—Mother grieves

(FROM PAGE 1)

him as "not being violent at all at home" was charged with the robbery of Life Evangelical Church, 3306 Garrison Blvd. Police reports show his name as "Robert Presley."

Said Mrs. Henderson, "The bond was too high for me to get him out of jail. I have tried to be a decent mother. If people would only give him a chance."

Mrs. Henderson explained she had just returned Sunday night from Dallas, Texas where she had expected to have a number of poems published.

"I am trying to get my work published and I only said 'dear Lord, let Willie be safe and well.'

"Then, when I arrived home Sunday evening they told me he had called from Northwestern to come and get him out.

"Mama, mama I didn't do it," was all the mother said her son could impart to her when she visited him on Monday.

"He asked me to get him out. I would be willing to mortgage the house to get him out of jail," explained the mother softly through tears.

"I hope those people who named him in court know what they are doing. He may have been in trouble before, but I don't believe he did this.

"Just because he has a record, they are ready to cast him away already. He always did everything I asked him," she related.

The mother said, "I would like to have sent Willie away. Maybe, I guess, back to Washington where he was born. We moved to Baltimore 11 years ago. His father lives over there. I'm remarried."

The upset woman expressed the fear her son was never given a chance to live.

"He always wanted to play the drums when he was little. He loved music.

At this Mrs. Henderson began to cry as though her grief and hurt had reached the depths of her soul and had broken her heart 'till she could bear no more.

* * *

She exclaimed, "Oh Lord! Oh Lord!" If they would only give him justice just this once. Why should he have to suffer more? Because he has a record? Jesus, why does this have to happen? I have tried Lord knows I have tried."

Mrs. Henderson admitted to being greatly disturbed at the expense of the legal fees she will have to bear.

She said the lawyer she had engaged charged her $100 for the appearance he made on her son's behalf at Northwestern on Monday.

She noted, "When I told him I went to the bank for the money, he told me had he known I had to go to the bank for the money he would have charged me more."

The mother told the AFRO she didn't know when the trial for her son would be held, but she "dreaded going back down to those courts again."

"Willie was a good boy."

—Neighbors fear

(FROM PAGE 1)

are absolutely frightened to death all the time. It's awful to try to sleep and then turn over and think someone may come in our doors."

The neighbors recalled how they used to sit on their back porches on hot evenings and chat with Mrs. Merchant over tall glasses of iced tea and cookies she handed to them over the railings.

"She was always so happy and cheerful. She was a good neighbor. She and her husband were kind to everyone. They seemed to be happy."

They related, "We called her Cookie. She always locked her doors after her husband left for work. She was sure of that. We never knew she had any person close enough to come in after dark through the 10 years she lived in that house."

However, one dowager revealed that a man who moved from a house in back of them was friendly to all and recently had been reported as having commented on Mr. Mrs. chant's death.

She quoted him as saying he knew the exact time the woman died.

"If he knew he must have been there," both matrons concluded.

They described the man as of slight build and "as talkative as a woman." He had been reported as making remarks on the murder the day the body was discovered "around the corner on Greenmount Ave."

The neigrbors said they only knew him by a nickname and did not know his present address. The house in which he lived is now boarded up. It lies directly behind the Merchant residence.

* * *

Again, at last report Homicide detectives have not ruled anyone beyond suspicion. They are continuing the investigation and implied that an additional angle may have given them a new lead.

Meanwhile several calls have been received by the AFRO on a recent revelation by a Gay St. woman that she knows "who did it" and will tell police "after Labor Day."

The woman known as "the Gay St. Medium" achieved fame when she predicted the body of Mrs. Shirley Parker would be found in the Druid Hill Park Lake in 1968.

Fire victims

Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Ebb, parents of Mrs. Catherine Steward, the Catonsville woman whose home was completely destroyed by fire three weeks ago, express their thanks to AFRO readers for help and cooperation.

In a letter to the AFRO Mr. and Mrs. Ebb noted, "Many friends have called us at 747-2944 to offer help of which we are indeed grateful. They tell us they found us through the AFRO."

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. Ebb say, "However we are asking now if anyone wishes to donate clothing ask them to hold off until further contact — due to lack of space. The family has not been housed yet. Sincerely yours, Arnold and Violet Ebb."

Mrs. Steward, her nine children and three grandchildren resided at 16 Shipley Ave. A fire broke out in the home on a Friday afternoon. There were no injuries.

