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Real CHANGE
Seattle's Homeless Newspaper
Dollar Donation
OCTOBER, 1995

Wes Browning
Life and Art Find Balance at Street Life

Questioning Priorities
Has Helping Gone Awry?

Breakdown: Lost
Poetry by Marion Sue Fischer

Shelter Squeeze
The Winter Crunch is On

News, Poetry, Stuff that Matters

Real Change

is a non-profit organization and is a project of The Pike Market Senior Center/Downtown Food Bank.

Real Change is published the 1st of each month, and is sold by the poor and homeless of Seattle. Submissions are encouraged and should be mailed to "*Real Change*," 2129 Second Ave, Seattle, WA 98121. Tel. (206) 441-3247. Fax (206) 728-9108. Email rchange@speakeasy.org Articles should be received by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Subscriptions for one year (12 issues) are available for $35, and help to support *Real Change*.

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Real Change vendors receive 75¢ of the $1.00 paid for this paper.

MISSION STATEMENT

Organize, educate, and build alliances to find community-based solutions to homelessness and poverty.

Goals

1.) provide a foundation for grassroots organizing.

2.) publish the views of marginalized communities.

3.) create direct economic opportunity.

4.) build bridges with a broad range of allies in the struggle against poverty.

Editorial Policy

Articles appearing in *Real Change* reflect the opinion and perspective of the author. We encourage the submission of journalism, opinion, fiction, poetry and artwork, and hope to create a forum where the many perspectives that exist regarding poverty and homelessness can find expression. The editorial committee reserves the right to edit any material for length and style. Articles considered libelous or which encourage violence, sexism, homophobia, or racism will not be considered for publication.

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Cover art by Wes Browning

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1.) Vendors must be sober while they represent Real Change to the public. Drug or alcohol use while selling the paper is not allowed.

2.) Vendors must wear their Real Change Badge in a clearly visible manner while they sell the paper.

3.) Abusive language or threatening behavior of any form is not acceptable. You represent Real Change, and reflect upon all of us while you sell the paper.

4.) The real Change Badge, and the papers you buy, cannot be loaned or given to another vendor.

5.) Do not fight other vendors or panhandlers over turf. Either agree to share space, or find somewhere else to go.

Any of these actions will result in an immediate two week suspension as a vendor. Repeated suspensions will result in permanent termination of all rights to sell Real Change or be involved as a member.

Suspensions and terminations by staff may be appealed to the distribution committee, but are in effect until overturned.

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The only legitimate use of the Real Change Badge is to sell the Real Change newspaper. Vendors may not solicit funds or sell free papers, such as The Stranger or the Employment Paper, using this Badge. If you see this occur, please call 441-3247 with the badge number.

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Housing is the Answer

Yes on November Ballot Question Key to Future

This November 7th Seattle voters will have the opportu nity to renew a successful housing program that has provided the necessary foundation for thousands of our Seattle neighbors.

Linda Weedman

In 1981 and 1986 voters went to the polls and showed their support for providing low-income housing throughout the city. The projects that resulted from those two measures were successful in buiulding 20 to 30 percent more units than originally planned. The 1981 bond produced 1300 units, 300 more than anticipated and the 1986 levy is on track to produce a total of 1200 units.

Although we have made great progress in the last fourteen years, we can't stop now. As private market rents continue to grow, wages are not keeping pace. The residents that will be occupying these homes are truly our neighbors, sales clerks, secretaries, child care workers, the elderly people with disabilities . These are the people who will directly benefit from this levy.

We can't rely on the private market to provide low-income housing. The private market has not been able to meet the need for low-income housing in our community. For a significant segment of our community, market costs continue to outstrip the ability to pay .

The costs of construction are high and property costs are rising greater than most peoples incomes. The private market cannot and should not be expected to shoulder the cost of providing below market rate housing. This is a civic responsibility. If you believe in civic responsibility, then one of the most basic and essential needs to be addressed is helping people to have a place to call home.

One of the major aspects of the levy is that it will create or preserve 1,000 affordable rental units for homeless people, working families, senior citizens, and people living with disabilities.

Two other programs included in this levy address stabilization of neighborhoods. The first is low-interest loans to low-income homeowners, primarily seniors, to help address repairs and maintenance. This revolving loan fund will serve 440 over the next forty years.

Secondly, the home buyer assistance program will enable more than 560 low-income families to become homeowners in distressed neighborhoods. This revolving loan fund provides down payment assistance to help renters become owners and will also help to revitalize neighborhoods.

Community organizations such as the Capital Hill Housing Improvement Program, Archdiocesan Housing Authority, Plymouth Housing Group, and the International District Improvement Association can use levy funds to create or rehabilitate housing for many families and individuals.

There are many other fine organizations and individuals committed to affordable housing. These are the people who must now step forward and support the passage of Proposistion #1 and vote for it on November7.

"The private market has not been able to meet the need for low-income housing in our community. For a significant segment of our community, market costs continue to outstrip the ability to pay."

I look at all we've done in the last fourteen years with the money made available through voter approved measures and hope that those who support low-income housing know that their contributions have made a difference. I can hope Seattle can renew that committment by supporting a successful, well-managed program.

Voting YES! on Proposition #1 will enable Seattle to continue its committment to helping low-income friends and neighbors live in our beautiful city. We need to keep working so that Seattle can continue to be a place people can proudly call home.

I encourage everyone to look at the need in our city, examine the success of the last fourteen years, and join the Yes for Homes Campaign. We need your efforts, this community campaign will rely volenteers for office staff, speakers, fundraisers, so bring a friend and join us.

Linda Weedman is Associate Director of the YWCA and Co-Chair of the Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless.

Call 448-9757 to volunteer and send your donations to Yes for Homes, Foundatin for Success,

Mail address: 2608 2nd Avenue, Box 190, Seattle 98121-1212

Office: 2328 6th Avenue (6th & Battery)- FAX 448-9367.

MAILBAG

2129 2nd Ave., 98121

Dear *Real Change,*

I purchased the September issue of your paper for the first time for the $1 donation and found the content very interesting. As a *hard* working, college graduated (business), hippie (hair well past neck) I disagreed profusely with the stand taken against the Commons. I fully intent *(sic)*, as a *taxpaying* citizen, to vote absolutely yes on a project that would give us a beautiful downtown park. But the theme of low-income housing kept popping up in the rebuttal of the Commons. I ask, why are people entitled to such housing when I, as a *hard working* citizen shoulder the burden of others complacency and/or addiction.

News on the Net discussed the plight of American children versus other western countries. However, no mention was ever made about our ridiculously high rate of teenage childbirth. People are entitled to have all the children they please but I'll be goddamned if I'm going to pay for them. Back to the word "entitle." Everyone (or at least many) perceive themselves as entitled to low income housing, or "quality childcare" or anything else doled out. Everyone looking for an entitlement. I've lived in Germany for two years and I've paid their outrageous taxes. No mention was made in News on the Net to the incredible taxes these other countries pay. Of course taxes are not of the least bit of concern to your audience because many of them don't pay taxes.

People crying out for more, more, more, while doing relatively little are pushing me into the arms of the Republicans. People need to take responsibility for their own actions and results of these actions. It's a free goddamn country and its my right to say to those asking for handouts, "fuck no."

Have you considered what is called poverty level here. Most countries wouldn't classify it as such. The criteria is constantly rising. Poverty is not destitute *(sic)*.

You have an interesting paper with an extreme left (handout) view. Keep up the good work. Needless to say I won't be buying another issue.

Rodney Dodge
Seattle

Dear *Real Change,*

Real Change is the first paper I've read cover to cover in about three years. I'm not "homeless" but I could be. Easily.

A couple of rent payments behind, ex-husband deciding that the three-hundred bucks he pays for the children is too damned much, a long term stomach-ache so I can't have five minimum wage days in a row. Who knows? (And so, dear reader, do you, and it scares the hell out of you.)

But the reason I'm writing is that I've been thinking a lot about language lately. I want to let you know that the word "homelessness," like "displaced homemaker" or "people of color" or the "physically challenged" are words we should absolutely refuse to apply to ourselves. After all, did you think up the word "homeless" to describe your situation? If you didn't, who did? Or any other of the flat, colorless, invisible, pathetic, cringing and passive nouns and adjectives they define us by?

I for one, am a "displaced homemaker," and this is what I think about that: Displaced homemaker huh? Makes me think of dinner plates. Empty. Flat. Sterile. Where's the anger there? The agony? As silent and passive as the woman herself. dis. placed. home. maker. How about savage slut, crazy mom, scared female? How about loving adoring mother for ever and ever?

Yes, that's what they call me these days. Never mind that I was once a teacher, lawyer, sexy broad, mother; now I am middle-aged and dis placed. Never mind that once I gave my nights and days to diapers and dressings, baby carriages and baby backpacks, bottles, soccer, PTA, toy stores and birthday parties and cupcakes. Invisible now. Unnecessary. Displaced.

How about you homeless types?

Cont. on page 19

Vendor of the Month

Edward McClain moved here from Minneapolis last March after hearing the economy was good and jobs were to be had. Within two months, his savings of $1,600 were gone and he still didn't have a job. In April, he began to work for *Real Change*

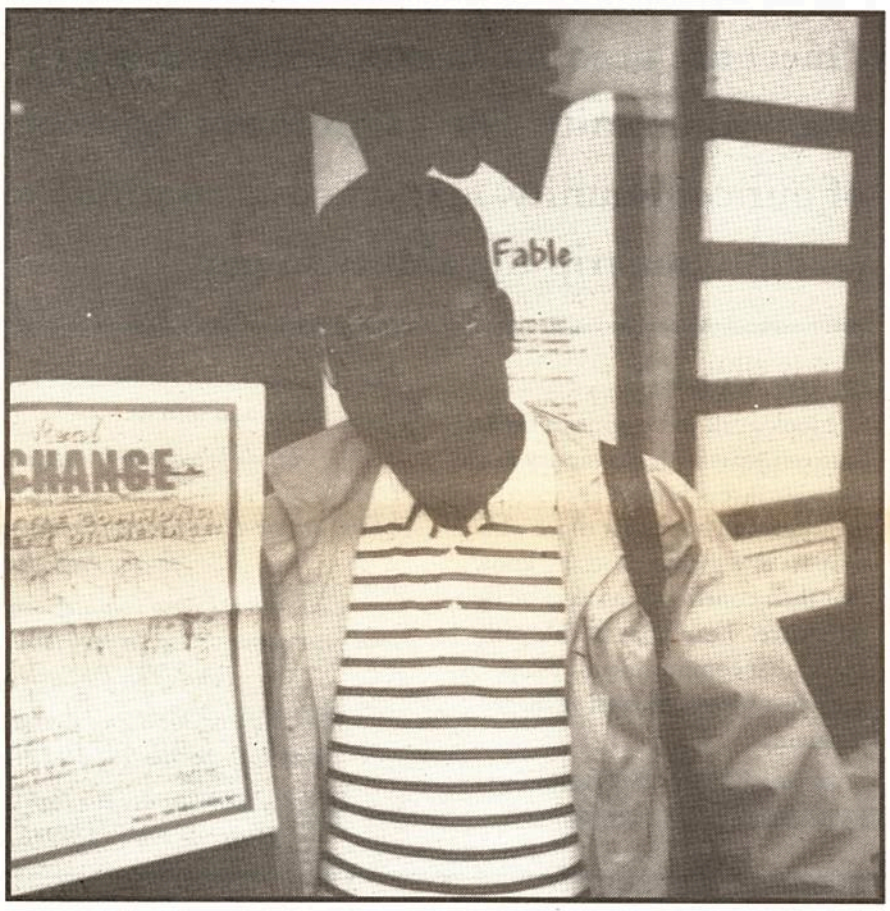
The 52-year-old cook and baker has 28 years' experience in his field, as well a degrees in both political science and sociology from Northern Illinois University.

"When I moved here, I had no idea the situation was what it is," said McClain. "All I've found so far is just hard times. The job didn't happen."

"Working for the paper has put money in my pocket. I might have to live in the shelter, but at least I don't have to eat their food. It gives me some independence. Without the paper I'd be dead broke."

"Selling the paper, I get a chance to meet people. You'd be surprised the things I see out there. I see people who are truly in need. I don't have time to feel sorry for myself, because there's people out there far worse off than I."

McClain plans to continue selling *Real Change* until he is able to find other work. Employers interested in hiring a hard working and experienced cook and baker may reach him through this paper.



The Problem

Real Change Needs Your Grassroots Support

This month, we at *Real Change* have decided to toss all pretense of subtlety to the wind and ask for what we need straight out: send money, please.

There has never been any doubt that this paper enjoys broad public support. We do get your letters and phone calls, but mostly, we hear what you tell our vendors, and, barring the occasional exception owing to poor taste or questionable politics, feedback has been extremely positive.

