

OP/ED



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We Are 40

It was 40 years ago this month that *The Chronicle* made its debut. The year 1974 was a banner time for headline-grabbing stories. Hank Aaron broke and then surpassed Babe Ruth's home-run record; heiress Patty Hearst was as thick as thieves with the Symbionese Liberation Army; President Richard Nixon resigned from office in the wake of the Watergate scandal; and Muhammad Ali KO'ed George Foreman during a match in Zaire dubbed "The Rumble in the Jungle."

Some of those stories made their way into *The Chronicle*, but from the beginning, much of the paper's attention has centered on local, community interests.

The focus on high-quality, community-centered journalism has been our hallmark and one that has served us well. Our longtime readers have been extremely loyal and new readers are regularly being won over.

The struggle is quite real, though, for newspapers. When big dailies catch a cold, smaller ones catch the flu. And black-owned papers? We get the bubonic plague.

We will be marking our 40th anniversary in the months to come with special events and promotions and recommitting ourselves to the mission that has brought us this far. We thank you for your support and ask for your prayers as we plan and prepare for our next 40 years.

Cops and Cameras Still Problematic

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then certainly moving pictures should have the ability to tell a whole, unadulterated story. Right?

The Winston-Salem Police Department is joining law enforcement agencies around the country in testing the use of video technology to record the arrests and interactions of its officers.

There has always been "We said, They said" in matters concerning cops. Black men, especially, have long charged that officers flout protocol and the letter of the law in their encounters with them. Such claims are routinely ignored by Internal Affairs and prosecutors and slammed by law enforcement unions and associations.

Even police review panels overseen by citizens have been ineffective in addressing complaints. That's not surprising. These boards are given a lofty charge but zero authority to take real action.

Thanks in no small measure to the tacit nod of approval given to bad officers by their law enforcement brethren, misdeeds have escalated. While beat-downs by cops have been common, killings are becoming the new normal. We all know that unarmed Michael Brown was buffeted with bullets by officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Mo. The death of the recent high school grad last month sparked more than a week's worth of protests. But there are other Michael Browns, nameless unarmed black men who have died at the hands of cops. Their deaths didn't necessarily trigger uprisings, but are no less troubling and egregious. Ohio cops killed John Crawford Jr. while he was leaning against a toy gun in a Walmart; Eric Garner was choked to death on a Brooklyn street; the examples are numerous and sickening.

Now, law enforcement and lawmakers think cameras are the answer - a way to document what occurs during every stop and confrontation. Footage could exonerate suspects or a cop accused of being heavy-handed or trigger-happy. It would also aid prosecutors, for who could argue with a video?

The truth is history has shown that video evidence is not definitive. In police brutality cases, a video is like the Constitution, the Bible, a 19th century English sonnet: its meaning depends on one's interpretation.

Remember the cunning defense team in the Rodney King case arguing that King's writhing as a result of being beaten to near an inch of life was actually a sign of him resisting arrest?

There is video footage of Garner's death at the hands of the NYPD, but the law enforcement community has wholeheartedly backed the cops involved, citing subtle actions in the video they say justified a chokehold.

Hats off to the WSPD and city leaders for being proactive, but accoutering cops with cameras is no cure-all. In a society where the actions of black men are automatically viewed as sinister and threatening, even a video will have few powers of persuasion.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More vigilance needed to stop underage drinking

To the Editor:

Many people say that they discourage underage drinking, but does everyone? Why do so many underage drinkers die every year? The question is, if underage drinking is so discouraged, where do the underage drinkers get their alcohol from?

I am Krishna Patel, and I am on the Youth Advisory Council of the Coalition for Drug Abuse Prevention. The Coalition did an experiment where an underage-looking person goes to the store and asks the clerk to sell them alcohol without showing identification that they are over 21. This experiment was not to get anyone in trouble, so the person who wanted to buy the alcohol was actually over 21, but looked very young. The results of the experiment were very disappointing. Forty percent of the stores were willing to sell to our representatives without taking identification.

I was so shocked when I heard about the results. No wonder so many underage drinkers die every year. They have easy access to alcohol and they just need to know where to go. Sales clerks should be trained to not sell to drinkers without identification. Not only will this help save lives, it will prevent the future generation from getting access to alcohol, and therefore, prevent alcohol addiction and death.

Another huge issue is the selling of Alcopops - alcoholic beverages flavored to taste sweet like sodas, juice, or energy drinks. The percentage of alcohol in alcopops is very high, usually 12 percent. Just one drink can get a person very intoxicated; two can cause a lot of alcohol related injuries. Most underage drinkers drink alcopops because they are easy to get and do not cost a lot. One alcopop may contain as much alcohol as a six-pack of beer.

