

# Winston-Salem Chronicle

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## EDITORIALS

### AIDS and education

SURGEON General C. Everett Koop has determined that AIDS is hazardous to your health. No argument there.

He also has called for an effort to educate our youth about the dangers of AIDS. No argument there, either.

The rationale for AIDS education is painfully clear. AIDS kills.

When to begin such education and how are the hard part.

Do we begin at the third grade, as Koop has suggested? Do we teach abstinence? How do we handle such delicate, taboo topics as homosexuality and anal sex? And who does the teaching? The driver's ed instructor who coaches basketball and teaches health classes in his spare time?

"There is now no doubt that we need sex education in schools and that it must include information on homosexual relationships," Koop said in a report on AIDS last month.

"... We have to be as explicit as necessary to get the message across," Koop later told *Time* magazine. "You can't talk of the dangers of snake poisoning and not mention snakes."

Neither, however, can you talk about the dangers of AIDS and not mention worms -- as in a can full of.

Many believe that the job of sex education belongs to parents alone. But many parents seem uncomfortable and unwilling to talk about sex.

Others think that the topic of homosexuality should be broached only when it is condemned.

Still others don't believe in any form of sex education beyond warnings not to engage in intercourse until marriage.

Given the alarming teen-pregnancy problem in the United States, sex education as it exists now has not been particularly effective. How, then, do we go one step further and handle a deadly, sexually transmitted disease that can infect nearly anyone, be he gay or straight, sexually promiscuous or monogamous?

The issue is particularly germane to the black community, where AIDS disproportionately strikes, especially among youth.

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, blacks comprise 25 percent of all victims of the disease, more than double the 12-percent black population.

What's more, 50 percent of the nation's children who have contracted AIDS have been black.

"There's still a belief in the black community that AIDS is a white man's disease," said Dr. Wayne Greaves of Howard University Hospital in a November 1985 interview.

Another problem is that black AIDS victims tend to be poorer and therefore seek medical attention only when the disease has reached its advanced stages.

What to do?

As far as sex education goes, Forsyth County seems headed in the right direction.

To their credit, the city-county schools here have fashioned a "family life education" program that allows for the community's conservative tenor without taking a head-in-the-sand retreat.

With community input, the program involves specially trained teachers, nurses and guidance counselors and explicit guidelines on which instructional materials should be used and how.

And, while its guidelines encourage students to "abstain from sexual activity and promiscuous behavior," the program does not stop with moral histrionics.

The topic of contraception is introduced in the seventh grade. Parents may withdraw their children from the instruction if they wish and are privy to the teaching materials used.

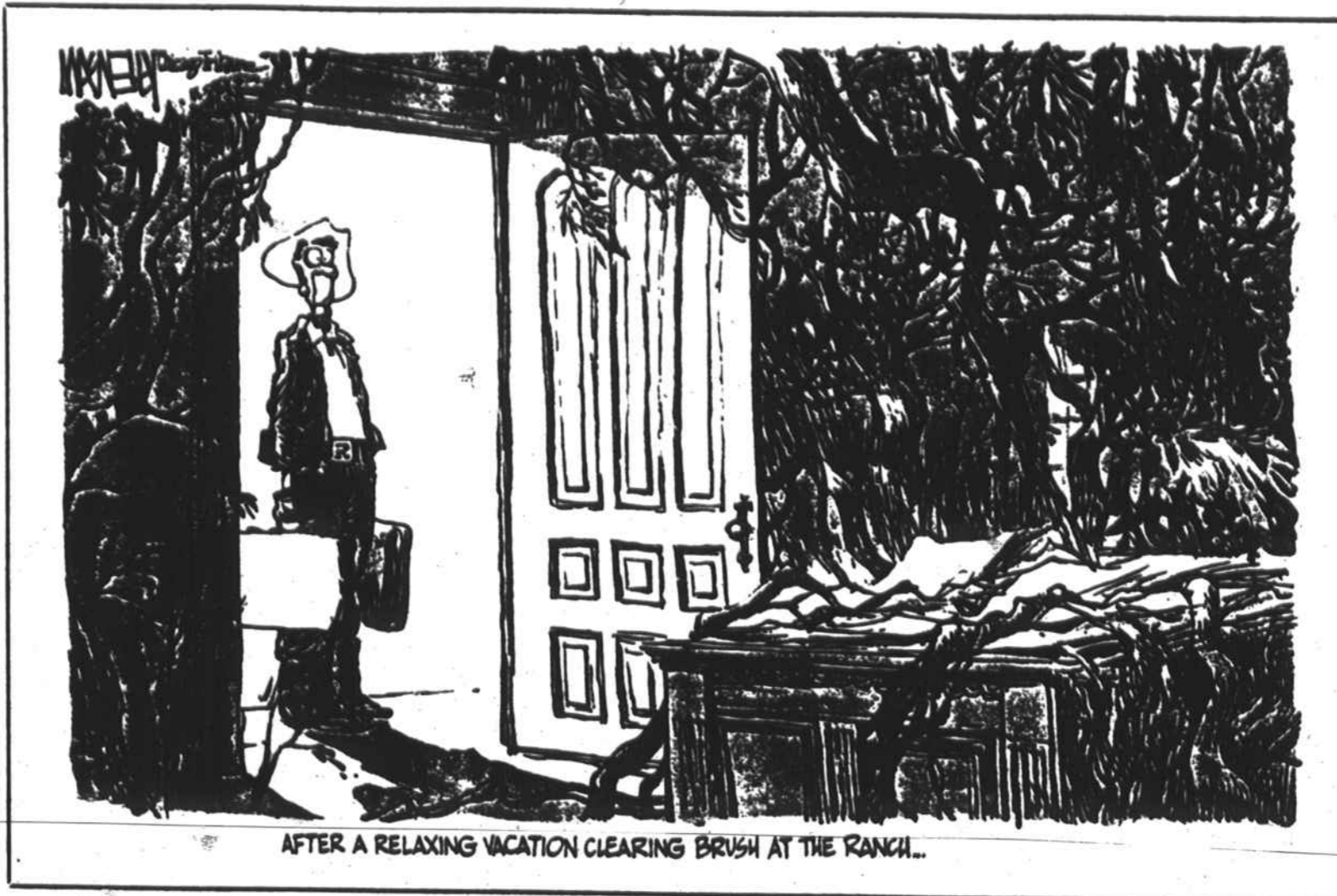
All in all, the program sounds good. But it took time to create meaningful instruction on so sensitive a topic without alienating parents.

