

Cover to Cover

He say... she say... McMillan, Wright say

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

He Say, She Say
Yolanda Joe
Doubleday
1997
\$21.95

What do you get when you cross two Generation Xers and a couple of baby boomers? Problems.

In "He Say, She Say," Yolanda Joe takes on the gender divide, the racial divide and a couple of divides heretofore unknown.

When Sandy, a radio executive desperately searching for Mr. Right, meets T.J., a handsome but somewhat lazy and shiftless jazz musician (OK, I know it's a stereotype) sparks fly.

Sandy and T.J. are joined by Bebe, Sandy's best friend who happens to be old enough to be her mother and T.J.'s dad, Speed.

A mix of a little of everything, "He Say, She Say" actually takes a look into the minds of black men, a rarity. What Joe finds is shocking, a little strange and often humorous.

Through a series of conversations and first-person narratives, Joe allows the story to evolve into a decent work.

It has a few problems. Joe stereotypes T.J. as the quintessential playboy. He doesn't often work and borrows heavily from Sandy to stay out of debt.

Of course, the relationship doesn't work out. I won't tell you why, but remember T.J. is a musician and you know what they say about musicians. But Joe does a good job of developing a solid relationship between T.J. and Speed. Speed is a loving, caring father who sacrificed all to raise his son after the death of his wife. Yes, finally a happily married black couple.

"He Say, She Say" is pretty good and well worth reading.

Out in paperback

How Stella Got Her Groove Back
Terry McMillan
Signet Fiction
1996
\$6.99

What can I say? McMillan struck gold with the touching, humorous tale of a divorcee who finds romance with a man almost 20 years her junior. Go ahead...exhale.

Richard Wright Reader
Edited by Ellen Wright and Michael Fabre
De Capo Press
1997
\$22.50

A reprint of the 1971 classic put together by Michel Fabre, a leading scholar and biographer of Richard Wright and Wright's widow Ellen Wright.

Wright, one of the leading thinkers and writers of the Harlem Renaissance, is skillfully de-mystified in The Richard Wright Reader. Fabre and Ellen Wright use a mix of Wright's nonfiction works from

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Heirloom gardens gaining popularity

By Leann Spencer
THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

CHICAGO - The precious heirlooms that Maryann Underwood collects require careful treatment: She takes them outdoors, heaps dirt on them and hopes it rains.

If it doesn't, she sprays them with water herself. They are poppy seeds from

Flanders Field, the World War I battlefield, she said. Underwood and other collectors in this new field of memorabilia plant seeds which they believe connect them to the past.

There are heirloom collectors that say they own seeds from a fruit tree whose ancestors are believed to have grown in Thomas Jefferson's gardens at Monticello.

Like antique aficionados who can recite the provenance of a piece of furniture, heirloom gardeners keep detailed records of their plants.

Historical plants have become so popular that catalog giant W. Atlee Burpee & Co. this year issued the company's first catalog of heirlooms.

Proponents say the plants are often hardier and healthier than

commercial hybrids and best suited to herbicide- and pesticide-free gardening.

Some say further that these flowers, vegetables and herbs look, taste and smell better than modern varieties, though their harvests may be small, producing only a few blossoms or a limited number of vegetables.

"They are collectibles that people can have and pass down for

generations," said Underwood, who has hundreds of different seeds stashed in sterilized glass jars of all shapes and sizes throughout her home.

"Until earlier this century, a lot of seed was just passed from gardener to gardener and from farmer to farmer," said Kent Whealy, director of the Seed Savers Exchange in Decorah,

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Century of Memories



Jannie Roseboro spends much of her day watching neighborhood children play. At 100, Roseboro says she still has a lot to offer.

Charlotte woman celebrates 100 years

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Jannie Roseboro hates that people are making such a fuss over her.

"I had three parties," she says. "One on Wednesday. Dinner on Thursday and dinner on Friday. Now you know that ain't necessary. I'm not that all important. It's wonderful, though."

Roseboro, a Charlotte native who turned 100 April 19, celebrated her birthday surround-

ed by friends and family. But life at 100 isn't easy. It's been tough, she says.

"You'd be surprised at what happens when you get old," she says. "Things just fall apart."

Her memory is not what it used to be.

"Seems like sometimes, I just can't remember nothing," she says. "I want to remember, but I just can't. That's what happens when you get real old."

She's a little hard of hearing. And, she sometimes has a hard time getting around.

"You can see this house," she says, pointing to a pile of clothes. "It's full of everything, except the work and I don't worry about it."

Roseboro's decided to be thankful for the little things.

Like the deacon from her church who fixed her lamps so she could turn them off and on from bed.

