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Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless • Volume 7, No. 19

**Celebrating 100 Issues • Our Future • Party Down
with the Greens • No More Deaths • Labor Ready Journal
Socrates and Democracy • Pothole Parity (see page 16)**

Time Travel

Checking in on the faces behind our first 100 issues

September 1995
October 1995
November 1995
December 1995
January 1996

The Battle of Pacific Hotel

Then: The Pacific Hotel, on Fourth Avenue and Marion Street downtown, was abandoned by its owners in 1991. It could have been converted into a luxury hotel, until Operation Homestead staged a building takeover in September 1992, occupying it for a week. Pressure from the housing activists and negotiations between the owner, Seafirst Bank, and Plymouth Housing Group eventually allowed Plymouth to buy the building. Plymouth reopened the building in 1995 with 106 low-income units.

Now: Over the past five years, Plymouth Housing Group has continued to provide low-income housing there, with 112 units that are home to approximately 200 people with an average income of \$8,000 a year. New programs to help get tenants back on their feet have been added, including the tenant employment project, the tenant council and a computer lab.

However, pressures on downtown developers have also increased. Operation Homestead took over two other buildings after the Pacific, yet both of

these — the Payne Apartments and the North Hotel — were eventually torn down to make way for the Convention Center and a video game complex. There are just as many abandoned units along First and Second Avenue today; now they're above high-end retail stores.

One housing activist notes some progress, especially in areas like the International District, where the owners of an estimated 400-500 abandoned units have been more willing to sell to low-income housing providers. Yet Plymouth's own waiting list is still several hundred people long, and the organization can do little about the estimated 2,000 people who end up on the street every night. ■

—Molly Rhodes

May 1998
April 1998
June 1998
July 1998
August 1998

Paul's Promise

Then: In the summer of 1998, several events (all reported in *Real Change*) focused public attention on the dangers to homeless women: a serial killer who targeted them on the streets of Pioneer Square; controversy over bulldozing homeless encampments in the

greenbelt, called The Jungle; and SHARE/WHEEL's Tent City 2 on Beacon Hill. In response, Mayor Schell publicly pledged \$500,000 in additional city funds to get all the women and children off the streets by Christmas.

WHEEL led a push for a public process to plan the use of these funds, rather than the usual competitive process. It became the largest cooperative effort of homeless services up to that point. The immediate result was more services for women, including:

- The Women's Referral Center: a centralized location where women could go to find emergency shelter that evening and information on other services.

- Hammond House emergency night shelter.

- A Salvation Army emergency night shelter.

- Extended hours at Angeline's day center.

Now: Most of the energy of the planning group, which has adopted the name Community Action for Homeless Women, has gone into ensuring that projects started then stay open.

Resources for homeless women have not continued to grow at the same rate as during 1998. Last year's One Night Count in 1999 recorded 93 women on the streets of Seattle — an all-time high. On one night last month, the Women's Referral Center turned away 18 women for lack of shelter. To date, Schell's promise has not been kept. ■

—Anitra Freeman

October 1996

November 1996

December 1996

January 1997

February 1997

Love thy Neighbor

Then: In an effort to crack down on the habits of low-income drinkers, the Pioneer Square Community Council asked convenience stores to sign the Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA), a pledge to curb sales of cheap, potent booze. About 80 percent of the neighborhood stores made the pledge. When the Saveway store on Occidental Avenue and Yesler refused to get on board, the city attorney's office took it to court.

Now: Stronger fences make better Neighbors. This summer, the city council gave the GNA effort some teeth: it made Pioneer Square eligible for recognition as an "Alcohol Impact Area." The state Liquor Control Board can modify or revoke a store's liquor license if its customers "unreasonably disturb the welfare, health, peace, or safety of the surrounding community."

If stores like Saveway, which has not yet signed the GNA, get their licenses revoked, alcoholics will probably go elsewhere. Other neighborhoods could follow Pioneer Square's lead and seek their own designation as an Alcohol Impact Area. At a May public hearing, a Bon Marché representative said such a move would be welcome outside the department store at Third Avenue and Pine Street.

Continued on Page 6

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.

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Mission Statement:

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 MacWorkshop, 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.



Ground under the Heels

Dear *Real Change*,

As a resident of Pioneer Square, I find the newly resurrected "Good Neighbor" policy wildly ludicrous.

Limiting the sale of beer and wine at convenience stores blithely overlooks the very real dangers posed by a privileged class of boozers — namely, the Seattle "suburban brat" community.

On any given Friday or Saturday night in Pioneer Square's bars, I am treated to the sound of beer bottles crashing and the shrill shrieks and whooped yahoos of a drunken horde of adolescents. They pour themselves into mommy and daddy's car only to drive off into the dead of night (or into the dead they leave in their drunken wake). This certainly seems to be a greater threat to society than a pile of vino vomit. Puh-LEEZ!

I realize Seattle is a very style- and class-conscious town, but certainly the homeless or a few hapless winos can't complete with the "Gap Kids." Must the high-ended classes continually grind the underclass into the dirt?

Sincerely,
Lance B.
Vendor #3129

Loaves, Fishes, Tents

Dear Mayor Schell and members of the Seattle City Council:

We have read about the fine currently being charged to El Centro de la Raza by the city's Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use. As we understand the situation, El Centro currently faces a fine of \$75 a day because the Tent City for the homeless does not comply with the appropriate zoning regulations.

We also understand that the city and county have only about 4,000 beds currently available for homeless and transitional housing needs. We are told that approximately 1,500 people sleep on the streets every evening in our city.

We do not believe that a tent city is a permanent solution to the problem of homelessness. But we do feel strongly that the Gospel message about feeding the hungry and clothing the naked should be taken to heart.

We live in one of the wealthiest communities in North America, and our governments have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on cultural and entertainment facilities in recent years. We are deeply disappointed that our leaders have not chosen to create adequate shelter space for the poorest people in our midst.

If there were a concrete action plan to bring 500 or 1,000 new shelter beds online in the next 90 days, we might be content to wait for even such a tempo-

rary solution to the situation. But winter is coming, there is no such plan, and we are mindful of the adage that the perfect is the enemy of the good.

Accordingly, we urge the city council to overrule the staff at DCLU, who are only acting within the laws and procedures laid down for them by our elected officials, and grant a temporary use permit to El Centro.

We prefer to give a donation directly to El Centro and to SHARE/WHEEL, where it could be used for food, clothing, and other direct support of the homeless. But members of our group have seen far too many people sleeping on cardboard underneath the Alaskan Way viaduct, and we will not turn our heads any more. If following proper procedures, obeying the law, and waiting for permanent solutions leaves men, women, and children sleeping in our streets, we must stand with the lawbreakers.

In the tradition of Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Mahatma Gandhi, we respectfully request that the enclosed check for \$75, one day's fine, be given to DCLU on behalf of El Centro de la Raza, SHARE/WHEEL, and every person who slept on concrete in our city last night.

Please call or write to us if you have any questions about our position or if you have new information about the situation.

Sincerely,
Bart Preecs, on behalf of
New Creation Community, Seattle

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Beyond Charity

Support justice and dignity for all

You don't have to read very far into this newspaper to find some of the best poetry, photography, and journalism that you will find anywhere.

All of this is brought to you by a host of volunteers and a small dedicated staff, without foundation or government grants. The StreetLife Gallery, StreetWrites, a bustling computer lab, and the Homeless Speakers Bureau, all projects of the Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project (RCHEP), are supported equally through contributions and grants. Make Sid the cat happy and help ensure our future by donating time or energy. Checks written to *Real Change* are not tax-deductible, and support the newspaper itself; checks to RCHEP are tax-deductible.

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

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Fast Forward

Our hundredth issue is just the beginning

By Timothy Harris

Recently, a group of us sat around a table and tortured finalists for the Associate Director position here at *Real Change*. Since this person is responsible for most of our empowerment program, we thought it fair to ask what they imagined we'd look like in five years.

Well, we didn't actually think it was fair. But we asked anyway.

Given that this, Volume 7, Number 19, of *Real Change* is our one-hundredth issue, I've been in a forward-looking frame of mind. As a public service to future applicants, I thought I'd publish the answers I like best.

This December, we at *Real Change* are switching from twice-monthly publication to coming out every other Thursday. While this means two extra issues a year, the real benefit is less confusion for our vendors, readers and advertisers. It also means we're a little less likely to be scooped on poverty news by the weeklies, something we really, really hate.

In five years, after becoming at least twice as thick and crammed with news, culture, and stories written from the bottom up, we'll go weekly ourselves.

This will be inevitable, because StreetWrites, our peer support group for homeless and low-income writers, will have trained so many journalists, writers, and poets, that we'll need to publish that often just to keep up.

Meanwhile, the StreetWrites Bedless Bards poetry performance group will be touring throughout the region, mostly to schools, with occasional national performances, spreading the word that poor and homeless people might have some problems to cope with, but can be just as smart, creative, and capable as anyone.

In five years, Mayor Steinbrueck will fear our wrath and welcome our ideas.

Their video will be available for streaming download on our website, which by then will get about 100,000 hits a day. Presently we average about 15,000.

Real Change will be a regional publication, with distribution outlets in Tacoma, Everett, and Olympia. Our

vendor-training program will help people decide what they really want to do and how they're going to get there. If people want to sell our paper, we'll help them get good at it. If they want a bridge to something else, we'll help them go there. As always, the vendor will decide what's best for themselves.

First things First, our grass-roots organizing campaign to create adequate housing and shelter and ensure that homeless people are heard, will have 5,000 active members. Our issue workshops and activist trainings will be very popular. Our specialty will be coalition-building and making government listen to the poor. Mayor Steinbrueck will fear our wrath and welcome our ideas.

Our computer lab, the MacWorkshop, will offer PCs as well as Macs and will be called something else. We'll have twice as many terminals, and with 14 computers, will be serving about 75 people a day. The digital divide, however, will be wider than ever, with poor people working overtime to learn the skills middle-class people take for granted at age 14.

We'll have outgrown our space, but that'll be fine, since the capital campaign to buy our own building was such a success.

The StreetLife Gallery, our working art studio and display space for homeless and low-income artists at Second Avenue and Bell Street, will have produced several of the nation's better known "outsider artists." The space will be well known as a place where unique visions flourish, and will be a regular stop for art lovers from Seattle and the Eastside. StreetLife art will be in such demand for coffee shops, corporate display spaces, schools, and other galleries that the artists will have to work three times as hard just to keep up with demand.

They won't mind, though, since art from StreetLife will earn them good money. Then, as now, all proceeds for art sold will go directly to the artist.

The vision remains the same. In five years, *Real Change* will create the conditions poor people need to have a real voice of their own, just like we do now. We'll just do it better, louder, and with more people until finally, poor people win. ■

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Hip hop music killed 18 people in Sarasota, Florida, this past Labor Day weekend before heading up the coast and terrorizing folks in Atlanta, Norfolk, and Baltimore. The rogue art form traveled west from there, rampaging in usually sleepy Enid, Oklahoma, and Wamsutter, Wyoming, before touching down in Seattle this past weekend.

Five people were shot in Pioneer Square when the music simply became so animated that it caused weapons to spontaneously detonate and bullets to fly through the air. "It's this music that should be killed," said city Attorney Mark Sidran. "Black music, be it blues or jazz or hip hop, has always caused civil unrest, and it stands in our way of a civil society here in the Northwest. Blacks have really good rhythm, but damn it, they get too jiggy and now peeps is getting popped!"

Sidran suggests that since Richard Butler's Aryan Nations have been kicked out of Idaho, maybe they could come to Seattle and play music in our clubs. Barring that, he recommends people listen to more white musicians — Kid Rock, Insane Clown Posse, and Eminem — who merely sing pop music, which never killed anyone. ■

— Bob Redmond

Sharpening up The Blade

The downtown corner of Second Avenue and Pike Street, could become ground zero in a turf war over one building's future.

But for a smoke-spouting teriyaki joint, downtown's only needle exchange, and the Holy Ghost Revival street ministry, the seven-story building on the northwest corner of the block known as "The Blade" stands empty. The city is going up against long-time owner Richard Nimmer, seeking to condemn the building and convert it into 80 units of affordable housing.

No matter whether the city gets it or the owner redevelops it, deputy mayor Tom Byers says the needle exchange will have to move, at least during the remodel. "If we get Plymouth Housing Group and the Market Foundation to redevelop the building, as is our hope, it's conceivable that it could fit in with the remodel," Byers says. Byers told the *Wall Street Journal* that the crowd frequenting the block thwarts one long retail corridor from Pike Place Market up to the Pacific Place shopping center. Street Outreach Services established the needle exchange in 1997; now, Byers told the *Journal*, it presents "a little bit of a chicken-and-egg issue."

Nimmer has been looking to convert the building and adjacent properties into office or retail use, in a partnership with Samis Land Trust, which owns adjacent property. ■

— Adam Holdorf

Same crime, same time?

The sentencing of a young man for the murder of David Ballenger may challenge the state's mandatory-minimum sentencing guidelines. At issue is: should two defendants receive different punishment simply because one plea-bargained and the other went to court?

Throughout his trial, 19-year-old Shelton Musgrave maintained that he'd stood by while his friends had beaten and stabbed Ballenger, a homeless man, to death in August 1999. Though the jury found him guilty of first-degree murder, King County Superior Court judge Charles Mertel sentenced him to 17 years in prison, less than the state's mandatory-minimum time of 22 years. Mertel's decision challenges the judicial practice of plea bargaining, or leniency for defendants who admit guilt and waive their trials.

In the sentencing, Mertel says he's protecting Musgrave's constitutional right to serving the same sentence for the same crime. Musgrave's cohort Jay Stewart, who pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, also received a 17-year sentence. The third defendant, Michael Vittorio "Vito" Caffee, pled guilty to manslaughter, testified against Musgrave, and received 6 1/2 years.

Judge Mertel doesn't think the case will receive such attention. He told *Real Change* that "most of the time co-defendants are not equally culpable," as he believes they were in this case.

