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Real Change

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Out-Spoken

Welfare Administrator says DSHS is broken and getting worse

Plus: Goodbye Uncle Bob • Sweet Deal for Downtown Developers • Shutters in South Bronx • Nancy Amidei's Olympia Watch

Interview by Joe Martin

PHOTO OF MARGEY RUBADO BY RICK DAHMS.

Last year, the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) announced that its welfare-to-work program, WorkFirst, had shrunk the number of people on welfare by 40 percent. With all those former welfare recipients working, caseworkers could be cut. DSHS announced layoffs at welfare offices. In the new era of welfare reform, these caseworkers weren't needed.

In King County, the ax fell indiscriminately hard on the Belltown Community Service Office, in downtown Seattle. While caseworkers elsewhere were getting their clients into jobs, people downtown tended to be different. Last year, 2,700 unemployable people came to the office seeking General Assistance; an additional 1,300 wanted treatment for alcohol or drug addiction. Caseworkers downtown serve a higher percentage of homeless, mentally ill, and chemically dependent people than almost anywhere else in the state.

As director of the Belltown office, Margey Rubado was working to fulfill Governor Gary Locke's mandate of "a job, a better job, a career" for these clients. The cuts threatened to extinguish the hard work of her staff. She resigned, saying she would not manage a doomed program.

Lobbying by advocates persuaded DSHS to preserve some of the Belltown jobs. But as a cash-starved state Legislature looks to break even in the 2001-2002 budget, cuts in social services will come close to the bone.

A 25-year veteran of DSHS, Rubado earned praise for her dedication to serving the state's poorest clients. Rubado told *Real Change* why she left, describing a bureaucracy out of touch with homeless people's needs.

RC: Had the draconian staff cuts that occurred last summer not happened, would you still be working at Belltown?

Rubado: Yes.

RC: As a concerned DSHS administrator, what did you find frustrating about your job?

Rubado: The food stamp error effort, for starters. The folks in Olympia were talking about how we better fix the food stamp error rate [as caseworkers were wrongly assigning food stamps to ineligible clients], or we're all gonna lose our jobs. They gave us additional staff to address the problem, we did it, and then they turned right around and took back the staff.

We worked really hard at the Belltown CSO, when I was there, to have a very strong relationship with the com-

munity. One of the things that got the Native American community workers reinstated was the vocal support expressed by so many. These workers save people's lives. The same thing with the PACE program, which helps some very marginalized, longtime homeless people find employment. Yet we lost staff every single year for the past six years.

This isn't anybody's favorite population right now. The PACE program got recognized in the governor's Blue Book for excellence twice. DSHS officials turned right around and said, "We're not gonna staff this program."

RC: What is the rationale? Why do officials in Olympia turn around and pull the carpet out from under a successful program?

Continued on Page 11



Bean counting

Dear *Real Change*,

While I am very supportive of your efforts and read your paper with outrage at the privileged and sympathy for those less fortunate, I am concerned by an obvious misstatement in "Economics 101" (Jan. 11). The writer cites an analysis by *The Seattle Times* that indicated "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."

As I understand it, the author intends us to believe that each of the two wage earners in the family would need to earn \$22.54 per hour to get by, but that would amount to a gross family income of about \$93,000 per year, which is obviously not correct.

This sort of error always concerns me because people reading the article are going to think that if they are only making \$20.00 per hour they are not really quite getting by, and, in my opinion, \$20.00 per hour is a pretty decent income.

Sincerely,
Peter Kolb
Seattle

Ed. replies: That number is a family wage, not an individual's. The Times report put the living-wage income of a family of four at \$22.54 an hour, or around \$45,000 a year, in the Puget Sound region. In other words, if two parents both have full-time jobs that pay around \$11 an hour, they can provide for their two children — just barely. ■

Beating the odds

Dear *Real Change*,

I am a visitor to Seattle and read an issue of *Real Change* and wanted to tell my story of how I re-entered society after being diagnosed with a major mental illness (schizoaffective depression) 14 years ago.

I qualified for disability benefits, but after a year I became bored and couldn't handle that lifestyle anymore. So I decided to deliver flowers on weekends, which I did part-time for five years, quitting a few times because it was so painful to be around people when your mind is not working right

and the people and reality seem so far away. I dreaded each time I walked into the store, but my boss liked my work and my quiet, patient character, and encouraged me to keep at it.

I then went into fast food delivery, using my benefits to subsidize car repairs, and once again I found a boss who would take me back after I gave up and quit a few times. I finally got tired of quitting and decided to try college. After five years of painful psychological struggle and difficult classwork, I finished a two-year degree in computer studies. Now I have gone back to fast food work until I can get my Microsoft certification, and am trying to develop some marketing ideas.

My future looks bright, and I am enjoying life again after 12 years of depression with the help of a medication called "Venlafaxine HCL" (Effexor) and an abiding faith in God, as well as the help of caring people who brought me out of myself and gave me hope for the future.

If you are on the street, all I can say is: Don't give up hope. It took me 14 years to claw my way, inch by inch, back into life out of a pit of despair, but it isn't that hard for most people. All people need is a helping hand and someone who cares enough to give them a chance.

These last 14 years cost the taxpayers at least \$200,000, including benefits, medications, and treatment to rehabilitate one mentally ill person. Hopefully, now that I am feeling better, I can repay society one day. It is an extreme challenge to re-enter society — like steering Apollo 13, or climbing Mt. Everest with one leg — but with the right teamwork and determination and God's help, you can succeed in doing the impossible. Recovery: "Just do it."

Sincerely,
Harold E. Bartko
Anchorage, AK

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Real Change

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.

Editorial Policy

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

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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Pinpricks of Light

Keep a close watch on Bush's faith-based anti-poverty agenda

by Adam Holdorf

Just as the coming economic downturn might be blamed, unjustly, on our new president George W. Bush, so might the coming rise in homelessness. But that's not fair. Eight years of a Democratic presidency did little to staunch the open sore of American poverty.

In the final year of Clinton's presidency, requests for emergency food in U.S. cities increased by 17 percent, according to an annual report by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Two-thirds of the people requesting assistance were members of families; 32 percent of the adults requesting food were employed. Demand for emergency shelter increased 15 percent; one-third of the demand was from families with children. Thirteen percent of the requests for food and nearly one-quarter of the requests for housing went unmet. One Catholic charitable network experienced a "startling" 22 percent increase in requests for emergency shelter, clothing, food, and medicine.

And the latest U.S. Census shows that one in every six American children is poor; one in three are children of color. The U.S. has more child poverty than every other developed country.

Given the numbers, we might actually look forward to a new approach.

"One could say that George W. Bush is an oil and gas man from Texas," Jim

When they take on the administrative functions of a social service agency, can religious workers continue to play a pivotal role in organizing for economic justice?

Wallis, the leader of Call to Renewal, a national organization working ecumenically to end poverty, told the *Houston Chronicle*. "I would say, well, that may turn out to be true. But the faith-based initiative thing is like a wild card in his poker hand. It is the thing that could surprise most people."

Wallis and about 30 other religious leaders from diverse backgrounds met with President-elect Bush just a few weeks after he was officially declared the election's victor. Bush wanted to talk to them about launching his "Armies of Compassion" — a campaign whereby religious organizations become eligible to take a greater hand in administering services formerly the domain of state agencies. It's like his father's Thousand Points of Light, refracted.

Wallis, a national leader of the Christian left, said he was surprised by Bush's willingness to listen. He is approaching Bush's proposal for a federal "Office of Faith-Based Action" with an open mind.

Certainly the record of Missouri Senator John Ashcroft, nominated to Attorney General, is no point of light. And Bush's Cabinet appointee to head Health and Human Services, Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson, doesn't confirm Wallis' hopefulness.

Wisconsin's welfare-to-work program, which Thompson implemented, is praised in some circles for getting people off welfare. A recent report by the National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support notes numerous problems. Among them:

- Wisconsin pioneered the practice of diverting federal TANF funds to pay for tax cuts or other programs unrelated to alleviating poverty.
- Two audits by the federal government found that the state was illegally discouraging Food Stamps applications from needy families.
- Thompson's "innovations" with respect to privatizing the welfare system have left a trail of scandal and fraud in their wake. Maximus, Inc., a for-profit corporation, spent hundreds of thousands of federal welfare dollars on staff parties, flowers, travel, and expenses incurred attempting to get welfare contracts in other states.
- Meanwhile, one year after getting work, the average income of former welfare recipients had declined from about \$12,000 to \$10,000 per year. And demand on the state's emergency services increased.

Perhaps the real test of Bush's assault on misery will be how he treats his infantry. As a Christian, Bush should recognize the role of spirituality to form community, help provide for one another, and give life meaning.

When they tackle the administrative functions of a social service agency, can religious workers continue to play their pivotal role in organizing for economic justice? Will they be able to lobby for a living wage while screening applicants for Food Stamps eligibility?

Wallis, at least, will not relinquish the duty of his faith. "In forging new partnerships to reduce poverty, the religious community will not only be service providers but prophetic interrogators," he wrote recently in a *Washington Post* opinion piece. "Our vocation is to ask why people are poor, and not just to care for the forgotten."

Here's hoping that, as Bush places the weight of caring for others in the hands of communities of faith, their eyes remain fixed upward, on what is just. ■

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THIS JUST IN! The Seattle Arts Commission has announced a new awards program, as part of the mayor's Arts 2001 campaign. Called the "Hunger Artist" project, the program also boasts support from the City Attorney's Office and a network of local feeding programs.

Starting this June, 100 homeless people will eat only water and vitamins for 100 days, all the while recording their experience in paint, poetry, visual art, and music. The artists will be placed in kiosks around the city so that the general public can observe them, and even record their own reactions on an interactive computer terminal at each kiosk.

"What we are trying to do here," says Deputy Mayor Tom Byers, "is try to gain deeper understanding of what homeless people think, especially when they are hungry. Why are they hungry? What motivates the need for food? What kind of outcomes can we project through the creative process?"

At the end of the 100 days, the Hunger Artists will each receive \$100 and a meal for two at McDonalds. Their artwork will be displayed in the lobby of the Washington Mutual Building.

Dan Moshenberg of the Union Gospel Mission says that the program, which will award \$10,000 in cash directly to homeless people, is a good incentive for them to come up with their own solutions to their problems: "Why should someone live in a building with broken windows, when they can fix the windows of their soul?" ■

—Bob Redmond

For details or an application, call (206)684-8288.

