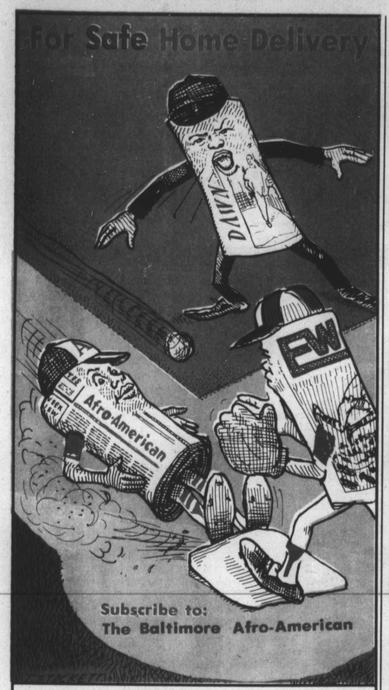

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You've Earned It!

Reception kicks off AFRAM activities

Several hundred business people attended an AFRAM (African American Ethnic Festival) Arts Reception on Wednesday evening, June 20 at the Baltimore Grand, 401 W. Fayette Street.

The reception was underway at 6:30 p.m.

Although this year's festival theme is, AFRAM Salutes "Business and Industry," special recognition was given to some of Baltimore's leading African American Artists. A collection of their works will be on display.

The reception was a preliminary activity to the 14th Annual AFRAM Festival which will be August 3-5. It is designed to introduce a broader cross-section of business and industry to the Annual Affair.

Know for its flair, AFRAM has a number of features which has drawn thousands of visitors each year. The festival will be at Festival Hall, Sharp and Pratt Streets, where exhibits are displayed, and on the adjoining grounds where scores of vendors, many from out of state, offer a variety of ethnic food and handicrafts.

There is entertainment both inside Festival Hall and on the outside grounds.

Traditionally, AFRAM kicks off with a stellar luncheon at which tribute is paid to outstanding African Americans, and academic scholarships are presented to outstanding Baltimore City High School graduates.

Other events include family fun races, a five-mile run, a parade and a full calendar of performing artists, local and pouplar material performers.

Curriculum changes for city schools

The Baltimore School Board has made minor changes in the exclusionary dress code.

Beginning in September, each middle school and senior high school will establish a safety committee composed of students, faculty, and parents to monitor the implementation of the city-wide dress code.

This committee must have at least 50 percent student membership.

School curriculum meeting

During the month of June, the Baltimore City school system has been having panels to discuss and develop its curriculum during meetings at Cross Keys Inn.

The division of curriculum development called upon the community organizations to make recommendations in the areas of math, science, health and technology.

The project was started to launch a series of events and activities promoting the importance of the family as the core of education.

September 1990, has been designated as Family Education Month in the Baltimore City public schools.

Perry presents awards

Dr. Larry S. Perry, cardiologist, presented two local high school students with the Larry S. Perry, M., P.A. scholarship to Morgan State University.

Darren Hicks, of Forest Park High School and Reginald Lewis of Carver High School are the recipients.

The Scholarship is awarded to an entering freshman who has a financial need and has excelled at his respective high school academically and athletically.

The award is for $1,750.00 per student, and the annual scholarship is available to students of Forest Park and Carver schools.

Dr. Perry is a 1970 graduate of Morgan State University and a 1966 graduate of Forest Park.

Morgan to hold dormitory groundbreaking

Morgan State University will start the construction of a 600-bed, eight-story brick building on June 27 at 1 p.m. on Argonne Drive.

The building will provide a model campus lifestyle, providing study, lounge, and recreation areas.

The project is scheduled to be completed by August 1991.

Additionally, two existing dormitories will be completed by August 1993.

Over the next three years, renovation activities will have commenced on three additional buildings which will provide facilities for the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Business and Management, and the Athletic facilities.

Lemmel Middle School teacher receives award

On June 12, Linda Chase, a math teacher at William Lemmel Middle School, received a $3,000 teacher of the year award.

This award is part of a Harkins Associates, Inc. five-year incentive grant to Lemmel Middle.

