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THE FORUM

More opinions,
columns and features.

Preschool: 'Vaccine' for our children

GUEST COLUMN

By JOHN S. NIBLOCK

The author is the executive director of the North Carolina Child Advocacy Institute.

If a persistent, contagious disease afflicted North Carolina's children, and we could prevent the illness with a vaccine, surely we would see to it that our children were inoculated.

In fact, there are a number of persistent problems plaguing our young people, and a remarkably high proportion could be prevented. Yet, they linger like a contagious disease.

Consider these statistics:

- Nearly 8,000 children in North Carolina fail first grade annually, 180,000 other children are in special education programs, and 143,000 are in remedial education programs.
- About 22,000 of the state's children drop out of school each year.
- More than 10,000 North

Carolina youths under age 16 come before the courts charged with committing a crime, and about 700 are sent to training schools.

• Each year, 25,000 teen-age girls in the state become pregnant.

Just as the Salk vaccine prevents polio, there is a "vaccine" that can ensure a better life for many of our children.

It can enable young people to succeed in school, reducing the number of children failing a grade and costly remedial or special education needed by 50 percent. It can lower school dropout rates by one-third. And it can cut juvenile delinquency and teen-age pregnancy almost in half.

Moreover, this cure is remarkably cost-effective,

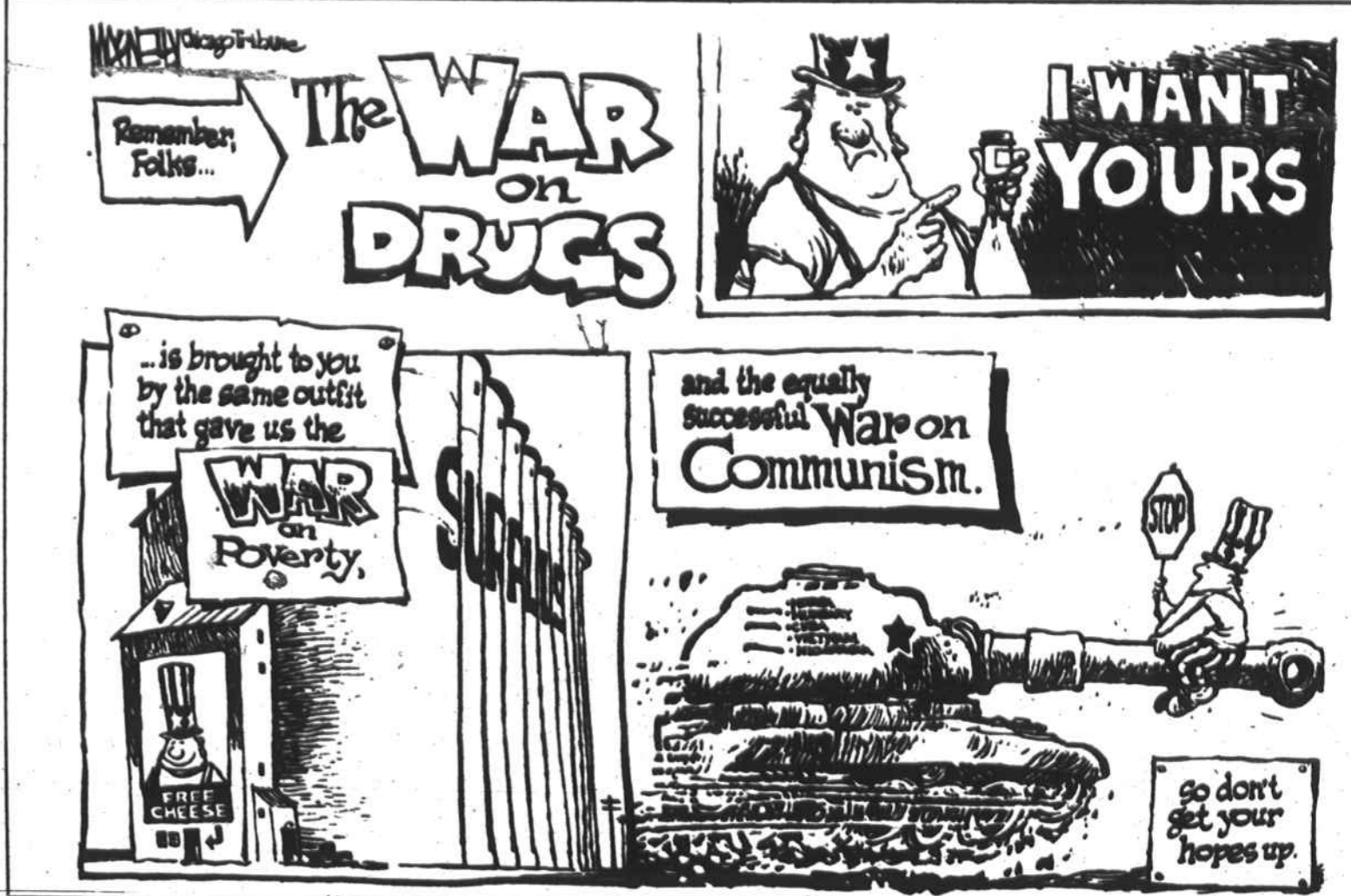
yielding a much greater return than the best business investment. Each dollar spent on the medicine reduces the cost to society by \$7 in medical care to pregnant teens, special and remedial education programs and court costs for juvenile delinquents.

