News behind the news

City employe raises

By Fred Hines
AFRO Staff Writer

City employees may be denied their annual increment raises if Baltimore labor commissioner, Jeffrey Austin, has his way. He is proposing merit increases instead.

Increment raises guarantee yearly step raises for almost every city employe.

Converting to a system where raises are based on merit, a move opposed by the city unions, will not only give more power to the supervisors to determine but could hurt black city employees more than any one else since they occupy many of the lower positions.

Black employees could theoretically be told that their work is not up to par by the supervisor and really by denied the raise because they are black. They would have little means of appealing such a denial.

The National Workers Organization said there was no point in "wages being frozen for city workers, some of whom make little over $5,000 a year now. Also what is 'reasonable' about more families dying in fires, more schools overcrowded and more rat infested neighborhoods when firemen, teachers, and sanitation workers are laid off?"

Property tax assessments

By Fred Hines
AFRO Staff Writer

About 30 state property assessors will inspect between 75,000 and 80,000 properties during the next 6 months in the first large-scale reevaluation since the massive reassessments in 1975.

In 1975, more than 23,500 properties were reassessed in a one-year crash program that added $520 million to the city's tax base but stirred a record number of taxpayer protests that are still in the process of being heard.

According to a spokesman at the Baltimore office of the State Department for Assessments and Taxes, dimension, age of house, and a personal interview with the homeowner are the main factors in determining assessment.

If the assessments of the properties are raised, the property taxes automatically go up, the spokesman said. Thus the cost of living in Baltimore may increase even more in the up coming months.

B. G. and E. rates soar

By Fred Hines
AFRO Staff Writer

Residents of Baltimore will pay even higher utility bills in the upcoming future if the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company is granted approval for a proposed increase.

The pocketbook of the average consumer will be dipped into a little more as those who use 500 kilowatts of electricity a month will see their rise from $26.96 to $32.45.

Gas heating customers, who use an average of 108 units a month, would pay $31.46, instead of $29.40 under present rates.

B.G/E. appears to be unsatisfied with its new rate increase approval only six months ago which granted them the right to increase consumer bills an extra $1.57 a month and gas users an extra $1.53 a month

Gas and Electric customers, by the way can expect to see their bills increase whether or not B.G/E. gets its wish, because of an increase this week in the Maryland sales tax from 4 per cent to 5 per cent.

High Court and seniority

By Fred Hines
AFRO Staff Writer

Black Baltimoreans may be affected by a Supreme Court decision this week that rules seniority systems that continue the effects of past racial discrimination are not necessarily illegal.

Generally, the charges involved a situation in which minority employees were mostly centered in one type of work, and whites in another, with separate seniority systems for each. If an employee left one unit he would lose the seniority he had built up for such things as job bidding and layoffs.

The ruling, in a case from Texas involving truck drivers, rejects the views of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Justice Department which said that such seniority systems are invalid.

The two lower courts that tried the case earlier found that this system "locked" minority workers into inferior jobs and continued the effects of prior discriminatory practice in which the blacks were kept out of the better jobs.

Meanwhile in Baltimore a similar situation exists involving workers at the main Post Office who say their supervisor has been giving the easiest jobs to whites whereas blacks with more seniority are stuck in jobs that are physically more difficult though their job classification may be the same.

The Supreme Court voted 7-2 favoring work seniority rules that may discriminate and Thurgood Marshall, one of the justices that opposed the ruling, said "equal opportunity will remain a distant dream, for all incumbent employees."

PART 2 OF HIS MORRIS BROWN SPEECH

'Little Willie's game plan for winning

Baltimore's business leader William L. (Little Willie) Adams was commencement speaker at Morris Brown College of Atlanta recently at which time Mr. Adams also received an honorary doctorate of letters.

In Tuesday's AFRO Part One of his address to the 200 graduates was published.

Part Two, his concluding remarks, are as follows:

I do not consider myself to be a black man in business, I consider myself to be a businessman who is black.

We at Parks Sausage have an integrated business. Even though it was black-owned — we needed the expertise and the know-how of people of all races.

Because we were integrated we had plenty to markets we would have missed otherwise.

At Northwest Associates, at Mondawmin there are three in our partnership — one Jewish fellow — one Gentile and a soul brother.

We have this large shopping center of 50 acres of land located in the center of the black community. Twenty years ago when this center was built — no one imagined it would soon depend on the Black community for support.

