More racially balanced

Attitudes, home ownership changing in Northeast

By Charles J. Fitzgibbon, Smith-Mead, Inc.

A recent survey says homeowners in Northeast Baltimore are there to stay.

In a study funded by the Ford Foundation, two-thirds of those residents said that they were not planning to move ary time soon. A whopping 97.5 percent expressed satisfaction with their Northeast neighborhood. There's an atmosphere of hope in Northeast that wasn't there 10 years ago.

During the early 1970s, Northeast residents were skeptical about surviving a wave of "white flight" into the suburbs. The real estate industry was seen as the bad guy, especially in issues like blockbusting and steering.

To stop an impending deterioration in its 13 neighborhoods, Northeast community leaders decided to get the real estate industry on their side.

The task was a challenge. Ads for area homes did not generate much interest. Salespersons and brokers had seen Northeast houses sit on the market for as long an nine months. They had to be shown that people were interested in affordable, quality houses in integrated city neighborhoods.

Block Grants in 1976

In 1976, the city's Department of Housing and Community Development supplied block grant money for the nonprofit Northeast Real Estate Conservation Project (now called Northeast Inc.). Since then, things have been looking up.

In 1977, home sales rose 50 percent above the average for the Baltimore metropolitan area. In the project's first year, the inventory of Northeast homes on the market was cut in half.

The project's effect continued with a buyer information and referral center established by Northeast Inc., and prospective homeowners were educated on the advantages of owning a home there and learned of the amenities offered.

A team of preferred agents completed an orientation program and were prepared to receive referrals on a rotating basis from the center. The center's services drew many young, first-time buyers. It is still providing these and other services, including a home-seller, seminar to help Northeast homeowners market their homes.

By mid-1980, home values in Northeast were up almost 84 percent from 1974. The average selling price today is $37,205, compared to $20,260 in 1974. For several years, Northeast home prices increased at twice the metropolitan average.

But these are figures. Northeast homeowners had the opportunity to voice their opinions about their area in a $20,000 grant survey conducted during the summer of 1979. In this study, residents moving into the area during the previous 10 years were interviewed for their attitudes toward neighborhood changes and integration, as well as reasons for choosing their neighborhood.

Some demographic data regarding racial distribution, size, and makeup of households and integration, as well was also contained.

Homeowners College Grads

First, some facts. Some 80 percent of Northeast households are relatively small (five persons or less). In fact, more than two - thirds of the sample had three persons or less living in their homes. Nearly half of the homeowners hold college degrees, and more than 90 percent have high school educations. Seventy percent of the homes surveyed have two major wage earners. Almost three - quarters of the households have total incomes between $10,000 and $30,000 and 23 percent have total incomes over $30,000.

Racial breakdown of the area showed the population to be 42 percent black, 54 percent white and five percent other races. These figures correspond closely to overall perception of the area makeup — half black and half white.

Some 90 percent of the black residents and 82 percent of the white residents interviewed said they have not had any problems they would attribute to the area's integration. In fact, when asked what they liked about an integrated neighborhood, the two most frequent responses described the neighborhoods as "interesting and broadening" and conducive to interracial cooperation.

As an indication of neighborhood involvement, over half of the respondents said they have five or more friends in their neighborhood. Several residents were careful to define "friends" as more than just "acquaintances").

Of special interest to the Ford Foundation was a determination of migratory patterns — the mobility of people within a metropolitan area. Most homeowners surveyed had lived in areas close to Northeast, including Parkville, areas south of Northeast and the Northwest corner of Baltimore city.

Affordable and Spacious

Homeowners were given a list of possible reasons for selecting Northeast as a place to live. Those reasons which received the highest ratings were "need for a bigger house," "affordability of the housing," "access to mass transportation" and "convenience to shopping and services."

Each respondent was then asked to give his or her chief reason for moving to Northeast. Answers most frequently given stated that economic factors affordability of homes, mainly) influenced their decision, basic appeal of the neighborhood and the individual houses, as well as referrals of relatives and friends living in Northeast, were also frequent reasons.

In a racial breakdown of the question, blacks more commonly gave economic reasons for choosing the area, while whites were attracted by the overall appearance and character of the neighborhoods.

