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# Real CHANGE

VOL. 6, NO. 23, DECEMBER, 1999

**Selma  
Waldman  
and the  
Art of  
Memory**

**Safe  
Links  
Offers a  
Friend on  
the Street**

**TU  
Organizer  
Siobhan  
Ring Kicks  
Butt**

**Agitating  
Homeless  
Women  
Talk in  
Circles**

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION PROJECT

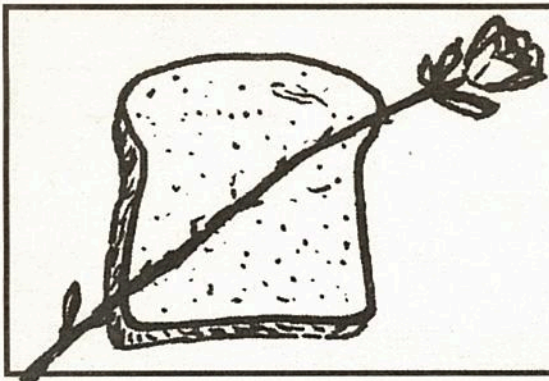
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COVER ART BY SELMA WALDMAN

Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless

Dec. 1999



## Safe Links

### Making life for street teens a little safer

BY ADAM HOLDORF

Greg McCormack was familiar with weird situations on the sidewalks where he worked. When he heard the tail light of the Safe Links van shatter, he promptly followed the group of leather-clad inebriates walking down Broadway.

Polite and articulate, McCormack avoided fights. But he stood his ground, even when one of the men brandished a stick in his face. "We're out here providing a service, helping the community," McCormack told his foes. "Why did you do that?" By the time the men began making physical threats, police had arrived. McCormack went back to his territory — the Safe Links van he manages, a van that makes its weekly round to homeless youth on Capitol Hill and the University District.

Every Monday night McCormack and a staff of volunteer doctors weather the elements, driving the Safe Links van to areas where homeless youth gather. The van connects children with medical and mental health resources. Presently, there are upwards of 500 young people homeless in Seattle every night. Many are infected with HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, and hepatitis C.

According to Seattle Children's Home, there are two major issues that haunt homeless youth: Survival, which means food, clothes, and a place to live; and medical concerns, mostly related to sexual abuses. A sister program, Street Links, addresses the concerns of food and clothing; Safe Links addresses the medical concerns. Volunteer doctors

dress wounds, soothe blisters, and hand out balm for skin rashes and other diseases inherent to homelessness

#### The street's open door

**"The same kids I worked with in the hospitals are now out here. They've been through traditional help and it didn't work."**

**Greg McCormack,  
Safe Links**

Earlier this year, the Seattle Children's Home started Safe Links with a \$300,000 grant from the Department of Health and Human Services. The program is slated to run for at least three years, depending upon its success and level of assistance to homeless youth. Safe Links provides preliminary care. Individuals in need of serious attention are transferred to clinics, where they receive comprehensive medical treatment.

McCormack hosts many of the van's open door, impromptu counseling sessions. After two decades at traditional hospitals — where he shuttled patients in the door, administered pills, and scooted them out again — McCormack considers himself a refugee from the hospital-based mental health treatment that fails many of the young people he serves. "The same kids I worked with in the hospitals are now out here," McCormack explained recently. The rain was beating steadily, and

*Continued to page 8*

## Strong Women Unite

### An interview with organizer Siobhan Ring

BY TODD MATTHEWS

Siobhan Ring is regarded by many as one of the most talented young organizers in Seattle. Currently, Ring is Lead Organizer at the Tenants Union — a non-profit, membership-based organization providing information to Washington State tenants and fighting for stronger tenants' rights since 1976.

As a student, Ring worked at the Women's Resource Center of Winona, Minnesota — the first women's shelter in that state to open its doors to battered lesbians. Soon after, Ring was selected to attend the Organizing Apprenticeship Project, where she received some of the best organizing training available. She later moved to Seattle, Washington, where she participated in a union drive at Borders Books & Music and, later, joined the Tenants Union.

*Real Change* met with Ring at the Tenants Union offices in the Rainier Valley. An energetic, self-described "talker," Ring offered insight into her work as an activist and organizer at the Tenants Union, her concerns for renters in Seattle, and her goals as a woman activist and organizer in the Pacific Northwest.

**REAL CHANGE:** Why did you decide to be an organizer at the Tenants Union, as opposed to other organizations?

**SIOBHAN RING:** The Tenants Union is so cool because we bring together low-income folks from all walks of life and help them take charge of their lives. Some members are on welfare and some are working families and some are senior citizens. There is an incredible scope of people. Organizing at the Tenants Union is about challenging the economic structure that makes it so hard to meet your basic need of shelter.

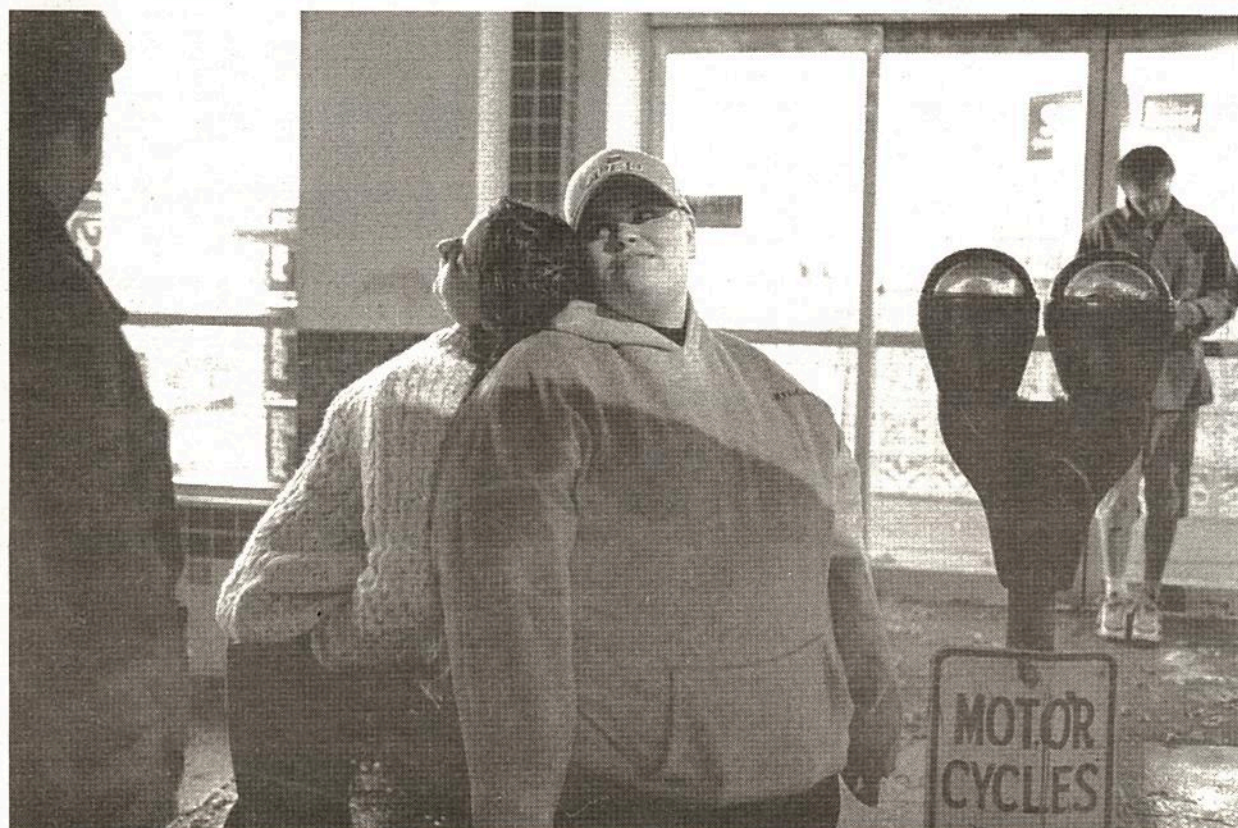
As an organizer, it is amazing because we get to bring these folks together from different places, with different experiences, and channel those experiences of economic suffering into understanding and using one's power to change the world in small ways. I could organize on another issue — I'm not bound to the Tenants Union — but I have to be able to do these things, and the Tenants Union is a good place to do that: Use the power that tenants have to make changes.

**RC:** What are some challenges you face as a female activist and organizer in Seattle?

**RING:** I face a higher risk when I go out door-to-door; I am cognizant of the safety risks involved with that. I have been in plenty of situations where I thought, "This is not safe. I have to go." And when I canvassed in college, I had some unsafe moments.

Also, there are certain realities about how people in power respond to women as opposed to men. I

*Continued to page 14*



ON THE STREETS, WHERE TRUST IS HARD TO COME BY, SAFE LINKS IS GETTING A GOOD REP. PHOTO BY ERIK CASTRO.

# Real CHANGE

**Puget Sound's Voice of the  
Poor and Homeless**

*Real Change* is published the first and fifteenth of each month and is sold by the poor and homeless of Seattle. Annual subscriptions are available for \$35. All material is copyrighted to the authors. Submissions are encouraged and should be mailed to "Real Change," 2129 2nd Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. Tel. (206) 441-3247.

On the Web at  
<http://www.realchangenews.org>  
Email [rchange@speakeasy.org](mailto:rchange@speakeasy.org)  
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*Real Change* vendors receive 70¢ of the \$1.00 paid for this paper.

## Mission Statements:

*Real Change* organizes, educates, and builds alliances to find community-based solutions to homelessness and poverty.

## Goals

Provide a foundation for grassroots organizing.  
Publish the views of marginalized communities.  
Create direct economic opportunity.  
Build bridges with a broad range of allies in the struggle against poverty.

The Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that sponsors the StreetLife Gallery, StreetWrites, and the Homeless Speakers Bureau. The RCHEP raises the voices of the poor by supporting cultural, artistic, and literary expression to place a human face on homelessness and poverty. All donations to the RCHEP support these programs and are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

## Editorial Policy

Articles appearing in *Real Change* reflect the opinions and perspectives of the authors. We encourage the submission of journalism, opinion, fiction, poetry, and artwork, and hope to create a forum where the many perspectives on 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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From the voicemail:

Hi my name is Paul, and, regrettably, I'm a resident in public housing. The advertisement on page 17 of the newspaper I purchased today — I take great exception that you accepted that advertisement. I understand that you need money and need to keep the paper going, but that's a conflict of interest. Seattle Housing Authority is not a bunch of benevolent human beings that treat us like good people. Quite the contrary. I object. I wish you wouldn't do this

again. It's misleading. And thank you.

*Reply from Editor:* I disagree. The SHA ad is labelled "paid advertisement." Most people would interpret this as indicating bias. When our Editorial Committee takes on the Housing Authority, you can be sure that our ad revenue is the furthest thing from our minds. A review of past articles will make that clear. Moreover, unlike with cigarettes or alcohol, there are no scientific

studies indicating that SHA is bad for all people. Some have good experiences; others do not. A testimonial in an advertisement is clearly one person's experience. The less flattering perspectives will always be left out of SHA's own promotional material. That is where a free press is useful. Let the buyer beware.

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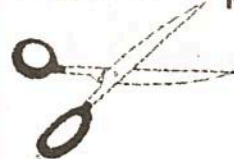
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# Making a Difference

*Real Change* is more than you think

**T**his little paper reaches and helps a whole lot of people with very few resources. Every month, about 30,000 papers go out our door. Every month, about 150 people use *Real Change* to improve their lives.

Sometimes, the difference we can make is profound. People grow. Others are touched in ways that change the way they see.

At *Real Change*, everyone knows they are valued. Through the paper, our vendors connect with people who care. People like you. Relationships are built. Everyone matters.

## Timothy Harris

But our newspaper is only the most visible part of what we do. Our Homeless Empowerment Project ensures that homeless people have the tools they need to have a voice of their own. Look at what we've accomplished this year:

- Since *Real Change* started publishing twice a month last January, circulation has risen by 25 percent. Our vendors are getting great reader feedback. People say we're getting better all the time. That means more people reading *Real Change*, and more income for our vendors. Our paper creates powerful opportunity for self-help and advocacy in Seattle.
- We've initiated a whole new program. The **MacWorkshop** offers six fast computers with internet access. Everyday, all day, our workshop terminals are full. Participants are often using a computer for the first time. They access e-mail, surf the web, and learn to use programs like Word and Typing Tutor. We offer individual assistance as well as group workshops in a variety of programs. Last week, we received a small

grant from the City of Seattle to purchase GED high school equivalency exam software for the lab.

- Our **Homeless Speakers Bureau** is booming. Just this October, five different speakers went to nine different venues. These included freshman orientations at the University of Washington, a meeting of the Older Women's League, a VISTA volunteer meeting, an ESL class, and nursing students from St. Martin's College. Through the speakers bureau, people are able to learn about poverty directly from homeless people themselves.
- **StreetWrites**, our peer support group for homeless writers, meets three days a week. They have published an anthology of poetry, as well as their own quarterly publication, *Out of the Margins*, which is distributed for free among the homeless. StreetWrites has performed publicly as the Bedless Bards on more than 10 occasions this year, and hopes to soon take their show to the Seattle schools.
- Our **Home Computer Program** gets your giveaways to those who really need them. We've passed on 20 computers to the newly housed. Our readers donate older macs to us, and we rehab them for those getting a new start. A lot of people have been made very happy through this one small service.
- **StreetLife Gallery** continues to offer homeless artists a place off the street where creative community can form among the very poor. This workshop and gallery at 2nd and Bell offers 20 private workspaces and a large common area with art supplies for everyone's use. StreetLife

is a place where the lonely and isolated can find some company and create some beauty.

- We've played a lead role in forming the **First Things First Coalition**, a group of activists and service providers dedicated to more humane priorities downtown and a greater role for homeless people themselves in affecting the programs that serve them. First Things First has responded strongly to a City proposal to create an outcomes-based computer tracking system. We want homeless people's concerns regarding computer tracking to be heard loud and clear, and have devoted staff resources to this critical organizing task.

I wish I could say homelessness was going away. I wish I could say our strong local economy is lifting people out of poverty. I can't. The need is

greater than ever. This year's mid-night-to-4 a.m. street count in downtown Seattle found 1,013 homeless people outdoors in late-October, a 25 percent increase over last year.

You can assume a whole lot of people didn't get counted.

*Real Change* is here to see that the people left in the cold are not invisible to everyone.

As always, all of our work happens with a very small staff and a tight budget. All of our program — the paper, the gallery, the computer workshop,

the writers group, the speakers bureau, the coalition building — relies on three full-time staff, two interns, and a bunch of volunteers. Your donations are stretched as far as possible to build power and community among those who often have the least and need the most.

Your gift will build opportunity, community, and self-advocacy for the poor in Seattle. This holiday season, help the homeless find their voice. Make a generous donation to *Real Change*.

Donations to our *Real Change* Homeless Empowerment Project (RCHEP) are tax-deductible, and will be applied to our empowerment projects. Those made to *Real Change* are not, but will be applied to our work on the paper itself. All donors will receive a copy of the new StreetWrites poetry anthology, *The Circle of Family*, as a thank you gift from our writers to you.

Help us make every human life count. Please give generously today. ☐

**"Real Change is here to see that the people left in the cold are not invisible to everyone."**

## Beyond Charity

Support justice and dignity for all

**T**his little paper, which now publishes twice a month, receives no foundation or government support, and your donations matter a lot. *Real Change* depends upon the grassroots support of our readers to do a lot with very little money. Your contribution goes beyond simple charity. *Real Change* helps people help themselves while they work for a more just world for everyone. Donations to the Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project (RCHEP) are tax deductible and support our work with StreetWrites, StreetLife Gallery, the Macworkshop computer lab, and the Homeless Speakers Bureau. Checks written to *Real Change* are not tax deductible, and support the newspaper itself.

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## Jesus does the right thing

**S**HARE/WHEEL RECENTLY RECEIVED AGREEMENTS from two Seattle churches to set up week-long tent cities during the World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial. Profound concern about the homeless community's safety and survival during WTO moved two churches — Crown Hill United Methodist (8500 14th Avenue NW) and Seattle Advent Christian Church (1300 E. Olive Street) — to host 50-person Tent Cities from Sunday, November 28th through Sunday, December 5th in their parking lots.

"We are called to make a public witness to those who are marginalized," said Pastor Judy Schultz of Crown Hill United Methodist. "This is a temporary response to an emergency. We asked ourselves, 'What would Jesus do?'"

According to SHARE/WHEEL, homeless people need to camp together during WTO for their own safety and protection. "We are doing this to help our Seattle homeless community remain safe and protected during the WTO," said Ruth Worrell, a recently homeless WHEEL member. SHARE/WHEEL has battled with the City of Seattle for a tent city during WTO for much of this year. At press time, it is unclear whether the Mayor's Office will confront SHARE/WHEEL when they establish the Tent Cities, or allow them to proceed as planned.

—Michele Marchand

## Noise we can live with

**T**HOUGH THE SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL was foiled by Mayor Paul Schell's veto of the most recent noise ordinance, they are presently considering a new and revised plan. But according to Tim Crowley of Free Speech Seattle, there is still cause for concern. "It's basically the same ordinance," says Crowley. "It has the same subjective wording about what exactly is 'offensive noise.' And it leaves exceptions for construction, airplanes, and much of the other noise that city residents regularly complain about." Crowley is so concerned by the new plan — as well as what he views as the city's "adversarial" view of area artists, musicians and youth — that he and Free Speech Seattle staged a demonstration at the Municipal building on November 11, 1999.

Crowley sees two steps toward a successful noise ordinance: Public input and objectivity.

"A reasonable noise ordinance starts with bringing people together for public hearings," says Crowley. "Also, the noise ordinance has to be objective. Subjective laws that are left to the discretion of police officers are ludicrous and open to abuse, which we see happen time and time again. If they are talking about this as a health issue, let's approach it from a scientific standpoint. Let's measure the sound. Let's decide what amount of sound is unhealthy, and let's measure that sound. The ordinance has to be reasonable and objective."

It has been more than a month since the noise ordinance was passed and then promptly vetoed. In October, the city council indicated they would review and revise the rejected noise ordinance. But there have been few if any new developments or announcements from city hall regarding the ordinance. Many people watching this process, including Crowley, believe the city council has shelved revision plans until the new council is seated. At that point, Crowley and others hope to be invited to the city council discussions regarding said ordinance.

"If you bring everyone together and talk about it, and start with the basis of it has to be objective and fair and measurable," says Crowley, "I think then you will find a noise ordinance that everyone can live with. Everyone may not be happy with it, but they will at least be able to live with it."

—Todd Matthews

## LIHI does it again

**A**N ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD of Frye Hotel residents, funders, supporters and Pioneer Square neighbors attended the November 12th Open House to celebrate the renovation of the historic Frye Hotel. Over \$17 million was raised to acquire and complete the renovation of 234 units of low-income housing in Pioneer Square. "This celebration today is to thank the many people who participated in the successful preservation of one of the largest Section 8 buildings in the entire state," stated Sharon Lee, Executive Director of the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI), the owner of the building. "The Frye Hotel will remain as affordable housing for low-income seniors, families and disabled people for the next 50 to 75 years."

