Morgan's WEAA launches fund drive

Hope to raise $100,000

By Sue Williams

In the wee hours of yesterday morning, WBAA-FM disc jockey Isiamo Pratabulu-Bey put her headphones on and began what will be one of the longest radio marathons Baltimore has known.

For ninety-six hours this weekend, and again for ninety-six hours next weekend, the station's disc jockeys, as well as visiting radio, television and community representatives will appeal to the Baltimore community for the funds that will help the station reach its $100,000 goal.

By midnight next weekend, there will hopefully have been enough funds and pledges collected to make sure Morgan State University's radio station continues to pump out the kind of professionalism for which it has become known. With the collected funds, the station will be able to become a 24-hour operation, will be able to purchase much- needed equipment and supplies, will expand its training program for communications students who use the station as their first step in the field of journalism, and will be able to pay its present professional staff more competitive salaries.

General Manager Al Stewart said that nobody participating in the marathon expected the two-weekend stretch to be easy, but that everybody was confident the goal would be met.

After all, he said, nobody really expected the station to raise even half of the $64,000 in last year's effort. This year, with the added impetus of one success behind them, Stewart is confident that everything is going to be just fine.

As one of two non-commercial radio stations in the city (WJZ is the other one), WEAA depends entirely on funds received from student fees and grants from the Corporation of Public Broadcasting. Such funds are adequate but hardly enough to push the station into the competitive realm of which it would like to be a part.

Since its creation almost four years ago, WEAA has moved along and become a part of the Baltimore community without ever having purchased new equipment. Although the staff has been responsible for training Morgan students to move along to major commercial stations, including WCAO, WLIF, WMAR - TV and UPI, Baltimore, they have not yet begun to receive wages which Stewart feels are commensurate with their time and expertise.

Student news reporters have aired more than 23 presidential news conferences live from the White House; the station has aired more public affairs programs than any other station in Maryland, and over 2500 hours of news coverage have been given to Maryland and Washington D.C. listeners.

Those accomplishments notwithstanding, Stewart, along with Program Director Kweisi Mfume and News Director Larry Dean says it is time for expansion. As the only black-owned and operated FM station in the state of Maryland, WEAA has a responsibility to improve the over-all positive image of blacks it seeks to project. There is a need for more talk-shows, more opportunities for important view-points to be expressed and explored.

With the expansion of the broadcast day from 18 hours to 24, there will be more news coverage, more opportunities for the station to give listeners breaking stories when they happen.

"What we want to do, said Stewart, "is make WEAA more of a part of the lives of the people of the Baltimore metropolitan area."

News Director Dean scoffed at the commonly heard criticism of the station that it does not use students enough, while siphoning funds for operation from student fees.

"Right now, we have the maximum number of students we can have, he said, explaining that all students go through a 12-week training course.

During that 12 weeks, they receive practical experience at the station, while getting theoretical work in the classroom. New students learn to write copy, to gather information, and write scripts and comentaries, as well as the mechanics of broadcasting such as voice projection and diction. Programming students are taught the methodology behind the creation of an effective talk show and how to produce their own shows.

It takes time and patience, said Dean, but the training of the students has been one of the biggest functions of the station since its inception. At the end of the 12 weeks, the students are incorporated into the staff, making it virtually impossible for outsiders to be hired.

Funds secured from the marathon will help that training process improve all the more, he said.

Radio personalities from other stations, television personnel and political figures will all be a part of this year's thrust, said Dean. He also said that intense follow-up procedures will be carried out to make sure that pledges received actually meet monies received.

"I'm optimistic," he said. "We have classified ourselves as a professional station ... and this marathon will help us support that claim.

(AFRO photos by Mark Gall)

Senior student Marie Rhymer checks wire services for latest news, while news director Larry Dean talks with student professional Doug Tait about upcoming broadcast.

Bill Lane In Hollywood

GLADYS KNIGHT and The Pips wind out old, new and warming material here on other night at the Roxy. Most times one sees and hears her act out in an audience away a good distance from the stage. At the Roxy Gladys was right down front, and actually many times right in the middle of the audience, and that's the way she says she often likes to perform. The crowd loved it, hysterically. From her offstage song lines from Charlie Chaplin's "Smile" down to her "Grapevine" closeout it was sheer talent, sporadic soul and refreshing entertainment all the way.