Santos spirited away

After seven years in the Federal Building, you'd think Bob Santos had put down roots. But he's been evicted by a little Shrub.

Santos resigned his post as Secretary's Representative at the four-state northwestern regional office of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Already a proven activist for the underdog in the Seattle community before taking office, Santos used his HUD post as a bully pulpit, talking up his agency's responsibility to the region's poor.



"UNCLE" BOB SANTOS ENDED HIS SEVEN-YEAR LEADERSHIP OF THE REGIONAL HUD OFFICE THIS MONTH.

attending about four such events a week.

What are the chances that Bush's appointee will work this hard? We'll miss you, Uncle Bob. ■

—Adam Holdorf

We miss him already

Among former HUD Secretary Bob Santos' more recent feats: attempting to find Tent City a home, after its January 15 departure from El Centro de La Raza.

Santos met with Deputy Mayor Tom Byers, seeking permission to house the homeless encampment on federal property in the Duwamish corridor south of downtown. The mayor's office declined, repeating that the camp would violate city zoning code.



RESURRECTING TENT CITY AT MARTIN LUTHER KING PARK, ONLY TO MOVE AGAIN THIS PAST WEEKEND. PHOTO BY GEORGE HICKEY.

Byers says the city met with Santos to discuss a "homestead experiment" on the parking lot of a Government Services Administration building on East Marginal Way South. "We wanted to test a tent city in a controlled environment," says Byers. "The idea was to create a place with the practices of Tent City — in terms of a community advisory committee — and improve the living circumstances to something that would approximate city code."

The talks were cut off, says Byers, when Santos resigned his office. There is no word from the mayor's office on whether they are attempting to find a new spot for such an experiment.

Tent City, which according to organizers at the homeless persons' group SHARE/WHEEL, was never approached by Byers with this proposal, has moved



from Martin Luther King Park to St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 1245 - 10th Avenue E, on the north end of Capitol Hill. The church is hosting the camp until February 16. Tent City has begun looking for another site — if you have any tips, call SHARE/WHEEL at (206)448-7889. ■

— Adam Holdorf

Haggling over the landlord law

While a proposed rent retaliation ordinance awaits hearing before the full City Council, both tenant and landlord organizations are organizing to tweak the ordinance in their favor. The ordinance laid out by City Councilmember Judy Nicastro would allow tenants to organize to maintain or improve their living

conditions, and would make it easier for the city to punish landlords who retaliated against organizing tenants, such as with rent increases or the threat of eviction. Landlords would also face civil penalties if they retaliated against a tenant who had already filed a claim against them.

The ordinance had already passed through Nicastro's Landlord/Tenant and Land Use Committee before the proposal had its first public hearing last week. As such, even amendments that are supported by Nicastro would have to be officially approved by the rest of the committee before the ordinance can be changed. Any amendments could be heard by the committee no earlier than next month.

Nicastro's decision to push the proposal through the committee before key tenant and landlord groups had a chance to discuss changes with her irked organizations like the Tenants Union, which feels some of the language still unnecessarily protects landlords at the expense of increasing tenants' rights.

However, other parts of the bill did not hold tenants as responsible for retaliatory action against a legitimate rent increase, countered the Apartment Association of Seattle & King County. AASK is likely to propose an amendment offering stricter penalties against tenants who file unsubstantiated claims against their landlords. ■

— Molly Rhodes

Look it up

The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* has called for nothing less than outside help to get the Mayor's office to find a safe, legal place for the homeless people camped at Tent City, Seattle's "number-one social services embarrassment," according to a January 23 editorial.

Like U.S. Senator Patty Murray, fresh from mediating the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild's strike against the *Seattle Times*. Or former president Jimmy Carter, international peacekeeping gadfly and co-founder of Habitat for Humanity. Deputy Mayor Tom Byers and the rest of Paul Schell's administration have so far failed to respond adequately; only high-profile — read: competent — intervention will end the "peripatetic wanderings" of the homeless camp, says the *P-I*.

[Note to classicists: learned sources say the word *peripatetic* comes from the Greek words meaning *peri* and *patos*, meaning "to walk" and "to teach." The meaning conjures up images of sandal-wearing Platonists ambling obliviously through Athens. Tent City is not a political protest; perhaps it's a wandering lesson.] ■

— Adam Holdorf

Power to the people

As electric bills start creeping up, the Seattle City Council may expand its efforts to publicize a little-used subsidy for people who can't pay their monthly electricity bill.

Late last year, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) went door-to-door in South Seattle, polling residents about their electric bills. "A lot of people were coming to the door in their winter coats," says Doug Bloch, an organizer with ACORN. "We found that they didn't know the city has an assistance program."

City Light, faced with power scarcity from its suppliers, proposed an 18 percent rate hike in early January. Councilmember Heidi Wills, chair of the council's Energy and Environmental Policy Committee, wants to protect those who receive subsidies from the increase. But then there's those who go without the subsidy: for them, the council may soon consider a bill to spend more money getting the word out.

The city estimates that less than 50 percent of eligible households apply for the rate assistance, which is subsidized by Seattle City Light. Low-income seniors and disabled people are more likely to know about the subsidy, says Bloch. In order to qualify, you have to earn less than 125 percent of the federal poverty level — which, according to Bloch, effectively disqualifies anybody making more than minimum wage. ■

—Adam Holdorf

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

High Rise, Low Wage

Labor, housing, environmental activists want city to rethink realtors' sweet deal

By Adam Holdorf

They built the Benaroya Music Hall. They refurbished the Paramount Theater.

Now, after two decades of trading high-rise development for money to give Seattle its "world class" veneer, city officials want office and hotel developers to contribute to a neglected niche: affordable housing.

The Office of Housing and the mayor's office convened an advisory committee of downtown developers to tweak an incentive program toward that end. But a coalition of "smart growth" environmentalists, labor unions, and low-income people says the proposal continues to let the real estate moguls off the hook.

At issue is the city's so-called Housing Bonus development program, created to make employers indirectly support the housing needs of their lowest-paid workers.

The program springs from a simple logic: if you build it, they will come — and if you don't pay them a living wage, you must help provide affordable housing.

The city land-use laws allows downtown property owners to build higher or wider if they include a few "bonuses" for the public's benefit: open plazas, wider sidewalks, overhead awnings that shelter pedestrians from the rain. If an

office or hotel wants to build a bigger building — which will add more low-wage jobs, contributing to the city's housing crunch — the developer can also choose to pay \$13 per additional square foot to the city Office of Housing. The Office of Housing distributes the money, in the form of grants, to non-profit developers who will build affordable housing in the neighborhood.

There are at least two flaws in the Housing Bonus system. Developers tend to contribute to the housing fund last and least. Less than half of the \$10.8 million gathered from the bonus program since its inception in 1985 has gone to build or preserve affordable apartments, says Cynthia Parker of the city's Office of Housing. Most went to restoring or building performance halls. Benaroya went up; low-cost apartments did not.

And even when they participate, developers get away with a sweet deal. The \$13 per square foot is far below even the city's own estimates of the gap between the region's high housing costs and its plentiful low-wage service jobs.

"When you compare how much the low-wage jobs in each building add to the city's housing crisis, child care crisis, and suburban sprawl, against what developers are contributing in return, you see

how the environment and taxpayers are getting a bad deal," says Dana Wise, of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, AFL-CIO, a member of the coalition. "One solution to these problems is to raise the wages of workers, so that they don't need city-subsidized housing and city-subsidized child care."

The developer-led advisory committee wants to raise the contribution per square foot from \$13 to \$22, and set aside \$3.75 of that new contribution for child care. The city is selling low: according to its own calculations, that's still just 69 percent of the true cost of making housing affordable to low-wage service workers employed by typical offices and hotels. Moreover, members of the coalition have said that the city's numbers ignore as much as 87 percent of the housing need that these buildings create.

Last June, the coalition, called the Seattle Alliance for Good Jobs and Housing for Everyone (SAGE), gained ground against the proposal when the City Council sent the advisory committee back to the drawing board. A council resolution told the Office of Housing and the mayor's office to take a closer look at "demand-side measures [and] other measures to address affordable housing" — including, says Wise, strategies encouraging better pay for hotel workers. City staff has until the end of January to come up with an answer.

Office of Housing staffer Rick Hooper and Deputy Mayor Tom Byers say the new plan won't ask developers to pay more than they're comfortable with — \$22 a square foot.

"You have to be realistic here," says Parker, also with the Office of Housing. If the contribution were set higher,

she says, "nobody would pay it, and all these developments wouldn't happen."

"We worked for three years in DUCPG [the Downtown Urban Center Planning Group], to come up with this," says Adrienne Quinn, a lawyer with the land use law firm Buck and Gordon and board president of the nonprofit Plymouth Housing Group. Because of the City Council's move, "We're missing that market for every

development that's come online since," she says. "If the real estate market cools," as regional analysts have predicted, "we'll have missed out."

Wise says the city law acknowledges the role service-industry employers play in spawning the working poor and the affordable housing crisis. It gives the mayor the power to simply ask developers to reduce the problems they create.

"There's no dispute over the rationale" for the city's law, says Wise. "The question is whether the mayor and City Council are ready to face the root causes of our city's housing crisis." ■

The Seattle Alliance for Good Jobs and Housing for Everyone meets Tuesday, January 30, at St. Mark's Cathedral. Mayor Paul Schell and city councilmembers have been invited to discuss changes to the developer incentive program. A free meal will be served. To RSVP, call Maya Baxter at (206)625-9790.

Policy Watch

By Nancy Amidei

Two weeks into the state legislative session, the atmosphere in Olympia remains pretty relaxed. It is still possible to find parking near the capitol dome; tables are still available in the cafeteria; hearing rooms are generally uncrowded and unfrenzied.

But the fiscal realities are enough to strike fear into the stoutest of hearts. Consider: the \$22.2 billion spending limit mandated by Initiative 601 is \$400 million lower than the amount needed just to maintain current state activities. Voter-passed initiatives have set aside another \$646 million. Any new or increased spending means taking a slice out of existing activities.

The Governor's proposed budget included huge cuts in health and human service programs — including programs that serve people with disabilities and people with nowhere else to turn, as well as cuts the legislature has never agreed to.

These cuts go deep into the bone. The Governor's proposed version is widely thought to be the "high-water mark" for most health and social service programs. At this point, it is hard to get major funding restorations or additions taken seriously.

But citizens can make a lot happen in a few weeks. Every year, groups put an item on the agenda that was not there at the beginning; every year, some issues emerge to become priorities.

