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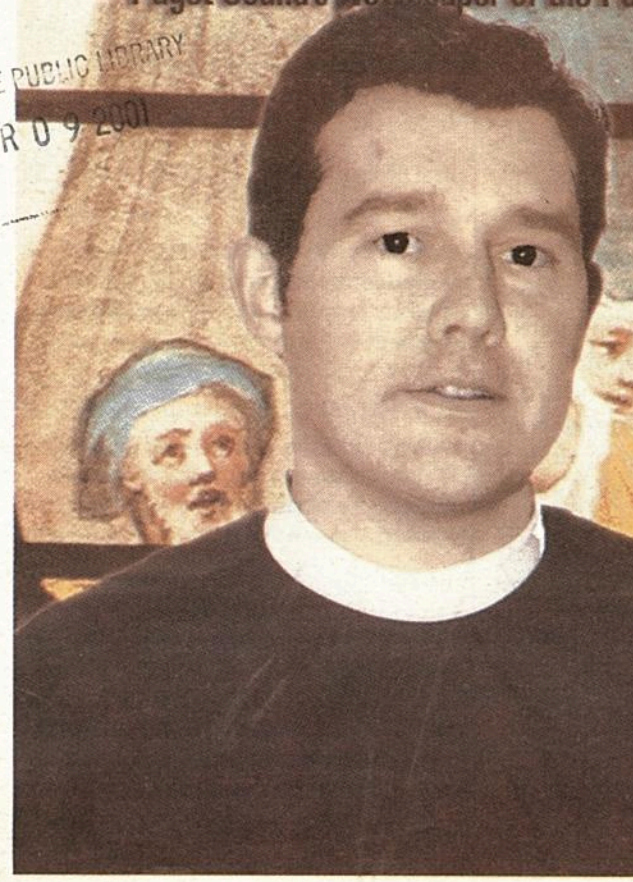
Change

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

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Faith Matters

Dean Robert Taylor on homelessness, community, and the politics of caring

Inside: Locke Swings the Axe • Happy Birthday Tent City, Goodbye Winter Shelters • Managed Care Nightmare

PHOTO OF DEAN ROBERT TAYLOR BY MIKE HAMRICK.

Interview by Tim Harris and Liz Smith

When Rev. Robert Taylor was installed as the Dean of St. Mark's Cathedral, there was little reason to believe that his would be a quiet tenure. For starters, the 42-year-old Dean fled South Africa 20 years ago, after his anti-apartheid activism had drawn the wrong kind of government attention. When Taylor arrived at St. Mark's in February of last year, he became the first openly gay man ever chosen to head a U.S. Cathedral. By May, Taylor had committed the Cathedral to hosting SHARE's Tent City. Soon after, St. Mark's was bringing service providers, city officials, funders, and homeless people themselves to the table to talk about how homelessness could be ended in Seattle. On April 28, this dialogue will result in a "Creating the Political Will to End Homelessness" conference, hosted by St. Mark's (see sidebar). *Real Change* spoke with Dean Taylor about religion, politics, and other matters not discussed in polite company.

Real Change: Why is homelessness a priority issue for Saint Mark's, and how did hosting Tent Village lead to the Community Dialogue?

Dean Robert Taylor: I see shelter as a basic human right. The continuation of homelessness is a great moral blot on our culture and who we are. We live in the most affluent country that humankind has ever known, and yet there are people who are homeless.

So when we were asked to host Tent Village last year, it seemed to me to be a no-brainer. It was an act of compassion in the tradition of Christian hospitality. But I kept asking myself, "What good does this do? We have a tent city here for two weeks and they go away and nothing has changed."

And so, as I wrestled with that and started talking with people, this idea just seemed to not let go of me. What would it be like if we invited Tent Village here and at the same time invited people who work with the homeless and other people in the community — the religious leadership, city government folks, some people from the foundation and corporate worlds, and people who are homeless — to come and be a part of a dialogue on homelessness, and see if we could get a coalition of people operating in separate worlds?

I know that people's lives are busy, and consumed with their own issues, and that their energy for other issues is limited. But I also believe that, at heart, people want to do the right thing.

RC: How has hosting Tent Village changed St. Mark's?

Taylor: Well, it's been really quite a remarkable and wonderful experience. The first time Tent Village was here, a much-loved member of the congregation walked between the tents and had someone tap him on his shoulder. It was his nephew, whom he had not seen in 20 years. And they have been reunited with family members and it has been a powerful story. That encounter was spoken about a lot in the life of the Cathedral.

Another example that comes to mind is a woman who has been a member here for generations. She's a very quiet, thankful, wonderful human being. She started baking bread for Tent Village every morning. And after Tent Village left after their first visit, I learned that she was still baking bread every day and following them around from place to place. I said to her, "Cokie, this is amazing, you know. You are just wonderful." And she said, "It's nothing, don't thank me." And I said, "No, you don't understand. We talk about the Eucharist, and the bread is the symbol of life and eternity, and you are carrying that out in a very practical way."

There are endless stories about the way in which St. Mark's has been transformed by this wonderful experience. It's been a gift to us.

RC: Where does your faith come from and what helps you keep your faith strong in the face of looking at the world?

Taylor: I see wonderful people, like Cokie, the woman that I just spoke of. Is that action going to end homelessness? Of course not. Does it remind us that we're all human and that we share a common humanity and that we're all made in the image of God? Yes. What happens if there are 100 or 1,000 or 100,000 Cokies doing things similar, every day, just in this city?

Some of it is related to where I grew up, which was South Africa, and becoming friends with families of people detained or murdered by the government, people forcibly evicted from their own beautiful homes because of their race, and moved to little concrete shacks. And yet, seeing the human spirit survive and refuse to be defeated by that. In all of those cases, they were people who connected that with their faith and who refused to stop fighting, and also refused to stop loving. And who refused to believe that they were anything less than gorgeous in the image of God. Those experiences have shaped me forever.

And I suppose some of my own struggling with what it means to be gay in an institution that has said "You are less than human; you are not quite OK" gives me some understanding of others. Life comes with a lot of adversity. Have I known some of that? Yes. Is it [greater] or less than someone else's? Probably yes to all of that. But, the question is, what do we do with it?

Continued on Page 10



Divisive? Us?

Dear *Real Change*,

In a city wrought with racial tension and economic division, it disturbs me to fathom the mentality which strives to incite further disparity.

I refer to the inflammatory article in your March 8 issue entitled "In the Git-Along Gang." The article implies a Gestapo-like presence by the Metropolitan Improvement District's Ambassador program.

The notion that an ambassador is trained to harass the harmless is both inaccurate and absurd. The role of "ambassador," whether safety or maintenance, is defined and performed with diplomacy, professionalism, and mutual respect for each and every resident and visitor in the city of Seattle.

Rather than further exacerbate themes of maliciousness among former and current MID employees, or prolong the misconceptions about our organization, I invite everyone to work together to promote cooperation and unity within our city.

I strongly urge whoever is unfamiliar or uncomfortable with any aspect of our program to simply approach an ambassador on the street and talk about it. Engaging in dialogue and dispelling stereotypes is the only way we have to effectively initiate a...**REAL CHANGE.**"

Sincerely,
Lainne Dexter
Safety Supervisor, MID, Seattle

The joy of giving

Dear *Real Change*,

On a glass storefront, long unleased, on Pike Street, was this notice: "Help protect our community by not supporting pan handling. Report drug activity to police at 911." It was signed by the Chamber of Commerce.

Firstly, let me mention that it was the only such flyer I've seen and that it was placed in a window front unoccupied for nearly a year. The possibility of market manipulation should not be overlooked but this is not what inspired me to interrupt your day and ask for your attention for which I thank you in advance. I have spoken to those that panhandle (by the way the term "pan-

handle" is obsolete — "spare changing" is the appropriate lingo). In fact, in the almost a year that I've been living on Capitol Hill I've shelled out close to \$1,000 to a small group of selected individuals living on the street. No one I've talked to wants to be in their predicament, and they have each told me that the worst part of asking for money is being ignored. I know it is not the money they are really asking for but rather validation, recognition, and acknowledgement. Whether the money goes for a piece of black tar (heroin) or a burger (cholesterol) at Dick's doesn't matter. That is their decision. I, by giving a dollar here and there, encourage them as people.

Delegating this attention to underpaid, under-trained social services is not working as well as hoped. Nor is punishing someone for having gotten addicted to an uncontrollable substance, as the courts are starting to discover. Also realize that it costs our community tens of thousands of dollars when QFC punishes someone for having stolen a doughnut and a candy bar. Spare changing is an activity that requires many of the same skills as most socially approved employments, and should be considered an efficient and human form of helping and being helped. I don't have a magic wand. I can't clean people all up and turn them into CEOs and artists, but I would if I could. They know this every time they hear my gentle words of encouragement and feel the paper or coins in their hands. The members of the Chamber of Commerce I'm sure have issues and this is not an affront to them, but a suggestion that the livelihood of a street person does more good than harm.

Sincerely,
Dean Hedges
Seattle

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Change

Puget Sound's Voice of the
Poor and Homeless

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Mission Statement:

Real Change organizes, educates, and builds alliances to create solutions to homelessness and poverty. We exist to provide a voice for poor people in our community.

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. Programs include the *Real Change* newspaper, the MacWorkshop computer lab, StreetLife Art Gallery, the StreetWrites peer support group for homeless writers, the Homeless Speakers Bureau, and the First things First organizing project. All donations 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. *Real Change* 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.

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

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Burning at Both Ends

Slashing the state health care budget will sicken everyone

By Adam Holdorf

If you're homeless, sick, and need to see a doctor, you can either ignore your problems — hoping they won't get worse — or plunge into the state Medicaid program's managed-care system. If you choose the latter, you might need help from Health Care for the Homeless Network (HCHN).

For five years, the outreach workers of HCHN have been making the rounds to Seattle-area family and domestic violence shelters, meeting with sick homeless people to help them navigate the managed-care Medicaid system. Last year, they reached about 800 families and domestic violence victims in 25 shelters. Outreach workers help applicants choose insurance providers, or — if they're ruled ineligible for Medicaid — find more immediate short-term help. "We help you pick your own provider rather than having the system — meaning, a computer — pick for you," says Scott Pinegar of HCHN.

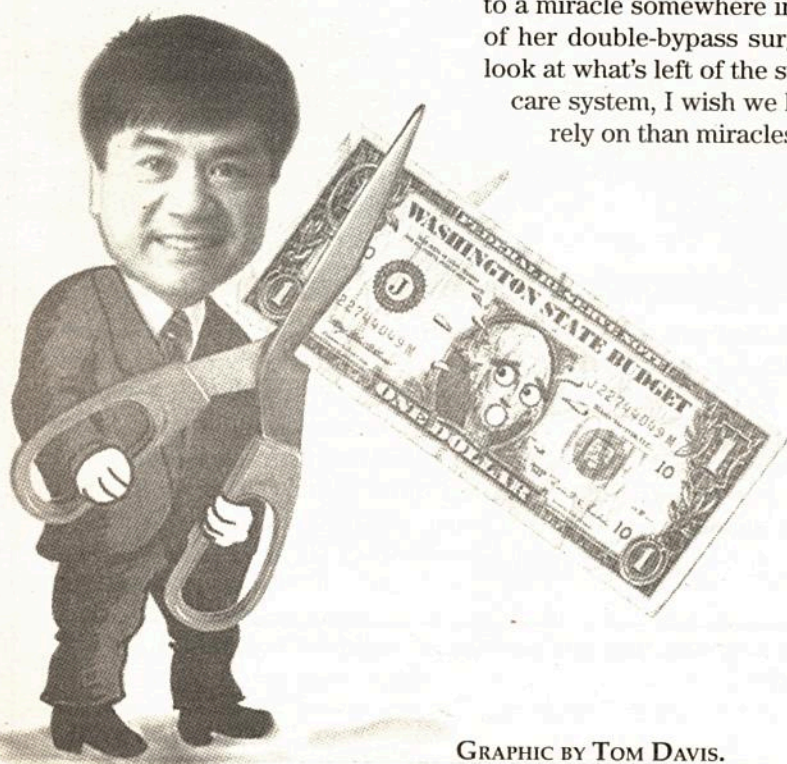
But state budget cuts will lop off 40 percent of the organization's budget. And while assistance for homeless people will be missed, you can take your pick of programs nicked and picked over as the budget planning enters its final weeks.

