

PORTLAND OBSERVER

Introducing ...



Ruby Reuben

Actress, Cultural Presenter, President-National Council of Negro Women - Tri-County Section, Ad Representative, Portland Observer and Director -Sojourner Truth Theater Cultural Enrichment Program.

This Saturday, the National Council of Negro Women will sponsor a Youth Awareness Workshop at Portland Community College (Cascade Campus) starting at 9:30 a.m.. The community is invited to participate.



Mr. Harvey Lockett

Politician, Businessman, Manager/Owner of Rental Properties and Former Assistant to City Commissioner Charles Jordan and Former Executive Assistant to City Commissioner Dick Bogle.



Mr. & Mrs. Shin, Owners of the New Seven Star Market 505 N.E. Killingsworth

INDEX

- FEATURES Page 1
- EDITORIAL STORIES Page 2
- COMMUNITY FORUM Page 3
- RELIGION Page 4
- ENTERTAINMENT Page 5
- FASHION SAVVY Page 6
- COMMUNITY CALENDAR Page 8
- RELATED STORIES Page 9
- CLASSIFIEDS Pages 10 - 12

An Observer Special Report

The Struggle To Dream: An Urban (League) Dilemma "Rooked," But Not Defeated

During the half century that the Portland Urban League has served the Black community, it has weathered numerous fiscal storms. But the fury of the cruel tempest that now batters this venerable old service organization will demand an enduring fortitude as the League struggles to survive under the constant breaking of another wave of impecuniosity. Last week the Fred Meyer Foundation canceled the remaining \$370,000 of a four year grant which would have found employment for numerous minorities in our City of Roses. This might be the first time in the history of the local league that a corporate donor had withdrawn such a large sum of money from a program it had committed to fund. That amount represents more than 10 percent of the current annual budget. In addition to those league employees who will lose their jobs and others who will continue their employment only with a reduced income, the overall effect is that the employment services once available to the chronically underemployed will certainly be curtailed.

The initial explanation offered for the cancellation was the discovery that the Urban League had diverted \$70,000 of the grant to cover operating expenses. Absolutely no one is accused of having enjoyed a personal gain from the misapplication of the dedicated funds. More recently, however, the success of the employment program, itself, has come under criticism by the trustees of the foundation and especially, its director, Mr. Charles S. Rooks. He faulted the program for not having hired enough persons under its auspices. Of the 870 persons recommended to various employers, only 146 were hired.

One cannot help but applaud the wisdom and commitment of the Fred Meyer Foundation to dedicate such a huge amount of funds to this effort. It is lamentable that at the urging of Mr.

Rooks the funds were suspended. It is quite apparent that decision was excessively punitive and misguided. It is Mr. Rooks who has focused on the wrong target.

Through this program the Urban League generated thousands of applicants and after screening those who were employable, recommended almost one thousand persons to a prospective employer. It is the would be employer who through lack of commitment or some other in-cumbrance, failed to honor the recommendations of the league.

One also suspects that the original program which the Fred Meyer Foundation funded was itself defective because it predicated its success on a sophisticated computer technology which only the writer of the software could administer. This is a type of blackmail computer programmers have perpetrated on their employees for years. Mr. Rooks and the other "trustees" should have been suspicious of such a ploy from the very outset.

Finally, with the re-organization of the Urban League's top management and the departure of key personnel who had developed the grant application, it is not surprising to observe that the program did not move forward with all due speed. It is unfortunate the foundation assumed such a callous and obdurate position in this matter. It is regrettable that the Fred Meyer Foundation did not grant the new administration a period of grace to put its house in order.

It is applaudable that these funds are still available to any group that can make the plan work. There is no reason that the Urban League should not resubmit a workable plan developed by its present staff. The League does have a commendable track record here in the City of Roses. It is to be hoped that the men of good will who run its industries will supply the funds in order to ameliorate the league's present embarrassment of funds.

The Economic Homefront: Part II

by Marcus White

Sitting in a small restaurant is a man, peering out a painted window watching cars pass and children play, awaits his meal which is soon to come.

Throughout the room of the restaurant a sweet, and familiar, chicken aroma. From the backroom, better known as the kitchen, a man promptly, yet carefully, watches the food as it cooks.

Realizing the need of his presence, the cook walks to the front room. The cook, Levert Franklin, who has been an entrepreneur for twenty years, tells how he started out.

"In starting my business I began by selling candy and potato chips," said Franklin with a reminiscent look, "I simply put my money back into the business."

Levert Franklin is just one of many small minority business owners in Oregon who start out through loans or other means of financial support.

"For the most part, minority businesses have had problems in the past acquiring loans from major banks," Franklin states, "this is not just a problem here in Oregon, but nationwide as well."

Despite the fact that banks in Oregon may discriminate against minority owned businesses, this impediment does not stop the economic process for owners.

Much of Franklin's success attributes to the help of the Small Business Administration. "They (SBA) came out and asked me if I wanted a loan for my business," admitted Franklin, "I really didn't have any problems."

Phillip Jackson, founder of J.P. Advertising says that many minority owned businesses often go through "red tape" in order to acquire loans.

Having owned a business for three years, Jackson says banks evaluate the history and business plans of people requesting loans. Jackson admits that the problem arises when you don't have a track record for banks to go by.

Seeking entrepreneurs for funding is another means by which black owned businesses, have succeeded. "I had a friend who helped me out by giving me a small loan," Jackson commented.

Currently, Jackson, as well as several other minority businessmen, is involved in the 'Incubator Program.' This program facilitates the development of small busi-

Continued to Page 9

The Future Of African-Americans

(Excerpts from the Congressional Task Force Summary Report "The Future of African-Americans to the Year 2000")

PIVOTAL CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE

In looking to the future, there are four concerns demanding special attention: the black social class structure, the future of African-Americans who are now children, the role of African-Americans in the American technological future, and the continuing problem of racism.

