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Change!

Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless Volume 8, No. 19

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Oh My!
It's the
Election
Issue.

"If I only had a brain!..." "...da noive!" "...a heart!" GREG NICKELS (THE SCARECROW), PAUL SCHELL (THE COWARDLY LION), AND MARK SIDRAN (THE TIN WOODSMAN). ILLUSTRATION BY TOM DAVIS.

Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore.

It started out as a jest in an email message from local legal rights and media activist Paul Richmond this spring, in the first months of the Seattle mayoral race. It's become an obsession here at *Real Change*. As candidates for Mayor, City Attorney, and City Council returned our questionnaire, one question merited our closest attention:

"If you were a character from *The Wizard of Oz*, who would you be?"

You can read each response in our Candidate's Guide, which starts on Page 8. We thought we'd pegged the three leading candidates: Nickels, for his Sound Transit record, was in search of a brain; Schell, who canceled the Millennium Celebration, lacked nerve; Sidran, of course, lacked heart.

The candidates, of course, had other ideas. Schell identified himself as Glinda the Good Witch of the North, who you'll recall (if you've ever seen the movie or read the book) appeared to reveal the secret of Dorothy's ruby slippers after the Wizard's last snake-

oil scheme left her hopeless. "Click your heels three times and say, 'There's no place like home, there's no place like home, there's no place like...'"

Don't we all wish it were that easy. For some of us, Glinda is remembered as Dorothy's savior. The cynics, however, believe she was making political hay with the young girl's plight. Glinda has a manipulative side: She only reveals the secret of Dorothy's ruby slippers after the long adventure along the Yellow Brick Road, to the Emerald City, and out to the stronghold of the Wicked Witch of the West. Dorothy risks her life to do the Wizard's bidding, then finds the Good Witch had given her the means to go home long ago. Perhaps she woke up in that bed back in Kansas and thought "Damn it, when I get my hands on that Glinda..."

And what does it mean that Sidran believes he should be Dorothy?

Nickels was the only candidate to correctly identify himself, as the Scarecrow, although he air-brushes the straw man's faults, saying he is "sensible" and "smarter than people give him credit for."

We can't forget that the Emerald City itself is a chimera, a realm ruled by a "wonderful wizard" who turns out to be a sideshow huckster, "a very good man" but "a very bad wizard" from Omaha, Nebraska. Schell, our incumbent mayor, was born two hours north-east of Omaha. Intriguing!

There are other delightful insights to ponder herein. If Sidran, Firestone, and Richard McIver bumped into each other in Seward Park — the favorite city park of each — what would they talk about? Are Schell and Sidran really both reading biographies of famous American politicians by the same author? Did their campaign manager just tell them to say that? Or do such books get passed around City Hall?

In the late afternoon of a rather dull electoral season, this Oz imagery has shone light into cobwebbed corners of our political imagination. What does it mean that Curt Firestone calls himself the Yellow Brick Road? Is he inviting us to follow him to the Emerald City, or to walk all over him? Why does everyone want to be Glinda? Why would any politician identify his or herself as the Wizard: a fake, a phony, a man-behind-the-curtain? And what good is a flying monkey?

A Technical Note

In keeping with *Real Change's* position as a nonprofit organization operating within the rules of the Internal Revenue Service, we do not endorse candidates. This guide is done in an effort to edu-

cate our readers about each candidate's positions on a range of issues pertinent to the city.

There's also the matter of our editing.

To fit all who responded (not all did; for information on those who didn't, consult your Voter's Pamphlet), we asked every candidate to respect a strict word limit: 25 words for issue-oriented responses, 50 words for a few longer questions. We warned them that anything more would not be published. Some loquacious, passionate folk spilled their guts about transit, civil rights, and homelessness until they were way over. And since condensing each to fit would inevitably entail a bias toward candidates who didn't follow our orders, we took a ham-handed approach with the copy-room scissors. Whenever you find a "snip" at the end of the sentence, that's where the candidate exceeded their word limit, and we had to cut it short.

It's unfortunate that some candidates didn't take our guidelines seriously. Perhaps this policy highlights the faults of the long-winded. But after all, brevity is the soul of wit, and some people just need to know when to (snip!) ■

The guide was made possible thanks to the volunteer commitment of Peter Bloch Garcia.



Continued on Page 8



Welfare to What?

Dear *Real Change*,

August 22 marked the five-year Anniversary of "Welfare Reform." Low-wage working families are being asked to leave our nation's last housing safety net and step broadly into the world of inadequate wages. The last two U.S. Conference of Mayors reports showed that in no city in the United States can a family afford a one-bedroom apartment at the federal minimum wage. These are the people who serve us food, feed our children in cafeteria lines, and clean our office urinals.

At best, welfare reform has had mixed results. But overall, the economic instability of low income families has occurred during the longest economic expansion in our nation's history. It has occurred during our lowest unemployment rate in over three decades. Who can guess the effect on our nation's poorest

families during a period of slowing economic growth or even recession.

According to the Urban Institute, families exiting welfare earn \$1,093 per month. Additionally, over half of these families received wages below the federal poverty line. Over a year-long period, 46 percent of these families were unable to pay their rent, mortgage, or utility bills.

Is it not time to assert the moral premise that anyone working a 40-hour week should receive a basic living wage? Perhaps this should occur before people are invited to exit our last housing safety net and enter the dark abyss of America's streets. Call (202) 456-1111, press 0. Ask your Congressional Leaders and President Bush to reauthorize the law to focus on poverty reduction. Support a Universal Living Wage.

Richard R. Troxell
Universal Living Wage Campaign
National Chairman

Irresponsible Statement

Dear *Real Change*,

It is disheartening that in making an appeal for a show of support for ending homelessness, Rev. Fred Hutchinson made an unwarranted attack on the WTO 1999 demonstrators. Far from "the anger" suggested by Rev. Hutchinson, the demonstrators came out in a spirit of good humor, organized by persons committed to nonviolence and skilled in its application. Far from threatening with "fists," the demonstrators exercised restraint, even in the face of official provocation. Rev. Hutchinson seems to have

accepted uncritically the most sensationalist, selected press reports.

While I'd be glad to participate in a public show of support for an end to homelessness, I'd hesitate to associate myself with a group that can put out such an irresponsible statement.

For an account of the WTO disorders from a trustworthy source, I suggest that *Real Change* make available on its premises "Out of Control: Seattle's Flawed Response to Protest Against the World Trade Organization: A Special Report," issued by the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington, July 2000. (Write 705 Second Ave., #300 Hoge Bldg., Seattle, WA 98104, or phone (206) 624-2190.) I would also recommend a documentary film made of the events just mentioned, "This Is What Democracy Looks Like," by the Independent Media Center and Big Noise Films. At least one member of *Real Change's* Advisory Board appears in the film as a spokesperson for the demonstration; I don't doubt that many additional folk associated with the paper were participants.

Sincerely,
 Sue Davidson, Seattle

A Real Gent

Dear *Real Change*,

I was pleased to see Robert Hansen profiled in your latest edition of *Real Change*. I buy my paper from Robert and he is truly a gentleman and a fine representative of your publication. In fact, I make it a point to take time out each day to talk with him as he works the corner near my building. His sense of humor and the stories he tells brighten my day. Kudos to you, your publication, and what it means to those individuals who are less fortunate than most.

Sincerely, Marty Wall
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Change

Puget Sound's Voice of the
 Poor and Homeless

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Email rchange@speakeasy.org

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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.

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Wiped Off the Books

A good idea goes the way of the Buffalo

By Adam Holdorf

This is a funeral dirge for the death of a good idea. It was called the right of first refusal, and it has fallen far. It once held court with government dignitaries. People in Seattle dreamed of its possibilities: a tool to save low-income housing; a shield protecting tenants from the real-estate schemes of its landlords. As a legal tool to preserve affordable rental housing, it will soon be as archaic as its name. This month, the City Council will put the final nails in its coffin. Tenants' rights will have another foot in the grave.

Up until last fall, it was within sight of the City Council, which was awaiting a favorable ruling from the state Supreme Court before ushering it into the halls of power. Two years ago, Mayor Paul Schell said he supported the idea as a "concept."

What happened? Last year, the state Supreme Court ruled 5-3 to repeal the state Mobile Home Parks Resident Ownership Act, a 1993 law intended to slow the conversion of Washington's trailer parks from havens of affordable housing to suburban subdivisions. The law granted mobile home park tenants, who lease the ground their homes sit on, the "right of first refusal" — legal lingo for first dibs on any park being sold out from under their feet. Tenants had to be notified of the owner's intentions, and if they could put together the money and meet another interested buyer's best offer, the owner had to sell to them.

The court, which is rumored to possess an arch-conservative's view of property rights, held that such consideration toward tenants connoted a property

right, and to tie up a real estate transaction connoted "takings" — an uncompensated intervention into the affairs of private property, kind of like theft.

In his dissent from the majority, Justice Charles W. Johnson wrote that the court misconstrued the right of first refusal "as a right of property" and wrongly called it a "taking." And the right of first refusal does not obliterate the real value of the trailer park owner's property — it simply puts a

condition upon it. The legislature had identified a public interest in preserving a dwindling housing resource. Evidently, the five justices who prevailed don't want to make housing a political issue.

Johnson looked quizzically on the trailer park owner's lawyers, who were aided and abetted by the Building Industry Association of Washington and the Washington Association of Realtors. Johnson wrote: "We do not speculate as to the validity of [their] unsubstantiated assertions that the restriction results in a diminution in property value, or reduces the pool of prospective purchasers. We note only that [merely] conditioning the sale of the property to a right of first refusal does not amount to a taking."

If only his opinion had swayed two other justices. Today, the right of first refusal would be stronger, forged in the fiery eye of the judiciary, roaming City Hall and looking to become law. In light of the ruling, the City Council is erasing any tenant privileges which roughly resemble the trailer park residents'.

One of the three laws they plan to eliminate is a clause in Seattle's Just Cause Eviction Ordinance that grants the tenant first dibs on re-renting their former apartment, if the owner relocates them in order to remodel. Like the other ordinances, it suggests that a renter has some right to their unit. Unlike them, it does not intervene in an owner's plans to sell. Council is turning its back on an old friend.

Once, not long ago, the right of first refusal was a darling proposal. With the urging of housing advocates and the Tenants Union, Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck drafted a plan to extend the right to tenants in Seattle's Section 8 housing — privately owned low-income units with federal subsidies that, over the last several years, have been expiring. Some of these units, like the Oxford Apartments in Seattle, were sold to a real estate company who let the subsidy expire. The judicial decision ensures that will keep happening.

What would it take to replace the right of first refusal with another tenant protection? How do we ensure that our dwindling supply of federally subsidized housing — buildings which house the elderly, the disabled, and young families — won't disappear from under our noses?

They say that politics is the art of the possible. From Florida to Washington, we're learning that the gates to the possible world are watched by guards in black robes. ■

There's a public hearing on the City Council's action to delete local ordinances related to the right of first refusal on Thursday, September 13, at 5 p.m. in Council chambers, 11th floor of the Municipal Building, Fourth Avenue and Cherry Street.

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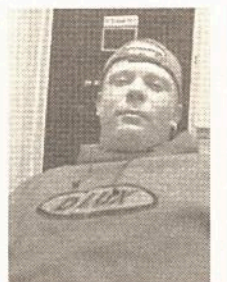
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Activism

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Mike Vashi, 18, has been selling *Real Change* for two years. He grew up in Buffalo, New York, and when his parents split up, he and his dad moved to Florida. Dad eventually sent Mike to live with his mother in Seattle because they weren't getting along; Mike's mom then sent him back to Florida. A few weeks later, Mike was returned to Seattle. He's been living on the streets for four years; his mother died of heart disease last year.



If he could make one phone call to the dead, he says, he would call his mother, because he never really got a chance to say how he felt before she died.

If he had one superpower, he would like the ability to read people's minds; he thinks this would then help him to avoid having "crazy females" mad at him.