Still, it won't do nationally or locally to wait for psychologists, politicians, school officials, fundamentalists, anti-abortionists, the gay lobby and the anti-gay lobby to reach a consensus on the best AIDS awareness campaign.

The black community, especially individual parents, churches, colleges and newspapers, would do well to act now with workshops and seminars of our own.

Simultaneously, we should work with the school system to fashion a realistic, instructional response to what has been termed a pandemic disease.

While many people still appear inclined to ignore AIDS, AIDS is not so inclined to ignore people.



AFTER A RELAXING VACATION CLEARING BRUSH AT THE RANCH...

## Analysts are overlooking key factor

NEW YORK — The roaring police drug scandal in New York defies solutions proposed in city hall, the streets and precinct headquarters, because analysts refuse to consider a key factor -- race.

A Brooklyn community, black and largely poor, has been victimized, over the years, by hard drugs flooding in with the aid of largely white members of the 77th Police Precinct. Of the 13 officers indicted in November, one is black and already exposed -- by name -- in the media as cooperating with investigators.

Across the country, the corrupting effects of drug money have hit law enforcement officials in cities such as Miami, Key West, Boston, Chicago and Portland and states such as Georgia, Tennessee and Colorado. But true to its outsized reputation, New York has experienced drug corruption in the grand manner.

The influential seem to have agreed that every rock and fig leaf may be upturned so long as there is no suggestion that race is a factor bearing on the corruption. After all, the explanation goes, how can race be a factor when the police commissioner, Benjamin Ward, is black? This little sleight of hand is something which Mayor Edward Koch, ever the magician, has worked to his political advantage.

When the winds from the black community blow against the police, Mayor Koch attaches himself to his commissioner like

**LES PAYNE**  
Syndicated Columnist

an egret to a rhinoceros. The winds this time have shifted, however, with the predominantly white police force calling for the resignation of Commissioner Ward. The threat of an armed, quasi-military force taking to the streets to demand the resignation of its commander was so unusual as to tempt one to say unprecedented.

*"At the root of the drug scandal in the 77th is police failure to respect, not simply to know, the people they serve. The white suburban cops are aliens not so much for residency as for their inability to identify with those in the inner-city areas they police."*

The Patrolman's Benevolent Association prepared for the barricades because of anger over an element of the commissioner's anti-corruption plan. Twenty percent of the officers in the city's 75 precincts have been ordered transferred to new assignments every year. By disrupting stationhouse cronism, Ward sought to deny the trust so vital to the building of a broad-based network of precinct corruption.

"Stigmatizing an entire department," said Patrolman's Benevolent Association President Philip Caruso of the plan, in an analogy that has crept into editorials and newspaper col-

umns. "(Ward) has created the illusion amid the entire public that no police officer should be trusted."

The six-day-old police work slowdown was called off Nov. 13 when Commissioner Ward said he would delay his rotation plan, which had been scheduled to begin Nov. 17.

