A different kind of testimony

Public hearing draws food stamp cut foes

The Union Baptist Church on Druid Hill Avenue was the scene of a different kind of testimony last Monday night, when social workers, religious leaders, welfare officials and food stamp recipients testified for two and one-half hours on the effects of the October 1981 food stamp budget cuts.

The community testimony is part of an attempt by the Maryland Food Committee and the Washington, DC based community Nutrition Institute, both non-profit, private, anti-hunger groups to halt new food stamp budget cut proposals.

They hope to chronicle the effects of the present cuts on people across the country in 15 cities, as Congress considers the Reagan Administration's new statistics for more food stamp program cuts.

About one million recipients lost food stamp benefits last October 1, under new federal guidelines. Of the remaining 21 million recipients many now are receiving reduced benefits.

The Reagan Administration is proposing more cuts for fiscal year 1983, including a measure which would reduce benefits to persons who now receive the minimum $10 a month benefit.

Throughout the evening, the message was the same: more food stamp cuts would be unthinkable.

And the outpouring of that message came from all strata of the Baltimore community.

Bard Shollenberger, director at the Institute told the hearing participants a bad economy means the need for the food stamp program grows. Indeed, some economists say for each one percent increase in unemployment, the government loses $29 billion in tax revenues and in additional social program costs which must be paid.

Sister Debbie of the St. Ambrose Outreach Center echoed that refrain. "These cutbacks (1981) forced more people recently to become dependent on churches and community services already burdened," she said.

The number of people coming to the food pantry at the center has doubled since October and Sister Debbie exclaimed, "We can't even say we're coming close to meeting the needs."

Ann Miller, director of the Maryland Food Bank, a non-profit central distributiing center for food to area church soup kitchens and emergency food centers, testified that back in 1979 the people on Maryland's Eastern Shore told the food bank their services would not be needed.

By late 1980 however, high unemployment had set in and the Maryland Food Bank was distributing food through their Salisbury office.

Ms. Miller explained the waiting list of groups wanting to join the Food Bank had doubled since last September. The Food Bank's usual distribution of 175,000-180,000 pounds of food per month jumped to 200,000 pounds in March

Then there were the food stamp recipients themselves. When striving to meet the basic needs of food, clothing and housing, "if one category increases, usually the food category will suffer," Sister Debbie said.

Shortly after that statement, Annie Chambers recalled the story of a 16-year-old boy sentenced to a Maryland prison for armed robbery. The boy said he was tired of coming home with nothing to eat, so he put a gun to a man's face, because he knew he would either get away with his money, or end up in jail again, where at least he could eat.

Testifying on behalf of the aged was Betty Hamburger of the Maryland Advocates for Aging who decried the proposed cuts of one and two person households because, they effect older people and "most of us live alone or with our mates."

"What $10 means (the minimum food stamp allowance to one and two person households), Mr. Reagan seems to think is insignificant, but when you're living on a fixed income, it amounts to a great deal," Ms. Hamburger insisted.

According to Ms. Hamburger, out of 16,000 people cut from the food stamp program in Maryland, 7,000 were older Americans.

Mrs. Theresa Miller, a mother of two small children told the hearing panel that without the food stamps she receives every month "we may have to resort to eating from house to house and food lines."

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Iota Phi Theta Fraternity celebrates Founders' Day

ENJOYING THE FESTIVITIES during the Founders' Day Celebration of the Iota Phi Theta Fraternity hosted at Martin's Champagne Room Friday, March 19 are (left panel, lt to r): James Smith, Clifton Durant, Mrs. Rebecca Myles & Larry Myles; (right panel, l to r): Mrs. Vanessa Johnson, Lloyd G. Johnson Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Bessicks Sr. and Linda Bessicks.

(AFRO Photos by Roman Hankewycz)

IOTA PHI THETA OFFICERS at the local level are L to R): Larry Ward, treasurer; Adrain Boyer, secretary; Irving Durant, polaris and Joshua Bessicks, vice polaris.

NATIONAL OFFICERS include (L to R): Art Lawson, national director, Social Affairs; Reginald Williams, grand executive secretary; Edgar Johnson, grand polaris, James Martin, grand vice polaris and Tom Dean, national director, Graduate Affairs.

FOUNDING BROTHERS of the fraternity are (L to R): Frank Coakley, Charley Briscoe, John Danton Slade and Lonnie C. Spruill Jr.

