The month of April is National Autism Awareness Month. In April 1970, The Autism Society first recognized National Autism Awareness Month. It was created to educate the public about autism, assist with lowering the stigma associated with autism and empower those with autism and the families of those supporting autistic individuals.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines autism as ASD a "developmental disability that can cause significant soaps, communication, and behavior challenges."

It is a lifelong developmental disability.

It is important to raise awareness about autism because it can affect anyone. The CDC says about 1 in 44 children in the United States is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and boys are four times more likely to be diagnosed than girls.

It is highly likely that we all know someone with autism.

Research has stated that African American children experience longer delays in autism diagnoses, according to the Washington School of Medicine in St. Louis.

By increasing our awareness this month and every month, we can hopefully be more supportive and empathetic towards those with autism. We can also assist with advocating for the appropriate help for the Black children who have autism.

There are many opportunities for individuals with autism, just ask Jaime Smith, a former special Olympian from the 2007 Shanghai Olympics. He is not only an Olympian, and has had several jobs while striving to be a positive influence for others living with autism.

"Bridgerton" is a period drama television show streamed on Netflix. The series was created by Chris Van Duden and produced by Shonda Rhimes.

Julia Quinn’s novels serve as the inspiration for the series as Rhimes has voiced plans to have a season for each one of the eight books written by Quinn. The novel revolves around presenting debutantes at court during the season in Regency era London.

Wealthy families are competing against each other to obtain the best match for their offspring.

The first season of “Bridgerton” debuted on Netflix on Dec. 25, 2020. It had rave reviews and became the most watched series on Netflix at the time of its premiere.

It remains the second most watched series by total watch time on the streaming platform.

A big draw for Bridgerton is the diverse cast, beautiful aesthetics, and risqué scenes. One of the breakout stars from season one was Regé-Jean Page who played Simon Basset (Duke of Hastings).

Fans were in an uproar when it was revealed he would not be in season two as they “burn” (A popular term from the show) for him. However, the Duke of Hastings is not in the second book which season two is based on. Basset verbalized only signing up for a limited role and rejected pleas to have him come back in a very limited capacity for the second season.

Season two debuted on March 25 and it has had mediocre reviews compared to season one.
Recognizing Black Women’s worth

By Zion Sanders

In society today, Black women are overlooked in most aspects of life. Whether it be for the way she looks, the shade of her skin, the fit of her clothes, the style of her hair or her knowledge.

Black women endure the hardship of the constant ridicule from others. For instance, being looked at as less because of the color of your skin, compared to white people.

However, facing these challenges gives Black women thick skin to deal with the judgment. Growing from the taunting helps all ages of Black women that encounter someone who finds them intimidating. By the skills and essence that Black women process to own it, and be proud of the skin that they are in.

As most of the world was able to recall the events of the Oscars the past Sunday, the speech that was given by Jane Campion was hidden behind all the chaos. Campion is a filmmaker. She won the award for best director for the Film, “The Power of the Dog.”

“What an honor to be in the room with you. Venus and Serena, you’re such marvels. However, you don’t play against the guys, like I have to,” she said in her speech.

Her comment was not received well by the viewers. Venus Williams gave an appalled look, while Serena Williams just applauded and the audience cheered.

The Williams’ sisters have dominated the sport of tennis from a young age. According to US Weekly, Serena Williams has accumulated “23 Grand Slam singles titles and four Olympic gold medals. Venus, for her part, joins Serena as the only female tennis player in the Open Era to win Olympic golds in both singles and doubles category.”

Even with constant contempt, the Williams sister continues to show the world that they are unbreakable.

Black women are faced with backhanded comments on numerous occasions, exhibiting the situation with Campion and the Williams’.

Either the devaluing of the hard work that Black women have to put in when it comes to everything is a rebuff.

In another instance, Campion was able to offend three Black women in total in her speech. When she mentioned Halle Berry in her speech, who previously won an award and gave an acceptance speech, Campion went on to say, “Halle Berry you have already done my speech,” in a sense trying to take credit for Berry’s work.

The reactions that were displayed by the sisters and others show how often these situations happen.

Despite the comments made by Campion, the Williams’ sisters did not allow it to ruin their evening. They continued on and enjoyed their night.

