THE NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

Rate hike for BG&E, AGAIN!

Baltimore's giant utility company seems to be getting away with murder as they once again announced that they would soon put higher rates into effect.

They want to increase prices, not because they are losing money, but because the utility says it is not earning enough revenues to attract investors for construction projects.

Baltimore Gas and Electric Co. (BG and E) announced Monday that the Maryland Public Servce Commission has granted it a rate hike of more than $72 million—$55 million in new electric revenues and $17 million in new gas revenues.

Charles Franklin, a company spokesman, said the rate increase will boost the average gas bill by eight percent and electric bill by 10 percent.

The residential gas price advance was the third this year of six percent or more. As a result gas prices have climbed 37.1 percent in the past year, more than double the national increase for the same period.

When the utility appeared at a hearing requesting the increase, a lawyer arguing against the utility verbally objected to the rate increase saying that it would be a hardship on Baltimore area residents.

His was an understatement. This rate increase, like the previous three this year, will freeze many people out and force many others to change their spending habits.

Who has the money for that?

Area shoppers and workers are both fighting a losing batle in Baltimore where prices are increasing at a much faster rate than wages.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, during the past year ending August, 1977 pay levels for unskilled workers increased an average of 5.6 per cent and 5.6 per cent for skilled workers.

At the same time, the Bureau said, Baltimore area shoppers are paying nearly double the amount they paid 10 years ago. A market basket of food costing $10 a decade ago now costs the area shopper $19.89.

What this means to the average citizen is that food is beginning to take more and more from everyone's budget.

And it means the average citizen must spend more money on food or change his or her eating habit by purchasing less expensive foods such as meat.

Suit may end it all for blacks

If Maryland is successful in its suit against a 1976 federal law requiring state and local government to pay unemployement compensation, black residents who currently receive the aid could lose out.

Specifically, the law gives state and local government two alternatives if they do not comply with the law—loss of federal funding or the loss of autonomy from federal supervision.

Attorney General Francis Burch said Maryland joined six states and 1,268 towns, cities and muncipalities, in challenging the law that he said cost Maryland $716,000 in 1976.

Many persons who are laid off their state and local government jobs have no alternative but to apply for unemployment compensation.

The blacks who are among those laid off will fare even worse if the state cuts off unemployment compensation because they have less chances of getting a job because of the high rate of black unemployment.

Eyeglasses may be antiques

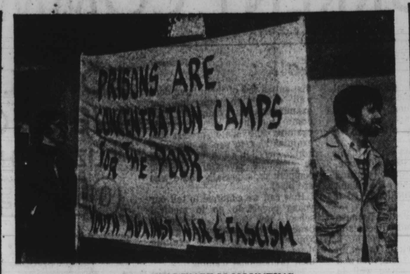
Eyeglasses may be obsolete in the United States 10 years from now with soft contact lenses taking their place. The lenses are currently worn in some parts of the world for as long as two years without ever being removed.

The Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins University is one of the 12 medical centers experimenting with lenses in a study monitored by the Food and Drug Administration

Dr. A. Edward Maumenee, director of the Wilmer Institute, said that the first target of the soft lenses is patients who had cataract extractions and lens implants.

"If a person can wear these soft lenses and if that person can get the same benefits visually, he may not want the lens implant" Maumenee said. "He may be just as happy with contact lenses."

But if the doctors are successful with their attempt to convert cataract patients, their next target will no doubt be those who wear contact lenses and finally, those with eyeglasses may succumb.



THE EVIDENCE IS MOUNTING.

No black found in foodcenter

The Maryland Wholesale Food Center Authority continues to operate without any black-owned businesses, but it boasts of profits for fiscal year 1977 in a recently released financial statement.

"There's none in the wholesale business," says J. Gary Lee when asked why none of the 25 companies are black - owned at the Center's Jessup, Md. facility.

The Maryland Wholesale Food Center Authority was created to develop a food center to house wholesale operations for many of the chain retail stores and restaurants.

Consumers can buy wholesale food at the Maryland Wholesale Produce Market located in the Jessup center that sells to people who have the money to buy in case - lot quantities.

The 72 - unit produce market, which occupies 38 acres within the Food Center, says it is enormously successful and a great benefit to the wholesale produce merchants and the consumers of Maryland.

