

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Golfers play one of Winston Lake's 18-holes.

More support needed for "The Lake"



Ernie Pitt

This & That

Recently, I had the privilege of playing in a golf match between the Winston Lake Senior Golf Association and the golf team in Charlotte. The match-up was coordinated by the legendary golfer, Mr. James Black. The match was held at the Revolution Golf Course, which is now a part of Revolution Park just west of downtown Charlotte.

The course used to be an 18-hole course but nine holes were eliminated to make room for the park. The nine holes are played twice to complete an 18-hole round of golf.

What was so significant to me about the match was how proud the Charlotte golfers were of Revolution Golf Course. Even though it was only nine holes and two hot dogs cost \$6. They were proud of the history of the course and proud of the recognition given to some of the old players. Some of the holes had plaques with the guys' names on them including their nick names.

The other significant thing to me was how envious they were of the golfers from Winston-Salem and Winston Lake. They knew as much about The Lake as we did.

They knew that it was constructed for blacks way back when. They knew that we have had few problems scheduling matches there. And they knew that it was basically run by African-Americans.

I'm certain that most people are not aware of this but some black golfers actually have vowed never to play The Lake again. Why? Mainly for personal reasons that they don't seem to be able to get over. It's easy to get upset about things when they don't

go your way or when you feel ignored or mistreated. But after listening to those guys in Charlotte say the things they said about The Lake, I actually got a wee bit embarrassed at the few times that I've gotten angry over something that happened at The Lake. I really felt bad.

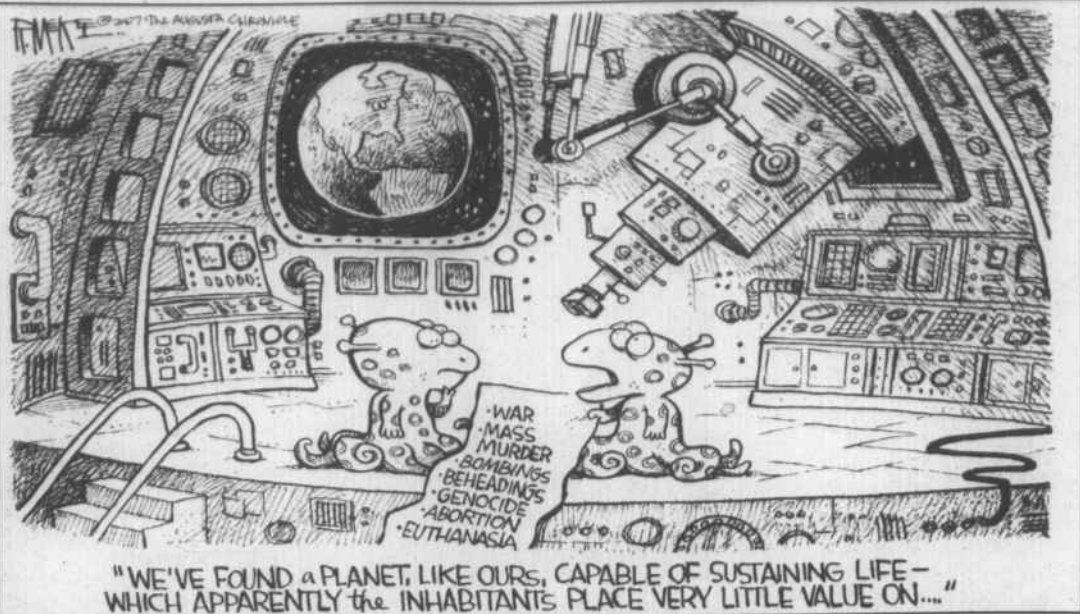
Nothing should make any of us so angry that we stop supporting Winston Lake Golf Course. Mr. Black made an impassioned speech about his love for the game of golf and what we should be getting out of the game. He said it was about love...for the game...for the competition...for your partner...for your brotherhood...fatherhood...sharing a few hours fellowshiping and the like. He broke down in tears before he could finish speaking.

