



African Talking Drum

Volume 7, Issue 2

The Official Newsletter of the African Association of Madison, Inc.

September 2005

Next Meeting of the AAM General Membership

September 24, 2005
5:00–7:00 pm

Venue: Hospice Care, Inc.
5395 E. Cheryl Parkway
Fitchburg, WI

We greatly value your presence at this meeting,
where we will discuss matters of great importance to the Association.

Agenda: Review proposed new constitution and organizational structure

Directions to E. Cheryl Parkway: Exit from the Beltline at the Fish Hatchery South exit. Continue south on Fish Hatchery past the conjunction with Highway PD (about a mile). Immediately after La Paella (Spanish restaurant on your left), turn left unto East Cheryl Parkway. Continue east on E. Cheryl Parkway for less than a mile, and Hospice Care will be on your right.

2005 AAM Executive Officers

President: Aggo Akyea

Vice President: Dick Lowe

Secretary: Felix Ossia

Treasurer: Joe Brewoo

Financial Secretary: Richard Yarl

—Update from the President—

I'm pleased to share with you some important developments of the African Association of Madison, Inc., and several key priorities for the remainder of this year.

As you know, our team took over the reins of the Association almost halfway through the year. This has created significant challenges for all of us for the progress of work of the association.

—continued

While I do not want to minimize the seriousness of this handicap, I would like to emphasize that the steps your Executive Committee has taken in this short period are helping us to preserve the critical elements of quality.

We have embarked on the following priorities and actions:

- Develop activities and projects to keep interest alive in the Association.
- Cancel the 2005 Madison African Festival to enable us to organize a substantive festival in the park in 2006.
- Lead the Association in the completion, incorporation and implementation of the Focus Group's recommendations.
- Put the Association on target to produce a new constitution and other recommendations for the approval of the membership by the end of the third quarter of the year.

In June, AAM honored its graduates with awards, food, music, and dance to celebrate the achievements of our scholars, honor our graduates, and cement our commitment to education.

In July, we got together in Marshall Park on the shores of beautiful Lake Mendota for our annual picnic. This year's picnic was the first to be cosponsored with the African Women's Association, Inc. (AWA). Highlights of the picnic included good food and drink, great friends, musical chairs, bag races, the limbo, soccer, ludo, music, singing, dancing, and drumming. The weather was bright and fun was everywhere.

But the year's not over yet. Please take note of the calendar for the rest of the year and participate in all activities of the Association.

Meetings of the General Membership:
September 24, 2005
December 3, 2005

End-of-Year Party:
December 10, 2005

We look forward to working with you to build a strong foundation for the future of AAM.

Aggo Akyea, 2005 President



Announcements

Raise funds for AAM and see a football game, too! AAM is looking for volunteers to work at UW football home games. Your wages go to AAM, and you get to see some great Badger football—a win-win deal.

AAM and disaster relief efforts. AAM will make two contributions to help disaster relief efforts: \$100 to relief efforts in the wake of the Stoughton tornado and \$100 to Red Cross for Hurricane Katrina relief. Our thoughts are with the many people struck by tragedy in the wake of these storms.

AFFEST 2004 videos. Get your copy of video coverage of the 2004 Africa Fest for only \$20. To get a copy, contact AAM or a member of the 2005 executive committee.

AFFEST 2006 plans are underway. We are gearing up with plans for Africa Fest '06, and we need your help. If you're able to help, contact the president or another member of the executive, or leave a message on our voice mail at 608-258-0261.

African Association of Madison, Inc.
PO Box 1016
Madison, WI 53701-1016

Voice mail: 608-258-0261
Email: info@africanassociation.org
Online: <http://www.africanassociation.org>

Special thanks to all members of our community who contributed items of news and creativity for this newsletter...we love to hear your news so that we can make our newsletter as complete as possible. Keep up the communication, and thank you again.

