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Toy Guns: SERIOUS TOPIC

Students express their feelings about weapons in unique way

Steven J. Gaither
SPORTS EDITOR

It all started with a quilt. In response to the Red Rooster nightclub shooting in March, which led to the death of a Winston-Salem police officer and subsequent arrest of a Winston-Salem State University student, art professor Katherine Houle brought a quilt to class that she had made in 1991.

"At the time, I was kind of worried about my nephews," Houle said. "I was concerned with the accessibility to guns."

Her quilt contained the phrase, "out of the guns shot flowers instead of bullets." She said she always had the vision of guns with flowers coming out of them. She shared the quilt with students in her Introduction to Art class and they decided to make it happen.

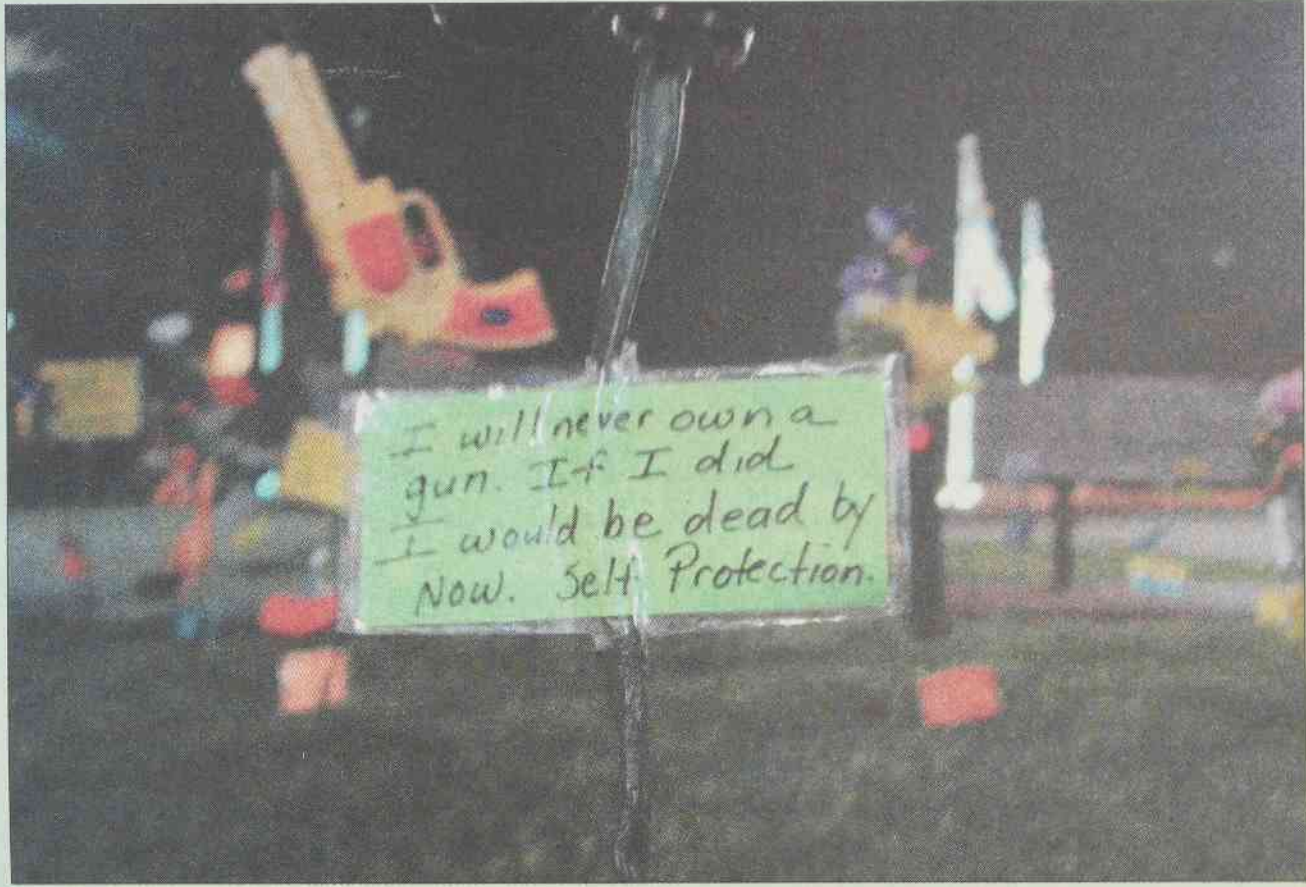
She then had her students bring in toy guns and drill holes and put the flowers in between them. Some of her students who had loved ones killed by guns posted comments in honor of them.

