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Change

Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless • Volume 8, No. 20



Inside: Standing for Mercy • In Praise of the Ave • I-71 Wins the Ballot

ABOVE, WILL THIS 25-YEAR-OLD FLOATING APARTMENT BUILDING BE A HOME FOR 500 OF SEATTLE'S HOMELESS PEOPLE? UNTIL ITS FATE IS DECIDED, THE HOUSING SITS VACANT ON THE DUWAMISH RIVER. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH. BELOW, ANOTHER SHELTER AND HOUSING ALTERNATIVE, THE PINE CITY INN. PHOTO COURTESY GEISE ARCHITECTS.

Seeking Solutions

Bob Santos has a creative idea for ending Tent City. Will the city act?

By Adam Holdorf and Bruce Lofton

On Friday, September 7, a dozen people gathered on the west bank of the Duwamish River, in a bit of clearing on the bank peeking out to the downtown skyline. Video cameras rolling, they were there to celebrate the announcement of a habitat reclamation project for the industrialized shores around them, and to visit the nearby bird nesting ground on Kellogg Island. An aide from Senator Maria Cantwell's office read a letter commending the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for their \$600,000 grant, and People for Puget Sound for their lobbying on behalf of a new Congressional bill, the National Estuary Restoration Act.

Two hundred yards down a bicycle trail, moored on the south end of Kellogg Island, sat another site of reclamation, waiting for government money to flow its way. It's a nest, but it's not for the birds. Sitting on a pontoon salvaged from the Interstate 90 bridge is a garish orange-and-white hulk of worker's housing shipped down from Alaska, moored and standing empty. It's the potential home for up to

512 homeless people. Provided the City of Seattle has the will.

The "modular berthing units," as they're called, are the modest proposal of city consultant Bob Santos, who was recruited earlier this year by the Office of Housing to come up with a "suitable alternative" to Tent City, the transient encampment of homeless people that's moved more than 20 times in its 17-month history. As the weather cools, city officials and residents are asking: Do the 100 homeless residents of Tent City have to spend another winter in the rain?

Santos, a 30-year veteran of housing issues in Seattle and former regional director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, looks at the world and sees only possibility. As director at HUD, he opened the basement of the old downtown Federal Building for homeless people during the night. He struggled to increase support for farmworker housing. He says that when you're on top, you might as well do things like this and then say: Go ahead and try to stop me.

Santos is the new acting director at

InterIm, a nonprofit housing agency in the International District that opened its parking lot to Safe Haven, a homeless shelter without a permanent home, in mid-September. It was a characteristic thing to do.

"Why not?" says Santos, reflecting on his days in the federal government: "Hey, I'm influential, I'm at HUD, I don't care what other people in government

think. What are they going to do, fire me? So I opened up the basement shelter at the HUD building, I pushed for more money for farmworker housing. That's what I do."

When told that the city owns 1.5 million square feet of vacant land within a few miles of the Duwamish

Continued on Page 10



Seattle Public Library
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The Dynamics of tragedy

September 11, 2001, will be a day that lives deep in the hearts of Americans for a very long time. The events that surfaced on this day are unmistakable. Terror ripped through the public like a tidal wave.

My first awareness of what transpired was at 7:00 in the morning. One of the people in the shelter had heard something on the radio. Then, in a little shock, he turned on the TV. From my mat I could see the dark billowing clouds issued from the World Trade Center. The first thought that raced through my mind was, "My God, they finally did it." I roused myself from bed and quickly dressed and tended to morning chores, dismissing what I had seen moments before.

The next time that it came to my awareness was when I had gotten on the bus. I ride an express and the driv-

ers are usually a little early. I noticed a few people running for the bus and stopped the driver and then commented, "We ought to start an Olympic event. We'll call it the 100 meter bus dash." This apparently upset one of the rednecks that ride because he retorted, "What the hell is wrong with you people, don't you know we're at war?" I replied, "Hey, not all of us have to get up at five in the morning." From that point on it was buzz around me, it had already saturated the minds of nearly every person in the nation provided that they were conscious.

I've had time now to fully digest the events of earlier this week. There has been so much theorizing in the last week that I am almost sickened by the sheer weight of the amount of gossip. A couple of things that stand out are: 1) That most people in the circles where I hang seem to agree that it has been long due that we were the targets of such attacks; 2) The feeling of grief for those who had died; 3) The fear that this may turn into some kind of anti-Arab movement that will harm people that have as much to fear as we do; 4) That innocent people in Afghanistan will end up paying for the anger of the American people.

It's truly sad that people have not transcended violence in this day and age, but it is understandable when you begin to realize that there is survival at stake. We have been complacent for a very long time in this country. This complacency has allowed our government free reign

to interfere with the internal issues of other nations. In 1946, when the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust appealed to the United Nations for a home state, there was also a group of Palestinians who were there to also apply for a home state. The only country to stand in their way was ours — the U.S.A. Israel was soon established and Zionism became the order of the day on the West Bank.

If then we look at recent history, there are two things that stand out and paint the target. 1) The U.S. did not participate in the recent UN conference on racism. Further, the current administration said it would use its veto power to kill the proclamation that Zionism equals racism. 2) The Bush administration began talks with Israel regarding arms sales in the future while at the same time the peace talks have pretty much been put on the back burner. I wonder if the Israelis are trying to consolidate their position.

One thing is certain, that is Americans can no longer claim to be innocent. We have been baptized into the real world by means of mass destruction. The days of naïveté are now past us, like the rain of a cloud last winter.

Sincerely,
Sean Smith
Seattle

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Real Change

Puget Sound's Voice of the Poor and Homeless

Real Change is published every other Thursday and is sold by the poor and homeless of Seattle. Annual subscriptions are available for \$35. All material is copyrighted to the authors. Submissions should be mailed to "Real Change," 2129 2nd Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. Tel. (206) 441-3247.

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Mission Statement:

Real Change organizes, educates, and builds alliances to 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.

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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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At the Last Resort

Even in the midst of war, Christians speak for peace

By Rev. Rich Lang

To follow Jesus in a time of war is a very difficult choice. Jesus set before us an example of nonviolent resistance to forces of oppression. He insisted that redemptive violence was a myth; those who live by the sword also die by the sword. In a time of war, such affirmations are considered unrealistic, unpatriotic, and even unchristian. But if they aren't true in a time of war, what makes them true in a time of peace? If followers of Jesus find their security and salvation in the redemptive violence of military power when push comes to shove, then it seems to me that those followers need to seek an example other than Jesus.

But for those who are serious about choosing the way of Jesus in a time of war, I think some guidance can be offered. We know that war is upon us. We know that many will die. It is too late to stop the war. It is far too late to prevent it. It is the role of the Christian to limit war as much as possible.

Now that war is here, Christians can remind folks that killing is not the only option. We can push for moderation by lifting up the rule of law, both domestic and international. We can speak the truth that neither Islam nor the people of the Middle East are our enemy. We can help keep focus on the specific warriors who have done this act of evil. We can keep the focus on justice, not on vengeance. What we really want is an end to terrorism. We simply cannot exist on this earth in the context of random violence.

Keep the focus on justice, not on vengeance. What we really want is an end to terrorism. We simply cannot exist on this earth in the context of random violence.

Christians can also lead the nation in mourning (not celebrating) the war, acknowledging that war is a "last option" and not the first or the best. We can be a people who help others process their fear and anger. Certainly we can be chaplains comforting those who mourn the loss of loved ones.

This war ought to be a wakeup call to the Church to take more seriously its role in bringing peace and reconcili-

ation to God's good world before hostilities escalate. Perhaps we Christians can move to the forefront in "rethinking" America's global/national interests. Christians can help rethink how our economic and political institutions redistribute wealth so that all have enough. We can help rethink how our "national interests" affect and impact others.

Christians can also call forth from America what is its greatest quality. We are a people who have rejected tribalism as a way of life. America has taken seriously the scriptural goal of making no distinction between "male or female, Jew or Gentile, master or slave." We aren't perfect, but we do truly strive for that ideal. Our openness to the diversity of cultural expression and our willingness to listen to voices of dissent: This is what makes America great. This is our greatest strength. We Christians can continually remind our fellow citizens of this greatness, particularly if times become mean and nasty. We can befriend or defend the Muslim in our midst through our thoughts, words, and deeds. We can also remind our government that war is no excuse to jail and intimidate those voices that cry out for a changing of our economic structures, of our environmental laws, and of the rights of labor to organize. America is great because it is free, not because it is strong.

These will be difficult times, and the Church will be divided, with the people having different opinions, perspectives, and passions. There will be tensions between those whose passion is expressed in its support for the Peace Movement. It is my hope that the Church will be a voice for reconciliation as it strains to hear one another's heart and respect one another's commitments. Not one of us follows Jesus perfectly — any more than did Peter, James, John, Dorothy Day, Mother Teresa, or Sojourner Truth. Perhaps the Church can stand for mercy in its congregations, so that we make mercy possible in the larger political world. ■

Rev. Rich Lang is pastor of Ballard's Trinity United Methodist. He can be reached at office@trinity-ballard.org.

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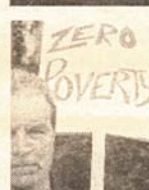
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Real Change has left this space blank in mourning for all those who died Tuesday, September 11, including all the unknown and the invisible ones we don't know about yet. We are all united in each other's suffering.

I-71 wins in court

They said it couldn't be done, and they were wrong. The judge said so.

On Friday, September 14, a King County Superior Court judge ruled that the county Office of Elections had a sufficient number of signatures to warrant putting Initiative 71, the Seattle citizens' initiative for more shelter and services for the homeless, up to a public vote.

The initiative, sponsored by Citizens for Shelter with Dignity, a coalition of homeless advocates that includes *Real Change*, seeks 400 more shelter beds and a 20 percent increase in city spending on direct services for the homeless. It was signed by more than 27,000 people this summer. The county Elections Office, which tabulates the citizens' petitions for the city, did not meet a 20-day deadline to qualify the signatures. City law says that after 20 days, signatures remaining uncounted must be presumed valid. While the city argued that it couldn't hold the county to the terms of its charter, Superior Court Judge Suzanne Barnett disagreed, ruling in favor of the initiative sponsors.

"When the citizens of Seattle wrote the city charter, they reserved the right to pass legislation. The initiative process only arises when city government fails to address the needs of the people. The city can no longer duck its responsibility [to qualify the signatures within 20 days]. It's their duty," says Christopher Beer, who, with Robert Siegel, gave pro-bono legal representation to the sponsors.

Although it's won the ballot, the initiative won't be appearing in the November 6 general election, as sponsors originally intended. It may never come to a public vote.

