HEALTH AND WELFARE

AIDS IN THE COMMUNITY

By Dr. Barbara Lyles

In the last column, I was trying to get you to think of personal and social behaviors that you could possibly look over and change so that you could reduce the chances of becoming infected with the AIDS virus.

The suggestions involved the things that would clearly be a part of what each of us wants anyhow: improve your nutritional status (fast food, donuts, cupcakes and soda don't have much to do with good diet); improve your general hygiene and level of cleanliness; clean up your sexual behavior in all the ways that are obvious.

Would you believe that the research suggests that many men who are infected by relations with prostitutes are probably infected by contact with the sperm cells remaining from prior customers?

With that out of the way and the encouragement to at least look at what you're doing to hurt yourself, let's look at it from another angle.

Gradually, we are beginning to hear that there are co-factors in AIDS infection . . . i.e., factors other than contact with infected body fluids, shared works among drug abusers, mother to fetus infection, blood/blood factor transfusion, and sexual contact with an infected person.

Why don't all the infected people get disease symptoms within the possible 3-6 weeks expected period of infection?

Why is it that the greatest number of infected persons are homosexual/bi-sexual males and drug abusers?

Does something have to happen inside the body to allow the infection to occur? Questions. Questions.

Questions when what we really need are answers. According to the researchers, the "poppers" (nitrites) used by homosexual/bisexual males and other drugs and alcohol are (or maybe) co-factors.

Repeated exposure to heavy doses of the virus such as would be found in semen and in blood are co-factors.

It is estimated that of a selected group of homosexual/bisexual males, 96% used poppers, 80% used marijuana, 66% used nasal cocaine and 50% used ethyl chloride. Of this group, no questions were asked about alcohol.

In short, about 80% of male at-risk groups abuse use of some sort of drug (we can assume that this same group also uses alcohol, even though it is not a part of the measured responses of the group.)

If we take the obvious a step further, common sense and logic tell us that people who use drugs and alcohol are also people who have poor nutrition. They don't eat well, for a number of reasons.

It is also true that people who use drugs and alcohol often engage in behavior in which they would not engage if they were in control of their behavior, and of themselves.

What I am saying is that substance abusers often are risk takers because of the powerful feelings and feeling of control and well-being that accompany substance abuse.

Would slowing down or stopping alcohol and drugs slow down the infection level in the spread of AIDS?

Have you heard that for some reason AIDS patients don't seem to be able to drink as much; AIDS infected I-V drug abusers on withdrawal often have more severe symptoms than non-AIDS victims?

Many researchers say so.

Let's get back to Belle Glades, Florida migrant workers camp (this is, you may recall, the area in which there is the highest level of AIDS infection in the country).

What of the very high rate of infection in certain parts of Africa and in Haiti where sanitation is bad, nutrition is poor, sexual patterns are often random, and other diseases are endemic?

Would this data suggest that something other than the virus itself is necessary to cause individuals infected with the AIDS virus to progress to full blown AIDS?

I have some real questions about what happens to that group of individuals who experience one or more of the early opportunistic infections (long lasting swollen glands, diarrhea, mononucleosis-like disorder); (thrush of mouth, esophagus and/or anus); (meningitis-like illness with acne-like lesions and ulcers); Karposi's sarcoma or pneumonocystic pneumonia carinii).

For some reason which is not yet clear to me, some of these patients respond to treatment and apparently experience a period of relative freedom from death-threatening illness at least for a time.

We simply do not seem to hear about those who do not progress to full blown AIDS in a short period of time and die . . . . become another in the long march of victims?

What is the unknown factor or co-factor here? Let's keep on looking.

Let's see if we can find out why some people get infected, develop antibodies to the disease, progress to full-blown AIDS and die.

Let us, more importantly, try to find out why some people get infected and remain well for five to ten years relatively free of problems. I'm searching for the missing link.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

By Frederick Scott

"Connections" is a very important word. It means the place where things come together, where transfers take place; in the language of the day, it's where the action is.

A few years ago, a savvy TV programmer produced a series titled "Interface," another word for connections.

And before that, a radio broadcaster created a marvelous space on the airways in which listeners could interact with him and each other.

His "Connections" was one of the first call-in shows and helped set the pace for what has become a superabundance of talk shows.

And there are many "connections" in the print medium.

Well, this is another one! After a long time at watching and listening, I think there are a lot of connections that haven't been recognized or discussed — some vital connections that deal with everyday things we often take for granted but that have profound influences on our lives, certainly on the quality of our lives, perhaps on our very existence as a people and as a species.

We ought to spend some time and effort to think about them, maybe talk about them.

What are some of the things we ought to connect about? Well, power is one.