There's the cap on the Children's Health Insurance Program, which will leave 4,000 eligible children uninsured. When children, low-income adults, and homeless people need emergency medical care, they'll get it some way — usually through the free or sliding-scale hospitals or emergency wards. But there's less to help people once they're in desperate situations, and less to prevent the young from avoiding unhealthy circumstances. Health care is burning at both ends. The result will be more sick people avoiding a doctor until they're in dire straits.

It's hard to understand Locke's rationale for proposing cuts to entire programs. Perhaps his budget writers grew weary of the constant wave of voter-mandated austerity measures. One told the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, "We just thought that it was a better policy decision to shut some things down completely rather than to just keep nicking them."

Once the slashing's over, we're left to ponder how the creaking system makes things worse. Look at what happened to John Joseph Pajor, who tells his own story on page seven. He and his wife, insured by Basic Health through Blue Cross, were in the midst of an emergency situation when the only hospital Blue Cross said would take their plan simply wouldn't respond to a phone call. When his wife's emergency care was postponed five hours, it was the fault of a managed-care system that cut off the route to the most immediate aid because, as Mr. Pajor told me, "they said, 'You've only got Basic Health.'"

Mr. Pajor credits his wife's survival to a miracle somewhere in the course of her double-bypass surgery. As we look at what's left of the state's health care system, I wish we had more to rely on than miracles. ■



GRAPHIC BY TOM DAVIS.

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BBC NEWS SERVICES, LONDON — It is an epidemic destined to make the African AIDS scourge look mild. The foot and mouth plague has already caused over 1,500 deaths in Europe and Russia, and with new strains reported, threatens to become an illness whose transmission cannot be controlled.

But to make matters worse, the Monsanto corporation is now refusing to abide by a decree of the United Nations and the World Health Organization that they stop shutting down farms and jailing farmers for growing vegetables. Monsanto owns WTO patents for corn, soybeans, wheat, and a dozen other plants, and accuses farmers of not paying licensing fees.

Farmers in India have been hardest hit by Monsanto, since poor transportation and a devalued rupee have prevented them from becoming part of the European Union's food distribution network. A faction of leaders at the U.N. this week pleaded unsuccessfully for \$1 billion in aid to the Indian farmers.

"We have to let the global marketplace make its own corrections," asserted President Bush of the United States. "Tainted beef or illegal wheat, it's the same assault on our communities." Bush maintained his support to arrest those involved with the black market agricultural trade.

So while eating cattle is deadly and eating plants, illegal, we leave you with the bitter salutation of the day, at least as it is in the East End: *Bon appetit!* ■

—Bob Redmond

Sidran steps up, Osgood ducks out

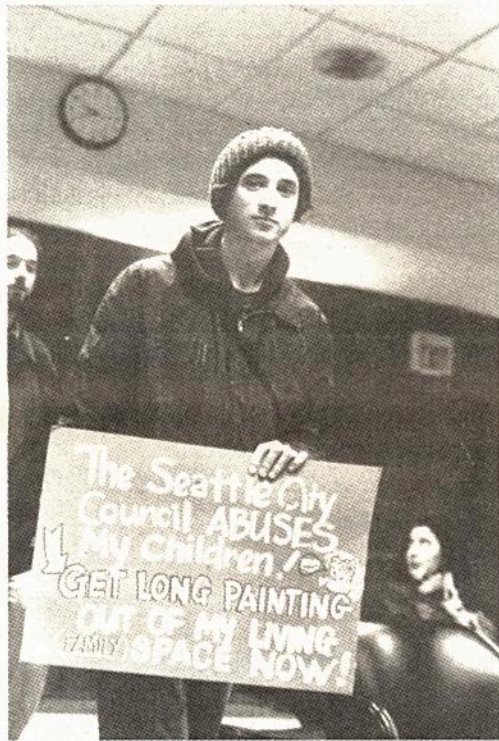
Mark Sidran made what might seem like an odd choice of locale to announce his run for Mayor — Jose Rizal Park, on the northwest flank of Beacon Hill. The park stands in the shadow of the former PacMed (now Amazon.com) building. It's off the beaten path for most of the local establishment: the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* mistakenly called it "Jose Reval Park." It's more meaningful for homeless people and friends present on July 18, 1994, and June 10, 1998 — when the City of Seattle bulldozed The Jungle, the greenbelt/camp to the north.

Sidran's entry into the Mayor's race empties the slate for his office. Local civil defense attorney David Osgood, who's tussled with Sidran in defense of black nightclub owners and campaigned to overturn the city's poster ban, had once indicated he might confront Sidran during a 2001 re-election campaign. Now that Sidran's stepped up, he's less interested in running for office.

"Someone would have to work really hard" to get him into the City Attorney's race, says Osgood, a sole practitioner with five years' experience in Seattle. "If I've got a legitimate opponent, I'd look like a flake." ■

—Adam Holdorf

Standing on ceremony



MATT REMLE MAKES HIS FEELINGS KNOWN. PHOTO BY MIKE HAMRICK.

Matt Remle and other members of the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice (CCEJ) picketed the March 26 Seattle City Council briefing to draw attention to Long Painting, the fume-spewing South Park neighborhood paint plant. Members of the South Seattle neighborhood are trying to roll back the smoke-stack emissions, noise, and groundwater runoff at Long — which is seeking city approval to expand its operations.

"If the City Council didn't allow mixed-use zoning, we wouldn't have [Long Painting] in the first place," says Yalonda Sindé, CCEJ's director. CCEJ and South Park residents are calling on City Councilmember Judy Nicastro to re-examine Long's operation.

Long disagrees that its work is creating all the problems at

the site, pointing to the years of manufacturing in the working-class neighborhood. That, says Sindé, ignores their current activity: "It's like running up to someone with a spray can, spraying them in the face, and then saying, 'Well, there's other sources of paint out there.'" ■

—Adam Holdorf

Restless nights

The parking garage east of the Municipal Building on Fourth and James Street is coming down, and the sound of crumbling concrete is causing at least one of the 50 homeless men sleeping in the building's shelter to lose sleep.

Demolition work goes on until 10 p.m., sometimes until midnight. The shelter, operated by the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC), is continuing as it is. When lights-out comes at 10 p.m., the noise goes on.

One shelter patron, Robert, filed a complaint with King County Risk Management. He says the noise is keeping many homeless people from getting their seven and a half hours of sleep.

A spokesman for the construction contractor was surprised to hear that the Municipal Building shelter was still open: "I thought they'd relocate it."

Meribeth Berberich, a manager in the city's Human Services Department, says that as the two-year project moves along, the shelter will be relocated. The noise "hasn't been brought to our attention yet," and she doesn't know



when construction would necessitate moving the shelter. "Maybe they're accelerating the construction," she says. "These kinds of things often change without us knowing."

DESC head Bill Hobson says that, in the meantime, there's little hope of stopping the background noise: "The alternative here is to close the doors, but we figured this is better than having 50 people on the street." ■

—Aubrey Hiers

Electrifying controversy

When your child flips the switch on Death Row Marv, the six-inch action figure convulses and says, "That the best you can do, you pansies?" Some might think that's funny, but a nationwide coalition of groups says it sends the message that killing is OK. Amnesty International, the National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children, and locally, Mothers for Police Accountability, are all calling on chain stores to pull Death Row Marv off the shelves.

Mothers For Police Accountability is one of these groups appalled by the sale of the toy, based on a character in the adult-themed comic book series *Sin City*. Harriet Walden, the director of Mothers for Police Accountability, urges individuals not to buy the toy. "I believe that the electric chair, presented as a toy, will desensitize our children to suffering," she says.

Louis Solomon, a representative of Tower Records, where Death Row Marv can be purchased by anyone over 13, responds, "Could not the opposite be true? The toy provides a forum to discuss the death penalty. Far from desensitizing, Death Row Marv raises the issue to be discussed."

Just goes to show Tower's commitment to a public debate over capital punishment — so long as it means money in the bank. ■

—Aubrey Hiers



A GOOD LAUGH, A FORUM FOR DISCUSSION, OR A SUPPORT FOR VIOLENCE?

Vigil for change



ELISE DEGOOYER, LEFT, WAS OUT IN WESTLAKE PARK HANDING OUT LEAFLETS ON MARCH 8 — INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY — TO INAUGURATE A WEEKLY WOMEN IN BLACK VIGIL. DEGOOYER MODELED THE WOMEN IN BLACK WITNESSING AFTER THE SILENT VIGILS FOR HOMELESS MEN OR WOMEN FOUND DEAD ON THE STREETS OF SEATTLE. MEMBERS OF THE WOMEN'S HOMELESS EMPOWERMENT AND EDUCATION LEAGUE (WHEEL) SPONSORED THOSE VIGILS. DEGOOYER IS HOPING GROUPS WILL JOIN HER TO HIGHLIGHT A LOCAL, NATIONAL, OR GLOBAL ISSUE EVERY THURSDAY AT 4:30 P.M. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL HER AT (206)722-4340.

PHOTO BY ANDREA LEE.

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

Hunted

Tent City, one year old, faces more fines

By Adam Holdorf

City officials appear to be taking a new tactic in their ongoing quarrel with Tent City: they're breathing down the collars of its supporters.

Last month, the Department of Design, Construction and Land Use issued a Notice of Violation to its current host, Trinity United Methodist Church, threatening \$75-a-day fines if the homeless encampment didn't move by April 5. It followed up by notifying them of a new inquiry: DCLU wants to know if zoning codes are violated in Trinity's renting floor space to other organizations.

Alan Justad of DCLU confirms that, prompted by an anonymous complaint, the city is looking at Trinity's leases. "We don't know whether or not it's a code violation," he says. "We'll be investigating it in the next few weeks."

If Trinity is breaking city land use code with its third-floor leases, then so are many other churches, contends Trinity Pastor Rich Lang. The practice of leasing office space to community groups is "widespread," and it helps keep religious organizations afloat in a time of declining membership. Lang estimates that the lease revenue makes up about one-third of the 65-member Ballard church's \$40,000 annual income.

