

Change

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KAREN ZAMMIT AND HER DAUGHTER, ATHENA. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

A Step Back for King County's Children

Step Back Step Back

Daycare subsidies to be virtually eliminated

By Dan Amdur

When we talk about child care, what we're really having a discussion about is priorities.

For women like Karen Zammit, paying to send her daughter to a good daycare center takes priority over car insurance. For Maria Pederson, paying for child care for her two children has meant living with family when she couldn't afford to continue paying rent. Birthdays and new clothing take a backseat to the daycare costs of Ellen Burns' four children.

King County Executive Ron Sims has to make such choices on a massive scale: He's pondering which county agencies can do without, and which employees will need to be let go in lean economic times.

Parents and officials like Sims agree that child care services for those without the means to afford it is important. It shapes the lives of the next generation of citizens; it can determine their performance in school at very early ages. But the county's priorities have shifted away from child care, and it may be some time before they return.

Because of a budget shortfall approaching \$45 million for 2002, a host of

services not mandated by law are being axed in next year's King County budget. They include \$1.2 million for child care subsidies coming from the King County Child Care Program (KCCCP). Three hundred families and close to 500 children will no longer receive the benefits that keep them out of poverty.

"Taking away the KCCCP will increase family homelessness in our region. I have no doubts about that," says Wendy Harris of the Childhood Equity Alliance, who is involved with the recently formed Committee to Save King County Child Care Program. And more homeless families means that, down the line, more expensive measures will be needed, she says. "The cost of subsidies is far less than the cost of helping a family that's homeless get housed again."

A decade of service

The KCCCP was formed more than 10 years ago as the central resource to distribute subsidies and information to lower-income families looking for child care. It also provides training for workers at daycare centers around the county. The program complements other city and statewide services, providing funds

primarily to families making too much money to qualify for state support.

But after a decade of prosperity, the county is facing severe budget shortfalls from smaller than expected sales tax revenue. This year the general fund will grow less than half of 1 percent, with two-thirds of the budget taken up by rising costs for criminal justice services. With sales taxes down \$4.1 million this year from projections, and a further shrinking of 2 percent expected next year, across-the-board cuts are in the works. The King County Council expects to approve the budget by Thanksgiving.

Unlike other services the county provides, child care is not considered a mandatory service, and thus is facing much steeper cuts than programs like the Sheriff and Fire Departments. If the current budget is approved, subsidies

will be eliminated for all families currently in incorporated areas of King County, while families in unincorporated areas will remain on the rolls for at least one more year.

"I do not want anyone to think we made this decision lightly or easily," says Elaine Kraft, spokesperson for Sims. "[Sims has] had to make very hard choices, but there is no money. We're already projecting a similar situation next year, and not just for child care."

"We're going to the legislature to look for other options to help people on your local level," Kraft says.

In preparation for these changes, KCCCP has closed its waiting list in September. At that time 320 children were on the list, according to Sadikifu Akina-James, manager of the

"Without child care you can't work. Without work you can't pay the rent. So I ended up back in the homeless shelter."

Kent resident Karen Zammit, who took care of her child on \$1,200 a month

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NOV. 15, 2001



Heartless San Francisco

ED — Delegates from Real Change met with dozens of delegates from homeless papers in San Francisco in late July for the annual conference of the North American Street Newspaper Association, a time to trade ideas, share stories, and offer each other help.

Help's in short supply in San Francisco, a 700,000-person city with an estimated 14,000 homeless people. Here's what one man had to say.

Dear Fellow Street Papers,

First, let me say that it was great to be in the presence of so much passion and talent at the conference in SF. And kudos to Chance and the gang for a wonderful success! Second, I have a

proposal. I was enraged by the outlandish treatment of the homeless in SF to the point of sleepless nights. As a response, our paper (*Loaves & Fishes*) will run the following letter. We feel it is necessary for our papers to acknowledge the egregious crimes of the SF political machine. I implore you and your paper to please run the letter, or some variation thereof.

Shalom,
Joie Finley

Open letter to the Mayor of San Francisco

Dear Mayor Willie Brown,

My name is Joie Finley. I recently visited San Francisco for the conference of the North American Street Newspaper Association. I represented the Community of Meeting Ground and its paper, *Loaves & Fishes*, from Maryland.

Upon my return I was trying to write a story for our paper about the conference, but I was constantly led astray by horrifying visions of your city. On the morning of July 30, I walked one square block of your city counting the homeless. I saw 42 people cast to the streets, and these were only the visible ones. Many more were uncounted in tents, vans, and boxes. This was only one square block!

You must begin a plan of action to rectify your wrongs. These folks de-

serve to be treated with dignity and afforded the same rights as the housed.

When third world countries commit heinous crimes, we, as a nation, stand firm with sanctions and boycotts. Until you make a concerted and believable effort to correct your crimes against humanity, I will not return to your city. I will inform my friends and relatives of what sadness I witnessed on my visit and discourage them from any future visits they may have planned.

I have also sent this letter to more than 65 street papers across the U.S. and Canada with a request that they print it, or a letter of a similar sentiment. This will reach more than 344,000 readers in one month. If each of these readers tells two friends or family members of your horrible, egregious treatment of your homeless CITIZENS, that will be more than one million possible tourists lost! This reaction is exponential, and will inevitably reach far beyond one million.

The homeless of your city are living in a war zone, and yes, this is a boycott of your war-torn land. Your inaction and poor policies are criminal and you are to be held accountable for the lives and souls lost on your streets. Mayor Brown, take notice: The people of your city are dying.

Until you take action and appropriate measures to provide affordable housing, living-wage jobs, decent and accessible health care, mental health services, and substance-use treatment for EVERY resident of your city, as well as compassion training for your police department, I will continue to support and advocate for a boycott of your city.

With Sincere Regret,
Joie Finley,
Loaves & Fishes

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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.

RC Profile

Sean Chapman, 29, walked by *Real Change* this spring and saw a sign saying "volunteers needed." He had come to Seattle just a few weeks ago, and was downtown looking for work. He came in, and within one hour had a job — an unpaid one — helping out at the front desk. He's been there since, selling papers and helping solve the random problems that come up in the course of a workday. In that seat, he acts as the first face to greet anyone walking into the office. It may not be a prettified face — but don't let the dog collar scare you away.

Sean moved up here from Portland earlier this year; this is the second time he's been homeless. He's currently sleeping outside in the downtown area and saving up money for his own apartment. He feels like a bigger city offers more opportunity to get off the streets. As he works toward that goal, he volunteers at *Real Change* in order to achieve a balance and cultivate his own compassion. He wonders how the world would be if more people did the same.

"I try to give back as much as I've taken," he says. While he admits that his customer service is a little brusque, "my bark is worse than my bite."

"I've never found a place quite like this," he says of *Real Change*. "It's amazing how many people come here [from all walks of life]. I've never been accepted so well." ■

— Adam Holdorf



DON'T WORRY — SEAN'S BARK IS WORSE THAN HIS BITE.
PHOTO BY ADAM HOLDORF.

More Than Meets the Eye

Help *Real Change* build for power

By Timothy Harris

When most people think of *Real Change*, what comes to mind is the newspaper you now hold in your hand. Maybe they think of the vendors that they've come to know, and the relationships that they might have built. On an average month, there are more than 180 people out there selling this newspaper. Lately we've been going through 17,000 copies of every issue. We publish news, analysis, essays, and poetry, and have worked hard to create a newspaper that is widely respected in Seattle. The reason is simple. We want people to buy *Real Change* because it's a great newspaper, not because they feel sorry for somebody.

But *Real Change* is a whole lot more than 16 pages of newsprint. We organize, educate, and build alliances, and are a voice of the poor in Seattle. Our Homeless Empowerment Project has carefully built a range of programs to do just that. *Real Change* offers economic opportunity, cultural programs, skills training, public education on poverty issues, and more.

We do this with very few resources. Last year, total expenses for all six of our programs was just \$230,000. Donations from people like yourself make our work possible. Your donations support not only this newspaper, but the following programs as well:

The MacWorkshop: Our busy computer lab is a six-terminal workshop that offers participants up to 90 minutes of free use daily for internet access, self-guided GED study, typing training, and experience in a variety of software programs. Currently we offer three classes weekly in basic computer skills. We have plans this year to expand the workshop to nine terminals and upgrade all of the equipment. The MacWorkshop also provides free donated computers to homeless and low-income persons who obtain housing through the Computers to Go program. The MacWorkshop currently gives away an average of three computers a week. If you have a used Power Mac to donate, we'll make sure it finds a good home.

The Homeless Speakers Bureau: The HSB is a means for homeless and formerly homeless participants to communicate to schools, churches, and civic organizations about their own experiences with homelessness and how others can become a part of the solution. You can arrange for a speaker to come to your organization by calling our office.

StreetWrites: StreetWrites is a peer support group for homeless and very low-income writers. The workshop meets Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and has an open mike poetry reading on Sunday afternoons. StreetWrites publishes an annual poetry chapbook that is sold by *Real Change* vendors, as well as a monthly zine (*Out of the Margins*) for distribution in shelters and homeless drop-in centers.

StreetLife Gallery: StreetLife Gallery, located a block from our office at the corner of Second and Bell Street, is a working art studio and gallery that serves about 50 homeless and very low-income artists. The Gallery offers common workspace and supplies for free, 20 individual workspaces that rent for \$5 per month, and display space for completed work. StreetLife offers creative community to those who may otherwise not have the resources to make and sell their art. All proceeds from art sold goes directly to the artists.

First things First: FtF is an organizing effort to put human needs first in City of Seattle priorities. This year, First things First organized the successful I-71 ballot initiative campaign to increase shelter and homeless support services in Seattle. Our organizing efforts resulted in more than 200 units of new shelter and more than 200 new units of transitional and permanent housing for the homeless. The broad goals of FtF are to ensure that policymakers hear homeless people's concerns, and to make poverty a priority issue in Seattle politics.

These are not good times for the poor and homeless. This year's One Night Count found more homeless people literally sleeping on the street than ever before. Budget cuts are coming from all directions — city, county, state, and federal — and as the economy falters, the poor will be the first to feel the effects. Worse, it is widely predicted that charitable giving will be down this year, just when it will be needed most.

Real Change is an incredibly effective organization that makes a profound difference in people's lives. We build community. We offer the tools people need to succeed. We build for social change from the ground up. We are a scrappy grassroots program that does a lot with very little, but we need your help to keep our work moving. Please use the coupon on this page to donate as generously as possible to *Real Change*. ■

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More Than Meets the Eye

Real Change is much more than just a newspaper. We are a respected voice of the poor that reaches more than 30,000 people each month. We are a powerful grassroots organizing project that wins real gains for the homeless. We offer cultural and educational opportunity through our art gallery, writers workshops, and computer lab. Your support makes our work possible. Please give generously. All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

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

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Clock stopped for some welfare families

Governor Gary Locke came out with an election-day gift for people counting down until time runs out for Washington's welfare recipients: He stopped the clock for those with significant barriers to finding a job. In addition, he announced that people looking for work can keep receiving state assistance until their first paycheck arrives.

Locke's move has a direct effect on about 3,200 families who were scheduled to hit their five-year lifetime limit next August. The governor's office says that three-quarters of those recipients are "playing by the rules" — working, looking for work, or getting vocational training. Another 550 or so are physically or mentally disabled and can not be reasonably expected to participate in WorkFirst.

