Former prostitute pans Baltimore P.D.'s 'Dear John' letters

The founder of an international organization of prostitutes took issue earlier this week with the police department's tactic of sending "Dear John" letters to men who solicit sex from streetwalkers.

"It won't last long, I'll tell you that," said Margo St. James, founder of COYOTE - an acronym for Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics - and a former prostitute.

"If they really wanted to cut down on the customers, they would bust a couple of johns and put them in jail," she said.

The vice squad this week began sending letters to "Johns" - men who pay for sexual favors — who are caught soliciting policewomen who pose as prostitutes.

The letters identify the suspect and the undercover policewomen he solicited. The letters say, in part, "there has been a conversation between you and the officer about sexual activity for compensation, which would be a violation of the state's prostitution laws."

In an interview with a local daily newspaper, Ms St. James said she considers the manuver racially and sexually discriminating.

"No doubt about it," she said. "How about the hookers? The cops don't mind putting them in jail for two months. They don't extend any courtesy toward the prostitutes, do they?

"It's racially discriminating. Black women don't get busted in their own neighborhoods, but they do if they go into a white neighborhood," said Ms. St. James, a lecturer, writer advocate of decriminalization of prostitution.

"I'd like to see men learn how to please women, and they can learn that with a prostitute," she said.

The chief of the vice squad and originator of the idea explained the objective.

"We hope to deny street prostitutes access to Johns, and thus to their livelihood," Lt. John Cunningham said.

He said the vice squad began the strategy because it found that prosecuting first-time offenders simply jammed the legal system and the results were inadequate. "If a john is caught a second time within a year, he may be prosecuted on both charges, police said.

Ms. St. James, who lives in San Francisco, said COYOTE has 30,000 people on its mailing list and estimated there are about 10 million ladies of the evening in the United States — "If you count the retirees." - UPI

NAACP wants cop fired

Cambridge - The City Council rejected a request by black leaders to fire the police chief and an officer because of the wounding of a black youth last summer.

Council President Allen Dennis cited legal reasons earlier this week in turning down the request from the Dorchester County NAACP.

Dennis said he consulted with the city's attorney who told him firing police chief Russell Wroten and officer Scott Mears, who are white, would violate their civil rights and due process.

Mears, 31, was found innocent in December of assault with intent to murder and related battery and handgun charges in the Aug. 8 shooting of Timothy Sampson, 19.

Sampson was shot in the head following a high-speed chase in Cambridge, and he testified he was not armed when he was shot.

Mears testified he thought Sampson was armed, but the gun turned out to be a black hat.

Sampson recovered from the wounds.

Wroten recently announced that Mears did not violate any departmental regulations and allowed the officer to return to patrol work.

Mary Ashanti, County NAACP president, said permitting Mears and Wroten to remain on the force was "a slap in the face" to the black community. UPI

Roadblocks to snare drunken drivers

Pikesville — State Police disclosed Wednesday they plan to begin setting up random roadblocks across Maryland this Spring to snare unsuspecting drunk drivers, part of a major effort to reduce highway fatalities.

Dan McCarthy, a State Police spokesman, said troopers will begin the operation in earnest by May 1, but that smallscale roadblock efforts may be set up earlier in some areas to iron out any kinks in procedures.

"We won't stop cars arbitrarily, we will stop everybody at each road block," he said. "Responsible people will recognize we're out there trying to save their lives. For them to be inconvenienced for a minute or two shouldn't be a problem."

McCarthy said exact procedures to be used by the troopers have not been finalized, but that they would probably ask to see motorists' driver's licenses and engage them in a brief conversation.

"To a trained eye, it's not as difficult as you might think to spot a drunk," he said. "You can smell alcohol, you can tell by the look in their eyes, and their speech may be slurred."

Although the American Civil Liberties Union has gone to court in Montgomery County to stop similar random roadblocks by local police there, McCarthy said State Police fear no adverse court ruling on the procedure.

"We have examined all the legal options to ensure full compliance with previous court decisions about road blocks," he said. "We will do everything to ensure that the constitutional rights of individuals are guaranteed."

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OUR WORLD

★ PARTYLINE ★ PACESETTERS ★ PEOPLE

The AFRO salutes women during National Women's History Week

By Pattie Hodges,
AFRO Women's Editor

Womankind — the sweetheart, the wife, the mother, the friend, the doer of helpful deeds; the cook, the maid, the chauffeur, the laundress, the nurse, the career lady, toting her briefcase part of the time and swishing her dustmop at other times.

We are doctors, actresses, businesswomen, dancers, fashion designers, teachers, politicians, lawyers, judges, leaders of organizations — you name it — we're in there — doing our thing.

Sound familiar. It is. For women have worn all these hats — carried off all of these roles with the dignity of one to the manor born, the determination of the strongest in any army, and the integrity of the most high - minded and level - headed, and, unless totally bogged down by it all, or ill, at most times, with diplomacy.