Yet, inexplicably, donations and subscriptions have sharply fallen off of late, and our margin of success is a bit too narrow for this to go on for long. Perhaps people think we're *so* successful now we no longer need financial support.

This is definitely not this case.

When the money isn't there, it really isn't a crisis. All goes along as usual, except that staff doesn't get paid. And when staff doesn't get paid, we begin to lay awake nights wondering whether this thing can really work after all, even though we know it will.

And then we come into work, and write columns such as this, trusting in what we know to be the essential goodness of humanity.

Publishing is expensive. There's a paper shortage going on, and we have seen four price increases over the past year. Over half our budget goes to paying the printer around $2,500 a month. We're a shoestring operation with one and a half staff people and a number of volunteers, stretching a buck as far as it will go.

Recently, the average very occasional check that happens into our mailbox has been for around $20, with a note apologizing that it can't be more. We think that's great. It's an indicator that we resonate most strongly with those who have the least. It says we're doing something right.

However, we need to hear from more of you. And we also need to hear from those of you who can offer greater levels of support. *Real Change* depends heavily upon grassroots support for its very survival. Your donations and subscriptions make this project possible.

Look at it this way. Many, many people who are offended by growing homelessness and poverty do their share by contributing to shelters, soup kitchens, and other sorts of emergency services. This is a good thing, and needs to happen.

This project, however, needs support as well. We offer people opportunity to do something for themselves. We help break down the damaging stereotypes that keep poor people oppressed. We give people the information they need to act with understanding. We build bridges between people so they can better work together.

Is that something you can get behind?

We need to raise $10,000 from grassroots supporters such as yourself by January 1st. That's a lot of money, but if everyone does what they can, it's not an unreasonable goal.

Please do your part to help this worthy project survive and grow. Send in a check for any amount you can afford, and do it today. Thank you for being there.

—Timothy Harris, Director

Real Change Matters. Here's What I Can Do.

Name _____

Address/Zip _____

Phone _____

☐ Patron	$100 or more	☐ Call me about volunteering my time and energy.
☐ Friend	$50 or more	
☐ Member	$35	
☐ Supporter	Any amount	

Don't miss the

Real **CHANGE**

Junk-a-thon

Yes, that's right. The rummage sale you've been waiting for, right here, at our spacious storefront, deep in the heart of Belltown.

Friday and Saturday, Oct. 6-7, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. 2129 2nd Ave.

Cool tunes. Free coffee & sugar. Stuff to buy.

Why Should I?

The Housing Levy, and One Person's Conversion

BY DAVID M. SALTER

Recently, an editor of this publication requested that I submit an article regarding the upcoming housing levy on November 7. While confessing my ignorance of the issue at the time, I would like to share the process of my own "political conversion" with our readers.

As a native of Seattle, I have seen numerous levies come and go; Seemingly passing or failing without regard to my personal vote. A registered voter for over twenty years in the area, I must admit some disillusionment at the constant picking at my income over that time, and the unrelenting "need" for more and more money to be spent for my own benefit, or for the good of the community.

We are asked to support and fund project upon project and there never seems to be an end. The *projects* end all right, but when was the last time anyone's taxes went down?

Disillusionment has resulted in many of us voting almost exclusively against levies, regardless of their perceived benefit. We recently said "no" to the Commons, and "no" to the baseball stadium; Why should the upcoming housing levy be any different?

What will the community, or the individual voters, taxpayers, and residents get for their buck? How much is it going to cost? And does the cost relate to the benefit, even in the least? Well, as a leading audio manufacturer challenges, "You be the judge."

This is not the first housing levy to come before Seattle residents. Similar measures were passed in 1981 and 1986. It is projected that the 1986 levy will produce over 1,220 housing units. Roughly 200 more units, or 20% more, than the levy was designed to provide.

The 1981 levy also surprised many, coming in with nearly 30% more production of Senior Housing than originally predicted. At a time when we are often revisited with such political profundities as "Gee whiz, this is going to cost a lot more than we thought," it's refreshing in a proposal to see a history of realistic planning and responsible management, for comparison.

Further, despite the inflationary nature of government projects in general, the New Seattle Housing levy proposes to operate at the same cost to taxpayers as the 1986 levy, that is, about $29 a year for a $150,000 home owner.

What are we going to get for our buck? Over a thousand new low-income housing rentals for working families with children, seniors, people with disabilities, and victims of domestic violence and their children. *"Now how much would you pay? Don't answer yet."*

Unlike previous levies, the 1995 proposal seeks also to provide seniors with $9,000,000 in home repair and maintenance funding. *"But wait, there's more."* You also get a $2,000,000 revolving fund to assist low income, first time home buyers, with down payments; All for the same low, low price of $29.00 per year.

"As a native of Seattle, I have seen numerous levies come and go… A registered voter for over twenty years in the area, I must admit some disillusionment at the constant picking at my income over that time, and the unrelenting 'need' for more and more money…"

"The bottom line," you ask, "for all this?" The levy seeks to generate 59.2 million dollars to provide low-income rental units over the next 40 years to approximately 7,700 households; A mere fraction of the 11,000 households on Seattle Housing Authority's (SHA) waiting lists.

$59.2 million to provide an opportunity for low-income families to purchase a home they might other wise have only dreamed of; In many cases, taking them off SHA waiting lists, out of rentals costing as much as 30% of their income, and possibly even off the streets.

$59.2 million generated by, essentially, the renewal of an existing tax, to continue a program that seems to have little or no negative impact, yet improves the standard of living for so many. Or, as stated by Christine Woffinden of Yes for Homes, Foundation for Success, "Truly this is a program that works. It's affordable, and it addresses an important issue."

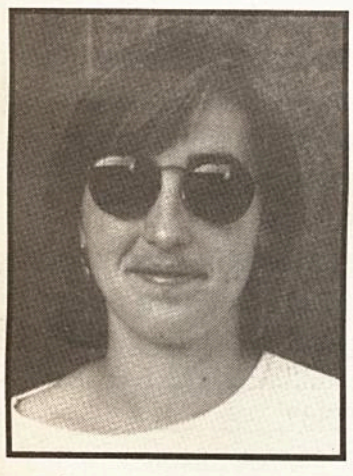
Since the "cons" of this issue are yet to be explored, all this may sound, ever so slightly, biased. One may ask, who would be against such a proposal? For one, anyone who thinks *they* have a better idea.

The Organization "Citizens for Affordable Housing" (CAH) is such an entity. Your voters' pamphlet will include a "Statement Against" and a "Rebuttal to Statement for Proposition 1" (Low Income Housing Levy.) CAH will be noted as the author.

Cont to p. 19

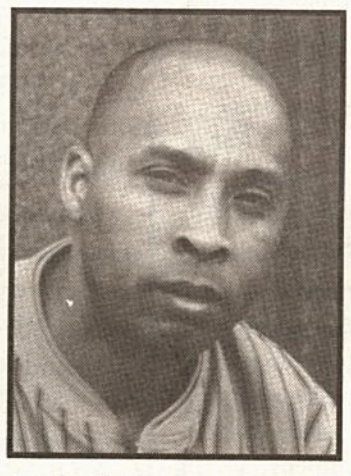
How Important is low-income housing to you?

photos by Julie Eagleton, interviews by Justin "Scoop" Mercer



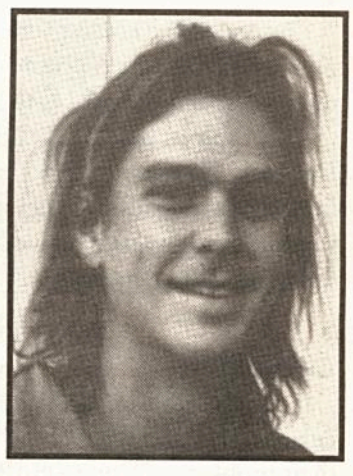
Anne, 20, Student
"Definitely, it should be more of a priority than baseball stadiums and parks."

Anna, 28, Teacher
"I think it's one of the most crucial issues today."



Michael, 43, Computers
"Very much so. More important than sending money to other countries while people are homeless on the street."

Claudia, 27, Student
"It needs to be a priority."



Dwayne, 28, Student
"There should definitely be a system, maybe not just low-income. Something that would benefit everyone."

Local News

Shelter Crunch

Winter Heightens City's Chronic Shelter Shortage

By Julie Eagleton

All the indicators are that Seattle's chronic shelter shortage has become increasingly desperate over the past year. Operation Nightwatch, the late-night shelter referral point., turned away large numbers of people even in mid-summer. Officially tolerated evening encampments outside the Municipal and Federal buildings have grown to hold over 100 people nightly. The SHARE Safe Haven encampment in the King County Administrative Building Courtyard has routinely filled to capacity.

A June count of people sleeping out found 431 people in the downtown and waterfront area, a 78% increase over the previous year. The official estimate of Seattle's homeless counts 4,000-4,500 people, but only 2,800 beds.

"As bad weather approaches," warns Rev. Rick Reynolds of Operation Nightwatch, "there just aren't going to be enough beds to go around, especially for single women and families."

Every year the city puts together a Winter Response Plan for October 1st through March 31st to increase the number of beds available as the cold, wet winter settles in. Karen Dawson, Manager of City Survival Services, who has written and implemented the plan since 1986, agrees that winter housing is not adequate, especially for women.

This year, says Dawson, the city plan includes a community building opened up by the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) available to 50 men, and another facility set up by SHARE, which provides beds for another 50 men. The Winter Response Plan also allocates $12,000 in traveler's aid for families, she adds.

"At one of the coldest times of the year, we want to keep people off of the streets, and our goal is to help as many people as possible," said Dawson. "However, we do have limitations, one of those being funding, and the truth is, what we're doing is just not enough."

Falling Short

Even the additional shelter sites currently being offered come with their problems. While SHARE will open a 50-bed shelter in the County Administrative Building, this, they say, does not address the needs of the encampment they have held in the courtyard throughout the summer. The homeless-led group says that while they will run the emergency shelter, they also intend to remain camped in the courtyard until another building is found.

The issues surrounding the DESC-run municipal Building shelter also highlight how desperate Seattle's shelter situation has become. An unofficial yet city-tolerated encampment surrounding the municipal building has grown to hold over 100 people nightly.

According to DESC Program Manager Beverly Nachatello, the encampment has grown increasingly violent, with a 911 response that ranges from 45 minutes to an hour and a half. Nachatello says she is "gravely concerned" that staff and clients cannot be guaranteed safe entrance to the shelter.

Municipal Building Manager Rick West said that City policy toward the encampment has been "tolerance," and that, as a result, police are reluctant to respond to complaints. West said he believed the encampment has quadrupled in size over the past year.

While no one seems to have a ready solution to this issue, there is at least broad agreement a problem exists. "We need a solution," said DESC Director Bill Hobson, "and a better one than just driving people away."

One point stressed by Dawson is that there aren't any additional facilities available to single women during the winter months. "These women need funds, continues Karen, "because their needs are so critical. What many of them have gone through is a tragedy."

According to Karen's figures, 15% of the winter shelter need is from single women. Rick Reynolds also says that the needs of single women are not being met, and he points to the addition of an all women's facility as the only answer. "One of the difficulties, he states, "is that many of the women just don't feel safe in a room with men. By adding an all women's facility, it would relieve some shelter pressure off both the women and the men."

NightWatch has teamed up with Noel House, Seattle's shelter for single homeless women, to do just that. Together they have worked on a proposal to create an additional 20 beds solely for single women.

According to Noel House Director Carolyn Frimpter, the plan needs additional city funding. The City has already committed $22,000 to this project, but the shelter, which would open at 5 p.m. to provide a safe place for women after dark, will take an estimated $58,000 to run.

"During the winter it is crunch time, and it only exemplifies how hard it is all year long....the truth is, what we're doing is just not enough."
Karen Dawson, Manager of City Survival Services

While the Winter Response Committee of the Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless has recognized the establishment of this shelter as their highest priority, it is far from clear that the additional funding needed will be available.

Dawson says that, in the future, she would like to see more long-term solutions focusing on the whole year. "During the Winter it is crunch time, and it only exemplifies how hard it is all year long. What we need to do is focus on long-term solutions, like permanent housing," she explains.

SHARE Safe Haven Update

September 29th was our six-month anniversary sleeping outdoors. SHARE's Safe Haven is an outdoor shelter that has been operating in various Pioneer Square locations since March.

In the words of one of the stalwart Safe Haven stayers, "Safe Haven is safety in numbers...it's a refuge from the thugs who prey on the homeless in Pioneer Square." This refuge has become an institutionalized, outdoor, co-ed and self-managed shelter. People who stay at Safe Haven (50 men and women every night) provide their own security, food, and clean-up crews. People who stay at Safe Haven keep each other safe from the increasingly mean streets.

