'Hot' issues set for Assembly opening

By Arthur Johnson
AFRO Staff Writer

Unemployment benefits for job-seeking recent high school graduates, divestiture of state funds from banks involved in South Africa, funds for Provident Hospital, a ban on a certain hone billing formula and employees' right to know if workplace conditions are unsafe are just a few of the concerns of Maryland's state senators and delegates as they gear up for Wednesday's noon opening session of the 1984 Maryland General Assembly.

The two houses of the Assembly meet for 90 days each year to make new laws and amend the existing laws under which the state is governed. The 1984 session ends April 9 at midnight.

The Senate, which has 47 members, has standing committees including Budget and Taxation, Finance, Economic Affairs, Judicial Prodeedings and Constitutional and Public Law.

The House of Delegates, which has 141 members, has committees which include Appropriations, Constitutions and Administrative Law, Economic Matters, Environmental Matters, Judiciary, and Ways and Means. Other committees include Protocol and Rules and Executive Nominations.

Responsibilities of the Senate and the House of Delegates include passing laws necessary for the welfare of Maryland citizens, and laws for counties and special taxing areas, deciding the manner in which state funds are spent, supervising the state's administrative agencies and proposing amendments to the state constitution and is instrumental in integrating public demands with public policy.

When asked to pinpoint legislation that he hopes to move through the legislative process this session, Delegate Larry Young, (D., Baltimore City 39th District) says, "I don't want to show my hand to people who will oppose my legislation", but Young did cite several issues that will garner his attention during the session.

Issues that deal with the aged, the criminal justice system, efforts to raise $2 million for N.M. Carroll Maner Home in West Baltimore and the University of Maryland Hospital's efforts to separate from the state and have its own governance under a private corporation are important issues Young says are coming up in the 1984 session.

Another piece of legislation Young is interested in is a right-to-know law that would require chemical plants to provide information to its workers who might possibly be exposed to dangerous working cor itions.

"I'll be prepared to address health, energy, natural resources and agriculture," says Young. But even before the session has begun , Young has encountered difficulties putting together a staff.

"It's difficult to find blacks to work in Annapolis. The salaries are not the most outstanding, but if you are good for the 90 days, you can get leverage in law firms or corporations," says the chairman of the Environmental Matters Committee.

"It's hard to explain to people to invest for later down the road."

During the session Young says he will also host a daily 5-minute "Annapolis Notebook" program on WEAA-FM radio.

"I'll share the issues coming up daily".

The program will air at 6:15 p.m., Mondays through Fridays beginning Jan. 9.

Delegate Paula C. Hollinger (D., Baltimore County District 11) says that preparations for the session have been hectic but that during the interim between sessions she has worked on legislation for a proposed nursing bill which might require that all nurses complete four year instead of two and three year programs.

Del. Hollinger has supported legislation to facilitate efforts of current nurses to acquire the additional education should state nursing requirements change.

She says she will also work to enact a ban on measured time phone service which would calculate phone billing on the basis of the length of time that customers talk.

"It (measured time) will start out as an option, then the flat rate will go up so high that it (measured time) will be the only affordable service," says the Baltimore County delegate.

The adoption of measured time billing would especially hurt elderly, according to the delegate.

Other bills she expects to pay special attention to deal with medical life - supporting procedures which Hollinger calls a major issue.

"There is almost no such thing as death anymore since there are machines to do everything.

The delegate advocates the formation of a Medical Advisory Board which would look at disputes concerning life sustaining measures and gives an advisory.

Delegate Curtis Anderson (D., Baltimore City 44th District) says he wants to introduce legislation that would extend the new car seat and seat belt laws for children under four riding in passenger cars to include small buses that transport small children too.

He will also work to make binding those decisions of medical panels for malpractice suits. Currently, decisions by such panels are not binding and can be taken to court.

"It is such a long litigation. Sixty percent who file (with the panel) are satisfied and because of the costly nature (of a court suit) this would be advantageous," says Anderson.

Delegate Howard P. Rawlings (D., Baltimore City District 40) says he will be co-sponsoring a package of two housing bills with Delegate Ann Perkins.

"One deals with assisting homeowners threatened with mortgage foreclosure, and the other deals with funding through the state for housing for the elderly," he says.