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—$71,000 bail

(FROM PAGE ONE)

police as wearing on arrest an orange shirt, blue dungarees and tennis shoes and having $366 in cash and a .32 caliber black handle revolver containing five live bullets.

STOP Squad reports claim he is known to the Tactical Squad and to them on two former arrests as "picking up drugs in Lafayette Square and selling the same in the area of Pennsylvania Ave. and Pitcher St.

The report states he carried a brown paper bag and the gun against being held up.

When Bryant was apprehended, police state they took a brown paper bag from his hand and noted it contained a large quantity of drugs and $310 in cash.

A further search at headquarters revealed McCray had $56 in cash in a pocket.

-Church robbed

(FROM PAGE 1)

AFRO, the accused ran up the aisle and tried to leave the scene.

Mr. Whitehurst said he grabbed the gunman and began struggling just as he did in the dream.

Mr. Whitehurst and another church member, Daniel W. Chandler, held the gunman until police arrived on the scene.

—Slow elevators

(FROM PAGE ONE)

little boys.
Water trees, plants and flowers.
So they can grow big as towers.
Clean streets, kill the rat.
And always have a big cat.
Do these things, do them fine.
Then Baltimore will be sweet as pine.

* * *

Something has happened since that dedication, something has happened since young Robert wrote his poem.

Looking at the five giant towers of George B. Murphy Homes as they are silhouetted against the Baltimore skyline, you might say nothing has changed.

But as you zoom in for a close-up the changes become quite evident.

* * *

The laughter of children playing in the playground and even the sound of a rubber ball bouncing from the brick wall would normally indicate that all is well . . . but not so.

As you pass the children and go to the elevator entrance of one of the towers you are greeted by the usual spray paint signatures on the once brightly painted walls.

I remember two sparkling elevators, that efficiently moved tenants from floor to floor.

* * *

Something has happened. As nearly a dozen youngsters and adults waited, it became evident only one elevator was in operation.

It was at least a five minute wait for it to return the ground floor.

Instead of the sweet scent of pine, as Robert had in his poem, the strong smell of urine penetrated your nostrils, more spray paint signatures and the remains of a watermelon rind filled your vision.

* * *

The ride up was slow and painful. Because of mechanical difficulty the elevator could not stop at my floor but stopped at the one above, making it necessary to walk back through a semi-dark dingy fire exit.

The halls that were once bright and cheerful gave the appearance of a long, poorly lighted cavern. After leaving a message through a door that the occupant was reluctant to open, I luckily caught the elevator on the return trip to the ground floor.

Young ladies colorfully dressed for Sunday evenings contrasted the drab walls of the elevator.

The delicate fragrance of perfume was over powered by the stench of urine. We were glad to welcome the fresh air and sunshine of the ground floor.

I hope we can make something else happen as Robert's poem can become a reality.

LOSE SOMETHING — Call AFRO Classified, 728-8200. You're assured a quick results.

-Sparrow Point

(FROM PAGE 1)

where he received a bachelor of science degree in 1969.

She also attended Washington Hospital School of Medical Technology and then became a member of the firm's 1969 Loop Course for management training program.

Upon completion of her orientation in Bethlehem, Miss Johnson was assigned to the Sparrows Point metallurgical department as a technical assistant, the position she held prior to her recent promotion.

Before joining the Bethlehem force in 1969, Miss Johnson was an employee during the summer of 1968 under the summer employment program in the sheet month program in the sheet and strip division, annealing section.

She is a member of the American Society for Metals and the American Institute of Biological Science.

Pence gone

LONDON —Britons said goodbye Wednesday to the old earthweal pennies that had worn holes in generations of British pants pockets.

Along with the pennies went their few remaining 12-sided three penny pieces, worth three U.S. cents.

The two coins were the last remaining holdovers from the former pounds, shillings and pence money which had bewildered foreigners but which Britons had accepted happily as part of the "British way of life." After midnight both coins ceased to be legal currency. Only new decimal money was valid.

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AMONG 190,000 youngsters due in classrooms Tuesday bright and early are Donna Sneed and Geoge Sneed headed for Cecil Elementary School.

-Weekend weather

(FROM PAGE ONE)

on Friday.

CLOSED

On Monday (Labor Day) all of the above will be closed for the entire day.

All Employment Security offices of the Maryland Department of Employment and Social Services will be closed Monday, Sept. 6, (Labor Day).