More respondents in the study had purchased homes in the last five years than in the first half of the decade. For this reason, presumably, some two - thirds said their neighborhoods had "not changed much" in the last 10 years.

Of those who did notice changes, many noted their neighborhoods becoming more racially integrated. A substantial number also saw a younger population inhabiting the area. Only 13 of the 539 participants surveyed regarded recent changes as "deterioration."

Increasing Racial Cooperation

Northeast is not of course, totally without racial uneasiness. About 15 percent of its long-term homeowners (purchasing before 1969) cited racial integration as a reason for their neighborhoods being poor places to live. But those who viewed integration as an advantage said that it increased cooperation between races and provided a desirable atmosphere for raising children.

The survey, titled the Neighborhood Change Dynamics Research project, was done in conjunction with the Neighborhood Housing Service.

It is certain that Northeast has progressed, but there is still more to be done. In addressing current marketing of the area, the real estate center established a Neighborhood Marketing Committee. Each Northeast neighborhood is assigned two preferred agents to monitor real estate practices and encourage cooperation between residents and the industry.

The end result of this effort will be several local real estate committees acting as monitors and advisors. Individual neighborhoods will then get the specific marketing programs they need.

Preferred agents are also in the process of developing funding sources above and beyond the block grant money and that keeps the center operating.

Since 1976, the Northeast wheels haven't stopped turning. While many initial issues have resolved, efforts are being rechanneled into more current and pressing community needs. And, as the survey showed, most residents still agree with the advertising agency that called Northeast "the sensible alternative."

This article is printed courtesy of the Greater Baltimore Board of Realtors.

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What to do when buying a home

By Patricia Davis G.R.I.

Anyone can buy a home. However, if you are not an experienced realtor, the first and most crucial step for homebuyers is to find a realtor you can trust.

The realtor will assist you in finding a home that fits your needs and making sure that your financial goals are consistent with what lenders will loan you.

One of the most important aspects of home buying is to know how much you can safely spend. A rule of thumb can be used to figure this out. Your regular weekly wages, before taxes, should come close to matching what your monthly mortgage payment would be including principal and interest, taxes, insurance and ground rent, if any.

Another rule is to take the money you are paying for rent, including utilities and compare this with what your payments would be if you bought a home.

What you will be able to afford to pay for a house will depend on your regular monthly expenses. Try keeping a record of your monthly family budget. Include the following items when you discuss your expenses with your realtor;

Rent, gas and electricity, heating, food, clothing, medical, education, automobile, insurance, recreation, telephone, and monthly installment payments such as personal loans, department store accounts, furniture bills and credit cards.

When you total your monthly expenses you'll be better prepared to see where and how your money is spent.

Remember when figuring out what you can afford, do not include unusual overtime, renting a room, or the salary of other family members in your household, unless they will be buying the home with you.

Single, separated or divorced persons can usually buy homes if their income and expenses allow them to pay the mortgage.

Your realtor can help you locate homes you can afford. Realtors can arrange for you to see homes you're interested in and can find the financing that's just right for you.

They are pledged to uphold the fair housing laws, so there can be no discrimination in the sale of property because of race, color, creed or national origin.

Contact your local realtor when you have any real estate needs. They'll be glad to help you.

businesses sought

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency is in the process of soliciting applications in order to fund a grant that will render management and technical assistance to minority businesses within the Baltimore area at a cost not to exceed $240,000.

The project, a General Business Services Program, will provide management assistance to minority businesses for the purpose of improving their stability by increasing their management and marketing capabilities.

Any interested for-profit or non-profit organization is eligible to submit an aplication. The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday, Jan. 16.

An application kit is available by contacting Vincent S. Martin at 202-634-7883 or at the following address:

U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency, Washington Regional Office, 1730 K Street, N.W., Suite 420, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Business courses at Loyola

Two continuing education courses covering a selection of business topics will be offered by the Loyola College Professional Development Program office this month.

"Fundamental Concepts of Business Data Processing" will take place Thursday, Ja. 8, 15, and 22, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Course work will cover data processing capabilities and information storage facilities of computers, as well as practical application of concepts in the areas of payroll, billing, and inventory.