The King County Prosecutor's office is considering whether to appeal Musgrave's sentencing. If the ruling isn't upheld, the case could go to the state Supreme Court. ■

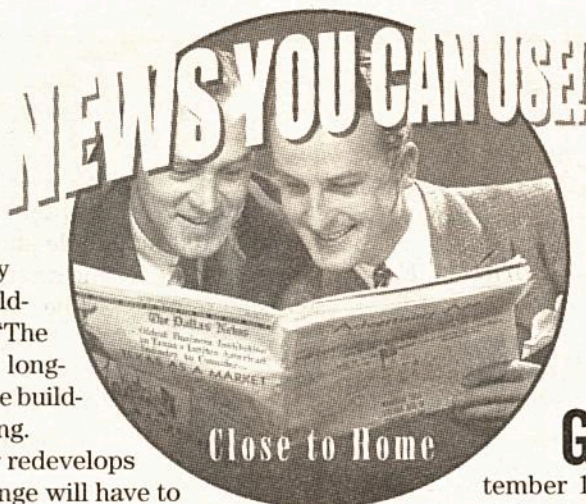
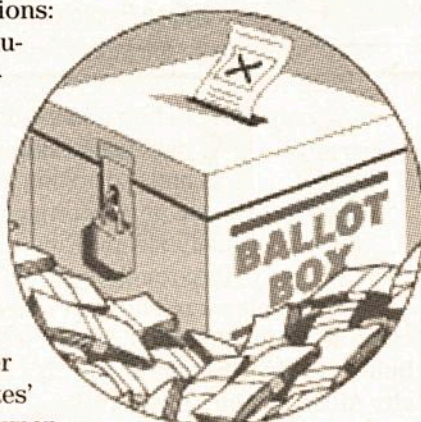
— Adam Holdorf

Big money getting bigger

The Seattle city council may raise individual contribution limits for city races from \$400 to \$600 as early as October 9th. It's a move that would benefit incumbents and hurt less well-connected candidates, says councilmember Nick Licata. Council aide Newell Aldrich paints a picture of the funding disparities in city elections: mayor Paul Schell found over 350 individuals to contribute \$400 apiece to his campaign; Licata had just 49 for his 1995 council race. "This change will make it that much easier to get elected with a few big donors," says Aldrich.

Councilmember Richard Conlin, who helped pass the measure out of committee, disagrees. He says the increase would narrow the gap between individual contributions and two other sources of campaign cash: the candidates' own money, and so-called "independent expenditures" given by one group, such as the Apartment Association of Seattle-King County, to fight several candidates.

The Ethics and Elections Committee, which recommended the changes, says this isn't a way to put challengers on a par with incumbents: "Incumbents will always have an advantage in raising campaign contributions, whether the limits are low or high," its council briefing reads. "Keeping the limit artificially low will only harm challengers by making it harder for them to raise sufficient funds to mount a serious campaign."



If nothing will help put individuals on par with the tens of thousands that better-connected candidates get, why not hike the maximum limit much higher? Good question, says Conlin. "There's no particular basis for the \$400 limit, and the Citizens Panel suggested we go anywhere from \$500 to \$800," he says. "Six hundred dollars was a compromise." ■

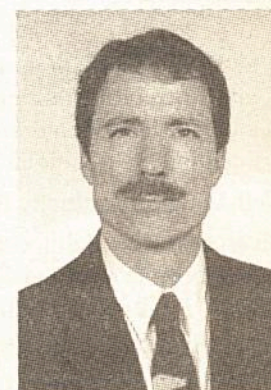
— Adam Holdorf

Threadbare coverage

Green Party congressional candidate Joe Szwaja went home the night of the September 19th primary, exuberant after elections results showed he'd gotten 11 percent of the popular vote. He turned on the TV to find KOMO reporting that his opponent, incumbent Jim McDermott, had received 100 percent of the votes tallied. When he called the station, staff said they were publicizing only the votes of registered Democrats; apparently, Republican, Green or Libertarian voters weren't newsworthy enough.

Szwaja got a similar shock the next morning: the *Post-Intelligencer's* primary coverage didn't even mention the Congressional race. He points out that, combined with the votes for Libertarian campaigner Joel Grus, third-party candidates won over 20 percent of the Seventh District's voters — more than what Perot got in the presidential race back in 1992. The final tally for Szwaja was 13.2 percent. ■

— Adam Holdorf



Dine out for lunch

Ever wanted to stand outside in a slop line, waiting for a hot meal? Well, stop wondering and get on down to Awareness Day 2000, where no matter who you are, you can be subject to the same random indignities people in need experience every day.

The affair will be somewhat softer than usual: the hot meal program Operation Sack Lunch, which serves real-live needy people five days a week outside the Public Safety Building, has recruited chefs Tom French, of Common Meals to cook, and state senator Rosemary McAuliffe to serve up the food. Organizers says it's a chance to dispel some of the myths about homeless people while seeing life through their eyes.

The meal takes place from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 4th, at the usual place: the Memorial Plaza Wall on Fourth Avenue and Cherry Street downtown. True to life, the meal will be first-come, first-served, so hurry up and wait in line. ■

— Adam Holdorf

Citigroup taking it on the chin

A group of activists are setting their sights on Citigroup, the nation's biggest bank, tallying up its legion of nasty corporate practices: the racist loan shark corrupts elected officials, underwrites genetic engineering, and helps finance union-busting firms.

Hey, everyone, that's not all: Citigroup also skims money off the benefits of welfare recipients.

The financial company enjoys a near-monopoly over the business of delivering benefits electronically to hundreds of thousands of welfare recipients. Citigroup runs it in 29 of the 39 states with an electronic benefits system, distributing \$700 million monthly to more than 12 million people across the country. Here in Washington, they administer the Quest Card, which carries cash and Food Stamps benefits.

Every time a Quest Card user withdraws cash from an ATM machine, Citigroup deducts 85 cents. Although the state Department of Social and Health Services oversaw the change from paper-check to electronic benefits last year, they passed on the cost of using an ATM machine to the clients.

An unlikely partner has made common cause with the card users: the food industry. Retailers, chafing under numerous electronic glitches that have over-charged customers and held up business, have spoken up. They filed a formal complaint with the federal body regulating electronic money transfers early this summer.

"It is a tragedy to see food stamp recipients turned away without food because of errors committed by Citicorp," said Tim Hammonds, an industry representative with the Food Marketing Institute. "It's time for them to step up and take responsibility for the frequent system failures, and to correct the matter immediately." ■

— Adam Holdorf

Do you have a story we should look into? Call Adam Holdorf at 441-8143, and just maybe we will.

Loved and Lost

Robin Langston and Eliseo Lopez live in memory

Belltown was nearly empty one recent Saturday morning. Even the smokers outside Angeline's Day Center for homeless women were gone. It was the morning after two friends of the homeless and formerly homeless community were brutally murdered downtown.

Real Change has been keeping a deathwatch this year, tracking reports of homeless people murdered in Seattle. At a September 15 press briefing, the Seattle Police Criminal Investigations Bureau reported 22 homicides in Seattle so far this year, although that number went up to 23 that night after the stabbing of a homeless man in Steinbrueck Park. Three of those murdered have been homeless women and men. These victims make up 13 percent of all murders, although homeless people comprise just one percent of the general population in Seattle.

In light of the media's attention to the recent string of assaults, the police assure us not to fear. Assistant Chief John Pirak said 10-15 additional officers are on the streets. Police statistics show that the number of violent crimes in downtown has declined in the last few years. Our mayor offered a pep talk in The Seattle Times (Sept. 20), saying he and his wife frequently dine out in Belltown: "I'm telling people, come down to eat, I am. It is a safe city."

When 2,000 or more people are forced to sleep outside every night, and when a disproportionate number of homeless people are violently attacked, this is cold comfort to the homeless community. The swelling wave of fear, sympathy, shock, empathy... these emotions swirl around our community every time there's a murder in our neighborhood: Belltown, Pioneer Square, under the bridges, in parks, in alleys. It could have been me.

Robin Langston, age 27

Robin Langston was strangled to death in the alley off Third Avenue and Blanchard Friday, September 15, at 4 a.m. Late in the afternoon that day I walked down the alley, just after I'd gone to a police briefing about the murder.

Two homeless women were there, one whose legs were the only visible part of her body; she was dumpster diving. Her friend was pacing in the alley, drunk, wracked with grief, talking to herself. Is this where it happened, I asked them. Yes, Roxanne replied; homeless women who spent the night in Regrade Park had heard a woman screaming. Roxanne said she thought she'd known the victim; nobody knew, since Robin had been found without ID and was not identified until late that night.

Soon, Renee came out of the dumpster with her treasures: a medium plastic pot, a small fake Christmas tree, a wilted flower they both kept calling a purple daffodil. As I stood in the alley talking, these two women slowly constructed a memorial for their fallen sister, whoever she was. They left their makeshift memorial in that alley, and we walked on together to the Women's Referral Center.

Robin was a beautiful 27-year-old African American woman who was beginning to get her life back on track. Her lovingly written obituary in *The Facts* says Robin, who grew up in Seattle, had many friends. "Robin was a very kind and caring person who made friends and not enemies. She had a

smile that no one will forget." She is survived by her parents, her two young sons, her four siblings.

At her wake, friends and family told me, "she was a good person. Nobody had anything but good to say about her." Her friends used to fuss with her, but they obviously loved her very much.

Robin's family and friends were heartbroken by the media coverage of her murder. There was absolutely nothing of her life in any of the daily papers, which called her simply "a transient with a history of prostitution." When the story hit the news, family members phoned reporters repeatedly to complain about the coverage and to give more information about Robin's life. Their calls weren't returned. Without the recent muggings in downtown, Robin's murder would not have gotten even this much coverage.

At the Referral Center one night, a homeless woman shared her grief with me: "They found her by the trash cans like she don't matter. I read that a guy in the apartment building [the Cornelius] said 'We hear those people all the time,' like she deserved what she got."

Did the residents of that apartment building call the police right away when they heard Robin's screams? Police and medics responded within four minutes, but couldn't revive Robin at the scene.

Amos, one of Robin's friends, believes that attitude makes it easier to feel it could never happen to us.

But of course it can, it does. WHEEL, the homeless women's organizing effort, mobilized for Women in Black last Wednesday for just that reason: this could have been me, this was my sister,

my brother. Twenty homeless women and their supporters stood silently for an hour at the Public Safety Building Plaza to honor Robin, Eliseo, and all homeless people, in the wind, the cold, the rain. At the end of that silent hour, we gathered in a circle and prayed — for our safety, for the safety of our sisters and our city. Diane, who is homeless now, closed the prayer: "As cold and wet and miserable as we are," she said, "I guess we're the lucky ones." ■

— Michele Marchand

Eliseo Lopez, age 28

My Saturday afternoon collided with the death of Eliseo Lopez without a moment to take evasive action. It could have happened to any of us. I just happened to be in the way.

The only warning sign was a clutch of flowers on the grass by a park bench where he'd died the night before. Sitting down nearby with a book, I took them for trash.

A few pages into Faulkner, I look up at a man dressed neatly in an old brown suit bending over the bouquet. He glances at me once, his grief making him slightly abashed. He says "My friend died here last night."

That's when I see the dark stains on the bench beside me.

Humberto Salazar met Eliseo in the park a few months ago. They would disappear on long walks, once exploring the train tunnel below downtown. They talked politics. "He was very thoughtful, very philosophical," Humberto says. "We had some pleasing walks." Eliseo expressed his homesickness for Mexico, but didn't want to return to his children empty-handed. He'd work a little to save some money.

"Even if he was broke, he'd find something to give you if you were hungry," says Humberto.

One night, a couple weeks before his death, the two witnessed a knife-fight in the park. "We both agreed, 'Someone's going to be killed here,'" says Humberto. "But we never saw this coming."

Humberto takes me to meet Cholita, Eliseo's girlfriend, over by the market stalls. Cholita is very smart, he says as we walk over; she learned Spanish on the streets. Perched on a cement slab, Cholita's rubbing down a crucifix with a strand of toilet paper and a bottle of Oxy 10. She picks at the crevices of the small Christ-figure with a toothpick. She's wearing a black baseball cap emblazoned with an Indian spirit-catcher. The cap's facing backward, toward the park, the symbol netting good feelings and thwarting bad.

I tell Cholita where I work, and she responds softly to my obtuse questions. Yes, I'm going to miss him. We were going to get married. No, I don't know what will happen to the body. I'm going to the Mexican Consulate to get it sent back to Sinaloa, where he's from. I can do it; this happened once before, with another boyfriend.

Every few minutes, a friend walks by and gives Cholita a hug and a couple of low words. When I turn to go, she tells me she's getting off the streets tonight, staying at her mom's house. She raises the crucifix and assures me things will be OK. The cross's metal is white and clean. I imagine she returns my smile.

The police incident report blacked Eliseo's name out of public view. He is referred to as 'V': V, address unknown, was stabbed in the leg and died at Harborview later that night. Seven witnesses swear one suspect, caught soon after the knifing, is guilty. Eliseo's body remains at the King County Medical Examiner's Office.

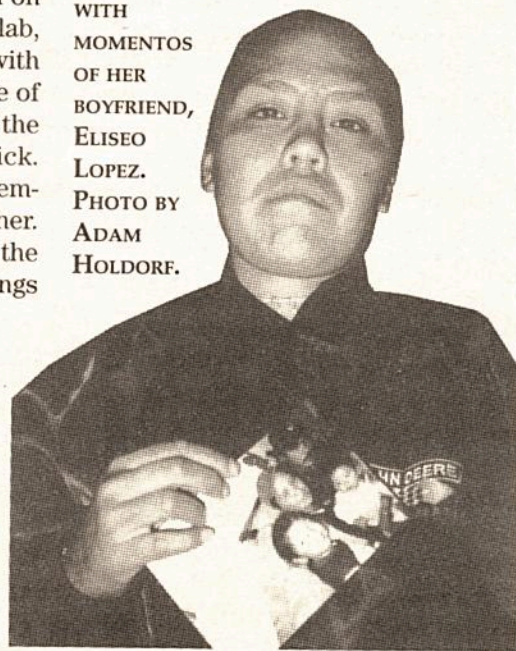
Five days later down at the park, I find out Eliseo's last name. It's Lopez, and flyers with Scripture on them are passed around "in loving memory" of Lopez. The group of mourners assembled is hemmed in on three sides. To their backs is the cement wall and beyond that the Viaduct, then beyond that the bay, with the equinox sunset glowing orange. To their left, a fancy restaurant displays a seafood gala behind plate-glass. Right in front of the mourners, there's a skinny white preacher and a PA system. There are two cakes, a big bowl of something wrapped in foil, and a cross of red roses. The park's wooden tables are covered in plastic white tarp.

As soon as the speaker tells us that the wages of sin are death, I turn my attention to the view. The rest of the audience, however, assumes an attentive posture. Even if no one is saved, they sure are graced with patience. The food's up front, behind the preacher; they wait for its blessing.

Cholita and her mother are sitting at a park table sharing a cigarette. She shows me photos, taken two weeks before at her mother's 50th birthday party. In them, she and Eliseo cuddle a young child. She says she's still on the street. When she goes to the mike and tells the crowd how she'll always miss Eliseo, how he was always good to her, her mother runs up and stills her sobbing shoulders. The preacher resumes the mike. I fade out down the sidewalk before the mealtime prayer. ■

— Adam Holdorf

CHOLITA WITH MOMENTOS OF HER BOYFRIEND, ELISEO LOPEZ. PHOTO BY ADAM HOLDORF.



