—Baltimore Urban League

(Continued from Page A1)

create a black history museum and office space that would be made available to outside leasers.

The Philadelphia developer, Thomas M. Holloman, proposes turning the church and the three row houses next door, into an apartment complex and a black history museum.

Holloman wants to destroy the row house directly adjacent to the church and create one structure out of the remaining two.

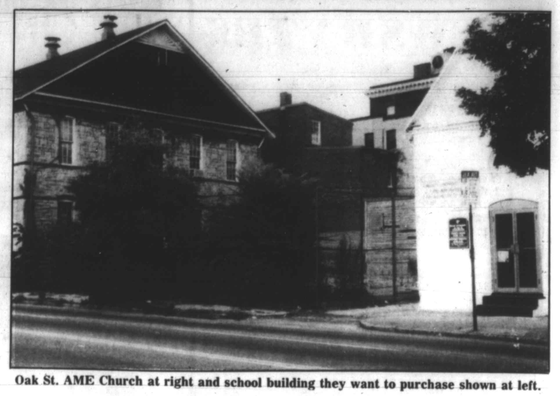
The estimated cost of the project is $1,125,000.

However, Maryland Historic Trust guidelines restrict residential use at the Orchard Street site.

Bill Touhey, spokesperson for the Department of Housing and Community Development, said that they are in the middle of reviewing the proposals and that it was too early for comment specifically on the bidding process.

The reviewing process for the selection of proposals consists of four general criterion: financing for the project, whether the project conforms to the community in which it will be located.

Whether the project meets the guidelines of the Maryland Historic Trust, and the trust must approve the proposal, before it is accepted.



Oak St. AME Church at right and school building they want to purchase shown at left.

—Was it a bombing?

(Continued from Page A1)

the Baltimore City Fire Department, said the fire, which probably was arson-induced started inside the car causing $25,000 worth of damages. The charred inside and the broken glass remain below the Brailey's steps.

Flynn said the 3:46 a.m. incident is still under investigation.

Mrs. Brailey said she had no idea why someone would want to "bomb" the car.

"It sounded like a gun shot," said one neighbor.

"I got up because I saw this bright light burning and when I went to the window I saw the car burning," said Mrs. Inez Lumpkins, of the 2400 block of Baker Street.

Ironically, Mrs. Brailey's son and daughter-in-law had parked the luxury car outside their parents home since Christmas to avoid paying parking meters outside their East 21st Street home.

Mrs. Brailey said she believed Barbara had the car insured and was thankful no one was hurt.

Dennis Hill, a spokesman for the Baltimore City Police Department, said the department's arson unit is working with the fire department to determine the fire's cause.

"Initially there was no evidence of a bombing, but it looks like someone could have poured a flammable liquid on it," Hill said.

Mrs. Brailey said the fire may have been related to recent shootings and drug-trafficking in the area.

"You just don't know," she said.

Interior of burned car.

—Charles Village fights

(Continued from Page A1)

school buildings which were no longer used when the Department of Education moved to new headquarters on North Avenue.

The opposing task force is composed of Charles Village/Remington business owners. The City Planning Commission members are appointed by the mayor and have endorsed the church plan.

Many residents who have lived in the area for years do not understand the reasons behind objecting to Oak Street buying the property and point out that the history of the church predates many of the groups who are most uncomfortable with Oak St. expansion.

Planning Commission member Carl Smith says, "those who are in opposition to Oak St. purchasing the buildings do not understand what the church is doing; they have never invited the church to take part in the planning process that involves a building that is located right next door to them."

Oak St. A.M.E. has been a part of the Charles Village Community since 1897 when A.M.E. Bishop James A. Handy led the campaign to purchase the site which the church now occupies.

The church sought a location that would be easily accessible to parishioners from both East and West Baltimore.

The present Oak St. A.M.E. Pastor is Reverend Vashti McKenzie, who is also the first female minister to lead a congregation within Baltimore City.

Rev. McKenzie plans to renovate the school building for use as a day care center and outreach center providing tutorial programs and high school diploma preparation classes.

