

Summer work picture cloudy

By RUDY ANDERSON
Chronicle Managing Editor

Winston-Salem's teens and young adults will have a brighter future finding jobs this summer than many of their parents will, according to city officials who say they have more money to help them find employment than they have had in the last three years.

But the Employment Security Commission (ESC), the other agency that will see a lot of those youths is not painting an optimistic picture for what they are likely to find.

"We anticipate this summer's employment program being parallel to last summer's program," said Walter Farabee, director of the city's Workforce Development program. "We are going to have high numbers of youth needing employment."

But Farabee said Workforce Development programs will be able to offer more because of an increase in federal allocations to the city through the U.S. Department of Labor's Job Training Partnership Act.

This year's appropriation to the city for Workforce programs is more than \$321,000. That is up by \$85,000 over the previous year. The city program is one of only a few operating trying to place youths for the summer.

Liberians set Solidarity Day extravaganza

Chronicle Staff Report

The Liberian Organization of the Piedmont was established in 1988 to advance human relations, unity, education, international understanding, and brotherhood.

The organization assists other community service groups, serves people in need, and helps in the reconstruction, rehabilitation, resettlement, and relief of Liberian Civil War victims.

The members of the Liberian Organization will hold their first Annual African/American Extravaganza Saturday evening, April 27, from 8 p.m.-1 a.m. at the M.C. Benton Convention Center. The event will feature an African/American Queen Pageant, an African Fashion Show, and Mr. Bill's Production Disco Show. Patrons are permitted to BYOB (Bring Your Own Beverage).

Individual donations are \$10. Tables are available for a donation of \$100 per table (ten seats per table). For students over 18 with ID, the donation is \$5. Donations are tax deductible, and proceeds will benefit Liberia Civil War victims and other tax exempt organizations in our communities.

Mayor Martha S. Wood has proclaimed the day of the celebration, Saturday, April 27, "African/American Solidarity Day" in Winston-Salem. She urges the city's citizens to support the special celebration by the Liberian Organization with their enthusiastic participation.

For ticket information, please call: (919) 922-2913, (919) 724-2099, or (919) 722-0063.

Belk store exec pleads guilty to lesser charge

By Chronicle Staff Report

A former assistant Belk Department Store manager, facing a charge of embezzlement, pled guilty to a lesser charge Friday and was placed in the Forsyth County deferred-prosecution program.

Robert D. Rhoad, 45, of 6075 Styers Ferry Road, had been charged with one count of embezzlement. Investigators said Rhoad had taken \$1,010 from the department store at Hanes Mall from Oct. 6 through March 28. Rhoad admitted to a charge of misdemeanor larceny.

Completion of the deferred-prosecution program by Rhoad would mean the charge would be dismissed and he'd have no criminal record.

Rhoad was also ordered to do 50 hours of community service. He was not required to pay the money back, according to the prosecuting attorney, because store officials said he had already done that.

"With the funds available we'll be able to give from 230 to 250 youths opportunities for work," said Farabee. The bulk of that group, Farabee said, will be placed through Workforce Development's Summer Youth Employment Service (SYEP). Youths who are 16-21 years old and qualify are eligible for this program.

The rest, he said, will probably be placed through the Triad Youth Service Program (TYSP). This program is a collaborative effort by United Way, the Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Development, and the Urban League. This collaborative effort in placing youth in summer jobs is an outgrowth of the violence of last spring and summer that left two youths dead or others on the wrong side of the law.

In this program youths as young as 14 are placed in jobs. Last year, of the 119 people to register with the program, 58 actually found work with various companies. And last year the program was rather late in getting started for programs of its type.

"Kids needing jobs are sent to companies needing people, and the company works out the pay schedule," said Reginald McCaskill, youth coordinator for Workforce. "This is a referral and pre-employment program to prepare kids for the initial interview and the actual

work site."

McCaskill said he was hopeful that an earlier start this year will help place more youths.

While those efforts are admirable, more than 10,000 working age youths fresh out of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools will be out on the streets in the next few weeks. That figure does not include college students returning who will also be looking for work.

"It's tough right now," said Curtis Mitchell, manager of the ESC. Mitchell said there were some opportunities available that he felt some youths would not want to do, like yard work. He said there are possibilities in the fast food industry but that they are not as plentiful as they once were.

"In the manufacturing, computer, and service-oriented industries, those companies will be looking for the children of company employees to fill their vacancies first and then look outside to fill the positions left," said Mitchell.

"It is not going to be a great summer for kids generally in the workforce this summer. But if they use their ingenuity, it is possible to find something. They just can't give up if they don't get the job they originally go after," Mitchell said.

