

National NEWS



Reactions To Ashe's Death

Tennis star Arthur Ashe, shown in this 1992 file photo at a news conference in New York as Mayor David Dinkins looks on, has died at 49. Ashe, a champion tennis player who opened the door for black athletes and fought off the court for human rights and against AIDS announced in April that he was suffering from the AIDS virus.

Billions Wanted For Inner Cities

WASHINGTON, DC — The National Urban League has called upon President Clinton to back up his campaign promises to black Americans by allocating up to \$50 billion a year for the next ten years to rebuild inner-city America. The civil rights organization also called upon African-Americans to do more to rebuild their own communities. Urban League President John Jacob made his call at an annual Washington news conference during which he released the group's 18th annual State of Black America report. Citing last spring's Los Angeles riots, Jacob warned that the circumstances in inner-city black America were "desperate." The report pointed to a 14 percent black unemployment rate which climbed to nearly 25 percent, once part-time and discouraged workers were added, and the fact that 50 percent of black children are currently growing up in poverty. According to Jacob, Clinton "cannot move this country forward without addressing these concerns."

Inaugural Poem Published

NEW YORK — Maya Angelou's inaugural poem, "On the Pulse of the Morning," will be published by Random House in a commemorative paperback edition.

The book cost \$5 and will be shipped to stores around the country on Feb. 10.

Random House has published 11 previous bestsellers by Angelou, including her classic, "I Know Why the Caged Birds Sing" and her collection of poetry, "I Shall Not Be Moved."

Black Have Less Ovarian Cancer

LOS ANGELES, CA — Running counter to the general trend in which blacks tend to suffer more from most ailments than whites, a new study has found that African-American women are significantly less likely than white women to develop ovarian cancer. However, researchers led by a team at Stanford University say they do not know why. Ovarian cancer strikes nine in every 100,000 black women compared to 14 in every 100,000 white women. The study which was reported in the current issue of the Journal of the National Cancer Institute speculates that black women may be protected by some genetic factor or a social factor such as diet and exercise.



Sara Lee Salutes Frank Carr

ATLANTA, GA — Sara Lee Corporation, an ongoing supporter of the King Center, joined in the salute to honorees Frank C. Carr, founder of Inroads Inc., and John Portman Jr., chairman and CEO of the Portman Companies, during the King Center's 1993 Salute to Greatness Awards Dinner. Elynor Williams (l), vice president of public responsibility and Eva Chess (r), Manager of public responsibility, Sara Lee Corporation, share time with Coretta Scott King at the recent awards celebration in Atlanta.

Group Advocate "Balanced Life"

WASHINGTON, DC — "We shorten our lives primarily because our lives are unbalanced," says James Nathan, president of the black anti-aging group known as the Better Life Club. Nathan, along with a growing number of aging experts, believes that human life expectancy can be pushed to 120 years, if people would make certain simple adjustments to their lifestyles. "The keys to combating the negative effects of aging," says Nathan, "are moderate exercise, reduced calorie-intake and reducing stresses on the heart." Nathan's group has compiled a guide entitled "How to live to be 120 Years Old". It is available from the Better Life Club, P.O. Box 28422.

Black Abortion Rate Is High

WASHINGTON, DC — A new survey entitled Who Get Abortions in America revealed that black women get abortions at over twice the rate of white women. The Washington Post/ABC News survey found that the abortion rate for black women was 57 per 1,000 live births. This compares to a rate for white women of 21 per 1,000 live births. The most common age range for abortions is 20 to 24, followed by 25 to 29. On a religious basis, Protestant women get the greater number of abortions, followed by Catholics.

Parent Teens Find Hope And Help At Independence

By SHERIDAN HILL
Chronicle Assistant Editor

Being a pregnant teenager carries its own set of challenges; high schools are not set up to deal with the special needs of a pregnant woman, from health problems to social situations and transportation needs.

National statistics show that more than half of students who become pregnant drop out.

In an effort to turn that number back, Independence High School opened a day care center for children of students last week. It is the first of its kind in the county.

Northwest Child Development Center is contracted to run the facility, located on the Independence campus. Within two weeks of opening, 17 children were signed up, and there is a waiting list for the remaining seven slots. Only children under two years old are eligible.

Most of the parents qualify for Aid to Families With Dependent Children, which pays for the day care. Wachovia Bank and Trust donated \$15,000 to furnish the center, which has brand new maple cribs and rocking chairs.

Many of the parenting teens at Independence sign up for a class called Child Care I, which consists of hands-on parenting experience in the day care center, taught by staff from Northwest Child Development Center.

"The child care class is good experience," said Erica Hughley, a

senior with two children who are in day care at another center. "I'm picking up some good ideas."

Principal Dan Piggott said he believes the day care center will make a big difference in the lives of his students.

"These are good kids," he said. "They just got dealt a bad hand."

Carver Principal Robert Clemmer, who has worked extensively with at-risk students, reiterated the need to help students with special needs succeed at every level.

"With a pregnant teen, once the baby is born, if a grandmother or other family member can't keep the child, chances are good that the student will drop out," he said. "Pregnant girls are definitely high-risk girls who, if we don't really pay attention to their needs, will drop out."

Pregnant students who are enrolled in regular school may not find their teachers as accepting and flexible as those at Independence.

If they are lucky, teachers will help them keep up with classwork while they are sick, and while they are recovering from delivery. Once the baby is born, finding and affording child care presents another problem.