As Locke announced this amnesty for the majority of WorkFirst participants, he didn't let up on an uncooperative minority. The 120 Washington families that have resisted participation in WorkFirst have been put under sanction, and their monthly payments gradually reduced. Gov. Locke introduced the Child SafetyNet Payment System for the children of these families. Under the system, a third-party money manager will get a family's monthly benefit check, and use it to pay for rent, utilities, food, or other items deemed necessary for the children's well-being.

"Even though some parents refuse to cooperate with WorkFirst requirements, their children should not suffer because of it," the governor said in a statement.

Locke prepared his statement in response to a petition filed by child and family advocates September 5. It asked for prompt clarification of which families might be eligible for extension beyond their lifetime limits.

A state survey conducted earlier this year showed that half of the families leaving Washington's welfare rolls are making less than \$1,100 a month — below the federal poverty line. The study also showed an increase in the number of families going back to welfare after leaving for a job. Many of them said that they relied on food banks and sometimes skipped meals. ■

— Adam Holdorf

A devastating state budget

The week before Locke made his pronouncement, the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) was preparing a draft 2002 budget that would conform to the governor's orders to cut spending by 15 percent. In response, DSHS came up with a slew of devastating cuts. Among them:

Eliminate GAU. The General Assistance-Unemployable program provides monthly payments to more than 7,000 adults, many of them homeless, who are waiting for the state to get them on a similar program called Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Shut down drug and alcohol treatment programs. State-contracted residential treatment centers would lose their funding; 730 alcoholics and addicts seeking treatment would lose out.

Cut programs for homeless and at-risk youth. Group homes and residential centers used by 2,500 young people every year would be eliminated. Other counseling services that resolve conflict between parents and at-risk youth would disappear. Another cut would end state funding for homeless youth shelters.

"These short-sighted cuts would have tremendous long-term costs," says Paul Barry, legislative director at the Children's Alliance. "You're training kids to be unsuccessful as adults."

In asking for these proposals, Office of Financial Management director Marty Brown told the state's agency directors to "define your most important, central missions" and "maintain services that protect the state's most at-risk and vulnerable population." Plainly, DSHS didn't follow directions.

"I can't imagine anyone more vulnerable than a homeless 12-year-old girl," says Barry. The Children's Alliance and the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless are asking concerned citizens to contact Locke's office as his staff considers DSHS's proposal. The governor releases his own draft budget in mid-December, and the state Legislature tackles the issue in January. ■

— Adam Holdorf

Candidates say no to library as a hygiene center

Those in favor of a new downtown hygiene center have found an unlikely ally in the Friends of Seattle Public Library, whose recent voters guide was focused on this issue. The October 2001 issue of *The Bookmark*, the group's newsletter, was in the form of a voter's guide designed to inform members of the stances of candidates on library-related issues. The main focus was the library's concern for a new downtown hygiene center, due to



the number of homeless people utilizing their facilities for hygiene purposes.

The guide framed the issue by stating, "Every day, people attempt to bathe or wash their clothes in the library restrooms. Assaults, drug use, and sexual misconduct occur in the hallways, stairways, elevators, and among the book stacks. Employees and patrons are harassed." It does not seem to be sympathy for homeless people that drives the library's enthusiasm for a hygiene center, but its own concerns. The library does not want its facilities to be used for hygiene maintenance, but it has recognized that its use as a hygiene center indicates a need for such a place somewhere downtown.

The questions asked of the candidates included, "Do you believe that the downtown public library should serve as a de facto hygiene/activity center for non-library using homeless persons? If elected, would you take a leadership role and prioritize funding for a hygiene/activity center? State how you would support the security and quality-of-life issues in the library, not only the hygiene-related ones."

Among those questioned were mayoral candidates Greg Nickels and Mark Sidran, and candidates for council positions 2, 4, 6, and 8. Nick Licata and Peter Olive, both running for council position 8, did not give responses.

Every candidate who responded said that they did not believe that the library should be used as a hygiene center, and every candidate but Mark Sidran wanted funding for a hygiene center. Sidran's response was "maybe," but he chose to emphasize the need for stronger public safety. He stated, "The library needs personnel devoted to security. They should be trained specifically to handle the security and quality-of-life issues in an appropriate way for the atmosphere in the library." No concern for the needs of homeless people was expressed. ■

— Jeanne Ryan

Food or bombs?

The military strikes against the Taliban appeared to make great gains this week with the opposition Northern Alliance's march into the Afghanistan capitol of Kabul, and reports of large defections from the Taliban forces. Yet these seeming victories still guarantee nothing to the millions of refugees and poorest Afghans who are on the brink of starvation or death from easily-treatable diseases.

Several international relief and humanitarian aid agencies are trying to find ways to get supplies to Afghans before the brutal winter months set in. This week, the Seattle-based World Concern joined with Northwest Medical Teams, Arizona's Food for the Hungry, and Tajikistan's Central Asia Development Agency to announce plans to distribute goods — including food, clothing, and medical and hygienic supplies — throughout Northern Afghanistan. Through their combined efforts, the four agencies hope to help 20,000 families or 140,000 Afghans by the end of the year. Oxfam is also working to gather food, blankets, and medical supplies for refugees in the region.

Yet some organizations, including Oxfam and a coalition of local groups led by the Church Council of Greater Seattle, believe gathering aid is fruitless unless there is a safe way to deliver it. They believe that until there is at least a pause in the bombing of Afghanistan, this way will never come.

"An immediate cessation of the bombing... is the critical link to getting desperately needed food and winter supplies to the innocent Afghan people," said the Rev. John C. Boonstra, executive Minister for the Washington Association of Churches, in a prepared statement.

To bring attention to this cause, peace activists will raise money for Afghanistan relief efforts and local food banks outside the Federal Building in Seattle starting at 4 p.m. from Nov. 15-18.

Yet the cessation of bombing is not necessary to help 1.8 million people who live in the North, pointed out World Concern's executive director Kelly Miller. As agencies help the people they can more easily and safely reach, other areas — like Kabul — open up. The coalition World Concern has partnered with has already started distributing their goods across Afghanistan's borders, and has plans to help another 2,600 families starting this week.

Find out more about how and what to donate to various international aid agencies through the following contact information:

Oxfam America Afghan Relief Fund: www.oxfamamerica.org/donate/index.html

World Concern: www.worldconcern.org, 1 (800) 755-5022

Northwest Medical Teams: www.nwmti.org/how_you.htm, 1(800) 959-HEAL ■

— Molly Rhodes

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

Party While You Can

Amid the slowdown, local officials celebrate luxury hotel

By Adam Holdorf

The Elliott Grand Hyatt luxury hotel celebrated its opening on November 6. There was a party, the champagne was flowing, and nothing could dampen the spirits.

Not the declining occupancy rates for the Hyatt's \$200-a-night rooms. Not the recession. Not, on the national level, the highest unemployment rate in 18 years. Not even a recent *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* article on the decline in hotel occupancy with the headline "The Party's Over." Local hotels at all price ranges are seeing more rooms going empty. Last month, they brought in 22 percent fewer customers than this time last year. Instead, the dignitaries were defiantly buoyant.

"It's been said by some that you couldn't have picked a worse time to open a luxury hotel," began former City Councilmember Martha Choe, now the head of the state Office of Trade and Economic Development. "Well, with all due respect, I beg to differ."

"There's no doubt this industry took a big hit, but we know these people [the customers] will come back," said Mayor Paul Schell. He thanked the Hyatt and its co-owner, R.C. Hedreen, for a glorious building and an impressive sculpture by a famous Dutch artist gracing the Pine Street entry. But if these are gloomy times, they compare positively to 1992, "when this street was full of prostitutes." The Grand Hyatt "is going to set the new standard for our city to follow," he finished.

But it's not just the city that should be grateful. Jim Ellis stepped to the microphone to reassure a worried nation.

As chairman of the board of the Convention Center, Ellis helped engineer the destruction of some of downtown's last old hotels where the complex now sits.

"What a spectacular culmination of an incredible struggle," he beamed. The hotels here "have already changed this end of downtown," and we can take pride in the Convention Center's place among the top three revenue-generating meeting places in the country. He struck a note of patriotism — one underscored by the red-white-and-blue ribbons tied around the stem of each commemorative champagne glass: "The temporary bumps, even one as horrible as [the attacks of Sept. 11], are temporary. The country will survive, it will excel, and this building will excel. It will prosper."

Really?

Depressing numbers

On the second floor of the Grand Hyatt, the hiring office is not taking applications. The hotel was expected to hire about 400 workers when it opened. People to reserve rooms, carry bags, change sheets, serve drinks, and push carts. Management hired about 310 people. They stopped when the lack of guests couldn't justify more workers, Hyatt general manager Doug Sears said.

And the employees they did hire aren't seeing much action, since they're not called in until necessary. Some employees, hired on for five-day full-time jobs, go to work — and get paid for — four, maybe three, days a week.

Sears expects business to pick up; according to one tray-toting server, the employment office will be hiring again soon. In the meantime, underemployed workers have a couple resources: they can get another part-time job, they can sit tight until things get better, or they can stretch their dollar by cutting expenses. Stay home and cook. Move in with a friend. Or find "wage support," in the parlance of policymakers: Seek out char-

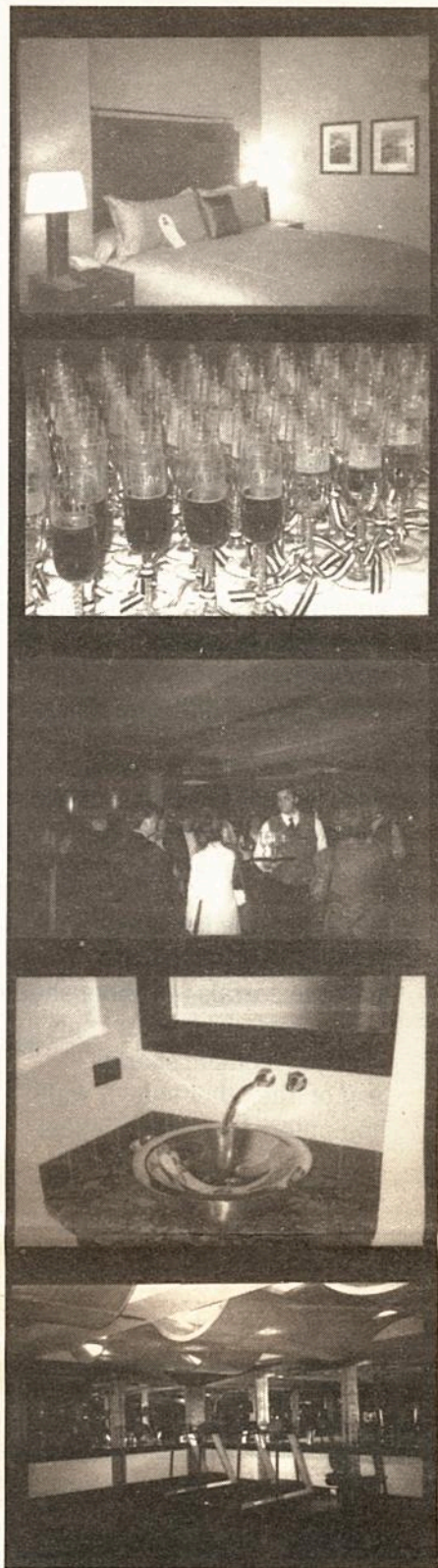
ity at a food bank; apply for food stamps.

As the economy continues to sour — and there are few indications it will do otherwise — such measures will get more common. Nearly 10,000 people filed for unemployment in Washington state during the last week of October. More than 136,000 workers have been laid off from their jobs in the hospitality industry. Across the employment sectors, according to public announcements collected by the AFL-CIO, 662,000 people are being let go. The Hotel and Restaurant Employees International Union estimates that one-third of its workforce will be let go.

