

# ECHO ECHO ECHO ECHO

## Nigerian exchange student offers cross-cultural observations

By Pat Shaw

McQuaid Jesuit High School

The other day, something resembling a tied shirt, in a swarm of surrounding ties, caught my eye. This was when I first noticed our Nigerian exchange student. Although his native clothes stood out, he seemed very reserved; but upon talking to him, I found that he opened up, fascinating me with his views on Americans and his cultural observations. His views came from a totally different perspective.

Andrew Tekulah, 18, is from Benin City, Nigeria, in the midwestern region of the African continent. Andrew is Nigeria's first exchange student. At home, he has 10 brothers and sisters. His father works for the government in the civil service department. His native tongue is Afriama, and he speaks English almost flawlessly.

In Nigeria, he also attends a Catholic school. However, it is much larger than McQuaid — 2,000 students to our 800 — and has some fun-

damental differences. To accommodate the size of its student body, the school is partitioned into three houses similar to college fraternities. A sense of competitiveness exists among them, but, as Andrew says, "You have to see the good side of it."

Andrew's schedule would discourage even the most academic American student, yet he describes his school as academically difficult during end-of-the-year finals but "casual" throughout the rest of the year. He goes to school in the morning from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., and in the afternoon from 1:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. — a rather long school day by any standard. But he is hardly a "regular" student, according to the standard of the American work ethic. Andrew has trouble accepting the fact that a lot of students here hold jobs and go to school.

"It is very unusual (in Nigeria) for a student to have a job," he comments. "You either go to school as a student or work. It's one or the other."

Although he is not at all cynical, Andrew

is politely critical of American teenagers. Most of all he observes a lack of cultural unity among teenagers here. From his standpoint, there is no firm set of customs in America. The lackadaisical attitude that Americans display toward each other — and particularly to their elders — contrasts sharply with the unconditional deference and respect practiced in his homeland.

"People (in Nigeria) don't give each other regards," Andrew observes of the informality with which Americans greet each other. In his culture, children greet their parents formally every morning, with more than "just a hello." Rather than being a mere set of rules, Andrew's customs add up to his cultural identity.

Andrew also views materialism as a prevalent characteristic of our society. He contrasts the American obsession with clothes to the simplicity of Africa. "Here I see girls wearing miniskirts," he comments. "At home, we call those people 'lost children.'" Such materialism might well be rubbing off on him, however. "Here I have a Walkman," Andrew admits. "Before I came over . . . nothing like that."

With the exception of these cultural differences, he seems to be enjoying himself in the United States, although a few things — fast food, riding a bus to school and Rochester's anything-but-tropical weather — make him understandably homesick. At home, he has many interests, including soccer and track at school, and judo on the weekend.

By explaining one of his typical weekends, Andrew gave me a better understanding of what it would be like to be a teenager in Africa. On Saturday, he goes to the stadium to practice judo. After that, he goes to a special gathering spot called "the stream" — a nickname for the beach. "We do anything there," he says, "listen to reggae, play cards, chat — anything."

On Sundays, he goes to church in the morning. In the afternoon, he sometimes goes to a

movie or occasionally does homework. For all of Andrew's cultural differences, his social activities seem to be a common bond he shares with his American contemporaries.

Because South Africa is the subject of considerable criticism regarding its policy of apartheid, Andrew is very aware politically. He feels the effects of apartheid indirectly, but that is enough to make him firmly object to it on moral grounds. "It affects me only directly because of where I live, but I don't want people to think it doesn't reach me," he insists.

Andrew would like to see Africans take control of the situation by taking decisive action. "It's not a question of whether (apartheid is) wrong," he says, "it's more (a matter of) what can you do about it. We have to educate our people and make them aware."

Andrew sees governments — and particularly that of the United States — as ineffective deterrents to apartheid. The reason for this, in his view, is American naivete concerning the issue. "It's not black and white alone," says Andrew. "We're talking about tribal things."

For Andrew, America's inaction and failure to understand the plight of African blacks summarizes the cultural gap between our two continents. He does concede, however, that "there is no perfect nation." While this may be an understatement, it's nevertheless a quiet truth.

I think we all have something positive to gain from Andrew. His simple ideals and customs make him a very interesting addition to McQuaid. His criticisms of America are not voiced in a morally superior tone, but simply as an outsider's view of our society.

"Maybe it's just me, but I don't think anyone is better than anyone else," Andrew concluded, as we discussed apartheid. Taken out of context, that comment seems to be an accurate reflection of his character.

## Speaking Out

By Michael Fleming

Cardinal-Mooney High School

It seems as though the term "rock 'n' roll" has almost become extinct. The reason for this is that it has been divided into so many categories. There's pop, heavy metal, thrash, punk and new wave, among others, and each of these categories has its respective sub-categories.

The "new kid on the block" is a type of music commonly referred to as "Christian Metal." You might be thinking that religion and rock don't mix. However, the members of Stryper might disagree with you.