TIME Continued from Page 1

Supporters claim that curbing alcohol sales is part of a strategy that includes detox for so-called chronic public inebriates. But barriers to turning your life around persist. Mark Elsner, of the King County Division of Detox Services, says homeless people struggling with alcoholism need affordable housing before they get clean and sober: "places where, if you come in at night with alcohol on your breath, you won't be automatically kicked out." ■

— Adam Holdorf

July 1999
August 1999
September 1999
October 1999
November 1999

Design Science

Then: On the heels of Tent City 2 in late 1998, SHARE and WHEEL enlisted the expertise of Environmental Works/Community Design Center to put together a comprehensive study on emergency, urban encampment structures that would still be portable and affordable but safer and tougher than tents.

Several designs were suggested in the final study, all of which met basic criteria: light, durable, and lockable, the structures would be easy to transport and set up, fit in pre-existing city spaces like a parking lot space, and link with other structures to form a community.

This study was then submitted to the city's Health Services Department, as well as all the members of the city council. Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck

had initially expressed interest in the designs, especially how they fit into his Safe Harbors plan to provide a safe, secure place for those with nowhere else to go. Yet a proposed urban encampment along the Duwamish River was shot down by nearby residents, squelching a city-supported alternative for people who were shut out of the shelters. Officials pushing for conventional, permanent housing couldn't justify siphoning off money into structures designed to be temporary.

Now: Those currently living in Tent Village Three would rather live in a building than in streamlined huts with porta-potties outside their doors. Yet it takes time to build standard, permanent housing.

While the city concentrate on the big picture, Tent Village residents have started scrambling for heavy tents to make it through the winter. In addition, before the Department of Design, Construction and Land Use approves their application for a temporary use permit for the Beacon Hill camp, it could conceivably require structures very similar to the ones proposed to the city more than a year ago. ■

— Molly Rhodes

Then: Mary's Place, the first kid-friendly

September 1999
November 1999
December 1999
January 2000
February 2000

Mary's Place

day center for homeless women in downtown, opened in November at the First United Methodist Church at Fifth

Avenue and Columbia, offering laundry services, meals, and showers, as well as career, housing, and financial guidance. Designed by homeless women, the program was also maintained by them through established tasks and chores. The initial goal was to serve 20-25 women daily.

Now: Starting this month, Mary's Place expands its hours and, in conjunction with the WHEEL Women's Empowerment Center, provides computer, reading, and writing classes.

Through a recent grant from the Presbyterian Counseling Service, the center offers a Pastoral counselor every Thursday. Another grant from the PacificCare Foundation sponsors a nurse to help women at the shelter 10 hours a week.

Through such programs, the center has been able to reach 25-30 women daily, and as many as 60 when the YWCA Angeline's Day Center is closed.

Self-management of the center continues. Through each chore performed, women earn points which can be used to buy toiletries and food at the center's "Bon Mary's" store.

Mary's Place program coordinator Marty Hartman says the self-managed system works: "Women want to take care of the place they spend the day. This represents their living room."

Mary's Place is open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. ■

— Molly Rhodes

Seattle native Robert Hansen, 49, is one of *Real Change*'s top-selling ven-

June 1994
July 1994
August 1994
September 1994
October 1994

Robert Hansen

dors. Working from the first issue onward, with just a few months off, he estimates he's sold about 50,000 papers in six years.

Then: What were you doing when you heard about the paper? "*Working as a meat processor at Bar-S Foods in south Seattle, and living in Rainier Beach. I've also been a cook, a baker, a laborer, a housekeeper.*"

Now: Where do you work? "*Out in front of the Seward Park PCC, which is close to home.*"

What is it like for you to sell *Real Change*? "*When the paper first came out it was a lot harder to push it. A lot of people weren't aware of homeless papers. They'd ask, 'What's it all about? Is this a gay paper? A commie paper?' Since it's taken off, people buy it for what it stands for. Six out of 10 of my customers buy it for the poetry.*"

"*The job's all right. It's a way to meet people and to talk about poverty and being poor. You get some people who are like, 'Why don't you get a job?' but mostly, people are supportive.*" ■

— Adam Holdorf

Foreshadow

Some headlines for our next 100 issues

By Dr. Wes Browning

Real Change Takes a Hike

As Belltown gentrification continues, the Hilton buys the Rivoli Apartments and *Real Change* becomes truly homeless

Real Change Moves to Aurora Village, Becomes Real-Estate Rag**Choppy Waters for Safe Harbors**

"I'm sure we'll get the bugs out of the system any day now," says Steinbrueck

The Heat Is On

Increasing efforts to move the homeless out of every area in Seattle

Pioneer Square Businesses Pay Homeless to Be Pioneers, Settlers
An interview with Bob and Charlie, who portray Doc Maynard and Chief Seattle

Aurora/Tent Village

Displaced from downtown Seattle, homeless stage a takeover of Aurora Village. *Real Change* forced to return to printing the voice of the revolution!

Break A Leg! StreetWrites Completes Fortieth Week on Broadway**The Paper Is Served**

Yale awards honorary doctorate in classical lit to Timothy Harris

**Return of the Roaring Twenties**

Belltown competes with Pioneer Square, pays homeless to portray general strikers, scabs, baton-wielding coppers

Cold Fusion Discovered in Real Change Refrigerator

"But no other lab can reproduce the conditions," complain scientists

Cuomo Steps Down, Santos Steps Up**Choppy Waters for Safe Harbors**

"I'm sure we'll get the bugs out of the system any day now," says Steinbrueck

Downtown Seattle Association Bids Farewell to Mark Sidran**The Daily Dose**

New city attorney files suit on 30 landlords in 30 days

**Second Anniversary Celebration for Legal Tent City**

DCLU chief cuts cake

Seattle's Jazz Scene Stages Historic Comeback

Homeless workers make the difference

Washington Lifts Lid Off Rent Control**A Consumer's Report on President Nader****Choppy Waters for Safe Harbors**

"I'm sure we'll get the bugs out of the system any day now," says Steinbrueck ■



Trickle Down Politics

Will Green Party energy outlast Campaign 2000?

By Adam Holdorf

You could see the gleam in Brent McMillan's eyes as he talked about the night ahead.

"We broke the bank for this," said the state coordinator of the Green Party of Washington, standing in the bowels of the Key Arena six hours before a crowd of 10,000 would rally behind Green Party presidential candidate Ralph Nader. "This could be the single biggest rally for any presidential candidate in the campaign season."

In the end, it wasn't. The night before, 12,000 people had shown up to cheer Nader and running mate Winona LaDuke in Minneapolis. But by the admission of both Al Gore's and George W. Bush's staff, these events are smashing the attendance records at their own campaign stops.

Though Ralph's the star of the evening show, he's joined by a supporting cast of thousands within the Green Party. And his campaign boasts of the grassroots effects of the national campaign: because of Nader, Green Party chapters are forming in 33 of Washington state's 39 counties. But their future is anything but clear.

True to the presidential campaigns of the two major parties, the Key Arena event offered little opportunity for the Greens to raise money for the hard work of party-building. All the funds generated from ticket sales went back to the national campaign. Local campaigners Joe Szwaja (House of Representatives, 7th District) and Kara Ceriello (state House, 36th District) made a short pitch for money — on behalf of Nader.

Nader's Naiveté

Despite dogging corporate power for decades, Ralph Nader is new to politics. Carl Pope of the Sierra Club recently called the public-interest watchdog an "anti-politician" who likes to start his own organizations and then leave them to their own devices. This campaign has made the dogged skeptic do something he's never done before: take a party's claim at face value. When *Real Change* asked Nader to specify the local benefits of his Key Arena appearance before the evening, Nader punted, referring to the expected turnout, and the state organization's 33 incubating chapters.

McMillan says these "chapters" comprise as few as one or two people who express their eagerness to start a local organization. Until the election shows the depth of Nader's support, there's not much more evidence of a membership base.

Even if Nader garners five percent of the vote in the November election, the Greens have to wait until the 2004 race to access millions of dollars in federal matching funds. At least three lean

years of organizing are ahead. So far, party-building strategy has been: bring the grand old man to town, and see what filters down.

Locally, at least, money and members are trickling in. The Seattle Greens, with 400 to 500 members, has hired a part-time staffperson paid for by membership dues and private contributions. At a monthly general meeting in the University Heights Community Center in the U-District, the group's treasurer reported revenue of over \$2,000 from t-shirt sales, new members' dues, and pass-the-hat donations in the last two weeks. After the election, the party's hoping to find some affordable office space.

Curt Firestone, last year's city council candidate against Margaret Pageler, who plans to run again next year, is optimistic. Looking out at the crowd from backstage at the Key Arena, Firestone remarked, "Four years ago, this never could have happened."

Just as a national debate is simmering about Nader's candidacy, Seattle's local progressives are far from united. City councilmembers Judy Nicastro and Heidi Wills, who count themselves as Green Party members, are backing Gore; Nicastro says Bush's threat to abortion rights have put her in the Democrats' camp. Councilmember Nick Licata said he won't decide who to vote for until he sees the last-minute polls, in order to throw his weight behind Gore in a pinch. He says, "I want to avoid the catastrophe that Bush would bring, but I want to build the Green Party as well."

Even councilmember Peter Steinbrueck, the only Green Party elected official to speak that night, used his stump speech to issue ambivalent support. While Democrats "have become a party of the elite... I'm a Democrat. The values [of the Greens] are wholly compatible with the Democratic Party." (He later emailed an apology to Green Party members for not being more supportive.) Steinbrueck's speech begged the question: are the Seattle Greens trying to create a new party, or just prod Seattle's Democratic consensus leftward?

As long as the Seattle Greens keep the focus strictly local, the party doesn't have to decide. Next year, candidates will return for the same races: Firestone says he'll start campaigning for city council in January 2001. But in a county council seat, for example, candi-

dates risk alienating liberals still loyal to the Democrats in any three-way race.

Licata says whenever Greens begin to target county seats, they should begin in Republican strongholds where no Dem can win. Such a strategy might bring lefty non-voters back to the polls while skirting division among liberal ranks; it would also allow moderate Democrats in liberal districts to continue cruising to re-election. Unless some non-voting liberals came out of the suburbs, the strategy wouldn't get anyone elected.

Tough Row to Hoe

Local activist Hop Hopkins says he's not sure the Greens are ready for the work ahead. He quit the Greens because "they couldn't make the connections around race, class, gender, and sexuality that they needed to," he says. "I'm not sure how you can advocate for people when they're not part of your leadership."

The Greens definitely don't look like the rest of America. There didn't appear to be a single nonwhite face at last month's Green Party general meeting. The Key Arena event's only Black speaker was Rev. Robert Jeffrey, minister at the New Hope Baptist Church, who brought the house to its feet with an impassioned call to back Nader. According to two different event organizers, the night's lineup was

changed in the final days from all-male and all-white.

"In the year 2000, for that to happen...." said Sally Soriano, former organizer of People for Fair Trade.

"We've always talked about how we want to organize more with labor and people of color," said Seattle Greens member Patrick Mazza after the speech. Referring to Jeffrey's appearance, "It looks like it might finally happen."

Whatever the Green Party's lacking now, Mazza says the next few months provide an opportunity to get it. "What's most important is what happens after Election Day. The big question is: will we draw together all this new interest? Will it help us get the necessary infrastructure?"

Meanwhile, Hopkins is shying away from election-year politicking. He wonders if the Nader candidacy will land the Green Party exactly where the Reform Party's washed up: co-opted by a demagogue like Pat Buchanan.

"We need organizations like the Green Party, but in order to move beyond being a hard-working choir, they must develop a sense of what the daily lives of people around them are like," Hopkins says. "We get fly-by-night operations all the time in election season, asking 'why aren't [people of color] coming out for us?' not 'What is it that we lack?'" ■

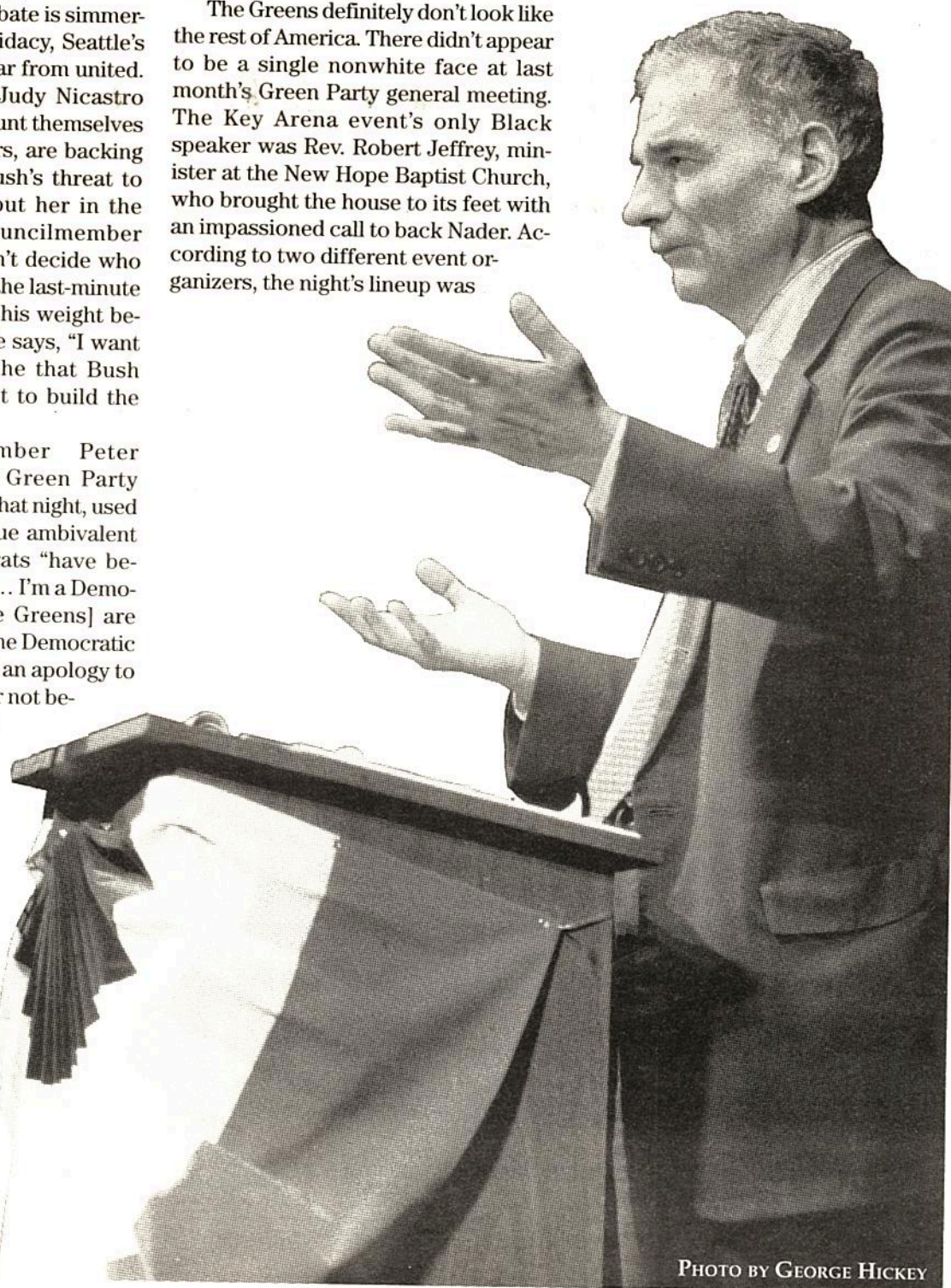


PHOTO BY GEORGE HICKEY



Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning

Last month we were bad. We pretended to be offering solutions to homelessness. But in fact we didn't mean any of them. So this time, to compensate, we have decided that we will mean everything we say.

