

COVER PHOTO BY PETER GOLDSTINE.

A Room with a View

Pioneer Square's new residents take on the old Skid Road

By Adam Holdorf

Last month's morning meeting of the Pioneer Square Public Safety Committee, taking place in the storefront of the Frye Hotel on Third and Yesler, addressed what many residents viewed as a threat: one social service agency's proposal to open a free shower and laundry facility in the same block. On everyone's minds: would a hygiene center attract the very people they've been trying to disperse from Yesler Way?

Most of those present were not eager to see another place for low-income people start in a neighborhood that, arguably, already has more than its share. So they talked strategy: how to turn city councilmembers against a budget proposal launching the center.

If a hygiene center doesn't make it into the Frye Hotel, as its owner, the Low Income Housing Institute, has planned, it will probably be due to the efforts of members of the Public Safety Committee. Among the myriad of Pioneer Square's neighborhood organizations, this is a group of mostly middle-class property owners dedicated to the rollback of "urban disorder" in all its forms. They act with an eye on the welfare of the "street people" they speak for: the homeless alcoholic in the alley,

the dealer hanging around Courthouse Park. They wield some clout.

In the last five years, residents have coaxed convenience store owners into curbing sales of low-end liquor. This summer they cleared the way for the state Liquor Control Board's establishment of their neighborhood as a so-called Alcohol Impact Area, where persuasion could give way to punishment against merchants continuing these sales. They have lobbied the Police Department to issue more Parks Exclusion, no-sitting or public drinking citations.

The meeting was being held in their latest achievement: the new outpost of the Metropolitan Improvement District (MID), a clean-and-safe street operation funded by dues from downtown businesses. The station's picture windows afford an excellent view of Courthouse Park and the southeast corner of the Morrison Hotel.

The MID station also aspires to double as a community center. Public computer terminals, funded by the Department of Neighborhoods, are in the works; Sound Transit will post a kiosk here to help commuters get around. Members of the committee want it to put up a video surveillance camera out-

side. The Seattle Police Department has hung a sign in the window declaring it a "neighborhood office," though police simply come in for the free phone and a place to sit down.

After years of struggle, with the establishment of the station, Pioneer Square residents concerned about public safety have a home base from which to wage war on disorder. But this is perhaps the one neighborhood in the city where activists come face-to-face with a deeply rooted support system for low-income people that keeps the neighborhood's other name, Skid Road, alive.

Some would say the irresistible force is meeting the immovable object.

Bar owner Tina Bueche is on the board of the MID, but thinks the Third and Yesler station won't change a thing. And she has a hard time sympathizing

with public safety advocates who also target her tavern, Dutch Ned's, when there's noise on the street. Public safety supporters, she says, "don't want to live where there's music, there's noise, and there's people."

"Things are no different in Pioneer Square now than they were seven years ago. If you put a funnel of dysfunction over the state of Washington, it would all come out at Third and Yesler."

**Bill Hobson,
director of Downtown
Emergency Services
Center**

Changes anywhere are incremental, especially when we're talking about Seattle's oldest urban area. So it's difficult to trace the decline and fall of the old Skid Road. The seeds of the worldview behind the Public Safety Committee and its headquarters were sown back in the 1960s and '70s, when the Fire Department was cracking down on code violations in the neighborhood's old hotels and flophouses. Between 1965 and 1970, 16 hotels and apartment buildings providing 772 units of housing were vacated or demolished — a loss of more than one-

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Dec 1, 2000



Art with heart

Dear *Real Change*,

I am a 32-year-old white male, single, educated, who had to experience being homeless for the first time a month ago. I was unable to stay with my parent or girlfriend and actually had to sleep in my car. I don't think people realize what it's like to be homeless until it actually happens to them. My car broke down and my constant job searches turned up nothing.

Thankfully, I now have a place to live, but it is still a constant struggle to get back on my feet with thousands of dollars in repairs needed on my car. I am lucky that the good Lord gave me a talent to draw like Michelangelo himself, and I am making a living just selling my artwork,

but most people who are homeless do not have a talent they can fall back on to make a living.

Last week I gave a homeless man \$10 when I was almost broke myself. Then, three days later, I sold two of my works for \$600. People may not choose to believe in religion or God, but he is helping me to find my way out of this situation. It is true that you reap what you sow. I plan to one day use my art to raise money to help the homeless people in my city to get back on their feet.

Sincerely,
Victor

Free to not read

Dear *Real Change*,

I have always purchased your paper because of the principles behind it, and more often than not, gave more than the \$1 cost to the vendor.

However, I am sorry to say that I cannot continue to support your cause because of the messages you purvey: instead of promoting individualism, personal responsibility, and freedoms, you endorse many government-sponsored projects (i.e., socialism).

The more government becomes involved in people's lives, the more socialistic our society becomes and the less freedoms we as individuals have. I cannot support any cause that pro-

notes bigger government unless it gives equal time to more conservative opinions.

Sincerely,
Brian T. Hart

No room for earthly affairs

[Note: The following was received in response to an Action Alert sent over email by First things First.]

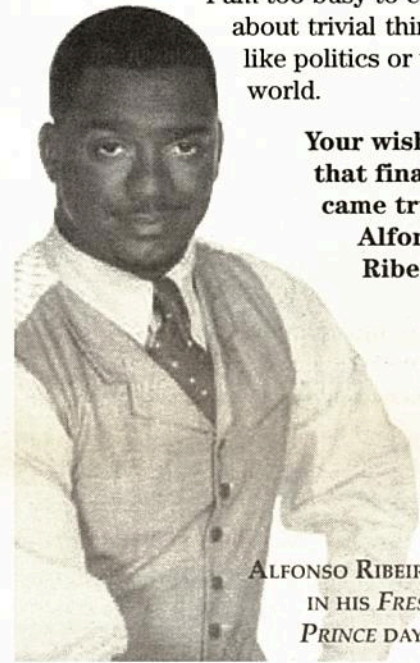
Hello there,

I am Alfonso Ribeiro, Libertarian and cultural pop icon from the '80s. You may remember a little show called *Silver Spoons*, or perhaps *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*. Well, let me explain something to you dear friend, I do not know you nor do I care to. I have friends already (ever heard of Willy Smith or Ricky Schroeder? Perhaps Mike Jackson and Bobby De Niro are foreign names to your kind).

In conclusion, leave me off your list.

I am too busy to care about trivial things like politics or the world.

Your wishes that finally came true,
Alfonso Ribeiro



ALFONSO RIBEIRO
IN HIS FRESH
PRINCE DAYS.

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.

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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. The *Real Change* newspaper is now a project of the Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project, our 501c3 non-profit umbrella, so all donations are tax deductible.

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

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Call me about volunteering my time and energy.

If you donate \$35 or more, please indicate whether you want a subscription mailed to you. Yes No

Mail to: *Real Change*, 2129 2nd Ave, Seattle, WA 98121

Real Change: Offering Dignity and Hope

Every month, about 150 homeless and very-low-income people take pride in selling *Real Change*. Many of them use what they earn to build better lives for themselves. All of them find the opportunity and supportive community that they need. All of them help make Seattle a better, more caring, city.

Recently, one of our long-term vendors — I'll call him Bill — asked me to come visit the home he'd carved out. His pride was obvious. Bill's public housing studio apartment, with a 23-inch color TV and cable, is something he'd worked hard to win. Bill has been a heroin addict since he was 13. He's been clean for three years.

When Bill first came to *Real Change*, most people would have thought there was little hope. What made the difference for him, he said, was finding people who could see past Bill the addict to Bill the person. He found this at *Real Change*, and started to believe in himself. Now, at 46, Bill is learning to read.

I am constantly humbled by people like Bill, people who have the odds stacked against them but still find the will and courage to succeed.

Real Change is working hard to even things up for people like Bill. We are still a very small organization, but our power is growing:

● Last year, with just a handful of staff, we published a quality newspaper twice a month. Each issue sells between 12,000 and 15,000 copies. Vendors say that, with tips, they average an income of \$1.25 per copy. That's an average of more than \$375,000 going directly to our vendors.

● Our newest organizing project, First things First, is working to build political power on the issues that affect poor people. Over the past month, we've helped to pack two city budget hearings with supporters of housing, shelter, and opportunity. We held a rally at City Hall that mobilized nearly 200 supporters on a week's notice.

● We also provide the opportunity for people to find community, create beauty, and build a voice of the poor through the StreetWrites peer support group for homeless and low-income writers and the StreetLife art gallery, our working studio and gallery for homeless artists.

● Poor people also have a voice through our Homeless Speakers Bureau, which brought the first-hand experience of the homeless to about 60 schools, churches, and civic organizations last year

● Our computer lab, the MacWorkshop, is closing the digital divide by providing computer and internet access for free to about 30 people a day. When our supporters donate computers to *Real Change*, we give them away to people who have found housing. Last year we handed out more than 50 systems.

Our Priorities: Create Success, Build Power

Among our many priorities for next year, two stand out: creating success and building power. We will offer our vendors more of the support, such as marketing and skills building, that they need to experience success. On the advocacy front, we will work hard to create a roof over every bed by building a grassroots organization of poor people and their allies.

There is so much to be done. Here are some of the new projects we have already begun:

● Beginning next year, *Real Change* will publish every other Thursday. This will mean two more issues a year for our vendors, and is a step toward our goal of weekly publication.

● We're training vendors in the skills they need to succeed: assertiveness, consistency, and personal presentation. We want to multiply our success stories by offering the tools people need.

● We're working to market our paper through television PSAs, radio promotion, and other means that create visibility for *Real Change*. We want every person in Seattle to recognize *Real Change* as a quality newspaper.

● Our Action Alert outreach effort identifies and mobilizes the community-based activists who can place pressure on decision-makers.

● We have hired a part-time Congregational Organizer, who works to help faith-based groups strengthen their commitment to ending poverty and engage their memberships in the fight for legislative solutions to homelessness.

● We will organize an activist conference in 2001 to forge a community agenda on homelessness and poverty and build coalition for a unified strategy for change.

Real Change, with its practical, dignity-based approach to self-help and social action, is changing the way things work in Seattle. Our impact is limited only by our resources. Please give as generously as you can. ■

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Activism

Citizen Participation Project 16



Wary of waiting for an outcome to the national elections, a small county in South Georgia has declared that they will no longer recognize a president.

"There is clearly no mandate in this election," said Ronald Hartline, precinct captain for the Electoral nomination subcommittee to reconfirm democratic emissions and standards.

Instead, the citizens of Lanier County have decided to recognize a broccoli. "We have to fill in the forms," said Hartline, "and my broccoli always wins the State Fair contest."