Michael and Robert Sweet, Tim Gaines and Oz Fox, the members of Stryper, are all born-again Christians. They also happen to be one of the hottest acts in the country. Hailing from Florida, Stryper has released three albums: "The Yellow and Black Attack," "Soldiers Under Command," and most recently, "To Hell with the Devil." All of these albums are hard rock (bordering on heavy metal), but they all consist of songs praising God and Christ and condemning Satan and drug abuse.

Recently I was fortunate enough to see a Stryper concert. What I saw simply amazed me. It was by far the best concert that I've ever seen. It comprised more than an hour and a half of non-stop energy and excitement. Besides being good Christians, these guys happen to be excellent musicians. The dueling guitars of Michael Sweet and Oz Fox rivaled those of Iron Maiden's Dave Murray and Adrian Smith.

The religious theme of Stryper's music was definitely evident, but not overdone.

After the third song, singer/guitarist Michael Sweet sat down and said, "I don't know if everyone realizes this, but this band is devoted to Jesus Christ!"

The crowd went wild, and a smile came over Sweet's face.

"I guess we all agree on that," he said.

At the end of the show, members of the band threw Bibles into the audience. The fans snatched them up as fast as they could.

The point of this article is not to give a concert review, but to introduce a band I truly admire to anyone who doesn't know of them yet.

Personally, I think the whole issue of "Satan in rock 'n' roll" is a load of garbage. I don't think the members of Iron Maiden, Black Sabbath and Metallica are devil worshippers. Yet a lot of people insist on blaming these groups for teenage crime, suicide and sexual immorality.

The fact is that no one will ever accuse Stryper of having a negative influence on their audience — which means that they're shedding a positive light on rock music. This can only be a step in the right direction.

Many older people are just beginning to realize that because a guy wants to grow his hair long, play an electric guitar and join a band, he's not necessarily holding Satanic rituals in his basement.

I think it's about time that a band like Stryper be well-received because they're giving the kids something different — something clearly positive.

A lot of you hard-rock fans may still be skeptical, and I'll admit that I was, too, at first. All I can suggest is that you buy the album. Stryper plays fast. Stryper plays loud. Stryper also plays with an outstanding amount of musical intensity.

So buy or even borrow one of Stryper's records. The "God Squad" might just surprise you.

## Equal Time

Notre Dame High School

Should the networks allow the advertisement of birth control on TV?

AL BORJA, senior

Yes, we should be aware of the various devices to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Also, companies that produce and sell these products have as much right to advertise their merchandise on TV as toy companies do.

SARA HYLAND, senior

No, networks should not allow the advertisement of contraceptives, because viewing these ads just encourages people to engage in sexual activity without thinking of the physical and emotional consequences.

KEARY COLLINS, senior

I think that the networks should allow the advertisement of birth control on TV. It would help people to be aware of the growing problem, and if birth control is the only answer, the message will be able to reach a wide range of people.

THERESA SWEENEY, senior

No, because that is approval of its use. It goes against Catholic teaching. They also don't report all of the side effects and bad results. If girls want to use it, they should consult their parents, physician or a family planning group.

TAHIR CHAUDRY, senior

I think network TV should allow advertisements for birth control. If they allow illicit sex scenes, they should have no trouble in presenting the possible necessities and outcomes.

ELIZABETH KENNEDY, senior

No, our society is giving the impression that it is OK to have sex in an irresponsible manner. Why don't we try to improve the morality of our young people, instead of accepting what is going on? The ads also give the false impression that birth control is 100 percent foolproof.

## HOUSE OF GUITARS

We received 7 correct entries identifying "You're 16" as the Ringo Starr hit.



The winner was Brigid Fitch of St. Pius X.

## MUSIC TRIVIA

This week's question:

Who is Gerry Dorsey?

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_

### Rules:

Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon, and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn.

If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave.

All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

The Courier-Journal  
Music Trivia  
1150 Buffalo Rd.  
Rochester, N.Y. 14624

## Silver anniversary Mass set for Cardinal Mooney

The faculty, staff, students and alumni of Cardinal Mooney High School invite all parents, graduates and friends to join in a celebration of Mooney's silver anniversary on Sunday, May 31.

The celebration of the Eucharist will take place at 4 p.m. in Our Mother of Sorrows Church, 500 Mt. Read Blvd., Rochester. The main celebrant for the liturgy will be Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

## Driver education scheduled for Nazareth Academy in June

Nazareth Academy will offer driver education classes again this summer. The course provides sufficient class time and road time to satisfy the New York State Education Department's requirements for high school credit. The course also meets requirements for the New York State "blue card," which provides insurance discounts and privileges for drivers under the age of 18.

The course begins on June 29. Applications may be obtained by calling the school at (716) 458-8583. Early registration is required because of a limit on the number of participants.

A reception and open house will take place immediately following the Mass at Cardinal Mooney High School, 800 Maiden Lane, Greece.

For information, contact the school at (716)865-1000.

## Bottle, can drive set at Aquinas

The Aquinas Band is sponsoring a bottle and can drive on Saturday and Sunday, June 6 and 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Aquinas parking lot, 1127 Dewey Ave., Rochester.

Donors who are unable to drop off their bottles and cans are asked to call (716)247-5263, to make arrangements to have them picked up.