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Change

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Spoon-taneity

The Spoonman Speaketh

Inside: The Market's Music • Sidewalk Jedi • Picturing Tent City • Behind Bread and Roses

PHOTO OF ARTIS THE SPOONMAN, BY ADAM WEINTRAUB.

Interview by Ken Strong

He's a familiar figure to many in Seattle, especially those who frequent the Pike Place Market: the muscular, middle-aged man with the mohawk, standing on the sidewalk, usually accompanying singer/songwriter/guitarist Jim Page, with his huge array of spoons of different shapes and sizes and materials spread out on a blanket, furiously playing against his face and body, eyes closed, lost in the performance. Pete Seeger called him "the best damn spoon player in the universe." Frank Zappa told him, "You haven't got a commercial bone in your body." The Grateful Dead's Mickey Hart said, "Finally, some real music." He's played on sidewalks and in bars all around the world, played with Zappa, Aerosmith, and k.d. lang; appeared on Broadway with Itzhak Perlman; on David Letterman's show; and in a Grammy Award-winning song and MTV video by Soundgarden. Artis the Spoonman has taken his silverware skills far.

Real Change: When did you first come to Seattle?

Artis the Spoonman: I've been in Seattle since 1949. I was born in Kodiak, but I only lived there the first five months of my life. My mother left my father there and brought me down here. I never met him—as a matter of fact, a friend of mine just found him this year. I haven't verified or validated it. He died in 1994. This other guy became my stepfather. In a few months, she was pregnant by him, with my sister. Then he legally adopted me and changed my name to Artis.

I legally changed my name to just "Artis" when I was 40 years old. I just have the one name; it wasn't my thing to carry anybody else's bloodline, it's just not my bag, and I don't really know

my own bloodline, so I didn't feel attached. And Artis is my name, so I use it. The only time having the single name is a problem is when some computer geek can't figure out how to put it in his damn computer. I'm actually responsible for the Washington Department of Licensing in Olympia changing their databases to accommodate single names, because of me. This happened about five or six years ago.

RC: When did you first develop your interest in silverware?

Artis: I was 10 years old when my mother bought me a pair of musical spoons — she bought my sister a pair as well. I broke mine. They were made here in Seattle — the man who built the

Fiddler's Inn, in Wedgwood [north Seattle] had a little cottage industry making musical spoons. This was back in the 1950s; Lawrence Welk funded it. They were two spoons with a plastic handle holding them together.

After I broke mine, I took my sister's from her and never gave them back. I wasn't really into it at that time; I played along with my mother's swing tunes. I was into Elvis at the time, but whenever a swing tune, or a Latin tune, came along where the spoons would fit, I played along with it.

But it wasn't until one day in the Navy — I was the youngest guy in my squadron, and I wasn't very well liked, I was a thief and a loudmouth. One day when I was about 19, it was late, I saw these two guys standing by a table with a couple of spoons on the table, and one of them was playing, so I picked up the spoons and started playing, and put them back down and

walked away. And as I walked away, I could feel through the back of my head that these guys were looking at me with respect now.

"I was 10 years old when my mother bought me a pair of musical spoons — she bought my sister a pair as well. I broke mine. They were made here in Seattle — the man who built the Fiddler's Inn, in Wedgwood [north Seattle] had a little cottage industry making musical spoons. This was back in the 1950s; Lawrence Welk funded it."

— Artis the Spoonman

I got out of the Navy, and I went into the Post Office, and I quit the Post Office, my daughter was born, and my wife and I were divorced, it was 1972, and I went to live in Fremont. I lived upstairs in that historic building they moved [recently home to the Red Door Alehouse], above three bars. It was \$36 a month, and I was drawing \$72 a week unemployment, so I really had it fat. I went to work at Tommy's Café downstairs—I saw Tommy this year for the first time in 25 years — I worked for free, he'd feed me and give me money if I needed it. I started playing the teaspoons along with the jukebox, when there wasn't anything else going on. And people liked it, no one ever told

Continued On Page 14



Classic thanks

Dear *Real Change*,

I was impressed by Perffess'r Harris's Classics Corner in the Dec. 27 issue. It feels good to hear someone say what I am feeling. Please talk more about this in future issues. I have been trying to tell anyone who would listen that our policies in the Middle East have for decades reflected only our greed and our willingness to turn a blind eye to human suffering in the interest of an economic excess we don't even need. For my trouble I have been accused of anti-Semitism and subversion (if you're not with us you're with them).

I'm not an expert on economics but I know that the country from which the raw material comes (mahogany, sugar

tobacco, oil) is the least industrialized and least able to defend itself and is paid the least for the product which is then taken to other countries where it is refined, and that country gets more money than the last one and is more industrialized. It is no accident that the use of all these products has its roots in slavery.

Try walking around in this society knowing that Hussein had more right to the land he claimed in the Gulf War than we have to Texas; that fanatics are created by unfair economic pressure (see Hitler); that the twin towers themselves were built on the backs of American poor and homeless people, and the blood of the people who died in them is on the hands of a superpower gone mad with greed which pretends human beings don't reach a point where they would rather die than be stepped on any more. It's lonely.

Again, my sincere thanks for that column. Please keep on; someone really is listening.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Romeo
Sacramento, CA

Light socket justice

Dear *Real Change*,

I must say that Dr. Wes Browning's editorial on military justice (RC Dec. 13) was one of the sexiest renderings

on the subject of due process I am aware of. His Heraclitian experiment with "the force," by sticking his finger in the light socket at 12 years old, suggests a star-crossed Dharma verging on fairy dust. Of course any such experiment with Seattle Light, as street folks are aware of, would result in the same through-the-looking-glass result — not to mention the straw of censure from the Dionysian privatization shamans waiting for the return of their golden frisbee.

We mere mortals — each of us — should consider both the roots of injustice, the conceit of greed, and, besides some demonstrations of dissatisfaction (QED), seek the true meaning of action. This is the real meaning of due process. Seeing that justice is accomplished — not settling for other priorities. Locally, this means: (1) expanding and improving shelter places, coordinating counseling and assessment for resources; (2) improving access to employment and training; and (3) finding intentional community!

Sincerely,
Brent Avery
Seattle

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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

Lily Anna North

It wasn't until two days before her first interview with *Real Change* that Lily Anna North realized she would be working with computers as the Computer Lab Coordinator. But this didn't bother the 23-year-old math major from Wenatchee, who still liked the chance to work with the homeless community in Seattle.

"The good thing about my job is that I don't have to know everything about computers," describes Lily, who joined *Real Change's* staff in November. "I just have to find people who do."

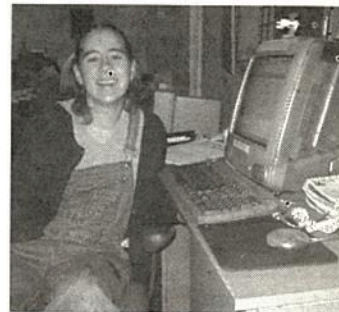
There are other good aspects to the job, such as the chance to help people use the *Real Change* computers to access useful information, and to watch homeless volunteers grow. There's also the chance to make the most of her year-long Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) position, a program run by AmeriCorps linking skilled college graduates with non-profits and social service organizations.

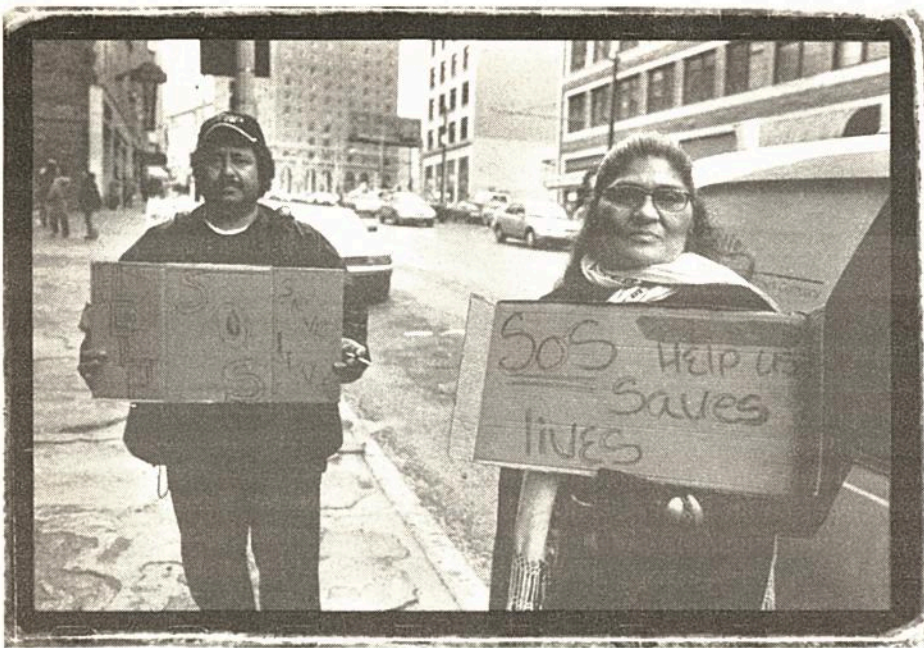
"It's phenomenal, when I stop and think about it, that all of a sudden there are people I work with, who I'm friends with, who are also homeless," says Lily. "I feel like it's a normal relationship. It's a balanced relationship, instead of me just giving something to them."

Lily has already built several easy friendships with *Real Change* vendors, computer users, and writers, and hopes to continue to forge connections even after she leaves *Real Change*.

"I'm interested in helping people," says Lily. "That's what I want to do with my life." ■

— Molly Rhodes





GABRIAL HERNANDEZ, LEFT, AND LUPI VILLALON RALLY FOR HELP TO KEEP STREET OUTREACH SERVICES FROM BEING EVICTED. PHOTO BY MIKE HAMRICK.

Reflex Time

Quicker response needed for Street Outreach Services

By Adam Holdorf

Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels hid from his constituents on January 31. Supporters of Street Outreach Services, the day center which is lobbying for the city's support in a struggle to hold onto its offices at Second Avenue and Pike Street, waited in the 12th-floor foyer of the mayor's office. A bell rang, an elevator door opened. The Mayor stood inside. He froze, a "get me out of here" look on his face. A button was pushed, the door slid shut, and the mayor postponed his return to the office.

Since preparedness seems to be the prerogative of our age, it's disappointing that Nickels couldn't have stepped forward and put on a fresh face for his uninvited guests. If George W. Bush's approval ratings post-September 11 are any indication, we like our leaders to be rough-'n-ready.

Hours after the encounter, the word went out that Street Outreach Services' fate has been deferred by 90 days. Councilmember Nick Licata wrote landlord Richard Nimmer an 11th-hour appeal (which Nickels and Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck co-signed) for more time. The landlord acceded, perhaps because a lousy real estate market is restraining the whole project.

Besides his signature, Nickels has offered little else. Although Paul Schell pledged to find new space for SOS when the city first threatened demolition in fall 2000, the current mayor knows he's under no obligation to keep the former mayor's word. That's fine, but Nickels shouldn't muck things up for the day center's management either — as he did by making unsupported allegations of SOS's mismanagement on a talk radio show in late January. If the mayor can station "rapid-response" tow trucks to unclog the freeways, he could act more decisively when one of the city's largest day centers is threatened.

Since he appears to need some lead time, here's a heads-up for the new administration: The city is running out of money to keep its wintertime Severe Weather shelters open. During 20 sub-freezing nights last month, up to 177 people were given a berth at the South Lake Union Armory and the Pioneer Square women's shelter. As of February 5, the city had enough money to operate these shelters for 24 more nights. There are 54 winter nights remaining before March 31. If another cold stretch comes along, that money could run out, leaving nothing for the nights of October, November, and December. On top of that, the Armory building (the largest Severe Weather shelter the city's ever funded) won't reopen next winter, because of an agreement with a not-in-my-backyard neighborhood group.

Can Nickels find money to keep the city's programs around for the nights they're needed? Will he make sure that adequate space is found next winter? And when the Municipal Building's demolition concludes early next year, the city's 50-person year-round homeless shelter will be without a home. Where will it go?

On the state and federal level, similar crises are brewing, and politicians are distracted. They can't be relied on to do the right thing. Issues of human need remain, just as pressing as the military priorities Bush touted in last month's State of the Union address. Here's the new mayor's chance to show us that he can meet hard issues — and voters with hard questions — face to face. ■

Inside:

Opinion

Reflex Time: Quicker response needed for SOS
By Adam Holdorf 3

Regular Features

RC Profile: Lily North
by Molly Rhodes 2
News You Can Use: New rules to get a leg up
by Adam Holdorf, Angelique Ledesma, Jeanne Ryan 4
Adventures in Poetry: Pharmaceutical cornucopia
with © Dr. Wes Browning 6
Notes from the Kitchen: Bread and roses
By Liz Smith 16
Street Watch
by Emma Quinn 17
Classics Corner: War in human terms
by Timothy Harris 18
Calendar
compiled by Sandra Enger 19

Food Feature

Spoon-taneity: The Spoonman speaketh
by Ken Strong 1
No Sitting Allowed... Except for Jedi Masters
by Dan Amdur 5
Not So Different: Tent City photo exhibit
by Molly Rhodes 8
The Standard Bearer: A new way to measure poverty
by Adam Holdorf 13
Sounds of the Market: Musicians in Pike Place Market
by Aubrey Hiers 14

Poetry

Insights and Surprises from Stan Burriss, Jobi,
Elizabeth Romero, Liz Smith, Barry L. Taylor 6-7

Special Insert

Mockingbird Times 9-12

Activism

Citizens Participation Project 20



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.

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They found the money

A hygiene and day center for homeless people is one step closer to reality, because of leftover funds from last year.

On January 27, the Seattle City Council approved setting aside \$800,000 in unanticipated revenue from the Pike Place Market parking garage to expand or create hygiene services for homeless people in the downtown area. Council President Peter Steinbrueck sponsored the set-aside, and weathered the objections of Mayor Greg Nickels and three other councilmembers.

Council Bill 114080 set aside the money to a special fund for the construction or expansion of new facilities in the downtown area. The money can't be touched for other purposes — which means it can't help shore up a \$30 city budget million shortfall that may arrive next year, because of the recession.

"I think there should have been a full and open discussion on it," says Councilmember Richard McIver, who echoed the mayor's sentiments when he voted against setting the money aside. He would have preferred to have one of the council's subcommittees debate the issue.

