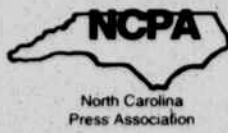


OPINION

Winston-Salem Chronicle

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First Aid for RHC

Our nation's health care system shows little sign of reform. The government currently finances 40 percent of health care costs in the United States. The health care industry represents nearly 15 percent of the U.S. economy. Yet, the country lags behind several developed nations in key indicators of health. The chief reason for this trend is that the poor and working poor lack access to affordable, quality health care stressing preventive medicine. Ironically, President Clinton's 1992 health care reform proposal was pronounced dead on arrival, derailed by awesome lobbies and partisan politics.

Though reform floundered in Washington, health care continues to concern all American citizens. And the health care issue is hitting close to home in East Winston. The fate of Reynolds Health Center, formerly Reynolds Memorial Hospital, hangs in the balance. Next month, Forsyth county commissioners must decide whether to continue county control of the center or to accept a \$5 million proposal from Baptist Hospital to take over the facility.

Some black leaders regard county control as an insurance policy that East Winston will continue to have a primary care facility. Others fear that without Baptist Hospital's support, the operation, which received \$4.6 million in county funds last year, may eventually fold.

A Reynolds advisory committee plans to reduce the center's reliance on government funds by increasing preventative care. By 2001, that would save more than \$1 million annually. But can the county hold on that long?

President Clinton advocacy aside, government seems to shun, rather than embrace, the health care business. By all indications, the Department of Health and Human Services is getting citizens off the public dole. The government is offering Band-Aids when health care really needs a transfusion. And a transfusion is just what Baptist Hospital is offering Reynolds Health Center: capital, a new patient-friendly facility, and unrivaled expertise. Baptist Hospital, however is not just bringing a proposal to the table; it is also reaching out and inviting input. What's not to like?

Health care is changing in the United States. Patients navigate a sea of health care options and benefits. Meanwhile, the government is jumping ship, getting out of health care administration. East Winston's best bet is to seize the opportunity Baptist Hospital's proposal presents. The African-American community should accept the proposal, get involved with the commission and insist upon a community advisory board. Baptist Hospital is not going to invest \$5 million in a facility unless it plans to make it work.

How long can we expect the county commission to continue funding Reynolds Health Center? Granted, the facility is a lifeline for those it serves. How many times have we seen federal, state and local governments value dollars over human lives? Experience tells us that if Reynolds is not financially viable, government funds will dry up sooner or later. At least for the moment, there is an alternative, and a rather attractive one at that.

"U.S. News and World Report's" 1996 guide to America's hospitals ranked the Bowman Gray/Baptist Hospital Medical Center as one of the best hospitals in the country in six specialties: cancer treatment, geriatrics, gynecology, neurology, orthopedics and rheumatology. Who better than Baptist to breathe new life into Reynolds and minister to our community's health?

Motherwit & History

Motherwit comes natural, and it speaks to heart and soul. Heed this simple, yet profound, wisdom.

"You were born God's original. Try not to be someone's copy," says Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund. The African-American woman is a marvel. Behold her dark beauty, shining intellect, amazing strength and rich legacy.

Poet and essayist June Jordan does not dwell on the past. "History don't stop to let nobody out of it," she attests. "So go ahead, get into the facts. Then we can move on."

Let's start at the beginning. If, as anthropological finds suggest, Africa is the cradle of civilization, an African woman was the mother of all mothers.

So, how does one go from being the first female ancestor to being a double minority? That's a long story. Super model Naomi Sims prefers looking on the bright side. "One great advantage," she says, "of being both black and a woman was that I started off with nothing to lose."

Combined with healthy optimism, that harsh reality emboldens daughters of Africa to take risks and compels them to rely on each other. "Sisterhood," says Rachel Bagby, "is a gift." Cherish it.

With all the African-American woman has had to endure, is it any wonder that she is just now hitting her stride? She's got a right to sing the blues. Instead, she sings praises and keeps the faith. "No more pleadin'. No more cryin'," sings Linda Tillery. "Cuz I believe that I do hold up half the sky."

'Deed you do, sister; 'deed, you do.



The Chronicle Mailbag

Our Readers Speak Out

Faircloth N.C. Embarrassment

To the Editor:

Lauch Faircloth. Like Bill Turner in his last column, we, too, found ourselves in D.C. the day the Washington Post ran its piece on Faircloth's plan to dismantle democracy in the District. What an embarrassment to all North Carolinians! To have to defend the state and its percentage of good people before breakfast. And when we can't claim he is an aberration, what with Jesse, Burr, Coble, Myrick and the rest of their kind.

Democracy just does not come naturally to Lauch. A poorly educated man, he is much more at home running things from his hip pocket. Maybe if we swapped him a small Central American country for D.C., he could sit behind a big desk and not have to answer to any kind of elected body at all, just like in his pig farm empire.

