

EBONY HERALD

VOL. 1

NO. 3

MAY 1975

Maurice White of EW&F Interviewed

By Brian Kelsey/Sven Eric Sieurin

Brian: You guys really had your stuff together.

Maurice: Yeah, we're still perfecting; we're still trying to do better than that and we'll be working on that forever.

Brian: The way you guys are going now, I don't think that you have too far to go.

Maurice: ~~we're still trying and what~~ we want is total perfection.

Brian: At first, it was sort of slow and then it just kept getting heavier and heavier and it just got nice. But right now just to let you know who I am, Eric did say that I was the editor of the **EBONY HERALD**, and as of right now we're a struggling Black newspaper trying to get on our feet on a so-called predominately white campus and I think we're holding our own; it's really nice to hear you guys and really sit down and rap to you.

Maurice: Hey man, well it's our pleasure because we enjoy listening to people express what they feel and we'll be downtown or on our records, or our performances and the whole thing. It's a good feeling for us just to satisfy the people which is what we set out to do.

Brian: You and that kalimba were really getting down, but we were sort of scared for a minute when you guys stepped off of the stage and one time we kept hollering, "More, More!"

Maurice: We were coming back, we were in the dressing room catching our breath and it was a pretty long show I guess. I think it was about an hour and a half or so.

Brian: What is EW&F's real purpose—their goal in their music?

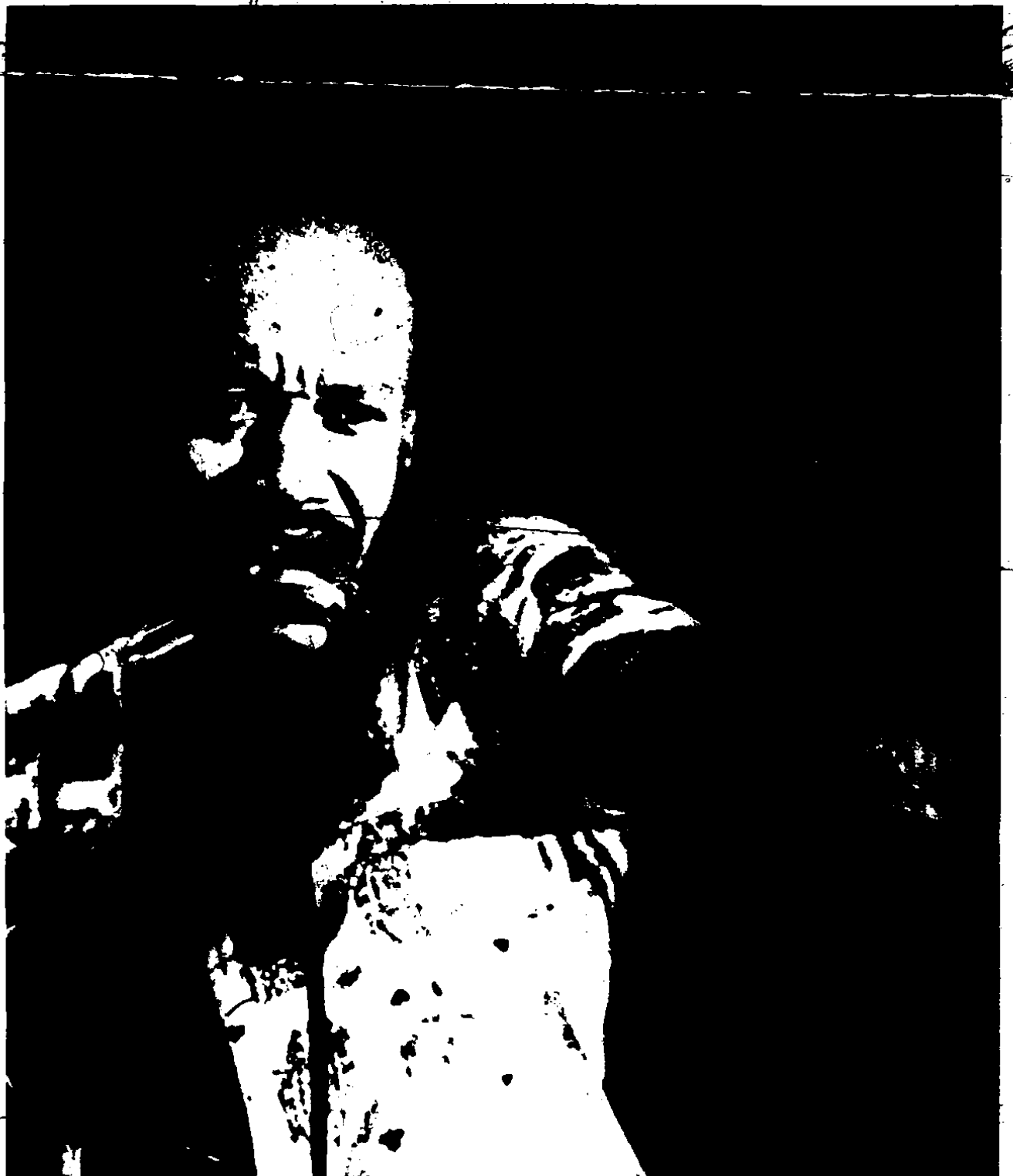
Maurice: Well, to render service to mankind. To say, for trying to uplift humanity's concept of themselves.

