



Mrs. Margaret K. Noble sits at the control panel of the Spitz Planetarium at Cardozo High School. Mrs. Noble, a District science teacher,

has been assigned full time to the planetarium to work with students from throughout the city.—Star Staff Photo by Tom Hoy.

YOUNG STUDENTS VIEW STARS

3 Planetariums Installed in District

By ANDREW W. BINGHAM
Star Staff Writer

Thousands of local youngsters will soon be getting their first clear—and scientific—look at the stars.

Three new planetariums have just been installed in the Washington area: At Cardozo High School, Montgomery Junior College and the Nature Center in Rock Creek Park.

While not of the expensive Zeiss variety, they have enough features to excite educators. For they make possible effective, meaningful lessons in astronomy.

The one at Cardozo has already been used for a few classes. It has clearly shown its value.

"Some students had not only never seen the North Star before—they hadn't even heard of it," reports Keith Johnson, supervising director of science for District schools.

This country, but also in such distant places as Australia, South Africa, and Thailand.

The stars and other heavenly bodies are projected on to a special dome about 20 feet in diameter, under which some 70 people can sit to see the show.

One person can easily operate the actual instrument, which itself looks as though it has come straight from outer space. Mr. Johnson calls the device "a knob twister's dream."

Mrs. Margaret K. Noble, the District science teacher who will run the Cardozo planetarium for the benefit of all students in the city, also attests that the instrument is as enjoyable for the operator as for the spectators.

Gets Paid for It, Too

"I get such a kick out of it anyway," she says. "And to think that I get paid for operating it as well . . ."

Last summer, Mrs. Noble visited 16 planetariums in this

country and Mexico on a Meyer Foundation grant. She feels the Spitz version does all the things that a full-scale planetarium—with a dome 60 or 70 feet in diameter—can do except for such spectacular shows as a meteor streaking across the sky.

Everyone else who has had experience with the Spitz planetarium is also quick to praise its usefulness and ingenuity. Aside from the three new ones, the only other planetarium in the area is owned by the Prince Georges public schools, which got it in 1958.

"We're not only satisfied with it," says Howard B. Owens, supervisor there for secondary education, who is responsible for the science program. "We've become one of Dr. Spitz's most enthusiastic supporters."

The Montgomery Junior College installation is just now being completed, according to Dean Donald E. Deyo. It will

not go into actual use until next fall, when the college will start offering a regular course in astronomy. The planetarium will also be available for county public school students and a limited number of adults groups.

The planetarium at the new Nature Center on Glover road just south of Military road will primarily serve to give youngsters "an outdoor experience indoors," according to William L. Perry, Park Service naturalist in charge of the center.

This means that appropriate animal noises, for instance, will accompany sunset and the appearance of the stars during the center's show. "We mainly want to stimulate the children to go outside and study the stars on their own," says Mr. Perry.

Priced at \$6,000 to \$17,000

Until recently, Dr. Spitz claims, his planetarium was the only one available at a reasonable price—varying from about \$6,000 to \$17,000 depending on the installation—with high performance capabilities. Although he understands a Japanese firm is now selling a comparably priced instrument, he says the demand for his planetariums in the space age is greater than ever.

He has also branched out into the manufacture of more elaborate units, including a full-size one for the Air Force Academy and another for a science center in Montevideo, Uruguay. In addition he has come up with a toy planetarium a "Spitz Junior" which sells for less than \$15.

Dr. Spitz, who now advises various Federal agencies on astronomical matters, was a newspaper reporter and publisher before he joined the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia during the 1930's as a writer and editor. "Astronomy became an interest—virtually a passion with me only after that," he claims. His doctorate is honorary.

He strongly believes his planetariums should do more than introduce children to the heavens or simply teach them how to tell time or how to navigate by the stars. He wants them to get across a message about the essential unity of the universe.

Public May Visit One

The planetarium in the new Nature Center is scheduled to go into operation on June 7. It is the only one of the three which will be regularly open to the general public—although, even here, the program will be specifically designed for school children.

The projection instrument at the core of these new planetariums is the invention of a part-time Washington resident who insists he does not qualify as a professional astronomer: Dr. Armand N. Spitz.

Before he developed the prototype of the instrument more than 15 years ago, there were only five planetariums in the country, each one costing well into six figures and a product of the famous Carl Zeiss firm in Germany.

Dr. Spitz, then a lecturer at Philadelphia's Fels Planetarium, decided that it was such an educational advantage to have a planetarium that he would develop an inexpensive one for widespread distribution to schools and museums.