Budget items of special concern include the Governor's proposed cuts in dental coverage and vision services (including eyeglasses) for low-income adults, and cuts in adult daycare. Also of concern is adequate funding for special needs transportation, as well as adequate wages for health and other care workers.



Housing/Homelessness: Housing advocates are seeking to increase the Housing Trust Fund from \$61.8 million to \$100 million, and will work to protect it from attempts to "raid" it for use on other purposes. The Housing Trust Fund is one of the state's few sources of money for affordable and low-cost housing.

The Governor's proposed budget cuts the Housing Trust Fund to just \$50 million — despite a departmental recommendation that it be raised to \$87 million. The Governor would also re-

move the "set-asides" for housing for people with disabilities and for farmworker housing.



Children and Youth: Advocates are hoping to insert an extra \$7.3 million for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) into the budget. ECEAP is a state-funded pre-kindergarten program similar to Head Start that prepares children for success in school. I-732 requires community colleges and schools to raise the wages of ECEAP staff to keep pace with other employees, but it provided no funding. Without \$7.3 million in additional funds, the money for wages would come from cutting services for children.



Mental Health: Here's another issue receiving a lot of attention this year. The Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee began considering two mental health bills: SB 5211, requiring "parity," or equal health plan coverage, for mental and physical health; and SB 5271, providing insurance coverage for certain mental illnesses. A bill similar to SB 5211, HB 1080, is being introduced in the House.



Substance Abuse: SB 5051, which changes provisions relating to persons incapacitated by alcoholism or drug addiction [see "Throw Away the Key," Jan. 11, 2001] got a public hearing in mid-January before the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee.



Welfare: In late January, the House Children and Family Services Committee began reviewing reports on the state's WorkFirst program, including outcome measures, Welfare-to-Work services contracts, and non-cash benefits.

"Wheels to Work" (SB 5031), a bill seeking to ease transportation problems for welfare recipients, got a public hearing on Friday, January 19, before the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee [see the Citizens Participation Project, page 16].

SB 5201, the "Higher Education for Lifelong Progress" bill, would make TANF recipients able to enroll in college or post-secondary vocational school. This bill is an effort to extend the education and training opportunities available to adults on welfare. The Senate Higher Education Committee heard the bill in mid-January. Additional bills are expected for other modifications to WorkFirst.

Information on these and other matters can be tracked on various state web sites, such as the state Legislature's web site: <http://www.leg.wa.gov>. ■

Nancy Amidei is on the faculty of the University of Washington School of Social Work. A complete version of Policy Watch, Amidei's weekly bulletin about legislative issues and events available at the School of Social Work web site (<http://weber.u.washington.edu/~ssweb/>).

Gated Ghetto

Publicly funded roadblock segregates Kent communities

By Manny Frishberg

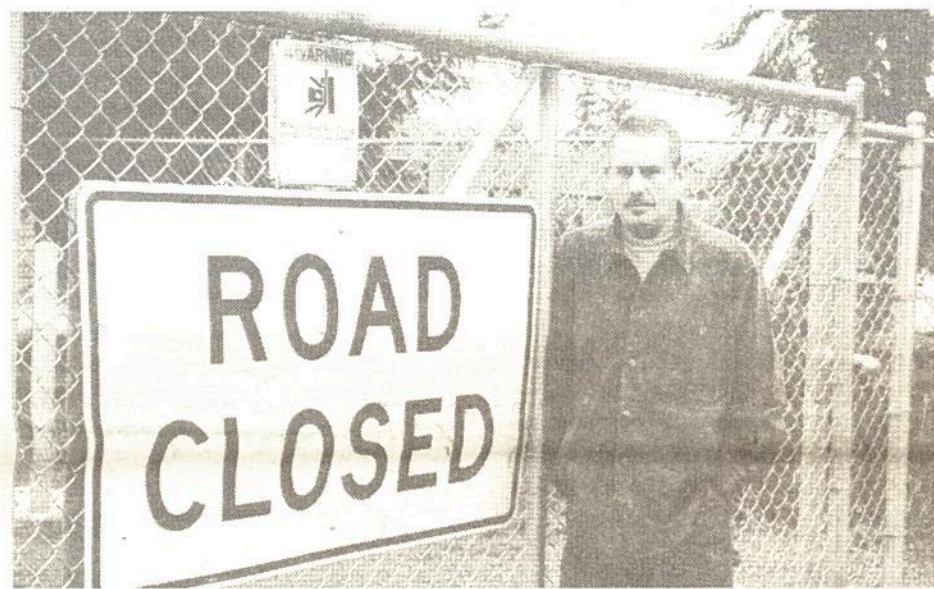
Is it the next Berlin Wall?

In the south end of the Seattle area, a street closure has gotten neighbors up in arms, raising questions of fairness, safety, and what the word "community" really means.

Last October, the City of Kent installed a six-foot-high cyclone fence which splits off a neighborhood of modest single-family homes from the two- and three-story apartment complexes that have sprouted up between it and Pacific Highway.

The city says the fence, which can be opened only by school buses and emergency vehicles, keeps speeding cars from shortcutting through the winding streets of the apartment complex and out into the single-family neighborhood. Some tenants of the 650-resident Pacific Pointe Apartments, where one in five families pays their rent with a HUD Section 8 voucher, call it discrimination.

"It cuts us in half," says Karlyn Harmon, assistant manager of the apartment complex. "Some people say it's a racial thing."



BRUCE CHARLÉY BY THE NEWLY-INSTALLED KENT GATE. PHOTO BY JOHN CAPUTO.

The gate blocks off one of the two ways out of the apartments. Although it adds only an extra three blocks to the trip to and from home, resident Bruce Charléy says that the new detour takes residents past three more traffic lights and creates a bottleneck, particularly during commuter hours.

In the morning, when 27 school buses full of children head out from the apartments to Federal Way, getting out to the main streets can take 20 to 30 minutes or more. A year ago the city replaced the original gate with one that has a keypad-operated hinge, that opens it from the apartment side. The gate opens slowly, allowing only a few cars to pass through before closing again. Residents have to stop, get out of their

cars, and punch in the key code to leave. They have no way of opening the gate from the outside to come back in.

Charléy says the apartments and the adjoining four-plexes are a "a kind of ghetto-esque type of neighborhood" with a higher crime rate than the adjoining areas. The gate walls him and his fellow tenants "in with the drug dealers."

"It leaves well over 800 families with one exit out of the community," says Charléy. "In the event of a natural disaster, that could be pretty horrendous. It also blocks a mostly-minority section out of a mostly white neighborhood."

Charléy says ACORN has tried a number of things to resolve the situation over the past 15 months, from raising the issue in city council meetings and hold-

ing community forums to bring together people on both sides of the gate, to staging demonstrations, the first one a year ago on Martin Luther King's birthday.

For people on either side of the barrier, it's not a black-and-white issue. Some of the Kent neighbors oppose the gate, says Charléy, while some apartment residents say that even if it affects their commute, its crime-detering results are welcome.

Charléy, who chairs the West Hills chapter, says the city has been intransigent on the subject, and the council has been unresponsive to their complaints. He has met with Kent city officials to request more police patrols in the area. He was told that they could not spare additional officers to bring the drug dealing under control.

The West Hills chapter of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now has filed a complaint against the gate with the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD is still investigating the claim. ACORN activists have been drumming up support from the local community, meeting with Kent city administrators and staging protest demonstrations against the gate since its installation.

Housing discrimination

Hong Tran is a staff attorney with the Northwest Justice Project, which has taken on the West Hills ACORN case. She said that the city is allowed a few basic reasons for closing off a public street as they have in this instance. Washington law limits the reasons for closing off an existing street, she said. For example, closing a street is permitted if the road is being damaged by 18-wheelers traveling on a residential street, if the roadway is dangerous to traffic, or if it is necessary to control excessive speeding through a residential neighborhood that represents a hazard to the community, said Tran. But, she said, traffic studies did not show a large number of speeders, or demonstrate that the gate was effective in reducing dangerous traffic problems.

Tran says the city's own studies show that the gating has only produced a relatively small reduction of traffic or speeding in the single-family neighborhood. That would suggest that the traffic issue is just a pretext for separating the neighbors. She said the gate could be considered a form of housing discrimination under federal law, since it creates a "disparate impact" on the largely nonwhite communities living in the apartments near Pacific Highway.

The Kent City Council has repeatedly voted not to remove the gate while the issue is being disputed. Pat Fitzpatrick, a staff lawyer in the Kent City Attorney's office, said councilmembers are "taking a wait-and-see approach" to the issue, in anticipation of HUD's ruling. Cori Senechal, a spokesperson for HUD's Seattle office, said in late December that the staff was preparing a report on the Kent situation. She said there was no indication from the investigators when they would be finished with their work.

Doug Bloch, an ACORN organizer, says he had been told by one of the HUD inspectors on the case that they were considering referring it to the Justice Department for further action. According to Bloch, an ACORN attorney in their New Orleans headquarters had spoken to someone at the federal Department of Justice, who said they are taking a close look at the case.

Whether or not HUD has finished its work on the complaint, or the Justice Department proceeds with its own investigation, Charléy says ACORN plans to take the city to federal court.

Walls for the wealthy in Snohomish County

Although Kent city officials are watching a court case against another gate to their north, there the situation is different. But the basic issue is the same.

Mukilteo is a small town in Snohomish County, on the north end of Puget Sound. Most people recognize it as the mainland dock for the ferry to Clinton, on the south end of Whidbey Island. Last fall, residents of an older development in unincorporated Snohomish County won a first round in court against the City of Mukilteo. The city had approved the gate in May, but in September it was ordered open by Snohomish County Superior Judge Richard Thorpe.

The gate had blocked off the older neighborhood, known as Wind and Tides, from the more recently built Mukilteo development of St. Andrews Drive.

Unlike the situation in Kent, there is relatively little, besides the gate, to separate the two communities there. Homes in both neighborhoods sell in the range of \$300,000 to \$500,000 each, with a few priced above the three-quarters of a million dollars mark, according to figures provided to the local newspaper by the Multiple Listings Service.

The St. Andrews Drive homes opened for sale in 1994. Residents on the unincorporated side of the gate say they are afraid the added travel time to the town's shopping centers and high schools will reduce their property values. Members of Citizens for Connected Communities, a group of residents from the Wind and Tides neighborhood, argue that the gate reduces emergency vehicles' access to the high school, library, local businesses, and the YMCA. Some Wind and Tides residents also say that having to maneuver around the gate increases driving time to the Harbour Point area from five to 20 minutes or more. They point out that the road was originally put in place to make the trip to town faster and more convenient. The city claims the gate was the final move in an ongoing attempt to reduce speeding and high traffic volumes through the neighborhood.