"It's a growing problem," Clemmer said. "I would love to have a day care center on campus here. It's a pretty tough situation."

If a girl at a regular high school becomes pregnant and prefers to enroll at Independence, transportation can be a disappointment. She



Erica Hughley, a senior and the mother of two, holds the five-month-old son of senior Audi Craft. Pregnant and parenting students learn parenting skills in the day care center as part of a child care class.

can take a bus from her home to her regular school, catch another bus to the Career Center, and load a different bus to Independence.

The day care center at Independence has a waiting list of students from Independence and from other schools who want to enroll themselves in school and their children in day care there.

Piggott is thrilled with the program. Students stay in school, learn

parenting skills they might not otherwise be exposed to, and potentially at-risk children receive proper care.

But Clemmer poses a long-term question.

"It's a first-class program. But are we taking care of the need in the system? We need to focus our attention on setting up that program in a regular school, too. One on this side of town."

On The Avant Garde

marriages.

Entire congregations are sitting and waiting to be helped to understand the morality of these modern-day cultural issues.

What about Sodom and Gomorrah? They ask, and wonder when these issues stopped being issues of morality. When did they become simply a matter of cultural differences, matters of diversity and

taste? Coffee, tea, or milk?

People are genuinely concerned with the whole issue of sex education in our public schools. They are disturbed that schools want to distribute condoms but not Bibles.

But the church has opted for the comfort of the middle ground, avoiding the prickly pears of chance, lest they offend anyone.

It would be too easy to suggest that such moral ambiguity is the result of many of our pastors having become too active in partisan politics, thus giving approval of the church to the platform and policies espoused by the extremists within such groups.

About the only thing many of our churches seem to be able to agree on today is, that drugs are a menace, killing is bad, and White

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folks is still the devil.

If we as a community cannot turn to our churches for moral leadership, to whom will we turn? To the government? To White folks? If the leadership of our churches abdicates on the fundamental issues of what is right and what is wrong, the church will find itself permanently anchored in lukewarm water, fit to be spewed out in the desert of irrelevance and shame.

Leaders Protest Firing Of Exec

Roberts, former manager of Corporate Public Programs at Phillip Morris, has filed a \$5 million suit against the company in Bronx Supreme Court charging discrimination and a campaign of harassment after she had sought promotion to the company's Washington office she was fired Nov. 30. Expressing grave concern over

the actions of Philip Morris was New York State Assemblyman Albert Vann, chairman of the New York State Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators Inc.,

"Allene Roberts is trusted by me and many other New York State legislators of both political parties," he said. Philip Morris has been

the beneficiary of the goodwill which she has engendered."

During her career with Philip Morris, Roberts has developed and directed constituency programs on the national, state and local levels in support of the company's public policy and public affairs activities.

Roberts has received several

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hundred awards for her work during her career at Philip Morris from many of the black political and business organizations. At the conference of Black legislators, despite the knowledge of members that she had been dismissed by the company, Roberts was presented three awards and received a standing ovation when she was introduced.

Students Get One Last Chance

student was so volatile that Piggott agreed to take him only if an aide were assigned to walk him from class to class. Some students live in home situations that are not conducive to growth.

"In a regular school, these kids would be in the back of the class, not getting the attention they need," said Dan Piggott. "But here, they get personalized instruction. And that makes their behavior improve, because they're not as frustrated."

Student enrollment fluctuates according to who drops out and who stays with the program, but currently 455 students are enrolled at Independence. At a school where attendance is the biggest problem, the goal is 70 percent. Last year, about 62 percent of students attended regularly.

"They come to us with very low self-esteem," said Leslie Britt, chairman of the English Department. "The warmth and support of the teachers is critical."

Piggott explains that discipline is a big part of the routine at Independence. Students all wear an identification card, hanging from a cotton string around their necks. They sign in and out of class, and are allowed a specific amount of time to travel from one class to another.

"We keep a tight rope on them," Piggott said. "We are very conscientious about discipline, and we expect them to be responsible."

Visitors are often surprised to find well-behaved students quietly on their own at Independence. They arrive on time for class, sign in, and take their classroom

work from a personalized education plan the teacher has prepared and left out for them. Each student works at his or her own pace, based on reading level.

"If the public really knew what we do, they'd be extremely pleased," Piggott said. He is absolutely exuberant about this school.

"People think students are throwing bricks out here. No way! It's much calmer here than in regular school."

Most students suffer from poor reading skills. "We have many students who read on a sixth grade level," Britt said. "But those who attend regularly may go up three grade levels in one year."

(Quotes from student who graduated and is now a junior at Wake Forest.)

The average dropout rate in Forsyth County is about 7 percent. The dropout rate for Independence in 1989 was 27 percent. But that comparison may not be fair, given the at-risk student body at Independence. One national study showed that 53 percent of learning disabled students drop out.

Piggott is quick to point out that the graduation rate at Independence can't be computed accurately anyway, since students work at their own pace. Not all seniors are ready to graduate at the end of the school year. Juniors who complete course requirements in mid-year automatically graduate.

North Carolina law allows students to drop out when they turn 16,

and many are inclined to do so. "Sometimes we get them turned on. Sometimes they just go ahead and

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drop out," Piggott said. "If we could get a group and lock into them, we could do a better job."

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f o o r t h e

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