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- MRS. SANTA Cases, page 32.
- FRIDAY PLUS — Left Bank Jazz Society happenings this Sunday
- NEW DAWN Magazine
- LOTTERY — Page 17.

AFRO spends a day in rent court

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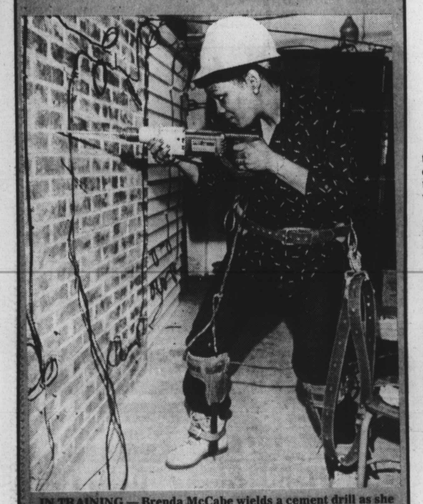
Baltimore Afro-American

95th Year No. 22 BALTIMORE, MD OCTOBER 25, 1986 50 CENTS

Woman at work



IN TRAINING — Brenda McCabe wields a cement drill as she learns cable TV installation. It's a part of a degree-program at Sojourner-Douglass College where students may now qualify for a bachelor's degree, with cable technology as a part of the curriculum. This is the only 4-year program of its type in the country—a real first for Baltimore and Sojourner-Douglass College.

MTA rate increase draws angry reaction from riders

By Manotti L. Jenkins and Paula Wagner
AFRO Staff Writers

The Mass Transit Administration (MTA) held public hearings on proposed fare increases at three Baltimore locations this week.

MTA officials conducted hearings at its Control Center, 301 N. Eutaw St., the North Arundel Center at 101 Crain Highway in Glen Burnie, and the Old Court House in Towson.

The hearing on Eutaw St., which attracted over 100 people that left only standing room in the small facility, became a forum in which many of the 30 or more persons testifying repudiated MTA's alleged race- and class-conscious policies in providing transit services to local citizens.

The overwhelming majority of the mostly black and working-class audience were adamantly opposed to the proposed increases, scheduled to go into effect Nov. 16.

These increases include:

•The adult base fare would rise from .75 to .90.

•Senior citizens and disabled persons registered for the reduced-fare program would be charged .30 instead of the current .25.

•Student fares would increase from .50 to .60.

•Zone charges between zones 1 and 2 would remain .10; between zones 2 and 3 would remain .15; however, charges between zones 3 and 4 and zones 4 and 5 would increase from .25 to .30.

•Tokens and 10-trip tickets would remain available at a discount, but the price of tokens for 10 trips would rise to $8.50, 10-trip tickets for zone 1 would increase to $8.50 and for zone 2 to $9.50.

•Monthly pass prices for zone 1 would increase from $28 to $35 and zone 5 premium passes would increase from $67 to $79.

Several testifiers spoke on behalf of children in criticizing the proposed fare increases.

The executive director of the Public School Administration Supervisory Association, Maurice Dorsey, said city school

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Caucus backs Young in the fight to save his chairmanship

Delegate Larry Young is rallying support in his efforts to save his seat as chairman of the House Environmental Matters Committee.

Last week, the AFRO reported rumors were circulating Annapolis and Baltimore that Young, D-39th, could lose his chairmanship because he did not support Mayor William Donald Schaefer in his almost certain election bid for governor.

Since the report was first published, the president of the Maryland Black Legislative Caucus has said the 27-member group is "100 percent" in its support for Young.

District 1199E National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees AFL-CIO, also has come forward to publicly endorse Young's retention of the chairmanship.

He was appointed chairman of the House Environmental Matters Committee almost four years ago. The appointment was hailed as a first in Maryland. Young was the first black to occupy such a position in the state's 350-year-plus history.

In last week's AFRO story, sources said Young's retention of the seat was dependent on two elections — that of Schaefer as governor and that of the next Speaker of the House of Delegates.

The caucus meets twice monthly. At a regular scheduled meeting earlier this week, Young was one of the topics of discussion.

Decatur W. Trotter, D-24th, caucus president, said Young will be supported.

"My understanding is that 100 percent of the caucus favors Larry and favors his retaining his seat," Trotter said. "I think

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Police head unveils H.E.A.T. program

It was a pretty straight forward, run-of-the-mill press conference - the city task force on illegal handguns - until City Police Commissioner Bishop Robinson took the floor and the spotlight Wednesday morning at City Hall.

With flair and flash Robinson unleashed H.E.A.T.

The Handgun Enforcement Arrest Team (H.E.A.T.) consists of city police officers and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearm special agents. H.E.A.T.'s aim is to "impact against handguns used by criminals in the city."

Robinson said illegal handguns in the city and state pose serious problems. He said by Sept. 30, 176 homicides had been committed in the city, 107 of them by handguns.

H.E.A.T. has three major targets:

The warrant target looks for the person who fits the criteria of a repeat offender and who is wanted on one or more arrest warrants.

The arrest target looks for the person already arrested but not in jail. These people are out on bail or released on their recognizance or to a third part.

The investigative target is for the person who fits the criteria of the first two targets.

H.E.A.T. will be comprised of a network of city police homicide officers, members of the robbery and fugitive/career criminals units, the drug enforcement section and the neighborhood foot and motorized patrol officers.

Robinson said the new unit will use the federal gun control act and Maryland handgun statues in its efforts.

He also announced the unit has been in operation for the past 30 days and has been successful in identifying 20 targets, 15 of whom have been arrested and removed from city streets.