Instead of exasperating already jaded voters, the joke seems to be winning support around the country. Residents in Ashland, Virginia, have appointed the pet daschund of a third-grade girl as president, and Hudson, Ohio, has submitted a woolly-bear caterpillar to lead the nation.

President-elect Bush dismissed the reports, saying, "My daddy and my daddy before him used to hunt woolly bears with their dog hounds, and we'd eat broccoli for dinner." Vice President Gore was not available for comment. Rumor has it that he is wandering the Cascade Mountains in Eastern Washington, trying to collect votes from a herd of deer.

—Bob Redmond

The worst-laid plans

Before the end of the year, the Seattle Housing Authority should get some community advice on what to do with the understaffed and chronically mismanaged Morrison Hotel. Advocates wonder whether SHA will heed anybody's counsel but its own.

Dozens of social service providers, neighborhood property owners, and advocates have been meeting for four months to discuss management and security problems at the Pioneer Square building. At a mid-November meeting, members shared five concrete proposals.

The one written by SHA itself has the most drastic impact on the building, which houses 205 very low-income people, many of them elderly. It would move them all out, along with the ground-floor retail space and the homeless shelter in the basement, before renovating the building completely, and then open it up to a higher-income bracket. Rents on the retail space would go up, as would monthly rents for the rooms.

"SHA wants people living there who are 'compatible with the area,'" says David Lawton, a member of the Seattle Displacement Coalition who has been participating in the task force. "Given the gentrification and upscaling in the area, what they meant was they want higher-income people there."

Other proposals included a faith-based effort to operate the building without government subsidies and a plan to sell it to a non-profit housing agency, like the Low Income Housing Institute or Plymouth Housing Group.

City Office of Housing staffer Rick Hooper, who co-chairs the task force, says the five proposals on the table have "generated a lot of ideas." He also realizes that SHA is not bound to follow any of the task force's recommendations. "SHA is quite interested in the city's thoughts on the matter," he says. In setting up the task force, "they tried to include a broad sampling of the community."

Hooper says the task force will recommend a plan to the SHA Board of Commissioners sometime in late December or early January. ■

— Adam Holdorf



ON NOVEMBER 11, MORE THAN 30 MEMBERS OF THE TENANTS UNION DESCENDED ON THE KIRKLAND HOME OF APARTMENT ASSOCIATION OF SEATTLE-KING COUNTY PRESIDENT PAUL BIRKELAND TO GET HIM TO SIGN A PLEDGE AGAINST NO-CAUSE EVICTIONS. WHILE LANDLORDS IN SEATTLE HAVE TO PROVIDE A REASON BEFORE EVICTING A TENANT, THIS IS NOT THE LAW STATEWIDE. MOREOVER, IN RECENT YEARS AASK HAS SUPPORTED STATE LEGISLATION THAT WOULD OVERRIDE SEATTLE'S TENANT PROTECTIONS.

PHOTO BY GEORGE HICKEY.

Capitol Hill rent caps?

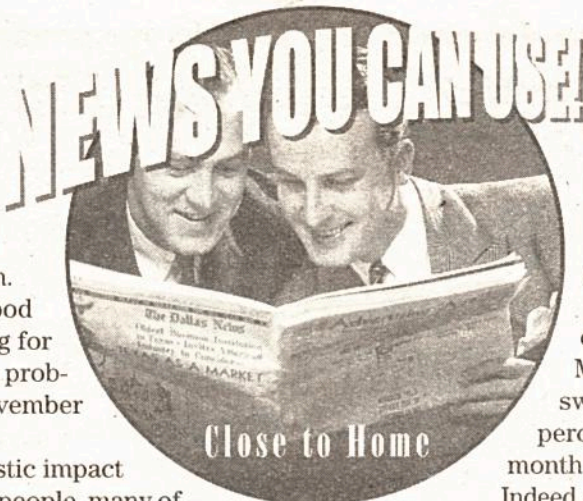
As the city moves towards reshaping the Pike/Pine neighborhood, the Seattle Displacement Coalition wants to make sure low income tenants don't get pushed out.

The city council is currently discussing a proposed Pike/Pine district overlay, a series of development guidelines that encourage new mixed-use buildings — with office, commercial, or retail space on lower floors and residents above — to cut down on the traffic and improve the quality of life in the area. The guidelines also include incentives like tax breaks if developers provide proportional amounts of parking spaces and open space.

However, about 500 units of low-income housing could be destroyed in the quest to meet city guidelines, warned John Fox of the Seattle Displacement Coalition.

"At present, the Pike/Pine plan builds in incentives that could exacerbate the loss of low-income housing," he says. "The city should not be in the business of actively encouraging demolition of these buildings."

In response to these concerns, the city's modified neighborhood plan might



require all new developments to offer at least 40 percent of their residential units at 60 percent of the current market rental rate. In addition, if any low-income units are destroyed in the process of building a new development, they would have to be replaced with new low-income units of comparable quality to the development's market-rate rentals.

Even if these added protections are adopted at the city council's next scheduled Pike/Pine discussion on Monday, they still leave a lot of potential problems unanswered, noted Fox. For one, a studio that rented for 60 percent of current market rates would still cost \$100 more a month than what low-income tenants are currently paying.

Indeed, under the plan's language, the quality of the low-income and the new low-income housing are not. So while a developer might provide "affordable units" to meet the city's incentive guidelines, the actual rents might end up being substantially more than area low-income tenants are paying now.

"They could demolish what's left of what's truly affordable," says Fox. "This entire exercise would be for nothing if that language is not changed. But I think we can get that change." ■

— Molly Rhodes

Newsies stand together

In the last eight years on the job in the advertising department of *The Seattle Times*, Janell Van Dussen estimates that her wages have gone up eight percent. Her employer, meanwhile, has estimated that the cost of living in the region has gone up almost 19 percent over the same period. Out on strike, Van Dussen wants the *Times* to put its money where its mouth is.

Of the 1,000 *Times* and *Post-Intelligencer* employees on the picket lines since November 20th, the most high-profile ones have bylines, signatures, and mug shots. But over two-thirds of the strikers are less well-known, and just as essential, as the newsroom staff. They arrange your classified ads, deliver your paper, and answer the phone. Their starting salaries are nearly 30 percent lower than a cub reporter's wages — just over \$400 a week. And they have the most to gain from their unions' demand for an across-the-board pay increase.

As the strike entered its second week, negotiators for the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild emphasized that they seek to correct the stagnant earnings resulting from the "pay-for-performance" deals of previous contracts.

Van Dussen says last year, under the pay-for-performance arrangement, her manager gave her a perfect score and just a 10-cent hourly pay increase. After ten years on the job, she is not making much more than the starting wages of new sales associates.

"I don't expect to become wealthy doing my job; I like it," she says. "But I expect to be able to live here."

The pay of the ad reps contrasts markedly with the reporters, whose starting salaries begin at around \$600 a week. Why do the big cheeses and the small-fries stay in one big union?

"The wage gap developed when [reporters' and editors' jobs] got more and more professionalized," said Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist David Horsey at a rally November 27th. Horsey says it's a good thing. "It brings disparate groups out here together." ■

— Adam Holdorf

Boomtown bounces back

Where can you get a breakfast burrito, two sausage links, a side of cinnamon-sprinkled applesauce, and a cup of coffee for \$1.25? Forget McDonalds. Try the newly re-opened Boomtown Café in the ground floor of the Morrison, on Third and James downtown.

The nonprofit restaurant café shut down in mid-September while staff amassed the necessary operating revenue to pay for rent, labor and electricity — about \$70,000. An anonymous \$40,000 donation put them over the top. New executive director Robert Kubiniec went to Boomtown from his job as associate director of the Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project in September. Kubiniec says to serve meals at the cost of the food, Boomtown will always be needy. "We're always going to be raising money, and we'll always depend on people's donations," he says.

The new menu serves breakfast and lunch every weekday for the same low prices: \$1.25 and \$1.75. New on the menu are sloppy joes, served up through the generosity of Dick Spady, founder of Dick's Drive-In. Dick's is donating about 200 double-patty Deluxe burgers and buns every day. ■

— Adam Holdorf

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

It Takes a Village

Homeless Women's Forum calls for action

By Shauna Curphey

Homeless women practice the art of invisibility. Women on the street at night who fear being rousted, assaulted, or raped conceal themselves in overlooked crannies. Women heading to work or to find a safe place to rest camouflage themselves to afford more dignity.

Practicing the art of obscurity means that when decisions are made affecting their lives, homeless women are not heard. The Women's Housing Equality and Enhancement League (WHEEL) reaches out to Seattle's dispossessed women, empowering them to raise their voices and demand more than what the street allows.

WHEEL, a grassroots organization of homeless and formerly homeless women, supports displaced women, works with providers, and pressures city officials to end the horrors of life on the street. The group hosts a Women's Empowerment Center on Mondays at Mary's Place, a day shelter for homeless women. Women come to the center to partake in a meal, share their stories, and start the work of rebuilding their lives.

Talking up change

At a recent lunch at Mary's Place, the women spoke about life without a home. Since many voiced concern about being in the paper, their names are not included here.

One participant mentioned that there is no safe place for women to go when they are still addicted to drugs. "Police think that's the King County Jail," she added in disgust.

Tears welled up in her eyes as she remembered her friend, who was raped and murdered just after she lined up a space in rehab. Another woman quietly said that she was raped and physically abused while homeless.

The first woman added, "If you don't make it into a shelter, you're out there, hanging on with a bad element, smok-

ing crack to stay awake because it is safer to stay awake."

Another woman described how hard it was while she was still trying to hang on to her home. "For some reason, when you hit the street, the poverty landscape changes... paying rent, that is real poverty."

Others join the discussion, revealing they can't stay with their partners in most shelters; they can't quite overcome illnesses because they have no place to rest; they ride the buses rather than sleep outside alone.

While these stories are painful to recount, the telling melts isolation and stirs the embers of community. Homelessness becomes bigger than their own private hell; it's a public policy issue. The women ask questions, get angry, and get organized. Ideas launched at the Women's Empowerment Center and other WHEEL gatherings evolve into demands for action.

Once a year, WHEEL hosts the Homeless Women's Forum to tell the truth about homeless women, celebrate progress, and recommend specific action to the city government at budget review time. This year, WHEEL spotlighted Tent Village, an encampment of homeless men, women, and children that has found a temporary home at El Centro de la Raza in Seattle's Beacon Hill community.