Transitions

We welcome our youngest newcomers to Madison—

- Born 12 June 2005 to *Hortense and Moussa Bamba* at Meriter Hospital...a baby girl.
- *Jonathan Swen Weah*, born at St. Mary's on 13 June 2005 to *James and Charlene Weah*.

- Sara, born at St. Mary's on 3 July 2005 to *Carmen Best and Salifou Issoufou*.
- *Amani Kahite*, born to *Lilian and Kally Kahite* in July at St. Mary's.

We ask that the souls of our loved ones who have crossed over find peace. Our condolences to the families of—

- *Dzignbodi Akyea*, whose brother, Sewornu Adatsi, passed away in Ghana on 12 May 2005.
- *Adetunji Lesi* for the loss of his mother, Madam S. Ajike Lesi, who crossed over 26 May 2005 in Lagos, Nigeria.
- *Adelaide Fiske*, whose brother, Emmanuel Morris, passed away 9 June 2005 in Liberia.
- *John Mazvimavi*, whose brother, Wenceslaus Mazvimavi, was killed in a car-jacking in Zimbabwe on 12 July 2005.
- *Godwin Amegashie*, whose nephew, Emmanuel Amegashie, passed away in Spain in July 2005.
- *Abdoul Savadogo*, for the loss of his mother, Kadjatou Senou Savadogo, who passed away 20 July 2005 in Cote d'Ivoire.
- *Aggo Akyea*, for the loss of his younger sister, Akweley Akyea in Ghana in August.
- *Dorothy Conduah*, whose father, Mr. Ntim, passed away in Ghana in August.
- *Becky Kambeu-Kamguia*, for the loss of her mother on 5 August 2005. She leaves behind 4 of her 9 children, 23 grandchildren, and 9 great-grandchildren.

Congratulations to...

- *Mobolaji Faloma* (East High School) and *Algernon Felice* (High Academic Honors, Memorial High School), who were each awarded a \$1,000 scholarship as part of the 2005 Madison Metropolitan Chapter of the Links Scholarship and Student Recognition Program. Only eight students received these scholarships. Mobolaji is a member of the National Honor Society and Carolyn F. Johnson Honor Society and has been a Honor/High Honor Roll member throughout her high school career. Algernon is a member

of the National Honors Society and has been recognized as a Venture Scholar and in Who's Who.

- *Kweku Brewoo, Kobby Cann, Farida Issoufou, Abdul Kooistra, Aristide Vakunta, and Winston Vakunta*, recipients of Links awards of recognition for excellence in academics.
- *Sautsani Godfrey Ndafooka*, who received a \$500 scholarship from West High School's ESL Department.
- *Aliko Songolo*, who has been elected chair of the Department of French and Italian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- *Delphine Vakunta* (West High), who won a gold medal and certificate as finalist in the statewide forensics competition held in Madison in April 2005.
- *Linda Vakunta*, inducted into West High School's Hall of Fame for her GPA and outstanding performance in extracurricular activities (slam poetry, track and field, diversity alliance club, community tutoring, emergency shelter, SHINE World camp and Africa Fest dance).



Farida (daughter of Salifou Issoufou) with her certificate of recognition from the Madison chapter of LINKS, Inc. for outstanding academic achievements. Farida turned 6 in July.

Graduations—High School

- *Abou Amara*, East High School. Abou will attend Southwest Minnesota State University this fall.
- *Mobolaji Falomo*, La Follette High School.
- *Frank and Marjolaine Gbahe*.
- *Korpo Gorvego*, Middleton High School.
- *Ernest James*, West High School.
- *Judith Martin*, James Madison Memorial High School.
- *Sautsani Godfrey Ndafooka*, James Madison Memorial High School.
- *Stephanie Osuocha*, La Follette High School.

- *Linda Vakunta*, West High School. Linda will study medicine in the fall at UW–Madison.
- *Nyalay Gbonou Weller*, West High School.