The Black Social Class Structure

Rich, middle-class, and poor, white collar and blue collar, employed and unemployed, professional, technical, and service ... the American population is structured in identifiable layers. And so is the community of African-Americans. The social class structure of this community is complex, but there is a two-class pattern that seems to be emerging, featuring a middle-class and what is now commonly called an "underclass." It is taken for granted that the middle-class is comprised of persons of all racial backgrounds. However, it is often assumed that the underclass is made up of only African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans. In fact, a great many European-Americans are in this layer, though larger fractions of the black and hispanic communities are found there.

The major public concern is with the underclass. Emerging as a clearly identifiable part of the American economy, this social element is experiencing a disproportionate share of the problems in American society. Sociologists Douglas Glasgow and William Wilson tell us that the hallmarks of social life of the underclass in urban settings are high unemployment, large numbers of out-of-wedlock births, high proportions of female-headed households, welfare dependency, and violent crimes.³¹ Policy analysts John Palmer and Isabel Sawhill indicate that the plight of these communities has intensified as a result of recent cuts in federal spending for social programs.³²

Although substantially better off than the black underclass, the black middle class is equally vulnerable. Recent evidence has suggested persistent inequities between the black and white elements of the American middle

class. But even more important, it has been suggested that the black middle class may have reached its zenith. For one thing, Richard Hylton points out that the income of black middle class families relative to that of white middle class families varies in absolute terms and by the number of wage earners in the family.³³ And Professor Bart Landry writes that a significantly larger percentage of black middle-class families lacks the income to maintain a middle-class standard of living,³⁴ and though families in both groups generally rely on the wives' salaries to sustain a middle-class living standard, this reliance is far greater for black families than for white ones. Further, middle-class African-Americans typically have lower earnings and opportunities for advancement

and the conclusion offered is that they can not be helped at all, so these policies should be abandoned in the interest of economy in the face of a mammoth national debt. The middle class, in contrast, is said to have become so successful that it no longer needs or deserves the help of government and industry to make it, and it is said that policies supporting them should also be abandoned in fairness to competing European-Americans. The logical bottom line is that all policies directly or indirectly supporting African-Americans in their quest for a better life should be curtailed. For the underclass, this would mean a worsening of conditions and an even earlier death for a great many people. For the middle class, which is plainly marginal, it means further advance-

FACTS AND FIGURES

| Region | Total | % of Total |
|---------------|-------|------------|
| Northeast | 708 | 10.6 |
| North Central | 1,275 | 19.2 |
| South | 4,287 | 64.5 |
| West | 376 | 5.7 |
| Total* | 6,646 | 100 |

Source: Joint Center for Political Studies

* The 35 BECs in the Virgin Islands are not included because that territory is not included in the divisions of the United States used by the U.S. Census.

| Name | Term Expires | City | Percentage Of Black |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Eugene Sawyer Jr. | 4/89 | Chicago | 40.0 |
| Thomas Bradley | 7/89 | Los Angeles | 17.0 |
| W. Wilson Goode | 12/91 | Philadelphia | 40.2 |
| Coleman Young | 12/89 | Detroit | 63.1 |
| Kurt Schmoke | 12/91 | Baltimore | 54.8 |
| Marion Barry | 12/90 | Washington | 66.6 |
| Sidney Barthelmy | 3/90 | New Orleans | 55.3 |

Source: Joint Center for Political Studies

ment and stabilization for only a few families, continued marginality for some, and a slide back into poverty for many.

And from a political standpoint it means the erosion of the black element of the political base of black politicians. Under conditions of budgetary stringency, this dynamic will, if not countered, accelerate the decline of the hard-earned position of African-Americans in American politics. As a result, African-Americans would fall even farther behind European-Americans.

The Future of Black Children
It is plain that the future of all America is the future of its children. Likewise, the future of black children is the future of African-Americans. And while the future of all American children is not what it should be, without substantial initiatives in public and private policies, the future of black children is especially bleak. Look first at the condition

Continued to Page 9

NEWSMAKER OF THE WEEK

Rick Jones: One Of Storefront's Busiest Artists

Ever since last year's acclaimed production of *Woza Albert!* actor-director Rick Jones has been covering a whole lot of ground. That particular production went on tour after closing at the Winningstad, taking Rick and co-star Anthony Armstrong to high schools, churches, colleges and other theatres around Portland and in Corvallis, Hood River, Condon, and even to the Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem.

Following *Woza Albert!* last spring Rick was invited to repeat his role as Levee in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* at the Pegasus Theatre in Chicago, which he did for the month of May. Then Seattle's Pioneer Square Theatre drafted him for its production of the same play, but this time he took over the role of Toledo in a production that also featured the lighting of Storefront's Jeff Forbes. Seattle critic Roger Downey wrote that as "Toledo the piano man, Rick Jones, a welcome visitor from Portland, turns a voice into a living human being."



Rick Jones as Levee in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*

Rick's current projects are his appearance in the Burt Reynolds film *Breaking In*, and rehearsing the role of Othello for the Actors Cooperative, which he is co-producing at the IFCC Theatre beginning September 16.

As soon as *Othello* opens, Rick starts rehearsals as Director of the Storefront production of *Zooman and the Sign*, a play he appeared in back in 1982 in Philadelphia. Cast members for the show include Brian Dance as Zooman, with Anthony P. Armstrong, Wanda Walden, Al Jamison, Brenda Phillips, Nyawusi Askari, Rita Bankhead LeDuff, Eugene Hughes and Michael Winbush. Once *Zooman* and *the Sign* opens on November 2, Rick Jones may be able to take a few deep breaths before his next project.