Express views on drugs, world condition

Miss Inner City pageant contestants — all winners

By James M. Abraham
AFRO Staff Writer

Although many adults have a tendency to look at the youth of today and shake their heads in dismay, the 13 contestants in this year's Miss Inner City Pageant, sponsored by the Urban Service Agency and the St. James Youth Development program are a fresh sign of hope for the future.

Friday, July 11, 12 of the young beauties talked with a reporter on topics ranging from today's youth, to the state of world affairs to drugs and peer pressure.

The girls are all high school students, and have all maintained a grade point average of 80 or better. According to Beverly Simon, the pageant is a unique one.

"It's not just a beauty pageant," she said emphatically, "we don't have to show off our bodies to show that we're beautiful."

Gail Baker says the pageant has brought her closer to the other girls. "Just being with them, we've learned to trust them."

The girls won't be having a bathing suit competition, and instead concur with Beverly that their talent will be the showcase item in the pageant.

They have enjoyed several trips to art galleries and TV and radio stations, and a trip to Annapolis to meet Gov. Harry Hughes, and all agreed that the experiences have done a lot to open new worls to them.

"Even though most of the artists we saw at the Baltimore Museum of Art were white, I still enjoyed it. It was a matter of being exposed," said Robin Paul.

Rose Anne Ward agreed that the trips have opened her eyes to a lot of new experiences, but laughingly added that the high point of the trip to Annapolis, which included lunch at a fashionable restaurant, "was the food!"

Preparation for the pageant has taken up a large portion of the girls's time but they say that what they have gained from the experience is worth it.

All of the girls were quick to discuss some of the problems facing youth today. They agree that the use of drugs is one of the main obstacles facing youth, and were offered some probable reasons why so many young people experiment with them.

"Many children feel unwanted," said Wendy Anne Green, "so they use drugs so that they can belong."

Tezhra Tucker feels that some use drugs because they have been influenced by an older person.

"When you see a child with drugs," she commented, "they've probably been around someone older who's been using them."

Tanya Wormley said that some youths may feel they need drugs because "it's the only way they can enjoy life."

Theresa Streeter stated that peer pressure may be a factor.

"Teenagers think they have to use drugs to fit in."

What about peer pressure? How do some of the contestants handle it?

"I think things over," said Doris Day, "and ask myself is it right or is it wrong. I just listen to my right mind and don't do it."

What about the state of the world: Although some of the girls expressed pessimism, an equal amount had enthusiasm for the future.

"The world is going down the drain," said Tezhra.

"Some people have just stopped caring," said Beverly, "Man is killing himself."

Geraldine Jones agreed, and said that part of the problem is that "people just don't stick together."

But Wendy Ann Green disagreed, and said that she is prepared to do her part to change things. "The world is not going down the drain. When I become an adult I know that there are some positive things I can do."

Evelyn Parrot concurred. "One positive thing I can do is talk to people and try to get them to open their minds and look at things in a more positive way."

The girls all feel that the black race still has a long way to go towards solving several problems.

Wendy pointed out that blacks comprise a larger minority in the city than the Jews, but that, while Jews are politically sophisticated, the black population doesn't seem to stick together at the ballot box.

"Before blacks can get an understanding of politics," said Robin Paul, "they have to get an understanding of the institution of racism."

Beverly said that blacks must deal "with the attitudes of our leaders."

What about the older generation? Lately the news has been filled with reports of young people abusing the elderly.

Theresa said that many youths find it wasy to victimize older people.

"But they have to understand what we're going through," said Rose. But April Riley saus that the young must remember that "young people eventually become to the older generation."

The contest is scheduled for Sunday, July 20 at 2 p.m. at the Baltimore Convention Center.

Although only one of the young ladies will be able to walk off with the winner's laurels, one can help but agree, after talking with them, that all of the girls are winners.

BEVY OF BEAUTIES — Who will be the winner? Everyone who gets a chance to check out the acts of the 13 contestants for the title of Miss Inner City. The beauties vying for the honor include, (front row, L to R), Geraldine Jones, RobinPaul, Beverly Simon, Wendy Green and Tezhra Tucker. (Second row, L to R), Doris Day, Leslie Smith, Teresa Streeter, Tonia Wormley, Rose Ann Ward, April Riley, GAll Baker, Evelyn Parrot. The contest is set for Sunday, July 20 at the Convention Center.