Not who has it or how they got it so much as how it gets transferred, where does it come from? What power does each person have and how does one learn to develop and exercise it?

For another, how does one function at an optimum level? What is the connection between what I eat and do and how I feel and function?

Is education all its cracked up to be? How come it didn't teach me how to function better in my everyday world?

Seems like most of what a lot of us have learned that is useful, was learned outside of school. Are there any lessons in that?

Is science a good thing? Or is it black magic — or should we call it white magic because there aren't many black people in it?

Anyway, it never seems to help black folks.

Maybe it is just another game, a way to con us into giving up more control of our lives to others, increasing our powerlessness under the illusion of progress.

As the song goes, the head bone's connected to the neck bone; the neck bone's connected to the backbone . . . and so on to the foot bone.

And those bones are connected not only to the brain and brawn in each of us but to the other creatures in us and around us and to the soil and air and water and physical space and emotional space around us in some vital ways that need to be examined.

When those connections do not work right, we are in trouble.

Our community, more than most others, is in deep trouble. Can we make any difference by examining those connections?

A few years ago, a biology researcher discovered in a new way the crucial importance the surroundings play in how living things work.

She and her colleagues sought to learn how the matrix material, a sort of glue that surrounds and connects the cells of the body, affects the way in which those cells work.

By examining carefully over a long period of time and many experiments, they were able to show that the proper functioning of the cells depended entirely on the kind and quality of that connection glue which provides the necessary nutrients and other factors.

Without those necessary connections only wild, malignant cells survived for long.

Perhaps if we examine carefully the connections that bind our larger community, we may learn more about how they interact and what's necessary for us to function properly.

It may be even more important than we might expect.

Despite the pervasive despair and hopelessness we feel, our community does have the attributes necessary not only for our survival and prosperity but, I believe, for the survival of the whole human species.

The western European culture that continues to ravish this planet shows little sign of abating or perceiving its threat to continued survival.

Yet native populations, most notably African civilizations, survived and prospered in essential harmony for eons longer. Maybe a careful examination of those connections combined with appropriate action by our community can make the vital difference.



GROUNDBREAKING — Jerry Hartman, Gov. Schaefer, Mayor Schmoke, Mickey Miller and Pat Moran shovel dirt to start the construction of the Red Cross's new location in Seton Park.

Blacks sought as blood donors

By Alicia Benjamin
AFRO Staff Writer

William Cooper was in desperate need of blood last year, after he suffered a sickle-cell anemia crisis.

The first blood transfusion he received went well but there were problems with the second attempt to give Cooper blood.

Many blood transfusions had caused Cooper to develop six antibodies or proteins in his blood. Aside from those, Cooper had developed one of the rarest forms of proteins in his blood called cromer antibodies.

The American Red Cross stepped in to help Cooper and conducted local, national and international searches for a compatible donor with no luck.

After two months, Cooper's physician decided to give him steroid treatments for two weeks and Cooper experienced a complete turn around.

For the past year, Cooper has been a spokesperson for ARC in an attempt to get more blacks to donate blood.

According to Cooper, only five percent of Baltimore's black population donates blood.

Cooper said the fact that the people he needed blood from the most, blacks, do not donate blood in significant numbers, disappoints him.

It was more likely that Cooper could be matched with a black donor than with a white donor.

The Red Cross began a campaign last year to increase black participation in their blood donor program.

To educate people about what the ARC does and to improve their image in black communities, the organization held a dinner Tuesday night at the Forum and their program for the evening was hostd by Beverly Burke, news anchor for WMAR-TV, Channel 2.

The program included testimonials by Cooper and Susan McGill, whose life was saved by her son David. Her son was awarded locally and nationally by the Red Cross performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation on his mother, saving her life.

Cooper told the audience that during blood drives at such places as Mondawmin Mall, efforts to get more blacks to donate blood were futile.

"We didn't get a very good outpouring from the black community," he stated.

"The bottom line is we need it; you have to please give it," he concluded.

Before Cooper addressed the crowd he said many blacks do not give blood because they do not want to give information about where they live, they fear the blood pool may be contaminated and "the brothers are afraid they are gonna catch something."

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THE AFRO-AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS
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Ashburton

Continued from Page 1A

concerns about the inconveniences they have been experiencing because of the modernization process.

The tenants have complained that their rights have been violated because they have been forced to live in substandard conditions during renovations to the apartments.

"When I look at my place, I feel like crying," said Margarete Woodlon, an Ashburton Apartments tenant for over 20 years.

"These used to be nice apartments," she continued. "It's like somebody's dead around here."

She may feel someone has died because many of the tenants are packing up to leave the apartments.

Boxes sit in the middle of living rooms along with suitcases and other belongings.