Gladys Knight has a way of reaching all people with her singing. She elicits sympathetic tears to white females as well as black women. But to black women she is something special. Delicate, sweet, energizing, inspiring and a focal point of genetic pride. She makes beautiful an attitude. And although she is onstage surrounded by males — her Pips, the big orchestra led by young conductor Victor Hall — Gladys Knight can actually make one feel like man was an accident. She has the sternainess, and, above all, the firmness of woman.

She makes her show something of a family affair. Not just with her cousins and her brother Bubba as the Pips, but her brother David Knight playing drums in the orchestra, and a son, a daughter, two nephews and a neice performing in her mid - show dance troupe.

Dorothy Ashby's harp playing and Bobby Bryant's trumpet experience come through brightly with the band, and Aaron and Freddie can, after all these years, send an audience into hysterics of laughter as comedy warmup. The two dummies used by ventriloquist Aaron shake up everybody when Aaron tries to stuff them into suitcases. A memorable act, and without compare anywhere else in the world.

AND another of the Gladys Knight warming performers is a blonde young chap of extraordinary abilities, not just with his Jerry Lee Lewis - Johnny Ray songs, but with his proficiency with the bajo, violin and piano. His name is Glen Smith.

NOT MANY nights before Gladys Knight bedecked the Roxy stage the place was taken over by Stevie Wonder, who was doing a warmup of his act just before leaving for an eight - day Europe blast. Paul Wasserman hyped up a capacity crowd for Stevie, at a hundred dollars a head. And you bought your own drinks. It was a benefit show Stevie performed for a rights group called The Gathering, which had been sustaining support for the memory and family of the late black housewife, Mrs. Eula Love, who was shot to death by L.A. cops in her home. After the show, Stevie reportedly tossed a million bucks in their general direction. Motown boss Berry Gordy said the Wonder night was the most wondrous.

RUTH Robinson of the Hollywood Reporter did the highbrow scene with a young Nigerian television performer Jimi Solanke.

NBC previewed the changed version of "Beulah Land" here for civil rights and press people, intending soon to put it on the network and take producer David Gerber from under pressure, and recoup the money the network put out to secure film and production rights to the Lonnie Coleman story about early life Down Yonder.... Milt Jackson and Grady Tate still on tour with Michelob's Jazzmobile.

Party for Star- Shemah

Actress Star - shemah Bobatoon, known for her role of Diana Freeman in the Alex Haley - Norman Lear produced television series "Palmerstown, U.S.A." was feted at a going away party held at Bogard's in New York City. Ms. Bobatoon was celebrating the second season of the hit program which is scheduled to begin production as soon as the Screen Actors Guild strike is settled.

The affair was given by Star - shemah's mother, actress Sudana Bobatoon (who is the founder and director of the dramatic workshop "Bobatoon Enterprises" in Harlem).

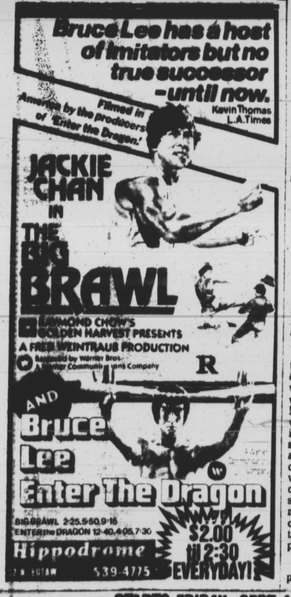
A 20 - minute videotape presentation of highlights from Star - shemah's acting career was shown at the party. It included scenes from "Turkey Treasure" directed by Cliff Frazier, "Muggsy" with Scott Balo, "A Piece of Cake" with Ossie Davis, "7 Wishes of Joanna Peabody" with Butterfly McQueen and "Palmerstown, U.S.A." with Glynn Turman, Bill Duke, Beah Richards, Jonelle Allen and Tan Adams.