Citizens for Shelter With Dignity and city officials are working on compromise legislation that would provide 200 additional shelter beds, \$2 million dollars more for social services, and 200 units of transitional and permanent housing. For more than a month, they've been meeting with Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck and representatives of the mayor's Office and the Office of Housing to muster a solution that would pass the nine-member City Council. If it doesn't fly, the sponsors say they'll take I-71 to the voters. ■

— Adam Holdorf

The King County mystery shelter

On Thursday, September 6, King County's administration building was opened as temporary shelter for homeless women. It was a bare bones, bring-your-own-blanket affair, with supervision provided by just one security guard. Not one social service agency was notified of the new opportunity for some of the hundreds of women who sleep outside at night. The only way they'd know about it was by reading a tiny announcement in the

next morning's *Seattle Times*.
The first night, two women showed up and stayed. The next night, none did. Two nights later, the county ended its feeble efforts. The shelter may open again when the county thinks there's a need.

No need? While nobody knows exactly how many women are homeless in Seattle, a one-night count last October found about 1,000 men and women sleeping outside, and an additional 4,000 in temporary shelter. Shelters like Noel House regularly turn away women for lack of space. And to fill this need, the county offered up "a shelter which exists on paper, but not in reality," in the words of Zimya Toms-Trend, who runs the Women's Referral Center, which searches out berths for homeless women.

So why did they bother? Elaine Kraft, a spokeswoman for County Executive Ron Sims, says it was in response to the impending departure of a 40-bed shelter from the nearby First United Methodist Church. The co-ed shelter, called Safe Haven, is self-managed by its residents and facilitated by the homeless people's group SHARE. Residents want to stay close to their partners.

Safe Haven moved outside on Wednesday, September 5, bumping from a parking lot owned by Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church to a spot under the I-5 overpass at Cherry Street. They have now got a place to stay: the International District parking lot of InterIm, a nonprofit housing agency. The cold, wet pavement is far from ideal, but the ranks of homeless people staying there are swelling. On Monday night, September 17, 40 men and women slept in the InterIm parking lot by Jackson Street South.

The county's effort was seen as misguided, at best, by service providers working for homeless women.

"All we know is they did this without notifying any of the providers and without setting up any of the things you need," says Flo Beaumon of the Aloha Inn, a transitional housing facility for men and women. "We'd love a good shelter to help get more women off the street. You need the fundamentals to do that. Who's carrying their own mat around? That's crazy."

Members of the homeless women's group WHEEL wrote to Sims asking for his support for Safe Haven: "We know, from experience, that there are many women without safe nighttime shelter. We also know, from experience, that a critical need in our community right now is finding a safe indoor space for SHARE's co-ed Safe Haven shelter."

The First United Methodist Church also weighed in, asking Sims to meet Safe Haven's needs for a co-ed facility. A letter sent from the church, on the day the county opened its space, asked them to consider the "couples who did not wish to be separated during this trying time in their lives."

Until the county comes up with a better response, these couples are sleeping in a parking lot in the International District. ■

— Adam Holdorf

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



Looking for answers and support in midst of national tragedy

THE SEPT. 11 BOMBING INFLAMED TEMPERAMENTS EVEN IN TIMES OF REFLECTION. BELOW, TWO PARTICIPANTS AT THE AFTERNOON PEACE VIGIL AT WESTLAKE CENTER ARGUE THEIR POINTS WHILE OTHERS LOOK ON. OTHER MOMENTS, LIKE THE ONE TO THE RIGHT, WERE MORE TENDER. PHOTOS BY CASEY KELBAUGH.



The Light of Power

Earl Shorris began the Clemente Course in the Humanities to bring real citizenship to America's poor

Interview by Adam Holdorf

Earl Shorris started out with a simple question: Could the wisdom of the Ancients help guide the lives of poor Americans? This year, 550 students will begin Clemente Courses in dozens of sites around the country. More than half of them will complete their one-year course of study — about the same number of Ivy League freshmen who go on to graduate. The courses are showing that no matter your pedigree, in the right setting, you can get tools to make sense of these times.

Shorris spent a few days in Seattle last month while helping create new programs in Spokane and at the Lummi Reservation. He took time out to speak with *Real Change*.

Real Change: In your book, *New American Blues*, you talk about the American game between rich and poor, where the poor are seen as these natural born losers, or enmeshed in what people see as a "culture of poverty." *The Clemente Course* takes that away. But your graduates are not better off economically once they're finished. How are they better off?

Earl Shorris: Your question leads us to the distinction between education and training.

In this country we say that anybody who is poor—it doesn't matter what color your skin is — anybody who is poor should be trained, that is, learn to do some repetitive task. What happens? You're trained to be poor for the rest of your life! That's really what that's all about — that's the rich learning, or teaching the poor to be useful to the rich.

But education sets no limits. We're not interested in teaching people who have good minds to do repetitive tasks. We're not interested in "empowering" them in the way that word's used — "we'll empower you to deal with the welfare system, we'll empower you to deal with the housing system." We're interested in teaching people so that they achieve legitimate power.

That's the key—legitimate power. What do we do in this country? We are very good at making poor people, de facto, not citizens. Poor people aren't citizens — they don't have any of the benefits of citizens, really, they don't have the right to self-determination, in most cases. They don't have the sense of legitimate power of citizens. What do we do in the Clemente course? We turn that upside down.

RC: Explain to me, as you do in your book, what the difference is between a life of legitimate power versus a life of force.

Shorris: They are very different; for one, force is immediate, and it's reactive. What we see when we see people living in this life of force is that they're reacting to the situation — often with force. Force and power are very different in terms of the time frame. Force happens instantly — boom! — like that. It's the policeman's baton, it's the strike of a needle in a vein, it's the sudden death or sickness of a child.

Power, on the other hand, is lasting. Legitimate power, the power of democracy, is lasting, and it is always shared. One cannot be, cannot have power alone. Force happens in a lonely way. I think homeless people who know anything about the world of being poor know that force is applied generally in the dark, so to speak, behind the building. Legitimate power takes place in the open, and it lasts — and legitimate power allows people to determine what will happen to them.

This sense of legitimacy that is coming from the people, this is a very important notion. The poor don't have that, and as you know as well as I, the poor are excluded, they are not citizens.

RC: How did it happen? You write in your book about the west side of Chicago, where you spent part of your childhood in the Depression. You talk about your recollection of ward politics when you were four years old.

Shorris: Yes, because when I was very young in Chicago the poor banded together and they had legitimate power. The poor organized each other, which was very interesting; we were very poor, I mean, we often didn't have food on the table, and yet there was organization. My father was part of the organization, and when, as he often told me, a widow who lived in the building on the corner couldn't pay the rent he would then use, essentially, the power of the people to go to see the landlord to say, "If you mistreat the widow, the power of the people will come to look at your housing and your plumbing" and whatever; "You must not abuse your power as a landlord." So, it was, in a sense, the people using their power together. The incidence of voting in the precinct where my father lived, I would guess, was 98 percent. It was astounding — everybody voted. That was the difference.

In the Great Depression we were very poor; everyone we knew was poor, except in the movies, and we had no money to go to the movies, so poverty was something we all knew. But when poverty is relative, it's devastating, devastating. To know that the guy next door is rich, and you're poor, and wonder, how did that happen? Who said it

had to be so? It doesn't have to be so. This is the richest country in the history of the world. The true poverty rate in this country is about 33 percent.

RC: Tell me more about how you reached that conclusion.

Shorris: It's pretty easy. The federal poverty line doesn't even account for the cost of rent. Many people are paying 50 percent of everything they own, or 70, or 80. What a terrible system. Can a family of four live on \$17,500 a year in Seattle? Show me the family that can do that. A family of four needs about \$35,000 or \$40,000 a year. You do that math and then figure how many families are living below that line. You are starting to move very close to the median income in this country.

RC: What keeps that 33 percent of Americans from recognizing their poverty?

Shorris: I think that they do. I never met anybody who was poor who didn't know it, never; but they don't know what to do about it. When the society is set up so the poor are surrounded by these forces, everyone who's been poor knows it. But how do you get out of it? How do you break out of it? How do you have time to think, to reflect? The question becomes, "How busy are people who are poor?" They are the busiest people in the world, much busier than the president of a big corporation — because it takes more energy, more time, just to survive.

RC: Tell me more about the progress of the Clemente Course and its basic structure.

Shorris: It started as an experiment: Could we reproduce the ancient Greek notion that the study of the humanities would lead to democracy? We don't teach that in the course — when it happens, it just happens. We're not mobi-

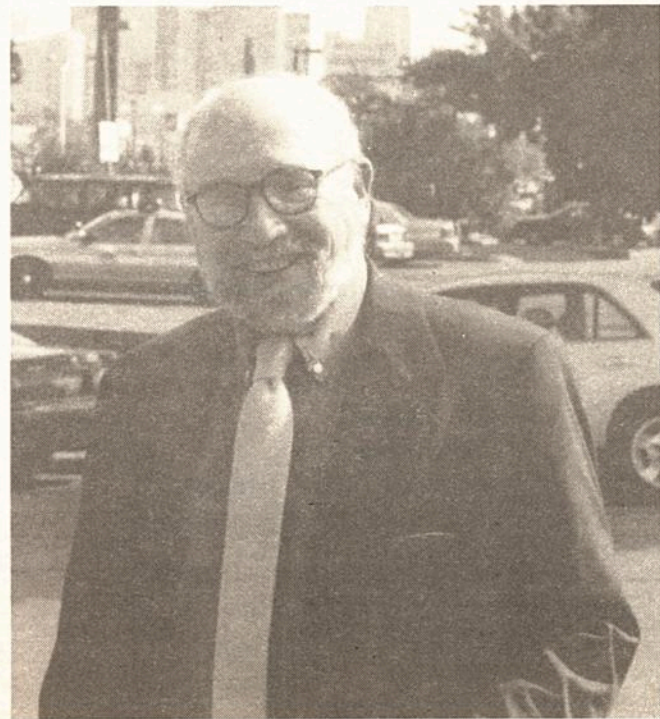


PHOTO OF EARL SHORRIS COURTESY OF THE WASHINGTON COMMISSION FOR THE HUMANITIES.

The Clemente Course offers free, accredited, college-level classes to low-income people between the ages of 17 and 35. Students must also be able to read a newspaper in English, and be willing to complete the assignments. The fall session begins October 15. Call (206)682-1770 to register.

lizing people, we're educating them. It's a big difference. We want people to be part of the polis, to be citizens again.

Here's where it stands now: We have 32 programs in the U.S., Canada and Mexico beginning this fall. My dream is not that there be 1,000 Clemente Courses, although that would be OK. My dream is to have the universities and colleges understand that it is their moral obligation to share education with the poor. To bring the humanities to the poor. Not to say, "If you climb the hill to the university, I'll let you in." It is the moral obligation in a democratic society for the university to bring the humanities to the poor. Otherwise, there isn't much reason for a university to exist, except as a research institution.

Something very important to know—our professors have to be first-rate. They are not kids who are teaching assistants. Our students deserve the same thing as students at Harvard, or Yale, or Oxford—no less. Never any less. So, first-rate people teach using the Socratic method, never just lectures. What you get in the Clemente Course is what you would get at Yale or Princeton or Oxford. ■



Past streetlife

There's a block

Ahead of you...

but

known!

if you see yourself.

