



THE ARKANSAS TRAVELER



page 2
BLACK HISTORY
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'A HIDDEN ISSUE'

Nonprofits address rising human trafficking rates

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Through advocacy programs, hotlines and prevention training, several local nonprofits are working to dispel misconceptions surrounding human trafficking while unable to settle on a single definition for the crime.

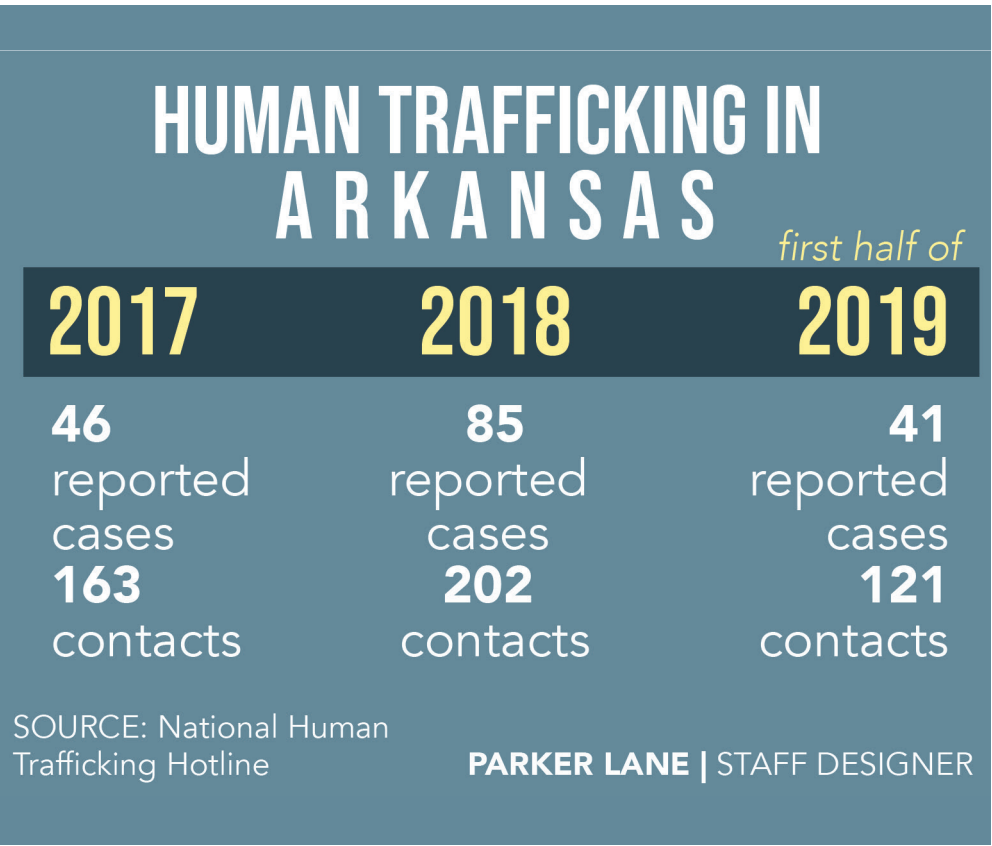
Arkansas-based organizations are working to combat rising reports of human trafficking following an 84.7% increase in reports in 2018.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline recorded 85 reports of human trafficking cases in Arkansas in 2018. The reports identified 178 victims and 65 traffickers.

In the first half of 2019, the hotline recorded 41 reports, including 27 for sex trafficking in Arkansas.

Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain labor or a commercial sex act, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Gretchen Smeltzer, founding board member and executive director of Into the Light, defines sex trafficking as any interaction wherein a sexual act is exchanged for anything of value, whether it be money, food or a place to sleep under force, fraud or



coercion.

Into the Light, an Arkansas-based organization founded in 2015, offers refuge to young survivors of sexual exploitation, who Smeltzer said are especially vulnerable to trafficking because their trafficker is likely someone they know or trust.

Despite the rising number of reports, Smeltzer thinks the public is detached from the problem, she said.

"The general public doesn't understand trafficking for the most part," Smeltzer said. "They

see it as an overseas thing or a white van driving by."

Into the Light also works with Hub of Hope, a nonprofit organization formed in 2015 which provides services to adult female victims.

Jennifer Sorey, founder and executive director of Hub of Hope, said human trafficking is a hidden issue. "Many survivors of trafficking don't even realize they are a victim of a crime," Sorey said.

In addition to a mentorship program similar to Into the Light's, Hub of

Hope offers services for trafficking victims. Services include a help line, a victim response team that meets with victims to establish safe shelter, a relocation team that arranges travel for victims and a 72-hour transition center where victims can rest and recover.