Star-shemah Bobatoon

The videotape was produced by Institute of New Cinema Artists executive director Cliff Frazier, Al Crawford & actress - publicist - writer Margot L. Jordan

On hand to express their good wishes was; Irene Cara, star of the hit movie "Fame", Tony Thompson and Nile Rogers of Chic, Robert "Kool" Bell (Kool & The Gang) and his lovely wife Sakinah, flautist Bobbi Humphrey, Alex Briley of The Village People.

The evening was topped off with a star shaped cake. (Of course!)



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Week-end T.V. watching

By Vanessa Johnson

Friday

John Davidson: Co-host Robert Guillaume is joined by Ned Beatty, Katherine Helmond and others. 4:30-6:00 p.m.-Ch. 13.

Baseball: The Baltimore Orioles take on the Blue Jays at Exhibition Stadium in Toronto. 7:30-10:00 p.m.-Ch. 2.

Benson: The Governor has to choose between Kathy and the President when he's summoned to a White House conference that conflicts with his daughter's play, Starring Robert Guillaume. 8:00-8:30 p.m.-Ch. 13.

Merv Griffin: From Las Vegas guests are boxers Muhammad Ali - and Larry Holmes. 9:00-10:00 p.m.-Ch. 5.

Your Children, My Children: A documentary designed to provide families with guidance in dealing with the ever increasing problem of youngster's exposure to drugs at alarmingly younger ages, and an attempt to help these families deal with the availability of drugs before usage becomes a serious problem. 10:00-11:00 p.m.-Ch. 4.

Man Called Stone: A moonlighting scientist steals a virulent microbe and the formula for its antedote. Starring Ji-Tu Cumbuka. 10:00-11:00 p.m.-Ch. 11.

Midnight Special: - Guests include Christopher Cross, the S.O.S. Band, Irene Cara - and others. 1:00-2:30 a.m.-Ch. 11.

Saturday

Fat Albert: The 10th season begins with a tale about a girl who learns she was adopted. Hosted by Bill Cosby. 12:30-12:30 p.m.-Ch. 2.

Weekend Special: - "The Trouble With Miss Switch," a teacher who's also a good witch, is that she'll be banished to a forest from which no one returns unless she comes up with a bright new idea in witchcraft. 12:00-12:30 p.m.-Ch. 13.

American Bandstand: Singer Larry Graham - performs "One In A Million." 12:30-1:30 p.m.-Ch. 13.

Soul Train: A salute to Barry White who sings "Sheet Music" and "I Believe In Music." 12:30-1:30 p.m.-Ch. 11.

Baseball: The Baltimore Orioles take on the Blue Jays at Exhibition Stadium in Toronto. 1:30-3:30 p.m.-Ch. 2.

Love Boat: A widow boards with an invisible partner, the ghost of her ex-husband who is bent on setting her up with another man. Starring Vernee Watson, Jimmie reg Morris and Ted Lange. 8:00-9:00 p.m.-Ch. 13.

BJ And the Bear: BJ looks up an old war buddy who runs a helicopter service and smuggles contraband. Sister Sledge perform Family." 9:00-10:00 p.m. C h. 11.

Sunday

Sunday Live!: Guest unknown at press time. 1:00-2:00 p.m.-Ch. 13.

Disney's Wonderful World: "Disneyland's 25th Anniversary," with host Danny Kaye, Michael Jackson and sts. 7:00-8:00 p.m.-Ch . 11.

Movie: "The Women's Room" spans 19 years in the life of a troubled divorcee whose quest for self-fulfillment reflects women's changing attitudes toward love and marriage. 8:00-11:00 p.m.-Ch. 13.

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Jesse Walker's N.Y.

NEW YORK — Two black New York - based radio broadcasters have joined forces in a $120 million cable - TV systems venture planned for Queens County, N.Y. The Inner Unity Cable TV Systems, Inc., a joint venture of the Inner City Broadcasting Corp., headed by Percy Sutton, and the Unity Broadcasting Network (National Black Network), headed by Eugene D. Jackson, and the CanWest Communications Corp. of Canada, have filed with the NYC Board of Estimate as Queens Inner Unity Cable Systems, Inc. for the franchise to provide cable TV to the Boroughs of Queens, a franchise actively sought by Warner Amex Orthovision, Inc., Cablevision and Gotham Cable Co.

