Catonsville Notes

By Liz Williams

It is nice to be back home after having been away for a month. Due to a water pollution problem, we were forced to move and are now living in an apartment in the Catonsville area. We love this community and we were fortunate to be able to get what we wanted here. It was a pleasant surprise to know that Charlie and Harriett Dunlap are nearby neighbors.

Kindly send Get Well or Thinking Of You cards to the following friends and neighbors: George Jenson, Jack Scott, Mabel Randall, Julia Williams, Amy Warden (North Charles General Hospital), Annie Beverly, and Bob Rideout. Royal Weaver (Hermoine) recently had surgery at Mercy Hospital and is doing nicely. Hopefully, he will be home when you read this column. Granville Hillen (Gwen), is now at home and is doing well with a very hearty appetite. Otis Froe (Otes) is at home and is doing nicely.

It was so good to see Colonel William "Box" Harris (Ivy) up and about. Congratulations to Box for being elected the new Polemarch for the alumni chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity here in Baltimore. Here's hoping that Dr. William "Billy" Hall (Linda) is done with his crutches and is on the mend.

Birthday cards to our friends who are celebrating their birthdays this month. Among them are: Rev. Ida Torsell, Elhana Washington, Bernard Williams, Selma McConico, Florence Jenson, Thelma Coe, William Mitchell, and Carrie Scott.

Congratulations to Jesse and Helen Fleming who were recently married and are living in Ellicott City.

Congratulations to Charles and Grace Gaskins on their 25th wedding anniversary. Charles is an assistant principal at Garrison Junior High School and Grace is the Guidance Dept. Head at Lemmel Junior High School. They are the proud parents of Charles Jr., Gregory and Cori Gaskins.

I received a warm note from Roland "Boogie" Henson (Anita) requesting that this item be printed. The Douglass High School class of 1928 will hold its 50th reunion on Sunday, Oct. 1 at Overlea Hall, 6809 Belair Road from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. For further information, members may contact the following persons: Abdella Campbell — 664-5948, Charlotte Dyson — 669-2310 or Norma Lambson — 448-3424. I will continue to inform you about their meetings.

Congratulations to Henry Joyce upon his retirement. He had 33 years service with Employment Security. A dinner in his honor was held at the Heart Of Town Motor Inn in Charleston, W. Va., The climax to his retirement was a cruise that he and his lovely wife, Daisy took. They visited Puerto Plata, St. Thomas, San Juan, and Cape Haitien. Hopefully, we in the Catonsville community will see more of this beautiful couple now that they have nothing but leisure time.

Touring the West are Imogene Douglass, Louise Turks, Thelma Addison, Clara Scott, and Ethel and Robert Poindexter.

William "Bennie" Brown, husband of the late Dorothy Brown, wishes to thank all for their many acts of kindness shown to him and his family during the time of their bereavement. Dottie, as she was fondly known by all, was with Baltimore City Health Dept. for 27 years prior to her retirement. Anyone who had worked with her in the schools would say that she was among the best school nurses in Baltimore City. She loved the children and teachers with whom she worked.

She was truly committed to others, not only on her job, but she worked in all phases of the Christian ministry. Among the churches which she served were: St. Paul R.C., St. Pius R.C., St. Francis Xavier R.C., St. Mark R.C. and Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in Ellicott City. It would be almost impossible for Bennie to respond to all of their dear friends, so hopefully you will read his words of thanks and appreciation in this column.

We were away when our dear friend Reuben F. Jones died. Along with others we were saddened by his death. He was a great guy and a friend to all who knew him. In memory of this former educator, it would be so nice if you could send donations to the Reuben F. Jones Scholarship Fund in care of Union Baptist Church. I am sure that this would please his Romaine very much, whom we all fondly remember as an area director, prior to her retirement.

NANCY WILSON, popular vocalist, receives a proclamation for Nancy Wilson Day in the District of Columbia from Mayor Walter E. Washington during ceremony in the mayor's office. Miss Wilson also received the key to the city and a portrait of her painted by a young District resident, Willie Blount.

Dr. Webb named acting dean of education at MSU

Vergial S. Webb, professor of education at Morgan State University, has been appointed acting dean of the School of Education, by Dr. Andrew Billingsley, president of the University.

Dr. Webb joined the University faculty in 1966 as an associate professor of education. She began her professional career as an elementary school teacher in North Carolina Public Schools from 1944-56; as director of the Remedial Language Workship for Children, Laurel, Del.; guest lecturer and professor at Wyoming, Laramie, Wym.; supervisor of Student Teachers and Demonstration Instructor in the Labortory School at Virginia State College.

