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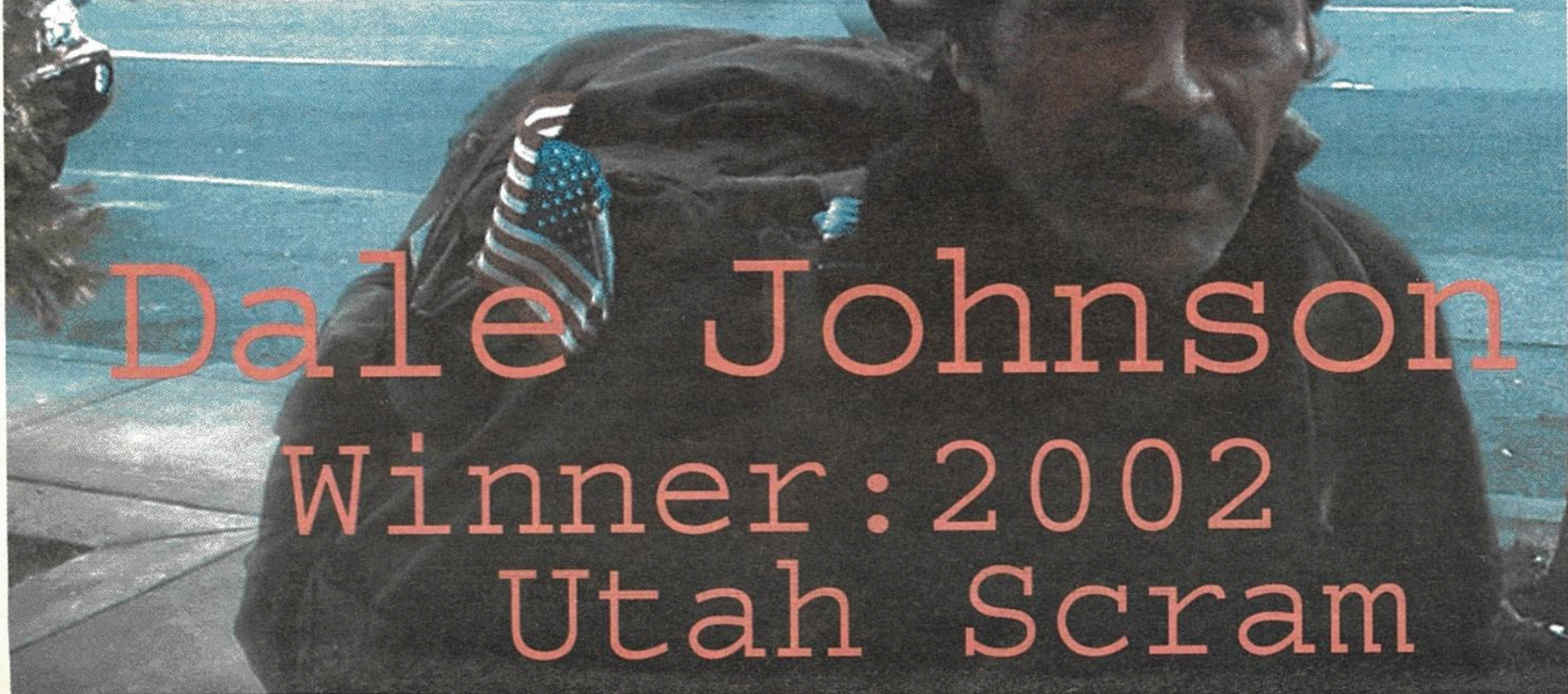
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Creal Change

Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless • Volume 9

Feb 21 - May 6 2002



Dale Johnson Winner: 2002 Utah Scram

DALE JOHNSON ARRIVED IN SEATTLE ON A ONE-WAY-BUS TICKET FROM SALT LAKE CITY. PHOTO BY ADAM HOLDORF.

Cast Down from the Mountain

Someone in Salt Lake City wants to rid its Olympic playground of homeless people

By Adam Holdorf

The job on a shrimping boat was just about done in Florida, so Dale Johnson started looking around for something else. "Me and a partner decided to go where the work was," he told me the other day, over a cup of coffee at one of Belltown's last gritty taverns.

"We thought it would be Salt Lake City."

It was going to be cold there, much colder than the Gulf Coast, but he and his traveling companion had heard that the Mormon Church was generous with handouts. He figured Salt Lake City charity would take care of them.

They rode a train north and west, then hitched ride with a hippie in a VW bus. As they walked the last few miles into town, a State Patrol car pulled over beside them. The officer got out and said, "I suggest that you don't go to Salt Lake City," Dale recalls. "He made it sound like they didn't want the homeless."