To start with, I mean it when I say that now that the presidential election is heating up it's time for me to cash in on some of the action. So I am prepared to repeat my popular 1996 offer: bidding is now open for my Y2K presidential vote.

I don't care who you want for president! I don't care what your party is: Republican, Democrat, Green, Libertarian, Socialist, Communist, Reform, Slumber, BYOB, or Pizza! If you are the top bidder I will vote your way. That's a promise, from a man who can be trusted every other month!

So if you care about our country's future, or if you don't but you have money you don't need, what are you waiting for? Send your bid to me c/o *Real Change*. Bids start at \$5. Offer void where prohibited by law. Bids must be received by midnight, October 21 to be considered. Do your share to help the formerly homeless stay off the streets! No, you may not watch me vote. You have to trust me!

I will now indicate a partial solution to the homeless problem in this city. City Councilmembers, Mayor, Political Hacks, take notes now, if you want to be part of the Future of Seattle.

Any of you ever heard of Skid Road? Of course you have. It's famous throughout the world, albeit in a corrupted form. We had the first and the best "Skid Row" of any city in America. We had colorful pioneers, down-and-out loggers, drunken fishermen waiting for the season to start, and quaint local natives wrapped in blankets. We had women shipped in from New England to be the wives of the aforementioned.

And what do we have now? All we've got are just plain homeless people.

We've got homeless people, down-and-out airplane mechanics, drunken fishermen waiting for the season to start, and quaint local natives dressed in Tommy Hilfiger Casual Wear. We've got women moving here from Los Angeles, I don't know why.

Do you see it coming, or am I the only genius in the house? The only significant differences between what we have now and what we had then are the outfits. We can get our colorful history back.

We've already spent a fortune making Pioneer Square look like it did in the 1870s and '80s. Why not go all the way? It's worked for Disney; it can work for us.

Here's the plan: The city and the businesses in and around Pioneer Square will split the cost of (a) providing period costumes to our local homeless and (b) paying them to wear them and act the part. They ought to be paid as much as extras in a film, but I'm thinking \$8 an hour would do it. For 12 hours a day.

If you're thinking that's too much, then I'd say you're not thinking very clearly! For every \$1,000,000 a day we pay to the homeless to act like early Seattle pioneers, our city will rake in tens of millions in tourist revenue. And don't think the homeless are going to go to Tacoma to spend their new earnings either. They're going to spend their money right here at businesses that are supporting them.

In fact there is really only one minor drawback to the plan. To show you all how minor I believe that drawback is, I am going to share it with you, when I could just hide it until it was too late.

Here it is: When all the homeless in this city have decent-paying jobs acting the parts of 1880s homeless, it is going to become painfully obvious in new ways that, even with that additional income, there is no housing for them. In fact, the additional money in the hands of the formerly poor will be seen as an opportunity by landlords to jack rents up higher, and there will be more homeless than ever.

But, they will be well-paid homeless!

And who knows, but if everyone can see clearly that having good-paying jobs doesn't guarantee access to housing, maybe somebody would listen to me expound upon the subject of what would.

Just don't expect any straight answers in odd-numbered months. ■

Count

Too many lights; broken
where they hang from the loose
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permitted at
night —

but, only at night! are
darker
themselves, than the last
time!

Time spent!
Lost, of course, and never light

again.
Only in the dark circles.

—STAN BURRISS

Lullaby

Last night I found a loneliness that I could hold.
Arms crossed, knees drawn up, we sat and rocked,
This thing and I, the dawn far off, so far...
It is autumn, and the apples are falling,
Our bodies are falling, souls oozing through the exit
Of a cruel bruise. Time dies its minute death,
Stiffens, moves on again, blind as an arrow.
And all the dead scattered like fallen stars
Startle this thing and I, locked in love and grief.

— JAMES SCOFIELD

Coyote

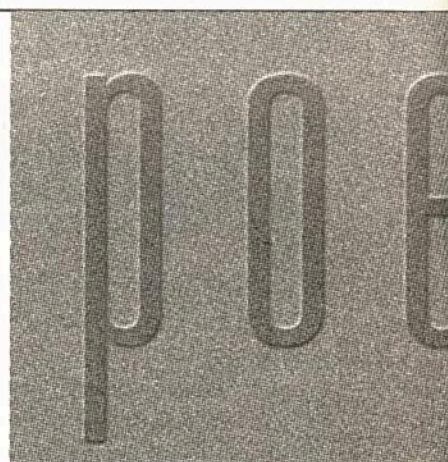
Coyote was out on the streets one night looking for a warm place to sleep, but a policeman kept coming by and saying, "Move along, you can't sleep here."

Coyote was out on the streets one night looking for a place to piss, but a policeman coming by and saying, "Move along, you can't piss here."

Coyote was out on the streets one night looking for something to eat, and when he found something to eat he wanted to share it with his friends. But a policeman kept coming by and saying, "This street isn't a restaurant folks, you can't serve food here, you can't eat here, move along."

Coyote was getting angry, and when Coyote gets angry he gets a mischievous look in his eye. So the next time something odd happens, when the traffic lights don't work, when the roof of the new multi-million dollar stadium doesn't retract or nobody can remember the name of the person who was supposed to make the payment for the Opera House, you might ask yourself, "What was Coyote going to do next?"

— ANTHONY



Wes Browning

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—STAN BURRISS

poetry

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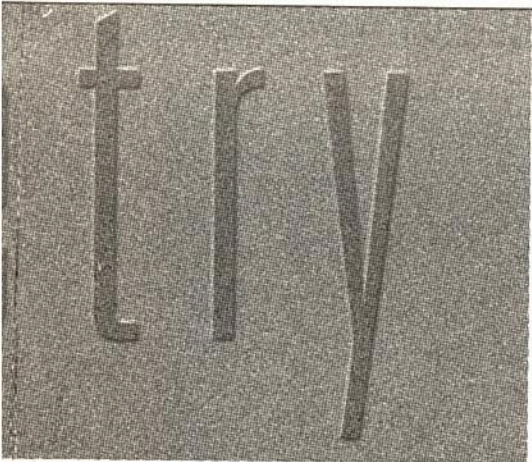
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— ANITRA FREEMAN



Who Amongst Us Is Above It?

Capitol Hill is the smoking capitol of Seattle
all the drunks want a cigarette
“Do you remember the days when all you wanted was
a cigarette and a beer?”
now a days the Hood is changing,
now a days the boys in the Hood are using heroin;
the Seattle Times says, “Seattle is the heroin capitol.”
Courtney Love said, “The Seattle police aren’t doing enough.”
they say that cigarettes are as, or more addictive than heroin
the legal high,
the last legal high, “ a coffee advertisement”
According to Bob Marley,
the white man’s drugs
(caffeine, nicotine, sugar)
are legal,
the black man’s drugs (marijuana)
is not
is our drug war a racial war?
A spokesman for the White House said,
on national television,
“The Federal Gov’t. would not approve legalization
of marijuana because smoking was a health hazard.”
Everyone knows the Gov’t. gives
subsidies to the tobacco industry
and it is a well known fact that R.J. owns Coca Cola,
and Coca Cola owns Paramount Pictures;
what’s the last movie you’ve seen?

— PATRICK BISSELL

Morning Bus Ride in Seattle

(For R. Rawhide)

Sitting on the metro bus, I read the newspaper’s
sports and weather report. A sprinkle beads the glass
and the windshield wipers become metronomic.

Yesterday saw a May dandelion in the grooves
of the cement sidewalk.

...this reminded me of home
where long-leaved cattails are shedding
their yellowish fluff in the dried-up ponds.
However green is painting
the valley’s landscape.
Hop vines climb the coarse twine
the neighbor’s dogs bark at a pick-up
truck, it passes crunchingly on the gravel road.
As a boy I tried to unravel a spider
web constructed between the barbwire fence,
I failed at my misadventure; the glistening
slender threads, shivering,
they cradled morning
dew...

Bus windows vibrate and the shiny drops of water
streak becoming transparent lines.
I gather last night’s note
readying them to type the calendar of events
and I have to telephone
verifying the time and place.
I stretch, pulling the cable-like stop cord
and retrieve a schedule
as I leave.

—EARLE THOMPSON

The Paranoia Bird

Summer declines in roseate embrace
out the yawning door you can see
the old backyard, a stack of bricks
there, some boards, tires, beer bottles
sparrows squabbling in the bushes
the tall grass rustling
weeds casually thriving, dandelions
the open door
the flies
cloud shadows, touch of breeze
the cat prowling meditatively
a squirrel watching the cat
and up in the elm tree
a bird sings encrypto
what sounds like
guillotine, guillotine
now
just what the hell
does that mean?

—ROBERT DEMALVALAIN

In My Darkest Hour

"Dark Days" director saw light at the end of the tunnel

by Anitra Freeman

One lone figure walks down dark, empty city streets. He enters the Amtrak train tunnel, shoves aside some trash, and lowers his body down a hole.

Into a community of people, houses, and life.

This is the world of the "mole people" of New York, homeless residents who have built homes in the Amtrak tunnels out of discarded trash. They find safety and support among each other, far from the cold streets and harsh shelters above. The community electrician, Henry, says, "You can grow down here. One of the woman living here, Dee, says, 'We're family.'"

The documentarian of this community is Marc Singer, the director of *Dark Days*. He lived in the tunnels himself for two years, earning the residents' trust and eventually filming their lives. They divulge the most intimate details on screen. The camera shows the methods the residents use to combat — or to reconcile with — the rats infesting the tunnel; it shows the residents struggling with and surrendering to addiction; it shows them foraging through the garbage bins in the world above.

Singer also moved down to the tunnels, he told *Real Change*, because "I loved the people there and was learning so much from them that I wanted to be there the whole time." These people included crack addicts and former crack addicts, people that most of us regard as unlovable, even disposable. Singer draws us close to them, humanizes them, shows us the foundations of human dignity as people who have lost all material possessions and status in their lives treat each other with respect in spite of color, creed, gender or age.

When Dee, who is black, is burned out of her shanty, Ralph, who is Puerto Rican, shelters her. Tommy, a young white man who looks like a poster boy for Aryan youth, finds safety here from abusive drug- and alcohol-addicted parents, and is comfortable among the racial mix.

"I learned so much about myself" during his years in the tunnel, Singer

says, "that it is hard to sum it all up in one sentence. If I had to try, then I guess I learned what it is like to be human."

Toward the end of the movie, Amtrak responds to public pressure by serving 30-day eviction notices on the tunnel residents. One Amtrak executive says tunnel residents suffer from asthma and other lung problems, although nobody wheezed in the interviews shown. He utters the amusingly oxymoronic phrase "Asthma is prevalent among a few individuals." He reports the death of one resident from exposure in a previous winter, one woman struck by a train during the time the film was made.

Over the same period of time, I wonder, how many homeless people in the streets above died of exposure, were struck by cars, attacked by gangs, shot by police? But, says Amtrak, how could living in the tunnels be anything but miserable?

The parallels with Tent City are compelling: there's the same sense of belonging to a community dependent on each other for survival, the same sense of dignity in making your own way, however harsh it may be; the same hardships; the same difficulty of persuading people in suits that this is better than the alternative.

The Coalition for the Homeless steps in, pointing out that the mole people have nowhere to go. In the

end, the Coalition finds housing vouchers for all 75 of the tunnel residents.

According to the background material on the film, and an interview with Marc Singer, those who needed it also successfully completed drug rehab. The people shrouded in darkness are now filmed in their own light-filled apartments. Ralph passionately affirms, "I will never go back to homelessness. Never. I woke up out of homelessness. I'm going to stay awake."

I and the half-dozen friends of mine, all homeless and formerly homeless, had the same reaction to the ending. It was jarring and not quite believable. Surely the readjustment after years of living underground wouldn't be that easy. Surely staying in housing and never becoming homeless again wouldn't be that certain.

Singer says that even for him, coming back up "was a bit strange at the beginning. When I first finished filming

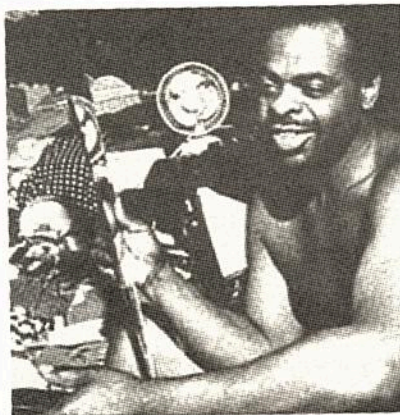
and stopped going into the tunnel it was a bit hard to talk to people." But he keeps in contact with all of his former "film crew."

"I see most of them every few weeks, and speak to all of them at least once a week. Some are doing really well and others doing just brilliantly. Initially, for some the adjustment was a bit more challenging than for others. Some people had lived in the tunnel for over 10 years. But there were a lot of good people around who really cared about them, and gave a lot of love and a lot of support."

"They started to get their confidence back. To get their pride back. To care about themselves. To go back to work. To trust people again."

"Love and a lot of support" seems to make the difference, to make the end of addiction really the end, to make "permanent housing" truly permanent. Marc Singer has helped us see the "mole people" as people who, even in their darkest days, possess love and courage. ■

Dark Days plays through October 5 at the Varsity Theater, 4329 University Way NE. Call 632-3131 for showtimes.



"I learned so much about myself," says filmmaker Marc Singer about his years in the Amtrak tunnels in New York, "that it is hard to sum it all up in one sentence. If I had to try, then I guess I learned what it is like to be human."

The parallels with Tent City are compelling: the same sense of belonging to a community dependent on each other for survival.

