SLEDDING TIME—Two city children took advantage of the light snowfall early this week and rode their sled in a park. The sun re-appeared and melted the snow but fridgid winter winds chilled Baltimore residents. (AFRO Photo by Roman Hakewycz).

Annapolis council tables Kunta Kinte controversy

The political fight over an idea prompted by the best selling book "Roots" has Annapolis Mayor John C. Apostol winning, at least for now.

The City Council did some fast side-stepping Monday Jan. 9, and voted five to four to table a proposal to erect a plaque commemorating the arrival of Kunta Kinte, the ancestor of "Roots" author Alex Haley, at the city dock in 1767.

Instead the nine member body voted five to four to establish a committee headed by Mayor Apostol to study the proposal.

The vote came after a heated 90 minute discussion on whether a single plaque honoring one individual should be erected at the head of the dock.

Those council members who voted in favor of tabling the proposal were Apostol, Aldermen Gusta, J. Akerland, Benjamin Winegrad, David O. Colburn and Joseph F. Rodowsky.

The council members who opposed the measure were Alderman Edward W. Pinnegan, Alfred A. Hopkins, John T. Chambers Jr., the only black member and John R. Hammond.

The idea for the plaque was developed by the Committee to Commemorate the 1767 Landing of Kunta Kinte over two months ago and has been the topic of a heated dispute between the committee and the mayor.

Former Alerman Norwood Brown was in favor of the proposal but he pointed out that the council needed to seek a broader community reaction.

Alderman Alfred A. Hopkins, who is regarded as a conservative by the committee reminded the council that the piaque was intended to by symbolic of all those persons who "came into the country by force."

"This whole human race," he said, "this whole country, this whole city of Annapolis, is people, not buildings. If you are not going to remember people, I say to hell with the historical events."

Carl Snowden, committee representative, called the vote "tragic" and felt the special committee which is predominantely white and is headed by Apostol, will kill the plaque's original purpose.

"The Kunta Kinte plaque proposal is not dead," he said. "It may be included with the mayor's idea to have a plaque citing a number of historical events. But at this point, the city council is not willing to recognize that Annapolis was a slave port."

Snowden's speculation may have a ring of truth.

The committee is composed of Annapolis city officials or officials related to city governments.

Single parents workshop

Working with Single Parent Families; featuring visiting faculty Joseph Dorflinger of The Nathan Ackerman Institute, is the theme of a two-day program co-sponsored by The Family Life Centers of Howard and Montgomery Counties.

The workshop, Friday, February 10, 9 to 4:30, will include a theoretical presentation, "Is Psychotherapy Possible With One Parent Families?" followed by live interviews with a single parent family, panel discussions and questions. The fee is $25.

The Small Group Seminar, on Saturday, February 11, 9:30 to 4, is limited to 25 participants and will examine the dynamics, techniques, and therapist's use of self in working with single parent families. The fee is $45.

Both programs will be conducted at The Loft, Oakland Mills Village Center, Columbia.

For further information call The Family Life Center of Montgomery County (301) 924-4515 or The Family Life Center, of Howard County (301) 997-3557.

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THE NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

Leaded gas could be costly

When you ask a station attendant to put leaded gas in a car equipped with a catalytic converter, you are asking him to break the law, advises the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

And it takes only two or three tankfuls of leaded gas to ruin your converter so it can't pass inspection. At least 19 states now require inspections, and EPA would like to see even more.

You are not violating the law in buying leaded gas. But if the station operator sells it to you, he can be fined $10,000. This includes operators of self-service stations and fleet owners who pump their own gas.

Some people think they save 2 to 7 cents a gallon and get better mileage and engine performance with leaded gas. Any saving should be weighed against the replacement cost of the converter whose factory warrnaty will be voided by use of leaded gas.

And your mileage won't improve, either.

Delegates' secret committees

The Maryland House of Delegates leave themselves open for speculation when their constituents find out that the lower chamber does not require procedures to record final committee votes.

The danger in this is that many bills are killed in committees without ever reaching the floor of either chamber and there are no records left of the vote.