Six months ago, when the stock market bubble burst on the high-tech industry, the unemployment impact felt reasonably low. Now that the boom is officially over, the damage is widespread. The hurt is showing in even the "casual" workforce that labors underneath the radar of statisticians. Last month, CASA Latina director Hilary Stern told the Seattle City Council that many more Hispanic men were coming to the day labor center in search of work — but fewer employers were stopping by.

No terrorists started this economic slowdown, and patriotism alone won't bring the country out of it. Witness the bitter partisanship over the stimulus package being debated by Congress and the White House. At best, it could offer the opportunity to address the wage stagnation that, according to the Economic Policy Institute, has characterized the U.S. economy for almost two years. But that won't happen, if the version passed by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives prevails. It's a collage of tax cuts and rebates for Fortune 500 companies.

What is out there to help the underemployed or would-be employed of the Grand Hyatt? If they can hang in there until next spring, and their straits are dire enough, they'll benefit from the



CELEBRATING IN STYLE AT THE ELLIOTT GRAND HYATT. PHOTOS BY JACKIE RENN.

Earned Income Tax Credit, a lump-sum payment from the IRS to low-wage workers. Until then, if the paychecks don't cover the cost of living, they can fall back on a "wage support" system that is already slated for cutbacks.

Has the champagne lost its fizz yet? ■



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poetry

In The Generic Landscape

In the generic landscape
through the sterile suburbs
among the hunters and gatherers
in the Range-Rovers
moving about
in the land of milk and honey.

Lost in concrete canyons
with electric candles burning
the workers are working
the money-lenders are happy.

In the generic landscape
down the asphalt rivers
past the corrals of rubber-shod horses
police cars circle like
nervous metallic sharks
and on the other side of walls
computers hum like crickets.

—L.E. CORNELISON

Dragonfly Pond

As I lay in the cool, moist sand, mesmerized,
Watching the chain of events unfold around me,
Water skeeter is skating across the pond
while the honeybees go about their days, work pollinating the blackberry blossoms.

As I lay in the cool, moist sand, watching
The pesky mosquitoes take twice their weight in blood each time they strike
while trout hides quietly in the shadows.
and frog hops onto a rock to say hello.

As I lay in the cool, moist sand, watching
The stifling heat brings with it the fragrance of blossoms
and the sweet smell of uncut hay.

As I lay in the cool, moist sand, watching
A pair of dragonflies arrives to perform a ballet
Flitting to and fro, pirouetting like two ballerinas
landing gently on the water, wings slowly pulsating in the sun.

As I lay in the cool, moist sand, pondering life's deep questions
I am filled with joy at all the discoveries here
but, my stomach growls hungrily
and I say goodbye to my friends

—PAUL VON KEMPF, JR.

Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning



As you may recall, these are the things that I have said you need to write a poem:

1. Words.
2. A form to put your words in.
3. Something to say with the words you put in the form (this will affect how you arrange the words).

Regarding the words themselves, there is some controversy over how many different kinds you need. Here are three viewpoints on this matter:

1. "You just need to know everyday common words. People don't have strong feelings for the others, so they tend to get in the way of whatever mood you are trying to create, so don't use them."
2. "What a crock. Poems are made of words — uncommon words make uncommon poems, but they're still poems, you dolt."
3. "So, you don't think I have strong feelings for 'martingales'? I feel so hurt and misunderstood. I'm going home to Mother, right now."

Another viewpoint says that you can sometimes discover poetry inside uncommon words—in just the same way that, sometimes, you can discover ugly mollusks inside beautiful sea shells. With a pen or a sharpened pencil.

Let's look for mollusks inside the beautiful but uncommon word-shell "hebdomadad."

What are hebdomadads? Well, lots of things are... there's original episodes of *The X-Files* and *I Love Lucy*; lunar quarters, approximately; blue-collar paydays; days set aside for gods; the *TV Guide*; *The Stranger*; Monday Night Football; days of rest; TGIF; *Saturday Night Live*; my parents' trips to restaurants; days set aside for gods; soup kitchens at some churches; bowling days; poker nights; days set aside for gods.

OK, all it really means is "weekly." But it means it with so much more beans than "weekly" means it. If you say that you go to church weekly, it sounds like you don't care the other six days of the week. But if you say you go to church hebdomadadistically, it sounds like you're putting serious effort into it.

Here's a poem with hebdomadals in it. I was inspired to write the following "prose poem" by the fact that hebdomadad nearly rhymes with "bomb it all," but not with much else, so don't look for any rhyme.

Charlie's Hebdomadals

Wednesday at noon used to be air raid drill time —
get off the street behind your screen door.
Charlie had to prepare for World War III
so we could all outlast the Russkies.

Then Charles went to college.
Noon Wednesdays brought the experimental film series.
An Andalusian dog met with severe abuse.
After that Charlie's Wednesday noon hebdomadals
rapidly became personal.

Once, a kangaroo escaped from the zoo
and jumped in Charlie's mocha.
Last Wednesday noon Charlie's shorts everted
while he was wearing them.

Next Wednesday Charlie will attempt to eat lobster.
He expects his food will assault him.
Let's surprise him with a tie.

—© DR. WES BROWNING

I wonder how many people here in Seattle remember how frightened everyone was back in the Fifties by the threat of being bombed to death. There really were air raid drills every Wednesday noon. Though everybody knew about them and could brace themselves for them, they still sent chills up people's spines. Of course it was nothing so personal as having a zoo animal in your drink. Or like having an actual 10-ton bomb dropped on your own house.

The U.S. gets bombed once in half a century and all of the sudden we're the world's victims. ■



Zona Roja

Time, a commodity of mind that can't be changed has aged her face.

"I had a man once," she tells me, "who treated me like a queen. But the vanity of youth and the stupidity of my conceit destroyed what would otherwise have been a decent life, with kids perhaps and maybe even a garden where I would have grown roses."

Now I see her in this reddened light, the harlot that has aged beyond the help of ruddy paint & Calvin Klein, to tell me in drunken delirium her woeful state of mind and ask me with beer scented tongue if I won't have her favors to prove to me how fine a woman she still purports to be.

Uninvited though she is, I sit and listen to her spiel in this place where women come to sell their fine honed wares and seek solicited *consolation in the profaning arms* of nameless strangers. One night's passion guaranteed with the endearing rustle of pungent smelling paper. No questions asked. Not here or other places like it. "La Chingada," she says with a sudden hearty laugh, "has taken little from my spirit." And then drinks her drink and smiles a smile too tragic for words of any color or description.

La Chingada has left little else, I think, but brittle nets of reeking, faded hardships traced and etched like long forgotten dreams on her weary, listless face; "I live alone," she says. "Time takes all," I tell her. And then she looks at me with thoughts too painful to relate, hiding her dark, brown eyes like melancholic tears too timid to emerge. I buy her another round and say, "Goodbye." Outside I wonder what her name might be as I walk with Time gnawing at my flesh like a ravenous dog feasting on a corpse not yet dead.

—J.L. NAVARRO

My Flag

My flag sings Woody Guthrie songs to a box car rhythm, my flag is brown hands reaching up for red fruit in orchards along the Columbia, my flag is Martin Luther King's voice breaking over one hundred thousand hearts open to words of peace and justice for all. I pledge allegiance to the United States of Compassion, to the United States of full bellies and honest work, to the United States of Thomas Paine, Sojourner Truth, and Joe Hill. My flag is the moon and the morning star, Venus steadfast and clear on a field of blue. My flag flies from the top most tip of a Marin County redwood and flashes yellow in the flight of grasshoppers ratcheting from thistle to thistle. My flag flutters in the breath a mother blows over the wheatfield air of her infant nursing at her breast, and takes off its shoes for mid-day prayers. My flag is the sweat running down the fireman's back as he climbs the stairs towards the inferno. My flag will never rally the troops of vengeance or be folded over a soldier's pawned body. My flag's glory is as old as George Washington's hemp fields, as royal as the ostrich feathers in Marcus Garvey's hat, as common as Abe Lincoln's jokes. My flag does not fly over marching troops or misidentify killers as heroes. The cloth of my flag is still clenched in the silkworm's gut, still tufted on the cotton plant. My flag will fly only when nations die, and the idea of the other gives way to the truth of my brother.

—DAVID THORNBRUGH

CHILDCARE Continued from Page 1

Community Services Division of the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS). Four full-time and two part-time positions are set to be eliminated, cutting the staff for the program almost in half. This will cut 5,000 hours of training and technical assistance for county-contracted child care centers.

The personnel cuts will also have a snowball effect on the county's ability to get private funding for child care. According to Akina-James, what's left of the department in 2002 will no longer be able to administer grants. At this time, they are looking for another entity, possibly governmental or nonprofit, to take over that role.

The end result of the budget change will be the dismantling of the county's child care safety net.

"[KCCCP] would no longer play a major role in the child care system as they have in the past," says Akina-James, who helped set up the program in 1988.

"Crucial" to families

Because KCCCP traditionally serves families who make too much for state subsidies, many of those affected will have little if any recourse to other funds. For many of them, the impact can be immediate and severe.

"I understand having to stay with programs that are mandatory," says Zammit, a 28-year-old administrative assistant in Kent with a nine-year-old daughter,

Athena. "But when you're talking human services, why are we specifically choosing this [to cut]? I know from personal experience that one of the major factors in homeless families is child care costs. It happened to me. It happens to a lot of people."

Five years ago, before Zammit began receiving subsidies from the county, she ran into difficulty paying for both her child care and her rent. Zammit brought home about \$1,200 a month, a third of which went to child care costs, and her income placed her above the line necessary to receive state funds from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

"Without child care you can't work. Without work you can't pay the rent. So I ended up back in the homeless shelter."

After spending three months in a shelter, Zammit finally made it through the waiting list

for the county subsidies, and it allowed her to get back on her feet.

"Quality child care and the ability to afford it is a necessity," says Zammit. "For some of us, child care is the difference between making it and not making it."

Zammit receives child care assistance now to send her daughter to a center full-time during the summer, and despite a position that pays \$33,000 a year, she still needs assistance from the county to help cover these costs. For the average family, child care costs range anywhere from \$200 to more than \$600 per child a month, depending on whether care is fulltime or just before and after school.

"I work full-time. I have a good job. I make decent money. Yet here I was in a situation I never expected. It was a choice between paying my rent and paying my daycare."

**Maria Pederson,
mother of two**



KAREN ZAMMIT AND HER 9-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, ATHENA, DANCE TO THE STEREO IN THEIR HOME.

Taking from her experiences firsthand, Zammit participated in the Homeless Child Care Needs Assessment report released in February 2000 by the KCCCP. Among the recommendations in this report were coordinating information resources, providing greater accessibility to child care services, and helping families before they have a financial crisis to stop the cycle of homelessness.

At the time, Sims said of the report: "Access to quality child care and other sup-

port services are crucial to the stabilization of families." In fact, Sims has a long record of supporting child care issues that leaves many wondering how the county could find itself in this situation.

"If the child care subsidy program goes away, you're going to have women who can't afford to work," says Maria Pederson, a 36-year-old single mother of two who receives KCCCP funds. As a staffing supervisor with Family Resource Home Care, Pederson brings in \$38,000 a year. Ho-

Hey Mayor, Can You Spare \$200,000?

Local governments asked to compensate

By Dan Amdur

As King County officials wrestle with eliminating their child care program, they are trying the novel approach of asking city governments to help pick up the tab. But so far, no one else around the table is reaching for their wallets.