StreetLife Gallery

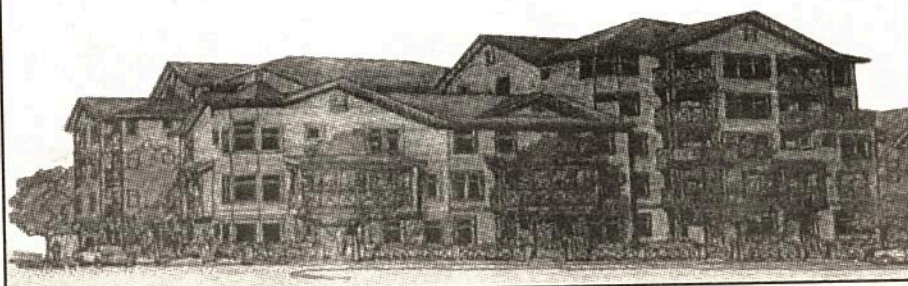
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Daily Work

A Labor Ready Journal

By John Shaw

By telling you what I'm about to tell you, I will break an agreement I signed.

Six months ago, I was between jobs. After 5 1/2 years at a transitional housing program, I quit my job and took some time off. It was great, until I went broke, and then I started temping.

Labor Ready, Interim Personnel, a local publication where I worked for a few days — these were my employers.

Labor Ready was the worst. Before they send you out at poverty-level wages — typically \$6.50 an hour — you must agree to the following:

- If there's an accident, you have to take a drug test.
- If you get hurt on the job, you won't hold the place where you work accountable.
- You won't divulge any of Labor Ready's trade secrets.

But I'm going to divulge one of their trade secrets: Labor Ready routinely practices fraud.

Before they send you on a job, you have to sign something saying that you've read training manuals and seen safety videos. But they don't show you the manuals or videos.

I asked the woman working behind the computer, "I have to sign these? But you haven't shown me them."

"We'll show them after you get back from your first job."

She was lying.

I get to the Labor Ready at Rainier and Jackson a little after 6 a.m. The lobby is already packed with 40 or 50 people, almost all men, hoping to go to work. Little hope of getting sent today, not with all these people ahead of me.

I settle into a chair and read the paper. I fall asleep. I'm not the only one sleeping.

The office sends only a few people out. A couple of times the counter people call out, "Anybody with a car?" But out of 40 or 50 laborers, only a few have cars. This is the bottom end of the economy. One of the only places in America you can go and be with so many car-less adults.

After waiting over four hours, I go home.

My sweetie is a social worker, and she tells me that the Kent Labor Ready is sending people out. Sometimes it pays to have friends in low places, like Garth Brooks says.

In addition to connections, my sweetie also has a car, and she lets me drive it to Kent.

Gotta fill out the paperwork again. Yes, I agree to take a drug test if a beam falls on me and breaks my foot. Yes, I agree not to divulge Labor Ready's trade secrets. Yes, I affirm that I've been trained in safety techniques, even though I haven't.

Funny, if you're barred from one Labor Ready office, you're barred out of them all, but you have to sign this damn paperwork in every single office.

"OK, John, you're driving today? Good. Do you mind taking Mike? (not his real name). Great, you'll be unloading a container truck for a furniture company about a 10-minute drive from here. Here's a map."

Mike is pissed. He's psyched to be going out on a job, but he's pissed. He just got turned down from selling plasma because he told the truth about whether he'd been in jail in the last year. "I could have lied, but no, I told the truth," he complains.

At the end of the day the furniture company warehouse supervisor asks us to come back tomorrow. Mike and I drive back to Labor Ready and get paid. We'd forgotten to ask the wage before we left. It's \$6.50 an hour.

Labor Ready will give you a check, or you can cash out there. If you take cash, you go to an ATM in the office and pay a \$1 surcharge. The cash machine doesn't dispense coins, so they also deduct whatever change is on your check. Most people take the cash. Hey, if Labor Ready skims a little off the top, it's still cheaper than CheckMart.

At Labor Ready, you have to report to work at least a half-hour before you start getting paid, even if you're going on a repeat job. You have to pay your own transportation from the office to the work-site, and at the end of your shift, you have to transport yourself back to the office, on your own dime and off the clock.

Labor Ready does subsidize you if you drive other people to the work-site. But they don't pay for it. They dock a dollar from the other guy's check and add it to yours.

It's not as though Labor Ready can't afford to pay for transportation. If you're getting \$6.50 an hour, Labor Ready is charging the workplace \$12 to \$14, according to the counter people at the Kent office.

The advantage of Labor Ready is that they pay daily; Interim pays only once a week. The people at Interim are really nice, but I had a problem with my check four of the five weeks I worked there. Usually, it's late. Once it was for twenty cents for twenty hours of work. Oops. As a rule, Interim pays better. A moving job there paid \$8 an hour, \$1.50 higher than Labor Ready.

The second day moving furniture for Labor Ready, Mike takes another, less strenuous assignment, so today my labormate is Richard (not his real name).

A nice guy and a hard worker, Richard has been sleeping under a bridge. He had been staying in a shelter, but he got barred. I used to volunteer occasionally at this shelter, and friends of mine still work there.

The bar was unjust, he says. A client-volunteer, a man with authority, lied to him about something, and they got busted doing something they weren't supposed to.

Richard says he doesn't mind too much. He'd rather sleep outside than

put up with nonsense. He says his ex-wife is helping him find a place, and it should come through soon. Once he gets a place he'll get a real job again. It's hard to show up at a regular job if you haven't had a shower. At Labor Ready it doesn't matter.

"For some of the people at Labor Ready, it's a lifestyle. A lot of them are real alcoholics. Not that I should talk — I'm a serious alcoholic myself. But I haven't had a drink in a month."

Richard says he doesn't mind sleeping under the bridge too much, but after we get paid at the end of the day he says, "I'm going to a hotel tonight. I was going to wait 'til the weekend. I try to save money, but it's hard." ■

John Shaw now works at the Washington Low Income Housing Network.

Demand justice for day workers outside the Labor Ready Shareholders Meeting 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, October 25th, Portland Avenue Park, Tacoma. For more information, call the Pierce County Labor Council, AFL-CIO at (253)473-3810.



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NOTES FROM THE KITCHEN

One flew over the coop's nest

By Liz Smith

It was that melancholy 17th century philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, who penned the famous words, "The life of man is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." This gloomy observation was made by someone who was raised in luxury, attended Oxford, and spent his adult years writing brilliant, learned treatises.

In an effort to teach their boy some humility and prepare him for the rigors of college, his parents gave him the daily task of chicken-slaughtering.

"Tommy," his mother would call, "There's 17 folke for to sup tonight. Go thee hence with thy axe and prepareth the fowl."

Off he would trudge to the hen house and then to the chopping block, muttering, "Oh, the life of a chicken is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish...."

Hardly anybody reads Hobbes anymore, and comparatively few people attend Oxford, but people all over the world still raise chickens. Even in a big, modern city like Seattle, people are quietly keeping hens in their backyards (noisy roosters not allowed).

Mrs. Amy Hagopian will be showing off her egg-laying operation later this month, as a hostess of Seattle Tilth's second annual City Chicken Coop Tour. She and her husband keep chickens for the same reason people have gardens: it's a timeless pleasure to step outside and pick fresh tomatoes for a salad or gather newly-laid eggs. They also wanted their children to appreciate where their food comes from.

Most of the people touring the coops probably intend on having laying hens, as it's a lot simpler to gather an egg than to butcher a live chicken. The Hagopian family have two Leghorns (pronounced "leggerns"), which are the best egg-layers, and one Rhode Island Red, which lays brown eggs.

The Hagopians' coop is fully enclosed with chicken wire to keep the birds from flying away and protect them from predators. Some people de-beak their fowl and clip their wings, but with only three chickens, it's not necessary. The coop has a sturdy roof and a little awning so the chickens stay dry when they stroll out for a breath of fresh air. Chickens hate to be rained on. It makes them miserable and lowers egg production.

Chickens are amazingly delicate and sensitive. Day-old peeps must huddle under either a warming lamp or a warm mommy. They need special drinking fountains to keep them from getting wet and chilled, and consequently dying. Even when older, and presumably more hardy, they rush toward sickness like it was a tasty junebug.

Chickens with plenty to eat, lots of room, and fresh, clean water will still have a cranky and nervous disposition. They don't like to be startled, so it is advisable to knock and say hello before entering the coop. When gathering

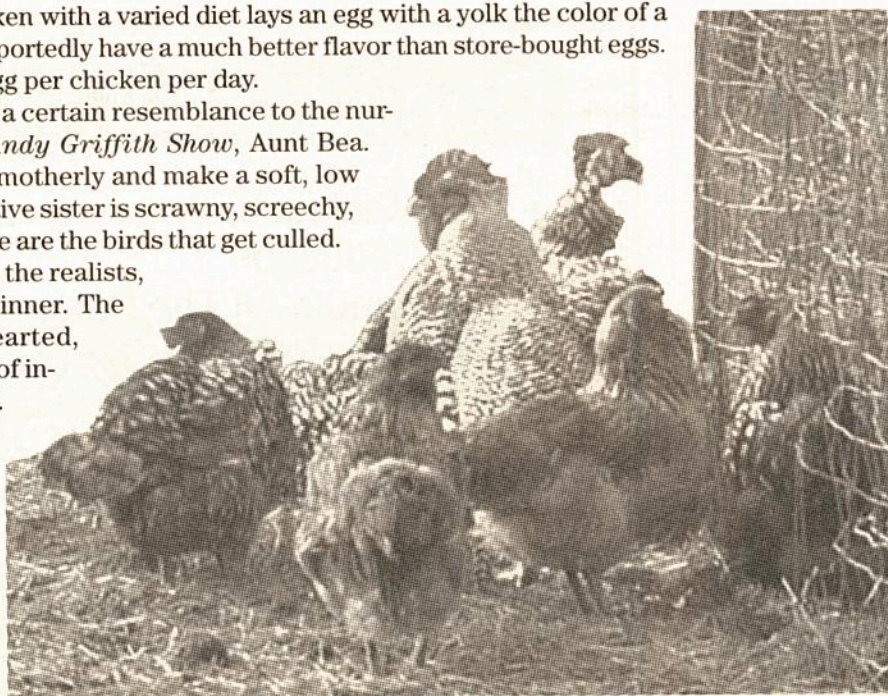
eggs, they peck at your arm in indignation. Chickens hate to be picked up and are very hard to catch. I guess if I were a chicken, I too would feel suspicious when a human came near me.

In the past, farmers used to give their poultry kitchen scraps, and their flocks would get sick and die from malnutrition. It's a lot more scientific now, and hens get laying mash, a kind of chicken chow. They like to nibble on apple cores, lettuce, grass clippings, and a vegetable called mangel-wurzel.

A home-grown chicken with a varied diet lays an egg with a yolk the color of a harvest moon. These reportedly have a much better flavor than store-bought eggs. As a rule, expect one egg per chicken per day.

A fruitful hen bears a certain resemblance to the nurturing lady from the *Andy Griffith Show*, Aunt Bea. She'll be rounded and motherly and make a soft, low cluck. Her non-productive sister is scrawny, screechy, and squinty-eyed. These are the birds that get culled.

Some chicken owners, the realists, invite these birds to dinner. The others, the tender-hearted, drop them off at a sort of informal chicken camp. Someday, when you are on the Burke-Gilman Trail near Lake Washington, look up into the trees and you may observe the survival of the noisiest, and the fittest. ■



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2000 Block Western Avenue, Downtown, September 19: Police cited a 40-year-old homeless white male for drinking in public. A federal agent from the Immigration and Naturalization Service's Outside Assist Agency determined that the man was an illegal alien. He was taken into custody. Police assisted in transporting the suspect to the INS detention center.

Downtown, September 20: A homeless white male reported to the police that he believed an unknown person had robbed him of his personal belongings the night before. He had passed out on the street due to intoxication, and awoke to find travelers checks and a money order missing.

1800 Block Broadway, Capitol Hill, September 23: At approximately 10 p.m., a police officer approached a black male in his 30s who was sleeping on the sidewalk and attempted to move him along. The officer informed the man he couldn't sleep there, and asked him to stand up. The man appeared disoriented. The officer asked him if he was under mental health treatment, to which the suspect answered 'yes.' The officer then asked the man to pick up his sleeping bag and belongings and move. The man seemed very confused by this, and began to throw his belongings about. He threw a plastic bag containing his papers at the officer, narrowly missing his head. He was placed in restraints and transferred to Harborview.

First Avenue Metro Bus Station, Downtown, September 23: A homeless white female in her early 20s was punched in the face, tackled to the ground, and sprayed in the eyes with an unknown substance at around 11 p.m. The suspect, a man approximately 30 years of age, took \$20 that the victim had dropped to the ground during the attack and fled the scene. He is still at large. ■

Compiled by Emma Quinn

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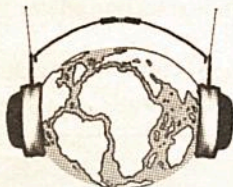
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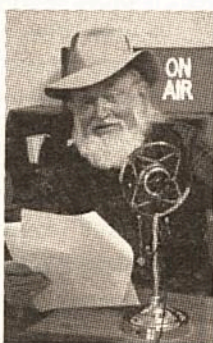
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Sundays, Midnight

A patchwork of tall tales, labor songs and stories, tramping and railroad lore, and a general and often comic assessment of the passing parade.

Forty thousand people lined the wharves and shoreline and 15,000 watched from boats in Elliott Bay as the USS Battleship Nebraska was launched from the Moran Brothers Shipyard on October 7, 1904. The Shipyard was located south of



of vacant land owned by the Port of Seattle, located a few blocks south of Pioneer Square. Within a few days, they built 50 shanties. After the squatters were brought to the attention

of the City of Seattle, the Health Department posted notices on every shack telling occupants to vacate within a week. Seven days later the police arrived with cans of kerosene and burned down the shacks. The squatters immediately rebuilt. About a month later the city burned down the shacks once again. This time the residents burrowed into the ground and constructed roofs made of tin or steel. The city relented and allowed them to stay on the condition that they adhere to safety and sanitary rules.

Jackson became the liaison between Hooverville residents and City Hall and local businesses. He was Hooverville's most public citizen, and people began to call him the Mayor of Hooverville. He stated, "I am just a simple person, living among simple people, whose status in life is the same



POSTERBOY USS BATTLESHIP NEBRASKA

Seattle's Pioneer Square at the foot of South Charles Street. The 435-foot long Nebraska's keel was laid on July 4, 1904; the ship cost \$4.5 million to build.

Nine hundred men of the U.S. Army's 25th Infantry Regiment were transferred to Seattle's Fort Lawton from the Philippines on October 9, 1909. Fort Lawton was on Magnolia Bluff, overlooking Puget Sound, in what is now Discovery Park. The 25th was one of four regiments of African American soldiers in the Army, called Buffalo Soldiers by Plains Indians in the 1870s and 1880s. The soldiers at Fort Lawton and their families, who arrived the following year, constituted approximately one-third of the city's African American population, which numbered about 2,400 persons in 1910. Filipinos who enlisted in the U.S. Army were placed in the regiment as well.