Construction was begun on 251,000 square feet of new warehouse facilities in fiscal year 1977.

Maybe by the time the new facility is completed a black - owned retail store or group of stores will deem it necessary to lease one of the units for its use.

Insure now for cheap life

A new regulation announced this week by State Insurance Commissioner Edward Birrane Jr. promises to save Maryland policy holders about 3.5 million dollars in the next year.

In the revised regulation the insurance chief reduced the basic premium charge for most forms of credit life insurance from 70 cents per hundred dollars of insurance per year to 48 cents.

Credit life insurance provides for payment of the balance of the debt in event of the death of the borrower or purchaser.

Under the current rates, it is estimated that the premium volume for these lines would amount to a figure in excess of 43 million dollars in 1978. Under the revised rates it is expected that this figure will be reduced to under 40 million dollars.

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BY THE WAY...

by Joe Black

When did "We shall overcome" turn into "We shall over-run" in the minds of too many of our brothers?

Why did some of us start disregarding the great, and painful, work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Whitney Young, Roy Wilkins, James Farmer, James Forman, and A. Phillip Randolph?

These men worked to form a coalition to lead Black people toward the rights we were all guaranteed under the Constitution. The marches, boycotts, and unity they inspired enabled Black Americans to overcome some of the inequities that held us down for over 300 years.

And yet, this year, there are some who think and act as if the Movement was simply to give Blacks self-serving freedom to do what they choose.

What they choose. Whether it be lawful, or not. Too often, not.

Why else do Blacks murder, rape, and rob; only to rage about racism, Blackism, and poverty when they're caught?

Fact: All Black criminals are not victims of racism. Nor are they political prisoners. This is something Black America must recognize. Realize. And join forces, to rid the Black community of the bad guys.

We must tell our criminals that their skin color can no longer constitute a valid cop-out. Because, the more we push down crime, the greater our economic growth in Black communities will be felt.

We'll see insurance rates reduced. Along with the fear of pilferage and hoodlumism. More businesses will open up with more job opportunities, and that will help curb unemployment.

We shall overcome. We must overcome. Otherwise, the end result will be—criminal.

Joe Black
Vice President
The Greyhound Corporation

Mitchell to speak at dinner

Rep. Parren J. Mitchell will speak at the Seventh annual Freedom House Fellowship Dinner Sunday, Dec. 11 at 2:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Johns Hopkins Inn, Broadway and Orleans St.

This is the annual fundraiser for Freedom House, a charitable non - profit organization of neighborhood leaders, clergy and civic organizations across the city who are dedicated to building up the neighborhoods.

Freedom House has worked with the police department of Baltimore City to prevent and reduce crime and delinquency in inner city neighborhoods by working with the police department in a partnership to bring protection to inner city residents in their homes and by working on the causes of crime and delinquency.

In this manner, Freedom House is a worksite for summer job programs for inner city youth.

The Freedom House Neighborhood Council also sponsors summer youth recreational programs, including bus trips to Washington, the Dutch Country, Camp Concern and Fort Smallwood, in cooperation with city agencies.

For nine weeks Freedom House has been in a crusade for jobs in which more than 100 unemployed have found work.

Judge Robert B. Watts will preside at the dinner and awards will be made to Mrs. Edith Heinline and Sgt. Mercedes Rankin of the Baltimore City police department for their outstanding contributions to the welfare of our city.

Mrs. Frances Marshall is chairperson of the dinner; Dr. Flossie Dedmond, program chairperson; Johnson R. Peters, president of Freedom House, Inc.; George C. Lottier, treasurer, and Bowen K. Jackson, dinner coordinator.

Tutman gets HUD post

Howard L. Tutman Jr.

WASHINGTON — Howard L. Tutman Jr. of Randallstown, Md., has been named national coordinator of a federal work study program that is geared to place students from disadvantaged groups in government planning and public administration.

Tutman, 35, a native of Baltimore, was named to the position by HUD Assistant Secretary Robert C. Embry Jr. Tutman formerly served as a program officer at HUD.

The formal name of the program that Tutman will head is National 701 Work Study Program. It falls under HUD's community planning and development division.

Last year 54 students who received grants and 56 universities were involved in the program.

A graduate of Morgan State College, Tutman received a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

He and his wife, Carolyn, have three children. They are Howard III, Mark, 10 and Jason, 6.

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