Although Oak Street A.M.E. has won the support of the mayor and the city Planning Commission, the proposal must be approved by an upcoming City Council vote.

—Oaks replacement

(Continued from Page A1)

legislature.

"Education is the single most important issue before the General Assembly and Baltimore City, especially for black children," said Sen. Blount Wednesday afternoon. "Parham is an educator and most legislators are not."

Parham was a schoolteacher at Dunbar Senior High School for 25 years until he retired in 1983. Before Dunbar, he taught at the Robert Poole Elementary-Junior High School.

Blount said Parham's presence in the General Assembly could help to protect black institutions and educational programs for the young, but admits Parham is less familiar with other major issues, like crime and drugs.

Parham, 59, was voted unanimously Feb. 7 by the 41st District Democratic State Central Committee to replace Nathaniel T. Oaks, who lost his delegate seat last Monday after he received a five year suspended sentence for theft, perjury and misconduct in office.

Parham was selected over former delegate, Rev. Wendell Phillips and Baltimore City Council reader Lynnwood Taylor and seven other candidates.

Blount denied his close association with Parham played a factor in Parham's selection.

"I've always liked him (Parham) and supported him, but everyone was given adequate consideration," said Blount.

Parham was president of Blount's political club, the Five in Five Democratic Club. "I've been a foot soldier in politics and in campaigns in the 41st District and the city for 15 to 25 years," Parham said Wednesday evening.

Blount said no matter the choice, someone would have said "somebody else was better."

The senator called Parham a cooperative, quiet, calm, reasonable and understanding man.

"All of these qualities are needed to legislate," Sen. Blount said.

The native of Warren, N.C. said: "I'm not afraid of what lies ahead of me" in Annapolis.

Gov. William D. Schaefer has to approve Parham before he officially takes office.

Parham has a bachelor's degree from North Carolina Central University and a master's in fine arts from New York University.

—Pupils

(Continued from Page A1)

award is only one of many incentives that can be taken to motivate inner city students to excel. "Education is everybody's business," said Cummings.

Cummings got the idea after visiting two Prince George's County elementary schools that were located in poor and drug-infested areas where the parents involvement dominoed to improve their children's lives, despite their surroundings.

Cummings said the children's reading and math levels increased drastically.

The delegate said the unity group will raise the money itself.

NCNW Presents, "In Splendid Error"

The National Council of Negro Women, Greater Baltimore Section, will present William Branch's drama, "In Splendid Error," on Friday, February 17. The proceeds from the play will benefit the Arena Players, Inc. There will be a recreation immediately following the show. The curtain will rise at 8:30 p.m. at the Arena Playhouse, 801 McCulloh Street.

For further information contact Pamela Hill-Kenya at 433-1047.

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3:00-6:00 p.m.

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THIS WEEK IN BLACK AMERICA

MILESTONES

Bill White has become the first black ever to head a major sports league in the United States. White was named president of the National Baseball League Feb. 3. The 55-year-old, former all-star will serve as president for four years.

EDUCATION

Shouting "No money, no grades, no future" more than 600 students at Washington Preparatory High School in Los Angeles, Cal. walked out of their homeroom classes in protest of not receiving grades. Teachers have withheld the grades since the beginning of the semester as a result of conflict over pay.

BUSINESS

Barbara Lamont, a former investigative reporter and news anchor in New York City, has become the first black woman in the U.S. to own a television station. WCCL, channel 49, will reach about 650,000 households in Mississippi and Louisiana, and is expected to go on the air within the first three months of this year.

YOUTH

The internationally acclaimed Eastern High School Choir serenaded scores of federal government workers for the start of Black History Month in Washington, D.C.

SENIORS

The University of Southern California and San Diego University have received a three-year, $1 million grant from the State Federal Administration on Aging to establish the first National Resource Center on Minority Aging in the United States.

SPORTS

Grambling's Eddie Robinson, the nation's winningest college coach (349-121-15), has launched a campaign to have Paul "Tank" Younger inducted in the Hall-of-Fame. Younger led the Los Angeles Rams in rushing in 1954 with 610 yards on 91 attempts.