Graduations—Post-Secondary

- *Anthony Amegashie*: BA, economics, UW–Madison.
- *Gontorwon Borh*: BS, electrical engineering, UW–Madison.
- *Aimey N. Enemuoh*: BSc, human development and family studies/psychology, Department of Human Ecology, UW–Madison.
- *Pascal G. Enemuoh*: BS, industrial technology with emphasis on plastic engineering, UW–Platteville, December 2004.
- *Ogom Enwemnw*: BA, African arts history/computer imagery, UW–Madison.
- *Miriam Ezenwa-Ifeagha*: MS, nursing, UW–Madison.
- *Oluyemi Falomo*: BS, construction management, UW–Platteville.
- *Amadou Fofana*: PhD, African languages and literature, UW–Madison.
- *Kally Kahite*: MS, industrial engineering, UW–Madison.
- *Ousman Kobo*: PhD, African history, UW–Madison.
- *Adebanke Lesi*: BSc (honors), biology, UW–Madison. She will attend medical school at UW–Madison this fall.
- *Chijioke Offor*: BSE, computer science, University of Michigan–Ann Arbor.
- *Ifeyinwa Offor*: MS, elementary education, St. Joseph’s University.
- *Effiong Okon*: BS, clinical lab. science, UW–Stevens Point.
- *Christine Okpala*: BS, bacteriology/genetics, UW–Madison.
- *Kofi Appiah Okyere*: PhD, accounting and information systems, UW–Madison.
- *Lucy Osakwe*: BA African American studies, UW–Madison.

Jewish Social Services of Madison: Resource for Immigrants in Madison

Jewish Social Services offers immigration law services as well as resettlement services for people who have moved here from other countries (helping them find housing, language classes and jobs, make new friends, and become part of the community). Attorney Nia Enemuoh-Trammell describes this organization as a great resource for members of our community, especially those who may have cases qualified for pro bono work. (Please note that Nia does not practice immigration law, so please contact Jewish Social Services directly.) Jewish Social Services’ offices are located on the far west side of Madison in the Max Weinstein Jewish Community Building, 6434 Enterprise Lane, Madison, WI 53719-1117. Phone (608) 278-1808; Fax (608) 278-7814; Email jss@mjcc.net

Association News

There are many African associations in Madison. Here is a bit of information about a few of them.

Cameroon Association in Madison

This is an association for Cameroonians who live in the city of Madison. Its main objectives are—

1. Get to know one another.
2. Help new arrivals settle in Madison.
3. Provide moral and material support to members in need.
4. Laugh and cry with members when the need arises.
5. Liaise with other African associations in Madison toward achieving long-term African goals.
6. Work in conjunction with other community based organizations in Madison in order to contribute our quota toward the development of the city of Madison.
7. Function as an ancillary organ of AAM 8 Share news from home (Cameroon) on a regular basis.

In the meantime, we are working on our constitution and by-laws that would spell out functions and office bears. Peter Vakunta is the current coordinator of the one-year old association. We are making considerable progress.

Union of Nigerians In Madison Area (UNIMA)

Contact: UNIMA, PO Box 965, Madison, WI 53701;
Email: unima1960@yahoo.com

2005 UNIMA Executive:

Ray Kumapayi, President
Chidi Obasi, Vice President
Wale Onabule, Financial Secretary
Abiodun Lesi, Treasurer
Uche Okpara, Secretary
Sam Jimba, Assistant Secretary
Madu Enwemnwana, Social Secretary
Mojji Olaniyan, Custodian

African Women's Association of Madison (AWA)

The African Women's Association of Madison was formed 7 years ago to bring together women in Madison who are African or have African connections and interests. Our purpose is to form a sisterhood for mutual support and to preserve our African heritage and culture.

AWA meetings are scheduled on the third Saturday of the month.

Contact: African Women's Association of Madison, Inc., PO Box 44672, Madison, WI 53744.

