

# Rape group promotes awareness

BY PAUL COLLINS  
THE CHRONICLE

M.A.A.R.s, Musicians and Artists Against Rape, a new nonprofit organization providing rape awareness and prevention education, had its first community meeting March 7, at Green Street United Methodist Church. Peggy Hall, M.A.A.R.s founder, and Deloris Huntley of the Winston-Salem Urban League, led the discussion.

In an interview with The Chronicle last Thursday, Hall and Huntley talked about M.A.A.R.s, rape and sexual assault.

Explaining how M.A.A.R.s came about, Hall said, "I am a survivor of rape and sexual assault. I was working for another county as an educator for rape and sexual assault. At the time I was not a survivor. I went out into the community. I was really excited about what I did. One night, because I was talking about what I did, I was attacked and I was raped."

"The group I worked for pretty much told me to keep my mouth shut about it. I had a really hard time in the reporting process. Everything from the police department, sheriff's department, no one really knew what to do. When one sheriff came out, before he even said, 'Hello, how are you doing?' he said, 'Were you drinking?'"

"Even the hospital I went to, it was the same kind of story. I was denied access to the morning-after pill. I asked to get the STD medicine. I was denied access to certain rights and was not even given the rape kit that I should have received. My case just sat on the shelf. No one did anything about it."

"At the same time, the rapes at Woodstock happened. I'm a musician to begin with. It's my outlet. I was just very angry. I continued to stay working for the organization. As I was working, the opportunity came up for me to put together a booth at (a music concert in Winston-Salem in 1999). I came up here, got in touch with Family Services, told them what I wanted to do, and out of 4,000 concertgoers, we had 1,000 men sign pledges to end rape and sexual assault in Winston-Salem. I really loved one of the bands and my friend got me back stage to meet one of the bands. In talking to one of them, wheels started turning in my head...."

"I was still working for the rape crisis center, but it was getting extremely difficult with everything I was dealing with....I went to D.C. with several organizations (and) said this is my idea. They said you would probably be the only organization that strictly is



Peggy Hall, left, and Deloris Huntley

devoted to community education on rape and sexual assault. There are really good organizations that do it, but they are usually tied in with direct services....They don't get to do all the community education that they would like. So we're (M.A.A.R.s) there to complement their services. We want to work with them. We are strictly community education. We do not do direct services. We will do stuff like teaching self-defense.

"I went back. It was almost dramatic. I had a meeting in the county that I dealt with, from the rape crisis center to the same nurses....They were meeting to talk about how to work on this issue, but they kept going back and blaming the victim and saying that it was always the woman's fault. I just stood up, told my story, just bawling, just crying and looked at them and said, 'OK, I've survived my rape and now I've survived you.'"

"I left. I worked at a coffee shop here and then I started teaching (she teaches music at Atkins Middle School) just to get things off the ground. It was extremely difficult because I had to move away from that community and so I had to start meeting people here in Winston-Salem and networking...."

"We want people to identify what the issues are in their area....We're starting the first pilot program here in Winston-Salem. That gives us kind of that grassroots angle. We really want to kind of go from the bottom up."

Anyone from the community, not just musicians and artists, can come to M.A.A.R.s meetings. The reason M.A.A.R.s was selected for the name of the group, Hall said, is "I'm a musician, so that was

really natural for me....When I saw the rapes at Woodstock, it really affected me. I thought about their (rape victims') moms, what these girls' moms must be going through, because my mom has been a great supporter. My mom will actually talk about why it is so important to believe your children when they tell you this is happening."

"I just really felt a connection, like I knew what they were going to have to go through, what it's going to be like having to rebuild your life. I thought if we could get musicians and artists to talk about it....they are pretty much our vehicle to get through to youth who are most at risk of being a victim and being a perpetrator."

At M.A.A.R.s' first community meeting March 7, Hall and Huntley showed the movie "Dream Worlds II." M.A.A.R.s says MTV tried to stop the distribution of "Dream Worlds II" with the threat of legal action because of the impact it would have on the music industry. At the community meeting, Hall and Huntley led a discussion about how the media perpetuate a rape culture and how we can find ways to end violence against women in our area.