National chain stores started with the venture but they left — and when Sears closed the whole center was threatened to be closed down.

I was called upon by certain segments of the community to help save and revitalize the shopping center.

To do this, it was necessary to purchase the Sears building of 200,000 sq. feet. So we formed an organization called North-West Associates — the Jewish fellow the Gentile and I.

Because of the confidence I had built up with white business men, we were able to raise the capital — 3 million dollars through the efforts of my partners and myself. We raised the capital — renovated the building and secured tenants.

We were able to secure contracts for space from 15 to 20 entities — consisting of state agencies, Federal agencies and retail merchants. This venture received national publicity — from News Week and Time Magazines.

I could not have swung this deal depending on blacks alone. I have been able, in Baltimore, to gain the confidence of the financial world by living up to my obligations — paying all bills when due and keeping my promises.

This was done with honesty-integrity and ethical conduct in all of my lines of business at all times.

So we must integrate our business if we want to grow — if we want to deal in millions rather than in hundreds of dollars. This is an example of the new concept in business today.

Today is the day of specialization whereas you should be able to do more than one thing. Specialization, however, in a field creates better chances for success.

I am mentioning my successes. I will not have time to mention my many failures. As a gambler — I put my losses behind me and headed for new fields.

Here is my phylosophy — Little Willie's Suggestions of how you can make it in the world today.

1. Acquire capital — In business it would be money; in other fields it would be skills and experience.

2. Specialize — Be the best there is in your field.

3. Be Flexible — be flexible with your same plan — make changes when necessary.

4. Develop proper attitudes — Don't be a smart Aleck; Don't try to be slick; Be courteous, be ethical, be honest.

5. Attempt to integrate your business and get in position to work to the top — where the big boys are.

6. Be willing to pay the price for success. This means hard work, long hours, sacrifice of social life, sacrifice of superficial luxuries at the beginning for the substantial rewards will come later on.

7. Realize the world does not owe you a living — but You owe it to the world to be productive.

Because at Morris Brown — your teachers and your parents have invested so much time, love, money and energy in you — and you must pay the dividends by being a productive member of society.

8. You should make financial contributions to help others who struggle to get an education. Each of you, when success comes, owes a debt to help send at least one student through college.

9. You should make considerable contributions to charities as well as to churches. Political power and economic power go hand in hand...

I would like to quote from Matthews Chapter 25, Verses 14-31, "Again, the kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going into another country, who called together his servants and gave them money to invest for him while he was gone.

"He gave $5,000 to one, $2,000 to another, and $1,000 to the last — dividing it in proportion to their abilities — and then left on his trip.

"The man who received the $5,000 began immediately to buy and sell with it and soon earned another $5,000. The man with $2,000 went right to work, too, and earned another $2,000.

"But the man who received the $1,000 dug a hole in the ground and hid the money for safekeeping.

"After a long time the master returned from his trip and called them to him to account for his money. The man to whom he had entrusted the $5,000 brought him $10,000 for good work.

"His master praised him, saying, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Begin the joyous tasks I have assigned to you.'

"Next came the man who had received the $2,000 with the report: 'Sir, you gave me $2,000 to use, and I have doubled it.'

"'Good work,' his master said. 'You are a good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with this small amount, so now I will give you much more.'

"Then the man with the $1,000 came and said, 'Sir, I knew you were a hard man, and I was afraid you would rob me of what you earned, so I hid your money in the earth and here it is!'

"But his master replied, 'Wicked man! Lazy slave! Since you knew I would demand your profit, you should at least have put my money into the bank so I would have some interest.'

Use what you have and make the best of it.

I hope my message and this advice will help the 1977 graduates.

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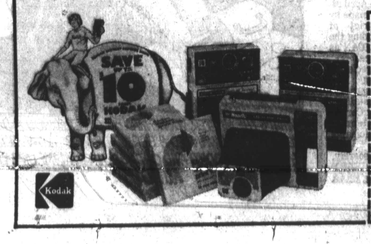

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FUND-RAISER TO FIGHT EASTSIDE PRISON

NAACP president speaks at citizens dinner

The president of the local NAACP said at a fund-raiser dinner in East Baltimore last Thursday warehousing of criminals is part of the overall, larger problem in the state's criminal justice system.

"There are too many criminals ... The jails are bursting at the seams ... and the state has given up on rehabilitation of prisoners ..." Mrs. Enola P. McMillan, the president, told an audience of about 250 gathered as part of money-raising efforts by the citizens lobby, Concerned Citizens of East Baltimore, which is intent on seeking court action to block a prison in their Biddle St. neighborhood.