Since then she has served as director of the University's Career Department Program, director of COPE, director of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher's Education, associate professor of education, education, executive assistant of the department of education and coordinator of Elementary Education Department of Education.

Dr. Webb has served as past-president of the Maryland Association of Teacher Education; consultant, Elementary Teacher Education; Baltimore City Schools; panelist, Teacher Education-Institute on Racial Relations sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education; team leader, Association for Student Teaching National Conferences and American Asociation of Colleges for Teacher Education;

Also, NCATE Evaluation team member, Harris Teacher College, St. Louis, Mo.; NCATE consultant, to the faculty and ean of the School of Education, Howard University; author of a prospectus and co-author of a proposal that received $247,000 from the U.S. Office of Education to support a Career Opportunities Program in Education.

Dr. Webb received the Bachelor of Science degree from Winston-Salem State University, the Masters of Arts degree from Columbia University, the Doctor of Education degree from Indiana University and did post-doctoral study at San Francisco State University.

She is national president of MOLES (a national organization with 24 chapters), a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the National Council of Negro Women, the National Association of University Women, the Association of Supervision of curriculum Development and many other organizations.

A native of Kinston N.C. Dr. Webb resides in Baltimore.

Dr. Vergial S. Webb

Dr. C. Edouard Ward named exchange program recipient

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Dr. C. Edouard Ward, an associate professor of humanities at Coppin State College, has been chosen as the recipient of an African - American Exchange of Scholars Program Award for the Fall of 1978. The award, authorized by the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, is administered through the Phelps - Stokes Fund. Dr. Ward will serve as guest professor at the Cuttington University College near Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa.

Dr. Ward had been involved professionally in the areas of humanities, art, world literature and music at Coppin. Prior to this tenure, he was the conductor of Tuskegee Institute's famed concert choir. He has also served on the faculty of the African - American Studies Program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and on the organ faculty at Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University.

At the latter institution, Ward introduced the first course dealing with the Afro - American classical musical tradition. He is presently engaged in serious research of the eminent Afro - American composer Will Marion Cooke, one of the innovators of American music.

A man of wide exposure, Ward earned the degrees of Bachelor and Master of Music, majoring in pipe organ, Northwestern University. In recognition of both high achievement in performance and scholarship, he was elected to the music society of Pi Kappa Lambda.

Among the first group of recipients of Fulbright fellowships for Austria, Ward matriculated at Vienna's Akademie fuecr Musik und darstellende Kunst for further study in applied music. He later pursued post - graduate studies at the famed University of Bienna, founded in the year 1365 (the oldest German - speaking university) and became the first Black American to have conferred upon him the coveted degree of Doctor Philosophiae in musical research.

Affiliated with Phi Mu Alpha music fraternity, Ward has distinguished himself as an organ recitalist and has been active in church music circles in Baltimore. A world traveler for more than two decades, having visited five continents, Ward has played most of the famous instruments housed in the old cathedrals and churches of both Europe and America. He is also an organ consultant.

A member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, he will commence his duties in Liberia toward the middle of August. Aside from this grant, Dr. Ward was awarded a second Fulbright - Hayes Faculty Research Abroad grant in 1977.

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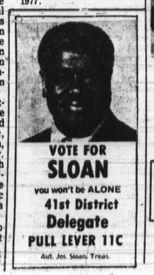

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SHOW TIME

Chip and Kim Fields have Cinderella story

Chip's in CBS 'Spider-Man'

Kim made name in 'Baby I'm Back'

Kim Fields is 9. Has new record.

By Ida Peters

"We had just finished touring with "Hello Dolly" with Pearl Bailey, for six weeks and we finished up in D.C. We went to the White House and met President Ford.

Then I decided, I have to go to California. We packed everything we couldn't carry and when we got there, were so poor we had only about 25 cents left."

Thus spoke Chip Fields, 27, who co - starred with Richard Pryor in "Blue Collar" and co - stars as Rita on "Spider Man" starting Sept. 3 on CBS - TV.

With her was her daughter Kim, 9, who played the impudent, lovable daughter of Denise Nicholas and Demond Wilson on 13 episodes of "Baby I'm Back".

They both stopped by the AFRO home offices on a brief visit to Baltimore to visit her aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Louis (Alice) Hatcher of Riggs Avenue.

Chip, as Laverne Bernard, was raised by her Aunt Alice and she has 13 aunts in the Baltimore area all members of the Davis family out of Virginia.

