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PRESENTS

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Daycare center teacher indicted for child abuse

(See Column 1)

ERICAN Co. LATE CITY EDITION SATURDAY

Baltimore Afro-American

93RD YEAR NO. 8 BALTIMORE, MD. SEPTEMBER 8, 1984 40 CENTS

USPS-009-060 BA-2 01x
000005650
99/99/99 OY 00M 00W
MICRO PHOTO DIVISION
ATTN SHILA HYLTON
OLD MANSFIELD RD
WOOSTER OH 44691

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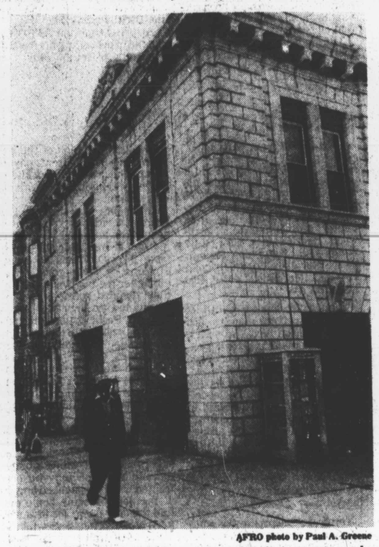
Community leader killed in fiery Franklin St. crash



AFRO photo by Paul A. Greene

RUN DOWN...This fire station once housed engine company number 19 at 1601 E. North Avenue is now up for sale.

By Racine S. Winborne
AFRO Staff Writer

A fatal mid-day traffic accident claimed the lives of two people earlier this week, including a prominent Rosemont community leader who had been scheduled to testify before the city Zoning Board on behalf of a neighborhood friend hours before the incident.

Killed in Tuesday's fiery crash were Mrs. Mildred Cobb Battle, 45, of the 2700 block of W. Franklin Street, and Joseph Hart, 52, of the 2600 block of W. Franklin Street.

A third passenger, Mrs. Ellouise Carroll, 39, of the 2700 block of Edmondson Avenue, was rushed to University Hospital where she remains in critical condition.

According to official police reports, the vehicle, a 1972 Ford LTD, was traveling westbound on I-170 at approximately 11:35 a.m. when the driver of the car, Hart, lost consciousness and collapsed at the wheel just as the car was entering the W. Franklin Street exit ramp east of Pulaski Street.

The vehicle collided with a concrete wall as Mrs. Battle, who was seated next to Hart, attempted unsuccessfully to gain control of its steering. Seconds later it crashed into a nearby pole, according to witnesses at the scene.

Both Hart and Mrs. Battle were pronounced dead at University Hospital.

Mrs. Mildred Cobb Battle

Ironically, Tuesday's tragedy occurred in the very same police district where, two months ago, the popular Rosemont matron had become embroiled in a controversial dispute with two officers at the Western District Precinct.

She had visited the station in May on a community related matter and became concerned over the length of time she waited to see a court commissioner.

In a sworn statement released soon after her arrest on three counts of trespassing, assault and resisting arrest, Mrs. Battle insisted that she had conducted herself in an orderly manner, but accused the two white officers of using "racial epithets and excessive force" when she sought assistance.

Mrs. Battle suffered a seizure as a result of the skirmish. She was later revived by emergency paramedics and detained for a 24-hour period, despite the lack of any prior police record.

Citing her lengthy background as a community organizer and elected neighborhood officer, her attorneys, Juanita Jackson Mitchell and Michael B. Mitchell, argued that she was yet another victim of police brutality. The case was scheduled to begin in Circuit Court on September 14th.

"These were criminal charges pending against her...the state would (now) issue a nolle prosequi or dismissal because of her death," attorney Michael Mitchell said on Wednesday.

He indicated that her estate could still bring suit against the police department on the matter of the police brutality charge, but said that the decision rests with her family.

Funeral arrangements for Joseph Hart were unavailable at AFRO presstime. Wake services for Mrs. Battle are scheduled for this evening (Friday) at the Vernon Bailey Funeral Home, 1348 N. Calhoun Street. The body will be sent to her hometown of Tarboro, North Carolina for burial on Saturday.

Neighborhood upset over firehouse loss

By Jadi Omowale
AFRO Staff Writer

The closing of a firehouse in an east Baltimore community has residents so up in arms; that they are planning a demonstration to protest the closing this Saturday.

The firehouse located at 1601 E. North Avenue was closed in March and despite the city's treatment of Locust Point recently, Fire Department officials say that the station on North Avenue will not reopen.

Residents are also upset with their elected officials whom they felt have failed them on this issue.

"There is a real credibility gap in existence here," said Leonard Cannady, Chair of the Democratic Central Committee, and an area resident.

At a meeting with the fire department, Anthony Ambridge, 2nd district councilmember, left before he could be questioned, Nathaniel McFadden also a second district councilperson, said he was unaware that the station had been closed, and Councilperson Jackie McLean was not in attendance.

A letter from Delegate John Douglass was circulated right after the closing but residents are still not satisfied.

The closing of a station in Locust Point, a predominantly white area, and its subsequent reopening has been cited as one of the major reasons for the community action to be taken this Saturday.

The residents are also incenced because they feel that they were the last to know and if their elected officials had forwarned them and worked with them something might have been able to be done about the situation.

"We feel it is an insult to us; the closing at Locust Point made us more concerned because the residents there were made aware of the closing beforehand whereas ours was just closed," Cannady said.

Cannady continues, "They say they are closing the building because the building is delapidated and falling down, then this for sale sign appeared on the building."

In March, the firehouse located

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Mildred Battle— tireless worker

By Racine S. Winborne
AFRO Staff Writer

As Mildred C. Battle and two fellow companions headed to their respective West Baltimore homes on Tuesday, it was an overcast rainy kind of day. Many of the city roads and streets were still glistening from the early morning shower and the air was cool with threats of more precipitation.