A "Survey of Non-Profit Organization" will address the relationships of management to service recipients, and specific issues and trends in non-profit organization management. Classes will be held Saturdays, Jan. 10 to 24, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Both programs will be held on the Loyola College North Charles street campus.

Advanced program offered at U of B

The University of Baltimore offers over 70 advanced - level business courses each year for those individuals who have already earned the MB.B.A., the M.S. in business or an advanced oegree in a business - related field.

For the spring semester, beginning Jan. 19, 29 of these advanced-level courses will be offered in the following areas: accounting, economics, finance, international business, management, management operation research and personnel and industrial relations at the tuition rate of $59 per credit.

Registration and specific course information may be obtained by contacting the Admissions Office, University of Baltimore, 1420 N. Charles St., Baltimore, Md. 21201 or calling 727 - 6350 ext 363.

Engineering competition scheduled

Entries for the Engineering Excellence Awards, a statewide competition sponsored by the Consulting Engineers Council of Maryland (CEC-MD) are now being accepted by the Council's awards committee.

Entrants will be judged on originality, innovation and engineering excellence in five categories: research, consulting services, project design services with construction costs between $2 million and $8 million, and project design services with construction costs over $8 million.

Any firm in the private practice of consulting engineering is eligible to enter the competition. Winning entries will be entered in a national competition in early March sponsored by the American Consulting Engineers Council, of which CEC-MD is an affiliate.

Entry forms for the 1981 Awards Competition may be obtained from G.R. Davidson, Awards Committee chairman, Consulting Engineers Council of Maryland, 3 E. Franklin St., Suite 401, Baltimore, Md. 21-2-.

There will be an entry fee for members and non-members. Deadline for entry is Friday, January 30, 1981. For information call 539-1592.

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Tommy D'Alesandro heads new effort

Metro war on crime launched

Metroplitan area counties will wage war against rising crime by publicizing a "crime of the week" and pay as much as $1,000 a case in rewards.

The new program is modeled after a program in Albuquerque, N.M. that has been adopted by 30 cities since 1976. The Baltimore area program will be called "Metro Crime Prevention Inc." It will operate in Anne Arundel, Baltimore and Howard Counties and Baltimore.

A top crime will be publicized in newspapers and on radio. Actors from various area colleges will dramatize some crimes on television, said former Baltimore Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro, a member of the group's executive committee.

Crime tips will be accepted on a 24-hour, seven-day confidential hotline. Rewards for people whose information leads to the arrest and indictment of suspects will range from $50 to $1,000.

"We believe our program is the first to be instituted on a mutual basis," D'Alesandro said. "The recurring theme is citizen information is responsible for an estimated 90 percent of all crimes solved."

Baltimore Mayor William Donald Schaefer said he hopes the program will lead to more public involvement in crime fighting.

"Many people talk about crime, but they don't know what to do about it or they're afraid to get involved," Schaefer said. "We need the participation of the general public, and this gives the public a way to help solve crime."

"Offering a cash reward is an incentive to abandon apathy," said Herman Katkow, acting chairman of the program.

A board of directors of eight residents from each area will adopt rules and select the "crime of the week" submitted from participating police departments, D'Alesandro said.

Program directors have a $25,000 budget and hope to receive private donations as well.

D'Alesandro said Albuquerque authorities managed to win convictions in one-third those cases in which they appealed to the public for information. But he wouldn't predict similar success for the local program.

If program organizers decide after a year the program has not lived up to expectations, "We'll fold up the tents," he said.

Court upholds rape conviction where words, not violence, prevailed

The Court of Appeals this week reinstated the 1978 rape conviction of a Baltimore man, ruling that a rapist does not have to threaten a woman with violence in order for the act to be considered rape.

The 4-3 ruling by the state's highest court reversed a 1980 decision by the Court of Special Appeals, which overturned Eddie Rusk's second degree rape conviction. Rusk was convicted in Baltimore Criminal Court of the rape of a 21-year old woman he met at a bar in the Fells Point section of the city.

The Court of Special Appeals said the state did not prove Rusk forced the woman to have sex with him, an opinion that was criticized by women's groups who feared that the ruling might make it more difficult to obtain rape convictions.

But the Court of Appeals, in an opinion by Chief Judge Robert Murphy, disagreed with the lower court ruling.