On October 3, 1918, the University of Washington reported that the worldwide epidemic of Spanish Influenza had arrived in Seattle, killing one person and sickening 700. Two days



FASHION MEETS DISEASE PREVENTION.

later, Seattle Health Commissioner Dr. J.S. McBride said that the disease was "admittedly prevalent." Though theaters and schools closed, public gatherings were banned, and people wore gauze masks to thwart the germs, approximately 1,600 persons died over the next six months. At least 21 million people died throughout the world, including some 700,000 in the United States.

During the fall and winter of 1931-1932, unemployed workers established Seattle's Hooverville. In October 1932, an unemployed lumberjack by the name of Jesse Jackson and 20 others started building shacks on nine acres



A VIEW OF HOOVERVILLE.

as theirs. I'm trying to do the best I know how to administer, in my poor way, to their wants. The men often seek my advice and bring their troubles to me. I advise them the best I can on many questions. I am often able to prevent many little rows that might develop into big ones."

The residents named the shantytown in sarcastic honor of President Herbert Hoover (1874-1964), on whose beat the Great Depression began. It was the former location of Skinner and Eddy Shipyard Plant 2, which had closed in 1920. A census taken during March 1934 counted 632 men and seven women living in 479 shanties. Their ages ranged from 15 to 73. Included were 292 foreign-born Caucasians, 186 native-born Caucasians, 120 Filipinos, 29 African Americans, three Costa Ricans, two Mexicans, two Indians, two Eskimos, and one Chilean. Hooverville remained until the end of the Great Depression. ■

To learn more about these and other events and benchmarks in Seattle and King County history, visit www.historylink.org. All photos are courtesy of historylink. Copyright ©2000 History Ink. HistoryLink is a registered trademark of History Ink.

CLASSICS CORNER



by Perfess'r Harris

Looking back over the last 100 issues of *Real Change*, it occurs to us that we may not be loved by all. This makes us sad, because despite all our tough activist posturing, we are still desperate for approval. But facts are facts, and facts must be faced. Not everyone thinks the words "homeless" and "empowerment" belong together in the same phrase. There are those who believe the homeless should simply become the non-homeless, and barring that, should just shut up and stop bothering the rest of us.

Socrates would probably have been among them.

We at Classics Corner have always found the Socrates/Christ conflation quite unfortunate, since their opinions regarding the poor couldn't have been more different. For those unfamiliar with their respective philosophies, we'll clarify: Christ loved the poor, and said so regularly. Christians still occasionally recognize this odd quirk of his, but more often than not prefer to do so in the abstract.

Socrates, on the other hand, was an elitist — 'scuse our French — sum'mobitch, and despite the fact that the world around him had gone rabidly democratic, still believed in the rule of kings. Let's be clear. Aristocracy, for Socrates, was too democratic. Rule by the people, he thought, was dangerous, wrong, and just plain dumb.

Socrates would have found the opinions expressed in *Real Change* annoying at best.

The issue of democracy, for Socrates, revolved around the idea of whether virtue could be taught. He didn't think so. People had virtue or they did not, and generally speaking, the better one's breeding, the more virtuous one was. He therefore despised the sophists, or wisdom teachers, of the time, who were busy teaching the rising Greek middle class how to effectively reason, debate, and get their way in the public assembly, which he also despised.

This is why the Protagoras is our favorite Platonic dialogue. Protagoras was a famous sophist, and he and Socrates clash over this very question. Oddly, Socrates loses.

Protagoras relays a lovely creation myth in which Epimetheus, the god who peopled the world, makes all the animals first and forgets to save any of the good stuff for us. Prometheus, to his later peril, tries to save our pathetic asses by stealing art from Athena and fire from Hephaestus. This helps, but it's not enough. When we try to live in communities, we just fight and kill and make a mess of things in general.

Zeus brilliantly sends in Hermes to give us mutual respect and a sense of justice. The messenger asks to whom he should give these talents, and Zeus says "to all." Protagoras' point is that democracy works because we all have the potential to participate.

Socrates gets all pissy and diverts the conversation to hairsplitting word games until everyone, including the reader of the dialogue, just has a big headache. But Protagoras' argument stands unchallenged: There is something about the democratic process that makes us complete. We are born to it. All of us.

So what's our point? Love us or not, *Real Change* is here to stay. Join us next time, when we ask, "Does Slade Gorton have a soul?" ■

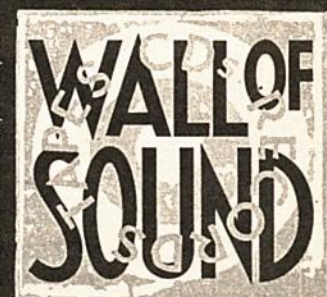
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October Notables

Tuesday, 10/3

Health Care Justice Community Hearing. Jobs with Justice Workers' Rights Board will take testimony from consumers, advocates, and health care workers on how our health care system fails to meet needs, 7-9 p.m., at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Madison near 19 Ave., info Just Health Care Coalition of Washington 206-784-9695.

Wednesday, 10/4

Meeting of Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) aims to provide a comfortable atmosphere where people can share experiences to learn how to support their gay & bisexual friends and family members, this and subsequent 1st Wednesdays, 7 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 99 Wells Ave., Renton, info 425-226-8783.

Thursday, 10/5

Grand opening of Walden's Art Gallery (named for community activist and artist Harriet Walden), a new exhibit and work/study space for emerging artists. Featured this month are works of Kathy Moscou, Isaiah Tate, Jay Thompson, Dr. Mohammed Osmen, and Frank Marshall. 6-8 p.m. at 2524 16th Avenue South, #201, at El Centro de la Raza. Info Jeff Patterson or Harriet Walden, (206)323-1273.

Women's Leadership Circle, an intergenerational cross-cultural meeting working on Women's Oppression and Racism, this and every other week afterwards, 7-8:30 p.m., at [suggest calling to confirm location] American Friends Service Committee, 814 NE 40, downstairs from University Friends meeting, 4001 9 NE, info Jessica Levy 206-524-7489.

Friday, 10/6

Home Alive's Annual Conference "Building Bridges and Building Allies: Moving Forward with Different Communities to Address Violence, Bigotry and Hate," Keynote Speaker Dorothy Allison, panel presentation on coalition-building and social change work, through October 8, Friday 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall at downtown 8 and Seneca, Saturday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. at Seattle Central Community College, Sunday at Home Alive Headquarters, 18 & Union, info Home Alive 206-720-0606 or www.homealive.org

Sunday, 10/8

"Pursue the Peace," a Jewish peace group, will hold a vigil just before Yom Kippur, to support a shared Jerusalem and just Israeli/Palestinian peace, 1:30-3 p.m., at Westlake Park, near 4 & Pine, downtown, info 206-522-0657 or figtree18@hotmail.com

Monday, 10/9

Seattle Seniors Internet Group (SSIG), this and subsequent 2 Mondays, 1 p.m., at Greenwood Senior Center, 525 N 85 St., info seniors@transport.com or www.nw-seniorsonline.org or 206-361-0369.

Co-housing Salon sponsored by Northwest Co-housing, no reservations needed, this and subsequent second Mondays, 6-8 p.m., at Delfino's in University Village, info <http://www.thefoundry.org/cohousing/> or 206-763-2623.

Wednesday, 10/11

National Coming Out Day, info <http://www.hrc.org/ncop/guide.html>

Homestead Community Land Trust general meeting, we can help prevent further displacement of lower-income families from our neighborhoods, help government to make the most of our limited housing subsidy funds, this and subsequent 2 Wednesdays [note new time, contact info, and location,] 6:30 p.m., at Java Love Espresso, 2414 Beacon Ave. S, info and confirmation 206-323-1227 or homesteadclt@yahoo.com

Thursday, 10/12

Seattle Labor Chorus and the Seattle Folklore Society present a concert featuring Seattle's own Rebel Voices, and Leon Rosselson in "Who Reaps The Profits?", tickets \$10-\$12.00 available at Guitar Emporium, Dusty Strings, Terra Mar, and Bailey/Coy Books, 7:30 p.m., at University Friends Meeting, 4001 9 NE, just north of University Bridge, info Seattle Folklore Society 206-528-8523.

Saturday, 10/14

The Urban Action School presents a class "**Activism 102 Series: Nonviolent Direct Action Training**" by Non-violent Action Community of Cascadia, sliding scale, info <http://www.urbanaction.org> or 206-464-9129.

Friday, 10/20

Volunteer for the **One Night Count**, Operation Nightwatch's annual attempt to gauge the number of **homeless people** in downtown Seattle and the University District. Start off at the Belltown welfare office, 2106 Second Ave., 2:30 a.m. Get a free breakfast at Minnie's Café when you're done. You might see which omelette Ron Sims prefers.

Ongoing Wednesdays

"Changing America," weekly news program covering issues important to the working class and minorities, featuring interviews with community & religious activists, union leaders, progressive legislators, etc., commentary by Tim Wheeler, editor *People's Weekly World* and reflecting views and program of the Communist Party U.S.A. 9-9:30 a.m., on NW Public Access cable TV, channel 29 (times can vary), for info 206-329-9171 or fax 206-329-4042 or marca@earthlink.net

"Spirit of the Times," a live half-hour TV program featuring interviews with local activists, 2 p.m., on Channel 29, info producer J.M. Black-Ferguson 206-282-4776.

Ongoing Sundays

Seattle Food Not Bombs collects food and serves free vegetarian meals to the homeless every Sunday, noon - 4 p.m., cook, 5:30 p.m. share dinner at Occidental Park, info 206-985-2247 or fnb@scn.org or <http://www.scn.org/activism/foodnotbombs>

Citizen Vagrom's Micro-media monthly offerings, a video magazine highlighting independent, micro-media from Seattle and beyond, 8 p.m., Community TV Channel 29, info 206-344-6434 or citizen@speakeasy.org

Ongoing Daily

Support I-245, the Universal Health Care Initiative, call to find out about volunteer opportunities, info 206-323-3393 or toll-free 1-877-903-9723 or info@healthcare2k.org

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Call to Artists: Mary Vitold Gallery is seeking visual and performance artists whose work makes a social critique or commentary on the issue of homelessness for a December 2000 exhibition. All media are welcome. The deadline for submissions is November 14. Please send slides or photos, artist statement and SASE to: 110 South Washington St., Seattle, WA 98104. For more information or questions, please call 206-624-9336 or e-mail hogan@endsound.com.



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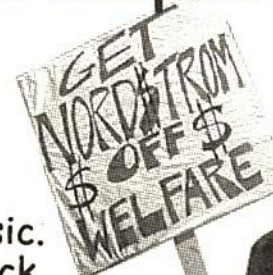


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Pothole Parity

Issue: People's lives are at least as important as a brisk commute.

Background: The Mayor's proposed budget for the 2001-2002 biennium is, in many ways, a very good budget. While the clear priority is to fix Seattle's gridlock, a popular issue that no Mayor would be safe to ignore, the budget also includes an unprecedented increase in human services spending, from this year's \$9.8 million to \$13 million in 2002. This, assuming the budget passes council, represents the largest increase in human services spending Seattle has seen yet.

Is it enough? What do you think?

The good news is that Mayor Schell is listening. The new spending is, in many ways, well targeted, and for the most part represents priorities identified by the Seattle Human Services Coalition, the Minority Executive Directors Coalition, and other human services organizations.

These priorities include:

- a pay raise designed to bring human services line staff up to a livable wage
- significant new funding to support the overburdened food bank system
- additional support to domestic violence programs
- another \$550,000 over the two years for new shelter
- additional funding for services to move people from shelter to housing
- additional spending for rental assistance and transitional housing
- significant new spending for childcare

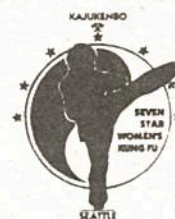
Yet the biggest increase in this year's budget is for transportation, with \$9 million in new dollars for roads, bridges, traffic lights, bike trails, and the like. While we hate being stuck in traffic as much as anyone, we wonder if these relative increases truly reflect our city's priorities.

Action: These are the best of times for Seattle, and we should be able to ensure the survival of our poorest citizens. Call and email members of Seattle City Council asking for "Pothole Parity" in the final budget. Seattle should put people and potholes on at least a par: \$6 million for transportation, \$6 million for people. If you think waiting in traffic is bad, try sleeping under a bridge.

City council mailing address:
600 4th Avenue, 11th floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Richard Conlin: richard.conlin@ci.seattle.wa.us, (206)684-8805
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Jan Drago: jan.drago@ci.seattle.wa.us, (206)684-8801

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Resistances, Leadership Creating Communities of Resistance

By S. Naomi Finkelstein in a conversation
with Bill Aal and Cricket Keating

Popular Education is Education
for the Sake of Social Change

In social and economic systems where money is king, power isn't talked about and is abused and people's humanity is denied poor people, woman, People of Color, queers and folks with disabilities are fragmented from one another and ourselves. *What role does Popular Education have in developing leadership within groups that are already deeply rooted within their own communities? How does honoring resistances relate fundamentally to solidarity?*

At its core, Popular Education has these values:

- * It values each other resistances, experiences and histories
- * It assumes that the world is understandable from many points of view.
- * It affirms people's resistances.
- * It supports folks to connect to a larger context in their struggles.
- * It believes that there is hope even in the worst of circumstances
- * It honors that our cultures and traditions give us the strength to resist.

One of the major challenges for Popular Education is the tension between what is organizing and what is education. For the organizer the issue is the goal- or for the teacher the set of knowledge is the focus.. For the Popular Educator relationships and dialogue are key and action is a built-in part of the process. We have learned from the popular movements in Latin America the concept of "Praxis".- that it is important to act and work in the world and reflect on those actions. Political people talk a lot about the theory and action divide- Popular Education disrupts that- it cuts right through it because it encourages people to take meaning from their actions and to act from the thinking they have been doing.

We build complex alliances when we share with each other our histories and acknowledge and honor our forms of resistance and when we take action to make things better. In these alliances people have each other's backs and value each other's lives. What results can be a very difficult and somewhat fragile solidarity, which takes a long time and a lot of commitment to build. But it is a real solidarity, needed for our work together in coalitions and within our organizations.

Those of us who build democratic organizations need skills to explore where the power lies, to acknowledge it, talk about it and share it. We are not practiced at using these skills living in a the United States. By creating a space for people to tell their own stories, histories and speak their dreams and desires. Popular Education lays the groundwork. Taking time to build power with others based on mutual respect and power sharing, we can build organizations that are owned by all involved. Popular Education can help change organizational culture and empower communities. It challenges those traditionally thought of as not having power to build on and use their innate power. It encourages them to accept their power even if hidden deeply within or

has been very risky to use historically. Leadership in this view is a set of relationships between people. By shedding light on how power and responsibility are shared, Popular Education challenges those who have held the power. It says that the power we have is with each other and not over each other. This kind of leadership cannot be taught didactically, it cannot be assumed and it cannot be grabbed. It must be built over time as we take chances with each other and as we share power. Undoubtedly conflict will arise. One of Popular Education's strengths is that conflict is seen as generative- it is a place where people get radical. Conflicts always exist whether in the open or hidden. Instead of shying away from conflicts, if we look at relations of power implicit in them, change can begin.