Mike is most thankful for his life, and the motivation he gets from "idiotic people." He watches the direction they're heading and then follows the opposite path. When he's not selling *Real Change* he enjoys reading, sleeping, drinking coffee, and just "kickin' it." He wants people who buy papers from him to know he's not an idiot, and he hopes they wouldn't assume that he's "another drunk sitting outside trying to get money for alcohol or drugs." ■

— Shawn Steen

Bob's big barge

After months of investigation, Bob Santos has proposed a new shelter for some of the estimated 1,000 people stuck outside at night with nowhere to go: vacant worker's housing moored on the Duwamish River. Now, it's in the government's hands.

"These units are available, they're actually livable right now, and the price is right," says Santos, who was the regional head of the federal Office of Housing and Urban Development under President Clinton. "And if the city really wants to do this, they just have to step forward and do it. It's in their hands."

But the city Office of Housing has questions about the proposal, which Santos produced as part of an effort to bring Tent City, the 17-month-old tent camp for 100 people, to a conclusion that's mutually agreeable to the city and the homeless group SHARE/WHEEL, Tent City's sponsors.

The housing barge is one of two proposals Santos outlined in a nine-page report; the other was a \$2.5 million vacant hotel in the Georgetown neighborhood. Of the two, the barge could potentially shelter more people. Santos' report does not include cost estimates related to finding a suitable site for the barge housing, which could be broken down into components of 40 or more units apiece and spread around the city.

Though he's happy with Santos' work, "there are a bunch of thorny questions" that need answers before any action is taken, says Office of Housing deputy director Bill Rumpf. Like: What's the total cost of buying, siting and operating the facility? Can we change land-use code to allow it? And will it put an end to Tent City?

"The challenge here is, is there a place that meets the land use, health and safety requirements and is suitable to the homeless people who are currently in Tent City?" Rumpf says.

Santos estimates that the barge will cost about \$2 million to buy and \$200,000 to renovate.

Rumpf says that if the mayor and City Council are amenable, money for the project could come from this fall's budget revisions the mayor will draft this month. "The timing is good, from a process sense," says Rumpf, but he also cautions that Schell has called for a virtual moratorium on new city spending. ■

— Adam Holdorf

Welfare: challenging the deadline

An alliance of social service agencies and advocates is petitioning the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to change the rules on welfare reform's five-year lifetime limit. They want DSHS to come up with a policy that ensures welfare recipients have some minimal safety net after they reach their deadline.

Behind it is a simple question: if you meet the lifetime limit and can't find another way to live, you need some form of continued assistance. The groups want to see policies that grant "hardship extensions" to people who are trying, but for various reasons can't get off welfare.

Between 3,000 and 4,000 welfare recipients may run out of their five-year lifetime limit when the deadline hits next August. But with the right policy, the impact will be minimal, according to Jon Gould of the Children's Alliance, one group among the petitioners. The federal government allows states, which administer welfare benefits, to exempt 20 percent of their caseload from the cutoff for reasons of personal hardship. Gould says the groups have pushed the state to categorize many people — "as many as we can" — under the hardship exemption; people experiencing homelessness or mental illness, for example.

"Anyone who's been receiving welfare for 60 months straight needs an exemption," he says. "They should not be cut off." ■

— Adam Holdorf



Public toilets enthroned

Providing that the Seattle City Council overrides Mayor Paul Schell's veto, next year the first five Automatic Public Toilets will be installed in Pioneer Square, the International District, Pike Place Market, Ballard, and the University District. While many on council agree that the price of the toilets is high, they all believe that more public toilets are needed. Perhaps the best way to tell is by gauging public perceptions of what we have now.

"Seattle's few public restrooms are eyesores," states Kate Joncas, of the Downtown Association, referring to the present free-standing models — those foreboding, grizzled cubicles — which are located in unattractive niches around the downtown area.

Some are more than eyesores: People dread using them. "Only after squirming and chafing my legs together to the point of being afraid to go on myself will I use one," says one middle-aged woman.

For the sanitation-conscious, these public toilets are repulsive. Although the fragrance of an aqua-blue chemical cleaner permeates the existing toilets, "they still could have some type of frightful germs left by the previous user," says Jessica Kelly, a UW computer science student. "Plus, they are frequented by the poor and homeless. They're so dark inside."

The new public toilets will be state-of-the-art — the Rolls Royce of outhouse commodes. The seat and floor will be automatically pressure washed after each use. Sensors will detect if there is a person inside; they won't activate the cleaning process until the stall is empty. After 25 cents and 15 minutes, the occupants will be warned that the door will open (God forbid a malfunction). Also the toilets will have an emergency button to notify Northwest Cascade, the Seattle company that entered a joint contract with Bau, to come out and check on maintenance and supplies, or other trouble. Northwest Cascade is contracted to service each toilet twice a day. Similar toilets in San Francisco have been plagued by maintenance problems (see "Opulent Outhouses," RC July 26)

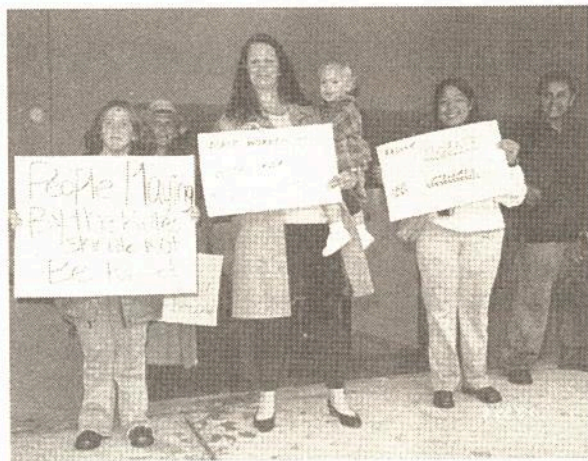
The toilets come only after a fight between Mayor Paul Schell and City Council. Last month, Schell vetoed the Council's toilet plan, saying the \$6.4 million price tag for a ten-year operating contract was too high. He's asked City Council to lift a strict ban on advertising on city property, in the hopes that ads will provide more of the revenue.

Before their approval, some councilmembers also considered reopening the bidding process to find a cheaper contractor. Seattle Public Utilities only negotiated the contract with Hering Bau, a German company, to build the automatic public toilets, and Hering Bau was practically unfettered to set its price. With the ban on ads, other concerns weren't interested in offering a bid.

A man named William, working for the street sanitation company CleanScapes, believes the price is too high. "The economic element — the spirit of competition, which serves to drive prices down — was totally lacking," he says. "The price is obviously inflated."

The poor and homeless, more than anyone, used the old public toilets. It will be interesting to see if the average well-dressed citizen will trust technology and have the courage to use the shiny new digital outhouses. ■

—Larry Capers and Adam Holdorf



ON AUGUST 22, PROTESTERS CONGREGATED OUTSIDE THE QUEEN ANNE DSHS OFFICE TO MARK THE FOUR-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF WELFARE REFORM. NEXT AUGUST, WELFARE RECIPIENTS IN WASHINGTON BEGIN REACHING THE LIFETIME LIMIT. PHOTO BY GEORGE HICKEY.

Drago doo-right

A SUPPORTER OF CITY COUNCILMEMBER JAN DRAGO'S RE-ELECTION BID IN A PRIVATE MOMENT AT THIS YEAR'S GAY PRIDE PARADE. PERHAPS WE NEED A PUBLIC TOILET ON BROADWAY TOO? PHOTO BY GEORGE HICKEY.



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

Going to War for Rainier Vista



Neighborhood group wants to retain public housing

CAROLEE COLTER AND MARGARET LAWRENCE ARE MEMBERS OF FRIENDS OF RAINIER VISTA, A GROUP OF NEIGHBORS HOPING TO ALTER THE SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S PLANS FOR ITS 481-UNIT RAINIER VALLEY HOUSING PROJECT. PHOTO BY BEN EVANS.

By Adam Holdorf

Carolee Colter's backyard is full of cobwebs and birds. Her lawn peters out to an ivy-covered slope, and the ground drops down to the open lawns of Rainier Vista below. A thicket of trees provides afternoon shade. She turns toward the greenery and says, "We've gotten no answer as to whether those will stay or not."

As she walks the streets of Rainier Vista, Colter's wondering whether anything will remain, including the people who live there now. And after two years of hearing vague news of her next door neighbor's impending demolition, she's sounding the alarm.

She and about a dozen neighbors, mostly women, who live near and in the 481-unit Rainier Valley housing project, have formed the Friends of Rainier Vista. They are bringing public scrutiny to the impact of SHA's impending redevelopment of the housing project — a project that will knock down the one-story homes, tear up the streets, sell off parcels to people at a variety of incomes, and bring in apartment buildings with ground floor commercial tenants. Rainier Vista would be reborn as a second Holly Park: a new, high-density, mixed income neighborhood.

In part because of their work, the

City Council is negotiating an agreement with SHA to specify the number of units that will be retained for very-low-income renters. The neighbors are meeting privately with councilmembers. The City Council will hold a public hearing next week.

It's more than not-in-my-backyardism that's driving Colter's activism. These relatively privileged women — most of whom seem to own their homes — are worried about more than their trees and their view. They're doing it in the name of preserving a public resource: housing for the poorest people.

For Colter, the turning point was a city meeting last October, where architects showed off the preliminary design for the new project. There, she says, neighbors and residents looked at designs for new row houses with cynicism.

"I was a total neophyte as a city activist," she says. "I didn't know what the initials for everything were, I didn't know who this design review board was, anything. But the crowd was really angry, saying, 'What's the real plan here? When are you going to pull a bait-and-switch like you did at Holly Park?' I was trying to understand the atmosphere in that room. Toward the end of the meeting, they pulled out the zoning

map," showing the zoning changes needed to build multi-story apartments along Martin Luther King Jr. Way.

"That's when the crowd started shouting: 'That's where the poor people go, right? Six stories up, against the street,'" she says. "And that's where I said, 'Oh, I see what's going on here.'"

She and Karen Kinney, who organizes the weekly Columbia City Farmer's Market, began talking to their neighbors. They held their first meeting in March. This summer, they've been leafletting the neighborhood, going to public events, and reaching out to other groups for help.

Colter and others have had a brief political education. They've come face to face with the bleak reality of working with a City Council that holds its municipal housing corporation, charged with housing the city's poor, at arm's length.

"They don't really know what they're voting on," says Margaret Lawrence, another member of the group. "They routinely confuse the terms 'replacement' and 'relocation,' 'public housing' with 'low-income housing.'"

In the diffuse committee-oriented environment of the Seattle City Council, at least four councilmembers (Jim Compton, Jan Drago, Heidi Wills, Margaret Pageler) are playing follow-the-leader. Hanging back, they depend on Richard McIver, whose council Transportation Committee is bringing this to a vote, to appease SHA's critics.

Others on council take a more active role. Nick Licata and Peter Steinbrueck have called on SHA to replace the existing housing with units that truly serve the very poor people who need SHA's services. Judy Nicastro, usually regarded as a renter's

friend, initially opposed the rezones and has been out of touch with the group since.

John Fox, chair of the Seattle Displacement Coalition, a staunch public housing defender, takes heart from their work; because of them, he says SHA may end up with more very-low-income housing in Rainier Vista than it had wanted.

"It's so extra unusual to have a group of homeowners coming out for the cause of low-income housing," says Fox. "They are attracted by that affordability, and want to help save it."

Not everyone in the neighborhood is so energized. As Colter makes her rounds with leaflets describing SHA's plans, she meets people morose with the imminent arrival of two kinds of urban renewal: a Sound Transit train tearing down the middle of their street,

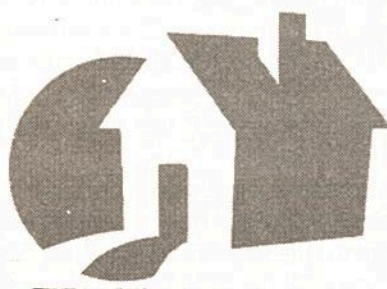
and a brand-new multi-story development, with new homes selling at more than \$200,000. Colter, who's white, sees nonwhite residents who answer the door connect police behavior, the train, and economic development, and reach one conclusion: "Over time, more and more, people have said to me, 'The city just wants to drive us out of here.'"