In August, County Executive Ron Sims sent proposals to the 29 incorporated areas and the city of Seattle explaining the budget situation and seeking partnerships to keep funding for KCCCP families that will be affected in their areas.

"We're in ongoing discussions with the cities," said Elaine Kraft, spokesperson for Sims. "The City of Seattle has been the most proactive in talking to us about this issue."

Included with the letter was a breakdown of projected costs to various cities for the subsidies, ranging from about \$5,000 for areas such as Bothell, with only one KCCCP-subsidized child, to Renton, which maintains the largest proportion of KCCCP children and would be responsible for supplying more than \$200,000 per year. With the county nearing a decision on the 2002 budget, no cities have come forth in favor of picking up the cost of the county program.

"I don't know how much cities will really be able to help with the cost," says Bellevue Mayor Chuck Mosher, whose city maintains the second largest block of KCCCP-funded children in the county. "It's going to be tight for us this year. I don't see us being able to pick up additional programming like this."

One proposal currently under discussion by the King County Council would provide up to \$400,000 in matching funds for cities willing to shoulder the KCCCP child care subsidies within their jurisdictions. According to Ken Lundberg, media relations manager for the county council, this proposal will likely be amended to the 2002 budget when the council votes on Nov. 19.

But with no city currently stepping up to the plate to make up for the missing child care services, the matching funds may not even be used. Yet, even if the entire

\$400,000 is matched by the various incorporated areas, it will still only come to \$800,000, which is still far short of the \$1.2 million being cut from the KCCCP.

For Derek Todd, assistant to the chief administrative officer for Renton, the issue is not just budgetary. It's a matter of principle.

"[Child care] needs to be a regional service," says Todd. "This program was created by the county. All of these citizens pay just as many taxes as those within unincorporated areas."

"We have no way of picking up an ongoing expense of \$250,000 for a city the size of Renton," he says.

In a letter responding to Sims' request, Renton Mayor Jesse Tanner pointed out that city residents are already paying for the county to provide child care through their property and sales taxes, and it is unfair to expect them to pay once again for a city child care service. Meanwhile, he also took issue with the county's decision to cut subsidies only in incorporated areas, pointing out that much of the revenue the county receives is coming from within the cities, but is used to support unincorporated areas of the county.

As other regional city governments spar with the county, the city of Seattle for one is not waiting around for county support.

"Unfortunately, with the [city's] budget situation, we're not in a position to solve the county's problems for them," says Tom Byers, deputy mayor of Seattle. "Seattle does way more for child care than the county ever did."

While Seattle also faces a \$24 million budget shortfall, Byers insisted the city was only making administrative cuts to human services, maintaining programs such as Project Lift Off, a public/private partnership providing early childhood education and out-of-school support.

As the county and city governments deal with their budget shortages, the debate is anything but academic for Wendy Zachary. A 33-year-old secretary with two children who currently receives subsidies from KCCCP, Zachary lives in an unincorporated area of the county but is worried about the program's future. Her ex-husband was just laid off from United Airlines, and he can no longer provide child support. County subsidies to help with the \$1,200 a month child care bill is crucial for Zachary to survive on her \$2,250 monthly salary.

"Safe and affordable child care is not a luxury," says Zachary. "It's a necessity." ■

A Piece of the Port's Pie

Campaign launched to redirect agency's surplus

By Brenda Anibarro

"It seems to me that I pay taxes, it's going somewhere where it's not needed, and I would like it to come back to me, where it is needed."

That was Karen Zammit speaking Saturday, October 27, in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' union hall. She was one of the many people assembled to tell elected officials and candidates how to use the Port of Seattle's enormous budget surplus.

A coalition of community, labor, and social service organizations has begun the Port Profits for Human Needs campaign, which aims to have the Port of Seattle share its profits with the county to ease this year's budget crunch. It is targeting the taxes paid to the Port by King County taxpayers. The campaign also demands an end to the privatization of crane maintenance work on the waterfront, and an end to layoffs.

"We came here today... not only to ask you to put a portion of these tax dollars back into social programs, but... to stop giving our property to these private corporations," began Tyree Scott, Board Chair of the Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office and a retired IBEW Local 46 member.

As a public entity, the Port levies a tax on King County taxpayers which, according to the Port's 2000 Annual report, is projected to be extracted at the amount of \$35.6 million for

2001. While the Port made profits amounting to \$116.3 million in 2000, King County faces budget cuts for next year at approximately \$45 million.

The Port of Seattle was established in 1911 to challenge the East Coast railroad companies which monopolized the central waterfront. Its current move to contract its crane maintenance work out to a private company, Stevedoring Services of America (SSA), has raised a number of challengers who argue that the Port has abandoned the spirit of its original intent. David Personius, a crane maintenance worker and member of the IBEW local 46, stated, "SSA currently leases Terminal 18, Terminal 25, and Terminal 37 from the Port of Seattle. Of the six terminals, they control three of them. If this privatization goes through, it will make them the de facto port authority."

In an accountability session following the testimony, elected officials and candidate were asked if they would support the issues in question. Of the nine officials and candidates in attendance, two (Port Commission candidate Lawrence Molloy and Tom Tierney, representing the current Port Commission) said no. The rest (including County Councilmembers Larry Gossett and Dwight Pelz and City Council candidates Curt Firestone and Grant Cogswell) said they would. All agreed to a second meeting.

The community hearing brought together members from social services and labor to figure out ways to work together. As Myles Sundin concluded his piece on the possibilities ahead he remarked, "The possibility is that the Port join with us... that's a possibility I'd like to see happen." ■



LIVING ROOM. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

ver, in the spring of 1999, Pederson worked for Evergreen Hospital making about \$32,000 a year. With her take-home pay around \$1,850, and child care costs at \$1,100 a month for her two children, the issue quickly became a crisis.

"I work full-time. I have a good job. I make decent money. Yet here I was in a situation I never expected," says Pederson. It was a choice between paying my rent and paying my daycare."

"It was terrifying. It was hard to hold it all together for my kids. I was exhausted emotionally, physically."

Beyond the direct impact to families with subsidies, anyone with children in county-contracted child care centers will feel the effects. Centers will likely have to pick up training costs themselves for mandated programs like first aid and CPR. With fees ranging between \$45 and \$65 per staff member for a class, each child care center will have to add a few thousand dollars to its bottom-line costs. And since child care providers are already paid fairly substandard wages, there is little room for these centers to compensate.

But today, pay tomorrow

The solution currently being proposed to alleviate this impending crisis is for the Port of Seattle to give back \$35.6 million in funds it receives from the county to be used to offset cuts in human services. Campaign sponsors point to \$100 million in profit the Port showed in 2000, and a projected profit of \$120 million this year, arguing that the Port can afford to return county funds during this time of need.

Whatever the outcome of this debate, it is unlikely to have an immediate impact. If the county moves to cut child care funds, the government has already sent letters to the 29 suburban incorporated cities and Seattle requesting that they pick up the funding. One option currently under discussion by the King County Council is to provide up to \$400,000 in match-

ing funds to be used by cities that agree to take up the cost of the KCCCP subsidies in their jurisdiction. However, at this point, no city has agreed to either proposal.

The end result, many fear, will be an increase in homelessness among families that leads to rising criminal justice costs in the future. Indeed, the law enforcement and safety category in the budget is the only segment of the general budget to experience significant growth — about a 4 percent increase to \$336 million in 2002.

For Harris, the price of eliminating child care subsidies now will be higher criminal justice costs in the future, as children raised in families without an adequate child care solution become more likely to experience developmental problems that can in turn lead to run-ins with the law.

Another factor weighing on Harris is the reduced political influence of child care on the state level. Harris fears that if King County leaves child care behind, the issue will lose relevance with the state government, since the county comes to the table with a much stronger voice than any of the local city governments.

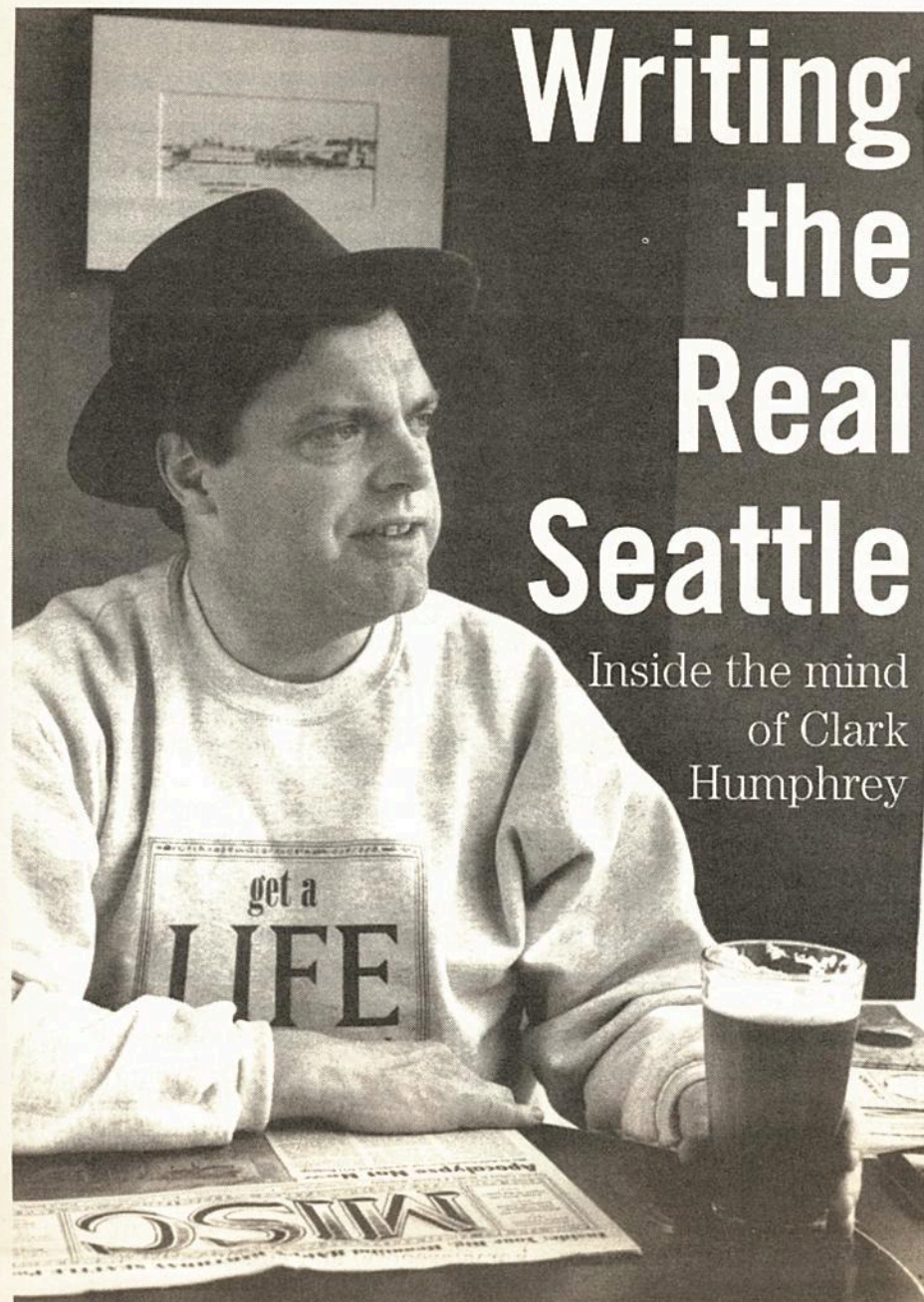
But for Ellen Burns, policy debates take a backseat to her much more present reality of supporting four children under 10 years old with a minimum-wage job. Burns, who is married and works as a cook in the Family Circle Learning Center, already struggles to pay for child care for her kids, even with the discount she receives from working at the child care center. Without help from the county, she's not sure where the extra money will come from.

