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Walking for cancer prevention

By Artellia Burch
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Jim Hickey has been spit on, almost hit intentionally by a motorist and slept in the homes of 69 strangers in an attempt to raise cancer awareness.

Hickey's father died of prostate cancer Sept. 5, 1996. Six months later his brother was diagnosed with the disease. A year later his brother had a successful surgery. But after viewing the scars cancer was making in his family, Hickey says he knew he had to do something.

"Watching my dad die with the disease was a horrible thing to see," he said. "After I read an article I begin to think about I could walk across the U.S. for cancer. The more I tried to dismiss the idea the stronger the idea got. I sold my car, quit my job and gave up my apartment to do this."

So Hickey set out in 1998 to walk across America to increase cancer awareness. He failed. Then he set out again in 2001 but failed again.

With two failed hikes under his belt, Hickey says this time he's going to make it.

"This time around I have more people behind me," he said. "And I just know I'm going to make it. It's a feeling I have I can't explain it."

Hickey is in Charlotte for a week. Saturday night he will be honored at a Charlotte Checkers game. Then on Monday he will hit the road.

While traveling, Hickey hands out information about cancer and asks people to donate to the City of Hope and Big John's Team or any cancer research foundation that makes them comfortable. He also raises money for children like Joshua Polk of Charlotte, who suffers from leukemia.

Although life expectancy of prostate cancer victims has increased, there is room for improvement. According to the American Cancer Society, over the past 20 years, the survival rate for all stages combined have increased from 67 percent to 97 percent. At least 79 percent of men diagnosed with prostate cancer survive 10 years and 57 percent survive 15 years. Prostate cancer will account for 30 percent of cancer cases in men and 11 percent of the deaths.

The African American community has been hit extremely hard by prostate cancer. Medical experts suggest African American men have one the highest rate of prostate cancer in the world. The mortality rate is twice as

See WALK/2B

Keep home fires burning



Divorce has become commonplace. Statistics predict that one out every two marriages will end in divorce. According to the U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Reports most marriages are susceptible to divorce in the early years of marriage. After five years, approximately 10 percent of marriages are expected to end in divorce and another 10 percent are expected to end in after a 10 years of marriage.

"It's important to keep the love fires burning," said Elaine Stevens Ph.D. and host of "Matters of the Heart," a relationship program that airs on WBAY (FM 101.9). "You have to keep the passion going in the relationship. You must keep cuddling and sex in the marriage. Couples have to remain intimate. Doing things like holding hands in the mall."

"You also have to share your everyday existence. Talking and communicating about your day. A couple needs to continue to have a date night without kids and family."

Taking care of each other helps. If you need something you need to be able to communicate about what you need."

Why some marriages work and other marriages end varies from couple to couple. Below some couples give their secrets.

What does it require to make a marriage work?

Clarence Byrd (married 28 years): "The key to our marriage is working together and having respect for one another. We also keep a level of independence. We allow each other the space and the respect to still make decisions for themselves. First it has to be love, then it has to be respect. Respect is a guideline that makes you want to do right."

"Another thing that has helped us is my wife and I share common goals. Our biggest oppo-

See KEEP/3B

Black Africans tell of bias, beatings in Libya

By Niko Price
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRIPOLI, Libya — You hear it in the rumbas pulsing from tiny barbershops. You see it in the colorful turbans in Tripoli's old city. You smell it in the backroom eateries that serve up dishes of West African wheat meal.

Libya is filled with immigrants. Hundreds of thousands of Africans have made their way across the vast Sahara, often on perilous, illegal journeys, looking for a better life. A U.S. report estimates sub-Saharan Africans make up a third of Libya's work force.

And while Libya's leader, Col. Moammar Gadhafi, has cast himself as the father of Africa, his people have been slow to welcome the newcomers.

Black African immigrants tell of police shakedowns, attacks by racist youth gangs, employers who refuse to pay. In 2000, the racial tensions boiled over into four days of rioting west of Tripoli that left seven dead.

"If you're black, you're still a slave in Libya," said Ali, an immigrant from Chad.

Throughout Tripoli, men line the streets, some holding light bulbs, pipes and iron bars to advertise their skills, waiting for Libyans to drive by and hire them. Most hold nothing, but are willing to do anything.

In a televised speech two years ago, Gadhafi said that "Africans should pay no respect to their borders and should be able to move freely." But many of his people have been less welcoming.

"They have done nothing good for this country," said Anis Muktar al-Ajeli, a 35-year-old chef. "They brought diseases and drugs with them. They're criminals and thieves."

Most immigrants say they came only to work — many aiming to save enough money for the \$800 trip on a smuggler's boat to Italy. Few ever save enough to make the trip.

