

Real Change

Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless • Volume 8, No. 2

Across the Great Divide

\$1

Jan. 11, 2001

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INSIDE:

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Meet Me at the Rendezvous
City to Tent Village: Go Away
DESC Still Endangered**

Economics 101

Chuck Collins wants to teach the rich a lesson

By Silja J.A. Talvi

High employment rates, stock market riches, low inflation and the availability of a mind-boggling array of material goods: the last decade of economic growth in our nation has made history. Life in America, we've been told, is the best it's ever been.

Here in the Puget Sound region, we scarcely need to look toward national trends to grasp the impact of the "economic boom." According to recent *Seattle Times* analysis, the highest-paid 10 percent of King County's workers made \$4.4 billion in 1990. In 1998, that figure had risen to a staggering \$11.8 billion. King County's economy managed to churn out more than 175,000 jobs in that eight-year time span.

The growth *has* been phenomenal... phenomenally unequal.

In 1990, the lowest-paid 50 percent of King County's workers made 29.2 percent, or \$5 billion, of the total wages. But by 1998, this figure had dropped to 24.4 percent. What about all those new jobs? According to the *Times*' own eye-opening analysis, the under-\$15-an-hour category accounted for six out of 10 new jobs between 1990-1998, while two working parents with two kids need a wage of \$22.54 an hour to pull off a basic, no-frills existence.

"Economic boom for whom?" ask co-authors Chuck Collins and Felice Yeskel in their new book, "Economic Apartheid in America: A Primer on Economic Inequality and Insecurity."

Co-directors of the Boston-based organization United for a Fair Economy (UFE), Collins and Yeskel have co-authored "Economic Apartheid" to draw attention to the fast-growing gap between the poorest and the richest members of American society. And that gap is neither subtle nor widely reported on: the average CEO at a Fortune 500 company, for instance, now makes 419 times what an average employee makes. Statistics like this are disheartening; they don't make the evening news.

The problem of economic inequality is hardly limited to grossly inflated corporate executive salaries, or even the lack of access to housing and other basics. At the heart of the matter, write Collins and Yeskel, "economic inequality is the single greatest factor that puts our nation's social cohesion at risk."

Real Change interviewed Chuck Collins, co-author of "Shifting Fortunes" and "Robin Hood Was Right," and co-founder of the UFE-affiliated group Responsible Wealth, about America's own kind of economic apartheid.

RC: One of the primary assertions that you make in *Economic Apartheid in America* is that our current, much-hyped levels of economic prosperity are, in fact, precarious. In what ways is the U.S. economy actually less healthy than it appears?

Collins: What's masking some of the trends is that people in the so-called "middle-class" are not feeling the real brunt of this economy, because people are working longer hours and borrowing.

There is an economic boom for people who own a lot of stocks and bonds and real estate. Many people

think things are good because there is a little bit of trickle-down. There is low unemployment, although you often need a couple jobs to survive. Inflation is low, and you can buy cheap stuff from around the planet; people are getting cool things. A lot of this is not

based on real wage increases, it's based on plastic. The real story of the 1990s was exploding consumer debt, not the stock market boom.

A lot of people have not shared at all in the economic boom. People in the bottom fifth and maybe the bottom 40 percent are worse off in terms of their real wages and savings. At the same time that housing costs and health care costs have gone up, real wages for the bottom 40 percent have actually fallen.

Credit companies are trying to hook people who are younger and younger. Seventy-seven percent of full-time undergraduate students have a credit card now. It's the culture of preparing people to live beyond their means. It traps people into a sort of debt-cycle that limits their options and keeps people working multiple jobs and not complaining.

"It's not that some people are working harder than others, or that some people are being smarter than others. It's that there's a power imbalance and the winners get more, and everybody else gets less."

Chuck Collins
Director, United for a Fair Economy

Continued on Page 10



Without a Net

Dear *Real Change*,

There was this guy across the room at the public library waiting for a computer to use. "I have to wait because of all these homeless people," he said. In his opinion, the homeless had no right to the public use of the computer.

The homeless seem not to be subject to many of the luxuries that the rest of the world has. The constitution states that all have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This does include the homeless. The one thing that seems to be forgotten is that homeless are people, too. They walk, talk, eat, and sleep, if they can find a bed — just like everyone else. The true fact is that they have rights, too.

Imagine you walk into a restaurant and you are told to leave. Why? Not be-

cause you are causing a problem or because you are not going to eat, but because the people there know that you are homeless. You go shopping and notice that the employees serve you beyond the call of duty. The thought is to hurry and get you out of the store because they know that you are going to steal. You are talking to a person on the street and you just happen to mention you are without shelter, and it is almost as if you said that you have the plague. We have civil rights laws for everyone, but where do we get compensated for the treatment we receive for being a homeless person? There is none.

Don't be misled or misinformed: there are a great deal of organizations out there that offer help, but honestly, it's not enough. We need to unite and help our fellow Americans in need. A great deal of them fought to keep us free and have sacrificed their bodies and some of them, their minds for this country. However, many that "have" could care less about the "have-nots." Many people have been in a situation where there was a need for someone to reach out and help. It may not have been to this extent, but it was still a need that had to be filled. Many have forgotten that — an easy thing to do. We often forget when the shoe was on the other foot.

The number-one killer of homeless people is the lack of support from families and friends. It is like a slug that rips through you. It puts you on an island

and you feel like Gilligan and the castaways. The loneliness can be too much to bear; it can sometimes lead to suicide. There's an emptiness that goes along with being homeless, a feeling of nothingness and a feeling of being a bother to society. These feelings are there, America doesn't need to drive them home.

What happened to being our brother's keeper? What has happened to the human race? Do we care anymore? Do we want to help, or not? It is already hard enough for the homeless to deal with the prejudices of individuals. Let us hope and pray that the government steps to the plate and reiterates that the homeless have rights, too.

Sincerely,
Charles Jones
Seattle

Correction: City Attorney Mark Sidran did not propose Seattle's "camping ban," as *Real Change* asserted in its introduction to his interview ["The Sayings of Attorney Sidran," 12/28/00]. The Seattle Municipal Code has banned camping in public parks since 1977.

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Puget Sound's Voice of the Poor and Homeless

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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.

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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.

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Gutless

DCLU decision supports status quo; sells out homeless

By Adam Holdorf

One January 15th, the residents of Beacon Hill's Tent Village will pack up their belongings, roll up their tarps, and move on to another site. Their six-month stay at El Centro de la Raza is over.

They leave a hospitable landowner in El Centro's Roberto Maestas, whose Latino community center has set aside much of its blacktop parking lot for the homeless camp. Over the last five months, Maestas' agency has been assessed \$75-a-day fines for violating city land use code. The code nowhere recognizes temporary camps. SHARE and WHEEL, the homeless people's organizations running Tent Village, applied for a six-month land use permit to stop the fines and allow the camp.

The city Department of Design, Construction and Land Use (DCLU) could have authorized Tent Village under two conditions: that the decision would not "be materially detrimental to the public welfare" nor "be injurious to property in the vicinity."

On January 4th, after a nearly four-month wait, El Centro and the residents got their answer: No.

While most of the news coverage on DCLU's decision was accompanied by city officials talking up their support for homeless shelters, the text of the DCLU report itself deserves a longer look. It shows which side city officials leaned toward.

DCLU received hundreds of citizen comments on SHARE/WHEEL's application. The decision says most of these differed widely in their assessments of "who is the public and what is detrimental to its welfare." Broadly, views were divided into two camps:

- The city does not provide enough shelter for homeless people; they need a safe, legal place to go at night; Tent Village provides it. Grant Tent Village a permit.
- Tent Village brings crime and uncivil behavior, which threatens my well-being and the value of my neighborhood. Why should it be here? Deny the permit.

When DCLU ruled in favor of the second opinion, it relied on a series of suppositions. Anecdotes about neighborhood cleanliness matched wits with anecdotes about Tent Villagers' courtesy. But some anecdotes weigh more than others.

The Beacon Hill Chamber of Commerce claimed that customers were shunning the nearby commercial strip for fear of the Tent Village. DCLU tried to back this up with figures, digging in to the local sales tax reports; they found

nothing to support the claim. Strike one for Tent Village opponents.

DCLU then went to Seattle Police Department crime reports. Crime statistics also rose, in some areas, but the South Precinct community officer told DCLU that "no special concerns" come out of Tent Village. Strike two.

The major factor, of course, was the community's perception of Tent Village, and its effect on property values. Perceptions of a negative impact, that Beacon Hill has become "more dangerous and less desirable," will hurt property values. Wham! It's a hit!

The most cynical legal argument against a permit came from city councilmember Margaret Pageler, who, as a member of the State Board of Health, has studied government-regulated tent camps for eastern Washington migrant workers.

In her December newsletter, she pointed to El Centro director Roberto Maestas' support for "the toughest" health standards when coaxing growers to provide temporary shelter for the state's cherry pickers.

The same goes for any government-approved Seattle homeless camp, she wrote: we need "military-style tents" with above-the-ground platforms, and El Centro "will need to provide sanitation, refrigeration, showers, and safe cooking facilities.... Some kind of fireproof heating is a must." Finally, since the state approves tents because farmworkers only stay a few weeks, any tent camp should disappear just as quickly. "The host organization should provide case managers" to place people in "standard housing." "Seattle's urban migrants deserve no less," she writes, than the same standards El Centro "so effectively championed" on the state level.

Herrationale props up DCLU's decision as well: even the state's standards, the decision notes, "provide a higher level of habitability than those proposed at Tent Village."

Pageler thinks she's so clever. But there's a difference the size of the Cascades between Tent Village and cherry tent camps. On the east side of the mountains, employers are being pressed to own up to their role in spurring homelessness. If Nintendo, Amazon.com, and Labor Ready — a few of the companies that Tent Villagers work for — recognized that their workers are homeless, they too might do something about it. If Pageler really wants to provide such accommodations, maybe she should bring it up with Jeff Bezos. ■

Join Tent Village on January 15 for a march from El Centro de la Raza (2524 16 Ave. S.) to a new location; call 448-7889 for more information.

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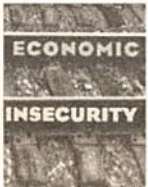


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THIS JUST IN!

To the delight of many and the horror of a few, Elvis Presley was spotted in Denny's Restaurant on Mercer Street last Monday. Having been dead more than 23 years, the King was a little worse for wear, but he chose a corner booth and hid as best he could behind sunglasses, a tall collar, and a large slice of chocolate cake.

Response to the surprise visit varied. Most of the restaurant public whispered and pointed politely, while Denny's Manager Tom Parker found versions of "Love Me Tender" and "Blue Moon of Kentucky" on the Muzak. The cook fainted, and outside, a formation of seagulls circled the parking lot, each holding a french fry.

City Attorney Mark Sidran, who happened to be getting gas across the street, witnessed the commotion. "The issue is," said Sidran, "how are you going to find some strategy that isn't basically responding to an endless demand for food? The question needs to be asked, 'Well, why are you here at Denny's at 6 p.m. as a hungry person? Or, even as a dead person?' We need to remember there's an inexhaustible supply of people who need food and shelter. Elvis should not be exempt."

Sidran had the police book Elvis into the City Jail for sitting down in a public place, but, as we know, the whole rhythm section was the Purple Gang. Let's rock. ■

—Bob Redmond

Throw Away the Key

By labeling alcoholism a disability, county substance abuse specialists want to put homeless alcoholics away to get clean — even if it's against their will.

The state Legislature is considering Senate Bill 5051, introduced this week, which would recognize alcoholics as "gravely disabled" people, incapable of choosing what's best for them, and eligible for commitment to a sobering plan by court order.