As women, we have never received full credit for the many facets of life we have been interwoven into. Perhaps we never will. The ERA has yet to be ratified, and many things are still "not fair" for females.

Yet we trudge onward and upward, sounding our horns, beating out life's cadence on our vibrant drums.

And so it is with pleasure that the AFRO - AMERICAN takes time this week, (from March 7 through March 13) which has been designated by Congress as "National Women's History Week" to salute a few women in the Baltimore area who have made their mark and left their imprint on the tablets of history and most of whom we salute, are still at it — working, doing, helping, contributing.

To those who have departed this life and now belong to the ages, we give a salute in memoriam.

To those who are still among us — helping in their way to make life better, we salute you for your contributions and say, as maybe you wou'd "Give me my flowers, while I can smell them."

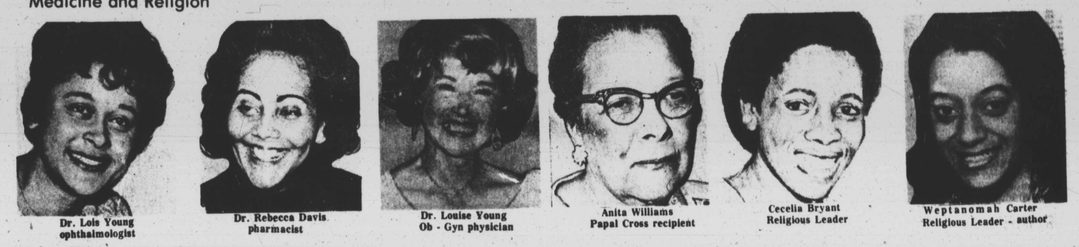
Orchids to you . . . history makers.

(More salutes on Page 10)

Civil Rights and Law

Mabel Hubbard, Judge — Juanita Mitchell, attorney - civil rights activist — Lillie M. Jackson, Civil Rights activist — Enolia McMillan, Balto. NAACP Head, Civil Rights activist — Saundra Banks, Clerk of Ct. of Common Pleas — Elise Jude Mason

Medicine and Religion



Dr. Lois Young, ophthalmologist — Dr. Rebecca Davis, pharmacist — Dr. Louise Young, Ob - Gyn physician — Anita Williams, Papal Cross recipient — Cecelia Bryant, Religious Leader — Weptanomah Carter, Religious Leader - author

Education

Essie M. Hughes, retired Douglass High French teacher — Edna Decoursey Johnson, Retired BCPS Adm. — Dr. Anne Emery, Asst. supt. - Pub. Info Balto City Public Schools — Vivian Cook, former Balto. City principal — Edna Over Campbell, retired Balto Schools Adm. — Julia Woodland, Dunbar High principal

Authors and Singers

Dr. Frances Beckles, author - professor — Lucille Clifton, poetess - author — Mary Carter Smith, Poetess - author - griot — Billie Holiday, former jazz and Blues singer — Ethel Ennis, jazz songstress — Veronica Tyler, Opera singer

Drama and Fashion

Mary West Miller, actress - teacher — June Thorne, actress — Nellie Buchanan, actress - drama coach - former Latin teacher — Willia Bland, Modeling Agency owner — Pauline Brooks Amis, Fashion Boutique owner

PARTYLINE

Hampton Pals mark 50th year

By Pattie Hodges,
AFRO Women's Editor

The Hampton Pals, a group of women, (and founders of the club) who were college friends at Hampton Institute, celebrated their fiftieth anniversary, Monday, Feb. 15.

Ten new and younger friends have become members since the original ten started the group. All members are Hamptonians.

They feel that the club is unique in many ways. They meet only once a year, the date of the meeting being very near Lincoln's birthday.

Until Vernice Wynn moved to Virginia Beach three years ago she was the club's first and only president. Mamie Williams has served in that capacity ever since.

Thelma Rice has been the only secretary and Patty Page the only treasurer.

Their activities are to meet in good fellowship, reminisce (which they still do), hug and kiss, congratulate each other, compare the thirties with the eighties, compare their looks of "yesteryears" and talk seriously about what is happening at their beloved alma mater now.

Some interesting observations were made at their meeting. Even though three of their members have moved to other cities or towns they have not missed a meeting in fifty years.

Phyllis Tilley came from Elgin, IL., Vernice Wynn from Virginia Beach and Marion Overton from West Chester, PA for the recent meet.

The ages of the members range from forty to eighty eight, and the club has lost only one member through death — Dr. Flemmy P. Kittrell, an honorary member.

Other members include Mae Parrott, Ivora Gibson, Malissa Perdue, Lillian Lois Carter, Catherine Royston, Erma Meacham, Idella Nichols, Zella Washington, Phyllis Thompson, Aresa Richardson, Mary A. Johnson, Verce Taylor, Catherine Adams and Gwendolyn Lewis, who was absent due to illness.

All members are retired with

(Continued on Page 10)

M A R