

PRINCIPLES OF KWANZAA



One candle is lit for each day of the Kwanzaa celebration, representing each of the seven daily themes.

Kwanzaa is based on the *Nguzo Saba*, the following seven guiding principles, one for each day of the observance from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1:

Umoja (oo-mo-jah) — Unity stresses the importance of togetherness for the family and the community, which is reflected in the African saying, "I am We."

Kujichagulia (koo-gee-cha-goo-lee-yah) — Self Determination requires that we define our common interests and make decisions that are in the best inter-

est of our family and community.

Ujima (oo-gee-mah) — Collective work and responsibility reminds us of our obligation to the past, present and future, and that we have a role to play in the community, society, and world.

Ujamaa (oo-jah-mah) — Cooperative economics emphasizes our collective economic strength and encourages us to meet common needs through mutual support.

Nia (nee-yah) — Purpose encourages

us to look within ourselves and to set personal goals that are beneficial to the community.

Kuumba (koo-oo-bah) — Creativity makes use of our creative energies to build and maintain a strong and vibrant community.

Imani (ee-mah-nee) — Faith focuses on honoring the best of our traditions, draws upon the best in ourselves, and helps us strive for a higher level of life for humankind, by affirming our self-worth and con-

fidence in our ability to succeed and triumph in righteous struggle.

Few supplies decorate observance

Celebrating Kwanzaa requires a few supplies, such as a *kinara* (candle holder), *mkeka* (placemat preferably made of straw), *mazao* (fruits and vegetables), *vibunzi* or *muhindi* (ears of corn to reflect the number of children in the household), *kikombe cha umoja* (communal unity cup), *mishumaa saba* (seven candles, one black, three red, and three green); and *zawadi* (gifts that are enriching).

The candles reflect the seven principles, the foundation of Kwanzaa. Even households without any children should place an ear of corn on the place mat to symbolize the African concept of social parenthood. All seven symbols are creatively placed on top of the place mat, and should be attractively arranged as they form the Kwanzaa centerpiece. The colors of Kwanzaa are black, red and green. This should be kept in mind when decorating the home. Black, red and green streamers, balloons, cloth, flowers, and African prints can be hung tastefully around the room. Original art and

sculpture may be displayed as well.

Kuumba (creativity) is greatly encouraged when giving gifts for Kwanzaa. Not only is *Kuumba* one of the seven principles, it also brings a sense of personal satisfaction and puts one squarely into the spirit of Kwanzaa. The giving of gifts during Kwanzaa should be affordable and of an educational or artistic nature. Gifts are usually exchanged between parents and children and traditionally given on Jan. 1st, the last day of Kwanzaa. However, gift giving during Kwanzaa may occur at any time.