Youths will also be competing with the adult population for the jobs that are available in this area.

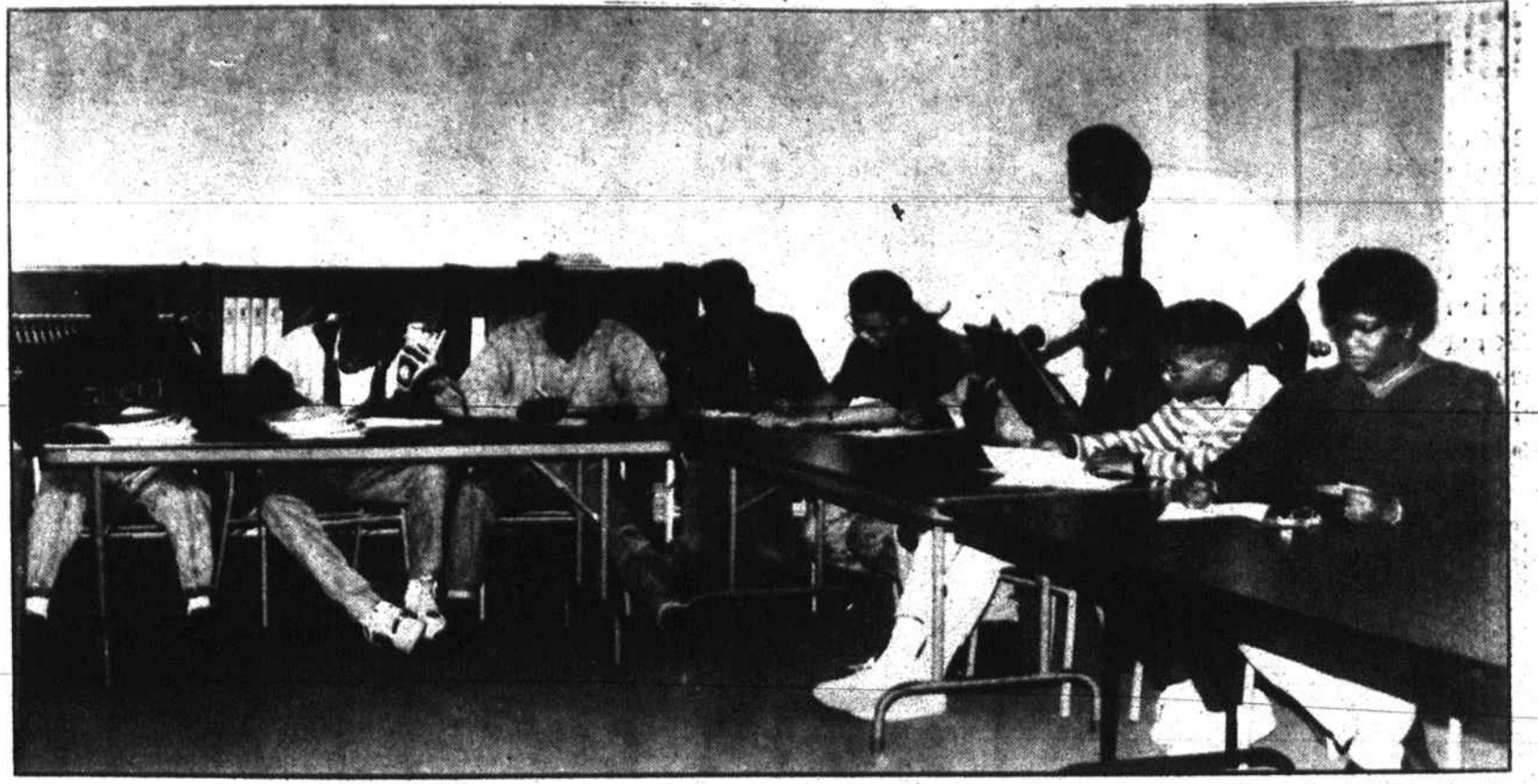


Photo by L.B. Speas Jr.

Reginald McCaskill, youth coordinator for Workforce, instructs youth on procedures in signing up for summer employment.

Forsyth County's unemployment rate stands at roughly four percent. Some would argue that figure is extremely conservative.