Regardless of where the complaint comes from, DCLU's inquiry creates additional stress on a small organization faced with big fines. Lang says it

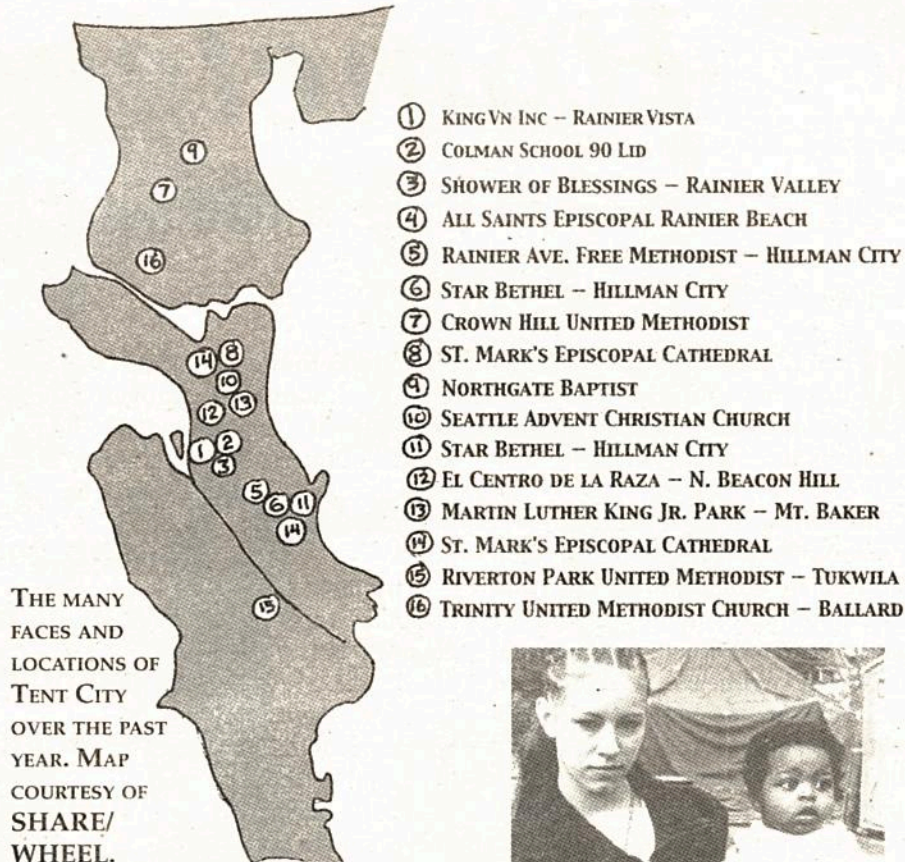
sends a message to other organizations thinking of hosting the homeless camp: if you do, the city will be on your back.

"They're trying to intimidate other churches," says Lang. "They're saying, 'If you offer sanctuary, we're going to squeeze you.'"

Lang says hosting Tent City is no less than the church's duty. At a special meeting of the congregation, everyone was in favor of hosting the camp. "Our parking lot is part of the body of Christ," he says. "It does not really belong to us."

Both Lang and Mark Rising, an attorney for the Pacific Northwest United Methodist Conference, say the city would do well to back off, or face the law — specifically, the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000, which declares that government may not impose land use law contrary to a religious institution's beliefs — unless there's a "compelling governmental interest." The city would have to prove that land use codes are more important than what Lang refers to as a "sane, sober, safe community." In telling them to evict the camp, Lang wrote in a March 30 letter to DCLU, "the action you are asking us to take is both malodorous and offensive to our understanding of what it means to be a human being."

This is the second time in this Tent City's one-year, 16-host existence that DCLU has assessed the property owners



TWO PARTICIPANTS IN THE TENT CITY CELEBRATION. PHOTO BY JON CAPUTO.

with fines for a land use code violation. DCLU has yet to collect on thousands of dollars it drew up during Tent City's six-month stay at El Centro de La Raza. Roberto Maestas, head of El Centro, says the city has not yet gotten serious. "There's no indication they'll take us to court [to collect the fines]," he says. "It's a sensitive political dilemma for them."

Maestas believes the city will wait until it meets in court with lawyers for Tent City, who are filing suit to roll back the fines. If the city wins, says Maestas, "they will move on us."

"There's no way we are going to pay the fine," says Pastor Lang, of his Ballard church. "For us, it's an issue of

sanctuary. The city is asking us to provide shelter for homeless people. Here we are, providing shelter, in a way that is not endangering anyone's wellbeing," he says. "On the one hand, we are asked to be useful to the community; on the other, if you do it this way, they'll fine you." ■

Policy Watch

By Nancy Amidei

The season of hard budget choices is upon us. This week and next will be dominated by floor votes on all surviving bills by close of business day on Friday, April 13. Everyone is also eager to see what version of the budget — the Governor's or the Senate's — the equally divided House can agree on.

Health and human services advocates were generally pleased by the Senate budget — chiefly because it includes funding for many programs eliminated or cut by the Governor. However, it is all relative. In a time when many basic survival services need expanding, it is not exactly good news that the Senate budget "only" cuts \$15 million from human services, compared with the Governor's \$106 million.

Budget: Still in the Senate Rules Committee, waiting to be scheduled for Floor Action, is the two-year supplemental budget (SB 5346). The Senate's operating budget was passed with no

major amendments; the House will follow with its own version in a few weeks.

Long-Term Care: A version of a house bill, HB 1652, to require a prescription drug fair pricing act is being kept alive in the House budget process. The Governor's budget eliminated routine dental coverage and vision services (including eyeglasses) for low-income adults; the Senate version of the budget includes funding for both.

Childcare: A bill providing services for 18- to 21-year-olds who are or have been in foster care, HB 1259, still lacks a Medicaid extension as it awaits floor action in the Senate.

Housing: SSB 5965, a bill to use local option real estate excise taxes of 0.5 percent for affordable housing, passed the Senate and is before the House Finance Committee.

Health Care: A bill to extend family planning services to families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, SB 5186, appears to have died in the House Appropriations Committee on Monday.

Juveniles/youth: A bill to revise the BECCA and HOPE Acts, allowing judges to "stack" time against runaways and allowing runaways to be detained for 21 days, SSB 5500, passed the Senate and is awaiting action on the House floor. A bill to create youth courts, SB 5692, passed the Senate and is awaiting floor action in the House. The Senate budget includes \$240,000 for shelter funding, but warns that new sources of funding must be found in the next budget cycle.

Mental Health: SSB 5211, requiring comparable mental health benefits for children, appears to have died in the House Appropriations Committee on Monday. The Governor's budget proposes closing 15 wards at state mental hospitals, and sending 422 patients to community care. The Senate budget would instead close four wards, move 120 patients from state hospitals to community-based facilities, and provide \$5.7 mil-

lion to improve community-based care for them, for an estimated savings of \$3.4 million.

Sexual Assault: SB 5189, a bill to allow victims of domestic violence or stalking to receive unemployment benefits, appears to have died in its House committee.

Substance Abuse: A bill to make it easier to involuntarily treat someone with a chemical dependency, SB 5051, is awaiting House floor action. A bill requiring the identification of drug-infected infants and providing treatment to their mothers, SSB 5416, appears to have died in its House committee.

If there is a bill or budget item that you want passed or stopped, the easiest way to tell your legislators is to use the toll-free hotline: 1-800-562-6000 (complete with translation services). One call from you can send a message to your Senator, both Representatives, and the Governor — all in about 90 seconds. ■

This bulletin is also available at <http://depts.washington.edu/sswweb/policywatch.html>. Information on these and other matters can be tracked on various state websites, such as the state Legislature's website, www.leg.wa.gov.

Homeless Smoking

A bad habit is hard to lose

By Pati Wilson

When I first became homeless, it occurred to me on that stark, penniless morning that I would most likely have to quit smoking cigarettes.

This horrible revelation came upon me soon after devouring my Mission muffin and my stolen coffee, when that predictable unavoidable craving for tobacco began to creep, and I started to twitch and writhe as my body turned a pale, sickly green and sprouted a thick growth of matted fur. My nails turned to black, gnarly claws, and I was soon an angry monster, dangerous and mean. I needed a cigarette.

It had been 25 years since I first lit up in an effort to be as grown-up as the other immature idiots I was hanging out with at the time, and I have been in bondage to smoking ever since. In those days a pack of cigarettes cost a whopping 50 cents, and it was no great imposition to ask someone for a smoke if you happened to be out and in need; unlike these days, when you may as well be asking for a stranger's first-born son or, at the very least, their wallet, the way they look at you as if to say, "So, where's your collateral?" Strangers on the street respond more kindly to panhandling than to the request for a cigarette, mostly due to the fact that they could very well get off cheaper by giving someone cash rather than a smoke, which is an automatic quarter. (For those of you who are smugly innocent of the economics of a tobacco habit, a pack of cigarettes costs around four dollars now, sometimes more.)

In spite of the additional hardships presented by habitual cigarette smoking, quitting smoking while living on the streets proved to be more than my already weak constitution could accomplish, and only succeeded in throwing me into insipid fits of monster-itis. So I found myself faced with a dilemma:

Should I try to stick it out and "Just Say No," or should I get innovative and score myself a cig? I decided to be realistic about the whole thing and scrounge, self-discipline never having been my strong point.

The most logical place to get a cigarette is from a smoker, right? However, logistics are a consideration here, and by that I mean it's hard to bum a smoke on a street where everybody else is bumming smokes — e.g., lower Pike Street. Fifth Avenue is not good, either; people there carefully avoid looking at you, and anyway, most of them no longer smoke, and are by now much too angelic and untouchable to even get close to a smoker: they might breathe second-hand-clothing-smoke-stains, then they'd have to sue you. I decided Third and Union would be good.

I am not a good beggar, due to unhealthy bouts of shyness, and very soon after my arrival on the scene I was too embarrassed to ask anyone, after being turned down by a woman, close to my own age, successful. She made me feel like dog doo-doo, the way she had looked at me condescendingly before she turned me down. I hated her, and I hated me. I decided I wouldn't put myself through

this, and went to find a cliff to jump off of — or push someone else off of.

Then suddenly, like a light went on upstairs, there it was... shining ahead of me like the land of Oz... my stash.

Quitting smoking while living on the streets proved to be more than my already weak constitution could accomplish, and only succeeded in throwing me into insipid fits of monster-itis. So I found myself faced with a dilemma: Should I try to stick it out and "Just Say No," or should I get innovative and score myself a cig?

My own personal Mecca. The answer to the problem at hand was there before me: A great big ashtray, full of unusually long butts. Now, this was no ordinary ashtray, nor was it the receptacle for just anybody's butt. This exceptionally clean ashtray was in the only smoking area for one of the largest and classiest buildings in downtown Seattle, a building that housed lawyers and stockbrokers and businesspeople who, in spite of their elevated status, have fallen prey to the tobacco demon. Having succumbed to this very human ailment of addiction, it became necessary

that these people occasionally dropped down here to indulge, just a little and just for a moment, in our shared filthy habit, before scurrying back up to their offices. They usually didn't stay long, taking only a few puffs before extinguishing their cigarette (which seemed to me to be gross prodigality) and leaving behind long, white, relatively clean sticks of tobacco. All for me.

