The Wabash-Sequoia war on rats

By Portia E. Bedham
AFRO Staff Writer

A four - month long battle over rats waged between a West Baltimore apartment manager and the city administration finally ended this week with the apartment manager coming off the winner.

Samuel Johnson, who manages the Wabash and Sequoia Apartments, proved that you can get results from an administration that is sometimes hampered by too much "red tape."

The Wabash - Sequoia complex had been plagued with rats and mice feeling a subway construction site near the Chessie System railroad tracks.

Both the property owned by Chessie System and the city had been filled with tall weeds, trash and debris with heavy rat and mouse infestation.

"Rats can't take the high pitch noise which was coming from the subway construction," pointed out Johnson. "They were coming into my apartment complex and one tenant reported to me that four large rats came out of his garage when he opened it."

The manager also cited another incident where a small child was nearly bitten by a rat before another youngster was able to ward off the rodent.

After repeated attempts to get the Chessie System and the city to clean the property proved futile, Johnson called a press conference earlier this week to bring the problem to public attention.

Representatives from the city's housing division, Chessie System and the mass Transit Administration were present for the press conference and by Wednesday of this week, several portions of the area had been cleaned.

There is still additional property to be cleaned by Johnson told the AFRO, "I'm satisfied at this point that the job has at least been started."

He reported that eradicating the rats that have infested his complex will be a four - team effort between his maintenance staff, the city, Chessi System and the Mass Transit Administration.

However, he stated thah his maintenance crew would be responsible for removing the rats from the property once they are dead.

But says Johnson, the "fight doesn't stop here."

Another problem he faces is getting the city sanitation division to clean the streets where the complex is located.

The apartments extend from the 3800 block to 4000 block Wabash Ave. which is a deadend street. All cars park on a 45 degree angle.

Because of this parking situation, Johnson states he is having problems getting the street cleaned by the city.

He pointed out that along Broadway in Fells Point there is the same type of parking but the sanitation division effectively cleans that street.

During the summer, Johnson who worked at the Marylander Apartments before coming to Wabash as superintendent, hired six neighborhood youths to work in conservation corps with positive results.

Not happy with money

New teachers' contract ratified by 2 to 1 margin

They didn't like it but there was not much they could do about it, so by a 2 to one margin, 599 to 309, Baltimore teachers accepted the first collective bargaining agreement with city schools since 1976.

They ratified a new contract Tuesday that called for an immediate change in the teacher evaluation plan and restored the rights to binding arbitration in grievance procedures. The agreement had no change in the benefits but included a 3.5 raise in teacher's salaries.

It was the pay raise teachers didn't like.

"I knew there would be a lot of disatisfaction," said John Bethea, president of the Baltimore Teachers Union, the group that negotiated the contract. "I mean let's be frank. I don't like the money. I think it's a crock of s--- but we're stuck with it now."

The union had asked for an increase of salary of between $2,000 and $4,000 for all of the estimated 8,000 teachers on all levels. This means, according to Bethea that a beginning teacher who is presently earning $10,232 would earn $12,500 a year.

More experienced teachers under the BTU proposal would earn anywhere from $13,500 to $24,550.

Now that the contract is ratified teachers find themselves in positions the same as the rest of the municipal unions. Most have accepted the across - the - board 3.5 percent plus one half of the increments limit.

While he is not really pleased with the money, Bethea said that the ratification was "not so much an endorsement of the contract, as written, as it is an endorsement of the BTU leadership to go forward and get a stronger contract with the money next year."

He added that the language in the contract protects the teacher and "allows the teachers to teach."

But there are those who are still not happy.

Members of the rival Public School Teachers Association criticized the union for not allowing non-members to vote on the proposed contract.

The PSTA was decertified along with BTU in 1974.

Union officials said that the rule violated no law because union members pay for the right to vote.

Politicians key to census jobs

Maryland's unemployed who hope to cash in on about 2,100 jobs created because of the 1980 census should probably keep flipping through the want ads unless they know a politician, the U.S. Census Bureau says.

Marshall Turner, assistant chief of the decennial census division, Wednesday explained the job situation like this: "Let's say there are three equally qualified candidates. The job goes to the political referral."

Larry Rowe, assistant chief of the census bureau's field division, agreed that many of the census workers being recruited in the Baltimore area would probably be recommended by politicians.

He said the agency has "traditionally followed the referral system. With the massive numbers we need (275,000 workers nationwide), we need to recruit through many avenues."