Pederson, who is facing the same dilemma, feels the familiar anger and fear that she hoped was left behind, and wonders why such a relatively small amount of money can't be found somewhere to deal with a critical issue.

"This is real. These aren't faceless people," says Pederson. "There is money there. It's just a question of where it's going and what our priorities are." ■



CHILD CARE FOR MARIA PEDERSON'S TWO CHILDREN COSTS ABOUT \$1,100 A MONTH. WITHOUT A COUNTY SUBSIDY, SHE COULDN'T PAY HER RENT. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.



Writing the Real Seattle

Inside the mind of Clark Humphrey

PHOTO OF CLARK HUMPHREY BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

Interview by Kenneth Strong

Seattle writer Clark Humphrey is that increasingly rare local bird, a Northwest native. His love affair with American popular culture, and specifically Seattle culture, dates from a visit to the brand-new Space Needle during the 1962 World's Fair. In 1986, he began writing a column called "Misc" (it's pronounced just like it looks, Humphrey says) in a local tabloid called *ArtsFocus*. When that paper went under, Humphrey began privately publishing and distributing his own version of *Misc*, available for free at many local bookstores and watering holes. Since 1995 Humphrey has been online at www.miscmedia.com. He has published a book of his collected columns, and in 1995 published *Loser: The Real Seattle Music Story*. *Real Change* recently sat down at Two Bells in Belltown and had a chat with Clark.

Real Change: What led you to start writing the columns?

Clark Humphrey: Oh, lack of anything better to do. I was severely underemployed at the time, and I was offered a space in a little tabloid called *ArtsFocus*. It was put out by the old Lincoln Arts Center at 66 Bell, next to the Viaduct. I never got around to stopping.

RC: And it's been online—

Humphrey: It's been online since June, 1995.

RC: You also recently began a new column for *The Stranger* called "Obits."

Humphrey: Yeah, it's not just people who've died, but buildings that have been torn down or cool places that went defunct or dot-coms that went out of business.

RC: Do you have any advice for aspiring writers?

Humphrey: I don't know anything about teaching people to write. I do know the formula for becoming a successful writer in Seattle, though. Two parts: One, become a successful writer. Two, move to Seattle.

RC: You have to do it in that order?

Humphrey: Yeah, it has to be done in that order.

RC: How did your book, *Loser*, come about?

Humphrey: I was, as I often am, you know, desperate for money, trying to think of something I could do that would sell, and one day I thought of something that I knew about that somebody might be interested in reading about.

RC: The book's main focus is the "grunge" years, but it starts out with some very interesting pictures and information about the Seattle music scene in the '60s and '70s.

Humphrey: What I call the prehistory chapter—actually, all the great early

Seattle rock bands were from Tacoma, Boise or Portland.

RC: Where did Kurt Cobain's death come into your book?

Humphrey: I was actually finishing it up and sending xeroxes of chapters out to people I'd interviewed for fact checking when Cobain died. So, needless to say, not only did I have to add more about that event in the aftermath, but everything else sort of had to be reassessed in that context.

RC: Have you seen that movie, *Kurt and Courtney*?

Humphrey: That dumb Kurt and Courtney movie...I saw the mayoral candidates debating recently, and Richard Lee, the producer/host of a cable access show who claims that Kurt Cobain was murdered, showed up as a candidate for mayor wearing a dress, and holding a video camcorder in front of his own face.

RC: I don't believe he won, did he?

Humphrey: He did not—I think he got maybe 150 votes.

RC: Paul Schell didn't win, either.

Humphrey: Yes, Paul Schell, the first incumbent mayor to not even get nominated for a second term. I think he was out of his league. Paul Schell, like a lot of people in the '90s, didn't understand that running a government is not like running a business, and it can never be just like running a business. Schell was also a victim of the narrow vision that you get in a lot of civic establishments in Seattle, people who imagine that the city is composed only of upscale white baby boomers.

Then we had Nickels and Sidran: Nickels, an upscale white baby boomer himself, but also a professional administrator and bureaucrat, somebody who knows how to get things done. And Mark Sidran, the self-promoter, a guy who demands to be loved. I almost want to call him a throwback to the dot-com era.

RC: Maybe he fancies himself as a local version of New York's Rudy Giuliani.

Humphrey: No, he's not Giuliani; he wishes he were.

RC: As another long-time local, it certainly seems to me that there are a lot more homeless people on the streets than, say, 20 or 30 years ago.

Humphrey: There were a few transients in Pioneer Square, and up here in Belltown there were a lot of people who, I don't know if they were totally homeless, but there were certain people who were living a day-to-day existence. Back in the '70s, before the privatization of social services, before the "get tough on welfare" bluster, there were a lot fewer people on the streets.

RC: What do you think the future for social spending is going to be in the wake of the World Trade Center attacks?

Humphrey: I really hope that there is a new spirit of community in America,

that people do learn that we all have to depend upon one another, and that nobody is expendable. I hope we learn that we have to take care of our people and our lands, not just our bottom lines.

RC: Seattle has traditionally been more of a white-collar place than many large American cities.

Humphrey: Yeah, Seattle has always tried to be a middle-class, white-collared city that would earn money from all the rough-housing, redneck lumberjacks and fishermen out in the sticks, you know. The fishing boats would be out there somewhere, and the sawmills out somewhere else, and here we'd have the lawyers and engineers and college professors.

RC: You said your earliest memory of Seattle was the 1962 World's Fair?

Humphrey: Yes—I was five years old. I was very impressed by everything that was supposed to have come about by the 21st century—the dome cities, the monorails, the flying cars, the bubbleator....

RC: Does it seem like there's a neurotic need for Seattle's leaders to be seen by others as a "world-class city"?

Humphrey: Yes, and that led partly to the WTO fiasco. This goes right back to the original name for Seattle, which was "Alki," or "New York by-and-by." We're gonna be huge, we're gonna be respectable, we're not a bunch of lumberjacks, we've got boulevards and parks and universities and engineers. A lot of cities have been under pressure to be seen as world-class for one reason: the convention and tourist industry. Every big and medium-sized city in the U.S. is playing a game of one-upmanship with one another, in order to get some of that lucrative convention business.

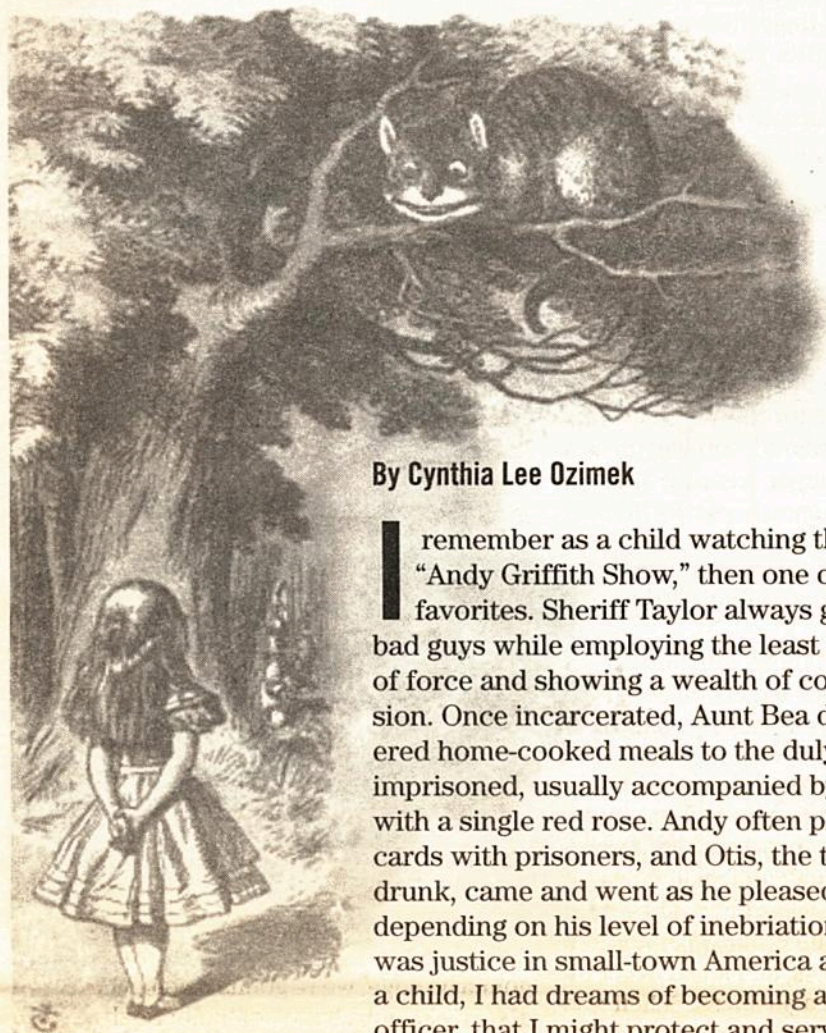
RC: I know an awful lot of low-income housing has been torn down in recent years to accommodate convention- and tourism-related business.

Humphrey: My concern is that you can't depend on the convention business, as we are about to find out, because what if corporate America decides it doesn't want to fly around anymore? What if they decide they can use video conferencing and Internet Relay Chat? There go many of the hotels, restaurants, cabs....

RC: After the WTO debacle and the Mardi Gras riots, Mayor Schell keeps trying to blame outside agitators, saying "this is not Seattle." But the city has a long history of rowdiness and protest, in the late '60s, and all the way back to the Wobblies.

Humphrey: Well, actually, it is Seattle. It's a part of what this city really is, but that the demographically correct have attempted to ignore. Of course, the local media only want to reach that desired demographic. Again, it's the false image of an Emerald City, which Schell probably sincerely believed in, to his own demise. This is a real place, it's a real city, with real people and real problems. ■

Alice in Wonderland MEETS THE KING COUNTY JUSTICE SYSTEM



By Cynthia Lee Ozimek

I remember as a child watching the "Andy Griffith Show," then one of my favorites. Sheriff Taylor always got the bad guys while employing the least amount of force and showing a wealth of compassion. Once incarcerated, Aunt Bea delivered home-cooked meals to the duly imprisoned, usually accompanied by a vase with a single red rose. Andy often played cards with prisoners, and Otis, the town drunk, came and went as he pleased, depending on his level of inebriation. This was justice in small-town America and, as a child, I had dreams of becoming a police officer, that I might protect and serve in the manner of "Sheriff Taylor."

It is 35 years since I dreamed of becoming a police officer. As a drug addict with a dual diagnosis of bipolar disorder, I have had many encounters with the Seattle Police Department. Sadly, I have found most officers lacking the compassion so prevalent in the town of Mayberry. In fact, my most recent experience with the SPD is reminiscent of Alice in Wonderland after she has gone through the looking glass: up is down and right is wrong.

The story begins about 9 p.m. on July 3. My friend and I were on the corner of Blanchard Street and Second Avenue, just across from the office of *Real Change*. Another individual sold \$20 worth of drugs to an undercover police officer. Seconds later there were police everywhere screaming, "Get down on the ground!!!" and tackling us even before we had a chance to comprehend the orders given to us. Once searched and handcuffed, we were told to get up and move toward the waiting police cars. If any of you have ever been handcuffed with your hands behind your back, you have some appreciation of how difficult it is to get up on your own volition when you are face down on a cement sidewalk. Once this nearly impossible feat was accomplished, we were processed at the downtown precinct and taken to the King County Jail.