His first instrument was delivered to Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Va., in the fall of 1947. Since then Dr. Spitz, through his own firm, has manufactured about 250 planetariums which are now in operation not only throughout

D. C. to Require Paving Of Street Car Tracks

The District will require D. C. Transit System to pave over a large portion of the unused street car tracks on Georgia and Wisconsin avenues this summer but will not require the company to tear up the tracks until some time in the future.

Brig. Gen. A. C. Welling, District Engineer Commissioner, said last night the tracks will be covered on Georgia avenue north of Florida avenue to the District line and on Wisconsin avenue from Western to Massachusetts avenues.

He emphasized the decision not to require the company to remove the tracks at this time does not mean D. C. Transit will be freed of its obligations to eliminate the street car rails.

Under the company's franchise it is required to convert to an all-bus operation by August, 1963, and remove all the tracks. It is also to pay for half the cost of repaving the street if the work is done in conjunction with repaving of the entire street by the city.

Gen. Welling said, however, that the District has no funds at present for a major repaving project so the temporary cover over the tracks will be made instead. He said the tracks should be covered for traffic and safety reasons.

He added that a request for funds will be made next year for repaving the avenues in the center of the city and when this is done the company will be ordered to tear up the tracks.

Eventually, he said, the city will repave all portions of the two avenues and then the company will be credited for the new surface it will have already put down.

The track cover project should get underway sometime after June, Gen. Welling said. He told of the plan during an appearance on WDC's "Report to the People."

of the Federal Government now owns the land on the Washington Channel side of Maine avenue. Its control is split between the District and the Army Corps of Engineers, but the corps has agreed to turn over jurisdiction of its two strips of waterfront land to the city.

Decision Reversed

The District Commissioners' draft bill originally would have permitted the city to figure the value of the waterfront land as a non-cash donation toward its share of redevelopment costs. But, at the direction of the Federal Bureau of the Budget, the bill was amended by the city to preclude this financing measure.

City officials indicated yesterday that the decision by the Budget Bureau came as no surprise and that, under present cost estimates, it would have no serious impact.

Schuyler Lowe, head of the Department of General Administration, said that inasmuch as the land is owned by the Federal Government, he could see no basis for the District's raising objections to the bureau's position.

Meanwhile, a new proposal to redevelop an 80-acre residential area in Northwest Washington bounded by Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York avenues and North Capitol street has been scheduled to go before the National Capital Planning Commission on June 16.

Approval Expected

The agency is expected to approve the project boundaries and send the plan to the Commissioners with a request that the city apply for a Federal planning grant.

These steps will be taken under agreement reached Friday at a Commissioners' conference with planning and urban renewal officials for a new planning approach toward redeveloping in the Second Precinct area.

A general plan to redevelop an 834-acre area in the Northwest section in 10 years was shelved, and the Commissioners abandoned an earlier proposed location for an initial project area in favor of planning studies on the location below New York avenue.

House Unit Studying Plan For New Family Court

Waterfront Bill Sent to Capital

Draft Would Allow Transfer of Title

A draft of a bill to clear the way for redevelopment of Washington's Southwest waterfront has been sent to Congress by the Commissioners.

Under the proposed legislation, the city would be permitted to give the District's Redevelopment Land Agency title to most of the waterfront land between Fourteenth street and Fort McNair. This, in turn, would permit RLA to lease the land to private investors to rebuild in line with redevelopment plans.

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Transit Agency Action Expected Wednesday

Senator Bible to Recommend Vote, District Committee Backing Assured

By JAMES G. DEANE
Star Staff Writer

A congressional committee is ready to recommend immediate creation of an agency to lay the groundwork for a new Washington area rapid-transit system.

The Joint Committee on Washington Metropolitan Problems, headed by Senator Bible, Democrat of Nevada, is expected to take action Wednesday on legislation to authorize the new agency.

Committee sources said yesterday the unit will press for approval of its recommendations before adjournment. Prompt clearance by the Senate and House District Committees is virtually assured because the joint committee was drawn from the two groups and includes Senator Bible and Representative McMillan, Democrat of South Carolina, the District group's chairman.

Senator Bible last week declared himself strongly in favor of mass transit development. In a statement to the Senate Banking Committee, in which he supported national transit legislation, he said expanded transit facilities are essential to combat growing highway congestion in the Nation's cities.

Local Plan Favored

It has been reported that committee members look with favor on suggestions that the agency be managed by a board of directors which could include representation of nearby communities. Criticism has arisen over a Budget Bureau proposal to allow the President to create a Federal corporation to operate transit lines if an interstate agency, run jointly by Maryland, Virginia and the District, is not set up within the next several years.

Committee members are said to be concerned mainly with getting the preliminaries under way, so that there could be an effort to persuade the White House to defer organizational details for future legislative consideration.