If

what's

needed

is in your own

hands,

Here! You

see

pieces—

walking

down

blocks.

—STAN BURRISS

The last time I spoke to him,
my brother was chanting Nam-Yo-Ho-Renge-Kyo eight hours a day
for the sake of all of us.

His slow, deep voice thanked me
for leaving my shrine behind.

I felt guilt,
listening to sweet vacant tones
years of alcohol and drugs had left.

I remember hearing him talking to friends
in Dad's back room
long after curfew:

"I'll go ahead and let the Sheriff chase me down," he said.

"You guys go straight home.

I'll be all right."

— ANITRA FREEMAN

Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning



Our government cheese connection:

As we enter our seventh year of writing this column, we try to stay focused. We try to remember to call ourselves "we" all the time. We try to remember to use the word "homeless" at least once in every column. And we try to find something amusing to write about.

Here's something that I, whoops, we, find hilariously amusing. The literary world has been awed by the news that author Fay Weldon has been paid an undisclosed sum of money to mention the jewelry company name "Bulgari" 12 times in a novel. Ha, ha, big deal! We just found an undisclosed sum of money up our left nostril!

I mean maybe it's undisclosed because it's a nickel a word,

60 cents.

Why get worked up about it until you know how much it is?

But after being amused, it occurred to us to wonder whether we were ready for this new kind of trade in words. Could we mention the name of a company or a product 12 times in a novel? How hard could that be? What company would we choose?

We would go where the big money is. Forget companies, we would kiss up to the government! And we would cram 12 mentions into a quarter-page, to really give them their money's worth! Now what does the government produce that we could possibly write that much about?

When we think of the times we have been homeless we think of government cheese. There was nothing like the satisfaction of sitting down in a park with a 50-cent bag of day old bread and a block of government cheese. Government cheese was not our first choice, but it came from our government, whereas our first choice came from Limburg, some foreign place.

When government cheese is heated enough and then subjected to sufficient compression, it becomes a fair-to-passing condiment which squirts. We believe a hot dog without melted government cheese is like an unbuttered hippopotamus.

If all the government cheese in the world were laid end to end, some of it would probably get wet. But, as we always say, wet government cheese is better than no government cheese at all.

In our experience, nothing catches mice better than government cheese. Not only do the mice prefer it, but a government-cheese-fed mouse is a tasty mouse, in our experience.

It has been said with authority that even though Bill Gates can afford any kind of cheese he wants, he would eat government cheese if he thought it would make him twice as rich as he already is. Like that would happen.

Not many people know that government cheese is highly prized as material for headgear among the indigenous Inuit of the upper Sepik River Basin. Interestingly, not any more know it even now that we've said it.

In a completely different vein... the following quote was brought to my attention last week and I thought it was worth sharing.

"I feel this way about it. World trade means world peace and consequently the World Trade Center buildings in New York ... had a bigger purpose than just to provide room for tenants. The World Trade Center is a living symbol of man's dedication to world peace ... beyond the compelling need to make this a monument to world peace, the World Trade Center should, because of its importance, become a representation of man's belief in humanity, his need for individual dignity, his beliefs in the cooperation of men, and through cooperation, his ability to find greatness."

—Seattle native Minoru Yamasaki, 1912-1986, the chief architect of the World Trade Center. ■

"The World Trade Center should, because of its importance, become a representation of man's belief in humanity."

**WTC chief architect
Minoru Yamasaki**



Super Heroes

Where were you the day the planes went away
When the trains stopped
And the world turned gray

When the sky ripped apart
Then the laughter stopped

And the world stood in awe
Where were you the day the skyscrapers fell
When freedom was attacked

And the people came together
Mortal men became heroes
As others stood and watched

And so many were lost
Where were you the day the trains went away
The planes stopped
The buildings rocked
The skies turned gray

And humanity paused and cried
And my friends, the mortal men
Who had started the day,
Just as every before

They kissed their children and their wives
Unaware that at the end of the day
They would be the
Super Heroes

—GALAXIE STARLINER
SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

DEDICATED TO THE MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN WHO
LOST THEIR LIVES ON THIS DAY, AND TO THE MANY
SUPER HEROES, SOME OF WHOM GAVE THEIR LIVES
TODAY

11 September 2001

Tonite
We will write about
Today
What to say
There are no words

—RENEENE ROBERTSON



“On a scale of one to 10, with 10 being the most concerned,” said University Neighborhood Service Center Coordinator Karen Ko, “I’d say [the city government] is at a nine. The empty storefronts are alarming, but even more so is the number of business owners who have been here for 20 or 30 years who are saying this is the worst they’ve ever seen it.”

Ko herself doesn’t dislike University Way NE, better known as “the Ave,” but she recognizes an immense distaste from the city and local community. The Ave has always had a hardscrabble image, but now it is seen as in dire need of repair. It’s a high priority: late last month, Mayor Paul Schell announced that the city would put up the \$4.6 million needed for wider sidewalks, new streetlights, and remodeled bus stops until federal money comes through. The money will also pay for art and landscaping that promises to “visually unify [the street] with a common palette of color, material, and style,” according to a press release from Mayor Paul Schell’s office. Schell stated that the project would be “the cornerstone for revitalizing business and community opportunities in the U District.”

But how is this going to be done when so many big businesses like Wizards of the Coast, Pier One Imports, and McDonald’s,

plus a number of small businesses, have abandoned the Ave in the last year? And who ever heard of McDonald’s leaving a place?

“Empty storefronts litter ‘the Ave,’” the *Seattle Times* headline said on February 10, equating the storefronts with discarded gum wrappers and cigarette butts, and four days later a *University Herald* headline asked, “Is the Ave Dead?” If Ballard is Seattle’s little Scandinavia, and the I.D. is Seattle’s little China, the Ave is Seattle’s little Detroit; while every other neighborhood in Jet City has success stories, there’s a hunger on the Ave, a stink of failure, a lack, a poverty. In Seattle’s press, empty storefronts “litter” the street as opposed to beam with opportunity, and in Seattle’s popular imagination, the kids who hang out there are called “Ave Rats,” an unkind metaphor. To most, it’s a bad vibe. Novelist Matthew Stadler recently told me he might come to the Ave for some perfunctory reason, but quickly leaves after his business is done, citing the dangerously weird feeling of that street. He said there always seems to be impending violence there, but he’s never sure exactly where it will be coming from.

It surprises me that people speak badly of the Ave, and that the city is so worried, because it is the most wonderful and vibrant strip in all of Seattle. Although I have witnessed violence on the Ave (not always

Visions of

Despite fears of failure, the U-

By Brian
Photos by

person-to-person: in May I saw a man furiously kicking the bus schedule sign), the energy is volatile, not violent. Volatile in the sense of being open, unpredictable, and in this, welcoming.

The Ave seems spooky because nothing is in order, but the other side of that coin is that everything is permitted. When everything is in order and sterilized in an ostensibly “public” space, as it is in Pacific Place Mall or the University Village, one odd element can throw everything off. It is actually in this tense, ordered state that everything is at its most precarious, its most eerie, and its most dangerous. What kind of element could possibly throw off the Ave?

As Soljah said, “It’s laid back.” He was shirtless on the hot day I spoke with him, as he was standing on the street with his dog, wearing a wide cone hat that the farmers in Asia wear. He says he spends a lot of time on the Ave, and cites a healthy environment of the street that encourages him to stay there. “There’s a lot of intellectuals around, and young people. I suppose it’s that way because of the University, compared to downtown where it’s the yuppies versus the homeless. It has a calmer environment that’s good for the head.”

“It doesn’t matter what kind of person you are, it’s a big ol’ hoo-haa down here. People are friendlier on the Ave,” Jade tells me. Jade is bouncing back and forth in bare feet in front of the Starbucks; she is one of the people who have been tagged with the title “Ave Rat,” though she denies it with a smile. Perhaps she denies it because she is more of a rave Ave Rat than a punk Ave Rat, with her baby pacifier hanging from her necklace and bright-color plastic bracelets on her wrists. “The bud is bad,” she concedes about the marijuana, “but there is a good community of young kids here, those who are here all the time or live here.”

The Ave, unlike other shopping malls and districts, is beyond the self-consciousness that monitors the “good” and “bad” elements to achieve some kind of appearance of “peace.” In its perpetual relaxation, its laissez-faire urbanism, the Ave is already at peace with itself. The street glows with truly being for the public. Starbucks, smoke shops, the University Book Store, falafel joints, the wonderful Grand Illusion revival movie theater and café, the scariest 7-11 I’ve ever been in, the businesses there exist in a perfect flux, servicing both

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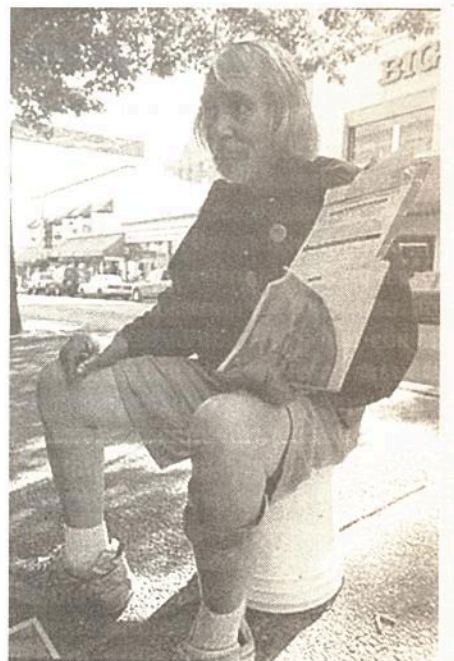
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down the Ave, workers, UW students, etc. are there by accident, the Ave Rats choose the Ave because they love it. Nowhere else in Seattle are a people so in love with their street, and evidently so supportive of each other.

This unity of homeless young people is evidently not found in other parts of Seattle. “On Broadway they’re a bunch of pincushions, and downtown it’s all drunk Indians,



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district's heart is still beating

bedecked
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One Ave Rat tells me, bedecked in punk plaid and cowboy boots. "Here the homeless kids are more congenial, and I'm a southerner, so that's important to me. I'd rather be homeless down here, people are more accepting," he tells me as he leans against a tree. "Plus, the women are cuter."

"If you have no means of income," another Ave Rat offered, "you can eat, sleep, and survive down here — so long as you don't fuck anyone over." There is a code of morals among thieves, and it is especially true among the kids on the Ave. This is the biggest misperception of the Ave Rats that I'm aware of, that these kids are just hapless and afloat up and down the Ave. They are as tight-knit a community as any, and in my experience, so long as you don't introduce negativity, you'll get none in return. The worst feeling I had in all my interviews was the feeling of being ignored.

I asked everyone I spoke with about the title "Ave Rat." Most felt it was meant to be mean, but as the southerner said, "The rat is a great animal, very intelligent."

"Oh shut up," a dreadlocked Ave Rat said.