Even as I was processed into the jail, even as I was fingerprinted, strip-searched, given my prison garb (blue for misdemeanors, fire-engine red for

felonies). Even as I was led to my "tank," I was not seriously concerned. I had been found with no drugs on me, no drug paraphernalia. Surely I would be released. Thus I laid in my four-by-eight foot cell, hour by hour, day by day, wondering when justice would prevail. In the interim, I "kited," (sent notes to) the jail's health staff, requesting and re-requesting the immediate implementation of my bipolar meds.

Initially, I was interviewed by the jail's psychiatric nurse, who went over my psychiatric history, including my medications, and assured me I would be receiving them in about three days' time. Three days came and went with no meds. Finally, about the seventh day, I received part of my medication. The missing pharmaceutical was a drug called Seroquel. It allows me to sleep and counteracts the severe depression I routinely suffer as a result of bipolar disorder. It also acts to clarify my thought processes.

A bipolar person cannot filter out excess noise, stimulation, or interaction. Without medication, the brain becomes overwhelmed and chaos ensues. Depression follows. Isolation is the end result. The life of an unmedicated bipolar person is an exercise in brutal futility. You would think that the jail-house medical staff would realize this and provide prisoners with proper psychiatric medication. It would make for a more secure, peaceful environment for them and their wards.

Finally, on the 10th day of incarceration, I was given a subtherapeutic dose of Seroquel. A psychiatrist who had never seen me decided to cut back most of my medications. Despite repeated "kites," and interventions from my prescribing physician and my attorney's office, my medications were never restored.

As for my case, despite the fact that I had no drugs or related paraphernalia, I was charged with "delivery of narcotics" under the Washington State Uniform Controlled Substances Act. Apparently, anyone within the vicinity of narcotics who might possibly be aware of those narcotics can be held under the same charges as the person who is caught with the drugs in question.

When my attorney told me this, I shook my head in disbelief. I told him that I would fight it, would go to trial. He stated that the county prosecutor's office would then add the charge of delivering drugs in a school zone (any metro bus stop can be considered a school zone), which would get me years in the state prison system. So the prosecutor's office would punish my attempt to protect myself by piling on other drug-related offenses. It was then that I realized I had gone from Seattle through Alice's looking glass. Right was wrong and up was down.

On August 8, 2001, I was released from the county jail on my own recognizance. Releasing a homeless person on their own recognizance is almost unheard of in the King County justice

system. The assumption is that a homeless person has no roots within the community and is, thus, a dangerous flight risk. This is particularly ludicrous to me as, of all people, the homeless cannot readily board flights to Tahiti or Russia or Katmandu — if we could, most of us would not be homeless in the first place.

I realized I had gone from Seattle through Alice's looking glass. Right was wrong and up was down.

My trial was scheduled to begin in September. While I realize I am far from an innocent, I can't help but wonder if the people's monies and the government's time might be better served in capturing and prosecuting rapists and bank robbers and people who cause bodily harm to others.

It is my experience that the vast majority of people in the King County Jail are there because, like myself, they are adept at causing the most harm to themselves by way of drugs, homelessness, and abusive relationships. I believe society's interests (and pocketbooks) would be much better served by promoting alternatives to incarceration such as drug and alcohol treatment. Regardless of what happens to me, I tell you this one thing with absolute assurity: I will never look at "The Andy Griffith Show" in the same light again. ■

Cynthia Lee Ozimek is a poet who lives, works, and plays in the Belltown section of Seattle.



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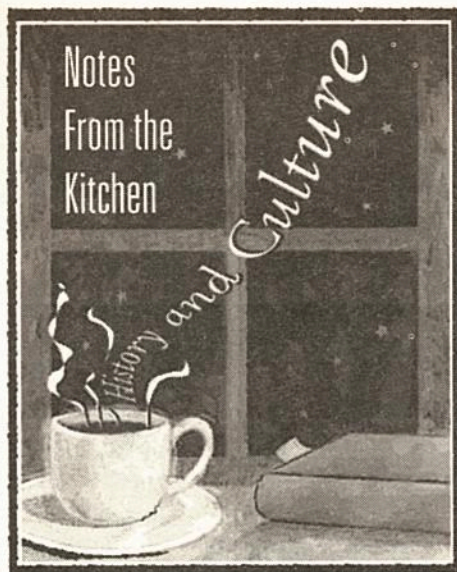
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Football 1, Television 0

By Liz Smith

This is the true story of a little girl who sacked two quarterbacks, two football teams, and several thousand screaming fans.

The date was November 17, 1968. The New York Jets were ready to take on the Oakland Raiders, and it promised to be a brutal game. The two teams were leading their divisions in the AFL. In a game they played one year earlier, the Raiders' Abe Lassiter had broken the cheekbone of Joe Namath, the Jets' quarterback. It was the Hatfields and McCoys on the 50 yard line.

At 4 p.m. Eastern Time, the game began, with Namath heading the Jets and Daryle Lamonica the Raiders. It was a hard-fought, vicious game, slowed by numerous time-outs and 19 penalties. Most of those were marked off against the Jets, with the most serious going to safety Jim Hudson for grabbing a Raiders face mask. When he complained, he was ejected and replaced by rookie Mike D'Amato. In the fourth quarter, Jim Turner booted a field goal from the 26 yard line. That put the Jets ahead by three, for a score of 32-29. There were 65 seconds left to play.

Jets fans were elated. What could happen in 65 seconds?

A lot of sound and fury, that's what. It was now 6:59 p.m. At 7 p.m., the children's movie *Heidi* was scheduled to begin. NBC was being flooded with calls — some people asking for the game to continue, others clamoring for the movie. This caused communication problems between NBC officials and NBC Broadcast Operations supervisor Dick Cline. Cline wasn't hearing anything from his bosses, so he ran the movie, bringing glee to little children and consternation to the fans.

This is what went on after NBC cut to *Heidi*:

Oakland's Charlie Smith outraced the rookie D'Amato to receive a touchdown pass from Lamonica. George Blanda made a placement conversion, which put the Raiders ahead, 36-32. Forty-two seconds remaining. A kickoff by Oakland was fumbled by Earl Christy. It was scooped up by Preston Ridlehuber at the two, for another Oakland touchdown. Final score: Raiders over the Jets, 43-32.

The Jets were furious. To this day, they believe that if Jim Hudson hadn't been ejected, those touchdown maneuvers by Smith and Ridlehuber wouldn't have happened. The Jets' coach, Web Eubanks, led his dejected players back to the locker room. The assistant coach and the team's physician went to the referees' room and started banging on the locked door and yelling. They confronted the guilty party (the official who made the call) and for their trouble received letters from the league ordering them to pay thousands of dollars in fines.

Twenty minutes into *Heidi*, NBC ran a "crawl" along the bottom of the Swiss Alps announcing the final score of the game. Jets fans were outraged. Raiders fans were outraged. NBC's switchboard broke down. Thousands of distressed men, perhaps befuddled by too much beer, also called the New York City Police, the New York Telephone Company, and the *New York Times*. The phone lines were snarled for several hours.

The president of NBC, Julian Goodman, issued this statement a few hours later: "It was a forgivable error committed by humans who were concerned about the children who expected to see *Heidi* at 7 p.m. I missed the game as much as anyone else."

This embarrassing mistake, also known as "the Heidi game," led to the NFL changing its TV contracts. A football game would be broadcast in each team's home city, until completely over. No matter what.

Later that season, the Jets would face the Baltimore Colts in the Superbowl. It was the only championship they ever won. In his book about the Jets, *Gang Green*, Gerald Esbenazi covered 38 years of Jets' history. Poor draft choices, a succession of coaches, and freak injuries had all contributed to a really crummy win-loss record. At the end of the book, they have yet another new coach and new uniforms, but they still don't have their own stadium. Go, Jets.

As a result of extensive polling among male football fans, I have determined that what they like to eat during the game must be easy to fix, must be crunchy, and must taste good with beer. Here are some suggestions:

Hot cheese dip:

Heat up one cup of prepared salsa. Add one pound of cut-up Velveeta, and stir over low heat until blended. Serve with chips.

Spinach dip:

Defrost one package of frozen chopped spinach. Squeeze out all the liquid. Mix with 16 ounces of sour cream and one 3 ounce package of cream cheese. Add 1 ounce of Lipton dry onion soup mix. Serve with chips.

Nachos:

In case you just moved here from someplace like the Outer Hebrides, I'll tell you how to make nachos. Mix one can of refried beans with a little water. Spread beans evenly on chips. Sprinkle with grated cheddar cheese and top with sliced jalapenos. Bake at 350 degrees until the cheese melts. Serve with sour cream and guacamole.

Spicy chicken wings:

Start these 24 hours in advance. Marinate two pounds of chicken wings in one cup prepared teriyaki sauce for 24 hours, stirring two or three times to ensure even soaking. Bake in 350 degree oven for 45 minutes, discarding marinade. ■




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Friday, Oct. 12, 9:50 p.m., Olive Way and Bellevue. On the above date, officers responded to the above location and contacted the victim, a homeless white male aged 35 years. He had been assaulted by a homeless Indian male, and stated the suspect had accused him of stealing beer from him. Victim suffered a small cut to his hand and a cut on his forehead. He was able to walk to a friend's apartment, where he called 911. He was then transported to Harborview for medical attention. The suspect is still at large.

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Friday, Oct. 26, 10:05 p.m., 1500 Block Western Ave An officer responded to Western on a report of a stabbing. He arrived and found the victim, a homeless white male aged 52, standing on the sidewalk smoking a cigarette. He had stab wounds to his lower right leg, a two-inch cut on his elbow, and a stab wound to his chest, and appeared to be in a large amount of pain. He explained he had been standing there, "minding his business," and was attacked by three Hispanic males. He was stabbed several times, causing the above injuries. The males then got into a car and left the scene. He said he recognized the men, but did not know their names, and had no idea why they attacked him. He was treated at the scene for his injuries, and was transported to Harborview for further medical attention.

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Saturday, Oct. 27, 8:08 p.m., Broadway Ave. and E. Thomas St. Police made contact with two homeless white males, aged 26 and 24, at the above location in regard to a disturbance. They stated that they were standing on the street corner when a gray truck stopped at a red light in front of them. The driver yelled and waved, but they had never seen the man before, and so did not respond. The vehicle then turned around at the intersection and pulled up to the curb. They were uncertain of the man's intentions, and one of the subjects hopped on his bike and began to ride away. As he passed by the truck the suspect got out and attempted to push the man off his bike. The suspect was yelling and screaming at the two men, and one of them headed to a phone to call 911. The suspect jumped back into his truck, and one of the victims, attempting to get the license plate, was almost hit as the man backed up and sped away. Neither victim was hurt, but were worried that the suspect might return to cause more trouble, and so made a report to the police. ■

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.

Saying Goodbye to Verna Maxwell

born 30 September, 1933, died 28 October, 2001

Of all the things I did and all the things I said
Let no one try to find out who I was
An obstacle was there transforming
The actions and the manner of my life
An obstacle was often there
To silence me when I began to speak

—FROM "HIDDEN THINGS" BY CONSTANTINE CAVAFY

By Michele Marchand

During a recent renovation, Noel House shelter lost its archives. The archives, carefully prepared by a former staffperson, are contained in a simple scrapbook of photographs and clippings dating back to the shelter's beginning.