"That's just wonderful," she says. "I can get up in the middle of the night and take my medicine. I had the life. I laid right there in that bed and did everything. Isn't that something?"

And she's just thankful for being.

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Survey shows horn honking only makes drivers take longer

By Michael Raphael
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. - You're not imagining it: Drivers do take longer to leave parking spots when someone is waiting. And if you honk, it takes even longer.

A study of more than 400 drivers at an Atlanta-area mall parking lot shows that drivers defend their spots as instinctively as other territorial animals.

"Like our ancestors, we humans still defend territories," said Penn State University sociologist Barry Ruback. "This despite the fact that when you're leaving the whole point is to leave. There's nothing to be territorial about."

The study, "Territorial Defense in Parking Lots: Retaliation Against Waiting Drivers" appears in the May 1-15 issue of Journal of Applied Social Psychology. Ruback conducted the research with Daniel Juieng, an undergraduate at Georgia State University.

The study conducted three years ago found that, on average, motorists pulling out of unwanted spots took 32.2 seconds from the moment they opened the car door to completely leave the parking space.

If someone was waiting, however, it took almost seven seconds longer, and honkers were forced to wait just under 43 seconds for spots to open up, the study found.

One reason for the extra wait, Ruback said, could be safety. Drivers may slow down to avoid hitting the other car.

Even more interesting, Ruback said, is that drivers said in a related survey that they actually try to move more quickly if they know someone is waiting.

"It suggests that people can be territorial even if they're not aware of it," Ruback said.

Male drivers were affected by the type of car waiting for the spot. If a \$57,000 Infiniti Q45 pulled up men exited in half a minute; when it was a \$5,200 station wagon the wait was longer than 39 seconds.

Women, on the other hand, didn't seem to mind the kind of car.

Costly billing errors found by medical review service

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES - If the cost of health care seems astronomical, the fault may not be in the stars but in the hospital bill.

Although no industrywide statistics exist, a host of studies conducted by private companies and the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, indicate that medical billing errors are relatively common.

They are most common in large bills listing several procedures and charges and are far more likely to be in favor of the medical provider than the patient.

The problem is apparent to Pam Brown and Kathleen Cordova, who founded a medical bill-review service last year in the suburb of La Canada Flintridge.

They say the average \$10,000 hospital bill contains overcharges ranging from \$900 to \$1,300.

In one case, a hospital charged a man \$17 an hour for a pulse meter, but the bill worked out to 57 hours in one day. He also was double-charged for pharmaceutical supplies. The total overcharges topped \$1,100.

Cordova said many overcharges are honest mistakes caused by the maze of paperwork for medical care.

For example, each procedure has its own code. A doctor may check the code and scribble a few notes, but the carbon copies of that bill may be illegible to the billing clerk.

If the bill is unclear, the clerk is likely to charge for the more expensive procedure.

Sometimes, numbers in a procedure code are juxtaposed. A cancer surgery might read as cosmetic surgery, prompting the insurer to deny the claim, Brown said.

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Five of first black sextuplets survive ordeal

By Jennifer Batog
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Five surviving babies of the sextuplets born at Georgetown University Hospital are doing well, doctors said Tuesday.

The babies, born May 8 to Jacqueline and Linden Thompson, are the first black sextuplets born in the United States.

Doctors said the four surviving

girls and a boy have no major health problems. Four babies are being treated for jaundice, but doctors said that is fairly normal in premature babies.

The babies, Octavia Daniela, Richard Linden, Stella Kimberly, Ann Marie Amanda and Emily Elizabeth, weigh between 2 pounds, 2 ounces and 2 pounds, 6 ounces each.

The sixth - a girl - was still-born and weighed less than a

pound.

"They're doing great. They're all five doing very well," said Dr. Joseph Collea, who delivered the babies.

The mother, who set a U.S. record for the longest sextuplet pregnancy, said she was "excited, happy. I'm just proud of myself. I'm overwhelmed."

Linden Thompson, an electrician, called the pregnancy "quite an ordeal."

"But as you can see, we are both happy. Everything worked out just fine. We're just waiting to get them home," the father said.

The babies are the first for the couple, who would not discuss whether fertility drugs were used.

Jacqueline Thompson, a waitress and a cashier at a hotel, was confined to bed for most of

the 30-week pregnancy, spending the last four months at Georgetown, said hospital spokeswoman Amy Pianalto. She sat up Tuesday for the first time in four months.

Although the babies will be in the hospital until the end of June or early July, Mrs. Thompson was expected to return to the couple's Northeast Washington home by the end of the week, Collea said.