The inconvenience of rearranging car pools and other commuting schemes may have been a stronger, more believable reason the largely suburban force oppos-

ed the rotation plan. Wading in, blindly defending the police, Councilwoman Ruth Messenger, echoing other politicians, offered: "The men and women on the beat should be encouraged to get to know the community they are covering."

Knowing the community would be greatly enhanced if patrolling officers resided in their precincts. Many of New York's finest live so far from their stationhouse that they spend several hours in daily commute.

At the root of the drug scandal in the 77th is police failure to respect, not simply to know, the people they serve. The white

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## Let's give ourselves a gift that lasts

■ The author is a business instructor at Winston-Salem State University and chairman of the 21st Century Political Action Committee of North Carolina.

The media and many black "leaders" have long asserted that black people are poor.

To that I answer, blacks in the Triad control more than \$800 million dollars. That kind of money does not a poor people make.

We are not poor, but our spending habits inflict unemployment and poverty upon many of our race.

As a people, we spend 6.6 percent of our wealth with black businesses, and all too many of these businesses refuse to support each other. As a result, our dollars have no turnover.

What is turnover? It's the difference between jobs and unemployment, between adequate housing and slums and between owning businesses in our community and working for someone else.

Korean, Arab, Jewish and Cuban communities know the magic of turnover well.

When they receive a dollar, they in turn buy clothes, shoes, professional services, food, cars and gas from their brothers and sisters. That one dollar turns over 4 to 8 times before it leaves their communities, creating jobs in the process.

Last year, Tony Brown launch-

### GUEST COLUMN

By VERNON ROBINSON

ed the Buy Freedom campaign. Its goal is to harness this vast engine of black wealth to create

starting this Christmas season to take the Buy Freedom pledge and spending dollars where they will create jobs for your community. Be sure to gently but firmly ask black business owners whether they support the Buy Freedom



businesses and jobs for our community.

The campaign asks you to think before you buy and to spend at least 50 percent of your money with minority-owned firms, professionals and financial institutions who support the Buy Freedom goals. Buy Freedom also asks you to support, with the remainder of your spending, non-minority firms which hire blacks and support minority vendors.

Buy Freedom has not formally organized in the Triad, but you can still buy your freedom by

program.

Black businesses are asked to buy from other black-owned businesses, give discounts when possible, give courteous and competitive service at competitive prices in a wholesome environment, support black financial institutions with deposits and create new jobs from some of the increased sales.

Many may question whether you should spend money at black-owned firms which do not follow these practices.

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## CHILDWATCH

### We persist; children win

By MARIAN W. EDELMAN  
Syndicated Columnist

WASHINGTON — It has never been easy.

This year, Alabama child advocate Sophia Harris faced yet another in a series of uphill struggles on behalf of Alabama's black and disadvantaged youngsters.

For the third year in a row, the termination of the state's program to help provide child care to disadvantaged children seemed likely. A special fall session of the legislature was called to resolve this issue and other budget matters.

As a key leader in the child-care community, Ms. Harris got on the phone to all her friends -- women's groups, churches, civic groups, sororities, fraternities -- "asking them to get out and help us."

When the session ended, the money for child care had survived.

Ms. Harris has never been daunted by difficult obstacles. As a young black girl, she sought to attend a predominantly white high school, an experience which, she says, made her "passionate" about equal educational opportunities for blacks.

She carried that passion into the first meeting in 1972 of the Federated Child Care Centers of Alabama, or FOCAL, a network of black-run child-care centers of which she is now director. The centers were then struggling with complex new federal requirements for child care.

FOCAL came to their rescue, attracting more than 40 centers into its network in the first year and one-half alone. It provided the training and expertise that helped these centers offer better-quality child care to the black community.

But many black families in Alabama still faced a big obstacle to getting the child care they needed: money. Harris did something about it.

When federal funding to help families pay for child care began to dry up at the start of the '80s, she turned to another source: the state legislature.

With a strong lobbying effort, FOCAL and other groups managed to win the first new state money to help poor and black families pay for child care in the history of this conservative state.

Harris was not deterred by the racial stereotypes and negative attitudes toward blacks held by some state legislators. Instead, FOCAL has built a broad coalition composed of both blacks and whites to fight together to hold on to the child-care funds through repeated threats of cut-backs.

Once again, Sophia Harris has won -- and so have the children of Alabama. Her successful efforts are an important reminder that working for children is not a matter of fighting one fight.

It is a matter of persistence.

Marian Wright Edelman is a National Newspaper Publishers Association columnist who is president of the Children's Defense Fund, a national voice for youth.

## ABOUT LETTERS

The *Chronicle* welcomes letters from its readers, as well as columns. Letters should be as concise as possible and typed or printed legibly. They also should include the name, address and telephone number of the writer.

Submit your letters and columns to *Chronicle* Mailbag, P.O. Box 3154, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102.