Renovation of the Frye Hotel did not come easily. The building was close to being converted to market rate housing. The former owners, after twenty years, wanted to get out of the Section 8 program and prepay their HUD mortgage. If LIHI had not raised the funds in time to purchase the Frye Hotel, the owners were ready to sell it to a for-profit developer who had made a back-up offer to buy the building. David Label, one of the former owners of the building, told the audience that he was directed by the other owners to start emptying the fully occupied building if LIHI did not come up with funds to buy it in 1997.

Low income families and individuals will be able to pay 30% of their in-

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come for rent, and Section 8 rental assistance from HUD will make up the difference to pay for on-going maintenance. LIHI was able to secure additional financing from HUD under the McKinney SRO Moderate Rehabilitation Program. Forty-eight of the 234 units are now set aside for homeless people transitioning off the streets or out of shelters.

—Katy Carter

## Have crowbar, will occupy

**N**EARLY FIVE-DOZEN ACTIVISTS TOOK OVER A VACANT DOWNTOWN BUILDING near the corner of the 9th and Virginia on Sunday, November 29, 1999. "It is absurd and insane that buildings such as these sit empty, while people remain homeless on the street," said John, an activist from Oregon, who spoke with reporters after spending the night inside the building. A banner furled over the side of the building, proclaiming "Housing Is A Right, Not A Privilege," was visible from the street. In addition, many protestors and activists were seen on the roof and inside, on the second and third floors of the building.

According to officer Clem Benton at the Seattle Police Department (SPD), police contacted the owner of the building. When asked what sort of charges the activists faced, officer Benton indicated that would be determined by the building's owner. "If the owner wants to press charges," said officer Benton, "the individuals would face trespassing and burglary infractions." The SPD also worked with the Seattle Fire Department and the Seattle Health Department regarding the situation.

Several activists commented that the power and water had been shut off in the building. Officer Benton would not confirm such information, nor did he indicate the extent of any dialogue between activists inside the building and police officers outside.

According to one activist who spoke with reporters after spending the night inside, the World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial was an ideal platform for extending the message of the crisis of homelessness in the United States. "There are hundreds of buildings like this in cities all over the country," added the activist, who refused to provide his name. "This building sits empty and unoccupied, when it could be used for housing."

—Todd Matthews



EVEN A WAREHOUSE IS BETTER THAN THE STREET. STREET KIDS AND OTHERS STAGE TAKE OVER AT 9TH & VIRGINIA. PHOTO BY KATE ANISOWICZ

## Hitler liked structure too

**T**HE CITY COUNCIL LAST MONTH APPROVED A \$90,000 LINE ITEM in the amended city budget to get the ball rolling on computer tracking of the homeless. The new line item sets aside money for a consultant who will study ways to implement the system.

Councilmember Peter Steinbruek, the author of Safe Harbors, a council resolution calling for outcomes-based tracking of services to the homeless, rejected the addition of new language that would address concerns regarding privacy and compulsory participation. He did, however, amend his resolution to admit the possibility that the new system may not be computerized.

"It better be computerized," huffed Councilmember Margaret Pageler. The Pageler, speaking of her experience with children and others, opined that "Structure is the path of love." Other councilors warmly chimed their agreement.

While Councilors publicly state the new system will simply "improve services" without punishing the non-compliant, we suspect a much broader agenda. Time will tell.

—Timothy Harris

# Mary's Place

New homeless women's space is just the beginning.

BY TODD MATTHEWS

"It's nice to have a safe place off the street, where homeless women are welcomed," said Marie, as she addressed a group of fellow homeless women. Marie was speaking to a room filled with several dozen people — mostly women — who celebrated the opening of Mary's Place — a new day center for homeless women and their children. "A home base to come to can be very reassuring."

A home base. A feeling of sisterhood. A place of hospitality. These were all themes of the opening of Mary's Place last month — themes that Reverend Patricia Simpson, pastor at The Church of Mary Magdalene, is working to see remain for a long time.

"Hope for someone who's hurting starts with meeting their most basic needs," observed Rev. Simpson. "A nutritious meal, a hot shower and laundry facilities are offered daily at Mary's Place. After these needs are met women are ready to deal with the bigger issues — finding a place to live, obtaining job skills, developing a sup-

port system, and more. Our desire is to bring as many services as possible to the women to reduce the amount of time, travel, and stress it takes to enrich their lives."

What's unique about Mary's Place is that the program was designed entirely by homeless women. "We did outreach to shelters in the planning stage," commented Marty Hartman, the Program Coordinator at Mary's Place. "We asked homeless women what they wanted to see at Mary's Place." As a result, Hartman believes that the format of Mary's Place will empower the women to lead and take responsibility of their own shelter. Tasks and chores have been created by homeless women for the center, and will also be completed by homeless women.

Rev. Simpson added, "Homeless women contributing to the upkeep means that they have a vested interest in the quality of life here."

And what do homeless women think of Mary's Place? Many are grateful for the facility. "My heart was glad to be coming to a new place," commented one homeless woman.

"It is truly a blessing."

"Beyond having a place for a sense of belonging and safety," she said, "Mary's Place offers homeless women a chance for self-discovery. You will get back in return everything you contributed to this place. We are the pebbles that will make ripples that will come back to you."

Mary's Place is setting a precedent, in that it is the first "kid-friendly" day center for homeless women. Other groups have expressed interest in opening centers similar to Mary's Place, in order to meet the needs of homeless women and their children. Presently, Angeline's — a center serving nearly 100 homeless women daily — is planning a new and larger facility (they were recently awarded \$2 million by the Gates Foundation). The Women's Housing, Equality, and Enhancement League (WHEEL) has plans for a Women's Empowerment Center. And a group of business professionals has formed Sisters, with plans to open a facility similar to Mary's Place.

"Angeline's is great," commented Rev. Simpson, "but it is overcrowded

and doesn't allow kids. It is the only day center for homeless women, and it serves lots of women. There are limits to what they can do. Angeline's seems supportive of Mary's Place. We may not lighten their load a whole lot, but we will at least be an alternative."

Diane Powers, Regional Director of Homeless Services at Angeline's, is pleased to see an additional center for homeless women. "Mary's Place is a good addition," Powers said. "We worked with the staff at Mary's Place on a coalition, and have discussed ways to expand services. Mary's Place is something that we dreamed about." ■

*Mary's Place, a program of The Church of Mary Magdalene, is a Christian ministry for homeless women located downtown at 5th and Columbia in the First United Methodist Church. Tuesday through Friday, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the facility offers showers, laundry, restrooms, dining room, kitchen, offices, and a large room for various events. Mary's Place initially hopes to serve 20-25 homeless women daily. Tuesdays will focus on housing resources; Wednesdays are reserved for vocational needs; Thursdays will focus on financial needs; and Fridays will cover health issues — both physical and emotional.*



NICOLE (6), AND KATIE(3), INSTRUCT VICTORIA ON THE FINER POINTS OF PUZZLE ASSEMBLY. PHOTO BY ERIK CASTRO.



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# Selma Waldman

## An internationalist in Seattle

BY TODD MATTHEWS

Even the steps leading to Selma Waldman's front door are marked with art.

"That's what I call my porch modernism," she says, chuckling slightly. The porch is covered in a scattered collection of political statements, odd-shaped objects, posters, and miscellaneous trinkets.

And beyond the front door is even more art, much of it her own original work.

Selma Waldman is an accomplished artist and activist, with a focus on social justice and human rights. Her career is expansive and impressive. She studied in Berlin on a Fulbright grant, and soon thereafter began to work in radical new directions.

Much of that work has culminated in a collection entitled *Naked/Aggression* — for which I was recently invited to preview at her small, modest home in Columbia City. Waldman's home — which dates back to the turn of the century, when loggers occupied much of the Pacific Northwest — serves as an enormous library and studio. Books are everywhere — lining the couches, floors, and any available table space.

Works in progress hang on the walls, and Waldman describes them at length. *Thin Naked Line* depicts a group of soldiers dressed in riot gear, armed with shields. The soldiers are colored red, and the painting is a play on the popular book and film *The Thin Red Line*. On the opposite wall, *Invitation To The Dance* depicts a scene in which one man inflicts a choke hold on another man — the characters large and nearly leaping from the

medium. Are they dancing? Or fighting? Or both?

"The collection reflects the archetypal gestures of combat," Waldman explains. "I find that war is very similar to prison. In prison, some men are killed and others are violated. War is like prison. When missiles are launched, they are launched to kill, penetrate, and violate other men."

Social justice. War. Combat. Murder. These are heavy themes for a rather small, quiet (yet powerfully spoken) woman. One would imagine she grew up in an environment of hostility and danger. Rather, Waldman was raised in the small town of Kingsville, Texas, during the 1940s. Kingsville was owned by the King Ranch, and was very stifling for an aspiring artist. Her father ran the general store, but the King's Ranch folks owned the general store. They also owned the newspaper. And the nearby dairy farm. And all the land. "It was a very feudal arrangement," Waldman says.

The King ranchers would often enter her father's store and take what they liked — without paying any money. "I would draw pictures on my father's blank receipt tape," Waldman explains, "because he didn't sell very much." Though the family was poor, Waldman's father

believed that a desire to be an artist was the highest calling. He supported his daughter's passion for art, and saved enough money to send her to the University of Texas. "My father always told me, 'You are going to be a great artist,'" Waldman says. "My father was a strength for me as a woman and an artist."