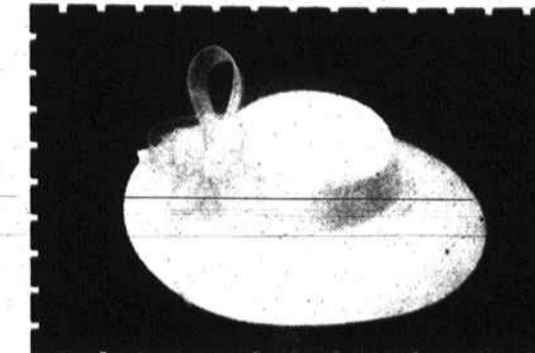
Even so, that represents five to six thousand people in the four-county area served by the ESC, who

are looking for fulltime employment. ESC places about 1,000 youths a year, under age 22, in full-time jobs.

Mitchell suggested youths begin their job search early to take advantage of the few opportunities

available.

"If adults are having difficulty finding jobs, you know young people are," said Farabee. "That's why we're going all out to give the total family all the assistance they can get."

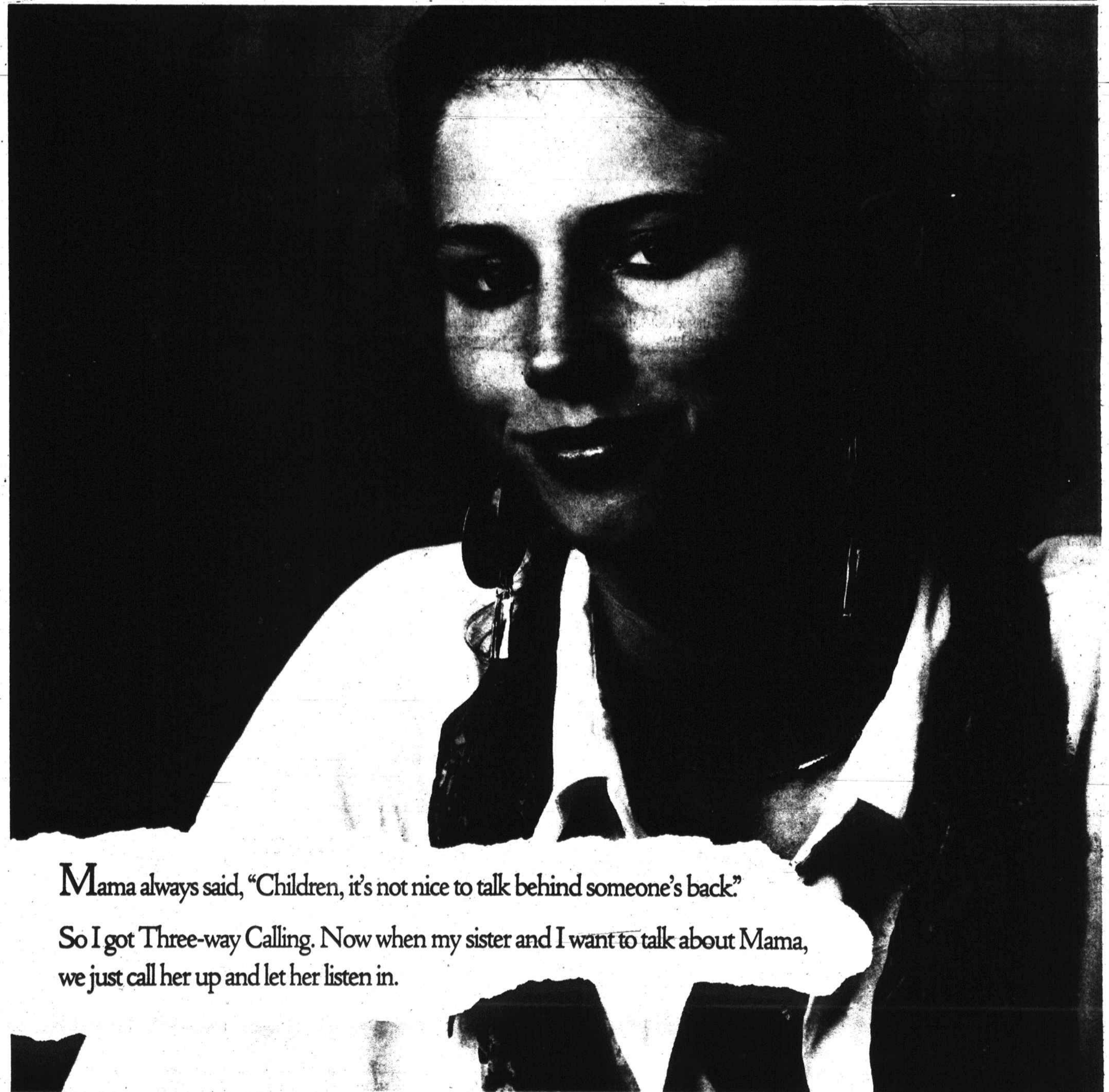


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