Now, I realize how this must sound to you, how thoroughly nauseating the idea of digging through an ashtray would be and putting your mouth where some stranger's mouth had been, and on and on it goes until you could vomit. But when an addictive drive is the master of the moment, and tobacco is one of the strongest, one tends to rationalize (plus, living on the streets caused many of my former standards to drop below normal, sort of like "When you got nothin', you got nothin' to lose."). Thus I had myself convinced that it was okay to engage these particular long butts, because of the supposed character of their former owners. These were people, I told myself, who unfailingly brush their teeth and use mouthwash. They visit the dentist regularly, and don't have any diseases like herpes or trench-mouth, and of course they only

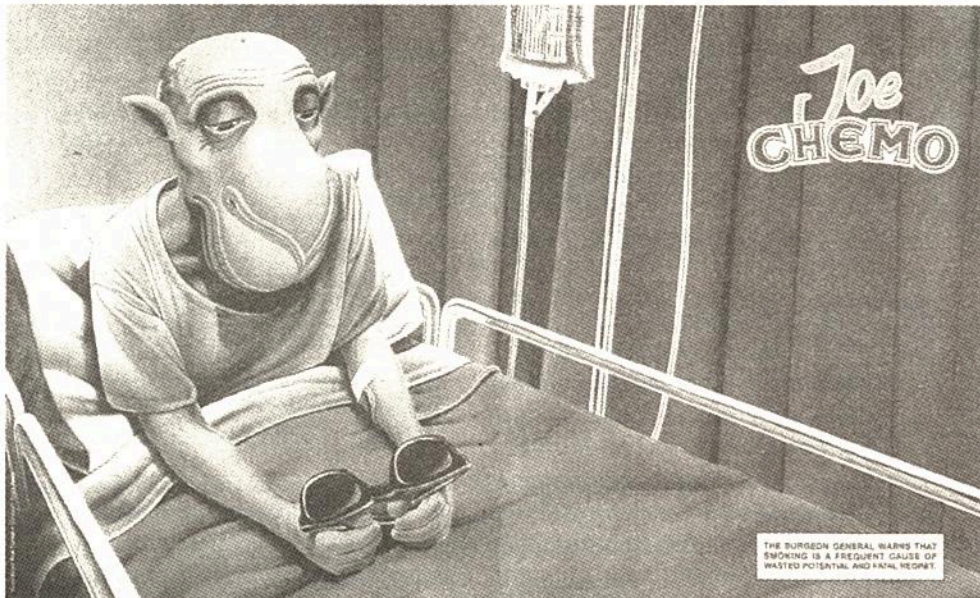
kiss people who are as clean as themselves. If I were to smoke second-hand cigarettes, these would be the best choice possible.

But in spite of all this carefully crafted reasoning I was still grossed out, and prior to smoking any of these cigarettes, I adopted the practice of clipping the end with scissors, then wrapping a little piece of white adhesive tape over the filter end to eliminate any mouth contact — a slightly neurotic practice, but it made me feel better. It occurred to me I may even benefit from fraternization around the ashtray. Maybe one of those very handsome, navy-blue pinstripe three-piece suit gentlemen will look at me and say, "Pardon me, but you look like you could use a high-paying, full-time job with good benefits that involves international travel. Are you interested?"

Now there was to be, of course, a fly in the oatmeal. The first little annoyance came after only a few days with the realization that I suddenly had company. A few other indigent smokers had discovered what I hoped to keep as my own personal gold mine, and were taking full advantage of the bounty, but without any attempts to hide their actions. Some super-opportunistic folks would even panhandle the fellow smokers while gathering up the booty. The drastic increase in traffic through this narrow, outdoor corridor was noticed almost immediately, bringing about the second problem: an enterprising custodial staff. These fellows had always cleaned out the ashtrays, but now they pursued the task with new zeal and an inflated sense of duty. Apparently one of the more kind-hearted of the executive clan had issued a complaint that there were riff-raff lurking around their ashtray. (I, too, was appalled: "They don't even use tape!")

That was the beginning of the end of my high-rise ashtray, as it was more embarrassment than I cared to withstand to have to physically race the custodians for possession of the contents.

I have, for the most part, almost completely stopped smoking now, although I know that when I was living nowhere I could not have quit. I liked to smoke and felt somehow justified because I didn't have much else, and it pains me now to know that I indulged myself in such nauseating self-pity, just to allow myself that slow suicide. King James, in around 1600, did not mince words when asked how he felt about smoking, if I may quote: "A custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black, stinking fumes thereof, nearest resembling the horrible Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless." Then again, in those days they didn't have Ultra-Lights. ■



EVEN CLEVER ANTI-SMOKING ADS AREN'T ENOUGH TO KEEP THE RESOURCEFUL SMOKER AT BAY. AD COURTESY OF ADBUSTERS.ORG.

Red Alert

Recovery's bureaucracy drags couple downward

By Johnjoseph Pajor

You know what? I can't understand why the doctors kept saying over and over to me, "Heart tissue is like brain tissue. The more time it's deprived of oxygen, the more permanent damage there will be. You don't grow it back. It's gone forever." No one, except the ambulance crew and the attending physicians, acted like it meant anything.

June 19, 2000: My wife needs an emergency transfer from Port Townsend's Jefferson General to Swedish Hospital's downtown campus. After the ER doctor starts going nuts from the long time we wait for a reply, the doctor from Swedish finally calls back and says, "I'm not on call. Get ahold of someone who is." And bam! He hangs up.

The ER doctor says, "That never happened before!" He is obviously flabbergasted and very angry. He calls Swedish back and is told a second doctor will call right away. When that doesn't happen I'm on the phone myself, calling Swedish, telling them to get moving: "Our insurance says it's where my wife has to go to be covered for her care. She's still having a heart attack. They don't have the equipment in Port Townsend to take care of it."

Four doctor's names are thrown at us; we call. No answers. The ER physician says to me we gotta do something... or I'm not going to have a wife. I tell him to do whatever it takes. So he calls Harborview and everything is put into motion in just minutes and he is getting the overdue cardiac advice he needs.

The time lapse between my call for an ambulance and my wife's arrival at Harborview to get stabilized is five hours. Months later, some attorneys will tell me there was a delay, that it

contributed to her damaged heart, but nobody can really say how much more damage it caused, end of story.

But the delay causes problems exponentially. She goes from Harborview to UW Medical Center because of how bad off she is by this time. UW starts telling me that we're looking at a transplant. In any case, we have to move our household to Seattle. It's going to be a long time before my wife gets on her feet, *if* she even makes it.

The next morning, our insurance tells me to get her to Swedish, or we probably won't be covered for anything. I say no way — that they can't even move her at UW because she's too unstable even to go down to surgery. But they still argue back with me. I say, "Hey, later for this, you guys." I'm too busy on the horn calling agencies — I'm calling everybody you can think of for low-income housing. They all tell me it's a one- to three-year wait. All along my wife is tottering between life and death.

"But this is a medical emergency."

"Sorry," they say.

Someone asks me, "Is she a cancer patient? We could do it if she was a cancer patient." Another place says we gotta be homeless. And then after we prove that, it's still a six-month wait.

I call Social Security to get my wife's Disability application rolling. They tell me they don't care what has happened.

They don't care *if* she's unconscious. They have to talk to her personally, over the phone. She has to get busy and sign their papers. I tell them I can't believe they're talking this way. And they repeat what they first said, in an even surlier tone, as if out of spite. Reader, listener, are you hearing me?

It's now July. I've been sleeping in the UW Medical Center lobby, on the floor, on the sofa; I don't have food to eat. Finally the hospital gives me a couple vouchers to get a few things from the cafeteria. And after almost a week goes by, I get one night at a motel. Finally a friend starts taking care of me. By then, my legs and hands are numb from pain because of my own medical problems. When I'm not at my wife's side, I'm on the phone or filling out forms.

Agency after agency turns me away. People start telling me to apply for help from Welfare. I'm told my wife's insurance doesn't cover a long-term nursing facility, which she will eventually need. We need help with food, with medicine. You name it. But a month later, nothing. Someone misplaced the paperwork — sent it back to the Peninsula. So no nursing facility. And for all the dozens and dozens of Seattle church and government agencies I call, all I get is an offer of a bed in a homeless shelter.

My wife's doctors say, "They have to be kidding, right?"

August 2000: Social workers had told me my wife should be getting an assistance grant while I try to figure out what to depend on. But we never got it. Living on just our pantry supply, we finally get food stamps. She needs cardio-therapy, and her insurance fights it, telling us it isn't mandatory, usually, though they understand that for her it was necessary.

September: Finally, Medicaid is approved. Slowly, the insurance changes its tune and starts to be nice — only after I began complaining to the state Department of Health and the Insurance Commissioner. I even call Swedish. I tell them not one of their on-call doctors got back to us the night of her heart attack. They try to lay the blame for everything on the ER doctor in Port Townsend.

In its findings, the Department of Health leaves out my story about calling Swedish from the ER and saying all the right things. They make a typo reducing the delay time. They even note that the first doctor that called the ER had given professional guidance.

I said, Excuse me? Yes, they said; he told the ER doctor to call somebody else.

Continued on Page 11



GRAPHIC BY DANIJEL ZEELJ

My wife was all of what brawn was left to our family. Now this.



While we at *Real Change* are celebrating the first birthday of the current avatar of Tent City, we are also trying hard to understand why some people don't appreciate it as much as we do, so that we can be on the cutting edge of persuasion, as we change their minds, and so make the street papers in other cities jealous, and steal their women.

I mean, getting to the persuading part, the bottom line is, there aren't enough shelter beds, and affordable housing hasn't happened. Living together in tents is just the safest alternative to sleeping in doorways. Ya'll don't want people sleeping in doorways, right?

I know this is hard for some of you, so let me run that at you again. Raise your hands, everyone who wants the homeless who don't get into shelters to sleep in their own front doorway. Hmmm, I thought so. Next, hands from those of you who want them sleeping in your neighbor's doorway. Better. Now let's see hands for people who want them to sleep isolated from each other in public parks. OK, not bad. Now,

I realized that the need "to putter" must precede all the noble-sounding ones, like the need "to art" or the need "to science" or the need "to make lame jokes."

how many hands do we have for them sleeping in tents somewhere together?

Hello? You in the back! It's the last alternative! You have to raise your hand sometime, because these people are going to sleep somewhere! You don't get to just sit on your hands like the problem will go away.

People need to sleep! Speaking of human

needs, just before I sat down to write this masterpiece I noticed I was puttering. A lot of you will say I am still puttering even now as I type, especially those of you who know what the word means.

putter, v, to busy or occupy oneself in a leisurely, casual, or ineffective manner.

Yes, I was puttering. And I noticed! And it occurred to me that I rarely notice when I have been puttering, I normally just putter about obliviously, but that in reality I must spend two-thirds of my waking life puttering, and have always done so, even when I was gainfully employed — although of course we generally called it something else then.

We called it paper clip stuffing, or arranging our files, or fulfilling personal directives, or sorting priorities.

Suddenly I had an epiphany! I became aware, as I had never been aware before, of the extent to which puttering is a human need. I now realize that puttering is a need right up there with food and shelter and safety and moist towelettes. No, seriously, I realized that the need "to putter", in your Maslow hierarchy of needs, must precede all the noble-sounding ones, like the need "to art" or the need "to science", or the need "to make lame jokes", or even the need "to mention moist towelettes repeatedly." Moist towelettes.

It explains so much. It explains for instance, why I am so fond of things that explain things. It explains why most men can't grow a beard: they trim it to death. It explains couch surfing. It explains cubicle art.

You know what I'm talking about. Cubicle art is the greatest contemporary American folk art form. Not Cubist Art. Cubicle art. You have a cubicle at work. You decorate it with stuff. That's it. All you get is the one cubicle. It's similar to hanging fuzzy dice in your car, only now it's a cubicle, not a car.

Or it could be a car, too. People still express their puttering need through their cars, even though cubicles have become the more popular medium. And what's the most popular medium of all?

The home, of course.

I have a dream. I dream of the day when every man, woman, and child of this great nation of ours has at least a cubicle, or the equivalent, to putter in. I dream of the day when that puttering will be recognized, not only as leisurely, casual, and ineffective, but as the very stuff of life.

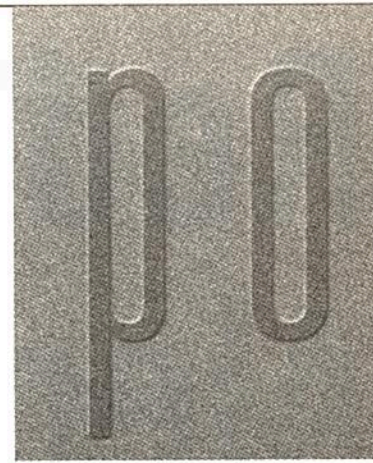
I dream of a day when people will be valued not for the size of their homes, or whether they have one or not, but for the puttering that they can do, when given the chance.