It's disheartening, to say and to hear. People get intimidated, or caught up in their own lives, or they can't cross the barriers that, like the chain-link fence between Rainier Vista's lawns and the ridge where straight streets run, separate the homeowners from the tenants. ■

The Rainier Vista Memorandum of Agreement will be discussed at a City Council public hearing at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, September 11 in Council Chambers (11th floor of the Municipal Building, 600 Fourth Ave. downtown).

"Over time, more and more, people have said to me, 'The city just wants to drive us out of here.'"

— Carolee Colter, founding member of Friends of Rainier Vista



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poetry

Drink Calls Us to the Dark Habits of Love

I make tracings feeling constellations
sweetbriar freckles on her arching brow
and cusped breasts
bare-legged siren
a soporific bellybutton
I digest rhythm
worship yeast
and the
sea
she gathers sheaves of my pencil
as we drink unadulterated
and fermented
music.

—EARLE THOMPSON

Betrayal

A sensing of your fears
Betrayal
The devil awaits

—GALAXIE S. STARLINER

Survival

Blasted poor and framed by the exhaust grating,
There's use for public showers and drying out of doors, and
Combing tangled hair with a metal fork.

Framed by the exhaust grating, the
Warm and stale air will flutter at your rags —
Epiglottis resonate with the metal creature-ventilator,

Could chant sentences of mantras to
Electric and mechanic cradle that sustains your life —
In desperation Buddhism, escape from realism

Rejection of the worldly and creative meditation.
In the grid upon the grating, square of squalid destitution, you
Could cling to any reason and a space among the living.

—HANS LILLEGARD

Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning



It's election time in the Emerald City again!
We look forward to these elections the way we look forward to bleeding gums. Especially the mayoral election.

As I am writing this it appears that the race for mayor will come down to a November run-off between my fifth and sixth choices respectively. Or are they my seventh and eighth choices? I forget how many are running and whether or not Charlie Chong is in or out this time.

One thing I will not be doing this year. I will not be openly endorsing any candidates. In particular, I will not be endorsing my customary write-in candidate, me. So don't anybody vote for me. Forget I even mentioned ever having been a write-in candidate. It didn't happen. We are not doing that this time. Vote for one of the suits or find some other write-in candidate.

I know this comes as a huge disappointment to a great many of you, but I have concluded that I am not mayoral material. I knew this as soon as I saw the results of the questionnaires we sent out to the real candidates. How could I ever compete with so many Glinda-the-Good-Witches? Or Dorothy herself? I am not in that league. I am but one lowly flying monkey. Hang me on a wire and heave me out a parapet, but whatever you do, don't vote for me.

Other reasons I won't endorse myself, in no particular order, are:

- The beard didn't work for Lowry, it won't work for me.
- The book I am currently reading has more alien characters in it than are on the City Council.
- I think the city should have smart toilets that are so smart they let themselves be cleaned by paid workers.
- I believe buses should be free for everybody, paid for by the businesses who would benefit from the ease in transportation, i.e., all of them.
- If something like WTO happened while I was mayor, the police would be SO busted.

- My policy of wedgies for bad bills is not likely to be approved.
- Narrow political base, primarily confined to eaters of pizzas with pepperoni and mushrooms and black olives with anchovies. Thus my hopes would be dashed by the powerful anti-anchovy faction.

- *Real Change* won't let me.

- But ultimately it just comes down to this: flying monkeys shouldn't be mayors. I think we can all agree on that, at least.

What can't we agree on? Well, let's see, how about this: Should it be possible for *Seattle Times* staff to be able to tell if a man sitting in their park is dead or not? Have people gone totally stupid and insensitive?

So Lukas David Stidd died across the street from the *Seattle Times* building. Nobody working there noticed that he was dead for a long time, and Nicole Brodeur sees tragedy in this. That it wasn't noticed that he was dead. Not that he was dead, but that no one noticed. As if everyone who passed should have stopped to take his pulse.

As if the problem was that there aren't enough people out there trained to tell a corpse from the sleeping.

No, that's not the problem. The problem is that people die on the streets all the time, and it is time to get them off the streets so that doesn't happen anymore. ■

I know this comes as a huge disappointment to a great many of you, but I have concluded that I am not mayoral material. How could I ever compete with so many Glinda-the-Good-Witches? Or Dorothy herself? I am not in that league.



The Pen Is a Weapon

With metal sinks No soap
Metal toilets No seat covers
Stainless rectable urinals,
The rest room will not serve your privacy

In the eyes of a video camera sibling to
Twin-brother glares,
Endoscopes fixed in the central-gut of this metal-beast,
And city jail, their gazes
Span bars in windows and dirty-white walls, and
Painted metal tables, key-scratched and scarred with names,

But in electric blind spots the guards will say,
The pen is a weapon.

Could slip between the tendons of a cell mate,
Outside the cage be clevered in the viscerals of keepers or
Needle-like, be self-injected in the throat.

Better than a weapon writes on the paper of a trench coat
Spread roughly on the not-desk of these cement floors
Better than an enemy.

Better than escape, could be
Victor to the concrete print of legal books
Could rewrite laws of men, better
Than that, explains the spirit that creates them.

—HANS LILLEGARD

Sleeping Between the Walls

And it's just so strange
Because you're sleeping between two walls, though

That two foot wide ledge of overlapping rooves
Stretches across the chasm of unintended shelter.

Your body substance *rigor mortis*-like
Cements the space between two walls.

Silent cold and dark and,
Stored at street temperature,
In a space between two walls.

The cold place void of Night sky,
Walls you from the heavens,
Unmoving constellation of rotting gable-slats.

Desolated firmament storage materiel slept on,
Wooden the cement-hard fuel rods of mental illness,
Narrow sleeping cubicle of emptiness reactor.

But freed from dead stone space,
The statue of your flesh,
Waking for the first time to
Narcotic
Morning
Air.

—HANS LILLEGARD

Yakama Epiphany

At 5 a.m., June sunlight does a round dance
on the Plexiglass window filtering
through the dusty screen and hawk screeches
in the cottonwood. Later I will rise,
walk to the milkweed field and cross the pond
hoping to collect fallen feathers
beneath the tree.

For breakfast, I open canned huckleberries
dark clouds dissipating and wispy tuft sliding
southeast

I eat. In the fall, we pick berries on Potato Hill
it is below Mount Adams. When I was a boy —
my coffee can bucket was rarely full.
In the evening, Tillah, that is grandfather
on my mother's side, told me of "Stick-
Indians," they will try to trick
or lure you from camp to become lost.
These stories or legends will teach you
a lesson
or listen to your Elders
learning
about right, wrong
and good.

The black and brown puppies stop playing tag,
they follow me. Their chubby necks crane
skyward
a magpie awkwardly lopes
and lands on a fencepost.

I hike to a blue meadow
encircled by grey bunch grass
and yellow-ochre needles adorn the earth
lone pine serrating purple foothills;
I follow a rabbit trail
colors become soft green.
Puppies stumble, I laugh, when coyotes bark
these small guys try to answer
their relatives.
Hawk curving, slicing the air,
it searches and hunts
for an unsuspecting field mouse,
as I circle homeward.

—EARLE THOMPSON

Home Base

People sleeping outside can vote — but they may not know it

When you register to vote in this city, the voter registration form asks for the address "where you live." That doesn't mean homeless people are disqualified.

Under the King County elections office's rules, people without a residential address can substitute the address of a government office near where they stay.

Here's a scenario: If you sleep outside just south of downtown, you could list the King County Administration Building as your residential address. It's roughly in the vicinity, and that's close enough for the county, says elections superintendent Julie Anne Kempf. Residential information is used in county council or state legislative elections, to locate each registered voter in his or her precinct. Homeless people wanting to register can walk up to the county Elections offices on Fourth Avenue during business hours.

"People will come to us and explain their situation," says Kempf, "and we let them use our building as their current address."

Just because this opportunity exists, doesn't mean homeless people are informed of it. Only about 250 voters have listed the downtown administration building as their residential address, says Kempf.

Other people experiencing homelessness may opt to list their shelter's address as the permanent residence — provided they don't plan to move too soon.

Signature-gathering campaigns in the past have sparked more voter registration among the homeless. Juan Bocanegra, director of the Downtown Human Services Council, remembers that in 1997, lots of homeless people filled out mail-in voter registration forms as they signed a state initiative to increase the minimum wage. It's unknown whether the newly registered turn out to vote.

Homeless people have a right to vote; it's been established by state and federal case law. The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty lists eight court rulings that affirm that right; several cases cite the equal protection clause of the Constitution. Others expand the definition of "residence" to include "the place at the center of the individual's life" — be it a house, a park, or a street corner. ■

—Adam Holdorf

The final date to register to vote for the primary passed August 31. You have until October 22 to register for the November 10 general election. Call (206)296-8683 for more information.

Candidates for Seattle City Attorney

Jim Cline



Number of homes owned: Part of one ("the bank still owns most of it").

Favorite local park: Green Lake

Currently reading: *Ghost Soldiers*

Public transit? Rides the bus.

If you were a character from *The Wizard of Oz*, you'd be: "Glenda, the Good Witch of the North."



What's your background? I am a 1986 Graduate of the Notre Dame Law School. Since graduating from law school I have worked three years as a King County Deputy Prosecutor and 11 years as a labor lawyer, representing a range of public sector labor organizations. I have undertaken extensive pro bono work as (snip!) ✂

What is one major issue you plan to highlight in your campaign? A balanced approach to public safety that fully and fairly enforces the laws while at the same time recognizes civil rights. In furtherance of that I intend to create a civil rights unit and make the City Attorney's Office the front line of police accountability. Also, the City Attorney should (snip!) ✂

What role should city government play in the lives of citizens? To see that justice is done at all times: Economic justice, social justice and legal justice. This means creating a political and economic environment that promotes the common good above narrow individual interests and ensuring that the least advantaged are not further disadvantaged through government neglect or harassment.

If you could do just one thing to help each of the following issues, what would it be?
Homelessness: Review and revise the approach of the existing City Attorney to jail individuals on matters which should be treated, at the most, as infractions. Justice (snip!) ✂

Utilities: Ensure that all utility customers receive the due process to which they are entitled regarding payment issues.

Water: I will work to enhance the City Attorney's approach to environmental issues, merging the land use and environmental units and will bring environment/land use lawyers (snip!) ✂

Urban Reforestation: Same as answer above for water.

Transportation: Ensure that the City Council and Mayor receive proper legal advice on legal issues concerning transportation plans.

Tenants' rights: I will ensure that Prosecutors are fully trained and capable of enforcing the existing city code provisions and will fully and aggressively prosecute those (snip!) ✂

Economic equity: Civil rights: I will strive to make the City Attorney's Office a model employer. I have taken a written pledge to fully restore the collective bargaining (snip!) ✂

As City Attorney I will create a Civil Rights unit which proactively enforces the civil rights and civil liberties of all citizens.

Thomas Carr



One

Schmitz Park

The Last Amateurs

Bus/water taxi; "I am a daily transit user."

The tin man, "after he gets his heart."

(attached a résumé that's too long to reprint here — ed.)

Justice that brings us together. Using the City Attorney's office as a platform to resolve mediate and facilitate the resolution of disputes in our community.

City government should help.



More affordable housing and better shelter.

(no response).

Pass Initiative 63.

I support efforts to daylight our creeks and preserve green space in Seattle.

Better bus service and monorail.

More affordable housing.

Institute a means test for traffic violations.

Better communication.