That "Broadway - Western Ball, honoring Sheriff Cal "The Lone Shooter" Ramsey, to be held Sunday, Sept. 21 at the Bond International Casino will benefit OIC New York and the Holcombe Rucker Community - Basketball League. The Rustlers, or Committee for the Ball, includes Alfred "Butch" Beard, Melvin "Bootsie" Dunn, Norman "Pony Express" Ewbanks, Raleigh "The Mighty Euh" Ewbanks, Roger "Django" Gibbs, Carl "Spider" Lockhart, Jim "The Indian" Lytle, Earl "The Pearl" Monroe, Willie "The Big W" Reed, and Everald "Shrimp" Walsh. Attire for the $40 ticket affair is "button and bows" and ten - gallon hats.

"Dear Pen Pal", a special feature of "Big Blue Marble", the award - winning TV series sponsored as a public service by TFT, has finally matched its two millionth pen pal. Most pen pal requests come from the U.S., but Trinidad is second, with 59,346 requests, followed by West Malaysia (46,231), Jamaica (43,712) and Greece (39,189).

Allan McMillan, the 80 - year - old veteran columnist who was honored Sept. 4 by a bunch of NYC friends, is a native of Valdosta, Ga. and a former semi - pro baseball player. He got his start in journalism in Chicago with the Baltimore AFRO - AMERICAN, writing a column called "Chicago By Day and By Night." He says he was the first black writer to interview Al Capone.

Some members of the Boys Choir of Harlem will sing the National Anthem at the Grambling - Morgan State Annual Football Classic, and Con Edison is making sure that other choir members and chaperones get tickets for the game which it helps co - sponsor along with The New York Yankees in association with the New York Urban League. The game is Saturday night, Sept. 13.

Ms. Irene Reid, the Real Queen of Soul Singers, will be returning by popular demand to the New Small's Paradise on a limited engagement Sept. 12 - 13 and 19 - 20.

Caught recently keeping everyone happy at Showman's Cafe on West 125th Street was a group including Morris Mitchell on organ, Arthur Grant on sax and Leon Lawrence on drums.

NBC - TV has tentatively set the airing of the controversial mini - series, "Beulah Land" for Oct. 7, 8, and 9 and the Hollywood Chapter of the NAACP is still against the show after seeing previews. On the other hand, a black Harvard prof claims it's alright. And a brutal syndicated article on the new minority censorship of movies, TV films, etc., was really rough when it declared that black actors on "Beulah Land" did not become critical of its depiction of the treatment of slaves during the Civil War until they had completed their roles and been paid.

After 13 years in the tiny St. Marks Playhouse on Second Avenue, the Negro Ensemble Company is moving to larger quarters, at Theater Four on West 55th Street, between 9th and 10th Avenue, where its new season will begin Sept. 30. Theater Four has 299 seats, compared to only 145 at St. Marks. But NEC hopes eventually to have its own theater at some midtown site in a 500 - 700 - seat theater.

Tap dance enthusiasts should get their fill when a festival of tap classes, performances and conversations is held at the Village Gate, Oct 13 - 18. Called "By Word of Foot: Twelve Tap Masters Pass on Their Tradition," it will feature John Bubbles, Honi Coles, Charles "Cookie" Cook, Leslie "Bubba" Gaines, Ernest "Brownie" Brown, Buster Brown, Albert Gibson, Leon Collins and Chuck Green. Sessions will meet daily between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. with Bubbles appearing at 4 p.m. in "Cocktails with John Bubbles."

What Blacks are on the staffs of National Football League teams? Give a look: Paul Warfield, assistant director of pro personnel for Cleveland Browns; Lionel Taylor, offensive coordinator, LA Rams; Sherrill Pinkston, offensive backfield coach, Rams; Mel Phillips, defensive backfield coach, Detroit Lions; Al Davis, coach of running backs, Dallas Cowboys; Milt Jackson, handles receivers and special teams, 49ers; Billy Joe, coach of Philly Eagle running backs; Billy Matthews, running backs, San Francisco; Elijah Pitts, offensive backs and special teams, Buffalo Bills; Ernie McMillan, offensive line, Green Bay; Earnel Durden, offensive backs, San Diego, Bob LeBetter, running backs, New York Jets.

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