Brian: Your goal which you just said was to help mankind. But does it pertain, does it have any strong effect towards the Black listener?

Maurice: Yeah well, actually we're coming from a very universal place. We try to consider all people but

of course some of our music being of the fact that we are of Black writ, so our music comes from the church and what have you, it kind of has a church overtone. So I would say that it more or less appeals to Blacks first and then after that it starts to appeal on a more personal-universal level where everybody can understand it. But I think Blacks ~~accepted our music first and~~ then afterwards we have been able to

(continued on page 2)



(Photo by Richard Goldman)

“ . . You may find us playing just any instrument . . ”

(continued from page 2)

that electronics has been a great asset to all of us in a sense of employing everything in music. Basically what we're into is sound and we try to pull as many sounds out as we can. We feel that anything you hear in the streets like a car, someone walking or screaming, or hollering or whatever it is a musical sound. What we try to do is imitate the sounds that we hear in everyday life. You may find us playing just any instrument. Sometimes on occasion when the stage is big enough, we usually have a acoustic piano up there too.

Eric: To me, that "See The Light" tune on the album is that finest tune on the album. That was really a beautiful tune. Did you do the scoring on the orchestra and all that?

Maurice: Yeah, right. Well, it's a tune that was basically dedicated to The Creator and we were actually talking to The Creator and thanking him for all of the knowledge and concepts that he laid on us.

Eric: Have you played with anybody else along the line or go to other studios for recordings?

Maurice: I used to play with Ramsey Lewis, and I used to be part of his trio. Before that I used to play with John Cole Train, and a bunch of people. Train's experience was an experience that was enlightening for me. In fact, I think indirectly it probably was the reason I started when I started because of the spiritual thing he laid on me. I guess the association was good for me.

Brian: I know that you mentioned a while Eric that EW&F was pretty versatile and you're a combination of jazz, a combination of soul, a little bit of African, and what not and the thing which I was sort of wondering about though is that each person in the back of their mind has their own musical idol. Like Hendrix idolized B.B. King, B.B. idolized Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters, and I just wanted to ask you personally who do you try to idolize yourself?

Maurice: John Cole Train. I think he has been more inspirational for me.

Brian: I've been into the blues and I've listened to B.B., I've gotten into

Howlin' Wolf a little bit, and I've experimented with Hendrix a little. I've never gotten into John Cole Train. For those who don't know him, do you think that you might be able to talk about him?

