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WE

WELCOME—Staff Sgt. Allen Montgomery gets a hug from his wife Deborah after returning to Fort Bragg, N.C. from maneuvers in Honduras.

They fell out of the sky this week, throwing their bodies from huge airplanes flying high in the North Carolina skies.

And as they floated down, an anxious audience, faces turned upward, cheered with pride and joy.

The boys had come home. The parachutists in North Carolina, members of the 82nd Airborne Division, and infantrymen from several units based in California had returned from their mission in Central America.

The first two contingents of the 3,200 American soldiers sent to Honduras nearly two weeks ago returned to cheering welcomes in North Carolina and California confident their training mission helped protect the Contras.

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Love feud fuels arson, death

By Alisa Samuels
AFRO Staff Writer

An ongoing domestic dispute between a mother and her boyfriend in Northeast Baltimore finally erupted Wednesday morning leaving her three children dead after the boyfriend blazed their home, police said.

Forty-two men from 11 units could not save the children — Derrick Penn, 3, Damian Penn, 19 months and Donita Penn, five months, said Capt. Patrick P. Flynn, of the Baltimore Fire Department.

Apparently, 27-year-old Daniel O. Perry, of 2618 Kirk Ave., poured charcoal lighter fluid on the first floor of the two-story house and at the foot of his girlfriend's (21-year-old Ann Penn) bed and set the liquid on fire, Lt. Larry Leeson, a Baltimore City police spokesman said.

The Fire Department received a call at 6:21 a.m. and contained the fire 18 minutes later, Capt. Flynn said.

The two older children were found on the floor in a middle bedroom on the second floor and the youngest was found faced

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Mitchell not guilty of tax charges

Former State Sen. Clarence Mitchell, III was found not guilty Thursday on two counts of failure to file income taxes.

"We're beginning to get some justice," said Mitchell, who was convicted in January of obstructing a federal grand jury investigation.

He was also found guilty in November of last year of blocking a federal probe of a defense contractor.

"It was obvious that I was not guilty of wilful failure to file," Mitchell said moments after the verdict was announced.

The jury of seven blacks and five whites took less than two hours to reach a decision.

"The failure was not wilful," said Mitchell attorney Blaine White, who worked along with attorney Edward T. Smith, Jr. on the case. "The law required that it be wilful, we proved that it was negligence."

"We're just going to press ahead with the appeal (of the earlier convictions) and achieve ultimate victory," said White, of the law firm of Lee and Harvey.

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$31,000 awarded in auto lawsuit

By Jill P. Carter
AFRO Staff Writer

Two years of heated legal battles ended Wednesday, when a victorious Delores Smith won a discrimination and assault case against Russel Motors.

Smith, day care center owner and former city school teacher, was awarded $9,000 in compensatory damages, and $22,000 for punitive damages, a total of $31,000. Her attorney, David P. Henninger, sought $200,000 in punitive damages.

"I feel great," Smith said. "This decision sends out a message that there is justice for all."

Smith's troubles began on May 12, 1986, when she purchased an $18,000 van from Russel Motors on Route 40 West. The routine procedure of buying a vehicle turned into a series of mishaps that it has taken the better part of two years to straighten out.

There was a series of delays in getting Mrs. Smith's van ready for her to drive home. Consequently, she was given a loaner car from the dealer. Everyday she checked to see when her van would be ready, and for 20 days,

Delores Smith and Rev. John Wright

the van was not ready for the new owner to use.

Finally, on June 2, Smith was able to pick up the van.

But, at this point, she had done some checking and discovered that the extra features she had paid for in her van were standard features of that same van at other

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Western student dies in France

A spring break tour ended in tragedy for a Western High School freshman who died of viral meningitis in Paris, France Wednesday.

Danita Dickens, 15, left Baltimore March 24 along with a group of about 25 teachers and students from Western, according to the school's principal Sandra Wighton.

"She had been lethargic as soon as she got the plane," said Wighton. "The disease had to be in the incubation stage when she left."

According to Wighton, who did not accompany the students and parents, Danita became fatigued as the students toured the palace of Versailles, located ion a suburb of Paris.

"When they boarded the tour bus, she apparently had become disoriented and wandered away," Wighton said. "They conducted a two-hour search with the palace officials and Versailles police."

But, according to Wighton, Danita was not found until the next day. She had made her way to Paris, and collapsed on a doorstep in the city.

She was rushed to a hospital, and embassy officials were notified. Her parents, along with minister Oscar Brown Jr. flew immediately to Paris and were with Danita when she died.

Funeral arrangements are still pending.

"The teachers are devastated," said Wighton, "Those teachers have chaperoned other students in the past and it has never been a problem."

Wighton said the student was bright and hardworking, and will be sorely missed. She said Danita was very active in her church, Mount Olive Freewill Baptist Church.