Moist towelettes! ■

some food

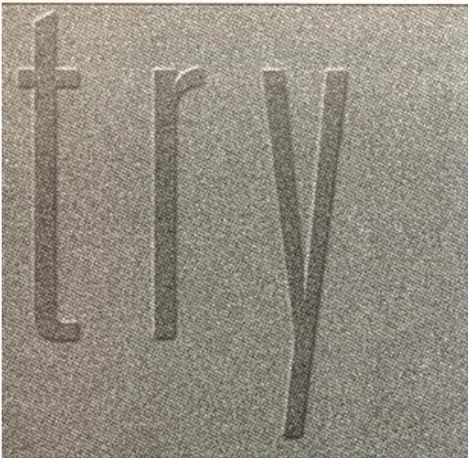
i bent over
 there were two eggs
 i turned around
 gosh! mustard on the ground
 then the phone rang
 it kept on ranging
 larry where are you
 i didn't know what to do
 a pot of greens
 a plate of cornbread
 some sauce with
 miracle weed
 a whole cake
 orange red
 these days are
 easy days
 oh how to sang songs
 these days
 maybe fried fish
 some wine to eat it with
 a fine fatale femme
 to spin the plate one side
 take turns on the turnpike
 with the flame a little high
 coat the pan with butter
 sauté a bunch of mushrooms
 look to see if she still around
 and taking another chance
 i tried to barbecue
 a smile from her frankness
 overdone the result
 i think i'll go in awhile
 still if there be
 a heart left over from the heat
 i won't let this girl cook for me
 you see only my ma could cook those greens
 the way she taught my sister
 was how my sister raised her man
 and i learned from dad the cornbread
 thing with a dip of grease and all
 so i won't ask for much
 perhaps just to be a friend
 to fix the salad in some sauce
 and little swirls in jello
 to stop the way the peas sour
 to watch the eagle grin
 and then to pass through life
 with the sugared fill sprite of
 her unimaginable love

— ETABU ETABUI



Creative Geni

It's about opening u
 to share your so
 with the worl
 It's about living a ki
 so that when yo
 the world wi
 It's about sharing re
 as well as thoug
 It's about being ope
 to new ideas
 from other p
 It's about asking qu
 It's about being quic
 and really lister
 to the answe
 It's about listening
 to your own he
 and the hear
 It's about responsib
 for being born v
 not shared b
 It's about saving so
 for your own ar
 It's about change.
 But mostly it's :



Exuviate

Lying with her under the viaduct,
I'd like her to be photographed by Leibovitz
on my side her long leg hooked behind my knee
and I placed my hand between warm thighs.

She said her daughters were breast
fed and they were beautiful.

I kissed her eyelids
closed.

During our journey we'd wash
the damp earth
from our
skin.

—EARLE THOMPSON

History in Seattle

History is wandering the streets of Seattle
diagnosed
with Multiple Personality Disorder.

She wears a gray silk suit.
She created personal computers
She launched the Information Age
She invented dot coms
She is a geek
and she has the espresso machine to prove it.

She carries her people's history
in a basket she wove herself.
She tanned her leather dress soft white
with her own hands.
She is beautiful
and invisible.

She wears Birkenstocks
and a down vest.
She won the vote for women in 1910.
She led the general strike in 1919.
She was called the Soviet of Washington in 1940.
She goes to liberal caucuses
where she is stood up on a pedestal
and pointed to
by people who can quote Noam Chomsky
and do;
who use the word "process"
a lot.

She came here with her husband and children
at the dawn of history
in 1851
and has been holding the primordial nuclear family together
with her own two hands
ever since.

She has always been the third party.
She has always worn rags
and worked hungry.
She has always been invisible.
She has never stopped shouting.

No amount of counseling has helped History reintegrate.
She refuses to take her meds.
She has been involuntarily committed numerous times
but she always escapes.

The many faces of History
are wandering the streets of Seattle
tonight.

—ANITRA L. FREEMAN

Gull

Plump, shabby white,
sparring
with the oily, yellow
paper. I understand you,
bird. Don't
take no guff.

—MERCEDES LAWRY

your soul,
er for it.

ound you.
orld

ifts

E ROBERTSON

The Moon, Its Polished Self, Mother of Pearl, Appears on Good Friday

a milky cataract,
in my grandmother's long-ago eye
soft willingness watching me?

in a daybreak harvest
wide cat's eye that holds me
in a circle like a "peerie."

doesn't seem to blink,
its open stare remembers something
I can't guess, perhaps a lake

where water in its vitreous aqua
is held against a shore, but who can say
whether it's seeing in or out.

It comes over from last night when the
moon is swallowed it whole; it opens its
polished self, appears as a pearl

on Good Friday, and I am grateful
for the ever-giving sky that keeps making them
possible by one, never asking for more.

—MICHAEL MAGEE



some food

i bent over
there were two eggs
i turned around
gosh! mustard on the ground
then the phone rang
it kept on ranging
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a pot of greens
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overdone the result
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a heart left over from the heat
i won't let this girl cook for me
you see only my ma could cook those greens
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was how my sister raised her man
and i learned from dad the cornbread
thing with a dip of grease and all
so i won't ask for much
perhaps just to be a friend
to fix the salad in some sauce
and little swirls in jello
to stop the way the peas sour
to watch the eagle grin
and then to pass through life
with the sugared fill sprite of
her unimaginable love

— ETABU ETABUI

Creative Genius

It's about opening up
to share your soul
with the world.
It's about living a kind life
so that when you do open up your soul,
the world will be the richer for it.
It's about sharing resources
as well as thoughts.
It's about being open
to new ideas
from other people
It's about asking questions.
It's about being quiet
and really listening
to the answers.
It's about listening
to your own heart
and the hearts of those around you.
It's about responsibility to the world
for being born with gifts
not shared by all.
It's about saving some of those gifts
for your own amusement.
It's about change.
But mostly it's about love.

—RENEENE ROBERTSON

Exuviate

Lying with her under the viaduct
I'd like her to be photographed b
on my side her long leg hooked b
and I placed my hand between w

She said her daughters were brea
fed and they were beautiful.

I kissed her eyelids
closed.

During our journey we'd wash
the damp earth
from our
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—EARLE THOMPSON

Gull

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The Moon, Its Polished Self, Mother of Pearl, Appears on Good Friday

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its soft willingness watching me?

From a daybreak harvest
or a wide cat's eye that holds me
in its circle like a "peerie."

It doesn't seem to blink,
but its open stare remembers something
you can't guess, perhaps a lake

Where water in its vitreous aqua
lapped against a shore, but who can say
whether it's seeing in or out.

Leftover from last night when the
sky swallowed it whole; it opens its
polished self, appears as a pearl

On Good Friday, and I am grateful
to the ever-giving sky that keeps making them
one by one, never asking for more.

—MICHAEL MAGEE

TAYLOR Continued from Page 1

RC: Can you tell us where the community dialogue is heading and what you hope will come out of the April 28 conference?

Taylor: Well, it's really a fascinating collection of people. There are several initiatives going on. There's a group planning the April 28 event. There's a group that's also been working with the heads of the various religious denominations in Seattle, getting their support for this event with the belief that we aim to thank and celebrate the way in which communities of faith have made space available for shelters. But also, to invite others to be a part of that process.

The religious membership across King County can have a huge, huge impact on the political process. My experience of politics is often like my experience of leadership in other areas: you always hear from the people who are angry with you — the people who are opposed. Those of us who really support new efforts to end homelessness are often not the people who are writing and saying, "You're doing a good job, have you thought about doing a little more? And have you thought about these ideas?" We tend to cede the ground to people who are opposed.

The other part of the homeless dialogue is something called the Community Shelter Feasibility Study. We are looking at the possibility of creating an entirely new model in King County for the way that funds for homeless services and housing are handled, and for the sharing of resources and information. We are really trying to provide a much more seamless approach to delivering homeless services.

The kinds of people involved are from various foundations, Seattle's Rotary Club president, people from city and county government and local municipalities, from groups that provide services to the homeless from some of the homeless themselves and from some religious groups. And that process comes to an end just before the April 28 conference, so the results will be presented then. It is a huge, huge undertaking; the fact that people are even willing to engage in conversation about a new model is enormously hopeful to me.

RC: Why is a new model needed?

Taylor: Right now, if I'm running a program providing services for the homeless, I'm filling out endless applications for funding and all of the reporting that goes with that. It's burdensome, and as somebody who ran social service programs before, I know how much time that takes away from the work that you're really there to do.

Part of the new model is not only a more centralized way of handling resources, but also the expectation that there will be a commitment from the business and the foundation worlds to put new money on the table. New work can't be done without new funding, and

the truth is that if we're only looking to government to provide, we're not going to be very satisfied. Government will continue to do its fair share, but we need to invite other people into the partnership to help build that community consensus.

RC: How do you, as a spiritual leader, get people to do anything when there are so many other pleasant and worldly distractions? How do you motivate anybody?

Taylor: One really important thing to remember is that we are all human together, and when we start denying the humanity of one another by writing people off, we tread onto some very treacherous ground. I hold that belief very, very dearly. I think people really understand that, and want to believe that.

I also think that people often say, "But what can I do?" And so it becomes a question of saying *this* is something that you can do. Is it going to change the world? Absolutely not. Is it going to make a difference in something? Yes.

Sometimes those of us involved with issues such as these make the mistake of thinking that people have endless amounts of free time. Or we make the mistake of assuming that, because they can't offer as much time as the passionate, deeply committed people in the trenches, their contribution is not as good. That's a bad message to send. We are each where we are in our life.

RC: Religious activist Jim Wallis has said that he thinks President Bush's faith-based initiative might be a good thing. His take is that churches will not be silent partners to government in service provision; that they will bring up the bigger issues of social justice that are involved. What do you think?

Taylor: The last congregation that I served in New York actually had its own community outreach center, and among the programs we offered was a day care center that was open over and against the opposition of some members of the congregation. It was a center designed primarily to serve the working poor and their children.

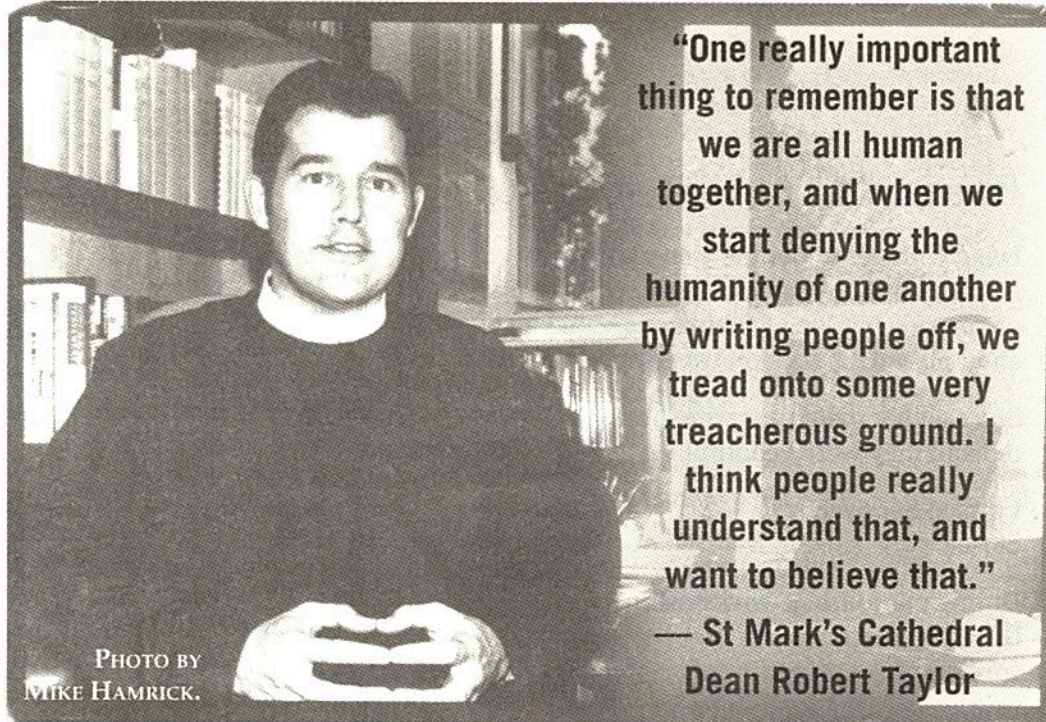


PHOTO BY
MIKE HAMRICK.