Articulate Homeless People

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Candidates for Seattle Mayor

	Scott Kennedy 	Greg Nickels 	Paul Schell 	Mark Sidran 
Number of homes owned:	None	One	Two	Two
Favorite local park:	Discovery Park	Lincoln Park in West Seattle	Volunteer Park	Seward Park, "where I grew up."
Currently reading:	<i>How To Win a Local Election</i>	<i>Big Sky</i> , by A.B. Guthrie	<i>John Adams</i> , by David McCullough	<i>Truman</i> , by David McCullough
Public transportation?	"I use public buses, drive, and bicycle. I hope to use a monorail."	"Metro, however as a public servant, my feet could also be considered public transportation."	Bus, trolley, monorail	Bus
If you were a character from <i>The Wizard of Oz</i>, you'd be:	"The Mayor of Munchkin City."	"The Scarecrow. There from the start of the journey, sensible, doesn't scare anyone, and smarter than people give him credit for."	"Glenda the Good Witch."	"Dorothy" 
What's your background?	I graduated in 1989 from The College of Wooster, where I started an artificial intelligence software company from my dorm room. Received a certificate in advertising from Boston University. Became VP of neural networks in Cambridge. Founder and CEO of Axcelis, founder and CEO of BitStar, owner, The BitStar Café.	I have over 25 years of experience in local government. I'm fortunate to have worked on the City Council staff for eight years under then-Councilmember Norm Rice. (snip!) 	Civically active in Seattle for 30-plus years. Helped save Pike Place Market; started, under Mayor Uhlman, the City's first neighborhood improvement program; authored Seattle's One Percent for Arts program; fought to preserve Pioneer Square; chaired three winning school campaigns; led three successful levies for libraries, parks and community centers.	Franklin High School grad, 1969; Harvard grad, Magna Cum laude in government, 1973; University of Washington Law School, law degree, 1976. (snip!) 
What is one major issue you plan to highlight in your campaign?	Our September 18 primary means you cannot "waste" your vote, so you can vote for the candidate you truly believe can be trusted to serve your best interests. There will still be two candidates to choose from in November. Happy with mass transit, housing and police? Vote establishment.	Transportation. I have spent my career seeking alternatives to single occupancy vehicles so that King County residents can get to school, work and home faster. For more than a decade I have led efforts to secure public support for the mass transportation solutions in our region. (snip!) 	To protect our community's quality of life, I've tackled congestion: synchronizing lights, fixing roads, speeding up bus routes, and launching a plan to create an interconnected, in-city transit system. To include everyone in that community, I've doubled funding for homeless programs and increased City-sponsored affordable housing production by 50 percent.	Seattle requires strong, focused leadership. The Nickels (Sound Transit Finance Chair) — Schell failure of leadership on light rail may be the worst failure of all. I won't build light rail without a sensible route and financing, and will focus on better, faster bus service in the short run.
What role should city government play in the lives of citizens?	Government should be run by the people, and for the people. Ideally, it collects a small amount of money from those who have income, and invests it wisely on city programs, roads, education, parks, etc, to enhance the quality of life for all of us.	I'm running for Mayor because Seattle needs a proven leader who can unite us to protect public health and safety, tackle our traffic crisis, and reinvest in our neighborhoods. Bringing all parties to the table that can work on these issues, together, is of utmost importance to me. (snip!) 	Playing the role of active partner to the citizens it serves, City government can leverage great, community-based accomplishments. The results? 850 citizen-led improvement projects funded by neighborhood matching funds. A stronger, more engaged faith-based community assisting the homeless. \$40 million in private funding for transitional housing for women and children.	City Hall should focus on maintaining and improving the quality of life for everyone in Seattle by providing necessary public services cost effectively.
If you could do just one thing to help each of the following issues, what would it be?	Homelessness: Address the causes. Homelessness is often a symptom of other problems (family breakdown, drug & alcohol abuse, mental health issues). (snip!) 	While I support the City stepping up to its responsibility regarding the homeless, I-71 (snip!) 	I'd succeed in my bid, co-signed by 40 U.S. mayors, to triple certain federal funding for shelter, housing, and homeless services.	Implement "continuum of care," especially increase treatment for chemical dependency and mental illness, reform involuntary treatment laws.
Utilities:	Rates should progressively increase so those who use less aren't hit as hard as those who use more.	I will seek efficiencies in Utilities operations in order to maximize revenue and hold rate increases in check to minimize the impacts on homeowners.	I'd accomplish what we are already working toward — independence from the energy market, using green power such as hydropower and wind.	Provide affordable water and electricity to all utility customers
Water:	Encourage conservation and don't sell our water to suburbs.	Seattle must become a cooperative leader in the region for water planning and supply. (snip!) 	I'd have all citizens join the City in its current commitment to double its water conservation savings over the next 10 years.	Promote clean water, adequate supply, and salmon restoration
Urban Reforestation:	Streamline application and grant process, and focus on planting native species.	I will work to daylight our urban streams and continue to explore opportunities for urban greenery and reforestation.	I'd repeat in my second term what I accomplished in my first: planting 27,000 trees in our city.	Promote "greening" of Seattle where practical
Transportation:	Build the voter-approved monorail and kill the over-budgeted Sound Transit plan.	Light Rail represents an opportunity to create a new transportation corridor through the city. (snip!) 	I'd demand that our State Legislature create permanent long-term funding solutions for our transportation needs for both roads and transit.	Provide leadership on Sound Transit. In contrast to Nickels (Chair of Sound Transit Finances) and Schell, don't build light rail without sensible route and financing
Tenants' rights:	I am the only pro-rent control Mayoral candidate. 	I support the adoption of a tenant bill of rights. With a city of over 50 percent renters, the time has come for such a measure.	I'd establish a tenants' bill of rights to give renters the confidence to pursue proper enforcement of the law.	Support fair treatment for all — whether renter or owner.

Mayor, Continued on Next Page

Mayor, Cont. from previous page

Scott Kennedy


Greg Nickels

Paul Schell

Mark Sidran

Economic equity:

Affirmative action policies have been proven effective, and I would encourage women/minority-owned small business.


As a County Councilmember, I have fought to ensure equal access to social services, transportation, health care and other basic services. (snip!) 

I'd dramatically expand funding for pre-school, after school and summer programs to give all children an equal opportunity to succeed.

Promote economic opportunity, especially for those historically discriminated against.

Civil rights:

I am the first candidate to back the development of an independent civilian review board.

I actively opposed Initiative 200 and have supported strong fair housing, equal employment and affirmative action policies. (snip!) 

I'd repeal Initiative 200.

Strongly support civil rights for all our citizens, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Candidates for Seattle City Council in District 2

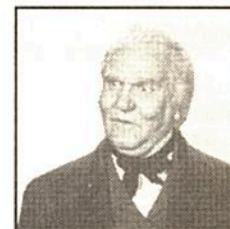
Dakotta James



Richard Conlin



Michael Preston



PRESTON SEES HIMSELF IN THE WIZARD.

Number of homes owned:

None

One

None

Favorite local park:

Discovery Park

Discovery Park

Seward Park/Fort Dent

Currently reading:

Skid Row & Like great people in History

Indian Killer, by Sherman Alexie

Secrets of A CEO Coach, by D.A. Benton

Public transportation?

"Car/walk"

"Annual bus pass, mainly the #3"

Bus

If you were a character from *The Wizard of Oz*, you'd be:

"The Tin Man & Dorothy" (sic)




"Dorothy, when she realizes, 'There's no place like home.'"

"The Wizard, because I have been able to inspire people and show them their inner strength."

What's your background?

I work for a Consulting Firm, I am currently in college, and I have been involved with a lot of organizations with helping in environmental cleanups, food lines, and community outreach programs.

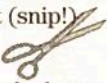
City Councilmember, 1997-present; Member, Seattle-King County Board of Health; Member, Growth Management Planning Council of King County; M.A. Political Science, Michigan State University, 1971, Phi Beta Kappa; Co-founder, Sustainable Seattle; Director, Seattle YMCA Earth Service Corps, 1991-1996; Publisher/Board Member, *YES! A Journal of Positive Futures*, 1996-present; Board Member, Bikeworks, 1996-present

I have served five terms on the Seattle School Board. I am a shareholder and CEO of Goldie's Shoreline. I have worked as Executive Director of CAYA and as a Planning Consultant for United Way of King County. I earned a M.Ed., and a B.A. from WWU. (snip!) 

What is one major issue you plan to highlight in your campaign?

Homelessness and Housing (I have done extensive research on this issue).


My continued work on development of an Economic Opportunity Strategy, including access to benefits, support for minority entrepreneurs, expansion of employment/education programs such as the Seattle Jobs Initiative, and an emphasis on community development in SE Seattle, the community with the largest number of low income households.

Transportation and the disaster we face if we proceed with Link Light Rail. We should not build the train to nowhere. No Light Rail on surface streets in Seattle. No buses in the downtown Bus Tunnel. Expand and improve bus service and explore Ride Free Express. Build Monorail from West (snip!) 

What role should city government play in the lives of citizens?

Looking at the organizational structure of the government, citizens are the government's bosses. City Government officials should be the voice of the citizens, fostering ideas and growth.

Make our basic services — like roads, parks, libraries, and public safety — work. Build on these foundations to foster an economy that provides family wage jobs and a healthy environment. Support excellent schools and create chances for young people to volunteer, work, and contribute to their communities.

The role of city government is to express the hopes and dreams and fears of the citizens of Seattle. It must listen to the concerns of people, and act with clarity and focus. City government must always attempt to make decisions that people can feel are reasonable and fair. (snip!) 

If you could do just one thing to help each of the following issues, what would it be? Homelessness:

Develop and Promote the programs to increase funding for them.

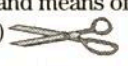
Increase transitional and permanent low income housing in the city.

Increase funding for comprehensive services including: shelter housing, drug and alcohol treatment, and job training.

Utilities:

Look into recycling plants.

Extend energy conservation funding to a larger number of low income households and to non-profit housing providers (already done for rates).

Strengthen and improve conservation programs. Educate the public including schoolchildren regarding ways and means of conserving our energy resources. (snip!) 

Water:

Construct efficient recycling plants.

Extend water conservation funding and rate subsidies to a larger number of low income households and to non-profit housing providers.

Allow the public to vote on I-63. Stiffer penalties for polluters. See utilities answer.

Urban Reforestation:

mandate on 3x amount of trees cut be replanted.


Continue and expand the City's tree planting and maintenance programs.

Utilize city support to establish and maintain habitat. Require city approval to remove trees over a certain size.

Transportation:

Build conjunctions between 99 and I-5 (see my website for traffic plans), rebuild Alaska viaduct, and build monorail.

Support compact communities with employment, housing, recreation, and shopping options, connected by an array of transportation choices.

No Light Rail on surface streets. Examine alternatives to light rail like Ride Free Express. (snip!) 

Tenants' rights:

Tenants' 60-day first right-of-refusal, Facilitate fast-track low interest HUD, Ease downtown building height caps to promote needed residential mixed-use construction with additional public low-cost parking.


Build an alliance between tenants and responsible landlords to focus attention and enforcement on landlord-tenant law violators.

Vigorously enforce the existing laws. Support the approach of Licata and Nicastro to this issue.

Economic equity:

Have a minimum living wage in the city.

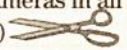
Invest in communities with low income households to aid in developing community resources, employment skills, education, businesses, home ownership, and other assets.

Maintain demographic data on all contracts with the city. Strive to include women- and minority-owned businesses. (snip!) 

Civil rights:

Protect the First Amendment.

Find more unity in our diversity, by openly tackling issues of racism and institutional racism through open communication and institutional change.

I propose that we place video cameras in all police cars in the city of Seattle. (snip!) 

Candidates for Seattle City Council in District 8

Grant Cogswell



"One one-bedroom co-op apartment on Capitol Hill."

Seattle Center

Short Talks, by Anne Carson

"Metro #s 10, 43, 8 and even sometimes our short Monorail. I have commuted by bus and bike (no car) for the last eight years."

"The flying monkeys"



Journalist, non-profit director; BA in English from the University of Virginia, 1993; coauthored the original Monorail Initiative (I-41), ran the signature campaign against Safeco Field, worked to elect Judy Nicastro, Nick Licata, consulted on development of outreach for Denny Place Youth Shelter.

Sound Transit's light rail — projected to get only one out of every thousand cars out of traffic — is too expensive to extend to the region. (snip!)



It should provide facilities for the common good — transit, parks, schools — and protect citizens from abuse, including abuse by the economy which renders people's own homes unaffordable, and abuse from the preexisting, car-oriented infrastructure which damages the environment and debases the public life of the city.

Create a fund to buy abandoned property and build short-term housing.

Invest in alternative energy sources to make up our winter shortfall.

Filter our street runoff and surface urban creeks so chemicals don't wash off the road directly into Lake Washington and the Sound.

Encourage development of backyard and parkland urban wildlife refuges.