Since Winston Lake is in the East Ward, I'm calling on City Council Member Joycelyn Johnson and the Winston Lake Senior Golf Association to work together to see how they can help revitalize The Lake. The course is a diamond in the rough, no pun intended. We could really make it more of an attraction than it is. It is really a great golf track, and it has a lot of history, which is reflected inside the club house and with its name, the E. Jerry Jones Club House.

But it needs to be promoted better and supported by all golfers in the city and county. And, I'm encouraging those guys who have given up on The Lake to let bygones be bygones and come on back to your home course. It needs you and I believe you need it.

Ain't God good? God bless you. Amen? Amen!

Ernie Pitt is publisher and co-founder of The Chronicle and the president of the N.C. Association of Black Publishers. Contact him at erpitt@wschronicle.com or 723-8428, ext. 104.



Graduation as the only option



Linda Harrill

Guest Columnist

The high dropout rate across North Carolina and its effect on the future of the economy is one of the most talked about topics in education. Our business leaders are talking about what will happen to our economy, when the reality is that our dropout numbers are already causing economic losses.

Research shows that youth who drop out rarely leave their communities and are a greater strain on local economies. Students who don't graduate earn half of what their peers who graduate earn and are eight times more likely to end up in prison. Girls who drop out are three times more likely to become teen mothers and 80% of youth who drop out will depend on public health-care.

The economic reality is that we need well educated, functionally literate youth with 21st century work skills.

The moral reality is that we cannot allow youth to make wrong decisions that will render them incapable of supporting themselves.

As responsible citizens, we must first accept that dropping out does not begin in high school, it simply ends there. Dropping out begins when a student enters elementary school and realizes that he or she is already behind. These students receive similar negative messages when they are held back in the third grade as they do when their parents give them permission to stay home from school to baby sit. By the time they reach high school, they typically fall into one of four "drop out" categories: those who leave by choice, those who get pushed out, those who get pulled out, and those who fall out.

Students who leave by choice are those who become bored with school because the curriculum just isn't challenging enough. While these students are rare, they do leave before receiving a diploma because a traditional high school is not fulfilling their needs.

Then there are students who get pushed out. They

receive subtle and overt messages their entire lives that there are other alternatives. However, once out of school, those promised alternatives are never offered.

The students who get pulled out are offered paying jobs by employers who never explain that a lucrative job at sixteen won't support a family or pay the mortgage. They are told that a GED is just as good as a high school diploma, which is just not true. A GED has its place, for older workers who never graduated, giving them a chance to provide for their families in the ever-changing work force, but not as an empty promise to teenagers in high school.

Finally, there are the students who fall out of school. They disappear from the classroom and no one ever reaches out to them to find out why. We simply assume that these students don't want to graduate, so we leave them alone.

As concerned citizens, we must intervene. We must consider the research and studies that confirm the creation of effective alternatives such as Performance Learning Centers, small nontraditional high schools, quality mentor-

ing programs and personal care teams that surround students and recognize their needs.

Many communities have realized that intervention is necessary, and through corporate, individual, educational and community support have asked Communities In Schools (CIS) for help. Recently, CIS collaborated with the National Dropout Prevention Center to create Best Practices in Dropout Prevention. CIS works at the local level to incorporate these strategies in their programs, working to identify students who are most at-risk early on in their education. CIS creates personalized, coordinated and accountable plans to help them graduate.

Statistics show us that we can either pay for these programs now, or pay for these youth later as they end up in jail or on welfare. It's up to us, we must teach our youth that there is truly only one option, and that is staying in school and graduating.

Linda Harrill is president and CEO of Communities In Schools of North Carolina.

