**NEWS**

Black History Month Starts Off With Read-In

By Christopher Fretz

It’s not often that readings from Tupac and Maya Angelou can be heard in the same place. But at a pre-reading event, a reading of African American literature was planned.

"Music is the next best thing to having cultural exposure, especially when there can be such limited exposure here at EMU," Hawk said.

Readers included representatives of Black Student Union, present and former professors at EMU, a student from Thomas Harrison middle school who was selected by Hawk, and students from EMU’s children’s literature class who are studying some African-American writers this semester. They read a wide range of styles of literature, including children’s stories, slave narratives, short stories, essays, sermons and poetry.

Rice worked with the Black Student Union to organize the event. Hawk expressed excitement about the increased access to African American authors in the past few years and spoke about the audience exposure to literature.

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The poetry read varied greatly in style from one poem to the next. Some of the poetry read included classic works by African-American writers like Langston Hughes and Paul Laurence Dunbar, but modern poets were represented as well. Poems by Tupac Shakur, Nikki Giovanni, and other modern poets were also read. However, themes of respect, identity, and overcoming tribulation were common themes in both types of poems. Other slave poems were read, including accounts of slaves learning how to read while still in slavery.

Other highlights included an essay about educators in minority schools, an excerpt from Maya Angelou's book, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, a short sermon by Martin Luther King, and an excerpt from Mildred Taylor’s book, *The Land*.

After the read-in was over, Hawk encouraged audience members to stay and read to each other from books they supplied for the occasion. Several students gathered in groups and read out loud to each other.

Audience response to the read-in was very positive. Sophomore Becca Reeder was impressed that a middle school student would take part in reading to a group of college students, and was impressed with her story-telling ability. She also talked about the need to have multi-cultural communication through literature.

"We live in a diverse world, and it’s important to be well-rounded in our knowledge of who’s around us," Reeder said.

Junior Heidi Bowman was one of the participants and is a student in the children’s literature class. She echoed Reeder’s sentiments and spoke about her appreciation for what she has learned from African American literature.

Bowman said, “It’s a different taste, a different kind of literature. It gives a different perspective on things. African-American literature also explores everyday themes that show how we are the same… It’s good to be aware of other people’s perspectives, and there’s always more than your own point of view. Reading about someone’s experience helps understand him or her. Put me in their shoes.”

The first African American read-in chain was organized by the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in 1990 and has become an annual event. An NCTE press release on the read-in said: “The read-in has been endorsed by the International Reading Association. Over a million readers of all ethnic groups, from 49 states, the West Indies, and African countries have participated.”

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**RICE from pg. 1**

Rice for the purpose of the read-in was organized by the Black Student Union and the broader church war in Iraq. Other groups, organizations, and the broader church in general are working together to help gather support for this protest.

Kendra Heatwole felt that this is a great way to make a statement. However, she said, “I doubt it will reach Bush’s doorstep and I think that the rice will end up being thrown out.”

Zee agrees that President Bush “may never see any of the rice, but he might hear about it.”

In light of that, is this protest a waste of food and resources? Most likely not, considering that only a half a cup per person is sent. In addition, rice and grains are abundant and go to African-American authors (to meats). This small amount of grain is mainly symbolic.

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**Baker To Blame?**

By Sean Boer

Sports Editor

During nine years under Coach Tom Baker EMU men’s basketball has had little success, but it is difficult to know where the blame should lie.

Baker has an overall record of 83 wins and 142 losses, a winning percentage of .363. He has had two seasons in which the team has gone over .500: the 1997-’98 season in which the team went 13-12. Baker credits his success in 1997-’98 then to three transfer students. “They were all very good players, and with a couple good recruiting years in a row, that is by far the most talent, and by far the best team we’ve ever had.”

Baker To Blame? An NCTE press release on the read-in said: “The read-in has been endorsed by the International Reading Association. Over a million readers of all ethnic groups, from 49 states, the West Indies, and African countries have participated.”

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