A city clothed in controversy

The women of WHEEL invited the suits and social workers to El Centro to share a meal with them on their turf, outside in a tent adjacent to Tent Village. On November 15, nearly 300 city officials, service providers, reporters, and homeless men and women filed past the village, lined up for chicken and rice, ate lunch together, and listened to homeless women tell their stories and state their needs.

WHEEL wants the city to allow the

encampment at Tent Village. El Centro de la Raza has served as host for the encampment since last summer, but at the risk of paying \$75 a day in fines. The organization applied to the city Department of Construction and Land Use for a backdated Temporary Use Permit to avoid the fines. The city is expected to respond in early December. WHEEL also seeks a new home for Tent Village when it leaves El Centro de la Raza on January 16. The encampment has seen 13 locations since its inception earlier this year.

Tent Villager Crystal Kiley put it simply: "I like to sleep quietly, safely, watched over." She is grateful for Tent Village because she can sleep at night without police forcing her to get up and move on.

Another villager, Louisa O'Shea, added that Tent Village is her haven from the disorienting daily shuffle from shelter to shelter.

"I have a home. I have a place to live. I have a tent and I live in it," said O'Shea. At Tent Village, she can go to work in the mornings without dragging along all her belongings.

Nearly fifty women stay at Tent Village.

Mayor Paul Schell explained his opposition to the encampment in a letter to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* last summer: "Let us not accept the temporary cloth solutions of tents. Other communities have tried, and encampments have not worked because of neighborhood and public safety concerns and lack of a clear connection to long-term stability for shelter residents."

WHEEL contends that Tent Village doesn't preclude long-term solutions. Residents must participate in upkeep, including security watch, trash pick-up and other duties. WHEEL supports Tent Village because it provides safety in numbers, allows couples to stay together, affords a place to store belongings during the day, and contributes to community building among homeless people.

WHEEL views Tent Village as an emergency measure, a single plank in a larger platform to end homelessness. At the forum, they announced the details of their full agenda for the coming year. Shouts of "right on!" and "Amen" drifted up from the women in the audience as WHEEL member Anitra Freeman said, "The pilot program is over. It is time for Seattle to commit resources to the full effort."

WHEEL's platform includes:

- Funding for a new shelter program for chronically mentally ill women by Christmas 2000.
- Support for a women-only severe weather shelter at First United Methodist Church downtown.
- Development of a day shelter for working women and a 24-hour drop-in center to meet the needs of women who miss curfew at current shelters because they work late shifts or swing shifts.
- Development of more respite shelter for women who are ill or recovering from surgery.
- Support for doubling the number of church-based shelters and developing a community shelter board.
- Community support for Women in Black, a project of WHEEL that mobi-

lizes women in the community to bear witness when a homeless person dies alone outside.

• Opposition to Safe Harbors, a computerized tracking system proposed by the City of Seattle to gauge homeless people's use of resources. WHEEL opposes Safe Harbors as a misuse of funds and an invasion of privacy.

Despite their differences on issues like Tent Village and Safe Harbors, in recent years WHEEL has worked effectively with the city to address homeless women's needs.

In June 1998, in response to the serial murders of several homeless women in Seattle, Mayor Paul Schell pledged that Seattle's homeless women and children would be off the streets by that Christmas. Alan Painter, director of the City of Seattle Community Services Division, said the commitment was sincere, but at the time, the mayor did not know the full extent of the problem. Though the mayor didn't fulfill his promise, Painter points out that the city has made progress on the issue, citing 175 additional units of shelter and housing.

"There's a lot to celebrate," says Painter of Schell's administration. "He's putting down the funding to make it real."

WHEEL also celebrates these achievements, but will continue to push for more until the mayor fulfills his promise.

In many ways, WHEEL has shown the way. When the mayor made his pledge, WHEEL called for a public process to plan the use of the \$500,000 Schell committed to the cause. This demand led to the creation of Community Action for Homeless Women, a group of service providers, city officials, and homeless women who work together to find solutions and ensure the solutions stay funded.

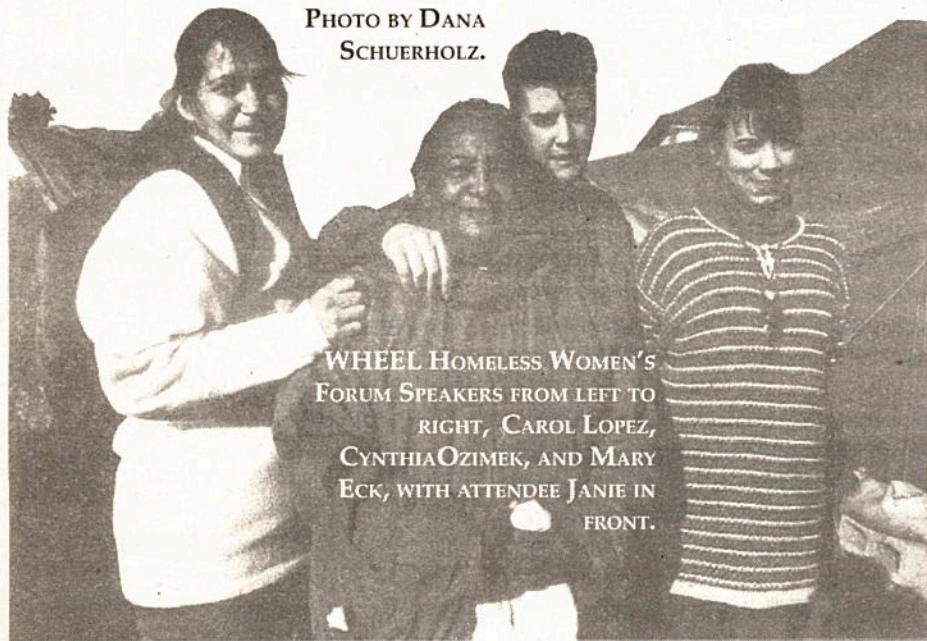
At their 1996 forum, WHEEL called for an evening drop-in center for women and for a permanent housing project for homeless women over 45. WHEEL's work with the city and service providers turned their demands into reality. In 1998, the Women's Referral Center opened its doors, providing a central location where women could find emergency shelter and information on other services. In 1999, Dorothy Day House opened, providing permanent homes for 40 homeless women over 45.

Ten years ago, Seattle had no shelters specifically for homeless women. WHEEL's annual forum lets the community know what the progress means to those on the street.

Speaker Cynthia Ozimek described her life at Hammond House, which opened in 1998 to provide shelter to 40 women each night: "At these simple wooden tables, all are welcome, and if these walls could speak, they would whisper lost sighs and stolen moments and fragile lives. If these walls could speak, they would sing a song so rapt with life that anyone who heard would know that homeless women have hearts no less beautiful for their lack of shelter."

Since the walls of our city's shelters don't speak for the women who seek refuge within them, WHEEL will continue to reach out to other homeless women so they can overcome fear and speak for themselves. ■

PHOTO BY DANA SCHUERHOLZ.



WHEEL HOMELESS WOMEN'S FORUM SPEAKERS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, CAROL LOPEZ, CYNTHIA OZIMEK, AND MARY ECK, WITH ATTENDEE JANIE IN FRONT.

A Daily Struggle

Geov Parrish on wellness, the *Weekly*, and the WTO

Interview by Adam Holdorf

If you've got an issue with anything from forests to foreign trade, chances are columnist Geov Parrish can tell you more about it. Parrish is often put at the center of Seattle's activist community, speaking from a very tall soapbox: the pages of the *Seattle Weekly*, where he writes a regular column, Impolitics. From there, he first began sounding the horn as the World Trade Organization prepared to converge on Seattle. He believes his column helped educate general readers, and prepared us all for the protests that accompanied last year's conference.

Parrish's newspaper work began when he founded alternative biweekly *Eat the State!* in 1996. Before switching to newspapers, Parrish spent years in the radio broadcast industry, helping found a trade research journal called *M Street* that today, he notes with a sigh, "is worth millions." His activism started long before, in college, when he publicly defied the military draft president Jimmy Carter had resumed.

Hurt by a stroke two years ago, and weakened by the immuno-suppressant drugs he takes for a kidney transplant, Parrish sometimes struggles to get out of bed. It's a far cry from his high school days as a cross-country champion, but he's not mourning his health. He recently shared his account of being an activist-journalist with *Real Change*.

Real Change: You use humor in *Eat the State!* and in your *Weekly* column. Why?

Geov Parrish: *Humor is a form of empathy, and political activism is a form of empathy. I think to be a good writer you have to be empathetic with your audience: put yourself in other people's shoes and try to understand what they're going through.*

The fact that I've had a lot of different experiences helps. Growing up, my parents wanted to be middle class, at the same time my dad was unemployed a lot of the time, so I had different class backgrounds.

And if you can't make yourself realize the basic absurdity of what happens to people, and not take it so seriously all the time, you're just going to drive yourself crazy. You can reach people through humor that you could never reach through preaching. There are few better ways to undress abuses of authority and power than through the medium of ridicule.

RC: What do you think of the WTO meeting, now that we're some months away from it?



PHOTO BY DAN CAPLAN.

This whole writing career is something I didn't do before I got sick. That's something inspiring. People with limitations can make important contributions.

Parrish: *The WTO protests have given us an opening to an audience that wouldn't have taken us seriously before. That also forces us to have our facts straight. To be — I don't necessarily want to say responsible, because I think irresponsible actions are sometimes necessary — but to be true to the cause.*

One of the things we're starting to realize, and maybe it takes a little bit of distancing from the WTO, is that that was an extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime event, both in terms of what Seattle will see, and in terms of what these activists will see. With what we did locally, we provided an opportunity to galvanize the movement internationally, to really be our own little niche in changing world history.

The jury's still out on what the long-term effects of the demonstrations in Seattle will be, but there's no question that it made history. That's not going to happen again. It's very easy to fall into the trap of trying to live up to what we did, but now it's more appropriate to select local goals. They can take their inspiration from national and international movements, but we have to remember that we're dealing in our local community.

RC: How is writing for the *Weekly* different than publishing *Eat the State!*?

Parrish: *I started *Eat the State!* as an activist in the community, with a background in media. It was frustrating, the extremely tedious stuff that people were putting out in newsletters — great information, but who would read it? It was boring and not timely.*

I'm still adjusting to the idea that I'm a "journalist" as opposed to an activist, because I see myself as doing both. I'm certainly promoting activism in the media work that I do, promoting the idea that people can make a difference, and that they should care about what happens in their community.

much rather I be opinionated. People expect a certain approach when they see my byline, and that's what prompts them to pick up the paper. Besides, The Seattle Times obviously has a bias.

RC: How has the sale of the *Weekly* to the *Village Voice* impacted the paper?