"That threats of force need not be made in any particular manner in order to put a person in fear of bodily harm is well established. Indeed, conduct, rather than words, may convey the threat," Murphy wrote.

The rape victim, testifed she met Rusk in a Baltimore bar and agreed to drive him back to his apartment. When they arrived, Ruck reached over, turned off the car's ignition, took the keys with him and invited her inside, she said.

When they got inside, he suggested they go to the bedroom, the victim said.

Rusk "put his hands on my throat, and started lightly to choke me and I said, "if I do what you want, will you let me go?"

Rusk reportedly said "yes" and that that point, the victim said she proceeded to do what he wanted her to do."

Murphy noted that "just where persuasion ends and force begins in cases like the present is essentially a factual issue...the vast majority of jurisdictions have required that the victim's fear be reasonably grounded in order to obviate the need for either proof of actual force on the part of the assailant or physical resistance on the part of the victim."

Murphy said "we think, generally, this is the correct standard."

Dissenting Judge Harry Cole, joined by Judges Marvin Smith and J. Dudley Digges, said that the "only substantive fear the victim had was that she would be late arriving home. The objective facts make it inherently improbable that the defendant's conduct generated any fear for her physical well-being, he said.

12th Atlanta child murder victim identified

The number of Atlanta children slain over the past 18 months climbed to 12 this week after medical authorities identified Christopher Philepe Richardson as one of the two skeletons found last week.

Police found the two skeletons Jan. 9 in a wooded area of Southwest Atlanta while searching for Lubie Geter, the latest child victim who disappeared nearly two weeks ago.

Christopher, 11, disappeared last June while on his way to a swimming pool in Decatur, an Atlanta suburb on the eastern edge of the metropolitan area. He was found almost 13 miles away. Four others remain missing.

"An examination of the dental records by the medical examiner identified the body as that of Christopher Richardson," said Public Safety Commissioner Lee P. Brown.

Authorities had little doubt that the second skeleton, found 50 yards from Christopher's, would prove to be one of the remaining missing children.

However, at AFRO presstime medical examiners were still trying to positively identify the second skeleton. The identification process of the second skeleton is going to take some time, according to Dr. Saleh Zaki, Fulton County assistant medical examiner.

He said the condition of the remains and the amount and nature of information available on the missing children have hampered progress.

Identification, he said, depended on dental comparisons but most of the missing children who come from low-income neighborhoods did not have extensive dental records.

Police were reported checking on a missing 15-year-old black girl, but a spokesman said officers had not gathered enough information to determine whether she should be classified as a runaway or turned over to the special 35-member task force investigating the city's 16 cases of murdered and missing black children. Only two of the victims have been girls.

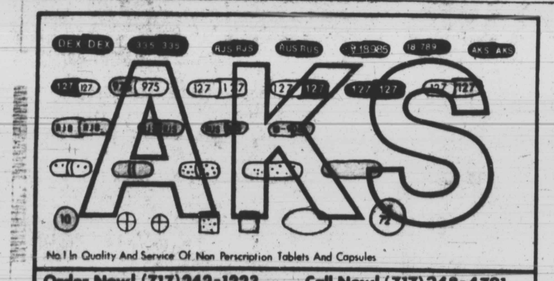
Wilson named to TV firm

Kenneth O. Wilson, Vice-President and Advertising Manager for the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers, has been named executive vice-president of Baltimore Cable TV, which is currently competing for the cable television franchise in Baltimore.

Edgar Keats, president of BCTV, said that Wilson will become an investor and take an active role in the development and operation of the new company.

"It is important to have persons of Mr. Wilson's business and community background as officers in our company," Keats said. Wilson is also a businessman and a civic leader.

KENNETH O. WILSON



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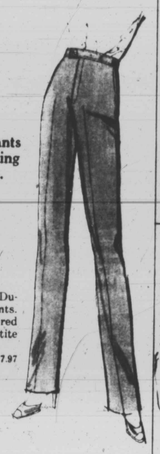

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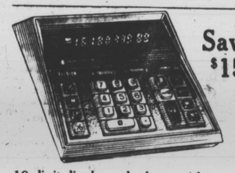

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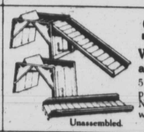

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