The Wind and Tides neighbors claim the effect is to make the road leading to their homes into a cul-de-sac, and turns St. Andrews Drive into an exclusive "gated community." The two sides have been filing briefs for months in the case; it went to court on January 19. A final ruling by the Superior Court could come as early as the end of the month. ■

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Angry Enough to Care

Unanswerable questions and the people who ask them

by Michele Marchand

The room hisses. Above the cold dark streets the lights on the hill are shining, and above them the sky is bottomless. A woman on the bus asked me today, Why are we born if only to die? I could not answer and she said, I am angry with God.

—"Atonement"
by Elizabeth Romero

On Christmas Eve, I went with my friend Jenna and her two small children to put up a Christmas tree on our friend Pearl Cahall's grave. We constructed our own tree of sticks scattered throughout the cemetery, and decorated it with dime store ornaments and small ceramic animals I'd brought from home. Pearl would've appreciated the effort, even as she is still, somewhere, angry at being buried in a Catholic cemetery, angry at being dead at all.

A few days later, at the annual Compass Center memorial service for homeless and low-income people who died in 2000, I found myself getting unspeakably angry. I sat there, in the sparse crowd — of 25 or 30 people, the lowest turnout ever for this event — and remembered the day Pearl died. I got the call too late to say goodbye to her when she was still alive at Harborview; rushed up to the hospital to keep a death watch with her body. I sat in her hospital room for hours, until they came to take her body down to the morgue. She did not look at peace to me. She looked as though she was still struggling to take breath into her lungs or speak a few last words of condemnation of her plight.

Reverend Nyer Urness began the Compass Center service with a reading from 1 Corinthians 15: "O death where is thy victory? O death where is thy sting?" There were 86 names on the list of the dead this year; fewer than last year but still, as King County Executive Ron Sims said at the service, "If this were any other population, we would've declared an epidemic a long time ago." I knew a dozen of those who died last year; some, like Pearl, were dear friends whose deaths rocked my world.

And I am tired of mourning, tired of ritualizing death, tired of accepting its too-early inevitability for homeless people. For me, there is no succor in the notion of some better place after death for people whose lives are filled with misery. "I don't like the way God

has set up the system," said my priest during one of his homilies last year. I've thought a lot about these words, and, as arrogant as it may seem, I too find myself angry not just at the system, but sometimes at God Himself.

As we sat in our plastic chairs in the Compass Center cafeteria, traffic hissed by and caused what I am sure was an auditory hallucination of drumbeats in the background. I remembered a time two years ago, when I sat in the cafeteria at Virginia Mason Hospital with my friend Rita, whose husband was dying upstairs, and listened to her despair about his imminent death. "What is it?" she asked. "Thud (pounding her fist on the table) or the Sweet Hereafter? Thud,

or the Sweet Hereafter?" I could not answer her; muttered some Catholic sentiment about how we have to live as though there is a Sweet Hereafter whether we know for sure or not.

This holiday Santa brought me the flu and an intruder who stole my briefcase while I was up-

stairs looking for vegetables. It was *not* a good holiday, and some of my friends have been funny enough to respond to these holiday visitations by saying, "You must've been very naughty."

I also was visited by a friend who no longer wanted to live, whose despair over her circumstance caused her to want to be swallowed up by the sheltering sky. "Look," I said to her, "the choice for death is always there. You can make that choice tomorrow, or the next day, or the day after that if this situation continues to be untenable. You don't have to make that choice today when you are so tired."

The truth is, I understand her crossroads more than I like to admit. Live or die, to steal the words of confessional poet Anne Sexton; on some days, the bad ones, the choice seems not to matter. It is no longer enough for me to mourn the dead believing they are in a better place, when life for many of my friends is grinding poverty, ceaseless fear, constant degradation.

But of course, why put a Christmas tree on Pearl's grave if that is the case? Why gather ornaments for her, sing to her, get angry for her, speak to her in silent moments of mourning? These acts belie my own faithlessness. As Alice Munro wrote in her story "Memorial": "Acts performed without faith may restore faith." ■

"If this were any other population, we would've declared an epidemic a long time ago."

King County Executive Ron Sims



KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE RON SIMS AT THE COMPASS CENTER'S ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE. THE CEREMONY HONORED 86 HOMELESS AND FORMERLY HOMELESS MEN AND WOMEN WHO PASSED AWAY IN 2000. PHOTO BY LISA WALDO.

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The American Protest Theme Park greets you, bring your quaint belief in what's true, they take it for cute.
Remember, don't mention Mickey Mouse. You'll get thrown out of the house, you'll pay a fine.
Anyone in America can speak out. Take a number, don't shout, wait in line.

Welcome to the Last Free Speech hole in the ground.
You may now speak freely to whoever's around, nobody cares here.
Step behind the rope, dope, nobody cares here.

Is anyone besides me aware that all inauguration ceremonies are propaganda? And that propaganda is government speech? And that therefore if Pennsylvania Avenue is a designated Demonstration Free Zone, then there can't be an inauguration there either? Is it just me who thinks Demonstration Zones are the worst things that have happened to this country since war rations?

What next? Talking Zones? Thinking Zones?

They can't even hide behind state's rights on this. Were talking about the District of Columbia, where all the law is Congressional law. That bit about "Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech" has full force in D.C.

Meanwhile our own mayor, Paul Schell, wants to define Tent City as a political act, apparently because in the past he's had some success forcing political acts to go away. In connection with the trials of Tent City, a word has cropped up often: transient.

transient *adj.* 1. not lasting, enduring, or permanent; *transitory* 2. lasting only a short time; existing briefly; temporary—*n.* a person or thing that is transient.

Mayor Schell would clearly like to see to it that Tent City is transient. But more importantly, there is the notion that the people who

There is the notion that the people who make up Tent City are not deserving of Seattle's concern, because they are transient, they are not natives. Yet anyone who is from Seattle isn't a normal Seattleite.

make up Tent City are not deserving of Seattle's concern, because they are transient, they are not natives.

I have heard the following statistic quoted: half of all Seattle's homeless are not from here.

I've got news for you all: as of the last 20 years at least, anyone who is from Seattle isn't a normal Seattleite.

I don't have to go back to the pioneer days to establish the fact, but I will, just because I can't resist mention-

ing that Chief Noah Seattle was born on Kitsap. Or that Denny came from Indiana, or that Doc Maynard came all the way from Vermont.

Do I have to tell anyone that John W. Nordstrom was born in Sweden? That William Boeing grew up in Detroit and didn't move to this city until he was 30?

I don't have to go back that far. I can look at... I don't know, let's see now... the mayor! Paul Schell, born in Fort Dodge, Iowa? So Schell once really did get out of Dodge?

City Councilperson Margaret Pageler was born in CHINA, for crying out loud. Her colleague Jim Compton came here by way of Portland, Oregon. Jan Drago and Heidi Wills are from another planet.

The Stranger was born in Chicago. More than nine-tenths of the Burke Museum was born in British Columbia or the Great Plains. The Pike Place Market got its start in Morocco. The Space Needle was shipped here in a box from the set of *The Jetsons*.

Surveys have been done that have shown that considerably more than 50 percent of us aren't from here.

Does that make the majority of Seattle transient? Sounds fair to me. ■

The Two Virgins

The sweet smile of a sure love,
My heart her throb is so pure
We see those that lie in wait and
see if they will change our fate
Love so pure, her lips so sweet when they
meet my eyes my heart begins to cry
What would I ever do oh lord if you took her to
The bliss of another morning
oh how happy I awake
To see the beauty of her face
Unveiled I wed thee, oh yes I do
Say yes again to me my love
I promise I promise

— ANON.

Equi Noctis

The autumn horses of the night
Come at length to end the day,
And fury halloween'd from fate
Makes the most of it.

Would that you were mine again
In the Springtime of our youth.
Hell hath fury of the damned:
I am damned to you.

Winter, come and take me now.
Never waste another day.
Ice and snowy chills are here
And ashes of our once-warm hearth.

—F.L.

T'was the night before the Night Before Thanksgiving
And the Waves were lapping at the Shore
The Wind was driving shorebirds disconcerted
And the Homeless and the Poor.

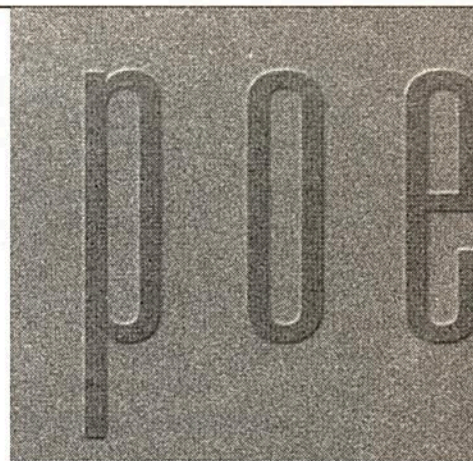
The rich lay snug in their beds
With dreams of platinum and pearls
And Sal and I lay curled up in the Great Outdoors -
Between us never a cross Word.

Each Time, in its Own Time, is Golden
Every dog has its day in the Sun.
And I wondered why Seattle was so cold; and
Punished us. What wrong had we done?

Sal died in the Alley that night
Released from her suffering I'm told
To join all the other dear departed,
And I'll follow when I'm kilt by the cold.

And the Waves were lapping at the Shore
The Earth turned day by day
It was Xmas, and January, and Febuary
And I survived Winter once more...

—ADELE ARMSTRONG



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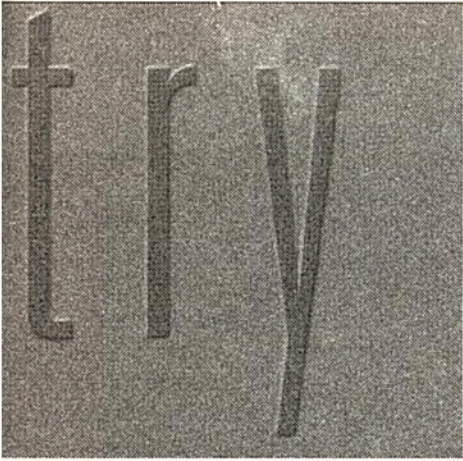
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Ryan's Song

it started out simple, but got confusing along the way
it started out with a sentence, another sentence, some
punctuation, and then a question
it digressed, and then, ascending the hills, the
wooded hills of one's own imagination;
man is at his best in the wilderness
no outside influences, just the trees, the birds,
the wild life
Joe tells me dropping acid in the forest is the only
way to go
it's the city which drives us insane
man is at his best in the wilderness

2.