Much of Waldman's artistic career has focused on two locales: Berlin and South Africa. She was very much interested in the history of the Holocaust, and spent much time researching and completing art related to that period. From 1986 to 1991, Waldman's Holocaust-related works were displayed in the Martin-Gropius-Bau, adjacent to the site of the former Gestapo torture cells. That work is now included in

passbooks. Police panicked and opened fire on the protesters, killing 69 people. Many were shot in the back as they tried to flee gunfire.

**"Thirty-seven years after the Sharpeville Massacre, and several hundred works later, I found myself in South Africa on the exact anniversary of Sharpeville. ... I had journeyed on the historical cutting edge that had defined an international movement for racial justice."**

The Sharpeville Massacre had an enormous impact on Waldman. "I knew that there was no other choice but to commit my life and art to the struggle to end genocide and racism," she declares.

She began a direct collaboration with African liberation movements, producing eight books of life histories, from documentation of colonial abuses in Kenya to township life in South Africa. Moreover, Waldman organized anti-apartheid events and created a body of work to support the African National Congress and a democratic, non-racial South Africa.

Waldman became so immersed in social justice that, in 1971, at the height of her career, she withdrew from national and international exhibitions, competitions, and invitational shows, on principle, as contrary to the work.

Yet, considering how important a role South Africa has played in her career, Waldman did not make it there until 1997. "Thirty-seven years after the Sharpeville Massacre, and several hundred works later, I found myself in South Africa on the exact anniversary of Sharpeville," says Waldman. "When I brought my drawings to South Africa, I had journeyed on the historical cutting edge that had defined an international movement for racial justice."

In the fall of 1997, a significant amount of Waldman's work was established as the Selma Waldman Collection at the Mayibuye Centre in Cape Town, South Africa. That collection consists of works from several larger series inspired by South African poetry, and imagery of funerals, detentions, political prisoners, township sweeps,

Continued to page 9



PHOTO BY JOSH ROOT

the permanent collection of the Jewish Museum Berlin.

While in Berlin, Waldman also learned of the Sharpeville Massacre — and event in the 1960s that would have an incredible impact on her career. On March 21, 1960, several thousand unarmed people showed up at Sharpeville police station to protest laws requiring all non-whites to carry



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# Circle of Unity

## Not just another day in the Dome Room

BY THE WOMEN OF WHEEL

**"T**his is my Winter Solstice," began Ruth Worrell, "my longest night and shortest day." She broke down in tears as she recounted her descent into homelessness. Almost unable to continue, Ruth was held up by three other women, and the audience at WHEEL's Homeless Women's Forum was visibly shaken. It was the first time, Ruth said, she had ever spoken her story aloud, and it was a powerful moment in a complex program, crying out for a deep emotional response.

For five years WHEEL — the Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League, a grassroots organizing effort of homeless and formerly homeless women — has staged a large, free forum for homeless women, service providers, bureaucrats, political and business leaders. It is the only such event in the nation, and has become a vehicle to present WHEEL goals to the wider community. It has also become a manifestation of Seattle homeless women's deep community connection.

WHEEL's fifth annual Forum was held November 17th at the Arctic Building Dome Room. More than 200 people from all walks of life attended, and participated in WHEEL's most ambitious program at its fanciest-ever venue. Fabulous food was catered by Boomtown Cafe, and playing off the paradox of place, WHEEL set up a tent — and designs for its Tent City — under the glass chandelier.

WHEEL member and poet laureate Anitra Freeman said, "This year we wanted to show the emotional power behind our goals. We want homeless women and other community members to create changes by tapping into the cry of our humanity and its urgency."

"We're all basically the same," agreed Ruth Worrell, "and some people told me they learned more this year from the structure of the program."

### May the circle...

"Circle of Unity" was this year's theme, and the Forum began with Louella Solomon, longtime WHEEL member, reading from Black Elk Speaks. The program mirrored Black Elk's words and moved in a circle too, with eight seasonal speakers telling stories of their struggles and asking for members of the audience to respond by talking about their seasons of darkness and hope.

Anitra said, "We felt it was important to speak with the audience and to bring them into the Forum as par-



1999 HOMELESS WOMEN'S FORUM. PHOTO BY JOSH ROOT

ticipants." Respondants were chosen more or less randomly, according to numbers they were given at the door—mimicking the potential random privacy invasion of the City's proposed computer tracking system. Again reflecting the theme, this technique "demonstrated that power doesn't move just one way, top down or bottom up."

The platform of proposed goals also reflected the theme: a day's worth of new programs and services for homeless women, "morning to morning," and increased safety and dignity for women 'round the clock.

Specifically, WHEEL is working on a significant increase in day service options for women, on an empowerment model, an increase in evening options—meals and drop-in—and

more respite for women who are ill. Until shelter for every woman is made real (also a WHEEL goal, reflecting last year's Mayoral promise) WHEEL also is developing (and about to execute, with its brother organization SHARE) a Tent City, and is asking for a City tolerance policy towards people who camp together in groups for their safety.

Finally, WHEEL wants to stop the City's proposed computerized tracking system of homeless people, pointing out its serious risks of invading privacy and controlling free choice, and its fundamental discrimination. In another powerful moment, Paula Rosner explained that her mother, a concentration camp survivor, died with her faith in the American dream of freedom intact. Her mother, Paula

said, would never believe her own daughter would be labelled today in this way; "My name doesn't matter because I'm just another survivor."

### Be unbroken

When asked to explain the power of WHEEL and its Forum program, WHEEL members give several reasons: We focus on the positive; our victories. We speak as a group, with many voices and no one representative. We focus on the urgency of our goals—staying alive!

But part of the power comes through relationships and sticking together through our most difficult times, they say. This is the power of healing through telling the truth about pain and our struggles out loud: other people get to respond at that level and it is all part of our healing. As Anitra puts it, "There is a marvelous alchemy when we talk about our most shameful experiences. It gives us back our dignity." □

**"There is a marvelous alchemy when we talk about our most shameful experiences. It gives us back our dignity."**

Anitra Freeman

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## SAFE, CONT. FROM PAGE 1

we were parked near an awning on the campus of Seattle Central Community College. "They've been through traditional help and it didn't work."

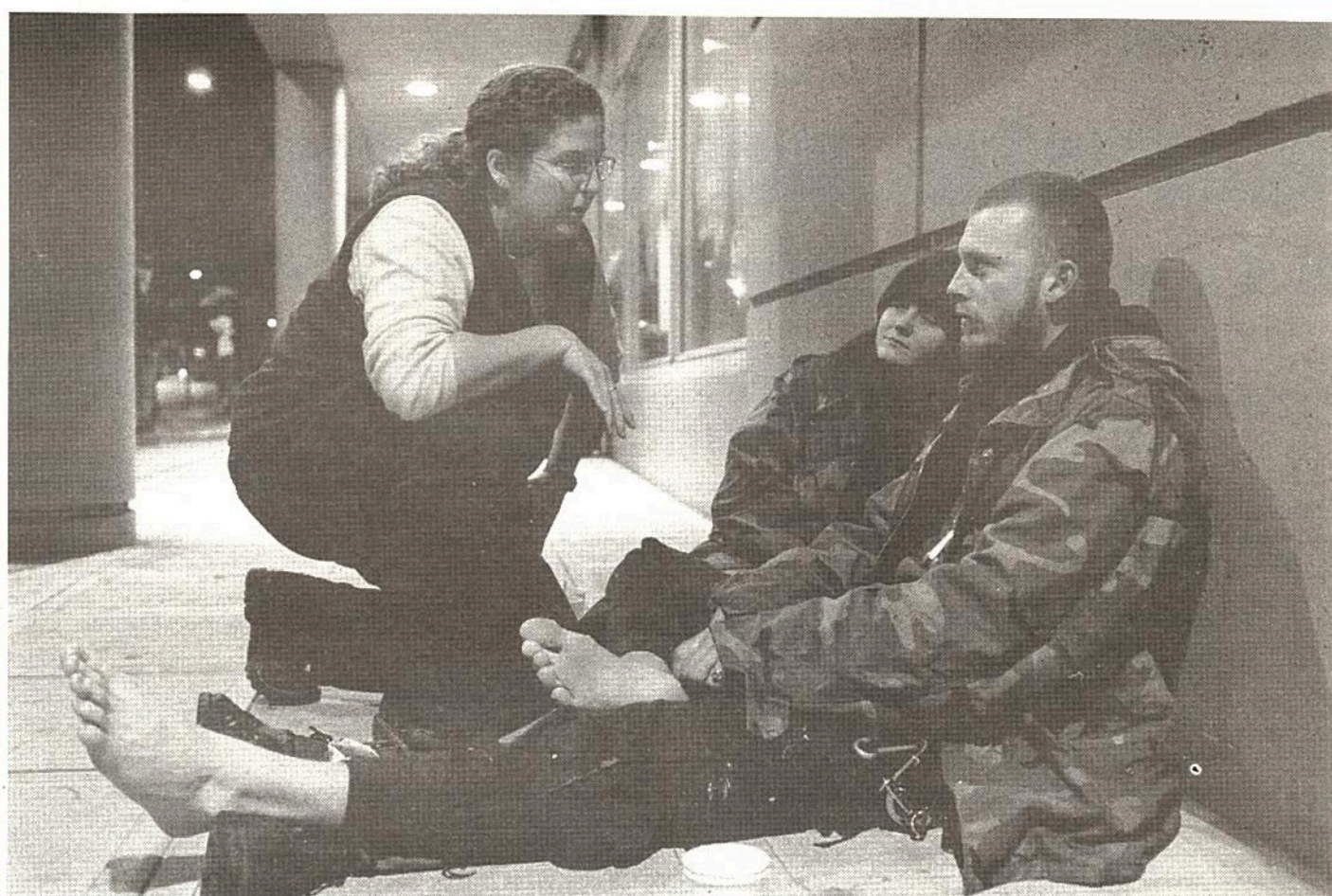
McCormack's "counseling sessions" are steeped in practicality. If a teenager asks him for help in breaking a drug habit, McCormack admits there isn't much he can do. Patients wait eight months for a slot to open at Ryther Treatment Center — a rehabilitation center for troubled and homeless youth. McCormack's advice? Circumvent the social service net. "They should go to the cops and tell them they are breaking the law," McCormack explains. "At least then they can go to drug court and get into a treatment program faster."