There has already been a healthy debate about where excess money should go — during last fall's budget process, when the Council faced a \$24 million shortfall, it passed a Statement of Legislative Intent asking the city to find extra money for exactly this purpose. That was an outgrowth of Resolution 30418, a promise to make more hygiene services a priority.

"We've been processed to death," says Sharon Lee, director of the Low Income Housing Institute and a member of Citizens for Shelter with Dignity, which won Res. 30418 last fall when it halted the Initiative 71 campaign. If Nickels doesn't think this has gone through the proper channels, "he should look at the record."

"It was embarrassing to see him opposing something this good," she continues. "If anything, the Mayor should be thanking Council for finding the money and saving [another city department] the trouble."

Despite his reservations, the Mayor will not veto the bill, says his spokesperson Marianne Bichsel. It passed Council five to three, with Jim Compton, Jan Drago, Nick Licata, and Heidi Wills siding with Steinbrueck. Judy Nicastro, McIver, and Richard Conlin voted nay. City staff will come up with a plan for the money by May 31. ■

—Adam Holdorf

Shifting priorities

On January 22, the Seattle Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to pass a new Section 8 admissions policy. The new changes will amend old federal preferences put in place in the early 1970s as a response to the rise in homelessness. The federal preferences give first priority consideration for Section 8 vouchers to those who are currently homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless. Secondary preference goes to those who are rent burdened or who are in substandard or overcrowded housing. All other situations are considered after the first two preferences.

In 1996, the federal government allowed states to change their preferences, and currently only 12 percent of housing authorities in the country still use the federal priorities. The problem that SHA saw with the federal preferences is that many of the individuals who are homeless and have first preference still are not meeting the qualifications, such as good landlord history, of the Section 8 Voucher program. SHA is attempting to find a way to move these individuals up through the system so that they eventually can meet this standard. To do this, they will give first priority not only to those who are homeless, but also to those living in publicly financed housing situations in such places as the Downtown Emergency Service Center and Pilgrim Housing Group.

In a press release from SHA, Kathy Roseth said, "This will increase the number of successful applicants to SHA's programs, while it also increases the capacity of transitional housing providers to serve the homeless."

Individuals in such publicly financed housing are currently not being considered under the federal preferences because they are not currently homeless and not rent burdened, yet they still cannot move up through the system into better housing because they cannot afford regular rent prices. These individuals have landlord history and experience with paying rent, making them highly eligible for the Section 8 Voucher program. Including them in first preference will increase the turnover rate in publicly funded housing, allowing homeless people who do not meet Voucher criteria to get into this housing and build up positive landlord history,



improving their chances of entering the Section 8 program.

SHA's press release also quotes Jennifer Potter, SHA Board Commission Chair, as saying, "Clearly what the new preferences will do is to free up the SRO [single resident occupancy] units for people who really need them. It will also make it possible for formerly homeless people to get the landlord references and track record they need in order to qualify for public housing. It gives SHA a chance to work more directly with our colleagues in the non-profit housing sector and to take a collegial approach to addressing these wider community issues."

Under the new preferences, people in publicly financed housing will be given the same preference as homeless, but not more preference, and secondary preference will remain with the rent burdened and those living in substandard or overcrowded housing.

Potter's enthusiasm for the changes seems to be shared with the non-profits of the city, and their tenants. Linda Hollett of Plymouth Housing Group says that the new policy "definitely is going to be taken in a positive manner. The Housing Group is being given more opportunities to serve people coming off the street from homelessness." She also said that they expect tenants to see the changes as positive as well, as they are always looking to improve their living conditions.

A meeting was held at SHA's Porch Light headquarters on January 7 to take public comment on the proposed change of priorities for admission to the Section 8 Voucher program. This was the second-to-last meeting before the board made its final vote on January 22. The small group of 14 individuals at the meeting, which was chaired by Kathy Rosette, the director of Porch Light, all agreed that the new preferences are a good idea. Though there was some concern over whether the new preferences would change the character of those admitted and cause disturbances in SHA housing, Rosette reassured those at the meeting that this would not be the case, and that the new preferences would increase the number of people who are good tenants, making the housing situation better. ■

—Jeanne Ryan

Putting Americans first

On January 26, Congressman Jim McDermott held a hearing at Carpenters Hall to offer evidence to the public on the importance of bill HR 3341, "The Putting Americans First Act." If this bill is enacted, it will add additional aid to those peoplerelying on unemployment and medical benefits. This bill offers an increase of unemployment benefits as well as a 26-week extension of compensation. HR 3341 would also provide coverage to part-time employees. In health care, HR 3341 would cover 75 percent of the cost of COBRA premiums and an increase in Medicaid. It would also reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) supplemental grants and contingency fund.

At the hearing, Congressman McDermott had a panel of speakers, including Greg Weeks, Vice President of Policy, Labor Market and Economic Analysis for the Washington State Employment Security Department, whose presentation offered little hope for an end to the recession that has hit America after the events of September 11. Dana Wise, from the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union spoke of how drastically their organization has been hit due to the unstable economy.

Mr. Wise brought Lee Lui, a laid-off SkyChef worker, whose story added a personal touch to the reality that unemployment plays in a citizen's daily life. Mr Lui's benefits are coming to an end, and he is unsure how he will pay medical coverage from an outside agency. He is also concerned how he will survive with no money coming in each week. Mr Lui, like many citizens, has worked for many years and, due to a lack of work available in his trade, is unable to find a job.

These are the people who would be able to sleep a little better if HR 3341 is passed. Senator Maria Cantwell, who

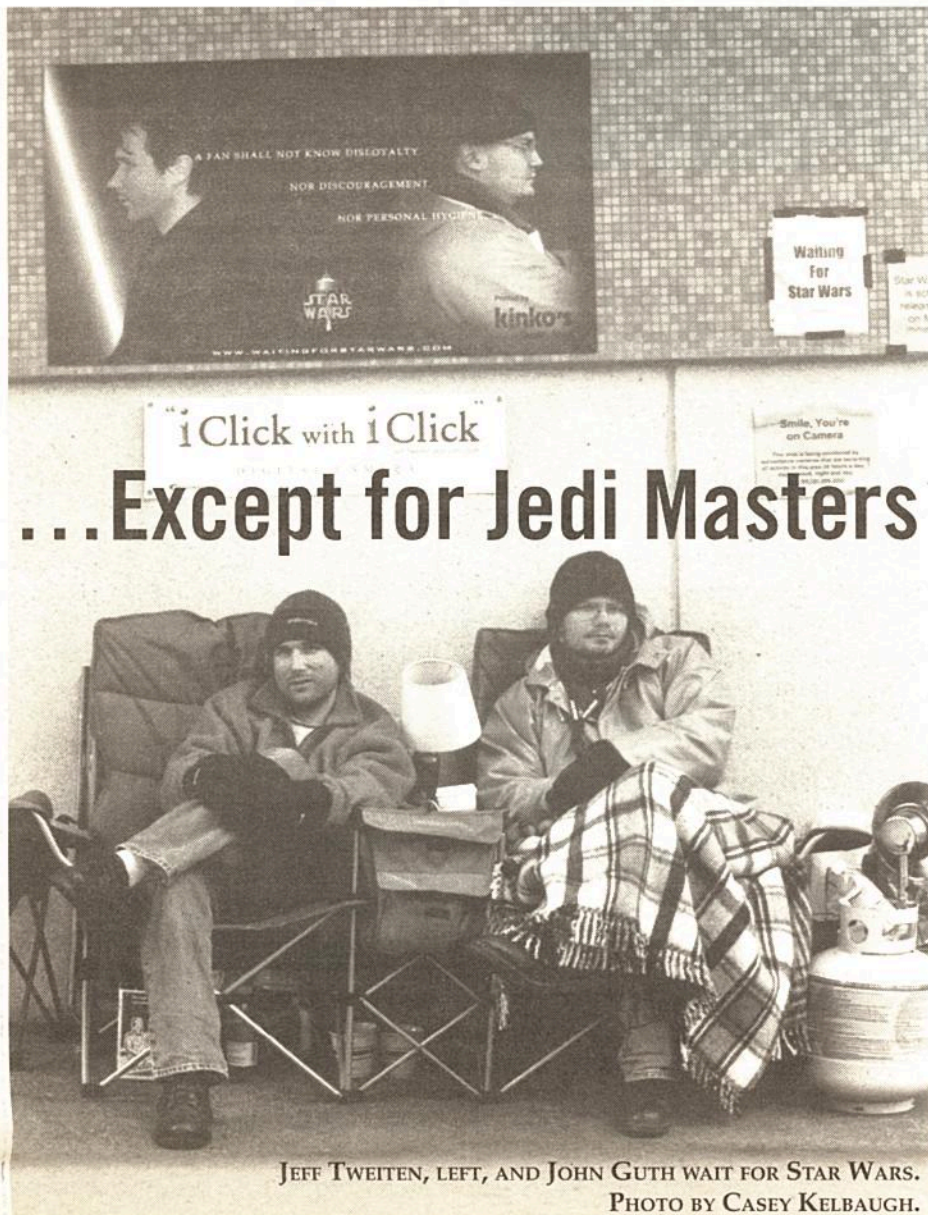
was unable to attend, had her assistant read a letter stating her support to the congressman and applauding him on his stance on HR 3341.

The two-hour hearing offered a variety of reasons the community should support Congressman McDermott and offered Washingtonians a little light at the end of a very dark tunnel. ■

—Angelique Ledesma

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

No Sitting Allowed



JEFF TWEITEN, LEFT, AND JOHN GUTH WAIT FOR STAR WARS. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

By Dan Amdur

It's a typical cold and wet Seattle afternoon downtown. The kind of weekday where shoppers and office workers quietly mutter a sigh of relief that they're not one of the local indigents shuffling around the busy streets looking for a bit of warmth. But on their daily crusade for a spot of shelter, Seattle's homeless know that if they linger for long in any sidewalk nook, they risk a warning from police officers enforcing the city's "no-sitting" law — Ordinance S.M.C.15.48.040.

Unless, of course, they happen to be

young Jedi, training to save the galaxy from the might of the dark side.

Enacted in the mid-'90s, Seattle's no-sitting ordinance divides people on the street into two classes — those who make money and those who don't.

Which brings us to Star Wars. Since Jan. 1, two determined if slightly fanatical Star Wars entrepreneurs have been camped out in front of the Cinerama movie theater on Fourth Avenue and Lenora Street. Their goal: set the record for the longest-ever wait in line for movie tickets, and in the process be the first people to see a teen Darth Vader-

to-be wield his light saber in *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones* when it opens on May 16.

Since they began their quest, 32-year-old John Guth and 24-year-old Jeff Tweiten have appeared in hundreds of news stories in the U.S. and abroad, partaken in the generosity and sponsorship of area businesses, and had tacit approval from city police to keep their quest going. Meanwhile, more than 6,000 area homeless face fines if they decide to spend too long huddled under the eaves of the same wide-screen theater.

"It's selective enforcement," says Reverend Rick Reynolds, executive director for Operation Nightwatch, which provides shelter, food, and other services for the area's homeless. "The city needs to tell us where to send the 2,000 men and women on the streets tonight."

"[The ordinance is] a useful tool in terms of making the city livable," insists Deanna Nollette, spokesperson for the Seattle Police Department.

Somewhere between those two perspectives are our Star Wars campers, and they're far from alone. Each year, thousands of area residents camp on the streets for a few nights at a time waiting for tickets to sporting events and concerts.

The no-sitting ordinance itself paints a rather murky moral picture. According to the ordinance, "No person shall sit or lie down upon a public sidewalk, or upon a blanket, chair, stool, or

any other object placed upon a public sidewalk, during the hours between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m." Yet sleeping on public sidewalks after 9 p.m. is allowed, as long as people are not blocking commercial traffic or sleeping in doorways. The ordinance also mandates that police officers give violators a warning before issuing a citation; consequently, relatively few citations are issued.

Backed by former City Attorney Mark Sidran, the ordinance faced a series of court challenges until it was finally upheld in 1996 by Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in a two-to-one decision. In dissenting from the majority ruling, Circuit Judge Harry Pregerson recognized that the ordinance was narrowly targeted towards a group that many consider "undesirable," and seemed to be an attempt by the city of Seattle to unfairly restrict the rights of this group without exploring other viable alternatives.

While ostensibly designed to make the city's streets safer for pedestrians, in reality the measure was adopted at the urging of many area businessmen such as the Pioneer Square Business Association. Consequently, police officers rarely actively enforce the ordinance unless they receive a complaint from a merchant.

But this very aspect of selective enforcement encourages us to place dif-

Continued on Page 18



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poetry

Living Alone

Me? Feel lonely???? Neah! It's great!
I can burp and flatulate
Without caring either way
Of what somebody else might say.

If my fancy should be stirred,
Then my laughter isn't heard
When I roar and hold my side.
(Though all my spiders run and hide!)

When, in some dark, secret spot
I've a twinge, then I need not
Tough it out or fear the glare
Of folks who see me scratching there.

Should you come without invite,
Just to cheer my "lonely" night,
No sad hermit would you see —
Just belching, laughing, scratching — me!

—JOBI

blanket

Two bells! these,
never remember the voices
within...
aren't
asked,
to —
continue.
Call it your own!
But,
keep your distance
totally.
And, at home.

— STAN BURRISS



Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning

Today's new word is carminative. Try to figure out what it means from the context!

One loose end is tied. A while back I ranted righteously and justifiably about the incessant cowboy music at 3rd and Pine, courtesy of that intersection's McDonald's. I am happy to note that said McDonald's is now gone, so we may all be spared the unwelcome musical invasion in our lives when we walk the sidewalks there, at least until a new obnoxious tenant moves into that space. I am unhappy to note that this outcome has been achieved by normal business development, when it should have come about by this city's always unfairly applied Noise Abatement Ordinance.

Here's a rule of thumb for you guys in Tom Carr's office:

If a business PURPOSELY pipes music OUTSIDE of its own establishment, that is an INTENTIONAL disturbance of the peace. That is grounds to pursue legal remedy. The public doesn't want to be unwillingly subjected to Hank Williams, no matter how good his stuff is. We want to be willingly subjected to it, in the privacy of our own homes. So abate that.

