

Bless the Children is honored for community service

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Bless the Children Program and 4-H Club knows all about true success.

Feb. 19 marked the first year of The Bless the Children Program and 4-H Club being a legal, chartered organization. The group has achieved a lot.

The group received a certificate of appreciation for community service at Forsyth County 4-H Achievement Night. Thirty-five youths, seven staff members and six volunteers, all representing The Bless the Children Program and 4-H Club, were presented the award after pulling up in their first van sponsored by Beauty World.

The theme of Achievement Night was "The Power of Youth" (4-H emphasizes head, heart, hands and health). Awards and certificates were presented to more than 100 youths and their 4-H groups. Johnell and Debra Hunter and their youth group were presented with a 4-H Club

achievement certificate. The Hunters wish to thank all of the children, parents, staff volunteers and sponsors for supporting the Bless the Children Program and 4-H Club.

This has been a blessed year for the club, which has obtained a new office, computer, national base station, three new sites for neighborhood beautification, a new 4-H youth committee and several new sponsors.

Club activities include: field trips, missions, outreach programs, arts and crafts, awards, garden projects, community clean-up, neighborhood beautification, and celebrations and giveaways.

The club wishes to thank Don Mebane and Jackie Hilton, 4-H agents; Mrs. Stanback and Beth Thompson of the junior master gardener program; others with the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and John Kim of Beauty World.

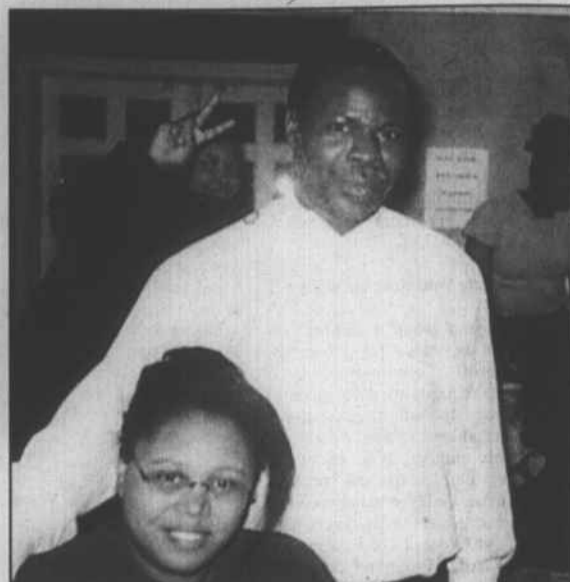
Also, 4-H celebrated 100



Members of the Bless the Children Program and 4-H Club

plus years of service as the world's largest youth organization.

The Bless the Children Program and 4-H Club meets on the third Thursday of each



Johnell and Debra Hunter

month from 6-8:30 at Newness of Life Family Worship Center, 4125 Indiana Ave. For

more information, call the church at 744-5080 or the Hunters at 725-7073.

Retailers

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compact disc. Eighteen were on sale just as vinyl records.

Seventeen songs, including Creed's "My Sacrifice," No Doubt's "Hey Baby," Enrique Iglesias' "Hero" and Alanis Morissette's "Hands Clean," were only available if you bought a full album. Record retailers complain this alienates fans, particularly young ones, by forcing them to spend more than they want or - worse yet - retrieve songs online.

"I think they're losing a whole generation of record buyers," said Carl Rosenbaum, chief executive of Top Hits, a Buffalo Grove, Ill., company that supplies music to 15,000 stores nationwide.

"You either have to steal it off the Internet or you just don't buy it at all," he said. "The other option is to buy a full CD for \$18. If you're just introducing yourself to an act, you don't want to do that. It's hard to figure out what their

thinking is."

Music executives, in turn, blame retailers for discounting singles so heavily it's impossible to make money.

"We can't work it out," said Val Azzoli, co-chairman of the Atlantic Group of record labels. "We're not an industry that works together."

