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Ron McNair: inspiration to youth

By Valerie Smith-Madden
AFRO Staff Writer and Wire Reports

Ronald E. McNair, one of five crew members assigned to the shuttle Challenger for the 10th space shuttle flight in February 1984, also was the second black American astronaut in space.

His big job aboard the shuttle Challenger was to operate the ship's mechanical arm with a spacewalking astronaut riding at the end in a sort of space cherry picker.

He went on to serve as a crew member aboard the ill-fated Challenger mission that exploded Tuesday. He was to have launched a small but important science platform to study Halley's Comet as it hurled toward the sun.

As a black in a small Southern town in the 1950s and '60s, McNair learned quickly not to let racial discrimination impede his goals.

"It means trying a little harder, fighting a little harder to get what you perhaps deserve," he said. "It means building up a tolerance and not being discouraged by some of the obstacles that get put in front of you."

McNair received a bachelor of science degree in physics from North Carolina AT&T State University in 1971, where he graduated magna cum laude, and a doctorate in physics from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1976.

McNair was an expert in laser physics. He studied at E'cole D'ete Theorique de Physique in France and worked as a staff physicist with Hughes Research Laboratories in Malibu, Calif., before being selected for the astronaut corps in 1978.

There was more to McNair's life than just being an astronaut. He was a fourth-degree black belt in karate and taught the sport at a Baptist church in Houston during the week.

He played saxophone in an 8-piece swing band made up of space center employees and occasionally jammed with jazz groups during open sets at nightclubs in Houston. He said his saxophone even accompanied him into orbit on his first space flight.

Rev. Dana Swann, pastor of the Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Church in Columbia, Md., remembered astronaut Ronald E. McNair as a "regular Joe, someone that anyone could talk to, "a man unimpressed with his own academic plumage, yet committed to excellence on all levels.

Rev. Swann, also an electrical engineer in Washington, DC, recalled McNair from his undergraduate days at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

"I knew him from church and

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Ron McNair

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LATE CITY EDITION

Baltimore Afro American

94TH YEAR NO. 50 BALTIMORE, MD., FEBRUARY 1, 1986 40 CENTS

(AFRO Photo by Paul A. Greene)

Chanise Beckett (L), principal Anna M. Coplin, and Celena Falline enjoy Leadership Day activities. Chanise and Celena were vice principal and school principal respectively. Celena said one of the things she enjoyed was answering the telephones.

10-year-old becomes a principal—for one day

Along with reading and mathematic skills, students at the Cecil Elementary School in East Baltimore are learning about leadership.

Wednesday, January 29, many of the students at the school exchanged places with their principal, vice principal and other key school personnel to get a "feel" for the different careers that will be available to them as adults.

The exchange, part of the "School Pride Week" activities, also gave the students a chance to exercise adult responsibility. Often, they were called upon to make some of the same decisions made daily by their teachers and

Continued on page 2

(AFRO Photo by Paul A. Greene)

Mrs. Betty Warren (L) student council advisor assists Nicole Jones who is acting school secretary as the students of Cecil Elementary School participate in Leadership Day Activities. Mrs. Warren said the activity will probably become an annual one.

S. Africa products found in Eastside supermarket

By Lamont Curry
AFRO Staff Writer

Rudolph Driver, 32, and his wife live in Cedonia. They shop at "Basics and More," a local warehouse chain that generally serves their needs, but that might change.

Recently, the couple's attention was drawn to a can of food labeled, a "Product of the Republic of South Africa."

"We couldn't believe it. This is a black community and we support this store, but does this store support us?" Driver asked.

He contacted the AFRO which immediately set out to investigate the allegations.

"South Africa? No . . .

"What in the world do they export in the line of food . . .

"Go head . . . You don't find any imported foods, other than specialty items," said Barry Beynon, store manager, Basics and More, Cedonia.

When a reporter produced a Grocer's Pride can of yellow, cling, sliced peaches labeled, Product of the Republic of South Africa, Beynon reared back.

"I'll be damned! Peaches . . . I guess I'm surprised but I'm not really shocked," he said.

Avi Herskovitz, director of Grocery and Merchandizing for Food-A-Rama and the Regional Buyer for Basics and More, said that he was unaware of the South African product.

"I don't understand it. I was not aware that we were buying

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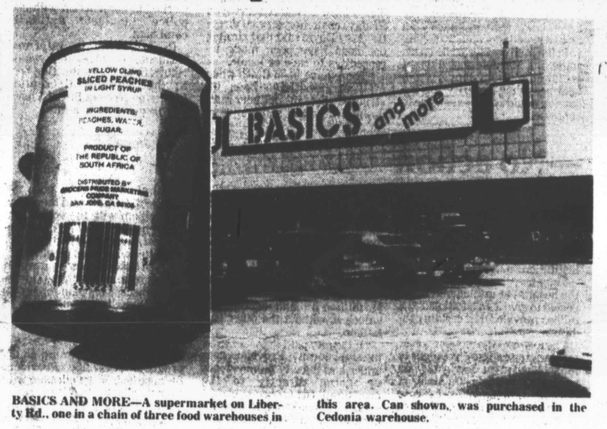

BASICS AND MORE—A supermarket on Liberty Rd., one in a chain of three food warehouses in this area. Can shown, was purchased in the Cedonia warehouse.