Claimants who regularly report for unemployment insurance benefits on Monday have been notified of an alternate reporting date.

* * *

Maryland State Police warn that alcohol is still a factor in many highway deaths. Also, many of these untimely deaths could be prevented through the use of lap-type safety belts.

The caution is: "Remember to use your safety belts. They do reduce injuries and they do save lives."

So far in 1971, 540 persons have been killed in traffic accidents. There were 495 at this time last year.

IT'S SEPTEMBER

September, the 9th month, has 30 days. Sept. 1 was the 244th day of 1971 with 121 more days remaining in the year.

A monthly forecast reveals August-like sunshine, some hot days and cool to frosty to warm nights. Rain, they say, will be plentiful to hold back turning of the leaves until October.

* * *

AFRICAN FOLKLORE

The waning of a season, according to African folklore, brings a time for rest, and rejuvenation before another starts.

The reasoning of the idea is based on Mother nature who when the summer season begins to fade puts her animal children to drowsiness to save strength for the winter.

Also, African folklore calls the attention to storing up and saving against a sparce season when plenty food and adequate shelter will be necessary.

—Birth rate decline

(FROM PAGE ONE)

to a drop in birth rate which began five years ago.

Credited with bringing about the decline in birth rate starting in 1966 are efforts of planned parenthood groups to encourage smaller families; relaxed abortion laws in Maryland and legal approval of "The Pill" birth control medicine now available through prescription under physicians' advice.

The AFRO's attention was called this week to the significant fact by a kindergarten teacher who wishes her name withheld.

She notes, "It's no secret. It is generally talked about by elementary school principals and kindergarten teachers who can recall "The Pill" came in five years ago and now makes our classes smaller.

"Whatever the cause, smaller enrollment is better for beginners who will benefit all their school days from less crowded classrooms.

"Teachers can give each child greater attention and larger advantage toward solid learning foundations.

"We predict today's kindergarten child will have a better chance. Naturally, some 12 years hence, graduating classes will be smaller."

After checking with some elementary school principles, the AFRO talked with Clarence Gittings, assistant superintendent for Elementary Education.

Mr. Gittings was not asked to comment on the reason why but only to give what his files reflect from statistics supplied by the Education Department's Bureau of Research.

He replied, "The expected kindergarten enrollment this term is about 13,000 in contrast to 14,284 in 1970. Kindergarten children were registered in June this year and are five years of age.

"We understand from the Bureau of Research that there were fewer youngsters born five years ago and that the definite drop in birth rate then and the low kindergarten enrollment now can be related statistically."

Mr. Gittings states that kindergartens are located in most of the city's 150 elementary schools and will probably average 25 to 30 beginners to a class.

The total school population is estimated at about 190,000.

However, William Pinderhughes, assistant superintendent for Personnel said in June the total is expected to be smaller when final figures come in October.

About 115,000 elementary school pupils are expected to enter classrooms Tuesday.

Some 75,000 pupils are expected in secondary schools including junior and senior high schools, vocational schools and special education classes.

Schools open for classroom study Tuesday, Sept. 7. All schools will be closed Tuesday Sept. 14, Primary Election Day.

-New schools

(FROM PAGE 1)

$16.9 million, will be open for only 500 9th graders Tuesday.

The rest of the 2,116 population will come in on other days.

Wednesday, the remaining 9th graders will be admitted. Thursday and Friday, the 10th graders are expected to come for classes. These three new schools are pictured inside today's AFRO.

Man slain on Howard Park school yard

Homicide officers are questioning this morning (Friday) several persons who were on the Howard Park Elementary School rear recreation yard at Liberty Heights and Howad Park Aves. Thursday when a man was slain.

Police told the AFRO the unemployed married man, Richard Llee Fields, 25, 4100 block Fairfax Rd., was gunned down with one shot in the chest by a man while children and adults looked on in broad daylight at about 5 p.m.

The wife, Mrs. Clordeola Fields, identified and claimed the body.

ATTENTION

The Clean Blockers who were unable to attend the AFRO Awards Ceremony where Clean Block prizes were distributed may pick up their awards at the AFRO Building, 628 N. Eutaw St., Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Checks will be issued by Mrs. Odessa Dyson.

Please don't let your hardworking neighbors down. Come immediately to the AFRO Building and go back to your neighborhoods and show your neighbors how much their help in the campaign was appreciated.

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