Two thousand dollars of the award will be used by Ms. Chase for a project with students. One thousand dollars is for her personal use.

Ms. Chase was chosen to receive this award for her excellent performance in five areas: teaching, attendance, ability to work within an instructional team, school projects, and overall evaluation.

'Big River' now at Towson Theater

By Joy M. Tyler
AFRO Staff Reporter

The adventures of Huckleberry Finn, legendary character created by Mark Twain in his novels, has come to life off Broadway to the Towson Town Dinner Theater.

"Big River" is a former Tony award winning musical that focuses on this young boy's mundane life wanting to escape the boredom of childhood, and his relationship with a runaway slave traveling along the Mississippi River.

Huck Finn, played by Liam Burke, is a feisty character, and Big River provides the perfect scenario for this big adventure.

The musical opens with Huck talking about how boring life is with his conservative aunts who are raising him and their challenge to bring him up right.

Being the adamant kid who rebels against the pearls of righteousness, Huck decides that going off into his own adventure, and faking his own death is the only way to escape.

It is his desire to be free that gives him the courage to be independent and go in search of what life really holds for him.

At the start of his travels down the Mississippi, Huck runs into a family slave, played by Todd Vanhackett, who also wants to escape to freedom and convinces Huck to take him along.

The Mississippi river not only holds an escape route for the two looking for a better life, but an adventure beyond their wildest dreams.

The two meet up with a couple of unsavory characters along the way who also want to escape to freedom, but their escape is of a different kind of prison.

The adventure turns into the group of river travelers cooking up a scam to get rich quick.

But all is not lost, Huck redeems himself by disavowing the actions of his scheming friends, and manages to save the family slave from being taken back into custody and offers him his freedom.

It is through this scam that involved deceit, money and betrayal that Huck and the slave learn the true meaning of friendship.

The singing in Big River was excellent. Several numbers were of old time gospel or Negro spiritual style. Cast member Sheila Ford gave a moving solo, and other numbers were performed with spark.

Choreography done by Enie Ritchey was appropriate to the mood to the production and makes the actors look as if they were having fun.

Stage setting was very realistic for the time periods, and scene changes gave just the right touch to catch the mood of the production.

Big River is a fun family production that all ages would enjoy. The production will be running at the Towson Town dinner theater through August 26.

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METRO PROFILE

■ Lifestyle B2
■ Area Entertainment B3

Saturday, June 23, 1990

Fox - Maryland's Movie Ambassor

By Helen Glover Cook
AFRO Staff Writer

Lots of people are aware the Director of the Maryland Film Commission is Jay Schlossberg-Cohen but do they know the Deputy Director of the commission is Charles Fox — a Black man.

Charles Fox is one of Maryland's ambassadors to the film world. He encourages local scouts, directors and producers in the industry to use our state as the backdrop for major motion pictures.

Although Fox has lived and worked in New York and Wasington, D.C. for many years, he is a second generation Marylander whose family ties are thoroughly entrenched in this state.

The original Foxes have roots that go back to West Virginia where the family is noted as being one of the first land owning families in Jefferson County.

Charles Washington Fox, the great-grandfather of Charles Fox, built the first Black church/school in the county and was a contemporary and friend of Frederick Douglass and slave insurrectionist, John Brown.

Charles Fox says, "I can trace my family origins back even further than my great-grandfather, to his mother who is responsible for the Fox family last name.

"This grandmother was a mid-wife whose delivered babies were all stillbirths, at least that is what she told the slave master. She said the same thing about the babies that were born to her.

"Each night the plantation inhabitants could see her making her appointed rounds with food provisions tied in a bundle. When she was asked what the food was for she would reply 'just a little food to feed the baby foxes who have been abandoned by their mamas.' "

"Those fictionalized foxes became the latter generation Foxes—my family."

The family name stuck and was transported to "The Free State" when the family pulled up stakes and migrated to Baltimore. The 45-year-old Fox was only a baby at the time.

