



THE TALK

by Doug Moe

"YOU WANT the truth?" he said.

"Sure I want the truth."

"It's very difficult for me coming back. Very disturbing. It brings it all back like it was yesterday."

Anthony Hicks was talking about Madison. He was in the city last week — in and out in the space of 24 hours.

The last time we had spoken, sometime around Christmas 1995, there had to be a third person in the room.

This was at the Waupun Correctional Institution, one of the great misnomers of all time. They aren't trying to correct anything at Waupun. Call it what it is — a prison.

Freed by DNA test, he has new life

Anthony Hicks was there because a Dane County jury convicted him of the 1990 rape of a woman on Madison's west side. I had come to see him for a magazine article. A friend of mine was representing Hicks on appeal. My most vivid recollection of being inside Waupun is that all the inmates seemed to be black.

In a quiet voice, Hicks proclaimed his innocence. Many prisoners do. But Hicks had new evidence to back him up. The state Court of Appeals had ruled he deserved a new trial, and at the time we spoke, the Supreme Court was considering the case. The new evidence was post-conviction DNA tests on black male pubic hairs from the victim's bedroom that showed the hairs couldn't have come from Hicks. The victim had testified no black male other than her attacker had ever been in her apartment.

Eventually the Supreme Court agreed with the appellate court, and when in 1997 even more sophisticated DNA testing further pointed to Hicks' in-

nocence, Dane County prosecutors decided against retrying him.

He was out of prison, if not precisely free. Hicks would never again feel free in Madison. "The day after I got out," Hicks said, "I had lunch with a friend, and I was supposed to go meet my kids at home. I was 15 minutes late. They were panicking. They thought it was happening again."

Then, a day later, Hicks went to Hilldale on a shopping trip with his family. "We were at Marshall Field's. People were pointing, whispering. They knew who I was."

It wasn't an isolated episode. "I'd be walking with my kids. People driving by would yell an obscenity. My son, at school, had a terrible time."

Though Hicks' wife, Denise, has family here including her mother, they decided they needed to relocate. Hicks had worked for UPS in Madison, and in June 1998 he got a job with the company in

Houston, Texas. Denise got a good job with the University of Houston. "Houston is doing great things for us," Hicks said. "We don't have to look over our shoulders. We've made some great new friends, and they know us only for who we are. And of course the kids love the weather."

Hicks has a 15-year-old son and a 10-year-old daughter. He was lost to them for 4 1/2 years.

Hicks was in Madison last week because a lawsuit for negligence he has filed against his first attorney was scheduled to start today. But the judge had to postpone the trial date, and Hicks flew home. He will have to come back again. He doesn't look forward to it.

Denise hasn't been back to Madison since they moved to Texas, not even at Christmas. "It's too bad, but that's how it is," Hicks said. "We could never live in Madison again."

Heard something Moe should know? Please call 252-6446, e-mail him at dougmoe@madison.com, or write to PO Box 8060, Madison, WI 53708.

2A

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West zeros in on black history

By Chris Murphy

The Capital Times

February is Black History Month in classrooms across the country, but Kendra Parks is one of the few teachers in Madison who tackles the subject each day of the school year.

On a recent morning in her African-American Experience class at West High School, Parks warmed up the students with a frank discussion about the lyrics of the popular song "Back That Thang Up" before moving on to a quiz over the finer points of the landmark Supreme Court decision Brown vs. Board of Education.

The 1954 decision forced American schools to desegregate, and the vivacious Parks shared a loud laugh with her students when it became clear that she mistakenly typed that the court declared the "separate but equal" doctrine to be "inherently equal" instead of "unequal." The question was a freebie, she told them.

The students in Parks' class have already finished a two-week overview of events from slavery up until World War II, and they will spend the rest of the year studying the modern era. She teaches three sections of the course each year with about 25 students in each class.

But what do the rest of Madison high school students learn about African-American history?

Mainstream history classes at each school incorporate the story of blacks, but not all of the schools offer separate courses like the one taught by Parks, and opinions differ sharply over whether they should.

Phillip Paulson is the chairman of East High School's social studies department, and he said the school tried offering separate history courses in the 1960s and 1970s.

It was possible for a student to take Black History I and II as well as another course on sub-Saharan Africa. Other ethnic history courses were available as well.

Paulson said the result was a scheduling nightmare, and he added that some students asked for waivers from mainstream history courses because they did not have the time to take them.