Blessing Anikwenze, 32,

came to Libya in 2002 and opened a tiny eatery serving wheat meal and chicken in coconut milk to fellow Nigerians.

Seven months ago, she said, three Libyan youths demanded her purse. When she refused, one slashed at her face with a knife, lopping off her right earlobe and leaving a deep gash on her cheek. Another stabbed her in the shoulder.

"At the hospital, they told me I needed a police report," she said. "At the police station, no one listened to me because I'm black."

Immigrants often tell of attacks by police themselves.

Tony Chidize, 28, said he was picked up last year. The policemen took him to their office, where they hung him from the ceiling and beat him.

"Then they pulled out an electrical wire and put it on my arms," he said, adding he was tortured for two days, then let go.

Kofi Hemas, 30, said he was beaten by thugs soon

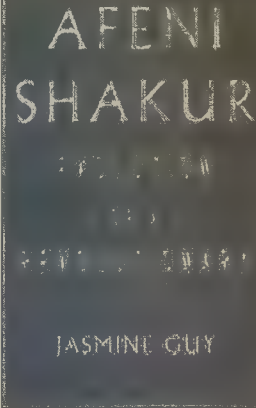
after he arrived from Ghana two years ago. His salvation came six months ago when he was swimming on a Tripoli beach near a glistening new hotel, the Gate to Africa, and a hotel official approached him.

The five-star Maltese-owned hotel had a problem with garbage blocking the water intake of its steam turbine generator. It needed six men to live under an overpass, picking trash from the mesh that serves as a filter. The job was 24 hours a day, and would pay each man 50 dinars a month — U.S. \$38.

Hemas recruited five other Ghanaian immigrants but then — after attacks by Libyan youths — he realized that wasn't enough. They are now 12, living together in a shack, sleeping two to a mattress, following a regime set by Hemas.

"At first they would come and rob us," Hemas said. "But we have showed them who we are."

See SPELL/3B



Bio paints requiem for rebel

By Artellia Burch
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"Afeni Shakur: Evolution of A Revolutionary" by Jasmine Guy is a memoir that needs to be read and remembered.

Shakur allows the reader to draw intimately close to the woman who grew up in Lumberton, N.C. and later moved to New York and became one of the most powerful women in the Black Panther Party.

Alice Faye Williams, who later changed her name to Afeni Shakur, rose to power with the Panthers. On April 2, 1969, she was awakened from her sleep and arrested along with 20 other members of the party. History recalls this group as the New York 21.

For two years, Shakur says she fought for her life. "I fought for everything I believed in, against everyone I knew — not only the government, but my own Panther brethren..."

Guy, a close friend of the family of more than 10 years, first became friends with the former Panther and mother of the slain megastar Tupac Shakur. Although Tupac is often referred to, he is not the center of the book.

Afeni's story doesn't begin with the Panther Party nor end with the death of her famous son. It includes her triumphs, tragedies and pitfalls. Through Shakur's stories, the reader gets to travel through time to see her successfully defend herself in 1971 when faced with more than 300 years of prison.

This book gives a very human side of this revolutionary. It tells how she fell from grace and became a crack addict. Her tale of how she abandoned her kids in California while she embraced her addiction will bring tears to your eyes.

One of the most moving parts of the book is when Afeni talks of how her drug problem affected her son and nearly destroyed her daughter.

See SPELL/3B

Mysteries of sleep: Can we someday trick a drowsy brain into staying awake?

By Malcolm Ritter
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Frank Knower knew something was wrong when he kept having conversations with co-workers and later couldn't remember a thing that was said. He couldn't even remember what he'd said.

Later, after he retired, he discovered another problem: He got irresistibly drowsy during long drives.

None of the usual stay-awake tricks like turning up the radio or rolling down the window could keep him awake. He had to pull over for naps.

These days, his wife handles a lot of

the driving. And while the 74-year-old Knower can still nod off during the day at his home in Tappan, New York, treatment for his sleep-disrupting condition, apnea, and a daytime alertness pill help keep his problems in check.

For Knower, it's a story with a happy ending. For scientists, though, it's a story full of mystery.

Why would a sleep-deprived brain fail to absorb conversations? Just how does it produce drowsiness while a person is driving? Indeed, how does it know it needs more sleep in the first place?

These aren't just esoteric ponderings. The answers to these and related mysteries about

the sleepy brain could lead to improved drugs to help people fall asleep or stay awake. They could help drowsy people find the most effective time to drink coffee or take a nap.

Scientists may even find safe and reliable ways to skip slumber entirely for days without the usual mental glitches.

"You could have soldiers who could fight a war 24 hours a day and maybe not sleep, at least for a few days," said Dr. Clifford Saper of Harvard Medical School. "If you knew what was making the brain sleepy,

See METHODS/2B