Del. Rawlings says he will also support efforts for divestiture of state funds from banks doing business and making loans to the Republic of South Africa and national corporations of that country.

Also on Rawlings' agenda are to make sure Morgan State Univer sity's funding for its engineering school "survives intact through the legislative process," and to make sure funds that the State Board of Higher Education recommended in special funding for Community College of Baltimore are passed, to secure money for Provident Hospital, and to reduce the "warehousing" prison inmates and more emphasis on using incarceration as an "opportunity to educate prisoners with job skills, and provide counseling for those addicted to alcohol and drugs."

Senator Jack Lapides (D., Baltimore City, 44th District) says that some of his personal legislation includes an environmental bill that would require any plant that shuts down to seek environmental approval.

"Before they close, they would have to get approval that they've left no hazardous waste," says the state senator who is about to begin his 22nd year in the legislature.

Lapides also expects to be supportive of a bill to ban the sale of human organs, and an election bill which would allow voters to replace a resigning, removed, or deceased senator or delegate at the next election instead of having to accept an appointee for the remainder of the term.

"For example, Sen. Abrams left to become head of the governor's Office on Aging in her first year of office which means her successor would be in office for three years."

"Under this bill the appointee would act only until the next election. For example, during the presidential primary and congressional races in that district they would have a special election for state senate."

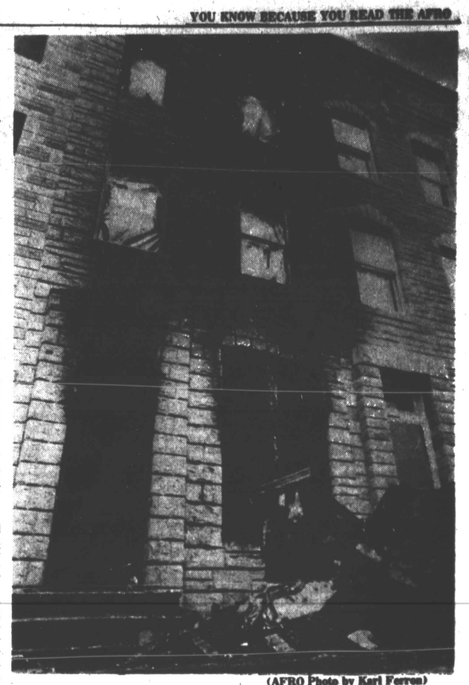
"We have elections three out of every four years in Baltimore so no one would be appointed for more than one year."

Senator Troy Brailey (D., Baltimore City 40th District) says he has already filed two bills.

"One deals with evictions—giving people a reason why they are being evicted. Sometimes they're evicted without reason.

Another bill deals with stores attempting to sell used clothing as if it were new. I've received a lot of complaints," says Brailey.

The senator will also refile a bill that would pay unemployment insurance to high school graduates who are not college bound and who have been looking for work unsuccessfully for at least six months.



(AFRO Photo by Karl Ferren)

COULD THEY HAVE BEEN SAVED? According to fire officials the lives of 12 people could have been spared in both the Monroe St. fire and Tuesday's South Baltimore blaze, pictured above, if smoke detectors had been installed.

Lake Clifton student shot near school

A 17 - year - old Lake Clifton high school student was shot in the shoulder while on the grounds of the Eastside high school shortly after classes ended Thursday afternoon.

Both the assailants and the victim left the scene before police arrived, however, and no suspects have been apprehended. Police eventually found Jones at the Johns Hopkins Hospital emergency room, where he was treated for a superficial wound and released.

Police said Jones appeared reluctant to discuss the incident, and gave a version which conflicted with one given by a girl who was with him during the shooting.

In Jones' version of the incident, police said, he was walking with the girl, whose name was not released, when he suddenly felt a stinging sensation in his shoulder and realized he had been shot.

But according to his companion, police said, Jones was shot after arguing with his assailant.

The shooting, apparently the first on the grounds of a public school this year, comes at a time when school officials are increasingly concerned about guns on school property.

Last November a Harlem Park student was murdered inside the Westside junior high school while being robbed of his jacket.

Local telephone rates to rise

By Steven Humphreys

The Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Co. says telephone service across Maryland will increase anywhere from 15 to 74 percent — but will drop in some cases — under revised rate schedules subject to approval by the state Public Service Commission.