Young actors learn their craft at Free Spirit Theater

By James M. Abraham
AFRO staff Writer

In a hot loft located over a liquor store in the 400 block N. Howard St., a group of young actors pant and sweat as they are put through their paces by 20 - year - old Norma Penny Johnson, a third - year student at the Juilliard School of Performing Arts.

The students are all city school pupils, and their performance lessons are being sponsored by the city's summer corps program. The project is being run by the Free Spirit Theater, a five-year-old acting group directed by Dr. Percy Thomas and Cassandra Jamison.

Ms. Jamison explained how the program came to be.

"We were granted an award by the arts expansion program of the city to train Baltimore Summer Youth Corps workers. The students were selected on the basis of their dance and drama talents."

She added that the program has a six-week duration, and that the final two weeks will be spent presenting "street theater" at various sites througout the city and at several penal institutions.

Outside Jamison's offices, the student practice running at a chair and leaping over it. Cheers greet those who make the jump, as the students appear enthusiastic about their work. As the last jumper clears the chair, Penny Johnson calls them over, and pairs them off.

"Now we'll practice fighting," she announced.

She gave a demonstration of the fake fighting techniques used by actors, then set the class to work.

"We teach the students stage fighting, mime, voice production, speech technique, and improvisation she said. That seems like a lot to learn in just six weeks but Penny says the work is worth it.

"I'll work them like a drill sergeant," she admitted. "You have a lot who want to do this sort of thing, but who don't want to go through the training involved. She says that this dedication proves the difference between amateurs and pros.

Percy Thomas, director of Free Spirit Theater, endorses the hard work the students endure.

"Young people have a tremendous amount of talent, but aren't challenged to aspire to the pros."

Thomas says that acting is a natural ability of all, but that this ability is diminished as one grows older.

"We start on the principle that all people have dramatic instincts, but that they become inhibited by environmental forces which signal to some to conform themselves."

Thomas described how he has successfully used drama techniques to reach problem youth in the past.

"When I was working in Watts, I needed a vehicle to reach gang youths. I used drama techniques because it's a natural instinct in young people."

He praised the work of Penny Norman, when he said taught the Free Spirit Theater's adult drama class in the past.

"It's seldom that one finds a youth with her talent and ability. I first saw her at the Arena Players, and said that she was a star on the rise."

Meanwhile, outside the office, the youths began leaving the 7-hour sessions for the day.

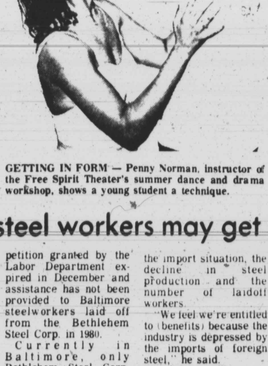
Penny Norman sat to one side, drying her face with a towel. She looked tired but haPpy, and told a reporter that, despite the hard work involved in training, persistence will pay off in the future.

"You have to abandon a lot of things, and you have to leave a lot of friends, but you say good-bye to people only to open the door to say hello."

The students in the summer project include Sharon Richardson, Kyle Still, Melvin Riley, Leslie Rice, Leatrice Millerson, Victoria Johnson, Kirk Johnson, Freda Hunter, Earnest and Freda Hunter

Other students are Freda Hunter, Earnest Heil, Tromay Fields, Natalie Carter and Velma Bond

Their first performance, which will take place July 28.



GETTING IN FORM — Penny Norman, instructor of the Free Spirit Theater's summer dance and drama workshop, shows a young student a technique.

SMILING DIRECTOR — Cassandra Jameson, assistant director of the Free Spirit Theater, beams as she surveys some of her young charges.

Taxpayers profit from city errors

About 22,000 city homeowners apparently will not have to pay the full amount indicated on their original property tax bills.

Under state law, homeowners cannot be billed more than 15 percent above the amount of taxes they paid last year.

