Theme parks across America

Where thrill seekers scream with delight

Scattered on the outskirts of major metropolitan areas across the country are gathering places where thrill seekers scream with delight, children greet their favorite cartoon characters, and lovers of the outdoors escape from their ordinary surroundings into acres of natural and man-made beauty. These gathering places are America's giant theme parks, nearly 30 in number, which represent a $750 million a year industry. The nation's amusement park renaissance is in full bloom, so before you take your family out to see the sights, you might like to know a little of what's in store for you when you get there.

The Theme's The Thing

Although thrill rides continue to be the major attractions, as they are at amusement parks, what really separates theme parks from their predecessors are the international motifs portrayed throughout each park. Replicas of nostalgic American, European and African locales are created through the reconstruction of colorful buildings (landmarks, castles and shops, for example) and the preparation of regional dishes. Unique costumes worn by park employees also add a foreign or historical flavor to the surroundings. Visitors may find themselves on a boat ride down the "Congo River" in the heart of "Africa" or on a journey through the dark expanses of "deep space."

Another standard feature at most major parks is the continual presentation of live shows. They range from popular rock and jazz concerts to childrens' shows spotlighting famous magicians, puppeteers, clowns or animal acts. Admission to these shows is usually covered by the general price paid at the main gate, but check with the park you plan to visit to see if there are exceptions.

Those twisting hulks of structural steel you'll see as you enter the park are the result of growth in the industry. As the competition for visitors gets fiercer, bigger and more frightening rides appear each year. Park owners willingly spend millions to make a ride on their roller coasters (or other machines which plunge toward the earth at breath-taking speeds) the most terrifying, hair-raising experience on earth. And for those children who are not yet tall enough to try these thrillers (and for those of us who just don't want to!), there are a variety of other rides that progress at a much more leisurely and less horrifying pace. Perennial favorites like carousels, sky rides and train rides around the park grounds are the popular alternatives to the spine-tinglers.

Theme parks are designed as family entertainment centers. Most often, they are staffed by responsible and friendly people whose job is to make sure you're treated well. Virtually all parks spend countless dollars on meticulous grounds-keeping. Their overall aim is to make their park seem as charming and enticing as possible so you *want* to return, and since nearly 80 million people visit them annually, it looks like they're succeeding.

Of course, themes, attractions and procedures vary widely from park to park. What one park in one area of the country might deem essential to the happiness of its customers, another may find only secondary in importance. So, here's a rundown on what you can expect to see and do at some of the nation's major theme parks.

Disney Started It All

Walt Disney's dream of transforming the ordinary amusement park into a land where the imagination of both children and adults could flourish has culminated in two of the largest and most popular parks in America.

Disneyland (Anaheim, California), the first true "theme park," opened in 1955. Its 76 acres are divided into 7 different "lands." Most notable among them are: "Adventureland," highlighted by a jungle cruise through re-creations of Africa and Asia; "Fantasyland," frequented by Disney's cartoon characters and site of the famous Sleeping Beauty Castle; and "Tomorrowland," where several "space rides" take you through the world of the future according to Disney.

Walt Disney World (Lake Buena Vista, Florida) opened in 1971; it is the largest theme park complex in the world. Its visitors (13 million per year) have access to the park proper (with 6 theme lands similar to its West Coast cousin) and the surrounding resort areas that provide hotels, restaurants and golfing facilities.

Both parks offer either general admission tickets or a series of ticket booklets. If you opt for the first, you are entitled to entrance to the park and all the free attractions available. The second includes admission to the park and tickets for a number of rides and attractions in each "land." Because of their size, both parks have developed large transportation systems to and from each theme area. With the appropriate tickets, visitors ride monorails, trains, buses, sky cars and boats to take in as much of each park as possible.

Busch Gardens

The expansion of its Tampa bird sanctuary into one large East Coast park and the addition of another park next to its Williamsburg, Virginia brewery has made Anheuser-Busch a leader in the theme park industry.