Now East students can take an Ethnic Studies course that offers an overview of the experiences of several ethnic groups, though the course does not help fulfill social studies graduation requirements.

Mainstream history classes at each school incorporate the story of blacks, but not all of the schools offer separate courses like one taught at West High School, and opinions differ sharply over whether they should.

Paulson said the regular U.S. history courses incorporate a significant amount of material about blacks all along. Students study the Supreme Court's 1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson decision, for example, which justified segregation. Paulson has his students examine "Dream Deferred," the poem by Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes.

Memorial High School takes an almost identical approach to East. Social studies department Chairman Gregg Mueller said, "Our department has decided that history is history and that you shouldn't pull out any one aspect of it."

He added that "I just feel very strongly that we need to show a balanced picture of American society, and I think to do that you need to show it as one big picture."

Not everyone shares that view. Parks teaches a ninth-grade U.S. history course in addition to the African-American Experience course, and she said that although she also mixes in the stories of blacks and other ethnic groups, it never seems to be enough.

Shabazz City High School social studies teacher Tenia Jenkins said even general ethnic studies courses, while they have their place, don't do justice to any one group.

Jenkins' current classes at the alternative school include "Eyes on the Prize: Analysis of the Civil Rights Movement," and she has taught many others as well.

Shabazz' hands-on approach to learning even allows Jenkins to take a dozen students down to Mississippi every other year or so to study the African-American culture of the river delta.

She said the Madison school



HENRY A. KOSHOLLEK/THE CAPITAL TIMES

Kendra Parks teaches her African-American Experience class at West High School.

district as a whole teaches the subject of black history "very sporadically," and she fought to change it as the parent of a West High student in the mid-1990s. She was the founder of Parents of African-American Students, and the group successfully lobbied for the school to add the course that Parks now teaches.

Jenkins said a key to the course is the fact that it fulfills part of a student's social studies graduation requirement.

"Otherwise it's just a sham and a shame," she said. "It is American history, isn't it?"

Jenkins said when La Follette High School first offered a black history course, it was an elective only, but that has changed now.

The course is back after a hiatus of several years, and although teacher Bryan Grau

agreed that it's good that it fulfills social studies requirements, it could be a moot point soon.

He helped organized a Black History Month program for La Follette last week, and while a few hundred students applauded as their classmates read poems on stage in the auditorium, Grau was saying backstage that there needs to be that level of interest more often.

There were only 13 students in the class this year, and Grau said it hasn't been decided yet if the course will be available next year.

Former School Board candidate and activist Kaleem Caire said courses like Grau's are crucial for minority students to feel that their school cares about them.

"They have no connection to it" otherwise, he said.

director in 1987, and met Giffey a few years later.

The way she tells it, she had a vision about adorning the walls of the neighborhood center gymnasium with murals, but really had no idea about how to do it. It was about then that a "white gentleman" appeared on the scene and said: "Hi, I'm David Giffey."

A muralist for years already, he had painted the icons in Assumption Greek Orthodox Church in Madison among other

projects, and he knew just what to do.

"Exodus," the story of the 1950s, appeared in 1992, and the others have followed every few years. Giffey plans to paint one more for the decade of the 1990s.

Both McShan and the artist received standing ovations from the crowd Sunday, but Giffey would take no credit for his gifts.

"I have gained much more than I have given," he told the audience.

At Taycheedah, waiting for aid is all but policy

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Waiting for medical services for ill prison inmates at Taycheedah is so common that one corrections officer told a newspaper the prison is "lucky" more inmates haven't died.

Shortly after the death of asthmatic inmate Michelle Greer, 29, who collapsed telling corrections officers that her inhaler was not helping her condition, a prisoner with severe chest pains waited 24 minutes for help, a Taycheedah sergeant told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

"This is not extreme," Sgt. Rainy Hafermann told the newspaper. "These types of things go on all the time, and we've been so lucky. We've sent inmates to the hospital where doctors have said, 'Oh, my God, if you would have waited another hour she would have been dead.'"

The women's prison has a policy that prohibits corrections officers from contacting nurses directly, Hafermann said.

"None of us are allowed to call a nurse directly, not even a sergeant," Hafermann said of the policy instituted 1 1/2 years ago by warden Kristine Krenke.

A captain could not be quickly located on Feb. 17 when an inmate, who had been taken to the hospital the night before for chest pains, complained the pain returned at 9 a.m., the Journal Sentinel reported.