Its loss is unfortunate, since many of us old-timers were sure that the scrapbook contained a photograph of Verna Maxwell, and her beatific smile. Verna, who'd been an icon at Noel House since its early days, passed away October 28 after a short, intense struggle with a heart infection.

"She was a lady; I'm not much of a one," I joked at Verna's memorial service, "so maybe that's why I didn't get to know her very well." Verna was always perfectly coiffed, dressed to the nines, with bright and glamorous red lipstick. She carefully ironed her next-day clothes every evening.

But she closely guarded her privacy, and had a way of avoiding questions. She never talked about her background, her family, where she came from or where she went. She left the shelter for extended periods several times over the years, without warning and without stories when she returned. We always imagined she had returned to her family somewhere in the South.

When she was in Seattle, Verna was quiet, and she was everywhere. "In any part of town, you'd see that woman. She had *style!*" said Noel House staffperson Spring Pinckney, who spoke of seeing Verna in unlikely places—Bellevue, Redmond, everywhere. Spring also spoke of Verna's quiet dignity: "Verna was a private person. When you had to tell her what to do she'd say 'I know,' and then she wouldn't. That was how she wanted to be, and you had to respect it."

She didn't go to the women's day centers; she hung out at the Bon Marche. "When she stayed at the Federal Building Shelter, the least glamorous of our shelters, she was still all dressed up like Isadora Duncan," said

zimya toms-trend of the Women's Referral Center. "She was elegant in what clothes she wore," said a clothing room volunteer. "Even when she was wearing jeans, from the back she looked like a 17 year old."

"It shocked and bothered me that she's dead. She's the tenth African-American woman I know to have died of heart disease, to have succumbed to the streets," said Noel House staffperson Ebony Colbert.

Within that shock of loss were conflicting emotions about the limitation of knowing others, despite an intense longing to know, to share, to reveal.

Despite the obstacles and duress for any woman living at a communal nighttime shelter, Verna was clothed with strength and dignity.

Lupe, whose bed was not too far from Verna's, is one of the most persistent questioners of other women in her shelter. Because of her aggressive questioning and persistence, many women open up to Lupe.

Lupe visited Verna in the hospital. "We held hands. We prayed. She said, 'Lupe, I am tired already.' She started to cry." It's the only time any of us know Verna broke down. I remember when I worked at Noel House Verna got visibly angry just a couple of times; I can't remember why. Despite the obstacles and duress for any woman living at a communal nighttime shelter, Verna was clothed with strength and dignity.

And perhaps that is the only thing that matters, as we build our pictures of a woman's life without an actual photograph in front of us. Poet Constantine Cavafy goes on to say in "Hidden Things":

"From my most unnoticed actions... / from these alone will I be understood... / Later, in a more perfect society / someone else made just like me / is certain to appear and act freely."

In her closing memorial service comments, Reverend Pat Simpson said, "And so we give our sister back to God, with that smile, and that style." From these alone will we remember Verna Maxwell. For now it is enough to carry her dignity in our memories, until we see her beatific smile again. ■

CLASSICS CORNER



by Perfess'r Harris

Given the recent rash of electoral politics, we at Classics Corner have been preoccupied with Euripides. He was perhaps the best known and most controversial poet of his time, but over a career of more than 50 years won first place for his plays on just four occasions. This is because, as the saying goes, no one loves a prophet in his own time. Sophocles once said that while he portrayed people as he would like them, Euripides wrote them the way they really are. This is generally unwise. The comforting lie has more immediate appeal.

Would-be Mayor Mark Sidran has made a career, for example, of blaming poor people for being poor. The system is not broken, he says. Poor people are. Those who point to high rents, low wages, and a decimated safety

In Homer, Odysseus is pretty much everyone's favorite. He lies his way through the entire *Odyssey*, kills the bad guys, and it's all good. To Euripides, however, Odysseus was just another tinhorn demagogue.

net are just making excuses for a historically unprecedented absence of personal initiative. The real problem is that poor people love to piss and shit in public, and need to be driven out of town before they bury us all in a rising fecal wave of sheer sloth. More homeless shelters will just encourage them to continue on with their verminous lives.

Sidran reminds us, of course, of Euripides' Odysseus. In

Homer, as we all know, Odysseus is pretty much everyone's favorite. He lies his way through the entire *Odyssey*, kills the bad guys, and it's all good. His slippery but charming nature is evidence of superior intelligence, and the Greeks loved that sort of thing. Euripides, however, saw things differently. To Euripides, Odysseus was just another tinhorn demagogue.

In *Hecuba*, Euripides insults the politicians of fifth century Athens by reflecting them in the character of Odysseus. He comes on the scene to inform the Queen of Troy that the assembly has just voted to sacrifice her daughter Polyxena to the ghost of Achilles. "O gods," says Hecuba, "Spare me the sight of this thankless breed, these politicians who cringe for favors from a screaming mob."

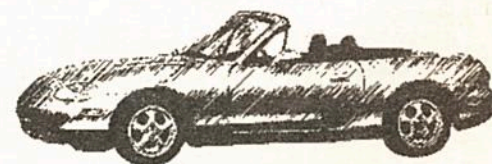
Euripides' Odysseus has no moral center, but beginning from political necessity makes the case for whatever is most expedient. He hides behind the will of the people, and shapes their opinions to bolster his own power. He has a lawyerly answer for everything and believes that, in the end, it is not right but power that carries the day.

Hecuba pleads for her innocent daughter's life, but her arguments fall on deaf ears. "Allow me to observe," Odysseus replies to Hecuba's moral reasoning, "that in your hysterics your twist the facts." This is the cool, facile voice of rationality in the service of power. It makes us want to rip his sleazy little lungs out.

But we do not. We just vote for the other guy instead. Now that several millennia of self-serving politicians have come and gone, we can sometimes see them coming. ■

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Thanksgiving Notables

Thursday, 11/15

University of Washington Jackson School of International Studies session on "Why Some Wars Become Genocidal and Others Don't" by Daniel Chirot, Director, International Studies Center and Professor of International Studies, 7:30 p.m. at University of Washington, Kane Hall Room 130, free and open to the public; info 206-543-4372, advance tickets must be obtained at UW Bookstore outlets, available one week in advance.

Women in Black are sponsoring a **Peace Vigil** and leafletting to stop the war on Afghanistan, this and subsequent Thursdays, 5 - 6 p.m., near Westlake Park arch at 4th and Pine.

HSD and the Family Empowerment Center present "Breaking the Silence: Connecting the mind, body and spirit, a holistic approach to ending **Black On Black Violence**. 6:30 - 9 p.m., at Langston Hughes Cultural Center, 104 17th Ave; info Rev. Walden 206-323-5697.

Eight distinguished **UW African American Faculty** discuss their paths toward university level teaching, sponsored by The Central District Forum for Arts and

Ideas. 6:30 - 8 p.m. at First AME Church, free and open to the public; info Millie Russell 206-685-0774 or <http://www.cdforum.org/home.html>.

"Listen up! **Young Women Speak Their Minds**" High school and college activists will present their views at a public meeting of Radical Women. 7:30 p.m. Dinner, with vegetarian option, available at 6:30 p.m. for a \$6.50 donation. New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave S., Seattle; info 206-722-6057. Wheelchair accessible.

Friday, 11/16

HRConnections **Diversity and Technical Career Fair**, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., at Seattle Central Community College; info hrcinfo@aol.com.

The Downtown Employment and Learning Center is having an **Open House**. 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., at downtown Seattle's Melbourne Tower, 1511 3rd Ave., Suite 200, lunch snacks and refreshments provided; info 206-447-1679.

"**Racism in the Name of War**," public forum with panelists from local and international organizations. 7 p.m., at Garfield Community Center, 23rd and Cherry; info 206-292-8809.

Saturday, 11/17

Learn about **Laughter Clubs**, the benefits of laughter and the history of the laughter club movement, from certified laughter leaders Karen Schneider-Chen and Stephanie Roche. 2 - 3 p.m., at the Fremont Library.

"Taking Action for Peace" - A chance to listen to inspirational stories of **People Involved in Past Peace Movements** and then to discuss with students about how we can work together for peace. 2 p.m. at University of Washington, details TBA.

Citizens Concerned for the People of Iraq meeting, working to end the **U.S./U.N. Sanctions Against Iraq**. 3 p.m., this and subsequent 3rd Saturdays, at University Baptist Church, 4554 12th Ave. NE.; info Fellowship of Reconciliation 206-789-5565.

Seattle Peace Chorus Concert "Voices of Reason" a concert of Christian, Jewish, and Islamic music based on the three **Religions' Common Teachings of Peace**. Peace Chorus will be joined by the Jewish group Shalom Ensemble and Islamic chants performed by members of the Muslim community. 7:30 p.m., at the Seattle Unity Church, 8th Ave. E. at John. Tickets \$12 advance, \$15 at door, \$10 students with ID, seniors, and disabled. Ticket orders 206-264-5532; info John Jerin 206-547-5297.

American Civil Liberties Union of Washington (ACLU) **2001 Bill of Rights Celebration Dinner**, at the West Coast Grand Hotel; \$50 tickets and info 206-624-2184.

Sunday 11/18

Interfaith Vigil for Peace in the Middle East, pray for the end of the violence; 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. in McCaw Chapel, 8 p.m. - 8 a.m. in Thomsen Chapel, this and subsequent 18th of each month at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E.; info 206-270-9170 or 425-641-9247.

Annual **NEHAP dinner**, raising money for medical assistance and cultural exchanges between Nicaragua and the U.S., 6 p.m., at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave E.; info Peter Strimer 206-323-0300 x 217.

Tuesday 11/20

Third in a **Class on Islam** in six parts by Richard Ater, this session "Common Is-

lamic Beliefs", 7 p.m., at Interfaith Community Church, 1763 NW 62nd St. in Ballard. Admission free, donations welcome; info Karen Lindquist 206-297-8651 or Rich Ater rvwa@seane.com.

The Arab Student Union at the University of Washington and the World Affairs Council present **Islam in War and Peace**, 7 p.m., at University of Washington, Kane Bldg Room 130; info islamawareness@hotmail.com.

Thursday 11/22

Dinner will be served on Thanksgiving Day from 12 - 3 p.m. at the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, 4142 Brooklyn Ave NE, everyone is invited. Please join us for some home-cooked turkey and pie! Call the church for further information at 206-547-4354.

Native American Thanksgiving Feast, all are invited to enjoy a roast turkey dinner with videos, games, and conversation afterward. Doors open at 2 p.m., buffet served from 3 - 5 p.m., at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S. Dinner donation is \$9.50, children under 12 are \$5.50 (sliding scale for low income or work exchanges available). Info, 206-722-2453. Wheelchair accessible.

Sunday 11/25

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.