Chip's mother was Hortense Davis, a ballroom dancer with a stage name of Patsey Styles or Pat and well known by Pearl Bailey, Billy Eckstine, Sammy Davis, and Cab Calloway.

While being raised in New York, she came to Baltimore to live with her aunt every summer until she was seven.

She studied acting in the High School for Performing Arts in New York. She then signed with the Al Fann Theatrical Agency.

She then moved to California where her first job was Casting Director for Sam Goldwyn's "Come Back Charleston Blue".

Back in New York she auditioned for a role in "Hello Dolly" with Pearl Bailey and was hired on the spot.

Pearl was very nice to her after she learned she was little Patsey's daughter. Her mother attended the opening on Broadway and died three weeks later.

Chip remembers she went on and was given a standing ovation as a "real trouper" by the audience and Miss Bailey.

Little Miss Kim Fields is 9, in the fourth grade and her favorite subject is art. Her favorite person is Randy Jackson and her best friend is Janet Jackson.

She loved playing on "Baby I'm Back" and she is the most popular star to vist our Entertainment Office in years.

She remained calm through all the posing the flattery and attention. The only time she got upset was when we discovered her real, real crush on Randy Jackson. She's not alone.

Kim and her mother have just produced two children's albums for Wise Owl Productions "Magnificent Multiplication" and "I Have A Friend In You".

The first is the multiplication tables to R-and B music and the second is with Kim and a white friend, Paula Maurer, on friendship between two kinds.

Chip is also writing a musical soap opera, "World Full of Feelings", a children's show.

The AFRO Office best remembers Chip as the mother child abuser of Janet Jackson on "Good Times".

Besides "Spider Man", Chip will appear with LeVar Burton on "Battered" an NBC Movie of the Week" Sept. 18. It's a story about battered wives.

Chip Fields in town to visit relatives.

Percy Thomas' drama at Arena

The Arena Players Silver Summer Series '78 presents The Free Spirit Theatre of Baltimore at the Arena Playhouse through Sunday.

The original slave drama by Melvin Degree, "None To Call Him Father" is directed by Percy Thomas and was first produced at the Arena Playhouse in 1977. The play has since been presented in New York and Columbia, Md.

Saturday night, the Free Spirit Theatre will present awards to Mrs. Hazel Bryant of New York and Mrs. Ida Peters, Entertainment Editor of the AFRO.

"None To Call Him Father" is about slavery in the 1800's and focuses at Nat Turner, a black preacher who exhorted a small band of slaves to rise against their masters.

Percy Thomas is Nat Turner and his strong cast includes Darrell Taylor, Cassandra Jamison, Fred Mason, Michael Kane, Gordon Parks, La Fonde Holley, Bonita Cartwright and Alfred Thomas, the Turner family and band.

Percy Thomas as Nat Turner

Alfred Thomas, 5, son of the director, makes his debut as Nat Turner's son.

Michael Kane is Henry.

The slave owners are portrayed by Wendy Domarecki, Al Carwil, Mike Barrett and Cindy Landers.

On black classical music

Dominique de Lerma

Maestro Paul Freeman

Dr. DeLerma is professor of music at Morgan State University. He also hosts a radio show, "Melodies, Notes and Lyrics." Sunday, 11 a.m. WEAA-FM.

I've been around conductors for 33 years, including Leopold Stokowski, Franz Allers, Skitch Henderson, Serge Koussevitzky, and even Paul Whiteman, but I've never seen anyone like Paul Freeman.

At any given moment, if the electronic circuitry within his brain could be explored, we would find him thinking (and in an incredibly orderly manner) about a television series he is exploring for production in the Netherlands on psychological aspects of composition, about a tight schedule of concerts in Detroit and Iceland, about new and difficult scores by contemporary black composers which he projects for recording for Columbia, about how to milk his last grant past the last ounce, about the education of son Douglas or when he can enjoy that long awaited vacation with Douglas and his wife, Cornelia.

Furthermore, he knows every option that might be open to him if any of the original plan hit a snag, and he wastes no time switching tracks.

Paul Freeman comes from Virginia and secured his pre-college education in Richmond. He holds three college degrees, all from the Eastman School of Music, but he also followed advanced study in Berlin and with Pierre Monteux and Richard Lert. Then he was ready for his career.

And what a career it has been during the past dozen years. He presently is conductor-in-residence to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, a post he has held since 1970. Before that he was affiliated with symphony and opera orchestras of Dallas, Rochester and San Francisco.

