

# NAFTA: A Bad Gamble For African Americans

BY WILLIAM LUCY

African Americans have an important stake in a new trade agreement now pending in the Congress. That trade agreement is the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA as it is better known.

Very little has been written in the black press about NAFTA, but the economic implications of this trade agreement for African Americans are enormous.

Currently, there is a big debate on the benefits that U.S. industry could yield from NAFTA, but little is said of the grave and severe impact that will be suffered by African Americans if this pact is approved.

Relative to their white counterparts, black workers are more likely to be employed in industries which will experience large job losses to Mexico, including automobiles and trucks, apparel, household glassware, ceramics, major household appliances, and electronics. History has proven that U.S. workers who are thrown out of work because of import competition do not climb up the job ladder. Instead, they fall back to lower wages, or worse, end up in unemployment lines.

\* Jobs lost to imports from Mexico are high-wage manufacturing jobs. In 1991, average hourly wages in those industries running a trade deficit with Mexico ranged from \$8.30 to \$16.30,

with wages in six of the nine affected industries averaging more than \$12 per hour.

Threats to move production to Mexico will depress manufacturing wages as well as undercut wages in other sectors of the economy. One economist concluded that NAFTA will inflict an average annual wage loss of \$1,000 per worker for the lower 70 percent of the U.S. labor force.

\* To be sure, increased unemployment and wage depression will have powerful ripple effects throughout every African American community. Less disposable income will result in shrinking retail sales for neighborhood businesses. The local tax base will erode, drying up funding for critical government programs and services. Public sector workers, who are disproportionately female and minority, will be laid off.

\* In addition to the obvious economic backlash of NAFTA, there are also social costs—chiefly, drug trafficking—to be considered. NAFTA is likely to put more crack cocaine on the streets of our inner cities.

A recent U.S. intelligence report warned that drug traffickers have started buying Mexican manufacturing, trucking, and warehouse businesses as fronts for drug shipments. There is already a massive drug enforcement problem on the border,

NAFTA will make it worse.

NAFTA proponents claim that firms are not moving to Mexico for low rates, but rather to reach the Mexican consumer market. That claim is ridiculous. The Mexican market is tiny, less than five percent of the U.S. market. By almost any criterion, there are more attractive consumer markets right here in the U.S., including African American communities. Consider this, in 1990, the aggregate purchasing power of the Afro-American community was \$265 billion, roughly equal to Mexico's Gross Domestic Product—all private and public sector spending—of \$270 billion.

Instead of policies to make Mexico more attractive to investors, the U.S. government should encourage investment in our own African American Market. If the American business community were making investment in jobs, plants and equipment in our inner cities and poor rural communities, as it is doing in Mexico, black unemployment should plummet from its current 14 percent.

Let's be clear: the real motivation behind NAFTA is the lure of cheap labor for U.S. investors. NAFTA is a massive gamble with America's economic future. For African Americans, the odds are overwhelmingly stacked against us.

## Whitney Young Center Open For Free Summer Tutoring

A free summer tutorial program for students in grades six and up is being offered by the Urban League of Portland's Whitney M. Young, Jr. Education and Cultural Center. The summer session will run from June 28 to July 29, Mondays to Thursdays between 9am and 3pm. Focus areas are math, reading, writing and SAT test preparation.

Enrollment is on a first-come basis. For information, contact Herman Lessard or Gloria Phillips at the Urban League, 280-2600.

## PDX Passengers Climb 21 Percent In May

The number of passengers using Portland International Airport (PDX) continues to increase at a phenomenal rate in 1993, with a 21 percent growth in May.

A total of 664,488 passengers flew through PDX in May 1993, far surpassing the previous May record of 551,146 passengers set in 1992.

May's impressive performance was the 13th consecutive month that PDX has bettered the monthly record for passengers. For the first five months of 1993, PDX passenger count is 20 percent above 1992's record year.

"Attractive fares, new domestic and international destinations like Taipei and New York, and new carriers all contributed to our growth," said Aviation director John Brockley.

Cargo through PDX is also achieving double-digit growth. May's 14,487 tons was 14 percent above

May 1992's 12,729 tons and pushed tonnage for 1993 to 69,454, a 12 percent rise over 1992. "Fresh cherries transiting PDX for Japan and Taiwan helped boost our cargo numbers in May," said Brockley.

PDX has now experienced 23 consecutive record months for cargo. Operations (takeoffs and landings) at the Port of Portland's general aviation airports are heading in opposite directions. Troutdale Airport's operations are up 10 percent for 1993 after 11 percent growth in May. May's 10,689 operations at Troutdale are the most for May there since 1979.

Operations at Hillsboro Airport, however, continue to decline. In May, there were 18,726 operations at Hillsboro, a 10 percent drop from May 1992 and the lowest May total since 1988. For 1993, Hillsboro operations are down 15 percent.

## Shibley Moves Safe Transportation Bills Portland Lawmaker Takes Action On Truck Notice, Bike Paths

Rep. Gail Shibley, D-Portland, saw two of her priority bills make progress through the Legislature on Wednesday. One piece of legislation, House Bill 2900, is aimed at noisy truck brakes called "jake brakes." The other bill, Senate Bill 262, requires private developers to provide bike paths and foot paths along new roads. HB 2900 was approved by the Senate after passing the House earlier in the week and now goes to the Governor for her signature. SB 262 passed the Senate and is on its way to the House.

"These two bills will make Oregon a safer, better place for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists," said Rep. Shibley. "Transportation is one of my top issues and I feel HB 2900 and SB 262 form substantive, positive legislation that will help people throughout the Portland metro area and throughout the state."