Parrish: *It's one of the few occasions where corporate chain ownership has actually benefited a paper. They have given us the resources to do good local political reporting. We have people involved with the paper for many years, really having their first opportunity to do what they've wanted to do. It is a very different paper now than in the days of [former editor] David Brewster.*

There are things that I haven't written about yet. I don't particularly think that the soft porn advertising in back of alternative papers is appropriate, and I would like to criticize the paper for doing that. A lot of people in this city are pro-porn. I'd love to get into a debate about what pornography represents in our culture.

RC: Are your health problems a spur to your activism?

Parrish: *It informs the way I live my life, in terms of not planning for the future, not taking anything for granted. I could wake up tomorrow unable to walk, having had another stroke.*

I know a lot of people with severe health problems who sit around all day saying "Oh my god, I'm so sick, what can I do?" This whole writing career is something I didn't do before I got sick. That's something inspiring. People with limitations can make important contributions. That's a form of activism in itself. I do look forward six months from now, but I do so with the awareness that I might not be alive then. I don't take life for granted.

RC: What would you say to people whose first protest experience was WTO?

Parrish: *Be sure and tell your grandkids you were there. Something like 1.5 million people will swear they'd been there by the year 2050. Like Woodstock, or the Democratic Convention of '68.*

Also, don't stop. The protests were painted by the media as something that came out of the blue, but organizing is hard work. Victories, even massive victories, are sometimes possible. Don't give up when you meet failure.

RC: If you were Mayor for a week, what would you do?

Parrish: *Establish a civilian review board for police accountability. Because the police have the most power over the citizens. Making sure that that responsibility is used judiciously is really important. ■*

I'm in the rather awkward position of being seen as a spokesperson for an entire community of political activists. There are so many activists in town trying really hard to get their story told, and for better or worse, I'm the only person who has managed to get any kind of regular, uncensored access to the semi-mainstream media.

*The column that I do in the *Weekly* in particular, much more so than the *Stranger*, is read by elected officials and other powerful people. They see what I write as representative of what the grass roots are thinking. That's not necessarily true at all: even if I could fulfill that responsibility, it's not something I would want. I have to be careful about what I write, because people don't see it as just being Geov Parrish, they see it as being an entire movement, particularly post-WTO. I was the only one out there before WTO who was saying "This is going to be big!" Folks remember that.*

RC: Do you think that, with your byline visibility increased, your editors worry about responses they might get — you know, "don't trust Geov because he's obviously a biased source"?

GP: *The *Weekly*'s editors don't like it when I'm not biased. They would*

No Violins Here



By Liz Smith
Photos by Petter Goldstine

VOLUNTEERS HAND OUT A HOT MEAL EVERY DAY AT THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL ON FOURTH AVENUE AND CHERRY STREET DOWNTOWN.

I did something the other day that I wish Paul Schell would do. At Fourth and James, in the Memorial Plaza courtyard, I talked to some of the people waiting in line to get something to eat. The kind people who bring the hot meals every Sunday don't want me to call it a soup line. When asked "Why not?" they said "soup line" has a stigma, a negative connotation. So I won't call it a soup line — but a misery line, a poverty line, a line of shame in America the Beautiful.

2:30 p.m. A few people are there. The guards are hosing down the courtyard to clean it up from the meal that was given at 1 p.m. by a different group. Below us but unseen is the police underground parking lot. Across the street is City Hall, which has security cameras to watch over the people there. Above us is the gray sky. There is a small sign on a post that tells when meals are served throughout the week. To the right of the sign is a garden of trees and chain-link fence partitions. I peer through the padlocked wrought-iron gates to look at it. The guard says it is not a prison for trees, but art. The back wall is chiseled with the names of soldiers who died in World War II. It is like being on Pluto: cold, dark, lonely, and a long way from any warmth or comfort.

3 p.m. More people are starting to arrive, setting down their bedrolls and packs on the ground in a line that begins in front of a blue pavilion tent. It

shelters two rows of empty tables upon which the meal providers put their tubs of food. On the sidewalk, two middle-aged, prosperous-looking couples pass by. They give us a quick glance, then avert their eyes and pretend they see nothing. Perhaps they are afraid our poverty is contagious.

3:30 p.m. I walk the length of the line, 79 steps, of people two and three abreast. The guard says that people come no matter what the weather is doing. If it's raining, they eat rained-on food. There is no place to go to the bathroom and no place to wash your hands. These people are here — the city knows they're here — it grudgingly lets them have food, but allows them no dignity. I take my place at the very end of the line. Ahead of me is an endless row of thin shoulders and backs like beaten-down hills. Most of the people in line are men, just a few women and one young child. It's hard to tell what age they are. There is a look men acquire which becomes as indelibly

engraved as the marble walls around us: a look of suffering, of ill-use, of harsh wariness.

3:45 p.m. People, men, women, and little kids, from a different organization, arrive and pass out small sacks of sandwiches and fruit. These are very eagerly accepted, and guys in the line are eating these very hungrily.

3:50 p.m. The big blue van arrives — 20 minutes late — and the workers set up the hot meal containers. The people with empty bellies shuffle north towards Mecca. For the most part it is very quiet, and the waiting men are



"COLD, DARK, LONELY:"
THE DINNER TABLE AGAINST
THE MEMORIAL WALL.

There is a look men acquire which becomes as indelibly engraved as the marble walls around us: a look of suffering, of ill-use, of harsh wariness.



MEN LOOK FOR SHELTERS AND SERVICES WHERE THEY ARE TREATED WITH RESPECT.

patient and orderly. What hurts the ears are the screaming sirens of the ambulances racing up Fourth Avenue, punctuated by a jackhammer which can't be seen but certainly is heard.

4:15 p.m. I am at the front of the line now. They are running low on food, so I duck away and look for people to talk to. The food looks good and smells delicious: a pork stew, fruit salad, bread and margarine. Most people eat standing up. Just a few minutes of sitting on a marble bench makes you feel like a human iceberg.

I interviewed five gentlemen in the courtyard. Four gave their names: Mike and Charles Ellis, brothers, Al Koenig, James McDonald, and the fifth re-

quested that his name not be used. All five are employed. Four of them sleep in shelters; one has a place to live, which takes most of his check. I asked them why they ate here, in the cold outdoors. They said the food banks are only open during the hours they are working, and even if they could get there, the majority of the food needs to be cooked. They have eaten at the missions, but do not want to sit through a two-hour church service to receive a plate of white bread and gravy.

They told me about their experiences in the shelters. Some of them offer a spot on a cement floor. Tough luck if you don't have a sleeping bag, you get to roll up in your coat. All night men are coughing, snoring, having nightmares. There is lice, people with tuberculosis, people shooting up in the bathrooms. Come 5 a.m., you get the boot and there you are, cold and dazed, on the street.

They said they like City Team the best, where you pay \$2.00 for a mat on the floor. They also get a hot meal, a shower, and a set of clean sheets. What was not said, but what I heard, is that there, they are treated with respect and dignity.

The fifth man I interviewed was from a small country in Africa. He is college-educated. He told me that his country is considered poor, yet there aren't so many homeless people as we have here. "You are the richest country in the world," he said. "What is the matter that you can't take care of your

poor people? America is rotting with a cancer from within."

I had no answer for him. He said what I and many people believe. People are ill-housed, ill-fed, and ill-clothed, and the powers that be simply pretend that this suffering doesn't exist. They avert their gaze and just wish it would all go away.

Mr. Mayor, I am inviting you to come here on any given day and see what your policies are doing to your people. I would be there to keep you company and give you moral support. It would not be the same as your catered dinners, but it would probably be more interesting. ■

Liz Smith's Notes from the Kitchen will return next issue.



If I'd known we could elect the dead, I would have voted for Lincoln.

Some of you may recall my very generous offer to sell my vote to the highest bidder over five dollars. At least one of you took note of that offer. In fact Pooky Glax, probably alien quantum life form, who may or may not have run for U.S. President this year, gave me ten dollars sealed in a box with some guy's cat to vote for him. For Pooky that is, not the cat. I'm betting the cat will die.

So I voted for a quantum life form. Since that was the only bid I received, thank you all very much, I voted for Glax for President. But I hardly expected him/her/it/whut to win. He/she/it/whut didn't exactly campaign.

So imagine my surprise when I woke up November 8 and learned that there was no certain winner of the Presidency! It turns out that Gore and Bush must be two of Pooky's quantum states! Uncertainty Rules!

But enough about what I don't know. What I want to discuss today is something I know a lot about, namely, stupidity. In fact, I consider myself quite the expert on the subject.

Don't get me wrong. I can be as smart as the next guy, when it's my turn and the wind is at my back. But when I want to be stupid I can outstupid most anybody. Cause, let's face it, most people don't even try to be stupid. How can they expect to excel at it? Truth is, most people don't even know the different kinds of stupidity. They get them all mixed up.

Like when George Bush signed that law allowing hand recounts in Texas, then sued against it in Florida. That's stupid, but is it world-class stupidity? I say no. I say I can top that with both hands tied behind my back standing knee-deep in setting cement. I spit on George Bush's stupidity!

The really stupid thing to do, George, that would prove to everyone that you were city council material and that you might have a promising career in politics or at least as a grad student in poly sci, would be to call for a study. Instead of just being a governor in the one state that doesn't really permit them.

The Ballad of the Palm Beach Election Board or, Opus 2000, If John Henry Could See This, It'd Kill Him Dead

Palm Beach had itself an election board,
They worked from six 'til five,
"Raise up them ballots and put 'em down,
We'll count 'em to the Lord's Day or die."
The board said to the Secret'ry,
"You're nothing but a RepubliCAN,
That butterfly ballot won't beat us down,
Or we'll die with cards in our hands."

The Secret'ry faxed out to the board:
"I hear a pewter a-humming, lads."
The board faxed just this to her: "Oh Lord!"
"That's our volunteers you hear a-counting chad(s)."

The board was a-counting on the left side,
The machine was a-counting on the right.
No I lie, the machine, it was a-finished
Four days before Saturday night.

The board's now a-lying on its death bed
Not any of its recount alive
And these were the last words the board done said:
"Bring me a contest, before I die."

The board had a little capital,
Her name was TallahasSEE
They faxed and briefed her court all day,
Saying, "Tally, let our counting be complete."

Tallahassee, she would not see them,
Their heart was broken through,
And while the Secret'ry's master had filed a suit,
They died with cards in their hands, it's true.

Apologies to W. T. Blankenship, wherever he is. Come to think of it, apologies to everyone. ■

Just Two Questions...