On an average night Safe Haven turns away between five and twenty men and women for lack of space—five to twenty men and women forced to go it alone in alleys and doorways in their extremely dangerous neighborhood (Pioneer Square). During these six months outside Safe Haven folks have witnessed violence in the neighborhood almost every night—bottle-bashings, stabbings, women getting assaulted.

The City of Seattle is working on an indoor location near Pioneer Square. SHARE is hoping Mayor Rice will keep his April promise to help Safe Haven get inside—and that he does so before it snows.

SHARE is also hoping that King County will honor its contract with SHARE to operate a 50-bed winter response shelter beginning October 1st. While this 6-month winter response shelter is usually located in the lobby of the King County Administration Building, this year the County has chosen to use that space for an espresso stand instead. With six days to go, the County has still not found a replacement space for the winter shelter.

For more information or the latest update on getting Safe Haven and the winter shelter inside, call the SHARE office—#448-7889.

—*Mary Ann Buseman* and *Steven Wossne for SHARE (Seattle*

"To Rest and Be Well"

Mental Health Chaplaincy Brings Caring to Street

The Mental Health Chaplaincy is a local volunteer operation running out of Plymouth Congregational Church with one paid staff that offers street ministry to the homeless mentally ill. Chaplain Craig Rennebohm is at the heart of this very extraordinary project of the Church Council of Greater Seattle, and we recently had the opportunity to hear his views on this troubling subject.

REAL CHANGE: First question: What is mental health Chaplaincy to you

RENNEBOHM: The basic thing the Chaplaincy does is provide outreach on the streets, to the homeless, those who are struggling with mental illness, those who are very depressed, very frightened...our special care is for the person who is not even making it into a shelter, who is wandering, hanging out on the steps or in the park.

REAL CHANGE: How does outreach happen?

RENNEBOHM: I walk through Capitol Hill and downtown each day. Particularly the places where the homeless gather looking for the person who is most without resources, who seems to be the most isolated and most pained by their situation, come along side and reassure ....

REAL CHANGE: How long does that typically take?

RENNEBOHM: Some folks, they're just real glad to have someone who's available and we may spend the next 3 days together getting shelter and housing and resources. With other folks it may just be a wave or hello for several days, several weeks, sharing a bit of coffee down the road, sitting together on a park bench for a while, real slow development of the relationship.

Another thing that happens is folks who experience great illness or extraordinary experiences, something very frightening or difficult. You have to have a lot of patience, and be led by each person by their needs. It's not about what I think they should do.

REAL CHANGE: How many people do you typically see at any one time?

RENNEBOHM: About 15-20 people. I work intensively with about 35-50 people in the course of the year on the street. We make referrals...

REAL CHANGE: What's the biggest misconception that the general public may have about the people you're working with?

RENNEBOHM: I think often the general public and policy makers miss the fact that this is a real illness, a real disorder. People have a heart attack, cancer or diabetes and it is pretty clear that there is something that requires attention and special care. But when there may be an imbalance in the brain chemistry we don't understand it is an illness, and so we make other kinds of assumptions: that people are lazy, or they don't want help, or they want to live out of garbage cans and sleep in doorways and that it's just a free choice people are making and that there is nothing influencing that choice. When in fact the person could be heroically surviving some very difficult circumstances.

REAL CHANGE: What do the Chaplaincy volunteers do?

RENNEBOHM: The basic role that the volunteers play is to serve as a companion. A few people are doing advocacy and outreach out of their local church space, but the majority are serving as companions. One of the things we try to do is not only help people transition off the street, but get into some stable housing and community.

Having a home again is more than just having a roof over your head. It's connecting with some people and having some friends and having a place in that neighborhood. And so the volunteers pick up at that point. They are there to listen to share to come along side the person and help find a place and then make that place home. That's the basic function of the volunteers to serve as companions to help people make a home.

REAL CHANGE: Chaplaincy is a religious term. What are the religious aspects of your program? Are we in the territory of sing for your supper missions?

RENNEBOHM: No. The first thing I say is that each of us has an inherent dignity as a human being. Each of us has a deep divinity within us. I begin with that with each person that I meet. Here is a sacred person across from me. And that really frames how I relate with another individual. And that is one really concrete way that faith guides the work that I do.

Second, is that all of us have some kind of spiritual connection to our life. Our religions help shape our religious life. I have a deep respect for each person's particular spiritual truth.

REAL CHANGE: When you've established a relationship with someone you've met on the street. What are some typical next steps you'd take with them?

RENNEBOHM: There are a variety of next steps. One of the keys of those next steps is that I help introduce people to some other persons. I just did it, I went to a shelter to introduce that person to someone who worked in the shelter. And to be with them to make that step. Or if you go to apply for public assistance, go with them to introduce them to folks at the Bell Town Office. If they're going up to the walk-in clinic at Harborview, to go with them and introduce them to staff there.

So our personal relationship becomes expanded into a circle of care and support. That support may eventually come from a shelter, or housing resources, health care, public assistance, but my interest is that whenever we take those steps, that human beings are connected to human beings. And not just people getting put into a program.

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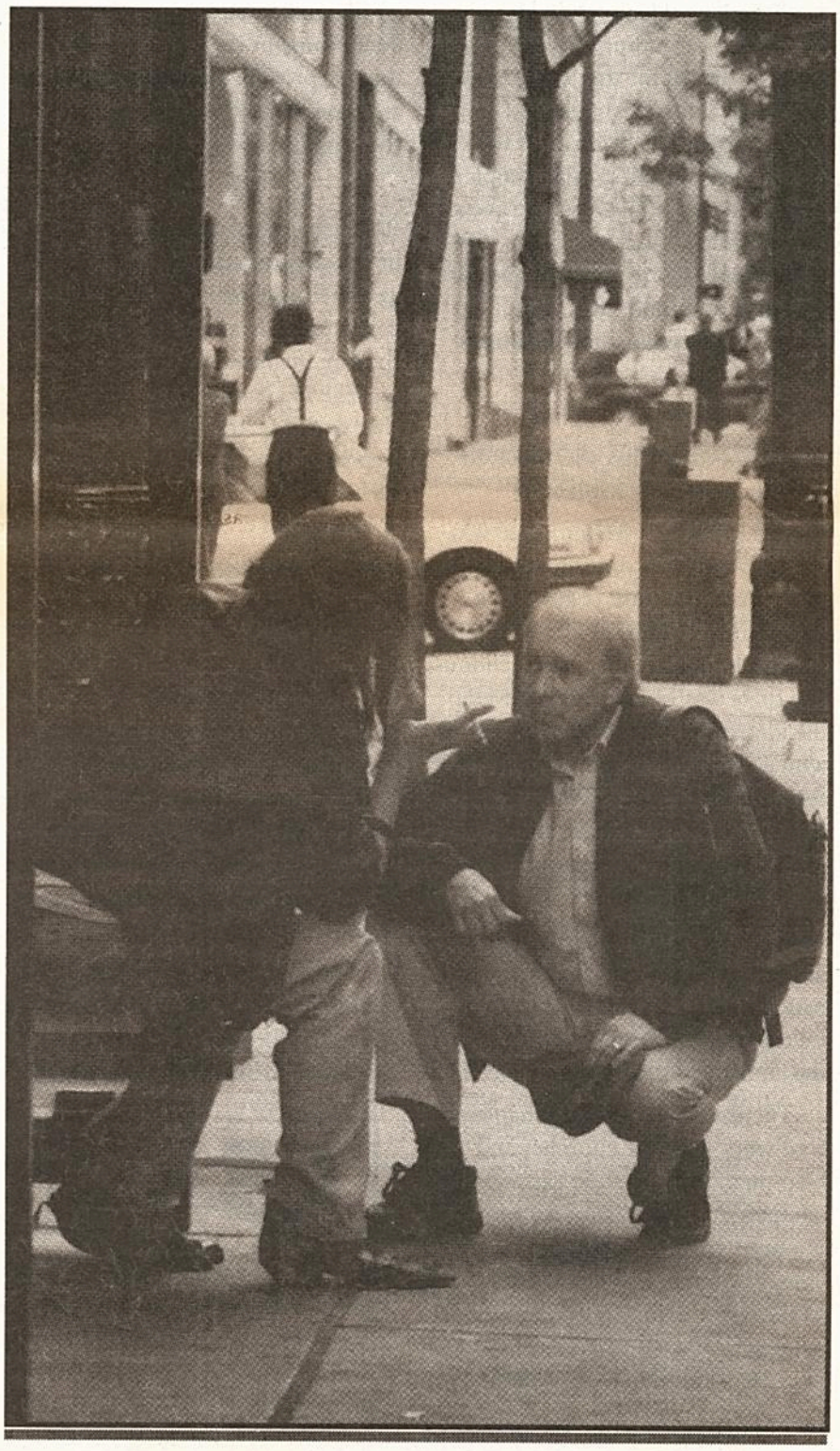

"Too much of our culture is based on that notion that you have to be out there by yourself, on your own; the independent rugged western mythology that says you shouldn't need any help... the reality is that were not created to be out there all alone by ourselves that we need each other."

Solutions

TO REST, CONT FROM P. 7

REAL CHANGE: What drew you into this work and led you to become involved with the Chaplaincy?

RENNEBOHM: It's a story about the co-founder, Hayden. When I was a pastor, there was a fellow who came and camped out on the doorstep for a number of weeks. He was very confused, very frightened. Finally developed enough trust where I was able to ask a health worker to come and see him and he agreed. He wanted to go to the hospital and get some help. He wanted assistance and support.

It was kind of a bureaucratic snafoo that they couldn't take him. When he heard that, he kinda collapsed. And ran back on to the street. I read a couple weeks later that a man had been found frozen to death under a villa duct downtown, his name was Sterling Hayden. And it was at that point that I started to get the idea of the Chaplaincy. There needs to be some of us who are out there in touch with people, where they are, knowledgable about the resources that are available, able to show the way to the help and care that they want and need. And that was the touchpoint that got things started.

REAL CHANGE: What was involved with starting the Chaplaincy?

RENNEBOHM: The second piece was that I spent some time as a chaplain in a psychiatric unit. I got to see things from a hospital side of things. I began to realize what a tremendous gap there was and began to develop the idea of the Chaplaincy. I met with a group of 4-5 people from the community here in Seattle. Together we began to shape the work of the chaplaincy in terms of outreach on the streets.

Towards the end of the day, I go up to Harborview, I'm available as a in-patient minister there. I can to follow people in from the streets to the clinic or the hospital.

The third piece of the Chaplaincy is to work with the churches and help them develop their capacity for companionship, systems for providing housing, and ongoing support. The fourth piece is to do advocacy in the larger community to make sure that we've got the housing, and that there are resources available.

REAL CHANGE: Can you give us an example of advocacy?

RENNEBOHM: We've helped to organize some neighborhoods to participate in the cities neighborhood planning process. To encourage neighborhoods to have resources available for folks that are homeless and those that experience mental illness not just resources downtown, but resources throughout the wider community. We've influenced state government and the legislature, by trying to help them understand what it's like to be out on the street. What some of the concerns are so that we provide the kind of budgets and do the kind of services that meet these folks' needs.

"Often the general public and policy makers miss the fact that this is a real illness, a real disorder.... when there may be an imbalance in the brain chemistry, we don't understand it is an illness, and so we make other kinds of assumptions: that people are lazy, or they don't want help, or they want to live out of garbage cans and sleep in doorways and that it's just a free choice people are making..."

REAL CHANGE: Setting aside, the pie in the sky attitudes, what do you see as a need or direction that this community, Seattle, and the folks that are involved with the homeless and mental health issues might go that would be the next meaningful step or part of the picture that would be helpful to the folks you are involved with?

RENNEBOHM: Couple of things. It would be ideal if we had a 24 hour drop in center. Where folks who had been through this experience were the staff and where if you were having some pretty extraordinary experiences, that would not be seen as too unusual. You could come in and be part of things, get something hot to drink. Sleep on the floor for a while, that'd be O.K.. Take a shower, whatever.

If we had several such places scattered around rather than large scale...that brings me to the other suggestion that is that particularly if it is real uncertain and unstable and things are real confused and depressing to have a place where you can go and put your bag have a bunk and know that you keep coming back there, at least a few nights and if you're wandering around there and you can come back. That this is Joe's spot, this is Mary's place. and maybe for the next 3 months, 6 months, 5 years, whatever it takes until you can get something else going, this is Mary's place, and you can always come back. This is your home. That's the first step to saying you're not homeless.

REAL CHANGE: It sounds like Thomas Wolff "To The Country". A place where you can go home again. That's a pretty impressive vision in terms of really maintaining a place like that for people.