The 300-acre *Dark Contigent* in Tampa, Florida opened in 1959 and is inspired by the cities, plains and jungles of Africa. One popular attraction is a "safari" (by sky ride, monorail or steam locomotive) through the "Serengeti Plain," where several species of African big game roam freely. Other areas include "The Congo," highlighted by a voyage on the "African Queen" and a ride on the "Python" roller coaster, and "Marrakesh," the Moroccan village alive with exotic shops and entertainment.

In 1975, Busch Gardens opened a Williamsburg, Virginia complement to its Tampa Park. *The Old Country* is a 360-acre expanse themed with 7 captivating European settings. In "Banbury Cross" there is a replica of the Shakespearean Globe Theatre, featuring continuous musical and magical shows. In "Germany" stands the large and impressive "Festhaus," where you can eat popular German dishes while singing and dancing with the park's troupe of slap dancers. And most recently opened is "The Loch Ness Monster," a roller coaster billed as "the most insidious, awesome ride of its kind."

Both parks operate under a single admission charge. Once you're inside, *all* rides, shows and attractions are free. Much in the Disney manner, the Busch Gardens theme parks have devoted themselves to top-notch family entertainment in a professionally-run, pleasant environment.

Six Flags

Six Flags, the first multi-park operator, now runs 5 major parks across the country. They are: *Six Flags Over Texas* (Arlington), *Six Flags Over Georgia* (Atlanta), *Six Flags Over Mid-America* (Eureka, Missouri), *Astroworld* (Houston, Texas), and *Great Adventure* (Jackson, New Jersey).

Besides a variety of shows and rides, *Great Adventure* features a drive-through safari (a photographer's dream-come-true) where wild game walk right up to your car window to say "hello." Both the Arlington and Atlanta parks are highlighted by a giant parachute drop (over 200 feet high) as well as musical productions in the spirit of Broadway. *Astroworld* has 11 internationally-themed areas and *Six Flags Over Mid-America* has 6, in addition to their numerous "white-knucklers" and live shows.

Six Flags introduced the one-price admission ticket to the industry and continues this procedure at all of its parks.

Marriott's *Great America*

Marriott's twin parks (Gurnee, Illinois and Santa Clara, California) are themed by American nostalgia. "Orleans Place," with its "Buffet Le Grand," offers original Creole cooking; the "Yukon Territory" represents the Alaskan Northwoods; and the "County Fair," exhibiting turn-of-the-century America, features a farmer's market. For America's inlanders, "Yankee Harbor" lends a historical view of our eastern seaboard, and challenges the daring with the "Tidal Wave" roller coaster. Both parks offer 35 rides and 15 live shows (including, in Illinois, a Broadway review and "Bugs Bunny's Magic World"). Access to different areas of each park is provided through sky rides, trollies, and trains. And, both parks employ one-price admission.

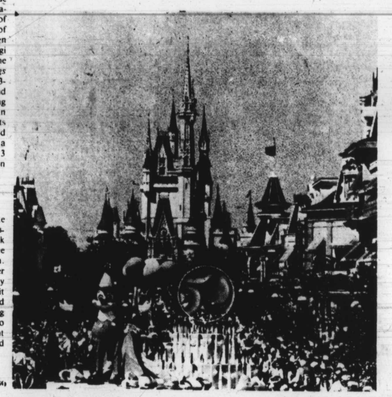
Taft Broadcasting

Taft's 3 parks, *Kings Island* (Kings Mills, Ohio), *Kings Dominion* (Doswell, Virginia) and *Carowinds* (Charlotte, North Carolina), are featuring live stunt shows. At *Kings Island* and *Carowinds*, you can see the Firestone Air Show which re-creates wartime dogfights and skydiving and an old-time hot-air balloon show. At *Kings Dominion*, water-skiing daredevils glide over a ten acre lake to thrill spectators. The outstanding theme area of all 3 parks is the "Happyland of Hanna-Barbera," where children can meet such characters as Yogi Bear, Huckleberry Hound and the Flintstones. Also included at *Kings Island* and *Kings Dominion* are a 33-foot replica of the Eiffel Tower and a safari (via monorail) affording close-up views of wild African game. *Kings Island* has also added its own hotel, camping grounds and two 18-hole golf courses to make it a complete vacation resort. All 3 parks use the single-price admission ticket.