Heros and Sheros needed



Marian Wright Edelman

Guest Columnist

About this time each year, Hollywood releases blockbuster movies featuring superheroes - typically a man in tights and maybe a cape opposing a master villain. Fiction aside, what is needed are real world heroes with what it takes to oppose a truly daunting foe. As the members of the class of 2007, I invite you to take a heroic stand for something bigger than yourselves and join the fight for social justice. You have a great heritage and legacy to carry on. Your forefathers and foremothers fought to abolish slavery, secure rights for women, establish worker protections, end poverty and racial segregation and achieve equality for all. Out of these movements grew the Children's Defense Fund, an advocacy organization for children who are the most voiceless group in our nation and world.

This year, we're fighting to guarantee health and mental health care to all children. We're building a movement to tear down the sinister architecture that funnels tens of thousands of children and teens into the Cradle to Prison Pipeline. We are working to end gun violence against children, which takes almost eight young lives every day. We're establishing CDF Freedom Schools programs across the country to provide critical summer and after-school enrichment. None of these efforts will be depicted in scenes of superhero movies coming to a theater near you. But by embracing one of them, you can make a differ-



Photo by Carol Fouke-Mpoye/NCCUSA

Dr. Otis Moss is pastor of Olivet Institutional Baptist

ence in your community.

We need strong, smart, morally-centered young people willing to take on the struggle to truly Leave No Child Behind and ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood. We need young people who won't look down at their shoes if someone calls them smart or a "do-gooder."

You don't have to have super powers. Most of you will never be stronger or healthier, and have as much energy as you possess today. You have agile minds and bodies and you have time - you have more than 40 or 50 years of productive work ahead of you - if you stay out of the fast lane with the fast crowd going nowhere. Two of my mentors, pioneering social activist Dorothy Height and scholar John Hope Franklin, are both over 90 and they're still going strong.

Spend some of your time and energy helping others in both your professional and

personal lives. There's a lot of work for heroes and sheroes - not with guns blazing or swinging from a tall building to save the cute imperiled co-star. Be a star teacher, go to law school and represent the unempowered. Become a juvenile or family court judge. Go to medical school and work in an urban or rural clinic. Volunteer to help build affordable housing with Habitat for Humanity, teach in or support a CDF Freedom Schools program. Choose a child in your extended family or from your community and stick with him or her as a mentor until they're 18. It is alarming how many children we lose to the streets, drugs, and crime for lack of just one positive adult in their lives.

Find your voice. We need people who will speak up, shout out, if necessary, when they see an injustice. Don't be afraid to stick your neck out, and take risks. Establish clear goals and take a focused and strategic approach to what you're fighting for. Don't scatter your energies on many

things that don't add up to a better whole. Keep your word and your commitments and take responsibility for your actions. Don't stop learning; continue your intellectual and spiritual development to grow as a person and asset to your family and community.

If you're right, don't take "no" or "but" for an answer. Be persistent and tenacious. Things may get rough at times. You may be challenged by formidable opponents backed by powerful and well-funded interests. The adversity you encounter might be so intimidating that you'll want to give up. Don't. When trouble comes, hang on and hang in. You're tougher than you think. Don't expect to solve a major concern with one big effort - work steadily over the long term. Movements are not built in a day or a decade.

Don't confuse heroism with fame or celebrity. As former Morehouse College board chair and Cleveland pastor Otis Moss, Jr., says, "The hero is known for achievements, the celebrity for being well-known. Celebrities make the news, heroes make history. Time makes heroes, time dissolves celebrities."

What is offered here is not a life of sacrifice but of service and purpose. You don't have to take a vow of poverty to share what you have with others. My own experience as a civil rights lawyer and as an advocate for children has been gratifying beyond description. If you want an exciting, purpose-driven life, join the effort to make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable in America - be a hero or a shero.

Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund and its Action Council whose Leave No Child Behind mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start.

Correction

Incorrect cut-line information ran with this photo in last week's issue. The little girl pictured, Naomi, is the daughter of the woman being made-up, Mariel Aponte.