RENNEBOHM: There are an awful lot of these folks without such a place winding up in jails or involuntarily detained in hospitals. I think if we had somewhere general accessible homes on a small scale sort that feel just a little bit safe where they can come back. That would be a step.

"You can't go home again" is a false cultural ideal.

Too much of our culture is based on that notion that you have to be out there by yourself, on your own; the independent rugged western mythology that says you shouldn't need any help

And the reality is that were not created to be out there all alone by ourselves that we need each other. We have to be able to help each other.

"Better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."
—*Adelie Stevenson*

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Art in Balance

Wes Browning's Images for the God

Wes Browning came to Street Life Gallery several years ago during a period when mental illness had forced him from a job as a university professor to sleeping in cars and on public couches.

The 46-year-old artist is now a valued member of both the Street Life Gallery and our own Editorial Committee. He is the featured artist at the Street Life this month, and his colorful acrylic wonders may be viewed at 2129 2nd Ave. Call the Gallery at 328-5637 for hours or information on how to donate supplies or volunteer.

I'd intended to write a story on Wes for this issue, but as he shared his history with me over lunch last month, it became clear that all I really needed to do was run the tape and get out of the way. The following is a slightly edited transcript of the story he told.

—Timothy Harris

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE NOW that it happened. I was only two years old. I remember it so well now. The memory hasn't changed much in my head. It's very stable.

I remember the guy sitting there, while his brother beat on sticks and chanted. Well, they both chanted. But his brother was doing the drumming. And he would literally go into a trance while he carved his little wooden figures. And they were sort of like what I do now.

The basic shape is that of an animal, but there would be all of this geometric ornamentation around the outside. Once he'd get the basic shape, he'd add all this ornamentation, and that's when he'd start getting into this trance.

Sometimes he'd talk about what he was doing and how it was important to let the god take over, because the art's not really for you. It's for the god. The idea is to transcend yourself and create something that's not really a human vision at all. It's another way of seeing what you're seeing that sets up communication between you and the spirit world, or the god.

As I come to remember that whole way of looking at art, it's as if I remember, "Oh, yeah, that's what I've been trying to do.' It sank in at some level, but I didn't remember where I got the idea.

Sometimes when I'm working, I don't have any idea of what I'm doing. I know how to work the brush, but the actual lines that come up I hardly think about. They just happen. It's sort of like the vision is coming from another channel. That's the way like it. That's why I gravitate to that style.

It goes back to the Hawaiian experience, which becomes more and more the motivation. I didn't remember that experience very well until recently, in 1991, when I broke through in my therapy remembering all the things that happened to me.

Lani and Lono

THE BROTHERS were Lani and Lono, which were the names of the sky god and the harvest god. I can remember them explaining what their names meant.

They were non-identical twins, and were from Niʻihau, which was like a private reservation to preserve native culture. It's the westernmost inhabited island of Hawaii. People could only live there by invitation of the natives already there, and it was called the Forbidden Island. You couldn't go there.

They had jobs as civilian maintenance workers at Schoffield Barracks. It's a normal arrangement at army bases outside of the U.S. to have civilian workers trimming the hedges and doing the lawns and stuff. These guys had a route they would work that included a recreation center about five blocks from where I lived.

Meanwhile, whenever my father was away, my mother would neglect me and was a real pain to be around. She wouldn't feed me and would get mad about anything and start hitting on me, so I left.

I'd wander off, beginning the year I turned two. Some older friends I'd played with started going to school, so I went looking for the school. I didn't know what a school was, but I knew they were there. Then I found out that I could beg for food off the neighborhood housewives. So that reinforced the practice and I started doing it everyday.

I had a little route I worked out, and it got wider and wider. I kept branching out, and finally, at two years and two months, I was doing about twenty blocks a day on this route. And everybody thought my mother was the most horrible person on the planet for letting me do it. But army bases being what they are, everybody kept their mouth shut.

One day, I came across these guys. The first thing he said to me was in Hawaiian, and then he translated right away. "Who's little offspring are you?" I didn't understand. I had trouble with English from a head injury from when my parents ran over me. But it sounded really good, and he had a neat smile on his face, so I followed them around.

I heard them talking among themselves and it was really pretty, and so I first got hooked up with them by following them around just to listen to that. And then after about a month I started talking to them in Hawaiian, and they were naturally very surprised.

I didn't speak English until about six months after that. I had trouble with consonants, and they were easier in Hawaiian. I got Hawaiian first, and then English as a second language.

At first I followed them around at work, until they put stop to that because I was getting in their way too much. So I started seeing them every time they had their lunch break, a nice, long, hour one.

I learned to tell time well enough to get there when their hour started. And after that I'd go away and watch them from a distance. They used to sing while they worked and that was pretty cool. I'd watch them sing and learn the songs.

Just before my third birthday I started to speak English. I'd learned to translate back and forth and that was my big breakthrough. I would talk to them in Hawaiian, but after a while they made me speak to them in English, because they were afraid that I was neglecting the English.

They thought they would get in trouble too, for letting me learn Hawaiian from them. The situation in those days was that there was a lot of bigotry; more so than there is now. Native Hawaiians were really distrusted. If anything had gone

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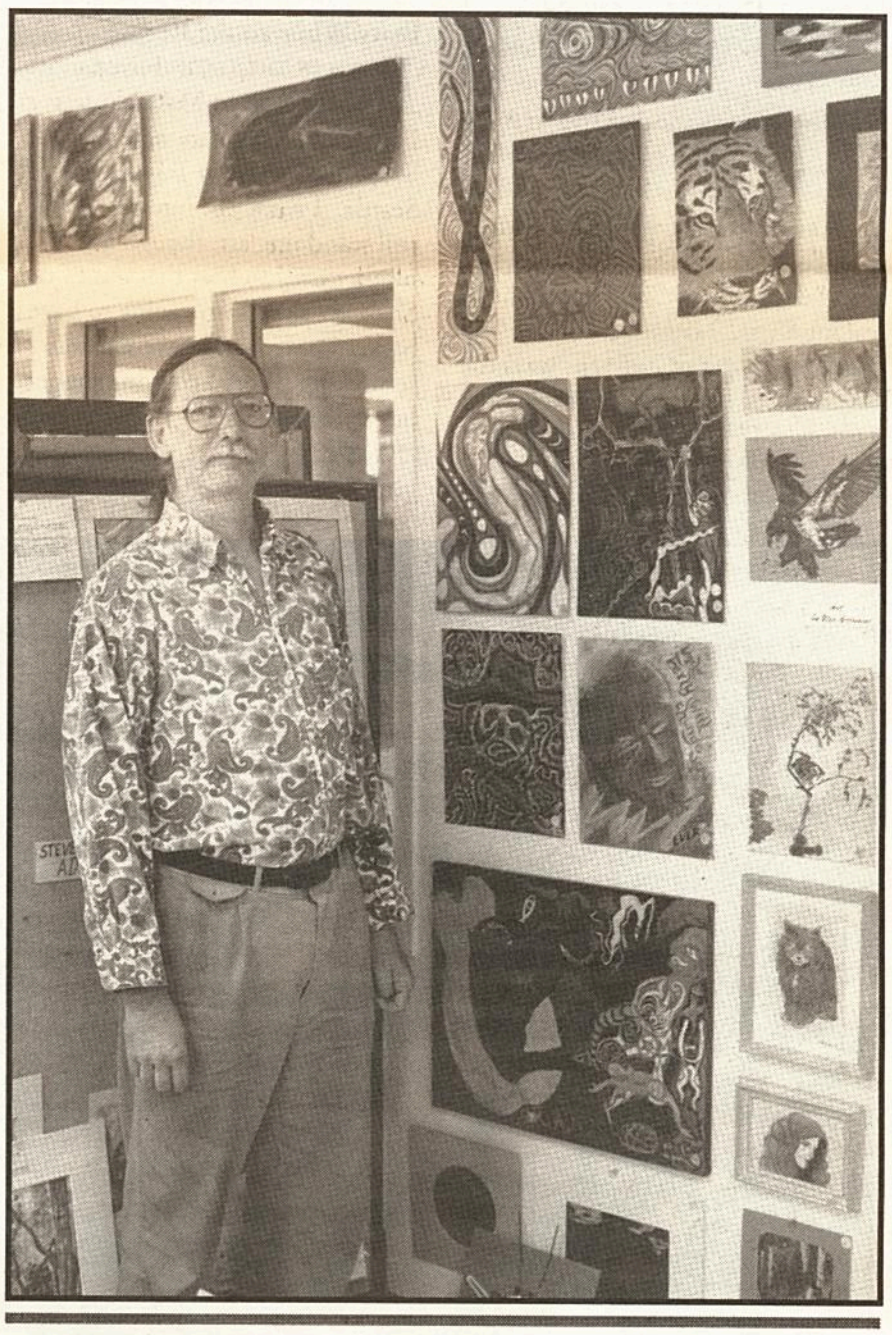


ALL PHOTOS BY JENNIFER STANTON

" The idea is to transcend yourself and create something that's not really a human vision at all. It's another way of seeing what you're seeing that sets up communication between you and the spirit world, or the god."

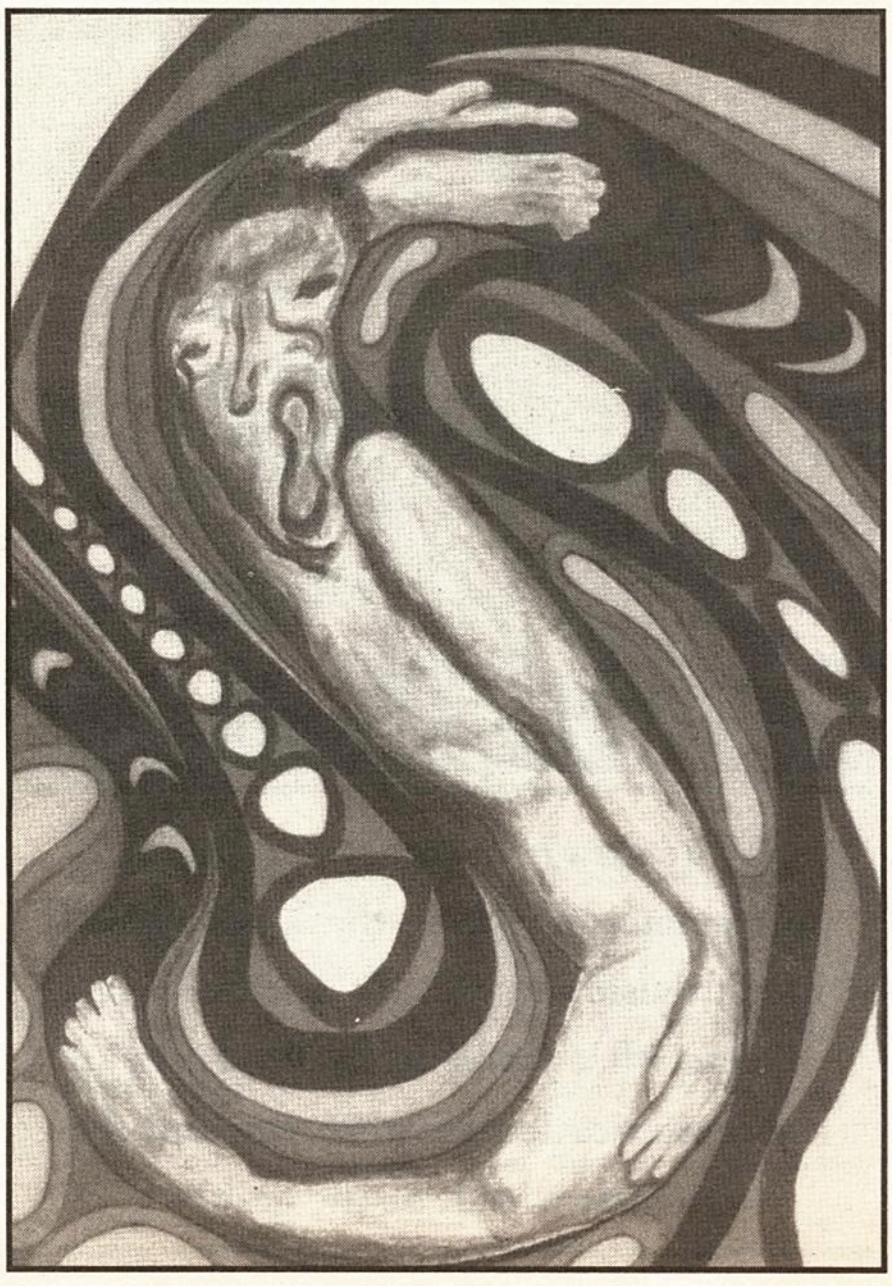
Street Life

BROWNING, CONT. FROM P. 9
wrong, their explanation of what happened would of not been believed. They would have been in serious trouble and lost their jobs, at least. Maybe ended up in jail or something. So I'm sure they were really concerned to not do anything to get in trouble.