Charles came to Baltimore as a child from his native West Virginia when his father, Charles Fox Sr., was called to Baltimore as an assistant pastor to Father Mills of St. James' Episcopal Church; at the time the city's only Black Episcopal Parish.

After the senior Fox became familiar with the city he realized a need to fill the void left by the lack of an Episcopal Church for members of the East Baltimore congregation.

Charles Washington Fox Sr. left St. James' and formed what was to become East Baltimore's first Black Episcopal Parish, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. St. Matthews originated from the humble beginnings of a row house located on the corner of Lafayette and Broadway Sts.

Charles Fox said, "The upstairs was used as living quarters and the sanctuary was located downstairs with an altar constructed by hand — the hand of my father, Reverend Charles Fox.

St. Matthew's parishioners now hold services in a church at the Alameda and 33rd Sts. while they await the building of a new church home on the Alameda. The groundbreaking ceremony took place last month.

"I have a sister who lives in Philadelphia and last spring made an unsuccessful bid for the office of District Attorney. My brother is a pharmaceutical salesman for a Hunt Valley company and my mother is retired as an adult education teacher of English and French at Douglass High School.

"I have found passages and information in the books of J. A. Rodgers to collaborate what I have learned from the family's records and many of their hand-me-down stories.

"That source of history and family folklore led me to write, first creative fiction as a youngster and then to a stint as a copy writer at an advertising agency in New York.

"I applied and was later accepted into the creative writing program at Johns Hopkins University and left Hopkins with a degree and a job at Maryland Public Television. I am proud of the programs we styled at MPT, especially the Studio 4 series for which we won an Emmy Award in 1986.

"The programs were half-hour segments aired on the NBC Washington, DC affiliate. These programs were aimed at the teen audience. We sought out Washington D.C. youth who became exceptional achievers although their upbringing was traumatic and they had no role models to emulate.

Charles Fox

"In some instances we found students who came from homes where there were alcoholic single parents; in others we saw illiterate parents whose children became excellent students and leaders of the student population."

Charles Fox hopes that in his role as Deputy Film Commissioner he can take an active role in "creating a future for our youth within the largest industry in the world—communications."

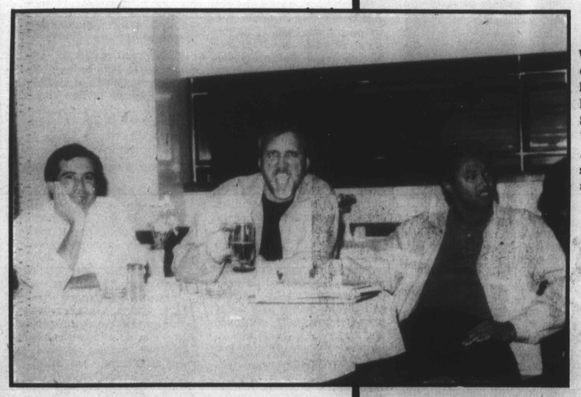
Fox says, "We are looking forward to the Warner Brothers Motion Picture Workshop being held in Baltimore this June. Gus Blackmon a Warner Bros. Vice President will be in Baltimore and meeting some of the talent that submitted scripts to the workshop.

The success of the workshop will mean an opportunity for Maryland/Baltimore to expand both regionally and nationally."

"I see this as a step towards writing more movie/television/video programs that create family bonds. We have to get away from the broadening of the generations that the present programming promotes.

"After all, the communications industry has the largest consumer base in the world too and we want it to be a thinking informed consumer base."

BIG SHOTS—Gus Blackmon and Debbie Langford, Director of Current Programming at Warner Bros. listen to reporter's questions at the press conference announcing the success of the Warner Brothers Writers Workshop.



WARNER BROTHERS Studios executives responsible for the Baltimore Writers Workshop. L-R, Executive Producers of "Night Court," Stu Kreisman and Chris Cluess. Vice President of Story and Vocational Administration Gus Blackmon who started his career in the mailroom at Warner Bros.

THE MOST PROMISING of the Baltimore Writers, L-R Karen Raper and Eunetta Boone.