In the United States, this is important, where organizational culture is controlled by middle class attitudes that are set up to avoid conflict at all costs.

Myles Horton of The Highlander school, one of the forbearers of Popular Education in this country, also provided a place for people to come together across class and race. They taught that culture is the key to resistance: music, history, storytelling etc. It is with these tools that we build the strength to resist.

These tools allow people to explore resistances arising in their communities, which involves a complex analysis of resistance- looking at the double-edge nature of some of what we do to survive. People are actively saving their lives and their kids lives within this system all the time; standing up for themselves, playing along, smiling in social workers faces and sharing what little they have, helping each other out of binds and throwing monkey wrenches in wherever they dare.

Resistance is fighting back in little and big ways against oppression. It is claiming our humanity in whatever ways possible and developing a different vision of the way things should be. Our visions have been often repressed or ignored or nearly destroyed by the mainstream. Some resistances are by their nature hard to get behind and are harder to talk about. It is easier to break bread and share some of our cultures than it is to talk about gang involvement.

The Escuela Popular Nortena brings young grass roots people together for an Encuentro, a residential gathering during the summer. In a space outside of their organizational or every day lives, people are encouraged to see resistances they engage in, and share them. This critical examination and sharing works against fragmentation and encourages solidarity- a risky notion of solidarity- not an easy one. It isn't a solidarity that sees people as all the same; it seeks out their particularities.. It is grounded in a true respect and excitement for differences and is not invested in seeing each other as the same. The thing that is dangerous about solidarity- is that often the one who is most powerful in a group gets to define what it looks like or should be. That's been a failure of our political movements over the last fifty years - the assumption that initiators and leaders know best.

At the Encuentro, alliances are *built* and not assumed. People are encouraged to talk about some of those experiences that are most difficult to talk about and to see these

resistances as ways in which people stand up. In youth culture tagging is resistance. It is double-edged resistance that both empowers and sometimes destroys. Tagging may also be harmful to our communities and us but it is important to still the resistance in the act. This is hard to value when you have been to too many funerals with mothers crying and you live in a neighborhood overrun by gangs and you've dodged bullets. But it is still resistance and it is important to look at that confrontation with the dominant culture. Shoplifting is another example, it may be an important survival tool. Yet, it is hidden, that is part of way it is practiced. It too is a double-edged sword. Honoring it as subversion and as a practical necessity in capitalism, and seeing that it can also bite you back reveals the highly complex nature of resistance.

Talking back or being silent in classrooms and organizations can be a whole politics of resistance. Who talks in and who doesn't? Who defines the dialogue or is it really a monologue? Who defines the language used and the culture created to talk about what is hard or important to us. Does emotion have a place or are we all stuck using a very middle class and Christian paradigm that shuts down passion or anger or grief or even, laughter-deep belly laughter, as being "too emotional" or "offensive"? Hip Hop is another example- it's a language to explain what is happening for a whole group of young people. As a resistance against the mainstream ("Standard English") and older folks *aren't* supposed to know it.

In building a real solidarity draw upon our resistances to collectively stand up for what is right, Popular Education can help. If you are in the role of teacher or "leader" you have to step away from thinking you know everything or have control of the conversation in order to understand people are really saying to you or who they really are or, the risk they take when speak at all. The risk alone is worthy of honor- even if what was said was hard to hear. We need the knowledge of how we have all survived this long and still stand here today.

Popular education is an approach that goes against the professionalization of the teacher or the organizer. It assumes that people are the experts. It holds out the best for them- but doesn't assume what that best is. It promotes the idea that leadership comes from within the community. It assumes that everyone has important contributions not only to daily work but also to overall direction of the movement. Leaders may be anywhere, say- the hair salon or barber shop, on handball courts, street corners, playing Mah Jong, dancing a hora, or playing salsa...

Popular Education helps to uncover our leadership. Paulo Freire, creator much of the theory behind Popular Education, worked in Brazil with poor rural people. He walked a fine line; insisting that teachers should not back off from leading people forward but it was a particular kind of leading, valuing peoples experiences and encouraging "leading from below".

Our system of education feeds us into structures of domination- it gets us used to authority outside ourselves. It trains us to not question the very assumptions about what a good worker is, who has money and who doesn't, who has the power and who doesn't. It sets the stage for exploitation, teaching

people to assume that everyone should own lots of stuff, stay in nuclear families, be straight, celebrate Christmas, speak English. This "Banking" approach holds knowledge as something external to be fed to us instead of being generated in communities or we know to be true intrinsically. It teaches us to believe to dominant media or- worse- to not believe ourselves. Radical or critical pedagogy (education) counters this, looking at issues of power, creating dialogue and bringing in visions of hope. It brings the person back into the center and power into focus.

Coalition Building

Bernice Johnson Reagon wrote 20 years ago:

"Coalition work is some of the most dangerous work you can do. It must become necessary for all of us to feel that this is our world. And that we are here to stay and that anything here is ours to take and to use in our image. And watch that 'our' make it as big as you can. ... that our must include everybody you have to include in order to survive.... That's why we have to have coalitions. Cause I ain't gonna let you live unless you let me live. Now there's a danger in that but there is also the possibility that we both can live...."

Twenty years has passed and we are still in a time of great danger and opportunity and great hope. As George Jackson said, "People are **already** dying" We are at a moment where we can build on the anti-globalization movement that came into focus during the convergence on the WTO in Seattle and on the work of social justice movements throughout the world. We can seize this moment, and take the risks to build real solidarity with one another. It is a good time to have each other's backs in real and concrete ways and to say to our allies- if it is good for you and yours, then it is also good for me and mine but if it is bad for you and yours, then it is also bad for me and mine. And act on those words. We live in a culture of great alienation. The illusion of separation- separation from ourselves, each other and the earth is a false belief which underpins and this system. It takes great risks *and* courage to reconnect with each other and to the planet. The processes of coming alive again undoubtedly hurts- much like a leg that has been asleep too long. But what happens to us as a society or as people if we frantically avoid the pain? Can we risk that we can live with that pain and move through it? Slowly, we can begin to reconnect, becoming whole and allied instead of fragmented and alienated; and exploited or exploitative.

Popular Education can help unleash what is already so present in us and our communities but remains hidden from view: our knowledge, the strengths of our histories, struggles, survival techniques, traditions and loves. It helps us to critically think and to link with larger struggle. It honors how we get by,- how we have always gotten by. But it holds out the hope for something more- that we, with those same strengths can remake the world into whatever our visions hold for us, with each other in an infinitely strong but fragile and precious solidarity. We do it so that we and our children and the planet may live. In this way we choose life over death, again and again in our actions, in our risks, with our faith and with each other.

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SEIZE THE AIRWAVES !!!

Studio X & The Independent Media Center
Join us for a hands-on introduction to making true community radio. We'll practice basic interviewing, recording, and editing skills, in the context of building a grassroots media movement here in Seattle. **Wednesday, October 4, 7:00 - 9:00 pm** at IMC* (\$5-\$20-\$35**)

INDEPENDENT MEDIA AGAINST GLOBAL CAPITAL

The Independent Media Center
In the wake of recent successes in confronting corporate globalization in Seattle, DC, Philly, and L.A., the role of independent media has taken on new importance. Lets take a critical look at the possibilities for challenging the status quo. How can we build a principled independent media that includes all voices? **Wednesday, October 18, 7:00 - 9:00 pm** IMC* (\$5-\$20-\$35**)

DE-CARTOONING

Leonard Rifas
"De-cartooning" is a way of sharpening our thinking by making our thoughts visible to ourselves and each other. We will use drawing and discussion to make our understandings of how we are connected graphically evident to ourselves and one another. **Wednesday, October 11, 7:00- 10:00** at YT* (\$8.75-\$35-\$61.25**)

INVESTIGATING CORPORATE POWER

George Draffan
Participants will receive practical training in specific research methods and tools for investigating corporate holding companies and subsidiaries, corporate directors and shareholders, interlocks with public officials, corporate subsidies, and environmental, labor, and regulatory records. **Sunday, October 29, 10:00 - 5:00** Pre-registration is required. To register, call (206) 723-4276. (\$17.50-\$70-\$122.50**)

POLITICIZING THE EVERYDAY

Cricket Keating
A workshop developed by members of La Escuela Popular Norteña (EPN). EPN works within the popular education tradition and brings people together in dialogue in a non-hierarchical setting to analyze the conditions in which they live and to develop plans for collective action. **Saturday, November 4, 10:00-1:30** at YT* (\$8.75-\$35-\$61.25**)

THEATER OF LIBERATION

Lupita Peterson
Theater of Liberation has been designed for actors and non-actors to address oppression. It is an interactive process that proposes that spectators are active participants, "spec-actors." In a very relaxed atmosphere we are going to investigate together issues of oppression, which are faced in our daily lives, or in other words we can rehearse life to empower ourselves. **Friday, October 27, 6:00 - 10:00** at YT* (\$10-\$40-\$70**)

INTERLOCKING OPPRESSIONS

Bill Aal, Margo Adair, & Mayet Dalila
We will explore how different systemic oppressions (race, class, gender, age, ability etc.) hold one another up. Where are the intersections, where are the common patterns how are they different -personally, culturally and institutionally? **Thursday, October 26, 6:30 -10:00** at IMC* (\$8.75-\$35-\$61.25**)

DROP IN TECH-HELP

Red Cursor Collective
Come on down to the tech salon for computer help of any kind, from turning on a computer to writing web applications. Topics might include computer hardware and repair, web page design, desktop publishing, databases, programming, network/server administration, or general help on a Mac, Windows, or Linux computer. Check out <http://riseup.net/techsalon> for more info. **Wednesdays October 11, 25; November 8, IMC* 7:00pm** (\$0-\$15)

ACTIVISM OR PERSONAL GROWTH?

Margo Adair & Marc Weinblatt
Do activism and personal growth need each other or do they exclude each other? We will explore the delicate balance between them. Can we work for social change without also working on ourselves or inward without also looking at the world around us? The workshop features theater, meditation, and other experiential processes. **Thurs, October 12; 6:30-10** IMC* (\$8.75-\$35-\$61.25**)

PERSONAL STORY & THE POWER OF POETRY

Qwo-Li Driskill
We will look at the ways personal stories can be told thru poetry. In addition, we'll focus on listening to poetry and the revision process using contemporary radical poets as examples. **Tuesday, November 14, 7:00-9:00** at CAN* (\$5-\$20-\$35)

EXPRESS YOURSELF !!!!

Finding your voice through poetry
Rosemary Tatum Reed
(Supported by Mayet Dalila)
This Saturday morning class promises to wake up both your body and creativity. Developing a written voice to express our thoughts, concerns, feelings and ideas about the world around us can help us gain deeper insight into ourselves, — and provide opportunity to share a piece of ourselves with others. **Saturday, November 4, 11, 18, 10:00 - 12:00.** Location to be announced. (\$15-\$60-\$105**)

MEDITATION SKILLS FOR ACTIVISTS

Margo Adair
Applied Meditation helps to remember the sacred in the midst of everyday life, avoid burnout, be able to align our energies with our goals, find ways to not get undermined by ego, have principled disagreement while remaining open hearted and grounded in our sense of connectedness. **Thursday, October 19, 6:30 - 10:00** on Capital Hill (location to be announced) (\$8.75-\$35-\$61.25**)

ACTIVISM 102 SERIES:

Nonviolent Direct Action Training

Nonviolent Action Community of Cascadia
Two preparations for nonviolent direct actions using history of direct action and nonviolence, affinity groups, defusing violence, role-plays, quick decision-making, arrest, the legal process, jail solidarity, and more. **#1 Sat, October 14 10:00 -4:30 or #2 Sun, November 12, 1:00-5:00** at CAN* (\$\$11.25-\$45-\$78.75**)

Consensus: A Powerful Decision-Making Tool

Nonviolent Action Community of Cascadia

Learn how to work cooperatively to create effective solutions that integrate the best thinking of everyone in the group. **#1 Saturday, October 21, 12:00-4:00 or #2 Sunday, November 5, 12:00-4:00** at CAN* (\$10-\$40-\$70**)

AFRICAN-AMERICANS AND JEWS

Marc Weinblatt & Deborah Terry-Hays
Both groups share a history of oppression yet are often separated by skin color and religion. How can we bridge the gaps, build real relationships, and work together for social justice? This hands-on workshop will feature theatre and interactive communication processes. Limited to 12 Jews and 12 African-Americans. **Wed, Nov 9, 6:30 - 10:00**, location to be announced. Pre-registration required. (\$8.75 -\$35-\$61.25**)

LIVING AS AN ACTIVIST, THRIVING AS AN ORGANIZER

Bill Aal & John Fawcett Long
How do those committed to working for fundamental social change support ourselves when there is little or no monetary support from society? Teaching, union organizing, nonprofit and government work all come with strings attached. Come to two evening discussions on these issues. **Thursdays, November 9 and 16, 7:00-9:30** at IMC* (\$12.50-\$50-\$87.50**)

JUSTICE ORGANIZING FOR TENANTS

Scott Winn & Michele Lyn Thomas
An experiential workshop on organizing in your neighborhood for renter's justice. Learn the skills of door knocking with your neighbors to talk about ongoing campaigns for affordable housing. We will have a discussion of the principles of direct action organizing. **Saturday, October 28, 11:00 - 3:00** at IMC* (\$10-\$40-\$70)

JEWS AND CLASS

Naomi Finkelstein & Bill Aal
Jews almost never like to talk about class; it frightens us, as it does other Americans. In these two evenings, we will explore the myths and realities about Jewish people, such as that there are no poor Jews, or that our safety lies in being white (buying into the system of white privilege).

We want to look at the history of Jewish women and men who have stood up for economic justice and some of the undersides of our involvement in the class system. By looking at our roles and status within the US and Global economic systems, we can get a better understanding of our relationship to money, inheritance, charity and social change. **Saturday, November 11, 12:00 - 4:00** at CAN* (\$10-\$40-\$70**)

DISABILITY, ACCESS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN PUGET SOUND

Naomi Finkelstein
Are you concerned about the dismantling of Metro's Access Service, which has always had problems and has gotten worse? Would you like disabled citizens to have a say in the future design of public transportation? We'll discuss the pros and cons of the Monorail Initiatives and The Sound Transit transportation plan to insure proper access. This is a meeting of people with disabilities and their allies who need public transportation and want to strategize to get our needs heard by the City Council, Sound Transportation Committee and the Monorail Initiatives folks. **Sunday, December 3, 12:00-3:00** at YT* (Free to those on fixed incomes. \$10 for others.)

