—$65G's

(Continued from Page 1)

Harry Shriver, general manager of WPBR, said he feared the decision by the Maryland Court of Appeals could lead to pre-censorship in the newsroom.

"I think it's going to inhibit... broadcasters from venting their full feelings on controversial matters because this means radio stations do not have full use of first amendment," he said. "It means if any broadcaster without prior knowledge or consent of his management makes a remark that someone considers libelous, his company is liable.

"This is not going to enhance full discussion of controversial topics on the air," Shriver predicted.

In its ruling, the high court split over whether the radio station should have been held liable for remarks for which it may not have been at fault, deciding on a 4 to 3 vote it should.

On April 11, 1980, a Baltimore Supreme Bench jury awarded Holly $250,00 in compensatory damages from both Walker and WPBR, and also awarded $5,000 in punitive damages against Walker and $35,000 against the station.

The state's intermediate appellate court, the Court of Special Appeals, later affirmed the judgment, but said the lower court had improperly awarded punitive damages in differing amounts against the two defendants and ordered a new trial.

Before that could occur, however, the Court of Appeals accepted the case and decided there was nothing improper about the awarding of the punitive damages in differing amounts.

The case arose out of a broadcast conversation between Walker and Newsman Ron Matz in which Matz mimicked a Hollywood gossip columnist character.

One morning, Matz mentioned Holly was about to undergo knee surgery, which was true.

Walker, attempting to make the "tidbit" funny, speculated on how Holly had injured his knee. He suggested Holly might have fallen down while carrying a television during the blizzard that had occurred a few days earlier.

During that snowstorm, looters took advantage of immobilized police vehicles and stole merchandise from dozens of Baltimore stores. Police arrested more than 300 people.

Following the broadcast, WMAR-TV officials reported numerous inquiries about the accuracy of Walker's remark, and Holly reported receiving anonymous, harassing telephone calls. As a result, he filed suit.

The high court concluded both WPBR and Walker should be held liable.

"It is not error to permit the jury to impose exemplary liability on a master for the defamatory utterances of its servant where the employee acted in the scope of his employment and with knowledge of falsity or reckless disregard for the truth," Judge Dudley Digges wrote for the majority.

Chief Judge Robert C. Murphy disagreed and filed a dissenting opinion in which Judges John C. Eldridge and Rita C. Davidson concurred.

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—Tobie Marsh

(Continued from Page 1)

"It's not my position or desire to defend WMAR-TV," she said. But "I feel a responsibility to do the job I was hired to do."

Ms. Marsh said the new contract offered to the newscasters was a fair offer and that "I felt it was wrong" to strike. Two days before the newscasters went on strike she said she "tried to share her views" with her co-workers.

"They didn't understand" and she was attacked "verbally" by a lot of people.

However, what apparently was a fair contract to Ms. Marsh was seen as "union busting" by her co-worker Sweeney. According to news reports the station wants the freedom to hire as many reporters as it can for whatever salary can be bargained for.

The union representing the striking newscasters made a counter offer to start new reporters off at $12,000 a year with overtime and personal appearance fee provisions.

That offer was refused by the newscasters. Under the old contract, base salary for on-the-air reporters was $20,000.

The question of money apparently is not a factor in the walk-out. Marsh, Sweeney and other WMAR staffers have admitted to being very well paid for their work.

Sweeney has been quoted as saying part of the issue concerns the next generation of journalists.

"We voted 'no' just out of sheer conscience," he said. "Even if we'd voted to accept the contract, the national union would have rejected it."

Even though he is said to be displeased with Ms. Marsh for not striking, Sweeney said he likes her, but when the strike ends she will have to go.

"Who's gonna work with her? It's unfortunate, she's not a bad person, but she's dumb as a box of rocks," he is reported as saying.

While the controversy over the strike continues between the striking and non-striking WMAR staffers, the station's management, who has performed on-air activities left vacant by the striking newscasters, continues to operate as best it can.

Arnie Kleiner, the station's general manager, when asked by the AFRO how long management will be willing to wait before it hires replacements for the strikers said a federally mediated meeting with the strikers today hopefully will bear some fruit toward a settlement.

If it does not, he said, then "we'll have to sit down at the beginning of next week to discuss what our future plans will be."