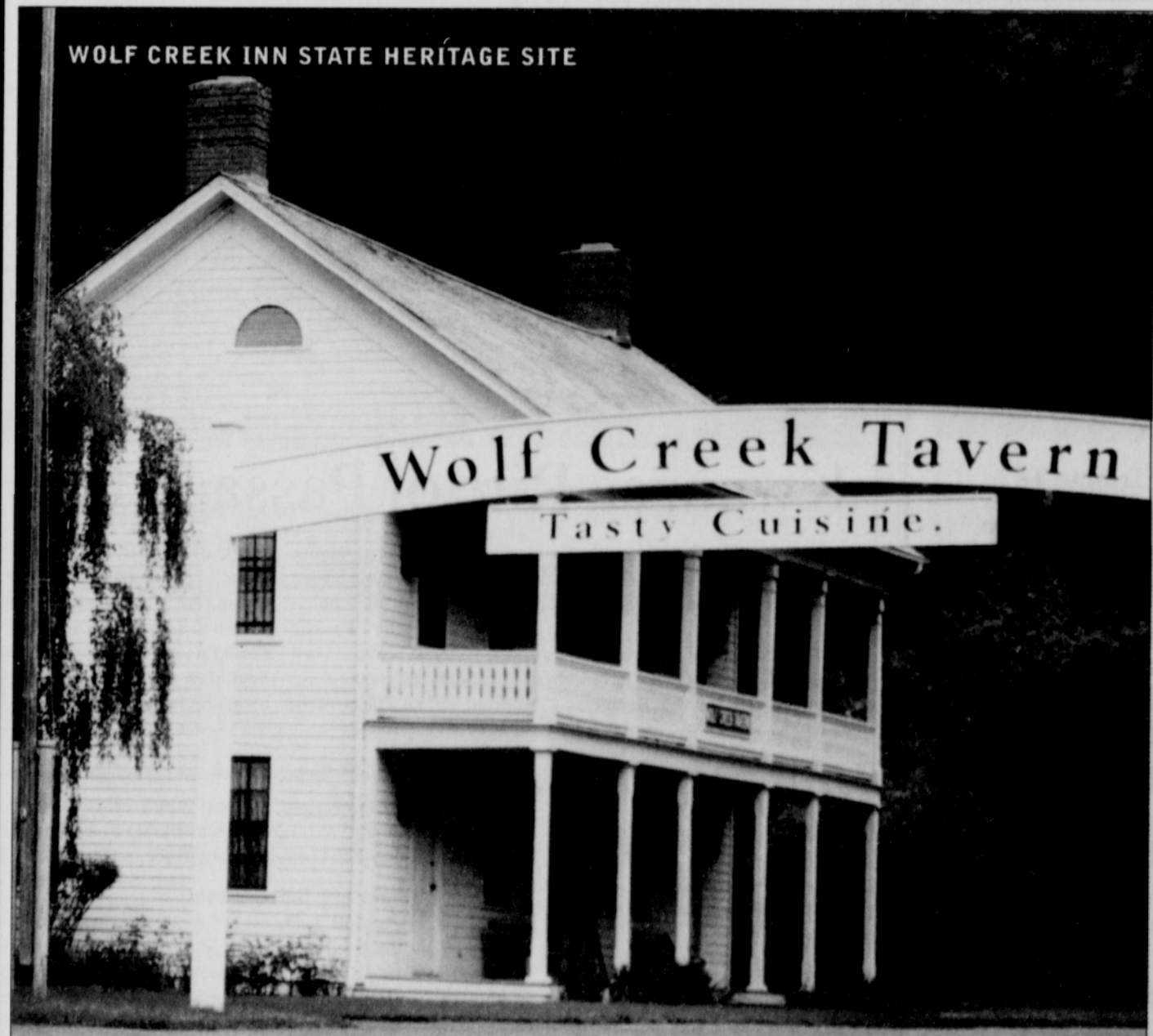
The Kwanzaa *karamu*, a feast traditionally held on Dec. 31, is a very special event bringing us closer to our African roots. The *karamu* is a communal and cooperative effort. Ceremonies and cultural expressions are highly encouraged. It is important to decorate the place where the *karamu* will be held in an African motif and Kwanzaa colors scheme.

A large Kwanzaa setting should dominate the room where the *karamu* will take place. A large *mkeka* should be placed in the center of the floor where the food should be placed creatively and made accessible to all for self-service. Prior to and during the feast, an informative and entertaining program should be presented. Traditionally, the program involved welcoming, remembering, re-assessment, recommitment and rejoicing, concluded by a farewell statement and a call for greater unity.



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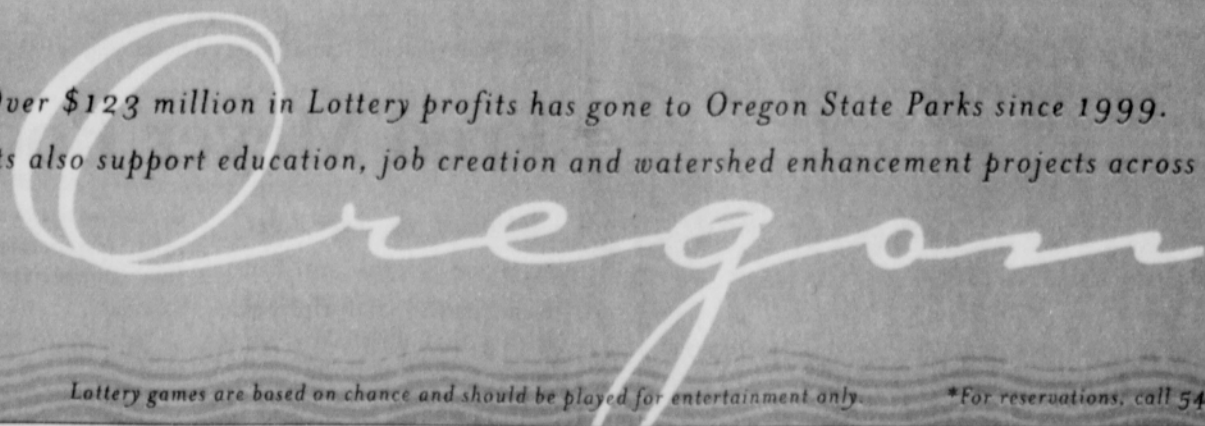
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