It's an odd dose of advice, indeed. But McCormack serves an odd demographic living in unusual and dire circumstances. On one of the evenings that I rode along with the Safe Links crew, doctors helped a young, married couple — John and Jackie. They were still teenagers, and John was suffering from a severe case of athlete's foot — a common ailment among the homeless. John sat on the pavement, his back against a building's wall. He unlaced a black boot and removed a damp sock. A doctor tended to John's foot. John explained that he and Jackie recently landed a \$10 gig providing information about contraceptive practices to a local medical survey. Jackie explained that the two were married a few weeks ago in a Capitol Hill alley. "We still have that 'newlywed glow,' don't we?"

McCormack offers his pragmatic counsel in an informal mode. He networks with the kids who drop in for a cup of cocoa or a handful of condoms. Many of the young people strike a conversation with McCormack. Sometimes they play a bit of hackey sack. It is a relaxed environment. McCormack won't force young people to get care they don't want, but he does want them to know that the services are available.

### High stakes

While the Safe Links volunteer doctors offer rather basic services, they are treating an alarming number of cases of hepatitis C. In 1998, new cases of hepatitis C reported in King County nearly topped 1,000 — up from only 62 reports in 1992. Individuals carrying the virus are described as "walking time bombs." And cases are common among homeless youth that face various at-risk elements such as



DR. MICHELLE RITTER DISPENSES ADVICE TO THE NEWLYWEDS, JOHN AND JACKIE. PHOTO BY ERIK CASTRO

needle sharing, engaging in unprotected sex, and snorting cocaine and other drugs.

One recent study concluded that 85 percent of intravenous drug users in Seattle carry the virus. Janice Boase of the Public Health Department of Seattle and King County comments, "Washington State Department of Health (WSDH) has yet to put hepatitis C on its list of reportable diseases. Until WSDH recognizes the disease as a public health issue, county health departments can do very little for infected people. There are some antiviral treatments, but they are very costly."

Costly treatment is hardly the remedy for homeless youth and the upstart Safe Links. Charissa Fotinos, a doctor with the Family Medicine branch of Providence Medical Group (and a volunteer doctor at Safe Links), comments, "Even free experimental trials would be extremely limited for a homeless teen. And even if they were available, the treatment makes the patient feel as though he or she has a chronic flu. Enduring that sort of treatment while homeless is pretty unrealistic." Moreover, Fotinos argues homeless youth are at risk of early death for a lot of other things; essentially, if hepatitis C doesn't get them, something else will.

Though the program is less than a year old, McCormack has long-term goals. Ideally he would like to see 40 permanent doctors and nurses offering services through Safe Links seven nights a week. Seattle Children's Home sees the services of Safe Links as providing a family tie of sorts. The youths may be reluctant to share their stories at first, but after three or four Safe Links visits, many homeless youth feel that the doctors and volunteers at Safe Links are sort of parental figures who genuinely care.

While new, Safe Links seems to be working. "Most of the time, people call me 'junky,' 'bum' or 'degenerate,' even before they

know what kind of person I am," said one youth. "But here, they treat me as no different from anybody else. It's not their duty to help us, but they choose to do so, and do it without asking for anything. They are noble. They are the best people I have ever met in this world." □

**"Most of the time, people call me 'junky,' 'bum' or 'degenerate,' even before they know who I am. But here, they treat me as no different from anybody else."**

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TORTURE OF STEVEN BIKO, BY SELMA WALDMAN

## WALDMAN, CONT. FROM P. 6

police brutality, and political mobilizations.

Waldman's representation in both the Jewish Museum Berlin and the Mayibuye Centre is significant because it marks different histories and uncommon legacies connected by the commonality of genocide in the 20th century. "I really didn't expect to be so honored and privileged to have my drawings in Berlin and South Africa," says Waldman, reflectively. "To be included in those places — I don't know what more I would want."

Placements are now pending for museums in Sarajevo, Bosnia; Amman, Jordan; and Bonn, Germany, among others. And the Frauen Museum in Bonn and Yad VaShem Holocaust and Heroism Museum for Art in Israel requested documents about Waldman's life and work for their archives.

While much of Waldman's work is displayed on an international level, Waldman has also been recognized locally. Her work has been acquired for the Bailey-Boushay House, the Douglass-Truth Library, and the African-American Academy. Waldman is also known locally for *Nailing Hammering Man* — a book critical of the Hammering Man installation at the Seattle Art Museum.

Waldman is preparing to launch the *Naked/Aggression* series, though she admits that it will be a difficult task. "I am eager to show the work," she says. "Though I don't know if there is a venue that would be comfortable show-

ing it. I believe it may be too emotional, too controversial."

So what does a life pursuing local justice mean for Waldman? "It means that I really made the bed that I lay down in," says Waldman. "Because once you make that choice to go in that direction full-bore, there is a cost. You live and die with it. And when that happens, you become something of a threat if you are any good at all with the work." Waldman pauses. "Yet, it's almost like I can't do anything else. I am what I am doing. And the reward is a beautiful sense of community." □



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## Tenants in the "Global Village" "It's capitalism stupid"

BY JASON ADAMS

Each year, the landlord lobby in Olympia rallies their money, lawyers, and lobbyists to fight the efforts of the Tenants Union. This lobby's main vehicle is "preemption" legislation — a move that would prevent local communities from passing their own housing laws. Laws the Tenants Union got passed in Seattle, such as the Just Cause Eviction Ordinance, are threatened by preemption legislation. The membership of the Tenants Union has voted to fight for a statewide Just Cause law, which would not only strengthen Seattle's existing Just Cause Eviction Ordinance but would also help to protect against preemption if it should pass.

This tug-of-war between the interests of tenants and landlords in Washington state is essentially a microcosm of the present climate in the rest of the world. Right now, the world economy which frames the rules and conditions of tenancy — and everything else — is changing more quickly than it ever has before.

Now, more than ever, the landlords and bosses are organizing and consolidating their resources through mergers, they are creating new international organizations that compromise the ability of communities to defend or enact laws that benefit them (such as the World Trade Organization), and they are systematically doing away with the protective laws we fought for — locally, nationally, and internationally — that they claim get in the way of the rights of "business."

This gutting has dismantled and prevented rent control, it has promoted gentrification, unjust evictions, and the loss of low-income housing, and it has made it harder for us to organize for our rights, both as tenants and as workers. As a result, the rich and powerful are employing many of us at wages well below livable standards, they are taking away our healthcare protections, they are moving our jobs to low-wage third-world countries, and they are charging us as much as they can for rent — even if that means that we become homeless.

According to the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), things have gotten so bad that close to 1.2 billion people are now residing in housing and living conditions that are unhealthy and precarious, including more than 100 million who are completely homeless. Even here in the "prosperous" enclave of King County, over 5,000 people have no housing.

In response to these massive disparities, the anti-globalization movement in much of the world has produced mass occupations, general strikes, marches, and demonstrations of a level unprecedented in history. In Brazil, for instance, an organization known as Sem Terra (which

means "without land") has mobilized tens of thousands of low-income tenants left behind by the global economy to occupy miles and miles of unused, corporate-owned land. In the U.K., a recent WTO ruling that their national ban on asbestos amounted to a "trade barrier" and was therefore illegal produced large demonstrations and marches by those concerned about the health risks that would be reintroduced to British tenants and construction workers.

Today, the tenant movement is beginning to take action locally, nationally, and internationally against this profits-first onslaught on people. Locally, the Tenants Union passed a strong resolution in opposition to the coming meeting of the World Trade Organization, the most powerful free-trade organization in the world. And our members participated in the mass community rally and march against the WTO on November 30.

On the national level, local tenant organizations are consolidating efforts to increase our numbers and power. Here in the United States we have organizations like the National Alliance of HUD Tenants and the National Public Housing Residents Campaign. In Canada, a new national organization called the Canadian Housing and Homelessness Network is currently being founded by the Vancouver, B.C., Tenants Rights Action Coalition and other tenants organizations across the country.

And now, in response to an economy that recognizes no borders, we are beginning to see tenant organizations on the international level as well. Last year, an international tenant organization called

COHRE (Center on Housing Rights and Evictions) took a resolution to the United Nations calling for international trade, investment, and financial institutions such as the WTO to take fully into account the human rights implications of their undemocratic, inhumane policies. The new International Union of Tenants has been publishing a magazine called *Global Tenant* for the past couple of years as well.

The first move has been made in Seattle for a stepped-up global confrontation to return the power to the people, with the mass marches, rallies, and direct actions that have taken place against the profits-first policies of the WTO. What is to come in the future will depend on the level and form of action that we as an international community are willing to take. ☐

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BY PERFESS'R HARRIS



For those of you who missed it, November 21-28 was the 59th annual National Bible Week, an event which, according to the National Bible Association, included "bible reading marathons and biblical story telling."

Who could resist?

I can't think of a better excuse, in this wacky post-Initiative 695 world we live in, to bring up Amos, the Old Testament minor prophet. With Amos, God turned from war-like tribalism to caring about justice.

Amos, an early ethical thinker, obviously had a lot on his mind, but I can't help but wonder how he would have felt about car tab taxes.

