

SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 1999 •

Richmond Times-Dispatch

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"I had some nice friends there, people who helped me out. I learned a lot working at Hermitage. I learned the proper way of working with all types of races and people."

ARTHUR BROWN
HERMITAGE COUNTRY CLUB

GOLFERS' GRIP. Arthur Brown met golfing legend Arnold Palmer at a seniors tournament at Hermitage Country Club in 1983. Brown won the senior division for blacks in the North-South tournament in Miami in 1965.



STAYED BUSY. Arthur Brown worked for 72 years at Hermitage Country Club and in his spare time volunteered with numerous causes.

METRO FOCUS

Success in two different worlds

Longtime country club employee pushed registration of black voters

BY GARY ROBERTSON
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

For the thousands of golfers who passed through the Hermitage Country Club, Arthur Brown was an institution.

Brown, 88, worked at the club as a caddy, a waiter and a locker room attendant for 72 years, starting when he was 13 and still in school.

When the club moved from Hilliard Road in Henrico to Manakin in

Goochland, Brown moved with it.

That was one side of his life, the side marked by accommodation and loyalty, and one that he is terribly proud of.

"I had some nice friends there," Brown said, "people who helped me out. I learned a lot working at Hermitage. I learned the proper way of working with all types of races and people."

In that way, he said, it was an education, especially an education in the conventions and customs

and conversation and thinking of middle- and upper-class whites.

It was an education that Brown put to use in the other side of his life — a side where the stakes were far higher.

Brown was active in the movement to keep Richmond's schools open in the dark days of Massive Resistance to integration. A graduate of Armstrong High School, Brown also was president of an elementary school PTA for 16 years.

He believed that if the schools closed, a generation of children would be educationally crippled.

In the late 1950s, he joined the Richmond Crusade for Voters. The organization sought to give the

black community political clout by helping blacks register to vote. Brown served as the crusade's treasurer for 25 years.

"We never had a lot of money," said Dr. William S. Thornton, a former longtime president of the crusade. "But when someone gave some money, they wanted to know where it was spent. [Brown] handled that job meticulously."

Not infrequently, Brown reached into his own pocket to help sustain the organization, said Dr. Francis M. Foster, a dentist and historian of the city's black community.

"I lent them \$1,500 one time,"

PLEASE SEE **WORLD'S**, PAGE B4 ▶

Beheading stuns gay community

Many in area say they hope slaying wasn't hate crime

BY MARK HOLMBERG
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

News of Henry Edward Northington's decapitation alarmed the gay community over the weekend as word spread that his severed head was left on a footbridge leading to a popular summertime meeting place for gays, perhaps to send a message.

Northington, troubled and sometimes homeless, was known in the gay community as a strange and sometimes obnoxious man.

"We don't need a Matthew Shepard in Richmond," said Marcus J. Miller, president of Fieldens, a private West Broad Street club popular with gays. Miller was referring to the young homosexual man who died in Wyoming after being beaten and tied to a fence like a scarecrow.

While Northington's odd behavior was well-known in the gay community — he had been thrown out of

Fieldens twice and barred from another popular gay club on Grace Street — Miller said it's important that no one jump to the conclusion that Northington was targeted because of his sexual orientation.

Miller and many others in Richmond's gay community are hoping this wasn't a hate crime. Richmond police Detective Thomas T. Leonard at 698-3910, or CrimeStoppers at 780-0000.

ard, who is handling the case, said he's looking at everything.

"It may be a hate crime, it may be a sex crime, it may be a ritualistic crime. We really don't have anything concrete — no set way to go.

"The big question is: Why?" Leonard said yesterday. "It's one thing to kill someone, it's another to cut their head off."

A young couple strolling Monday morning across the pedestrian

PLEASE SEE **SLAYING**, PAGE B4 ▶

Clemency request cites child abuse

Execution is set Tuesday in killing of store owner

BY FRANK GREEN
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

When he was 2 years old his mother shot herself to death in front of him. He was, relatives said, covered in her blood.

He was raped by his paternal grandfather before he was 4 years old. He spent his childhood shuttled between homes in Texas and Virginia, beaten with a belt at times so severely it drew blood.

In 1976, when he was 14 years old, he was shot in the abdomen in a hunting accident. In 1978 he dropped out of school after completing the 8th grade with an undiagnosed learning disability. He later suffered two serious head injuries.

When he was 18, he snatched two purses. At age 20 he broke into a

grocery store and then he robbed a taxi driver in Houston — though his lawyers say he merely fled without paying the driver. He developed a drinking problem.

