Some 300 municipal workers face layoffs

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WE ARE NOW IN OUR 90TH YEAR

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Victims cheer as con man gets 10 years

Justice catches up with ex-Baltimorean's real estate scams

A 43-year-old man, known in Baltimore as the "phantom landlord" who allegedly tried to rent or sell a Garrison Boulevard home to at least seven persons while it still was occupied has been convicted of similar charges in Seattle, Wash.

Jesse Rhodes Jr., pleaded guilty to 21 counts of theft in Seattle after pocketing $51,300 from several people attempting to buy the same house. Rhodes failed to close any of the deals and kept the money.

When Superior Court Judge Jorman Quinn sentenced Rhodes to 10 years in prison for the housing fraud involving 21 people, several of the victims who were in the courtroom cheered and clapped, as Rhodes was being led out of the courtroom handcuffed.

The judge told the defendant, "You are articulate, persuasive, unrealistic and somewhat devious. Most important, you think everyone else is stupid. That is a very dangerous view to hold."

The judge's sentence came as a surprise to Rhodes, who was so convinced he was going to be placed on probation that he left his car parked at a meter near the courthouse.

When the defendant told the judge he left his car parked at a meter, Judge Quinn said, "I can't see how you can park you car on the street, face 21 counts and then expect to drive it off." The AFRO has learned Rhodes owned three cars.

He had pleaded guilty to 14 charges of first degree theft and seven charges of second degree theft related to a series of real estate transactions where he sold or rented the same house to more than one victim.

Rhodes had sold or rented four houses to the 21 victims between 1979 and 1981. He collected his clients money and did not return it when the deals did not go through.

As part of his sentencing Judge Quinn recommended the state Board of Prison Terms and Parole set a minimum term of four and a half years and ordered restitution be part of his parole.

Rhodes asked the judge for additional time to get his business in order before being sent to jail. However, the judge refused his request because he left Baltimore in 1978 when faced with similiar charges.

In September 1978, A Baltimore district court decision ordered that the house in the 4400 block of Garrison Blvd., be put up for auction after the court ruled Rhodes defaulted on the mortgage.

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Jazz great Thelonius Monk dies of stroke

ENGLEWOOD, NJ (UPI) — Jazz musician Thelonious Sphere Monk, one of the foremost pianists of the postwar modern jazz movement, died Wednesday. He was 61.

Monk suffered a brain hemorhage Feb. 5 and never regained consciousness.

Monk died while still in the coma at 8:10 a.m. at Englewood Hospital's coronary intensive care unit, August Wiesner, the hospital's assistant administrator said.

The elderly musician's condition had been complicated by a case of hepatitis, diagnosed by doctors when he arrived at the facility.

Monk was a self - taught

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KWAME TOURE, member of the All African People's Revolutionary Party spoke at Morgan State University Wednesday evening on the need for African students to develop progressive ideals. Toure, formerly known as Stokeley Carmichael, was a civil rights leader in the 1960s.

Thelonius Sphere Monk

City workers face layoffs

If federal budget cuts continue it could mean widespread layoffs and a curtailment of Baltimore City Services resulting in less garbage pickup, fewer places to play and possibly diminished police protection.

City agencies, at the Schaefer administration's order, were told to cut their budgets by 12 percent. The cuts were ordered in an Oct. 15 memo, which said a possible loss of federal funds prompted the action.

Some city agencies have been able to comply and trim their funding requests for the next fiscal year, but warnings of a substantial loss of city services also were issued.

Douglas S. Tawney, Dept. of Recreation and Parks director, is reported to have said a 12 percent budget reduction would mean about 40 summer concerts will not occur.

Three ice rinks and six park swimming pools also would fall by the wayside. In terms of manpower, these cuts would mean layoffs of 251 full-time workers.

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Drinking age, gun control debated hot and heavily in General Assembly

A bill, now in the House of Delegates, raising the drinking age from 18 to 21 has the support of two black legislators, who said they were opposed to lowering the drinking age in 1974.

State legislators also are dealing with a bill increasing the current mandatory sentence for possession of an unregistered handgun from a $250 fine and or 30-day sentence to a mandatory one-year sentence.

Earlier in the week, the drinking age bill was kept alive in the House apparently by lobbying efforts of Gov. Harry Hughes and pressure from house leadership.

An amendment raising the age to 19 was defeated by a vote of 77 to 61 Tuesday.

Del. Isaiah "Ike" Dixon Jr., (D-38th) told the AFRO he voted against lowering the drinking age to 18 in 1974 because "it would do a lot of harm to the community."

"It did," he said.

Increased alcohol-related traffic accidents, young people becoming "hooked" on alcohol and going "to other forms of drugs" were some of the harm caused by lowering the drinking age," Dixon said.

The bill has a "good chance of passage in the House, he said.

Del. Troy Brailey, (D-40th) echoed Dixon's comments.

"I'm in favor of 21. I've always been and I was opposed to lowering it (the drinking age) to 18," he said.