If the single dies altogether, the beginning of the end can be traced a decade back to the start of Soundscan, which provided the first precise measurements of music sales.

Executives who long suspected that singles cut into sales of the more profitable full-length CDs now had evidence to back that up, said Jordan Katz, senior vice president of sales at Arista Records.

There's some debate about the extent to which that's true, though.

Bob Higgins, chief executive of the Albany, N.Y.-based Trans World Entertainment, which owns 950 music stores, said he believes singles hurt album sales in only about 15 percent of the cases.

Nickelback's "Silver Side

Up" album is currently in the top 10, seemingly unhurt by the CD single for the song "How You Remind Me." And Santana sold boatloads of its most recent album despite a succession of singles, he said.

In the late 1990s, there was a brief period when record companies put singles by singers such as Mariah Carey on sale for a money-losing 49 cents, artificially boosting sales to secure flashy chart debuts.

To avoid manipulations of its charts, Billboard changed the way it computed the Top 40 to reflect radio airplay as well as sales. Therefore, it was possible to have a hit "single" without a song ever being released as a single.

CD singles, which usually have two or three songs, generally retail for between \$3 and \$4. Many retailers routinely discount them, by 50 percent or more, Azzoli said. And there are still music companies that encourage this by secretly giving singles away to retailers to inflate sales, he said.

"If I could get \$5 a single and sell a million of them, hey, there's a business there," Azzoli said.

The demise of the single means more of music's romance is disappearing, just like when colorful album covers were replaced by tiny CD booklets. In a song being released this spring, Elvis Costello waxes nostalgic about collecting stacks of 45s (a phrase already consigned to history, because it refers to the number of revolutions a 7-inch disc made each minute on a turntable).

"Nine-year-old puts his money down," he sings. "Every scratch, every click, every heartbeat. Every breath that I held for you."

Music companies recognize the danger, but "their short-term motivation is to get as much profit as possible," said Ed Christman, retail editor at Billboard. "The fact that young kids aren't buying records is a long-term worry."

It's not easy to find the section where singles are sold at the Virgin megastore in

New York's Times Square.

Walk past the display of top albums, go down the escalator and wander to the dance section in a back corner.

It's close to where Jeannie Imperati of North Haven, Conn., was grumbling one recent day when she took her 15-year-old son shopping.

"I'll spend \$100 on CDs just so he can get one song out of each of them," she said.

Her friend John Cas said he found the lack of choices in the singles section frustrating.

"Most of the CDs have only one good song out of a dozen," he said. "At 18 or 20 bucks a pop, you want to be able to enjoy the whole CD."

The space that music stores used to devote to singles is dwindling, or disappearing altogether. One worry for Rosenbaum's Top Hits is that the chains he supplies with music, such as Eckerd Drugs, may simply use the space for non-music products.

Now he's distributing golf balls as well as music.

At Arista, Katz is sensitive to concerns on both sides and

is among executives experimenting with ways to make more singles available, though maybe not in the way many consumers would want.

In some cases, singles are made available before an album's release but pulled from stores when the album comes out. Arista also makes singles for songs after they have cooled off as hits. Pink's "Get the Party Started," currently in Billboard's Top 10, isn't a CD single now but may be in a couple of months.

Labels also are experimenting more with so-called maxi-singles. They may contain five or six songs - often different remixes of the same song - and are sold for between \$7 and \$8. The costs of manufacturing them are similar to regular singles, so profits are higher.

Some artists also release DVD singles with videos included with the music.

"We have to get kids in the habit of buying music," Katz said. "I'm trying to figure out innovative ways to have singles and albums co-exist."

Author

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country.

"My mother was a social

worker and inspired us to do for other people," Taylor said. "The issue of domestic abuse is in the book, so I felt I had to do my part."

Taylor said that her book

gives a voice to the 50 million American women who are abused by their spouses.

"A Silver Tongue" is published by Oshun Dynasty Publications.

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