



ALFRED LEE HENDERSON
EDITOR/PUBLISHER



**WE SEE THE WORLD
THROUGH BLACK EYES**

OCL paternalism: It won't work

What is the Oregon Consumer League doing for the Black community? What are its responsibilities?

The Oregon Consumer League was founded by Don Willner and others to serve as a vehicle of communication and activity for the consumer. Recruiting membership from all walks of life, the Oregon Consumer League soon gained respect not only in Oregon, but nationally. Meetings were held in poverty areas including Albina to assist low-income buyers to get the most from their money; research was done; legislation was introduced; and although results were not immediate, there was an air of excitement. At last there was an organization working for the people!

But the Oregon Consumer League has declined into a small group of people fussing among themselves. The membership has not grown; the volunteers have left; the spirit has gone. The only thing the OCL has to show for itself is the Consumer Protection Agency in Albina. OCL has had to rely on the Consumer Protection Agency to do the research and to write its bills, and has not had the strength to get them passed.

And what has the OCL done with the Consumer Protection Agency other than use it? It has controlled the agency through its Management Committee, made up of 4 members of the OCL Executive committee and only 2 members from Model Cities. It has kept the agency in conflict through interference by board members. It has lost capable staff members through manipulation of favored employees.

OCL has done nothing to strengthen or perpetuate the program. It is still fully supported by Model Cities funds. OCL has not obtained grants to continue or expand the program, so when its next 8 months with Model Cities is finished, it will cease to exist.

What is the responsibility of the OCL to the Black community? First of all OCL should put the program in the hands of the people -- let a community board set policy, procedure and priority. Believe it or not, Mr. Williamson, Black people are able to do this. Give the program to the people, since the people's money funds it anyway, and don't sit paternalistically above, doing what you think is best. Second, having established a community policy board, eliminate the management committee and let the director manage the program within the directives provided by the community board.

Then, attempt to bring OCL closer to all the people of Oregon and let it become a community based program that will be sought out and respected.

OCL was a good idea. It can yet become a responsive and responsible organization.

Forgotten in Corvallis

Although more than 100 Black undergraduate students attend Oregon State University in Corvallis, their presence there is hardly acknowledged by the Black community of Portland. OSU is located in a small rural community, all-white, where racism is a tradition. Originally excelling in Agriculture and Forestry, OSU has attracted students from the small towns of Oregon -- students who were not exposed to diverse cultures and racial variations. OSU therefore has had a conservative student body and a conservative community.

Black students who attend OSU do so to take advantage of the excellent academic programs in the sciences and engineering. Because Black students have been counseled into the social sciences, more Black students have attended Portland State University or the University of Oregon. Now Black students are finding that there are opportunities in the sciences and that OSU is the school to attend.

When they get to Corvallis they face many problems -- difficulty finding housing and jobs in Corvallis; a lack of contact with educated or stimulating Black adults, as well as isolation from their own community; not knowing if they are wanted or merely tolerated by the university and its student body; and lack of opportunity for social life.

When out of state students come to the University of Portland, the Urban League welcomes them and finds them a "home away from home". But when Black students go to Corvallis they are forgotten.

Problems became so great a few years ago that the Black students left OSU in protest. The current group of students does not plan to leave -- they

plan to stay and receive the education they are entitled to receive as citizens of Oregon. They ask only two things -- a commitment from the university and a commitment from the people of Albina.

The last time the Black students of OSU asked for help, only two Black adults responded -- Tom Vickers and Wendell Wallace. It was too little and too late, and the students had to leave Corvallis. The problems have not reached a crisis this time -- and with support and assistance from Black Portland, they will not.

This is what Black students suggest: Visit the campus; attend functions at OSU sponsored by the Black students; provide summer jobs; provide scholarships; let the white student body know the Black students do have a community of support behind them; make the university administration aware of your concern for the education of Black students; inquire into the hiring and recruitment policies of the university. In short -- if we are concerned, the university will be concerned.

State plan fails: No leadership

Several months ago the OBSERVER was told by John Raynor, director of the state's affirmative action program, that the program had to work, for if the state agencies were not receptive, the Governor would intercede.

Now Mr. Raynor has admitted that progress has been slow and has not met his expectations. We would like to know what is wrong. Is Bob Boozer failing to recruit Blacks? Are Blacks failing to apply for state positions? Are the agencies resisting? Is the governor failing to provide leadership?

We know Boozer is recruiting and we know Blacks are applying. We suspect the agencies... and we know the Governor is failing to provide leadership. One look at his all-white office, and those of Secretary of State Clay Myers, Treasurer Jim Reddin and Attorney-General Lee Johnson, shows us that!

A perfect example is the position of Public Administration Trainee, for which there are two openings. This position is in the Governor's Executive Department. The position, which requires a bachelor's degree, has a starting salary of \$647 to \$716.

A Black with a Masters degree in Agriculture Economics was rejected. A Filipino with a Masters degree in Public Administration was rejected. The only acceptable minority applicant, an East Indian, was told he failed the written test which consisted of the question: "Why would you like to have one of these jobs." Here was an opportunity to hire minorities -- but who will get the jobs?

Another good example was the position of Administrative Analyst. A qualified Black applied but a white was imported from Illinois.

We ask again -- why is the percentage of Blacks in state employment so low? The answer is simple: They are screened out by various devious methods.

The state has an affirmative action agreement. It even has an affirmative action department. But it has no commitment and it has no leadership.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

County adds one

Dear Mr. Henderson:

Since our conversation a few days ago I have received a note from Commissioner Clark containing a piece of information provided by Mr. Bob Baldwin of the County Planning Department. Your article of Thursday, April 26 indicated that the Planning Commission employs no Blacks out of a total of thirty positions. Mr. Baldwin informed Commissioner Clark (and Mr. Clark wishes you to know) that the Planning Com-

mission employed a Black to the position of structural engineer on December 8, 1972. This particular position is the second highest paid position on the staff.

Obviously, this bit of information does not vindicate the County from the observations made in your article. But it is at least one indication of progress.

Sincerely,
James Sitzman

Air Guard leads

Dear Sir:

Your May 10th issue carried a front page story about the appointment of Bruce Broussard as the first Black Officer in the Oregon National Guard. I don't want to minimize an important appointment for a highly deserving person -- but the story should have read that CW2 Broussard is the first Black Officer in the Oregon Army National Guard. In the Oregon Air National Guard four Black Officers serve with distinction. They are:

Major Charles E. Williams, Security Police Staff Officer in Headquarters, Oregon Air National Guard.
Major William E. Gibson,

Dental Officer in the 142nd USAF Clinic.

Captain Calvin O. L. Henry, Weapons Director Staff Officer in the 153rd Tactical Air Control Center Squadron.

Captain Samuel E. Burton, Weapons Controller in the 116th Tactical Control Squadron.

My friends in Army green sometimes forget that "Oregon National Guard" is an all inclusive term, so I felt I should set the record straight. We are all on the same team -- but a friendly parochialism continues to exist.

Sincerely yours,
Staryl C. Austin, Jr.
Brigadier General
Deputy Adjutant General

Sympathetic

Dear Sir:

Here in California we are shocked at the unbalanced employment in Oregon. It is almost unbelievable that such things exist in the liberal state of Oregon.

You have just elected your first Black representative. You have had only one elected Black school board member. You have taxation without representation.

We have many more opportunities in California than Blacks in Oregon, from the Governor's office down. Now we are electing Thomas Bradley as Mayor of Los Angeles. I hope Blacks will get themselves together so things will change in Oregon.

Sincerely yours,
Bea S. Johnson
San Fernando, California



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