Four rail lines, operating partially underground, are proposed in a plan submitted last year to the White House and forwarded to the joint committee. It will be up to the new agency, however, to settle on definite plans in co-operation with other Government groups.

The agency would be empowered also to negotiate improved railroad commuter service, another approach to the congestion problem which received backing in hearings last fall and early this month.

The Budget Bureau has offered to make funds available for the agency's first year if legislation passes Congress.

Juveniles Key to Move For Merger

By SAM EASTMAN
Star Staff Writer

A House District subcommittee may propose that Juvenile Court be merged with the domestic relations branch of Municipal Court.

A recommendation that this Family Court be established is now under serious consideration, according to the subcommittee chairman, Representative Davis, Democrat of Georgia.

"The Family Court plan seems to have merit and we're going to examine it very carefully," Mr. Davis said yesterday.

New Judgeship Planned

A Senate-passed bill to add two judges to Juvenile Court has languished in the House District Committee. Mr. Davis' subcommittee held hearings last December on various legislative remedies for the court's overcrowded docket.

It was also learned yesterday that consideration is being given to combining the Family Court proposal with these recommendations.

The Family Court would have five judges—one new post alongside with the three judgeships in the domestic relations branch plus the Juvenile Court judgeship.

In addition, the new court would have one or two "referees" who would hear some cases and recommend decisions to the judges.

Decisions Not Made

Mr. Davis confirmed that this referee proposal also is under study, but emphasized that no decision has been made on the Juvenile Court question.

"We're considering every angle of the Juvenile Court problem, and we're not in a position now to say what will come out of it," he added.

Mr. Davis said he will try to get his subcommittee together soon to discuss this question.

Juvenile Court Judge Orm W. Ketcham has insisted that this caseload calls for two additional judges. The bill passed by the Senate is backed by the Commissioners.

In the past, Mr. Davis has maintained that the answer to the Juvenile Court problem might well be to strip away its jurisdiction over adult cases, rather than expand the bench. Included in this category are criminal non-support cases and those involving charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Not New Ideas

The domestic relations branch of Municipal Court was established several years ago to relieve Federal District Court of such civil family-type cases as divorce and adoptions.

The Family Court proposal for Washington is not new, and this single court to deal with civil and criminal family cases reportedly has worked successfully in other cities. The Family Court supporters include, as a general rule, the professional social workers.

Any recommendation by Mr. Davis' subcommittee stands an excellent chance of endorsement by the full House District Committee.

But any Juvenile Court Bill which would have to go to conference this late in the session stands little chance of passage.

Montgomery County Hit By Strep Infections

By CHARLES G. BROOKS
Star Staff Writer

An unusual outbreak of strep infections has swept Montgomery County over the past few months. Dr. William J. Peoples, county health officer, said last night.

The outbreak could lead to an increased incidence of rheumatic fever in the county. This heart-affecting disease is believed to be often caused by strep infections.

February and March are traditionally the months when streptococcus infections prevail. But, Dr. Peoples said, this past winter the outbreak began in late November and continued through April. It is beginning to die down now.

Over a year ago Montgomery County, in co-operation with the United States Public Health Service, started the country's first pilot program to try and prevent rheumatic fever.

The Health Department developed a swift test for the dangerous streptococcus group A bacteria. It is this type that is believed to be a principal cause of rheumatic fever.

Such a test is believed to be important because if the strep bug can be identified, appropriate antibiotics may be given to kill it and prevent possible complications such as rheumatic fever.

Smith Elected Lions' Governor

William J. Smith, 3651 Sultland road S.E., a member of the Anacostia Lions Club, yesterday was elected governor of Lions District 22-C at the 38th annual convention of Lions Multiple District 22.

The convention, at Atlantic City, was attended by Lions Club members from Maryland, Delaware and the District. District 22-C, which Mr. Smith will head, comprises part of Maryland and the District of Columbia. Mr. Smith is a public relations officer for the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Co. here.

Boothe Talk Slated

The Washington chapter of Virginia Polytechnic Institute will meet at 8 p.m., Tuesday, in the George Mason Hotel, Alexandria. State Senator Armistead Boothe will be the guest speaker.



NEW WATER SPORTS CENTER HERE WELL UNDERWAY

This water sports center at the mouth of Rock Creek should be ready about August 1, National Capital Park officials said yesterday. It will replace old boating facilities in the Key

Bridge area and will provide storage and dock space for 150 canoes and 36 eight-man shells.

A visitor gets a panoramic view of the Georgetown waterfront and Key Bridge from the sun-deck of the nearly finished water sports center.

Inside will be offices, a lounge, showers, restrooms, a snack bar and boat storage space.—Star Staff Photos by Randolph Routt.