

# AAHMSNJ NEWSLETTER

AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

## Seasons Greetings to our friends and supporters!



### Spotlight on our Black Santas

You may remember when the notion of a fat white man in a red velvet suit entering the home of a black family in the middle of the night to leave presents under the Christmas tree was the subject of jokes told by black comedians. Their jokes pointed out the difference between the white and black communities with humor, but from the laughter was born the recognition that black children needed a believable myth, too. As African Americans began to embrace their heritage, they darkened the appearance of long established pale icons to better reflect themselves. Toymakers began to make black versions of popular dolls and action figures and black Santas appeared in black neighborhoods across the country. Black fathers dressed up in the red velvet costume, and marketing firms began to feature black Santas in glossy magazine advertisements for black consumers. With the passage of time, old Saint Nick has become multicultural; he might be yellow, brown, black or white but his rollicking “ho, ho, ho” has become more inclusive.

Ralph Hunter’s collection of African Americana includes a small group of Black Santas. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Kwanza, Hannukah or the coming of the Winter Solstice, we hope you will stop in to see our Santas and the other memorabilia we have on display.

## Join us for our next exhibit...

**JANUARY 6 TO APRIL 30, 2010 -- RECEPTION SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1:00 - 4:00 P.M.**

In January the Museum will host the work of fine artists **Dressler Smith, Todd Johnson** and **Richmond Garrick**. Ms. **Joyce McAdoo** will introduce her children’s book, *Zimba the Turtle* with an exhibit of original illustrations by **Michael Roche**. The intricately fanciful dolls of **Belinda Starr Manning** will be on display as well. We will also feature an exhibit titled **The Great Kings of Africa** which was donated to the Museum by the late Theodore and Beatrice Johnson of Voorhees, former owners of the Cotton Club in Lawnside, NJ. The exhibition will extend from January 6 to April 30, 2010. A reception is planned for Saturday, February 20th from 1:00 - 4:00 PM at the Martin Luther King Center at 661 Jackson Road in Newtonville, NJ.



## Artists Well Received at October Reception

The reception for artists Burns Rose, Quinton Greene and Kevin Grant, whose work is shown above, was another successful event. The October 17th event was well attended. In addition to the usual reception fare, attendees were treated to chicken wings, lemon cake and sweet potato pie. They also got to meet the artists, each of whom spoke briefly about their work and their motivation. (See photos on page 3.)

We extend our thanks to all who attended the reception and supported the artists and the museum by purchasing their beautiful paintings and photographs. The work of all three talented artists will be on display through the end of the year.

## In Appreciation

In January **Mrs. Patricia King** will retire from the board. She has diligently served the Museum as Board Treasurer for several years, performing her duties with professionalism, unfailing dedication, and a smile. Mrs. King has been an excellent and constant champion of our goals, and has spent many hours in selfless service to the Museum as an enthusiastic initiator and supporter of our programs. She will be greatly missed as a board member but will remain a strong supporter of our mission.

The Museum appreciates the donations of gifts, money and time that we receive from the community. This quarter, the museum relied upon assistance provided by **Ms. Paulean Merriwether** and **Mr. Murphy Knight** in the absence of Ralph Hunter due to his continued recuperation from surgery. They worked in concert to make sure that Museum

visitors gained a better understanding of the collection and exhibits. We also extend thanks to **Ms. Gloria Reed** for her faithful efforts as a volunteer and **Ms. Deborah Stallings-Patton**, Director of the Martin Luther King Center, **Mayor Chuck Chiarello** and the **Recreation Committee of Buena Vista Township** for their continued cooperation.

We are grateful to the many groups and individuals, too numerous to list, who toured the museum this year. Their interest, as much as their donations, has helped to keep the Museum afloat. We are a non-profit organization, and as such, we are dependent upon the community we serve. *We encourage you to continue supporting our programs and exhibits in the coming year and to respond with a donation when you receive our Annual Letter asking for your support.*

# SOME PHOTOS FROM THE OCTOBER RECEPTION



Quinton Greene (center) is pictured with wife, Priscilla, and mother, Mrs. Annie Greene.



Burns Rose with board member Jeffrey Light and wife Adria.

**Museum Hours:**  
Tuesday - Friday  
10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.  
Saturday by appointment only  
**Closed for holiday**  
**Dec. 24 & 31**  
**and on**  
**Christmas &**  
**New Years**  
Admission is free  
Donations encouraged  
We are located in the  
MLK Center at  
661 Jackson Rd.,  
Newtonville, NJ 08346  
  
Call us to schedule a  
presentation of the  
Traveling Museum  
or to arrange a docent led  
tour for your group.  
  
Phone: 609-704-5495  
Fax: 609-704-5532  
www.aahmsnj.org  
rhunter@aahmsnj.org



Photographer Kevin Grant and Lydia Wittman.



Museum supporters, Rev. Milton White and wife Grace.



Although still recuperating from recent surgery, museum founder Ralph E. Hunter, Sr. attended the event and could not refrain from giving a quick history lesson.



Mayor Chuck Chiarello and Deputy Mayor Theresa Kelly were among the guests listening to the artists speak about their work.