I see a need to go backwards
back to the farming communities
otherwise we are going to destroy ourselves
I see the need, I see the need
visions of a farm land hand tilled
the daily blessings of the Sun & Rain
it's not me, the internal strife I struggle with
the bottle or the cigarettes
it's you and all you have to say about me
it's the sidewalks and the buildings
which converge to agitate me
No end, no end
I've seen the disappearances
I've seen the many posters posted for the missing
call home, call home
we are all sorry we mistreated you
please call home!

—PATRICK BISSELL

Be Yourself

I won't grovel at your feet or talk or act like you want me to.
Being a woman I do what I want to do.
I'm a happy person
I smile at most everyone I meet.
I'll stop and talk and joke around with friends on the street

I do it all the time
That's my trademark

Basically people are good
Given ideas or advice just being friendly and kind

But never, never lose sight of your own mind
Respect it

O yes in my life there is sadness, disappointment and hurt
But I stop, take a big sigh and say it could have been worse

And keep on keeping on!
So, be proud of who you are

Be what you want to be
Because I'm sure going to be me

—ESTELLA WALLACE

—CHANIRA REANG SPERRY



The Two Virgins

The sweet smile of a sure love,
My heart her throb is so pure
We see those that lie in wait and
see if they will change our fate
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The Earth turned day by day
It was Xmas, and January, and February
And I survived Winter once more...

—ADELE ARMSTRONG

Angeline's

outside, candy-colored compacts wait
lining the streets of downtown,
SUVs circling the block
to find a spot
while inside, servers work
business lunches, reaching
over double breasted suits and salon hair
gingerly pouring water into large glasses

outside, around the block
crimson-orange leaves dance
on cracked concrete leading me

inside of Angeline's.

Welcome, you have the
right to be treated with dignity.
welcome, you have the right
to have your privacy respected

privacy
as my eyes follow the women, like children,
lining up for lunch time

privacy
as my eyes watch women
half strung out, weary bodies
blend into green couches
in the middle of the room
tables and chairs
women, sitting, staring,
talking, sleeping, eating.

staring, sitting, talking, eating, sleeping
talking, sitting, eating, sleeping, staring,
staring, staring, staring.

welcome
to their home
where they get
one night of sleep
before they're back
on the streets

welcome
to this hidden
world of reality

—CHANIRA REANG SPERRY

Be Yourself

I won't grovel at yo
Being a woman I do
I'm a happy person
I smile at most ever
I'll stop and talk an

I do it all the time
That's my trademar

Basically people ar
Given ideas or advi

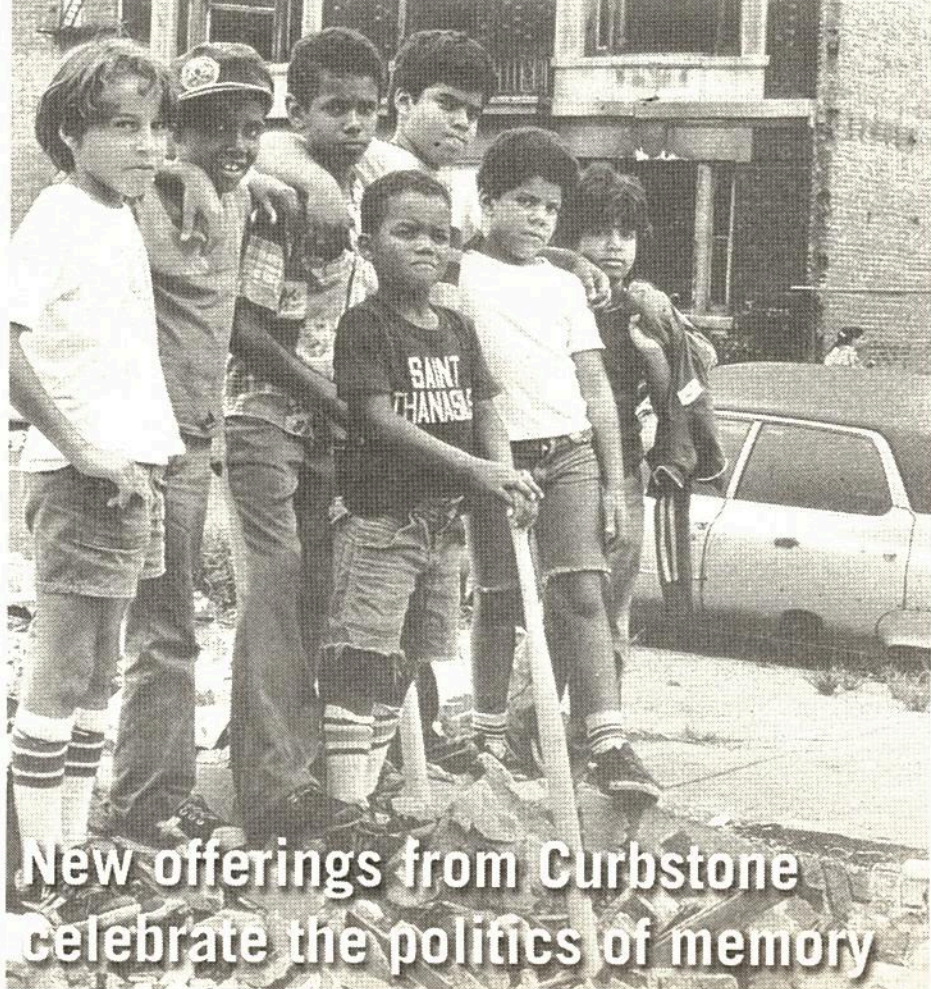
But never, never lo
Respect it

O yes in my life the
But I stop, take a b

And keep on keepi
So, be proud of wh

Be what you want t
Because I'm sure g

Against Oblivion



New offerings from Curbstone
celebrate the politics of memory

In the South Bronx of America
Photographs by Mel Rosenthal
With essays by Grace Paley, Martha Rosler, and
Barry Phillips
Curbstone Press, 2000
128 pp., \$39.95 hardcover

The Cherokee Lottery: A Sequence of Poems
By William Jay Smith
Curbstone Press, 2000
97 pp., \$13.95 paper

Review by Timothy Harris
Photos by Mel Rosenthal

Happily, history is no longer
written solely by the victors.
The people have presses too,

and we know how to use them. Small presses offer hope for a literature of witness, one that advocates for the powerless and remembers the forgotten.

Two new books from Curbstone help us to celebrate the politics of memory. Photographer Mel Rosenthal's photo essay on the South Bronx documents the planned destruction of an impoverished community, and poet William Jay Smith gives living memory to another forced relocation as he takes us along the Trail of Tears. Both of these works celebrate the strengths of communities under siege, and help us form a critical vocabulary of resistance.

In the introduction to *Against Forgetting*, the landmark anthology of 20th century poetry of witness, Carolyn Forché describes a poetic tradition divided into the personal and the political, the first being irrelevant to history and the second outside of immediate experience. We must recognize a third sort of writing, she says, that bridges these categories and describes our social reality.

The social, says Forché, is where our commonality exists, where we can step outside our haven of personal safety to acknowledge our connection to those at risk. The social "is a place of resistance and struggle, where books are published, poems read, and protest disseminated. It is the sphere in which claims against the political order are made in the name of justice."

In an age of atrocity, a literature of witness must assert itself against forgetting. German Jewish philosophers Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno have described modernity in part as a "reliance upon oblivion," one that depends upon willful isolation and forgetfulness. Forché describes a reality in which the monstrous is normalized and "our forgetfulness becomes a defense against remembering." Our response can only be a commitment to memory and all that it entails.

Mel Rosenthal's *In the South Bronx of America* represents the best that documentary photography has to offer. New York's South Bronx, during the two decades following the sixties, was the victim of "planned shrinkage," a term used by the Mayor and others to describe the withdrawal of critical services such as fire, police, and healthcare from a community marked for intentional destruction.

Over that time, more than half a million residents, mainly poor, Black, and Puerto Rican, were forced by slum clearance and highway construction from a neighborhood made uninhabitable.

As government colluded with private interests in the destruction of the Bronx, New York City spent \$267 million on "urban renewal," a euphemism for slum clearance. This was almost twice the amount spent by all other American cities combined.

Even so, arson remained the cheapest method. Between 1970 and 1975, 75,000 apartments were destroyed by fire. During a period in which New York saw an average of 33 fires a night, about 50 fire units were disbanded and others were reduced in size by 20-25 percent.

Rosenthal's photos were a means of creating community amidst the desolation. Residents came to know the photographer and health care worker as the "picture man," and asked him for portraits. Most residents were too poor to afford the Polaroids and snapshots that many of us take for granted, making Rosenthal's lens a popular addition to the neighborhood.

His photos were free, and if the subject was not pleased with the result, he'd tear up the picture and try again. Several ad hoc galleries sprang up in neighborhood bodegas, bars, and pizzerias, giving the community a new means of understanding itself.

This process acted as a safeguard against the objectification that mars much documentary photography, and created a deeply personal collection of photos, most of which seem to begin from the eyes and work their way out.

The disintegration of the South Bronx, says Rosenthal, was a process made possible by the negative politics of race and class. Without these concepts, he says, both of which become invisible in a depoliticized culture, people often misunderstand the evidence. In the absence of these analytical categories, we most often resort to victim blaming, self-hatred, and political despair.

Rosenthal concludes that while his photos may have bolstered a ravaged people's sense of self for a time, social change requires an organized movement, and in the absence of a viable community, no such movement could emerge.

Yet his book is a powerful indictment of the arrogance of power that lives on and threatens many of us today. We are invited to move past "spectatorship, to the complexity of empathy, understanding, outrage, and active mobilization," in whatever way we can manage.

William Jay Smith's *The Cherokee Lottery* also documents the story of a



TOP OF PAGE: ST. ATHANASIA'S BASEBALL TEAM; ABOVE AND TO THE RIGHT: THE SOCIAL CLUB SEEN ABOVE DIDN'T SURVIVE THE TIMES WHEN PHOTOGRAPHER MEL ROSENTHAL REVISITED THE SITE 15 YEARS LATER.

vanquished people, using poetry to bring new meaning to the photos and artwork that generously illustrate his remarkable book. This series of 18 poems describes the destruction of a culture that led to the Trail of Tears, a forced march that drove the Cherokee, the Chickasaw, the Creeks, the Choctaws, the Seminoles, and other tribes from the valuable land of the southeastern United States to the desolation and dust of Oklahoma.