But Detroit must not see too much of him. In the past 12 years he has been guest conductor of the orchestras in Minneapolis, New Orleans, Oklahoma City, Atlanta, Baltimore (five times here), Chicago, Birmingham, Denver, New York, Buffalo, Richmond, Toledo, Cleveland, St. Louis and Houston.

But he has also been a guest of the major orchestras of London, Berlin, Recklinghausen, Aalborg, Oslo, Malmo, Krakow, Warsaw, Helsinki and Spoleto.

And he, by far, the most active recording black conductor on the scene today, having single discs with Vox and Finlevy, four with Orion, nine with Columbia, and who knows how many with the Musical Heritage Society.

Those on the other labels have enjoyed excellent reviews, but it is the Columbia group which might be of most immediate interest to AFRO readers, because all nine of these belong to "The Black Composers Series."

Prior to the release of these nine discs, the most learned of musicians would have been hard pressed to name a single black composer working in the concert traditions. It was assumed, whenever anyone thought about it, that all black musicians were into jazz, pop, or gospel.

When the first four of the Columbia series were auditioned at Columbia's press party, the nation's critics gasped at the thought that there was a black composer of significance during the times of Mozart and Haydn and, as Dr. Freeman moved on through samples of the initial releases, the dismay was not lessened.

The Black Composer Series has by no means provided recorded representations of all of the most important works or composers, but it certainly has filled in a lot of holes which would have remained without this remedial venture.

Persons interested in hearing these works which Dr. Freeman has so splendidly interpreted may check the record catalog in neighborhood record shops, looking up Columbia releases of the works by Saint-Georges, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, William Grant Still, Ulysses Kay, George Walker, Roque Cordero, Jose Nunes-Garcia, Jose White, Fela Sowande, Olly Wilson, Talib Hakim, T.J. Anderson, Hale Smith and Adolphus Hailstork.

Those figures will give a sample of concert music composition by some of our finest composers of the past two centuries, devotedly performed by Paul Freeman and orchestras from Detroit, Baltimore, London and Helsinki.

But don't gorget the name of Paul Freeman. The combination of his mind and his talent augurs an even more dramatic future.

Charlie Covington... B'more's best jazz

By Bob Matthews

Back to the Bandstand in Fells Point to check out rumors that the best jazz pianist in Baltimore was playing there.

So, we checked . . . and we agree, without a doubt Charlie Covington is the best in town, in our opinion.

He was appearing with Mickey Fields on tenor sax; Hugh Walker, drums, and Phil Harris, bass, and we are still just a little amazed at the performance of Charlie.

The club is especially conducive to sparkling jazz performances since the clientele is strictly devoted to the music.

As the owner Sheldon declares, "It's the kind of place I would like to go to even if I didn't own it."

During an intermission, Mickey dropped by to say "howdy," and we asked him what was making him blow in such an inspired manner.

Mickey smiled in that shy fashion he has, then pointed and declared: "that young man will make you blow."

He was referring to Charlie Covington, who by his time was adeptly demonstrating his expertise with magic tricks. Believe me, he is a real professional.

As he put it, "I've been practicing for 25 years."

And the same thing is true with his pianistics. He is self taught, and being the perfectionist he is, practiced at least 8 hours a day until he was satisfied with some of his playing.

Despite learning to play by ear, Charlie can read music. He learned how after learning how to play.

The best way to describe his approach is to tell who he admires. His first and greatest influence was Art Tatum, and he is very much a fan of Ahmad Jamal's approach to jazz piano.

Charlie gained a reputation among musicians around town while playing with O'Donnell Levy. At that time he was playing an electronic piano with synthesizer, so the hard and fast jazz buffs really didn't get a chance to hear him work out.

But now we have learned — and take it from us, Charlie is dynamite.

"You'll have to wait to hear him now, for he, along with Carlos Johnson on alto, and Gene Watkins on drums, is in New York for three weeks.

They are backing up Damita Jo, who has joined the Playboy circuit and has opened at the N.Y. Hutch. She'll travel to Australia following the N.Y. stint, but Carlos and Charlie say two months is too long to be away from Baltimore.

On tap at the Bandstand this weekend is Marvin Cabell and his group. Caught him at the Sportsman at last Saturday's jazz set, and Marvin, we've heard you really blow that tenor. . .but please don't get lazy on us.

The set we caught, you didn't seem to have your inspiration working, fusion is fine, but solo repetition is not enough. We'll check out the Bandstand action.

Bob Butta, another budding piano great is at the Sportsman set this Saturday. Have never heard him play acoustic piano — kinda get the impression that he can really wail.