One loose end unravels. As of this writing, Street Outreach Services (SOS), in the same neighborhood, has just 90 days before its eviction. SOS is part of the solution. Their loss can only make the Pike/Pine area worse. As matters become worse, they will likely lead to some business down there subjecting passers-by to bubblegum music. The city will do nothing. I will have to be committed.

For those of you too young to remember bubblegum music, imagine Britney Spears with no midriff showing, hair in pigtails, singing in such a way that you are really genuinely convinced that she's a virgin after all.

Speaking of drugs, I am now one of the biggest drug users in the country. In the world. I am taking drugs for everything. The following is in the direction of a full disclosure. The cover-up will consist of the omissions.

To begin with, there's the Beano. Without the Beano, I would be a social outcast. Until the discovery of this miracle drug, I had to rely on that old-

fashioned carminative, cumin, or cummin, as it is sometimes spelled. A man can only take so much cummin.

My favorite drug is something called Olanzapine. Sometimes people say to me, "Wes, why are you such an atypical non-psychotic?" I'm not your everyday non-psychotic because I take an atypical anti-psychotic, Olanzapine. It makes all of the rest of you bearable so that I don't mind spending the rest of my life with you and even feel like communicating off and on. Otherwise I would go back to my corner and talk to my extensive collection of plastic figurines and damaged wind-up toys. I love my damaged wind-up toys.

Another fun drug is Wellbutrin, which as the name suggests makes you one happy butrin. I'm not actually taking any Wellbutrin right now because I'm going through a little phase in which it has been decided that I'm happy enough for now, thank you very much. Whee!

Then there are all those meds that counter the old paunchy guy syndrome. It is simply unbelievable how much of a pharmacy it takes to lower an old guy's cholesterol and drop his blood pressure. I'm personally taking a statin, a diuretic, and a beta-blocker everyday. I'm told they are working.

Before I forget: a carminative is an anti-flatulent. Did you get it right?

So, to sum up, not counting the carminative and the cover-up, that's five high-powered meds I'm taking every day, all legal and all socially sanctioned. And I'm just one crazy old fart out of millions.

Do yourself and America a favor. Proudly invest in our great pharmaceutical corporations. Today, a brave new country, tomorrow, the world. ■

**Imagine Britney Spears
with no midriff
showing, hair in
pigtails, singing in
such a way that you
are really genuinely
convinced that she's a
virgin after all.**



Two Disheveled Souls Get to Meet God Even Though Their Hair Is a Mess

A woman with shabby bundles on her back
Holds her little daughter's hand
As they trudge east up a mountain road, towards Pakistan.
The child looks up, points
At yellow boxes falling from a grey sky.
"Mama, pretty, look!" cries the child.
She thinks they are December birds.

The boxes sing no song.
The boxes tick softly to themselves
Backwards... 10... 9... 8... 7...
Two new souls are flying up to Heaven.

In Heaven there is no pain, no tears.
There is perfect love.
All voices sing in perfect pitch
No matter what the words.

—LIZ SMITH

It Seems to Me

It seems to me
the world bows down with the weight
of lonely people

A divorced man drinks in his room
haunted by memories too painful to admit
of his racing rain-splashed youth

It seems to me men and women are cut off
from the changing light of day
in cubicles,
in the dark hidden halls
of bright chain restaurants

The world bows down
with the weight of lonely people
going back each day
and coming out again

day follows day
with its collection
of bright and dark hours

I know, I know: I can hear you say
lonely people are lucky
to be just lonely
and not crippled
blind
maimed
mad

— ELIZABETH ROMERO

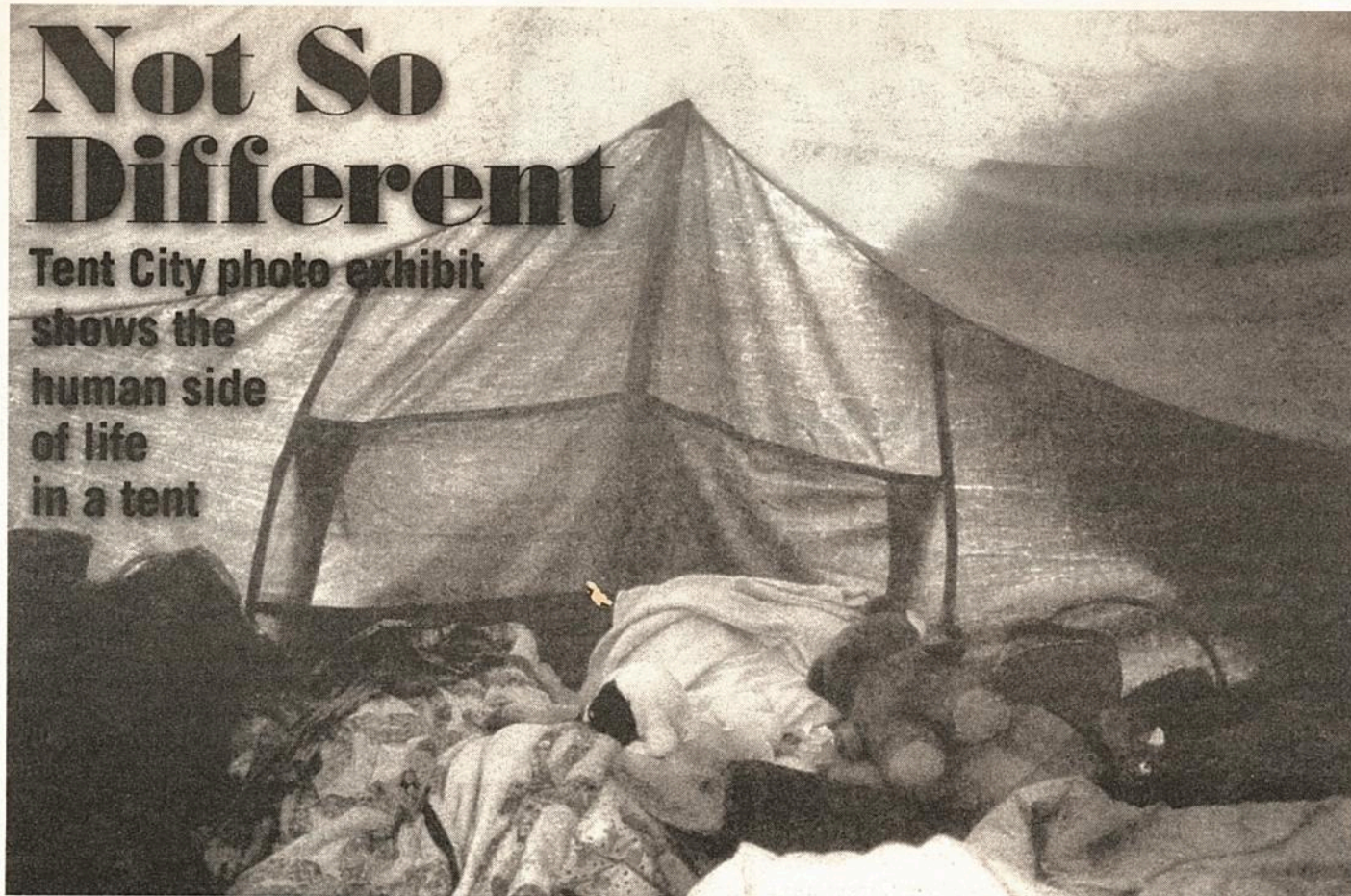
My Crime

I'm a criminal
At least that's how I feel;
Regarded with disdain
Because I'm disheveled
Relegated as being unfit
For all save the most menial
Of tasks; thought of as stupid
Or insane...or worse
Treated with contempt by those
Who haven't had the bad breaks
Which society — and even myself
Has handed me; and, worst of all
Lacking any semblance
Of self-esteem regardless of
How hard I try to
Hold my head up in the midst
Of such denigrating humiliation.
My crime...I am homeless.

— BARRY L. TAYLOR

Not So Different

Tent City photo exhibit shows the human side of life in a tent



ABOVE: A CHILD'S CORNER IN A FAMILY TENT; BELOW LEFT: A MAN CARRIES PALLETS, WHICH ARE USED TO RAISE TENTS OFF THE WET GROUND, INTO A TRUCK FOR ONE OF TENT CITY'S MANY MOVES; BELOW RIGHT: MEN WITH STAKES PREPARING TO SET UP THEIR HOME.

By Molly Rhodes
Photos by Petter Goldstine

Petter Goldstine's interest in homelessness and poverty grew as a natural offshoot to his interest in photography.

A couple of years ago, as part of a documentary project for a photography class at the University of Washington, the 26-year-old began taking photos of a local man who lived in his car. Later, he met *Real Change* cooking columnist Liz Smith on a bus, and agreed to photograph a story she was doing on a street food program outside the Wall downtown ("No Violins Here," Dec. 1, 2000). And when he returned from four months in Rome last winter, he knew he didn't want to return to his usual routine in his last months of school but continue to explore the world around him.

It was in this frame of mind that Goldstine began planning an intensive, long-term photography project on life in TentCity3. He had heard about the homeless encampment ever since he began working for *Real Change*, and approached the organizers in March with

the idea of letting him live with them and document their life. At a community meeting, the idea was approved, and on April 1, 2000, Goldstine moved in.

"Everything about the camp and people there was different from what I thought it would be," says Goldstine, who grew up on the Eastside and remembers being afraid to come into the city as a child. For example, before he moved in, he thought protecting himself and his personal property would be paramount. When he returned from a walk after only a few weeks at the camp to find the camera equipment he had left out missing, he didn't panic but didn't assume he would find it easily. Yet a man approached him and told him he had simply moved his equipment to outside Goldstine's tent.

"Even the fact that he put it outside my tent, not inside, respecting my sense of personal space," describes Goldstine, "even that challenged my idea of what it means to be homeless. People there cared for each other. It

was like any other community."

This idea that homeless people are not that different from other people became the closest thing Goldstine had to a theme when he began putting together his exhibit, "The Tent City Campaign," which opens at the Independent Media Center Gallery on February 9. Of the approximately 1,080 photos Goldstine took over the two and a half months he lived at TentCity3, he chose 60 of his favorites for consideration and then 20 for the three-week show.

"When choosing my favorites, I look for compositions, for colors and all that, but also for the situation," explains Goldstine. "They do things people everywhere do. One of the most beautiful moments of photographing is when they forget I am there. They simply accepted me as part of their world."

This acceptance didn't come immediately. Goldstine preferred to spend the first several days getting to know the people he was living with rather than launching into taking pictures. He had to abide by the rules of the camp

The Tent City Campaign

Photo Exhibit
by Petter Goldstine

The Independent Media
Center Gallery
1415 3rd Avenue

February 9 - 28

Opening reception

February 9,
6 - 10 p.m.

For more info visit

www.seattle.indymedia.org

and become as much of a full-fledged member as anyone else, doing his share of chores and respecting other members of the camp.

He also had to take a lot of ribbing from other TentCity3 dwellers who knew he would spend a couple nights away from the camp every week to attend classes and stay on campus.

Yet Goldstine didn't apologize for who he was, and was compelled by the other residents who treated him the same.

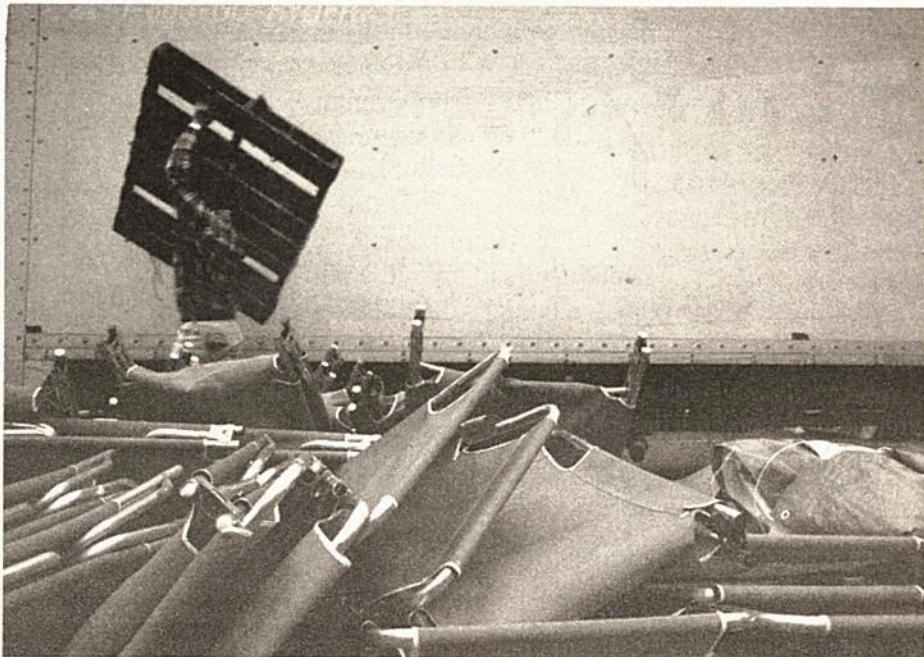
"These are just regular people," says Goldstine, singling out a picture of a child's room that looks like every child's room except that it happens to be in a tent (see above left). "That's the biggest thing that came out of this project."

Even the fact that the picture on the postcard advertising the exhibit — a silhouette of two men with tent stakes (see below) — reminds a lot of people of soldiers in the war in Afghanistan is, in Goldstine's mind, a jumping-off point to get people to start facing the truths about homelessness.

"They think this an exhibit about Afghanistan, so I'm interested in how they react when they see it's actually something in Seattle," says Goldstine. "People don't want to be reminded of homelessness. They don't want to know these things are happening right here."

And once people are shown the other sides to homelessness, Goldstine hopes they talk about them.

"TentCity3 is made up mostly of decent people who treat other people with respect," says Goldstine. "I want to have a show, to not just publish the pictures, but so I can get people together to see what their story is." ■



The Standard Bearer

Diana Pearce wants the government to measure poverty differently

Interview by Adam Holdorf

In the war on poverty, Diana Pearce is our Robert Oppenheimer. She has devised a newer, better method for telling people just who is poor and what to do about it. It's a calculation of the cost of different families' needs in every city and county in the United States. Her new tool is reforming the debate about welfare-to-work and living-wage jobs.

