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Above, Aspiring Scientists Work Alongside Astronaut. Dr. Bernard Harris reviews his Mars rover project for accuracy at NCCU.

During the ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Summer Science Camp at North Carolina Central University, nearly 48 Triangle area middle-school students strengthened their science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, knowledge and skills under the direction of college professors and science professionals, including Dr. Bernard A. Harris Jr., the first African-American to walk in space. See story on page 2. Dr. Bernard Harris at right



Barber leads effort to unify Charlotte as trial looms

By Tom Foreman Jr.
CHARLOTTE (AP) - As North Carolina's largest city braces for the trial of a former police officer accused in the killing of an unarmed black man, an unlikely coalition of barbers, clergy and law enforcement is working to improve relations between black community and police in Charlotte - and head off possible violence once the trial ends. Jury selection began July 13 in the trial of Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officer Randall Kerrick, who is charged with voluntary manslaughter in the September 2013 shooting death of Jonathan Ferrell. The 24-year-old Ferrell, who is black, was involved in a car accident and had gone to a house, apparently to search for help. A person at the house and police, and three officers responded. Investigators say Kerrick fired 12 shots, 10 of which hit Ferrell. Kerrick was the only officer who fired his gun. Shaun Corbett, who owns a barber shop on Charlotte's north side, the case drew immediate attention to another shooting: the 2014 killing of an unarmed black teenager in Ferguson, Missouri, by a white police officer. The case touched off a national debate over the way police conduct themselves when confronting minorities. The case also touched off destructive riots that erupted in Ferguson. A grand jury decided not to indict the Ferguson police officer in the death of 18-year-old Michael Brown. Corbett said he told himself that something had to be done, especially as barbers have a "responsibility" to look after the community. "Back in the day, a barber was a prestigious position in the community. That's where you came to get information. That's where you came to get counsel. That was the cornerstone of the community and I think we got away from that," Corbett said. He brought the issue to the N.C. Local Barbers Association, where he is a member of the board, and the "Cops and Barbers" program was born. The group organizes town hall forums so community members can talk to police. The program urges officers to get to know the places they go by getting out of their cruisers and meeting with residents. The youth are advised on how to



JONATHAN FERRELL.

handle encounters with police. The first event was held on Super Bowl Sunday, and Corbett said more than 200 people showed up. "Whatever the outcome is with the trial, I think the foundation and the groundwork we've laid is going to make that difference," he said. "I think that it's actually that we have the opportunity to have an honest dialogue. That's what the 'Cops and Barbers' movement is about." Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Det. Garry McFadden, who is active in the group, shares the optimism that there will be calm during and after the trial. "We can't say what's going to be the verdict and what's going to be the jury, but I think that when it comes to the community, we have a good relationship with the community people here, and that makes for a much better advantage for us," McFadden said. In the aftermath of the Civil War, Charlotte - (Continued On Page 3)

Woman found dead in Texas jail was excited about new chapter

By Jason Keyser and Michael Graczyk
HEMPSTEAD, Texas (AP) - A woman whose death in a Texas jail is under investigation was thrilled to be returning to her alma mater to begin a community outreach job after years of bouncing between temp work back home in Illinois, leaving friends doubting authorities who say she killed herself.

Bland grew up in Naperville, Illinois, 30 miles southwest of Chicago. Known in her family as Sandy B, she was the fourth of five tight-knit sisters. She was active in her family's church and was the only one of her sisters to go to college out of state. She studied at the College of Agriculture at Prairie View A&M University, a historically black school 40 miles northwest of Houston (Continued On Page 3)

Interviews with friends as well as Sandra Bland's own words in online videos about racial injustice and police brutality present a picture of a young woman on the cusp of finding her niche in life. She landed a perfect job. She had just gone on a joyful road trip to Memphis with her mother. She had a voice and a following on social media and was active in her community.

Even after an online video surfaced showing the 28-year-old talking in March about depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, those who knew her said she would not have taken her own life - not even over the confrontational traffic stop that led to her arrest, which mirrored the ones she railed against online.

"She was in good spirits. She was looking forward to what was next," said close friend and mentor LaVaughn Mosley, 57, adding that he was unaware of any struggles with depression. "She was making plans for the future, so there's no way she was in a suicidal state."

About 100 protesters marched from the jail to the courthouse July 17 in Hempstead, Texas, including other friends of Bland's who were also in disbelief.



MS Sandra Bland

2 Confederate monuments vandalized in North Carolina

By Emily Masters

RALEIGH (AP) - A vandalized Confederate monument in Charlotte, North Carolina was removed from Old City Hall on July 16 and relocated to a city warehouse for cleaning. "Right now there are plans to put it back, but that's a decision that needs to be made by city council," said Charlotte's corporate spokesman Ken Brown. It is unknown how long the cleaning will take or what it will cost, he said. The city manager's office ordered the monument moved but did not respond to requests for comment.

The vandalism comes as the nation debates the appropriateness of the Confederate battle flag and Confederate monuments after the shooting of nine worshippers at a historically black church in Charleston, S.C. The suspect in that case, a white man, has been seen posing in photographs with the Confederate flag.

While there have been numerous Confederate monuments vandalized across the South since the shooting, most monuments have been cleaned and reopened without having to be moved.

"The vandalism, in some cases, will give city officials a much welcomed excuse for taking them down," said James W. Loewen, an American sociologist who researches Confederate memorials. "This gives them an excuse to say we're taking it down because it is a point of contention and to save the city trouble and money. Then they don't have to take a stand on the underlying cause itself."

The North Carolina legislature is moving forward on legislation that would protect Confederate monuments. In April, the Senate passed a bill banning state or local authorities from removing "objects of remembrance" from public property without state legislative action. A House committee approved the bill July 15, sending it to the full House.

The monument at Old City Hall was one of two Confederate monuments to be defaced in Charlotte on July 15. Police are investigating both acts of vandalism. No arrests have been made.

At Old City Hall, someone spray-painted "racist" on a memorial that honors Confederate soldiers and was placed in 1977. Liquid cement was smeared on another Confederate memorial monument located near the Gandy Cole Center. The monument is owned by Mecklenburg County and was unveiled in 1929.

County spokesman Rick Christensen said the county will pay a private company to repair the damage for \$300. Workers covered the monument with black trash bags July 16, so rain would not harden the cement further.

The cement covered the carved inscription, two battle flags and the word 'Confederate.' The inscription states that Confederate soldiers "preserved the Anglo-Saxon civilization of the South," which Loewen called an "overt" white supremacist message.

The United Confederate Veterans raised funds with Charlotte citizens to pay for the monument and erected it in 1929. The Old City Hall monument was donated by the Confederate Memorial Association of Charlotte and the city council voted to allow its 1977 placement, Brown said.