

B

Section

Debutante
slaying
shows
ugly side

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAVANNAH, Ga. — In manicured bushes on Orleans Square, where a fountain bubbles beneath gnarled oaks, two bouquets of roses lay near the spot where a debutante fell to a mugger's bullet before dawn on Christmas Eve.

A robber shot 19-year-old Jennifer Ross a few hours after she danced with her father at Savannah's Christmas Cotillion, her formal introduction as a woman of society in Georgia's oldest city. She died New Year's Day at the hospital where her father is a senior executive.

The shooting in Savannah's downtown historic district has outraged the local elite, with a group of prominent business leaders demanding a fierce crackdown on crime.

It has also put a spotlight on something residents of antebellum homes on the city's famous squares know too well, but visitors often are surprised to learn—Savannah's most picturesque places mask an underbelly of crime.

"It's such a peaceful city with the Spanish moss hanging down. It's alluring is what it is," said Dian Brownfield, a former president of the city's Downtown Neighborhood Association. "I think people just can't imagine any violence happening in a city like Savannah."

The murder of Ross, who had been studying international business at Mercer University in Macon, was the 29th slaying reported by Savannah-Chatham County police in the past year. None of the others provoked such an outcry.

In the week after Ross' death, influential business owners, bankers and real estate brokers met at the Chamber of Commerce demanding action. Angry e-mails swamped the mayor's inbox. Officials swiftly ordered sheriff's deputies, normally limited to guarding the courthouse and county jail, to augment police patrols on the streets. No one has been arrested in the killing.

During Ross' funeral at St. John's Episcopal Church on Thursday, the pews filled quickly and more than 100 mourners stood silently around the steps outside until pallbearers carried her casket out.

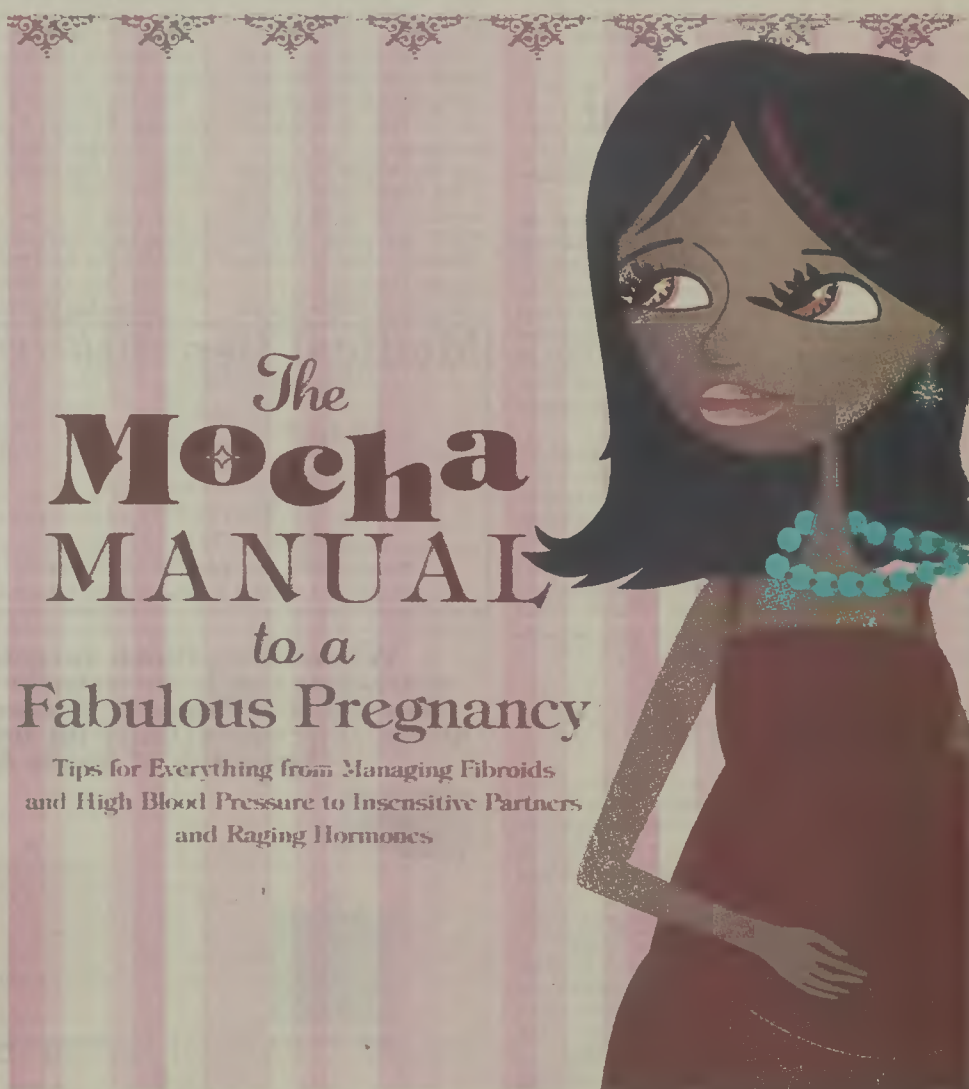
"It's just so senseless," said Ross' uncle, Adger Ross. "I think Jennifer represents the everyman scenario, it could have been any of us. Here we had a 19-year-old girl, the world was at her fingertips."

Others say the Ross family's social standing fired up a wealthy and powerful constituency rarely touched by violence. Ross' father, Rusty Ross, is a senior vice president and attorney for Memorial Health University Medical Center.

"Where the hell have they been all this time?" was the immediate response of Mayor Otis Johnson as the City Council met last week.