The census takers are paid about $4 an hour. The census, taken every 10 years, will cost the federal government about $1 billion, official said.

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Community College of Baltimore Spotlight

Computer studies program prepares students for the future

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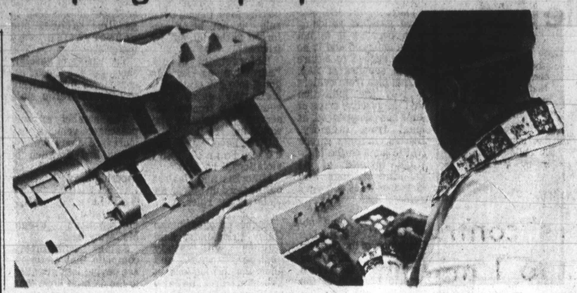

PROCESSING DATA — A Community College of Baltimore (CCB) student gains "hands on" experience with a computer system. CCB offers computer programs at both Liberty and Harbor campuses. Photo by Mark Gail

By Gusty Taler
Special to the AFRO

Robert Holmes is what they call in the business world, an entrepreneur. At 37 years of age, he owns and manages his own computer consulting firm, PAMCO (Programming Applications for Mini Computers), which employs a staff of 31 people.

At present he has three offices — one in the Cross Keys Village; one in Chiaton, Md., and one in Washington, D.C. He hopes, however, to open three more offices in New York, Philadelphia and Atlanta.

Holmes is a graduate of the Community College of Baltimore's computer studies program. After receiving his associate in arts degree from CCB he went on to earn his Ph.D in computer studies.

"If it weren't for CCB," Holmes stated, "I'd probably still be working for somebody else, doing menial jobs. Now I'm my own boss with my own company."

Otis Warren of Otis Warren and Company, has just opened his second Century 21 real estate office at the corner of Liberty Road and Essex Road (his other office is located at 4300 Gelston Drive). Between the two offices he employs a staff of 50 people.

Otis Warren

Of the 190 Century 21 franchises in the Maryland-Delaware-Virginia-Washington, D.C. area, Otis Warren and Company has been, for the past two years, the most successful franchise in terms of real estate sales.

Otis Warren, too, is a graduate of CCB's computer studies program.

"The Community College of Baltimore," he remarked, "was the answer for me with regard to continuing my education beyond the high school level. CCB introduced me to a college atmosphere, involved me in community services, and exposed me to a variety of business concepts, many of which I still use today."

Like Robert Holmes and Otis Warren, the majority of CCB's computer studies graduates have met with great success in their careers. Although not all own their own businesses, many are employed in a variety of organizations including insurance agencies, banks, private businesses, and government offices in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

Since its beginnings in 1965, CCB's computer studies program has grown steadily. Today, students enrolled in this program have a choice of two distinct options — data processing and computer in business, industry and government service for recrod keeping and information management, maintenance and retrieval. Graduates of the data processing option can find work in computer cents in banks, insurance companies, financial institutions and state and local governments.

CCB's Liberty Campus, located at 2901 Liberty Heights Ave., has provided instruction in computer studies since the program began.

Starting this fall, however, CCB's Harbor Campus, located at Lombard Street at Market Place, will also offer several courses in computer studies. Day and evening classes will be available on both campuses.

General registration for computer studies courses and other CCB programs and general interest courses is going on right now through Wednesday, Sept. 5, on both campuses, between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Registration at the Harbor Campus is being held in the Forum of the Bard Building. Registration at the Liberty Campus is being held in the TV Studio.

For further information regarding CCB's Computer Studies Program and other course offerings, call the Community College of Baltimore at 396-0203.

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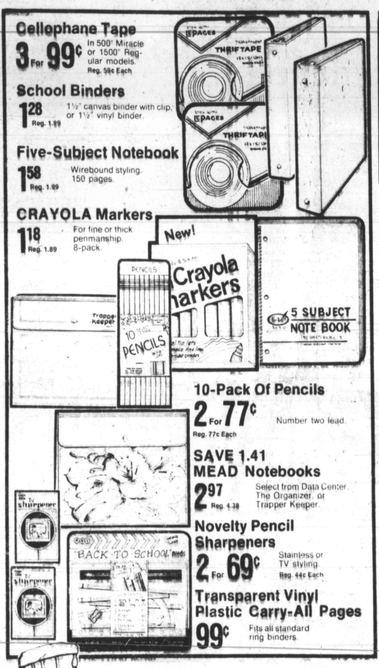

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