Postmen return in Westport area

By Brion M. Tyson
AFRO Staff Writer

"It's an unfortunate situation, but it's been reported that on several occasions our carrier was threatened with bodily harm, and on one occasion a carrier was searched by thugs," McDougald said.

At 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, city postal officials announced that carrier service would resume on Mayberry Ct., Kent and Nevada Sts. in the Westport section.

Mail delivery service was curtailed on those streets, where over 200 adults reside, after notification letters were sent out.

The letters, issued by city postmaster, James McDougald, stated that due to the threatening and harassment of a mail carrier there in November and December, service would be discontinued until further notice.

Residents were instructed to pick up their mail at the Austin Street station, which is located nearly a mile from their homes. The first of the letters came last Friday, January 24.

By Monday residents were outraged as a result of the inconvenience of having to travel that distance to receive their mail.

Sylvia Johnson, president of the Westport, Mt. Winan's Tenant's Council, said that the curtailment of mail service to that section had caused a great deal of tension for the many black and elderly residents who rely on Social Service checks and food stamps for survival.

"I think that the decision to discontinue service to those streets was a very unfair one. Everyone who lives there should not have to suffer because of a problem that doesn't involve them," Ms. Johnson told the AFRO.

Postmaster McDougald said that he decided to curtail service out of concerns over internal security, but had considered other options before making that decision.

"I made the decision after considering alternative deliveries and the installation of cluster boxes. It was a situation where the safety of the letter carrier was at stake. He is our responsibility," McDougald told the AFRO.

However, Ms. Johnson said that although McDougald's concern was justified, his decision disregarded the safety of the residents who were forced to travel to the station to get their mail.

"We know that it's his job to protect employees, but who is

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No action for week on city loan for provident

By Racine S. Winborne & Valerie Smith-Madden
AFRO Staff Writers

Provident Hospital will have to wait at least a week for a $1 million supplementary appropriation loan from the Board of Estimates.

The Baltimore City Council, which must approve the loan, was to have voted on the matter on Monday night. But it was not to be.

The chairman of the Budget and Appropriations Committee, John A. Schaefer, whose committee held a hearing on the loan bill last Tuesday and favorably endorsed the deal, informed the council on Monday that the final vote would be postponed for one week.

The bill, which would permit the funds to be secured from a 1985 city surplus fund, is currently on second reader.

Schaefer advised the council at that time that he was taking the action with the full support and consent of Provident Hospital's court-appointed trustee, George L. Russell, Jr.

The councilman said that Russell "sanctioned" the bill being held for one week.

The $1 million supplementary appropriation is part of a combined $4.5 million bail-out package

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Taylor appointment stirs council spat

By Racine S. Winborne
AFRO Staff Writer

A member of the City Council has indicated that he won't "retract" comments hurled at a colleague at City Hall on Monday in dispute over the appointment of a black banking official to one of two retirement systems.

Nathaniel McFadden, (D.-2nd) made the eyebrow raising comments to Councilman Michael B. Mitchell, (D.-4th), as the two men exchanged points of view on the appointment of Kenneth P. Taylor to the Fire and Police Employees Retirement System.

"I said it and I meant it and I'm not going to retract (it). He (Taylor) could bring a new flavor to that pension board. I wouldn't retract anything. I think this one was important to us," Councilman McFadeden later defended his actions.

It all started routinely enough with the Council plowing through its standard weekly business on Monday evening.

Then Councilwoman Rochelle "Rikki" Spector, (D.-5th), who heads the Executive Appointments Committee, stood to announce series of appointments to various local boards and commissions.

When she came to Taylor's favorable recommendation to be a member of the Fire and Police Employees Retirement System.

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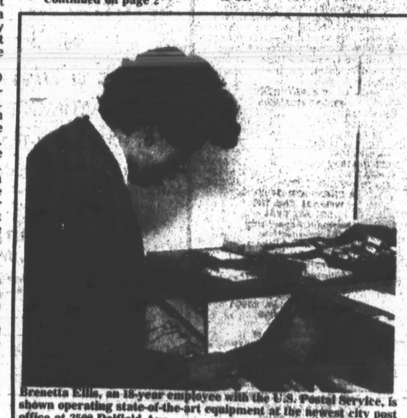
Newest post office opens



Brenetta Ellis, an 18-year employee with the U.S. Postal Service, is shown operating state-of-the-art equipment at the newest city post office at 3500 Dolfield Ave.

Above is the new and expanded city post office at 3500 Dolfield Ave. The facility begn service on January 27. It has 17,000 square feet on a 2.5 acre site with over 1,300 post office boxes available for rent and an automated stamp vending machine located in the lobby. Hours of operation will be Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

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