The new rates were redrawn to reflect a $168.3 million increase in the phone company's authorized revenues, granted Friday by the Maryland Public Service Commission.

That ruling held the phone company to about 60 percent of its $221.6 million increase, sending C&P officials back to the chalkboard for a new schedule of proposed rate increases.

Although the new rates will be retroactive to Jan. 1, they must still be approved by the PSC.

C&P had requested the rate increase—as well as sweeping changes in the way charges for local telephone service are calculated — to prepare it for corporate life after the breakup of the American Telegraph & Telephone Co.

Under the new rate structure also approved by the PSC, a previous set of 12 price classes divided by locations were to be combined into two categories for metropolitan and rural customers.

In the first category, said C&P spokeswoman Kynne Troup, metropolitan customers who retain the same service they currently use will see their rates increase anywhere from 15 to 40 percent.

Some customers, those who currently are paying among the highest rates for service in their area, will see their rates drop.

Rural customers who fall into the second category can expect to pay 35 to 74 percent for the same service, Troup said, while some in this group also will see their rates drop.

Customers in each category will continue to choose between the current four billing options to suit their own needs, plus a new option called local measured service that charges a lower monthly basic service fee and a per-call charge based on the distance and duration of the call.

Explaining who will be affected by the price increases, Troup said: "It depends on what kind of phone service you have and how you use it."

"Now is a really good time to start looking at how you use your local telephone service because you have good control over your charges if you exercise that control."

The proposed C&P rate schedules are as follows:

— Group A (metropolitan customers) will pay $16.49 per month for unlimited, flat rate service — up from $11.82 to $14.39;

$9.20 per month plus 9 per call after 65 phone calls for message rate service — Up from $8.82 for some customers, down from $11. 29 for others;

$5.40 per month plus 9 cents for each outgoing call for economy service — up from $4.42 for some customers, down from $6.19 for others;

$10.70 per month plus 10 cents per call for business service — Up from $7.98 for some customers, down from $10.56 for others.

— Group B (rural customers) will pay $15.22 per month for unlimited, flat rate service — up from $8.75 to $11.23; $10.60 per month plus 9 cents per call after 65 phone calls for message rate service — up from $8.82 for some customers, down from $11.29 for others;

$5.40 per month plus 9 cents for each outgoing call for economy service — up from $4.42 for some customers, down from $6.19 for others.

$12.70 per month plus 10 cents per call for business service — up from $7.98 for some customers, down from $10.56 for others.

The charge for local measured service, which is the same for groups A and B, would be 3.2 cents for the first minute and 1.3 cents for each additional minute. A five-minute call would be 8.6 cents.

Robbery rate at federally insured banks decreases

By Tyrone Vines
AFRO Staff Writer

According to the FBI the number of robberies at federally insured banks across Maryland stabilized in 1983 at about half the number reported two years ago.

Andrew Manning, a spokesman for the FBI said there were 116 bank robberies statewide in 1983 — just under the 119 reported for all of 1982.

Manning said the drop of three robberies was not significant, but it was significant that the number of bank robberies had not risen back to the level of the previous two years.

"It lets us know bank robberies are decreasing," Manning said of the 1983 statistics. "We didn't know if '82 was just going to be a freak year."

However, just this week the Capital Savings and Loan located at 412 N. Charles Street was robbed by a unidentified male of an undetermined amount of U.S. currency, police reported.

According to the police reports, the suspect walked into the bank at about 1:52 p.m., approached one of the tellers and announced that "this is a hold up".

Without presenting any weapon, the suspect was given an undetermined amount of money and fled the scene on foot. When the police arrived the only description of the robber was that he was a 6 feet tall, medium built, black male, police reported.

M. Glenn, president of the bank said, "there were at least 12 customers in the bank at the time of the robbery. One woman was taken sick, and two others were upset to the point that they were hysterical."

No one was reported hurt in the robbery and the police are still looking for the suspect. According to the bank official the film bank camera was working at the time and it will be a couple days before the film can be developed. It is then hoped that a better I.D. can be made from the developed film.

Even though the bank robbery occurred the same day as the report from Manning, he credited the drop in bank robberies to a high rate of solutions to bank robberies, now between 60 and 70 percent, and to strict enforcement of drug laws by local authorities.

