

Phills video discourages teen speeding

Continued from page 1A

"He was killed instantly," she says.

During lunch, more students wandered to the courtyard to get a glimpse of the wrecked Porsche, which will travel with Phills as she visits other schools. South Mecklenburg is the first of 16 Charlotte-Mecklenburg high schools where Phills will share her story.

"I think some students will

take the message to heart," said Ashley Weidner, a junior and member of the Students Against Destructive Decisions, or SADD. "It's important to make kids more aware of the consequences instead of just telling them not to do it. If they understand the consequences, then they're more likely to listen."

Phills hopes her video will drive home the anti-speed-

ing message and make students and adults think about the importance of life. "Maybe Bobby was supposed to be an all-star, but we'll never know," she says. "All of you have a purpose to fulfill, and we don't want a bad choice to keep you from achieving it."

According to Captain Dave Haggett of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, speed-related

accidents are the leading cause of death among high school students. While Phills admits the pain from her husband's death is still fresh, she also believes her candid anti-speeding message has the potential to save lives.

"I never saw myself as a motivational speaker, but I'm here today," says Phills, who hopes to make this a national campaign. "If I can help save one, maybe two

lives, then I know my husband's death was not in vain."

Phills left South Meck students, who've experienced several traffic-related deaths in the last year, with three lessons: Obey your parents; obey traffic laws and listen to the little voice that recognizes a bad decision.

Phills' next stop is Vance High School on April 20.

THE CHARLOTTE POST (USPS 965-500) is published weekly for \$40.00 per year by the Charlotte Post Publishing Co., 1531 Camden Rd. Charlotte, NC 28203-4753. Periodicals postage paid at Charlotte, NC. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE CHARLOTTE POST, PO Box 30144, Charlotte, NC 28230

JOHNSTON YMCA GRANT



PHOTO: CALVIN FERGUSON

Dena Jones, director of the Johnston YMCA arts and humanities program, inspects students' work during a grant presentation by Charlotte-based Wachovia Monday. The bank donated \$2 million to the branch for community programs.

SPRING CLEARANCE KEZIAH FURNITURE



Renaissance Oak Finish Table & 6 Chairs NOW \$399.00 Reg. \$699.00

Open Mon. - Sat. 9am - 6pm
2914 Gibbon Rd. Charlotte, N.C.

Financing Available
704-596-7427

We Give Our Customers The Best Price!

6pc. Bedroom Suit \$298.00 -
4-Drawer Chest \$49.00
Twin Mattress Set \$99.00
Sofa, Loveseat, Chair - All \$499.00
Carved Plant Stands \$39.00
Recliners \$198.00

Age, elements cause Islamic texts to crumble in Africa

By Edward Harris
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TIMBUKTU, Mali - Lit by a sunbeam slanting through his broken roof, a 16-year-old Islamic student chants verses from a brittle, yellowing page - one of an estimated 1 million ancient texts that experts say are crumbling to dust in this once-thriving city of Islamic learning.

Twice in the past eight years, conservationists working to save the manuscripts have come to this fly-buzzed home of sand floors and outdoor toilets, hoping to buy the disintegrating pages.

But while the family earns no income and lives on hand-outs, it refuses to part with its sole possession of value - about 40 volumes with ripped bindings and torn pages, heaped in a medical supplies box.

The student, Alhousseini Ould Alfadrou, cites the Prophet Muhammad to explain that holy writ cannot be sold for money.

"So we're obliged to keep them," Alfadrou says. "We're the ones who read them. It's written in these books: Those who read them must protect them."

But scholars say irreplaceable Islamic texts representing a historic era of Muslim culture, including West Africa's unique part in it, are decaying to oblivion in sweltering homes.

Tens of thousands have been rescued and put in safe storage here and abroad, but many more are scattered around Timbuktu - private heirlooms handed down from parents to children over the centuries.

The Timbuktu texts "are probably among the most important unused scholarly materials in the world," said Chris Murphy of the U.S. Library of Congress, who was co-curator of an exhibition of 23 of the manuscripts in Washington last year.

Timbuktu today is city of 30,000 people surviving on foreign aid, a spotty tourist trade and sales of bricks. Near-naked children with dust-caked grins fill the streets, and homes lack electricity or plumbing. There's only one Internet connection in the entire town.

But in the late 1300s, the salt, spice and slave routes were bringing wealth - and

Islam - to West Africa's northern desert. Timbuktu grew into a city of 100,000 and an international seat of learning.

