

METROPOLITAN

Bureaucratic hoops cloud NE solar

by Robert Lothian

Jim Cason is a big-hearted guy. He does a lot of favors for people, but like anyone else, he'd rather avoid getting ripped off in the process.

In 1980, under his own initiative, Cason applied for, and won, a \$24,500 U.S. Dept. of Energy grant to install five demonstration solar hot water heating systems for low income and minority residents of North and Northeast Portland.

The systems, now a year old, are working well, he said, and are demonstrating that solar can work for everyone, not just the wealthy. But Cason has some sour feelings about the grant process — all the hoops the DOE made him jump through. Also, he ended up donating hundreds of hours of his time as a "freebie," which is nothing new for Cason because he has helped other community projects, including KBOO and Eliot Energy House, with his plumbing skills. On this one, though, he had expected to make a little bit, yet by the time he was done, the government was asking him to pay taxes on the grant.

Cason learned about solar heating while working as a plumber on one of the State's largest solar installations — Clay Towers in downtown Portland. He eventually formed his own business, CaSUN Solar Mechanical, Inc.

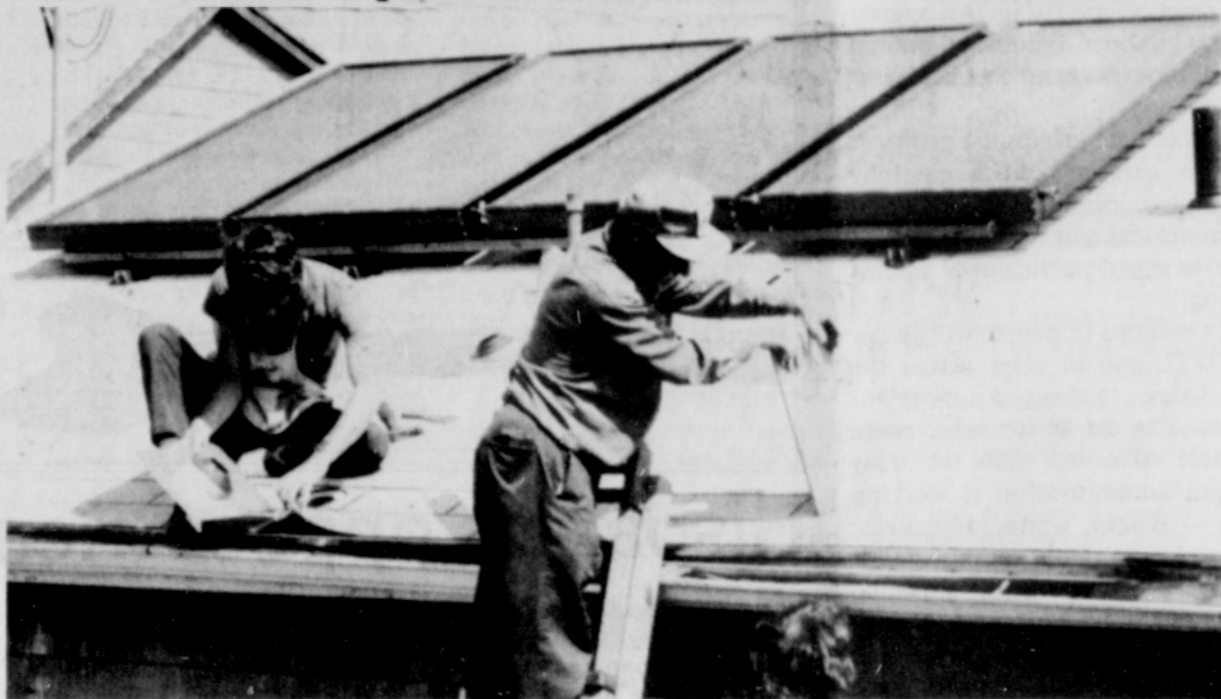
He advocated nuclear power for a long time, but was gradually won over to solar, partially because he saw it as a way for poor people to save on their utility bills and not have to worry about being connected to a utility that could cut them off should they get a little behind in their payments.

Cason felt the one-of-a-kind demonstration project, encouraged by the Carter administration's interest in solar and other alternative forms of energy, could benefit the Black community in particular.

"I felt it was unique to the minority community," he said. "In the minority community, people don't know about solar; they are always the last ones to find out about new things that will benefit them by keeping the big boys' hands out of their pockets."