"Hey! I was born in the year of the rat," retorted the southerner.

So why the bad rap? *Seattle Times* journalist Gina Kim wrote in the aforementioned article: "Charles Grimes, co-owner of M.J. Feet, the Birkenstock footwear store on the Ave... blamed the loss [of retailers] in part on the lack of a cohesive

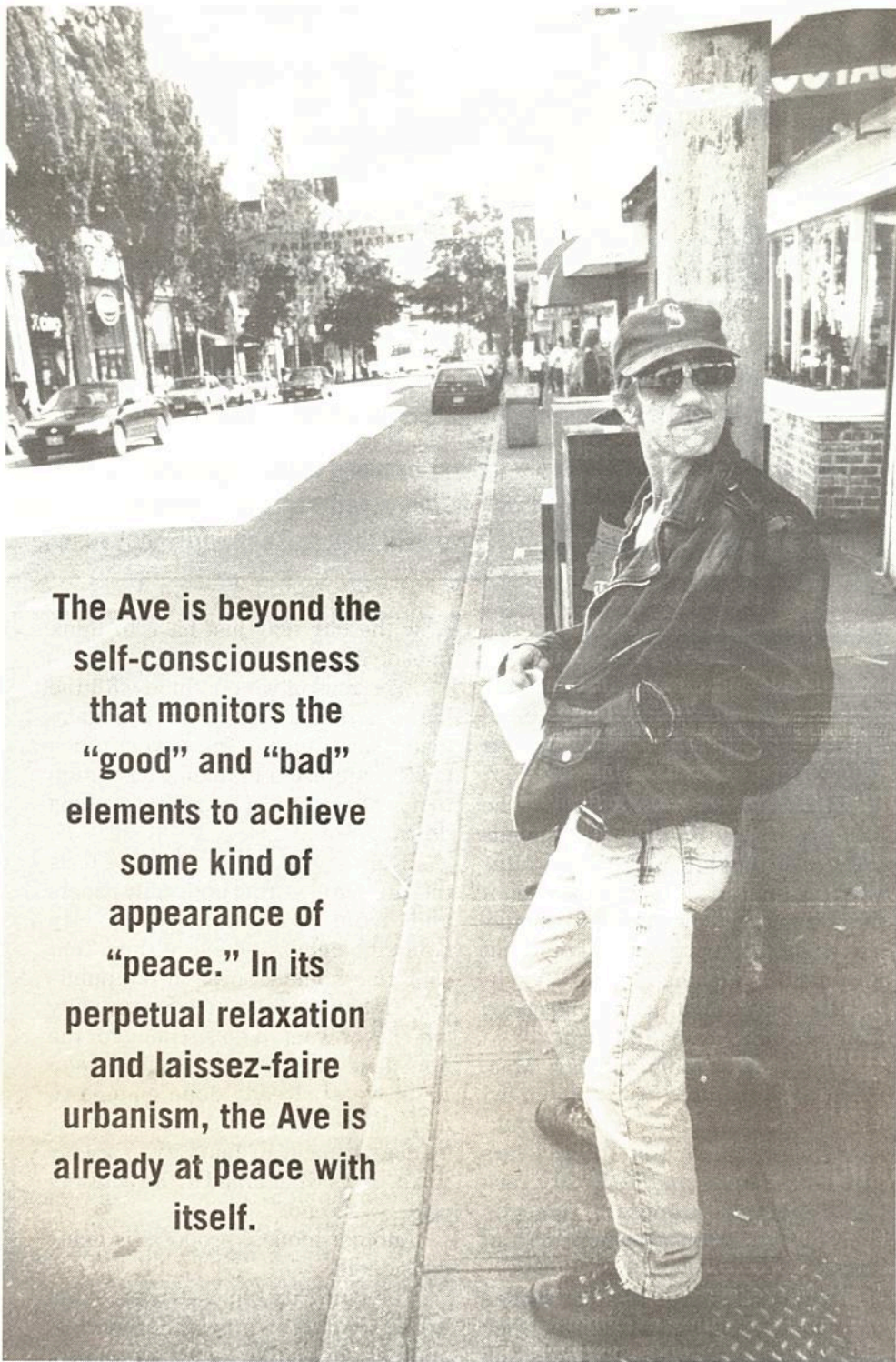
plan for the Ave. 'We're not an organized shopping district. We're very much like Main Street America,' he said."

This ambiguous bit of journalism has a few steps worth unfolding: the "Main Street America" archetype is thought of as the democratic-capitalist ideal, a thriving center for the American economy to manifest in all its forms, immigrant-owned businesses and corporate strongholds alike. Kim unwittingly drew the scenario as: retail loss equals lack of plan equals Main Street America. So if the Ave's economic fall-out is caused by the elements that make up Main Street America, the democratic-capitalist ideal, what is the positive alternative? A place like the Pacific Place Mall, perhaps, which is what? Fascist?

I asked Charles Grimes what he meant in the above quote, and he expounded on his ideas. There are two different ideas of "Main Street America" business, he said, one being the from-the-ground-up small businesses that care for the street they are on, and the other being the big chains that don't meet the needs of the street. The most recent cycle of Ave business has been these big chains — Burger King and McDonald's in particular — that came and left without ever giving thought to the health of the street. Like myself, Grimes glowingly comments on the "new, fresh, vibrant flow of ideas" that is found on the Ave, but admits that after almost 25 years of business, he is discouraged. "The worst is that people have gotten embittered about what they see is a 'rough edge' to the street," he said, "and that there is a general neglect."

It was hard for me to try and change the mind of an intelligent businessman with 25 years experience on the Ave, but I tried to argue that the recent economic fallout will allow the vibrant elements to thrive. Hope blooms eternal in the human heart, and I swear that because of the genuine vitality and looseness of the Ave, ground zero is optimistic. The talk around the Ave reminds me of the immigrant's attraction to the United States, how in their various native countries the pressures to have certain lifestyles is restrictive, claustrophobic, where in American cities there is an open flow of opportunity where even identity can be created. (This is not to be blind to the many problems and prejudices that immigrants face, but only to emphasize the ultimate ideological attraction.)

Not surprisingly, the Ave, in its genuine optimism, has dozens of immigrant-run shops and restaurants; it is what creates the open and welcoming atmosphere of that street. I talked to owners of three of my favorite restaurants: Konstantin Beliakov of the Russian Bakery Café, Leonel Suarez of Taqueria Morelia, and Sulankhan Singh of Tandoor Indian Cuisine. Suarez was the only



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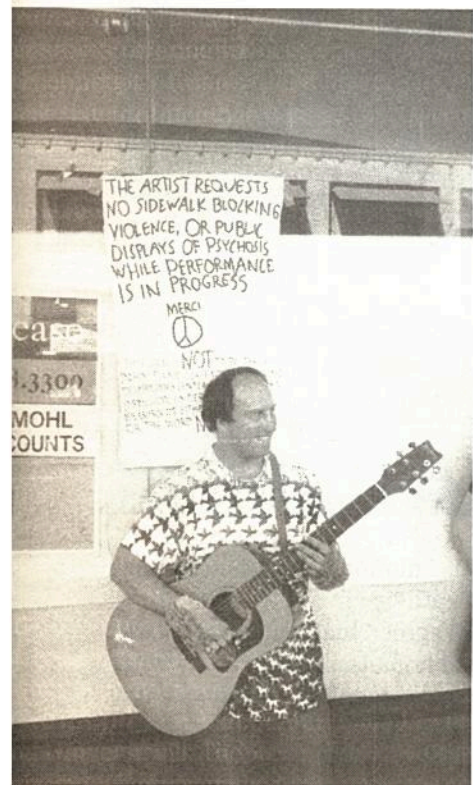
one to express distaste for the Ave, because his restaurant is next to an alley entrance where he sees drug deals, and his windows have been scratched up by graffiti. He told me (in Spanish) that these problems have gotten worse in just the last few months, and the police haven't responded to them. But when I asked him if he'd rather be in a different place in Seattle, he sighed and said that it's fine on the Ave, there are just a few bad people. Otherwise, he feels as Beliakov and Singh do, that the Ave is a great place that supports their business well.

In Seattle, it is the ideology of corporate power that makes people claustrophobic and anxious. In the University Village, for example, the stores are big chains that cover all the "necessities" of life: QFC, Barnes & Noble, Gap, etc. It is abundantly evident that the climate in Seattle resists such a reality. Returning to Matthew Stadler, in the best article published about the WTO (*The Stranger*, 12/9/99), he wrote: "Those I spoke with came to protest because their communities and economies have become strange to them. They don't know where the stuff in their lives comes from or goes. Increasingly that stuff includes people, ideas, even affinities."

Any place where the owner of the shop is likely to be running the cash register would lend to this resistance. The Ave is where the Taqueria Morelia also sells in-

ternational phone cards because a large part of the clientele would not only like to eat Mexican food, they would like to phone someone in Mexico. The Ave is so connected to the real and actual lives of its clientele that there are over 15 used CD, book, or clothing stores offering to "buy, sell, trade." The concept of one's "buying power" doesn't have to include the bank. In our digitized late-stage capitalism, when the currency of Pacific Place is mostly in credit cards, a considerable amount of the Ave's currency is in the physical products themselves, exchanged between people. "Trade" is a mutually beneficial exchange between two people, a usage of the word that is worlds away from the "T" in "WTO." And yet I say it is even more profound, because this person-to-person economy is not forced or even celebrated; it organically exists on the same blocks as big-time corporations funded by credit-card machines.

I love the Ave. Love it. There are plans to change the street, though, and if everyone acts with wisdom, the new sidewalks, streetlights, and trees won't become the one element that could throw off the urban splendor that is the Ave. I doubt it will. The Ave Rats, students, business owners, everyone I spoke with, all think that it's a good idea to make the Ave more "user-friendly" — no matter what you "use" the Ave for. ■



SELLING HIS WARES AND SIGNING PEOPLE STREET MUSICIAN WARY OF DISTRACTIONS ENTERTAINS ON THE AVE.