But city tax collector William A. Reiley said at least 22,000 properties were erroneously taxed at their full assessed value. Revised bills will be sent to those homeowners, he said.

"In making comparisons for the 15 percent, officials picked up last year's full assessment instead of the adjusted assessment," he said.

"The 15 percent should have been tadded to what was paid last year, not the full value."

Laid-off steel workers may get fed aid

Laid-off steelworkers in the city probably will become eligible for federal unemployment benefits under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act because President Carter needs their support to be re-elected, the head of the steelworkers union local said this week.

"I am an eternal optimist, especially when Carter is so hard-pressed for support," said David Wilson, president of local 2609. "I don't think it has anything to do with foreign imports."

The union has petitioned the U.S. Labor Department for federal money under the Trade Act, which was enacted to aid workers who have lost their jobs because of competition from foreign imports.

Wilson said an earlier petition granted by the Labor Department expired in December and assistance has not been provided to Baltimore steelworkers laid off from the Bethlehem Steel Corp. in 1980.

Currently in Baltimore, only Bethlehem Steel Corp. workers laid off between 4977 and 1979 are entitled to benefits under the program. As a result, few of the 5,000 persons out of work are receiving the assistance.

"In December, we couldn't demonstrate the layoffs were still being forced by foreign imports," he said. "But we filed another petition on June 10 because we think foreign production is a cause."

Wilson said the Labor Department will review the most recent petition, the import situation, the decline in steel production and the number of laidoff workers.

"We feel we're entitled to benefits because the industry is depressed by the imports of foreign steel," he said.

If the petition is granted, as Wilson predicted, a laidoff steelworker could receive $106 a week in federal benefits in addition to state unemployment compensation of $106.

"That is about 50 percent of his pay," he said, adding some workers also receive supplemental benefits from the union.

In a related matter, a bill that would broaden eligibility requirements under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act to include steelworkers is pending before the U.S. Senate.

About 400 laidoff steelworkers turned out for a meeting at a union hall in Dundalk this week to voice support for the measure.

An aide to Rep. Clarence Long, D-Md., told the group the bill may be considered when the Senate returns from a recess next week. If passed, the bill could provide between $500,000 and $1 million each week for laidoff workers in the Baltimore area.

The measure also proposes expanding eligibility to include workers laidoff from jobs in related industries, such as repair workers at Bethlehem Steel shipyard.

Real estate market still slow

Prospective homebuyers appear to be taking their time entering the mortgage market even though interest rates in the Baltimore Metropolitan area have stabilized.

Residential mortgage rates, which have fluctuated wildly in recent months, have leveled off at 11 percent to 12½ percent, industry officials said.

But buyers who were driven out of the market by the high cost of money earlier in the year appear to be waiting for interest rates to drop even further, officials said.

Ernest Moretti, vice-president at Augusta Federal Savings and Loan, said most of the people lenders see are first-time buyers and people who are relocating in the area.

Walter Preston, publisher of an industry publication, said, "there is activity in the market but nobody is breaking any records."

Anti-draft rally, July 21

An anti-draft rally is scheduled for Monday, July 21 at the Central Post office, located at 900 E. Fayette St. The protest coincides with the day thousands of young men are required to pre-register for the draft. The protest is being organized by a coalition group called the Stop the Draft Day Coalition. For additional information contact 659-9818 or 362-8875.

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See story column one and Showtime

Fired liquor inspector loses court fight

See page 2

Republicans sure they can take Md.

By James M. Abraham
AFRO Staff Writer

Maryland's Republican party delegation is back from the 1980 GOP convention, according to several black members of the party, a resurgence of strength for the party of Lincoln is expected in the upcoming national and local November races.

Ronald Reagan and his conservative wing of the GOP steamrollered past dissension at the convention and set the party back on a track which encompasses old Republican traditions.

The move to end the party's 40-year-old endorsement of the equal rights amendment, as well as Reagan's call for "military superiority, already has many black voters worried, but several local black Republicans say that Reagan and his party are the people who will "get the country back on its feet again."

According to Rev. St. George Crosse, who epitomizes the slow revolution blacks are begining to make toward the GOP, more black defection from the Democratic ranks are expected.