After telling the inmate to lay down, Hafermann told the newspaper she failed to reach a captain on her two-way radio. When she finally reached a commander, who dispatched a nurse, it was almost 9:30 a.m.

Big thaw to soothe Madison this week

By Jason Shepard

The Capital Times

Skiers, sledders and snowmobilers will be out of luck this week as temperatures are expected to remain well above normal as March ambles in like a lamb.

"We're expecting a continuation of our unseasonable warm temperatures," said meteorologist Cris Garcia of the National Weather Service in Sullivan.

After breaking a record on Saturday with a temperature of 61 degrees, Madison cooled off a bit.

But the mercury won't dip anywhere near the late-February normal temperature for the Madison area of around 35 degrees.

Today's forecast calls for a high temperature of 48 degrees, with low 50s or high 40s predicted for the rest of the week.

"We're just not getting that northern intrusion from Canada to bring the cooler temperatures," Garcia said. "It's not going to change at least this week, so enjoy."

There will be a chance of showers Tuesday and into Wednesday. Low temperatures are expected to be in the upper 30s to around 40 degrees.

While snow isn't in the near future, those hoping for one last

Officer: Prison has been 'lucky'

"There was nothing I could do for this inmate other than get her the help she needed, and that took me 24 minutes," Hafermann said.

The inmate with chest pains survived and was eventually taken to the Dodge Correctional Institution for observation.

Although Hafermann did not know if the inmate with chest pains had a heart attack, she said that inmate was not the type "to cry wolf" about being ill.

The Journal Sentinel said Hafermann's account was confirmed by two other corrections officials.

The Department of Corrections refused to comment on the Feb. 17 incident or on prison policy for dispatching nurses.

After reports of Greer's Feb. 2 death surfaced, 12 Democratic lawmakers asked Gov. Tommy Thompson to order an investigation into state prisons' treatment of inmates with severe health problems.

Thompson has said he does not intend to order such a review. Fond du Lac County District Attorney Thomas Storm said last week that he did not feel there was enough evidence at this point to file any criminal charges over Greer's death.

Hafermann, a 14-year veteran corrections officer, said she came forward about the Feb. 17 incident for fear more inmates would die without changing prison policy. She told the Journal Sentinel she may face retaliation for coming forward.

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snowstorm before spring arrives may be in luck: an average March brings 7.9 inches of snow to Madison.

"It seems like the pattern during the past few years is that our winters have been getting milder and shorter," Garcia said, adding that it may be the result of global warming or just a strange coincidence.

The average Madison winter brings 43.4 inches of snow. So far, only 26.1 inches have fallen.

The Dane County Sheriff's Office is continuing to warn ice fishers to stay off area lakes.

"The ice is definitely unsafe," Sheriff's Sgt. Gordon Disch said this morning. "Just from looking at the open spots, it should be obvious that it's not wise to be on the ice."

Mural

Continued from Page 1A

She told the audience she and her white assistant, Jeanne Pien, sometimes had to play an appalling "game" to get business done at the neighborhood center.

The audience grimaced as McShan paced the floor and said

that "sometimes I had to let Jeanne, because of her color, be the director." But there was laughter as she finished the story. "So sometimes I would be her secretary, and I don't even know how to type."

And when McShan spoke about the community spirit of the neighborhood's block parties in the early 1970s, she said, "We were like the people, the people, the people that our spirit knows."

McShan became the center's

State hopes to provide Medicaid for AIDS, HIV care

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Wisconsin could be the second state to provide Medicaid benefits for people with the HIV virus and AIDS after the federal government approved a similar plan in Maine.

Expanding Medicaid, a program for the poor, elderly and disabled, to cover AIDS would bring medical

care to about 320 people statewide, said Mike Gifford, deputy executive director of the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin has 5,000 to 8,000 people with HIV, 1,900 of whom have developed AIDS, officials say.

A plan to extend Medicaid to people with HIV was rejected two

years ago by the Clinton administration as too expensive.

Federal officials approved Maine's plan last week after judging that the policy's costs would not rise over five years.

Wisconsin's plan, however, would be more comprehensive than Maine's. A provision to expand ben-

efits for AIDS was included in the state budget.

With Maine receiving approval for AIDS coverage, Wisconsin plans to petition the federal government for similar permission, said Pris Boronic, deputy administrator of the state Bureau of Health Care Financing.