The Mini-Vacation

A growing travel trend is to take several mini-vacations each year instead of the traditional two-week family excursion. Visiting a theme park is one popular mini-vacation. Some families find it hard to cover everything of interest in a single day at a theme park. A weekend visit gives everyone a chance to do and see it all. But, no matter how long you choose to stay, you're bound to leave a theme park with pleasant memories of warm hospitality and gala entertainment.

by Bob Lorusso



PLENTY OF THRILLS — Roller coasters such as the one above are big attractions at theme parks. Bottom photo spotlighting Mickey Mouse who is celebrating his 50th birthday is a scene from Disney World in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

IN THE OFFICE, ON CAMPUS

What is sexual harassment?

By Patricia McCormack
UPI

If a woman's boss gives you a big hug on her birthday, is that sexual harassment?

Probably not, according to people who have studied the subject of sexual harassment on campus and in the office.

But if he gives her huge, longer and longer - lasting hugs on any other special days he elects to celebrate with her, she'd better watch out, they say, because repeated steps toward intimacy point to sexual harassment. If she complains, he just may tell her the huggings a condition of employment.

On campus, if a teacher keeps a girl after class and suggests you spend a weekend together, that's not necessarily sexual harassment. But it becomes harassment when he repeats the proposition and makes it clear turning him down will mean a low grade in the course.

The two situations are typical of those cited by two reports on this hidden issue. One is from the project on the status of women of the Association of American Colleges, the other from an Ms. Magazine report on sexual harassment on the job, Gloria Steinem, editor.

The conclusion is that harassment happens in the best of offices, the worst of offices and large and small, prestigious and not - so - great campuses. It happens in grade, junior high and secondary schools. And it reaches into government offices.

The magazines report, for one example of the latter, claims women on project on Education of Women noted.

Ms. Meyer and associates, who sponsor workshops on the subject for working women, said companies and schools should have a code of behavior that specifically rules out sexual harassment.

Capitol Hill talk about the problems of dodging their bosses and fellow staff - members around desks."

Karen Sauvigne and Susan Meyer, formerly with Cornell University, talked about working Women United Institute, which they run and which is cited in the Ms. report, a national research center on this subject.

"If a boss pats your bottom and says he wants to go out with you and you say stop that and he keeps it up, that's sexual harassment," Ms. Meyer said. "If a guy seems to accidentally brush up against you frequently in the office or stops short so you bump into him, that's probably sexual harassment, too."

Authorities consulted in preparation of this report said several courts have ruled that sexual harassment on the job constitutes sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. In some instances women have been awarded damages.

Whether sexual harassment against students constitutes sex discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments is now under litigation.

"Regardless of the legal outcome, students face a chilling climate for learning if sexual harassment is permitted or indirectly condoned," the report from the harassment.

"And enforcing that code should be a matter of institutional and corporate policy," they said. "There also should be a procedure making it easy for any victim of sexual harassment to report the person bothering her — with the guarantee that she may do so in confidence."

Seven organizations working on sexual harassment, including some providing counseling and referral services, are listed in the report from the project on the status and education of women.

They include:

Alliance Against Sexual Coercion, P. O. Box 1, Cambridge, Mass. provides counseling for those pestered in the work place or on campus. A literature packet is $2.

Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, Mass. sponsors a "Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) project and provides counseling and referral services for victims.