Maurice: Yeah, like there's been a lot of innovators in music starting a long time ago before I was going and just about I guess when my father was around, my father was a musician, Charlie Parker had the most influence on music at that time. I guess that was during the '40's and the '50's. During the '60's, John Cole Train and in the late fifties was working with Miles Davis and he started to change the music especially like around the middle sixties and he started to change the direction of music and I found that a lot of the groups that came out after John Cole Train, everybody was a lot more inventive even to Jimi Hendrix because what had happened was Train had put the music way out beyond anything we had been doing and its always some innovator who comes along every 10 or 20 years of this type and it tends to change music around John Cole Train being one of those. John Cole Train also was a man that reacquainted Blacks with themselves in reference to the blues, in reference to complexity in music and bringing together jazz and a new music which I'll refer to as "Spectrum" music because I don't have a name for it and well to put it all in a nutshell, John Cole Train was just as innovator and I think that my group, Stevie Wonder, and a bunch of us have all basically come out of that along with having a church concept and other things that we have brought with us but as far as directions to do things different and to disregard the rules that had been laid down, he was the man that was kind of responsible for that because he freed a lot of people up. Actually I kind of feel he was one of the people sent here to improve the musical horizon and after so he split because he was in his '40's when he left.

Eric: Do you think that Cole Train and Hendrix could have played together?

Maurice: Oh for sure.

Eric: A lot of my friends and I often wonder just what Hendrix would be playing now if he were alive today. It seems to me he'd be doing the same thing that Herbie Hancock is trying to do now.

Maurice: You know, Herbie was kind of an a distant thing. Hendrix was not really a jazz guitarist, he was more or less a blues-orientated guitarist. Herbie Hancock is more or less playing from a jazz writ. I find that maybe the music of Herbie, my band, Kool & The Gang, all of us in the same area, we're all playing a different kind of music. It's kind of like "Spectrum" music because it has a little overtone of everything; overtones of jazz, overtones of R & B, overtones of any kind of music you can name, you know. It's all there. If you can buy "spectrum" music, you'll find everything in it. it's just as complex as a jazz masterpiece or anything like that because like it's constructive, very complex, with very hip cord changes and the whole thing.

Brian: Speaking on an "experimental" (beginning) basis, though the program EW&F after the original was changed about, was it on an experimental basis? Was its purpose "experimental" at first or was its goal straight forward and fulfill its mission right off?

Maurice: Right, we had our mission, we had our goal, everything set. As far as experimental, it wasn't there at anytime really. It was direct. We always knew where we were going.

Brian: What you did in the beginning with the fire and the cloaked character speaking to the audience; where was this idea derived from, where did it come from, or was it originally thought of by the group itself?

Maurice: Yeah, it just came from the group. It's just something that we see. We see ourselves being surrounded by The Creator all of the time and I guess sometimes we tend to imitate what we feel and what we see.

Brian: Well, have the people every tried to dictate any changes (with your music)?

Maurice: No, they're usually, it's all like a marriage when we come out there. Some people come who've never seen us before to show us that at the same time people who have seen us before, who are our fans, usually come to share the experience with us. It's what it's really about.

Eric: (1)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tuition Increase

The Life or Death of the Student

To the editor,

I want to comment on the rebuttal to an editorial concerning a Black "gathering place" in the March 1975 edition of the Ebony Herald.

There is a tremendous need for a Black lounge or union for the ECU Black populace.

It seems that many students on this campus think if the Blacks on campus have a designated "gathering place" that it will attribute to more seperatism.

We as Blacks on a predominantly white campus feel the need to identify with our past, our culture, our future. Culture identification will not form any kind of seperatism. The Black lounge would aid to the social satisfaction of blacks, give us a home away from home feeling as the International House does for the students connected with it. I don't feel that the students at the International House feel separated from the ECU campus. The idea is that students have a heritage which they are proud of and they want to relate with someone of a similar background. And Black students should have a similar chance for cultural intervention.

The Black Student Center has been proven successful on other southern university campuses; for example, UNC Chapel Hill and UNC Greensboro. Why not us?

Sincerely,
Donald M. Shipman

Letter to the editor

I, Jim Adams president of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity am disenchanted with the structure of SOULS; mainly its governing body. I feel there are to many inexperience people in governing positions. The Alpha's will certainly have something to say about this "if we have another election."