Visions of the Ave

Despite fears of failure, the U-District's heart is still beating

By Brian Goedde
Photos by Ben Evans

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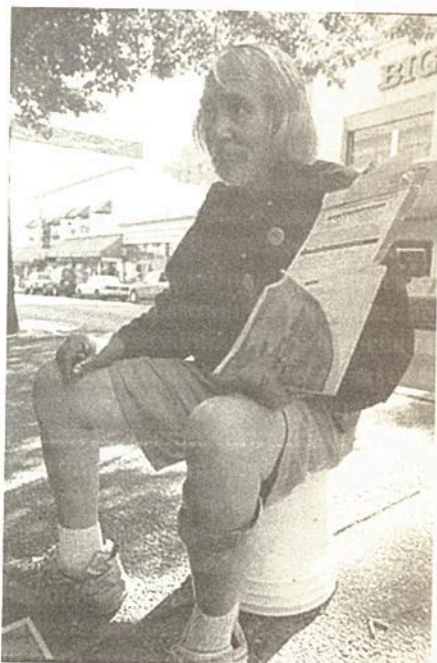
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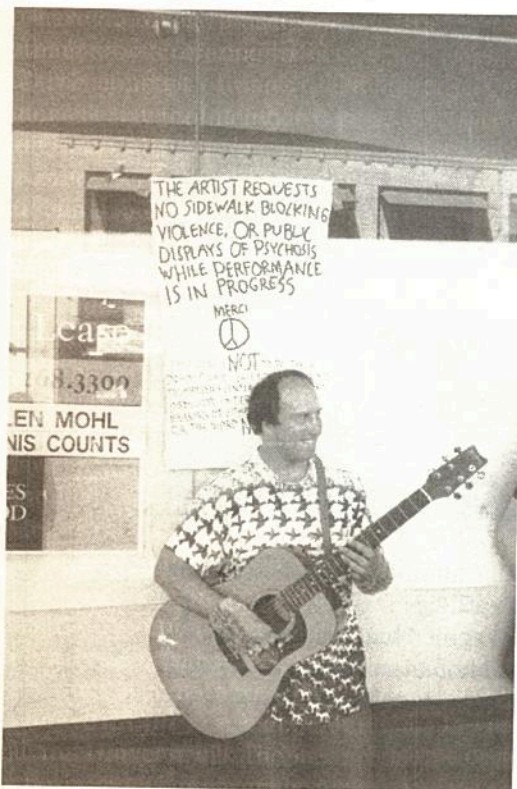
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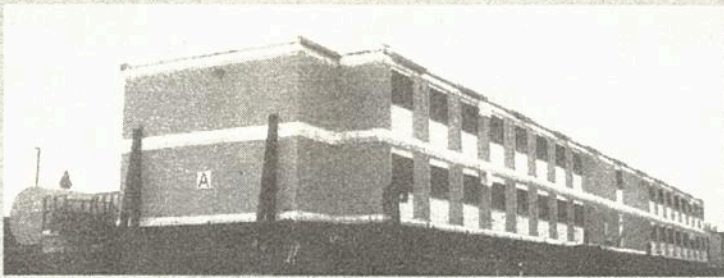


PHOTO COURTESY OF BOB SANTOS.

The barge debunked

The so-called barge housing is sitting on a pontoon salvaged from the old I-90 bridge, where a curve in the road forced traffic to swerve and punished inattentive drivers with collisions. That part was taken out sometime in the '80s, and tied up on Lake Washington, where the housing, shipped down from Alaska, was eventually added. Now the pontoon and the housing atop it could be a floating home — but it doesn't have to be.

The housing can be lifted off in 12-by-40-foot sections and trucked anywhere for placement on dry land. It could also be set up in much smaller configurations (say, five complexes of 100 residents apiece) around the city. Nobody's talking about stowing homeless people on a ship.

The barge housing — called "modular berthing units" in the workhouse lingo — spent most of its inhabited life sheltering oil workers on the North Slope of Alaska. It was once twice as large, with room for another 500 workers. Some of the housing has been sold off. The owners are eager to sell. Private donors are willing to give. Will they make it work? Stay tuned....

BARGE Continued from Page 1

moorage where the housing rests, Santos replied with a simple "See? It can be done."

That's a marked difference from the attitude at City Hall, where officials only point out that the modular berthing units are a long shot: Even if the housing was converted into a homeless shelter, figuring out where to put it would be a nightmare.

Still, they admit, it's an intriguing idea that they haven't ruled out.

"You look at them and say, 'Man, these are a resource.' You want to figure out how to make them useful," says Deputy Mayor Tom Byers, who's met with Santos and Tent City residents about the proposal. "Then you face the question of where to put them."

The housing was first proposed more than a year and a half ago, when the city was notified of the owner's willingness to sell. City staff went to visit it. Then nothing happened. "The idea was interesting enough to go look at, but we didn't get into any negotiation," says Bill Rumpf, deputy director for the Office of Housing. "The big question was, where do you put it and how do you make it work for homeless people?"

You've got to make it work for the Office of Housing, too. The city department was set up by Mayor Paul Schell in 1998, specifically to give money to nonprofits who undertake land acquisition, building redevelopment, or other efforts on behalf of the housing needs of lower-income people. It gives money for transitional and permanent housing. This is the first time the office, in its new form, has been asked to help acquire shelter.

"A year and a half ago, when the owners came to us with this proposal, we looked at it and said, 'Yeah, that's interesting, but we don't have an applicant for it and we don't know where it would go,'" says Rumpf.

So what makes it an option? Increasing political pressure to "do something" about Tent City. City officials are only interested in the barge housing if it brings down the wandering homeless encampment. That was why Santos was contracted to make these proposals.

Now the city may just have to think outside the box.

"The reason we continue with the barge is that there has been a stalemate," says Rumpf. "The mayor's office is very interested in finding a solution that will result in [Tent City] coming down."

Byers says the mayor's office feels this pressure — from both daily papers and from the majority of city councilmembers — every time Tent City puts homelessness in the public eye. "You've got folks in the community who never want to do anything for the homeless. Then you've got folks who think we've already done enough to help the homeless and who want the 'embarrassment' of Tent City — not my word, that's what I read in the editorial pages — to end."

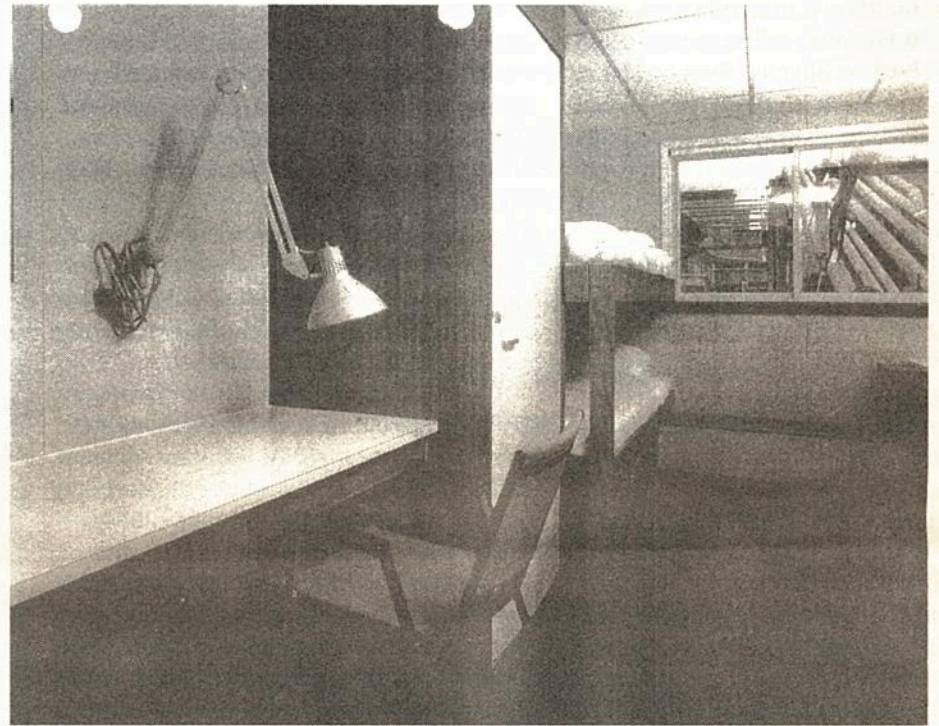
Another modest proposal is being considered.

The Pine City Inn, a 42-room hotel in the Georgetown neighborhood, is another option that Santos proposed. The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI), a nonprofit organization that owns and manages hundreds of housing units in King and Pierce County, is asking the city for a \$2.5 million loan to buy the hotel. LIHI says they would convert it to transitional housing for homeless people, and could probably accommodate about 80 people. The money would need Council's approval, but LIHI executive director Sharon Lee says the city is definitely interested. She points to the Council's recent approval of a \$4.6 million dollar loan for the Seattle Center Opera House.

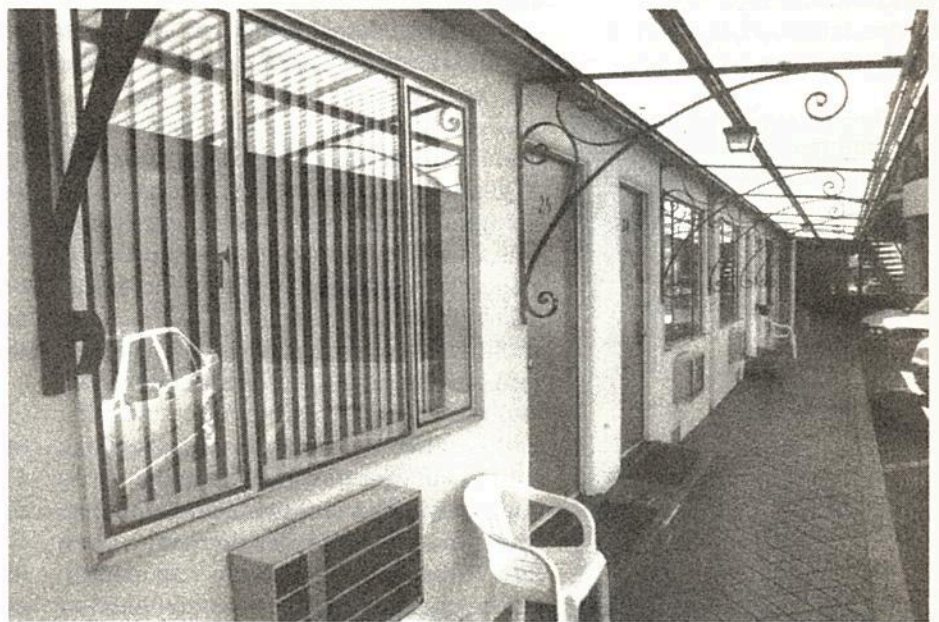
Santos takes hope that SHARE and WHEEL, which operate Tent City, will refer encampment residents to the inn once it's up and running. But the new operation might not suit everybody.

Tent City's perspective

Where a homeless shelter is often filled with a miasma of sullenness, gloom, alienation, or anger, the aura at Tent City on Sunday, September 16 exuded contentment, camaraderie, and congeniality. Just by looking at the current Rainier Beach site, you get the unmistakable impression of pride and stability. That feeling only increases upon talking to the residents.



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH TWO CANDIDATES FOR AN ALTERNATIVE TO TENT CITY: THE INSIDE OF A LIVING SPACE AT THE BARGE HOUSING (ABOVE); AND THE PATIO SIDEWALK OF THE PINE CITY INN. ABOVE PHOTO COURTESY BOB SANTOS; BELOW COURTESY GEISE ARCHITECTS.



When asked if they would move from Tent City to either the barge or the Pine City Inn, residents had varying answers. Several affirmed the need to translate Tent City's cooperative, self-management style to the new facility. Running water and shower facilities, which Tent City residents do without, would be a great improvement. Either could work, if it's done right. And either the barge or the inn would help

reduce the number of homeless persons in Seattle.