Cleveland Women Working, 1258 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, Ohio. Membership organization for women office workers. Monitors employment trends, makes recommendations to government agencies, operates a speakers bureau.

Nine to Five, YWCA, 140 Clarendon St., Boston, Mass. Counseling and Referral Services for women experiencing employment - related problems. Also monitors employment practices in major industries.

Stop Sexual Abuse of Students, Chicago Public Education Project, American Friends Service Committee, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. Takes on the problem of sexual harassment and abuse in the elementary and secondary schools. The group is gathering data on the incidence and scope of the problem and has set up two 24 - hour Hotlines to provide crisis counseling and referral. Information sheet available for 50 cents.

Vocations for Social Change, 353 Broadway, Cambridge, Mass. assists victims of sexual harassment in the workplace with job counseling, legal options, and employment compensation.

Working Women United Institute, 593 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. conducts research on sexual harassment, conducts workshops, educates the public and employers on this issue. Checklist of materials, $1.

In one study, 88 percent of respondents said they had experienced one or more forms of unwanted sexual advances on the job.

Myth: Sexual harassment is rare on campus.

Fact: Women only recently have begun to talk about the long hidden problem of sexual harassment of students, staff and faculty. Fear of ridicule, and a sense of hopelessness about the problem and a feeling that its a personal dilemma have kept the problem concealed.

What is sexual harassment?

"Harassment, at its extreme, occurs when a male in a position to control, influence or affect a woman's job, career or grades uses his authority and power to coerce the woman into sexual relations, or to punish her refusal," the project on education of women report noted.

Included, the report said, may be any of the following:

—Verbal harassment or abuse.

—Subtle pressure for sexual activity.

—Sexist remarks about a woman's clothing, body or sexual activity.

—Unnecessary touching, patting, or pinching.

—Leering or ogling of a woman's body.

—Constant brushing against a women's body.

—Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning one's job, grades, letters of recommendation.

—Physical assault.

Examples of sexual harassment cited in the report include these:

"A Yale undergraduate recently charged her political science professor with sexual harassment, alleging that he offered her an A in exchange for sexual favors. She refused, received a C in the course and has since filed a lawsuit against the school."

"A senior communications major at a State university in California testified before the California state legislature . . . that she knew of at least 15 professors who offered students As for sex."

"A female cadet at West Point resigned from the Military Academy in 1977 after charging her male squad leader with improper sexual advances. The academy dismissed her charges when the squad leader denied any wrongdoing."

"An administrative assistant at the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, lost her job after refusing her boss' sexual advances. She sued, and the court ruled that sexual demands as a condition of employment are illegal. EPA settled out of court with a back pay award."

Venetoulis wants to redistribute surplus through income tax credits

Baltimore County Executive Theodore Venetoulis said Wednesday if he is elected governor, he will redistribute the state's $60 million surplus to taxpayers through income tax credits.

Venetoulis, Acting Gov. Blair Lee III's chief rival for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination, said Lee should institute the tax credits.

However, if Lee does not take such action, Venetoulis said he will if his campaign is successful.

Venetoulis, speaking at a news conference, proposed issuing an executive order that would give each taxpayer an average $25 to $30 tax credit.

He said the state's unexpected surplus is an example of the Lee administration's inability to "reasonably compute its revenues."

Last year, Lee announced the state had a $120 million surplus, but that such a surplus was the product of a "one - time strange upswing" in Maryland's economy and would not occur again, Venetoulis said.

"By pulling a $60 million surplus out of the hat again this year, the acting governor has demonstrated that last year's huge budget surplus was not a one - time phenomenon, but the start of a budget pattern caused by overtaxation of the people of this state," he said.

Venetoulis said Lee and suspended Gov. Marvin Mandel created the surplus through imposition of such unnecessary taxes as the 1 percent increase in the state sales tax.

He said they used the extra tax money to pay for special projects as "election year gimmicks."

Venetoulis said if elected governor, he will do away with the new 5 percent sales tax on carry - out food costing more than $1.