"One really important thing to remember is that we are all human together, and when we start denying the humanity of one another by writing people off, we tread onto some very treacherous ground. I think people really understand that, and want to believe that."

— St Mark's Cathedral
Dean Robert Taylor

When there were state cutbacks in New York around day care, we were able to instantly mount a huge campaign of postcard and letter writing. And when I went with staff and members of our board to lobby in Albany, our state senator said, "You are the most organized outfit in my district."

It wasn't because of what any one of us had done. It was because of the experience the people had. It was no longer about: "Oh, these are subsidies for day care for the poor." It was, "Oh, these are for people who I've seen coming in and out of my church with their children." The dynamic was suddenly changed.

We also ran an HIV/AIDS drop-in and other service center. It helped to change people's perspectives on who had AIDS. The bulk of the population we served were Vietnam veterans, a majority of whom were people of color. This is the often silent face of AIDS in America, because it's not been well-organized politically or financially. It resulted in being able to mobilize people when they were threatening cutbacks. There was direct experience of the issue with real human beings.

We heard repeatedly that we were better able to deliver services than perhaps the government bureaucracy. We

were able to do them with compassion because we were rooted in the local community. We knew resources. We knew how to connect people. And people liked coming to us because we were faith-based. All of these I see as positives.

My major concern about the faith-based initiative is where a sectarian religious agenda will go on. What kind of safeguards will be built in to the system, so that if I come to St. Mark's Cathedral asking for services, I will not be expected to sign up to be a member, or go to a three- or a five-hour prayer service, or read something out of the Christian Bible if I'm Muslim or Buddhist or Jewish or whatever?

RC: What do you think of this idea of the unintended consequence? That a Republican administration might have one thing in mind, but could also have a faith-based movement for social justice on its hands?

Taylor: I think it's an exciting possibility, and particularly exciting because of some of the constituencies that it would energize who have not been traditional allies with many of us in the religious community around issues of social justice. There are possibilities for all kinds of new partnerships. That has enormous potential.

What I am fearful of is that some faith communities will become dependent on federal money to maintain their physical plants and operations and some of their infrastructure.

I also am concerned that poverty could become an industry, instead of a noble and wonderful work that takes people from a particular situation into a new place in their lives. I have a similar fear about the religious community [saying], "The poor will always be with us, therefore let's just take this money and be charitable to the poor," instead of saying, "How can we work with people to change structures and the system and make a difference?" And I think there's a huge difference between the two. ■

Creating the Political Will to End Homelessness

A conference for everyone concerned about the persistence of homelessness

Where: St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 - 10th Avenue E., Seattle

When: Saturday, April 28, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cost: Pre-registration \$12; \$15 at the door; scholarships are available

Seattle-area religious leaders are inviting church representatives, business and political leaders, community members, advocates, service providers, and homeless people to a day-long conference to declare that homelessness is morally unacceptable and figure out how to eliminate it.

For a brochure and more information, please call Stephanie Hall at (206)323-0300 ext. 337, or David Bloom at (206)941-8068.

The conference will feature:

- A keynote address by Dean Taylor on the church's role in this struggle
- Homeless and formerly homeless people discussing their experiences and sharing possible solutions
- The Community Shelter Board, a new proposal designed to reform the current homeless services system

Conference sponsors include the denominational and ecumenical leaders of the Puget Sound region; the Church Council of Greater Seattle; St. Mark's Cathedral; and the Community Dialogue on Homelessness.

— David Bloom

HEART Continued from Page 7

What a trip this is, I thought; are these guys on mental holiday? No. I smell money and politics. After all, I'm told, Swedish changed its transfer protocol. After that, the state said everything was suddenly fine. I also heard a few people say Jefferson General was under investigation for not being up to snuff for a state license. I said I didn't know why, they did a great job on my wife. They kept her alive. Later, though, as I checked further into things, I heard the delay was no big deal and that Jefferson General had all the necessary equipment — even though the ER physician answered the phone right in front of me, when talking to Seattle, "We don't have that sort of thing here." Then, I'm told by some attorneys I contact, "Well, we can't prove how much damage a delay really makes, and no doctors are stepping forward to say."

Swedish should put that in writing over every facility they own. They now own Providence, too. Isn't that scary? Doesn't that scare anybody?

Crisis centers can't even find food for my wife's medical diet. They don't consider a phone a medical need, but for monthly expenses they list cable TV. If it wasn't for friends, even perfect strangers, I mean everyday individuals helping us through the rough spots, we'd be on the street... or dead, most likely.

I eventually find a place to live by

looking through the *Times*. It takes almost very penny we have. Despite some one-time help from various agencies, we're not meeting daily needs. Even so, doing the math, our place is God-sent. There is no Disability yet for my wife, though even if we got it, we'd still be in a bind. The adjudicator in Olympia tells us that for heart attack cases, Social Security routinely delays approvals... to see if patients get better... or die.

Are we dead yet? Now are you listening to me?

February 2001: The other day someone from Welfare calls and asks me how do we pay for toilet paper: We do use toilet paper, don't we? She really gets on my case about it, even when I try to explain. Then she calls our apartment manager and gives her the third degree. I'm thinking, we don't live in Nazi Germany.

It all reminds me of the help we asked for 10 years ago when my wife became suddenly ill after a botched root canal. Welfare harassed her employers with so many reams of paperwork she lost her job. The call takes her back 15 years to when she was brutally raped, then stitched up and left to fend for herself, no matter she couldn't remember how to tie her shoes, had trouble with simple communication. Back then she was only "emotionally traumatized"! After her heart attack, a neurological exam revealed evidence of an old stroke. And things 15 years ago began to make more sense.



I find it curious, at best, that educated people, those who work in offices that primarily exist to help those in need, get so irritated when people in need stand up for themselves.



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Free PorchLight shuttle runs mornings, 8:00 a.m. — 12 noon, from Seattle Housing Authority's central office building, 120 6th Avenue N.

In my own past, in the '80s, a contractor threw some straw over a hole, then forgot about it...until I fell into it and had to have spinal surgery. Attorneys said it was just a Worker's Comp case, and I got enough money to retrain me, get me back into the work market quickly. But my neck graft deteriorated sooner than the doctors anticipated, and affected other parts of my spine. Back then I got treated like a low-life. No one helped me much. I ended up living in a car in a back brace. Finally a couple people opened a few doors for me.

After the call I think about how my wife and I have come a long way from our setbacks to get back on our feet, even if only somewhat, if only temporarily, even if not quite enough to overcome our ruined finances or our disability. My wife was all of what brawn was left to our family. Now this. Regardless, we still have some fight left, by the grace of God — if it's just to make sure we're treated right this time around, to be counted among the living. Then I hear a news story about a little girl who has to choose which doll to keep and which to leave behind when she moves into an emergency shelter with her mom. I think, we didn't get to that point. But then I think, wait a second, which concentration camp is she headed to? What country are we living in, anyway?

I find it curious, at best, that edu-

cated people, those who work in offices that primarily exist to help those in need, get so irritated when people in need stand up for themselves, demand respect, hold onto a dignified self-image, and refuse to be insulted, put down, or demeaned. No sir or ma'am, whoever you are, the poor are not outcasts, not in a civilized society.

The measure of a person's worth is not how much money they've made, how much of a political or social big shot they've been, or how much physical or mental prowess they had or can still claim. Yes, that's what I said, Mr. Attorney and Mr. Government Investigator who don't think we add up enough to something worth protecting or defending. America is not a dictatorship of the high-and-mighty, not the plaything of hooligans and bullies, but the sacred trust of everyday folks like you and me. We are the keepers of its Dream. America is a magnificent quilt of all colors, creeds, and cultures proudly worn by Lady Liberty. It is the sum force of those who are courageous for Good's sake, who are to all persons compassionate and loving. But unless each one of us starts doing something *today* about the way things are headed down the drain, the real America soon isn't even going to be a memory! ■

John Joseph Pajor and his wife live in West Seattle.

Memorial

For a Pike Market Friend

By Artis the Spoonman

He was scruffy, derelict, and strung out on heroin for maybe 20 years. He was a bit obnoxious in his desire to be liked sometimes. But you know what? I never heard him complain about life or what it dealt him. I have a feeling he would rather be alive than not, given a conscious choice.

Randy Ritter overdosed and died a few days ago. He was the short flute-player who often had puppets as well, dancing along with his flute playing. I remember Randy from the early '80s. He had at least one offspring from a relationship back then. I wonder if they have been informed of his passing. I asked if anybody was gonna write an obituary and didn't get a positive response, so I decided to say a few things.

The last time I saw Randy was about mid-February, and he was more "loaded" than I had ever seen him. It was about 9 a.m. in front of the Sanitary Market. He fell down and all but collapsed, unconscious. I told him he needed to go to detox. He nodded, and I asked the guys at the fruit stand to call detox. Less than three minutes

later, a Pike Place Market Security agent came by and laughingly asked Randy if he wanted to go to detox; this time Randy said no.

I attended Dutch's funeral last year. Dutch started Seattle's Detox center 20 years ago. He was also a friend of mine. I learned at his funeral

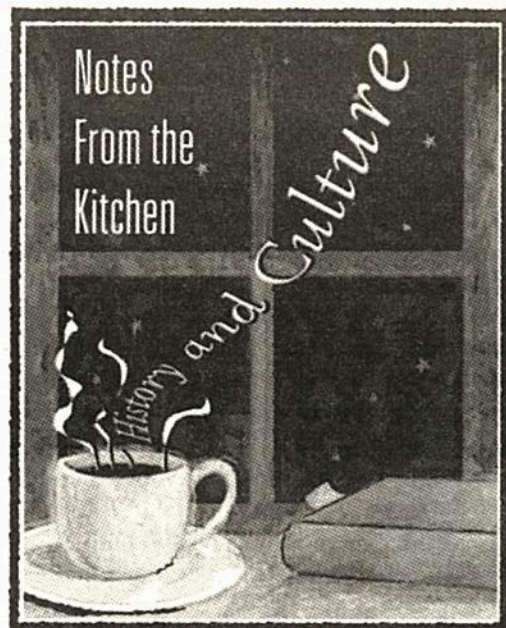
that Dutch never let a chance go by to get a victim of drug and alcohol abuse help, no matter how little, how late. I seriously regret not insisting on getting Randy to detox, and I want to stress that kind of devotion to be taught to our Pike Market security agents,

please. Randy may have been obnoxious and unkempt, but he was not a threat to Iraq, Watts, Indonesia, or your grandchild. He was just a sorry heroin addict who wanted to entertain you with flute playing. He was also very generous, even recently known to have gifted another musician a flute he had just made.