1.
Why did the cleaners
who found me unconscious
at the tram stop
on Swanston Street—
why did those cleaners
call the *police*
for help?

2.
The police,
when they came—
why did they
smell my breath
What is she?
Drunk?
and check my arms
for needle tracks
before wondering if maybe,
just maybe,
I was sick?

— RIA STRONG

Trends of Society

I tried real hard to be a follower
Like my mother said all young ladies should be
I learned to cook and sew and dress the part
Even though the world kept calling out to me
I followed the trends of society

Now I was expected to get married
Like my mother said all young ladies should be
So I agreed to the first man that asked
Even though my heart longed for the world to see
I followed the trend of society

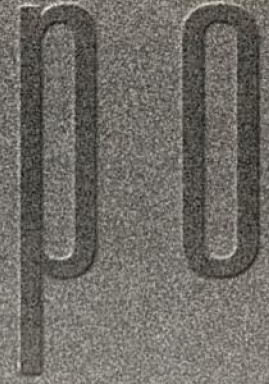
It didn't take long to become pregnant
Like my mother said married ladies should be
So I stayed at home raising three children
But the walls started closing in around me
I followed the trends of society

I tried real hard to be a follower
Like my mother said married ladies should be
I had his money but never his love
I had to walk away and set myself free
Ignoring the trends of society

I was not meant to be a follower
Like my mother had convinced me I should be
I was meant to go out and face the world
And become all that I can possibly be
Not follow the trends of society

Here I am finally seeing the world
A world that trend followers will never see
Right or wrong they keep following the crowds
Not me, I ride the winds that helped set me free
To hell with the trends of society

— DEBBIE BESSETTE



Sampling of poet
WHEEL Home

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poetry

Sampling of poetry from "It Takes a Village"
WHEEL Homeless Women's Forum 2000

Ode to the Therapist

As you sharpen your bicuspid on the Pokemon pen
The orderly of my world, paid to clean up my sin
Others' thoughts reaffirm you, whispering from every wall
While another sinner watches your clock in the hall
I could live as Brady inside my own head
In a bubble where every being bleeds red
But then if there wasn't people like me
Others wouldn't get paid for setting us free
I remember in high school this kid I'll call Sam
Use to carry this key chain of a stuffed blue lamb
I noticed him kissing it in the middle of math
But its tormented eyes had faced a definite wrath
I watched him then choke out all of its cotton
Toss it on the floor, cruelly forgotten
"Sam, what happened?" I began to ask
But then as I listened he took off his mask
"Son" he whispered down to the little creature
"Your father has been sent here to be your teacher.
I am an excellent therapist so how dare they think
My son is not normal or in need of a shrink.
You were born into money and handed each need.
If your tree turns out crooked, it wasn't the seed.
Are you listening son when I talk to you?
I see wackos each day that think they are blue.
Or hear little noises deep within their brain.
So don't tell me that you are the one in pain."
I guess Sam saw in shades, he was special like me
But his color-blind daddy couldn't set him free!
Our yearbook 2000 was dedicated to Sam
And the 16 years he lived as the little blue lamb.

— AMANDA TRIPLETT

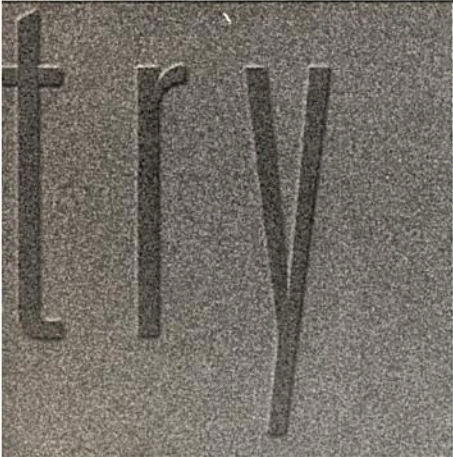
Our Selves Alone

From looking at my past, you can't get a view
thru the window that comes up in front of you
to hear my story, you wouldn't have a clue,
that one could have a past so blue...

Life can be a vicious circle that no one under
the only one to break it is the one that can win
life can be a vicious circle and you're the only
that can truly take command...

Anyone can want for you and everyone can care
but no one can direct you, cause you're
the only
one that's there...

— WENDY



**"It Takes a Village"
Men's Forum 2000**

ie Therapist

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Life can be a vicious circle that no one understands,
the only one to break it is the one that can withstand...
life can be a vicious circle and you're the only one
that can truly take command...

Anyone can want for you and everyone can care
but no one can direct you, cause you're
the only
one that's there...

— WENDY NAKASHIMA

Sharing City Shelter

Warmth, convenience, shelter from the elements.
Bus shelters.
Of course, if they are too closed in they become unsafe
anything can happen in there
so we'll have an open front
glass sides
with big gaps
and a tiny little roof
and it's still a **shelter**
you can't possibly get more than half-drowned in there.
It is still an attraction to those homeless people
so we'll take out the benches
it is harder to drown when you're standing up
and now everyone, shoppers and commuters and the poor
can huddle together on equally sore feet in the driving rain
in our **community** bus shelters.

— ANITRA L. FREEMAN

We gave our children
Nothing worth living for
Now they die for nothing

—RENEENE ROBERTSON

Beds

there was snoring
by my head
someone sneezing
in another bed
someone was sobbing
off to the right
and someone else moaning
all through the night.

someone was choking
holding back tears
while off to the left
were the whispers of fears
and several were talking out loud
in their dreams
would I get any sleep?
maybe some so it seems

Am I complaining?
No I think not.
As I am grateful
for all that I've got

were it not for this room
with its forty beds
some of these women
By morning, found dead

— PAULA ROZNER



NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVISTS HOPE THE NEW LANDLORD OF THE CAMPBELL FULLER GROCERY WILL HELP CLEAN UP THE BLOCK AND SHUT DOWN THE STORE, WHICH HAS NOT SIGNED THE GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENT

PIONEER Continued from Page 1

third of the housing units, according to an advocacy group called Lawyers for Housing. Most property owners preferred to shut down the buildings and evict the tenants rather than come up to code. When the neighborhood was declared a historic district in 1970, the remaining buildings were preserved from the wrecking ball that brought on ugly architecture like the Sinking Ship parking garage, on Second and Yesler. But any

ready — with housing stock that's about 75 percent subsidized and retail space that charges high monthly rents. But the neighborhood public safety advocates still have their targets. One, the Campbell-Fuller Grocery just down the street from the MID station, has refused to go along with the Good Neighbor agreements curtailing liquor sales. Early this spring the building was sold, and the grocer's new landlord has told some Public Safety Committee members that he would make some changes.

A Seattle Housing Authority task force is also bearing down on another Skid Road stalwart, their perpetually mismanaged Morrison Hotel. Late last month the task force released several scenarios for a major shift in the uses of the old hotel. The Task Force, in another example of neighborhood "partnerships" where advocates and anti-disorder activists sit down together, includes both high-end property owners and social-service agency directors.

Attention to "disorder" has a long history down here as well. The Pioneer Square Community Council, of which the Public Safety Committee is a part, concluded in 1989 that the combined effect of the County Courthouse, Skid Road social services, and low-income housing was crippling the efforts of the police to respond to the drug trade.

"We decided we wanted a day center out of this," says David Brunner, the current chair of the Public Safety Committee. "You extract from the larger population those who are unable to get away from the drug trade, who are out sitting in the parks, being used by the

dealers as clucks and mules."

The group also endorsed the idea of Cleanscapes, a maintenance and janitorial business. While Brunner points to Cleanscapes' efforts to hire people participating in county drug treatment programs, business owner Chris Martin says part of the business philosophy tries to "mainstream" people away from social services. Besides offering full medical benefits, Martin says his workers earn enough "not to go through the rigamarole" of waiting lists for staying on at Cleanscapes are high: after a month, janitors go from earning \$7.50 an hour to \$8.00 or \$8.50.

Brunner emphasizes that efforts for public safety have never tried to make poor people feel unwelcome. "The idea that Pioneer Square is trying to run off this part of its heritage is wrong. We're trying to embrace it, make it the best that it can be."

The public-safety efforts get the most boost from diligent neighborhood activists. Terry Johnson, head of the West Precinct's Crime Prevention unit, remembers that about five years ago neighbors and business owners came to police chief Norm Stamper "very frustrated" after an attack on an employee. Out of that meeting came the Public Safety Committee, which began meeting once a week.

Since then, "my opinion is there's been a great deal of education" among the residents, says Johnston. There was also stepped-up police work, including foot patrols, bikes, and horses in the neighborhood. Some of the members of the Public Safety Committee got the cell phone and pager numbers of cops working on the beat. Neighborhood block watches were set up. Violent crime, at least, has decreased in the neighborhood; Johnston says the SPD has no figures available on the number of nonviolent crimes or misdemeanors.

"We realize crime's going down, and we've worked hard to get it down," says Brunner.

Bill Hobson, director of Downtown Emergency Services Center, looks askance at most of the talk of Pioneer

The Campbell-Fuller Grocery, just down the street from the MID station, has refused to go along with the Good Neighbor agreements curtailing liquor sales.

Square's ugly underbelly. But he distinguishes between two concerns: that of the newcomers, who fear people on the street, and that of advocates wanting to ensure poor people are surviving.