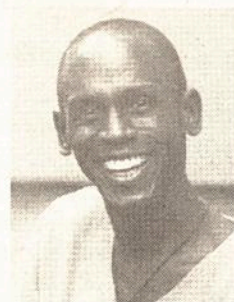
Make Sound Transit build Monorail.

Get tenants the right of first refusal.

Provide efficient public transit so the poor are spared the expense of owning a car.

Create an independent, elected review board for the police department.

Jerome Wilson



One

Gas Works

Nonviolent Communication, by Marshall Rosenthal

Bus

"Toto."



I am the Executive Director of the African American Heritage Museum. I was born and raised in Seattle. I graduated from Garfield High School and joined the Navy, serving eight years with distinction. I've worked as a financial services analyst for McCaw Cellular, Winn Art Group and Levi Strauss Co.

The unresponsive "downtown" mindset that governs Seattle. Whether it's voting for monorail and not getting it, coping with an unaccountable police force or enduring the bullying of Tent City by local bureaucrats, people are fed up with the arrogance of elected officials. We've all experienced it.

It should represent them. The power of City Hall should be used to address the needs of our diverse community not guard the prerogatives of a downtown elite. I will communicate with my constituents not dodge their complaints.

Make sure city council doesn't "tomahawk" the Safe Shelter in Seattle Initiative, I-71 (400 additional shelter beds + 20% increase in funding for support services).

Defend public power.

As outlined in I-63, "Water for Salmon," put in place a "water hog" rate to pay for retrofitting low-income residences for water conservation.

Expand The Department of Neighborhoods "Free Trees for Neighborhoods" program.

Transportation: Re-vote Sound Transit. The greatest danger to monorail and/or a system of free buses is a resuscitated Sound Transit following a "build south" strategy.

A Right of First Refusal Ordinance, which would allow tenants to purchase their rental units, ideally with loans underwritten by the city.

The city council needs to join other big cities and pass a Living-Wage Ordinance.

Work to end the police practice of racial profiling by installing in all patrol cars video cameras to record every stop.

Richard McIver



Two

Seward

Blanche Passes Go, by Barbara Neely

"None...I don't think carpools count."

"The Lion; rather be the Good Witch in *The Wiz*."

I have served in the city council since 1997, when selected from among 117 applicants to fill a vacancy. Prior to joining the council, I spent some thirty years in economic development and the creation of low-income housing.

Transportation. It's the most pressing issue facing the Puget Sound region. There's much more work that needs to be done in shoring our transportation infrastructure. I plan to continue my work to secure funding for the City's transportation infrastructure and help figure out ways to move citizens throughout the region.

The first obligation of the City government is public safety, followed with the infrastructure of roads, bridges, and power. Meeting human service needs is another high priority — things like addressing homelessness, the need for affordable housing and public health.

Add to the housing inventory, from shelters to additional affordable housing. Provide more shelter beds in a permanent facility. (snip!)



We've done it. Hold harmless tenants in low-income houses rate surcharges. Something about keeping utilities affordable for low-income people. See above.

Encourage additional conservation. Protecting salmon and something. We're back to the 1978 level of water usage. We're doing well.

City has recently enacted a tree protection ordinance a step towards preserving our natural environment as we develop greater housing density.

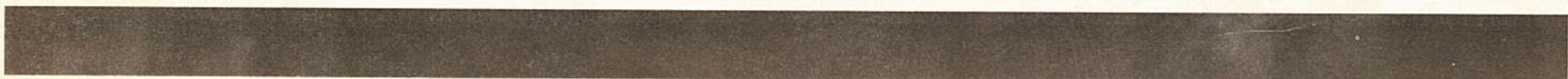
We've succeeded in increasing funding for basic M+O our streets by 300% Must now find stable reliable funding source to meet major infrastructure replacement needs. (snip!)



Continue to work for a balance in protecting the rights of tenants.

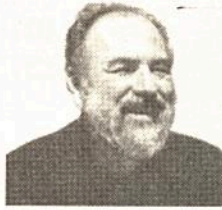
Not so much economic equity as using tools of government to protect the rights of those who remain economically disadvantaged.

I will continue my efforts, in light of I-200, to push the City to do more to encourage minority and women businesses (snip!)



Candidates for Seattle City Council in District 4

Curt Firestone



Number of homes owned:

One

Favorite local park:

Seward

Currently reading:

"During a campaign, I do not have time to read a book."



Public transportation?

"Bus."

If you were a character from *The Wizard of Oz*, you'd be:

"The Yellow Brick Road."

What's your background?

35 years of professional experience (Community Mental Health Executive and Small Business Owner). 40 years of community experience in leadership positions (Rainbow Coalition, Democratic Party, Green Party, Seattle Progressive Coalition, Downtown Human Services Council, King County Family Planning Board, Advisor to *Real Change*).

What is one major issue you plan to highlight in your campaign?

Housing. The City must build low and moderate income housing; Eliminate homelessness by creating permanent homes with appropriate social, health and employment services; Provide a permanent location for tent city; Assist first time homebuyers with interest free loans. Let us protect renter's rights.

What role should city government play in the lives of citizens?

The city must support all residents and enable them to fully enjoy the benefits of this wealthy society. The city must have an open government where all can fully participate. The city must assist in providing basic human services: food, clothing, housing, health care, recreation services, public safety, employment assistance.

If you could do just one thing to help each of the following issues, what would it be? Homelessness:

Build a thousand units of permanent housing. Create a permanent location for tent city as a transitional housing system. Social, health and employment services included.

Utilities:

Create an appropriate technology electric supply system using solar, wind and tidal power for all of Seattle. Lower utility bills and environmental protection.

Water:

I support I-63. It is time that we use the conserved water for protection of our rivers and salmon. (snip!)

Urban Reforestation:

Of course. Whoever cuts down a tree must replace it.

Transportation:

Monorail is an economical, environmentally friendly mass transit system for Seattle. Sound transit must build an economical regional transit network. Bike lanes are needed.

Tenants' rights:

Protect and expand them. Regain from the State, Seattle's right to set its own tenant/landlord standards. Ensure that rents match income levels.

Economic equity:

Living wage for every Seattle resident enabling every person to have a good home, healthy food, clean environment, transportation, medical care and funds for recreation.

Civil rights:

That we will give equal respect to every person regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious belief, mental and physical abilities. (snip!)

Susan Harmon

HARMON ALIGNS WITH TOTO.



"One — well sorta, the bank owns most of it."

"This is a hard one to answer because there are so many great parks in this city." (snip)

Freedom's Landing, by Anne McAffrey; *Message from the Sparrows*, by Taylor Morris; *When Healing Becomes a Crime*, by Kenny Ausubel.

"Bus."

"The Wizard, no, Glynda the good witch ... maybe Toto."

Present: Consultant, Seattle Public Schools. Created Powerful Partners for Powerful Youth. Created Inclusion Solution. Author, lecturer, community activist. Arts West Board of Trustees — education committee. ARC Board of Directors — past chair Grants/finance committee. West Seattle Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors — zone director. Westwood Neighborhood Council — Past President. Delridge Neighborhoods (snip!)

Youth violence and how it is a sign of the disenfranchisement felt by the vast majority of our citizens. It is the elephant in the living room no one seems to want to talk about, yet it impacts all of our lives. (snip!)

Government should provide services for all society's members. City government must listen to the needs of the people and to do that, its councilmembers must be involved in community and not be separated from the everyday lives of most people.

Provide a physical address so services could be implemented.

Use methane gas from solid waste. They've been wanting to do this for 10 years. Now is the time.

Use brown water for industry. Recycle and reward conservation.

I've helped plant hundreds of trees in my neighborhood. We have several good programs in place for that and I would encourage more.

Lots of little things as well as a monorail and light rail done right... like school ID for middle and high school youth as a buspass.

Rent controls that are fair to both tenants and owners. Address the issue of absentee landlords.

Mixed-income neighborhoods.

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● Mar. 31 - June 2, Transforming the violence of the empire

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oddev@earthlink.net, www.trinity-ballard.org

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for the evening



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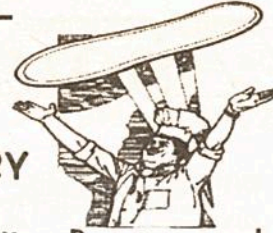
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Thursday, Aug. 16, 5:26 p.m., Central Lutheran Church, 11th Avenue. Police responded to a report of unwanted guests sleeping on the property. The complainant stated that this was an ongoing problem, and that he would like all trespassers removed. A routine computer check on the unwanted visitor — a 19-year-old homeless white male — revealed he had a previous warrant for marijuana possession, and he was arrested and transported to King County Jail.

Thursday, Aug. 16, 8:46 p.m., East Madison Street. Officers contacted complainant who stated that the suspect, a homeless black female aged 32, was sleeping in a van that did not belong to her. The van had been recently totaled, and the owner was out of the area. When asked, the suspect admitted she did not own the van, nor did she know the owner. Officers then issued a trespass warning, and ran her name via radio. A prior warrant for theft was found and verified, and she was arrested and taken to King County Jail.

Friday, Aug. 17, 2:04 a.m., 18th Avenue East. Officers were dispatched to a woman's address to remove her adult son at her request. Upon their arrival, the woman told them that her son, a homeless black male aged 31 years, had a long history of mental problems, and that he had been yelling at her. She said he made no threats and was not violent. She said she wanted him trespassed from her apartment until he could get the help he needs. Officers contacted subject, and told him he had to leave the residence, which he agreed to do. They escorted him outside the building, where he signed a trespass admonishment card, and stated that he understood that he would be arrested if he returned. He was given the number of the Crisis Clinic, and left without incident.

Saturday, Aug. 18, 3:32 a.m. Western Avenue/Pike Place Market. Officers on patrol came across a Native American male, age 35, sleeping underneath a bridge by the sidewalk on Western Avenue. Officers knew that the subject had recently been criminally trespassed from the Pike Place Market for the period of one year. The criminal trespass order was verified, and the subject detained. The order stated that the subject was to stay away from Pike Place Market, but officers were unable to determine if the sidewalk west of the wall on Western is considered the Market. No document could be obtained at that time to indicate how far the Market extends. Subject was released and advised that the police will review the case, and may prosecute in the future. ■

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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Presenting: a Mayoral Primer on KBCS

As the Seattle mayoral race picks up speed, KBCS and the Seattle Independent Media Center present a 3-part series on local issues with a focus on how the candidates for Seattle's mayor plan to tackle some of our most pressing problems. Independent reporters present in-depth analyses on the following topics:

June 28 - **Policing our Police**

August 2 - **The Housing Crisis**

September 13 - **Private-Public Partnerships**

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A Moment About Us

Waiting to Be Invited: a civil rights drama
by S.M. Shephard-Massat
Directed by Israel Hicks
Runs through September 16
ACT (A Contemporary Theatre)
Tickets: \$10-\$42

By Marsha Herrington
and Anitra L. Freeman

The Allen stage of A Contemporary Theater is like a small, cozy stadium, with a round, rotating stage circled by seven banks of seats, in turn circled by an expanse of carpeted floor. The actors enter down aisles underneath the top row of seats. With high ceilings and cushioned chairs, it is an intimate and elegant setting.

The atmosphere adds an extra fillip of irony to the production of a play about four black women preparing to sit in at a "whites-only" lunch counter in 1961 Atlanta.

Unlike many other movies, plays, and books about the civil-rights movement, *Waiting to Be Invited* doesn't focus on the headline figures and dramatic confrontations. In showing the private fears of four women preparing for civil disobedience, it draws attention to the millions of people behind the scenes who make a movement — and to the place of true battleground, inside us.

Sherry M. Shephard-Massat, in her first play, has captured the rhythm and style of southern conversation. This is probably as familiar to her as rain is to a Seattleite, since she based this play on her own grandmother's experiences and neighbors that she grew up with. Dialogue that could easily become shtick with less adept actors is instead rich and beautiful.