Johnson, Savannah's second black mayor, has made curbing crime a priority since taking office two years ago. He's held town meetings, publicly accused other black leaders of apathy, and issued a 2005 task-force report criticizing police for setting low crime-fighting goals and having too many officers behind

Please see DEBUTANTE/2B



Guide for moms

Handbook shows how pregnancy affects black women

By Cheris F. Hodges
cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

So you're having a baby, your ankles are swelling, your husband is now the biggest jerk in the world and you can't stop crying.

Is something wrong with you? No, and you're not alone. It's all in the manual.

"The Mocha Manual to a Fabulous Pregnancy" by Kimberly Seals-Allers is the first book about pregnancy written with black women in mind.

Seals-Allers is an award-winning journalist and mother of two. So, she knows what she's talking about.

"This book is like having a conversation with your girlfriend,"

Seals-Allers said. "This book gives black women everything they need to know about pregnancy."

Seals-Allers said when she was pregnant with her first child, she didn't find any information out there that spoke to her needs as a black woman. That was the inspiration behind her writing the "Manual."

"A study showed that college-educated women have the same poor outcomes in childbirth as poorer women," she said.

The reason is quite simple. Seals-Allers said black women have different needs when they are pregnant than their white counterparts. Black women have the highest rates of twins, 16 out of every

1,000 black births. It's half that for white women.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 17.5 percent of all births to black women are premature. The national average is 11.9 percent.

"Understanding that the complexities of our lives as black women can influence our responses to various situations, including pregnancy is key to helping us reverse the statistical tide in birth outcome," Seals-Allers writes.

The book, which is written in a conversational style, offers stories from celebrities who have experienced the miracle of childbirth and medical statistics.

Please see MOMS/2B

Citrus: Great for eating – and cleaning

By James and Morris Carey
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Winter is when oranges, tangerines and grapefruits are harvested in Northern California. The end result becomes glazed oranges, dried oranges, orange juice, orange soda, lemonade, grapefruit juice and

more. But best of all, we end up with a whole line of cleaning and deodorizing tools as a byproduct of good eats.

Lemon oil: Not lemon juice, lemon oil. Lemon oil is absolutely the very best glass cleaner we know of. If you have calcium build-up on your shower then you need lemon oil.

Simply use a piece of extra-fine steel wool dipped in lemon oil to clean a shower door that you currently can't see through because of the lime deposits. Once the door is clean, then wipe the surface down with a fresh coat of lemon oil and future lime deposits won't have a chance. By the way,

we also use car wax to protect glass in the shower when lemon oil isn't available.

Lemon juice: Not lemon oil, lemon juice. Have a recipe that requires half a lemon and don't know what to do with the rest of the juice? Lemon juice is highly acidic and is a great

Please see CITRUS/3B

ABOUT THIS LIFE WE LIVE

King holiday slips into party mode

By Cheris F. Hodges
cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

Twenty years ago, the United States made Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a national holiday.

This effort was supposed to keep King's legacy alive for generations to come. During this day, people were supposed to remember King's dream and what he stood for and worked for - racial harmony across the country.

What happened? Listening to Charlotte radio this past weekend, I was shocked that Dr. King's birthday has become a day to party.

There were about three or four parties billing themselves as MLK jump-off parties.

Could this be what's left of Dr. King's dream? We shall overcome so that we can go to the club and drop it like it's hot?

We have a dream to get 10 percent off at the mall? Dr. King's dream is more than a parade, more than a party and it certainly hasn't come true yet. So what are we really celebrating?

The meat of King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech is often glossed over. We're comfortable hearing Dr. King call for



PHOTO/BLACKVOICES.AOL.COM

Honoring King by shaking it fast at the club? Don't think that's what he dreamed about.

racial harmony, but what about what he said about blacks and poverty? It still rings true today.

In Mecklenburg County, nearly 10 percent of the population lives below the

Please see KING/2B



Exercise
helps delay
onset of
dementia

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA—Older people who exercise three or more times a week are less likely to develop Alzheimer's and other types of dementia, according to a study that adds to the evidence that staying active can help keep the mind sharp.

Researchers found that healthy people who reported exercising regularly had a 30 to 40 percent lower risk of dementia.

The study, published Tuesday in the Annals of Internal Medicine, reached no conclusions about whether certain types of exercise helped more than others, but researchers said even light activity, such as walking, seemed to help.

"It seems like we are delaying onset," said Dr. Wayne McCormick, a University of Washington geriatrician who was one of the study's authors. "The surprising finding for us was that it actually didn't take much to have this effect."

Some researchers have theorized that exercise might reduce brain levels of amyloid, a sticky protein that clogs the brain in Alzheimer's patients.

The study, from 1994 to 2003, followed 1,740 people ages 65 and older who showed no signs of dementia at the outset. The participants' health was evaluated every two years for six years.

Out of the original pool, 1,185 people were later found to be free of dementia, 77 percent of whom reported exercising three or more times a week; 158 people showed signs of dementia, only 67 percent of whom said they exercised that much. The rest either died or withdrew from the study.

The study could not say if exercise helped prevented dementia altogether, because not all of the participants were followed up to their deaths.

The frequency of dementia was 13 per 1,000 person years for those who said they exercised three or more times a week, compared with 19.7 per 1,000 person years for those who reported exercising less.

Other researchers said randomized studies—in which participants would be randomly assigned to either exercise or maintain their usual habits—are needed to confirm the findings.

Bill Thies, vice president for medical and scientific affairs for the Alzheimer's Association, said a randomized trial with more people could help answer questions such as what types of exercise might help more than others.

"You would have to start with a group that had roughly common habits, and change those habits in one group and not in the other," Thies said.



PHOTO/WADE NASH