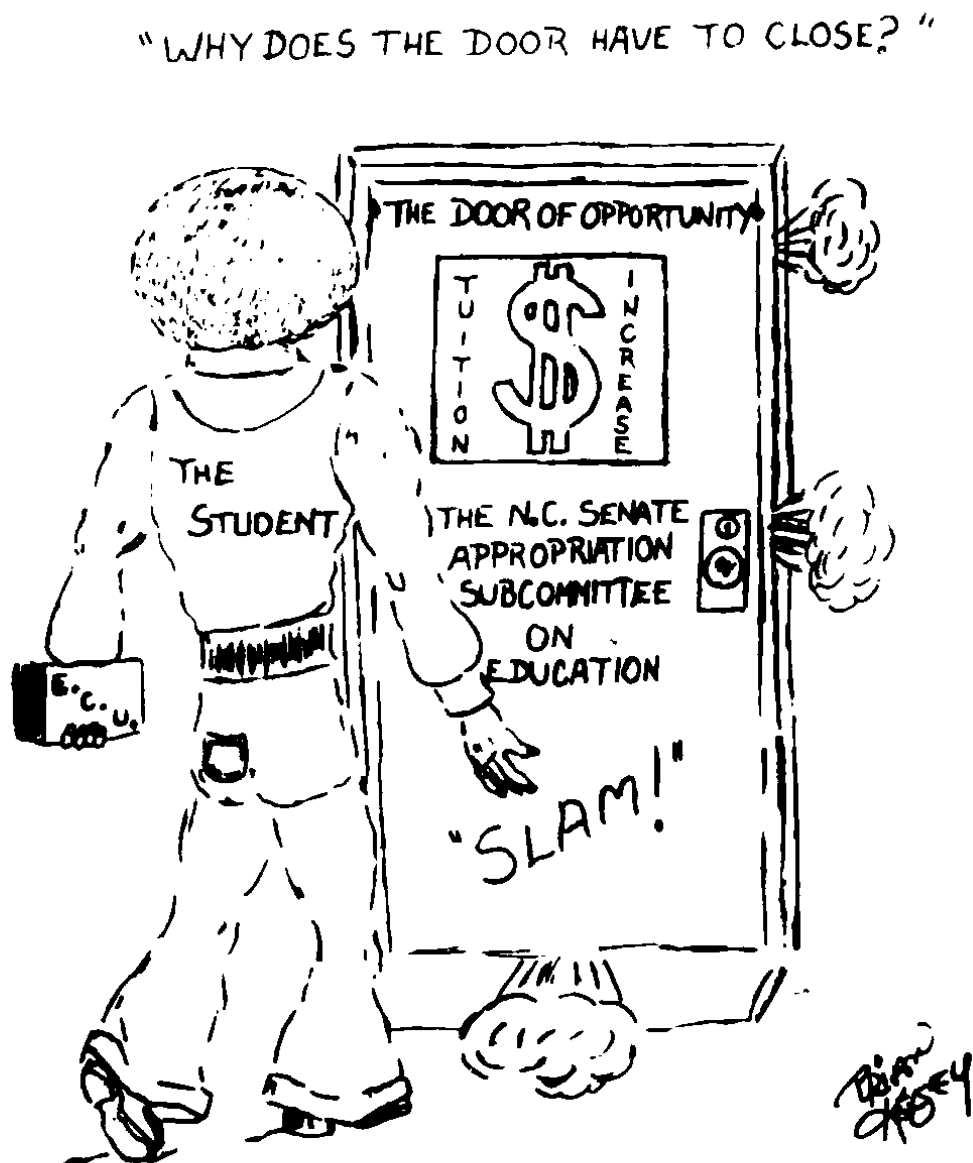
Jim Adams
President, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity

As you may well know, the Chairman of the North Carolina Senate Appropriation Subcommittee on Education gave tentative approval for a tuition increase of \$300. for out-of-state students and \$200. for in-state students. Little do the people in Raleigh know how difficult it is for the average student to pay for his or her education. The students living here in the state will have enough troubles with an extra \$200. more but what about the our-of-state students? Are they that financially well-off to take the increase in stride? For those out-of-state students who are reading this, you know the answer to that quite well. Are the residents of this state blessed to be granted a \$100. difference from the latter's cost? These questions tend to raise a few eyebrows when asked. Summer jobs are decreasing with the rising of inflation and the trimming of the federal government's budget. This leaves a question-mark for the students who **need** summer-aid desperately for their cost of education. Will they be able to come back here next year? Chances are that

the enrollment will drop state-wide because of this unnecessary measure. Last but not least, there are the students who are on financial aid. Eighty percent (80%) of all the Black students here on this campus are on financial aid. This bill may cause financial aid to either stay where it is (losing its value) or decrease, thus leaving the burden of education economically on their parents, who have enought trouble putting their children through college to begin with. There can be no weak approach to this matter, it has to be confronted head-on. It seems as if this bill holds more disadvantages than advantages. Tuition prices may have to go up eventually but for now have the money taken or collected from another source other than the students. The students and their parents have always bore the heavy burden of the cost of education. There's got to be another way. Will the "Door of Opportunity" be slammed in front of our faces?

"NO!"

The Editor



“ . . We're all playing a different kind of music . . .”

(continued from page 3)

incredible. How many more one-night stands do you have to pull?

Maurice: You mean in the next couple of weeks? We'll be out on the road until the 27th. We leave here and go to Charleston, S.C., we leave there and go to Indianapolis, Indiana, and then we leave there and go to Richmond, Va., and the following weekend we'll be in Washington, D.C. and we'll be there for two nights. We'll be at the Capitol Center, so we'll be on the road until about the 27th because we're doing Philadelphia too and that's for two nights too.

Eric: What's the next record that you'll release off of this album?

Maurice: It'll probably be "That's The Way Of The World" because we have a movie coming out and that's the title of the movie, so that's probably the next record we'll release.

Eric: We'll be playing "That's The Way Of The World" and we were playing "Shining Star" before anybody got it and it's just such a heavy album.

Maurice: Everybody seems to like it. It's really funny in this album because it's different than the albums we did before. Each one seems to take its own directions.

Brian: Maurice, I just want to ask you this. We're on a campus on which the minorities number about 2.5% give or take a few tenths, like with the Black people being the largest minority, then you have the Mexican, the Oriental, the American Indian, and what not. So what advice would you give to the people so that they wouldn't lose their identity yet they could work with the campus at the same time to achieve a certain goal?

Maurice: Well, what happens is that I find that in most situations like that is that the minorities seem to lose respect for each other. I think the first thing is that there should be some type of respect toward each other in a sense of honoring another human being. That's the first thing and in doing that it opens-up all avenues to do anything well. In other words, the first thing is to try to get the respect of the people then after that the rest of it comes easy and the other thing is to work hard at

what you're doing then you'll make it a reality. You're not going to get everybody, but if you can get 75% cooperation of the people then that's a start. If you can do that, eventually it will happen. people should be aware of themselves, and by making them aware of themselves, you make them proud of being what they are and by doing that it leads to doing something successful together. First of all, they've got to know what they are and they've got to be able to relate to each other and respect each other. In doing so, anything can develop.

Brian: It can come down to a case of a lack of unawareness. They know who they are but they're really unaware about what they've done in the past, what can be done, and what they are capable of doing. So I feel if awareness can be achieved on a large scale, this is not just for minorities.....

Maurice: This is for everybody. There has to be an awareness and when that happens that will more or less gain the respect of each individual for the other

one and in doing so, hey it ain't no problem. People have to be able to recognize each other and respect each other and love each other in the sense of understanding everybody's human, and we're all the same no matter what else has happened. Once we get that feeling in our heads, then we're at the beginning, and we can start someplace. We have to really work at it hard man, it takes time. When you believe that, it will happen. 'Cause you'll make it a reality.