When asked if he anticipates any trouble between Ms. Marsh and her striking co-workers once the strike ends, Kleiner said he "certainly would hope not."

Speculation is, according to AFRO sources, Sweeney may have been on his way out as WMAR's management seeks a format change to make it more competitive in the Baltimore market and, that maybe Sweeney's outspoken stance during the strike is because he feels he has nothing to lose.

"If Tom feels that way, I've not heard it," Kleiner said. "Nothing has been stated to that effect. I can tell you that his actions during the strike will have no bearing on his future employment at Channel 2."

In fact, no one at the station had been notified before they struck that they no longer were in the future plans of WMAR, he said.

—Teddy

(Continued from Page 1)

Pendergrass will remain in the hospital's intensive care unit for the next few days, but he is in stable condition. After he is released from the intensive care unit, doctors hope the singer will be able to sit in a wheel chair.

Watson, who is reported to work at the Forest Lounge in Philadelphia as a female impersonator during the weekends, is something of a mystery person because little is known about his background. Watson is said to impersonate, songstress Diana Ross most often during his on-stage performances.

—Rehabbed homes

(Continued from Page 1)

chens with a gas range, wood cabinets and butcher block formica counter tops, easy care tile floors, pre-wiring for telephones, and smoke detectors.

"This may be the last opportunity for low income individuals to take advantage of subsidized monthly payments where they can purchase a completely rehabilitated property," said M. J. Brodie, commissioner of the Department of Houseing and Community Development. "We are expecting these homes to sell very quickly."

For additional information on the 21 properties available in Upton, Poppleton and Druid Height, call Tom Jaudon, manager of sales for HCD's Home Ownership Development Division at 396-5777.

—Raashidi

(Continued from Page 1)

protestor outside of the office.

"To my knowledge this is the first time I've known anybody to picket the state office," Glenn said.

Both Johnson and Glenn said they tried to talk to Raashadi during his protest but attempts failed. Johnson told the AFRO that Raashadi said he could not talk now because he was protesting.

Johnson said he was led to believe they would talk later but there was no response from Raashadi.

Glenn said he plans to review Raashadi's past claims filed but said his protest will not effect the commission.

The commission said they had served Raashadi well.

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Reaction mixed to Murphy's appointment

Black City Council members were divided in their reaction to Monday's election of Timothy D. Murphy, an assistant state's attorney and the city's Democratic State Central Committee chairmen, to take the Council seat vacated by the Feb. 24 death of Sixth District Councilman Joseph P. Murphy.

Two black councilmen, Kweisi Mfume and Nathan C. Irby, Jr., of the fourth and second districts, respectively, are dissatisfied with what they see as a continuation of the under representation the sixth district's black population.

Mfume and Irby abstained from voting in the election of Murphy to the council seat.

But the remaining council members voted to seat Murphy, and some cited their satisfaction with the tradition of allowing the remaining members of a vacated delegation to make their own selection.

"I would not like to upset the tradition, when it has worked for me," Burns said, noting he had used the process to seat Nathan Irby, Jr. when a vacancy was created in the second district in 1975.

Victorine Adams, of the fourth district, said no black coalition was formed to attempt to persuade the council to select a black candidate because "we didn't know about this until the last minute. These kinds of things (ad hoc efforts) have to be nurtured."

The names of two blacks, Madeline Murphy and Marguerite Campbell, were among at least 22 candidates for the seat. But the Sixth District delegation, composed of George W Della, Jr. and William J. Myers, submitted only Timothy Murphy's name.

Timothy Murphy is not related to either Madeline Murphy or to the late Joseph Murphy.

According to Councilman Mfume, however, the issue of black representation is too important to take a back seat to "councilmanic courtesy."

"I abstained from the process to focus attention to the fact that since 1797 to one from the Afro-American community has represented the sixth district in the city council," Mfume said Tuesday, the day after Murphy's election.

Mfume noted the district currently is about 45 percent black and may exceed 50 percent after redistricting is completed.

Murphy was chosen by Della and Meyers after they consulted with state Senator Harry J. McGuirk, a S. Baltimore power broker who heads the Stonewall Democratic Club, and with other elected officials.