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Baltimore Afro-American
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Godson held in Eastside slaying

The godson of a 50-year-old Eastside matron who was found dead on the living room floor of her Northeast Baltimore apartment July 20, was arrested at his home Tuesday and charged with her murder.

Police report Raymond Adams Felton, 18, of the 1600 block of Cliftview Ave., is charged with the murder of Mrs. Stella England, of the 900 block Radecke Ave.

Mrs. England, who lived alone had been stabbed more than five times. Police report blood was smeared on the kitchen, bathroom and living room walls.

Two knives covered with blood were found on the kitchen table and police report the apartment door was unlocked. Mrs. England's daughter, Mrs. Gwendolyn Thomas told the AFRO she had not heard from her mother and decided to send her brother to her house to check on her.

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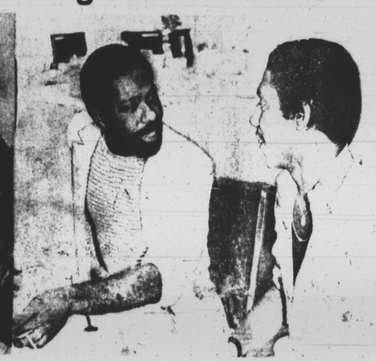
The Sims brothers among festival stars

AFRAM KICK-OFF — Mayor William Donald Schaefer and Sen. Robert Douglass (left photo) share in a laugh during the kick-off luncheon for AFRAM '80. Among the guests at the Convention Center Wednesday where Arthur and John Simms (at right), Baltimore recording artists who will be featured performers Saturday night at AFRAM and sing their hit single, "Never Had A Dream Come True."



AFRO photo by Mark Gall

2 women convicted

That $500 G Social Security swindle may involve others

Federal investigators say three people who participated in stealing $500,000 from the Social Security administration have been sentenced but the case is not closed.

Mrs. Lapet Elizabeth Bartee Blair, 29-year-old Social Security employee at Woodlawn and mastermind of he scheme was sentenced July 21 to 10 years.

Mrs. Blair, in her position as a benefit authorizer with Social Security was charged by prosecutors with submitting false claimants. She still refuses to tell prosecutors and her attorney what she did with the $500,000 she stole from Social Security.

Assistant U. S. Attorney James Rothschild said the guilty pleas led to information on other suspects, but he needs more help because the three are not cooperating and want to protect other people who were involved.

Rothschild asked persons with information on the fraud to notify his office or the Secret Service.

Mrs. Blair's brother-in-law, Malcolm Blair, 29, who is now serving a federal sentence on unrelated drug charges was sentenced to eight years for his part in the scheme.

Ms. Stella Abrams, 31, of Philadelphia, was sentenced to four years. Ms. Abrams and Blair pleaded guilty to opening bank accounts under fictitious names to deposit the checks.

Rothchild says federal investigators have obtained leads and will be submitting evidence to a grand jury. Mrs. Blair was called the "central figure" in a complicated conspiracy case involving knowledge of the Social Security computer check issuing system.

Continued on page 2

Seek 'Daoud' in assassination of Shah's man in D.C.

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Police and FBI agents Wednesday arrested two men, one a U.S. postal worker, in the assassination of Iranian anti - Khomeini exile Ali Tabatabai and searched for a black Muslim they believe pulled the trigger.

Police sought 29 - year - old David Belfield, also known as Daoud Salahuddin, who is linked in police documents with the Iranian Interest Section of the Algerian Consulate, the Khomeini government's headquarters in the United States.

Tyrone Anthony Frazier, 31, a postal service worker who originally reported he was abducted and his postal jeep stolen, was charged with being an accessory to the killing.

Also arrested was Horace Anthony Butler, 35, of Avondale, Md., who was charged with conspiracy in the shooting.

Belfield allegedly donned a mailman's uniform, drove to Tabatabai's $250,000 suburban Washington home in Frazier's jeep, and lured Tabatabai to his front door to sign for two purported special delivery letters.

When the ex - diplomat came to the door, he was shot several times at point blank range. He died in hospital from multiple chest and abdomen wounds less than an hour later.

