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### Diversity Center

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**GUSTAVUS**   
GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

Extraordinary People. Extraordinary Place.

## *at the center*



## Black History Month in St. Peter

a prose poem by **Phil Bryant**

**This February**, Black History Month passed quietly without any official fuss or fanfare in St. Peter. It was something akin to a dreary Christmas with no money and not a flake of snow on the ground or something close to a cold drizzly Fourth of July where the parade's even been cancelled—as the month came and went without a bang or a whimper. I did notice I got some odd looks from some of my fellow townspeople when I wore my “Celebrate Black History Month” button on the lapel of my overcoat. It was like they wanted to ask me quite point-blankly, “Philip, why on earth would you wear a button like that in St. Peter? You’ve lived here too long in this Swede town to start getting provocative on us. Just look around you and tell me what do you see? Piles of snow and ice and bundled-up, mildly hypothermic white people hunched down against the cold as far as the eye can see. You have to admit there’s certainly nothing black about that!” And, sadly it’s quite true. Who here among me in this town could sing even a few lines of “Lift Every Voice”? Or know who Charles Drew, Matthew Henson, or Sojourner Truth was? Not many here in this town, I think, if any. But still I think it important for me, at least, to carry the torch even when it’s this far north. So later on in the month when St. Peter holds its annual Winterfest Days, complete with the coronation of a snow king and queen, I can quietly piggy back and very subtly celebrate being black. Or at least can imagine the brilliant fireworks display, set off in this cold dark sub-arctic night over at the Nicollet County Fair Grounds, could well be in honor of Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, W.E.B. Dubois, Booker T. Washington, or Marcus Garvey. As my friend and poet Michael Harper wrote once: “History is Your Own Heartbeat” heard even up here on the snow and ice-clogged St. Peter streets, as a brighter hopeful tomorrow will quietly dawn from all our past sorrows so I’ll proudly wear my Black History Month button today, and my “Life’s too short not to be Swedish” button—maybe tomorrow. ■

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diversity center newsletter

# HigHER Ground

## Dagara Dance Troupe

## *coming events*

**Bernard Woma**, head xylophonist and master drummer of the Ghana National Theatre, and his award-winning ensemble, the Dagara Dance Troupe, will be performing at Gustavus on February 13, 2008, at 7 p.m. in Alumni Hall.

Dagara music is some of the oldest xylophone music in the world, with complex polyrhythms that challenge listener and performer alike. The dancing is joyful, expressive, and highly participatory. This live performance is offered as a means of sharing Dagara music and culture with the global community of music teachers, students, and enthusiasts.

It will be a return performance for Woma. Four years ago he wowed a packed audience in Alumni Hall with the power of West African

music and dance. In 1990, Woma was honored with the "Musician of the Year" award, the first time this award has been given to a percussionist. In his work with the Ghana Dance Ensemble, Bernard travels widely, demonstrating his proficiency with many traditional Ghanaian instruments.

This event is open to the public and is sponsored by the College Lecture Series and the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. If you are interested in co-sponsoring this program, please contact Paschal Kyoore at 507-933-6078 for more information. ■

## Nary Sem

## *student profile*

**My four years** of education at Gustavus are almost over, with only one semester left. Knowing that my academic experiences are coming to an end, I started to think back on how it all began. In the spring of '93 I heard about Gustavus from my mom's friend because both of her children went to this wonderful institution. She thought it would be a great school for me to attend as well. I guess she was right on the money! After I toured Gustavus, I felt an instant connection with the college. What attracted me the most to Gustavus was and still is to this day the architectural landscape such as the gardens of exotic plants and the wide open spaces on the campus.

During my years at Gustavus I decided to apply for a position as a Collegiate Fellow and had the privilege of being accepted into this program. As a Collegiate Fellow I have the opportunity to demonstrate leadership by being a role model and mentor to students attending the college. What I like most about being a Collegiate Fellow is I get to plan and organize events and programs on campus, such as making cookies or organizing the "Complex Haunted House." In the life of a Collegiate Fellow I can tell you there is NEVER a dull moment, only moments waiting to be experienced and opportunities to learn.