Interest rate bill

Credit industry tells AFRO its side of story

A member of the consumer credit industry, which is in favor of lifting the ceiling off interest rates in Maryland, said arguments to defeat House Bill 1853 are well-meaning but "distorted."

A.M. Kenny, a spokesman for the Commercial Credit Company, referred to a March 20 AFRO editorial as an example of "distorted" arguments used opposing the legislation, now being debated in the House of Delegates in Annapolis.

According to the AFRO's editorial, "We think few in our community have any interest at all in raising any kind of interest rates on borrowing.

"We urge our lawmakers to hold the line on interest rates. In these hard economic times, no low-income folk can afford to pay greater interest on time purchases," the editorial said.

Under the new legislation, a consumer loan of $1,000 for 12 months has a monthly payment of $97.13 on an annual percentage rate of 29.32 percent, Kenny said.

If HB 1851 is passed and the interest rate on the above loan rises to 33 percent, monthly payments on the same $1,000 loan would increase to $98.97, a difference of $1.84, he said.

"If poor people can't afford that (increase) they don't have any business with a $1,000 (loan)," Kenny said.

Kenny, Sue Liebman, of Rose Shanis Loans, and William Kahn, president of the Maryland Consumer Finance Association, visited the AFRO offices earlier this week to present their side, the credit industry's, of the issue in favor of higher interest rates.

If the bill is passed it would raise the permissible interest rate on most loans to 24 percent and increase the maximum amount small loan companies may lend.

The trio's concern over interest rates in Maryland, among the lowest in the nation, revolve around the declining number of consumer loan licensees in the state.

Such licensees make consumer loans to the public for second mortgages, appliances, furniture and cars.

According to a memo to Alan T. Fell, Commissioner of the State office of Consumer Credit, 29.57 percent of consumer loan licensees, such as Commercial Credit and Household Finance, have closed their offices since July 1, 1979.

The memo said a large number of licensees, which have not gone out of business no longer are making new borrower loans.

"Direct contact with industry representatives regarding closing, proposed closings and curtailment of lending activities has confirmed without exception that the current allowable interest rates are the primary reason for their discontinuance of activities in Maryland," the memo said.

The industry also has suffered record losses, $7.2 millionin 1981 and $3.9 million in 1980.

While consumer loans up to $6,000 to customers are allowed, because of the current tight money situation, some loan offices are limiting their loans to $2,000, Kahn said.

Ms. Liebman said the limit placed on similar loans as mentioned above at her office is $1,000.

Kenny said while Commerical Credit has not stopped making such loans, they have been curtailed "tremendously."

Kenny, Ms. Liebman and Kahn agreed the solution to the industry's problems is HB 1851 or possibly another bill, HB 1853. They said jobs and the availability of credit are what is at stake in this issue.

Gray urges racial harmony

The urgent need for racial unity in the Seventh Congressional District, in the City of Baltimore, the State of Maryland, and the nation is one of the major tenets of the political philosophy of Elizabeth C. Gray, 49, who is running for the Democratic nomination in the state's Seventh Congressional District's Primary Election.

"We have tried separateness and that didn't work," said the Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Baltimore's Coppin State College.

"Now it is time for each race to recognize and admit the need for each other's help and support in acquiring for all Americans those basic rights assured in the nation's historic documents: 'Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.'"

"Though we may be of different ethnic groups, the larger picture is that we are all members of a higher order, the human family under God.

"There is much that the different races and groups can learn from the other. But, before that can happen we have to clean away those polarizing forces, both black and white, which would, for their own expediency, have us constantly at each other's throats," Mrs. Gray said.

"I believe that the vast majority of white Americans are as desirous of the black woman and man having their full rights under the Constitution as any group has ever been.

"After all, the victories won by blacks in the past weren't achieved by blacks alone. It was a united effort that made blacks' and women's progress possible," she said.

"I believe that past unity can be the foundation for a new alliance for the Eighties if we would make the effort and then give it a chance to work," she concluded.

Mrs. Gray said she will carry this message from one corner of her district to the other during the next 25 weeks.

"Each race, I believe, wants the same thing for the other that they want for themselves and their children and families: freedom and equal access to reach the highest levels their respective potentials are capable of taking them. This is possible," and I am going to do all I can once I am elected to bring this about."

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