They were also afraid of teaching me too much about their beliefs. One of them was a non-christian, a traditional Hawaiian, and was really afraid of telling me anything about it because if it got to my parents there'd be an investigation and the military police would come down on them. Eventually, Lani did it anyway, but without letting his brother know.

They carved at work on their lunch break. Since I only saw them there it was isolated from everything else. They were 18 when I discovered them, and 19 when I left Schoffield. My mother actually met Lani the day we left. He didn't speak English, though Lono did. So I translated back and forth. It was a fairly long exchange. I can still remember the content of that conversation.

Lani told my mother that at 3 1/2 I was speaking Hawaiian very well, and was ready for school, except for one thing: I wasn't very good with numbers. I didn't know at the time that he was talking about grammatical numbers. Hawaiian, for example, has a lot of different ways to say 'they,' and I wasn't getting it. So I thought I had to learn numbers in order to make them proud if I should ever come back and see them again.



Betty White to the Rescue

BACK IN THE STATES I lived most of the time in Massachusetts at Fort Devans, though there was a little time as well in Taiwan and in Seattle. I really got into math, but still was doing art, though my mother tried to beat that out of me. She'd say she "wasn't going to have a basket weaver" and have me doing something where I couldn't support her in her old age.

When I was seven years old she caught me drawing some Hawaiian designs and chanting. I still remembered the chants then. I would never speak Hawaiian around her because we had this rule that I wasn't supposed to speak Hawaiian at home. I didn't want to get beat up.

She made me draw while she burned the back of my hand with a cigarette. Until then I was ambidextrous, but after that I couldn't draw or write with my left hand. Then my penmanship got really bad. Until then It was great, and she asked why, and I said, 'Well, you fixed it so I can't write with my left hand anymore,' and she said. "You were left handed?!" She was left handed, and my father was left handed, so you would have thought she would have figured that out.

Soon after that, the Betty White incident happened. We went to Taiwan right after the chanting incident. They had a USO show around Christmas time, and the place was this mountain-top U.S. Chinese electronic surveillance installation, to spy on the 'Reds.'. So my mother and I were blindfolded as we were driven up there in a staff car.

Betty White was the main act. She was an actor and stand-up comedienne at the time. Because my father was in charge of the base, she sat next to him, and I sat across from her at the banquet table and got to make friends during the dinner.

After the dinner I yanked on her dress and asked to talk to her in private. We went outside of the tent and I begged her to kidnap me, and she said, 'No, that wouldn't be good.' She said they'd just come and take me away from her and have her arrested.

I hadn't thought of that before, and could see the point, so I started crying. I felt like this was my last hope. I'd already tried to get a whole bunch of my relatives to kidnap me, and gas station attendants and things like that. And finally I met somebody who was really nice, and really pretty, whose heart was in the right place, and she wouldn't do it, and even had a good reason not to that I could generalize to other people, so I started crying.

She asked me why I wanted to do this, and I told her some of the stories, and she started giving me advice. She asked what I wanted to do when I grew up, and I said I hadn't decided, but either wanted to be an artist or do something with numbers. She said, 'Stick with the numbers. They'll probably like that better and they'll leave you alone. And when you grow up, you can do whatever you want.'

Then she taught me this joke. One of those things where you ask a question, like 'I'm twice as old as my brother, and my brother is seven,' and so on. And she said, 'Just remember the answer is 39.' We went back out there and she got a crowd together with my parents among them and said 'This kid's really bright. Listen to this.' and she does the riddle, all about what's her age, and I say '39,' and it's a joke since she's not really that old, and my parents are impressed.

We snowed them. And all the way home they're, 'Wow, we didn't know you were so good at math. You're like a genius.' It worked. The verbal abuse kept up, and my mother still beat me up once in a while, but this thing she had about hitting me in the head a lot stopped. She didn't want to damage the goods. It was her meal ticket for her old age.

Mental Illness

I DECIDED TO BECOME A MATHEMATICIAN WHEN I WAS 14. I'd spend three or four hours a day studying

"Street Life Gallery is a place where I can do for other people what those Hawaiian guys did for me. They gave me a place to retire everyday where I could be a human being and not be afraid."

my own stuff after my other homework. I was kind of obsessed with it. It has that trance thing going for it. You can lose yourself in that too. In a bad family it was kind of like a drug for me.

I got a doctorate at Cornell, and taught evening classes at the U here while I was on leave writing my thesis. I was invited to Swiss Polytechnic for a year. I came back and was supposed to do two years at Rutgers, but the mental illness was starting by then.

I started having problems with post traumatic stress. My father died just before the thesis was approved and that triggered massive panic attacks. I started having anxiety attacks every time I tried to do math, so I wasn't really good for research anymore.

After one year I quit Rutgers. I came back to Seattle and taught at community colleges, and did some more evening division. I liked the older people, but not the regular college-aged students. The anxiety got worse and worse. I taught at St. Martins a year, and during that year started having visions. Those were the worst one. Apocalyptic visions, like from Revelations.

I was getting sick from the stress of teaching. They weren't very happy with my performance because I wasn't really into it, and when they told me I wasn't going to be coming back the next year. I immediately began to look for something else.

A cab driver had been shot and killed at Seward Park, so there was an opening, and I figured no one else would probably want that job and went and applied. There were about 10 others, but they hired us all. I lost money driving cab, but had money and could afford it. The marriage fell apart soon after that, and I became homeless. It was a very cold winter.

Just before that, I went to a career councilor who was from the Caribbean, and she kept saying, you know, there's something strange about the way you express yourself and I'd like to hypnotize you, and she did and she got this Hawaiian character out of me. So she found out about all this stuff before I did.

It happens it situations like that pretty regularly. I had a split personality. And the Hawaiian speaking and English personality weren't really the same. It was the Hawaiian personality that mostly took the beatings. The Hawaiian personality was dominant at that point. So there was some work to be done.

She sent me to a therapist, who I've been seeing since then, November of '83. In '87 after a scary accident, I quit driving, and went on mental disability, which is something she'd been trying to get me to do. So I could afford therapy, and that led to the breakthrough I '91, where I remembered everything.

After that the two personalities started to join. So far as I can tell, they're integrated now. But there were three days when the other personality took over.

I went to the half-price bookstore in the U-District, and was looking through the foreign books, and there was this pocket traveler Hawaiian dictionary. And there was this word, 'hele,' which is to go. I used to use it all the time. I saw that and remembered saying it to my mother.

And I found more words, and remembered. That's when memories started breaking through and within three or four days this personality switch happened.

This other personality took over, and for three days ran around and fixed me up with things. Like a phone; I hadn't been able to get a phone up until then, but this other guy could get a phone. This other guy hooked me up with a psychiatrist to discuss the new developments. It was a scary time.

There was this fear of being overwhelmed by the unknown. I was working late at night as a janitor and was terrified. After that I started seeing the therapist again pretty frequently and worked a plan out. Doing art has really helped.

Art and Integration

I STARTED DOING ART in about '84, or thinking seriously about it. I was having what I now know were flashback related visions and had a lot of visual imagery impinging on me and I wanted to express some of that to the world. This was the main motivation, relating what I was going through.

I'd been doing drawing and things all the time since I was a kid, but that's when I got serious with it. Just before I ended up being homeless and the marriage broke up.

Cont. to p. 13

NEW on the NET

Black Caucus Regroups

The Congressional Black Caucus begins its 25th annual legislative conference seeking new allies to counter Republicans and the religious right. Both have ignored the conditions of blacks, who face disproportionately high rates of poverty, homelessness and violence, said Caucus chair Repr. Donald Payne (D-NJ).

Payne said he looked to the elderly, poor and middle-class whites as potential new partners, and also shares some aims with Colin Powell and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. The caucus has endorsed Farrakhan's "Million Man March" for October 16, although Payne disagrees with its exclusion of women.

The role of the Black Caucus has waned since the first two years of the Clinton administration, when, working with a Democrat-controlled Congress, it influenced policy on a broad range of issues. Now the group is trying to hold ground until the 1996 elections, when it hopes its work with civic groups to increase voter registration will pay off. "If people can see their interests being trampled on and their rights being challenged, we feel in '96 that people will come alive again," Payne said.

This year, the new GOP House majority cut off the Caucus's $250,000 in annual operating money from Congress when it ended payments to special legislative groups. And in June the Supreme Court struck down electoral redistricting plans that helped elect many caucus members.

Still, the group claims some victories during the past nine months, including the successful fight to preserve federal money for financially needy college students, summer jobs and low-income heating assistance, as well as moderating House proposals from the GOP's "Contract With America" in the Senate, and persuading President Clinton to defend affirmative action. "We've kept the Democratic Party somewhat honest," says Payne.

Homeless Evicted from Golden Gate Park

Police last month swept into San Fransisco's Golden Gate Park to clear the area of homeless people. Estimates of the park's overnight population have ranged from 100 to 500 people, but police found only about fifteen.

Homeless advocates called the cleanup a heartless political ploy, noting that San Francisco has an estimated homeless population of more than 10,000 but only 1,400 shelter beds.

Sister Bernie Galvin of Religious Witness with Homeless People said, "Mayor Jordan's flurry of activity in Golden Gate Park is designed to give voters the impression he is taking decisive action to solve the problem of homelessness in our city. In reality, Jordan has merely squandered millions of taxpayers' dollars and added untold misery to the lives of homeless people."

More Americans Behind Bars

The Bureau of Justices Statistics released a report finding an increasing number of Americans are behind bars or on probation or parole

At the end of 1994, 5.1 million or 2.7 percent of the country's adult population was under correctional supervision.

The report found that since 1980, the number of people in prison or jail or on probation or parole has almost tripled. The rate was growing at an average of 7.6 percent a year and at an actual rate of 3.9 percent in 1994. The state and federal probation population rose 2 percent in 1994 and the overall parole population grew by 2.1 percent.

About 75 percent of the 5.1 million were supervised in the community on probation or parole. Three-fourths of those on parole or probation were maintaining required, regular contact with a supervising agency. The others were equally divided between those who were not required to have regular contact and those who had failed to report and could not be found.

Nonprofits Fight Limits On Lobbying

Efforts to quash the House Republican Istook bill, aimed at curbing "political advocacy" by nonprofit groups receiving federal grants, are underway in about 30 states, from Colorado to Florida to Pennsylvania to Oregon. But on Capitol Hill, House Republicans began another push to attach the legislation to the $23 billion Treasury, Postal Service and White House appropriations bill headed for the House and Senate floors.

The bill would restrict the "advocacy" activities of federal grant recipients by setting limits on what they can do with their charitable contributions and nonfederal income. In a sharp break with current laws, the bill would expand lobbying restrictions to efforts to sway executive branch and judicial decisions.

The bill's critics denounce the measure as an attempt by House Republican leaders to silence the nonprofit community. "They want to gut the ability of anyone who says government can help provide an answer. It will make their budget-cutting that much easier," said Robert O. Bothwell, executive director of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

To curb lobbying activities, the House bill would limit spending on "political advocacy" to 5 percent of a nonprofit group's privately raised funds up to $20 million, and to 1 percent beyond that point. To broaden its reach, the bill also would prohibit the groups from doing business with any organization that spends 15 percent or more of its budget on political advocacy.

Groups receiving grants would be subject to audits by the General Accounting Office and required to prove that they are complying with the law or be fined and lose their grants. Lawsuits could be brought up to 10 years after the violation, with cash rewards provided to persons bringing such suits.

Critics of the Istook bill believe it is part of a GOP crusade to "defund the left." They point to attacks on the American Association of Retired Persons by Sen. Alan K. Simpson (R-Wyo.) and on the Combined Federal Campaign charity drive by Rep. John L. Mica (R-Fla.) as part of a strategy to gag groups that disagree with Republican goals.

Stagnant Wages for Workers Fuel Business Profits

According to a study released Saturday, business profits have soared in the 1990s largely because the wages of American workers have been kept stagnant.

The Economic Policy Institute, a think tank partly funded by labor groups, said that in the last six years, hourly pay, when adjusted for inflation, has remained the same or declined for all but the top 20 percent of male wage-earners and the top 30 percent of women in the work force. The report also said that pre-tax profits for businesses have risen as firms cut costs by holding down wage increases and eliminating jobs.

The study shows other factors at work, including a trend begun in the early 1980s that allows corporations to keep more of their profits after taxes. The institute study said that after-tax profits last year were the highest in 25 years, greater than at the end of earlier postwar recoveries.

The percentage of corporate income paid in taxes has fallen from an average of 44.3 percent in the 25-year period that ended in 1979 to 32.4 percent in the 1980s and 31 percent now, the study said.