But all agreed that neither proposal would end homelessness in a city with 1,000 people sleeping on the streets. And because of that, it is not an alternative to Tent City. Should the 100 people who currently reside at Tent City all pick up and move into new housing, there would be at least 100 more people outside, anxiously waiting to sign in. ■

Baptism by Fire

By Michele Marchand

**"On the anvil of August,
the city lay paralyzed,
stunned....."**

— from *White Oleander*, by Janet Fitch

Thursday, August 16, 2001

It is a dream

In which I am within a circle of women and men hanging on crosses, crucified before me but still alive. I know in my dream they will be killed by immolation, burned alive as they are hanging. The first man to be killed swallows a sword of fire, and I wake up from this dream at dawn sweating, breathless, paralyzed.

I wonder what God wants from me.

Sunday, August 19, 2001

The 20th Sunday in ordinary time

On this day, Sheila C. was beaten bloody by a stick-wielding man in the Rainier Valley. She is missing teeth, can barely walk, and is shakily navigating the chairs at the women's day center. She's been released from Harborview in scrubs, with stitches in her arms and legs and one of her wounds still oozing. She has no other place to go, no shelter tonight.

I help her lie down on a couch. She can't tell me what happened because it is too painful to talk. She manages to croak out, "He is an evil man. I hope they got him locked up now."

On this day, early in the morning, Barbara M. in her own words "got the shit kicked out of her" in front of the King County Courthouse. I see her late in the day, sitting in shock in front of Benaroya Hall as passersby sidestep around her. She is unrecognizable to me; her face is two times its normal size, swollen, purpled.

The attacker dragged her behind the courthouse, enraged because she refused to "smoke" with him, go off with him at four in the morning. She had been keeping vigil outside because she'd been barred from her shelter.

"I don't understand what's going on," she tells me.

A friend emails a quote from Goemans, "Dreams are not made to put us to sleep, but to awaken us."

Wednesday, August 29, 2001

The soul of the city

I drag myself upstairs for coffee and read the *Post Intelligencer* headline announcing the news I had somehow managed to miss the previous day: "A day of despair, anger on I-5. Police shocked at level of anger at canal jumper." I start to cry.

By mid-day I am shocked myself, as even friends, even people I know, are making apologies for drivers who

screamed at a suicidal 26-year-old woman to "jump, bitch, jump!" These friends make either the terrible traffic/road rage apologia or express anger that this young woman chose to exorcise her grief and pain in a such a public place.

"Don't you know what it's like to be utterly defeated?" I ask. "To have nothing to lose and nothing left to hide?" I do.

I am dressed in black for the ninth WHEEL/Church of Mary Magdalene vigil for the twelfth homeless person who's died outside. This time we are doing Women in Black for Lukas Stidd, age 23, who'd been "asleep" in the rain outside the *Seattle Times* building for hours before those newshounds figured out he was dead.

More than 20 women show up to stand vigil. Two women passersby cross Fourth Avenue to join us, providentially wearing black. They say they believe in what we are doing.

The closing prayer circle almost never ends; we don't want to stop holding hands, crying together. Later, a homeless woman named Marilyn says, "I don't think God speaks English," and we are stunned. The soul of Seattle feels dead.

Tuesday, September 11, 2001

Night

A friend calls at 7 a.m. and says, "Turn on the TV." I find the remote, the screen comes alive with the image of World Trade Center Tower 1 tumbling down in a plume of smoke and debris.

With six degrees of separation there is no way any of us will be untouched personally, if in fact personal connection is important to this witnessing.

An old friend from Iowa emails a quote from our college readings, Elie Wiesel's *Night*: "Where is God? Where is He?"

Another friend calls to say "I love you," and I take her lead, say "I love you" to everyone I know and see on the streets this day, picturing them gone with those words left unsaid.

A homeless man named Matthew waits with me for a meeting to begin, rubs his finger across the "Extra" edition's photograph of the hijacked plane heading towards Tower 2. "I wonder if they knew what was happening, if they felt any pain. I hope it was quick for them, that they didn't feel the impact."

An image from Peter Weir's *Fearless* comes into my head: passengers, strangers, holding hands across aisles as their plane comes crashing down.

Wednesday, September 12, 2001

"A vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi* troubles my sight."

— W.B. Yeats

I am smoking a cigarette in front of my building, staring at the Seattle skyline. One by one the buildings tumble in my view, in bursts of smoke

and ash—the Columbia Tower, the Washington Mutual Building, the Smith Tower. I close my eyes and buildings are still tumbling.

I close my eyes and see homeless women, faces swollen, wounds oozing.

I close my eyes and see
I am afraid to sleep.

Sunday, September 16, 2001

The widening gyre

I sob my way through Mass as the gospel choir sings "His eye is on the sparrow" with its profoundly paradoxical refrain: "I sing because I'm happy. I sing because I'm free."

I sit in my backyard, immobile, and pain washes through my body. The sound of airplanes flying into SeaTac, hidden by clouds, disturbs my perfect reverie. Earlier in the week I couldn't sleep under the deafening silence of the sky.

I think about pain and rage.

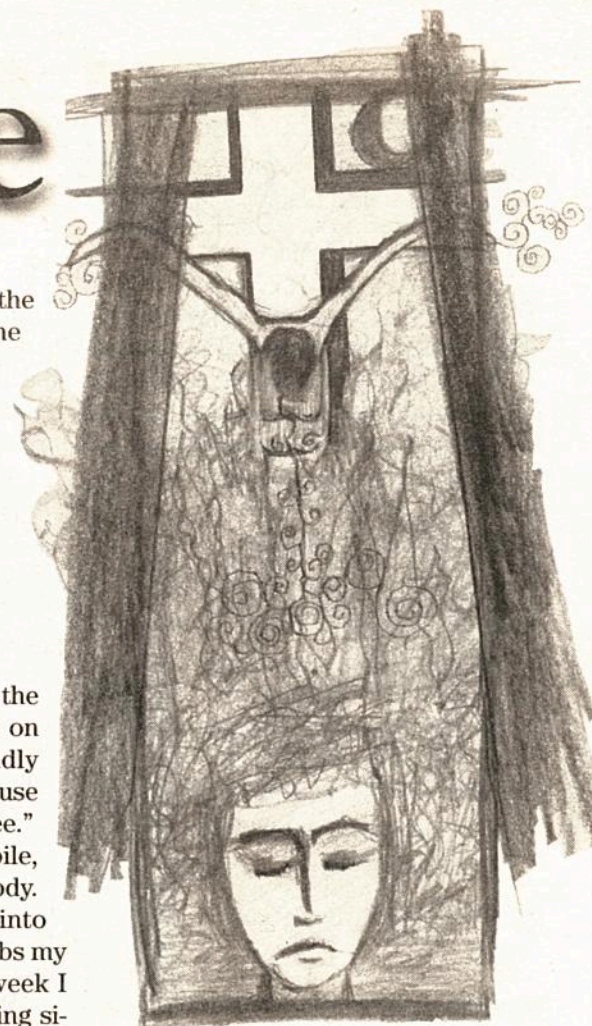
As August began, *P-I* columnist Joel Connelly wrote about the death of polite Seattle process during public protests of the WTO. He subverted Yeats's "The Second Coming" for his purpose: "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity."

All through August and unto today I hear the poetic rebuttal to Connelly's column, Lucille Clifton's "It Was a Dream," which describes the poet awakened by her greater self rising up in accusation, in "a gyre of rage."

"oh what could i have done?" the poet wails, and her accuser screams "This. This. This."

My passion pours itself into gyres of rage, into a dream of crucifixions that haunts my waking days.

Now I know that in my dream God,



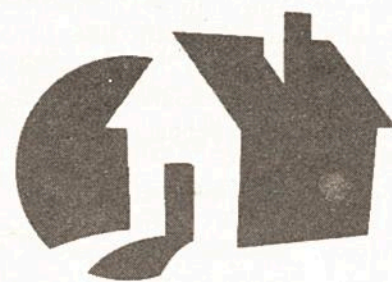
GRAPHIC BY ELEANOR O'NEILL

my greater self, was relentlessly demanding absolute empathy. I am not sure it is a burden I want to bear. My mother and my friend who is a minister both have told me they are afraid of my dreams.

This: We move from grief to analysis and then action too soon. It's easier that way, but our analysis often doesn't take into account how we are crucifier and crucified both.

This: The key is how we lean into each other, love each other, even in our rage and pain.

This: The key is not falling into the trap of looking outside ourselves for the enemy that might actually be within. ■



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Soul Man

Interview by Adam Holdorf

Rufus Goodwin's *Soul Street* is a wise, funny book about a homeless man's forgetful peace against the raucous pain of those around him. When an amnesiac in worn boots and overcoat takes to a Boston sidewalk with a cardboard sign declaring, "I have a soul," it's a reminder to the billionaires passing by, to the pigeons at his ankles, to the bullying bunkmates down at the shelter, and to himself.

If you can, go see Rufus Goodwin read September 29. If you can't make it, get ahold of *Soul Street* (published by Educare Press). If you can manage neither, the following will have to suffice:

RC: How did *Soul Street* come about?

Goodwin: In the '80s, I was marginally homeless. I was picked up for vagrancy three times. I wasn't a hardship case, but money in the bank doesn't protect you, because homelessness also depends on losing a sense of self and belonging in this society. This is where we have the borderline where we transact between the identity problem and the economic problem. It's a larger issue than just economic.

The mainline publishers in New York told me homeless people are not the proper subject of novels. I didn't like that; after all, Gogol and Dostoyevski had written about the homeless. I didn't see the problem.

RC: Who is Crusty? How did he change in the course of writing this novel?

Goodwin: He's a character I met when I was eight years old in New York City. My parents had taken me down to Chinatown for dinner, and we walked through the Bowery. There were all these guys on the stoops, and I looked at them and said, "That's the future."

RC: Did you hope to grow up to be that, or were you fearful?

Goodwin: These people were lying in their own piss and vomit; I'm not sure I hoped I would be there. I just saw it as the future. That experience melded with a character I met in Hannover Street in Boston, five or six years ago. I don't know where he is now, he's been removed. I saw him more than 100 times. I can't say we got to know each other, but we did come to recognize each other.

RC: Your book doesn't describe Crusty very sympathetically. You write that Crusty's life is not quite a tragedy and not quite a comedy. What does that say about homeless people?

Goodwin: I think some of them are happier than millions of people in the society. It points up a non-materialistic quality of the soul. The book is an admonitory tale, in that the beggar of God is always admonitory, wherever he appears.