In the interview last Thursday, Huntley said, "One of the things we feel is the media ... exploits women. We're not out to try to change (things) so people can't say certain things, but if you look at all the ads, women ... are half-dressed. Videos are about women looking like they are free and easy."

Hall added, "We're not for censorship of any kind. We're not media bashing. I love the media. I'm such a media junkie. I think we're trying to find ways to work with the media. That's the problem to begin

with: there's too much censorship already. The media has censored other voices and other people's stories. What we're doing is we're trying to find creative ways to get those other stories to come forward. These kinds of things, they define men and their gender roles, as well as they define women. We're trying to get those different people to come forward to talk about these issues."

Hall said she feels that newspapers should not publish the names of rape victims (she said only one newspaper in the country does so), because it discourages victims from reporting the crimes because there is such a stigma attached to being a rape victim. "There has actually been a study in this area of how women would not have come forward if they had known their names were going to be printed (in the newspaper)," she said.

As for prevention of rape or sexual assault, Hall said women should reduce their risk. For example, don't walk alone at night. Take a self-defense course. Get used to saying no.

"Women are so conditioned to be polite, so when we get that

See M.A.A.R.s on A9

# Safety group will distribute free gun locks

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Project HomeSafe will stop in Winston-Salem on March 22 and 23 to distribute free gun locks to anyone who keeps a gun in his or her house.

The locks have a 12-inch steel cable that is passed through the firing chamber of the weapon. Properly used, the locks make it impossible for a gun to function. The locks come with a firearms safety booklet and a lock instruction sheet.

On Friday, March 22, the Project HomeSafe trailer will be at the Food Lion parking lot at 1000 Woughtown Street

from 9 a.m. to noon and at the main entrance to Baptist Hospital, 301 Medical Center Blvd., from 1 to 4 p.m.

On Saturday, March 23, the Project HomeSafe trailer will be at the Target parking lot at 5420 University Parkway from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Project HomeSafe is an initiative of the National Shooting Sports Foundation, a leading trade organization in the firearms and shooting sports industry. The gun locks are being paid for by voluntary contributions of companies participating in the foundation's Hunting and Shooting Sports Heritage Fund.

# Sorority to hold step show

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Phi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha will host its third annual Paraphernalia Dance and Silent Auction on Saturday, March 23, at the Anderson Center at WSSU. The event will be held from 8 p.m. -12 a.m. Dress is casual and brown bagging is permitted. Guests must be 21 to be admitted.

There will be several area graduate chapters stepping in the competition. All proceeds will go to support the scholarship fund. The chapter grants scholarships to high school seniors in Winston-Salem.

For ticket information, contact any member of Phi Omega Chapter or e-mail the chapter at phiomegadance@yahoo.com. Tickets will not be sold at the door.

# Breast health event to be held Saturday

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Breast Health Project of Ephesus Seventh Day Adventist Church will sponsor a mammogram registration drive on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Winston Lake

YMCA on Waterworks Road in Winston-Salem. Free mammogram scholarships will be awarded to women who have registered and meet financial guidelines. For additional information, call (336) 774-0477.

[www.wschronicle.com](http://www.wschronicle.com)

# The LSB Win-a-Trip-to-the-PEPSI-400 Loan Sweepstakes!

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To purchase tickets to any Daytona International Speedway Race call 1-386-253-RACE or visit [www.daytonainternationalspeedway.com](http://www.daytonainternationalspeedway.com).



Ever feel like your neighborhood needs a pace car?

Come help the city figure out how to slow down traffic in our neighborhoods

The Winston-Salem Department of Transportation is holding seminars at the Benton Convention Center on Friday and Saturday this week to help develop strategies for managing traffic in residential neighborhoods.

We need your thoughts

Both sessions will be led by Dan Burden, a national expert on how transportation reforms can make cities better places to live and work. After an opening presentation the audience will divide into smaller groups.

Don't just complain about traffic! Do something!

Ideas gathered at the seminars will help city transportation planners who are working on new policies for managing traffic on residential streets. Come to either session, or both!



Winston-Salem

Friday, March 22, 4 - 8 p.m.  
Saturday, March 23, 8 - 11 a.m.  
Benton Convention Center  
301 W. Fifth Street

For more information call 747-6867