Labor Secretary Robert Reich criticized the growing gulf between corporate profits and workers' wages as "terribly un-American."

Reich called for expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit for the working poor and tax breaks for families supporting children in college. He blasted those who oppose raising the minimum wage from $4.25 an hour and seek to trim federal college loan programs.

GOP Further Reduces Earned-Income Tax Credit

One-upping their House counterparts, Senate Republicans proposed today to reduce a tax credit for the working poor by $40 billion over seven years, reports Associated Press.

Legislation approved by the House Ways and Means Committee on Tuesday would cut $23 billion from the $153 billion earned-income tax credit, which was designed to help the working poor stay off welfare.

The Senate plan will be taken up by the Finance Committee next week in combination with proposals to save $452 billion from Medicare and Medicaid, the federal health insurance programs serving the elderly, disabled and poor.

Senate Republicans would cut the earned-income credit by:

- Ending it for undocumented aliens and childless workers.
- Canceling a scheduled increase for families with two or more children.
- Eliminating the credit for workers at the top of the income-eligibility range.
- Reducing it for recipients of Social Security, nontaxable pensions and annuities, child support and tax-exempt interest.

Democrats denounced the entire package, including the earned-income-credit component, and contrasted it with Republican plans for tax cuts, such as reducing the rate on capital gains, that benefit the wealthy.

Handsnet—News & Blues

Homeless Netspots

Real Change: http://www.speakeasy.org/realchange

UK Homeless Homepage: http://s1.cxwms.ac.uk/Academic/AGPU/staffpag/robinson/interest/homeless/homepage.html

National Coalition for the Homeless: http://nch.ari.net/

Homelessness in America: http://www.teleport.com/~cool/homeless.html

Streetlife Gallery: http://internetcafe.allyn.com/slg/slg.html

All for a Blanket

A year ago I came to Seattle with the hope of starting a new life. I left New York believing that, given a chance, I had what it would take to turn my life around.

Vince Lomax

I'm a 40-year-old black man, well read, warm personality, and a strong desire to finally make something out of myself. You see, I'm homeless, and I've been through just about everything you can imagine, and come out of it with no scars and, surprise, no criminal record.

I simply refuse to do anything that would lock me up any worse than I already am. Then, last winter, that was changed for me by the Seattle police.

When I got here it was cold and I had no money. I walked around with someone I just met. He, too, was homeless. We were looking for some warm doorway to lay our heads and happened by a Ryder truck yard.

There was one of those furniture blankets, laying on the ground.

Okay. It was on the other side of the fence.

Naturally (we're cold and it's 3 a.m.) we pulled the blanket out. We went to the closest store to get something to eat, or try to.

Someone saw us take the blanket and called the police. When they got there I said I'd taken the blanket, that it was cold, and that my friend had nothing to do with it.

I was arrested and released 3 days later. I never saw a judge. I thought it was over.

Four months later, the police locked me up again. This time I was charged with theft, burglary, and trespassing, all because of the same blanket.

Now I'll admit, we were wrong for taking the piece of cloth, valued at $12, but we didn't break into anything or take anything else. We simply pulled it out from under the fence to cover up with.

This time, I end up with a public defender who tells me I'm facing a year in jail. This is where the system can turn you into a criminal, because what happens now is that the prosecutor and attorney make a deal where I'm supposed to plead guilty to a lesser charge and have a lot less punishment.

I could win if I go to trial, but that could take months of sitting behind bars, so naturally, I'm going to take the lesser charge and leave a lot sooner.

But that gives you a record. So I'm forced into saying I'm a criminal if I want my freedom, such as it is, as soon as possible.

even arrested or charged!

The police just wrote his name on a piece of paper, and the D.A.'s office decided six months later to charge him too.

"Being black and homeless, I know about this kind of justice.... It would have been easier to just freeze that night a year ago."

Being black and homeless, I know about this kind of justice.

So they took me in front of a judge to plead guilty to the lesser charge, trespassing. The judge says in court I should never have been arrested in the first place, that the officer should have simply scolded me and then taken me to a shelter so I wouldn't have to be out on the streets like that again.

Anyway, I pled guilty. They gave me a court date in two weeks for sentencing and released me. Now, wouldn't you know it, they locked up the guy that was with me for the same blanket! He ended up doing 60 days, and originally was never

It would have been easier to just freeze that night a year ago.

And you'd better believe they locked me up a third time for that blanket. This time, after two weeks in jail, I saw a different judge who informed me I should have been sentenced to just 4 days in jail the first time I was arrested, and that should have been the end of it.

So, I've already done 26 days, and my friend 60, when me and me only was just supposed to do 4.

All of this goes on my record, and for just a furniture blanket.

Vince Lomax is Real Change *Vendor #183*

SWAC Seattle Women's Action Coalition

SWAC (the Seattle Women's Action Coalition) has offered their monthly column to WHEEL for the next two months, preparatory to WHEEL's November 15th Homeless Women's Forum. WHEEL thanks SWAC for their support.

The Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League (WHEEL) is an organizing effort of homeless and formerly homeless women; it is the women's arm of SHARE. Its goals are to give voice and leadership to homeless women, and to organize campaigns around increased services and safety for homeless women.

WHEEL is sponsoring a Forum for homeless women, to be held November 15th at Plymouth Congregational Church. The yet-to-be-named Forum will take place at noon, with lunch provided.

The first goal of the Forum is to establish inclusive working groups that are committed to the ongoing safety of women who are or have been homeless in Seattle. The second goal is to develop strategies to gain housing, safety and health care for all homeless women.

In the past two years WHEEL has witnessed a dramatic increase in the numbers and needs of homeless women. Women are always easy targets for predators on the streets, but it's become clear that the streets are a lot meaner than they used to be. In addition, the few shelters for women in Seattle are always full, and are often turning women away to the streets for lack of space.

"It's difficult enough being on the streets," says one WHEEL member. "You're constantly worried about your safety; where you're going to get your next meal or shower. You're scared to death, and you're barely existing."

WHEEL wants to see more than bare existence offered to our sisters on the streets. WHEEL's organizing efforts have energy, but need support to affect the sweeping change that is necessary to ensure that there is housing, safety and health for all women. We need you to raise your voice with us!

This month, WHEEL is trying to get endorsements for the Forum from a variety of organizations and individuals who have traditional power. (The Seattle Women's Commission and the Seattle Women's Action Coalition already have offered their endorsements.) WHEEL is also working on a huge participants list—people whose attendance at the Forum might make a world of difference to homeless women, people who need to hear what homeless women have to say.

WHEEL meetings, open to all homeless and formerly homeless women, are Saturdays at 9:30 AM at the SHARE Office (1902 Second Avenue, 2nd floor of the Josephinum). Planning meetings for the Forum are Thursdays at 11 AM at the downtown YWCA (5th and Seneca, 2nd floor). Everyone is welcome at the planning meetings.

For more information, call WHEEL at #448-7889.

"It's difficult enough being on the streets. You're scared to death, and you're barely existing."

BROWNING, CONT FROM P. 11

After doing abstract art all those years and feeling like a talentless fool I deliberately taught myself to draw from life. Since I was living in a cab, and my own car which wasn't working, the '69 Rambler, I'd draw windshield wipers, and microphones and cords and clipboards for practice.

I went through this period where I was doing pen and ink drawings all the time in black and white. It was all consciously with the idea of getting out of it eventually. I just wanted to convince myself I could do it. I tried watercolors and didn't really like it, and started with acrylics in '89 and I liked them a lot.

I did a series of realistic paintings with the idea I'd move into more abstract work. The style I have now is what I've really always wanted to do. It balances realism and abstract to the point where I want it to be. For me it's just right.

I had this weird thing about the U-district and Bellevue then, not being able to stand being away from them, and after the breakthrough that subsided. There are places there that resembled the neighborhood in Schoffield barracks, and were reverberating. That area of the base looked like a suburban village.

Cont. to p. 14

Real Change

The Last Time I Got Out . . .

There was no bicameral dichotomous mind
the last time I got out of the bin,
The snowflake was snowflake, and the thought
of the snowflake was the thought of it
It was simply cold reality, and no matter how
much I am sexually attracted

To mannequins in store windows, reality was hard,
and hard it comes . . .

The logical conclusions has to be:
Someone is looking at the cold facts of cold cash
The wrong way, and it was not me,

For wherever there's money, the world is busy,
As in wherever there's honey, the bee is busy,

And women can smile and men can get hard about cold cash,
And all over thieves and lawyers discuss contrabands
and private stash . . .

This time as I left the hospital with $25 for a cab and a hot lunch,
I had no bicameral dichotomous mind,
Because it was all due to the courtesy of the police,
And the ambulance who had to keep busy,
And the high rises in this city that keeps and
dwarfs the hospital hidden,
And it is not listed or advertised in the phone book,
For a revolutionary in a tenement nook.

This time it was not for simple crooks,
Nor for all the fizz in Manhattan,
Nor for all the piss in China,

This time it was for the way I live,
The way I had to live,
And there was no Zen verbal tricks,
For I was born in a house of red bricks,

And I come half way around the world to live in a house of wood,
Then the sheriff took me outside and in the snow I stood . . .

A homeless man has a homeless mind,
Because that's the way he has to live,
And no powers will give,

And so across the Man's boundless mind he roams,
And never, never finds he a rightful home . . .

Koon Woon
Chrysanthemum, Seattle
February 13, 1995
—from the collection: The Way I Had to Live

BROWNING, **CONT FROM P. 13**

As I began to realize that it lost its hold on me and I could begin to leave it. Michael Howell offered to ride the bus to the Gallery with me, and talked me through a trip downtown. I started coming to the homeless art gallery on a regular basis.

It gave me a place where, first of all, that merging of the personalities could happen. You can't just do that without interacting with people. You have to let them come out and express themselves.

Also, the art does that too. The struggle to get the realism and abstract balance is also a struggle between my two personalities' way of expressing themselves together. The Gallery is a sort of a practice area, more than anything else.

It's also a sort of a place where I can do for other people what those Hawaiian guys did for me. They gave me a place to retire everyday where I could be a human being and not be afraid. I can see how important that is to somebody. So it gives me a good feeling about my life now and what I'm doing.

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Adventures in Poetry

with © Dr. Wes Browning

Greetings Poetry Lovers!

Since I have embarked on these Adventures a number of you have asked "Why?" A poet in the full grip of his Muse, when asked this least poetic of questions, might answer "Why not?" But as my Muse has stepped out for a smoke, I say "Why indeed?"

Is it boredom? A neurological imbalance? Poor nutrition? Revenge against high school English teachers?

Yes, it is.

Let's talk about the poet's craft! Occasionally, an admirer of my Art will ask "©Dr., where do you get your ideas?" and usually I answer "I steal them" or "go away" or "what ideas?" So instead of talking about where I get my ideas — let's talk about the poet's craft!

OK. Once you had a poetry idea you still need:

1) A vocabulary

2) A mold to put it in.

Such a mold is called a "form." Forms come in many forms. Today I'll consider the so-called "sonnet" form. As you'll see, I won't need to know what this means.

To illustrate what we've learned so far, let's "craft" a "sonnet" right now! We'll begin with the idea "sidewalks are hard." Then we'll take someone else's sonnet to be our mold. We'll then change the words — here's where the vocabulary come sin — until they express our idea and not the other guy's. The sonnet I'll use is Shakespeare's #1 — which by the way, being his first, was not one of his best.

And here's what we get!

My First Sonnet or Opus 10, We're Into Two Digits!

©Dr. Wes Browning

Of city benches we desire increase
That THERE our weary ends might ever lie.
Though as the benches may by time surcease
Our childish rears might share their memor-EYE.

But SIDEWALKS 'tached to thine own thick thighs
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel*
Making a sore butt where fatness lies;
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet ass too cruel,

As that art now your prize, best ornament
(Though-Hardly-Herald-To-The-Gaudy-Spring!)
Upon thine own butt forsaketh thy conTENT
Your tender tush made waste by your sitting.

Pity the world, for lest these benches stay
Our precious ends will end as puree.

(*: I didn't understand this line so I didn't change it.)

Isn't that great? Try it yourself! Start from this sonnet or any other poem, use your own "idea" and you'll have your own brilliant poem in minutes. Or wait until next month and I'll show you an even easier way to write poems! Until then, happy poesing!

Questioning Priorities

Has Institutionalizing a Services Bureaucracy in Seattle Been a Good Thing?

John Fox

In 1977 there were 3-4 emergency shelters in Seattle- all located in downtown and serving about 150-200 people a night, mostly single adult males. By 1980, however, on any given nights it was estimated that there were as many as many as 2000 homeless people, city-wide on our streets, including families, children, youth, senior citizens, people of color, unemployed workers and those with mental illness.