2005 AWA Executive:

Kaari Njiru-Lowe, President
Emilie Ngo-Nguidjol, Vice President
Anita Makuluni, Secretary
Ngozi Ikegwuonu, Assistant Secretary
Cecilia Cole, Treasurer
Agnes Dako, Ex Officio
Sonia Vallé, Facilitator

African Student Association (ASA)

ASA was formed to promote cultural and social awareness of the African people among the entire student and faculty of UW-Madison, facilitate better communication and understanding between African people and all other members of the university community, and encourage activities that portray the noble cultural treasures of the African continent.

Contacts:

Adedayo A. Lesi, 608-770-2542, aalesi@wisc.edu
Omolade O. Odualala, oodualala@wisc.edu
Selam Zewdie, szewdie@wisc.edu

Community Calendar—2005

SEPTEMBER

- 10 UNIMA-W Meeting (Independence Plan)
UNIMA Executive Meeting
- 17 AWA Meeting
- 24 UNIMA-W Meeting (Independence Plan)

OCTOBER

- 1 UNIMA: Nigeria's 45th Independence Party
- 15 AWA Meeting
- 22 UNIMA-W Meeting

NOVEMBER

- 19 AWA Meeting
UNIMA-W Meeting
- 23 UNIMA General Meeting

DECEMBER

- 3 UNIMA-W Meeting
- 17 AWA End-of-Year Party
UNIMA-W Holiday Party
- 31 UFIM New Year's Eve Celebration at NHCC

AAM	African Association of Madison
AWA	African Women's Association
UNIMA	United Nigerians in Madison Area
UNIMA-W	UNIMA Women
UFIM	Ivorian Community Organization



Music

When we asked what kind of music you like, very few people responded, which is strange because so many people love to dance whenever we get together. Here are some of the songs and musical styles you mentioned as favorites.

Music styles:

- *Makossa*. A popular dance rhythm from Cameroon.
- *Ndombolo*. According to Aliko Songolo, this is a style of music and dance invented at about the time Laurent-Désiré Kabila took power in the D.R. Congo in 1997. The dance is supposed to imitate his manner of walking, but there have been many variations since.

- *Njang*. A folk dance from KOM in the northwest province of Cameroon.

According to Moussa Bamba, the following three new styles of music originated in Cote D'Ivoire after the coup in 2002. Soldiers rebelling against the government traumatized the population, and musicians found their own way to support the nation.

- *La Prudencia*. Asks citizens to be prudent because danger is still around.
- *Le Cacher-Regarder*. A warning: *cache* (hide) and *regarder* (look) so we can analyze and understand proposed deals toward peace.
- *Le Coupe-Decale*. *Coupe* (cut) – *Decale* (drag) talks about young men using their parents' belongings and stolen credit cards to "improve" their lives.

Songs:

- "Loi" by Kofi Olomide (DRC)
- "Coupe Bibamba" by Awilo Longombo (Congo Kinshasa)
- "Daara J" by Paris Dakar (Senegal)
- "Hintoni" by Brenda Fassie (South Africa)

Great Tips for Building Healthy Relationships Within Our African Homes

— by Peter Vakunta

Quite a few myths do exist in our community regarding what constitutes a good or bad relationship. Thus, it is appropriate for me to begin this discussion by dispelling some misconceptions that readers may have on this subject. All too often, people believe that they have to be happy at all times in order to be loved or appreciated by their partner or friends. The truth of the matter is that it is impossible to be happy every time. Being happy every moment of our lives is a goal we all strive to achieve. Sadly enough, the constraints of daily life constantly throw us into mood swings. Today we're happy, tomorrow we're sad. That's life!

Other people feel that if they are involved in a relationship, there should never be a conflict or misunderstanding. In other words, they should never do something that would hurt their partner. Once again, the bitter truth is that we live in a conflict-ridden world. Besides, man is not an infallible being. From time to time, we do things that put our partners or friends on edge. Occasionally, even the most loving couples catch themselves arguing and disagreeing over trivial matters. Does this mean that love has flown out

through the window? Not as far as I know. It helps to be aware of the fact that conflicts are a fact of life. Indeed, they are part of a healthy relationship! Couples who never disagree are either living in a utopian world or are simply making believe.