A farmer and tradesman from a little Judean backwater called Tekoa, Amos thundered his unwelcome message in about 8th century B.C. He was a contemporary of Homer, but, unlike our Greek friend, was no friend of the rich. I figure Amos is the type who'd drive a '79 Dodge pick-up. His car tax probably wouldn't have amounted to much.

But Amos' primary concern with I-695 wouldn't have been his own pocket. He'd have thought long and hard about fire, police, the judicial system, public health, and transit, and then would have pulled the lever for the little guy. The real little guy that is, not the one sitting behind the wheel of an SUV.

His situation feels familiar. Amos preached during the reign of Jeroboam II, when Israel was at the height of territorial expansion, military might, and national prosperity. He denounced Israel's militarism, social injustice, and empty piety. It was boom-time in Israel, and no one wanted to hear it. Amos called for justice when most people, spoiled by affluence, just wanted more for themselves.

Easy living had turned the Israelites into a bunch of spoiled suburbanites. They had lost their compassion, and now "trampled the poor into the dust of the earth, and turned aside the way of the afflicted." Amos had another, more unpopular, idea. "Hate evil, love good, and establish justice in the gate," he said.

Now there's a ballot initiative to campaign for!

In Amos 4.1-13, our malcontented friend takes on the subject of luxurious excess, and preaches against the wealthy residents of Samaria, the "Cows of Bashan, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy." The typical Samaritan would probably have driven a Lexus, voted for 695, and then dropped a fiver in the Sunday basket at church, feeling the warm glow of self-satisfied charity.

This is just the sort of thing that really pissed Amos off. His God had no time for empty piety. His God wanted revolution. "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream," he said.

Maybe National Bible Week will help us remember the meaning of words. To Amos, justice meant a lot more than winning a selfish and regressive tax initiative. His revolution makes Tim Eyman's look pretty pathetic. ☐

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## Film Review

# Dutch Harbor

## Where the Sea Breaks Its Back

REVIEW BY TODD MATTHEWS

Three years ago I quit my job, paid my rent in advance, and signed a contract with a commercial fishing company in Seattle. I was headed to the Last Frontier — Alaska — and a remote spot on the Aleutian Islands known as Dutch Harbor.

The island of Unalaska, on which Dutch Harbor is situated (and part of the Aleutian chain), is beautiful. Ballyhoo Hill, dotted with the shells of old arsenal bunkers, looms above Captains Bay. Narrow gravel roads bordered by tall stacks of crab pots twist and weave through the island like thin veins. On crisp, clear nights the moon is brighter than a klieg light and larger than a satellite (and, for some strange reason, the stars have an icy blue sheen). And the Illiuliak River, which runs through what can only remotely be called the 'center of town' (a small fire station, hospital, and courthouse), is popular with children because it is there, when the river rises, that children run down to catch salmon with their bare hands.

The island is beautiful, yet lonely. Remote with a capital 'R.'

While Dutch Harbor served as the port, our crew spent most of its time 150 miles out in the Bering Sea. For three months I worked sixteen-hour shifts — from midnight until 4:00 p.m. — with no weekends, holidays, or vacations. I witnessed a

**"I witnessed a crewmate fall from a 20-foot ladder and onto the icy planks of the boat's hull. I handled a six-foot halibut, several octopuses, and more fish guts than I care to remember."**

nessed a crewmate fall from a 20-foot ladder and onto the icy planks of the boat's hull. I handled a six-foot halibut, several octopuses, and more fish guts than I care to remember. I shared a stateroom with a homeless man who saw work on the boat as an opportunity to get back on his feet and return to Seattle with much cash. And while in port, I witnessed fellow crewmates barter with Japanese fishermen — trading American rap/hip-hop cassettes and cartons of cigarettes for unopened bottles of Sapporo.

I mention all of this because I was excited to see that a documentary called *Dutch Harbor: Where the Sea Breaks Its Back* was playing at the Little Theater on Capitol Hill. It is my belief that there is a feeling among commercial fishermen that I can only equate to that of being an astronaut: While I can explain my fishing experiences to friends, they will never fully understand these experiences because they've never been to Dutch Harbor; similarly, we can drink as much Tang as possible, but we will never fully understand the moon because it is a place most have never been. Simply put, I was hoping to connect with this film in the same way in which I connect with other fishermen.

*Dutch Harbor* is a visually stunning film. Shot during the winter, the small town is covered in thick snow and small flurries freckle the island, making Dutch Harbor look more like a greeting card image than the largest and busiest commercial fishing port in the United States. The scene at sea is a different story altogether: a large trawler is tossed about like a large buoy; fishermen drop massive crab pots into the Bering Sea, and hammer at ice that collects on-deck, threatening to top-heavy the ship and tip it over. And though the film was made in 1997, the directors Braden King and Laura Moya shot the movie in black-and-white, in a grainy style that resembled old newsreels. A truly nice touch for a film about a small town stuck in time. And I must admit I was amazed to see the boat on which I worked — the F/V Cape Horn — featured in the film.

The Little Theater presented the film sans any dialogue. Live music by the Boxhead Ensemble "narrated" the film instead (the group provided the original score for the film), offering an eerie backdrop to scenes of hard work at sea. I imagine, though, it would have been nice for audience members unfamiliar with the tiny island to have some background information through narration.

Nonetheless, *Dutch Harbor* is an impressive film about a small town in the Aleutian Islands — a town holding many memories for many commercial fishermen and -women. ☐



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## Untitled

## I. Shifting Gears

We repeat, eons upon eons  
Countless sameness lives

Inching forward, backward  
Oh, a jump here  
a boost there

Now a chicken  
Now a strudel

Evolution  
De-volution  
(maybe, occasionally)  
RE-volution

Turning, turning  
In/ our/ own/ Spheres

Searching  
for comfort  
Longing  
for sameness

When

Only COURAGE  
Only Change

Will bring us  
What we need

...to  
join  
with  
our  
God

## II. ME, TOO

I long for someone  
something

I/ can/ RECOGNIZE

as being  
part/ of/ my/ family  
piece/ of/ myself

Longing for sameness  
The comfort of Community

—Marion Sue Fischer

## Marilyn's Death

We became a family when Marilyn died.

My daughter Marra and I had only been in the Kent shelter for about a week when the young mother across the way from us was found dead in the bathtub. The shelter was an eight-plex apartment with four units on either side of a common courtyard.

The shock of Marilyn's death got us to get together to comfort each other. We began to have communal dinners now and then, but by the time we had to leave three weeks later, we had become a support community for each other. We took turns preparing dinner and ate together every night.

Even in adversity we can share what little we have and all be richer for it.

—Reneene Robertson

## This is my winter...

During the winter I was evicted.  
Yes, during the coldest season of all, winter.  
While outside living in a park I'd become pregnant,  
the result of acquaintance rape.  
I was treated like a common slut amongst some of the men.  
The abuse never seemed to end.  
Much worse, I felt I had no privacy whatsoever.

After being raped, I still had to sleep outside  
in the same park that it happened in, which was also infested with  
spiders.

After being bitten, I'd become ill. If that wasn't hard enough,  
with all of the wind and rain that saturated the ground on a daily  
basis,  
I'd come down with walking pneumonia and almost broken my ankle  
trying to find a place to rest and feel safe  
In between trying to find a home and getting some rest.  
Every place that I tried to move into was stopped not only by a  
credit check  
but by the loss of jobs as well.

Every step that I'd taken in the right direction,  
someone tried to take away, it seemed the cycle never ended.  
After so much loss, including my children from an abusive husband,  
now I had to go through it all over again  
because there was no one there to help me when I needed it.

My safety net wasn't there....

—Storm

## The Streets

The streets are my friend. They wrap their cold unloving arms around me. When I lay my head down at night the cold cement calls to me. It keeps me cold when I want to be warm. It keeps me penniless at a time when I need money the most.

When I have trouble keeping my sanity the streets help me lose it. When I am down they pull me down further. They keep me in a sea of depression. When I find a foothold it takes it away. When I find something to hold onto it makes sure I lose my grip.

When will I get off these streets? When will I stop losing this battle? It seems as though it will never happen. The streets have a permanent hold on me.

—Marissa

## What Is Family?

Family are shouts in the dark that keep you awake  
trying to be invisible under your blankets.  
Family is the warm heart you run to  
when everyone else at the rink skates too fast  
and you've cut your knees on the ice.

Family are given to you at birth  
with your eyes and lips and nose.

They will stick to you wherever you go  
and shape how you see  
and what you say  
and how you are seen  
forever.

Family are found new each day  
wherever you put your heart last.

Family are the people you share bread with,  
and whoever you share the lack of bread with.

Sometimes your family aren't people.

Family is whoever lives under the tent of your soul.  
Your family can be as big as you are,  
and from birth to death, your real, real family  
are the ones who make you grow bigger.

—Anitra Freeman

## Disappearing Act

I know you, know me.  
We used to run in the same circle  
of acquaintances.  
Sharing opinions, ideas,  
seeing each other at public events.  
I always considered you a friend.  
I lost my job.  
The work I found paid so much less.  
To compensate I worked two then three jobs.  
I lost time to socialize and attend social events.  
This I'm sure is when I began to disappear.  
I was injured in an accident.  
I could not work.  
I became a burden to my partner.  
My partner and I split up.  
We are now friends only that,  
I'm too proud to go to for friendship or advice.  
I lost my home.  
Over time I've lost most of my possessions.  
I live in transitional housing and shelters.  
I'm unemployed, no income all outgo.  
I tell myself that material things can be replaced.  
Material friends can always be found.  
I have my spirit, healthy body, and mind.  
I still see you on the street sometimes.  
I remember when we used to speak.  
You don't seem to remember me, nor do you speak  
I've become a stranger to you.  
The disappearing act is complete.