LAW

An Fernando Valley, Cal. civil rights activist last week called for the Justice Department, the FBI and the District Attorney's office to investigate a cross-burning on the lawn of local black family.

POLITICS

Tuskegee Mayor Johnny Ford traveled to the nation's capital last Tuesday for the formal kickoff of his campaign to become the first Black ever elected to Congress from Alabama.

INTERNATIONAL

Liberian educators in the United States to study the development of primary and secondary school systems, were given $368,000 in federal contract funds to help them establish schools in Africa. The officials were sponsored by Florida A & M University.

RELIGION

The Rev. Allan Boesak accused former President Reagan and other Western leaders Tuesday of turning their backs on black South Africans, saying "thousands of lives would be saved by now" if they had imposed tough trade sanctions on the white-ruled government in Pretoria.

HEALTH

Research shows that a mercury based soap used by entertainer Michael Jackson and some Nigerians to lighten the skin, can cause gross disfigurement in hot climates along with brain, liver and kidney damage.

MARRIED

Former "Star Search" award winning model Tracy Ross and musical composer and producer Khashif.

TODD BRIDGES: Former TV star charged with attempted murder.

MOVING ON

Actor Todd Bridges, who once starred in the hit NBC sitcom "Different Strokes" was arrested and charged with attempted murder in Los Angeles. It's his second brush with the law in recent years.

DIVORCED

According to heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson, the only hurdle standing between his and actress Robin Givens divorce is her signature on the divorce papers. Appearing on The Arsenio Hall Show, Tyson told a nationwide audience that he had already signed the documents and was waiting for Ms. Givens to return from vacation to complete the divorce proceedings.

ENTERTAINMENT

The president of the Beverly Hills/Hollywood chapter of the NAACP filed a $10 million lawsuit against Arsenio Hall, claiming the comedian-talk show host falsely accused him of extortion.

MUSIC

Dionne Warwick wears many hats — a vocalist, interior decorator, great cook, and designer. Now she has taped a pilot for a new talk show tagged, "Dionne and Friends." The pilot will be seen in the fall of this year.

THEATRE

Rhythm and blues empress Ruth Brown and cast are drawing rave reviews with the premiere showings of the Broadway musical "Black and Blue".

DIED

Longworth N. Quinn, 80, publisher emeritus of The Michigan Chronicle, of a heart attack. He was twice named "Publisher of the Year" by the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

MOVING UP

1988 Kool Achievers award winner Cathy Hughes continues to snare headlines. The only black woman to own both an AM and FM radio station in the Nation's Capitol recently debuted her own television show.

DeBarge gets 5-yr. sentence

Chico DeBarge

KALAMAZOO, Mich. — A federal judge Thursday sentenced former Motown recording artist Robert DeBarge to more than five years in prison for conspiring to smuggle cocaine to Michigan from Los Angeles.

DeBarge, 26, and his brother, Jonathan "Chico" DeBarge, 22, were convicted last fall of conspiring with at least two others to transport 2.2 pounds of cocaine to Michigan.

They faced possible life prison terms and $4 million in fines on the charges.

U.S. District Judge Richard Enslen ordered DeBarge to serve 63 months in prison and to surrender to federal marshals Feb. 20.

Jonathan DeBarge is scheduled for sentencing next month.

The DeBarges, both Grand Rapids natives now living in Pasadena, Calif., were convicted with Dwayne O. Hill, 24, of Grand Rapids, and Mark Douglas, of Los Angeles.

Hill and Jonathan DeBarge were stopped June 28 by federal agents during a routine inspection of incoming passengers at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. The agent seized packages of the drug from both men's carry-on bags.

Her faith is unshakeable

Smiley says 'clean living' has attracted blacks to Mormons

WASHINGTON

By Sherri Milner
AFRO Staff Writer

While the outlook for African Americans at times may appear dismal in the face of drug abuse, unemployment, unwed motherhood, marital instability and other social menaces typically reported about the group, there is a segment of that population which has enjoyed a 158-year participation in a lifestyle nearly free of such ills.

The Church of the Latter Day Saints (LDS), or Mormons, as they are more commonly known, have an accent on family life, nutritional practices and "clean living", which has attracted many blacks to the fold.