It's a change advocated by county mental health and chemical dependency experts, who say it will push recalcitrant alcoholics into what they need: long-term detox and counseling. "It gives us some opportunity to deal with people who can't make rational decisions," says Mike Elsner, a county chemical dependency specialist who has sought court-ordered commitment for alcoholics before. "The only way we can do it now is if people agree to treatment voluntarily."

"These people, their friends and families, want them to be committed,"

says Terry Mark, associate director of the county Department of Community and Human Services. It's also a question of money: "the public agencies feel [long-term treatment] would be a better use of their funds" than, say, a one- or two-week stay at Harborview.

The proposed law brings up a touchy civil liberties issue: can alcoholics choose what's best for themselves, or



CAN ALCOHOLICS CHOOSE WHAT'S BEST FOR THEMSELVES, OR DO THEY NEED SOMEONE ELSE — IN THIS CASE, THE STATE — TO STEP IN?

do they need someone else — in this case, the state — to step in?

Currently, the law only allows hospital and clinic staff to press for involuntary treatment if people are addicted to drugs, or alcohol and some other drug, and show signs of mental illness that could pose a threat to others. In addition, they are not to be taken from private property against their will.

The government strategy on homeless alcoholics has gone from seeking a continuum of care (housing, job training, and counseling to break alcoholism) to partially re-criminalizing drinking in public. In 1993, repeated citations for drinking in public became a criminal misdemeanor, punishable by 90 days in jail. The involuntary commitment statute has been debated since the current state laws on mental health and drug abuse were passed, back in 1975.

"We're looking out for the person's best interests, the public defenders are looking out for the person's wishes," says Elsner. "In this case, when they're not able to make a rational decision, that creates a conflict."

The effects of such a law certainly isn't unprecedented, says Elsner: all types of laws restrain a person's freedom in order to guard their welfare. "There's a law against committing suicide," he points out. "And when someone makes an attempt, they don't get prosecuted, they get referred to counseling."

"Does a person have a right to be a chronic alcoholic? Maybe they do. But when they're out in the streets urinating in doorways, what are the rights of people they're infringing upon?"

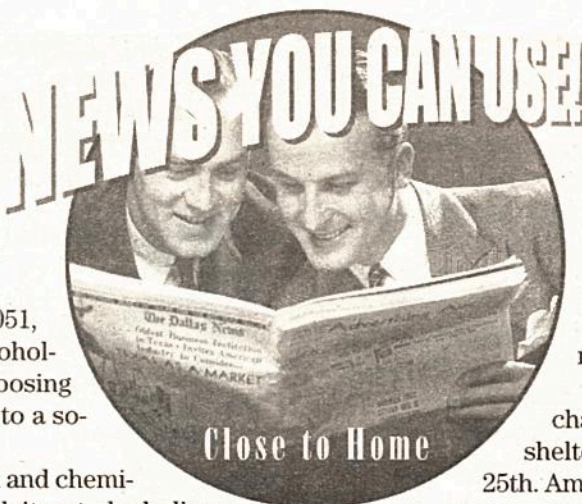
Currently, even if they wanted it, long-term treatment is out of reach for most homeless alcoholics. Pioneer Center North has a waiting period of about 36 days before a berth opens up. Patients must wait three to four weeks for most publicly funded chemical-dependency treatment facilities.

With only three involuntary commitment specialists in the county Department of Community and Human Services, and a lengthy judicial process in King County Superior Court, Elsner says few people will be impacted by the law. But they're highly visible. The spotlight has shone harshly on so-called "frequent flyers" who, as Elsner says, "are in and out of jail, in and out of detox."

A 1994 *Seattle Times* article described a handful of "half-million-dollar street drunks" who "abuse" the publicly-funded sobering and hospital services. In 1999, 36 individuals visited the Dutch Shisler Sobering Center and the Harborview Emergency Room hundreds of times. Three of them spent a total of 106 days in psychiatric hospitals. County staff estimate these 36 people cost the system \$720,000.

A similar proposal to SB 5051 passed the state Senate last February, but died in the House, a victim of the short legislative session. ■

—Adam Holdorf



More questions on the Morrison

The Morrison Task Force has voiced support for the 105-bed shelter run within the hotel by the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC).

In a January 5 straw poll, 14 of the 21 advisory panel members voted to retain the shelter on the mezzanine level of the Pioneer Square building. The remaining seven members want to move it.

That's no vote for the status quo, says task force co-chair Lynn Davison. A host of issues on the future of the shelter will be on the agenda at the next meeting, January 25th. Among them is a proposal, from DESC director Bill Hobson, to turn the shelter into a referral center from which Safe Harbors, the city's computerized tracking system, would be run. The city has budgeted \$850,000 over the next two years to develop the Safe Harbors system.

Also on the table is a vision for shrinking the shelter's capacity as the Seattle Housing Authority, the city or other nonprofits build new shelters. "We may investigate opening other sites for the same people, then change DESC as others come online," says Davison.

The task force is drafting a plan for review by SHA some time in the next few months. In its six months of operation, the advisory panel has reached just one conclusion: the current residents, mainly formerly homeless, elderly people, should stay in the building.

"We've reached closure on the issue of the resident population," says Davison, "but management, ownership, the details around security and services — all that is still undecided." ■

—Adam Holdorf

Location, Location, Location

You're living in a shelter downtown. Where do you go to apply for permanent housing? The Seattle Housing Authority has a new answer: you take the bus out to Ballard.

The new shop, where would-be tenants turn in their applications for housing or Section 8 rental assistance, is out at 907 Ballard Way, north of the ship canal. The old office near the Seattle Center, a few blocks from the Ride Free Zone, has been closed. SHA staffer Virginia Felton says housing applicants who show up there will get a free shuttle ride out to the new digs.

Felton says SHA tried to find a storefront somewhere in the downtown area, but "every suitable place we found, a dot-com company outbid us" on the lease. SHA hopes to open other neighborhood-based service centers in West Seattle and the south end eventually, but has no definite plans.

Metro's 28 bus runs from downtown along Leary Way, near the PorchLight office, about every half hour. Convenient, eh? ■

—Adam Holdorf

Color by number

In recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 71st birthday, here's some challenging facts:

- Blacks only make up 3 percent of the entire state's population, but nearly one-fourth of the state prisons' population.
- While African Americans make up 5 percent of total King County residents, they account for 36 percent of the county jail population.
- More than 150,000 adults in the state, a disproportionate number of them black, cannot vote because of their criminal history.

Thanks to county councilmember Larry Gossett for the stats. ■

—Adam Holdorf

More worrisome numbers

Whether you're looking to rent or buy a home, it's getting more difficult to find an affordable place. That's according to King County's annual Affordable Housing Bulletin, which shows that the housing market continues to price out low- and moderate-income people. Among its findings:

- Just one in six homes sold in King County last year was affordable to a household earning the county median income.
- Only about 1 percent of King County's apartment stock is affordable to people earning less than 30 percent of the median household income — full-time workers in service occupations.
- Most of the affordable rents and home-owning opportunities are in the south end of the county. North of I-90, only Seattle, Bothell, Shoreline, Carnation and Bellevue have more than 10 percent of their housing stock available at affordable levels. ■

—Adam Holdorf

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

Tenant Shield

Councilmember Judy Nicastro promotes landlord retaliation law

By Molly Rhodes

Seattle tenants could win the right to organize without fear of landlord retaliation, and the right to sue the landlord through the city should retaliation occur.

The proposal, from city councilmember Judy Nicastro, will get a public hearing in the council's Landlord/Tenant and Land Use committee next week. It's just what local tenant groups have clamored for.

"Anything that protects the right to organize is good for us," says Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) organizer Doug Bloch. "We've definitely heard of problems with ACORN members being threatened just because they wanted to organize, or just for asking landlords to make repairs."

Under the proposed city ordinance, tenants would be allowed to distribute leaflets, post notices on bulletin boards, and hold meetings in their building's common areas in the name of organizing to maintain or improve their living conditions.

Retaliating against tenants who organize — such as with rent increases or the threat of eviction — would become part of a set of new civil penalties. Landlords would also face civil penalties if they retaliated against a tenant who had already filed a

claim against them. Tenants would file claims with the city attorney's office, which would be responsible for prosecuting.

While the Apartment Association of Seattle & King County (AASK) supports the concept of a tenant's right to organize, one member says the proposed ordinance would impede the rights of landlords and other tenants.

"It's like killing a fly with a machine gun," says Chris Benis, AASK's general counsel and past president. According to Benis, the city's proposed civil penalties are too broadly worded, and they don't allow for the landlord to recover his or her attorney's fees should the city fail in court. AASK is looking to add language to the ordinance requiring any tenant filing a civil

claim to give a verified statement of exactly what happened. The tenant could

be held liable for perjury if the statement doesn't stand up in court.

Nicastro's proposed changes to criminal penalties are even more egregious, says Benis. The city wouldn't have to prove a landlord had knowledge of a violation — such as tampering with locks or turning off gas or electricity — before it can fine the landlord up to \$5,000 and throw him or her in jail for up to a year.

"If a landlord's being charged with a crime, they can't even use the defense that they didn't know what was going on," says Benis.

However, absentee landlords shouldn't be hiring property managers who are going to commit crimes such as lock tamper-

ing in the first place, counters Scott Winn of the Tenants Union.

Winn says some areas of the ordinance would still favor the landlord to the detriment of the tenant's claim. Although the ordinance does call for "rebuttable presumption" — a landlord would have to show that he didn't commit an act of retaliation, rather than a tenant having to prove that he was retaliated against — it allows for too many loopholes. If a tenant questioned a legitimate rent increase for which a landlord gave a reason in written notice, the tenant would have to prove the act was retaliatory. In addition, any tenant complaints brought within 90 days of a legitimate rent increase would be presumed to have been filed in bad faith as a response to the increase.

Yet while both sides are still looking to haggle with Nicastro and the other committee members over the exact wording of the proposal, her overall push to protect the right to organize and punish landlords who retaliate against legitimate requests for improved living conditions is praised.

"This will be a tremendous help for tenants of Seattle, especially low-income people," says Bloch. "We'll be at the hearing with signs, making sure it passes." ■

The Seattle City Council's Landlord/Tenant and Land Use committee will hold a public hearing on the proposed ordinance on Wednesday, January 17, starting at 5:30 p.m., on the 11th floor of the Municipal Building at 600 Fourth Avenue. A copy of the bill can requested via email at jill.berkey@ci.seattle.wa.us, via phone at (206) 684-8806, or in person at the city council reception desk.

Shock Jock

Homeless community convenes on air

By Alan MacMillan

Jamie called in from Illinois to describe the state welfare-to-work program, which had given her a poorly-paid part-time job. With no daycare available, she could not improve her job prospects by going to school; since welfare-to-work clients can't get unemployment, she could not quit.

A man who was HIV-positive and living out of his car called in, asking if someone could help him get a job, saying he preferred work over disability benefits.

Susan, a formerly homeless mother, called in, crying over the possibility of becoming homeless again. "All I want is for my children to be safe," she said. "How many other people are there like me?"

The fourth annual Homelessness Marathon reveals that what may feel like isolated stories are part of the collective experience of a community that is rarely given air-time. The Marathon is a 14-hour live radio broadcast from the streets of Cambridge, MA, on January 24. Throughout the night, "Nobody" (the host of the show) takes calls and broadcasts stories from the general public, especially from homeless people.

This is not a pledge drive. Instead of money, the creators of the Marathon

hope it will be a "consciousness-raising broadcast," discussing issues often ignored by most TV and radio. Bruce Wirth of KBCS 91.3 FM, which will feature the Marathon locally, hopes the Marathon will "build bridges between people who have homes, and people who don't," he says. "It's our job to represent the community, especially that part of the public that is ignored by the commercial stations. We see the Marathon as a chance to reach out and connect with the homeless community."

