

THE LOTUS LAMP

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Lotus Staff At C.I.B.I. Convention



On November 18th, ten members of the Lotus Academy staff traveled by van to the 1998 National Convention of the Council of Independent Black Institutions at the beautiful, sacred grounds of the Penn Center on St. Helena, South Carolina. Representatives from independent Black schools nationwide, and as far away as the United Kingdom, were in attendance. The theme for this year was “African Centered Education To Ensure African Reality”, and there were many workshops on this topic.

The convention was an opportunity for those committed to the educational and cultural development of our children to come together for serious thought, discussion, reflection, and rejuvenation. One of the goals of this convention was to recognize and include in this process those young people who have attended and graduated from C.I.B.I. schools.

Mothuri Badara: CIBI Convention Speaker

One of the true highlights of the C.I.B.I. National Convention was the workshop by Mothuri Badara. It was entitled, “Spirituality As A Basis For Rites Of Passage”, and was attended by a majority of the staff of Lotus. Everyone patiently waited for the workshop, and it was a true source of knowledge and inspiration for everyone there.

Mothuri Badara clearly explained the spiritual systems of Afrikan culture, and how we can apply them to our lives. Everyone learned a great deal from Badara’s teaching, especially his insight into how we can live our lives with our true Afrikan spirit: positive attitude and knowledge of our history. There was an excellent question and answer session at the end of the workshop where points were clarified and many views were shared. [Story by Mothura Terri]



“The name that a people call themselves must provide them with an understanding of their history by connecting them to a land mass, a language, a culture, a religion, a philosophy...”
DR. ANTHONY T. BROWDER

Special Events Committee Update

All of the Special Events committees have met over the last four weeks, including the newly formed Fashion Show committee which is looking at a big show in April, 1999. We want to thank those parents again who have given their time and energy to make Lotus a better place for our children.

The Website committee is in the midst of making design and content decisions. The first order of business is deciding on a new logo that will be featured on all of Lotus' material.

The African-Centered Education Conference committee has decided that the event will take place at the Lotus Academy on April 21-22, 1999. In addition to speakers, workshops, and vending, it will also feature our teachers and children demonstrating our achievements in the classroom. Also, the overall theme and workshop subjects are now being finalized.

The Awards Banquet committee has already begun to reach out to those guests who will make this such a special occasion, and is compiling a list of all those whom we intend to invite.

The Cultural Trips committee has selected New York City as its destination on a Saturday in March of 1999. The trip will feature an appropriate cultural event, restaurant, and shopping, and will be for adults only.

The Event Program Book committee is preparing to tackle its first project, the souvenir book for the Oratorical Contest in February, 1999. It will then follow up with souvenir books for the Science Expo, Awards Banquet, and Lotus Passage Ceremony.

The Family Day committee has as its major objective to increase the number of families coming out in June to cook out, join in the games, swim, boat, and just generally enjoy the summer weather. The committee plans to provide, at a very modest cost, food and transportation for those families who plan to join us.

Year-Round Education

The Lotus Academy administrative and teaching staff is in the process of weighing one of the most important decisions in its twenty-five year history. What is being very seriously considered is having **all** Lotus Academy students (with the exception of those who graduate from the eighth grade) attend school on a twelve-month basis! A questionnaire has been enclosed along with this newsletter so that parents can fill it out, and let the Lotus administration know exactly what you think about this truly historic proposal.

There are many educators and scholars who believe that the traditional school-year calendar that has students idle and learning virtually nothing from June until September is outdated and counterproductive. Many suggest that it is left over from an era where children should have been in the classroom, but were needed for planting, harvesting, and "picking" over the years in the many farms, fields, and plantations throughout this country.

One of the byproducts of this traditional calendar is that most students lose over the summer much of what they have learned during the school year. This often necessitates spending valuable time in September reviewing and recalling a great deal of old information. Also, a large number of teaching days are lost forever by eliminating any possibility of attending school in July or August. The sample calendar for the 1999-2000 school year that is also enclosed with this newsletter would give Lotus students almost fifteen percent more school days, even though there are many holidays, breaks, and even a three-week summer vacation built into it. Please keep in mind that this "sample" is not official, and is merely one example of how a year-round calendar might look.