In a dramatic display of show and tell, police officers brought forward large displays of H.E.A.T. targets -- rows of black and white photos of ugly, mean-looking offenders. The captured ones had a large red X marked across the face.

In a second dramatic display of show and tell, a publicity campaign designed by Image Dynamics was unveiled.

Robinson said the effectiveness

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REMINDER — Daylight Savings Time ends at 2 a.m. Sunday morning. Turn your clocks BACK one hour before going to bed Saturday night.

Larry Young

PAC money—can it influence elections

By P. A. Tatum
AFRO Staff Writer

Political action committees in Maryland — there seems to be no neutral ground on them.

On one side are those who say political action committees (PACS) are exerting undue influence over legislators by giving them large amounts of money.

On the other side are politicians who accept PAC money but dismiss allegations PACs are buying their votes.

PACs represent many different interests—banking, beverage, insurance, labor/union, manufacturing, and utility/energy companies among others.

Not all PACs represent big business or labor interests. Grassroots organizations such as the nuclear freeze movement, conservationists and other environment groups, teachers and nurses have formed PACs.

Maryland Common Cause, a watchdog organization monitoring PACs, is expressing its concern about the large amounts of money changing hands between the state's many PACs and legislators.

In a series of studies and reports, based in part on campaign expenditures filed with the Maryland State Administrative Board of Election Laws, Maryland Common Cause said by Aug. 24, 1986 PACs reported they had given candidates, especially incumbents, for state office almost $1.5 million.

Ricki Wadsworth, the group's executive director, said Maryland PACs are "multi-purpose" groups which give money to more than one candidate. PACs are formed because different groups want to express their concerns and interests in Annapolis.

She said the number of PACs in the state has grown from 50 in 1978 to about 246 today.

In 1976, she said the General Assembly removed limits on PAC contributions — by mistake — to state candidates. Since then their numbers have increased and so has the amount of money given to state legislators.

According to a recent Maryland Common Cause study, "PACs are clearly investing. much more to gain 'access' or 'good will' or 'recognition' from legislators. The pay-off was so valuable that PACs plunked down

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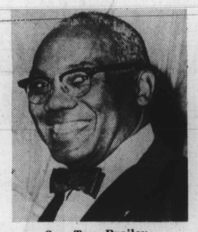
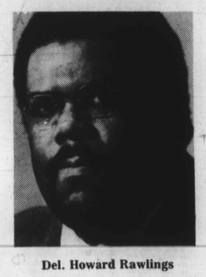


Sen. Troy Brailey



Del. Howard Rawlings

New sheriff gears up for transition

By P. A. Tatum
AFRO Staff Writer

Rumors of a house cleaning are weaving its way through the corridors and rooms of the sheriff's department but "they are just rumors" to be discounted said one official, as a history making transition is underway in that department.

The Sept. 9 primary saw the election of Shelton Stewart, a 43-year-old Mass Transit Administration official and community activist, as the city's first black sheriff. Stewart faces no opposition on the Nov. 4 general election.

Stewart told the AFRO he will emphasize communication within the department of about 140 and in the community at large.

"I'm the first black sheriff of Baltimore City but I've turned that around. I'm going to be the first community sheriff. My slogan is 'we can do it better if we do it together,' " he said.

Stewart first ran for sheriff in 1982. During the 1960s and 1970s he said he worked on Bertram Dorsey's three unsuccessful attempts to capture the office.

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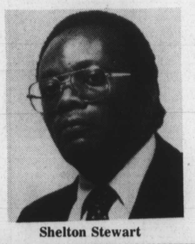

Shelton Stewart

Rent Court—is it just a landlord collection agency?

By Roz Hamlett
AFRO Staff Writer

With a sleeping child slung low across one hip, a distraught woman stood before the judge's bench, scornfully rolled her eyes at the landlord and announced to the packed courtroom that he was a liar.

Such scenes are common in the city's rent court, where Judge Roger W. Brown doles out justice to hundreds of rental disputes daily.

The tension between landlord and tenant is palpable — an undercurrent of camaraderie ripples among the tenants, when the judge can occasionally rule in their favor.

When one tenant successfully argued her case to the judge and won a judgement, many onlookers murmured under their breath, "that's right girl, tell them."

However, the landlord wins most of the time and is considered the "bad guy" in court proceedings.

"She has not paid me one thin dime in the past two months," says a disgruntled landlord, "her record is self-explanatory, your honor, this woman does not deserve a break — she has received seven put-out notices in the past eight months."

Tenants and landlords watch the judicial process attentively, straining forward to hang onto every word. But others doze in blissful sleep, read the morning paper or engage in whispered arguments over whose responsibility it was to pay the rent, to the chagrin of the court bailiff.

The District Court of Maryland has jurisdiction in both criminal and civil areas and exclusive jurisdiction in all landlord — tenant disputes, where plevin action is required — that is, one of the parties claims that money or chattel has been wrongfully taken.

On a normal day in rent court at least 1,200 cases are on the docket, but Chief Judge Robert W. Sweeney, says most of these people do not appear and out of the ones that do, they do not have adequate defense, which leaves the judge the undesirable job of evicting them.

There is help. Many tenants are referred to the Baltimore City Eviction Prevention Unit, an organization that enjoys rent-free space in the courthouse and serves as a liaison between the tenant and Social Services.

However, the city of Baltimore has more eviction notices filed than the city of New York because Maryland is one of only two or three other states, that allow the landlord to file for eviction the first day after the rent is late.

Last year in 1985, 413,000 cases were filed with the District Court

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OCT 1986