KBCS is supplementing the Cambridge broadcast with its own Puget Sound spin. Throughout the day on the 24th they will intersperse their regular programming with interviews with, and stories from, local homeless people. The station will bump their regular news program between 6:30 and 7 p.m., and replace it with a special half-hour interview program, with local advocates, artists, and homeless or formerly homeless folks themselves. From 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., they'll have a special edition of Womanotes, featuring live performances by local musicians centered around the theme of women and homelessness. Then at 9 they will be-

gin broadcasting the Marathon, which will run until 6 a.m.

The Marathon is the creation of Jeremy Alderson ("Nobody"), who hosts the weekly "Nobody Show" in New York. Frustrated by the inability to cover all the themes of homelessness in his allotted time-slot, Alderson came up with the concept of a long-format Marathon. This year the Marathon will be broadcast on over 20 radio stations, from New York to Costa Rica, from Fargo to North Dakota. Alderson attributes the popularity of the Marathon to the uniqueness of the show:

"The minute you hear it, you realize you've never heard anything like it before... people get hooked, listening for two, four, five hours... because they know they may never hear anything like it again."

Past Marathons have captivated listeners with tales of the struggles, successes, humor, and sadness that people have experienced on the streets. They have been a forum for homeless and formerly homeless to talk about topics of relevance to them, including perspectives on housing

problems, mental health issues, politics, networking amongst the homeless, and temporary work agencies.

The Marathons have also been a learning experience for Alderson himself. In the first Marathon, broadcast

from the streets of Ithaca, NY, Anderson had to stop the show for 15 minutes, overcome by the cold. This taught him a bitter, if simple, lesson about life on the streets. Now... he dresses more warmly.

Tune in to 91.3 FM on Wednesday, January 24 for a fascinating audio experience. But don't expect it to be bleak. Alderson sees the Marathon as a positive show: ordinary people actually care about the lives of those who are and have been homeless.

You wouldn't know this from listening to the rest of the media or most of our

elected officials. But he firmly believes the people of America care about homelessness. That's why, according to Alderson, the Marathon's popularity has snowballed. Maybe that's why you're reading this article in the first place. ■

Want to hear your voice on the airwaves? KBCS will be down at the Real Change office to tape interviews on Friday, January 19, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

On the day of the Marathon, people who are homeless, formerly homeless, or afraid they're about to be homeless can call 877-LEFTIST (533-8478). There's another number for the general public: (800)213-9367

The Rendezvous: Here to Please

By Michele Marchand

"The owner raised the price of coffee 50 cents on New Year's," Delores, my waitress, says as she rests her pot of coffee on the table. "I've argued with him, told him our customers are leaving," she says, sweeping her arm around the half-empty room. "But he won't listen to me. So it's \$1.50 for coffee now, hon. Do you still want a cup?"

This is quintessential Rendezvous. "World Famous since July 1, 1988!" the

Rendezvous

2320 - 2nd Avenue, (206) 441-5823.

Restaurant is open from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays; weekends 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bar is open from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m. everyday. Its jewelbox theatre sponsors AA meetings throughout the week.

Rendezvous proclaims on its curled, yellowed, laminated menu. It's a dark jewel of a diner hidden on Second Avenue between Bell and Battery Street; a place where you can get good plain food in large portions at a reasonable price. It's a place where a waitress like Delores will look after you, like any waitress in any great diner in any hard-boiled mystery you've ever read.

The Rendezvous is one of the last working-class restaurants downtown, and every time I go there I see lots of men and women I know from the streets. Any time of day, there are Bud cans at most tables. A few weeks ago two men, Bud cans in hand, took a break from eating their specials to sing a rousing chorus of "Hallelujah, I'm a bum!"

Shirley, a Belltown resident, sums up the Rendezvous in one sentence: "Good food, cheap drinks, and an AA meeting every morning. I used to go there for AA," Shirley adds, "because I liked the atmosphere. It was pretty much the same group every morning, on

their way to work. It gets a bit rowdy in the afternoons, but it's calmed down a lot from what it used to be."

This is part of the paradox of the Rendezvous. Anitra Freeman describes it as "a place my grandfather would've loved. He ate meat and potatoes every day of his life." She grinned and added, "And he could have given a grand old biblical lecture about the bar."

I've searched high and low for good biscuits and gravy in Seattle; the Rendezvous will do. It was the special on a day our Editorial Committee met there. Stan Burriss ordered it, and then looked patently confused when his order appeared; he was by then convinced he hadn't ordered anything. The waitress, that day, was

enormously patient with Stan, and the rest of us were well pleased; we passed his plate around, dividing up his good fluffy biscuits, sausage gravy, and stick-of-butter hash browns.

My friend Jen used to order a Reuben every time we had lunch there seven years ago. Every time she'd tell the waitress to tell the cook the *exact* specifications of her sandwich. Jen still remembers the Rendezvous as the only place that'd make her pet sandwich right; the folks there are extremely gra-

cious with idiosyncratic behavior since they've obviously seen it all.

Wes Browning also ordered the Reuben during a recent visit, but without specifications, so he could compare it to other restaurants. We were impressed by the thickness of the sandwich and the tenderness of the corned beef, although Anitra thought the bread was a bit limp. When we went back again for breakfast, she was just as impressed by the portions, and just as picky about minor details.

At the end of her French toast breakfast, Anitra pushed back her plate, sighed, and sang the praises of her short stack. "And a good thing I ordered a short stack," she said, "since if I'd ordered a 'stack' you'd have to roll me out the door. But the bacon isn't perfect..." which led me to spend several minutes pondering what in hell perfect bacon even is. Don't get me wrong, I know what *bad* bacon is. But Anitra's bacon seemed fine to me. Anitra claims perfect bacon "can't be cooked short order. It takes patience."

The Rendezvous may not have the patience to cook "perfect" bacon, but it certainly has patience with eccentric customers. Our managing editor Adam Holdorf changed his order more times than the rest of us could count, but Delores brought him exactly what he had finally ordered, and remained pleasant through the whole ordeal.

Where else can you still get a liverwurst sandwich, and what a deal, for just \$3.75?!

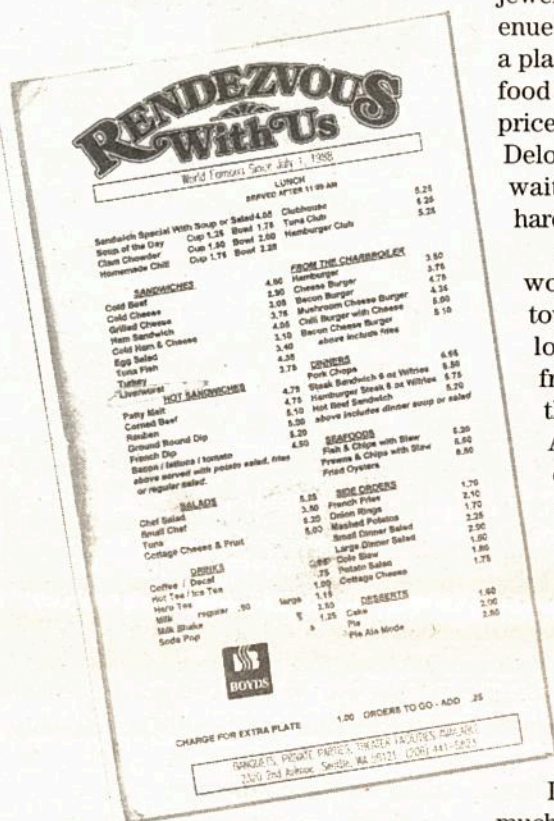
Where else would Dan Quayle be vindicated: "Mashed potatoes" sell as a side for just \$1.70, according to the menu.

The price of coffee may have gone up 50 cents on the New Year, but the price of a cheeseburger — \$3.75 — hasn't gone up for a decade. The Rendezvous is one of the last of the truly great Seattle diners. ■

Thanks to Anitra Freeman and Shirley Westbrooks for their help.

It's the Rendezvous Paradox: "Good food, cheap drinks, and an AA meeting every morning. I used to go there for AA because I liked the atmosphere."

Shirley Westbrooks, Belltown resident



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For an application, see our website at www.lihi.org, call (206) 443-9935, or stop by the office at 2407 First Ave., in the Belltown neighborhood of Seattle.

Attention Benevolent Bon Vivants!
Put Your Wine to Work for Us

A Real Change supporter recently won a high-class prize package: a six-month lease on a wine storage cellar at Esquin Wine Merchants, and four Riedel crystal chardonnay glasses.

We're auctioning it off!

Bidding will start at a measly \$300 for a package worth \$630. Your locker is tax-deductible. What a deal!

For more information or to place your bid, call (206) 441-8143, or email adamh@speakeasy.org



Landlords Unlock The Door

Mutual Interest eases move into permanent housing

By Mary Park

For a homeless person struggling to get back on his or her feet, sometimes the small issues loom the largest. Imagine that you've already beaten chemical dependency or domestic violence or simply a string of bad luck, and you're ready to move out of transitional housing. After weeks of searching, you find an acceptable apartment. At \$800 a month, it's not cheap, but that's the market rate in King County, and with your new job, you should be able to pay the rent. But the security deposit is another \$600. Add that to the first and last month's rent, and move-in costs can total well over \$2,000. Where on earth are you going to get that kind of money?

An innovative new non-profit organization wants to help low-income renters win this particular housing battle. Mutual Interest solicits donations from landlords who've benefited from King County's tight housing market, then distributes those funds to renters who need assistance with security deposits. By helping low-income people enter the housing market, landlords help tenants; in doing so, they help themselves.

It's no news to anyone that the Puget Sound area has a housing crisis. Even though job growth has slowed throughout the region, residential vacancies have fallen to their lowest point in three years — 3.8 percent, according to according to the fall 2000 report from Dupre+Scott Apartment Advisors. At the same time, Washington is losing subsidized housing at the eighth-fastest rate in the country, according to a 1998 National Housing Trust survey. It's a disastrous combination for low-income renters, even those with steady work.

"Move-in costs are one of the least-funded areas in housing assistance," says Keltie Wright, Mutual Interest's execu-

tive director. "The people we help have jobs, but to save up \$2,000 takes forever. It also puts a burden on transitional suppliers because people remain in transitional housing for longer. We remove the security deposit barrier, and we hope that speeds up the entire process."