Being a Black woman, challenges are bound to come your way. The way that you handle them is how you succeed. Show people that you are more than the meaningless words they say about you are nothing more than the opinions of jealousy.

Black women are the heart and soul of the world. Do not let others’ opinions falter or tilt the crown that you wear, hold your head up high and show them what Black women’s power represents: beauty, love, strength, intelligence and the many more abundant qualities.
Uhuru Na Umoja

By Zion Sanders

As the semester is winding down, graduation is nearing and seniors are gearing up for the next chapter in their lives. Uhuru discussed what the future holds for spring graduate Jaimee Sanders, a senior psychology major.

Uhuru: Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Sanders: “Hi, my name is Jaimee Sanders, and I am a senior graduating this May with a degree in psychology. I am a literacy mentor with Read Fresno with Every Neighborhood Partnership (ENP). I like to travel, spend time with family and friends and watch TV.”

Uhuru: Why did you decide to major in psychology?

Sanders: “I decided to major in psychology because I have always been interested in working with students in the educational field in some aspect. With a degree in psychology, I can help individuals overcome the effects of trauma and learn how to manage mental illness and health and achieve personal and academic goals.”

Uhuru: What challenges did you face during your college years?

Sanders: “Throughout college I faced many challenges, but one in particular would be the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time I had to transition from traditional learning to online learning and I lost a lot of motivation to stay on top of my studies. With having to deal with personal issues, work, health, and school there were many times I wanted to quit. However with faith, prayer and perseverance I stayed diligent and got through and now I am here ready to walk the stage with a Magna Cum Laude (high honors) GPA.”

Uhuru: What are you planning to do after college and what are your career goals?

Sanders: “After I graduate I plan to attend graduate school where I will earn a Master’s degree in Educational Psychology and then after I will complete a Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) credential to become a school psychologist. Ultimately, I hope to fulfill a vital role in young children’s life throughout their educational years.”

Uhuru: What advice would you give to college students who are thinking about pursuing a major in psychology?

Sanders: “Pursuing a degree in psychology will not be easy but with dedication, maturity, initiative and perseverance you can do it. Do not be afraid to ask for help and even though times may get hard whether it’s for personal or professional reasons, never give up because the finish line is so rewarding.”

By Dessalines Yamoussou

When people hear the word crown they typically associate it with the formal headwear worn by royalty.

In the Black community, crown has commonly been used to define hair.

People differ on the meanings they associate with hair.

During the Civil Rights movement, we saw a rise in the number of Black women who chose to wear their hair in its natural state.

This led to numerous Black people using harmful chemicals and/or heat on their hair to achieve European standards of beauty.

“For too long, Black girls have been discriminated against and criminalized for the hair that grows on our heads and the way we move through and show up in this world,” Rep. Ayanna Pressley said before the House of Representatives on March 18.

Also, activists like Angela Davis contributed in many ways to the positive image of Black people’s hair.

Betty Williams, 82, who copes with diabetes, helps braid her 14-year-old granddaughter Kaylyn Walker’s hair at their home in Chicago on July 22, 2021. (Antonio Perez/Chicago Tribune/TNS)

Black hair in its natural state began to be viewed as a source of empowerment, liberation and pride.

Unfortunately, Black people continue to face discrimination based on the way their hair naturally grows in today’s society and eventually led to California passing The Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair (CROWN) Act in 2019.

Since then, 13 additional states and 34 municipalities have adopted similar laws.

The Crown Act prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of hair texture or hairstyles commonly associated with a particular race or national origin.

This act refers to hair texture and protective hairstyles (braids, locks, twists, Bantu knots, etc.).

The United States House of Representatives passed the CROWN Act (H.R. 2116) on March 18, and it will now be moved to be voted on in the Senate.
**“Passing” and the Rhinelander case**

By Dessalines Yamoussou

Netflix has a wide variety of original movies and recently the movie streaming platform premiered “Passing,” starring Tessa Thompson and Ruth Negga. It is set in 1920s Harlem. The protagonist Irene Redfield (Tessa Thompson) is a Black woman who passes for white. Unlike her friend Clare, Irene does not actively live a white lifestyle. She lives in a white neighborhood and is married to a White man, John, who has no idea Clare is in fact, Black. Conflict unfolds when Clare begins to intrude on Irene’s life. Irene believes Clare’s involvement in her life is dangerous.