—Ruanda Morrison

## Homebody's Song

I yearn  
to sleep in peace and absolute dead quiet  
to sleep in  
to not have to go out at all  
to take a long long bubble bath, uninterrupted of course  
to not have to wear clothes all day  
if not all week  
to masturbate  
to watch tv or VCR movies  
to listen to music at my own volume without the  
benefit of headphones  
to be with my darling precious cuddly cat Queen Sheba Elizabeth  
Her Royal Highness  
to eat food but not right away  
to drink ice water or eat ice cream  
to sew, to crochet, to knit  
to read, to write in my own time  
not by the white man's time or the shelter's time  
my time  
someday soon  
very, very soon  
my time could not come fast enough  
however when it does  
good morning  
Welcome home  
it's been a song long long time coming

—Radha

## ADVENTURES IN POETRY

by © Dr Wes Browning

# The Coming Apocalypse

**I** HATE ONGOING EVENTS. Everyone's been wanting to know what's my take on the WTO conference.

How can I have a take on the WTO conference? I'm writing this before it has happened!

Therefore I present you with a dozen or so things that haven't happened yet at the WTO conference, but that would have really sucked by the time you will have read this:

Mayor Schell created an international incident when he performed his Charlie Chong impersonation for the benefit of the Ambassador from the People's Republic of China.

The bad news: with motorcades of officials criss-crossing Seattle for five days, traffic became a nonsense word. The good news: now everyone knows what life under I-695 is going to be like in years to come.

The worst traffic jams occurred in Redmond, of course, as thousands of rented Mercedes Benzes clogged the streets on their way to the seat of the local government, in the hopes of cashing in on some Free Trade chips.

For no apparent reason, WTO officials announced in the middle of the conference that the WTO's official name would be changed to the "Windows 2000 World Trade Organization," for the foreseeable future.

Meanwhile, during a vote-gathering tour of the city, unleashed Sandpoint dogs urinated on Al Gore, expecting that he would be environmentally friendly. Instead, he kicked them all in their tender spots, thus permanently losing the support of the SPCA, ALF, PAWS, and PETA.

In a surprise visit to the proceedings, Muamer Qadhafy got no further than 4th and Cherry. Awe-inspired by the depth of the brilliant ideas of Mark Sidran, amazed by Sidran's keen analysis of the reactionary behavior of improperly-indoctrinated masses, Qadhafy rushed back to Libya to teach his people his new understanding of the value of civility, "Starbuck's style."

The admiration apparently being mutual, Sidran surprised no-one by declaring, "To hell with Giuliani, from now on I want to be thought of as the Muamer Qadhafy of Seattle" and began appearing in public in high heels and long dresses and encouraging others to do so. "It's just one more way we can instill a lady-like respect for public decency and decorum".

President Clinton's unscheduled meeting with the Pope next to Rachel the Pig in the market ended in disaster when the Pope was struck by a stray airborne salmon. Fortunately, the world's free trade was not significantly harmed, as the volume of Pacific Northwest fish exports to the Vatican has been negligible up until now.

In a sharp moment of public empathy, Deputy Mayor Tom Byers recalled that he once wore purple bellbottoms and wide belts and got yelled at by his dad for growing his hair long. "Therefore," he said, "I really understand the problems that you people face on the streets." Then he said, "No, seriously, you can have your tent city during WTO— NOT!!! Ha ha, ha!"

The WTO determined that, henceforth, Boeing could only sell as many 767s per decade throughout the world as the number of Taiwanese suspenders that may be sold per century in Des Moines, Washington. Luckily, since no reporters were allowed to learn about the decision, no one got their shorts in a bunch about it.

Wasn't that massive earthquake awful? 9.9 on the Richter scale, who would've expected that? I hate being dead, don't you? Thank God for tent city, otherwise nobody would have survived!

And who would've believed that the apocalypse would have waited for the WTO conference? Wow!! Well, hey, now that it's happened, what do you, my readers, think? Was it worth waiting for? How 'bout those locusts? And are you satisfied that the rough places have been made plain? I sure am!! But please, let's not do it again!! My rough places are raw!!

**"Sidran surprised no-one by declaring, "To hell with Giuliani, from now on I want to be thought of as the Muamer Qadhafy of Seattle" and began appearing in public in high heels and long dresses and encouraging others to do so."**

## RING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

have to fight a bit harder to be a little clearer. I'm kind of small in stature, and I've had to lower my voice in certain environments so I can be taken seriously. There are some particular experiences as an organizer where I was conscious of sexism by others. And I have to compensate for that.

I am young. I am small. I am female, and I have a high voice. People sometimes joke about what I say, and are taken aback by my seriousness. I started organizing at the Tenants Union when I was 23. People would literally say to me, 'How old are you?' Even my targets.

I think female activists in general face these types of things. I mean, in rural Minnesota people would call me 'little lady.' I ask the men in this office if they face any of these things, and they don't.

RC: Where did you develop an interest in activism?

RING: I was an activist in college. I caused trouble. Diverting school funds to the Sandinistas. That sort of thing (laughing). I went to Macalester College — a small, liberal arts college with a progressive bent — in St. Paul, Minnesota. I grew up in Cambridge, New York — near the Vermont/New York border. Imagine Vermont with cows (laughing).

It was a place where McDonald's and movie theaters were not allowed, for fear that kids would start 'hanging out' too much. It was an extremely tight-knit community that pulled together in times of trouble. I got a sense of strength and importance of community growing up in a small town. Though it was a conservative atmosphere, we pulled together. It's not something you find in very many places in this country.

I already had an activist background, but with not a lot of outlets for it. Although now in retrospect I think of all the things I should have organized when I was a kid. But there was no culture or venue for that. It was a farm town. I was definitely a bit of a 'rabble-rouser.' I did my own thing. When I got to college I was so excited. I was in a city where there were all these people and all this stuff you could do. It was amazing. A whole new world.

But still, during college I didn't really have a clear picture of being an organizer. I wasn't quite sure what that was exactly. I became involved in feminist stuff — women's movement — and started working at the Women's Resource Center in Winona, Minnesota. It was the first shelter in Minnesota that opened its doors to battered lesbians. It was a very intense environment. I worked with Latino women trying to escape physical abuse, and so many of them went back to that abuse. They made conscious choices to return to abusive situations rather than subject themselves and their children to the economic violence of homelessness and welfare.

I worked there for three years off and on through college. It was not adequate. It was not enough for me to just be nice to people. Even a good shelter would have been a limiting and oppressive experience for these women — and this was a good shelter! Living by intense rules at that shelter was not something I wanted to devote my life to. So I started to look at organizing and became involved in economic issues in rural Minnesota.

After college, I was selected to the Organizing Apprenticeship Project. It was a great experience. Candidates applied for the six-month program there and organizations applied to be a host to the project's apprentices. I received incredible training from incredible organizers all over the state.

I then moved to Seattle in January, 1994. I didn't get connected to organizing right away. I applied at the Tenants Union three times before they hired me. I kept trying to work here. I couldn't get an organizing job out here because I was extremely

picky. I wanted to work for a membership-based grass-roots direct organization. There aren't many groups doing that kind of work. There aren't many openings. Most people get those jobs and stay.

RC: Are you able to apply your experiences with women's issues toward your work at the Tenants Union?

RING: Yes. Organizing is the same. Membership-based, direct-action organizing uses the same elements. All of those skills of outreach, leadership development, building a movement — they are all the same. There is a phenomenon in organizing wherein women will generally put themselves out there first. Women will put themselves on the line before men will. Women are more open to outreach. Yet, women are often reluctant to be visible.

If you go to a building and there are obvious problems, women are the individuals who often organize meetings with neighbors. It's easy then to think they are leaders. But a month later, at the accountability session with the building's owner, all the people talking are men. I often think, 'How did that happen? That's not where I started.' If you are not careful and don't support the women who are doing the hard work — and encourage them to be visible — then you will often lose them.

A lot of men are more comfortable taking the visible role. Women may be doing great work behind the scenes, but often they aren't speaking up. I am cognizant of the importance in supporting women in all roles of leadership organizing.

RC: What is the climate for renters today? What are some concerns you have for renters living in King County?

RING: A booming economy is not always the best thing for a renter because renters are subjected to the whims of the market. There is serious opposition organized by landlords toward regulation of the rental housing business. A lack of regulation means tenants are vulnerable to the market. Combine that with federal policy pushing hard on the housing for low-income people, and you have some real difficult times. The private rental market gets tighter.

You see tenants trying harder and harder to make ends meet. Tenants wonder why it is they can't make the rent, and they feel like it's something wrong with them. Many tenants think, 'Last year I could make my rent, this year I can't. This year I'm late on my rent every month. This year it just seems harder to pay the rest of my bills after I pay the rent.' That individual experience represents the economic push we are in right now, and it is getting harder. Landlords have more money to push for policies to make it easier for them to make money in their business.