Since mortality is upon us insidiously, let's nurture life while we have it. Many of us will miss Randy — and perhaps help others where we couldn't help him. ■

Perhaps we will help others where we couldn't help him.

A Girlfriend's Guide to Pregnancy



By Liz Smith

When a friend of mine went to her first prenatal appointment, the doctor came into the room and introduced himself. Timidly, she said she would prefer a woman doctor. The doctor became very angry, stormed out of the room, and slammed the door. "Let her wait!" he bellowed. The female intern apologized for her colleague's behavior. "He's a little moody," she explained. "He's a great big so-and-so," my friend thought.

After hearing this story and similar tales of physicians at their insensitive worst, I decided to interview a midwife. Now, if you already have a perfectly good OB/GYN, stick with them. But, if you're seeking a person who will be sensitive to your needs, a person who will provide some continuity throughout nine very important months and beyond, you can not go wrong by selecting a midwife.

Most of the midwives in the Seattle area studied at Seattle Midwifery School; one out of every 40 applicants is accepted as a student. Their course of study is

rigorous, and includes classes in human anatomy, microbiology, and genetics and embryology. I interviewed one of their graduates, Michele Schaab. She runs Urban Midwifery, which is located in Belltown.

When a client comes for the first appointment, Ms. Schaab does a health assessment. If the client has certain medical complications, such as type one diabetes, or is carrying more than one baby, that person is referred to an obstetrician. During the second appointment, the client brings in a three-day record of what she has eaten. If her diet isn't as good as it should be, that is discussed, and she may be referred to a nutritionist. We talked for almost an hour, and what came through was how much careful attention she gives to each client. Her thoughtful approach encompasses the whole person, not just their blood pressure or any specific symptom of pregnancy. What particularly struck me was her skill of listening closely, and how in caring for her clients she is so apt to err on the side of caution and prudence.

Each midwife operates somewhat differently. Ms. Schaab primarily attends home births, and always has another midwife with her during the mother's labor and delivery. She is also a participant in a pilot program at Providence Hospital, in which midwives have admitting and attending privileges. Things operate similarly at the University of Washington Hospital. When a woman has her baby there, her birth is attended by her midwife, along with nursing staff. Other midwives operate out of birthing centers, which have rooms that are similar to labor and delivery rooms, with a more attractive, home-like décor.

It may seem that when you are pregnant the entire world will want to come up to you and give you advice, whether you want it or not. My bit of advice is, if there is the slightest chance you are pregnant, take a multivitamin every day. The reason for this is that by the seventh week, the developing baby has all its internal organs, including the brain and heart. If you're in the habit of taking vitamins, then you're getting enough folic acid, which is critical for your baby.

Two things to keep in mind when having a baby:

1. Try not to worry
2. Get early prenatal care.

"Fine!" you snap, in a nervous, temperamental, pregnant tone of voice. "But it's our first baby, we have crummy insurance, and my husband here is even more nervous than I am. Where do we start?"

In my calm columnist's voice, I will tell you. Send your jittery husband into the kitchen to make you a nice hot cup of tea, put your feet up, and read on. It's natural to feel a little apprehensive; here are some helpful and positive ideas about things you can do so you will have an easier pregnancy and a healthy, robust baby.

First Steps: Over 5 percent of the newborns in Washington state are born too small (below five and a half pounds); 60 percent of these low birth-weight babies do not live to see their first birthday. The Legislature, realizing that something needed to be done, began a program in 1990 called First Steps. It helps low-income and high-risk mothers-to-be with *any* problem affecting their pregnancy. First Steps staff come to your home if you have transportation or child-care difficulties.

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (800)322-2588: This is a statewide information and referral office. They can help you find out about health insurance, medical coupons, health care providers, and nutrition resources. Even if you already have insurance, you may be able to get help if your co-payment is high.

Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program (800)841-1410: The WIC program assists pregnant and nursing mothers, babies, and children under the age of five. They give vouchers for specific foods such as peanut butter, milk, infant formula, and cereal. They also have nutrition classes, breastfeeding information and support, and resources and referrals to other helpful agencies. Translation services can be provided, and you can get WIC regardless of your immigrant status. Even if you have a job and think you make too much money to qualify, I encourage you to call and inquire. They are the nicest people — supportive, non-judgmental, and dedicated to helping mothers and little kids. So call already! Translators available for initial phone call.

Birthright (206)789-5676: A private, nonprofit organization which assists women facing an unplanned pregnancy, Birthright's motto is, "It is the right of every baby to be born." They help with emotional support and counseling, and tangible needs such as pregnancy tests, maternity clothes, baby layettes, and diapers. They also refer people to parenting classes.

Community Information Line (206)461-3200: A good number to call for information about resources, agencies, and help in King County. It has been my experience that some staff are more helpful than others. If the person answering the phone is unsatisfactory, ask to speak to someone else. Most of the time this organization is in the same office as WIC, but if not, WIC can give a referral. ■

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Tuesday, February 28, 5:30 p.m., Belmont Avenue East. At approximately 12:47 p.m., the suspect, a homeless male aged 20, entered a home on Belmont through an unlocked rear door, and fell asleep in the living room. The resident had gone to the store for approximately one hour, and upon returning, she found the man sleeping in her apartment. She also found a second man sleeping outside the closed rear door. The complainant did not know either of the young men. Both suspects were clearly under the influence of narcotics, and were disoriented. Seattle Fire Department responded, and they were transported to Harborview Medical Center for precautionary reasons. Complainant said no items had been stolen, and no damage had occurred.



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Wednesday, February 14, 12:19 p.m., Virginia Street Youth Center. The subject, an 18-year-old white male, told his caseworker that he had taken eight pills of an unspecified over-the-counter medicine — four times the prescribed level. He was disoriented and could not walk. His caseworker felt he was attempting to commit suicide, and he was transported to Harborview. She also noted that she thought he was unable to take care of himself. He stays on the streets, or wherever he can find a place to sleep. Police requested a 72-hour mental evaluation.

To advertise in Real Change,
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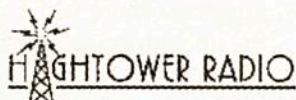
Thursday, February 15, 10 p.m., 100 Block of Pine Street. A 29-year-old man was resting on the sidewalk near the alley, when the suspect came up to him and started punching him in the head. When the victim was down on the sidewalk, the suspect kicked him in the head several times, and then left. The victim's girlfriend was witness to this incident — they have been together several years; both are homeless and live on the streets. The victim did not seek medical attention until the next day — he had a badly torn ear, swellings, and lacerations to his eyes and face. He was transported to Swedish Medical Center.

Friday, February 16, 11:10 p.m., Colman Ferry Dock. Two officers on a premises check of the Colman ferry dock area observed a 28-year-old homeless black man acting strangely. The man walked away from the officers, and then approached them, staring wild-eyed at them both. They asked him if he was OK, but he continued to wander aimlessly, a wool blanket in his arms. The suspect began flailing wildly and screaming. The officers restrained the man, and calmed him down. They then discovered that the man had a misdemeanor warrant from Seattle Police Department for failing to appear in court on a trespassing charge. After struggling with officers for some time, the suspect was placed into custody and 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.



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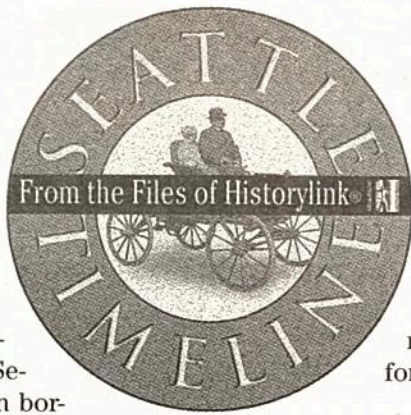
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The Seattle, Lake Shore & Eastern Railroad Co. was incorporated on April 15, 1885, as a solution to the problem of connecting Seattle to the Canadian border. The line was incorporated into

the arrival of non-Indians. Eight people, including two children, were killed; dozens had serious injuries. The ground shook for about 30 seconds.

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the Space Needle were held on April 17, 1961. It was to be the tallest structure in the city, topping the Smith Tower by 86 feet. The major investors in this pri-



EARLY SEATTLE'S BEST FORM OF "INTERNATIONAL" TRAVEL.

the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1892. The short history of the line reflects the paramount importance of railroad traffic during the city's formative decades, and the lengths to which early community leaders went to secure a healthy economic future for the fledgling town.

On April 8, 1891, the Seattle Library Commission opened a public reading room on the fifth floor of the Occidental Building, 4th Avenue and Seneca Street, featuring 180 periodicals. A.J. Snoko was the librarian. On December 1, 1894, the library began lending from its collection of 7,000 books, all of which had been purchased in Boston.

Seattle butcher Henry Hanson, a 22-year-old German immigrant, swam from West Seattle across Elliot Bay to Seattle in one hour, 35 minutes on April 12, 1914 — a feat that killed a world champion six weeks before.

Hooverville, the Depression-era shantytown built south of Seattle's Pioneer Square, burned down on April 10, 1941. As this town-within-a-town became engulfed in flames, the smoke could be seen all over Seattle. The Seattle Port Commission condemned all shacks and other abodes in the area shortly afterward.



SEATTLE'S 1949 EARTHQUAKE ALSO TOOK A BITE OUT OF PIONEER SQUARE.

A 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck Western Washington between Olympia and Tacoma on April 13, 1949 — the largest earthquake in Puget Sound since



SPACE NEEDLE OPENS FOR BUSINESS.

vate venture were Bagley Wright, Ned Skinner, Norton Clapp, John Graham, the architect, and Wright Construction, the main contractor.

Baseball fans got their first Major League team in April, 1969, when the Seattle Pilots moved to town. On April 11, the Pilots shut out the Chicago White Sox, 7-0, in their temporary home at Sicks' Stadium, along Rainier Avenue. Plans were in the works for a modern domed stadium that would give the Pilots and Seattle a Major League presence. But within a year, the Pilots had moved to Milwaukee. Because of their legacy, the Kingdome was built and became the first home of the Seattle Mariners. ■

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 Perfess'r Harris

Lately, we at Classics Corner have been preoccupied with the problem of rich people getting richer. While we enjoy extravagance as much as the next classics columnist, simple good taste demands some measure of fairness. Solon, the poet-politician who originated Athenian democracy in the late sixth century B.C., would have agreed.

As leader of Athens, Solon had an insight that eludes our ethics-challenged chimpanzee of a President. When the poor have little to lose, ugly things begin to happen. Maybe they won't quite have a revolution, but they might just kill you out of spite. Solon sought to avoid this sort of unpleasantness wherever possible.

"The leaders of the people are evil-minded," he warned. "The next stage will be great suffering, recompense for their violent acts, for they do not know enough to restrain their greed and apportion orderly shares for all as if at a decorous feast."

"Those of us who have already the biggest estates try to get twice as much as they have. Who can satisfy all of them?"

—Solon in *Prayer to the Muses*

In his *Prayer to the Muses*, Solon comes to the heart of the problem. "Those of us who have already the biggest estates try to get twice as much as they have. Who can satisfy all of them?" In his day, the wealthy enlarged their estates by taking the land of those whom they placed in debt. As the poor grew poorer, they were often forced to sell family members into slavery. This created a certain amount of class resentment.

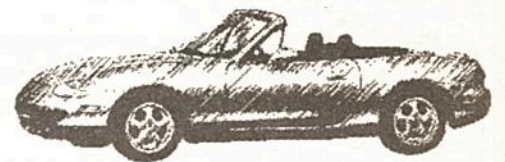
Solon understood that we live in a society. When ruin comes, he said, "the courtyard doors no longer have strength to keep it away, but it overleaps the lofty wall." While the very wealthy might feel safe behind their protective barriers, their security is an illusion. Once society crumbles, they are bound to feel the effect. Solon, like FDR and other great reformers, curbed the rich only to save them.