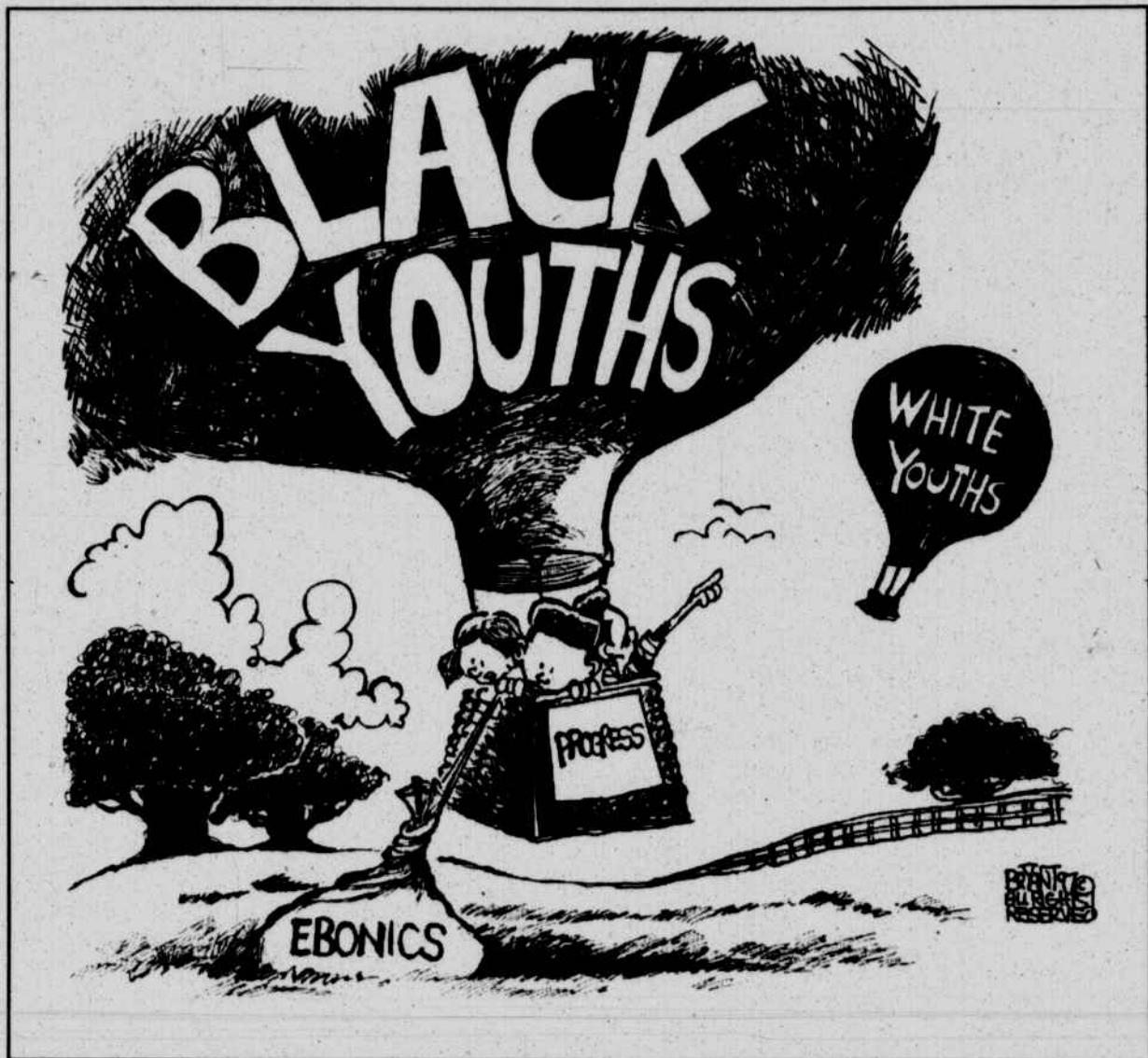
We have to turn out Faircloth and the rest of these mean and arrogant right wingers. The Charles Taylor-types may be smarter than Lauch, but they never saw a tree or a social program that didn't need cutting. Just because they don't look like bumpkins doesn't mean they're not as dangerous in their own way as Faircloth. We have to root out the ones that are dug in. As Mr. Turner pointed out, we owe it to the rest of the country.

Hayes McNeill

Report Child Abuse

To the Editor:

I am a social work major at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and I am currently doing an internship at Exchange SCAN, a child abuse prevention agency in Winston-Salem. I was wondering if people truly know



the growing, horrible problem child abuse is. Child abuse is a cancer in our society.

Last year across the nation, 3.1 million children were reported as abused. That does not include the cases never reported. "Two thousand of those children died from abuse" (Krupinski, 1996). More children die each year from abuse than they do in car accidents. Accidents are just that — accidents, and only happen once. Abuse is repetitive; it happens often and yet we can't seem to stop it. In North Carolina last year alone, 57,907 reports were made involving 96,175 children.

My concentration is on young children and abuse. Through my research I have heard astonishing stories. The lat-

est is a book I read called "Death From Child Abuse and No One Heard," written by Eve Krupinski and Dana Weikel. I highly recommend that everyone read this book. It is truly an eye-opener. It tells a true story of a five-year-old little girl who fights for her life her last seven days of pure torture, but fails. The saddest part of her story is people saw — her own mother saw — people knew, and no one told.