Timbuktu scholars penned intricate Arabic-language manuscripts about mathematics, poetry, medicine, law, astronomy, zoology, history and Islamic thought.

Centers such as this helped preserve Western learning during Europe's Dark Ages.

Perhaps the texts' most enduring legacy is what they tell about the underpinnings of West African Islam, which folds in African influences and is less austere than Arab Islam.

"The contents of the texts show very well, especially in legal and political terms, the working out of the desire of West Africans to be Muslims, but to keep things that are important to them," Murphy said.

"You see it all the time, the struggle to be Muslim - but in the West African manner."

By the time Mali was colonized by France in the late 1800s, most commerce had moved to coastal ports. Civil strife further impoverished the town.

For the families that own them, the texts represent a last link to a golden past, even though few documents are likely to be more than 200 years old. Older ones likely would already have crumbled, experts say.

"These books are from my grandfather and we must save them. They're our only inheritance," says 48-year-old Fatama Bocar Sambala, serving rice and onions to her five children.

Benefactors from the United States, Europe and South Africa have tried to move the texts to safekeeping, but no large-scale, unified effort has been launched.

Up to 1 million may still survive around Timbuktu, says Murphy, and perhaps 3 million across West Africa.

Mohamed Galla Dicko, director of Timbuktu's government-financed Ahmed Baba Institute museum, says the 20,000 texts he cares for in air-conditioned rooms are "just a tiny part of what's out there."

In 2000-01, his institute made digital images of about 2,000 texts with \$150,000 from the U.S.-based Ford Foundation.

"If we had the money and the family doesn't want to sell their manuscripts, we could scan them and put them on the Web," Dicko says.

He says the government runs some awareness campaigns. For instance, it tries to knock down the notion that Quranic law prevents the texts' sale.

Tadjir Ahmed, a local Islamic leader, says he sold his books to Dicko's institute and private collectors because he couldn't care for them properly, and with the proceeds built a roomy Quranic school with electricity for 60 students.

"Now, I'm missing the books, but my children can go to school and the books are still in town," says Ahmed, 35, who has three wives and four children.

"Others can keep theirs until the termites eat them. Then they'll have nothing."

Appeals for Sudan aid

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS - The United Nations launched an appeal Monday for \$115 million in humanitarian aid for the troubled Darfur region of western Sudan, where the U.N. humanitarian chief says a scorched-earth campaign of ethnic cleansing is taking place.

The appeal, which replaces a \$23 million drive launched in September, includes programs to provide food, health care, agricultural assistance, relief supplies, water, sanitation, education and protection for more than 700,000 people displaced since fighting erupted early last year. On April 2, the United Nations also launched an appeal for over \$30 million to aid 110,000 Sudanese refugees who fled to neighboring Chad.

The Sudanese government denies allegations by the U.N. and human rights groups that Arab militia groups, reportedly with Sudanese government backing, are engaged in ethnic cleansing against Africans in Darfur.



Dr. Kaplan

CHIROPRACTIC PHYSICIAN

ACCIDENT & INJURY CENTER

WE WANT TO HELP YOU!

Accidents:
Automobile • Workman's Comp

Are You Suffering From:
Sports Injuries • Headaches • Shoulder Pain
Neck Pain • Low Back Pain • Leg Pains •
Arthritis ?

Tel. (704) 372-7200

Visit Us Today!

2210 North Tryon St.
Charlotte, NC 28206
Hours: 9:00AM - 6:00PM Monday - Friday

2501 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, NC 28216
Hours: 9:00AM - 6:00PM Monday - Friday



Dr. Lawrence Kaplan, D.C.

PROFESSIONAL FLOORING

MOBLEY'S

Residential & Commercial

Carpet Cleaning, Sales & Service

• New Carpet Sales • VCT • Hardwood Flooring
• Ceramic & Marble Tile

"Spring Specials"

New Carpet Installed

Carpet, Pad & Labor
Only \$16.99 per yd.

Cleaning

"2" Rooms & Hallway
Only \$79.95

Vinyl Floor

Congoleum & Armstrong
Only \$13.99 per yd.

Duct Cleaning Only \$15

Come Visit Our Showroom

4930
Albemarle Road
Charlotte, NC 28205

"For Your Health" ... Remove the Dust From Your Vents!

"SPECIALS" Valid With This Ad Only

Eddie Mobley, Sr. • Eddie Mobley, Jr.

Ph: 704-531-0155 • Fax: 704-536-4272