Eric: Well, just thanks alot for letting us do the interview with you, we really appreciate it.

Maurice: Hey man, it was my pleasure.

Brian: I really appreciate you coming down here singing for us, and giving everybody a nice time when we left the colesium. The feeling was there, you could really feel it.

Maurice: Well, we'll be coming back again and let me thank you all for having me....

Black Student Union To Open

The Old Print Shop behind the infirmary has been made a part of the student center to be used as an Afro American Cultural Center. The Center will be a tie between students and the surrounding areas as a means of awareness of not only Afro American Culture but the present media as well as to build strong personal communications.

There will be a board of advisors for the center composed of 5 to 4 student faculty ratio.

There has not yet been a definite tie with the minority Arts Committee and the new student center but the cultural center will probably be an extension of this committee as in programming.

Ken Hammond, advisor to minority programming voices the expectations of initial criticism because of lack of understanding of the center's purpose. He says, "Perhaps there will be those who will think it will be discriminatory but that if it were so it would then be in violation of HEW ruling." He says the center will work to broaden the outlook on campus and act as another vehicle through which the campus is made

aware of Afro-American heritage and culture.

This is an effort that the Blacks on campus can unite in because there is a way of making our presence known. So now let it be an exemplification of what we can do if we work together. In order for this to succeed we must look forward to a strong group of interested and experienced Black students to help in planning, organizing, and contributing to the makings of the center.

It takes projects like S.O.U.L.S., the Ebony Herald, and next year's Black Student Union to draw students to East Carolina and the ones already here closer together.



In accordance to Publications Board rules, the editorship of the Ebony Herald will be open to all applicants seeking this position. All applicants can apply through the Dean of Student Affairs - 204 Whichard and all applications will be accepted no later than May 9, 1975. Screenings will take place on May 12, 1975 in the New Print Shop, on the second floor at 7 p.m.

KEN HAMMOND and ECU

Ken Hammond graduated from East Carolina in 1973 with a BA degree in History and political science. During his college years he participated in a lot of functional organizations which enriched the awareness of the Black population on the East Carolina Campus. Ken Hammond was a charter member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, the first Black Greek fraternity on campus. He was also Secretary of Minority Affairs and for two years Secretary of External Affairs, he also worked on various committees such as special events. In this way he was one of the spokesman for the Blacks on campus in order that we have a voice in the planning of campus affairs.

On graduating Hammond came to work for ECU as assistant program director. By Sept 1, 1974 his position was Program director and advisor to minority programming and this is the job he now holds. According to Ken

Hammond his purpose for being at the University is to try to help students in general not only in areas of campus involvement but those who have personal problems too. Ken likes to talk to students particularly Black students because he likes to see them involved in campus affairs. He encourages their involvement to get the full benefit of the campus. He says we have reached a point of acceptance and that since there are so many of us it seems as if total togetherness is not as essential as it was a few years back when the Minority populace on ECU campus was so small. Since the overall view now shows less discrimination we can broaden and relax ourselves in our involvement. But in areas of policy making that is essential to us as Blacks we should hang together if not but for the express reason to show that we are aware of what's going on and we do have a voice.

BE SOMEONE SPECIAL

The East Carolina University Student Volunteer Association has now set up offices in Mendenhall Student Center. Office hours are from 1-5 p.m., Monday thru Friday, Room 224.

The agencies seeking volunteers run from the traditional Boys' Club and Girl Scouts to several special interest programs such as Youth Attention which is a Big Brother-Big Sister Program which needs dedicated people who can give time and attention to a boy or girl who may be on probation or in some type of trouble, or just in need of an older friend.

Another special interest program which is available for volunteers is "Operation Sunshine", which is an after school program for girls between the ages of 8-14. Activities include arts and crafts, dance, sports, and singing.

For those interested in working with handicapped persons there is "Earth," a home for autistic and mentally disturbed children and rock them from 1-2 hours per week.

We share offices with the Ebony Herald, so drop on by and see us soon.

Arthur Pigram
ECUSVA

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