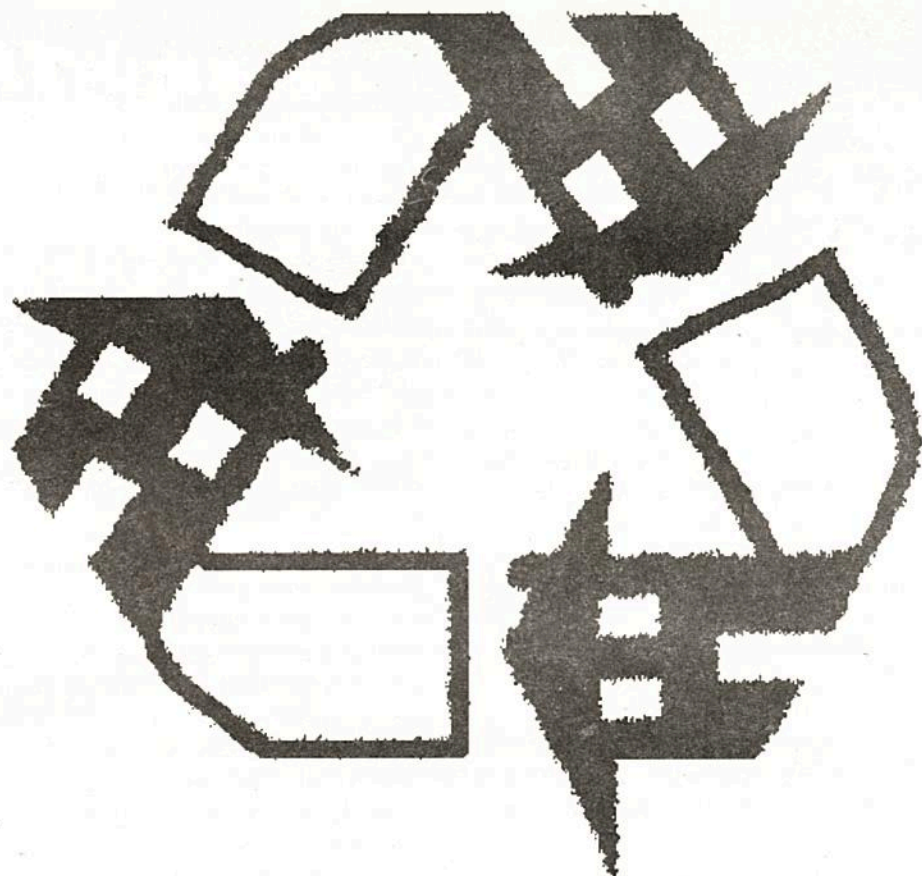
The brainchild of technology consultant Jennifer Gee, Mutual Interest was born from her own experience as a landlord. "When one of my housemates moved out, I thought that I had to return the interest from their security deposit, and it turned out that I didn't," she says. "At the same time, I was mentoring a guy in FareStart who was having trouble coming up with the money for a security deposit. My brain is the kind that just clicks in a situation like that."

Gee came up with the idea of having landlords donate the interest from their tenant's security deposits in order to help financially struggling renters with move-in costs. Together with a volunteer board of directors, she persuaded a number of area banks to periodically sweep the interest from participating landlords' security deposit escrow accounts. Next, Mutual Interest identified four existing housing agencies to handle and disburse that interest, in order to keep their own organiza-

tion focused on its mission, rather than create a new layer of social service bureaucracy. This fall, they hired executive director Keltie Wright.

Now, after more than two years of full-time, unpaid work on the project, Gee's efforts are about to come to fruition. At the beginning of this month, the first 50 tenants received security deposit assistance, thanks to Mutual Interest's efforts.

In the process, Mutual Interest had to refine their approach. The original



model encountered resistance from some members of AASK, the Apartment Association of Seattle & King County. Interest from security deposits is a hot-button political issue. Right now, unless a rental agreement states otherwise, that interest legally belongs to the landlord. Some landlords resist any implication that those funds are not theirs to keep. In addition, as executive director Jim Nell points out, more than 70 percent of AASK's members own fewer than 10 units. For these small landlords, tracking the interest from their security deposits is "a hassle from the bookkeeping standpoint."

As a result, Mutual Interest has broadened its focus to accept straight contributions as well; landlords can simply write a one-time check, with a suggested donation of \$10 per unit. "It's about the big picture," says Wright. "We're not interested in the political issues; we're interested in increasing access to housing."

In October, AASK endorsed Mutual Interest and asked its members to consider contributing to its fund. "We hope that they're very successful," Nell says. "Their mission benefits everyone, both landlords and tenants."

Many landlords share Nell's enthusiasm. In fact, three of Mutual Interest's board members are landlords themselves. "When peers talk to peers," Wright points out, "they're often more successful in encouraging others to contribute."

Board member (and landlord) Charlie Spaeth has worked with others in the real estate industry to solicit funds for Mutual Interest. Of course, "people are generally skeptical when someone asks them for money," he says. "It takes a lot of work and awareness and talking. As people get more comfortable with our mission, they often respond very well, even beyond our expectations."

"It's their opportunity to benefit the apartment industry," Wright adds. "Their support eases the impact of the strong rental market on those who can't afford that market."

In doing so, Mutual Interest has broken new ground. To her knowledge, says Gee, it's the first program of its kind in the nation. As a private sector initiative that requires neither legislation nor public funds, her idea has won support from some political figures who aren't ordinarily associated with homeless issues, including mayor Paul Schell.

"It's always good to let people do something for their community rather than to have it mandated by a state mechanism that they have to do something for their community," Gee says. "The state doesn't always do an efficient job with the money they handle."

Mutual Interest also has an innovative business model. Currently, 100 percent of the money landlords donate will go to their Security Deposit Assistance Fund, not institutional overhead; grants from foundations will cover operating costs. In the future, even that amount of outside funding won't be necessary. When tenants who have received aid move out, they'll receive a portion of the security deposit back as an incentive to help them keep their apartment in good condition. Another portion will cover Mutual Interest's operating costs, and the rest will revert to the fund. The goal is to become self-sustaining within several years.

As Nell notes, it's a winning situation for everyone involved. Tenants receive the help they need to move from transitional to permanent housing, and landlords get to give back to the renting community, opening access to the housing stock. At the same time, their efforts broaden the total base of potential tenants. Mutual Interest's name suggests what many already know: it's in everyone's benefit to make sure every man, woman, and child has a place to call home. ■

To learn more about Mutual Interest, or to make a contribution to its Security Deposit Assistance Fund, visit their web site (www.mutualinterest.org).



"When one of my housemates moved out, I [as the landlord] didn't have to return the interest from their security deposit. At the same time, I was mentoring a guy in FareStart who was having trouble coming up with a security deposit. My brain just clicked."

Jennifer Gee
Mutual Interest founder



WARNING: This is going to be one of the most diffuse, scattered columns I have ever written. I'm dealing with a concept I don't understand, because I've never had much concrete experience with it. I'm dealing with the concept of power.

So, Tonto, you'd like to make some changes around here, would you? Getting bored with all the picket fences? Want to break out and grow tomatoes, yams, and strawberries in the parking strip, do you, Tonto? Want to raise goats? Want to be the one who wears the mask instead

of the one who has to talk to it? Well, get in line, take an application form, and get ready to fill it out, and we'll get back to you in six months if we feel like it.

Sometimes when I get bored I like to multiply and divide numbers to see how big or little things are. Like the other day, when nothing was on the TV except Jerry Springer and infomercials for the Psychic Hotline, I got to wondering how big this country really is.

I mean, everyone knows the U.S. is 3,615,211 or so square miles, but what is that in square dog feet? I still don't know, but I found out another cool fact. I found out that if you divide that by the number of people they say we have, and if you know there are 640 acres in a square mile, you get more than eight acres.

Not having grown up on a farm, I immediately converted that answer to football fields, and got almost eight. The U.S. is so big that if you divided it up equally among all its adults and children, everyone would get almost eight football fields worth.

That tells me two things. First, that this country is a lot more crowded than it was in 1864. Back then General Sherman thought there was so much spare space that the freed slaves could all be given 38.72 football fields and a mule and nobody would hardly have to move over to make room. (The trick was to give them land covered with sand that nobody else wanted, and then take it back when nothing grew on it.)

The other thing it tells me is that the problem of homelessness is not that we've run out of places to put people.

No, it comes down to the same thing it came down to in 1864. Power.

People who have power saying that people who don't have power shouldn't be allowed it; it would upset the whole Natural Order of the Universe.

"You can't allow freed slaves to have land." "They never had any land before, they wouldn't know what to do with it." "How can people who only know how to steal chickens raise them?" "It wouldn't look right, have you seen the houses they live in? They're positively eyesores!" "Next thing is, they'll be wanting their children to be able to go to normal schools."

Et cetera. Every possible excuse except the one that gets to the point: "If you give them power, it's less power for me."

Let's see how this works on a smaller scale.

At first glance you would think that if El Centro de la Raza said that 100 or so homeless people could pitch tents on their land until Jan 16, 2001, that'd be the end of it, wouldn't it?

You'd be right, if El Centro de la Raza had the right to say what happens on El Centro de la Raza land. But in reality, nobody has the right to say what happens on their own land, because power isn't distributed that way.

Go ahead, try painting your house neon mauve, and see what happens.

Or try growing bamboo in your front yard. Or kudzu. That would be interesting, wouldn't it?

Interesting, but not within your power, Tonto. Your Neighborhood Association has some interesting ideas of its own, as does the Department of Construction and Land Use. Their interesting ideas usually involve something called Don't Rock the Boat.

Now if you'd just come in the middle of the night and put up something appealing, like a monolith reminiscent of the monoliths in Stanley Kubrick's "2001, a Space Odyssey," that would be different. That would be art, and this is a forward-looking, artistically sensitive community, which cares about not looking like a bunch of Philistines to the Rest of the World.

What does the Rest of the World have to do with it? Well, they have the power, not us. Didn't you know that, Tonto? ■

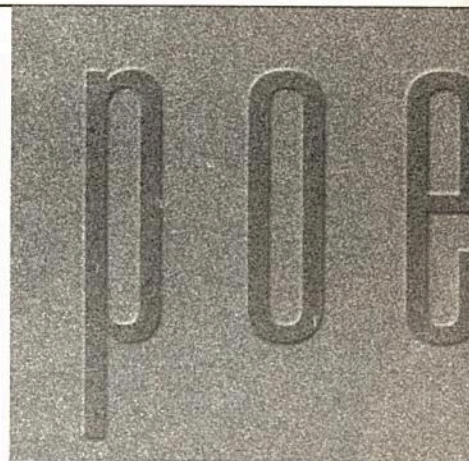
Betterspread

There are, in your
hand —
friends
Friends of your own... yours,
tomorrow.

At home tonight, raise that
light—
your own!—

The warm one.

—STAN BURRISS
[NOVEMBER 15TH 2000
CITY HALL RALLY]



Restaurants in China Town

Walking around Seattle's International District
at dinner time it is impossible
not to want to rush inside Canton Gates
and throw yourself on the mercy of the man
in a blood-stained apron
apparitional in a cloud of wok steam
Glimpsed through plate glass windows
every mouth is open
like a tunnel for the chopstick train
See the man lifting noodles like
a priest raising a baby over
the baptismal font
There are bok choy simmering
as lovers' fingers lick baby corn digits
and gaze into each others' eyes
Chinese restaurants are brothels for the mouth
Every sailor gets lucky in China Town
eating under pictures of the Great Wall
or in those cloud-hidden bread loaf
mountains
peeking through mists up which
solitary herd boys
drive big-horned oxen

—DAVID THORNBRUGH

Homeless vs. Sylvia Gillespie

I feel very odd, I have not entitled my self homeless with the loss of a roof.

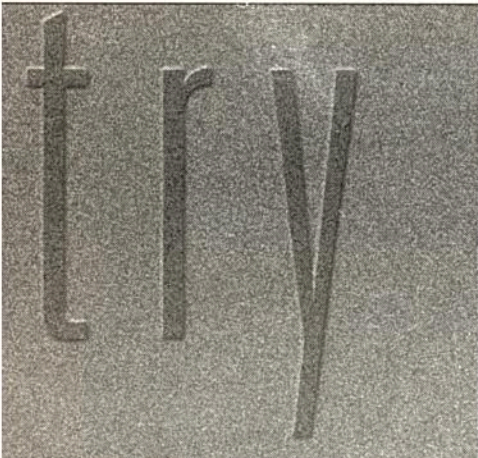
Homeless is not like Ph.D. at the end of my name. It's not the most important thing

I'm a woman, daughter, mother, veteran, fashion designer, poet, singer, songwriter, 5'7" and 188 lbs.

