

Happiness
by *Through*
Otto McClarrin *Health*

SUICIDES INCREASE AMONG THE NATION'S YOUNG PEOPLE:

In the past 10 years, the suicide rate among adolescents in the US has doubled, becoming the second leading cause of death among persons between the ages of 13 and 24.

Some medical experts say the actual increase may be even greater than statistics indicate, because many teen-age suicides are still recorded as "accidental" or "undetermined" deaths.

In the Washington area, for example, the recent rash of suicides among teen-agers at D.C. Children's Center, as well as middle-class suburban youths, reflects this trend and has focused local attention on what medical experts consider a "serious public health problem."

The question that looms in the case of adolescent suicides, making them what one doctor has called a particularly "tragic human event," is why a young person about to enter the prime of life would choose to die.

Without doubt, adolescence is emotionally one of the most difficult stages of a person's life. In addition, internal pressures associated with reaching puberty, most young people experience adolescence as a time of social turmoil, of expectations from parents and friends, and of rigid standards for achievement and acceptance.

"When you get to be 15 or 16, you begin to see that no matter how good you are, you are going to be hurt a lot during the rest of your life - for some people the saying 'You can't win them all' just doesn't work," one youth who contemplated suicide recently stated.

"Most kids don't like 'growing up' at all, and if they could choose, they'd rather be 11 or 12 again. And their 12-year-old brothers would rather be seven. They only reason they'd rather be older is so that they can drive.

Given the heightened sensitivity among adolescents, psychiatrists say that almost any problem could prompt a teen-ager to take his own life: Loss of a boyfriend or girlfriend, failure in academic or athletic challenges, dependence on drugs or alcohol, promiscuity or lack of sexual experience and physical unattractiveness.

No matter how transitory the problem may appear from an adult perspective, it can be totally disruptive to a child's emotional stability and sense of self-worth.

Exacerbating the normal trials of adolescence for some youths are family problems, including the loss of a parent through death or divorce, and the feeling that parents don't understand or appreciate them.

In a recent study of adolescent suicides in California, researchers found that approximately 90 percent of the youths who had contemplated or committed suicide shared this feeling that they are not understood.

But in addition to the prevalent problem of parents who "won't listen," many teen-agers say they have difficulty trying to discuss their feelings with teen-age friends.

Peer pressure has convinced many young persons that there is something wrong with them if they feel lonely or depressed, so they turn these feelings inward rather than risk rejection.

The hundreds of community "hotlines" and suicide prevention centers that have sprung up throughout the nation in the past decade attest to the need for an outlet for adolescents who feel they have no one with whom they can discuss their problems. Many of these services receive most of their calls from teen-agers. Experts estimate that the percentage is steadily growing.

One of the possible explanations offered by psychiatrists for the enormous increase is the lack of challenges that would lead to emotional maturity among today's teen-agers."

Many kids today have never experienced disappointment," commented one counselor. "Thanks to their parents, they're used to having things handed to them on a silver platter." In addition, they possess a tremendous amount of freedom to experiment with drugs, sex or alternatives to their parents' values, while they frequently lack the wisdom to make wise choices.



Local businessman, Sam Roberson has filed his candidacy for North Las Vegas Councilman.

Roberson, 39-year old proprietor of the Religious Emporium, a record shop in West Las Vegas, has faith in a bright future for Southern Nevadans and for North Las Vegas in particular. Speaking to a large assembly at the Zion Methodist Church Luncheon, Sam said, "I have reason to believe in North Las Vegas, I watched it grow from a small town with small ideas into a progressive community whose people are still learning how to get it together. People in North Las Vegas are not afraid to continue to grow, both in size and in wisdom."

Sam has been a part of that growth. He and his wife Earlene have resided in Clark County for 20 years and 14 of those years have been spent living in North Las Vegas, with their family of 5 children. "When you live in a community," continued Sam, "you begin to have a feel for it, and I am afraid that if we're not careful, North Las Vegas will be bankrupt with the next 4 years."

When Sam was asked about his platform he was quick to reply that he "wants many of the same things for North Las Vegas that untold numbers of candidates before me have identified, 'more industry, more and better recreational facilities, jobs, and lower utility rates for residents', but greater than these, we need to hang on to this community and develop some sound fiscal policies which will finance the survival of this community so that North Las Vegas will have a community in which to have these good things take place." Stating further, Roberson continues, "the sound management of finances comes first, then we can add the goodies." If elected, these are Sam Roberson's planks in the platform.