The systems, worth about \$4,000 each, were installed with the help of homeowners and neighbors. Portland Sun, a non-profit solar consulting firm which later became a victim of Reagan budget cuts, provided technical help.

Captured by roof-top collector panels, the sun's heat is transferred to water circulating through a system of pipes and collected in a basement holding tank. The only cost is that of installation and maintenance: those who heat water by solar can save up to 75% on their gas and electric bills, said Cason. "Solar does work in Portland, and



BYE BYE BILLS — Solar panels are installed on one of five homes of low-income and minority families in North and Northeast Portland. Heat

from the sun will supply 50% of the families' hot water needs. The roof top panels on this home have proved to be a money saving asset.

it does save people money," he said.

Two Black families, two white families and a Native American family received the systems at no obligation other than having at least one open house so that people in their neighborhoods would have a chance to learn about solar, he said. Up to 30 neighbors helped with installation at each house, and learned about solar heating, plumbing, soldering and electric wiring.

"I enjoyed the people," but also, he said, "it took its toll on me." Problems came with the transfer from the Carter to the Reagan administration. Carter would probably have expanded the grants program, he said, but as soon as the Reagan people got in, tax incentives and other funds to encourage solar dried up, the emphasis shifted to nuclear, and the people at DOE dragged their feet and created obstacles, said Cason. "All the different avenues just kind of closed."

"From the start up until the end I had to deal with seven or eight different staff people," each time having to explain his story from the start, said Cason.

By the time installation and consulting fees had been paid, he said, there was nothing left over for him, and on top of that, the government made him pay taxes on the grant. "I paid money to get the grant. So they got one hell of a deal. I really feel like I was taken advantage of."

He approached several unions seeking volunteer help from apprentices, but ran up against people who wanted to protect their craft, he said, and so didn't get any union help.

Also, said Cason, white solar consultants from Portland Sun had difficulty gaining the trust of Black

families. "I wasn't able to get as many Black families involved," he said. "In that respect the system failed because here were white people trying to talk to Black people about solar energy." Some didn't understand solar concepts, and were intimidated by the terminology, he said. Also, according to Cason, some were suspicious, thinking "this is too good to be true." They feared a lien or taxes sometime later.

In spite of the problems, Cason said he feels satisfied that the systems are serving their purpose — demonstrating that solar energy is viable and can save money for low income and minority people.

"Overall, I enjoyed making the

contacts with the different people. It was a nice experience to see a person that didn't really know about solar shut their gas or electricity off and watch the temperature gauge on their water storage tank go up to 160 degrees. . . They just can't believe it so I tell them to put their hands under the faucet, and their eyes light up when they finally realize that it's working. That's what nice, to make a believer out of someone.

"But the government hoops you have to jump through, that wasn't too pleasant."

And as for the future of solar energy? "I think the only thing that's going to keep solar alive is the tax credits," he said. "Without them we're dead in the water."

MHRC support committee disbands

The Committee for the Restoration of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission has disbanded. The citizen committee formed to organize and coordinate support for full restoration of MHRC's budget, staff and programs following City Council cuts of nearly 70 percent, as recommended by Commissioner Margaret Strachan. The coalition had grown to more than thirty diverse, citywide organizations and hundreds of individual citizens as a result of the support committee's activities.

Support committee chair, Fred Milton, states the committee's position: "We disagree with the approach MHRC has pursued in accepting whatever Commissioner Strachan wishes to offer them and on the terms imposed. Since the budget decision, MHRC has seemingly been unwilling to take an assertive position and definitive steps in defense of the integrity of human and civil rights.

"Our goal has been," says Milton, "to protect the provision and inte-

grity of a strong, independent and unified human and civil rights effort locally. We believe that human and civil rights policy making and administration must transcend the dictates of any single politician and must not be politicized, as is the goal of Commissioner Strachan."

"Because MHRC is not advocating in behalf of its budget, staff, programs and continued independence," states Milton, "it is unwittingly forfeiting administration and direction of human and civil rights to a single aspiring politician. That is an extremely dangerous and unsettling situation for these times and for a community as diverse as ours."

"In spite of the disbanding of the support committee, it still believes, as was unanimously agreed upon by the coalition's organizations attending a July 20th meeting," says Milton, "that the only reasonable course of action to restore integrity to human and civil rights is for the issue to come before the City Council for full public discussion."

