

Education

SCHOOL TALK

By Dr. Marshall C. Darnell

America Mourns

On January 28, 1986, Americans watched with excitement as the spaceship Challenger roared into space. In just a few seconds, that awe and wonderment of men and women traveling to space turned to shock, fear, and then grief for in a flash, seven brave Americans had been killed. They included Francis R. Scobee, Commander of the Flight, Mike Smith, Pilot, Flight Specialists Ronald E. McNair, Ellison Onizuka, and Judith Resnick, Flight Engineer, Gregory Jarvis, and Christa McAuliffe, who was a civilian teacher.

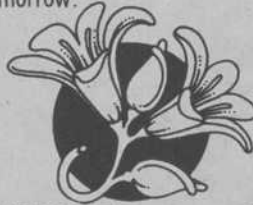
While we mourn the death of these American heroes, for thousands of school-age youngsters across this land the death of Christa McAuliffe was a special loss. From 11,000 applicants, she had been selected to be the first teacher in space. Children sat in classrooms in every corner of the land to watch the liftoff. Thrilled at the prospect that Christa would, in just a few hours, teach two lessons from space — lessons about traveling into a new dimension and more importantly, lessons about life, setting goals, and "reaching for the stars." Those classes will not be conducted, and the reality of death now has taken the place of this planned program. We in Clark County share with our fellow countrymen this tragic loss and resolve to learn from the tragedy and move on into a new frontier.

But lest we forget, not only did we lose Christa, but six other Americans and one of those, Ronald McNair, our second black astronaut in space, a man who had received his Doctorate of science degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and was not only learned, but a respected member of the scientific community. Then there was Ellison Onizuka, the first Japanese-American to be sent into space. He was born in Hawaii, and held a science degree from the University of Colorado. Judy Resnick was an electrical engineer and a classical pianist. Greg Jarvis was a graduate of Northeastern University in Boston and a Hughes engineer. Then we had Mike Smith, a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, who was a combat veteran of the Vietnam war and was on his first flight into space. The Commander of the flight, Francis Scobee, had worked himself up to a prominent position in the space program by attending night school and universities in conjunction with his Air Force training.

All leave a legacy for the youth of this country to follow. All are heroes and truly representative of this country's diversity and success. Americans grieve at their loss and what they could have brought as contributions to our space program and our society, but as Abraham Lincoln once stated, "They shall not have

died in vain." We resolve to use their lives as role models. We see the benefit of their education. We know their challenge, and appreciate their need to push back the frontiers, wherever they are found.

America mourns for Francis, Mike, Ronald, Ellison, Judy, Greg, and Christa, but we must remember they would have us get on with life and living, to get on with challenging today, and planning for tomorrow.



CCCC Communications & Fine Arts Division To Sponsor Benefit For Allied Arts Council

"An Evening of the Arts at Clark County Community College," sponsored by the Communications and Fine Arts Division of CCCC as a benefit for the Allied Arts Council, will take place Sunday, February 16.

The evening will begin at 6 p.m. with a performance of Marsha Norman's powerful drama, "Night Mother," directed by Brian Strom.

The play will be followed at 8 p.m. by an art opening and reception. The art show, "Invitational: Women Artists of Nevada," will feature the works of women artists from both Northern, Southern

"THE REPORT CARD"

The School Challenge

Yvonne Atkinson



Report cards for the first semester were distributed this week. In our elementary schools, grades were received for courses in language arts, mathematics, and other CORE subjects. In some areas, a grade on progress was identified. Some of our students demonstrated satisfactory progress and regrettably

some may have received an unsatisfactory notice, which suggests that the student has not been working up to their full potential.

At the secondary level, students received letter grades for each class. But what do the grades really tell us? In each instance, we look at the grade as an A, B, or C, and comment on the value of the grade earned rather than the knowledge obtained. If a student has obtained a grade of D or F, then in most homes, the parents become very concerned because this implies that poor and failing work has been performed for one-half of this school year. The report card which is provided is an indicator of achievement of successful work accomplished or an indicator that a particular student is not performing and some corrective action must be taken.

In several other articles written to our community, I have suggested to our parents to become actively involved in the learning process. Now is an excellent time to participate in your child's educational program. Let me suggest that report cards be an opening for dialogue. If your student has achieved high marks, then don't pass these grades off with a casual well done. Sit down and discuss every area emphasizing the fact that not every person can be an expert in every area, and the grades of A and B are certainly worthy of praise.

If your student has brought home a grade of C, also be complimentary. I know that none of us want to be "just average," but consider if you will that a grade of C doesn't mean just average. It means that your student has achieved at a level equal to the other students at their age/grade level and at an expected rate.

I have had parents report to me that an average grade was not to be tolerated in their home. My comment to this was, do you expect your student to be above average or excellent in every curriculum area? Such an expectancy may not be realistic for our students as it is not realistic for ourselves. As an example, I am acquainted with one of the educators in our district who quite openly says that he would never have difficulty in getting an A on an English test, writing a report, or completing a research project, and that in these areas he excels, but when asked to repair his car, he suggests that he very easily could receive a D or an F. The message is — he has learned his strengths and weaknesses.

This now brings us to those students who may have earned an unsatisfactory grade. Parents, I suggest in this case that we all counsel with these students to find out why such a grade was achieved by looking at the cause rather than by finding fault. By this approach, we will do ourselves and our students a major service.

Grades are indicators of achievement. They are never to be minimized or overlooked. Outstanding achievement should be praised, average achievement praised and regarded as worthy of mention, and we should look at unsatisfactory progress for its cause and eliminate this for future educational growth. Grades for our students are really their paychecks for 540 hours of work, but more than this, it is also an indicator for educational growth. Let us strive to work with our students and help them to grow into their full individual potential. Together we can make a difference.

1st AME Church to hold welcome tea for new pastor

First African Methodist Episcopal Church will sponsor a Welcome Tea in honor of its pastor, Rev. Thurman J. Baker, Feb. 9 at four o'clock p.m., at Zion United Methodist Church, 2108 North Revere Street in North Las Vegas. The public is cordially invited to attend.

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