That night they slept under a highway overpass and started a campfire to

keep warm. Police roused them, put out the fire, and told them to start walking. They walked into town that morning, knocking on the doors of area churches, asking for sleeping bags. When they stopped to warm their hands by a fire barrel, more police came around. Officers would ask for ID and run what's called a warrant check: plugging the suspects' names into a nationwide database, to see if they're wanted anywhere else. Dale was clear, and so was his friend, so they were always let go. But with a warning: "You got to keep going."

The two came to so-called Welfare Square, a one-block center in downtown Salt Lake City where nearly ev-

ery social service — from a men's and women's shelter to a jobs program — is located. At one of the agencies, Dale

got a new pair of boots to replace the ones he had worn out walking. They got a meal ticket, and went out for lunch.

Before they left, one of the staff told them, if you can get a ticket out of here, do it. Someone was coming by the next morning with bus tickets.

"They told us that we could talk to a man. He would come by and have work for us, but it wasn't in Salt Lake City, it was in Seattle."

They were having a heck of a time not getting noticed by police. That af-

ternoon, cops converged on his friend for rooting around in a dumpster. He's in jail for 90 days, Dale thinks. The cops seemed to have a policy, he said: "If you were stopped more than three or four times, you went to jail."

Dale spent Wednesday night at the shelter. He's not sure of its name; it could have been The Road Home, it could have been something else. "Something House; I'm not sure what," he said, when I prodded him with the names of area organizations.

The next day, two men and a woman, well dressed, pulled up in a van and presented anyone who wanted it with a bank check, made out to Greyhound and stamped "non-refundable," for a one-way trip. Dale left that afternoon, a day before the Winter Olympics' opening ceremony. Glad to be gone, he didn't much care who was paying his way. To him, it was an easy decision.

Continued on Page 8

The Winter Games create Olympus-sized problems for everyday people. Salt Lake City tried to mollify the worst of them — but their efforts have been too little, too late.

Inside: Drug Justice • Hope in Freeway Park • New Rules, New Housing • Rental Block • Defending the Poorest Public



Deep thanks all around

Dear friends at *Real Change*,

I would like to thank you guys for taking your time to put my poster in your newspaper ("Citizen Participation Project," Dec 27, 2001). I'd also like to thank you for printing my poster in color because I know that only the front page is in color. I really appreciate it. My parents are very proud of me. And I know that we can make a difference.

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,
Conrado Padillo, Jr.
 Health Student in Mercer
 Middle School

Dear friends,

I believe Conrado captures it best — the gratefulness we feel for publishing

his poster. This moment of celebration was a highlight for my class and me.

Also we want to thank Jon Gould (*Real Change* board president) and his son for stopping by with a warm handshake and words of congratulations to Conrado.

Thank you for acknowledging the concern my students have for homeless people. We appreciate the "voice" you give to members in our community that often are not heard.

With deep respect
 and appreciation,
**Ms. Ellis and the health
 students in Room 203 at
 Mercer Middle School**

Forgotten addicts?

Dear *Real Change*,

I am a recovering addict. I have been clean for almost six years, and I live in what is supposed to be clean and sober housing at a downtown hotel.

There are supposed to be three floors dedicated to recovering people, but yet the hotel rents out these rooms on these floors as regular hotel rooms. I brought this up at a house meeting one evening, and the program manager said the reason was "the almighty dollar."

Are people today more concerned about making a buck than helping recovering addicts stay clean?

My home at this place is my safe haven from the outside and I need to

feel safe and not be afraid of maybe finding a needle on the floor of what is supposed to be a recovery program floor.

Have people swept the recovering addicts under the rug? Have they forgotten about us? What are we to do if all we have are these programs and we cannot even feel safe in them?

Yours truly,
Anonymous

Honest mental health

Dear *Real Change*,

Thank you for the articles on mental healthcare in the July 12 - 25, 2001 issue (Ed — Sorry for the late publication, Rex). They will help inform many readers about matters important to the poor and homeless (as well as the rich and housed). The articles are well-balanced and well-written. I do wish to offer a couple clarifications, however.

One article points out the pains caused by some treatments, including side effects such as Tardive Dyskinesia (TD). This can be caused by many psychiatric medications, particularly the "anti-psychotics," such as Thorazine, which is mentioned. Thorazine is not often prescribed currently, however.

While the newer "anti-psychotics" do cause their own side effects, the rate of TD has been reduced, thank God, though not eliminated. We should also point out that it has not been attributed to Prozac, the popular anti-depression/anti-anxiety pill which is mentioned in the same paragraph.

We do need to be honest with patients and society about both the benefits and harms that come with each option, so that they can make informed choices for themselves. Thank you for helping.