Oregonians who live or work near busy highways will be the most immediate beneficiaries of HB 2900. The so-called "anti-jake brake" bill prohibits unmuffled engine braking state wide and requires the state to post

warning signs for truck drivers. This bill was stuck in the legislative process at one time, but Rep. Shibley forged an alliance with rural lawmaker Rep. Bill Markham, R-Riddell, and brought together all interested parties: truckers, Teamsters, State Department of Transportation, and Public Utilities Commission. The Portland lawmaker helped shape a consensus and her jake brake regulations were amended into a bill sponsored by Rep. Markham.

Rep. Shibley began working on SB 262 during the 1991 legislative session to create more bike paths along Oregon roadways. The bill died in committee that year. Shibley came back to the legislature this year and gave the legislation a second effort. Working with her colleagues in the Senate, she advanced the bill through that chamber and is optimistic the House will also support it. The legislation requires developers to provide bike paths and foot paths along new roads, when building new roads in residential or commercial developments.

## Common Sense Legal Services

"An affordable alternative to a lawyer."

For a growing number of consumers, the cost of using an attorney to handle every legal matter has outgrown their budget. Now, in Portland, there is a affordable alternative to seeing a lawyer: COMMON SENSE LEGAL SERVICES offers assistance to the general public in specific areas of the law: filing a divorce, creating a will or living trust, incorporating a business, forming a partnership, filing for bankruptcy, or help in preparing other legal documents.

The staff at COMMON SENSE understands that many individuals and families are seeking no legal advice, but effective and affordable help with simple yet necessary legal forms and documents. "Our typical client knows exactly what she wants as an end product," according to COMMON SENSE partner Casey

Nortness, "But we all need help occasionally, especially in a complex legalistic society, with choosing the right words to use or proper form to file. COMMON SENSE offers consumers a choice of services at an affordable cost, and with a faster turnaround."

The staff at COMMON SENSE is not a group of lawyers, but trained professionals with over 60 years of combined legal experience. Partner Barbara Davis stressed the difference between this service and a law firm: "We aren't competing with law firms, we don't provide the same service. If a client's need exceeds our capabilities, we refer them to an attorney; but in most cases, we can assist clients because they know what they want—and it saves them substantial time and money."

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## Sisterhood Luncheon

Date: July 1, 1993

To: African-American Women  
From: Avel Gordly, Amina Anderson

Our next Sisterhood Luncheon, scheduled for July 9th at 11:30am, will be hosted by Rip City Diner, located at 3100 NE Sandy Blvd.

The Sisterhood Luncheon's are simply a time for sisters to get together, share information, eat and enjoy in the company of other sisters.

We look forward to seeing you there, if you have any questions and/or comments please call Jo Ann Allen @ 282-7973.

P.S. Feel free to bring a friend and if you know of anyone who would like to be added to the mailing list please let myself or Artangia know at the above number.

## Parking Parol Adds Swing Shift

Portland's Parking patrol will provide enforcement until midnight Tuesday through Saturday throughout the city limits. Previously, police officers performed parking enforcement duties after 6pm. "We continued to receive complaints from citizens about blocked driveways, fire hydrants and crosswalks," said Anne Larkin, Parking Patrol Manager. "Adding the dedicated swing shift should allow us to provide better parking enforcement and reduce the burden on the Police Bureau."

Two deputies will be enforcing parking violations including blocked driveways, fire hydrants and crosswalks, traffic hazards as in blocking traffic lanes and no parking zones. As meters are not required after 6pm, meters will not be enforced after 6pm on neither will time zones unless they have an extended time written on them such as 10 minute parking all hours.

Citizens needing to report a parking problem between the hours of 6pm and 12:00 midnight can continue to call the City of Portland Police non-emergency number and the request will be relayed to the patrolling deputies.

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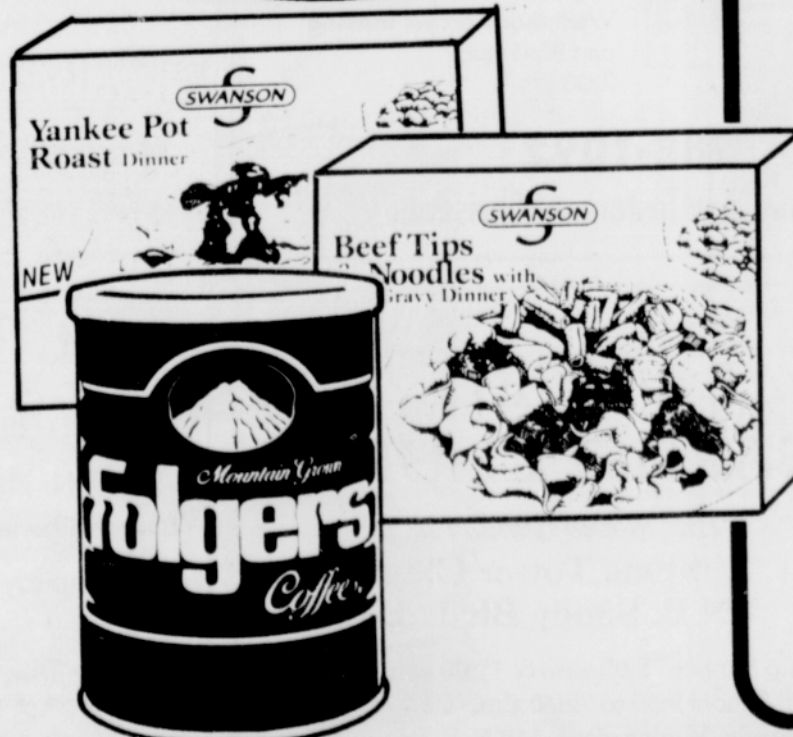
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