It's a long-overdue upgrade from the federal poverty line, the official measurement adopted by President Lyndon B. Johnson's Office of Economic Opportunity and used ever since. In 1965, a government economist determined that the poverty line — currently about \$14,630 for a family of three — was simply three times the cost of a meager food budget. The poverty line's become less and less meaningful since. Even the government has abandoned it. For example, most non-profit housing managers use the area median income — a kind of relative poverty line — to determine who's poor enough to be accepted into their units.

The Self Sufficiency Standard measures the cost of things like child care, housing, food, health care, transportation, and taxes — taking into account regional variations. For people who fall below the line — in Seattle, that would include a single mother with two small children who earns less than \$19.81 an hour — there are two ways to help. You can provide income support (like subsidized housing, day care, food, or other kinds of charity) or job training and education. You have to make both available at the same time, so that families weather tough times, and come out with greater opportunity.

Pearce, who frequently crisscrosses the country working with local social service networks and D.C.-based advocates, found time to talk to *Real Change* last month.

Real Change: How did you get into this?

Diana Pearce: I got started doing this way back in 1978; I wrote an article entitled "The Feminization of Poverty." In working on women's issues and poverty, I wound up at Wider Opportunities for Women, and while there, working with a group developing strategies for improving job training for women. One of the problems with the job training programs we have, federal and local programs, is that they don't serve women very well. One of the problems was that their performance standards don't take into account the different needs that women have — for example, that they might be supporting children, whereas many of the men are not supporting children. They take the higher averages of men and the lower averages of women and put them together.

RC: What do you mean, the performance standard?

Pearce: That's the standard at which the trainers were reimbursed by the government. If they didn't put a certain percentage of people into jobs at a certain wage, then they didn't get reimbursed. It was pretty low, \$5 to \$6 an hour, even 10 years ago that was pretty low. And it was averaging across different needs and family sizes. We thought, why don't you develop an alternative that would measure what it really takes to become self-sufficient? — because that was the goal of the Workforce Investment Act, a job training program, and our welfare programs also have that goal.

The poverty line doesn't measure the different circumstances that people find themselves in. Some people are in high-cost areas; some people have very young children and need child care. The poverty line is the same no matter where you live, whether it's in Manhattan, Kansas or Manhattan, New York City. When you want an understanding of whether or not people in different regions have adequate income, you're measuring apples and oranges.

So I developed the Self-Sufficiency Standard to meet that. Unlike way back 40 years ago, when we developed the poverty line, you don't have to get it all on one page. You can do it all by computer. So I took account of different ages of children, because child care costs are quite different by age. I do it by each county area and sub-county area where we have data.

RC: So you can take a family, plug in the different costs they face, and come up with a number of what their wage should be?

Pearce: Right: the minimum amount they would need to meet all their needs without any public or private subsidy. That means not just without Medicaid or Food Stamps, but also what they would need without the help of family members providing babysitting, or shared housing, or something like that. It's what you should get if you're going to fully meet your needs without sacrificing something like bread or milk, or having to go to a food pantry for food.

RC: What is the feminization of poverty?

Pearce: Back in 1978, the idea was that more and more of the poor are in families maintained by women alone. And

that our anti-poverty programs, starting with the War on Poverty, adjust the poverty structurally much better of men than of women. What we found is that two-parent families were leaving poverty but single-parent families were being left behind. Some of the structural things we were not doing was providing child care — we still don't have enough child care — and adjusting the wage gap between men and women. We still haven't done that either, so that women have to earn more than men do to get the same wages that men have. A woman with a Master's degree earns less than a man with a Bachelor's degree.

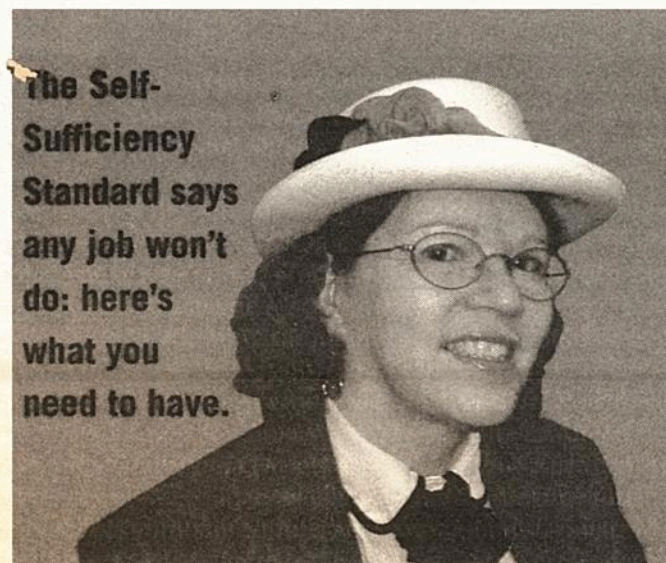


PHOTO OF DIANA PEARCE, BY ADAM HOLDORF.

RC: How do you solve that?

Pearce: Trying to break down some of the segregations that prevent women from getting into nontraditional jobs breaks down the wage gap. There are a number of groups across the country that get women into non-traditional training in high-tech programs: computer-aided drafting, that sort of thing. Not all non-traditional training involves women working on construction sites. It's hardware and software for computers, Xerox repair.

RC: Who uses the Self Sufficiency Standard?

Pearce: In Pennsylvania, an organization called Women's Association for Women's Alternatives has been working with public and private groups, community action programs, job agencies, and the state itself. The welfare department is now piloting it to work with clients.

What it does there is it changes the conversation that goes on in the welfare office. Right now you have a welfare caseworker who says to clients, the applicants, "Get a job, any job." And the applicant's thinking to herself, "Why do you think I'm here? I have been work-

ing, or I tried to work, and I couldn't get enough child care, and my kids got sick and I didn't have health insurance — that's why I'm applying for welfare." And the caseworker is thinking to herself, "Well, actually, any job won't do, I'm struggling to make it on my wages, because I'm not paid that well. Something below what I'm earning wouldn't work for my family, so why would it work for her family?" — unless you say that any job will do because any level of housing will do, and any level of food will do. And that's just not true. So there's a deep dishonesty between the two.

What the Self-Sufficiency Standard says is any job won't do; here's what you need to have.

It also shows people how, with the help of different kinds of work supports, you can reduce what you need to earn almost a third of what a full self-sufficiency wage is. So when in some places in Washington it's \$20 an hour if you have two very small kids, if your child care and health care is paid for it goes down to maybe \$10 an hour. If you get help with housing, get partial food stamps and other benefits, it goes down to \$6.45 an hour. Well, that's

much more doable for a family here. A family realizes that the Medicaid they get after they go off welfare, or the child care subsidy, and food stamps — all are going to help you make it.

The Self Sufficiency Standard is a benchmark. These are adequate wages with the help of others, but you're not self-sufficient, because you're getting support from other places. I don't think everybody should be on wage supports indefinitely, but it just shows that the help of different people can help you make it. And eventually make it to this wage, with training and education.

RC: I was struck by how spare the budget is. I know that a lot of poor people don't always make the best decisions when they have money. Is there no room for any splurges in this estimate?

Pearce: There's some room for choice, but not a lot. That's in the miscellaneous category. Most people look at that and say it's too small. What we tried to do here is develop a benchmark that is the minimally adequate amount of money — not that, if you're lucky, you find somebody to babysit for low cost, or get a great house for cheap. This is minimally what you'd need as an ordinary person. Even the food budget is pretty bare-bones. No pizza, no restaurant food. ■

ARTIS Continued from Page 1

me to quit, and finally they stocked the jukebox with what I wanted so I could play along — Mantovani, Peggy Lee, Elvis, the Kinks, the Stones, Wes Montgomery, King Curtis, Eddy Arnold, all stuff that I liked.

RC: You've played with an astonishing range of people. How did you get in touch with all of them?

Artis: Oh, it just happens, it's a career, you just fall into it. The only one I ever pursued was Zappa, because of a dream. One night, about 1975, I had a dream that I was playing with Zappa and Dr. Hook. In early '76, I was living in Portland, and Dr. Hook came to town. I went to the sound check in the afternoon, and they had me play with

them that night. So I knew that I was going to play with Zappa, and five years later I met him, and he immediately asked me to play, I didn't ask him. In 1992, Zappa invited me to his house and recorded and sampled my playing, and we hung out for a few hours. It was like being welcomed to the club. I mean, I'm broke. I'm not successful as a businessperson at all.

I lived 20 years on the road: 1974 to 1994 — lived in a car, slept under bridges, hitchhiked. In '81 I bought my first bus, lived in it until '94. Now I live in a basement in West Seattle, and I cannot see the sky. But, it's \$100 a month rent. My finances are fucked, except when you come to me to do business, I am professional, I have respect. But I don't know how to go out and say, "Yo, I'm the man, you need to hire me."

I'm going to Cuba in February — I have to pay \$1,000 to do it, but I went through my address book and raised \$1,000! In \$20-\$50 increments, from my friends and associates, you know.

RC: At least you're doing what you want.

Artis: No, I'm not doing what I want! I want to produce! I've got five CDs that I have the material and ability to do, if I could hire the musicians, if I could pay the engineer. I've got a rock one, I've got a live one, I've got a children's one, I've got a ballad one, and a completely instrumental one. It'd probably be \$20,000 at the very minimum to master them, and that's still not manufacturing them. But I've got to survive in the meantime, trying to stay off the fucking street, trying to eke a goddamn meal.

I'm serious; I hate this fucking shit. I wouldn't be on the sideline anymore if I didn't have to be. Thirty fucking years of this. I can't seem to get my funds together. I'm dysfunctional, bipolar, medicated, angry, and an alcoholic.

The only thing I'm not sick of is the show itself — when I'm doing it, playing it.

I wouldn't play with anyone but Jim Page, as far as the sidewalks. There's very few who write on a level with the stuff Jim writes — Zappa, Pete Townsend, Sun Ra — and Jim doesn't even know these people, he won't "get" Sun Ra or Zappa. He's totally the folk person, for lack of a better word.

RC: Have you always been a natural performer?

Artis: Yeah. When I was 19, even on the

Sounds of the Market

By Aubrey Hiers

“Without music, what a bland world this would be,” says Steve, a weathered street musician, sitting in the Pike Place Market Alleyway. The cobblestone street is caulked with rhythm. Instruments stream through the sunshine as musicians make their living with concrete concerts. Urban professionals escape their high-rise offices for a little lunch, fresh air, and exceptional entertainment.

“To me money isn't everything, I enjoy where I'm at and what I'm doing. It's about making someone's day — best job I ever had,” says Carlton Baltimore, of his past nine years of street performance. It all began when he saw a man playing the accordion at the Bon Marché and gave street performance a shot himself. Now, Carlton is well known and respected by the market audiences. I watch children dance for a solid half an hour while Carlton rolls

When I ask him if he enjoys playing on the street, he says, “Not just yeah — oh yeah! I could play in a bar but I don't like dealing with drunks at 2 a.m.”

his paper up and plays his Pepsi cup. His instruments are his vocals, his hands, and the recycled creations of a music man. “I never had a job past five months of my life. I've been at this for nine years. I love it here, this is the only place in Seattle organized for street music.”

“Music is my livelihood,” Johnny Hahn testifies as his fingers flow over his little piano. At the University of Washington's street fair in 1986, it occurred to Johnny that he could make a living playing on the street. He has ever since. Now, in the Pike Place Market, Johnny wheels his piano into position and plays to the public. He has three different records for sale, and is available

for house concerts.

Marvin Brost sets aside his autoharp to speak to me, and says, “I've had maybe 10 professions in my life. In September of 2000, when I was 60, I decided to be a street musician because I always wanted to do it. I spend about as much time talking to people as I do playing.” Marvin began playing the autoharp when it was given to him as a gift from his girlfriend. “I had no choice but to learn; it was the finest gift I've ever received.”

“It makes everyone slow down; it's like doing a public service,” Peter May says as he fixes his broken guitar string. Peter is a musician from New York City. He spends his winters on the East Coast, then returns to play in a local band, The Shamaniacs. He performs with Phinneus, a Tiberian fog parrot, at the market to subsidize himself in Seattle. This works well for Phinneus, who does not do street performances in the winter.

“Phinneus is a really cool parrot; he makes people happy when they go by,” boasts Peter. The duo has been playing together since Phinneus' owner, Chris, made the suggestion two years ago.

Just a few blocks up the sidewalk, outside of the Starbucks Café, everyone is tapping their feet, clapping their hands, and praising the voices of Roosevelt, Will Smith, Levi Barnes, Clifford Miller, James Butler, and Everett Dallas. The first vibration of their vocal chords pumps energy through my bloodstream, and suddenly I forget everything beyond rhythm. They are a beautiful group of friends who know how to turn out an outrageous sound.

When I spoke with Roosevelt, Will, Levi, and Everett, they agreed that they prefer to perform on stage. They perform a variety of venues and have CDs and tapes available for sale.

“I'd rather be playing in Pike Place Market” reads the bumper sticker inside Scott Free's guitar case. Sleeping by his side is Love Dog, who will be turning 15 in August. When I ask him if he enjoys playing on the street he says, “Not just yeah — oh yeah! I could play in a bar but I don't like dealing with drunks at 2 a.m.” Scott's playing on top of the world now that his Martin guitar has been returned to him after a 12-year separation.

Sitting next to Scott Free is his son Grege Blanke. Grege has been playing flute and guitar on the street for 23 years. Born and raised in Seattle, Grege looks around and comments, “This is a place where music takes hold of the people.”

“There aren't a whole lot of places you can do this,” says Jeremy Binns. Jeremy began playing on the streets in 1997 and has been playing in Seattle since last November. He presses his lips to his harmonica and blows smiles onto passing faces. Jeremy spoke to me about how he began: “I really didn't like playing in bars; it was wearing thin. But I love to play music so I found a different venue. After my first time playing on the street I was hooked — I loved it! You never know what you're going to get; no expectations and no pretense.”

“This is a system intended to make it easier for musicians, and the market benefits from having them,” explains Pike Place Market Master Bill Stalder. Musicians pay 15 dollars for a yearly permit to perform in the market. The permit allows a performer to remain in one of 13 designated spots for one hour. At that point, the musicians will move to a different location, rotating areas. Last year alone over 300 permits were sold. “We're one of the few, if not only cities that have a system as extensive as this,” Stalder boasts, “We have some world-class musicians.”