"Things are no different in Pioneer Square now than they were seven years ago," he says. "If you put a funnel of dys-

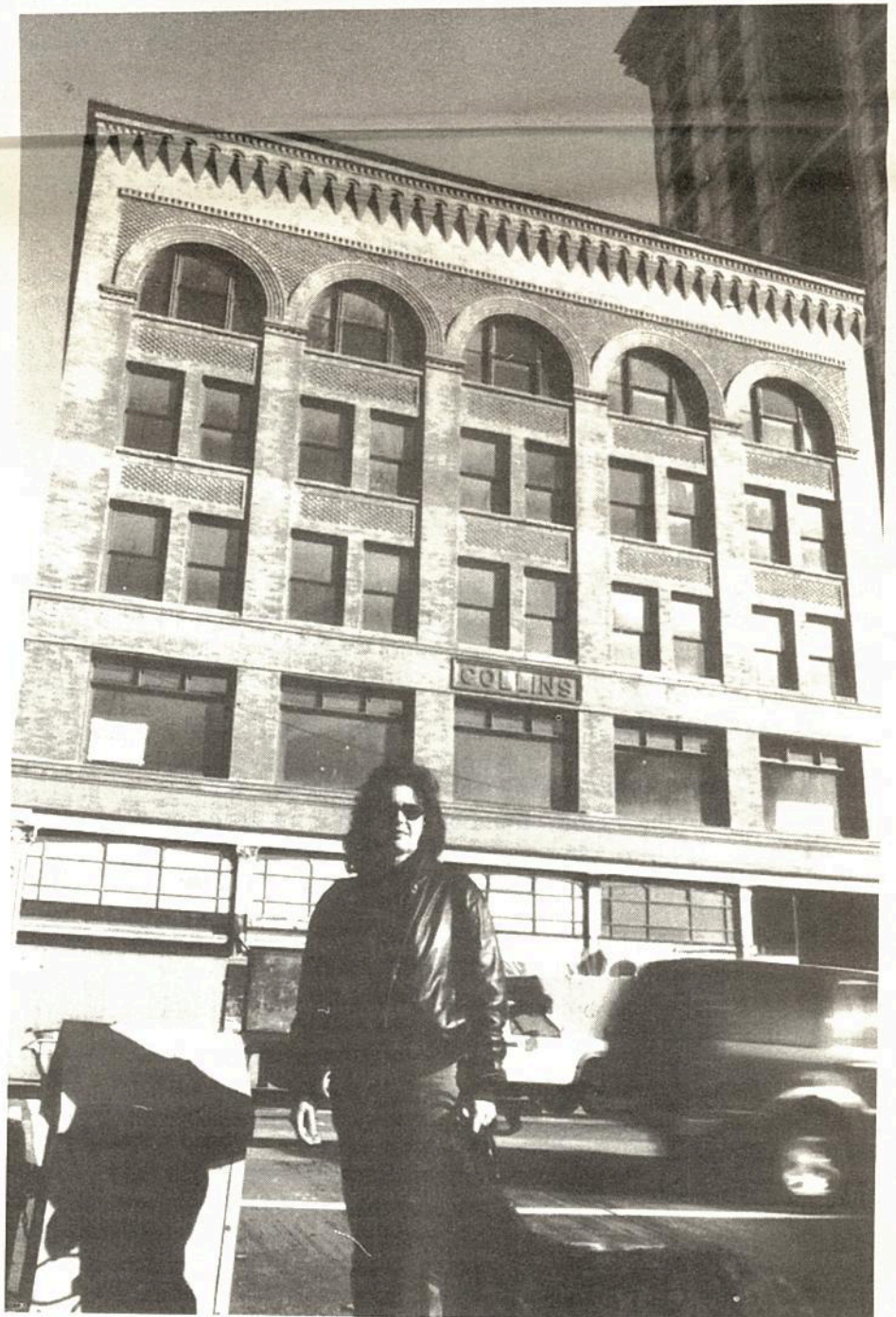
function over the state of Washington, it would all come out at Third and Yesler."

Since laws against public drunkenness were wiped out in the '70s, Hobson says the neighborhood attracted people too drunk to go inside. "People died" after the laws changed, he says. "If they weren't dying of high toxicity, it was liver failure, or exposure. We said, this isn't the response of a compassionate community."

When the county's Chronic Public Inebriate workgroup, started by executive Ron Sims in the early '90s, recommended the Alcohol Impact Area designation, Hobson went along. He still has his doubts.

"Some part of me says that there needs to be a community standard about how saturated a neighborhood is with alcohol," he says. Another part wonders, where are our priorities?

"I know an addict is an addict, and if they can't get the Ice House beer with the six-percent alcohol content, they'll find another treatment du jour," he says. "Isn't it clear what we need to do here? The AIA is not positive pressure, it's a recriminatory approach. We're approaching these things back-ass-wards. We need treatment on demand, and we need adequate housing." ■



PIONEER SQUARE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBER NANCY WOODFORD OUTSIDE THE COLLINS BUILDING ON SECOND AVENUE. THE BUILDING IS BEING REDEVELOPED FOR OFFICE SPACE BY ITS LONGTIME OWNER, SAMIS LAND TRUST. PHOTOS BY LISA WALDO.

Dying for Timely Treatment

In the struggle against alcoholism, surrender is always just around the corner

By Kirk Rose

It is a lie and a fallacy that people who are alcoholic and drug-addicted can readily get services in King and Pierce counties, at least if they're poor, even with a DSHS Medicaid card.

In every alcoholic or addict's life there comes a turning point, a point when they are able and willing to reach out for help. It is a very narrow window, and if help is not forthcoming immediately, the alcoholic or addict fades back into the blurry obscurity of days and weeks and months, unable to decipher which day or date it is, much less able to make or keep appointments.

I awake, or rather, come to, in the early morning of Friday, the 8th of September, on a bench, cold and miserable, as usual. I make some frantic efforts at getting breakfast, moving around, being lost and scared and tired. This has to stop and stop now! Untreated manic-depression, uncontrolled drinking, and the insanity of living on the streets.

I wasn't sure how to reach out for help, but found a pamphlet on "How to Ask for Help" as I was unloading gear and getting ready to seek help. I call 911, and they send a detox van, but I wasn't intoxicated and hadn't been drinking that morning. After a lecture about how worthless I was to even call them, they ungraciously gave me a ride to Street Outreach Services (SOS) at Second and Pike St. I was informed there that there were no beds in medical detox for two to four weeks; they had a waiting list (I needed medical detox due to Delirium Tremens and psychiatric problems). I was desperate and decided to try the ER at Harborview. SOS granted a bus ticket.

I end up in the back room of the psych



Answering the same interminable questions in the back room of the Harborview psych ward, I start to get chills, sweats, and a great fear of what is to come. I remember why it is easier to just keep drinking.

ward, talk to some medical people, and answer the interminable questions. I start to get chills, sweats, and a great fear of what is to come — I've been here before. I start to remember why it is easier to just keep drinking.

After eight, nine, or 10 hours, they find a medical detox bed for me in Pierce County. They provide a bus ticket, no medication, and somehow I make it there. I know a few drinks would "fix" me, but I really want to get well.

After more of the *same* interminable questions they send me to Tacoma General ER for another eight, nine, or 10 hours, and now I'm in trouble. Spiders are crawling on the walls, my skin is actually crawling and is red from me scratching it, I hear music coming out of the walls, hot and cold chills, interrupted by more of the same questions, hushed medical "consultations" by medical "experts," and still no medication.

Back to detox, a cab this time. I'm having trouble walking. And then the night of hell. I am under-medicated,

"Dante's Inferno," all levels, seems like Alice in Wonderland. More of the same only worse, my sheets are soaked in sweat, on the floor, and I'm clawing at the plastic mattress, trapped in a nether world of purgatory, but closer to hell.

Enter Nurse Ratchet (actually, "she" was nice compared to this B. from hell). She takes my vitals and states that I'm not detoxing (could've fooled me). She says I'm a liar and a diazepam addict (whatever that is). She asks no questions, states she worked at Western State Hospital for 25 years (I've been manic-depressive, and alcoholic for 36 years), I'm not detoxing (somehow this is my fault). So, I get discharged CYA — actually cover her ass. Her staff tells me to wait 45 minutes until she leaves and to come back, next door to crisis triage. Sounds good to me, I'm not sure at this point if it could get any worse. I'm still real sick.

You guessed it, back to Tacoma General ER, another eight, nine, or 10 hours, same questions. But one difference: I am prescribed stronger and bet-

ter medication — not given, prescribed — and it's back to crisis triage and a few hours of blessed relief.

Early next morning Kay, ooops, Nurse Ratchet, is across the hall, running her mouth and guess what? Discharged immediately, CYA again. I am not given enough for bus fare back to Seattle, but they do fill all my 'scripts and fix me the medication. Will wonders never cease? I'm a psych patient with several suicide attempts — they could only hope.

By this time I have given up — they do win. I crawl back to the bench and commence drinking again, with a twist: I down all those pills with my last 40 ounce.

Someone, I don't know who, how, or why, gets me back to Harborview ER. I end up on a gurney for 14 hours. I guess they just thought I was drunk or whatever, as a cop tried to roust me that a.m. I couldn't walk and was promptly admitted and seen. Some nurse wanted to shove tubes down by throat, but I said it was too late for that, and I suppose the doctors agreed. They also hit the ceiling when they realized I had lain there all this time and not been seen or had my vitals taken. There would have been no one to sue them if I had died, so I suppose their concern was a moot point.

Ten days on 5W, a psych ward, I get sobered up and started taking psych meds again. My admit date was September 11, three or four days and a serious OD attempt to get help — go figure.

This is October 17, and I still have no case manager (very necessary to get on waiting lists for shelter, psych appointments, etc.). My meds aren't working right, I suffer from extreme depression, but am not manic. I've been back to the ER at Harborview twice now to get meds that aren't really working and am living outside. Because of anxiety I can't abide the shelter systems. I do have an appointment for the 25th, but I don't know yet if it is with a real psychiatrist or a nurse practitioner — there is a big difference. Oh, I haven't drunk again, yet. ■

Kurt Rose sleeps in a tent near Pioneer Square. As of mid-November, he had given up searching for chemical dependency treatment and begun drinking again.

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A Tonic for the Sardonic

Angels and Donkeys: Tales for Christmas and Other Times
 By Andre Trocmé; Translated by Nelly Trocmé Hewett
 \$12.95, 170 pages
 Good Books, 1998

Review by Anna Sanchez

“In the 1930s and 1940s, the daily routine of life did not spoil us, for beggars came to the door asking for food, and the rumblings of war haunted us constantly.”

Thus writes the translator of her father's book in the opening chapter of *Angels and Donkeys*, which gives a glimpse of the world in which the little village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon survived while France was under siege. There, Pastor Andre Trocmé recounted these 11 tales of birth, the in-between, and the death of Christ — simply put, Christ's life cycle — while protecting 5,000 refugees from Hitler's troops.

On first reading, I found the tales readable but rigid. There were actual quotations from the Bible; there were passages followed by the exact references in Scripture. It struck me as predictable, and if I wanted to read a good Christmas story to my kids, I didn't want to make them feel as if they were in Bible class, with the nuns looming overhead.

Now how was I to go about the ominous job of reviewing a book about Christ written by a pastor?

I didn't think I learned anything new from these tales, and I didn't think I could recommend it. After all, it may not seem like appropriate holiday reading. To me, *Angels and Donkeys* was the antithesis of what Christmas has become in America.

