

## Business never had it so good...

By Fungai Kumbula



Economists call it the "free enterprise" or market economy and the United States of America professes to practice it. In a market economy there is very little if any government interference. The price of commodities is supposed to be determined by the laws of supply and demand. Essentially, it works like this: a surplus of any commodity will drive its price down while a shortage will drive the price up; the more of a product there is, the less it costs and vice versa.

The idea behind the free enterprise system was to encourage competition so the consumer will have a wide variety of products to choose from. In a competitive business, supposedly the entrepreneurs will be forced to keep improving the quality of their products while selling them at a price predetermined by the consumer. The consumer is supposed to be a very important cog in this wheel.

The American consumer, of late, would never know this. As the economy reels drunkenly from one crisis to the next, the poor consumer is buffeted from above and from below. The curious thing is, as long as the economy has been on the skids, one would have expected the news media to have had a field day. Can you see the media being this silent were it the Russian, Chinese or some other centrally planned economy that was in this mess? How many times have you seen the headlines: "Soviet Union Faces Another Severe Grain Shortfall" or "China To Import More Western Grain?"

Instead, the American media, in reporting on this country's economic difficulties, has focused on budget cuts, cuts in social services, cuts in government spending. What is not mentioned, of course, is that, for the past seven years, the U.S. has been experiencing declining standards of living. Along with the other western "democracies," the standard of living has declined considerably. While you may read about cuts in social services, you will never read anything about the failure of the American economic

system. Unemployment lines keep getting longer and more and more companies and individuals are declaring bankruptcy. Isn't that irrefutable evidence that the system is failing?

The sins of the government, however, will be visited upon the governed. As the economy flounders, it is the poor, elderly, minorities and the disadvantaged who feel the full weight of these hard times. The consumer is primed to expect less and less for which he/she will pay more and more. And, business never had it so good: just look at Chrysler. How many little businesses and minority enterprises have gone under in the past five years? How many times did the government raise a dollar to bail them out? Welfare is bad unless it is welfare for the rich! Shouldn't Chrysler's problems have been attributed to poor performance and a failure to provide what the consumer needs? Instead, taxpayers' money is taken to bail out this white elephant.

What does Chrysler do? Chrysler turns around and offers this same taxpayers' money as rebates to woo consumers to come and buy the same, inefficient gas guzzlers the consumers have rejected in the first place! At the same time, there is a concerted effort to limit the number of Japanese and other imports into this country again to force the consumer to buy the same Detroit "cazoonkas" they passed over. If the imports are doing so well, isn't that an indication that maybe these foreign auto manufacturers know something that Detroit does not? That they have been able to read the American consumer better than Detroit?

The overall effect of this will be that the consumer will be denied a product he/she has shown a preference for. Limiting the number of imports also will have the effect of driving up the price of the few imports that will be available. With the American consumer forced to buy those "cazoonkas" from Detroit which will be in the shop every other month, the cost of getting from here to there just goes through the roof.

Since American cars usually are less gas-efficient than the soon-to-be scarce imports, the consumer will be forced to use more gasoline at ever increasing prices. Of course, that is part of the strategy! If consumers use more gas, they will be that much more dependent on the oil companies! Business never had it so good... For the consumer, talk about the rock and the hard place!

Not too long ago, there was a candidate who campaigned on a platform of reducing dependence on foreign oil. The same candidate decried government regulation of private industry and vowed that, should he occupy the Oval Office, he would do something about eliminating most government controls. On the first count, it seems to me the way to cut dependence on foreign oil would have been to switch to smaller, more fuel efficient cars - the same type the consumer has shown a preference for but now the consumer will no longer have access to the most fuel cars - the imports. With this competition eliminated, what will force Detroit to switch to more efficient autos if it has been reluctant to do so when such stiff competition was available? More power (and money!) to the oil companies.

The (il)logic behind removing controls on gas was to encourage the oil companies to look for alternative sources of energy and so cut this country's dependence on foreign oil. A more plentiful gasoline supply would supposedly drive the price of gasoline down. Now, can you see the oil companies searching for more oil so they can cut down their own profits? Can you? There is supposed to be more gasoline available now than there has been for quite some time but, have prices come down? Not on your life. And they still call it "free enterprise"?

The American consumer, buffeted from above and below, and this is only the beginning... And Chrysler still has the nerve to ask you (an honest citizen) for a credit check!

maintain a school board that would assure a free exchange of ideas and continued support for the new direction of the board.