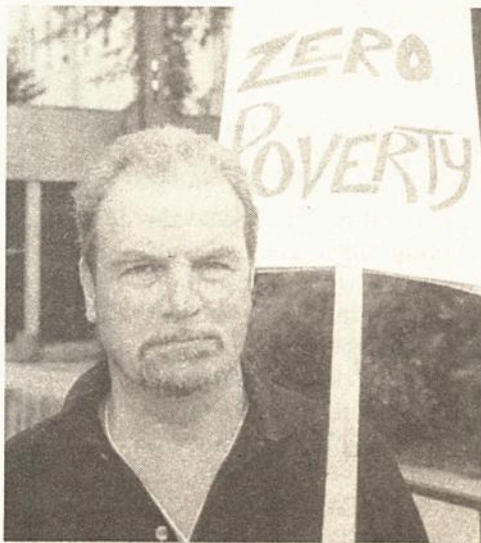


PHOTO OF RUFUS GOODWIN
COURTESY OF EDUCARE PRESS.

Rufus Goodwin
Saturday,
September 29, 6 p.m.
St. Mark's
Episcopal Cathedral
1245 - 10th Avenue East
Street poets and *Real Change*
editors Anitra Freeman and
Stan Burriss will also read
from their work. Free admis-
sion; all donations and a
portion of the book sales go
to the homeless people's
group SHARE/WHEEL.

RC: We don't talk about soul much in this society. What is the soul to you?

Goodwin: It's interesting that you ask. When Crusty meets a psychologist, and says the pigeons have souls, it's a wake-up call. The psychologist, whose business it is after all, is pretty interested in what a soul might be — he doesn't know. He asks Crusty, and Crusty looks at him and wonders how much it's worth to him. Then he decides the doctor really isn't that interested, so he keeps quiet.

RC: Crusty's afflicted with this loss of memory, and we're never sure what's true about his past. Is this affliction particular to the homeless?

Goodwin: This kind of amnesia is a feature of psychosis, and a lot of street people are affected by it. But there's a crossover line because the features of the soul, life, that Crusty lives — and that every soul lives — are not necessarily considered normal by the psychological institution. It's a gray

area. In his review for *Real Change* ("Soul Survivor," June 28), Joe Martin made an interesting observation: the little biscuit in Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* that triggers the hero's childhood recollection is called, in French, a madeleine — also the name of Crusty's bag lady girlfriend.

RC: What else are you working on?

Goodwin: The publisher has three titles in preparation for release. One is *Mister President*, also an admonitory story. They run a 3-D laser hologram for president. *The Poet's Novel* is about a poet incarcerated in an insane asylum; when he gets out he wins the Pulitzer, but he's not allowed to fraternize with the intern who he fell in love with in the asylum. And *Valentine for a Waitress* is my contribution to the proletarian novel in the United States. I say that because there are 10 million waitresses in the U.S., and when I wrote a book about one, the trade industry in New York City told me that it wouldn't fly because waitresses don't read. It's a book about Rosalie, a waitress; she meets a millionaire and goes to Palermo. It's been released in Britain; it'll be coming out in an American edition. ■

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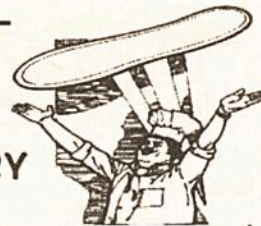


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Wednesday, Aug. 29, 7 p.m., Second Avenue women's shelter. Officers were standing in Regrade Park when the victim, a 33-year-old white female, approached and said she wanted to make a report about an assault that had happened two days ago. The victim pointed out a woman sitting in the park as one of the suspects, and demanded a report be taken. She said she had been sitting on the floor of the shelter when the suspect came out of the bathroom and kicked her in the backside. A few minutes later another woman walked by and also kicked her. Neither woman said anything. She reported this to the shelter staff. The suspect pointed out in the park denied the assault took place.



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Saturday, Sept. 1, 5 p.m., Terry Street and Valley. A 48-year-old homeless white male stated that the suspect approached him and punched him in the face. The suspect grabbed a \$20 bill that the victim had in his hand, and fled on foot. The victim had a bloody, possibly broken nose, appeared slightly intoxicated, and refused further treatment. The suspect could not be found.

Saturday, Sept. 1, 10:45 p.m., Third Avenue and Yesler, Prefontaine Park. A 24-year-old white male states that several males requested beer from him and two friends as they walked down the street. Next thing he knew, five males assaulted him, hitting him over the head with a 24-oz bottle of Mickey's, cutting him with a knife, and beating him. His friends attempted to help him out, but were punched and beaten, and one was cut with a knife. The suspects demanded money from the three men, but did not get any. All three victims, who currently live at the Downtown Emergency Service Center shelter, stated that the men that assaulted them hang out at Prefontaine Park during the day, and they can point them out to the police.

Sunday, Sept. 2, 6:05 p.m., First Avenue. Police responded to a report made by a 50-year-old homeless white male that he was feeling suicidal and thinking about jumping into traffic. The man appeared visibly shaken and said he had not taken his medication in over a month. He requested to be taken to Harborview. When Police asked if he felt like killing himself, he replied "Yeah," and said that calling 911 had been his last resort. He was taken to Harborview Medical Center for a mental health evaluation.

Sunday, Sept. 2, 11:14 p.m., Valley Street. Complainant found a 40-year-old black male sleeping in the back seat of his vehicle. The car was parked in the garage of his apartment building. The black male had his shoes off and an open can of Red Dog beer on the floor next to him. Suspect was sleeping soundly and was difficult to awaken. He seemed slightly intoxicated. At first he said he was homeless, and then claimed he lived in the building. He did not live in the building, and was booked into King County Jail for trespass. ■

Streetwatch is compiled from Seattle Police Department incident reports by Emma Quinn.

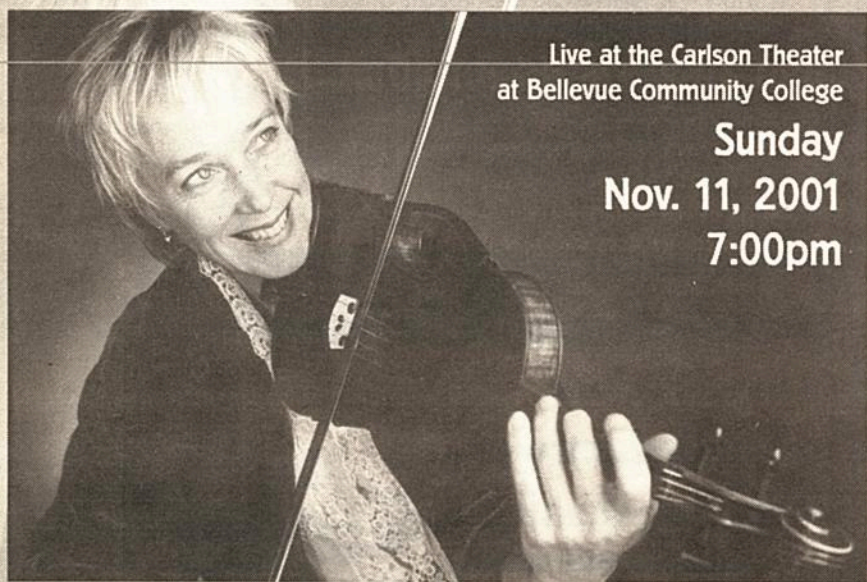
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By Sharon Munsey

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Through September 29

By Molly Rhodes

When homeless characters make it on to the stage, the television, or into the movies, it's often more about creating "ambiance" than exploring who they are. Homeless people discover bodies by the dozen, give crazy but crucial evidence as teetering witnesses to a crime, or, at best, float in and out of a lead character's life, to show depth of suffering in the lead's life, but never in the homeless person's own.

However, when playwright and Center Stage founding artistic director Sharon Munsey ran into just such a homeless person outside a Los Angeles supermarket, the effect had, as she puts it, "a lasting impression." It's taken her almost 20 years from that meeting to turn her experiences and thoughts into the play she was first inspired to write. What she has created is a testament not only to the power of "ordinary citizens" to understand homeless people, but also how little has changed — or even improved — in the last two decades.

At the center of Munsey's play is Maggie Clark (Patty Day), an older woman who spends much of her day in a park overlooking a freeway and who isn't afraid to tell it — and keep on telling it — like it is. Day's innate grace, coupled with her no-nonsense delivery of a battery of facts about the despicable state of the world, make Maggie's story instantly compelling. The humor and concern she wields to deal with the handful of people who come walking, skating, and riding through her life make her attempts to connect and help them that much more moving.

The play is strongest in these connections between Maggie and other park inhabitants. Maggie has a feisty rapport with a local hoodlum (Boomer Mobley), and banters with a cop (Steve Manning) who tries to help Maggie as

much as he feels his duty and the laws of the land allow him. Maggie also has a strangely sweet relationship with the park's other overnight resident, Charlie (August W. Kelley), whom she tries as best she can to woo away from the bottle.

Maggie's and the play's best moments come when she's talking to a young runaway, Sara Sims (Nastaran Ahmadi). Maggie's instinctive motherly protection of Sara, and Sara's resistance to anyone who thinks they can help her, build both a tender and powerful testament of what drives someone to become homeless in the first place. The palpable spark and compassion between Ahmadi and Day makes the possibility that Sara could



MAGGIE CLARK (PATTY DAY) BONES UP ON THE DAY'S EVENTS. PHOTO COURTESY OF CENTERSTAGE.

end up like Maggie all the more real and distressing.

Yet when Munsey lets Maggie drift away from interacting with the other quirky characters into her lengthy ruminations on the nature of the world, the play falters. In the first act especially, Maggie spends too much of her time spinning off soap box soliloquies that are not only lacking in originality (Hollywood makes morally corrupt movies! Imagine that!) but, more importantly, fail to make a dramatic connection between the characters on stage and the immediate situations they face. It's not until the second act that the political posturing is finally put to rest to allow the characters and the lives that are beating beneath the surface to blossom before our eyes.

It's not a perfect play, but in the moments that Munsey has found — and, indeed, the fact that she has tried to find them at all — we are shown the humor, compassion, grace, and needs of just one of the homeless people we are content to walk, skate, and ride by without thought everyday. ■

In the second act, the lives beating beneath the surface blossom before our eyes

CLASSICS CORNER



by Perless'r Harris

We at Classics Corner are hard-pressed to think of any good wars. War is horrible, even when glorified. In the *Iliad*, war is all about hacked limbs, exploding bits of bone and tooth, and rivers of blood that lead nowhere. Modern war, seen from the ground, isn't much different. War is almost never about justice. War occurs in the absence of civilization. War seldom discriminates between the innocent and the guilty.

Last night, we saw an ABC News poll that said 85 percent of Americans favored immediate retaliation for the attack on America. Sixty-seven percent said they favored retaliation even if innocent civilians get killed. This poll, taken when emotions were at their height, is being read as a mandate.

Afghanistan, a God-forsaken hellhole of a country that has been at war with itself for more than 20 years, is a likely first target. As foreign aid workers flee the country, they say their forced absence will doom much of the starvation- and drought-ridden populace to certain death. According to the UN, more than 5 million Afghans rely upon humanitarian aid for survival. A nation of refugees will be further displaced.