On April 3, a ceremony took place in front of the Fine Arts building to mark the opening of the display. The Burke Singers performed "Amazing Grace," students handed out flowers, and Ebony Benman read a poem about how African-Americans need to help each other and stop killing one another.

Benman said that Houle's quilt inspired her to read the poem.

"It opened my eyes to the fact that we need to get involved," she said.

Many students stopped by and left comments about guns or in honor of loved ones who had been killed by them.



Photos by Sharrod Patterson

ABOVE: Student artists' responses to gun-control issues inspired passers-by to record their own comments.

BELOW: The idea for the art installation came from a handmade quilt containing a phrase about guns

Houle said that she considers the project a success. "One of my student's brothers died a few months ago; just helping her put that in is enough for me," she said.

Houle said she hopes that in the future, her students will see that they have to be leaders.

"If there is something that they feel strongly about," she said, "just do it."



Commission meets; sets agenda, deadline

Tiphane Deas
MANAGING EDITOR

The Chancellor's Commission on Campus and Community Safety, a recently formed committee established by Interim Chancellor Michelle Howard-Vital, is taking a closer look at the safety of Winston-Salem State University's students, both on and off campus.

That investigation officially began on March 19, when the committee held its first meeting, which was open to the public. The committee is chaired by WSSU Police Chief Willie Bell and Dr. Melody Pierce, vice chancellor of Student Affairs, and made up of WSSU faculty, staff, and students as well as community leaders.

Bell and Pierce also sat on a six-member panel that Monday morning which included Mayor Allen Joines, Winston-Salem Chief of Police Pat Norris, WSSU's Dr. Pedro Martinez, and Jennifer Martin, the representative for the District Attorney of Forsyth County's office.

"Our first priority is the safety of our students and the community. If we have problems on our campus, or if our campus safety is compromised by negative outside influences, these issues must be addressed," said Howard-Vital in a press release from Media Relations.

Howard-Vital was unable to attend the meeting on March 19 due to illness.

Dr. Pedro Martinez, who represented her in her absence, explained the Commission's purpose to those present.

"This committee was formed in order to examine the campus climate at Winston-Salem State University, and



Photo by Steven J. Gaither

Mayor Allen Joines, left, and WSSU Police Chief Willie Bell discuss safety.

identify areas where changes are needed," the provost said.

This goal will be accomplished by subcommittees that will examine separate aspects of safety on WSSU's campus and the 15 other campuses that make up the UNC system.

"There's one that will address the policies and practices that promote public safety on and off campus," said Martinez. "Other subcommittees will deal with the patterns in the data for students who received judicial sentences, public safety investigations, or investigations by law enforcement."

"Another one of the subcommittees dealing with law enforcement will look at WSSU's policies and rules and whether or not they are enforced

appropriately," he said.

At the end of their allotted time period, each subcommittee will "report its findings, recommendations and implementation timetable."

The time the committee has been given to fulfill its goals? Ninety days.

"We have an aggressive timetable to get our homework done," said Pierce in regard to their June 30 deadline.

"Sometimes these commissions take six months, and we didn't get that," commented Bell.

Nonetheless, he is very optimistic about what the Commission will be able to do in the next three months because of the experience he has had sitting on previous task forces.

Afro-Flow comes to town with a message

Erin C. Perkins
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The prevalence of smoking has been historically higher among African-Americans. As a matter of fact, 50 percent are more likely to develop lung cancer than whites.

A one-year study found that three major African-American publications — Ebony, Jet and Essence — received proportionately higher profits from cigarette advertisements than other magazines, according to the American Lung Association. The attorney general reported that many of these ads advertise menthol brands such as Newport, Kool, and Salem, which were marketed specifically to African-Americans. This puts young people in the African-American Community at a higher risk for tobacco addiction.

In response to the critical condition of tobacco addiction among the African-American community and others, the American Cancer Society (ACS) sponsored the "Afro-Flow Tour" with spoken word performer, Mike-E, turntable master DJ Invisible, African percussionist Sowandé Keita, rising vocalist Kenny Watson and the live band hot sauce. The concert event was held on March 26 in the Dillard Auditorium.

The Afro-Flow Tour group is traveling across campuses nationwide to create awareness about tobacco prevention through spoken word, hip-hop and live music, which is what hip-hop pioneer KRS-One coined as "edutainment," a term that refers to bringing education and entertainment into one entity. One of black culture's rising spoken word artists, Mike-e, takes on the role as a musical and poetic chronicler.

"We are not preaching, we just want to inform and



Mike-E

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