Tenants are also complaining that they were not given prior notice as to when the renovations would begin; they had to clean up debris and dust left in their apartments daily;

Construction workers were eating their food and littering their apartments; their concerns about renovations occuring around them have not been addressed by management; and they were not informed by management that the apartments would become Section 8 apartments.

Tenants read in the AFRO that the apartments would be renovated and that management, Ashman Limited Partnership, would receive a $2.9 million tax-exempt loan for the acquisition and rehabilitation of the apartments.

The article, which originated as a press release from the state Department of Housing and Community Development, states that residents would be temporarily relocated within the developments and would be moved back into the apartments once the work was complete.

But management had not informed the residents that they would be relocated or offered their original apartments back.

Fowler said tenants who did not qualify for Section 8 housing would be offered their apartments at market rate price but as of last week management had not notified tenants of this option.

"Management hasn't informed us of anything," said Saunders.

Harry Prushanski, owner of the Ashburton Apartments, said it was not his responsibility to inform the tenants that the apartments would be converted into Section 8 housing.

The city asked for submissions of property that would qualify for Section 8 housing and the Ashman Limited Partnership responded, said Prushanski.

The city also held public hearings and printed public notices in newspapers, he said.

"I'm sure they announced it in the newspaper at least a year ago," he stated.

Renovations to the buildings started in late March but tenants were never notified when the construction would begin, according to Saunders.

In early April, tenants were notified to leave their keys with neighbors to let construction workers into their apartments.

"And that's when the nightmare began," said Saunders.

At times, the tenants were without hot water and at other times, they had no water at all, Saunders stated.

Plaster is missing from a number of the walls and ceilings in the apartment from the renovations in progress.

Saunders said workers painted his windows shut when it was very warm outside. It also presented a fire code violation, he said.

City housing inspectors have visited their homes and have been made aware of the violations, said Saundes. Some have been corrected and others have not, he said.

Saunders said he and Woodlon have been interviewed to see if they qualify for Section 8 housing without being aware they were being interviewed for Section 8 housing.

They said someone from the city DHCD told them they were being interviewed to see if they were eligible for a lowering of their rent.

But they informed the interviewer they were ineligible for Section 8, but applications were submitted for them anyway, they said.

As far as they knew, they signed affidavits verifying they answered questions to the best of their knowledge, said Saunders.

Fowler said all tenants were notified they would be interviewed for Section 8 housing. He said Eleanor Reagan interviewed 51 of the tenants and 20 of them were shown to be ineligible for Section 8 housing because their income was too high.

He said 10 of the tenants never showed up for interview appointments.

It is unclear as to whether the state or city is involved with the rehabilitation conversionof the apartments.

Patricia Tower, Public Information Officer for the state DHCD said it was a state endeavor but Fowler said the money was coming from the Baltimore HUD agency.

"It's a privately owned project but the city is involved because they are putting in Section 8," said Fowler.

Mary Benns, Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc. tenant organizer, said she has been trying to get the tenants organized to, in some way, correct what is happening to them.

"It seems there has been a lot of disrespect for the tenants and a lot of improperties," she said.

"They should have been moved out but instead, construction workers are knocking out walls and leaving debris with people still living there," said Benns.

Prushanski, said he has received numerous calls from tenants of the apartments.

Two weeks ago he met with Saunders to discuss the tenants' complaints.

After their meeting, Prushanski said he arranged a meeting with representatives from the Baltimore Housing and Urban Development agency and city officials to discuss tenants rights in regards to the Section 8 requirements.

"Now we will formulate our policy on how best to accommodate those tenants," Prushanski stated.

Whether tenants will be relocated depends on their status, said Prushanski.

In some cases, tenants will be relocated permanently and others may be relocated temporarily, he said.

He said three tenants who were "over housed" have already been permanently relocated.

"Over housed" families are defined as tenants who are living in an apartment with more bedrooms than they need.

"Unfortunately, many elderly tenants have lost a spouse or a child and may have needed two bedrooms at one time but no longer need them," he stated.

Those who are found to have an income which exceeds the requirement for Section 8 housing will be given the options of staying in their apartment and paying the market rate rent ($500), moving to another apartment building owned by management, or moving to an apartment building of their choice, said Prushanski.

Prushanski said he was aware of the tenants' complaints of sloppy work by construction workers and loitering and littering by construction workers.

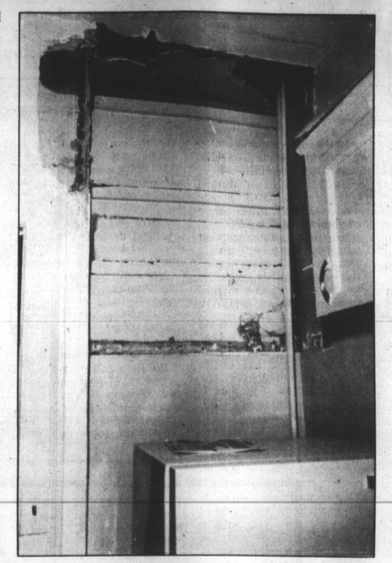
"In some cases I'm attempting to confirm those complaints and action has been taken in specific cases," he said.