He also proposed a graduated state income tax that he said would allow property taxes to be lowered slowly.

"This will be the first legislative battle I will encounter as governor," he said.

Study shows nursing homes still need improvements

Nursing home care in Baltimore still has a way to go, but in the last five years it has improved "tremendously," according to a consumer study released Wednesday.

Katherine Leveque, associate director of the Maryland Conference of Social Concern, said the study of 42 Baltimore nursing homes found that attentiveness to patient needs and physical facilities at the homes greatly improved since 1973.

"Nursing homes here are still not great," she said. "But the general feeling of the volunteers who investigated each home was that they have improved tremendously."

Groups of three volunteers visited each nursing home and met with administrators before touring the facility. The results of their findings have been published in a book called "The Consumer's Guide to Nursing Homes in Baltimore City."

Lawrence A. Lamotte, the executive director of the group, said he hoped nursing homes in other parts of the metropolitan area would be studied within the next year.

The report allows consumers to compare nursing homes, but there is no attempt to comparatively rate the homes. Lamotte said the report does not take the place of personal visits.

The 150 - page study gives information about physical plant, privacy, fees, staff, admissions policies, activity programs and food. It is available free at public libraries, senior citizen centers and hospitals.

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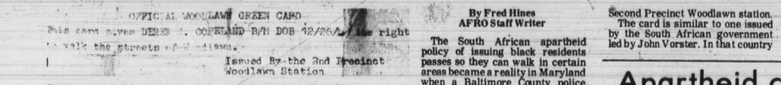
Blacks need permits to 'walk' in county


OFFICIAL WOODLAWN GREEN CARD
This card gives DEREK R. COPELAND B/M DOB 12/26/ the right to walk the streets of Woodlawn.
Issued By the 3rd Precinct Woodlawn Station

PERMIT FOR BLACKS — Here is one of the infamous "Green Cards." Such permits have been issued to black residents of Baltimore County by the County Police Department. Police say they do not know how many have been given to date. The card reads: "This card gives Derek R. Copeland B/M DOB 12/26 the right to walk the streets of Woodlawn.' "B/M" and "DOB" stand for black male and month and day of birth.

By Fred Hines
AFRO Staff Writer

The South African apartheid policy of issuing black residents passes so they can walk in certain areas became a reality in Maryland when a Baltimore County police station gave out similar passes in June, the AFRO learned this week.

Derek R. Copeland, a resident of the small suburban town of Woodlawn, was one of the recipients of a pass called the "Green Card," issued by the Second Precinct Woodlawn station. The card is similar to one issued by the South African government led by John Vorster. In that country

Apartheid comes to Md.

blacks must have permission to work in certain townships or walk though white areas.

Baltimore County police spokesman acknowledged that the "Green Card" was given out but say they cannot understand why and how many have been given out.

But most important, they say they don't know what policemen are responsible for giving the card out, so they are launching an investigation through the Internal Affairs Division.

The cards reads in part: "This card gives Derek R. Copeland the right to walk the streets of Woodlawn."

According to Derek's father, Clarence Copeland, Derek was told that he had to have police permission to be jogging on the neighborhood streets.

"He was jogging late one night in June when the police stopped him

(Continued on Page 2)

This is our 86th year
See Pages 1, 8, 9

Baltimore Afro-American
WE ARE IN OUR 86th YEAR

Dr. Crew bares city school program
See Page 25

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Charge dying man forced to lie about Col. Watkins

FACES IN THE CROWD — These smiling Baltimoreans were just part of the crowd of 200,000 who attended AFRAM Expo '78 at the Inner Harbor last weekend. See page 24 for more pictures.

State's attorney, cops accused of coercion

Letters purportedly from a dying man may be the dynamite that blows up the on - going probe of police corruption in the faces of defendants, cops and prosecutors alike.