SCISSORS HAIRDESIGN STUDIO



Permanent Waves Reg. \$45⁰⁰ Now \$25⁰⁰

Curls Reg. \$50⁰⁰ Now \$25⁰⁰

Including Cut and Style

Sculptured Nails

Reg. \$45⁰⁰ Now \$36⁰⁰

Designer — Joyce Benbo

2733 N.E. Broadway • 288-5438

With this coupon only • Expiration date September 10, 1983

Police seek hit-run driver

Portland Police are trying to find the driver of a car who struck an 11-year-old bicyclist in Northeast Portland Saturday afternoon August 13th and failed to return to the scene of the accident after telling the girl she was going for help.

Leannetta Jessie, of 4726 N.E. 33rd Ave., broke her right leg in two places.

The accident occurred about 4:15

p.m. at Northeast Ninth Ave. and Church Street, said Craig Lore, a hit-and-run investigator with the Portland Police Bureau.

He said the driver of the car, described as a woman in her '30s, was westbound on Church when she collided with the girl, who was northbound on Ninth Ave.

Lore asked that witnesses to the accident contact investigators.

Northeast schools

Boise split three ways

The previous Columbia-Whitaker Middle School, which was located in two separate campuses, has been merged into one Whitaker Middle School located at the former Adams High School building, 5700 N.E. 39th Ave.

Whitaker Middle will continue to serve the Woodlawn, Vernon, Faubion, Meek and Rigler primary schools.

The two campuses vacated by Columbia-Whitaker will be occupied for the next two years by the Boise and Eliot early childhood education programs.

Boise School, 620 N.E. Fremont Ave., is to be remodeled into a new early childhood education center serving students now in the Boise and Eliot attendance areas.

For the next two years, children living in the Boise area in Grades 1-5 will attend school at the former Columbia campus, 716 N.E. Marine Drive, Boise's pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students will attend the Eliot program at the former Whitaker campus. Boise's students in Grades 6-8 will join the new Whitaker Middle program during the remodeling period.

Eliot School, 2231 N.E. Flint Ave., is being remodeled for the permanent home of Harriet Tubman Middle School — temporarily located in the former Monroe High campus at 2508 N.E. Everett St. Eliot's pre-kindergarten to fifth-grade students will attend school at the former Whitaker campus, 5135 N.E. Columbia Blvd.

sears

AUGUST			
WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
24	25	26	27

Take Sears Back to School SALE

Most items at reduced prices

Little girls' sizes available at similar savings




Top to bottom Levi's \$4 to \$5 OFF

- A Men's all-cotton heavyweight denim—a blue jeans legend. Reg. \$19.99 14.99
- B Men's Saddleman sport shirt. Solids, stripes and plaids. S-XL. Reg. \$17 11.99
- Men's Action Slacks in solid colors and heathers. Super comfort! Reg. \$25 19.99 pr.
- C Men's western cut plaid shirt—a popular casual look. S-XL. Reg. \$22.99 18.99
- Men's Levi's for men stretch denim jeans of cotton and polyester. Reg. \$30 24.99
- D Big boys' Saddleman coordinats. Woven polyester and cotton shirts, sizes 8-12, reg. \$12.99 8.99
- Shirt sizes 14-20, reg. \$13.99 9.99
- Cotton or cotton and polyester denim jeans, sizes 8-14, reg. \$16.99 12.99
- Jeans, teen sizes, reg. \$19.5 15.99
- E Little boys' woven plaid shirt, cotton and polyester. Sizes 4-7, reg. \$10.99 6.99
- Saddleman cotton and polyester denim jeans, sizes 4-7, reg. \$12.99 8.99
- F Big girls' woven plaid tops, cotton and polyester blend. Sizes 7 to 14, reg. \$18.99 14.99
- Cotton denim straight leg jeans, reg. and slim sizes 7-14, reg. \$20.99 16.99



You may win a dream trip for two to the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games when you help choose the uniform of the U.S. Olympic team.

OLYMPIC'S LEVI'S STYLE

Entry forms and full details Sears retail stores.

Sears

Sears pricing policy. If an item is not described as reduced or a special purchase, it is at its regular price. A special purchase, though not reduced, is an exceptional value.

Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back

Sale prices throughout this section will be effective Wednesday, August 24th, through Saturday, August 27th, unless otherwise specified. This offer good at Sears retail stores. Sears Washington State Contractor's permit number: SEARS-SR-372NT. Nominal charge for home delivery.

Rain Check
It is our intention to have in stock every item advertised. However, if you do not find an item available, please ask for a rain check. Rain checks are available at every cashing area or at Customer Service.