So if out of all those things my title is homeless, then homelessness must be for the
People whose personal achievements diminish and lose their value to entitle you

Well not me, mine was accomplished by my flesh, not my house. And I didn't lose it
started sleeping under the sky. Homelessness is a situation not a personal assess

Why don't they call everyone else the housed?



emembrance

Recently, we sat around the kitchen table,
finishing breakfast, we listened to the music
the Cree tape cassette with their high-pitched native voices
the singing and the rhythm of the tribal drumming
became the background to our conversation.
It dawned on me, she, still,
had the aliveness; not being maudlin, the shiny
wrinkle in her eyes. When she spoke
to me, now, had lines around her brown eyes
her eyes softened her look and her thin lips curved
into a smile laughing she told a story
of her childhood. Sometimes a person doesn't believe
their parents had life before them.
It is funny about relationships
and I still call her by her first name
my mother.
We were never close like television families;
we always knew there was caring
and love. However over the years, I've become distant
as a writer and somewhat
more observant
and a better poet. We, all, approach death
and begin to measure life
not only in ourselves
but others
as well. Life seems more precious in others.
She told me as a girl
when the Whipman visited: Discipline had to be meted out.
Not in a mean way but to remind you of the need
to be good and mind your ways.
The Whipman was a relative or close to the family.
She, again, related: she became more animated
with chores. He rode his horse down the grassy
hillside where now there is a wheat field
and you can see him. Her story makes me understand
my relatives more. I don't believe we have grown older
and I cannot write a good enough letter
to tell of my love for the family.

—EARLE THOMPSON

about me.
I am a black, democrat,
and I have a few
loved ones.
I know when I
am not.

Sylvia Gillespie

the punks of Broadway have a curious philosophy
bad behavior should be rewarded
flicking a lit cigarette butt at you one day
asking for a cigarette you could spare the week later
every junkie walking Broadway sees me as
the king of Camels
a machine for dispensing cigarettes
get a job and buy your own pack of cigarettes!
the shit that really kills me though,
is this myth of the Brotherhood
say brothers,
cut the crap
the short fat ugly bastards
feeding off you like ghouls
the rule of thumb is that Bissell is dumb
he doesn't know it though,
and that's how come
he's good for a smoke
he's not the short fat ugly bastard you thought he was
he's my brother
the brotherhood is only skin deep
the brothers have taken over the asylum
and rolled a great big cigarette with Bissell's flesh
brothers of the Broadway District
unite!
and smoke these cigarettes into the dark cold
November night

—PATRICK BISSELL

POVERTY

Day in day out I am always suffering
No permanent place to sleep
Hunger, hunger my stomach complains
The mouth always dry
Bins are the sources of my food
Clothes are tattered and torn
When I cry for help , no one come to my rescue

Everyday I am always shouting
Begging in the city centre streets
Where the riches do their shopping
Sometimes I don't because of weakness and hunger
They always scold me and neglect me

I walk barefooted
My teeth always dirt
My hair scruffy
No toothpaste and soap available
I use water from public places

My fellows go to school
Whilst I am busy walking in the streets
My relatives denied me
I am an orphan
I have no one to care for me

When I seek help from churches
They say we have no money
Public places are the source of water
I hope one day in my life
God will rescue me
From this bondage of poverty

—HANDSEN CHIKOWORE

Betterspread

There are, in your
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Friends of your own... yours,
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At home tonight, raise that
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The warm one.

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as lovers' fingers lick baby corn digits
and gaze into each others' eyes
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Why don't they call everyone else the housed?

—SYLVIA GILLESPIE

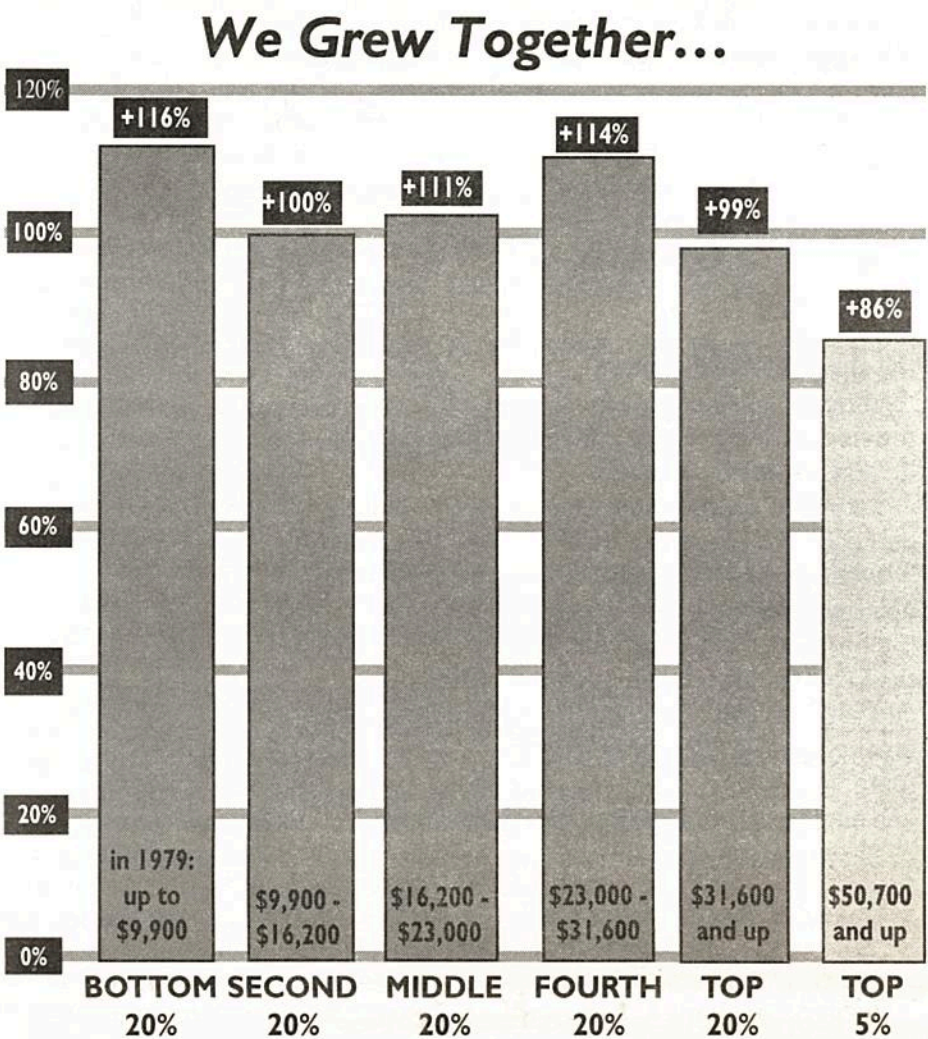


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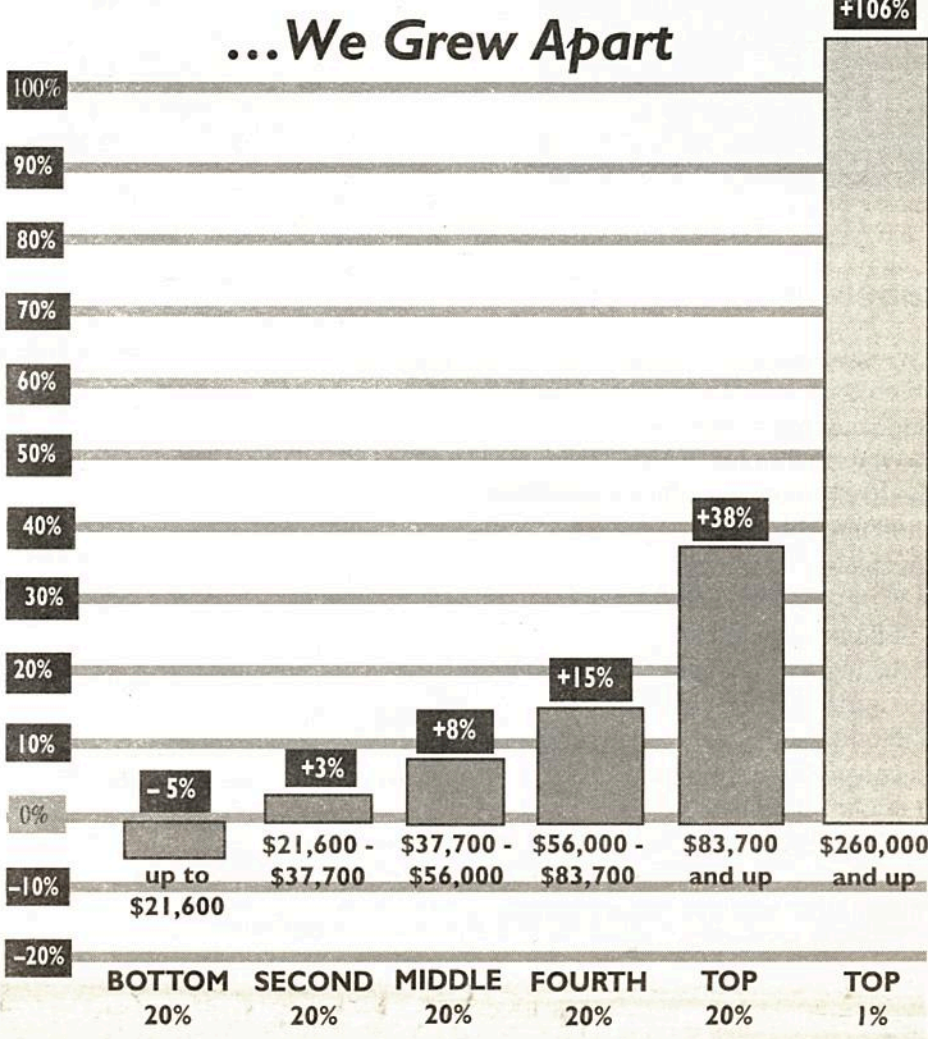
—EARLE THOMPSON

1947 to 1979 – Real Family Income Growth by Quintile & for Top 5%



Sources: Analysis of Census Bureau data from Mishel, Lawrence and Bernstein, Jared, *The State of Working America 1994-95*, p. 37. Income ranges in 1979 dollars, from March 1999 Census Current Population Survey, Table F-1.

1979 to 1998 – Real Family Income Growth by Quintile & for Top 1%



Sources: Quintiles Change and Ranges: March 1999 Census Current Population Survey, Table F-3. Income ranges in 1998 dollars. Calculation of Top 1% Change: 1979-89: 87.5% increase from Mishel et al., *The State of Working America 1996-97*. 1989-96: 10% increase from Mishel et al., *The State of Working America 1998-99*. Top 1% Income Threshold: In 1995 dollars from Federal Reserve Bank Survey of Consumer Finances data analyzed by Edward N. Wolff, January 1999. Adjusted to 1998 dollars using CPI-U.

ALL GRAPHS COURTESY OF UNITED FOR A FAIR ECONOMY.

COLLINS Continued from Page 1

It's really a form of social control.

When there is more of an economic slowdown, the mask will be pulled back and people will wake up and say, "Oh, I'm in the new economy now. I have \$20,000 in consumer debt, and 60 percent of my income is going to housing costs." The message of the new economy is "You're on your own," when in fact we're *not* alone. We have to organize to protect our interests and protect ourselves.

RC: In your introduction, you mention that *Economic Apartheid* is "not written against rich people," but that the rich have a special responsibility where their wealth is concerned. What kind of responsibility are you referring to?

Collins: Our premise is that this economy is bad for everybody, even people who are wealthy. It's bad for them for different reasons. It contributes to a polarization of society that's not good for anybody.

A lot of wealthy people, in my experience, buy into the myth of meritocracy: "I'm here because of some skill or ability of my own. I'm successful because of my own wits."

RC: Isn't that sometimes true?

Collins: It is sometimes true, but it's important to look at one's own effort along with privilege, luck, and God's grace. Your own ability is only one factor in success. If these people were really honest, they would own up to the forces that are beyond their control. It's not that some people are working harder than others, or that some people are being smarter than others. There's just a power imbalance: the winners get more, and everybody else gets less. Some people's contributions are overvalued, and other people's hard work is undervalued.