In the first act, Miss Louise (Demene E. Hall), Miss Delores (Cynthia Jones), and Miss Odessa (Ebony Jo-Ann) get off work at the doll factory, change into their best white dresses, and catch a bus downtown. Cheerful banter and insult humor is the tone of the entire conversation. They have exchanges with the bus driver Pomeroy Bateman (Keith L. Hatten) and a Bible-wielding white lady (Jane Welch), who express both admiration and concern when they are told the trio's intentions. Woven through the party atmosphere is evidence of the omnipresent force of racism in the character's lives, from the white lady's anecdote of a white boy who beat up little black kids to Pomeroy maintaining his survival and dignity by the simple refusal to "spend my money anywhere I'm not wanted."

In the second act, the three factory workers meet up with Miss Ruth, a pastor's wife, in a plaza outside the department store, and in the imminence of action, darker emotions begin to surface.

Our two reviewers differed over Michele Shay's portrayal of Miss Ruth, who is terrified of white retaliation and what a public confrontation might do

to her social standing. Marsha thought that Shay's character didn't seem as three-dimensional as the others and theorized that she lacked experience; but Shay is a Broadway veteran. Anitra's opinion was that Miss Ruth is, foremost, a plot device, designed to break through the veneer of ladies-day-on-the-town to the fears and angers underneath.

Racism is still an omnipresent force in our lives; as homeless and low-income people, at least, we deal with it every day. The experience of Anitra, who is white, is not the same as that of Marsha, who is black. But in some ways, all isms are the same, the racism, sexism, and classism that say if you haven't got money to spend here, don't come into our neighborhood.

The struggle for justice still goes on in the lives of millions of people who have to face the same fears about the consequences of standing up and speaking up that Miss Ruth, Miss Louise, Miss Odessa, and Miss Ruth do. The standing ovation that this play receives is not just for the courage of those four women and the others like them who won the struggle for civil rights in the 1960s. It is not just applause for our white liberal tolerance, for being better than our ancestors, for producing a play about black issues with black actors and blacks in the audience in a fancy theater that would never have welcomed such things in 1961.

The applause is appreciation for the writer's work of speaking the things we cannot speak for ourselves. In the crisis of the play, when the storm of fear and anger breaks out of hiding, we can all recognize the terrors that stand in the way of intervening in a case of child abuse, police abuse, racial abuse, or just stopping to check on a homeless person who has his head down on a picnic table.

This is not only a play about an important moment in history. This is a play about us. ■



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CLASSICS CORNER



by Perfess'r Harris

We're sure that by now you've heard the old story about the reporter and Mahatma Gandhi. The reporter says to Gandhi, "Mr. Gandhi, what do you think of Western Civilization?" And Gandhi says, "I think it would be a good idea."

As you no doubt recall, our last column had to do with Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*. We considered Prometheus as committed rebel, standing tall against Zeus and the horse he rode in on. What makes *Prometheus* a classic, outside of being really, really old, is the numerous ways in which it may be read. One is that of reason, or persuasion, pitted against force.

Those most likely to resort to force are the insecure. In *Prometheus*, Might and Violence are sent to do young Zeus' dirty work, and our Titan hero is bound for eternity to a rock. Eventually, however, he overcomes, because persuasion, over time, renders force obsolete.

All of which reminds us of what we saw on KIRO this morning. Susan Hutchison, who we're beginning to see as the friendly face of fascism, redundantly chirped that Seattle's new "get tough on protesters" policy meant that police were "getting tough." What followed were images of armor-clad cops kicking the crap out of a bunch of kids. Helpfully, the



PHOTO BY GEORGE HICKEY.

"ANARCHISTS" logo reminded viewers that these were not actually people.

While a bunch of counter-culturally clad teens taking to the street may not be persuasive to everyone, their anger over sweatshop conditions is one of the things a democratic society would tolerate.

Real Change combat photographer George "Go ahead, make my day" Hickey, who happens to be impervious to pepper spray, saw the whole thing. About 100 cops surrounded 150 or so kids to drive them back against a wall. When the kids ran out of room and pushed back, the cops let loose with tear gas and every other ass-kicking tool at their disposal.

Evidently, these big, strapping, weight-lifting cops had a preferred method of arrest: One would grab a kid by the hair while the other took a leg, and once the kid was flat on his back, two more would pile on to subdue the anarchist, all of which makes about 800 pounds of cop to one stringy rave-kid.

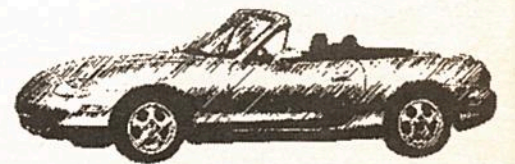
After the initial confrontation, the protesters were sent on a forced march out of the downtown area and herded down the sidewalk by police horses, motorcycles, and bikes. Nobody was allowed to leave. If a demonstrator stepped off the sidewalk onto the street, they were arrested for jaywalking.

Police found the storm-trooper tactics justified. They reportedly had intelligence that the demonstrators brought buckets of rocks. Sure. Like anyone's going to carry a bucket of rocks to a demonstration. People here have been shot for less.

This is not what democracy looks like. To paraphrase Pastor Niemöller, "First, they came for the Anarchists." We wonder who's next? ■

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September

Notables

Thursday, 9/6

Meeting of the Michael Randall Ealy Social Justice Foundation, for the purpose of bringing justice for the death of Michael Randall Ealy, killed while in custody of the Seattle Police, this and subsequent 1st Thursdays, 6:30 - 8 p.m., at the A.M.E. Zion Church, Social Hall, 1716-23rd at Olive; info 206-320-7069 or opealy@uswest.net.

The Seattle Colombia Committee is please to invite you to the third Tinto Por La Paz 2001 (a cup of coffee for peace), featuring "Fumigating Campesinos: What our taxes pay for," 7 - 9 p.m., at Independent Media Center, 1415 3rd Ave, downtown; info Cristina Reyes 206-567-5610.

League of Women Voters Forum, this month topic trade policy in the United States; free, this and subsequent 1st Thursdays, 7:30 p.m., at Seattle First Baptist Church, Harvard & Seneca; info 206-329-4848 or lvwseattle@aol.com.

Radical Women general meeting, learn more about their current activities and campaigns; 7:30 p.m., at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave S, 4 blocks south of S. Alaska St. on the #7 bus line, din-

ner with Vegetarian Option at 6:30 p.m. for \$6.50 donation; all welcome, info, rides or childcare 206-722-6057.

Friday, 9/7

Church Council of Greater Seattle press conference, "Dismantling Racism and White Privilege," 10:30 a.m., at Plymouth Cong. Church, 1217-6th Ave, downtown; info Paula Harris-White 206-525-1213 ext 4500 or harriswhite@uswest.net.

Sunday, 9/9

Northwest AIDS Walk, includes a 10K fun run in addition to the 5K/10K walk, join the efforts to battle the disease through financial and/or manpower support in the 3rd decade of AIDS; at the Seattle Center, info Kim Nguyen 206-957-1611 or kimn@lifelongaidsalliance.org.

21st Annual Seattle Peace Concert series in the parks, admission free, noon - 6 p.m., at Magnuson Park; info 206-729-5232 or <http://www.seapeace.org>.

Monday, 9/10

Potluck meeting of Out Front Labor Coalition / Gay Pride at Work, AFL-CIO, 6:30 p.m., at Labor Temple, Room 208, 2800 1st Ave at Broad St., Room 208, info co-

chairs Bruce or Sarah at voicemail 206-903-9488 or oflepride@aol.com.

Wednesday, 9/12

Meeting of Northwest Disarmament Coalition, 4 - 6 p.m., at the Peace Action office, 5828 Roosevelt NE just South of Ravenna Blvd, info Martin Fleck 206-547-2630.

Homestead Community Land Trust general meeting, creating permanently affordable homeownership opportunities; this and subsequent 2nd Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m., at Homestead's office, 1309 13th Ave. S, info 206-323-1227 or homesteadclt@yahoo.com.

Monthly meeting of the Labor Party, this and subsequent 2nd Wednesdays, 7 p.m., at Labor Temple, hall One, 2800 1st Ave; info on Labor Party 206-382-5712 or LaborPartyNW@aol.com

Thursday, 9/13

"Protecting Cultural Authenticity in Native American Art," Seattle Arts Commission presents a free public forum as part of the Salmon Homecoming Celebration; 1 p.m., at Seattle Art Museum, 100 University St.; seating is limited, to register, contact Sara Kabot, 206-684-7076 or sara.kabot@ci.seattle.wa.us.

Friday, 9/14

Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity Faces of Courage 2001 Awards Luncheon honoring leaders from the Puget Sound area fighting against bigotry and hatred, noon - 1:30 p.m., at the Bell Harbor International Conference Center at Pier 66, \$100, info Eric Ward 206-762-5627.

Saturday, 9/15

Trans Youth Night, a special space for transgendered or Trans questioning youth, this and subsequent 3rd Saturdays, 8 p.m. - midnight, at Lambert House, 1818 15th Ave; info Miles Conrad, 206-322-2515 ext. 13 or miles@lamberthouse.org.

Sunday, 9/16

Car free Fremont, a neighborhood celebration of freedom from automobile dependence, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., at 35th and Phinney, info <http://www.thinksmall.org/car-free/press.htm>.

21st Annual Seattle Peace Concert series in the parks; admission free, noon - 6 p.m., at Woodland Park Shelter Area #1 Park entrance N 50th between Stone Way & Aurora Ave N, east of the Woodland Park Zoo, info 206-729-5232 or <http://www.seapeace.org>.

Monday, 9/17

Public Information Forum by Community Transit to provide information and gather public input on service reductions and/or revenue increases, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., at UW Extension Downtown, 1411 4th Ave, Suite 210, info or to comment 425-353-RIDE or <http://www.commtrans.org>.

Tuesday, 9/18

Primary Election Day, remember to vote in Seattle, the Mayor and several City Council members will be elected this day and in November, important issues such as police accountability, first amendment right to protest, housing funding are at stake, 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Meeting of white women organizing against racism, a place for white women to get support from one another in doing anti-racist work; this and subsequent 3rd Tuesdays; 7 - 9 p.m., at Lesbian Resource Center at 23rd and Jackson; info Sarah Mello Temple 206-323-2396 or stemple@jvccaworks.org.

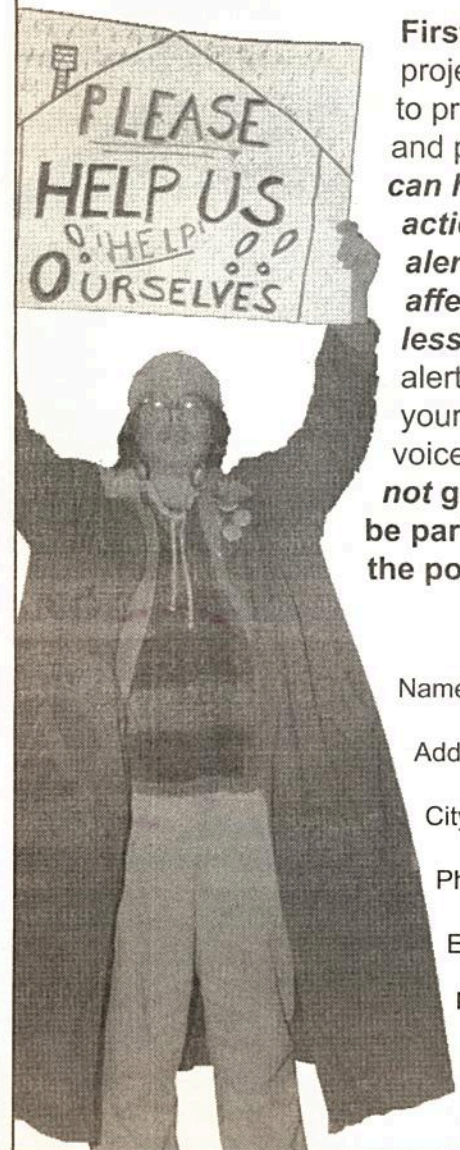
Special space for transgendered or Trans questioning youth, 3rd Saturdays, see Sept. 15; Lambert House, info Miles Conrad, Lambert House Transgender Youth Program Coordinator, 206-322-2515x13 or miles@lamberthouse.org.