She said the school will memorialize Danita by planting a tree on Arbor Day.

President Jackson?

VICTORY—Jackson, flanked by T.V. star Kim Fields, raises his hand in victory after smashing Gov. Michael Dukakis in the Michigan primary election last week.

Top Dems courting Jesse Jackson

By Matthew C. Quinn
UPI Political Writer

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Jesse Jackson held a symbolic meeting with some of the cream of the Democratic power elite Wednesday as the party comes to grips with the notion he just may win the presidential nomination.

"The party of the Democrats has always been the party of innovation. I think it's entirely possible that Jesse Jackson may be the one who's bringing the new innovation into our political process," said Clark Clifford, longtime party leader and adviser to presidents, following the breakfast meeting.

The meeting was held at the Jefferson Hotel, a gracious Republican bastion not far from the White House. It was organized by former Democratic Chairman John White and ex-budget director Bert Lance to give Jackson and party leaders the chance to discuss his increasingly popular campaign.

Jackson called it a "historical meeting." White said it represented "a maturing of the political process in America, a growing up of America.

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Schmoke cracks whip as Council stiffens

By Alisa Samuels
AFRO Staff Writer

Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke said Wednesday he does not regret demoting a veteran transportation worker last week, after the worker verbally attacked his administration and a department head.

"I think I was justified," the mayor said. "If I hadn't taken disciplinary actions I wouldn't be able to run an effective administration."

On March 21 at a Council hearing, the mayor demoted Frank Babusci, former chief of field operation for the Department of Transportation, after Babusci criticized the mayor's plan to transfer certain transportation functions to the Department of Public Works and scorned the transportation's acting commissioner James W. Causey.

The mayor sponsored a bill, Council Bill 85, which would have allowed for the function transferral at the hearing, but withdrew it Monday, because he felt it would not have been judged on its merits.

"I felt the issue of personalities had come to overshadow the issue of policy," the mayor said.

He said he would resubmit the bill probably after he reviews the municipal budget for 1988.

He also said, the department would not be hurt by the delay.

Babusci, now a Department of Public Works employee, is involved with the Metro Johns Hopkins Section C Extension Program and still earns $56,000 annually, the mayor said.

The mayor called the former transportation worker an "insubordinate" and said Babusci gave "unsolicited testimony," which opposed his administration's policy.

According to Mayor Schmoke, he had warned Babusci last year to not oppose his plans for the department, which included hiring more minorities.

"He was on notice that there could be a strong reaction," the mayor said about Babusci, 39.

Many councilmembers frowned upon the demotion and said it

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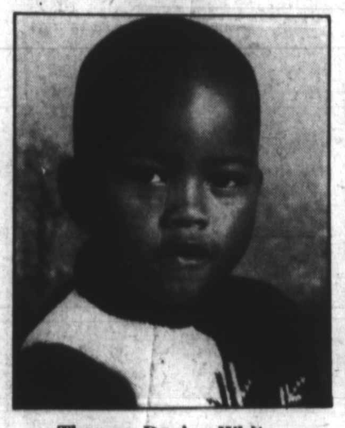
No Easter egg hunt for little Tommie



Thomas Darien White

By Charles Brown
AFRO Staff Writer

The Easter egg hunt of little Tommie White will not go as his family had hoped. Tommie, a four year old West Baltimore child, was tragically injured in an automobile accident on March 24th.

He is paralyzed and on life support systems at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Tommie's grandmother, Tina Gray, in an open letter to the AFRO titled, "No Easter Egg Hunt For Tommie," said, the boy is a member of The Sharp Street Saturday Bible School and was looking forward to Easter.

The family is asking your prayers and good thoughts for Tommie at Easter.

The youngster, who was being escorted along with his 2 year old sister Kee-Kee and their mother, Monica Brown along the 1300 block of McCulloh St. when hit by a car that jumped the curb and dragged the child up the street. Tommie, suffered injuries including punctured lungs, both legs broken, a broken neck, spinal chord injury, cranial swelling near the brain and a heart attack.

Monica Brown, Tommie's

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Legislators crush judgeship bill

By Alicia Benjamin
AFRO Staff Writer

The House voted to adopt a bill which would delete contested elections for state Circuit Court judges but a Senate Committee rejected the bill in a 6 to 5 vote Tuesday.

Sen. Larry Young (D) and Sen. Albert Wynn D-Prince George's County both agreed that Sen. John Pica of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee was the decisive vote in the decision to reject the bill.

"Pica was under considerable pressure to stand with the (Black) Caucus on the issue," Young said.

The state legislative Black Caucus has beenin staunch opposition to the bill, which was backed by the administration, since it was first proposed over 15 years ago.

Wynn, member of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee which rejected the proposed constitutional amendment, said Prince George's County legislators, especially PG Coun-

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