MARYLAND STATE POLICE

Underwood promoted, will become commander

By Brion Tyson
AFRO Staff Writer

Next week, 1st Lt. Russell Joel Underwood will become the first black Maryland State trooper promoted to the rank of barracks commander. Although Underwood has already received the promotion, he will begin actual service on April 23.

Lt. Underwood, who will turn 41 April 21, is a 18-year veteran state trooper. When the AFRO spoke to Underwood Wednesday, he jokingly evaded questions about his age, but Thursday state police spokesperson Sgt. Bill Tower let the cat out of the bag.

"Yes Lt. Underwood is 40 and the promotion will be a nice birthday present for him," Tower said.

Lt. Underwood, a Baltimore native, attended Baltimore City Public Schools and graduated from City College in East Baltimore in 1961. In '63 he enrolled at Morgan State University and in '67 he joined the Maryland State Police.

Russell J. Underwood

Lt. Underwood was promoted to barracks commander of the Valley Barracks in Brooklandville while he served as acting barracks commander at the state police College Park Barracks while a second lieutenant.

"I am very happy about it, but it was not a gift. I earned it by working very hard. I had been hoping for a promotion," Lt. Underwood told the AFRO.

Lt. Underwood described his and 42 other promotions and transfers as the second stage in an effort to create a greater sense of fairness in hiring and promotions among state police officers.

Underwood said that the promotions are also a part of State Police Superintendent George Brozan's efforts to bring the state police into equality with other state agencies in terms of pay, promotions, and opportunities for minorities.

Brozan assumed the post of superintendent in November, taking the helm from a temporary interim chief. Months earlier Colonel William Travers resigned from the post under pressure of allegations of favoritism and racial discrimination in hiring and promotions. An investigation conducted by Attorney General Stephen Sachs found the state police "legally indefensible" against charges of racial discrimination.

Sgt. Tower described Lt. Underwood as an experienced trooper with a diverse background, one well fit for the barrack's leadership. "First Lieutenant Underwood has worked with many different units and is respected as an all-around trooper," Tower told the AFRO.

According to Sgt. Tower, Underwood worked on the Legislative Detail in Annapolis on three separate assignments. Underwood worked with the unit in 1971, 73 and 74.

In 1977, he was assigned to the Automotive Enforcement Division and in 79 he was transferred to the Automotive Safety Enforcement Division.

In 1983, Underwood worked as a recruiter in the Personnel Management Division and was later assigned to the Intelligence Unit of the state police.

Sgt. Tower said that Underwood also shared command at a number of barracks including Bel Air, Valley, and Randallstown.

Recently, Lt. Underwood was assigned to assist in commanding the College Park Barracks where he is currently acting commander.

Along with being the first black promoted to the post of barracks commander, Underwood is the second black in Maryland state police history to be promoted to first lieutenant. The first black commissioned officer for the state police was Captain Milton Caylor.

Lt. Underwood presently lives in Baltimore County with his wife and daughter. His son, Russell Underwood, Jr. was married this month.

Lt. Underwood is a member of the Coalition of Black Maryland State Troopers, president of the Maryland Chapter of National Organization of Black Law Executives, (NOBLE) and a member of Fountain Baptist Church.

Loan program designed to fund new day care centers

By Valerie Smith-Madden
AFRO Staff Writer

Maryland residents interested in starting their own day care centers have a resource in the Day Care Facilities Loan Guarantee Program.

Director Joan Y. Case described the day care industry as a growth industry but admitted, "statewide, we have half the number of centers needed.

According to Case there are some 168,000 pre-school aged children across the state, but less than 50,000 are enrolled in licensed day care facilities.

In addition to serving the pre-school population, day care centers now serve the elderly and infants.

Case said that out of economic necessity, many mothers are returning to work, thus increasing the need for day care and infant care.

Day care centers for the elderly provide a variety of services during the day to health-impaired and substantially home-bound adults. The services are designed to help these adults maintain some of their independence and encourage and support physical and mental functions and to provide relief for the care-givers.

Maryland's Day Care Facilities Program is the first of its kind in the nation. It offers insurance on loans to those wishing to start a day care facility or expand an existing facility.

"The program is also available to persons and companies outside of Maryland who have licenses to operate inside the state," said Case.