The film is an adaptation of the book “Passing” by Nella Larsen. These consequences were the catalyst that propelled Larsen to write the book after the Leonard Rhinelander case in 1925. Rhinelander requested an annulment from his wife Alice Jones after allegations of her ethnicity were made public.

During the trial, Rhinelander’s lawyer, Isaac Mills, argued that the older Ms. Jones seduced Rhinelander in the hopes of winning his affections and living a lavish lifestyle. Alice was from a working-class family and the Rhinelander family was one of the richest families in New York.

Alice’s lawyer, Lee Davis, wanted to first argue that Alice was in fact, white but quickly changed his defense to Rhinelander of knowing his wife was Black during their courtship.

For her defense, Alice was asked to remove her clothing and reveal parts of her chest and legs to the all-white, all-male jury. As humiliating as that must have been, it was determined that she was in fact Black and anyone who saw her naked would know that she had won the case. Neither Alice nor Leonard remarried.

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**Staff Member of the Month**

By Dessalines Yamoussou

Meet John Hunt, The coordinator of African American Programs and Services and the coordinator of Leadership development programs and services.

He previously worked in the same positions in March 2017 and left July 2019 after earning a master’s degree in clinical rehabilitation and mental health counseling. He moved to southern California, and has returned to the Central Valley.

**Uhuru: What brought you back to Fresno State?**

Hunt: “I feel the love and I am happy to be back. People have been happy to see me, and I am genuinely happy to see them... While I was here, I developed great relationships and I feel like this is where I am supposed to be. I have always wanted to work with the youth. That’s my passion, man. I always say I am a light skin Black man. We have these moments where we wake up and are aware of the prejudice around us.”

**Uhuru: What would you say to a student walking on campus for the first time who looks up to you and wants to get to where you are?**

Hunt: “Find people to relate to. Get involved, get connected, meet people. I graduated from the college of health and human services... A brother got me connected to renaissance scholars which led me to staff members on campus I could trust. Things began to open up for me. The campus opened up for me. People like Dr. Pit, Dr. Raheem, Dr. Johnson and Dr. Dewalt in Africana Studies. They helped me a lot and I still have relationships with them. [Johnson] had a huge impact on me because I got to find brotherhood on campus. After that I did my part.”

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**Student of the Month**

By Dessalines Yamoussou

Meet Tobias Scott Jr., a freshman kinesiology major with a physical education background.

Born and raised in Sacramento, CA, Scott Jr. spends his free time working out and has aspirations of joining the football team at Fresno State.

He plays video games, but he doesn’t play as much as he used to.

**Uhuru: What brought you to Fresno State?**

Scott Jr.: “I applied to UCLA [and] Berkeley. I had some offers from the Midwest. Fresno State was part of my big three. It’s far enough from home but close enough so I can still go back every now and then when things happen. I had that separation still, that individuality away from family.

**Uhuru: If you could talk to a freshman walking on campus for the first time. What would you say to them?**

Scott Jr.: “That’s rough. I would say go to the basement of the library and talk to some- one from the support net. Literally, I went last week and met with someone and they cleared what I needed to do. I also met with my major advisor. After that, socialize [and] find events.”

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**Meet the Staff**

Joanna Lopez

Hi there, my name is Joanna, but you can call me Jojo. I am a first generation student and I am currently a sophomore. I am currently undeclared, but I am planning on majoring in psychology since I want to do my Masters in Social Work. I enjoy running and writing in my free time.

Dessalines Yamoussou

Hello, my name is Dessalines Yamoussou and I am the Editor-in-chief of Uhuru Na Umoja. I was born in Fort Hood, TX. My parents were both in the military and shortly after my sister was born, we moved to Washington D.C. where my father was from. I spent the next 19 years growing up in Southeast D.C. I currently am in pursuit of a master’s degree in history.

Zion Sanders

Hello, my name is Zion Sanders, and I am a sophomore at Fresno State. I enjoy reading, drawing, hanging out with my friends and family, and listening to music. My major is biochemistry and a minor in Africana Studies. I am in the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) and Office of Black Student Success (OBSSS) programs. I aspire to become an anesthesiologist, get my MD and Ph.D.

If you have any questions, comments, ideas, or stories you want to submit, email them to samstewart@mail.fresnostate.edu