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Winston-Salem Chronicle

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"Power concedes nothing without a struggle." — Frederick Douglass

75 CENTS

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Residents have run the Happy Hill Garden Mart since it first opened its doors Dec. 21, 1992. From left to right are: Scott Fletcher, manager; Danelda Wright; and Angela White, assistant manager.

1-Year-Old Happy Hill's Resident-Run Store Celebrates Anniversary

By SARRINA JONES
Chronicle Staff Intern

A couple of years ago, the corner of Liberia and Free streets in the Happy Hill Gardens community was a drug-infested area known as "The Block." After a year of fund raising, rebuilding and cooperation, the corner has become one of the neighborhood's most valuable assets.

The reason? Happy Hill Garden Mart. The store, managed and operated by residents of the community, first opened its doors Dec. 21, 1992. An anniversary ceremony will be held Friday, Jan. 14, at the store. Officials from the Housing Authority of Winston-Salem are excited about the store's success.

"I was part of a team," said Clifton Graves, HAWS' assistant executive director. "We wanted the store to be a shining star in the community."

Originally, the corner of Liberia and Free streets was a drug-infested area, said Graves. The original store sold alcohol and attracted shady characters to the neighborhood.

"It was a community eyesore," he said. "It was a

hangout for undesirable people."

In October 1991 community leaders Maggie Edwards and Yvonne Jefferson worked to clean up the streets. With donations from organizations such as the United Way, the Winston-Salem Foundation and the Kute Biting Foundation, the concept of revitalizing the area with a store moved from being a dream to a reality.

"I started dreaming about things I can do with the store if it was available," Edwards said. "And low and behold, it was available."

Edwards said that Jefferson went to the United Way, which provided money to purchase the store after it was offered for sale at an auction.

"So far, so good. The people are still getting used to the idea," she said. "It's more than they expected it to be."

The Happy Hill Garden Mart has done its part in beautifying the community. From its inviting cottage-like exterior to the clean, well-lit corridors separating shelves of goods ranging from detergent

see HAPPY HILL A3

Liberty Street Store Owners Still Bicker

▲ Employee: Minit Mart owner asset to community

By DAVID L. DILLARD
Chronicle Staff Writer

Jervis Mack walked into a crowded Minit Mart store Monday afternoon and picked up a loaf of bread, a pack of sausage and a beer.

Mack didn't have the money to pay for it but told Mike Sarsour, the store's owner, "You know I'm good for it tomorrow."

Sarsour smiled and said, "Take it. I'll see you next week."

Mack is one of many poor customers from the Liberty Street neighborhood who receives credit from Sarsour.

"A lot of times they don't always have the money right now," he said. "Where else can they go and get what they need when they're broke? If I don't help the people, no other business will."

Sarsour said his business is successful because it runs like a family environment to the residents.

"They trust me," he said. "I go to their houses and do whatever I can. I treat them like family. These are low-income people. I cannot take advantage of them."

Last week, Sarsour's competitor, Curtis Carpenter, who owns the Music Box and Andrea's One Stop across the street from the Minit Mart, complained that Sarsour, a Palestinian, was taking advantage of the black community.

While Carpenter vehemently continues to claim that he pressed charges against Sarsour for selling counterfeit cassette tapes, Sarsour denies the allegations, and the police have no record of a charge against him.

"Everything I told you was true," Carpenter said. "And he's still doing it when nobody's around."

see LIBERTY A7

BLACK & WHITE

After Work, Racial Socializing Ends

By DAVID L. DILLARD
Chronicle Staff Writer

Ron, a young, white worker at R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., said he doesn't care much for blacks. He doesn't associate with them and, if he had his druthers, would not work with them, either.

Ron (not his real name — he requested and was granted anonymity) feels race relations here are not good but doesn't believe tensions are getting any worse.

He apparently epitomizes how most members of the black and white races here feel about each other. Though they peacefully co-exist for more than a third of each week day, that is often where the interaction stops.

"I got my friends; they got theirs," he said. "I'm not a racist; I just do my job and go home."

see AFTER WORK A3

Tension Could Lead To Race Riot: Study

By DAVID L. DILLARD
Chronicle Staff Writer

Racial tension and discrimination are serious problems in North Carolina, according to a recent survey sponsored by the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

That discovery was made from data collected from over 800 North Carolinians by researchers,

see SURVEY A3

Famed NYC Dancer Arthur Mitchell to Teach Craft at NCSA

By MARK R. MOSS
Chronicle Staff Writer

For the two hours that Arthur Mitchell sat and watched students go through their dance routines Monday afternoon, there was nothing in his face to betray how he felt about what he saw.

Occasionally, he whispered into an assistant's ear or offered a smile when the dance instructor glanced in his direction.

Finally, near the end of the session, Mitchell, the legendary dancer and director of the Dance Theatre of

Harlem, began to offer his own criticisms. The chest should expand at the sides, he said, demonstrating by holding the armpits of a student.

"Let your belly button touch your backbone," he told another.

"You have no wrists," he told a woman for the benefit of all who weren't using their hands right.

And when the North Carolina School of the Arts students tried what Mitchell suggested and got it right, there came from the master in a thunderous and exuberant voice.

"Yes! Yes!" And, "There, you have the power!" Or, "There we go! There we go! That's nice dear. Very nice!"

Mitchell is in town this week to share his knowledge of dance with the School of the Arts students.

His observance of Monday's class was the first step in selecting those students whom he will work with on "Holberg Suite," a 17-minute piece Mitchell choreographed in 1970.

Before they were dismissed, the students, having shown off their

best, paused to give Mitchell a hearty applause.

Lorraine Graves, a stage director and a former director with the Dance Theatre, is assisting Mitchell this week.

"It's my life," Mitchell said. "I think that's what I'm here to do. It's the essence of what I am about."

Mitchell is 59 but looks and moves more like he's 39. Even when he flashes his toothy, bright, beguiling smile, there are no facial lines to hint at his age.

see FAMED A3

Ballet Co. Combines Dance and Life

By SARRINA JONES
Chronicle Staff Intern

Regeania Singletary has always known what she wanted to do.

While growing up in a rough section of Trenton, N.J., she knew that she wanted to participate in dance classes to occupy her idle time and to avoid winding up like some of the people around her.

Now as the assistant director of Dancers Unlimited Ballet, Singletary helps other young girls escape into the soothing and esteem-building world of dance.

"We just need to do something for our generation coming up — to correct a problem," she said.

Dancers Unlimited began 10 years ago as a result of the efforts of Wyenia Matthews, said Singletary, a Parkland High School teacher.

Matthews, a former student-health nurse at Winston-Salem State University, sought to provide dance lessons for young girls in her community.

With the permission of Clarence Gaines, the former basketball coach at the university, Matthews and her students were able to use the school's gym for their Saturday morning classes.

"She [Matthews] dedicated herself," Singletary said. "She would go bankrupt helping those kids."

All of the teachers with the company are non-paid volunteers, said Singletary. The students are charged dues that are used, among other things, to purchase snacks and for transportation.

The seven classes of jazz, tap, Afro, ballet, point, modern and

see BALLET A3



Arthur Mitchell instructs students during auditions at the N.C. School of the Arts.

WHERE TO FIND IT

BUSINESS	B10
CLASSIFIEDS	B12
COMMUNITY NEWS	A4
EDITORIALS	A13
ENTERTAINMENT	C11
FEATURES	B2
RELIGION	B9
SPORTS	B1

THIS WEEK IN BLACK HISTORY

On Jan. 1, 1916, the first issue of Journal of Negro History was published

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