Flicks Movie Review 'Brainstorm'

By Arthur J. Johnson

"Brainstorm" is the latest science fiction extravaganza to hit local movie screens. Actually the film is more than a year late getting to us because of the tragic death of one of its stars, Natalie Wood, in November 1981 shortly before the film was completed. Then there were the complicated computerized special effects to complete that added to the two year holdup of "Brainstorm".

Christopher Walken portrays a research scientist who, with his partner, Louise Fletcher (Best Actress Academy Award winner for "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest"), invents a device that enables one person to experience the thoughts, perceptions and sensations experienced by another person.

By wearing a special device about one's head, a person can record thoughts and experiences on a "tape". The tape can then be replayed by another person who can then have the identical experiences and sensations of the person who made the tape. A roller coaster ride, a meal, love, even sexual experiences can be duplicated and experienced without actual participation by playing the mental "videotapes".

Although the inventors don't know exactly how to apply their new invention, sinister government agents do and secretly research military uses for the device which they rename Project Brainstorm. When scientists Walken and Fletcher discover that the government is planning to use the invention to kill people, they rebel.

Unfortunatley, "Brainstorm" sounds a lot better on paper than it plays on film.

The photography is beautiful and lush. There hasn't been a high technology film where the computers and laboratories have looked so warm and unintimidating. Most science fiction films today give the hi-tech world a cold look but not Richard Yuricich, director of photography. He has made the laboratories here appear seductive and inviting.

Louise Fletcher, as the chain smoking workaholic head research scientist, is absolutely letter perfect. Most science films are not big on characterization and usually concentrate on the special effects. However Miss Fletcher is given time to create a real character here. She is a three-dimensional woman who is tender, dedicated, shrewd and determined that her work will not be used to exterminate human beings. This role was written for a male character, but Miss Fletcher's performance more than justifies the decision to rewrite the part for her.

The script of "Brainstorm", however, is not fully developed and leaves a lot of questions unanswered. The relationship between Miss Wood and her son in the film is strangely undeveloped. When the boy goes into extreme shock after playing one of the mental "videotapes", she seems strangely calm.

The special effects are not particularly spectacular past the opening scene in which you feel as though the theater is being turned upside down. Also the lack of consistent perspective in the mental videos is distracting.

For example, when Walken plays a tape of Miss Wood's thoughts, he sees himself as though she were looking at him; we see him through her eyes. But when she plays a tape of his thoughts about her, we see both of them as if there were a third party present. If he were looking at her, he wouldn't see himself. Perhaps Miss Wood's death prevented the filming of scenes with a consistent perspective but this makes for a very inconsistent concept, one that is crucial to the credibility of the film.

Finally there is a disturbing lack of black people in the world of research science represented here. A black cook and two black security guards are the only black people in the world of high technology, according to this film.

To add insult to injury, one of the security guards has a long scene in which he is comically taunted by robots and machinery gone haywire. This film implies that blacks won't be intimately involved in the age of high technology but will be its victims like the security guard. Perhaps a new engineering school at Morgan University will help make this type of implication seem even more ridiculous than it already is.

In short, don't rush out to see "Brainstorm." I'm sure it will be on television soon enough.

Ethel and Charles in concert for hungry people

Artists to End Hunger will present Ethel Ennis, Charles Covington, Ann and Isidor Saslav, and Alan Balter in a benefit concert on Sunday, Oct. 23 at 8:15 in the new concert hall of the Peabody Conservatory.

This unique blend of musicians promises surprises for the audience as the performers appear in unusual musical roles in a program ranging from classical music to jazz.

The concert is being presented in celebration of World Food Day 1983. All proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to the American Red Cross and the Open Door Diner, a local soup kitchen that feeds 300 people daily. This is made possible through the generous support of Baltimore media, businesses, and individuals.

In its first year Artists to End Hunger raised over $4,000 for different local and international hunger organizations.

Tickets for the benefit can be obtained for a tax-deductible contribution of $10 each (or $5 for students and senior citizens) at the Record and Tape Collector, Louie's Bookstore/Cafe, and the ticket office of the Peabody Conservatory.

For more information call (301) 332-0123.

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LATE CITY EDITION

Baltimore Afro-American

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A job center that put people to work

By Racine S. Winborne
AFRO Staff Writer

When Rev. Winifred Johnson started the job resource center it was with the idea that some of the city's unemployed might find jobs.

Promising to secure positions for all of the 637 plus who applied, the center has made good on its word. Presently, 143 people have found jobs since July 18, 1983.

They have positions with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Metro Nautilus and the Internal Revenue Service. Others have labor and maintenance - oriented employment.