Responsible Wealth kept doing programs for religious and civic groups, where we would talk about the impact of inequality, and people would come up to us afterward and say, "You know, I'm actually in the richest 1 percent and I'm with you. I see the dangers of inequality, I see how it's going to backfire. I have children and grandchildren who have to go out into the world in a polarized society, and I see that that's not the kind of country or world I want to live in."

Then it's [these peoples'] responsibility to make sure the rules are fair: tax policy, living wages, and making sure that corporations are accountable. It's not a mandate for charity, it's a mandate to work for a just economy. Giving can be part of it. But charity and

philanthropy are not the answer, it's just a part of how you change the rules.

RC: In a section of your book entitled "*The Wealth Holders*," you make reference to our local billionaire, Bill Gates, and point out that between 1996 and 1999, Gates' personal wealth went from \$18 billion to over \$85 billion dollars, and that his personal wealth now exceeds the combined wealth of the bottom 45 percent of the U.S. population.

What would you say to the argument that people like Gates have simply demonstrated their acumen in their field, and that not only are they entitled to their wealth, but we should be grateful that they have all this money to hand out to good local and international causes?

Collins: I think that his contribution is significant, and his own labor and time is significant. His charitable acts are righteous and good.

That said, his contribution is overvalued. There are lots and lots of people working at all levels of society who are also making significant contributions. People who teach at a local high school, the nurse at the local hospital, the researcher working on a cure for cancer or AIDS, [and] the parent who raises a child so that they have self-respect. There's other work in the world that is so under-

valued and his share is overvalued.

Some people would say that we should never tax away or regulate someone like Gates, but then you have to ask what happens when there's that much concentration of power. Should anybody have such an enormous claim on the wealth of the society? My answer is no. There is a limit. Do we wait until the richest 1 percent of the population has more wealth than the bottom 90 percent combined?

Also, there's so much focus on "fixing the poor." Problems are phrased in terms of "Let's fix people in the bottom fifth of our society." I would say that a lot of our social problems are actually rooted in an overconcentration of wealth and power.

RC: Your book describes the social and familial breakdown that accompanies longer work hours and the increasingly rapid pace of our work lives. You've said that overwork feeds the breakdown of civil society, and results in more economic inequality, which, in turn, perpetuates more overwork. Can you elaborate a bit more on this cycle?

Collins: There's a sort of speed-up in the workplace: people are working more hours or they're working with fewer boundaries — always on call, and that kind of thing. It means they have less

time to go to a meeting to deal with affordable housing. They can't get involved to protect their interests.

That vacuum [in civic life] is then filled by corporate interests who are very interested in shaping the rules of the economy to serve their view of the world: deregulate, cut wages, reduce environmental standards, push global trade treaties... and then inequality worsens. That's the cycle.

The solution is the reverse of that. You find ways to build civic organizations to defend people and break the influence between big money and our democracy, so that the rules stop getting changed in a way that worsens inequality. That's one of the challenges of this particular political movement: The very people who are most affected are struggling to survive and don't have time to participate in civic life.

It raises the more basic question of what kind of society we want to live in. What is our purpose here? One of the core religious teachings is that the economy is a human construct that should serve people, not that people should serve the economy.

We can organize our economy around spending time with one another, so that we can be stewards, and care for the young and the elderly. That could be the paramount value around which we organize our economy, which it isn't right now.



CHUCK COLLINS IS THE CO-FOUNDER OF BOTH UNITED FOR A FAIR ECONOMY (UFE) AND RESPONSIBLE WEALTH, ABOUT AMERICA'S OWN KIND OF ECONOMIC APARTHEID. PHOTO OF COLLINS COURTESY OF UFE.

People talk about the market as if it were a god — as if it were a god that we must appease! But the market is a human construct. It's shaped by values and a system of rules, and we can change it. ■

Contact United for a Fair Economy at info@ufenet.org or 37 Temple Pl., 2nd Floor, Boston, MA 02111. Tel: (617) 423-0191. You can also find UFE online at <http://www.ufenet.org>.

Powershift

Economic Apartheid in America: a Primer on Economic Inequality and Insecurity
By Chuck Collins and Felice Yeskel
United for a Fair Economy, 2000
\$16.95

Review By S. Naomi Finkelstein

The economy is a mystified abstraction, yet like the air we breathe, it's all around us. We have had our fill of talk about the last decade's economic boon. Yet despite that prosperity, there is a growing wealth divide in this country.

In "Economic Apartheid in America," Felice Yeskel and Chuck Collins do a great job of throwing light on the growing inequality. The book is an essential reference tool for those wishing to debunk current economic myths and work toward economic change.

With charts, graphs, and illustrations, it puts a highly complicated matter back into practical, common-sense language. Yeskel and Collins show us who's got the cash and the power and how they got it. When discussing the income divide, they provide concrete examples that make the abstract demonstrable: the top one percent of income earners receives 50.4 percent of the national income, which is more than the poorest 100 million people combined. CEOs make 419 times what the average factory worker makes. The wealthiest ten percent of U.S. citizens own 73 percent of the nation's wealth; the rest of us own 27 percent.

The shift of power, they write, took place over the last thirty years, as unions and political movements lost ground to corporate lobbyists, CEOs, multinational corporations and Wall Street. Corporate interests wielded their power to block health care reform, for example, even though most Americans have supported for over a decade. As Yeskel and Collins point out how big campaign contributors now drown out the individual voter's voice, "Economic Apartheid" points out the danger to our democracy.

Then there's the specter of a globalizing economy run by transnational corporations. Yeskel and Collins take time to concisely and plainly explain what the Federal Reserve is, and how it reaches beyond the U.S. to set monetary policy abroad. NAFTA and the WTO are dis-

cussed and fit into a context of deepening inequities.

In the face of the new economy, Yeskel and Collins call for grassroots education, direct and creative action, coalition building, and an independent media to get the word out. The authors' agenda calls for "rebuilding worker's power" and "reining in corporate power" — reducing the influence of money in politics, changing Federal Reserve monetary policy, building a fair tax system, and making global trade fair.

The Big But...

As the top five indicators of economic hard times, the book lists lack of savings, rising college costs, lack of leisure time, fewer households

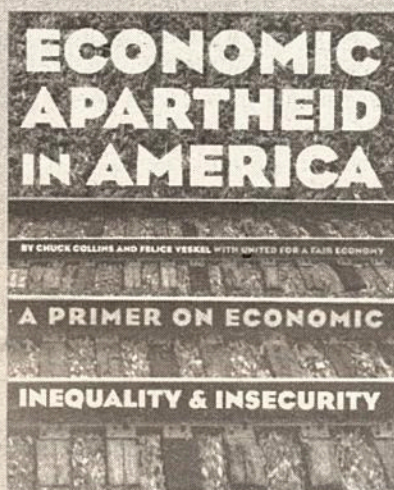
with health insurance, and a growing number of temporary jobs. I was shocked to see these indicators. Preferring to find common cause with the working and middle classes, "Economic Apartheid" overlooks the pressures on the poorest of us.

The book does not mention rising hun-

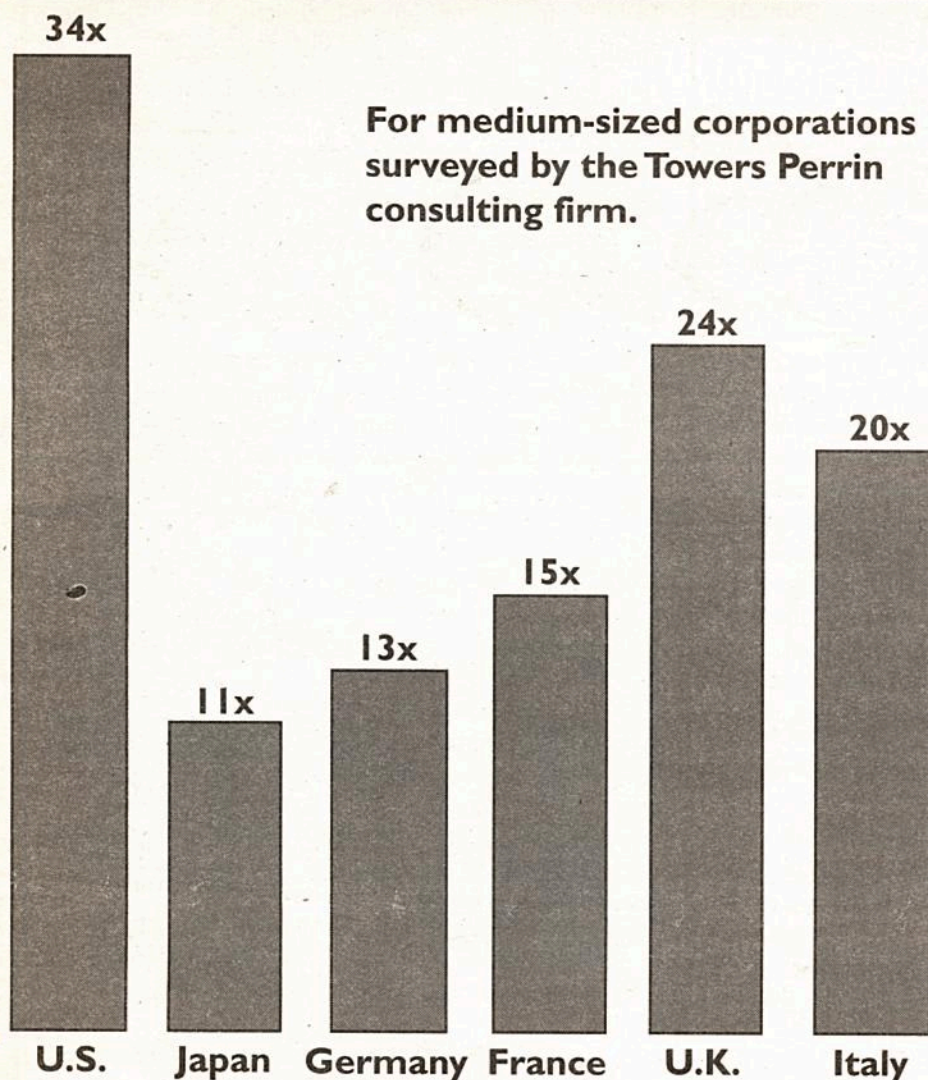
ger and homelessness. Nor does it directly address the politics of dismantling the social safety net, and how, consequently, people must rely on charity from the wealthy — a form of control that leaves poor women, children and disabled people particularly vulnerable. While it criticizes the rising cost of college, it does not speak to those of us who can not even get our kids into a decent primary school.

To their credit, Yeskel and Collins' approach unites us with one another across great gaps in income and class status and lead us to work against the real problem of the wealthiest few and corporate power instead of fighting with one another. They are out to sell it to people in Peoria, focus on what is fair, believing that the working class and middle class might not otherwise join with others to change the system.

This is a powerful approach, but it would only be made more powerful by including the agendas of the poorest of us. I just don't trust that any economic rights agenda will "trickle down" and make our lives better. But I still say go out and get "Economic Apartheid." It is, without a doubt, a useful and essential reference book. ■



The Wage Gap Around the World in 1999



For medium-sized corporations surveyed by the Towers Perrin consulting firm.

Source: Towers Perrin, *Worldwide Total Remuneration*, November 1999. The survey covered corporations with sales of between \$250 million and \$500 million and compared CEO pay to manufacturing worker pay, which is about 30% higher than the "average worker pay" used in the BusinessWeek data found in Chart 11.

NOTES FROM THE KITCHEN

Humble Soup and Exalted Music

By Liz Smith

Grand opera is like heaven. Everyone sings all the time, the scenery is perfection, and nobody needs to eat. Maybe you are an opera hater, thinking it's an endless procession of sopranos singing at the top of their substantial lungs.

That isn't the way it is, though.