I firmly believe that Rick has the integrity and experience (including his chairmanship of the House Education Committee) to keep the dream of an improving school system alive.

This could very well be the race that determines the course of Portland's schools for the 1980s. I strongly urge you to support Rick.

Sincerely,  
Mike Vebout

will cut their purse strings?

Every so often there comes a time when conscience demands that good citizens must protest. Paralleled with those times when they occur, the timid are seen to shiver and shake - and the political cowards hide from the light.

Earl D. Jelneck



## Survival first issue

By Calvin O. L. Henry

This is the 1980s and some Blacks in Oregon still have questions about whether to hold Black officials accountable on the records.

On March 6, 1981, the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs (OABA) wrote to all the members of the Governor's Commission on Black Affairs and questioned them about their meeting places and minutes while the 1981 Legislature is in session.

Governor Vic Atiyeh established the Black Commission, last October, without funds for operation, but he did budget for its operations beginning July 1, 1981, if the legislature approves its budget. The appropriation bill for the commission is SB 5559, and it is Subcommittee #1 of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. When the subcommittee met on this appropriation bill last month, several subcommittee members did not know that the Black Commission had been established by executive order. No action was taken on the bill, other than it was suggested that the budget be cut by 15%.

When the Black Commission was established last October, a member

of the Governor's office stated that the initial members of the Commission would have the task of working to get the legislature to fund the Commission. However, the Governor's Commission on Black Affairs does not plan to meet in Salem before May or June.

In its letter to the members of the Governor's Black Commission, OABA stated, "It is clear to us that this Commission is destined to fail unless immediate actions are taken to insure its longevity and effectiveness." In this letter, OABA stated, "It is imperative that you hold your meetings in Salem, and work, now, for the passage of the budget for the Commission" during this crucial period. OABA asked the Commission members to reconsider their meeting schedule and to give top priority to their budget passage while the 1981 Legislature is in session.

Several Blacks including a member of the Governor's staff are upset that OABA is holding members of the Governor's Commission on Black Affairs accountable for the Commission's longevity and effective-

ness. One of these individuals feels that such things should be done behind closed doors.

One of the objectives of the Oregon Assembly For Black Affairs is "to encourage public officials to become more accountable, responsive, and productive to the Black community." Can any public official be held to be accountable, productive or responsive to the Black community, if they do not know the truth about the conditions of Blacks, whether good or bad?

Should the Black community hold white public officials accountable if it is not willing to hold Black public officials accountable? Should white public officials be responsive to the Black community if Black public officials are not? What kind of productiveness in the Black community can be expected from white public officials if none come from Black public officials and leaders.

It is the position of the Oregon Assembly For Black Affairs that Black officials as well as white officials should be held accountable publicly and on the records by Blacks in Oregon. All Oregonians will benefit from such officials.



## HELEN V. MASON

Understands  
Portland's Schools

Outstanding Retired Teacher — 18 Years  
Cleveland High School

"... MY ONE AIM — to work to restore to the children of this district a truly excellent school system..."

"... this is an unpaid position which requires the time and effort I am now free to give..."

- ✓ Chaired School Board-Teacher Salary Incentive Committee Experienced Negotiator
- ✓ Assistant Director, Special Education Senior Citizens, Marylhurst
- ✓ Boards of Directors: Morrison Center for Youth and Family Services; Metropolitan Crisis Center; Portland Retired Teachers' Association.
- ✓ Corporate Business Experience
- ✓ Multnomah County Delegate to Oregon's Pre-White House Conference on Aging
- ✓ Married 35 years to Charles S. Mason; daughter, Mrs. Robert Daane; son, Van Mason; two grandchildren

"... I will not use this position as a stepping stone to political office, nor for personal gain. MY BARE-BONES BUDGET REFLECTS MY ATTITUDE TOWARD COST-CUTTING IN THE SCHOOLS..."

Presented by the Committee for Helen V. Mason for Portland's School Board. Gertrude E. Keate, Treasurer, 7100 SW Burlingame, Portland, OR 97219

VOTE  
HELEN  
V.  
MASON  
School Board  
Position #2  
Tuesday, March 31

## Letters to the Editor

### Bauman voice for people

To the Editor:

My candidacy for the Portland School Board in the past has been based on the belief that, working together, we could turn Portland's schools around. We could create a school system where decisions are genuinely made in the best interests of children, where each school in the city would be treated equitably and fairly by the administration and the school board, where each idea could be considered on its own merits. By doing this we could develop a school system which could withstand the external and internal forces which

have caused the educational decay of other large urban school systems.