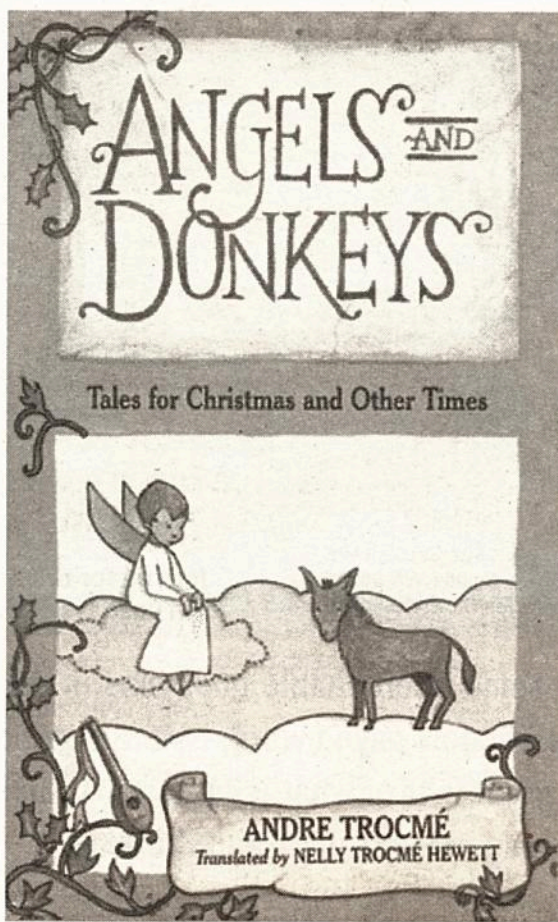
Think of the competitions between neighbors in decorating their houses. How Christmas seems to start earlier each year, by, if not before Thanksgiving.

The cynicism was rushing through my veins. But on a second reading, remarkably, the spirit moved me. I understood that it wasn't the world, but I who was cynical. Somehow, these tales became something entirely different the next time around.

Nelly Trocmé Hewett sets the stage in the introduction, "I Remember Le Chambon": "Our Sunday School teachers assigned each of us to a designated seating area. And that's when *the magic began*. A hundred candles lighted the tree, real live candles welcoming us with their shimmering lights. It looked like a thousand or more candles with all of the tinsel hanging on the branches.... Finally came the best part of our Christmas celebration — a special Christmas story written by Pastor Trocmé."

Somehow, I was transported back to the little village of Le Chambon, and I could suddenly see and hear, as if Christ himself had given me sight and hearing. I, too, became a part of their Christmas tradition.

In "The Rich Man and the Poor Man," I could see the value in giving what one doesn't have, and how the rich mistakenly think their gifts are better than that of the poor, who give openly and freely. The intertwined lives of the characters of "Nicodemus" show how the spirit of charity unites a group of people from all walks of life under the leadership of Christ. Other stories in this book do equally well in revealing Christ's teachings, without shoving them down our throats.



And in the end, I see that it is important that it was during the war, and that the stories were told by a pastor. It truly is incredible that these people, as well as the many refugees who they managed to save, survived. Not only did they survive: they were elevated to a place where war, hunger, and Hitler could not reach them.

These stories inevitably feature "hard" people, people unwilling to change. As soon as they are touched by the spirit, they go on to become enlightened souls. In this day and age, we need more such transformations, just like the one I experienced upon second reading.

Read *Angels and Donkeys* and find the spirit within you, and read it again if you don't get it the first time. Then, welcome it as a tradition, just as the little children of Le Chambon did when they gathered each Christmas in

the Huguenot church to hear Pastor Trocmé tell his tales. ■

If I wanted to read a good Christmas story to my kids, I didn't want to make them feel as if they were in Bible class, with the nuns looming overhead. But on a second reading, remarkably, the spirit moved me.

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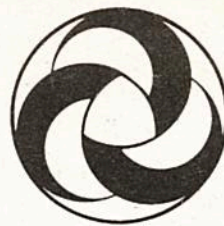


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Saturday November 11th, Bethel Homeless Shelter, Warren Avenue, 11p.m. One man was staying at the above shelter the night before when he became very disruptive. He was ejected and told not to come back. On November 11th, he returned with a friend at approximately 11:30. The men were told they would not be allowed inside, and they began hitting the door and yelling. The complainant stated that he heard the two men yelling as they left by the stairs. He heard banging on the windows at the top of the stairs and then four windows broke. He was unable to see which of the men had broken the windows. The suspects were then seen walking northbound toward the Seattle Center. Police were unable to locate either suspect.

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Sunday Nov. 12th, South Jackson St., 3:30 p.m. The King County Sheriff's Office evicted a 60-year-old man from the Bush Hotel on Wednesday, November 8th, warning him that if he returned he would be arrested for criminal trespass. He returned the next day and was cited. On Sunday afternoon, police were informed that a man was yelling in the hotel lobby. They responded to this complaint, and were informed by a citizen that the suspect causing a disturbance was the man evicted several days before. The police found the suspect sitting on the floor inside his old room, the handle to the room's door beside him. The police pointed to the door handle, and asked the suspect if he had removed it from the door. The man acknowledged that he had, and was placed under arrest for criminal trespass and property damage.

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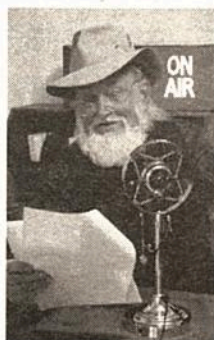
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Sundays, Midnight

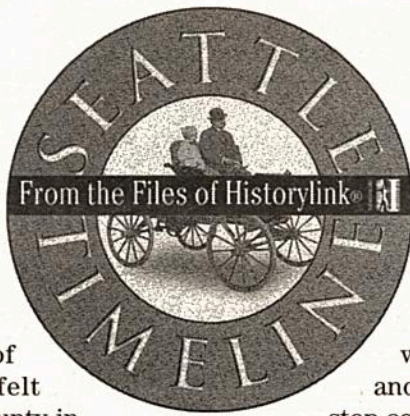
A patchwork of tall tales, labor songs and stories, tramping and railroad lore, and a general and often comic assessment of the passing parade.

Sunday Nov. 12th, 600 Block of Yesler Way, midnight. Officers were called to a grassy area 50 feet above the James Street exit of northbound I-5. There, Harborview Medical Center public safety officers were following a homeless woman, age 27. She had just been released from the mental unit at Harborview, and has a long history of suicide threats and attempts. When officers contacted her, she had one leg hanging over the wall, and appeared to be upset and crying. An officer was able to talk her away from the ledge, and an ambulance transported her back to Harborview, where she was involuntarily recommitted.

Tuesday Nov. 14th, 100 Block Broadway, 2:30 p.m. A 24-year-old female was contacted by the police for violating the "Sitting or Lying on a Public Sidewalk" ordinance, SMC 15.48.040. Her name was run through the computer, and an outstanding warrant for burglary was turned up. She was transported to King County Jail.

Tuesday Nov. 14th, 1711 - 12th Avenue, 2:47 p.m. Officer was dispatched to "burglary in progress" at a building under construction. According to the call the suspect, a dreadlocked man, was lying on the floor inside the building. By the time the police arrived, the suspect was gone. The caller stated that when he arrived for work, the homeless man was lying on the floor covered in blankets. When confronted, the man stated he had come in through a window. The caller told police there had been an ongoing problem with transients sleeping in and around the building. He admitted to letting some of them sleep on an outside porch.

Compiled by Emma Quinn



On December 7 and 12, 1880, two earthquakes struck the Puget Sound region. Frightened residents rushed out of buildings. It was felt throughout King County including in Seattle, at the coal mines at Newcastle, and in the Stuck and Puyallup valleys in south King County. Shortly before the December 12 earthquake a meteor was sighted crashing into the Chuckanut Mountains just south of Bellingham. Over the next three months a number of aftershocks followed.

On December 2, 1927, sound-on-film motion picture technology debuted in Seattle at the Blue Mouse Theater at 1421 Fifth Avenue. Fox Movietone News shows the departure of Col. Charles Lindbergh on his solo flight across the Atlantic to Paris and his later reception in Washington, D.C., by President Calvin Coolidge.

On December 2, 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt approved a \$3 million loan to the Seattle Housing Authority for the construction of 700 dwelling units in a slum area called



YESLER TERRACE IN THE 1940s.

"Profanity Hill." This became Yesler Terrace, the first racially integrated public housing in the United States. The project began with the demolition of substandard housing, which was replaced by 93 frame buildings. Each dwelling cost approximately \$2,500. The project housed a total of 3,000 persons. Not only did the project upgrade the substandard units in the "Japantown" neighborhood, but it stimulated a construction industry badly affected by the Great Depression. Part of the government subsidy guaranteed the low-rent status of the units.

On December 3, 1968, the Central Association (now the Downtown Seattle Association) unveiled its plan for Westlake Park in downtown Seattle. The proposal, which quickly became mired in controversy, envisioned redeveloping one block between 4th and 5th avenues and between Olive and Pine streets as commercial and retail space, and the closing of Pine Street to vehicular traffic.

Controversy endured until the project formally opened on October 20, 1988, after two years of construction.

Opponents, led by University of Washington architecture professor and preservationist Victor Steinbrueck (1911-1985), wanted more open space and in 1979 they sued to stop construction. In 1981, the

Washington State Supreme Court found the project to be an unconstitutional blend of public and private projects. In 1984, Steinbrueck and other opponents dropped their second lawsuit when the developers agreed to include an open plaza along Pine Street.



AD FOR THE "FUTURE" WESTLAKE MALL.

On December 3, 1969, KING-TV reporter Mike James hosted a special in which a woman described an abortion performed by Renton physician Dr. A. Frans Koome, an outspoken advocate of reproductive choice. Koome had caused a sensation a week earlier by releasing copies of a letter he had written to Governor Dan Evans, in which he confessed that he had been performing illegal abortions in his clinic for three years, committing felony manslaughter under state law hundreds of times. The college student, who said her school health center had referred her to Koome, defended the doctor as "a dedicated and principled physician."

Police investigated, but no criminal charges were ever filed as a result of Koome's public confession. King County Prosecutor Charles O. Carroll said his office could not locate any patients who were willing to testify against the doctor.

On December 5, 1975, Seattle Mayor Wes Uhlman proclaimed that the Yesler Branch of the Seattle Public Library at 23rd Avenue and Yesler Way would be renamed the Douglass-Truth



THE LIBRARY.

Branch to house the Seattle Public Library's African American Library collection and to provide meeting space for the African American community in the Central Area. The new name honored Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth, African Americans who in the nineteenth century worked to abolish slavery in the United States. In balloting to select a new name, an equal number of votes were cast for each name, so both names were selected. ■

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

As G.W. Bush coronates himself 43rd President of the United States, it would appear that democracy is in some trouble. We don't much care that he lost the popular vote. If the Electoral College was good enough for Imperial Rome, it's good enough for America.

Nor are we concerned that Governor Jeb, who happens to be the son of an ex-CIA chief, delivered Florida for his brother. It's nice to know folks can still depend on family when the going gets tough.