There were many who felt that Solon's reforms, which stopped well short of land redistribution, didn't go far enough. Like anyone who actually holds elected office, Solon was limited to the politically possible. We surmise that there were other contenders who held more radical views, but the uncompromised rarely come to power, do they? Those who seek moral purity should turn to religion, not politics.

Still, Solon's definition of "Good Government" is a call to what the Democratic Party should be. "She levels rough places, stops Glut and Greed, and takes the force from violence. She dries up the growing flowers of despair as they grow. She straightens out crooked judgements given, gentles the swollen ambitions, and puts an end to acts of divisional strife. She stills the gall of wearisome hate, and under her influence all life among mankind is harmonious and does well." ■

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Celebrating our 80th Anniversary

April Notables

Friday, 4/6

Benefit for Friends of the Pawnee, including line-up of Seattle musicians Milhous, Pink Chihuahua, Maria Mabra, and King Leah, \$6 admission goes to repatriation of Pawnee ancestral remains, 9 p.m. at the Gibson Bar and Grill on 2nd Ave. and Stewart, more information at 206-542-4266.

Saturday, 4/7

"Animals 101: Putting Compassion into Action," a full day of fascinating speakers talking about topics such as wildlife, animal law, direct action, and healthy living, with a keynote presentation by Roger Fouts, Ph.D., of the Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute and author of *Next of Kin*. Details available at <http://www.paws.org/animals101>, or 206-250-7301.

Sunday, 4/8

Green Party of South King County Membership Meeting, all welcome, 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., at Kent Regional Library, Meeting Room, 212 2nd Ave. N., Kent, info <http://communities.msn.com/GreenPartyofSouthKingCounty> or 253-941-9364.

Washington Free Press Anniversary Party, celebrate the 8th anniversary of the Independent Newspaper with good food, good music, and activists galore. Admission is by donation (\$10.00 or whatever you can afford), 7:00 p.m. at the Speakeasy Cafe, 2304 2nd Ave.

Thursday, 4/12

Benefit for StudioX, providing Web casting to community groups, bands TBA, cover \$5.00, 21+, ID required, 9:30 p.m., at Gibson's Bar, 116 Stewart St., info 206-448-6369 or <http://www.antenna-radio.com/gibson.html>

Saturday, 4/14

Culture Jam — Across the Lines: Celebrating Youth of All Cultures, a day of visual arts, music, dance, theater, drumming, and writing, 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., at the Garfield Teen Life Center, 428-23rd Ave., info 206-937-1936.

Friday, 4/13

Good Friday Walking Meditation, Praying Stations of the Cross. A free, multi-faith event open to all, beginning at St. Joseph's Chapel at the Josephinum, 2nd & Stewart. Procession will visit six

"Stations" in the downtown and conclude with a prayer service at Occidental Park to reclaim Pioneer Square for peace. 8:45 a.m. - noon. For more information contact: www.soultenders.org

Tuesday, 4/17

Monthly Business Meeting for Independent Print and Electronic Weekly Eat The State! Come opine, meet, and volunteer. How do we do it every other week? People like you! This and subsequent 3rd Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m., at the Eat The State! office, Independent Media Center, 1415 3rd Ave., downtown, info 206-215-1156.

Ongoing Mondays

Books to Prisoners, ongoing volunteer project could use your help answering letters and sending books to incarcerated individuals. Books to Prisoners is a 100% not-for-profit, 100% volunteer, collective, that has sent thousands of books to people in prison since 1979, 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m., also on Wednesdays 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., at 1004 Turner Way E. on 23rd Ave., Bus lines 43 & 48, info 206-322-2868 or <http://btp.tao.ca/>

A Freedom Socialist Party public discussion group on "Souls of Black Folk" by W.E.B. DuBois, free, everyone welcome, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., at Seattle Central Community College, Broadway and Pine, Room 2115, info Doreen McGrath 206-725-5434.

A Freedom Socialist Party public study group on "Democracy and Revolution" by George Novak, free, everyone welcome, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., 6727 Seward Park Ave. S., info Chris Smith 206-723-2549.

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 - 1:00 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 and every Sunday, noon - 4:00 p.m. cook, call for location, 5:30 p.m. share dinner at Occidental Park, contact info above.

Ongoing Daily

Free HIV Testing for people ages 14-24, using the Orasure method (no blood), Mondays 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Tuesdays 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., Thursdays 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Saturdays 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and Sundays (by appointment only) 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Lambert House, for Sunday testing leave a message at 206-322-2515 ext. 30 with time, anonymous, info Becca Hutcheson 206-322-2515 ext. 13.

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

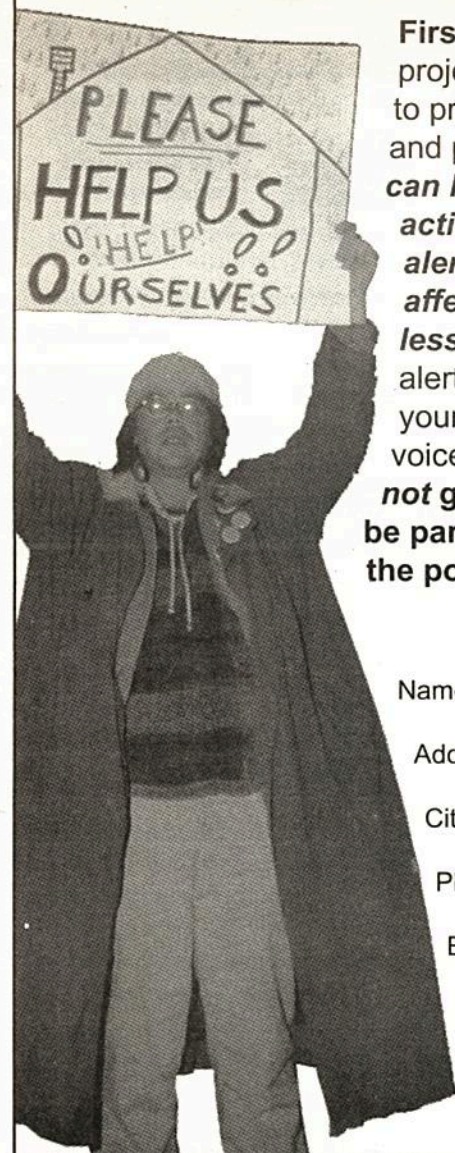
Free Earthquake Preparedness Training Course, "Surviving an Earthquake" info <http://www.regionxoti.org>

Aradia Women's Health Center, the Northwest's Pioneer Feminist Women's Health Center, has openings available for community outreach volunteers! Come speak (and learn) about feminist health care while staffing our information table at events like International Women's Day 2001, Pride March/Freedom Rally, and many others! Call Amie Newman, 323-9467 or aradiadev@juno.com.

Peace Action of Washington's Peace Café, join us for espresso, pastries and politics, all profits go to the Peace Action and the Freeze Education Fund, working toward reducing community violence, 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., at 5828 Roosevelt Way NE, info 206-527-8050 or www.peaceaction.gen.wa

Compiled by Kristen Alexander. For complete listings with meeting times for local groups, see Jean Buskin's Peace and Justice Events calendar, <http://www.scn.org/activism/calendar>

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.**

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____

Mail to: Real Change
 2129 2nd Ave.
 Seattle, WA 98121.
 Call (206) 441-3247 for more info.



Computer Corner!

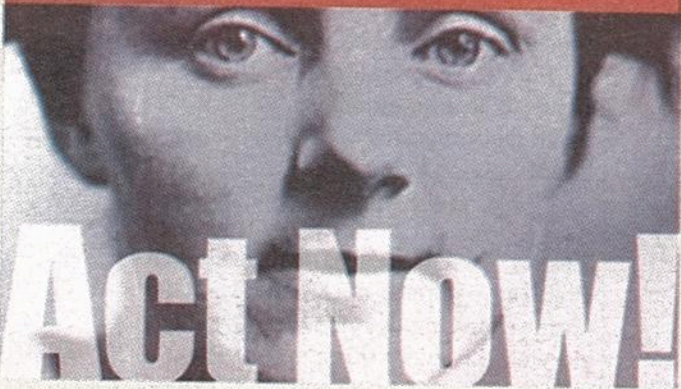
Come be a Macintosh teacher

Real Change's Mac Workshop is looking for volunteer instructors to teach people the Macintosh basics, and to expand from two classes a week to three. If you're interested, call or stop by and fill out a volunteer information sheet.

The workshop is also looking for computer hardware with more power — internal IDE MAC hard drives that are larger than 2GB (the bigger the better!).

If you're interested in either teaching or donating equipment, contact Mac Workshop Coordinator Matt Crichton at 206-441-3247.

citizens participation project



Preserve Basic Health Plan

Issue: A proposed \$.2.8 million cut in the Washington state budget would hurt 160,000 low-income residents with nowhere else to turn for affordable health insurance.

Background: Currently, the Basic Health Plan (BHP) provides subsidized health insurance coverage for 160,000 low-income Washington residents. Contrary to Washington's historic commitment to help the uninsured, Governor Locke's budget cuts \$2.8 million in the BHP and proposes an increase in the BHP co-pays that will hurt low-income families. The Senate Democrats' draft budget, although strong in other areas, does nothing to restore Locke's cuts to the BHP.

Low-income families are already struggling to pay for housing, childcare, and transportation to make ends meet. Rarely do they have money left over at the end of the month to pay for increased health care costs.

Increasing the co-pay will force families off the BHP who can't afford to pay any more for health care. When a similar increase was passed a few years ago, thousands of families immediately dropped the program. These uninsured families end up in emergency rooms, often leaving local providers to foot the bill for their uncompensated care.

To make things worse, healthy families (who are cheap to insure) don't see an immediate need for coverage and are the first to drop off the program. People with health problems are left on the plan, thereby raising overall costs of the BHP for the state and the remaining enrollees.

Action: Send your three legislators (two Representatives and one Senator) the message below.

"Cutting the Basic Health Plan (BHP) and increasing co-pays will make people leave the plan and turn to ambulances and emergency rooms for primary care. This is not a cost-savings. If cuts are made to the BHP, the costs don't go away — they show up in other parts of the health care system and are often much more expensive. Please do not cut the Basic Health Plan."

As an alternative to email, you can also leave messages for your three legislators and the Governor via the Legislative Hotline, (800) 562-6000, or at their personal offices listed below. During the legislative session, the Hotline is open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

43rd District: U-District, Capitol Hill, Madison Park, Downtown
Rep. Frank Chopp
chopp_fr@leg.wa.gov
(206) 389-2410

Rep. Ed Murray
murray_ed@leg.wa.gov
(206) 720-3074

Senator Pat Thibaudeau
thibaude_pa@leg.wa.gov
(206) 720-3050

36th District: Magnolia, Queen Anne, Fremont
Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles
kohl_je@leg.wa.gov
(206) 281-5493

Rep. Helen Sommers
sommers_he@leg.wa.gov
(206) 283-6388

Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson
dickerso_ma@leg.wa.gov
(206) 545-6513

11th District: West Seattle, International District, Beacon Hill
Senator Margarita Prentice
prentice_ma@leg.wa.gov
(360) 786-7616

Rep. Eileen Cody
cody_ei@leg.wa.gov
(206) 935-9176

Rep. Velma Rosete Veloria
veloria_ve@leg.wa.gov
(206) 720-3049

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