Like Rosenthal's book on the Bronx, *The Cherokee Lottery* uses highly personal imagery to bring contested political history into the sphere of the social, where we can reexamine our history and draw lessons from a wounding past. Smith, whose poetry spanning 1937-1997 is collected in the critically acclaimed *The World Below the Window*, is one of the leading poets of our time, and this recent work is the result of a mature poetic vision in the service of people's history.

The epic scope of Smith's poetry draws deeply upon the history he amplifies, and his judicious use of dramatic quotations helps to powerfully ground these poems in lived experience. "Murder is murder," says army interpreter John Burnett, "and somebody must an-

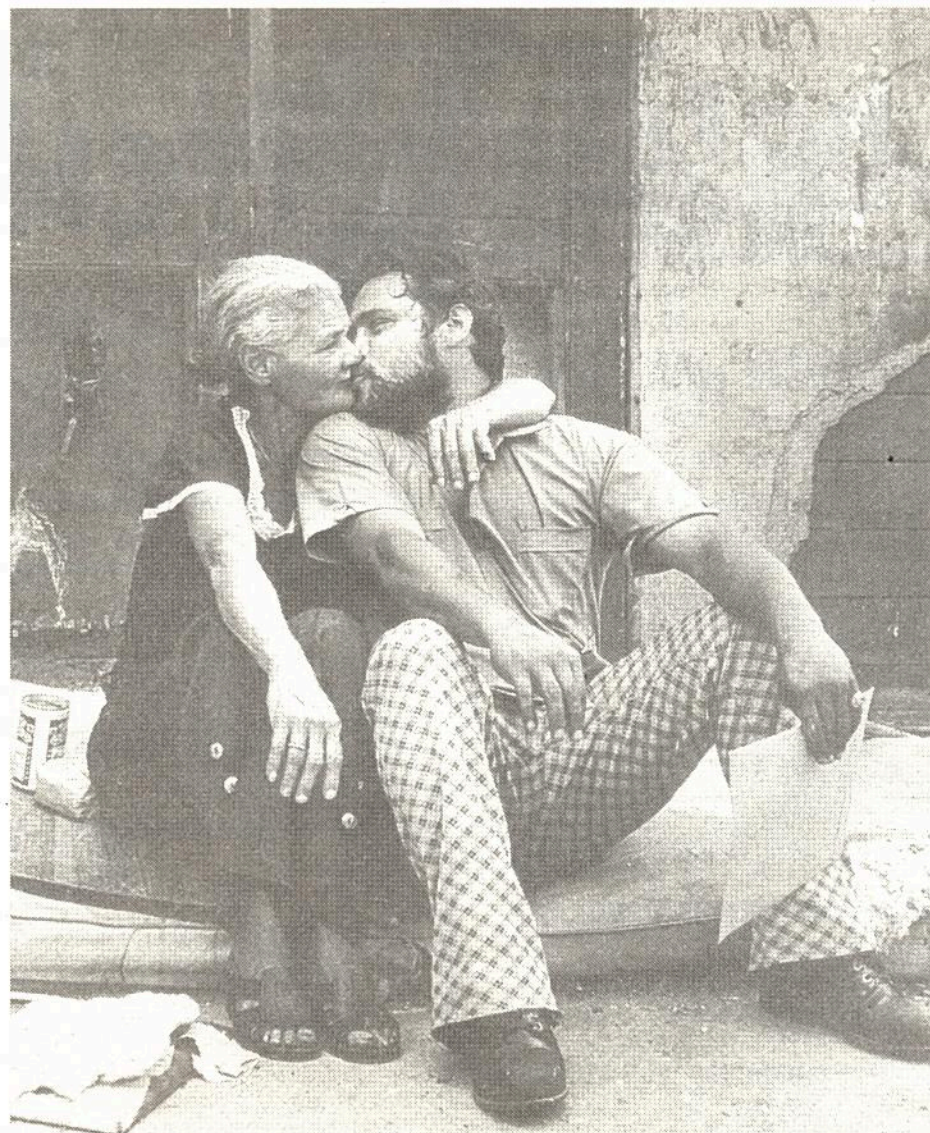
swer, somebody must explain, the streams of blood that flowed in the Indian country in the summer of 1838. Somebody must explain the 4,000 silent graves that mark the trail of the Cherokees to their exile. I wish I could forget it all...."

But the images in William Jay Smith's book do not allow this forgetfulness to occur. These range from Pushmataha, the Indian leader born of an oak split by a bolt of lightning, to Sir William Thomas Spencer Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, an Earl guided by Custer to slaughter 2,000 buffalo, 1,600 deer and elk, and 100 bear (including 40 grizzlies); from the carnage of a pumpkin field ravaged by starved Indians on a forced march, to the laser arrow of the crystal Indian at

the Foxwoods Resort Casino. The richness of these poems makes the multi-layered act of memory a luxurious task.

While nearly 140 years separate the forced migration of the American Indian and the forced relocation of the Blacks and Puerto Ricans of the South Bronx, these stories are continuous within the long history of domination and resistance that marks our struggle as humans. As we remember our history, so do we shape our future. ■

The richness of these poems makes the multi-layered act of memory a luxurious task.



PAULINA AND HER SON, EDDY, DON'T EVEN HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO MAKE IT BACK TO PUERTO RICO. ALL PHOTOS FROM *IN THE SOUTH BRONX OF AMERICA*.

RUBADO Continued from Page 1

Rubado: We're a small office. We are the only office in King County that serves this many homeless. I think top DSHS officials have lost track of what our mission is. I don't think we are doing what we were supposed to be doing.

You take an office like Belltown, that works with the most destitute, mentally ill, most at-risk people in downtown Seattle, and for Pete's sakes, why don't you take a small part of your budget and support this operation? When you don't have the staff, and we can't offer that service, these people *don't* get taken care of. Harborview sees them more often, and they keep cycling out to the streets. The police see them, Detox sees them. And yet DSHS is set to be battered again in the next legislative session. If they're not going to provide the service, who is? Are you just going to decide, all of a sudden, that this population doesn't exist?

[DSHS has] fallen in love with computers; officials think more computerization is going to solve everything. Somebody's turned this into an accounting practice. Now they're looking at how many people you can get to work. Businesses want these people, and we forgot to take a look at who they are.

I think what's happening to downtown Seattle is going to be really interesting, and I don't think it's gonna be nice. It's the same thing we said all along: You push people from one

end of town to the other, north and south, east and west. The population is still there. Whether they go more underground, or find new jungles or whatever, you're just shoving them around.

When a region gets this affluent, it's toughest on the poor people. We kind of forget to take care of each other. There *is* a certain percentage of people you can help now, and not wait until they get so mentally ill that SSI is the only answer. I can drive around now and look at [housing] that's coming down, and what's going up, and not much is going up to house very poor people. You *do* have to take care of the people who *are* mentally ill. Get them inside, somewhere off the streets.

RC: How might readers of *Real Change* make DSHS become more conscientious? The next time cuts are attempted by the officials in Olympia, how do we prevent them?

Rubado: I don't think you're gonna get any response from DSHS officials. DSHS reacts to the legislators. But the legislators *do* care. The support we got from state legislators [against the cuts] was really great.

And the governor needs to be accountable to the people. The governor's the ultimate boss. He can change any of this, anytime he wants. But he did not intervene in this most recent effort to reduce our staff—staff that was crucial to our work.

It's as if the WorkFirst [welfare-to-work] program, our big focus now, is supposed to help the employers get people in those jobs. It's almost like a sweatshop mentality. But there's a lot of people with mental illness, or drug and alcohol problems, they're not living a really good life. When you get down to that part of the population, you've got some very sick people. It's going to take a while for people to go "Oops, this wasn't a good idea, taking away social workers"—but by then the damage is done, and dedicated workers are going to be gone.

RC: What kind of a person should be in DSHS leadership positions?

Rubado: If in fact Community Services Offices are to serve communities, then they need to be led by somebody who believes that is what we are to do—serve those in need. But I really do not believe that's what we're doing anymore. I just think we don't work according to the mission. We work according to the political winds. Nobody [in DSHS] has stood up and said, "There is a reason all these people aren't ready for work, and it is *not* because they're lazy; it's because there is something wrong. Please understand that."

RC: In order to be efficient and effective, you are saying that you need a proper level of dedicated and competent staff?

Rubado: Right. And give us fair standards. Instead, DSHS cuts down the number of good social workers they had. Social services are so important, yet officials in Olympia don't value them.

I'd make DSHS outcome-based: Every single person who comes into the agency will get proper attention and will get results. You get them into a job, you get them alcoholic treatment, mental health help. Then you've got an accountable agency.

All these people on the streets, we keep letting them go down and down and down and we're not stopping it. If you get in front of it, like we were trying to do with the PACE program, you get the people off the streets and get them the help they want. These are people that have been on the streets seven, eight, nine years. We got them off the streets. It can be done, and I *do* think employment's part of it. But it's very staff-intensive, and it takes a long time.

RC: Anything to add?

Rubado: There's just a sadness with leaving. I really wanted to have everything up and running before I left: successful employment programs, homeless services, etc. You can't do this without staff. I left rather than put up with an intolerable situation. I was just chatting with someone from the office who told me they're already talking about staffing cuts again. It's painful to hear that. ■

NOTES FROM THE KITCHEN

Celebrate your Sunday with Brunch

By Liz Smith

It's Sunday, and you are looking forward to a leisurely brunch. Did you know the British coined the term brunch back in the 1890s? They eat food with names like Butty (a sandwich) and Toad in the Hole (anybody's guess what that is). For a country with so many famous writers, you would think they could come up with better names than that.

Today's column features a savory dish which is easy to cook and fairly inexpensive. It is called *Huevos con Migas*, Spanish for Eggs with Little Crumbs. It looks appetizing on the plate, with the rich golden yellow of the eggs set off by the bright reds and deep green of the tomatoes and chile peppers. Put on some Mercedes Sosa music, set the table with red, white, and green (the colors of Mexico), and have a few fresh carnations in a vase. Use paper plates, and you will have a pleasant, civilized meal without running yourself ragged cooking and washing dishes.

In the following menu, I mention brand names of things I particularly like. If your tastes are different, by all means buy whatever you like best.