Green Party of East King County monthly meeting, the Eastside's newest political party, all are welcome, this and subsequent 3rd Tuesdays, 7 - 9 p.m., at Redmond Public Library; info Bill Hayden rcia.com or 425-831-6086.

Wednesday, 9/19

Gay/lesbian PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) of Greater Puget Sound first meeting of the school year; panel discussion regarding "How to Advocate for Your Child in the Public School System," 6:30 - 9:30 p.m., at Meany Middle School, 301 21st E; info <http://www.glptsa.org>.

Do Something!



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

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citizens participation project



Push for Welfare Reauthorization

Issue: Tell your congressperson to support the renewal of the current federal welfare program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which is scheduled for congressional debate over the next year.

Background: With August 22 marking the fifth anniversary of when TANF was first put into law, this marks the perfect time to urge your congressional representative to support welfare reform without adding more limitations and requirements that those needing welfare assistance the most are unable to handle.

This is the time to put forward a vision for welfare reform legislation that is focused on getting families out of poverty. Welfare caseloads have been reduced far more quickly than the number of people living in poverty. While caseloads have dropped by close to 50 percent since 1995, the poverty rate dropped by only 17% between 1995 and 1999 (13.8% to 11.8%), according to figures released by the National Coalition for the Homeless. A study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found that the disposable incomes of the poorest fifth of single mothers actually fell during this same period.

There are some good sides to the new welfare approach. States have implemented their new welfare programs in lockstep with the longest economic expansion in our nation's history, characterized by the lowest unemployment rate in over three decades and rising hourly wage rates for the lowest-paid workers, which had fallen for the previous two decades. More single parents are working and earning more income than ever before. To the extent that the new welfare law has allowed families to benefit from the strong economy, it's been a success.

Yet poverty remains a persistent problem for those who have worked their way off welfare. A comprehensive study by the Urban Institute of families that recently left welfare shows that they earn, on average, \$1,093 per month. Over half of these families earned a monthly income below the federal poverty line. Fully 46% of the families were unable to pay rent, mortgage, or utility bills over a year-long period. We can't declare welfare reform a success — as too many have — if families leave welfare rolls only to bolster the ranks of the working poor.

Action: Washington state Representative Jim McDermott is an influential member of the House Ways and Means Committee's subcommittee on human resources.

Contact Representative McDermott at either (202) 225-3106, (206) 553-7170, or via email at www.house.gov/mcdermott and let him know that any reauthorization bill should contain the following provisions:

- TANF reauthorizing legislation must redefine the goal of welfare reform as the economic viability, long-term housing and family stability, health, and well-being of all the involved parents and their children.
- TANF policies and practices must ensure that no families participating in TANF programs become homeless. Families who are sanctioned must have uninterrupted housing stability in order to allow the relevant human service agencies to work effectively with these families to overcome barriers to compliance.
- Successful TANF policies and practices must move families out of poverty.
- Reauthorize TANF at current federal funding levels to provide adequate income and work supports for the length of time needed to ensure successful outcomes for all involved families.
- "Stop the Clock" by removing cash assistance benefits from time limits. Families complying with welfare to work activities should not have time limits on their access to needed cash assistance and income supports. ■

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Mockingbird Times

Washington State Foster Care
and Homeless Youth Speak Out

SEPTEMBER 6, 2001

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.MOCKINGBIRDSOCIETY.ORG

VOLUME I, ISSUE 2

Never Fear, the Ombudsman's Here

By JULIA HIGUERA

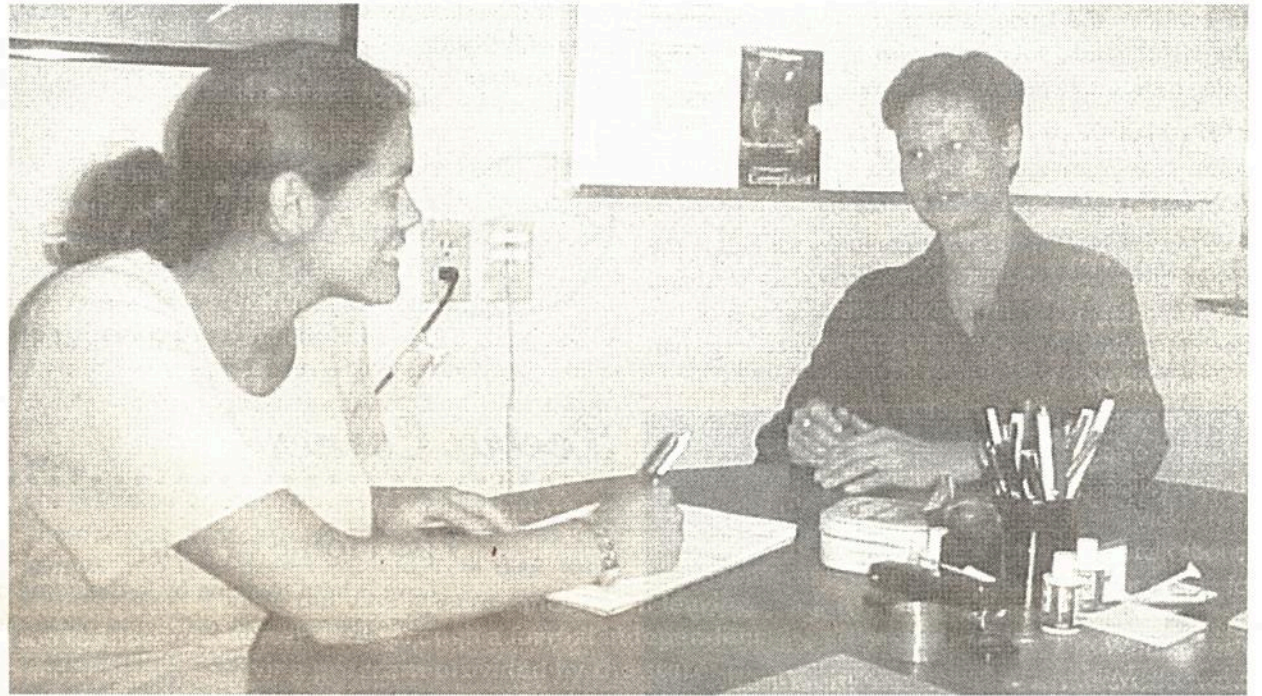
AFTER YEARS OF COMPLAINTS about abuse and victimizing at the Washington state facility OK Boys Ranch, the state finally decided to do something. In 1996, the governor created the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman to protect children and parents from harmful agency action or inaction.

Vickie Wallen has served as the ombudsman since its creation. After graduating from Princeton University and the Washington College of Law at the American University, she worked as a citizen's advocate and on state policy issues affecting women and children. She also served as former Governor Mike Lowry's senior policy coordinator for human services.

Vickie recently sat down with the *Mockingbird Times* to talk about her position and how she's trying to reach out to the foster care community.

What does the Ombudsman do?

We do two things. First, we try to determine whether or not the agency that is providing the service is doing that appropriately. For example, a neighbor may call us and say there seems to be a toddler running around the neighborhood and they don't see a parent out there taking care of their kid. They have called Child Protective Services and CPS hasn't taken any action. Or we may get someone in the foster care system who is contacting us to tell us he/she isn't getting a particular kind of service that he or she needs. Secondly, we advocate for improvements in the whole child welfare system. So rather than just helping one particular person, like we do with a complaint, we prod legislators and the agency to fix the system so that it is working better for all kids and families. You feel like you're not



Julia Higuera talks about the state of the foster care system with ombudsman Vickie Wallen. Photo by Jim Theofelis.

just putting out a fire, responding to one person's particular issue, which is important, but like you are making the system better for all kids and parents.

What power do you have to change the system? What can you actually change?

We can make proposals to actually change the law. That means we go to Olympia to testify in front of the legislature. We advocate and ask that more money be spent on programs for families and kids. We also try to persuade DSHS [the state Department of Social and Health Services] to make changes in their policies and practices. For example, one of the more recent recommendations we made was that DSHS persuade a group of kids that are in foster care, along with people who are working in the system, to focus on what kids say they need in order to make their experience in foster care better.

What is your outreach to let youth know that you are here to provide a service?

DSHS has a booklet that they give kids going into foster care. But we have felt that is not a very effective way of letting kids know that we are a resource. I don't think anybody reading it will get a sense

of what we do or that we are independent from DSHS. So during the last session we asked the legislature to

pass a law that would require DSHS to give every young person coming into foster care a brochure about us, written by us. But in this last session, it did not pass. We will have to keep working so the department will eventually give out something that will be useful to kids in care. We let all community agencies know that we are a resource. We want to do more outreach with kids. I don't feel like enough kids in the system know that we are a resource for them. One of the reasons I was excited to do this interview was that I was hoping your article would inform young people.

What about the younger children who can't read and express that they need help? How do you reach them?

If we could get to older kids to let them know that we exist, then younger kids would know that we are a resource. We also need to target the people who work with younger kids, like guardians

ad litem, counselors, therapists, or foster parents, or

OMBUDSMAN CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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Mockingbird and nest logo by Julia Higuera
Mockingbird Times is special insert in *Real Change*

Letter from the Editor

FIRST AND FOREMOST a heart-felt "thank you" to so many of you who responded to our inaugural edition of the *Mockingbird Times* with such encouragement and support. Our work and the passion that fuels it continue, as does our need for your support.

"A mile in their mocassins..."

As summer begins to fold into fall, most kids and families are preparing for school. New lunch boxes, backpacks, and clothes characterize the "back to school" routine. Starting a new school year means lots of other new items as well including a new teacher, new classmates and probably some new expectations. For most kids this is more than enough stress to endure. I ask you to consider the kindergartner, the fourth grader, or the eighth-grade youngster who as you read this is being moved to a new foster home.

"Extra Extra! Kids in foster care speak out!"

The *Mockingbird Times* is an opportunity for kids in the foster care system across Washington state to share, learn, and teach. If you know someone who is or has been in the foster care system, please encourage him

or her to contact us. We have many ways for young people ages 12-22 to participate, get published, and be compensated for their efforts. We want to be able to report on what is going on around and across the state regarding foster care services and issues.

Encouragement

This word has been with me since our inaugural edition hit the streets. As I said earlier, we have received a lot of encouragement and it is appreciated. Through their willingness to be public with their story, the young people who are working with *The Mockingbird Times* have demonstrated "the courage of a lion." It takes great courage to allow one's life to be placed in public view and held up for scrutiny and discussion. I thank them and their loved ones for their participation and their courage.

Jim Theofelis

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Congratulations to you and your staff on the first issue of *Mockingbird Times*. Quite an achievement to put all this together. I only have two suggestions: One, articles by former foster children who have overcome this hurting part of their life to become successes. Alas, the only role model that came by once every 18 months was my rotating caseworker. A role model gives hope, instills the idea that it is possible to succeed, permits the child to contemplate the future, and even begin working on that dream.

Second, I couldn't cut out your membership application because it would destroy the front page, so I copied it. Maybe an insert application instead.

You have my letter joining the Mockingbird Society in the mail.

THANK YOU,
FIDEL ALVAREZ

If there's an issue you want to see *Mockingbird Times* cover, we want to know about it. Contact the *Times* with your ideas and suggestions at www.mockingbirdsociety.org



Quirky Bird Quote

"In heaven there are no ethnic groups, no races, no distinctions of such as these, so why is there now?"

— Julia Higuera

Poetry Corner

The Home of Pain

Love is hard to come by in the home of Pain. People think I lie in the home of Pain. See my life in rain in the home of Pain, where lies are in stone. No one believes you no more. In the home of Pain the rain falls down like my tear drops as no one cares. They leave you in your room for... well it feels like a year. They say you want to fess up. I say I am not lying. They say you are. Then I stay in my room more and more until I go crazy and I can't take it no more. So kids if you are caught in the predicament anytime say what they want you to say. Because it's not fun to stay in your room everyday.

ELI WILSON

If you're a young poet anywhere in Washington State, we want to publish your poetry. Submit your poems to www.mockingbirdsociety.org

Meet Our Staff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jim Theofelis

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Siri Throm Saxe

STAFF ADVISORS

Valerie Douglas, Molly Rhodes

STAFF WRITERS

Julia Higuera, Eli Wilson, J.W.