"When I explain to Marylanders that there is no assurance that there will be a record of important committee votes, there is a consistant reaction of astonishment," Common Cause Director Lee Perlman [illegible] the rule.

The Senate has required the recording of final committee votes on all measures since 1974.

This leaves one to wonder — whether the House of Delegates has something to hide.

Utility customers lose again

The Baltimore Gas and Electric Co., (BG and E) recently granted a rate increase, is among four utility companies accused this week for overcharging Maryland consumers millions in unpaid federal income taxes.

Eric Fersht, a spokesman for the Maryland Action Coalition, said "The $1.2 million Maryland customers . . . are paying the price of excessive electric generating capacity, power demand over projections and 'phantom' federal taxes."

The group's report said BG and E's 1976 tax overcharges cost its 800,000 customers $20 million — or $25 each. It said Potomac Electric and Power Co.'s charge totalled $12.2 million.

Property owners protesting

No one wants to pay money for an unworthy cause. And the recent reassessment notices seem to be just that to one out of every seven metropolitan Baltimore residents who are appealling the notices.

Baltimore officials said 63,000 property owners took the first step in the five-tier appeals process to have their reassessments reduced.

In Baltimore city, 12,000 protests were filed. More than 75,000 property owners received increased assessments, hiking the tax base $160 million, to almost $2.7 billion.

Persons who are not forced to move out of the city because of the inability to pay taxes will have to settle with the higher taxes until something is done about reassessments.

Surplus beds may increase

Unnecessary hospital beds and plans for more hospital construction in the Baltimore area will waste nearly $70 million in public money in 1980, a state official said Wednesday.

Harold A. Cohen, director of the State Health Cost Review Commission, said there will be nearly 1,600 "excess" beds in area hospitals in 1980 and more than 1,900 by 1982.

But Cohen's figures do not agree with projections of hospital use compiled by the Central Maryland Health Systems Agency, a planning group that approves new hospital construction.

According to the planning agency, area hospitals will average 547 empty beds per day in 1980 and 872 in 1982. The cost of maintaining those beds was not calculated by the agency.

Look-out for phony bills in mail

If your mail has contained some unexpected "bills," you might want to take a closer look — some may be solicitations.

To help you spot the difference, new Postal Service regulations require that solicitations now carry one of two notices in large letters: either an explanatory paragraph or the words "This is not a bill" and the disclaimer "This is not a solicitation. You are under no obligation to pay unless you accept this offer."

Flight regulation coming

Charter flights will get stricter rules governing delays if a proposed regulations is adopted. The Civil Aeronautics Board wants to limit departure delays to six hours for all charters regardless of type, destination, trip duration or type of air carrier.

If departure is delayed longer than six hours, the flight must arrange for and pay costs of substitute air travel for the charter group on another charter or scheduled flight on another airline.

Porno centers in city

The principal wholesale distributors of pornography for adult bookstores in Washington and the mid-Atlantic states have been operating out of three city warehouses, according to the Baltimore police.

The businesses housed in the three warehouses rank among the country's top suppliers of pornographic material. Police records estimate the firm's yearly sales at more than $10 million.

U of B Law School update

The Continuing Legal Education Service of the University of Baltimore School of Law will sponsor a day-long update on corporations, Friday, January 20, in the auditorium of the Langsdale Library at Maryland Avenue and Oliver Street.

A registration fee of $20 will cover printed materials and parking, which is available directly across from the auditorium on the university's Oliver Street lot.

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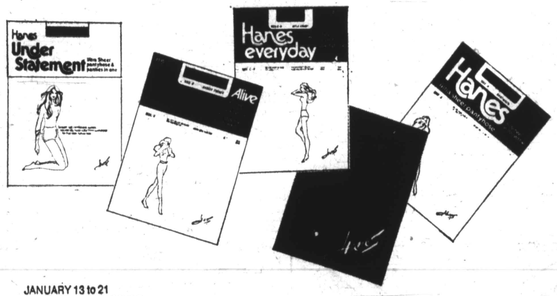

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