After four years, I am beginning to understand myself and others better than when I first stepped foot on this campus. People at Gustavus have challenged me to become a strong-minded,

independent, and confident individual. I would not be the person I am today without the support and honesty of my friends and faculty members. I have learned to be patient, tolerant, and sociable through my experiences of working on campus in the post office, being a Collegiate Fellow, and taking part in various volunteer activities through my four years at Gustavus.

With only one semester left, I realize that I will be saying good-bye to Gustavus in hopes that I am prepared to face the real world and reach my true potential. What I will miss most about Gustavus is walking around campus during warm nights with close friends and talking about life, goals, and planning events with other Collegiate Fellows. I will also miss the individuals working in the post office, J-Term, and snow days.

I will be an alumna soon and, following graduation, I plan to start working immediately. I hope to find a position that will allow me to use the skills I have gained at Gustavus. Hopefully, this will give me the opportunity to fulfill my number-one passion, which is helping others. After a few years of self-seeking through work, I might delve deeper into my major by attending graduate school in the field of psychology or business management. Right now I look forward to graduation and seeing what the future will hold for me. Opportunities are endless and now is the time to embrace every one of those opportunities. ■



*“In the life of a Collegiate Fellow I can tell you there is NEVER a dull moment, only moments waiting to be experienced and opportunities to learn.”*

– Nary Sem

## *community service center*

### Community Service Spring Work Trips

Last year, 94 Gustavus students traveled to Slidell, Louisiana, with Habitat for Humanity over spring break. The students dedicated a week of their lives to helping those in need in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, helping build houses for those who lost their homes. Roofing, framing, sawing, hammering, sweating, and sunburn were just a few of the highlights from their work during the day, but more importantly, they were helping to build a place that Slidell residents, who had lost their homes during the storm, could once again call a home of their own.

Along the way, the students also experienced some Louisiana culture with a catfish fry, swamp tour, a trip to the French Quarter . . . and who can forget the crawdads? The local residents were very thankful for the work the students put forth, and were willing to share their stories with the students.

This year, housing continues to be a need in the southern states affected by Katrina. Many of the affected areas are seeing a decline in volunteers and organizations dedicated to the rebuilding of the area. As a result, Gustavus has “adopted” the states affected by Katrina as locations for the Habitat for Humanity Spring Break Work Trips.

This year, 47 students will travel to inner-city New Orleans to continue the efforts of last year. We will also send 47 students to Mobile, Alabama, to help in the housing efforts of another affected area. With the support of the Gustavus community, the Habitat for Humanity Spring Break Work Trips will have another successful year.

The work trips will leave March 23 and return the following Sunday, March 30. ■

*“I always wanted to be somebody. If I made it, it’s half because I was game enough to take a lot of punishment along the way and half because there were a lot of people who cared enough to help me.”*

– Althea Gibson

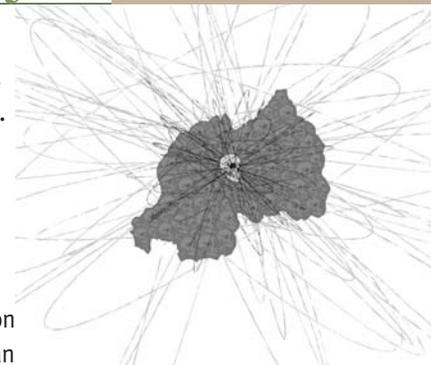
## Building Bridges

### *organization focus*

“Building Bridges” is a student-initiated, student-led diversity conference dedicated to addressing the pressing social and global issues of today. This annual conference started with a mission to promote mutual respect and understanding about diversity, to lay a foundation for dialogue throughout our community, to bring diverse students and student groups together to discuss matters of global diversity, and to address global diversity in a proactive, social, and informative way.

The annual conference is held in the spring of the year and has had speakers such as Lisa Ling, Inge Auerbacher, Oscar Arias Sanchez, and Arun Gandhi, among others, as keynotes.