Everyone recognizes that there are many considerations about year-round education that could prove troublesome or difficult. The weather during July and August would not lend itself to comfort in a building such as ours, and may require conducting some classes and other activities outside our building. There is also the issue of staff members needing these months for graduate school and personal development, and parents having to plan their vacations around a somewhat different summer timetable. Teachers would also have to be compensated for the additional teaching time, and that would mean that all parents would need to pay tuition for at least one additional month in the year.

What will be taking place over the next couple of months is an intense and thorough study as to how the Lotus Academy can possibly be the first school in this area to institute year-round education. It is very important that you share your ideas, questions, and concerns so that they become a part of the process that leads to an intelligent and informed decision. We are asking all parents to fully complete the questionnaire, and return it to the office no later than Friday, December 4, 1998. If you have any questions about it, please call the office.

A great deal of research has already gone into the consideration of year-round education. There have been many studies and reports that have been done on a local and a national basis. Anyone who would like to get a copy of this written material should contact the Director. This issue will be the subject of thorough discussion at our "Parent Workshop", scheduled for Wednesday, January 28, 1999. It is expected that a final decision will have been made *prior* to that date, and the reasons for and workings of it will be discussed fully at that time.

All parents must complete and return their "Year-Round" questionnaires to the Lotus office by Friday, December 4. This information will be used to make the very important decisions surrounding this issue.

News From The Lotus Age Groups

The pupils from Shava I and II have been studying Kemet (Egypt), in depth, for the last two months. They have tapped into their creativity (Kuumba), and written poems for their homework. These poems center around the life-giving River Nile, and how our ancestors honored it while maintaining their closeness with God and nature.

Many beautiful poems were written and they used wonderful words and phrases in appreciation of Nature. Two poems were chosen as one of many examples of Shava's splendor and enthusiasm.

[Above Story by Mothura Terri]

THE NILE by JASMINE HARRINGTON

It is much longer than a mile.
It flows from Africa all the way to the
Mediterranean Sea.
It travels much much longer than you
or me.
That great long river called the Nile.

From Uganda to Lake Victoria and
Ripon Falls.
That great big river goes wherever
nature calls.
Changing its name as it flows from
place to place.
Sometimes it seems like it is running
a race.

Sometimes during the summer there
are great big floods.
The flow is so natural, as natural as
blood.
Some say that the source of the Nile
is one great mystery.
I believe that is true, that is why we
are studying it in history.

So, remember the dams and all of
the lakes.
Just remember the names so there
are no mistakes.
When you are asked to tell and show.
The Nile is always the longest river
you know.

THE NILE by DEVON A. JOHNSON

Nile, Oh Nile, how great are you.
You're beautiful, luscious and long,
too.
Your banks are filled with life giving
powers.
It keeps Africans alive day by day,
hour by hour.

You overflow your banks every year
at the same time.
I wish the Nile was all mine.
You are praised by everyone for your
good deeds.
I think these are the characteristics all
rivers need.

As God Hapi you are known.
Energy and power you have shown.

In conclusion, I have to say,
your duties are surely praised every-
day.
So keep on doing the things you do.
Here are my thanks from me to you.

The Vishna and Shava Age Groups
are gearing up for the 1999 Science
Expo! Even though the annual event
is five months away, the students
have already begun to survey many
exciting topics to investigate. Some
of the topics submitted include the
many uses of lasers, the detrimental
effects of oil spills, and issues facing
Black firefighters.

Keep your eyes open for the Upper
School bulletin board which will
feature 'haikus' inspired by our visits
to Awbury Arboretum and observa-
tions of the phases of the moon. Hai-
kus are three-line poems with a total
of nineteen syllables; five in the first
line, seven in the second line, and
five in the third and final line.

Writing haikus is not nearly as sim-
ple as one might think. It is an exer-
cise in creative writing, because even
though they are not rhyming poems,
it is real challenge to get the correct
syllabication. The students' fondness
for nature and ingenuity were exem-
plified in these intricate exercises.