It was 1979 in New Orleans when Scott Free met Three Stars and told him about Pike Place Market. It took Three Stars two years after meeting Scott, but in 1980 his outstretched thumb landed him in Seattle. “It's a great city for music,” says Three Stars, as he plucks his country tunes. He laughs with confidence and admits that he has always wanted to play on the Grand Old Opry stage. “I'm going to do it. I'm in a position now where I can do something. If I've got this many fans here, there's no telling what I can do across the country.”

Confidence and persistence are crucial elements in all of these experienced musicians. “I got in trouble in school for playing paper; I always dreamed about playing paper,” Carlton considers this carefully, and then resumes with advice for other musicians. His words relate to any medium: “If you give the gift you have, it becomes more. I watch a lot of musicians come out here and give up. That's their biggest mistake.” ■



FOUR FRIENDS MAKE MUSIC TOGETHER OUTSIDE THE STARBUCKS IN PIKE PLACE MARKET. PHOTO BY ANDREA LEE.

ship in the Navy, I was entertaining the guys by dropping the splits, singing along with Jackie Wilson. Just like the hip-hoppers today — I love it!

It's ironic, though — the glamour stuff, the stardom stuff is bullshit. It really is. I mean, it's pathetic, like you had this N30 event [celebrating the second anniversary of the Seattle WTO protests last Nov. 30] which drew a couple of hundred people to Town Hall, and yet they'll come out in the thousands for some rock star. This is twisted, when it comes to citizen awareness.

RC: *There'll be one hundred thousand for a football game.*

Artis: Yeah! That's rock stardom, too. I can see the appreciation there, but not when it's just that, when all the common social consciousness is just vacuumed out, so that they don't even pay attention to how jeopardized their common condition is.

RC: *You went to Japan, too? How was that?*

Artis: Three times I've been to Japan. Everywhere I go it's the same — everywhere I go people appreciate the show.

It crosses all language barriers. Certainly one of the most outrageous times was playing in Bali, because it was a completely different culture. They're not completely westernized, there's some pretty remote places. I'd just pick somebody to play to, and the next thing you know, they're coming out of the trails, I'd get this big crowd around me, they're all watching me. When I'd quit, they don't applaud, it's not that they didn't like it, but they just don't do that there. But when I'd pick up my stuff and start to leave, they'd all go, in their language, "Again! Again! Encore!" I've seen tears in elders' eyes when I'd leave them.

Because the crackers that visit in these places, they bring their goddamn video cameras and plastic and they argue over fifty cents! The difference between a tourist and a visitor is that a tourist never leaves their house, they're only gone two weeks or six weeks or whatever, and they're only thinking about how they're going back to their front room and showing the video. They never take the one eye, at least, off the camera, and the other eye is usually shut, so they don't see anything on the periphery. All they got is a narrow little frame.

But the visitor goes, and they take their talent, I don't care if they're a mechanic, a linguist, a cook, a musician, a poet, whatever, and they share that. And the next thing you know, they're eating the food, from the leaf, on the dirt, with the people, and the people can't afford to give it to you, so

you sure do pay them, but you don't argue over fifty fucking cents. And then you find out, in a short period of time, the difference between the tourist and the more at-home visitor, you go buy a shirt or something you do like, they will give you, maybe not the local rate, because the locals don't buy it, but not the tourist rate, either, because you ain't arguing! Although, haggling is also part of the tradition.

But playing there was just fabulous! Fabulous!

RC: *What other interesting places have you gone to?*

Artis: Seattle! I love Seattle. I love Seattle! Fabulous place. I like the expanse of Texas. Santa Cruz. Australia. I've been to 30 countries. Flying into Tripoli while I was in the Navy, it gave me a perspective when they were bombing it with billion-dollar planes, bombing \$100 stucco huts. You put it into perspective, standing behind crowds of people — I remember hearing a blue-hair say to his wife, "Well, it must be for our own good, after all, it's the President doing it." And I'm thinking, people really believe that!

Citizen awareness is so important.

"I lived 20 years on the road: 1974 to 1994 — lived in a car, slept under bridges, hitchhiked. In '81 I bought my first bus, lived in it until '94. Now I live in a basement in West Seattle, and I cannot see the sky. But, it's \$100 a month rent."

— Artis the Spoonman

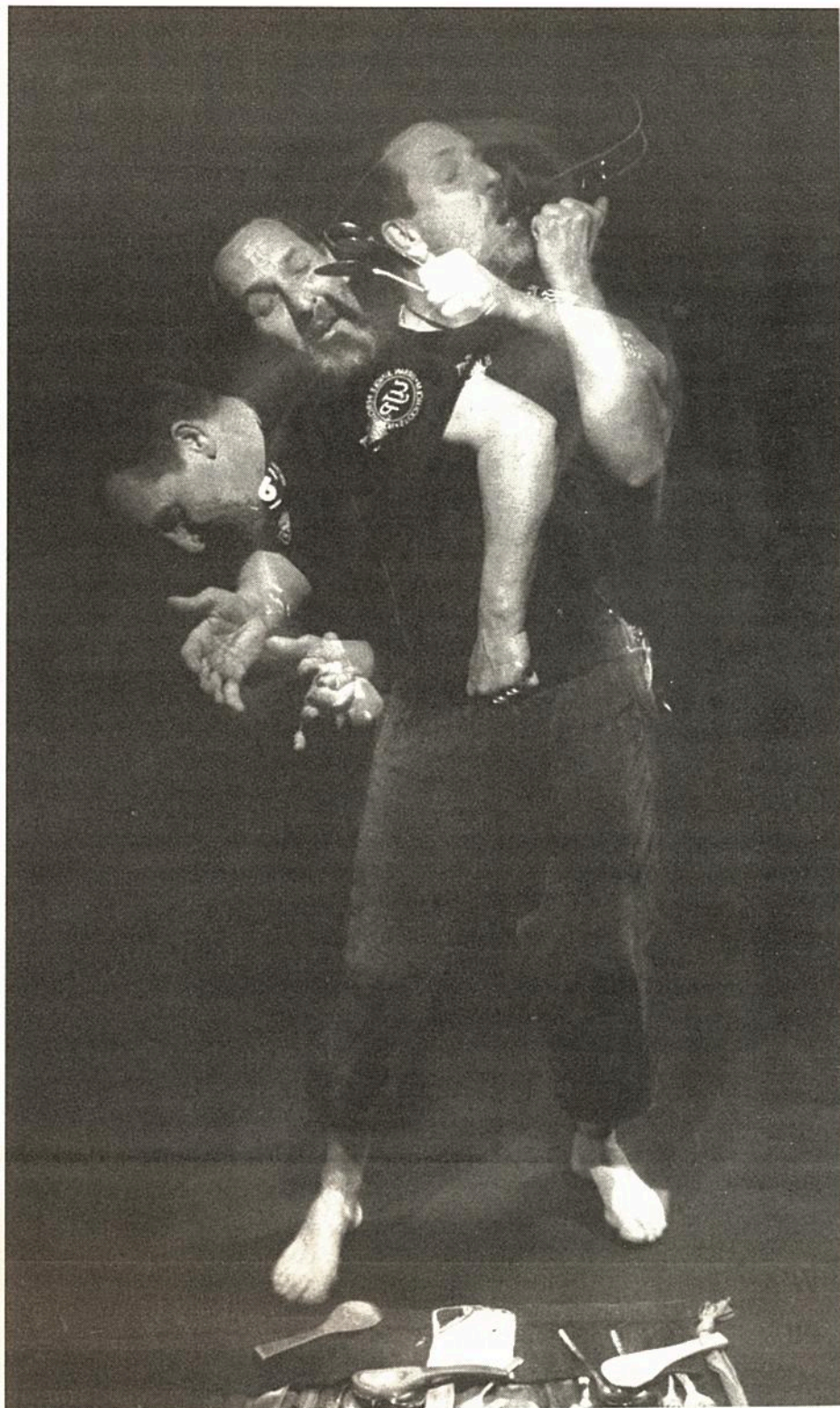
Less than 10 percent of the American citizenry have a passport, so even less than that ever leave the fucking country. They could walk from here to Canada; why don't they? Go to Canada for the weekend! Go to Mexico! You can fly to some island in the Pacific for some dirt-cheap price! Go! You can always go to Europe for \$300. We are a country of individuals. We haven't got a clue. We're so afraid of everything.

RC: *Do you think people in this country are, in general, less informed about things?*

Artis: I think, in general, yes. I hesitate to make any general statements about that because I could easily find my foot in my mouth. But the English-speaking places, like Australia, they are more determined to be isolated. Australia is a country of bigots—the whites are the complete dominant race, it's like being in the U.S. in the late '50s.

RC: *You're a pretty familiar figure around here, aren't you?*

Artis: Some people would say this is a vain statement, but it's not, it's fact: I am the most famous spoon player ever. Ever. On the planet, in history. I've played to millions of people. There are other spoon players — there are great, more proficient spoon players than me, fabulous spoon players, but I've become the most famous. ■



ARTIS THE SPOONMAN SHOWS OFF HIS SPOON SKILLS. PHOTO BY MICHAEL DOUCETT.

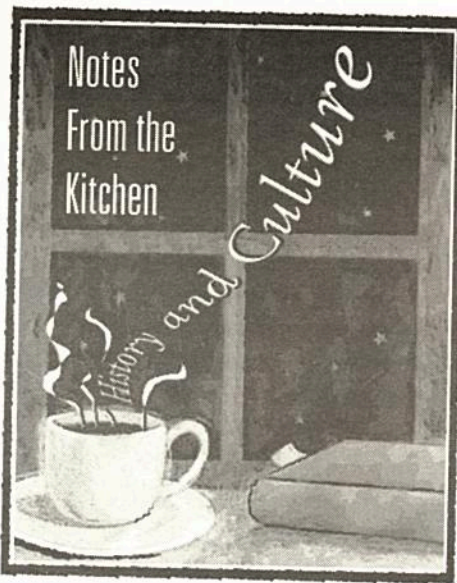
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SOCIAL INVESTMENTS



A Long Time Ago

By Liz Smith

Once upon a time there was, in the principality of Lawrence, Massachusetts, an uprising of the enslaved peoples living there. They were half-starved and overworked, and during their revolt suffered still more privation. Yes, they were desperate, not only for bread, but also for roses, and for the dignity and respect that had been denied them. This uprising came to be known as the "Bread and Roses Strike" and occurred in 1912 among the textile and paper mill workers.

Lawrence, with a population of 85,000, was a one-industry town. There were the well-to-do, the mill owners who made the rules. And there were the 50,000 or so who worked in the mills or the members of their families who depended on their pay packet. The rich people planned dinner parties with their cooks, went out driving on Sundays in their Model Ts, played records on their Pathe Gramophone — songs such as "Daddy Has a Sweetheart and Mother Is Her Name" — and taught their Irish maids how to operate the Baby Daisy Vacuum Cleaner.

In this book I have been reading, *Report on Strike of Textile Workers* (1912), there are about 300 pages of dry statistics about the average working person and the facts of their daily existence. Feeling as though my head was about to explode, I set the book up on the kitchen counter and threw a dart at it, and so selected one representative family.

"Household number 135" is Italian, living on the third floor of a cramped, coal-smoke wooden tenement. They have a toilet and a supply of cold water, but no bathtub. For lighting in their dark rooms they have kerosene lamps; the one source of heat is the kitchen stove. These are the people who live in this five-room flat, and their weekly wages: "Head, \$5.25; wife, at home; son, 16 years, \$6.55; son, 14 years, \$4.92; daughter, 13 years, at school; daughter, 9 years, at school; daughter, 7 years, at school." A family of three lodged in the flat as well, contributing \$6.00 a week to the household wages, for a total of \$22.72. The weekly rent is \$3.97, leaving \$18.75 to buy food, clothing, coal, and all the necessities of life. For their \$6.00, the lodgers receive soup, coffee, and clean laundry.

Here are some typical prices: Canned vegetables, 12 cents; pound of macaroni, 9¢; Kellogg's corn flakes, 15¢; canned milk, 10¢; pound of coffee, 10¢ to 40¢; pound of potatoes, 2¢; one-pound loaf of bread, 4¢; pound of ham, 14¢; pound of chuck roast, 12¢; pound of pig's plucks, 4¢; gallon of milk, 36¢; a ladies dress, \$3; a pair of shoes, \$2; men's suit, \$15; a bed and mattress, \$15.50; a kitchen table, \$5.50; 100 pounds of coal, 50¢; gallon of kerosene, 10¢.

Family number 135 was one of the better-off. Many families were larger, and with fewer wage-earners. If a worker got sick and had no income it could be disastrous.

To work in a textile mill was to have your own little slice of hell. The mills were situated by rivers, and giant water wheels were connected to enormous leather belts, which powered the looms. When the machinery was turned on at 5 a.m., the walls vibrated. Once inside, it was hot, and as you breathed, you inhaled a thick fog of lint and fibers. You had to shout like a madman to be heard by the person whose ear you were yelling into. You were there 56 hours each week, making nine cents per hour. On Sunday, you got to rest, or go to church, giving thanks to a merciful God to have employment.

Those were the harsh physical conditions. If you had a mean boss who called you a "bloody wop," you had to take it. If you had a boss grabbing you, you as a woman had to put up with that. If your boss had the whim, you could be fired or even blacklisted. I go into such detail because if I just said people were mistreated and poor, it would be hard to understand why they went on strike over such a small matter.

The Massachusetts Legislature passed a law reducing the hours of work from 56 to 54, effective Jan. 1, 1912. It was not made clear to the mill workers whether their pay would also be reduced. A committee made up of a new workers' organization, the Industrial Workers of the World (the I.W.W., also known as the Wobblies), paid a call upon the mill owners. The owners refused to meet, and refused to say straight out if there would be a pay cut.

On January 11, the Polish women in the Everett Company mill stopped their looms. Why? "Not enough pay." That began the walkout and the strike, which lasted until March 18, involving at times up to 28,118 strikers. Extra police and militia were brought in. People marched to meetings, carrying flags. A relief committee established headquarters, collecting \$1,000 to \$3,000 each day, sent in from all over the country. Soup kitchens were set up. Children of the strikers were evacuated. Workers formed moving picket lines so they wouldn't get arrested for loitering. Interpreters were brought in, as many of the workers spoke no English. People were everywhere, like vast bushels of leaves in a windstorm.