Since that time, City Government has spent over 200 million dollars on low income housing production, adding 4000 subsidized units to the housing stock. Over a hundred million dollars has been spent on social services and shelters to help "transition" the homeless back into our community. This year, Seattle will commit an allocations of about 25 million dollars for housing production and renovation, and over 16 million dollars for social services and shelter programs serving the homeless. While most of these agencies and their staff are highly committed and do an extraordinary job, has is really brought us any closer to a solution?

Quite the contrary. Today, there are more people on our streets who are homeless then there were in 1980- over 3000-5000 people on any given day. And in spite of the fact that there now are 2300 shelter beds, city wide, hundreds of homeless people "squat" each night in abandoned buildings, sleep out in their cars, under bridges, or in our greenbelts (where the City does not hesitate to evict them).

In all, there are over 105 different city-funded non-profit community based agencies providing outreach, shelter, housing development, counseling, referrals, food, health-care, day programs and other services to the homeless community. It is an elaborate system that depends heavily upon the Mayor, City Council and corporate sector to ensure a continuos flow of state, county, city, federal and private dollars. But when an agency these funds, there is a price to be paid.

In return, staff and board-members of these non-profit organizations are expected to support the re-election campaigns of the Mayor and City Council and give support (or at least acquiesce) when they take position on key issues. Also, there is a growing tendency among service providers to avoid venturing into the larger political arena at all for fear of alienating funding sources. Many will no longer even show up at hearings-say to oppose the no-sitting law, or to defend the just cause eviction law- except of course when annual funding decisions are being made that will affect their program. (Certainly , there are notable exceptions, but these people are increasingly rare.)

Worst of all, few of the providers offer any challenge to the City's larger land-use, zoning, redevelopment and capital investment plans that continue to cause massive displacement of the loss of thousands of low cost housing units in our city- many more times the number we could ever replace with limited public funds. Like sparrows in search of a hand-out at Dick's Drive-In, some agencies will even hook-up with big developer schemes like the Seattle Commons hoping to benefit by providing the services to the people who will be kicked-out of their homes.

At this level, this social service bureaucracy becomes a crass "buffer", helping to insulate the city officials from challenges from below. Every ribbon cutting or ground-breaking of another housing or service program is useful in deflecting those of us who say they aren't doing enough. When the structural roots of our housing and homeless crisis demand extensive and direct challenges to public policy decisions that have caused homelessness on massive scale, these agencies and most of their staff are consciously or unwittingly acquiescing to the cooptive role they have come to play. Like the patronage systems that historically dominated older East-Coast cities, community-based social service agencies have become the new "ward heelers"

Despite these concerns, I strongly believe that the public should give its support to the 60 million dollar low income housing and social services levy in November . While a not-so-insignificant chunk of these dollars will go to support salaries and bureaucracy, most will be used for "bricks and mortar" and direct services. In fact, we need more dollars, not less, for human needs in Seattle. What we do spend enables us to assist only a fraction of those people who are displaced and it pales in relation to what our elected officials pour into downtown each year for projects like the Commons, Convention Center, and Nordstrom's.

But we must expect more from our elected officials and those who work within the social service and non-profit housing system. We are simply pouring money down a deep dark hole, if we do not accompany spending programs with a call for laws that can stop the loss of existing low income units. To do that, we need more people willing to directly confront the corporate and public decision-makers causing the loss of housing in this town- many more times the number of low cost units that we could ever replace with limited public funds.

An effective housing strategy would promised first on the preservation of the existing stock of low income housing, through the judicious use of the City's zoning and land use authority, and its emergency powers to block housing demolition and to ensure that developers pay their fair share of the replacement and relocation assistance costs, when losses do occur. Passage of a "right of first refusal" law (giving low income tenants an opportunity to secure public funds to buy their apartments before a developer could purchase and demolish that housing) also would help. And, we should focus on putting more low income tenants and the homeless in charge of the management and control of their own housing and the delivery of social services (instead of directing so many of our housing and social service dollars into professional salaries and administration).

To achieve these outcomes will require more from us all. But anyone who gets paid with tax dollars to "assist" the poor, has an absolute responsibility to do more than provide direct services (as hard and as thankless as such work often is). Providers must also be organizers who are willing to work in coequal roles with those they are assisting - young people, working class neighborhoods, communities of colors, poor and homeless people, senior citizens - to support their call for justice at the ballot box and in the form of good old fashion protest.

—John Fox is Director of the Seattle Displacement Coalition

"When the structural roots of our housing and homeless crisis demand extensive and direct challenges to public policy decisions that have caused homelessness on massive scale, these agencies and most of their staff are consciously or unwittingly acquiescing to the cooptive role they have come to play....We need more people willing to directly confront the corporate and public decision-makers causing the loss of housing in this town."

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Scargo Hotel
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The Gatewood
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King County Labor Council, AFL-CIO

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Near Grotto Falls

NEVER
Can I forget
That a River
in Montana
told me:

"You
Belong
Here."

FRIGHTENED,
Not of the River
But of

DEATH itself
I
LEFT

Seattle Saturday Night
frightened and exhausted
I
Eat a
croissant
(with difficulty).

In the middle of the
Seattle Night,

While people in the street below
LOUDLY fight
(to the DEATH?),

My upstairs neighbor
Falls repeatedly
Upon his floor, my ceiling
(In who knows
WHAT state?)

And, Dear Michele,
There's ALWAYS
the
TRAFFIC: ...NOW, the leaf-blower starts:
1:30AM

—Marion Sue Fischer

The Over - Fiftly Blues

to Derek

SITTING,
Sipping prune juice
On the mental health ward
(where they patch me up.... Again)

Listening to a lapsed Mormon
Newly - divorced from his parents
Just like Tom Thumb's Blues

"Doin" Bob Dylan;

BETTER than
Bob
Dylan

—Marion Sue Fischer

The Coal And The Diamond

One day a diamond in the Earth's crust
Spoke to a piece of coal and she
was complaining, somewhat, about
the uneventful nature of
Her existence
and how things had been much the same
since eons ago when she was formed

And the piece of coal said
Be glad
Because once you become caught up in
eventful existence, there is no rest,
not ever.
One day you are a monkey
Then you're a maggot
Then you're a bird, soaring
Then you're a monkey again,
A turd, a tree, a piece of fruit
A monkey
Until you are a wolf
And so it goes
No rest for the weary, nor the wicked,
nor even the dead
I am my own offspring and that which I hated
Becomes what I am
Be glad. Be glad you're a damned diamond,
stuck in the Earth's crust.

And a lost wedding ring on the ground above commented:
Once I was a coin, used to purchase a concubine
Back in Roman times. Once I was hidden...well, I won't say
where, but you can imagine, Miss Coal, with what you've
experienced!
The diamond and the coal looked her way and said
Nobody was talking to you.

—John Hoffman

Beneath the Sky

I net (the) ochre stars from the night sky
beside me she is drunk, she is speaking
in her native language. I've listened
to crickets, sagebrush and coyote.
Yet I do not truly understand her.

I cannot mix the colors of the morning.
I tell her this and announce
that I intend to exchange
or get a refund
for my dollar timepiece.

I dream of a woman climbing a hill
with a plastic bag.
I dream of a woman howling at the moon
she is still beside me. As spider webs lash
skyward and a pine cone falls to earth

—Earle Thompson

POETRY

Breakdown: Lost

Thank you, Tim Harris and Joanna Taylor

WHEN
Your center will not hold
WHEN
Your center is GONE

WHEN
YOU
BECOME
(simply)
The tattered clothes
upon your bony back
Your few belongings
(if ANY)
The food you eat
(if ANY)
(your clothes wear *you* . . .)

WHEN
You dread the morning
EACH morning
Having *no idea*
What
to
do
upon awakening
(not even go-to-the-bathroom
brush your (rotting) teeth
comb your wild, knotted hair)

WHEN
The sound of your Name
(the *wound* of your name)
Spoken even by those
(if ANY)
Concerned about you
Scratches pain upon your nerves

WHEN
Friends spend agonizing hours
Writing your obituary

(a farewell to someone
you believe
they never knew . . .)

WHEN
Those around you
Indeed
Feared and alien beings
Related to one another
but not to you . . .

AND
you are the ONLY human
Left
on
Earth

WHEN
Your never-ending conversations
with God
Become your only joy
Your only rudder
And you are convinced
He *wants* you
(as "I Shall Be Released"
plays on the stereo
giving you hope:
"any day now, any day now . . .")

WHEN
Your surroundings
Speak in loud language
Telling stories
in puns
of symbolic interpretation
Punctuated by your own shallow breath
(the Rainbow rug, the blind windows
eye win ' dow pain, eye a-door jam . . .)
"Reading the Room"
Your only recreation
WHEN you dare open your eyes . . .

WHEN
You dare not MOVE or speak
For fear of
Changing
the
Universe

AND
Some ask
"Why are you
Doing this to yourself?"
(as if you *had*
a "self" to *do* it
or do it *to* . . .)

WHEN
You look furtively in a mirror (mira!)
To see IF
you're
still
here

AND
They bend OVER you
And ask
"Are you confused?"

THEN
You have lost
ALL
BUT
YOUR
LIFE.

* * * * * * *

ADDENDA:
To misquote Shakespeare: "Whom God wants,
He would first make mad . . ."

About "confusion:" My first (internal) reaction to their query was, "What the fuck is THAT?" Many years later, I wrote: "Confusion is merely a BAD ATTITUDE about having *more than one opinion* about something AT THE SAME TIME!"

—Marion Sue Fischer

LEVY, CONT. FROM P. 5

Their position is that the previous levy not only didn't alleviate housing problems, but that City policies actually contributed to the local housing disaster. They claim that Proposition 1 is motivated, not by social concern, but by profit seeking.

They state that statistics provided by Proposition 1 proponents are erroneous, and point to the need for a King County Levy that requires the remainder of county residents to share in the cost. They go on to state, "Three times as many units could have been provided if the City explored cost-efficient solutions, including rental assistance certificates that house people in their own neighborhoods."

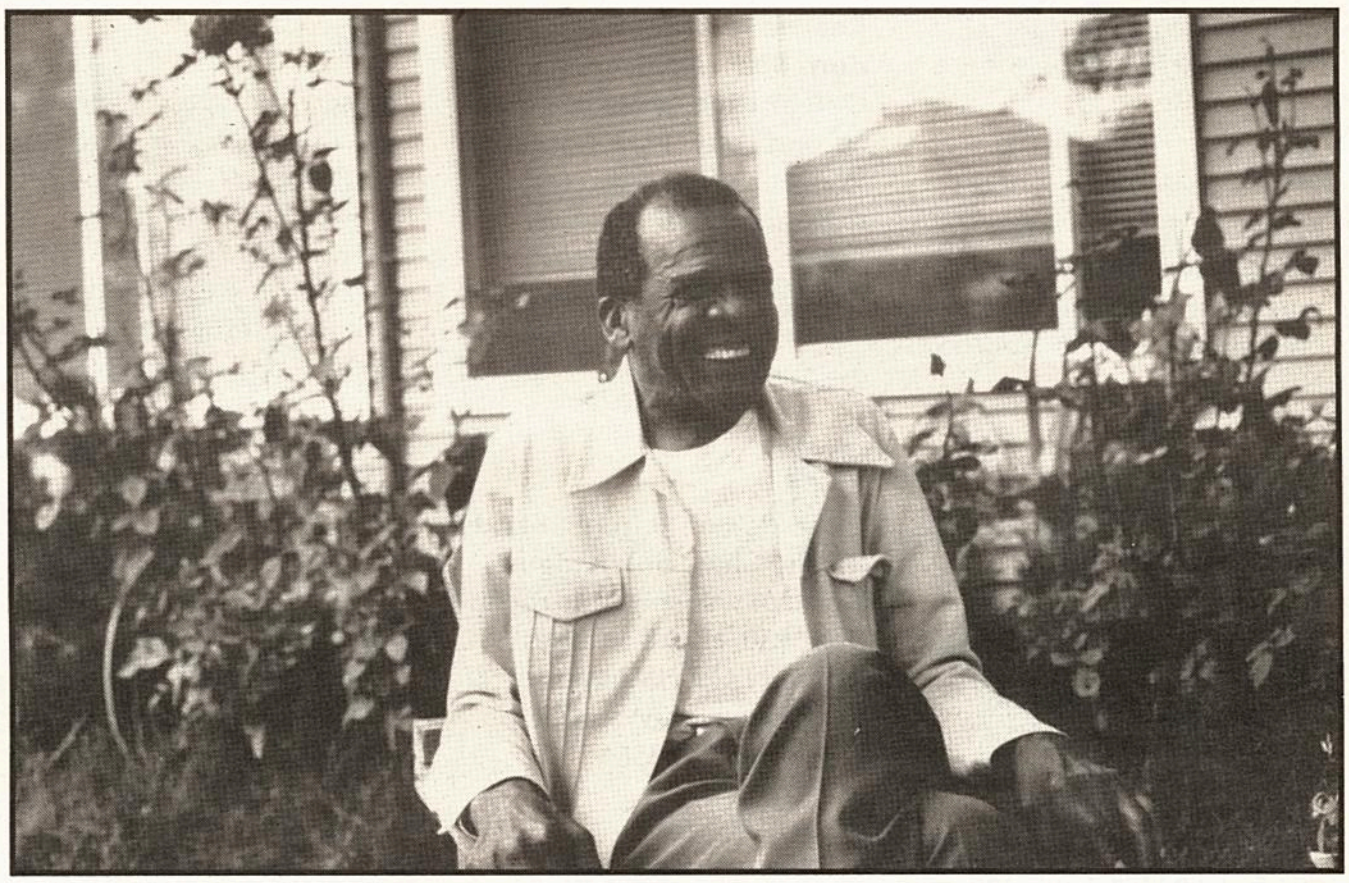
Also opposed to the proposition, not surprisingly, is the Apartment Association of Seattle/King County (AASK). AASK too, endorses the idea of housing vouchers being issued to those in need.