As a young person in this community, I feel alcopops should only be sold in liquor stores and removed from the shelves of grocery and convenience stores. The next time you are in a store that sells alcopops,

tell them you'd like to see them removed.

Krishna Patel
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Where Is Your Dream?

As we take the time to appreciate and honor our cultural history, let's look at a few highlights.

First of all, our struggles and our victories should not be taken lightly. African Americans have contributed so much to our way of life, and whether you accepted it or not, the footsteps of Civil Rights leaders continues to press on. Even today we should be ringing the Liberty Bell to signal that our lives should be lived in faith and harmony.

Winston-Salem was the first city in our state to integrate lunch counters. Then, the sit-in movement started in Greensboro with N.C. A&T State University students. They stirred up the change without the violence, and this grew to the rest of the nation.

We should be in the business of accepting the challenge to bring about change. We need to become fathers and mentors. Our children need us. Many freedom fighters are right here in our own families. There have been many leaders after Dr. King and Mandela who did their parts, but so many of them: didn't get the fame. Today, our youth have little or no idea of the attitudes of those days or the actions their great-grandparents took to provide them with the quality of life they have today.

So where is your dream? Let's turn it up and make history, and let's stay out of prison. At one point here in Winston-Salem, we had the most habitual felons in the state. Over the course of the last four decade, America's emphasis has shifted from public education to imprisonment, and tax dollars across the nation have followed suit, creating an environment where prisons receive far more financial support than public schools.

Terence Ray Crumpton
Tabor Correctional Institute



WSSU Photo by Garrett Garris

AIDS advocates meet at WSSU

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

About 200 HIV/AIDS advocates from across North Carolina gathered at Winston-Salem State University Saturday, Sept. 6 for the 2014 North Carolina HIV/AIDS Advocacy Conference.

The WSSU School of Health Sciences, the North Carolina AIDS Action Network and the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition hosted the event.

Workshops and networking opportu-

nities were held from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the F.L. Atkins Building. Attendees learned of ways to better assist the more than 35,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in North Carolina and to educate the broader public.

The event was sponsored by The Adam Foundation, the UNC-Chapel Hill Center for AIDS Research and their Community Outreach, Dissemination and Education Office, and supported by AIDS United and the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

UW

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age involvement.

"Eighteen percent of our children do not graduate from high school, over one in four children live in poverty, and thirty-four percent of children ages 10-17 are overweight or obese. These are a few examples of the critical issues facing the

community," said Alexander. "United Way invests with partners to make a real change and we've seen some great progress, particularly around high school graduation, which has risen to 82.1 percent from 70.7 percent in just six years, and reducing homelessness by over 50 percent in less than eight years."

Gordineer agrees that it takes the entire com-

munity coming together to enact real change.

"We have generous donors, great partners, supportive companies and organizations, and wonderful volunteers, like Cantey, who make our work possible," she says. "Together we can make Forsyth County one of the best places in the country for both residents and businesses."

IFB

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ment here in Arkansas as well as IFB's existing facilities in North Carolina."

The two organizations recently celebrated the announcement with employees at ALB's facility.

"Today, is a wonderful new chapter for both IFB and ALB," said Horton. "Our shared mission is to provide employment, training and services for people who are blind or visually impaired. Together, we'll be able to make an even greater impact in creating jobs and changing lives."



Horton



City of W-S Photo

City leaders and guests pose with Vandorn Hinnant at last week's unveiling.

Art

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senting Winston and Salem and inscribed with text and images commemorating significant historical figures and events. The mounted columns are 11 feet tall.

In his proposal, Hinnant said, "This depiction will encompass Winston-Salem's development from a hugely successful industrial power into a growing center of education, business, medicine, and the arts." The two columns illustrate "the Salem and Winston communities' choosing to work together towards a unified front as a city. This history of two diverse cultures coming together to create an example of harmony achieved through difference is reflected metaphorically through the inherent harmonious proportions throughout the two columns' geometric proportions."

Hinnant's work has been featured in more than 28 group exhibits in New York, San Francisco, Atlanta, Florida, Ohio, and North Carolina. He had four solo exhibits in Winston-Salem dating back to 1986, and his work has been included in two group exhibits at

the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. His art can be found in private and corporate art collections in Winston-

Salem, and he served as a consultant to Winston-Salem State University for over two decades.

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