I believe that the election of Steve Buel and the appointments of Herb Cawthorne and Sarah Newhall have put us on our way to meeting these goals. But the election on March 31st places this new majority in jeopardy. Until recently I believed that the school district was destined to return to its old ways. I gave serious consideration to running for Wally Priestley's seat, but personal matters precluded me from running this time. When Rick Bauman decided to run, and to run a serious campaign, I saw the opportunity to

### Where?

To the Editor:

I would like to add my comments to the observation by Ron Herndon that other organizations had been asked, but refused, to join in a press conference protesting the shocking oppossum incident.

The silence was indeed deafening in many corners of the community. The affair was so outrageous that

even the establishment press emitted editorial screams - but where were the rest?

Is Ivancie the Mayor of us all? Is he even in town? What about the City Council? Has the NAACP gone broke and out of business? Does the Urban League staff keep their heads down in fear that the white business elite at United Way

### Supports Newhall, Cawthorne

To the Editor:

The March 31, school board election is a crucial and important one for Herb Cawthorne and Sarah Newhall. Sarah Newhall's opponent, Charlotte Beaman is a confessed businessman's candidate, and I feel she will not be sensitive or concerned about the community's problems. I have checked Ms. Beaman's reactions at school board meetings, when she came from the Mayor's office, when the Citizen Coalition for School Integration was meeting for over the past three and a half years and there was no word or gesture of concern.

As the liaison person at that time between the Mayor's office and the school board, neither the Mayor nor Ms. Beaman, spoke in behalf of equity for the Black children who were forced to bus all over the City.

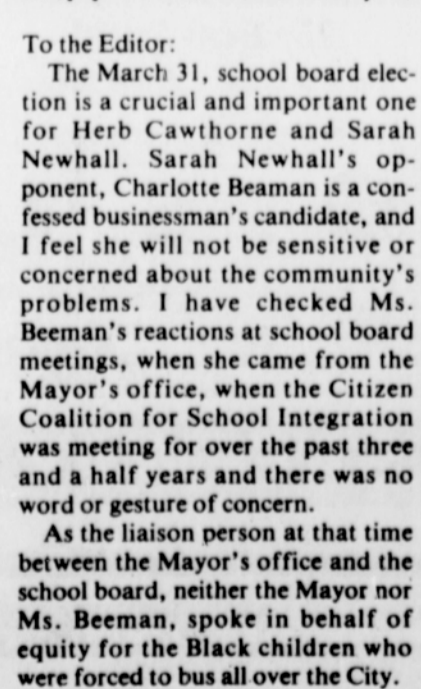
Ms. Beaman attended a lot of coalition meetings but never took part in the controversy, giving no indication of concern. I feel there was no concern then, and I feel there won't be any if she is elected.

I have not agreed with all of Herb or Sarah's votes or decisions, but I do feel they have shown sensitivity, concern and leadership.

I feel that Herb and Sarah are the two best candidates running for their positions and that is why I am supporting them, and asking you to get out and vote on March 31.

Let's keep the children first. There will be a Citizen Who Cares Candidates Fair, Friday night 7:00-9:00 at Boise. Please come. You are invited. The fair is sponsored by Vesia Loving and Ernestine Broadus.

Sincerely,  
Vesia Loving



Margaret  
March 31

Vote for  
MARGARET STRACHAN  
City Council

Paid for by Margaret Strachan for City Council Committee. Fred R. Chown, Treasurer, P.O. Box 8621, Portland, Oregon 97207. (503) 226-3287

"Margaret has not forgotten the lessons she learned as a parent and teacher. Quality schools are essential to a livable community. Students, parents and teachers can rely on Margaret."



Ken Fong, Teacher  
Jefferson High School

## RICK BAUMAN

PORTLAND SCHOOL BOARD - POSITION #2

Working for Quality and Equality in our schools.

With your help, Rick will help build a new tradition of community involvement and responsiveness in Portland's schools.

Paid: Bauman for School Board Committee, C. Frazier, Treas., 5627 SE 54th, Portland, OR 97206 - 775-2306.

March 31