It doesn't take a financial wizard to deduce that AASK members most certainly stand to benefit financially from a plan that gives vouchers to existing landlords, rather than creating new housing. This also calls into question the wisdom of Proposition 1 opponents even suggesting a "profit motive" by the proposal's supporters.

The supporters, if you're interested, being the many families and individuals helped by the previous levy (Brief case histories are being publicized by YES for Homes, Foundation for Success), and, to name just a few, local businesses and residents who have committed their time and money to the low-income housing campaign. Including; The Boeing Company at $25,000, Seafirst at $20,000, The Committee for the Seattle Commons at $15,000, Priscilla Collins at $10,000, Key Bank at $10,000, U.S. West Communications, U.S. Bank, Starbucks, Microsoft, Washington Mutual Savings Bank, Weyerhaeuser, and many campaign volunteers.

Is this "yellow journalism"? Maybe. Biased? Probably. But then, why would Real Change publish an article by someone who didn't support low-income housing? And besides, let's face it, opponents to Proposition 1 probably aren't going to buy a copy of this paper anyway.

Call 448-9757 to volunteer and send your donations to Yes for Homes



LEON, A RETIRED UW PURCHASING AGENT, HAS BEEN A RESIDENT OF HAZEL PLAZA FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS. HAZEL PLAZA'S AFFORDABLE RENT ALLOWS LEON AND HIS PRIZED ROSE BUSHES TO CONTINUE TO BLOOM. PHOTO BY TOM PHILLIPS

MAILBAG, CONT FROM P. 3

Homelessness brings to mind hanging heads, scuffing, shuffling feet. Beaten down. Tell 'em all to go to hell, Tell 'em I'm no more home less than she is dis placed.

I'm a pioneer. I'm a pilgrim. I've found a way to survive without a roof. I'm smart. I'm streetwise. I'm hungry and I endure it. I can look you in the eye, businessman who calls me homeless, and see through you. I'm wise.

In Victorian times they used euphemisms to cover up truth. In their case they couldn't talk about sex. Even the table leg was something else. God forbid a tree should have a crotch. These days. it's the poor and the outcasts who scare them so, who threaten certain foundations.

Whatever happened to "Hallelujah I'm a Bum? I used to play that song on the Piano when I was a little girl. Gleeful to be singing the words "Oh why don't I work like the other men do? How the hell can I work when the sky is so blue?"

When they take away our language they take away our power. Let's think of another word, OK? Let's think of lots of words to define us by; let's set them to music and sing them O.K? Call us pilgrims.

Mom,
Seattle

P.S. I like the name *Real Change*. It's got fist in the gist. Keep it.

Dear *Real Change*,

We are writing to request the editorial committee reconsider its decision not to print "Institutionalizing Homelessness in Seattle."

We both strongly believe that the issues aired in the piece are matters that have to be discussed if we are ever to come to grips with the problem of homelessness in our community. People who are our friends, in some cases our good friends, have recently taken stands in support of projects that we believe will cause massive displacement in our community.

Some of these agencies also stand to benefit from these projects. Also, recently representatives of the service provider and housing developer communities have formed a political action group, which instead of taking principled stands on behalf of alternative candidates (and calling for change in our city council), seem to be supporting the status quo (endorsing mostly incumbents).

These positions, we believe, are inimical to ever solving the problem of homelessness in our community, and makes us wonder just what in the heck is going on. Why are there fewer and fewer service providers who are also housing advocates (of course, there are notable examples of those working within the system who are vigorous advocates including great people who support and work on *Real Change*), but these people increasingly are the exceptions. This is what the article attempts to address by describing the problem and suggesting "constructive" solutions.

Otherwise, we strongly believe the rift between service providers and advocates can only grow and as a consequence move us even further away from real solutions to poverty and homelessness in our community.

We urge you to reconsider your position. A dialogue must occur on this matter, and *Real Change* is the vehicle to accomplish that.

We recently appreciated the piece you did on the Lutheran Compass Center—an editorial we strongly agreed with. It is a shame that the *Seattle Times* did not choose to print it. Would it not be unfortunate and sadly ironic if we also had to go to another newspaper—perhaps the *Times*—to get our story out and aired.

John Fox
Joe Martin
Seattle Displacement Coalition

Ed. Note: The Editorial Committee, in the interest of creating "a forum where the many perspectives that exist regarding poverty and homelessness can find expression" has reconsidered, and the article appears in this issue. We encourage responses from our readers.

Dear Real Change,

I am writing to you about life in the streets of Seattle.First of all I want to say that I enjoyed last month's issue which had an article on illegal train riding. I have always wondered what it was like ever since I heard that song by Arlo Gutherie.

It makes no sense to me how some people get to thinking that they are better then some people, especially when they are all in the same boat

I've noticed that some of those people working at the missions and other places will argue with you. There is nothing worse than arguing and there is nothing else that can make these places ugly as fast as this. If you ask me, arguing is even worse than the cockroaches that might be infesting the place.

Some of these missions and other places fire those workers who yell and harass street people.

I know that it is possible for those workers to get the respect of all street people. There is this man that deals with real street people that don't even go to missions - they sleep outside. If that man at Operation Nightwatch can get the respect of real street people, then those workers at the missions and elsewhere should be able to also.

John Austin
Seattle

CALENDAR

October

2

Monday, 7 p.m., Mental Illness Awareness Week candlelight gathering, University Presbyterian Church, 4540 15th NE 7:30 p.m.,

3

Tuesday, noon, "The Mayan People of Guatemala: Participation, Reconciliation, and Peace," with 1992 Nobel Peace Prize Recipient Rigoberta Menchu Tum, sponsored by GUASO and others, suggested $7 donation to benefit Rigoberta Menchu Tum Foundation to help indigenous and poor of Guatemala, Broadway Performance Hall Central Community College, info 367-3567, 723-1913, or 781-9653

5

Thursday, noon, Protect Medicare Rally, Harborview Medical Center, 325 9th near Jefferson, info 723-6511

6-7

Friday, Saturday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Real Change Junk-a-thon. Rummage Sale to Benefit the Homeless Newspaper, 2129 2nd Ave. Call 441-3247 for more info.

6:30 - 10 p.m. Panel Sessions, Sat, 8 a.m.- noon Workshops "Plutonium Roundtable", A Public Education Project on Policy Choices for nuclear weapons disposal, Sponsored by Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility and the League of Women Voters of Washington, Mountaineer's Building, 300 3rd Ave., info 547-2630

8

Sunday, noon - 6 p.m., Seattle Peace Concert - Columbus Got Lost Concert, Don Glenn & the Wombats with special guest Issac Scott, Crosseyed Cat, Drums! (Bring a drum or other rhythm instrument), Gasworks Park, busline #26, Please Bring Food Bank Donations (Non-perishable Food Items).

7 p.m., Seattle Branch Woman's International League for Peace and Freedom 80th Anniversary Celebration, presenting the historical play "Most Dangerous Women", ASL interpreted, suggested $3 - 8 donation, tickets: Bailey-Coy Books or Red & Black Books, Museum of History and Industry, 2700 24th Ave E,info 329-3666

12

Thursday, 6 - 8 p.m., Sarah Brady, Chair of Handgun Control will speak at reception, $30, Health Sciences Building, 1 Court, University of Washington,info Washington Cease Fire 322-7564

13

Friday, 7:30 p.m., Seattle Area Farm Workers Support Group presents a Victory Celebration for the successful Election for Union Representation at Chateau Ste Michelle, program, music, dancing, doors open 7, IBEW Hall, 2700 1st Ave in Belltown, info Dan Hawes 443-7645

7:30 p.m., A Conference on "The Love of Violence", sponsored by University of Washington, Ernest Becker Foundation and UW Dept of Comparative Religion, keynote address by Dr. Paul Colinvaux, Kane Hall, info 232-2994

14

Saturday, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Cross of Christ "Eastside on Population", a Zero Population Growth Conference with speakers and film, presenters include Alan Brooks, U.N. Association; Ron Fasano, Seattle Zero Population Growth; Anne Torre, participant in Beijing Women's Conference, Lutheran Church, 411 156th Ave NE, Bellevue, info 643-8923

15

Sunday , potluck 5:00 p.m., program 6:30, Nongovernmental Organizations Forum on Women in conjunction with the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, program with Nan McMurry and other women recently returned from Beijing, China,Woodland Park Presbyterian Church, 225 North 70th at Greenwood, Seattle Chapter Fellowship of Reconciliation, info 789-5565

19

Thursday and subsequent 3rd Thursdays, 7:30 A.M., International Women's Day Committee informal community building and networking meetings, Elliott Bay Bookstore Cafe, 1st South at Main, info Lexie 587-3854 or Louise 632-8547

Thursday, 7 p.m., Lorena Robles, a Guatemalan Labor leader will speak on "The Union Movement and the Peace Process in Guatemala", suggested $5 donation, to benefit Grassroots Guatemala, a project of Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala, Seattle Labor Temple Hall 6, 2700 1st Ave, info 441-7364 or 781-7653

21

Saturday, 8 p.m., Presentation Sarajevo: Behind God's Back, Washington Refugee Resettlement Benefit ofperformance, Group Theatre, Seattle Center House, $25, tickets 464 12th Ave Suite 220, Seattle 98122

22

Sunday, 2 p.m., Concert to benefit Fellowship of Reconciliation and Celebrate the United Nations, featuring folksinger Tom Rawson as master of ceremonies, Israeli Bass Or Ben Natan, Mexican guitarist and vocalist Jackie Rahimi, East Indian Dancers, and performers from Beacon United Methodist Church, Beacon United Methodist Church, 7301 Beacon S, busline #36, info 789-5565

22

Sunday, 7 p.m., Noam Chomsky speaking on "Bringing The Third World Home" Benefit for Olympia Political-Cultural Center, sponsored by Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace, $6 - 12, tickets available Scarecrow Video in Seattle, Capitol Theater, 206 East 5th Ave, Downtown Olympia, info Pete Bohmer 360/866-6000, X6431 or e-mail bohmerp@elwha.evergreen.edu

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Monday, noon, Noam Chomsky speaking on "Prospects For World Order", free, sponsored by Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace, College Recreation Center, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, info Pete Bohmer 360 866-6000, X6431 or e-mail bohmerp@elwha.evergreen.edu

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Saturday, 7:30 p.m., Radical Women Holloween Party, fall harvest buffet, dancing, comedy spoofs, costume contest. New Freeway Hall, 5018 Ranier Ave. S., For info, rides, or childcare, call 722-6057 or 722-2453 two days in advance

November

2

Thursday, Kadima and Bet Aleph will host Rodger Kamenetz, author of the Jew and the Lotus, relating historic dialogue between Jews and the Dalai Lama of Tibet, info 382-0322

11

Saturday, 6:30 p.m., auction, dinner, and music to benefit the local Bosnian Student Project, offering refuge and education, sponsored by Fellowship of Reconciliation and others, Olympia Center, 222 N Columbia,Olympia, advance tickets required, $12 - 15, info 360-491-9093

11

Saturday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., A Celebration of the Reawakening of Indigenous People", sponsored by the Greater Good Foundation and the Akhewoode Foundation, University Friends Center, 4001 9th Ave NE, info 323-5697

Special Thanks to Jean at buskin@u.washington.edu. Please send notices regarding homeless, housing,. poverty related, or other progressive events to Real Change, 2129 2nd Ave., 948121, 441-3247. Confirmation of listed events is advised.