Case explained the program was designed for the client who can't easily obtain money on their own. "The banks may be uncertain as to whether they want to give a loan. However, they will do it with a guarantee from the state."

Case said that one way to ensure a favorable response from the bank is to develop a good business package.

"One has to ask in starting a day care center, 'can the community pay what the center might have to charge to meet its monthly expenses?' "

Case also suggested that prospective center owners examine the quality of their curriculum and the quality of care to be offered.

"Day care directors must know how to run a good business and they must begin to think of themselves as a business," she insisted.

To help prospective directors change their way of thinking, Case's program, a division of the Maryland Department of Economics and Community Development will present a seminar at the Central YWCA.

"This seminar will provide information about the program; such things as what the banks are looking for, how to formulate a good business plan, marketing your day care center, what are the health department regulations and what are the zone requirements," she explained.

Case said that so far five packages have gone to settlement, the latest being a package for Catherine Fowlks.

Ms. Fowlks, a Prince Georges county resident is also the first black to be insured by the program now in its second year.

Case said applications for the program are free and an applicant must come to her office "to clarify any questions a potential client may have."

"We want to be able to get a good application to the bank," she said.

Interested persons should call the program at (301) 659-4308.

Vision Care program to help elderly see more

By Valerie Smith-Madden
AFRO Staff Writer

Vision Care, a first of its kind project in the country, which provides eyecare and eyewear for the elderly was announced on Wednesday morning by Delegate Larry Young, (D-38th).

The project, a national pilot is sponsored by Young and members of the Maryland Optometric Association.

The program is designed to identify disadvantaged persons in need of vision aids and then find the necessary devices for them.

Young said the project is aimed at the 55 and over population.

Young said he wants to set up an advisory committee of nine people "to make sure the community knows it's not a one-shot deal."

Young said he also is looking to provide and complete an eye care component.

"We want the whole process followed through," he said.

Vision Care will be located at one of three city sites on three separate dates during the summer of 1986.

Young said the dates have not been finalized, but the announcements will be made shortly.

"We're looking to serve a minimum of 1,500 on the first day.

How attainable is that goal? According to Young, "very." A spot on the noon news on Wednesday resulted in 60 calls in 40 minutes.

Young praised members of the Maryland Optometric Association for their participation, calling their involvement, "humane."

Persons interested in participating in this project should call Young's office at 727-6212.

LPN Courses Available

The Johnston School of Practical Nursing at The Union Memorial Hospital is currently accepting applications for its fall LPN classes.

Applicants must have high school diplomas, G.E.D.'s, or be graduating in June to apply. The 12 month program begins in October.

Applications must be received by April 30 for the May entrance exam. For more information call Ms. Heath at 554-2327.

Community Calendar

If you are a Baltimore area middle or high school student, you can win up to $350 in scholarships to college by entering the Greater Baltimore History Fair to be held at Towson State University on April 19.

To participate you must study some aspect of local, national or world history. You can enter four types of projects: essays, exhibits; audio visual presentations; or dramatic performances. Judges from area colleges and cultural institutions will select the winners.

Now is the time to complete your project. See your social studies teacher for information and entry blanks or call the History Fair office at 321-2918, or call 367-7975.

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LIVE AUDIENCE

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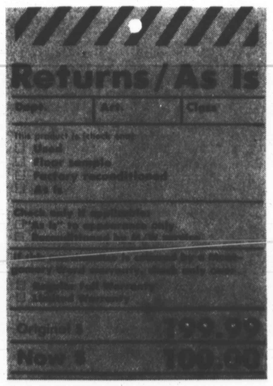

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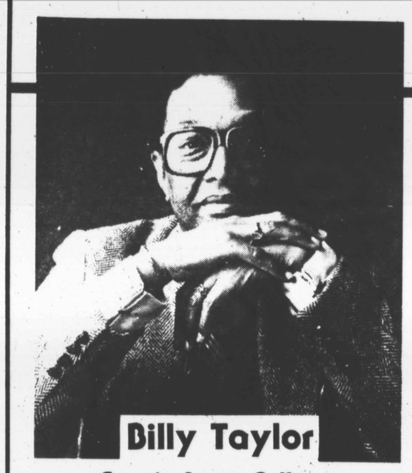

Billy Taylor
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New Edition
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