**"If you are not careful and don't support the women who are doing the hard work — and encourage them to be visible — then you will often lose them."**

*Siobhan Ring*

At the same time, there is great opportunity because the Tenants Union is strong right now and is a growing movement of tenants who are committed, knowledgeable, and ready to win changes in their lives. Two very important things are happening right now. First, it is easier now for tenants to see the injustice and get angry about that injustice. However, it's harder for tenants to organize because they are working so hard to keep their lives together. People have to be willing to battle the injustices while keeping their lives together. It's extremely difficult. [E]

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# DECEMBER

## NOTABLES

### Concert and Theatrical Performance: 12/1

"Join this exciting new alliance of labor and environmental activists for a very special evening to promote the expansion of collaborative efforts in opposition to corporate globalization and the WTO." Free beer and food. Live music by Jim Page and theater by Human Nature Theater company. Other acts TBA. No charge for admission, 5 - 10 p.m., at United Methodist Church, 811 Fifth Avenue between Marion and Columbia; info Sam 415-383-4314 or batfish@earthlink.net

**Indigenous Peoples Forum on WTO** with panels and speakers in alliance with International Indian Treaty Council, Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism and many other Indigenous organizations and nations throughout the Americas and the world, promoting the principle that as Indigenous Peoples, "We Speak For Ourselves" on issues that affect the future of our communities and the world; 6 p.m. Reception and Cultural Presentation, 7 - 10 p.m. Program, at Seattle University Piggott Auditorium, 900 Broadway Ave; Info: Tom Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network 218-751-4967 or Fax 218-751-0561 or ien@igc.org or http://www.alphacdc.com/ien or Javier Kinney, Seventh Generation Fund 707-825-7640 or jkinney@7genfund.org

**Human and Environmental Costs of International Trade** featuring David Korten, founder of the People-Centered Development Forum, and Vandana Shiva, founder of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology; Sponsored by The Progress Project, School of Public Affairs; 7 p.m., at UW, Kane Hall Room 130

**Cultural Event to Benefit The Direct Action Network** to Resist the WTO: Dinner Cabaret with Open Mike sign up at 6:30, tablecloth dinner, \$3 - \$10 sliding scale donation, 7 p.m. - midnight, at the Parlour Room, 161 S. Jackson Street in Pioneer Square; Info: Dale 206-298-9488 or dale.hodges@worldnet.att.net (Additional benefits also on 12/2 & 3)

**"Voices from the South: Building Cross-Border Resistance to the WTO, from the South to the North"** a public Forum for workers and organizers from the global South, in Seattle to protest the WTO, to highlight their challenges and successful resistance to globalization, Sponsored by CISPES; 7:30 - 10 p.m., at Garfield Community Center, 23rd Ave & Cherry; Info: Heather Day 206-325-5494 or seacispes@igc.org

### Sessions On Food & Agriculture: 12/2

**Food Safety and Security:** Sessions include: GMOs (genetically modified organisms) and agriculture and the SPS Agreement; focus will be positive — options for consumers which are "fair trade" and demands to keep those options in place, an excellent opportunity for organizations working on alternative models of agriculture production, distribution, etc; 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., at United Methodist Church (12:30 - 1:30 p.m., Food and Agriculture Rally at Victor Steinbruck park, just north of Seattle's Pike Place Market); Info: Renske van Staveren 612-870-0453 or rvanstaveren@iatp.org or http://www.iatp.org

**Celebration benefit for local micro-radio station Free Seattle Radio 87.9 FM** with entertainment by The Anti-Fascist Marching Band, Jethro Tull, and surprise guests; Only \$5, 8 p.m. at OK Hotel 212 Alaskan Way S; Info: Curtis Taylor or Katie Kurtz 206-329-9198 or http://www.speakeasy.org/~fsr

### Seattle Public Theater presents 12/3&4

**"The Maiden & The Makita"** by Beth Amsbary; "an immaculately reconceived story of the Virgin Mary's struggle to get out from under the covers"; 8 p.m., at Seattle Public Theater, 915 E Pine, Room 426; Info: 206-328-4848

### Session on Corporate Accountability: 12/3

**Who Rules?** with David Korten, People-Centered Development Forum; 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., at Gethsemane Lutheran Church; Info: pcd@econet.org or http://iisd.ca/pcdf or http://www.seattlewto.org or http://www.peopleforfairtrade.org or 206-770-9044

**All faiths candlelight vigil, a time for prayer with regard to change for the WTO;** please bring your own non-drip candles if you can, candles will be provided for others; 6:30 - 10 p.m., at the South Plaza off of 6th and Seneca in Freeway park

### National Network on Cuba "US/ 12/4-6

**Cuba 2000 Conference: A new conversation for the new millennium** conference for organizers and activists who do solidarity work with Cuba, new delegations who have visited Cuba recently, and people who are interested in learning about Cuba through information about the reality of Cuba today, and to build participation for the 2nd Meeting of World Solidarity with Cuba, to be held in Havana; at Seattle Center, Pavillion "A"; Info: Patsy Behrend, patsybehrend@hotmail.com or 313-561-8330

### The Worker's Voices Coalition will host 12/4

**Worker's Conference on Women, Immigration and Globalization;** speakers invited include many International Workers/ Trade Unionists; Coalition Members and Sponsors include Workers' Voices Coalition; Northwest Labor & Employment Law Office (LELO); Washington Alliance for Immigrant and Refugee Justice (WAIRJ); and many more; 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., at Piggott Hall, Seattle University 900 Broadway East, enter from 12th Avenue; Info: or reservations LELO 206-860-1414 or 206-860-1400 or lelo@labornet.org or WAIRJ or 206-340-9187 or http://www.scn.org/basecamp

**Fundraiser for the Tenants Union "Feast for Fairness"** with four course dinner and performances by four well-known area musicians, Orville Johnson and John Parry, playing blues and swing, Marjorie Richards, playing acoustic folk, and Carolyn Cruso, playing original and traditional music on hammered dulcimer; 6 - 9:30 p.m., at the Frye Hotel, 223 Yesler Way in Pioneer Square; \$20, tickets Arlen Olson 206-722-6848 by credit card, or mail a check to The Tenants Union, 3902 S. Ferdinand St., Seattle, WA 98118 by December 1

**Documentary Film "Zapatistas," the definitive look at the uprising in Chiapas, Mexico;** the story of how a few thousand Mayan peasants have held the entire Mexican army at bay for five years, and of how they have transformed the political culture of Mexico and the world forever; filmed behind the lines of battle, the account of a guerrilla struggle unlike any other; all profits will return to the people of Chiapas in the form of humanitarian aid, providing much needed food and medical supplies to the indigenous communities; 7 p.m., at Independent Media Center, 1415 3rd Ave between Union & Pike;

### University Congregational Housing 12/6

**Association (UCHA) celebrates the opening of Sortun Court;** come and see how a church parking lot was transformed into 16 units of low-income family housing; 4550 16th Ave. NE, 4:30 - 6:00 pm; Info: 524-2322

### Service Learning Conference 12/9

featuring presentations by members of The Literacy Partnership Project, The Richard Hugo House & Nathan Hale High School, Seattle School District, Stevens Elementary School, Seattle School District, MtView Elementary & Evergreen High School, Highline School District, and Projects by Seattle University MIT

students; Free! 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., at Loyola Hall, Seattle University; RSVP Bob Howard bob@democracy.org or 206-283-8067

### The Seattle Human 12/10

Rights Commission and the Seattle Office for Civil Rights will co-sponsor their fourth annual **Human Rights Day Celebration**, other participating organizations include the King County Civil Rights Commission, the Washington State Human Rights Commission, the Seattle Women's Commission, and the Seattle Commission for Sexual Minorities; includes a speaker, entertainment, a "City of Seattle Distinguished Citizen Award" and refreshments; Free and open to the public; 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., at Dome Room of the Arctic Building, 700 Third Ave.

### African American 12/11

physician Patricia L. Dawson (M.D., Ph.D., FACS) will read from her new book **Forged By The Knife: The Experience of Surgical Residency from the Perspective of a Woman of Color** (Open Hand Publishing Inc.); 7:30 p.m., at Elliott Bay Books, 1st S and S Main.

### Deadline for middle and junior high 12/17

**school students to submit essays on "Dr. King's Work: What My Generation Can Do to Complete It in the New Millennium"** to King County Civil Rights Commission, 900 Fourth Avenue, Suite 860, Seattle, WA 98164;

live  
and  
then  
some

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Some Noise****Free Speech Seattle Could use your help**

**ISSUE:** Public input into a new noise ordinance.

**BACKGROUND:** Seattle Mayor Paul Schell vetoed a proposed noise ordinance earlier this year, concerned that the law could limit free speech and threaten nightclubs. The measure, which the council approved 6-3 in mid-October, would have banned noisy political demonstrations in neighborhoods and limited them to between 5 a.m. and 11 p.m. in commercial zones. And though the city council was expected to propose a new ordinance by the end of October, mum's the word at city hall. The silence has some area activists and free speech advocates concerned. Many believe that the city council is simply waiting for the newly-elected council members to take office before tackling the ordinance. A demonstration last month by the group Free Speech Seattle highlighted many concerns. Free Speech Seattle, which is championing opposition to both the noise ordinance and the postering ban, sees two steps toward a successful noise ordinance: Public input and objectivity. "A reasonable noise ordinance starts with bringing people

together for public hearings," says Tim Crowley, a member of Free Speech Seattle. The noise ordinance has to be objective, activists say. Subjective laws that are left to the discretion of police officers are ludicrous and open to abuse. "If you bring everyone together and talk about it, and start with the basis of it has to be objective and fair and measurable," adds Crowley. "I think then you will find a noise ordinance that everyone can live with. Everyone may not be happy with it, but they will at least be able to live with it."

**ACTION NEEDED:** Contact the Seattle city council at (206) 684-8888 and let them know that the public should have input into the revised noise ordinance. Councilmembers can also be reached via email at [firstname.lastname@ci.seattle.wa.us](mailto:firstname.lastname@ci.seattle.wa.us)

**RECOMMENDED MESSAGE:** Public participation is needed when city council revamps the vetoed noise ordinance.

**MORE INFO:** Contact Tim Crowley of Free Speech Seattle at (206) 781-7371, or on the Internet at <http://www.freespeechseattle.org>.

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