By Pattie Hodges
AFRO Women's Editor

The gradute chapter of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity celebrated its Founders' Day Friday, March 19 at Martin's Champagne Room, 2701 W. Patapsco Ave.

The affair, which lasted from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m. featured music by Myca, open buffet and bar, much dancing and socializing.

However it also had a more sober side.

Iota Phi Theta is a national service fraternity which was founded in 1963 at Morgan State University and which dedicated itself to many worthy endeavors.

During the evening's festivities, there was pause for the group to be recongnized for its service to serval organizations.

Irvin Durant, fraternity polaris and chairperson for the Founders' Day celebration, accepted a plaque of appreciation from Raymond Puryear, of the Big Brother of America, Inc. for the fraternity's support of that organization's Group Adoption Program.

Other awards presented to the group included certificates from the NAACP and the National Federation for the Blind for their dedicated service and support to those organizations.

Chapter officers in addition to Durant include Joshua Bessicks vice polaris; Adrain Boyer, secretary and Larry Ward, treasurer.

BIG BROTHERS' CITATION is presented by Raymond Puryear, of the Big Brothers Organization to Irvin Durant, polaris, for the fraternity's support of the Big Brothers' Group Adoption Program.

2,000 attend Masonic festival

A THE MASONIC SPRING CHARITY FESTIVAL held Saturday, March 27 at the Fifth Regiment Armory are (seated L to R): Diana and Daniel Smith, Sandra Rouse and Melody Ables; (standing, L to R): Worshipful Master Thomas H. Wise Jr., Mrs. Tinetta Wise, Daniel Pinkney, William Ables, Sheila Robinson and Daryl Wise.

LOVELY LADIES who are Mary Kay representatives and had a display at the affair are (L to R): Cleolo Woodside, Edda Lane, Bernita Conaway, Henrietta Walker, Gloria Thornton and Michelle Dew.

MASONIC FESTIVAL GUESTS included (seated, L to R): Elmer Braxton, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Stevenson; (standing, L to R): Augustus Scott, Henry Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. James Matthews.

William F. Taylor Lodge No. 57, Free and Accepted Masons, P.H.A. sponsored its annual Charity Spring Festival Saturday, March 27 at the Fifth Regiment Armory.

Two thousand guests attended this gala event which featured Las Vegas style games of chance with continuous live entertainment provided by "first Class" and "The She Devils."

Proceeds from this fundraising event are donated to their Widows and Orphans Fund and Scholarship Fund, to continue charitable and philanthropic projects throughout the year.

Projects include a Christmas party for 200 under - privileged - youngsters, sponsorship of a vision program for needy public school children,

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Partyline

Md. League of Women's Clubs holds 38th conf.

By Pattie Hodges
AFRO Women's Editor

The Maryland League of Women's Clubs held its thirty - eighth annual One - Day Conference Saturday, March 27 at The Forum (formerly Emerald Gardens), 4210 Primrose Ave.

The Morning session began at 8:30 a.m. with registration and coffee.

The ten - point chairpersons made reports on the goals, objectives and activities of each program area.

Highlights of the morning session was the Housing Workshop chaired by Mrs. Vera Proctor.

The panelists focused on Home safety, Home Care, Rights of Tenants, Energy, Weatherization and the Rat - Rub - Out Program.

Mrs. Thelma T. Daley, immediate past national president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. was the keynote luncheon speaker.

She addressed herself to the theme for this year's conference: "The Challenge of the 80's: If Not You — Who? If Not Now — When?"

Meritorious awards were made to two Maryland League members for dedicated service — Mrs. Thelma Rice and Mrs. Marion J. Jackson.

A monetary contribution was made to Radio Station WEAA.

A Youth Award for scholarship excellence and creative talent was presented to Bonita Billingsley, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Andrew Billingsley.

Soloist was Mrs. Vicky Kelly, soprano, who rendered several selections a capella, rendering the audience spellbound with her melodious voice.

Glen Dowdy, chairman of the board of Shake and Bake, the new family recreation center on Pennsylvania Ave., brought his entire administrative staff and gave a video - tape presentation on what the center will include upon its completion which is expected in October.

This family center, the first of its kind in the nation, will house a skating rink, a bowling alley and family recreation rooms.

The One - Day Conference was an unqualified success which left League members with much to be proud of.

Officers of the Maryland League are Mrs. Gloria H. Luster, president; Mrs. Bernice S. White, first vice president; Mrs. Emma L. Daniels, second vice president; Mrs. Verna Day, recording secretary; Ms. Yvonne Archer,

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