Sliding scale:

The first, second and third figures are costs for low-income, middle-income and affluent people. All listed fees are based on the number of hours of class time. *No one will be turned away for lack of funds.* Pay where you fit. Pay more if you can!

Locations (in Seattle):

CAN (Community Action Network):
115 Prefontaine Pl. South
IMC (Independent Media Center):
1415 3rd Ave. (down)
YT (Yesler Terrace Community Center):
10th Ave & Yesler

Urban Action School

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School Fall, 2000

ic justice through participatory education and action.

Bill Aal is an activist and community organizer, in environmental and anti-racist movements. He has worked as a computer programmer, caterer and house painter. An Associate of *Tools for Change*, he does organizational consulting and popular-economics education.

Margo Adair has developed and teaching Applied Meditation for over 25 years. She is the author of *Working Inside Out*, and the forthcoming *Reflections on Everything Under the Sun*. She is also activist, mediator and anti-oppression trainer. She co-founded *Tools for Change* consulting with organizations working to bring about justice. (www.toolsforchange.org)

Mayet Dalila, a co-founder and one of the partners of IAK (Intra-Afrikan Konnection.), has community organizing and training experience in HIV/AIDS, welfare and tenant rights, youth empowerment, coalition building, leadership and organizational development.

George Draffan is a full-time public interest investigator. His *Primer on Corporate Power* and a *Directory of Transnational Corporations* are available at (www.endgame.org)

Qwo-Li Driskill is a Native and queer activist and a writer. He is currently an MA student at Antioch University, Seattle.

S. Naomi Finkelstein is a long time anti-poverty activist and a public transportation user. She believes that the future of public transportation is vital to ensure that disabled people have equal access to booming economic opportunities, social and civil life in Seattle.

The Independent Media Center is a community-based media resource center debuted during the WTO Ministerial as a “people’s newsroom” with a global reach. We use media production and distribution to support communities’ political and cultural self-determination. We provide media tools and space to those seeking to communicate their vital issues to the world as part of the growing movement for global justice. (www.indymedia.org)

Cricket Keating, a member of la Escuela Popular Nortena since 1992, is in the Women’s Studies and Political Science departments at the University of Washington.

John Fawcett Long is a son of farmers. He is community activist and former coordinator of the Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group. He currently works in downtown Seattle for an anonymous and comfortable law firm.

Nonviolent Action Council of Cascadia (NACC) uses nonviolent direct action to interrupt violence in all its forms, with a focus on working against militarism. We make undoing the system (and our learned oppressive behaviors) a part of our daily activities, and have fun in the process.

Our trainers, including Erica Kay, Scott McClay, Geov Parrish, and Vivien Sharples, have many years of experience in organizing. direct action and training.

Lupita Patterson is a Mexican woman who has been here in Seattle for four years. She is a long time actor who has been combining theater and social change in a creative, dynamic collaborative effort.

The Red Cursor Collective is composed of computer wizards who support local activists and NGO’s. Their goal is to make computer and web based technologies accessible to all who are working against rampant corporate power. (www.riseup.net)

Rosemary Tatum Reed, a partner of Intra-Afrikan Konnection consulting firm, graduated from the University of Washington. She has worked in Adult Basic Education, helping adults improve their reading and writing skills. She is a published poet and hopes to be a published fiction writer.

Leonard Rifas is an educational cartoonist (creator of “The Big Picture,” “AIDS News,” “Tobacco Comics” and other titles) and an information visualization enthusiast. (www.dataforest.com)

Studio X is a digital sound facility

streaming live onto the world wide web (<http://www.microradio.net>). We are a working exploration of what happens when you make local media global. We seek to work with community organizations and gladly makes training and resources available to support them.

Deborah Terry-Hays, Western Region Director of the National Coalition Building Institute, (NCBI), teaches the art of coalition building, community activism, internationally. International Women’s Constituency Leader of NCBI she bring women of color and white women together. (www.scn.org/activism/ncbisea)

Michelle Lyn Thomas is an activist who volunteers at the Tenants Union.

Marc Weinblatt — Director of the Mandala Center for Awareness, Transformation, & Action has been a educator, artist, activist, and workshop facilitator since 1980. He has extensive experience, using Theater of the Oppressed to stimulate personal and social change. He has worked with communities from corporate executives to homeless youth. (www.mandalaforchange.com)

Scott Winn is the city of Seattle tenant’s organizer. He works for the Tenants

The Urban Action School invites you to become a part of our efforts.

Yes I would like to get involved:

- ☐ Put me on your mailing list.
- ☐ I would like to teach a class.
- ☐ I would like to volunteer to help with publicity and other aspects

Enclosed is my donation of:

- ☐ \$10
- ☐ \$15
- ☐ \$25
- ☐ \$50
- ☐ Other!

Name:

Address:

Email Address:

Phone:

Union.

Our Mission: The Urban Action School is dedicated to participatory education for working people, the unemployed, homeless people, youth, community organizers, and activists.

In 1998, a group of labor and community organizers came together to create a school which would offer non-credit classes for adults in Seattle, on topics specific to the economy, history, and organizing. The group met for more than a year to develop the mission, course criteria, and to recruit faculty and course proposals. The Urban Action School is a neighborhood school primarily based in South and downtown Seattle. Its aims are to build across divides in the community, and to identify and develop leadership for grassroots action through existing organizations and self-identified individuals.□

The idea for the Urban Action School was initially proposed by the Evergreen State College Labor Center; the purpose of these classes was to explore links between organized labor and community groups.. The initial faculty met during the Spring and Summer of 1998 to develop the mission, course criteria, course proposals and brochure, and to discuss possible school names. In August, 1998 the Labor Center stepped back from the project, and several teachers decided to move forward, continue to recruit faculty, organize the school, and offer classes by Spring, 1999. Over 50 people attended the Urban Action School’s kick-off reception event, held at the Seattle Labor Temple in March 1999 and we had more than 125 people take classes our first session. Our faculty and core members have grown and shifted since that time and currently we have 20 instructors with more coming on board for next quarter. We are artists and poets, activists and visionaries, organizers and teachers and many of us encompass several of those labels! We are always looking for new ways to broaden the conversation.

The Urban Action School has continued to develop relations with community organizations, including NACC, the Non Violent Action Community of Cascadia, Casa Latina, Real Change and the Independent Media Center. We are seeking to make better connections with the Labor movement and to be of service to help people in the various communities to develop their leadership and capacity within organizations already rooted in their own communities. We are successfully building relationships across a broad spectrum of interests, political commitments and identities.

Our vision is to create a dynamic conversations across the lines that have divided us, in this historic time period as the country both faces threats from the Right and a corporate take over of our Democracy. These lines might have been between environment and labor, people of color and “white”, gay and straight, people with disabilities and those without. Using the approaches and values of the popular education movement, this conversation is a means to deeply explore and understand the conditions of our lives, make vision for changes, to act to make change and to reflect on those actions. In this moment the Urban Action School is becoming a gathering place for people to learn from each other using the tools Popular Education has to offer (in its many guises) and to strengthen the leadership innate within each of us as we make change in our lives through daily acts of resistance and through the joining together with others to envision and act to make social change. We invite you to work with us in any way that would help your work.

"The theater is a weapon and it is the people who should wield it" - Augusto Boal

Augusto Boal worked with the Arena Theater in Brazil during the 1960's and 70's and created the Theater of the Oppressed through a series of experimental theatrical techniques. His first step allowed for the audience to reflect on the production after the play was over. He then began an experiment that allowed for audience members to stop a performance and give the actors suggestions and directions for their work on stage. The actors would then carry out the suggestions.

The concept of the Spec-Actor was created when a woman could not explain her directions well enough for an actor to carry them out and came on stage herself during the performance. It became clear that the line between spectator and actor had been crossed, bringing theater and "real life" together. These experiments combined became a metaphor for social change- one could imagine the change, put the change into practice and reflect together about the change as observers and actors. This is what became the model for the Theater of the Oppressed.

The Theater of the Oppressed is participatory theater, which uses democratic interaction between its members. In a language which is accessible to all its participants, the theater analyzes situations (oppression), offers group solutions to the problem(s) and fosters dialogue amongst its participants. The theater itself becomes a rehearsal for social change. Deeply influenced by Popular Education theorist Paulo Freire, the Theater of Oppressed is a tool to view the conditions experienced by the participants, analyzes the causes of oppression and acts as a rehearsal for changing those conditions.

One of the key concepts of the work is that of SpecActors who are both actors and well as the observers. Instead of monologues the process becomes a dialogue between us, using collective analysis to form solutions to problems faced everyday. The actors do what each of us does on a day to day basis but as actors they are better able to turn things to their own advantage in part because they have rehearsed and because they have an analysis as to why they acted as they did and what their emotions may be in the given circumstance.

The process of dialogue is inherently more democratic than that of a monologue. It involves not a person acting ON us but rather people working with each other. Inherent questions concerning power arise in each of the methods of communicating: Who holds the power in a monologue and whose voice is being left out or talked over or ignored? Who is doing the listening and who is doing the talking? Is the effort collaborative or didactic? Who is making the rules for the discussion?

These questions are also very important in Popular Education Methodology. Dialogue, in Popular Education models such as the Theater of the Oppressed is not done solely for the purpose of furthering understanding. It is a respectful, cooperative activity between people that can lead us to action.

Lupita Peterson is a Mexican woman living in the United States for the last four years. She has been an actor for many years combining theater and social change in a creative, dynamic, collaborative effort. I interviewed her about the role of the Theater of the Oppressed in Creating Social Change.

Naomi-

How did you get involved with using Theater of Oppressed?

Lupita-

I have a BA in acting. So I learned some of this in school. When I moved to Seattle I became involved with the Seattle Public Theater and became part of the troupe. I learned more about this technique especially when two years ago Augusto Boal came to Seattle and we had a master's class and a performance with him.

I use it in Domestic Violence training, in working with youth, with homeless people, I use it to begin a dialogue with them in order to facilitate the process of them opening up options for themselves and realize what they need to do to change the conditions of their lives.

Naomi-

How does the Theater of the Oppressed encourage people to name and analyze the Oppression they live with?

Lupita-

People begin with their own stories, they work in an interactive setting in which they tell their stories and offer them to the group. Oppression is seen as a social phenomenon that doesn't happen to them only, but as something they share in common with other people. Their own stories are fitted into a larger context.

Naomi-

What methods are used?

Lupita-

The specifics of the technique are several games that are created for actors and non-actors, which are simple but challenging. The games allow people to organically investigate concepts such freedom, community, oppression, degradation. Organic in this context means using our bodies and feelings as well as our heads and intellects. An example of one game is the "Columbian Hypnosis" where participants work in pairs at first. One person places their hand in front of the other persons face without touching. The person who is holding the hand is the lead, the other the follower. The leader gently moves their hand so the other person can follow- in this way they can investigate movement, being aware they are leading someone else- up down, around, walking. Then they switch- then in trios and so on- as you go along with the exercise. You begin to understand what it feels like to lead and to follow and where you



are more comfortable.

After the exercise is done we talk about what it is like to lead and to follow. This is where we analyze our experience. Why is it more comfortable to lead than to follow or the other way around? We begin to examine where we have fit in the world and in society.

It is an organic metaphor- as adults we tend to analyze everything intellectually - and we do not let ourselves go into our feeling selves- and how we feel in our bodies. How does it *feel* to be led? How does it *feel* to follow? What *emotions* come up for us when we do these things? Do we even think when we are doing these things or do we do them automatically?

There is another exercise/technique used where we create a situation to set up people to look at problems from different points of view and use different solutions to solve it. You want to empower people to work as a community member and to participate in changing their own lives.

Naomi-

How is this useful to develop leaders from within the communities they are rooted in?

Lupita-

Here is a story about this:

In the sixty and seventies there were problems in Brazil between small farmers and the land owners who rented to them- so Augusto decided to write a play about the conflict and show the play through Brazil in the rural areas in order to "support their struggle".

One day in one of the shows they were performing- there was a scene with actors with rifle and they said at the end "Now you can go fight for your rights!" The play ended and the actors went back stage and one of the farmers went back and said "We are excited that you will come fight with us." And Augusto said, "We are only actors. We cannot fight." "But you have rifles you can come with us." Said the farm worker. Augusto said, "Those rifles are fake." And the farmer said, "We have more rifles- we can give you rifles."

From that time Augusto decided that you couldn't tell others how to solve the problems if you are not part of the group.

Theater of the Oppressed is done in such a way so that each group investigates their own issues and explores their own alternatives. No one provides the answers from outside the group because those answers do not work most of the time. The groups innate intelligence about their own lives are tapped.

Naomi-

I am interested to talk about the Mind/body or intellectual/emotional split.

Lupita-

Most of the time our head talks- we're good at analyzing. The problem is that in order to act, the process has to go deeper. How many times do we say -if this happens then I'll do this but when the time comes we don't act. Maybe its because we have fears, maybe its because in those moments we don't know what to do, maybe because it is easier to talk than to act.

In this technique we are rehearsing life. Oppression doesn't happen just once in your life. Maybe it will happen again and again and using this technique gives you a few different options- it walks you down some of the feelings before hand so they don't come as a total surprise and paralyze you.

The problem is we can talk, talk and analyze and analyze some more. But you can have a good analysis and not act. Acting is what makes changes. Our talk is disconnected from our action. When you have an action there will be a reaction.

So when you say, "No, this is not okay with me", the other person is going to react-especially if they are in a position of power over you. You can be unprepared for that but still have to be able to dance with that reaction. It is useful to have a few options for how to act given that reaction. By playing it out, you have options open to you when you face the reaction. This is one of the ways Theater of the Oppressed facilitates change. It prepares us for the reactions when we start to make change. It lets us feel some of the feelings we might feel at the oppressors reaction.

Naomi-

So it opens up a discussion about when to duck and when to push and what to do when you're scared to death or really pissed off but are still interacting and making change -huh? I could use to be in dialogue to figure out about when to duck (laughs) or what to do when the oppressor is talking shit at me and I get furious and become ineffective because of my fury.

Lupita-

Yes. It does open that dialogue and also talks about when and how to act honoring our emotions without being run by them. It teaches us that emotions are part of the process, as well- change does not happen all in our heads. It teaches us what to do with those emotions and how to have the intellectual and emotional influence each other.

This way the head and the heart inform each other and we prepare ourselves that way. The head and the heart and the body all work together.

Naomi-

Thank You so much. I am excited about your class.

Lupita-

It is my pleasure. Thank You.

Lupita@wscadv.org

This issue of Urban Action News was edited by Bill Aal and Naomi Finklestein. They were assisted by Margo Adair and Leonard Rifas.

Illustrations: Leonard Rifas
Layout: Bill Aal

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