The undertaking has been difficult and oftentimes frustrating for Johnson. As minister of the Universal Church of Christianity, at Park Ave. and Wilson St., she wanted to prove to people that they could "break the poverty cycle."

Four months later she has arrived at some pessimistic conclusions regarding portions of the city's unemployed.

"I was surprised how people expected you to do everything, find the job, assure them that they had the job when they hadn't even gone on the interview and give them money to get there.

Their laziness surprised me. I couldn't believe that a man who had been unemployed for three years didn't want to get up at 10 a.m. for an interview. He wanted to have it a 2 p.m."

Most of the applicants fall into the category of the "hardcore unemployed," people with less than a high school education and little or no work experience. They have filled the manual labor positions.

Johnson found herself arguing with people over the phone. "What do you mean you don't want the job. They'd say, but it's in D.C. I'd say at least go for the interview...maybe you can get a position here."

The resource center lent money to help applicants make their appointments. "One person," she recalls, "never went to the interview and never returned the money."

But all of Rev. Johnson's experiences aren't sour. The non-profit organization has placed several impressive candidates. "There were

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Elderly lash out at C&P rate hike plan

By Eddie King
AFRO Staff Writer

C&P Telephone Company's rate hike request totaling $218 million has created a stir among local minority and elderly residents who feel that they will be the hardest hit by such an increase.

An increase that would raise flat rate service from $11.82 to $21.30 a month has brought fear into the hearts of most that their service would be discontinued if the hike is approved.

Telephone officials arguing vehemently that such a hike is needed said that the breakup of AT&T removed subsidies that long distance rates had provided to local companies to keep local phone rates low.

"Adjustments, then, should be made within the company, not taken out on the consumer," said Del. Howard "Pete" Rawlings (D-40). "Such a request is outrageous and cannot be justified. Communication is an urban environmental necessity. People should be able to call the ambulance or fire department."

Many opponents of the increase charge C&P with raising the rates in an attempt to persuade or force people to stop using the flat rate service and use the measured service.

A consumer using measured service would be allowed $5.85 worth of calls with no charge. The first minute of additional calls would be four cents and each additional minute would be 1.5 cents.

Already at locally held hearings, the proposal has been called everything from "sickening" to "an injustice."

"Most minorities cannot afford rates as they are now,' said Emmett Burns, regional director of NAACP. "I'm really interested in the type of service that would be provided for that much of an increase."

C&P has also filed with the Federal Communications Commission for an access charge of $2 each month for residential customers and $3.25 for business customers for each line.

In February of this year, C&P Telephone Company received a rate hike of two percent totaling $26.2 million and more recently in April received another hike totaling $16.1 million.

"I'm sorry! I just cannot

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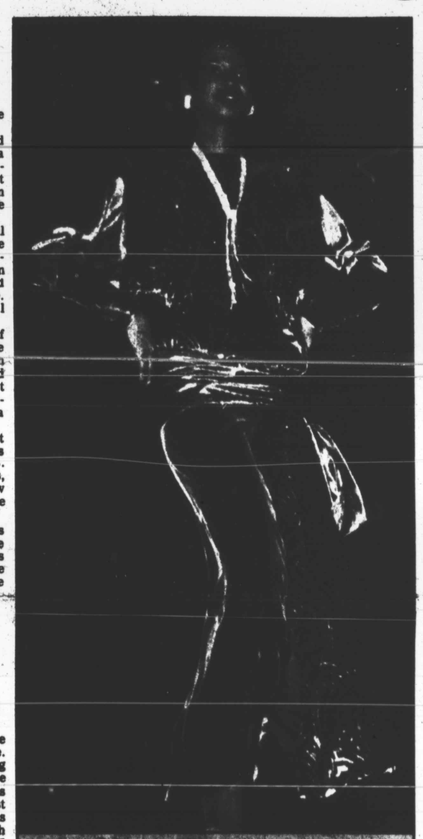
FACULTY SENATE CHARGES:

State stifling Morgan U.



Arthur Johnson
AFRO Staff Writer

A classrooom building which still stands incomplete after 11 years and the duplication of its programs at white state - funded institutions are just two examples of the state's continued underfunding and undermining of the growth of Morgan State University, according to University Faculty Senate members who are involved in the fight to gain an engineering program.

The continued underfunding of Morgan has prompted the Faculty Senate to engage a lawyer to do a feasibility study to determine the best way to protect the interests of the university, the AFRO learned.

The Faculty Senate is an elective governing body of the faculty which has powers over academic program changes, additions and modifications and which reserves the right to review any university policies that affect personnel or budget.

The Faculty Senate points out that the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) does not allow duplication of programs among state schools. However, Cynthia Harvey, assistant proessor of Math and Computer Science and president of the Faculty Senate, says the rules have changed to Morgan's disadvantage.