The police and soldiers were busy too. They detained 296 people, including one person arrested for "being stubborn." One man died from a bayonet wound. A group of women, walking home from a peaceful meeting, were beaten with wooden clubs. One of these women, Bertha Crouse, was beaten unconscious and suffered a miscarriage. Newspapers across the country and all over the world covered this tragic event. As a result of the publicity, Congress ordered an investigation, and the end of the strike was hastened.

When the workers started up their looms at 5 a.m. on March 18, these were the modest concessions they had won:

- A 15% increase in pay. For the Italian family, Household Number 135, this equaled \$2.51 each week.
- Overtime pay for overtime work.
- An end to the punishing and unfair bonus and premium system
- No strike retaliation

Well, that's the story in black and white. I wanted to write about this particular struggle because it had a happy ending, and so often it seems like the struggling of the poor ends in defeat. Poor people want the same things everybody wants: a small dry roof, freedom from fear, a little bread, some beautiful roses. ■

You were there 56 hours each week, making nine cents per hour. On Sunday, you got to rest, or go to church, giving thanks to a merciful God to have employment.

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Monday, Dec. 31, 12:06 p.m., Belmont Ave. Apts. storage shed. Police responded to a 911 call about a burglary in progress at the above address. The burglary was to a storage shed located in the secured parking garage of the apartment building. The owner of the storage unit stated that she had recently noticed that someone had been sleeping in the unit, and when she heard sounds in there today, she called 911. Police arrived, and the unit was opened. Two people were located inside – a white male aged 30, and a white female aged 25, both homeless. Both were taken into custody without incident, and the male gave the following statement. He said he has stayed in the unit several times in the last month – a friend told him how easy it was to get inside. He and his girlfriend entered the unit by crawling through the ceiling, and went to sleep. He said that in the month he has stayed there, he took a sweatshirt and two blankets. The owner claimed two Persian rugs were missing, but he denied knowledge of these. The unit was packed with boxes, and the owner could not tell if anything else was missing. Both suspects were interrogated and released, and trespassed from the scene.

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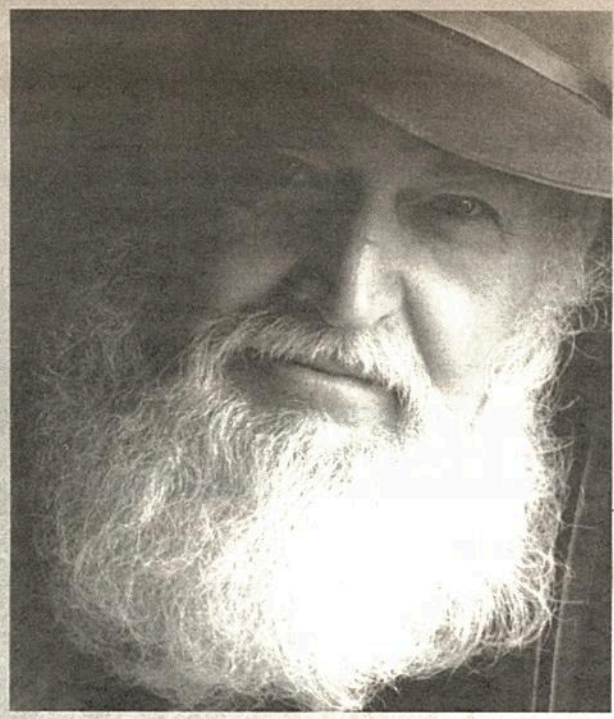
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Thursday, Jan. 17, 5 p.m., 29th Street – private house. Complainant called 911 stating that the above address has been empty for 12 months, and that over the past week she has seen "crackheads" entering the structure through the kitchen window. Today she noticed a light on in the basement. Officers arrived and found all doors and windows secure, and lights on. The kitchen window was locked, but the screen was pulled off. Inside the kitchen, two gas burners were on, and the oven door was open. Repeated loud knocking and announcements failed to bring anyone to the door; the officer kicked open the rear door. A search of the house turned up a man sleeping in the basement. He was a non-domiciled black male aged 35, who stated that a woman he knew had let him in the house to sleep. He was clear of warrants, and was issued a criminal trespass admonishment and released. The empty house was secured.

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Saturday, Jan. 19, 4:01 p.m. Lake Washington Boulevard – City Park. Officer dispatched to investigate a report of a possible suicide attempt. Upon arrival he spoke with the Seattle Fire Department, who explained they'd received an anonymous phone call stating someone had tried to drown himself in the lake. When officers arrived the man, a homeless black male aged 33, was inside the visitor's center in wet clothing. The Fire Dept. said he told them he wanted to die. The man admitted he'd tried to drown himself. Emergency medical response came to the scene and transported him to Harborview for treatment and a medical evaluation. ■

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

STAR WARS Continued from Page 5

ferent values on the lives of those we see on the street. Guth and Tweiten, both members of Seattle's Star Wars Society (Guth is president), received tacit approval from Cinerama management to pitch their sleeping bags right next to the theater. It was an easy decision for the recently-retooled luxury theater, since it generated untold amounts of free publicity in Seattle and across the globe.

"We're doing everything by the book," says Guth, who researched the local laws before embarking upon the endeavor. When queried about the disparity in how people react to their project versus the way people treat the homeless, Guth replies, "We're not hitting people up for anything. I think that's what really bothers people [about the homeless]."

Many area merchants seem to agree with their assessment. In point of fact, Guth and Tweiten are seen as bringing money into the area as opposed to scarifying it away.

Alain Rigazzi, general manager of the Warwick Hotel across the street from the Cinerama, first met members of the Star Wars Society when they camped out for tickets for the last George Lucas blockbuster, *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*. Now, the hotel collects mail for the duo, and friends in the hotel's restaurant provide occasional drinks and use of the restroom facilities — a luxury pointedly unavailable to homeless people.

Over at the Nara Grill on Fifth Avenue, general manager Brandon Sundara makes sure that the restaurant cooks a few extra employee meals each week and brings them to Guth and Tweiten.

"We heard it was very tough for them, so why not sponsor them?" Sundara says. "I like people to try to reach their goal."

Sundara freely admits that the restaurant wouldn't provide the same services for the area's homeless. Because the restaurant isn't equipped to provide for a large number of people, Sundara believes it's better not to make the offer. The recent downturn in the economy also makes Sundara reluctant to take on

much of an extra financial burden.

But it's exactly the difficult economic conditions that makes it all the more important to provide a greater safety net, warns Rev. Reynolds. "What do you tell the guy who's never been homeless before, and you hand them a blanket because all the shelters are full?" he says.

Operation Nightwatch took a rough count of people sleeping outside in select Seattle neighborhoods last October and found 1,455 people. It's far from the total number, but still up 15 percent from their count a year earlier.

So as the winter grinds onward, Guth and Tweiten sit comfortably under a large white canopy they set up in the Diamond Parking Lot next to the theater. (They moved from the sidewalk because of police concerns about too many reporters blocking traffic.) With private sponsorship paying for their endeavor, and a friend's apartment around the corner for showers and rest-breaks, the two Star Wars fans can relax next to their propane heater and Darth Maul statue and hold court for curious visitors.

Indeed, homeless people come up occasionally, looking for handouts or a chance to chat with a kindred street denizen. "People see that you have food and cigarettes, so they frequent you more often," says Guth.

Some of the homeless who come up are friendly, while others can be more adamant about asking for handouts, says Tweiten, who ended up giving his hand-warmers to one man who wandered by their camp and stayed to talk for quite awhile. But while they appreciate the company, Guth maintains that they don't want to be too associated with the area homeless and end up as a new kind of tent city for downtown.

As the afternoon wears on, the two Star Wars fans continue to pass the time waiting for the first days of May. Meanwhile, the occasional homeless person who stops by bears a different legal burden on his shoulders, sharing a similar lifestyle but at drastically opposing ends of the economic divide.

And when it comes to Seattle's sidewalks, where you are on this divide determines whether you can sit or must keep on walking by. ■

CLASSICS CORNER



by Perfass'r Harris

Force, said Simone Weil in her landmark essay on the *Iliad*, automatically dehumanizes by turning its object into a thing. Why is it then that this 2,800 year-old poem, with its sprays of blood, exploding brains, shattered teeth, and exposed entrails, remains, in Weil's memorable phrase "the loveliest of mirrors?" What is it that redeems this literature of violence and returns us, finally, to our humanity?

Homer's genius, we believe, is in his ability to describe war in the fullest terms possible. For every death there is grieving kin. Images of peaceful domestic life abound — the washing of clothes, the celebration of weddings, the harvest of wheat — and as these accumulate, the horror of war is thrown into grim relief.

Specificity, then, becomes the enemy of bloodlust. Joseph Stalin understood this when he said a single death is a tragedy but a million deaths is a mere statistic.

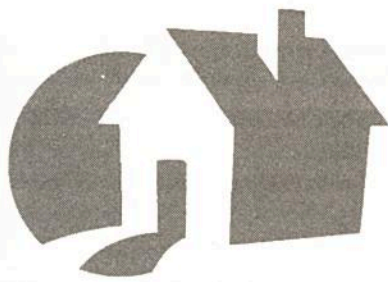
We are reminded of this by a recent essay by Howard Zinn, *The Others*, which appears in the Feb. 11, 2002 issue of *The Nation*. In this essay, Zinn speculates on which of us would support the American bombing campaign if we understood the loss of life in anything approaching human terms. As the civilian body count in Afghanistan surpasses the 4,000 mark, we are challenged to scour the news for evidence of what this means.

The *London Times* quotes a man who lost 10 relatives in the bombing of a small village named Torai. "I saw the body of one of my brothers-in-law being pulled from the debris," Mauroof said. "The lower part of his body had been blown away. Some of the other bodies were unrecognizable. There were heads missing and arms blown off..." The roll call of the dead read like an invitation list to a family wedding: his mother-in-law, two sisters-in-law, three brothers-in-law, and four of his sister's five young children, two girls and two boys, all under the age of eight."

Reuters brings us the following from Kabul: "A U.S. bomb flattened a flimsy mud-brick home in Kabul Sunday, blowing apart seven children as they ate breakfast with their father... Sobs racked the body of a middle-aged man as he cradled the head of his baby, its dust-covered body dressed only in a blue diaper..."

This from *Newsday*: "In the sprawling, mud-brick slum of Qala-ye-Khatir, most men were kneeling in the mosques at morning prayer on November 6 when a quarter-ton of steel and high explosives hurtled from the sky into the home of Gul Ahmed, a carpet weaver. The American bomb detonated, killing Ahmed, his five daughters, one of his wives, and a son."

And finally, *The Independent* speaks of "The village where nothing happened." "The cemetery on the hill contains 40 freshly dug graves, unmarked and identical. And the village of Kama Ado has ceased to exist.... And all this is very strange because, on Saturday morning — when American B-52s unloaded dozens of bombs that killed 115 men, women, and children — nothing happened.... We know this because the U.S. Department of Defense told us so.... 'It just didn't happen.'" ■



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February Notables

Thursday 2/7

General Radical Women meeting. Black History Month Video showing "Toni Morrison: Profile of a Writer." 7:30 p.m. Dinner, with vegetarian option at 6:30 p.m., for a \$6.50 donation. New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle; info 206-722-6057 or 206-722-2453.

Women in Black are sponsoring a Peace Vigil and leafleting to stop the war on Afghanistan, 5 - 6 p.m., this and subsequent Thursdays, at Westlake Park arch at 4th and Pine; info 206-208-9715.

Saturday 2/9

Antioch University Seattle Center for Creative Change offers a series of free educational forums, **Incubating Social Enterprises**, 1 - 4 p.m., this and subsequent 2nd Saturdays at Antioch University Seattle, Room 201-B, 2326 6th Ave. at Battery; info 206-268-4707 or habib@thegarden.net.

Benefit show for the Puget Sound branch of the **IWW Industrial Workers of the World** (the Wobblies). 9:30 p.m., at Industrial Coffee, 5503 Airport Way S, in

Georgetown, ages 21+, \$5; info 206-763-0354 or <http://www.iwww.org>.

Peace Vigil and leafleting to stop the war on Afghanistan, or any other country, and to defend civil liberties, by 911 Peace Coalition, this and subsequent Saturdays, 4 - 5 p.m., at Westlake Park at 4th and Pine; info Fred Miller, Peace and Justice Alliance 206-527-8050.

Congressman Jim McDermott holds a Community Meeting. Everyone is welcome. 2 - 3:30 p.m., Olympic View Community Church, 425 NE 95th St, Seattle; info 206-553-7170.

Monday 2/11

Cohousing Salon sponsored by Northwest Cohousing, 6 - 8 p.m., this and subsequent 2nd Mondays, at Delfino's Restaurant in University Village, no reservations required; info 206-763-2623.

Community Invitation to a free **Sustainability Symposium**. Come learn about how we affect the environment. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., at Seattle Central Community College, Main Building, Room 1110; info Tess Strand 206-851-2243 or terrace_s@hotmail.com.

Tuesday 2/12

Changing the world one letter at a time: a **weekly letter-writing party**. All are welcome, write to your representatives or anyone you like. 7 - 9 p.m., this and subsequent Tuesdays, at Peace Café, 5828 Roosevelt Way NE; info Jezanna 206-729-3843 or café 206-529-8081.

The Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle is sponsoring a free workshop "Why rent when you can own your own home?" 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. on 2/12 and 2/14, at the Urban League, 105 14th Ave, Seattle. Limited seating is available and registration is required. To register call Devin Stubblefield 206-461-3792 ext 3013.

Wednesday 2/13

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

Thursday 2/14

Eight distinguished UW African American Faculty discuss their **paths toward university teaching**, sponsored by The Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas. 6:30 - 8 p.m., at The African American Academy, 8311 Beacon Ave. S., Seattle; info Millie Russell 206-685-0774 or <http://www.cdforum.org/home.html>.

Global Economy Working Group of the Church Council of Greater Seattle meeting, 7 p.m., this and subsequent 2nd Thursdays, at St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave E.; info 206-382-3785.

Saturday 2/16

Congressman Jim McDermott holds a Community Meeting. Everyone is welcome. 1 - 2:30 p.m., Rainier Beach Community Center, 8825 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle; info 206-553-7170.

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.

Sunday 2/17

Seattle Chapter Fellowship of Reconciliation meeting and potluck dinner

with members of the **African American/Jewish Coalition for Justice** talking about Reparations for African Americans. 5 p.m. potluck, 6 p.m. program at Woodland Park Presbyterian Church, 225 N. 70th near Greenwood, Seattle; info 206-789-5565.