The AFRO has learned that letters from a star witness coincidentally received on the day of his death charge the very people responsible for the indictment of Police Col. James H. Watkins are themselves in violation of the law.

The question now is what new indictments may come as the result of a dying man's "confession."

Rufus Benjamin Tate, 60, key witness against indicted Baltimore Police Col. James H. Watkins was found dead in his Milwaukee, Wis., apartment on Aug. 7.

The same day attorneys for Watkins report they received a letter in Baltimore from Tate in which Tate said local prosecutors and police forced him to commit perjury before the grand jury.

One of the charges against Watkins was that the dead man had paid bribes to him.

In a letter received by lawyer George L. Russell Jr., Tate said, "I am writing to you because they made me prejury (sic) myself before the grand jury . . . I never gave Watkins any money. . . ."

After receiving the letter from

(Continued on Page 2)

Convicted murderer slain attacking guard

A 37 - year - old Maryland Penitentiary inmate serving a 25 - year murder term was shot to death Wednesday, Aug. 9 after he allegedly attacked a prison guard with a knife at the University Hospital where he had been taken for treatment.

Rockwell Jones, 2200 block Eutaw Place, was shot in the chest in the men's room, police said, after wounding Warren Ribin in the arm, shoulder and elbow.

According to police, Jones, who was at the hospital's surgical clinic for treatment, called the officer to the bathroom and unexpectedly attacked him. Police state they do not know how the inmate got the knife.

The case is still under in-

(Continued on Page 2)

It's all over for Bay College

ANNAPOLIS — The State Board for Higher Education voted unanimously Thursday to reaffirm its July 6 decision to close Bay College.

Board Chairman Harry Wells said the board determined any extension of the college operations, even to correct deficiencies, would be futile and would result in a loss of public confidence.

Bay College officials had tried to convince the board to allow the financially troubled school to remain open at least another academic year.

Dr. Charles P. Howard Jr., acting president and court - appointed trustee of the school, said Bay College had been reorganized and had proved over the last 12 weeks it was capable of operating on a profit - making basis.

But Dr. Sheldon Knorr, commissioner of Higher Education, said Bay College officials told him nothing that changed his mind about closing the school.

Knorr said a budget proposed by college officials was inadequate and that Community College of Baltimore or Coppin State, two other city institutions, could serve the same students Bay College served.

After voting to close the school, the board directed Knorr to try to place as many former Bay College students as possible in other Baltimore area schools.

School officials now have 15 days in which to decide if they want to pursue the matter in court. If they do not seek a judicial review, the board will immediately assume custody of the school's records.

Howard would not comment on the decision.

Earlier, Howard said "There has been tremendous change, a complete reorganization—a cleanup, so to speak."

He gave the board a prospective budget for the 1978-79 school year and said college officials developed a plan to attract an average of 500 students for each academic trimester.

The school, which caters predominantly to poor, inner city blacks and is housed in a partially condemned, six - story former high school, once boasted an enrollment of more than 1,000, but dropped to about 215 during the most recent summer session.

The board voted to close the nine - year - old school after a detailed

(Continued on Page 2)

Court backs union on teacher layoffs

A Circuit Court judge has ordered the Board of School Commissioners, the Mayor, City Council and Dr. John L. Crew, superintendent of schools, to show cause why an injunction should not be granted preventing 451 city school teachers from being laid off.

The decision delivered late Thursday by Judge James Perrott, was handed down after the Baltimore Teachers Union filed the injunction asking that the teachers dismissed by the board on June 22 be re - instated.

According to John Bethea, BTU president, the injunction charges that the board "acted in an arbitrary, capricious and illegal manner" and did "irreputable harm to the pupils, parents and teachers of the city."

The injunction also asks that all the dismissed teachers be rehired and reassigned before any more can be interviewed and hired.

School and city officials have until Aug. 24 to answer the court's order.

Pikesville Hilton double murder

One year later —perfect crime?