"We have had a Master of Music degree program here for years, yet Towson got theirs approved last spring. The SBHE says it won't allow duplication of programs, but for the ones we have, they have no problem," says Professor Harvey.

"They use duplication as a basic rule, but if the white schools want to duplicate a program, they change," says Ernest Hammond, assistant professor of Comprehensive Science and Science Education and Implementation Officer of the Morgan Faculty Senate.

Using the same duplication rule, the SBHE tried to deny Morgan a computer science program because the University of Maryland Baltimore County already had one. "The SBHE tried to interpret the Morgan mission (academic purpose) as being only in sociology where there are no jobs and no interest," says Professor Harvey.

"We told them we should have priority on anything needed in an urban area— the arts, the sciences and anything else," says Harvey. As a result Morgan now has a computer science program.

"Morgan was once the only four year state liberal arts college, so when Towson gets a mission of humanities and the arts, right away it's duplicating our program," says Harvey.

The state also allowed the University of Baltimore to have a business mission which also duplicated a Morgan program.

The new Morgan science center is also cited by the Faculty Senate as an example of the state's lack of commitment to Morgan. In the January 1983 Maryland State Department of Planning report of capital improvements, the present Morgan science facilities are described as "a four building complex which is in varying stages of obsolescence and deterioration."

"The state is planning a new science building based on 3,980 students, yet there are 4,200 students enrolled now. The facilities at UMBC were planned when there were zero students enrolled, yet facilities were built to accommodate 10,000 students."

"They are planning for Morgan to become smaller," says Professor Gary F. Ware, assistant professor of Mental Health and Chairperson of the Faculty Senate Enhancement Committee.

Another example of the state's neglect of Morgan is the fact that the McMechen Building has been incomplete since 1972.

"It looks like a normal building—on the outside. The top three floors are finished, but there is a dirt floor on the first level. They didn't even cement it, and the second floor is unfinished. We've been in that building since 1972," says Harvey who

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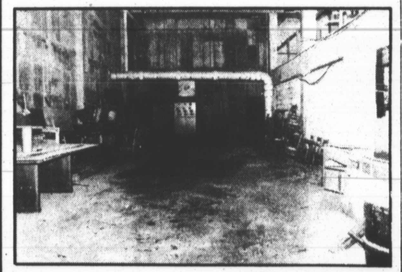

AFRO photo by Paul A. Greene

The dirt floor in Morgan State University's McMechen Building which has been incomplete since 1972.

Pomp and glitter at Ebony Fashion Fair

By Pamela Hodges, AFRO Women's Editor

With a kaleidoscope of colors, extravagantly lovely designs and dashingly dramatic models (10 females, two males) the 26th annual Ebony Fashion Extravaganza exploded onto the runway at Hill's Field House at Morgan University, Sunday, Oct. 2 at 5 p.m.

The near-capacity audience witnessed in two acts luxurious and beautiful afternoon and after-5 dresses and gowns, ensembles, suits, coats, swimwear, lingerie, furs and bridal wear, all by American, Italian and French designers.

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DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL CENTENNIAL:

New Douglass moves into the computer age

The faculty and administrators of Douglass High School, as well as its alumni association, will use next week's centennial celebration to intensify their on-going efforts to ensure the school's curriculum adequately prepares students for today's work world.

The world-famed institution, founded in 1883, existed for decades along with Washington, D.C.'s Dunbar High School, as the major regional institutions for educating the black man in the years following his 1863 emancipation from slavery.

The school has produced in the neighborhood of 70,000 graduates in its century of local education. The centennial celebration culminates in a gala dinner and ball next Saturday night at the downtown Convention Center. Alumni will be reunited from all parts of the country, including Alaska and California. President Reagan, Gov. Hughes, and Mayor Schaefer have or will have issued proclamations lauding the institution for its century of living up to its motto of "Pride, Dignity, and Excellence."

Statements have also come from Superintendent Alice Pinderhughes; Mrs. Jean Owens, principal, and Hannibal Mickens, alumni president.

"Douglass High School," Mrs. Pinderhughes said, "rich in heritage and educational service to Baltimore City is celebrating its historical centennial.

"I am proud to be a member of the Douglass alumni. I am proud that Douglass High School has provided an educational program for so many people: people who are providing services and entertainment throughout this country and abroad. The graduates of Douglass High School are achieving and have achieved over the years.

"The quality of education provided students who attended Douglass High School is evident throughout subsequent success stories appearing in major newspapers across this nation.

"As I look at the business and professional community, Douglass is very well represented among the doctors, lawyers, educators, businessmen, clergy, federal, state, city government and industrial employees.

"I salute Douglass for its past and for its present contributions on the local, state, and national levels.

"I am proud to serve as

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