Police alleged Frazier, who listed three separate Washington, D.C., addresses, fabricated the story of the jeep hijacking. Police said Frazier agreed to loan the jeep to the two other men for $200 in cash, with another $300 to be paid later.

A police affidavit taken from Frazier alleged the eight - year Post Office veteran made a deal Sunday with Belfield for the loan of the jeep.

Frazier reported he was told by Belfield to call a certain telephone number if he ran into any problems. Police said the number is that of the Iranian Interest Section at the Algerian Consulate.

Tabatabai, 49, was a press counsellor at the Iranian Embassy in Washington during the shah's regime. After the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini took power in Tehran, Tabatabai founded the Iranian Freedom Foundation; which described itself as both anti - shah and anti - Khomeini.

Tabatabai apparently had feared for his life for some time. Just one hour before the killing, he called UPI to line up coverage for an event sponsored by his foundation, a protest march to draw attention to "gross violations of human rights" in Iran.

In that conversation, he described the current rulers in Iran as "madmen."

Tabatabai told UPI in November he had received "repeated death threats" and he had given the tapes from his telephone answering machine to the FBI (UPI)

David Belfield
also known as Daoud Salahuddin

AFRAM weekend

By Portia E. Badham
AFRO Staff Writer

For the past two years it has rained during the AFRAM Expo festival weekend and according to the mayor he's not going to try to do anything about it. He's leaving that up to the Rev. Harold Carter of New Shiloh Baptist Church.

Mayor William Donald Schaefer who joined with nearly 300 other people to help kick-off AFRAM '80 at a luncheon Wednesday received resounding laughter when he left the weather in the popular

Looking towards Friday, opening day of the largest ethnic festival held in Baltimore, all fingers are crossed as organizers of the festival hope the rain clouds will decide not to attend.

Sponsored by the Urban Services Agency, AFRAM which began five years ago in Hopkins Plaza and moved to Rash Field in 1978 will continue through Sunday, July 27. This year's theme is "The Family."

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Chorus line

ON BROADWAY? — No, not quite. Just two of the little misses who were part of the 13 - member miniature chorus line which was a show - stopper during the 'Miss Inner City Teen Pageant' held at the Convention Center, July 20. They are (L to R): Kenya Jones and LaTasha Collins.

AFRO Photo by Mark Gall

You'll decide AFRO church woman of year

Exciting prizes will be given to the "AFRO Churchwoman of the Year."

In addition to $500 in cash prizes, winners will receive gift certificates from Nell Sheridan Hats, Pinnie Ross Boutique, tickets to the Arena Players, hairstyling at Mr. Baker's Beauty Salon, dinner for two at Big Daddy's Restaurant, Pauline Brooks gift certificate, gospel albums, gifts from Equitable Trust, Fidelity Trust, Maryland National Bank and many other prizes.

Is there a woman in your church who has performed countless deeds of merit without any recognition?

Which woman in your church has served as an inspiration or as a leader to others in the ongoing church programs and projects?

This is your chance to publicly recognize her, honor her present her with many prizes and make her "AFRO Churchwoman of the Year 1980" and to win a prize for your church.

Continued on page 2

Diggs gets extra day of freedom

Due to a mixup in signals, Former Rep. Charles C. Diggs Jr., D - Mich., has an extra day of freedom before he reports to federal prison to begin serving a three - year sentence for mail fraud and payroll kickbacks, it was disclosed Wednesday.

Diggs first had been expected to enter the prison at Maxwell Air Force Base Wednesday, but Prison Superintendent Joseph Crowe said a later check of his records showed Thursday was his last day to report.

Crowe said there was an error in the transmission of his record that set the date he was due to enter prison. "He (Diggs) didn't request a delay," the superintendent said.

Diggs appeared before U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Gasch in Washington June 14 to ask for probation or a reduced prison term. Gasch rejected his request.

He was convicted in 1978 of obtaining kickbacks to help meet personal and business expenses by inflating salaries of staff members and hiring two others who did no government work.

The government accused Diggs of obtaining $68,000 in the alleged scheme.

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