All too often, we believe that if our partner finds out who we really are, they will reject or abandon us. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The reality is that our partners would be happy to know us for who we are rather than have to deal with a wolf in sheep skin. Wearing a mask is the greatest mistake that people in a relationship can make. Falsehood does not last. It is not rewarding either. Before long, your partner will discover the farce! And the end result may be catastrophic.

So what are the ingredients for a good relationship? Experience has shown that the following factors do contribute significantly toward strengthening relationships:

- **Mutual respect.** Respect between partners is cement. Mutual respect presupposes recognizing your partner's individuality. It also implies a certain degree of maturity in handling conflict situations. We can disagree without necessarily tearing each other down.
- **Trust.** A trustworthy partner or friend is a reliable one. Trust implies caring about but not 'clinging' onto your partner like leech! Trusting your partner, means acknowledging the fact that he or she is dependable enough to make certain decisions in the behalf of you both. It means having confidence in your partner as well.
- **Honesty.** Being honest to your partner is synonymous with being open to him or her. It means frank talk. Talking frankly is being able to muster the courage to point our mistakes when they are made. An honest partner is the one who is able to express feelings without having to resort to gimmicks.

In a nutshell, in order to maintain a healthy relationship, it is imperative to assure that your interaction is spiced with the following ingredients:

- *flexibility* • *honesty* • *fair-play* •
- *courteousness* • *trust* • *mutual respect* •

Man is a social animal, condemned to live in communion with others. To do so successful, we have to learn the art of good interpersonal communication.



INVOCATION

Awaken my soul

(a poem by Daniel Kunene)

In the murk of early dawn
In the rising mists of this marsh
I stand
Barefoot

Barefoot
I stand
In the rising mists of this marsh
In the murk of early dawn
A leopard skin kaross draped on my shoulders

I stand
Barefoot
In the murk of early dawn
In the rising mists of this marsh
And I stare eastward
Awaiting the miracle of birth

In the murk of early dawn
I await
The miracle
Rising out of the life waters
Of *Ntswanatsatsi*

Bareheaded
Barefoot
Open to the sky and the earth
I stand
And I pray that the rising sun
May strike my forehead
With the one elusive mysterious ray
That kindles the fire of madness
To awaken the soul of a poet

Awaiting the miracle of birth
Staring eastward
Leopard skin draped on my shoulders
Bareheaded
Barefoot
I stand
In the rising mists of this marsh
In the murk of early dawn

And I pray
For the one elusive mysterious ray
To pierce my forehead
And fill me with the fire of wisdom and madness
To awaken the poet in me.

CLARION CALL

by Peter Vakunta

It beggars belief
to think that we will
salvage the African continent
by balkanizing it into
hostile ethnic enclaves.
This kind of social
tinkering heralds doom
for the present and posterity.

The future of Africa
lies in our collectivism.
We must stand together,
one country behind the other
in order to achieve long-term goals.
African intelligentsia and
the rank-and-file must
pick up the flickering torch
of African unity and forge ahead
toward the goal of attaining
genuine independence from
erstwhile colonial oppressors.
This task is ours.
Africa must unite!



Music To My Ears:

an autobiographical sketch by daniel p. kunene

[This is an introduction to music I composed starting from my mid-teen years to my twenties. The music library is working to preserve them in their archives—DPK]

I was born in Edenville, in the Orange Free State province of South Africa. Those were the days of a kinder, gentler apartheid called “segregation.” Black townships were called “locations” by the authorities, and so that’s what we called them too. When I first went to school at age six, classes were held in church buildings, since there were no school buildings for blacks in our “location.” The first two years of school, which were called Substandard A and Substandard B respectively, were held in the Wesleyan Methodist Church which was within shouting (or should we say “singing”) distance from the A.M.E. (African

Methodist Episcopal) Church, which accommodated the third and fourth years, namely Standards One and Two.