Manning went on to say, about 65 percent of all robberies are committed by people trying to support a drug habit.

Another factor, Manning said, lies in the fact that there are now fewer people in their late teens and early 20's. Those are the age groups which statistically are most likely to commit crimes, he said.

The decrease was especially significant in Baltimore, where the number of bank robberies went down from 33 in 1982 to 26 in 1983.

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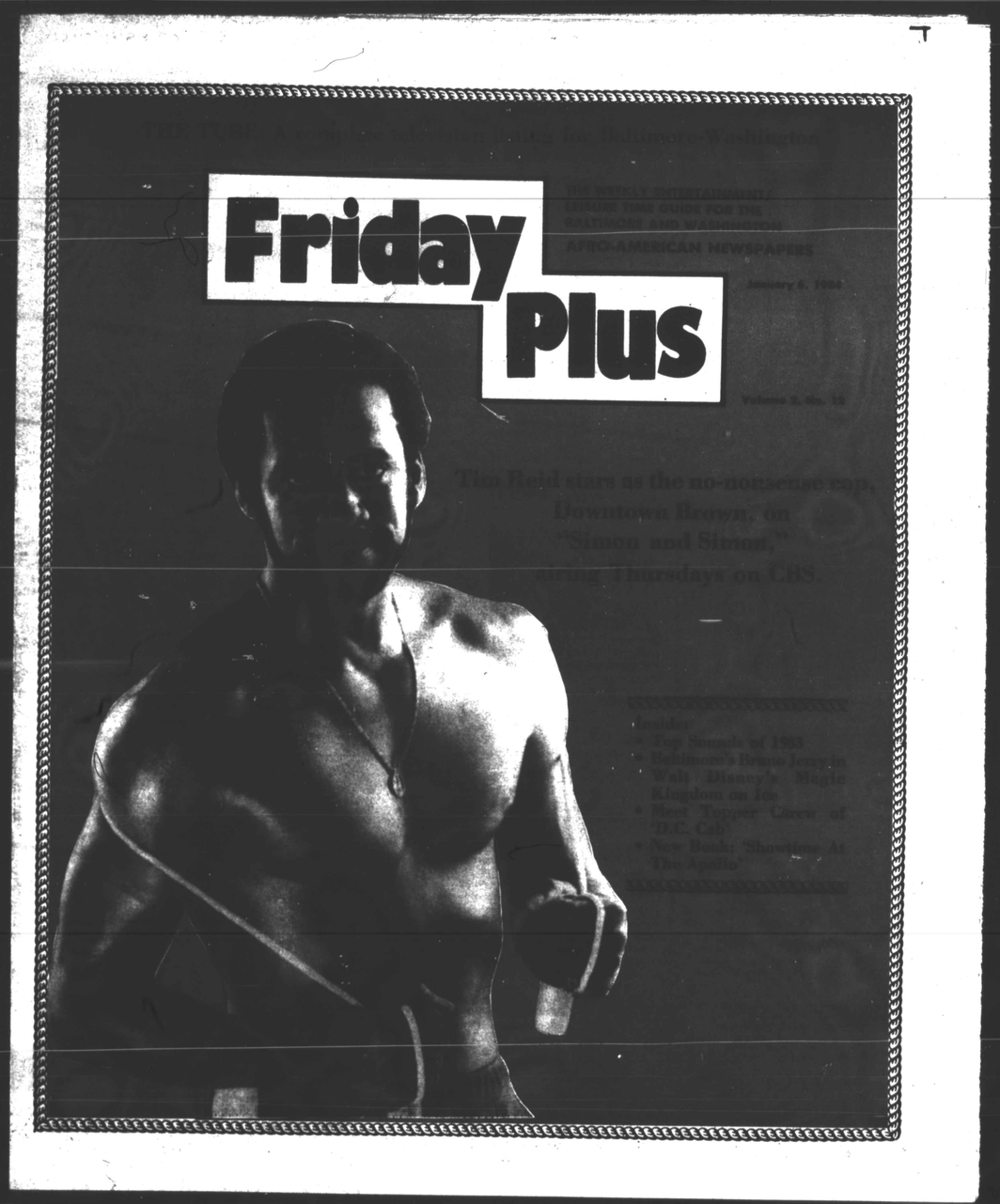
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