He was 28 years old and drunk on rum the night of Sept. 24, 1989. Early the next morning he burglarized the Tri-City Electric Supply Co. with a friend and shot to death the owner, Thomas L. Haynes.

On Tuesday, at age 37, George Adrian Quesinberry Jr. is to die by injection for the capital murder of Haynes and robbery unless Gov. Jim Gilmore or the U.S. Supreme Court steps in.

Quesinberry's lawyers have filed an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court and a clemency petition with Gilmore. They are set to meet tomorrow with representatives of the governor.

According to a Virginia Supreme Court summary of the crime and news accounts, on Sept. 24, 1989, Quesinberry visited a friend at a trailer court in Prince George County. Eric Hinkle also was present.

The three got drunk drinking rum and Quesinberry suggested breaking into the office and warehouse of the Tri-City Electric Supply Co. in

PLEASE SEE **REQUEST**, PAGE B5 ▶

Hey, cowboy! Put on that hard hat

You can tell there aren't enough women in the construction business because hard hats are painfully unfashionable.

If there were more women in the trades, we'd have more shapes and colors. There'd be a Jackie O pillbox hard hat, a hard-shelled Monica be-ret, an OSHA-approved Minnie Pearl bonnet and a Napoleonic che-
cheat for those pompous bosses you'd like to throw off the scaffold.

There'd be gaily colored spring hard hats, and somber winter ones. And there'd certainly be a lot more concern about "hard-hat hair."

But the vast majority of those who wear hard hats are men. Therefore, we've got two basic shapes (short-billed turtle cap and the round drill instructor hat) in yellow, white and blue, although you see some silver and black here and there.

Besides being ugly, they're hot, heavy, noisy and

headachy. At the end of the day you can take it off and, for hours, it still feels like its on your head.

I've hated to wear them during my half-life as a bricklayer, much to the annoyance of my bosses, who worried about injury and fat OSHA fines. (Luckily I was wearing one when a butterfingere laborer dropped a piece of block 15 floors down an elevator shaft and hit me on the head. It sounded like a Mark McGwire home.)

I've heard the phrase "Slim, put your hard hat on!" so many times it's ingrained in my brain, like Mazak.

Bret Atkins of California kept hearing it, too. He also hated to wear his hard hat, mainly because it meant he had to take off his beloved cowboy hat, which he wears everywhere.

"He probably sleeps with it on," guessed his co-worker, James Lee.

Atkins, a machine tool salesman who frequently visited hard-hat sites, hated dirtying his cowboy hat, which happened every time he had to take it off with greasy fingers to don his hard hat.

A light bulb clicked on above his head. He went to a hardware store and bought some hard plastic coating to paint on a cowboy hat.

"His first attempt burst into flames," Lee said.

By the end of 1998, Western Hardhat Inc. had an OSHA-approved cowboy hard hat. Since then, more

than 200,000 of them have sold. (Price: \$25 and up. They're available locally at Dominion Equipment & Supply Inc. and Chesterfield Trading Co.)

At least two other companies are manufacturing cowboy hard hats, including a firm that offers a pink one. Pink?

"Hell, no," said Ben Williams, a 36-year-old roofer with Roof Services Corp. of Virginia Beach. "All the guys would tease me."

But it was love at first sight when he spotted a tan cowboy hard hat at Bay Equipment in Newport News.

"It's different," said Williams, who was in Richmond last week to work on the new Times-Dispatch building. "I like the old cowboy look — kind of like Clint Eastwood."

The look is right. Most people I've known to wear hard hats have more than a little cowboy in them. Some might even be considered outlaws, like one bricklayer who jumped off a scaffold and ran away when a police car turned into the construction site. (The officer was just turning around.)

He, among several others, would be a candidate for the black cowboy hard hat.

I'm not sure which color I'll get to replace my old-fashioned yellow hard hat, which I had decorated with V-8 engine decals and stickers from heavy-metal bands.



NEW LOOK. Ben Williams sports a cowboy hard hat.

A forklift ran over it last year on a job in Gilpin Court because it wasn't on my head, where it belonged.

Now that hard-hat makers are finally thinking about style, maybe we can look forward to a snappy gangster fedora or a gambler's bowler, both of which would suit me nicely.

What's that, boss? You think I should hold out for the dunce's hard hat? In pink?

TOMORROW: UNITED WAY OFFICIALS FIGHTING A BUG OF THE COMPUTER KIND