Monday 2/18

Interfaith vigil for **peace in the Middle East**, pray for the end of the violence, 8 a.m. - 8 p.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.

Join Child Advocates for Rally in Olympia: **Have a Heart for Kids Day**, the Children's Alliance's annual advocacy event at the State Capitol. 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., transportation available. For more information, contact Jon Gould at (206) 324-0340 x19 or email jon@childrensalliance.org.

Save Our State Labor/Community Rally co-sponsored by the WA State Labor Council and the WA State Association of Churches. A day of action supported by 3,000 unions, faith communities, seniors, anti-poverty and child advocates from across the state. 10 a.m. on the State Capitol steps, in Olympia; info WSLC 206-281-8901 or <http://www.wslc.org>.

Friday 2/22

Life and Debt, a documentary film about free trade, produced and directed by Stephanie Black. It makes clear the link between Global Economic Policy and decimation of local agriculture/economy in Jamaica. Through Feb 28th at the Varsity Theater, 4329 University Way NE; info 206-632-3131.

Thursday 2/28

"**Creating Opportunities**," a dinner and silent auction to benefit the Center for Career Alternatives, a non-profit agency providing education and employment services to disadvantaged residents. 5 p.m. reception and silent auction, 6:30 p.m. dinner and program. Tickets are \$70; info 206-322-9080.

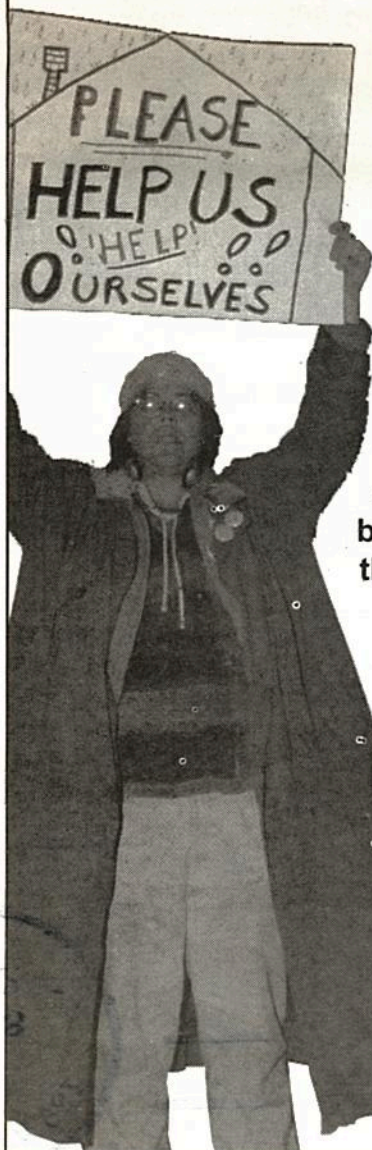
Ongoing

Art exhibit "**Long Steps Never Broke a Back: Art from Africa in America**" plus lectures on how African art influences contemporary African-American visual arts. Through May 19, at Seattle Art Museum; info Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas info@cdforum.org or 206-323-4032.

Free Reading, Writing, Math and ESL classes for adults at the People's Learning Center. Classes meet in the Central District. Call 206-325-8308 for more information.

Beyond Letters to the Editor: Citizen responsibility in an Age of Mass Information, sponsored by The Center for Contemplation and Nonviolence. Ongoing Thursdays through 3/21, 7:30 p.m., at Keystone United Church of Christ, 5019 Keystone Place, (Wallingford); info Eric Carlberg 206-632-6021. ■

Do Something!



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

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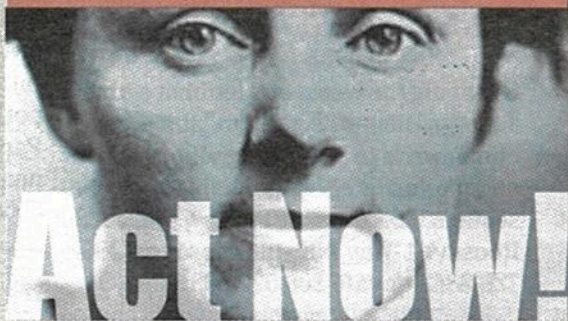
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citizens participation project



Support Bill for Laid-Off Workers

Issue: The Putting Americans First Act, sponsored by Washington state Representative Jim McDermott, would provide relief for thousands of workers who have been laid off, including improving unemployment compensation and healthcare coverage.

Background: In the last 12 months, 2.6 million people have lost their jobs. While the unemployment rate nationwide stands at about 5.8 percent — the highest joblessness rate in seven years — in Washington state it is 7.1 percent, second only to Oregon. Since this period last year, the number of unemployed in Seattle has increased 50 percent.

Hiring freezes and layoffs across the country are making it hard for those laid off last year to find new jobs. What's more, the number of people who have been reduced to part-time status as a result of the economy's weakness has reached 4.5 million. More than half of the 8.3 million unemployed people do not qualify for unemployment compensation. Making matters worse, under the current system, the vast majority of unemployed workers cannot afford health coverage. The average national weekly unemployment benefit is \$234, not even enough for a single mother with one child to reach the federal poverty line. Further, only about 40 percent of those who lose their jobs are eligible for unemployment insurance because part-time workers often are ineligible for compensation.

Last November, McDermott introduced H.R. 3341, The "Putting Americans First Act." The legislation provides a short-term enhanced safety net for those who have lost their jobs, while providing our economy with a necessary boost.

The bill would:

- Increase weekly benefit amount by \$65, which will move a single mother of one above the federal poverty level
- Extend unemployment compensation for 26 weeks
- Offer unemployment insurance to part-time workers
- Cover 75 percent of the cost of COBRA premiums, and give the state the option to pay for the remaining 25 percent of the COBRA premium with Medicaid funds.
- Increase federal funding levels for Medicaid programs
- Reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) supplemental grants and contingency fund

During a typical recession, a 1-percent rise in unemployment translates into a 5-percent rise in the number of single mothers receiving welfare benefits and a 10- to 15-percent rise in the number of married couples receiving them. Ignoring the fact that 55 percent of the federal budget surplus was depleted by the president's tax cut, House Republicans cited budgetary constraints and refused to reauthorize funding for the welfare supplemental grants and the contingency fund.

"The House Republican Leadership refuses to retreat from its demands that any economic stimulus package include billions of dollars in retroactive tax rebates to profitable businesses like IBM, GE, and GM and virtually nothing for families hardest hit by the recession," said McDermott in a prepared statement. "Their plan does nothing to stimulate our economy or help the people who need it most."

Action: Support H.R. 3341, the Putting Americans First Act, by contacting your local Representative to say you support the bill. A complete list of Western Washington Representatives can be found at www.house.gov.

Jim McDermott
1809 Seventh Ave. #1212
Seattle, WA 98101-1399
(206) 553-7170
www.house.gov/mcdermott

Jay Inslee
21905 - 64th Ave. W. Ste. 101
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043-2278
(425) 640-0233
jay.inslee@mail.house.gov

Adam Smith
3600 Port of Tacoma Rd. E., #308
Tacoma, WA 98424-1042
(888) Smith-09
www.house.gov/adamsmith

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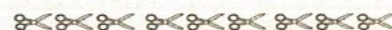
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(206) 325-7415, rbsea@yahoo.com

The website at the end
of Western Civilization
classicscorner.org



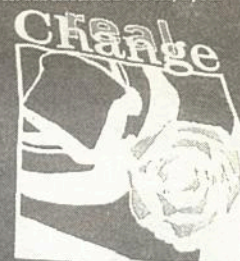
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Mockingbird Times



Washington State Foster Care
and Homeless Youth Speak Out



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VOLUME II, ISSUE 1

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Stabilizing the Education of Foster Youth

INTERVIEW BY BRITTANY LUCAS

RECENTLY, A NEW BILL was introduced in the Washington State Legislature that focused on keeping youth entering the foster care system in their original schools. Janis Avery, author of the Stable Education Bill, HB 2356, wrote up the bill to assist in reducing the amount of instability that youth experience as they enter the foster care system. The bill was read before the house on January 15, and is currently in the Children and Family Services Committee.

Janis Avery is the Executive Director of Tree House, one of the main supporters of the bill. Tree House grants wishes for kids in foster care and helps provide the fees and equipment necessary for foster youth to reach their goals. The *Mockingbird Times* interviewed Janis Avery on why the Stable Education bill was so important in helping to improve the lives of foster youth.

What do you hope to achieve by getting the bill passed?

We hope educational attainment will become one of the focal issues for the community and the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) folks as they think about how to make foster care better. Our long-term objective is for youth in foster care to graduate at the same rate as other kids in the

community. Currently, they graduate from high school at a much lower rate.

Does the bill have any co-sponsors?

Yes — I don't know them all. Representative Ruth Kagi is the sponsor and I know that Representatives Kip Tokuda and Mary Lou Dickerson co-sponsored.

What motivated you to write up this bill?

I collaborate with staff at other agencies that are focused on the educational attainment of youth in foster care. We have been advocating in Olympia for the legislature to do something about this issue. Three years ago, we secured the funding for a study, and this year we had planned to ask for a lot of money to address education. When the economy began failing, we had to think about what practical and relatively inexpensive things we could ask for. This is a first step in improving educational outcomes for kids in foster care.

Do you have any evidence that passing this bill will improve the education of foster youth?

We know that every time children and youth change schools that their educational performance decreases. Achievement tests register four to six months of decreased performance. So, if we can eliminate one change, we think we will see improved results.

Has the bill received any criticism yet? If not, can you think of any reason why any one would not want to support the bill?

Universally, folks like the concept. Both the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS, a division of DSHS) and OSPI (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction) think it will cost a lot of money. They have not submitted their fiscal notes yet. Advocates think a lot of the transportation can be accomplished within existing resources and what is really missing is a will to do the right thing.

If a child wants to be moved from their school, because of personal reasons, would they still have a choice in the matter, if this bill were to be passed?

A judge will make the final determination based on input from the social worker, child, and birth family. I can imagine many situations in which a school move might be helpful. Sometimes it wouldn't be safe to remain in the area, sometimes school might be going badly and a fresh start with good advocacy could make a big difference.

What are some steps you feel DCFS would need to comply with, if the bill were passed?

Right now placements are made to achieve safety for a child or youth. The next thing DCFS staff think about is permanence: will the child return to the birth

A View from Within

INTERVIEW BY BRITTANY LUCAS

JACKIE ESTEPHAN, a former foster youth, testified on behalf of the Stable Education Bill in front of the Washington State Legislature last month. The *Mockingbird Times* talked to her about why she advocated for the bill.

What motivated you to advocate for this bill?

The greatest motivation for me was that I was once in foster care myself. In my situation, I was removed from my home and my "home school," a move which was detrimental to my healing, moving on, and support network. I am an advocate for this bill because I want to make a difference in the lives of kids who will be removed from their families in the future. I know firsthand how difficult of a transition it is to not only be out of your home and away from your family, but also, away from your peers and educators who you have established a relationship with.

If this bill had been in law when you were in foster care, how do you think it would have changed your experience in the system?

My experience in foster care would have been a lot different. Prior to being removed from my biological home, I was doing well in school. I had great relationships with my peers, as well as with my teacher and other school staff. Essentially, it was because I had teachers and other adults in my life that cared about me so much that I ended up being taken from my home. It was the teachers who had concern for my well-being that spoke up for me and advocated for me to be placed in a safe environment. It was truly devastating to lose contact with my saviors, who aided in getting me out of an unsafe environment.

I was placed into foster care at age 12 and moved away from my neighborhood and community. I found myself in a new city where I literally did not know anybody, and nobody knew me. It was a very traumatic time for me, because the abuse that I had been experiencing was exposed and I felt like I had no one there who knew my history to support me.

If I had been able to stay in my home school after being removed from my home, I would have had the support network that had previously been

JACKIE CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

INSIDE

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR by Jim Theofelis	2
LETTER TO THE EDITOR A different kind of gift	2
QUOTE compiled by <i>Mockingbird</i> staff	2
MEET THE STAFF Brittany Lucas	3
MUSIC REVIEW <i>Living In Oblivion</i> by Brittany Lucas	3
FOSTER CARE CONFERENCE <i>Meeting of the minds in Yakima</i>	3
TWO FACES OF INCARCERATION <i>Reflections on time in jail</i> by Soledad Picon	4
POETRY CORNER by Tyra Cox	4

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

AVERY CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Letter from the Editor

I RECENTLY RETURNED from a conference in Washington, D.C., where I was invited to speak about the HOPE Act and The Mockingbird Society. This experience convinced me even more that the work we are doing is unique and critical toward the goal of creating a world-class foster care system in Washington state.

Professionals, policy makers, and foster parents attending the conference were unanimously enthusiastic about the *Mockingbird Times* and the meaningful opportunities it provides youth in foster care. Opportunities for meaningful employment resulting in marketable experience and skills, opportunities to give voice to their life experiences, insights, and dreams, and opportunities to improve the future for all children dependent on the foster care system. So many of these young people have learned to minimize their power or to express their power by "opting out" or disengaging. Through the *Mockingbird Times*, young people are learning the impact of positive power through engagement, participation, and leadership.

Our capacity to be effective advocates on behalf

of children and adolescents in foster care is also growing. Many of you responded to my request to contact Governor Locke's office and ask him to protect the foster care system during this volatile legislative session. I continue to receive messages from many of you confirming your call to the Governor's office and I assure you it makes a difference.

The Mockingbird Society is determined to make a difference through several strategic efforts all rooted in the philosophy of UNCONDITIONAL CARE. I submit that ALL children and adolescents deserve a safe, warm, nurturing environment to live, grow and dream. As a grass roots organization our challenge is to advance our mission, demonstrate our effectiveness, and stay financially solvent. We continue to survive with a three month financial safety net. No member of our staff is paid beyond half time status. We produce the *Mockingbird Times* and conduct all other Mockingbird business in office space less than 200 square feet. Our budget is modest, our vision is clear, and our determination is steadfast.

Letter to the Editor

Dear *Mockingbird Times*,

I appreciate that there is a paper such as yours out there to educate those who don't know about the system and to encourage those who are in it. I work at an organization that receives your paper and have enjoyed all issues but the last.