The trio was hurrying home in the maroon Ford which belonged to the well liked community leader, who was a tireless supporter of the many neighbors and strangers who sought her assistance in the 15-years since her arrival in the city from North Carolina.

She was taking driver's education classes and looked forward to the day when she could take the wheel of her vehicle on her own. But on Tuesday, a friend, Joseph Hart, agreed to chauffeur her and Ellouise Carroll to their destination.

Barely two hours from the time of the fatal traffic accident that would end prematurely two lives and seriously injure another, Mrs. Battle was to appear before a zoning hearing at City Hall.

A neighbor and friend, Elmer Gross, was scheduled to testify concerning his vegetable and fruit stand and she had agreed to be there. The small business, which operates from an empty lot on W. Franklin St. & Franklintown Road, was closed down because it violated city zoning laws.

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City has help for latchkey children

By Arthur Johnson
AFRO Staff Writer

They have sometimes been found hiding in closets with their pets or under beds with every light in the house turned on and with radios and televisions blaring.

"They" are the youngsters contemportary society has labeled "Latchkey Children," the at least 40,000 Baltimore children aged six to 13 who are left alone in an empty house or apartment for about two and one half hours daily.

These children prepare breakfast for themselves, left themselves into their homes after school (hence the name latchkey kids) and often spend the summer months by themselves because their parents must work or are in job training situations. These youngsters are not left alone because of parental neglect, but because their parents often have no alternative but to leave them unsupervised, said Heidi McDonald, coordinator of the Mayor's Office Latchkey Program.

Begun two years ago in response to the needs of the Baltimore community; 17 centers were set up around the city using community centers, recreation centers, daycare centers, schools and churches with the help of some 200 volunteers to offer these children a place to spend lonely hours.

During this school year, six Latchkey Program Centers will be open year round from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The centers offer adult supervision, breakfast, lunch and snacks, as well as recreational and educational activities.

Children are offered the opportunity to learn arts and crafts, play a variety of team and board games, join cooking clubs and even take trips such as one recently taken to the Washington, D.C. Zoo.

"You will not find them watching TV or playing video

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Union Baptist daycare center teacher indicted

By Tyrone Vines
AFRO Staff Writer

The national epidemic of reported incidents of child abuse and sexual molestation struck Baltimore again as James Taylor, a substitute teacher at the Union Baptist Day Care Center, was indicted by the grand jury for child molestation.

Recently the grand jury indicted Taylor, 26, on charges of third-degree sexual offense and one count of child abuse for an incident that occurred at the Union Baptist Day Care Center on Aug. 10.

According to Ms. Lynette Young, a spokeswoman for the state's attorney's office, Taylor was arrested Aug. 13, a week after he began working at the day care center on Druid Hill Ave. as a substitute teacher.

Taylor is alleged to have sexually molested a 4 year-old girl who was waiting for her parent to arrive at the center to transport her home at the end of the day.

Information from police records states that Taylor took the 4 year-old into a bathroom at the center and rubbed his genitals against the buttocks of the child.

The act was repeated in the center's cafeteria before the child was picked up by her mother, police reports said. Investigators also learned from the victim that the teacher told her that "You don't have to tell your mommy if you don't want to."

This bizarre incident, which allegedly occurred at the Union Baptist Day Care Center, is the third such incident in which an employee of a Baltimore day

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BTU against elected board

While proponents of an elected city school board savor their successful petition drive which placed the issue on the November ballot, other forces are expounding the negative side of the issue.

Both the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU) and the League of Women Voters (LWV) have declared their opposition to the charter amendment.

According to Susan Davis, BTU Director of Communications, "It's not that we're not for the public selecting who they want, we're behind the idea of an elected school board. It's just that this particular charter amendment has some problems. We'd like to see it done right before the public makes a decision."

The major problem with the concept of an elected Board of School Commissioners is that, like the appointed board, it cannot tax or increase the budget, said Ms. Davis. Therefore when the union negotiates a raise for teachers with the proposed elected board, it will be negotiating with a party that has no decision - making power, according to the BTU spokeswoman.

"The board can say they will give teachers a raise, but the Mayor and the City Council can say 'no way.' It has happened in counties surrounding Baltimore with elected boards," explained Ms. Davis.

Currently, the board can negotiate teacher salaries with the union and its decision "is usually what we end up with because the board knows ahead of time what the Mayor has to give," Ms. Davis continued.

An elected board will not have the backing of the Mayor and the City Council. The BTU spokeswoman added that the organization is not condemning an elected board but is suggesting that such a board have the power to raise taxes.

Other BTU objections to the proposed amendment include, fears that prospective board candidates will use the office as a "political stepping stone" and will vote only to please their constituencies. Since a minority of Baltimore voters have school-age children, elected board members may vote down budget increases if they believe that is what their constituencies desire, according to Ms. Davis.

"You could have board members running on the platform that we are spending too much money on schools. We have a president (Reagan) who does that. Why not the school board?," the spokeswoman warned.

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All seems quiet at Geo. Murphy Homes

By Eddie King
AFRO Staff Writer

Tension between the George B. Murphy Homes' Tenant Council and Improvement Association has finally subsided a bit after a recent conflict between the two organizations.

The improvement association charged the tenant council, which has been inactive for a number of years, with attempts to extinguish their organization and move it from its present office in the Murphy Homes apartments.

Concerned about the amount of work and positive impact they have had on the community during the inactivemenss of the council, the improvement association, headed by Carolyn Jordon, decided to fight for its privilege to stay in office.

The tenant council, backed by city housing authorities, insisted

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