Mothura Terri On African History

Although I taught history in England
for five years, my main emphasis was on
Afrikan History. My experience has
taught me that without knowledge of
'self', academic success will not take
place. If it does, it is usually at the ex-
pense of 'self'. Let me use this article to
explain further.....

**"A person without history is like a tree
without roots".** MARCUS GARVEY

When looking at the Afrikan Holocaust
(Slavery) and the evil that was perpetu-
ated against us, which was well thought
out and maintained for hundreds of
years, it is to be **expected** that we have
to re-learn to love ourselves!

School is a very important part of any
child's life; many hours are spent in this
place of learning. In order for any real
learning to take place it has to be taught
on a firm foundation of pupils having
knowledge and understanding of their
great ancestral history in Afrika, and not
just teaching about the horrors of the
Afrikan Holocaust.

Once the greatness of Afrikan-
American History is taught, children will
see the positive contributions their an-
cestors have made towards world his-
tory, which will raise their self-esteem
and enable them to 'walk tall'. This will
lead them to overall academic success,
because true knowledge of one's 'self'
has been achieved.

The word "Education" means to "draw
out", and for something to be drawn out
pupils must believe that it is within
themselves to be drawn out in the first
place. My Master's research (Education
of the Black Child) has taught me that
education is much more than reciting
facts and achieving high grades. It is a
wholistic approach of knowing where
you came from, who you are and where
you are going. This is the aim of The
Lotus Way curriculum, which will bring
focus and success wherever our chil-
dren's life journeys take them.

Lotus Academy Teacher Of The Month

Mothura Alva is our Teacher of the Month for a second time. In addition to her usual excellence in the classroom, she has proved time and time again how she is willing to make valuable contributions to our overall program at Lotus outside the classroom.



For example, in the planning of our trip to Africa in 1999, she was instrumental in helping us find a Black-owned company to set it all up. Mothura Alva is now finishing her requirements to get her Master's Degree in education.

Early Learning Center Building Deal Is Sealed

The Lotus Academy signed a three-year lease last week for the building which will house its Early Learning Center. The new program will begin full operation at 6110 Wissahickon Ave. on Monday, January 4, 1999. Because of the expected

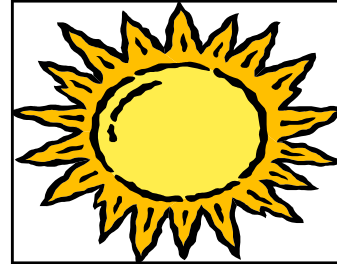
demand from parents of three and four year-old children, the five-year olds who are now at our main building on Haines



Street will remain there. The only children who will be moving from Haines Street in January will be our present three and four-year olds. Renovation of the building has already begun, and it is being specifically designed and equipped to meet the needs of our pre-kindergarten children.

Monthly Reminders

Early Learning Center



Thu., Nov. 26 – Early Learning Center CLOSED
Fri., Nov. 27 – Early Learning Center CLOSED
Tue., Dec. 1 – Teachers' Planning Session (ELC OPEN)
Wed., Dec. 16 – Parent/Teacher Conferences
Wed., Dec. 23 – Seasonal Celebration (Gold)
Dec. 24 to Jan. 1 – Early Learning Center CLOSED

Lower & Upper Schools (Grades 1 to 8)



Wed., Nov. 25 – Spotlight On Young Artists (Noon)
Thu. & Fri., Nov. 26 & 27 – SCHOOL CLOSED
Tue., Dec. 1 – Staff Meeting - NOON DISMISSAL
Wed, Dec 16 – P/T Conferences-NOON DISMISSAL
Wed., Dec. 23 – Seasonal Celebration (Gold)
Dec. 24 to Jan. 1 – SCHOOL CLOSED

“Institutions are mirrors, sounding boards, communication channels, and deposits of energy ... Without institutions, men cannot see themselves or be themselves.”

LERONE BENNETT, JR.