State legislators are doing the right thing in their efforts to raise the legal drinking age and its chances of passage are good, he said. Brailey said he has the backing of many of his constituents in the matter.

"I've talked with parents, and other adults ... church people," he said.

His response from teenagers has not been as great as the response from adults, but some "say it should be raised." But the bill faces opposition from the beer and wine industry, Brailey said.

"This is a great market for the beer and wine industry, so they'll be opposed to it," he said.

Brailey said he is looking at the bill from another point of view, also. With more than 230 bills filed during this session on crime and crime-related issues, passage of this bill may possibly lead to a decrease of criminal activity spurred by alcohol.

"If we really want to get rid of crime, we want to get rid of its causes," he said. "Somebody quoted statistics on how many teenagers involved in accidents resulted from drinking" and other crimes committed by people under the influence of alcohol.

Excuses such as "if they can go to the Army at 18, but can't drink" are "cop-outs," Brailey said.

"I think there are a lot of other recreational things young people can do than going to bars," he said.

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Tot, 2, in serious condition after bus mishap

MTA at loss over rash of 'freakish' accidents

Mass Transit officials, bus operators, and passengers were at a loss to explain the "freakish" rash of recent incidents that have killed two Baltimoreans and seriously injured a 2-year-old child.

The latest accident occurred Monday, Feb. 15, when young Calvin Squirrel, of the 1300 block of N. Gilmore St., was struck by a No. 21 bus when he ran between two parked cars and into the bus' path, police said.

The child was dragged about 20 feet before the bus was able to stop. He was taken to Johns Hopkins Hospital's pediatric ward, where he was listed in stable condition at AFRO presstime.

Tyrone Elder, 38, of West Baltimore, died Friday, Feb. 12, after he was crushed under the rear wheels of a bus in the 4400 block of Loch Raven Blvd.

In a Feb. 15 incident, 14-year-old Katrina Little, a Harlem Park Junior High School student, lost her balance and slipped under the wheels of a bus as she hurried to catch it on her way to school.

In all three incidences, the drivers were cleared by the police, Keith Rollinson, a MTA spokesman, told the AFRO.

"Two of them were kind of freakish," he said.

It is alarming these accidents have happened within such a short period of time, he said. But such deaths are few considering the vast number of miles traveled yearly by the buses and the millions of passengers carried.

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Last rites for mother slain helping son

Bernice Butler

Funeral services for Mrs. Bernice Butler, 52, were Feb. 15 at St. Paul Baptist Church.

Mrs. Butler, of East 21st Street, was shot for no apparent reason Feb. 11 when she opened the door of her home to the demands of a robber.

No arrest had been made at AFRO presstime and police still were investigating the case. Police said Calvin Butler Jr., son of Mrs. Butler told police he had parked his car in front of his house and was walking to his house when a man grabbed him around the neck.

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COPE '83 sets strategy meeting for Saturday

After almost a year of comparative silence, COPE '83 is gearing up for election year '82.

COPE 83 is the group formed by several area community leaders whose goal is the election of blacks to citywide office in 1983.

In a letter from Samuel Daniels, head of the group, a host of community leaders are invited to a meeting and luncheon Saturday, Feb. 20 at the Prince Hall Masons Temple on Eutaw Street.

The purpose of the meeting is to "join in a search for agreement as to those candidates for city-wide office in 1982 deserving of the active support of our community."

When COPE was formed in January of 1981, as a non-partisan organization, its primary goal was to push the leection of black city-wide officials in 1983.

COPE '83 now is considering the election of candidates for three seats on the city Supreme Bench.

In the Saturday meeting, COPE "will serve primarily as the convener of this assembly; it is our hope that those in attendance will select leadership to expedite an ongoing effort," Daniels' letter said

Two black candidates, Attorneys Alonzo P. Hairston and Kenneth Johnson, have announced they will be seeking seats on the bench.

As of yet, Hairston says he has no knowledge of the meeting Saturday, while Johnson was unavailable for comment.

Mrs. Louise G. Murphy selected as new 44th District Senator

Mrs. Louise G. Murphy, a West Baltimore school principal, has been selected by the Democratic Central Committee to fill the 44th senate district seat vacated by John Carroll Byrnes, when he was appointed to Baltimore's Supreme Bench.

Raymond V. Haysbert, president of Parks Sausage company, also had expressed interest in the post. Haysbert could not be reached for comment about Mrs. Murphy's appointment at AFRO presstime.

In a prepared statement, Mrs. Murphy said, "since I have been selected to fill the vacant senate seat, it will present the unique opportunity to again represent the total district."

"By reaching out through constant communication with the district, I shall strive to be alert to its concerns, and attempt to alleviate as many problems as possible, by thoroughly addressing the legislative issues that directly affect northeast Baltimore, Baltimore City and the state of Maryland.

"My work, and efforts will always be pursued in the spirit of true brotherhood, community and service," Mrs. Murphy said.

Louise G. Murphy

FEB