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securing the blue chip national advertising that makes this possible. But NNPA -- the Black Press is tackling this thorny problem headon with the never-say-die spirit that has characterized its astonishing survival in the past.

Washington, D. C.'s first elected mayor in a century, Walter Washington told NNPA: "There has never been a time in the history of this country that we needed the Black Press more."

And successful black publisher John H. Johnson put his finger on a crucial point. "We deal with stories and events that the white press does not always deem important or worthy."

The Black Press needs no new ideology, just a continuing vigilance and vigor and a renewed support from all of us.

Benjamin L. Hooks

FCC



The National Newspaper Publishers Association, representing some 200 Black Newspapers in the U. S., Canada, and the Virgin Islands, held its Mid-Winter Workshop recently in Washington, D.C. The event also marked the Sesquicentennial (150 years) of the Black Press and was the occasion for some soul searching introspection.

The NNPA's theme, "The Search For A Black Ideology -- The Role Of The Black Press" was indeed appropriate for these uncertain times when the Black Press in becoming more and more the object of criticism, especially by young blacks, some of whom are questioning outright whether there is, indeed, a continuing need for such a medium.

It was interesting to observe some of the representatives of the Black Press, many of whom are legendary or near legendary figures, wandering casually through the lobby, halls and meeting rooms of the International Inn where the conference was held. They were casually exchanging greetings, enjoying a brief hearty laugh, engaging in small talk, or off in a corner lost in serious conversation, or solemnly eating, singly and in groups, their minds racing ahead to next meeting or seminar.

There were, to name a few: energetic Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett, NNPA president who is also publisher of the Sun-Reporter in San Francisco; blunt talking, but shrewd William O. Walker, NNPA chairman, Black Press Archives, and publisher of the Cleveland Call and Post; John H. Murphy, III, slender, preoccupied, he of the famous Baltimore Afro-American Murphy clan; John H. Sengstacke, of the Chicago Defender, his strong bulldog-like jaw symbolizing the toughness and tenacity that has kept the Black Press alive and thriving for a century and a half; charismatic John H. Johnson, of Ebony-Jet magazines; Ms. Ophelia De Vore Mitchell, still looking more like the famous beauty consultant whose De Vore Girls in the 50's and 60's were among the most sought after models in the nation, publisher of the Columbus Times; Mrs. Lucile Bluford, whose gentle demeanor gives no indication of true occupation -- editor of the Kansas City Call; quiet, efficient Longworth Quinn, editor-publisher of the Michigan Chronicle one of the nation's most successful black newspapers.

And so they were gathered there, a group of intelligent hardworking men and women whose watchwords is commitment -- to the ideal of making this country one in which every man and woman is treated as a decent and deserving child of God and country, where all are equal under law.

They are worthy successors to the founding fathers of Black Press; the fiery Rev. Samuel Cornish, Presbyterian minister, and John Russwurm, the second black college (Bowdoin) graduate in the history of the country. In March, 1827 in New York City condition for blacks were almost as wretched as they were for the chattel slaves in the south. The "draft" riots in which largely mobs of immigrant Irish took to the streets and killed more than 1,000 blacks, was yet to come.

But employment, housing and social conditions for people of color were such sympathetic observers were appalled. It was at that time that Russwurm and Cornish started Freedom's Journal, the first black newspaper in this country.

It was designed to give a voice to the voiceless, to agitate against the wretched living conditions of blacks in the north and to champion the abolitionist cause against hated slavery in the south.

Today, the Black Press is yet the advocate against prejudice and discrimination; for decency, equality, fraternity.

Yet, the ever lengthening stream of young blacks, armed with degrees in journalism and communications from the nation's universities are unsure where to place their hearts and skills. They are idealistic and sensitive to black concerns, but deny their limited options:

going to the white press for a decent salary and limited reportorial freedom or working with the Black Press with wide-ranging freedom to write, report and investigate -- a young reporter's delight -- but small salary.

The Black Press is aware of this. A broad capital base is needed but there is difficulty, yet, in