No, it's worse than that. What's got our knickers in a knot is that we can't seem to remember the day before yesterday, and are thereby doomed to repeat. Doomed to repeat. That's how history is.

The title for World's Longest Running Democracy, of course, goes to Athens, which threw in the towel after a mere 280 years. This has the normally optimistic staff of Classics Corner wondering whether we perhaps might be due.

When democracy collapsed in Greece, no one really much noticed. It was unspectacular. The wealthy just became more and more central, until one day, well, they were back in charge. Of course, the rituals of democracy persisted in a most reassuring manner. Citizens continued to gather and vote, officials were elected, and democracy was celebrated long after it had in fact ceased to exist.

The rise and fall of Athenian democracy is a story that begs to be told.

As ordinary people in the ancient world accumulated wealth, the well-born began to lose control. The first challenges came from fellow aristocrats, who found that power over their peers could be had by playing to the people. These proto-Perots were some of early antiquity's more enlightened rulers, and beginning about 700 B.C., opened the road to democracy. By around 550, the people had gained enough power to approximate the real thing.

By the fifth century, all of Athens' free male citizens had a direct vote in the affairs of government, and they seemed to like it. The downside was that all this rabid democracy rested upon empire and slavery, but that's another story for another day.

Just when things were going really well, the Peloponnesian war broke out, and democrats and oligarchs did their best to do each other in for more than 28 years. Through a series of stupid but democratic decisions, Athens lost. There were several bloody attempts to restore oligarchy, but the people prevailed and democracy was restored.

Alexander the Great, who conquered most of the ancient world, was a big fan of formal democracy, but the real thing soon vanished.

When democracy worked, a balance of power had been maintained by soaking the rich to support the arts and the military. After Alexander, this became voluntary. The kings, posing as democrats, bolstered the power of the rich. The wealthy gained in power, and deployed their assets to suit their own interests. Before long, only the wealthy held major political office. Average people could still speak, but money talked much louder.

Yet, they still called it democracy. They always will. ■

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December Notables

Saturday, 12/2

"Dialogues with Madwomen," a groundbreaking film exploring the thin line between madness and sanity using the stories of seven women placed in mental institutions, acknowledging that "madness" is a way of explaining women's self-expression. Sponsored by Dyke Community Activists and Out Front Labor Coalition as a benefit for Dendron. 7 p.m. 911 Media Arts Center, 117 Yale N., north of Stewart & Denny. \$5-\$10 sliding scale. Call 206-325-4061 for more info.

"Taking Back the Power," a **Community Forum on Movements for Justice.** Last year on November 30, tens of thousands of people filled the streets of Seattle to take a stand for democracy and against corporate power. This year, learn more about the local and global issues that affect us all. A wide variety of workshops will include: Building Activist Skills, Environmental Justice, The Basics of Community Action, Your Legal Rights to Protest, Institutional Racism, Police Brutality, Religious Faith and more. 10:00 a.m.— 6:30p.m., Seattle Central Community College. Sponsors include, The American Friends Service

Committee, People's Coalition for Justice, United for a Fair Economy, CitiAction, Jubilee 2000 NW, Roundtable for Environmental and Economic Justice. For more information, contact Katie Wepplo (206) 632-0400 ext. 20. For info on other WTO anniversary events, see www.scn.org/wtocal/

Global People's Assembly holds a WTO Anniversary Event focusing on dialogue around the question: what are the challenges and opportunities for uniting global civil society into a powerful network giving voice to the people? Bring your own lunch, drinks and snacks provided, \$10 for day program, \$10 for dinner and evening program, 10 a.m. — evening, at Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41 St., RSVP and reserve dinner to dickburkhart@home.com or 206-721-5672, info on Global People's Assembly <http://www.ourvoices.org>

Benefit Concert for Seattle Chapter Fellowship of Reconciliation featuring activist musician and songwriter Mike Stern and friends including Mike's daughter Katie Stern, and William Limbach, celebrating Fellowship of Reconciliation's 85 years of pacifist activity, refreshments, \$5 - \$20, 7 p.m., at Olympic View Community Church, 425 NE 95th, info 206-789-5565.

Sunday, 12/3

The Urban Action School presents a class **"Disability, Access, and Public Transportation in Puget Sound"** by Naomi Finkelstein. We'll discuss the pros and cons of the Monorail Initiatives and the Sound Transit transportation plan to assure proper access, free to those on fixed incomes, \$10 for others, 12 - 3 p.m., at Yesler Terrace Community Center, 10th Ave & Yesler, info <http://www.urbanaction.org> or 206-464-9129.

Thursday, 12/7

Human Rights Day 2000, sponsored by the Seattle Human Rights Commission and the Seattle Office for Civil Rights, celebrating the United Nation Declaration of Human Rights established on December 10, 1948, with speaker Randall Robinson, President of TransAfrica, 7 - 9 p.m., at First A.M.E. Church, 1522- 14th Ave, info Angelyn C. Frazer 206-684-4540 or angelyn.frazer@ci.seattle.wa.us

Planning meeting of Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee, planning the January 15 events commemorating Dr. King and furthering civil rights, 7 — 8:30 p.m., at CAMP, 18th Ave at Columbia.

Saturday, 12/9

LaBaTeYah Youth Home's Annual Christmas Benefit Show to raise the funds necessary to provide the homeless youth of LaBaTeYah with Christmas gifts, \$10 includes dinner, entertainment, dancing, 21 years or older only, 7 p.m. - early morning, at Richard Hugo House, 1634 11th, info or tickets Adam 206-233-7089.

Ongoing Saturdays

Seattle Food Not Bombs re-distributes free produce to the members of the Yesler Terrace Community Center. Produce to the People, Right On! 10:45 a.m., sort vegetables, noon - 1 p.m., Free Market, at the Yesler Terrace Community Center, 835 E Yesler Way, info 206-985-2247 or fnb@scn.org or <http://www.scn.org/activism/foodnotbombs>

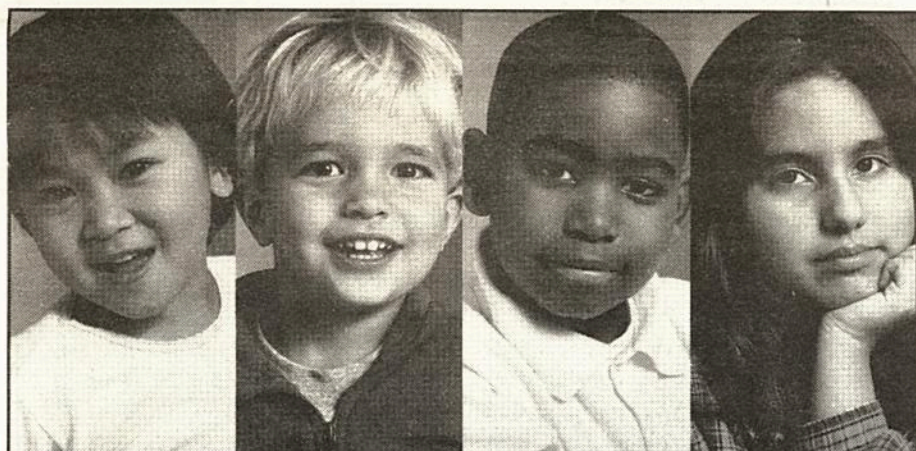
Radio Show "Teen Talk" 30 minute show for, about, and hosted by teens, features teens interviewing people and experts about a variety of subjects such as eating disorders, employment, good nutrition, anger management, gangs and youth, and crime prevention, 1 p.m., on KSRB-AM, 1150, info 425-452-2834.

Ongoing Sundays

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

Ongoing Daily

FareStart assists people who are homeless through training in life skills, food service, the culinary arts, and job placement, and runs their own restaurant, lunch daily and dinner on Thursdays only, with guest chefs from area restaurants. A 3 or 4 course dinner is only \$14.50 plus tax and tip, with all of the proceeds going to FareStart; at 1902-2nd Ave. between Stewart and Virginia. ■



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*Community Health Access Program (CHAP) is a private, non-profit program.

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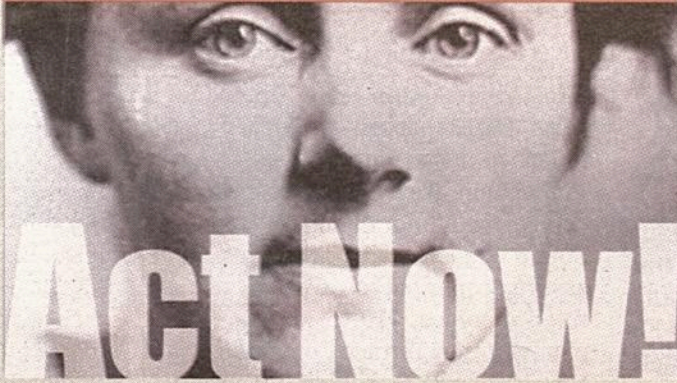
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Tell Locke to spare basic dental, vision care for poor people

Issue: If Governor Gary Locke listens to the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), thousands of poor people won't get aid for dentures, glasses, or other elementary dental and vision care. The cuts DSHS threatens to social services will hurt children and families.

Background: Adult dental and vision care is hard enough to get already. In September, the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) issued its proposed budget for the next two years. The following cuts to social services will hurt children and families:

- Elimination of adult dental services. Except for emergencies, adults who get health coverage through Medicaid would lose all access to dental care, including dentures. Dental problems can cause larger infections, respiratory and heart problems, not to mention chronic toothaches.
- Elimination of adult vision services. Adults who get health coverage through Medicaid would lose all access to vision services, including vision exams, eyeglasses, and contact lenses. This would save the state \$4 million. Clearly, if you can't see, it's very difficult to work, drive, or be safe.
- Lack of funding for Medicaid Client Outreach Projects and Healthy Kids Now marketing. Approximately \$3 million in federal funding being spent now for health care outreach will end in June 2001. The governor has been a leader in making health coverage available to children and encouraging families to enroll their children. The Governor should continue his leadership by replacing the lost federal funding with a \$3 million state appropriation.

Governor Locke is reviewing DSHS's budget request and will respond with his own plan in mid-December. The Legislature will then consider the state budget beginning in January 2001. Locke's budget draft should be the most sparing to poor people; it will go on to a Legislature that is likely to come up with its own, even more draconian, proposals.

Action: Contact Governor Gary Locke at (360) 902-4111 or email him at governor.locke@governor.wa.gov. Tell him: "When you write the state budget, please do not include cuts to adult dental and vision care." ■

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