Hub of Hope has 67 clients -- 34 of which are active.

Sorey said she thinks the statistics reported by the National Human Trafficking

See "Interstate 40" on page 3

Arkansas sex education inadequate, students say

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Some students and sex educators are desperate for a sex education overhaul in Arkansas as STI rates climb and the state holds steady as first in the nation for teenage birth rates.

While the state education code contains guidelines for sexuality education, there is no law or regulation requiring Arkansas schools to teach any sex education beyond HIV information. There is also no requirement that what is taught be medically accurate, age-appropriate, culturally appropriate, unbiased or non-religion-promoting.

When taught in Arkansas public schools, sex education must use abstinence-focused, "primary prevention" programs. "Secondary prevention" risk mitigation information may only be taught as a follow up.

Karleigh Ferrell, a UA junior, graduated from Concord High School in rural Cleburne County. Ferrell said she didn't think she learned much about sex and sexual health from her high school health curriculum.

Ferrell remembers her health teacher only spending an day or two on sex education. She remembers no mention of contraception, sexuality, gender identity, LGBTQ health issues, consent, healthy relationships or

sexual abuse in the health textbook, Ferrell said.

Concord High School principal Scott Whillock did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Ferrell, a childhood education major, said she hopes the laws and culture surrounding sex education in Arkansas will be different when she is a teacher.

Theresa Parrish, a UA academic counselor, is the former coordinator and a current teacher for the Our Whole Lives program at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fayetteville. OWL is a nationwide program that teaches age-appropriate, comprehensive sexuality education to people ranging from kindergarten-age to elderly adults. Parrish thinks the condition of sex education in Arkansas is dire, she said.

"The state's position on sex ed is archaic, and it's counterproductive," Parrish said. "It is held in place by the patriarchy that wants to keep women in a certain place. It's fueled by misinformation."

Clarksville High School brings in representatives of the Ozark Rape Crisis Center and Reality Check Inc., a primary prevention organization, to speak in health classes.

Beth Bryant, co-founder and executive director of Reality Check, said the organization works with more than 9,000 students across the state to help develop goals, healthy relationships and responsible

See "Studies find" on page 4

Professor's legacy continues through students, faculty he inspired

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UA faculty and alumni remember former professor Gordon Morgan as a trailblazer, both as the first black professor hired at the UofA and as an early advocate for black students on campus.

Morgan joined the UA faculty in 1969 and worked for 43 years as a professor of sociology. Morgan retired and took emeritus status in 2012. He died Dec. 17, 2019, at 88.

By the end of his career, Morgan had earned the university's highest faculty distinction, University Professor, written 13 books and won multiple awards, including the 1998 Black Alumni Society Living Legacy Award and the 2006 J. William

Fulbright Distinguished Alumni Award.

But those who knew and loved Morgan said it is not these honors, but rather Morgan's undying commitment to his students, his work and the welfare of black Arkansans, that define his legacy.

Fayetteville Public Schools Superintendent John Colbert, the district's first African-American superintendent, was one of Morgan's students in the early 1970s. Colbert, who earned a bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree from the UofA, said Morgan was an inspiration and source of support for black students on the overwhelmingly white campus when he arrived in 1973.

"If you had the opportunity to get someone who looked like you as a teacher, you would jump for it," Colbert said. "On that fact alone, I made a decision that I needed to take his class."

Morgan sometimes spoke in his classes about his need to work twice as hard as his white colleagues to prove himself, which Colbert could relate to, he said.

Steven Worden, associate professor of sociology, worked with Morgan from 1986 until Morgan's retirement. Worden said he knew Morgan faced obstacles such as racism and pushback from students and fellow faculty members. However, Morgan never complained, Worden said.

Morgan had a passion for writing about influential black Arkansans and sought to keep the state's history alive, Worden said. Most of Morgan's books focus on black history and culture at the UofA and across Arkansas and the south. Three are biographies of influential black scholars.

See "First black" on page 3



Courtesy of University Relations
Professor Gordon Morgan joined the UA faculty in 1969 and worked for 43 years as a professor of sociology.

UA-founded Registered Student Organization establishes second chapter



An organization focused on helping women establish personal connections that originated at the UofA will soon have a chapter at the University of Memphis.

Astrology app helps make connections



An app that shows people their astrological chart serves as a way for some students to better connect with others.

LGBTQ dating apps leave some users feeling unfulfilled



Some users struggle to find a meaningful relationship on LGBTQ dating apps as they are often saturated with users looking only for sex.