There are so many other children who fight for their lives every day, lives that can be saved. Society has an obligation to our innocent children to report suspected abuse. If you have good reason to think a child is being abused, he or she probably is. It doesn't matter if you are a neighbor, friend, teacher, student,

passer-by in the grocery store, you can report abuse, anonymously if you so choose.

Child Protective Services has a legal obligation to investigate physical abuse, within a maximum of 72 hours, when reported. Don't sit around and wonder if a child is being abused, let the Child Protective Services find out.

Abuse is an action or series of actions inflicted upon a child that causes harm and leaves scars. These can be physical, emotional or sexual and may not be evident to a casual observer. Abuse damages bodies, minds, self-esteem, relationships and family systems (Krupinski, 1996).

If the child lives through it.

Michele Brodbeck

Blue Bandages: Now There's Equality

Guilt is a bad thing. How many times have we heard that one? There's often a bit of wisdom in what "they say," yet I'm prone to wonder. In doing so, I recall my first reading of Peggy McIntosh's essay on white privilege. I was most struck at the time by her example concerning "flesh colored bandages," probably, because it involved an issue that seemed so trivial. (If racial injustice consisted of the fact that black people can't get bandages to match their skin tones, what a lovely world we would live in.) I'm fascinated by those blue bandages worn by players in the NBA. Justice personified: they look equally awful on everyone!

Frankly, I don't feel much (read: any) guilt when it comes to bandages, but if I'm truthful with myself, I must admit that I do feel certain pangs every now and then with regard to white privilege. Sometimes I'm a bit afraid to relinquish those feelings because without them I'm not sure what I might fail to do. Guess I need my guilt. Before you decide that I'm a prime candidate for psychiatric help or, worse yet, that I'm spiritually bankrupt, please let me explain.

There is no virtue in feeling guilty for things I don't do. I'm not representing all white people or apologizing for everything that anyone might happen to do at any time. Not me. Neither do I feel guilt concerning things that I once did, but that I am making a genuine effort not to do now. I do not expect perfection, even from myself. Let's face it: theologi-

cally and literally, I believe in the forgiveness of sin. I'm clean.

It seems that for black people to stop struggling is to give up,

types are less destructive when they are applied to others than to us. Human nature? Yes, and stupidity.

Guilt can serve as a badly needed wake-up call. Our failure to advance in the area of race relations in our country will have dire consequences for everyone, not just for blacks who have (historically) borne so much of the brunt of our failure to implement equality and justice, but for all Americans. My destiny, and that of my children and grandchildren, is, indeed, a part of our common destiny. King was right ... is right. Maybe guilt keeps me from living my life so selfishly. Maybe it's the push I need when I get out of bed each day. Maybe it's the catalyst for change (when heeded).

Or maybe that small twinge that I feel is not truly guilt at all ... maybe it's an angel pulling on my heart strings, reminding me to reject a privilege based on a false superiority, challenging me to strive to become someone more than just a generic white person ... maybe it's God hoping that I will dare to go beyond the declaration that the color of bandages is trivial (to whom?) — on to a more inclusive understanding of just whose needs are significant — on to a stand that acknowledges all human beings as God's children — on to struggle for justice and equality for everyone. Perhaps guilt is not a bad thing. Sometimes I wonder ...

(Helen Losse is a student at Wake Forest University.)

ONE STEP BEYOND

By HELEN LOSSE



That's not what I am talking about.

Perhaps there are readers who will take issue with my choice of words. I have determined (after many years of experience) not to argue about words. If the word guilt weighs heavily upon you, please, feel free to substitute one that will make you feel more comfortable. I am interested in concept above term.

White people (even, maybe especially, those of us who have made a commitment to strive for racial justice and equality) know that without something to keep us going, we can stop struggling for this justice anytime we choose. It's a part of the privilege we inherited when we were born white: privilege that we must consciously and continually reject for it will not stay gone. This privilege returns every time we sleep — or whenever we let down our guard — so we must reject it anew every morning. Rejection requires a conscious decision before it can become an action. And herein is the danger: forget (just once) ... and you are someone you do not want to be.

but for white people to stop struggling means only to stop struggling. When we reflect on this insane inequality, we do feel guilty. We can stop; others can't. We enjoy unmerited privilege even as we struggle for equality. For this reason, I think white people know that some little bit of guilt is absolutely necessary to keep us from lapsing into complacency. We need that twinge to keep us sensitive to the injustices that daily confront those who do not enjoy a privileged status. We need reminders so we will make the conscious rejection of privilege that we know we should make.

Pangs of conscience cause us to look into the face of another human being and to see his or her pain. And the twinges remind us that we have much to lose, for if we give up the struggle, we may well lose ourselves in a welcoming, but wickedly consuming, cloud of whiteness where we cannot find (or help) ourselves or others. It is a fearful thing to me to consider that in the eyes of many I am a generic white person. We often feel that stereo-