Mexican Brunch Menu

Huevos con Migas

Fletcher's peppercrust bacon
Gueuero flour tortillas

Simple Times peach salsa
Café con Leche (coffee with milk) and Ibarra Mexican chocolate

Huevos con Migas (serves 4 people)

2 TB butter or oil
2 medium onions
2 tomatoes (I used the B.C. hothouse variety)
2 poblano chiles

pepper
8 eggs plus 4 yolks
2/3 cup extra sharp cheddar cheese
2 handfuls of crispy tortilla chips

1 package Fletcher's peppercrust bacon
1 package Guerrero flour tortillas
butter and salt
1 jar Simple Times peach salsa

coffee
milk
Ibarra Mexican chocolate


- Place poblano chiles on a foil-lined cookie sheet a few inches below broiler. Broil on both sides until skin browns. Remove from oven. Fold edges of foil — let steam on counter 15 minutes. Peel skin and remove seeds. Set aside.
- Cook bacon on a foil-lined cookie sheet at 350 degrees until it's as crispy as you like, and since it keeps well in the fridge, you might as well cook the whole batch at once. Drain on paper towels, then keep warm in a low oven, about 175 degrees.
- Cut onions into small pieces. Melt butter in a big skillet and sauté onions on medium heat while you cut up the tomatoes. You can slice the tomatoes at the equator, then above and below, then remove the seeds and cut into small dice. Add to pan. Cut chiles into 1/2" squares and add to pan. Turn heat to low. Add pepper. Stir occasionally. After all the vegetables are in the pan they should cook about five minutes.
- Wrap the tortillas in foil and put in oven to warm.
- After the vegetables have had their five minutes of cooking, add the lightly beaten eggs. If the heat is too high the eggs will be tough and rubbery. After adding the eggs, let them cook and get set up a little. Use a big wide spatula to move the eggs, allowing the uncooked part to flow beneath the cooked part.
- While eggs are cooking slowly, cut cheese into small squares and set aside.
- When eggs are about three minutes to being cooked, add cubes of cheese and two handfuls of crunched-up chips. Stir everything together gently.
- Put eggs and bacon on a plate. Serve tortillas with butter and a dish of the peach salsa.
- When you are ready for your coffee, heat the milk. Mix in blender with the chocolate. Brew coffee. Mix equal parts coffee and chocolate. ■

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Thurs., Dec. 28, Rainier Ave. and S. Jackson St. 6:43 p.m. Police responded after receiving a 911 call from a 31-year-old homeless white male. He had been preparing to hang himself with a rope in front of Operation Nightwatch on 14th and Jackson, when another homeless man persuaded him to seek help. The man, who was intoxicated, said he was willing to go to Harborview Mental Health Clinic for a mental evaluation. He added that he had been at the clinic last week, but felt the staff there had not taken him seriously. An ambulance arrived and transported the man to Harborview.




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Fri., Dec. 29, E. Madison St., in front of Madison Market. A citizen walked into the market and told employees that there was a man outside with blood on his face. Officers arrived and found the victim, a 53-year-old homeless man, sitting on the sidewalk with blood coming from his nose and lip. He smelled of intoxicating beverages and possibly urine, and slurred his answers. He said he "got beat up for no reason." Eventually he described his assailant as a homeless black male, but was not able or willing to give more information, repeating, "He's a freak!" An area check was made, but the suspect was not located.

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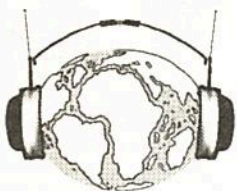
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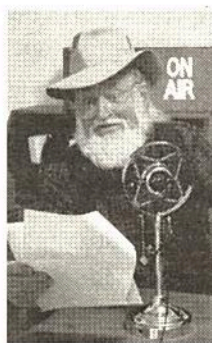
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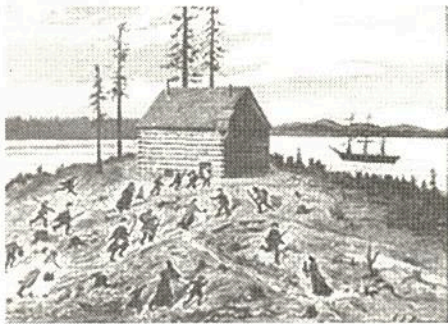
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passing parade.

Mon., Jan. 1, Seattle University Student Union building, E. Spring St., 6:53 a.m. Police received a complaint that somebody had broken into the Student Union building by breaking the window in the kitchen door with a rock. Officers checked the building and found no items out of place and all interior doors locked. The police departed. At 7:39 a.m., Dispatch informed the officers involved that a suspect had been located sleeping in one of the offices. The police returned, and were led to the office where a 31-year-old white male was asleep under a desk. He was awoken and questioned; when they found he was not a student, he was taken into custody. After the officers read him his rights, the man explained that he had found the window already broken and the door open, and that he had entered the building to sleep, saying he was cold and tired. He further stated that he thought it would be a safe place to sleep. He was booked into King County Jail.

Tues., Jan. 2, Broadway Texaco, 9:03 p.m. An officer saw a 31-year-old homeless man standing on the property at Texaco. The man had been told to stay off the property on many other occasions. At the time of contact the suspect was intoxicated. Texaco management currently has two cases pending regarding liquor violations; in order to comply with the state liquor ordinance, management has asked officers to "trespass" any intoxicated homeless people from their property. The man was booked into King County Jail. ■

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.

On the morning of January 26, 1856, after months of raids and clashes with federal troops in southern King County, Native Americans attacked Seattle. Previously warned by friendly natives, most settlers had bar-



THE ORIGINAL "BATTLE IN SEATTLE."

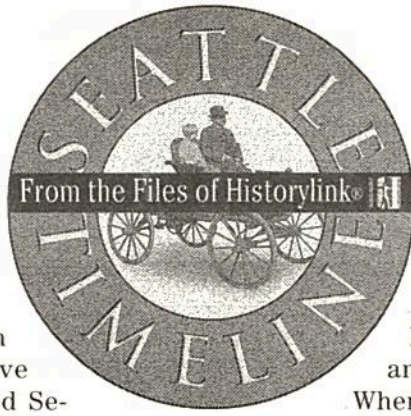
ricaded themselves in a blockhouse. The attackers were driven off by artillery fire and by Marines from the U.S. Navy sloop-of-war *Decatur*, anchored in Elliott Bay. Two settlers and an unknown number of raiders perished in the all-day "Battle of Seattle."

Conflicting reports credit Chief Seattle and his daughter Angeline, among other friendly natives, for warning Seattle's 50 or so white residents that an attack was imminent. They and many refugees from previous attacks in southern King County took shelter in a blockhouse at Cherry Street and First Avenue. The village also teemed with hundreds of friendly natives.

Further protection was afforded by the U.S. Navy sloop-of-war *Decatur*, which had anchored in Elliott Bay the previous fall. In response to warnings, her commander, Capt. Guert Gansevoort, ordered Marines ashore early on the morning of January 26. They lobbed a howitzer shell at a suspected enemy position on the forested crest of First Hill at about 8:30 a.m., and raiders replied with a fusillade of rifle fire.

Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens and others blamed that attack on Nisqually Chief Leschi and Klickitat/Yakama Chief Owhi, both of whom were later captured. Owhi was killed at Fort Walla Walla while trying to escape in late September 1856. Leschi eluded capture a little longer, thanks in part to the non-cooperation of settlers who felt he had been falsely accused of unrelated murders. Despite a strenuous, year-long defense to save his life, Leschi was hanged at Fort Steilacoom on February 19, 1858.

A throng of workers rounded up virtually every Chinese person in Seattle and herded them to the dock at the foot of Main Street for passage out of town on a waiting steamer on February 7, 1886. The mob and its frightened charges were met at the pier by police and a contingent of the volunteer Home Guard. A stalemate ensued when territorial governor Watson



Squire prevented the ship from leaving. The following morning, nearly 200 Chinese embarked for San Francisco, stranding another 150 on shore.

When police and deputies tried to escort this group back to their homes, the mob rioted. The deputies fired into the crowd, five agitators fell, and one died of his wounds. Governor Squire and President Grover Cleveland declared martial law.

On February 6, 1947, restaurateur Ivar Haglund was crowned the "Prince of Corn." A railroad tank car at Alaskan Way and Columbia Street had ruptured a hose and more than 1,000 gallons of corn sweetener spilled onto the street. Haglund, ever the promoter



THE PHOTO OF HAGLUND THAT MADE ITS WAY AROUND THE WORLD.

of his Acres of Clams Restaurant on Pier 54 across the street, saw an opportunity. He quickly ordered a stack of pancakes and donned a pair of hip boots. When news photographers and reporters arrived at the scene, they found Haglund squatting in a lake of corn sweetener, spooning the syrup onto his pancakes.

On January 26, 1969, civil rights leader and Seattle Urban League director Edwin Pratt (1930-1969) was killed by a shotgun blast outside his home in Shoreline. Police have never identified a suspect, and despite rewards totaling more than \$10,000, the case remains unsolved. ■

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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CLASSICS CORNER



by Perffess'r Harris

Last week, for no particular reason, we decided it was time to alphabetize our poetry collection. Perhaps we felt the universe was more disordered than usual, and would be improved if one small area could just begin with Ai and end with Yeats. Before long, we happened upon a poem by Angelou, Maya, that was read at the inauguration of Clinton, William Jefferson, on January 20, 1993.

This fine poem, which spoke of dinosaurs, mastodons, rocks, rivers, and trees, called us to an honest reckoning of the past and to face the new day with the hope and courage of the angels.

History, said Maya Angelou, "cannot be un-lived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."

The day she read that poem, we believed the universe was on our side.

Now, of course, we know better. The universe couldn't care less.

At times like this, it seems the theology of Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* might be closer to the mark. In *Chinatown*, Faye Dunaway, the goodhearted victim, gets her head blown off by the corrupt cop who should have been her protector. John Huston, the child-molesting, respectable businessman, ruthlessly gets his way because power and riches often do. And there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that Jack Nicholson can do to stop any of it.

We apologize if we've given the ending away, but let's face it, you've had 27 years to see this movie.

This and other recent inaugural events bring us to the classic problem of religious thought, to wit, why do bad things happen to good people? Or more to the point, why do good things happen to bad people?

The ancient Greeks, being the observant sort, wondered about this as well. Much as they wanted to believe in a world where Zeus upheld oaths and protected the weak, they couldn't help but notice that those

who lied, cheated, and bullied their way to power often wound up with all the best stuff. Like us, they did their best to explain away the contradiction.