Jimmy Wells is at the Tijuana Tacos out on York Rd. on Tuesdays, we're told. Will have to check that out.

Left Bank Jazz Society will present the Ray Bryant trio this Sunday. It'll be a sleeper, for many Baltimoreans have forgotten just how good the man is.

If you search your memory, you'll probably recall that he is the one who composed the music and played on the "Madison Time" album on which Eddie Morrison (remember the old WEBB days) did the calling.

Over in D.C., Anthony Braxton is holding forth at the D.C. Creative Space. He hasn't visited this area in quite some times.

Blues Alley has Gap Magione, brother of Chuck through Saturday, Kenny Burrell comes in on Monday for the week.

King of France Tavern in Annapolis has Wild Bill Davison and his all-star jazz band featuring Kenny Davern.

The Closet has its regular weekend quartet, featuring Henry Baker on tenor.

Phil Harris leads a group at No Fish Today, Monday.

Oscar Brown Jr. —Bard of the Blues

By Libre Jasiri

bard - singing poets who compose and recite verses and legends of their tribe (American Heritage Dictionary)

"The blues is written and sung in iambic pentameter," says Oscar Brown Jr. "A poetic rhythm. Shakespeare used it — like da DA, that's an iam. Do that five times and that's iambic pentameter. Dig"

'But soft, what light thru yonder window breaks

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun'

. . . and in the blues:

'Lord, have mercy, Lord have mercy on me' from Stormy Monday.

My songs come from the rhymes and rhythms I heard as a child. Songs like The Lone Ranger and Tom Tom and The Signifying Monkey were jokes we used to chant as children."

Brown later turned those childhood chants into folk epics, and recorded them as rhythmic slices of black life that gained him a cult following, but did not put him in the top 40.

While he is preeminently a playwright and concert performer, his songs have been most widely exposed when recorded by other artists. Diana Ross' recording of his classic, Brown Baby, released on the 'Touch Me' in the Morning' album continues to be the most popular version of that tune.

"I have never received royalties on a recording I made. I made a lot of money on Diana Ross' recording of Brown Baby. When Max Roach and Abby Lincoln recorded, But, I was Cool on their album Freedom Now Suite, it caused a rift in our friendship because Max did not consult me prior to doing that. But the song got a lot of exposure, and encouraged me to record my own stuff.

Later, Flip Wilson did that same song on his show. When I wrote that song, it was all for fun, and it wasn't 'til later that I wrote songs to make a living," Brown said recently.

Brown and his exotic dancer-singer wife, Jean Pace are currently touring in a review he calls 'Faces of Brown.' The show has been extended for an indefinite stay at The Last Hurrah in Washington, D.C., and Oscar Brown Jr. cultists in Baltimore will see him for the first time in concert here on Sunday, August 20th. While in town to promote the concert last week, Brown talked about his other face, that of playwright.

"My latest play, 'In the Beginning' is a rhyming interpretation of the book of Genesis. I first produced it in Chicago with a $10,000 loan which Muhammad Ali guaranteed to the bank.

"We took the play on the road trying to get to Broadway 'til I ran into problems with Moe Septee, the producer at the Philadelphia Academy of Music.

We ran in Philadelphia for a month with Septee's backing. When he and I had some differences, Septee allowed Actor's Equity to close us down on some flimsy story about a bond that had not been posted on a contract that did not exist in the first place."

This was not Brown's first experience with what he describes as a black playwright's inability to be "just a playwright."

"We have to be politicians, entrepreneurs, producers, the whole package. And even that is not enough. Black people are still slaves in this country, and slaves are not allowed to have theatre.

"That's unfortunate because everything that black people get into is made better by their participation. We bring new energies, new vitality to baseball, basketball, soccer, music, dance, theatre. That's why there are more teams in every league, more people go to games and shows than ever would if it were not for the contribution we make.

"Our greater participation, the bringing of our culture to films, theatre, to television could have a tremendously liberating affect on this country. But the folks who have a vested interest in the corruption and control of the minds and values of the people of this country are not about to support anything that would be liberating."

In the 60s, Brown produced and directed his own musical adaptation of the play "Big Time Buck White." It played to raving success in San Francisco for weeks. In fact, the play was so successful that another producer took it to Broadway with Muhammad Ali in the title role. It failed dismally.

Brown is not bitter about his experiences.

"I don't have that debilitating kind of bitterness. I've fared better than some other people who spoke out in the sixties. Where is Miriam Makeba now? And Max Roach or Nina Simone?

"I'll continue to do the show and the play and try to get out of the situation that has us stranded in this political system."