Opera is like real life. There are women being unfaithful to their boyfriends in "Così Fan Tutte." In *The Child and the Sorceress*, a little boy has a nightmare and calls out for his mother. We see, in *Rigoletto*, wealthy men toying with the affections of poor girls. In Act IV they sing all about it in one of the most lyrical and beautiful quartets ever written.

Then there is Puccini's "La Bohème," set in Paris, sung in Italian. It is the quintessential opera about poor people: nobody has any money, and the main characters are artists who live in a bleak, cold garret. In the last act, poor Mimi is dying. Colline, a philosopher and all-around nice guy, sings a farewell song to his beloved overcoat and then takes it away to sell in order to buy her medicine. In the final scene all the friends are reassembled in the garret. Suddenly they are silent; the orchestra sounds a tragic note. Rodolfo, the boyfriend, holds Mimi and sobs her name, but she no longer hears — she is dead.

Let's see: poor people, slumlords, pawn shops, substandard housing, no health care, no heat. Just like real life, only with better music.

Puccini, in writing this opera, drew from his own days as a poor student studying music in Milan. His landlady did not allow cooking in any of her garrets, and he had to sneak wood and groceries up the back stairs to make his own dinner, such as the soup that follows.

The soup in today's column is simple and Italian. It is garnished with grated parmigiano-reggiano cheese. You don't need a lot, but the cheese makes all the difference.

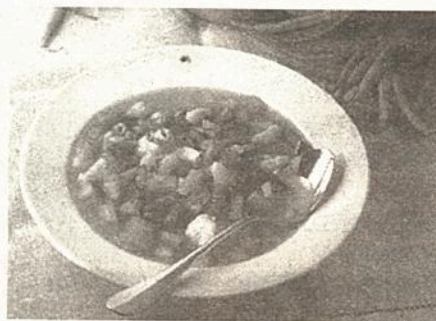
When buying your cheese, be aware that it can run up to \$14.99 a pound, but at Thriftway, Larry's Markets, and the PCC stores it is \$10 a pound. Try to find a piece of cheese with the least amount of rind on it, so you get your money's worth. And don't use that stuff in the can, it's not good.

Italian Soup

makes approximately 9 cups

2 cups dried Great Northern beans
1 medium onion, chilled
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 sprig fresh rosemary
1 1/2 cups celery, finely chopped
1 1/2 cups carrots, finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, finely minced
3-4 tsp. finely minced Italian flat leaf parsley
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon sage
salt and pepper
1/1 2 cups ditalini or other small tubular pasta
1/2 pound parmigiano-reggiano cheese



ITALIAN SOUP FOR THE SOUL.

1. The night before making the soup, sort through, rinse, and soak beans in cold water. Peel the onion and put in refrigerator. This makes the onion sting less when you chop it up.
2. When you are making the soup, make sure all the beans have absorbed water. If not, drain, pour boiling hot water on them, and let sit one hour or as needed. Chop the onion into small pieces.
3. Gently heat the olive oil in a big soup pot, and add the fresh rosemary. Let the oil absorb the rosemary essence for a few minutes. Set the rosemary aside.
4. Add the onion to the pot, sauté on medium-low heat for a few minutes. Add the celery, carrots, and garlic. Stir and cook for 10-15 minutes to develop the flavor.
5. Drain the beans, put in soup pot, and cover with fresh cold water. Bring to a boil, then turn heat down to a low simmer. Put the rosemary back in, along with the bay leaves. Stir in the sage, minced parsley, and one teaspoon each salt and pepper.
6. Let the soup cook one hour, stirring occasionally, then remove rosemary and bay leaves.
7. When the soup is fully cooked and everything is very tender, taste it and add salt or pepper if needed. Heat soup bowls with hot water. Grate cheese.
8. Crank soup up to a full boil. Stir up, and while stirring, drizzle in the pasta gradually, so that the temperature is hot enough. Cook pasta in rapidly simmering soup — stirring constantly, or soup will burn.
9. Take off heat when pasta is *al dente*. Dry soup bowls, ladle out soup, and garnish with cheese.

This would be good accompanied by a roasted chicken, crunchy peasant bread, and a romaine lettuce salad tossed with a red wine vinegar vinaigrette. ■

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Thursday Dec. 21, 21 and E. Madison St., 3:38 p.m. Officers on patrol noticed a homeless white male, age 31, standing on the sidewalk drinking a can of beer. As officers approached him, he attempted to hide the beer inside his coat. The officer asked him to remove the beer from his coat, and the man refused, saying he had no beer. Suspect was instructed to place his hands on the hood of the patrol car, and the officer removed a 22 oz. can of Mickey's from his coat. He was then patted down for weapons, and a 7.5-inch fixed-blade knife was removed from his pants pocket. The suspect said he had been ripped off earlier that day, and needed the knife for protection. He was placed into custody for drinking in public and having a concealed weapon.

Saturday Dec. 23, Virginia St., 1:30 p.m. Officers responded to a 911 call from a citizen who found a 28-year-old homeless white male behind his apartment building. The man was drooling, bleeding from the nose, and cold to the touch. Seattle Fire Department arrived at the scene, and confirmed that the man was dead.

Sunday Dec. 24, Pike Street, 10:28 p.m. Officers responded on the report of an assault. The victim, a 23-year-old homeless male, was extremely intoxicated, and could barely speak. All the officer could obtain from him was that he had been playing checkers with two Hispanic males in a hallway in the market building. The two males became upset with the game, beat up the victim, and fled the area. He was treated at the scene for bruising, and transported to Harborview Medical Center for further treatment.

Sunday Dec. 24, 4th Ave. Union 76 gas station parking lot, 1:51 a.m. Police were dispatched to a robbery complaint. The victim, a 40-year-old homeless female, had been driving in a car with two male acquaintances, and had stopped at the gas station. She got out of the car, and one of the males struck her once in the lower back with a stick. The men then took off in the vehicle. The suspects are still at large.

Monday Dec. 25, Sidewalk of 100 block of Fourth Ave., 9:04 p.m. Police received a call of a man down. Officers arrived to find the victim lying on the ground semi-conscious, face down in a pool of blood and vomit. The Seattle Fire Department was called to treat his injuries. A trail of blood and vomit led to a nearby stairwell - there the trail ended. There were no witnesses to the event, and police were unable to elicit any information from the victim in his current state. A search of his backpack failed to turn up any ID. The victim was transported to Harborview for further treatment. ■

Streetwatch is compiled from Seattle Police Department incident reports by Emma Quinn. Do you have your own story to tell? Call Real Change, (206)441-8143, and we'll get the scoop.

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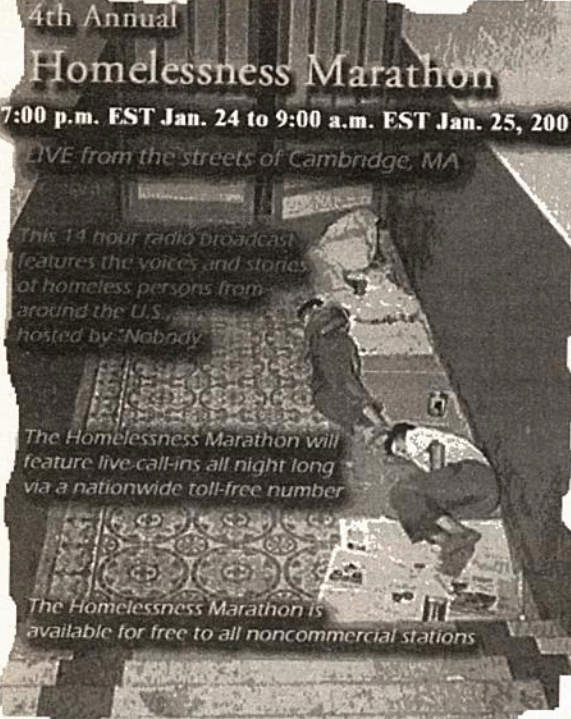
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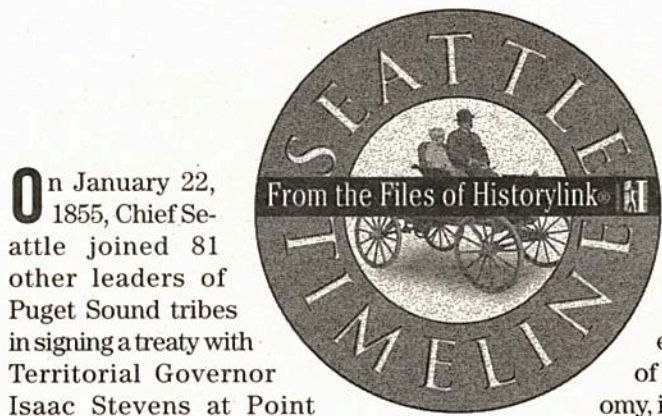
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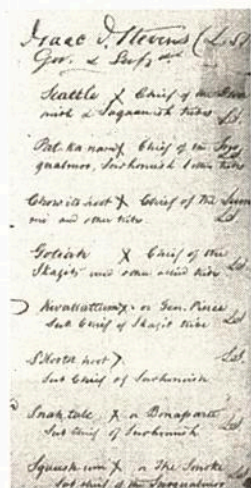
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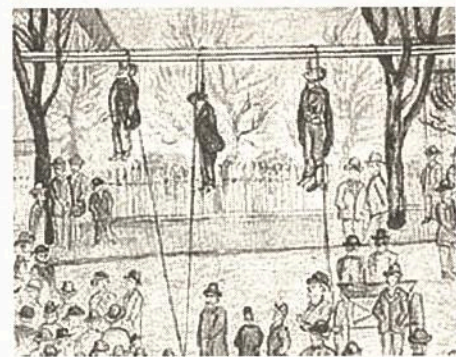
On January 22, 1855, Chief Seattle joined 81 other leaders of Puget Sound tribes in signing a treaty with Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens at Point



GOVERNOR ISAAC STEVENSON'S NAME JOINS THOSE OF THE AREAS' CHIEFS IN AN AGREEMENT TO TAKE OVER THE NATIVE-AMERICAN LAND.

Hansville on the Kitsap Peninsula).

A mob of Seattleites lynched three men on January 17, 1882. Two of them, James Sullivan and William Howard, had just been arraigned for robbing and fatally wounding busi-



A CARTOON OF THE 1882 LYNCHING.

nessman George B. Reynolds. The third victim, prisoner Benjamin Payne, was a suspect in the killing of Seattle police officer David Sires earlier that fall. Payne cried out to the mob, "You hang me, and you will hang an innocent man."

The mob hanged the men in trees on the north side of James Street between Front Street (1st Avenue) and 2nd Avenue. The scantlings, the boards between the two trees used to lynch the suspects, remained in the trees until the spring of 1889 as a warning to future criminals. No one was ever arrested for the lynchings.

Women regained the right to vote on January 16, 1888, by an act of the territorial legislature. Women constituted 38 percent of the electorate, and they had strong support among legislators for whom they had voted. Nevertheless, the legislature paid heed to anti-

suffragists' arguments that women should not serve on juries with men, because they would be exposed to discussions of sordid acts such as sodomy, incest, and rape. Women were no longer appointed to juries.

Elliott (now Mukilteo). Tribes including the Duwamish and Suquamish surrendered their lands for cash, relocation to reservations, and access to traditional fishing and hunting grounds. Four days later, tribal leaders from Hood Canal and the upper Puget Sound area signed a similar agreement at Point No-Point (near

On January 23, 1939, D.L. Underwood, a Democratic state legislator, criticized the University of Washington for hiring Economics professor Harold J. Laski, a British Marxist, as a visiting lecturer. Underwood called for an immediate investigation by the U.S. House of Representatives into "Communist activities" at the University and "to determine if the legislature can prevent state-supported schools from hiring Communistically inclined speakers or professors." He declared, "I am dead against the University going out of its way to employ foreigners who preach anti-Americanism." Laski had published an article in *The Nation* entitled "Why I Am a Marxist."