The Mormons believe since they received the revelation which allowed black men to enter into the priesthood as of June 1978, more blacks have been drawn to the denomination and there has been progress between racial groups and the white majority.

Cleeretta Smiley was one of the first blacks to join the LDS in Washington. She was an active Mormon even during the days when blacks were restricted from assuming the most visible role in the church for a total of 13 years.

"While we can't account for the time when blacks were not allowed in the priesthood, we know that the Heavenly Father is no respecter of persons and we knew that God at some point would make the fullness of the gospel accessible to all," she said.

While the church grew from 3.9 million to more than 6.5 million worldwide throughout the last 10 years, the membership is still largely white.

Actual statistics indicating the precise number of black Mormons are not available as members are not required to specify race on official membership forms, but the "successful growth of black membership into the Church" has become more obvious since the revelation was announced.

Reflecting over the past 10 years, Mormons admit that change can be uncomfortable. One of the major adjustments that converted black Mormons must make is to the musical worship experience practiced which has no resemblance to the gospel music or spirituals offered in churches where black membership represents the majority.

As illustrated in an Associated Press interview in which Natalie Palmer-Taylor explained that she experienced racism among Mormons when she moved to Utah, the transition included growing pains for both blacks and whites.

When Palmer-Taylor's son was the target of a racial epithet hurled by another Mormon youth, she followed up with a complaint to the leader of the faith's Council of the Twelve Apostles, Ezra Taft Benson, who told her that if she allowed the people of the church to turn her against the Church, she was not worthy to be in the Church in the first place.

Burgess Owens, a former wide receiver with the New York Jets and Oakland Raiders, and Robert Lang, one of the first blacks to be ordained after the ban was lifted, both cited incidents of discord in the Mormon community. They both, however, have accepted the tenets of the Church and believe strongly in what it represents, as does Smiley and the hundreds of other blacks who have accepted the doctrine.

"Our emphasis was not on what we couldn't do, but on what we were able to do," Smiley continued. "Through the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, we knew the church was true."

The Church of the Latter Day Saints is generally classed as a Protestant denomination, but on the basis of modern association, theology and practice, the label is inaccurate, they say. In many respects, the Mormons are entirely unique among today's Christian denominations, even though they believe in God and in Jesus Christ as His son.

AFRO publisher John J. Oliver, Jr., and Mrs. Marsha Rose Joyner, an elector of the Electoral College of Hawaii, were VIP guests at the inaugural festivities for President George Bush.

(Photo by Sherri Milner)

CLEERETTA SMILEY, shown here amongst her numerous awards and a portrait of the Mormon Temple, is the public communications director for the District's Second Ward of the Church of Latter Day Saints.

They are set apart from other Judeo-Christian denominations by their belief that Joseph Smith, Jr., in the early 1800s, received a new dispensation from God which granted priesthood by divine authority, thereby abolishing clergy positions. As a result, the Mormon priests are not trained theologians, but laymen who serve as emissaries with power, authority and keys to restore the kingdom of God.

The Mormon dogma suggests that man is called of God by prophecy and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof. They also believe that Zion will be built on the American continent, that the Bible is the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly, that the Book of Mormon is also the Word of God, and that the gifts of tongues, prophecy and healing are accessible to all who have the divine authority.

While there was controversy regarding the ban on priesthood accessibility to black men, no women are permitted to assume such a role; it is accepted as the will of God. "Our reason for existence is to nurture our families and rear our children. This makes us no less than the brethren because we serve our role," Smiley expounded.

Mormon women participate in a worldwide sisterhood called the Relief Society in which the Church's social mission is facilitated. Black women have been active in the sisterhood since the Church's inception.

Smiley believes that her faith has been richly rewarded by God. On Oct. 27, 1988, she received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the Universal Orthodox College of Nigeria for her contribution toward the promotion of the gospel in the United States and the world in general. She is also listed in ten Who's Who books, including The Foremost Women in the Twentieth Century.

"What this Church has given me is such a high level of freedom. I believe that this is the only 'true church' on the face of the earth because of the divine authority given us."