You featured an article on what street youth would like for Christmas, and after reading the first one, "Tunes for Travel," I almost couldn't continue to read the rest. Should that young man decide to be responsible and support himself, he would not need to be wishing for a walkman. He would buy it.


I too have been in the system and lived on the streets, and I think that if you are capable of taking care of yourself then you should. We would all like a life without commitments, open to just travel, but that is not what the centers that you go to are for. They instead are there to help people who are unable to care for themselves for whatever reason, with the hope that someday they will be successful adults who take responsibility.

Life is not a day camp: you don't come for your meal, pick up your supplies, and then wander until you're tired. Somewhere, someone is writing a check out to pay for that food and those supplies, with the hopes that it is a commitment, one in which they invest in the future of those who have already had enough hurt in their lives and would rather step up and take responsibility for themselves. The repayment of that commitment lies in the change in our youth and the bettering of lives for generations to come. I often hear other young people complain that no one wants to help them, but really no one wants to help someone who would otherwise not help his or her self.

So my Christmas wish to you, Tune Traveler, is that you see that you are hurting somebody: the person in the line who may not get enough and the person who writes the check hoping to see success.


Sincerely,
Jennifer Donahue

Your company's ad or agency's announcement could be here. Advertise across the state in the *Mockingbird Times*.




Only 59 percent of foster youth enrolled in 11th grade complete high school by the end of grade 12. The completion rate for non-foster youth is 86 percent.

— "Educational Attainment of Foster Youth," a report by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy



Jim Theofelis

If there's an issue you want to see *Mockingbird Times* cover, we want to know about it. We are also interested in any contributions you may have: artwork, poetry, essays, photography, reviews or article ideas. If we decide to use your work, we will pay up to \$25. Please email or write us with any questions regarding submissions: Valerie@mockingbirdsociety.org or Mockingbird Times, Submissions Dept., 3302 Fuhrman Ave. E, Ste, 107, Seattle, WA 98102. We want to hearing from all over the state.



Meet Our Staff

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THANK YOUS
Real Change, DSHS/ Division of Child and Family Services, Casey Family Program, Soledad, Richard Blake, Youth Care, Mr. Keller

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Seattle, WA 98102
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www.mockingbirdsociety.org

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

THE MOCKINGBIRD SOCIETY is an independent, non-profit organization that is dedicated to improving the safety, quality of life and future of the children and adolescents living in the Washington State foster care/group home system. The *Mockingbird Times* is a job-training program sponsored by the Mockingbird Society.

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

I want to support The Mockingbird Society

Enclosed, please find my check made payable to Mockingbird Society in the amount of:

\$1,000 + Protector \$ _____ \$500 - \$999 Care Taker \$ _____
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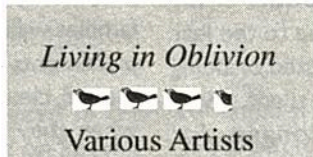
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To donate by mail: Please fill out and mail this form with a check or money order payable to The Mockingbird Society, to The Mockingbird Society, 3302 Fuhrman Ave E Ste 107, Seattle, WA 98102

Living in Oblivion

By BRITTANY LUCAS

THE 1980S may be long gone, but the music from this revolutionary decade of rock is here to stay. The '80s spawned a new form of music, called new wave, that originated from late '70s punk rock. New wave, with its synthesizers and playful electrical currents, gave the music scene a fresh breath of originality in a time of classic rock and the Top 40. Even though the radio stations weren't interested in playing records from bands such as The Naked Eyes and Duran Duran for most of the decade, MTV's media coverage of the alternative music scenes made new wave popular among '80s youth. Thus, new wave gave way to future explorations into the depths of alternative forms of music.



Living in Oblivion. The CD is a compilation of various new wave songs from the '80s. The CD brings you down memory lane with songs like "There's Always Something There to Remind Me," by Naked Eyes, and one of my choice picks, "Kids in America," by Kim Wilde. The CD also explores raw, rebellious, tantalizing sounds with songs such as "I eat cannibals," by Total Coelo, and "Homicide," by 999.

The CD may be a variety of music that's a bit outdated, but the transition of the pre-millennium music scene the CD highlights is worth seeing, well, a bit out of style. Not to mention the tracks are a fantastic collage of

retrospective, tangy sound. I highly recommend *Living in Oblivion* to anyone who is looking for a CD that is both refreshing and wanton.

A personal favorite '80s new wave CD of mine is

Profile: Brittany, Staff Writer

Tell us a little bit about your self

I am a seventeen-year-old youth in transition. I enjoy going to shows at Graceland, and listening to punk rock, techno, and industrial rock music. I also like to read, write, and jog in my free time.

What are some issues that you find important?

One of the main issues I feel is important is social injustice. When people are denied the same opportunities every one else gets because of their backgrounds, I feel upset that our own country would permit and allow such injustices to occur.

Another issue I find important is how some states treat their juvenile offenders and state kids. In some states, a kid can be locked up in jail for long periods of time for just running away or being kicked out. A lot of times the person stays in detention until they are found appropriate placements in residential facilities. Often detentions are not much better than adult jails. Just because someone isn't at the age of consent does not mean that they shouldn't be given all the court-appointed rights that an adult is given.

What is your foster care experience?

I never had to go to an actual foster home, but I have been in behavior treatment centers and group homes since I was 15. My guardian was neglectful, and the youth court decided to put me on informal probation because of my lack of parental care and school problems. I started to run away and was immediately put in to detention and placed in a treatment center for six months. I was forced to count through doorways, answer to my last name, follow long lists of strange, almost obsessive-compulsive-sounding rules, and even ask permission before I spoke. I was put in with girls who had murdered and sexually assaulted, and had serious emotional disturbances.

I remember being angry that Montana state would screw me over for something as small as running away. I was basically forced in to doing what ever anyone told me, whether I disagreed with it or not, so I could get my freedom. I finally decided to just comply with the system, and I was soon released, after paying a hefty fine to Montana.

If you could change one thing in the foster care system, what would it be?

I would probably change the conditions in the foster care system. I feel that there should be more placement alternatives that speak to an individual kid's needs. A lot of times, foster kids and state kids do not handle overly strict and conformist environments well. I feel that placements should try to be safe but the staff should care about the feelings and opinions of the kids. I also feel that these placements should reinforce independence instead of conformism. In the real world, knowing how to follow the rules isn't enough. Knowing how to make your own decisions is vital in living a productive life. Placements should also try to not overly penalize their residents for mistakes. After all, we are all human.

Why did you join the Mockingbird Times?

I was impressed that there was a paper that was working to improve the foster and juvenile system. I was frustrated with the system and I thought that writing for the *Mockingbird Times* would be a great way to make a difference by voicing my views. I also wanted the journalistic experience of working for a political paper.

What do you hope the Mockingbird Society will accomplish?

I hope the Mockingbird Society will assist in improving the conditions in our foster and juvenile system.



Join Foster Care Advocates for a Foster Care Odyssey

On March 18 - 20, hundreds of foster parents, foster care providers, residential care providers, social workers, and foster care youth will gather in Yakima for the annual foster care conference.

Although the original date for the conference had to be pushed back due to the September terrorist attacks, the sponsors are hoping to attract as many of the originally-planned attendees and speakers as possible, as well as anyone else who can add and benefit to this three-day-intensive discussion of how to help foster kids in Washington state. Workshop topics are expected to include how to train to become better foster parents, how to become part of legislation to help foster kids, how to develop a better relationship with a foster child, how to make the move towards adoption, and how to meet a foster child's different cultural needs, among several others.

The cost of attending the conference ranges from \$125 - \$165, including meals; lodging ranges from \$74 - \$84. Scholarships are available.

Registration materials are available by calling the conference coordinator at (425) 485-7776 or by mail at 2001 Foster Care Conference, c/o Preferred Planners, 16212 Bothell Everett Hwy, PMB #242, Mill Creek, WA 98012-1219.

Mockingbird Times Book Review Contest

Here at the *Mockingbird Times*, we have come up with a list of recommended books that we would like our young adult readers to write about and send to us. If we like your book review the best, you will receive a money order of \$15 and get your book review published in an upcoming issue of the *Mockingbird Times*. If you are attending school we will also pay for a pizza party for your class.

To be eligible you must be below the age of 22. When sending your submissions in, please include your contact information. Entries must be typed and spell checked. It's also all right to ask for help from other people when you're writing your book review.

Read as many books as you like from the list below and pick your favorite book to write about. Be sure to submit your entries by March 15.

Mockingbird Times Reading List

1. *A Life with out Consequences* by Steven Ellio
2. *A Child Called IT* by Dave Pelzer
3. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling
4. *The Box Car Children* by Gertrude Chandler Warner
5. *Fire Brats #2 Survivors* by Barbara and Scott Siegel

Mail submissions to:

The Mockingbird Society
3302 Fuhrman Ave. East Suite #107
Seattle WA 98102

OR

Email submissions to:

Newspaper@MockingbirdSociety.org

EVERY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

home or be freed for adoption? This bill will force them to think about education and communicate with the school the child is in. It may encourage a focus on recruiting foster homes in communities where there is a high incidence of placement in order to reduce the cost of transporting youth.

Will it cost anything to implement the bill, and if so how much?

The how much is very difficult to determine. 5,732 youth were placed in the last fiscal year. Roughly half returned home within 60 days — some in a just a few days. The entire group is very small and, while transportation is expensive and inconvenient, we think it's doable. We have asked DSHS for data, which would tell us how far away youth are placed from their homes, and haven't gotten it yet. DSHS hasn't thought about these issues before and can't easily find the information. However, this policy change may really help their practice. Youth are more likely to return home if they visit their birth parents — and if they are close by, it's more likely to happen.

Foster youth score, on average, 15 to 20 percentile points below non-foster youth in statewide achievement scores.

At both the elementary and secondary levels, twice as many foster youth had repeated a grade, changed schools during the year, or enrolled in special education programs compared with non-foster youth.

- From "Educational Attainment of Foster Youth," a report by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

JACKIE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

established. I would still have the teacher who knew my situation, understood my abilities, and saw great potential in me. Instead, I was in a brand new environment where my teachers and school staff had no idea of the support that I needed and the trauma that I had just experienced.



It took me a long time to re-establish myself. I suffered academically and socially due to the educational instability I experienced. Everything in my life was out of my control and I felt that I had lost my entire identity. I was hesitant to tell people in my school about my experience due to the fear of feeling rejected or being judged. I was silent, I was hurting, I longed for guidance, but I didn't have the courage to speak out to the strangers in my new environment.

How do you think someone who wants to give support for this bill could do so?

There are many ways to support this bill. Aside from political involvement and encouraging your

The Two Faces of Incarceration

BY SOLEDAD PICON

THERE ARE BOTH advantages and disadvantages to being incarcerated.

The advantages are having time to think about the crime you committed and getting sober. You will have a lot of time to think. I got angry because all I had to do was wait until court. I wondered how much time I would receive. I cried for a week because I couldn't believe I was in trouble again, and for the same thing as last time. I was messed up. Hard core!

Being sober while I was incarcerated was hard for me. It was hard for me because I was used to getting high on weekends. Now on

I was used to getting high on weekends. Now on weekends I was cleaning my room in my mail unit!

weekends I was cleaning my room in my mail unit! I got really mad sometimes. My body started to react. I felt sick, but it went away. The good thing is I started thinking clearly.

Many girls hate the lack of privacy. I hated that, too. Four other girls had to take a shower in every other stall. And I had to change in front of them. The staff asked me, "Why are you buzzing out?" When I didn't cooperate, they said, "Go to your room."

I felt lonely many times. My mom was in a different state. I couldn't get hold of my mom! One of my uncles stopped talking to me. I felt so sad. I hate being

incarcerated!

Interested in Getting a College Scholarship?

IF YOU ARE PLANNING on starting college soon and need financial assistance, the Casey Scholars Program will be accepting applications from eligible student through April 15. The Program has already awarded more than 185 scholarships to young adults who were emancipated from foster care in 2001. If you are interested in pursuing a higher level of education then applying for the Casey Scholars Program could be a first step in achieving your educational goals.

To be eligible for the program, you must meet these qualifications:

- 1. I am under the age of 25
2. I have been accepted into an accredited post-secondary school or program.
3. I was in public private foster care for a minimum of twelve months at the time of my 18th birthday.
4. I was not adopted following foster care.
5. I am not currently a Casey Family Programs CEJT participant.

If you are interested in finding out more information on this scholarship opportunity, you can visit the Orphan Foundation of America website at http://www.orphan.org/scholarships.html or call their toll free number at 1-800-950-4673.

representatives to approve this bill, there is much to be done. Support for foster care in general is desperately needed in our state and nation. That includes supporting children in care, individuals who choose to become foster parents to these kids, and those in professions that provide services to foster children.

Another important aspect of supporting this bill calls all teachers, administrators, social workers, and other professional to voice their thoughts and opinions on the issue. Often times the children in care don't have a voice, especially not a public voice. It is our responsibility to speak for these children and to voice the concern. If you know that the transition for foster children out of their homes could be improved if children remained in their home school, then say so! It would make an incredible difference in the lives of foster children to have educational stability in the midst of family instability.

Another crucial need is for more foster homes and families willing to open their doors. If there were more placements available then kids would not have to be moved clear across the county or to a new county when they are removed. If more foster homes were available then kids could be placed in a home that is still in the district of their home school and transportation costs would not be an issue.

Poetry Corner

Sitting here, feeling lonely and bored. Thoughts of home, in my mind are stored. Dreaming of the day when I am finally free to realize the potential of being me.

I'm scared of the road that I have ahead, things from the past rearing their head. I don't want to go back to the same old life, living each day in chaos and strife.

I need to remember all that I have been through. From these experiences, I learned and grew. The time that I have been under God's rule has taught me things I'll never learn in school.

I no longer take freedom for granted. Asking for more, after all I've been handed. I no longer spend all my time asking why. I'll never know the answer, so I don't both to try.

I'm sorry for causing so much anguish and shame, but I cannot continue to live with so much pain. What occurred was a tragedy, of this there is no doubt. But it must be forgotten, both inside and out.

My life is too precious to waste on resentment, now I will strive for peace and contentment. So as I sit here and ponder my hopes and my dreams, I thank God I'm alive for all that I've seen.

— TYRA COX

In Memoriam
ROBERT AMBROSE BLAYNEY
February 3, 1932 — October 14, 2001
A friend to all children