Answering her own question of why we are producing so many prisoners, Mrs. McMillan said, "The city and state share in the problems — of crime, unemployment and lack of concern."

Utilizing a metaphor to emphasize her sentiments, the civil rights leader said the coin of succes has two sides — government, business and industry on one side and public respondsibility and the other.

"Where is our political clout?" she asked.

"Political clout is earned," she continued, "And we have some folk who need to be put out of their jobs. We need to demand political credibility. If people can't represent us well, then we need to turn them out of office. I don't care whose son or daughter they are.

"To sustained applause, she added, "Until we decide some standards for political credibility, we are going to trouble. We pay too much attention to what these black politicians say and not enough attention to what they do."

Mrs. McMillan revealed the NAACP is launching an effort to bring about reforms in the criminal justice system here but added nothing could be done to aid blacks until politicians become more accountable to the people.

"and the people seize the ballot box as the potent weapon it is."

According to the former school administrator, turned black rights advocate," (Mayor) Schaefer doesn't need black votes" and can still do what he wants to in Baltimore. And that's because, she said, "we take our responsibilities much too lightly."

Her voice now raised to an intensity of emotion seldom seen in the usually demure matron, she declared, "If unemployment is as high as it is, then we can expect poverty to be our position. We must work together to employ young and old. Racism is part of the problem. Promotions for blacks in business are well behind. We have to prepare ourselves to do something that someone wants done."

Black young people have to be guided and learn to have the desire. If they don't have it, "for a good education to prepare for a place in American democracy," she noted.

And with emphasis, she threw in, "We need to teach standard English, not this black English."

To which she added, "We must have stanlards and live up to them."

Concluding, she asked the audience of mostly black East Baltimore homeowners, "Not only must we demand credibility from the politicians, but from the school teachers, some of whom leave school before the children do. And too many of them are only interested in the paycheck. What are you doing to help your child?"

Mrs. McMillan spoke at the invitation of the concerned citizens who need to raise $7,000 as legal fees. They expect to file a court suit asking that the state be permanently enjoined from locating an 800-bed medium-security prison in the Kenwood and Orangeville sections.

At the eleventh hour in the General Assembly, the state agreed to the prison's location, but only after an intensive filibuster led by Sen. Robert L. Douglass.

Included in remarks made by Mrs. McMillan was her urging that black citizens be willing"to have the job done;" that is, the community's problems be solved with their participation and cooperation.

"We find excuses for not

(Continued on Page 8)

A TINY SANDMAN plays on the beach at Ocean City, Md. as beach umbrellas and boardwalk rides loom in the background. Estimates of the Memorial Day weekend crowd at the ocean resort ranged from 150,000 to 250,000, but the beaches became bare except for this brave little fellow as cold winds and cloudy skies filled the area.

(AFRO staff photo by Roman Hankewycz)

Court defeats non-smokers' rights at work

Smoking on the job is coming under fire. And recent court cases have dramatized the controversial issue.

Last December, a New Jersey Superior Court Judge issued a permanent injunction to grant a telephone company employe the right to a smoke-free work-place. The day after the precedent-setting decision, the American Lung Association presented Donna Shimp, the employe who suffered an adverse reaction to tobacco smoke, a "Pioneer Award" for outstanding achievement in environmental health.

The court decreed that Mrs. Shimp's work environment was contaminated by the presence of an unnecessary toxic substance, cigarette smoke.

"The tools of her trade are pens, pencils, paper, a typewriter and a telephone," the court said. "There is no necessity to fill the air with tobacco smoke to carry on the defendant's business."

In another case, a Los Angeles school district employe, who argued his own case in court, was awarded unemployment benefits when he quit his job because he sat between a cigar smoker and a cigarette smoker.

Still another employe in Iowa sued when unemployment compensation was denied her when she left her job because of smoking coworkers. She, too, won her case in court.

Such decisions are reversing old views, accepted far too long, that smokers have a right to light up wherever and whenever they please—regardless of the reactions of other people. Protecting nonsmokers in public places is now guaranteed by law in most states, but shielding nonsmokers from the same effects at work is a newer idea.

Minnesota is one of the few states that already has a law to protect nonsmokers at work.

To find out more about nonsmokers' rights, contact your local American Lung Association.

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