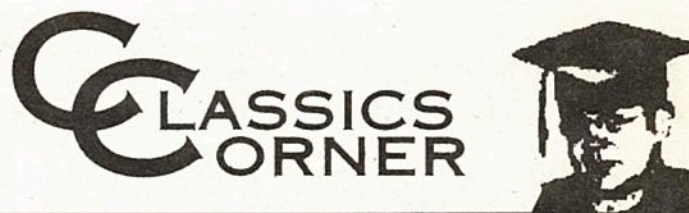
The Boeing Airplane Company hired its first African American employee, stenographer Florise Spearman, in January 1942. In April, the firm hired its first black production worker, sheet metal worker Dorothy West Williams. By July 1943, Boeing had 329 African American employees, of whom 86 percent were women. At its wartime peak, Boeing employed 1,600 black workers. ■

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.



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by Perfess'r Harris

Apparently, we now have a President who thinks government should care for the rich while the church attends to the poor. If recent events are any guide, the Supreme Court will agree. At times like this, when power lies naked next to justice and there seems no end to what the American people will accept, we at Classics Corner turn to Carl Sandburg's epic poem *The People, Yes*, and our hope in humankind is restored. We then sip our tea, bide our time, and calmly wait for the giant to awake.

What does justice say?
or if justice has become an abstraction or a harlot
what does her harder sister, necessity, say?
Their ears are so far from us,
so far from our wants and small belongings
we must trim these kings of our time
into something less than kings.
Of these too it will be written:
These kings shrank.

We at Classics Corner have much more faith in hope and necessity than in justice itself. Justice is too easily hijacked by any interest that can afford a judge. We are disturbed by its apparent mutability. To hope for justice feels like an ineffective prayer, sort of like hoping for sunshine or rain. We don't know what it means anymore to "believe in justice." We've decided to place our faith in necessity, and hope that justice will loyally follow.

We owe much of our newfound clarity on matters of justice and necessity to Thucydides, the Athenian general who wrote the *History of the Peloponnesian War* and gave us the only record we have of Diodotus, son of Eucrates. Diodotus enters history in 427 B.C., just long enough to rescue the Mytilenians, a people who rebelled from the Athenian empire and lost, from genocidal massacre.

Classicists have spilt barrel upon barrel of pedantic ink on the Mytilene debate, and the usual interpretation is that Cleon, arguing from justice, demands slaughter, while Diodotus, arguing from necessity, calls for leniency. Justice is not the issue, says Diodotus. In politics, we should consider only what is useful. The irony is that Diodotus, in rejecting revenge and embracing self-interest, arrives at the more just alternative. His argument narrowly carries the assembly, and the Mytilenians are saved.

In the process, Diodotus distills political motivation down to its purest elements: Poverty, he says, gives us the courage of necessity. Plenty, on the other hand, creates the ambition that comes of insolence and pride. Greed, he says, conceives of new needs and generates the hope of success that follows.

We do not know whether greed creates hope or hope greed. The problem reminds us of Sandburg's question of which comes first: the bullet or the hole? Yet we do believe that necessity, "the harder sister of justice," creates a hope of her own. This is the story of the world. The hope born of courage and necessity competes with the hope that runs with greed and pride. While justice tends to align with the rich, we should never underestimate the power of necessity. That's where our hope must reside. ■

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January Notables

Saturday, 1/13

An all-ages **Martin Luther King Day Hip Hop Show**, an all-ages event organized by area young people with Seattle Young People's Project, Students for A Just Society, and Martin Luther King Celebration Committee, groups committed to furthering the unfinished work of the nation's most famous pacifist. 7:30 p.m.-midnight, Rainier Beach Performing Arts Center, 8815 Seward Park Ave. S. \$3 admission; info 206-860-9606.

Monday, 1/15

City-wide **Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration**, with workshops, rally, and march, asking to "Reform the Criminal Justice System Now!" Workshops begin 9:30 a.m. at Garfield High School, 400-23rd Ave. E.; Rally begins at 11 a.m., march passes by the King County Jail and the Juvenile Detention Center. Info: MLK Celebration Committee, 206-989-5070.

Tuesday, 1/16

The **Safe Schools Coalition meeting**, a public-private partnership of 91 organizations (government agencies, schools, community agencies, churches, youth/student groups, gay/lesbian groups, human rights groups) and 400+ individuals working to help Washington State schools become safe places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, all are welcome, you do not need to be a member, 4-6 p.m., this and subsequent 3 Tuesdays, at University Friends Meeting House, 4001 9 Ave. NE, info <http://www.safeschools-wa.org>

Wednesday, 1/17

Everyone who opposes the lack of democracy in the November election is invited to come and participate in the January 20th Coalition planning a demonstration on January 20, 1 p.m., help us kick off four years of struggle against Bush's conservative politics, 7-9 p.m., at CAMP, 722 18th Ave. at Columbia, info 206-292-8809.

Thursday, 1/18

Meeting of International Women's Day Planning committee, 8 a.m., at Crocodile Cafe, 2 & Blanchard in Belltown, info Carol Hoyt 206-328-9637 or <http://www.scn.org/basecamp/iwd>

A **Lecture by Professor Deborah Lipstadt, "Denying the Holocaust: Perspectives from a British Courtroom."** Deborah Lipstadt and her British publisher, Penguin Books, won the case against David Irving, a British Holocaust Denier, in a trial that made headlines around the world. Despite England's draconian libel laws, Lipstadt and Penguin not only won resoundingly, but also exposed deniers, who distort 20th century history in order to promote 21st century antisemitism and white supremacy. Deborah Lipstadt is a professor at Emory University; info 206-441-5747 or info@wsherc.org or <http://www.wsherc.org> or <http://www.holocaustdenialtrial.org>

Friday, 1/19

Candle-light vigil to "Make Democracy Count!" on the eve of the inauguration to the not-elected president, sponsored by the January 20th Coalition, 5-7 p.m., at Federal Courthouse, 5th and Madison, info 206-292-8809.

Saturday, 1/20

Protest the Inauguration of the next President, not elected by the people, Protest to defend democracy! Challenge the legitimacy of the installation of Bush by a slim majority of conservative Supreme Court Justices. The actions of the Supreme Court have undermined our voting rights and threaten other civil rights, noon-3 p.m., at Westlake Park, near 4th and Pine, info rvarren@speakeasy.org

A gathering to protest the stealing of the presidency by Bush, in which citizens can speak their minds and can contact like-minded citizens for future activity, e.g. when Bush nominates his first Supreme Court appointee, people are encouraged to bring candles for a parade downtown, 4 p.m., in Volunteer Park, info lesgrin@yahoo.com

Sunday, 1/21

Meeting of Seattle Chapter Fellowship of Reconciliation with Kevin Glackin-Coley on "What Should We Do with People Who Break the Law?" A talk about the victim-offender reconciliation, the prison system, the death penalty, and efforts to make changes, 5 p.m. potluck, 6 p.m. announcements, 6:30 program, at Woodland Park Presbyterian Church, 225 N 70 near Greenwood, info 206-789-5565.

Joy and Justice Community Lectures, a weekly lecture/discussion community whose goal is to provide a public forum of education, advocacy, networking, and action, presents David Korten, author of "When Corporations Rule The World," speaking on globalization and the need to form communities of resistance, \$5 donation requested, 7 p.m., at Trinity United Methodist Church, 6512 23 Ave. NW, info Rich Lang 206-784-2227 or oddrev@juno.com

Tuesday, 1/23

Meeting of Foundation for Global Community, which contributes to a transformation of cultural values, a transformation from the dominant culture of growth to a culture of enough, of quality and excellence, all interested individuals welcome, this and subsequent 4th Tuesdays, various locations, info on local events Jerry Martin 425-746-7304 or martins@televar.com, info on national organization <http://www.globalcommunity.org>

Monday, 2/19

Have a Heart for Kids Day is the Children's Alliance's annual advocacy day at the state Capitol, featuring activities for adults and youth in the morning, the "Step Up for Human Services" rally on the capitol steps at noon, and lobbying legislators in the afternoon. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. For more information, contact Jon Gould at (206) 324-0340 x19 or jon@childrensalliance.org.

Ongoing Mondays

A **Freedom Socialist Party public discussion group on "Souls of Black Folk,"** by W.E.B. DuBois, free, everyone welcome, 7-9 p.m., at Seattle Central Community

College, Broadway & Pine, Room 2115, info Doreen McGrath 206-725-5434.

Ongoing Tuesdays

Meeting of Youth Against Corporate Exploitation Worldwide, an amazing group dealing with quite an assortment of issues to be determined by whoever shows up for meetings, 5:30 p.m., at Seattle Young People's Project, 123 21 Ave, 1/2 block North of Yesler, across the street from New Hope Baptist Church.

Ongoing Wednesdays

Dances of Universal Peace, 7:30 p.m., at Keystone Church, on Keystone Ave. N just north of 50th in Wallingford, info <http://www.teleport.com/~indup/>

Ongoing Fridays

Weekly social/political/economic discussion based on the "Revolutionary Worker" weekly newspaper, topics include many important political questions of the day that impact us nationally as well as internationally, 6:30-8 p.m., at Revolution Books, 1833 Nagle Place, one block east of Broadway and Denny, info 206-325-7415.

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>

Ongoing Daily

New Greens Discussion List, this list has been established to help facilitate Green Party Progress throughout the US in the year 2001; a place to share your ideas and experiences with regards to advancing third party politics and Green values in your communities. Pose relevant Green Party questions, info, announcements, suggest forums, and working groups that could be implemented and duplicated around the US, info <http://www.egroups.com/group/GreenParty2001>

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Put Some Teeth in Landlord/Tenant Law

Issue: On January 17, the Seattle City Council will decide whether or not to protect tenants who are looking to organize and improve their living conditions against retaliation from their landlords.

Background: While Seattle is the only city in Washington state that banned "no cause" evictions, tenants in the city still live with the fear of retaliation, keeping them from asserting their legal rights to get their basic needs met. Tenants also regularly face retaliation when they do assert their legal rights. Current legislation is not adequate in preventing retaliation or providing appropriate consequences when retaliation occurs.

The proposed ordinance would better protect tenants in some of the following ways:

- Add civil penalties to existing criminal penalties, making it illegal to not only enter a tenant's home without warning, but also to increase rents or evict a tenant in response to requests for home improvements or tenant organizing. Civil violations are also easier to prove than criminal violations.
- Give tenants the right to organize with their neighbors for decent and affordable housing — including distributing leaflets, holding tenant meetings and posting notices — without fear of retaliation in the form of rent increases or eviction.
- Give the Department of Design, Construction and Land Use the authority to penalize a landlord if he should retaliate against a tenant after the tenant has made a formal complaint.
- Give the tenant who has been retaliated against the right to sue the landlord for damages.

Action: The Seattle City Council's Landlord/Tenant and Land Use committee will hold a public hearing on the proposed ordinance on Wednesday, January 17, starting at 5:30 p.m., on the 11th floor of the Municipal Building (600 Fourth Avenue).

A copy of the bill can be requested via email to jill.berkey@ci.seattle.wa.us, via phone at (206) 684-8806, or in person at the City Council reception desk, 600 Fourth Avenue, 11th floor.

Contact the committee's chair, Judy Nicastro, to let her know you support a tenant's right to organize and enjoy decent and affordable housing without fear of retaliation from landlords. You can either attend the hearing or submit your support for the ordinance in the form of an email or letter:

judy.nicastro@ci.seattle.wa.us

Judy Nicastro

Chair, Landlord/Tenant and Land Use Committee

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