One afternoon, towards the end of the school day, my ear suddenly caught a four-part harmony that came from the direction of the A.M.E. Church. It would be just one chord, held for some time, and then stopped. I listened intently to these beautiful chords that floated towards me and hung in the air for a while, then died away, then started again and died again. Somehow I managed, at the same time, not to be distracted from what we were doing in my class. I wanted to go to the source of these sounds. But I could not. I cannot say how long they had been happening before I became aware of them. In time I got to know that they were made by the Standards One and Two combined choir as the teacher “tuned” them for a piece they were about to sing. That’s all. I think it was before tuning forks, and the teacher would estimate a comfortable level for the song, sound the major scale, and then command the choir “Chord!” and they made those glorious sounds.

I had a particularly sensitive ear to melody and harmony. I wanted to hear music. I wanted to create music. I wanted to place my hands on anything from which I could produce sounds that could even remotely be considered a tune or a melody. There were no musical instruments at my home, primarily because my parents were poor. To try to satisfy my yearning to produce musical sounds, I would take one of the chairs which were made of some hard dark wood with legs secured in the bottom of the seat with steel rods strung very taut with bolts at each of the four corners. I would turn the chair up-side-down and twang the rods with my fingers. I listened intently to the “music” and even tried to produce chords and harmonies by picking several of them at the same time. I relished whatever sounds I could produce from this “instrument.”

My family was a singing family. We sang at church, naturally. At home, after supper, the rest of the evening was devoted to either storytelling or singing. We had a song-book called *Congregational Anthem*. As with the hymnbooks, the music was written in tonic solfa, a system based on certain letters of the alphabet. How the book came into our possession I had no idea. My mother sang the “first part,” or soprano (melody), my older sister the “second part” (alto), myself and my older brother tenor, and my father bass. For some reason tenor and bass were not called “third part” and “fourth part.” Since harmonizing came naturally to us, and to other black people in our community, we were often surprised to hear that in the white church, the entire congregation, including the men, all sang “first part!,” and we said it was funny for men to sing “first

part,” and that was why they needed an organ to make the music sound nice. Given this frame of mind, I wonder, in retrospect, if my parents would have considered a piano a necessary addition to our household even if they had the money. But one thing I know, I would have cried incessantly, a kind of filibuster in reverse, until they did.

It seemed a natural consequence to form a family choir. We did. Besides singing for amusement, my parents would also stage a concert from time to time, held right there in the dining/sitting room of our house. It was announced by nailing a handwritten notice on to a big wooden corner pole that served as anchor for one of the grazing camp fences. Members of the community came, for a penny admission charge. If it was end of the month, admission might be raised to a tickey or even sixpence. But if someone showed up with a penny, they would never be refused admission.

There was a “chairman” who held the program in his hands and announced the items to be presented. Members of the audience added spice to the entertainment by engaging in a process called “buying” and “blocking.” For example, someone might approach the chairman after a piece was over to “buy” an encore performance. Another person might then go to the chairman to “block” that because they did not like the piece, but they would have to pay a little higher price than the previous “buyer,” almost like an auction. This could go on for quite some time. Or someone might stop a song in progress because they did not like it. Or again someone might buy a member of the audience to stand up and perform some act, or sing, and so on. A “buying” or “blocking” activity might be introduced with some colorful preface such as “With this tickey that I earned with my sweat loading and unloading trucks for Baas Rosen, I say ‘Block it!’” as he or she placed the money on the table. During the whole process, occasionally a voice would shout from the audience, but quite often from the chairman, saying, “That’s money!” meaning this is a money raising event and the more you “play” (i.e. engage in “buying” and “blocking”) the better. The concert was thus a noisy event, with members of the audience sometimes shouting encouragement to one performer or other.

African Association of Madison, Inc.
PO Box 1016
Madison, WI 53701-1016

Voice mail: 608-258-0261
Email: info@africanassociation.org
Online: <http://www.africanassociation.org>