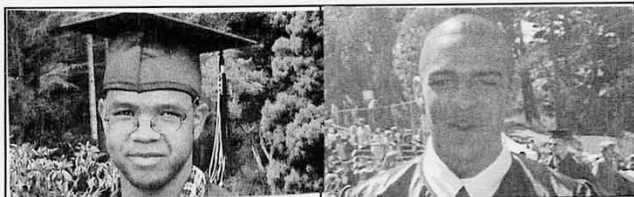


# Second Saturday Net

Aug 2002

## Interview With 5 Local Grads

Santa Cruz Black Graduation 2002 was a total success with loving family members, well wishing educators and other community leaders all rallying around our triumphant seniors. As part of the afterglow, this issue is devoted to excerpted interviews with three past and two recent graduates Gabriel Craft and Jessica Heit earned diplomas from Santa Cruz High in 2000 and Kamau Norman-Terrance in 2001. Justin Bedford graduated Delta School and Curtis Owens from Soquel High in June. The interviews took place during lunch-ins at Mike's Soul Food - 139 Water St. - Downtown Santa Cruz:



Justin and Curtis at their graduation events - Spring 2002

**Nubra:** What are you doing now?

**Gabe:** Taking some time off to figure out what I really want to do...It doesn't work the way they try to get you to do college in four years--it can take that long to just figure out what your major's gonna be...

**Jessica:** It's been a long full summer, and now I'm ready to start my junior year at Harvard...

**Kamau:** I leave for school tomorrow. I'm going back early to help coordinate the new student mentoring program--It's for African-American students entering any one of the Claremont Colleges this Fall...

**Justin:** I'm going to Cabrillo this year and not working...In a way I'd like to have a job but don't want anything to interfere with school right now...

**Curtis:** I actually started training and working as an arborist about five years ago, and now I'm taking the classes at Cabrillo that I'll eventually to be certified by the International Society of Arboriculture...

**Nubra:** How was your social life this past year?

**Gabe:** Tried to be open--not prejudge anybody--and I met all kinds of people that I never would of thought I'd become friends with...Like this Black girl from New York who was very religious and turned out to be a really interesting person...

**Jessica:** I got really involved with the Black Student Association (BSU) at Harvard...We have a very together group...There's also an Association of Black Harvard Women and a Black Men's Forum that's very strong and puts on great events...

**Kamau:** I was active all year with the Pan African Student Organization at Claremont but that wasn't the only place I made friends...I got pretty close to the people in my dorm and had plenty of time to bond with other guys on the basketball team, since we were the only ones on campus at winter break...

**Justin:** I've become more mature about it, because I finally realized things wouldn't always go my way... I began to take my religious beliefs more seriously and don't feel like I have to go to every party I hear about or try to talk to every nice looking girl I see...

**Curtis:** I pretty much cruised through school this past year and actually got more out of traveling than from school...This Summer I took a trip to New York with my family that had a big impact on me... I'd never seen so many Black people in my life--It was a kind of a culture shock, but it made me more open and less judgemental about different kinds of people... We went to a free concert in the park and saw India Arie...They sure don't have people like that coming to the Santa Cruz Boardwalk...



Gabe and Jessica "Representing the West" at Harvard Yale game - Fall 2001 photo courtesy M. Littlejohn

**Nubra:** How's your love life?

**Gabe:** *Hmmm--I'll let Jessica answer that one...*

**Jessica:** *It's good! Gabe and I are still going strong, and I don't think it will be that hard having a long distance romance, when he's here, and I'm back in Cambridge...We'll have to find some cheap flights, and then it won't be much different than when he was coming up from Howard to visit me on the weekend--or like I was going down to spend time with him in DC...It's really no big deal...*

**Kamau:** *Myself, I found it impossible to keep up a long distance relationship last year and don't think it would work to try to have one with someone on campus...Studying takes all the spare time you've got and then some...There's just so much to do...*

**Justin:** *If I met a girl that I liked now, I might try to make friends, but I'm probably not going to try to get serious right away...it's too easy to get into things that you don't realize what you're getting into... When I'm ready to take a relationship seriously will be when I'm ready to get married...*

**Curtis:** *I don't really want a relationship, because right now I'm concentrating on getting my life together...Financially speaking, I'd rather have it harder now and easier later...If I ended up in a serious relationship, I wouldn't want to get married, until I was able to support a wife...*

**Nubra:** How have your experiences since high school been different from those in high school?

**Gabe:** *Alot--It's a very different world out there, once you leave Santa Cruz!* 📖

**Jessica:** *And it's very different when you come back...I'm majoring in pre-med to become a pediatrician and hope to some day have a practice here in Santa Cruz...Now that I've been away, I can better appreciate what a great place it was for me to grow up in, and I'd love to be able to give something back to the community.* 📖

**Kamau:** *When I got to college, people seemed to see me differently, and then they treated me differently, so I guess I started acting different to measure up to their expectations...But inside I'm still the same person--I'm still me.* 📖

**Justin:** *When I was at Delta School, classes were really small, and the kids talked alot and all wanted to have their own way, but at Cabrillo people are quiet in class and listen to the teacher...There's not all the craziness going on...I like it alot better!* 📖

**Curtis:** *I've taken a big maturity step in the way that I view life...In High School I just lived from day to day...I've learned that in order to get something out of life, I have to be willing to work for it...I love the freedom of college and knowing I could just walk out of class any time I wanted--I don't walk out, but I like knowing that, if I wanted to, I could.* 📖



Kamau lavishes love on his sister Eboni and niece Aisha, while home from college - Summer 2002 photo by R.T.

This issue written and edited by Nubra Floyd with Maureen Littlejohn as Project Leader. Special thanks go to Mike Mitchell for the soulful venue! August 2002