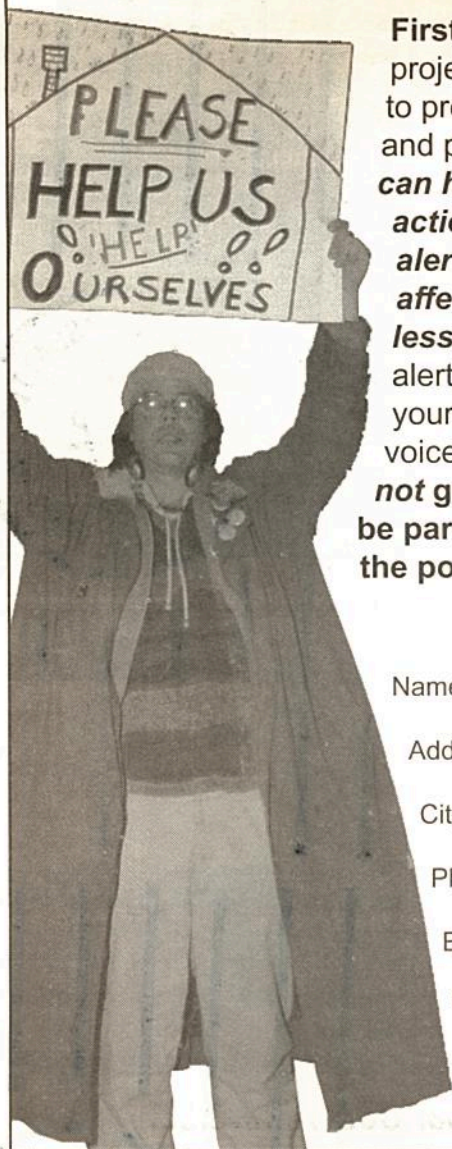
Tuesday 11/27

Fourth in a **Class on Islam** in six parts by Richard Ater, this session on "The Qur'an, Hadith and Traditions," 7 p.m. at Interfaith Community Church, 1763 NW 62 St in Ballard. Admission free, donations welcome; info Karen Lindquist 206-297-8651.

Ongoing Mondays

A Radical Women study group will explore the **multi-faceted realities of women in the Arab world** as presented in the writings of Egyptian feminist Nawal El Saadawi. 7 - 8:30 p.m. through Dec. 17, University of Washington, Ethnic Cultural Center, 3931 Brooklyn Ave. NE. Free. Everyone welcome. Information, 206-722-6057. ■

Do Something!



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Oppose Big Tax Cuts for Big Fortune 500 Companies

Issue: Tax cut bills passed by the House and currently being considered by the Senate give away billions of dollars to top U.S. companies while doing nothing to stimulate the economy or help the working and lower classes.

Background: Senate Republicans have proposed even larger upper-income and corporate tax cuts than the bloated "stimulus" measure passed by the House in October. The Senate Committee on Finance marked up their proposed bill, the "Economic Recovery and Assistance for American Workers Act of 2001," last week, and the full Senate could approve the final bill soon. Over the first three years, the Senate GOP measure would cut taxes by \$220 billion, compared to \$212 billion under the House bill. A bipartisan agreement between the President and congressional leaders to limit additional stimulus measures to \$50-75 billion has apparently been scrapped.

Under both bills, the "alternative minimum tax" would be repealed and corporations would be entitled to an immediate rebate of any alternative minimum tax they paid since the tax was established in 1986. Some \$7.4 billion of these corporate rebate checks would be made out to just 16 tax-avoiding Fortune 500 companies—each of which would get more than \$100 million in rebates.

Topping the list is IBM, slated to get a \$1.4 billion rebate check. Ford is next at \$1 billion, followed by General Motors at \$833 million, General Electric at \$671 million, TXU (Texas Utilities) at \$608 million, Daimler Chrysler at \$600 million, and Chevron Texaco at \$572 million. (The top 16 companies reported a total of more than \$42 billion in pretax U.S. profits last year.)

Also in the House Bill:

- Forty-one percent of the tax cuts would go to the richest 1 percent of all taxpayers, whose average tax cut in 2002 would be almost \$27,000 each.
- Almost three-quarters of the 2002 tax cuts would go to the best-off tenth of all taxpayers.
- Only 7 percent of the tax cuts would go the bottom three-fifths of taxpayers.

The proposed Senate Bill looks even worse. More than half of the tax cuts proposed by Senate Republicans for next year would go to the best-off 1 percent of all taxpayers, whose average tax cut in 2002 would be \$33,843 each. In contrast, only 6 percent of the proposed 2002 tax cuts would go to the bottom three-fifths of taxpayers, whose average 2002 tax cut would be \$67.

One of the few good things to come out of both of these bills is an extension of the personal tax rebates that were sent out earlier this year to many taxpayers who were previously ineligible. Yet this is not nearly enough to help those who truly need "stimulus" and aid after September 11, 37 million low-income workers and those on the brink of poverty who would receive just over half of the tax cuts big business is getting. Now, more than ever, we need the federal government to implement policies that move families out of poverty, not just off of welfare.

Action: While the House has already passed its bill, it's not too late to voice your opinion before the Senate commits billions in tax gifts to powerful business lobbyists. Write your senators and tell them to come up with a more sensible plan that truly helps those who have been affected by the current economic downturn.

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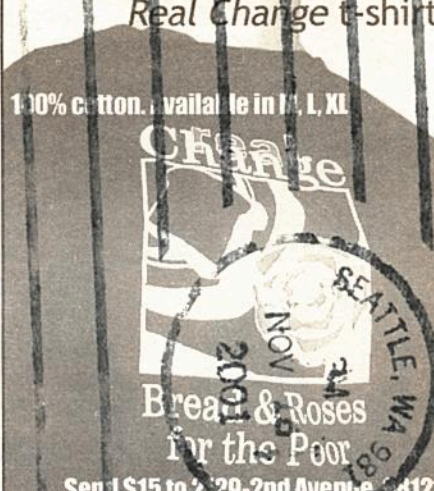


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KAREN ZAMMIT AND HER 9-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, ATHENA, DANCE TO THE STEREO IN THEIR KENT LIVING ROOM. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

A Piece of the Po

Campaign launched to redire

By Brenda Anibarro

“It seems to me that I pay taxes where it’s not needed, and I would like to see that money go to where it is needed.”

That was Karen Zammit speaking at a meeting of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. She was one of the many people who gathered to discuss how to use the budget surplus.

A coalition of community, labor and business organizations has begun the Port Profits Campaign which aims to have the Port of Seattle use a portion of the county to ease this year’s budget deficit. The campaign also demands an end to the renter’s work on the waterfront.

“We came here today... not only to demand that some of these tax dollars back into social services, but also to give our property to these private companies,” says Scott, Board Chair of the Northwest Labor Law Office and a retired IBEW Local 1577 member.

As a public entity, the Port levies taxes on property owners which, according to the Port’s 2001 budget, is projected to be extracted at the

Taking from her experiences firsthand, Zammit participated in the Homeless Child Care Needs Assessment report released in February 2000 by the KCCCP. Among the recommendations in this report were coordinating information resources, providing greater accessibility to child care services, and helping families before they have a financial crisis to stop the cycle of homelessness.

At the time, Sims said of the report: “Access to quality child care and other sup-

port services are crucial to the stabilization of families.” In fact, Sims has a long record of supporting child care issues, a fact that leaves many wondering how the county could find itself in this situation.

“If the child care subsidy program goes away, you’re going to have women who can’t afford to work,” says Maria Pederson, a 36-year-old single mother of two who receives KCCCP funds. As a staffing supervisor with Family Resource Home Care, Pederson brings in \$38,000 a year. How-

ever, in the spring of 1999, Pederson worked for Evergreen Hospital making about \$32,000 a year. With her take-home pay around \$1,850, and child care costs at \$1,100 a month for her two children, the issue quickly became a crisis.

“I work full-time. I have a good job. I make decent money. Yet here I was in a situation I never expected,” says Pederson. “It was a choice between paying my rent and paying my daycare.”

“It was terrifying. It was hard to hold it all together for my kids. I was exhausted emotionally, physically.”

Beyond the direct impact to families with subsidies, anyone with children in county-contracted child care centers will feel the effects. Centers will likely have to pick up training costs themselves for mandated programs like first aid and CPR. With fees ranging between \$45 and \$65 per staff member for a class, each child care center will have to add a few thousand dollars to its bottom-line costs. And since child care providers are already paid fairly substandard wages, there is little room for these centers to compensate.

Cut today, pay tomorrow

One solution currently being proposed to alleviate this impending crisis is for the Port of Seattle to give back \$35.6 million in funds it receives from the county to be used to offset cuts in human services. Campaign sponsors point to \$100 million in profit the Port showed in 2000, and a projected profit of \$120 million this year, arguing that the Port can afford to return county funds during this time of need.

Whatever the outcome of this debate, it is unlikely to have an immediate impact. As the county moves to cut child care funds, the government has already sent letters to the 29 suburban incorporated cities and Seattle requesting that they pick up the funding. One option currently under discussion by the King County Council is to provide up to \$400,000 in match-

ing funds to be used by cities that agree to take up the cost of the KCCCP subsidies in their jurisdiction. However, at this point no city has agreed to either proposal.

The end result, many fear, will be an increase in homelessness among families that leads to rising criminal justice costs in the future. Indeed, the law enforcement and safety category in the budget to experience significant growth — about a 20 percent increase to \$336 million in 2002.

For Harris, the price of eliminating child care subsidies now will be high criminal justice costs in the future, as children raised in families without an adequate child care solution become more likely to experience developmental problems that can in turn lead to run-ins with the law. Another factor weighing on Harris is the reduced political influence of child care on the state level. Harris fears that King County leaves child care behind, and the issue will lose relevance with the state government, since the county comes to the table with a much stronger voice than do the local city governments.

But for Ellen Burns, policy debates take a backseat to her much more present reality of supporting four children under 10 years old with a minimum-wage job. Burns, who is married and works as a cook in the Family Circle Learning Center, already struggles to pay for child care for her kids even with the discount she receives from working at the child care center. Without help from the county, she’s not sure where the extra money will come from.

Pederson, who is facing the same dilemma, feels the familiar anger and frustration that she hoped was left behind, and wonders why such a relatively small amount of money can’t be found somewhere else with a critical issue.

“This is real. These aren’t faceless people,” says Pederson. “There is money there. It’s just a question of where it’s going and what our priorities are.” ■

\$400,000 is matched by the various incorporated areas, it will still only come to \$800,000, which is still far short of the \$1.2 million being cut from the KCCCP.

For Derek Todd, assistant to the chief administrative officer for Renton, the issue is not just budgetary. It’s a matter of principle.

“[Child care] needs to be a regional service,” says Todd. “This program was created by the county. All of these citizens pay just as many taxes as those within unincorporated areas.”

“We have no way of picking up an ongoing expense of \$250,000 for a city the size of Renton,” he says.

In a letter responding to Sims’ request, Renton Mayor Jesse Tanner pointed out that city residents are already paying for the county to provide child care through their property and sales taxes, and it is unfair to expect them to pay once again for a city child care service. Meanwhile, he also took issue with the county’s decision to cut subsidies only in incorporated areas, pointing out that much of the revenue the county receives is coming from within the cities, but is used to support unincorporated areas of the county.

As other regional city governments spar with the county, the city of Seattle for one is not waiting around for county support.

“Unfortunately, with the [city’s] budget situation, we’re not in a position to solve the county’s problems for them,” says Tom Byers, deputy mayor of Seattle. “Seattle does way more for child care than the county ever did.”

While Seattle also faces a \$24 million budget shortfall, Byers insisted the city was only making administrative cuts to human services, maintaining programs such as Project Lift Off, a public/private partnership providing early childhood education and out-of-school support.

As the county and city governments deal with their budget shortages, the debate is anything but academic for Wendy Zachary. A 33-year-old secretary with two children who currently receives subsidies from KCCCP, Zachary lives in an unincorporated area of the county but is worried about the program’s future. Her ex-husband was just laid off from United Airlines, and he can no longer provide child support. County subsidies to help with the \$1,200 a month child care bill is crucial for Zachary to survive on her \$2,250 monthly salary.

“Safe and affordable child care is not a luxury,” says Zachary. “It’s a necessity.” ■