Who killed Miss Sondra Diane McMeekin and Allen Phipps and why? Homicide police are still struggling to untangle the mystery.

It is slightly over a year ago, Aug. 3, 1977, to be exact, when 28 - year - old Miss McMeekin, a local school teacher, and a New York City contractor executive, Phipps, 34, were found shot to death in a Pikesville Hilton Hotel swank room.

Police have ruled out robbery and drugs as the possible motives for the double killing.

However, the manner of the slayings, police report, seemed gangstyle. Both victims were reportedly shot in the head. The male victim was found with a pistol in his right hand.

Police state they have a suspect in mind but they said the state's attorney's office has advised there is not enough evidence to implicate him. Since then police have drawn blank checks in their investigations into the killings once described as a slickly executed double murder.

A relative of Miss McKeekin said it has been more than five months since they heard from the police and "I don't think they are still investigating the case."

Hotel housekeepers found the victims when they went in to clean the room around 1:30 p.m.

Friends of Miss McMeekin said she had regularly dated a Baltimore business man for five years and their relationship was said to have been dissolved a week before her death.

Phipps, who was described as "the happiest individual anyone would want to know," was in Baltimore on business for a construction company at the time he was killed.

Following these murders the AFRO checked with the Hilton Hotel about its security system. It was found that the Pikesville Hilton has what is called a no - key system and hotel room doors are controlled by a four digit system known only to the registered guest.

The desk clerk has a master key and the only way anyone else can get into a room is to know the combination number.

Questions that are still unanswered are: Did Miss McMeekin or Phipps give out the combination number to their suite?

Are the police really still investigating the case?

In the meantime, relatives and friends of McMeekin say they "are still puzzled about the case" and the double - slaying rates thus far as a perfect crime.

Miss Sondra Diane Mc Meekin

AFRO marks 86th birthday

By Elizabeth M. Oliver

The AFRO, - AMERICAN Newspapers, founded Aug. 13, 1892 becomes 86 years old Sunday and ranks as one of the largest black - owned printing operations in the United States.

DAWN Magazine, the AFRO's four - color magazine supplement, is distributed in 35 black newspapers with a readership of more than two million.

Established by John Henry Murphy Sr. in Baltimore 29 years after the 1863 Maryland Emancipation Act, the AFRO has continuous publication under his family, the 10 children born to him and his wife, Martha Elizabeth Howard and their descendants.

In addition to the Baltimore AFRO published, Tuesday and Friday, the Richmond AFRO, New Jersey AFRO and National AFRO each weekly publications, have branch offices with full editorial, advertising and circulation staffs.

Circulation goes into every state

(Continued on Page 8)

The AFRO on the radio

A special report to mark the 86th anniversary of the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers will be broadcast on Morgan State's radio station, WEAA-FM, Sunday, Aug. 13, at 6 p.m.

Cites continuous car spot checks

Pettit says cops ignoring the law

By Fred Hines
AFRO Staff Writer

The Baltimore City Police Department is acting as though "it is above the law" in its decision to ignore a court ruling that says spot checks on motorists are illegal, States Attorney candidate Dwight Pettie said Thursday.

Pettit's reaction came in response to a statement made by Deputy Attorney General Millard Rubenstein, who represents the Baltimore Police.

Rubenstein said the department reviewed the ruling of Criminal Court Judge Robert Hammerman and disagreed with it.

Hammerman ruled Tuesday the 20 - year - old policy of stopping cars randomly for no real reason and then checking them for possible crime, especially auto theft, is unconstitutional search.

"When police begin to feel they are above the law, you may have a disregard for safety in human life," Pettit told a group of reporters assembled in his office.

"I don't think Baltimore is in a state of siege, but I think we should check it now so the public won't be intimidated by police."

Pettit also criticized state's attorney William Swisher for silently rubber stamping the police department's decision, saying there are few times when Swisher disagrees with the police department.

(Continued on Page 2)