This "vaccine" has been evaluated in numerous settings across the country during the past 20 years. It has proven itself in one research project in North Carolina during the past 14 years.

The evaluators all agree: It works.

What is this miraculous preventive medicine? It is quality preschool education for 4-year-old children -- a half-day or full-day child development program operating five days a week.

The key word is "quality." For a number of years in North Carolina, upwards of half of our 4-year-olds have been in some sort of child-care program, but most are not in quality programs.



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On the political poverty of black conservatives

FROM THE GRASSROOTS

By DR. MANNING MARABLE

W. LAFAYETTE, Ind. -- A recent newspaper column by black conservative economist Walter E. Williams criticized what he termed the use of "racial quotas for the purposes of redressing historical grievances."

Williams also urged unemployed blacks to accept "dead-end" jobs as a means of upward mobility. His right-wing arguments symbolized the political poverty of Black Reaganism, the Neo-Uncle Tomism of the 1980s.

In the May issue of *Christian Century* magazine, Professor Glenn Loury of Harvard

another prominent black conservative, argued: "It is time for the Negro middle class to rise up from its stool of indifference, to retreat from its flight into unreality and to bring its full resources -- its heart, its mind and its checkbook -- to the aid of the less fortunate brother. ... Our work today is not to change the minds of white people, but to involve ourselves in the lives of black people."

One must admit that Loury is partially correct. The paradox of desegregation since the 1960s has been that the integration of white universities, businesses and suburbs has frequently meant the loss of thousands of black professionals from organizations which promote black interests.

The black middle class as a whole has failed to establish strong national institutions which rest upon its own fiscal resources and deal effectively or seriously with the problems of black

unemployment, hunger and black-on-black crime. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, but all too often, individual successes have meant the abandonment of our collective problems.

But the essential common sense of Loury's appeal comes from the fact that we have also heard this kind of appeal before.

Loury's recent popularity among some blacks comes from his rhetoric -- black self-help, racial pride, self-sufficiency. A small part of this political legacy can be traced to the ideas of black nationalism, as expressed

This would cost about \$3,500. Please see page A10

Tillerson

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which, as I've said before, is reflected by the fact that French youth mature faster.

That's especially the case in Paris, which is one of the world's largest cities. Paris is an international city and the cultural, social, political and industrial center of France. It has become such a vital part of that country that efforts are being made to create new cities and relieve the pressure on it.

But Paris wasn't always such a prominent city. It was called *Lutece* during the Roman invasion, and its importance then was solely commercial. The irrelevant town became a capital only when the French kings established their

administrations on the banks of the Seine River. Even then, the supremacy of the growing city often was challenged.

It isn't today. The variety of people who coexist in Paris, despite the problems, make it a rich place to live. The French are open in this way and exposed to new horizons and different outlooks on life.

But the French still have their share of misconceptions concerning Americans and our customs. For example, did you know that Americans eat jelly on their eggs for breakfast? Well, the French know that. Too bad they didn't tell us about it.

Brown

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Their first goal, of course, is to save Cindy's life, a life she has devoted to caring about other people. At Howard High, Cindy was more settled and mature than most.

"She was known as a leader and is still a leader. She was involved in community affairs and took care of people's children. She is an advocate in the community as well as in her church and even now volunteers at the Wilmington United Neighbors for Progress. She is always helping and never asks for help," Ms. Scrivens said in moving, emotional tones.

I also share these emotions. After investigating the circumstances and people (Margaret Scrivens, it turns out, helped us organize the first Black College Day in 1980), I've signed on as the speaker and honorary chairman for a fund-raising dinner on the first Wednesday in November.

My time will be donated as well as my expenses. Moreover, my TV series will air Cindy's story, and my magazine will feature her

plight. I will continue to use this column to save her life, and when I talk to thousands in audiences each week, I will ask them to join us in getting a kidney for Cindy.

I will also appeal to some of my educated "elitist" friends and big corporations to donate money to this foundation to save Cindy's life and the lives of other black victims of kidney disease.

God has not given me these resources for my glorification, but for his works. As I understand his will, you and I have the power to save Cindy's life. He has also given us the power to refuse.

I've elected to use what I have to do his will. Will you join me? If so, send money to the Lucille Swing Foundation, 215 W. 20th St., Wilmington, Del. 19801, or call (302) 654-1498.

Tony Brown is a syndicated columnist and television host, whose series, "Tony Brown's Journal," can be seen Sundays at 1:30 locally on channels 4 and 26.

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