"Specific subcontractors were told not to continue to do what they had been doing," he continued.

Prushanski said he volunteered to meet with the tenants but he was not invited to any of their meetings nor was he informed that there would be any meetings, he said.

"I indicated to him (Saunders) that I'd be more than willing to meet with him because I think it's a serious concern from our standpoint as well."

The renovations are scheduled to be completed by late Fall, Prushanski said.



ARE RENOVATIONS FINISHED — Many of the Ashburton Apartments have plaster missing from the walls and ceiling after work started on the apartments.

Superintendent

Continued from Page 1A

Dugger said the search committee as well as the School Board will have to take into consideration factors other than credentials.

"It should be someone who is very sensitive," he said.

Dugger said a number of people qualify but may be insensitive.

"The new superintendent should be someone who is positive, who cares, and I would say, loves young people . . ." he said.

"He or she must also be willing to work with parents," Dugger concluded.

Another principal said the selection of a local or non-local person is irrelevant.

"It's important that whoever comes in is able to focus on individual schools and on individual students," said Hilbert Stanley, the principal of Southwestern High School.

"Many times we lose the focus," he said.

Boyse Mosley, principal of Northwestern High School agreed that it doesn't matter whether the new superintendent is local or not.

"I would like to see us get the best person possible," he said.

He cited the best person as one who can address the problems confronting the school system and other viable solutions.

Mosley said the search committee's selection of a consultant to aid in the searching process was on target.

"It gave us an opportunity to have someone who knows who's out there," he said.

"It enhances our chances of getting the best possible superintendent."

Gunther said the names of applicants remains confidential.

"We're trying to keep it between ourselves and the candidates," he said.

He explained that the applicants are currently employed and to release their names may cause embarrassment or jeopardize their job.

"We have gone through a long process," Gunther said.

READ HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS ACTION EVERY TUESDAY

Graduate

Continued from Page 1A

take it to Coppin for completion," said Duke. "But they refused."

"The college has said they would not fill out the forms because I am an out of state resident," said Duke.

"We specified exactly what we needed for reclassification," said Dr. Clayton McNeill, Dean of Student Life at the college.

"In addition we gave him two extensions in trying to assist him," said McNeill. "He never responded to the notices we sent him."

Duke claims that he has been in touch with the college through the College President, Calvin W. Burnett, who referred all inquiries on the subject to Joyce Williams, college registrar.

Williams was unable for comment.

Duke has said that he wrote two letters to Dr. Burnett in which he begged for consideration and called attention to the hardship that the dilemna placed upon his family.

Williams lives with his wife who is a legal resident and his 11 year old son. Another son, seven years old, lives with Duke's parents in Nigeria.

"Other African and international students have (successfully) gone through the same situation," said Dr. McNeill. He has not pursued it as the established channels open to the students," he said.

"I should be allowed to graduate," said Duke, "That is all I am asking."

Caught

Continued from Page 1A

herself as a police officer, and ordered both occupants to place their hands in plain view. She saw Greenige reach behind the passenger seat, and grab an object which he raised in the officer's direction.

The officer, the report continued, believing the object to be the barrel of a shotgun, fired once, hitting Greenige in the right cheek.

Harris was arrested and charged with perverted sex act, while Greenige, who is also a security guard at a Giant foodstore was taken to the University Hospital, where he was listed in critical condition.

Agent Arlene Jenkins of the City Police Public Affairs said investigations have started in the shooting incident.

Schmoke to name black business liason

By Alisa Samuels
AFRO Staff Writer

Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke is expected to soon name a city educator and businesswoman as the city's minority business advisor.

Carolyn Britton, a Mergenthaler Vocational Senior High School teacher, is expected to be named, Schmoke said Tuesday in his office.

She is involved in the high school's Vocational Support Service Team (VSST).

Schmoke said he will hire the former businesswoman to increase minority businesses in Baltimore City and minority inclusion in the private sector.

Britton will act as a contact person for minority businesses to call for advice, Schmoke said.

Britton declined to comment, pending official word from the mayor.

Schmoke said the bleak status of black businesses in the city inspired him to create the position and to hire Britton.

Minority companies have more difficulty obtaining city contracts, for example, the mayor said.

"For black businesses to deal with the city, is almost a kiss of death," Schmoke said.

Many have to wait a long time before they are repaid and by that time, they could "go under," Schmoke said.

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