This year’s conference is Saturday, March 8, 2008, with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m. It will focus on “Genocide Awareness: How will history judge us?” The conference will open at 10 a.m. in Christ Chapel with keynote speaker Paul Rusesabagina. Traditionally, “Building Bridges” emphasizes student awareness and action. Oftentimes, the situation being discussed is considered by many to be an insurmountable tragedy and participants find themselves asking “What difference can a person actually make?” The goal of this year’s “Building Bridges” Conference is to provide students a means to be involved, take action, and defeat the notion that one person can’t make a difference in the world. ■



## College Calendar

- February 2–11  
**Touring and Activity Break**
- February 12  
**Meditation, 7 p.m.**
- February 13  
**Career Connections Reception, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Concert by Dagara Cultural Group from Ghana, 7 p.m.**
- February 14  
**Happy Valentine's Day!**
- February 14  
**ELCA Camp Fair, 10:30 a.m.**  
**Interviewing with Confidence, 3:30 p.m.**
- February 17  
**Gustavus Symphony Orchestra Home Concert, 1:30 p.m.**
- February 19  
**Meditation, 7 p.m.**
- February 20  
**Minnesota Private Colleges Job and Internship Fair, All day**
- February 22  
***A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, 8 p.m.**
- February 23  
**Scholarship Day, 9 a.m.**  
***A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, 8 p.m.**
- February 26  
**Meditation, 7 p.m.**
- February 28  
***A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, 8 p.m.**
- February 29  
***A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, 8 p.m.**

## Student Organization Meeting Schedules

- Diversity Leadership Council**  
WEDNESDAY : 4:45 p.m. : Leadholm
- Asian Cultures Club**  
WEDNESDAY : 7 p.m. : Walker House
- College Democrats**  
TUESDAY : 8:30 p.m.
- College Republicans**  
2nd & 4th THURSDAYS : 7:30 p.m. : Faculty/Staff Lounge
- Crossroads Exec Board**  
e/o SUNDAY : 8:30 p.m. : IC Lounge
- I Am We Are . . .**  
THURSDAY : 10–Midnight : Black Box Theatre
- Interfaith Forum**  
e/o THURSDAY : 4:30 p.m. : Old Main 103
- International Cultures Club (ICC)**  
THURSDAY : 6 p.m. : International Ed Office
- OLAS**  
TUESDAY : 7:30 p.m. : Gustie Den
- Pan Afrikan Student Organization**  
TUESDAY : 5 p.m. : Board Room
- Peer Assistants**  
SUNDAY : 9 p.m. : PA Office
- Queers & Allies**  
WEDNESDAY : 9:15 p.m. : Faculty/Staff Lounge
- SOFA**  
\*TUESDAY : 9 p.m. : Diversity Center
- Womyn's Awareness**  
WEDNESDAY : 8 p.m. : WAC

\*Tentative  
e/o = every other

## World Watch

**Kenya: Police kill protesters**—Human rights workers accuse Kenyan police of unjustified killings in the violence that followed the December 27 elections. President Mwai Kibaki is accused of stealing. International and local observers say the vote count was deeply flawed. The toll, according to the hospital: 187 people shot, 44 of them dead.

**Cuba: Brazil offers support**—For decades Washington has sought to isolate Cuba politically and economically. It hasn't worked. In the latest blow to the United States' Cuba policy, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva offered on Tuesday a \$1 billion line of credit for a wide range of items vital to Cuba's survival, from road building and food products to nickel mining and offshore oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico.

**Europe: Climate plans spark EU job fears**—Trade unions and business leaders say the EU plan to cut carbon emissions could harm European jobs and industry. The European Trade Union Confederation fears up to 50,000 steelworkers' jobs could go if their industry moves to areas with lower costs for polluters.

## Cultural Connections

- February 7—Chinese New Year (China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam):** The Year of the Water Rat. This is the year 4706 in the Chinese Lunar Calendar and the most important holiday. The Chinese clean and decorate their homes with the five lucky signs of happiness.
- February 14–20—Random Acts of Kindness Week (International):** Established in 1995, the movement inspires people to share kindness with one another as they discover for themselves what power it has to effect positive change as relationships are created and community connections nourished.