In the ancient world, people could come to power through blood, mayhem, and electoral fraud, but later generations would pay the price.

For the Greeks, a dismal afterlife in Hades was assumed for all of us, so our own conviction that the evil bastards will all fry in hell would have lacked credibility. They opted instead for the familial curse. In the ancient world, people could come to

power through blood, mayhem, and electoral fraud, but later generations would pay the price. *The Orestes Trilogy* by Aeschylus, for example, is one of the classic tales of cosmic revenge.

Agamemnon was the son of King Atreus, who one day consolidated his kingdom by killing his brother's children and serving them for dinner. These, like repealing the capital gains tax, undermining Roe vs. Wade, and opening up pristine wildlife preserves for oil exploration, were horrifying acts that demanded retribution, so while Atreus got away with murder, his progeny would pay. Noble Agamemnon would be slain by his wife upon his return from Troy. Orestes would avenge his father, only to be hounded by the Furies to the ends of the earth.

Athena eventually rescues Orestes by replacing blind retribution with the beginnings of law. Humanity was now responsible to itself. And we still are. Yet the future is still at stake, and our own courage, as the poet said, is all that matters. ■

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Mid-winter Notables

Saturday, 1/27

Town Meeting with Congressman Jim McDermott; let him know what you think! 2 - 3:30 p.m., at the Garfield Community Center, 2323 E Cherry St, info 206-553-7170.

Dancing with the Dragon, a **Benefit for Frontline Hepatitis Awareness**, a musical event featuring Duffy Bishop Band, Jr Cadillac, and Dave Conant-D-Rangers; a fund-raiser and educational event for Hepatitis C sufferers; there are approximately 100,000 people with Hep C in Washington State, most of whom are unaware they are infected. Anonymous bloodtest available for price of entrance ticket (\$25). 8:30 p.m., at VFW Post 3063, 2812 NW Market St.; info Frontline 206-328-5381.

Monday, 1/29

Women's Advocacy Day, sponsored by National Organization for Women and 10 statewide women's organizations. Starts with legislative briefing in Hearing Room E, appointments with legislators, legislative reception, join with other women's groups, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., in Olympia; info NOW Legislative coordinator Linda Tosti-Lane, 425-771-8923.

Thursday, 2/1

Naturopathic Treatments for Menopause! Alternative Healthcare Access Campaign (AHAC) sponsors "Menopause Naturally," an educational seminar with Dr. Jane Gultinan, Dean of the Bastyr Center for Natural Health. All proceeds benefit AHAC's alternate healthcare clinics for homeless and low-income people. \$20/person. 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m., 1307 N 45th St. Register and information, 907-2134.

Monday, 2/5

Homeless Youth Advocacy Day in Olympia, info wsch@earthlink.net

Wednesday, 2/7

Washington Association of Churches **Church Advocacy Day** at the state capitol with Opening 9:30 a.m., Legislative Briefing 9:45 - 10:45 a.m., advocacy role play, 10:45 - 11:00 a.m., lunch at Capitol Rotunda 11 - 11:45 a.m., procession to the Capitol steps for noon rally, 12:30 p.m. onward, info 206-625-9790.

Saturday, 2/10

Benefit for **Central Seattle Grassroots Radio**, a non-profit democratically run station

which is planning to resume soon, an all-ages, all-acoustic show, \$5, 8 p.m., at 2015 2nd Ave., downtown, 206-956-0489, info <http://www.microradio.net/csg>:

Monday, 2/12

Seattle Seniors Internet Group (SSIG), this and subsequent 2nd Mondays, 1 p.m., at Greenwood Senior Center, 525 N 85th St., with off-street parking, info Ralph Pfister seniors@transport.com or <http://www.nw-seniorsonline.org> or 206-361-0369.

Monday, 2/19

Have a Heart for Kids Day is the Children's Alliance's annual advocacy day at the state capitol, featuring activities 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 Wednesdays

Meeting of **Resist the List**, working to prevent mandatory reporting of HIV positive people, 7:30 p.m., at the community room, Cal Anderson House, 400 Broadway, info 206-517-2617 or jackman@drizzle.com or <http://www.speakeasy.org/~rtl>

Ongoing Thursdays

Deface the Nation, an alternate view on corporate media, topics such as New Weird Odor, Surreality Check, Right Wing Flap, and Rights Erosion Watch. Hot topic of the week dissects the main corporate headline as it is ... not how the corporations would like us to think it is, 11 p.m., TV channel 29, info defacenation@hotmail.com

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 Sundays

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

Ongoing Daily

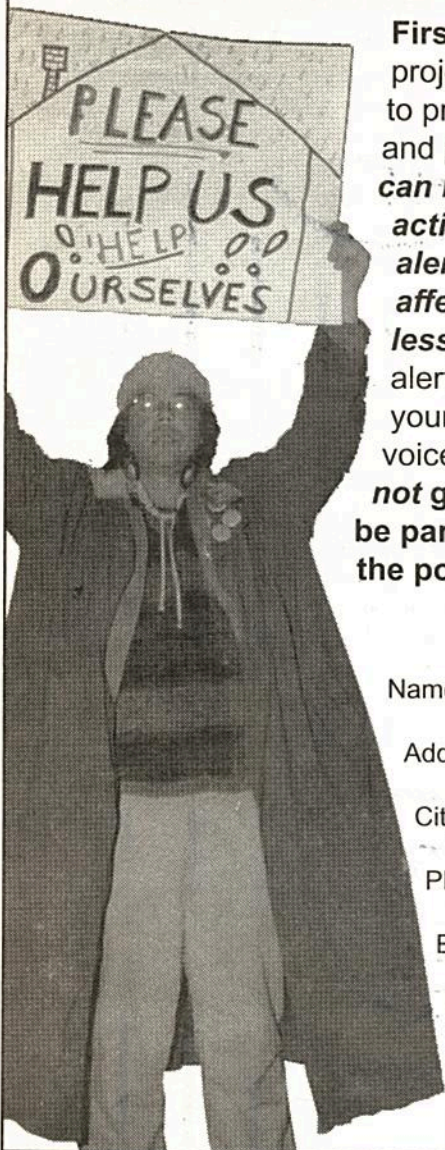
FareStart assists people who are homeless through training in life skills, food service, and the culinary arts, and job placement, and runs their own restaurant, lunch daily and dinner on Thursdays only, with guest chefs from area restaurants. A 3- or 4-course dinner is only \$14.50 plus tax and tip, with all of the proceeds going to FareStart, 1902-2nd Ave., please consider logging on to <http://www.farestart.org> and making a donation.

Safe Schools Coalition of Washington's toll free Hotline for Intervention, the number to call if you go to school (or work in a school) in Washington State, are having a problem with homophobic harassment or violence, need help solving it (advocacy, intervention, someone to help you talk with your principal or the police or your family or a lawyer), at toll-free 1-888-307-9275, or email intervention@safeschools-wa.org, non-emergency 2 - 8 p.m., Monday - Thursday, info 206-632-0662, ext. 49 or questions@safeschools-wa.org

Free Reading, Writing, Math, and ESL classes for adults at the People's Learning Center. Morning class location: Prince Hall Masonic Lodge, 306 24th Ave. S (between Yesler and Jackson). Use the side entrance. Evening class location: Every Body Health and Fitness, 2609 S Jackson, top floor. For more information, call 206-325-8308 or 206-233-9480.

Free Public Speaking Class! Have more confidence in yourself and learn how to speak to groups. We meet twice a month, every other Tuesday, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Instructor is from Seattle University. Come one, come all. Location: People's Learning Center at Prince Masonic Lodge, 306 24th Ave S. Use the side entrance. For more information, call 206-325-8308. ■

Do Something!



First things First is the organizing project of *Real Change* that works to preserve low-income housing and put a roof over every bed. **You can help by pledging to take action when First things First alerts you to critical decisions affecting the poor and homeless.** When you join our action alert list we will contact you by your preferred method when your voice needs to be heard. **You will not get a lot of junk mail. You will be part of creating real change for the poor and homeless.**

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citizens participation project



Support Wheels for the Poor

Issue: Senate Bill 5031, the "Wheels to Work" program, would be a step in the right direction in providing tools for children and their families to move out of poverty.

Background: Modeled after "wheels to work" programs in many other states, this policy would provide adults in the WorkFirst program with an opportunity to purchase a car. The car would be leased to a program participant who needs a car to get to work for six months at \$30 a month. For the first six months of the lease, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) would pay the car insurance premium. At the end of the six-month lease, the recipient would cover the cost of insurance. At the end of the first year of the lease, the title of the vehicle would be transferred to the participant. During the entire 12 months of the lease, the state will provide all necessary repairs to the car and emissions compliance requirements, but the recipient will be responsible for its maintenance. DSHS will administer the program and be responsible for acquiring donated vehicles. The program would be piloted in Pierce, Yakima, and Spokane Counties and expanded statewide after one year of implementation.

Statewide Policy Action Network's report, "Faces of Poverty: In-depth Interviews with Families in Rural and Urban Washington State," released last April, documented the level of difficulty low-income families experience with transportation. Eight percent of families in rural communities and 51 percent of families in urban communities ranked transportation as the biggest barrier to getting and keeping a job.

Action: Contact your state senator and members of the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee, and ask them to pass Senate Bill 5031, the "Wheels to Work" Bill. Committee members include Sen. Stevens (N.E. King and E. Snohomish counties), Sen. Costa (Everett/ Snohomish County), Sen. Kohl-Welles (Denny Regrade/ Magnolia/ Queen Anne/ Ballard/ Greenwood), Sen. Kastama (Sumner/Puyallup), and Sen. Long (S. Snohomish County).

Contact your senator using the toll-free legislative hotline at 1-800-562-6000. Leave a message for your senator saying, "Please vote in favor of Senate Bill 5031, the Wheels to Work Bill. Invest in children and their families on welfare by providing the tools they need to move out of poverty."

You can leave a message on this hotline (8 a.m. - 8 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Sat.) as well as locate your representative, find out which committees they serve on, and order copies of bills.

To view a copy of the bill, find your district on the web, or send an email to your legislator, visit www.leg.wa.gov. For further information, please contact Aiko Schaefer, Statewide Poverty Action Network, at (206) 694-6794 or aikos@fremontpublic.org. ■

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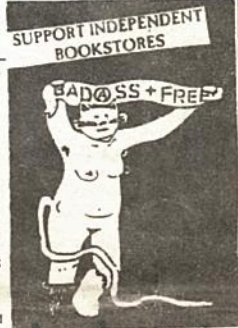
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