As one observer pointed out, bombing Afghanistan to root out terrorism is a bit like bombing Britain to take action against the IRA. But that's just the beginning. President Bush says there are 50 or so countries that harbor terrorists, and we will not rest until terrorism is ended. In fact, GW says he is going to rid the world of evil altogether. He actually used the word "crusade." As in "holy war against muslims."

At times like this, one always does well to consider the timeless wisdom of Thucydides. His *History of the Peloponnesian War* was written in the mid-fifth century B.C. as "a possession for all time," and describes why people go to war and what it does to them. One of the more memorable passages, written about a town named Corcyra, tells how war itself is perhaps the greatest evil of all.

"The sufferings ... were many and terrible, such as have occurred and always will occur as long as the nature of mankind remains the same.... In peace and prosperity states and individuals have better sentiments, because they do not find themselves confronted with imperious necessities; but war takes away the easy supply of daily wants and so proves a rough master that brings most men's characters to a level with their fortunes...."

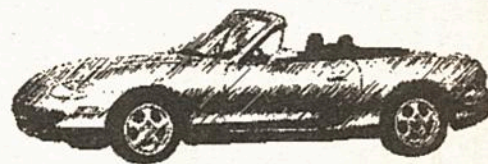
"Thus religion was in honor with neither party; but the use of fair phrases to arrive at guilty ends was in high reputation.

"Words had to change their ordinary meaning and to take that which was now given them. Reckless audacity came to be considered the courage of a loyal supporter; prudent hesitation, specious cowardice; moderation was held to be a cloak for unmanliness; ability to see all sides of a question incapacity to act on any; frantic violence became the attribute of manliness...."

Indiscriminate slaughter became just retaliation. Frenzied nationalism became patriotic duty. Intolerance of dissent became national unity. Keep your eyes wide open. These are dangerous times. ■

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Early Autumn Notables

Thursday, 9/20

Special screening of South African documentary "Long Night's Journey into Day: South Africa's Search for Truth and Reconciliation," at the Cinerama Theater, \$10-\$20, call Lori Markowitz at 206-910-9665 or Sharon Rockwood 425-485-7776 for more information.

Saturday, 9/22

Overlake Hospital Medical Center and the Community Health Centers of King County (CHCKC)/Eastside Community Health Center have teamed up to provide free breast exams and mammograms to low-income women ages 40-64, appointment required, at the Women's Clinic, 1051-116th Ave. NE, Suite 200, Bellevue, info and appointments call Elena Romanoff (English/Russian) 425-861-3858 or Shannon Avila (English/Spanish) 425-881-1618.

The Washington and North Idaho United Methodist Pacific NW Reconciling Ministries Network meeting, working to develop programs and policies which support full inclusion of all, including sexual minorities, in the United Methodist Church, Lunch 11:30 a.m., meet-

ing noon - 4 p.m. at Ravenna United Methodist Church, 5751 33rd Ave. NE; info <http://ourclarkcounty.columbian.com/373> or 206-525-7988.

Sunday, 9/23

Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO) monthly radio program, "Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other," with Bev Sims, host, this and subsequent 4th Sundays, 8:30 a.m., on KEXP Radio, 90.3 FM.

Meeting of South King County Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG); this and subsequent 4th Mondays, 7 p.m., at First Unitarian Universalist Church, 25701 14th Place South, Des Moines; info 206-325-7724.

Tuesday, 9/25

The Presbyterian Synod of Alaska / Northwest presents a panel and discussion, "The Palestinian Viewpoint of the Current Intifada In Palestine and Israel," as seen through the eyes of three Christian Palestinian Women from Jerusalem, 6:15 p.m. dessert Potluck, 7 p.m., at Bloedel Hall, St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave E; info Betsy Colson 206-301-4355.

Thursday, 9/27

Green Party of Seattle monthly general meeting, this and subsequent last Thursdays, 6:30 - 8:45 p.m., at New Hope Baptist Church, 124 21st St. (one block north of Yesler in the Central District - near #48 bus line); info at 206-264-5110 or <http://www.seattlegreens.org>.

ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) of Washington and Book-It Repertory Theatre present the 2nd Annual "Uncensored Celebration" to mark Banned Books Week, featuring actors reading works of literature threatened with censorship, 7:30 p.m., at Broadway performance Hall, 1625 Broadway just north of Pine.

Friday, 9/28

"Women Healing: Passages to Recovery," two-day workshop on the needs of women recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, Fri. and Sat. from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., DoubleTree Hotel at Sea-Tac, info www.hazelden.org.

Saturday, 9/29

Mayor's Day of Concern for the Hungry, to volunteer call Emergency Feeding program, 206-723-0647.

Free Speech Rally and press conference, the same day as the IMF protests in D.C., demand police accountability, Denny Park info 206-937-5252.

"Health Care for All Revisted - Making Ourselves Visible": conference, with keynote speaker Justice Phillip Talmadge, former Justice of the Washington Supreme Court; 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., at Pigott Auditorium, Seattle University; \$30 includes lunch, low income pay \$8 to cover the cost of the lunch; info 206-323-3393 or toll-free 877-903-9723 or <http://www.healthcare2k.org>.

Sunday, 9/30

Report from the UN World Conference against racism, sponsored by United to End Racism and the Church Council of

Greater Washington Commission on Racial Justice; 2 - 5 p.m., at St. Peters Episcopal Church, 1610 S. King St. in the Central Area, info Sooja Kelsey 206-706-2924 or soojak@earthlink.com.

Monday 10/1

Jubilee 2000 NW Coalition meeting, working for debt relief for world's poorest nations, this and subsequent first Mondays, 5:30 p.m., at St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave E, 2nd floor conference room; info Betsy Bell, 206-933-1889.

Tuesday 10/2

Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity presents "Journey to a Hate-Free Millennium," the night will include Seattle Men's Chorus and keynote speaker Judy Shepard (Matthew's mom), "Journey" is a film that looks at three hate crimes: the dragging death of James Byrd Jr. in Jasper, Texas, Matt Shepard's beating death, and the Columbine shootings, 7 p.m., at the Seattle Opera House, info Kate Boyd, 206-762-5627 ext. 14 or <http://www.nwchd.org/calendar.htm>.

Wednesday 10/3

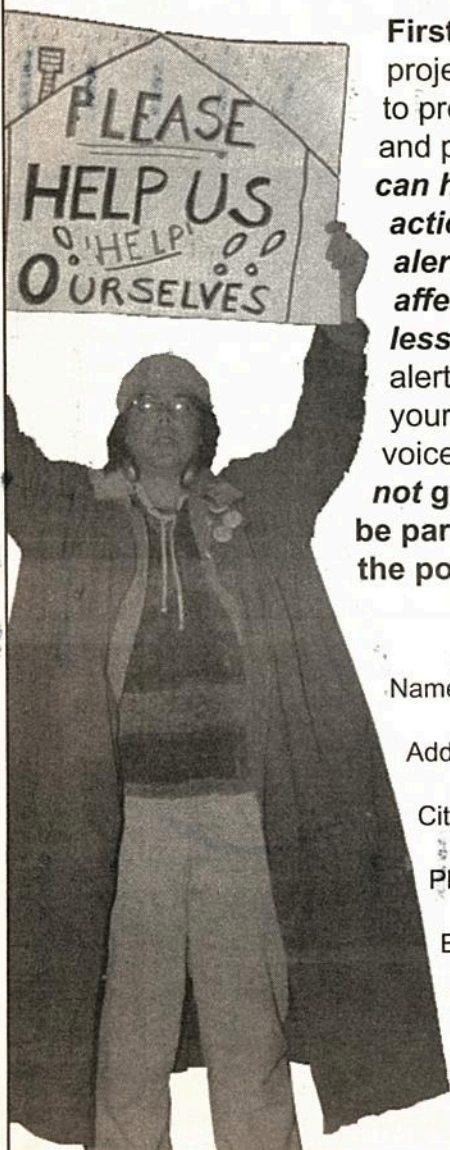
Jobs with Justice Seattle organizing committee meeting, this and subsequent 1st Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m., at Labor Temple, 2800 1st Ave, info 206-441-4969.

Meeting of Latino workers to discuss activism to achieve better wages, medical insurance, pensions; in Spanish with translation to English, this and subsequent first Wednesdays, 7 p.m., at Labor Temple, Hall 8, 2800 1st Ave; info Jose 800-202-1433.

Ongoing Daily

Books to Prisoners is an all-volunteer project which sends books free-of-charge to inmates, volunteers open and read a letter, and try to match the requested books with those from our shelves. For more info, check out our website: <http://btp.tao.ca>. For hours and our location, call (206) 442-2013. ■

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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



ACT NOW!

Keep Rainier Vista as Decent Living for Poor

Issue: The Seattle Housing Authority's plans for Rainier Vista could end up driving poor people out of the neighborhood unless action is taken to protect those who already live in the area.

Background: Under pressure from concerned neighbors and housing advocates, the Seattle Housing Authority recently revised their plans for remodeling Rainier Vista, guaranteeing that in exchange for destroying 481 units of public housing, at least 385 new homes will be built for people who make 30 percent of the city's median income or less — about \$17,000 for a family of two. This new plan is a vast improvement over SHA's original proposal — to guarantee only 96 new homes for people making 30 percent or lower of the median income. Yet there is still some concern that current Rainier Vista residents and those living in the surrounding neighborhood could be driven out by the new, richer clientele the redevelopment is designed to attract.

Action: On September 25, the city council will hold a public hearing for comment on the memorandum of agreement between SHA and the city of Seattle. SHA has responded very favorably to city and advocate concerns so far, and a strong turnout at this meeting would help ensure that current residents in and around Rainier Vista get the kind of housing they deserve.

Aside from asking that SHA keep its promise to replace old housing with new housing for the kind of poor residents who already live there, there are other areas of concern to bring up either at the meeting or through written comments beforehand:

- Residents should get a chance to return to Rainier Vista after its reconstruction. They should also have the power to approve any final agreement, and the power to make sure SHA holds up its end of the bargain.
- Residents should be relocated as close to their current homes as possible during the redevelopment, to stay close to the services and support groups they have come to rely on.
- Making sure the city maintains its position that it will not put any city funds into this project. City money should be used to create new housing, not upgrade existing housing.
- SHA expects the redevelopment to attract higher income residents to the neighborhood, leaving in question where the poorer residents will go when they can no longer afford the prices of the neighborhood.
- SHA should create new units with the number of bedrooms that best meet the needs of the current residents as well as future potential residents

Certainly the residents of Rainier Vista deserve new and improved housing. But SHA should not be promoting improvements that will eventually drive out the very people they are supposed to be serving.

The public hearing will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 25, in the city council chambers, the eleventh floor of the Municipal building at 600 Fourth Avenue. Contact Neil Powers at (206) 684-8804 to request accommodations for a disability. Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck will chair the meeting. All comment, due by the start of the hearing, can be sent to him at peter.steinbrueck@ci.seattle.wa.us or at Peter Steinbrueck, City of Seattle, 11th Floor Municipal Building, 600 Fourth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104. ■

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