THANK YOUS

Richard Hugo House, *Real Change*, Dani Turk, Children's Home Society, Independent Living Program, YWCA, New Horizons, Washington CASA, Vickie Wallen, the state Ombudsmans' office, Suzette Higuera, Casey Family Program, Ancil Payne

The Mockingbird Times
1820 12th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122
(206) 322-0438
www.mockingbirdsociety.org

What they should ask you at an intake: Do you want to contact anyone to let them know you're safe?

Join the Mockingbird Society: make a difference in the lives of Washington's most vulnerable youth

THE MOCKINGBIRD SOCIETY is an independent, non-profit organization that is dedicated to improving the safety, quality of life and future of the children and adolescents living in the Washington State foster care/group home system. We are committed to saving and improving children's lives by providing resources, leadership and expertise to the Washington State foster care/group home system.

All members of the Mockingbird Society will receive the *Mockingbird Times* monthly.

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To donate by mail: Please fill out and mail this form with a check or money order payable to The Mockingbird Society, to The Mockingbird Society, 1820 12th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122

Melodic Lyrics of a Brand New Star

By JULIA HIGUERA

WISE BEYOND HER YEARS, songwriter and classically trained pianist Alicia Keys has continued the process of writing, producing, and recording a debut album she began writing at 14.

Born and raised in Manhattan, bi-racial Keys mentions a number of influences, including her ultra-supportive mother, who told her, "You can quit anything else, but you can never give up on your piano lessons."

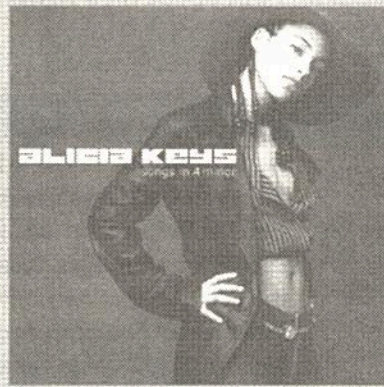
At age 16, Keys' outstanding grades allowed her to finish high school early. Right out of high school, Columbia University accepted Keys, but her desire to focus on music is what got her to where she is today.

Alicia Keys' album, *Songs in A Minor*, is a deep, soulful, and melodic album that shows Alicia and her

Songs in A Minor



By Alicia Keys



universal talents. The song "How Come You Don't Call Me," written by Prince, shows a good use of her vocal range.

"Fallin'" is a very deep song. The way Keys demonstrates her piano skills is extraordinary and the words are very powerful. The song "A Woman's Worth" is a very inspirational song for those women who need reinforcement that they are worth being treated right. "Never Felt This Way" is a very melodic and meaningful song that could be written to a child, partner, or friend.

"Goodbye" is a personal favorite. It talks about how to say good-bye to someone you loved for a long time and having to say good-bye because the relationship isn't positive. 🐦

OMBUDSMAN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

whoever is around that the young person may feel comfortable going to if they have a problem or issue.

What type of changes have occurred since the creation of the ombudsman position?

We have helped kids in a number of cases get attorneys, or a guardian ad litem to represent them in court. We have had a couple of situations where there was a group of brothers and sisters who didn't want to be split up. We were able to help in that situation by persuading the department to give the foster parent a waiver so that they were able to keep all the siblings together. On a system-wide basis, we have been talking a lot to the department about issues such as drivers licenses, holding allowances, staying at other people's houses and having people come over to stay with you. There hasn't been any clear policy changes in those areas, but I think the department is seriously looking at those issues and seems to be considering looking at ways to loosen up some of those restrictions.

Do you only investigate situations that are reported to you?

One of the great things about the office is that we don't have to wait for a complaint to investigate something. We can initiate our own investigations. If we become aware that there might be an chronic practice, like a caseworker not returning phone calls

or not going out and checking on a kid in a foster home, we document that and bring it to the attention of somebody higher up and say there seems to be a problem with this worker of this office and we think you need to intervene. We also go out and talk to foster kids, interview them and find out what is going well for them and what issues they think the ombudsman's office should address to make the system better for them.

What are some of the most common problems that are reported or that you see in the system?

There are so many. We get a lot of complaints from parents who have been separated from their family and they don't feel like the state is doing enough to reunify them with their children.

Another big issue is relatives that will call us and it might be relatives who want the kids to be placed with them and the system is saying they are going to remove the kids and place them in non-relative foster care.

The third biggest category is from people who are complaining that the state is not doing enough to keep a child safe. There doesn't seem to be enough services that the state offers to families to keep them together in the first place. It just seems really unfair to me that the state will take enough action to intervene and protect a child in a short term way but they don't then take the next step and make sure that the child and the family have the services that they need either to deal with the situation or to help support them through an obviously very difficult time.

It also doesn't seem like the system really helps support case workers to make sure they have enough time to spend with foster parents and kids in foster care, in order to make sure those placements are really working for the child in foster care. It almost feels like there is this assembly line mentality where we will put a child into a placement and then kind of disappear.

What would you like to see change about the foster care system?

My one wish is to see a radical infusion of support for families to prevent them from having their kids come into foster care in the first place. I would also like to see more support for kids and foster parents.

What happens to a state employee who gets investigated by the ombudsman and is found in the wrong in a situation?

We are most interested in making sure that the worker makes the right decision. If we feel like they are making a wrong decision, our primary goal is to have them change their mind and do the right thing. If we feel like their decision was one in which they exercised really poor judgment or were being really unfair, almost maliciously unfair about the decision they have made, then we will document that and let their boss know that. We expect their boss would bring that to the person's attention and take appropriate action. But there is no formal consequence for an employee as a result of an investigation that we would do. It is up to the department to discipline the workers or take appropriate action as to the worker.

You can't actually enforce anything?

We can investigate and get access to all the information the agency has and we can find out what the basis was for making a decision, but we can only recommend to the agency that they do something different. We don't have any formal authority to say you must do this. Now having said that, it doesn't sound very powerful, but in fact we are very effective about getting the agency to change its mind, especially in health and safety type issues. In the vast majority of the cases we get involved with, where we feel we have a concern about a young person's health and safety, the department will do what we recommend.

Because the stakes are so high, we're talking about really key decisions about people's lives and their safety and so that's why our office is so important because we can really be a check on those decisions. Making sure there is someone from the outside looking in and making sure decisions are made for the right reasons and not for things that aren't really relevant.

OMBUDSMAN CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

How to contact the ombudsman with a complaint:

Call the ombudsman at 1 (800) 571-7321

When you call, you have to know:

- The child's or parent's name
- The basic nature of the complaint or situation

If it's an imminent threat or health and safety issue, the ombudsman will:

- Do an intake over the phone
- Document the complaint
- Start an investigation right away
- Respond within a day or a few days

If it's not an imminent threat but a more long-term issue, the ombudsman will:

- Do an intake over the phone or send you a complaint form to fill out and return
- Document the complaint
- Start an investigation within 15 working days
- Respond within several days or weeks

By the time you hang up the phone, you'll know:

- How the ombudsman will proceed
- How long the investigation could take
- When you can expect to hear back from the ombudsman

For more information, go to www.governor.wa.gov/ofco

If you have an immediate threat of abuse or neglect to report, you can also call 911 or Child Protective Services at 1 (800) 562-5624. 🐦

OMBUDSMAN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

How does the process work. If a kid was to call what should they expect?

Anyone can call us on our 1-800 number (see sidebar on page 3) and basically tell what their complaint is, give us an idea of what their concern is. We'll do one of two things. We'll do an intake over the phone with that person, document the complaint, and start an investigation right away. If it's more of a longer-term kind of issue, we might send them a complaint form and have them fill it out. If that seems like too much of a hassle, we will just take their complaint over the phone and not investigate it right away. For the most part we will investigate complaints when they come in.

When we get a sense of the complaint while the person is still on the phone, we will have him or her talk to an ombudsman. That's the person who will do the complaint intake and explain what our time frame is, when we will begin the investigation and staff it.

By the time the person hangs up they will have a pretty good sense of how we intend to proceed. If it's a health or safety issue, it could be a matter of a day in some cases before we have an answer. If it is another kind of issue, like a placement issue, that might take longer for us to actually resolve. It could be a matter of weeks even.

Do you still do investigations if you don't know the specifics, like who the caseworker is?

You only need to have the name of the kid, if it involves a kid, or the name of the parent. That is all we need to be able to access records ourselves. So if someone were to call us from Yakima and say here's the kid's name, we could look it up in the system right away while the person is on the phone and say yes, there were three reports called in on this particular kid.

How do youth find out about their rights in foster care?

There is really nothing in law that gives foster kids basic kinds of legal rights within the child welfare system. Which I think is outrageous, because it makes it hard for advocates to say this foster kid should have the right to receive all the services that he or she needs. The state of California recently had legislation that was pending that would have created a bill of rights for kids in foster care. (See sidebar) It was a basic list of legal rights that every kid could have enforced on his or her behalf. That is something I want to be monitoring, to see if that is something we could be doing here in Washington state. It would really help keep the system accountable, because it would be a black and white statement of what Washington state is absolutely required to do in terms of kids in foster care.

VICKIE WALLEN

There is really nothing in law that is written that gives foster kids basic kinds of legal rights within the child welfare system. Which I think is outrageous, because it makes it hard for advocates to say this foster kid should have the right to receive all the services that he or she needs. The state of California recently had legislation that was pending that would have created a bill of rights for kids in foster care. (See sidebar) It was a basic list of legal rights that every kid could have enforced on his or her behalf. That is something I want to be monitoring, to see if that is something we could be doing here in Washington state. It would really help keep the system accountable, because it would be a black and white statement of what Washington state is absolutely required to do in terms of kids in foster care.

What do you want to say to that foster kid in a home in Yakima or Yelm or...

I would want that person to know that he or she can go and contact us to help make sure that he or she

will be kept safe. That is the strongest thing I would want to say. We want that person to call us and tell us what their opinion is. We really, really want to hear from kids in the system.

Foster Care Rights

This is a partial list of the rights and responsibilities that the California Youth Connection is trying to get the California state Legislature to pass this year, in the Assembly Bill 899. There are currently rules similar to these within the Washington state foster care system, but they're almost never enforced with the power that a law would have. The fact that advocates feel the need to put basic rights into law shows the kind of condition foster care systems are in.

- The right to adequate medical, dental, and psychiatric care.
• The right to overall well-being, free from physical or mental punishment.
• The right to contact family members, social workers, attorneys, mentors, and the state foster care ombudsman.
• The right to file a complaint.
• The right not to be locked in any room, building, or facility premises at any time.
• The right to attend religious services or activities. Attendance at religious services shall be on a completely voluntary basis.
• The right to education and community involvement.
• The right to work and develop job skills.
• The right to social contacts.
• The right to adequate clothing.
• The right to get assistance when leaving foster care through a formal independent living program provided by the state.
• The responsibility to respect the personal property of foster families.

To find out more about this bill and the California Youth Connection, go to their website at www.calyouthconn.org.

Word search grid containing various words related to foster care and social services.

All the words listed below can be found in the grid on the left, horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forwards, and backwards. For an extra challenge, 11 words can be found twice, four words can be found three times, two words can be found four times, one word can be found five times, and one word can be found seven times.

- Advocate Foster care Placement
Attorney Government Psychiatric
Bill Guardian Religious
Brochure Imminent Resource
California Improvements Responsibility
Caseworker Independent Living Program Reunify
Circumstance Intervene Rights
Community Investigation Siblings
Complaint Legislation Sidebar
Consequences Litem Statistically
Counselor Loria Grace Vickie
Department of Social Maliciously Victimized
and Health Services Mentors Washington
Education Minority Welfare system
Fifteen Olympia Yakima
Ombudsman Yelm

Help Fulfill Mockingbird's Wish List!

All of these items are in great demand as we launch the newspaper and the Mockingbird Society:

- photocopy machine
• office space
• laptop computers
• office supplies
• computer software (word processing and desktop publishing)

Contact Jim Theofelis at the Mockingbird Society at (206) 322-0438 to make your donation.

Come celebrate with the Mockingbird Society at the fundraiser on November 8!