Sincerely,
Rex Rempel

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Real Change

Puget Sound's Voice of the Poor and Homeless

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

On the Web at

http://www.realchangenews.org
 Email rchange@speakeasy.org
 ISSN 1085-729X

Real Change vendors receive 70¢ of the \$1.00 paid for this paper.

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.



Dan Bootz and Jeanne Ryan

Dan Bootz and Jeanne Ryan know the value of forced human interaction.

The two *Real Change* interns first met during such an interaction, as part of a random group of Seattle University freshmen thrown together to support each other during the first days of school. They immediately started dating, and a mere two-and-a-half years later, during Christmas break in Dan's home state of Wisconsin, they got engaged. They plan to tie the knot in June 2003, after they graduate.

Jeanne and Dan both joined *Real Change* in the fall. Dan mans the front desk, and Jeanne writes stories for the newspaper as the editorial assistant.

"I had never done journalism before," recalls Jeanne. "I was really nervous about the work."

However, doubts about what to expect were overcome with a strong belief in the importance of what *Real Change* is doing, and the ability to be a part of it. Through their Jesuit school and their own upbringings, both Dan and Jeanne value being able to make a difference in other people's lives.

And it doesn't hurt that *Real Change* provides its services in an environment that's both easy-going and respectful of other people's needs.

"I've had jobs behind a desk since I was 15," says Dan. "*Real Change* is the best atmosphere I've worked in." ■

— Molly Rhodes



It's a Crime

Fix the justice system now

By Adam Holdorf

Why are people poor? Some would say that the answer's contained in the question. People are poor because they don't have the things they need. Because they don't have adequate food, clothing, or shelter. Find a way to give them those things, and they won't be poor anymore.

Others would say, People are poor because they don't know how to be anything else. Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day; teach a man to fish and... etc.

Then there's another answer, and it echoes around the cavernous basement of American poverty. It's a voice that asks, *Who lives upstairs? There's something in the way.* Sometimes it's a barrier set up by racism, or class bias. Sometimes what's in the way is a gun, a cop, a judge, or a jail — things that have the

Sometimes it's a barrier set up by racism, or class bias. Sometimes, what's in the way is a gun, a cop, a judge, or a jail — things that have the power to forge an abstraction like racism into a steely reality. That's called the criminal justice system.

power to forge an abstraction like racism into a steely reality. That's called the criminal justice system. From the fatal police shootings of African-American men to the disproportionate monitoring of homeless people, we see the harm. We see it in this issue of *Real Change*:

How Dale Johnson, whose search for work took him to Salt Lake City, was caught between police harrassment and charity's false promises, and was squeezed back out again (cover story).

How defendants in the region's Mental Health Courts get help — from an employee of the same for-profit

company that would manage their treatment plan (page 9).

How the legacy of criminal behavior taints a man's future, cutting off the possibility of getting housing (Tenant Talk, page 11).

How the effort to endow poor people's lives with justice can come to a frustrated, thankless end (interview, page 10).

Every issue, we see the gritty reality of homelessness in the files of Streetwatch (page 13). Each item in that column is a nasty, brutish, brief expression of the situation. And they are just a sampling.

How do we deal with violence, drugs, and other criminal behavior in our society? Who suffers most? Consider the following:

● With roughly two million Americans doing time behind bars, the U.S. now has the highest rate of incarceration of any nation on the planet. A 35-year-old Black man is more likely to have gone to prison than to have graduated from a four-year college.

● Fully 40 percent of the 2,700 inmates in King County Jail are African American, although African Americans only represent 5.4 percent of the total county population.

● Nationwide, nearly 1.5 million American children have a mother or father in prison, an increase of 60 percent in the last decade alone. Once a parent is imprisoned, children often lose contact with their mothers and fathers. A majority of state inmates reported to the Bureau of Justice Statistics that they had never had a personal visit with their children since being incarcerated.

The local police department's own tactics continue to fill the jails disproportionately. Last year, Harvard graduate students studied drug-related arrests by Seattle police and found that by targeting downtown Seattle drug dealers, local law enforcement may be contributing to a serious ethnic disparity in drug arrests. The police department responded by calling for more money for drug treatment and specialized drug courts. It decided not to change its strategy of under-cover drug arrests.

Targeted all out of proportion to their guilt, the poor and nonwhite then rot in prison under our state's mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines. But here, there is hope for change, as the state Legislature considers lessening jail time for drug offenders and diverting them into treatment. It's not only the humane thing to do, but also the smart thing. If the bill became law today, it would save our cash-strapped, social service-slashing state an estimated \$33 million. To find out more, turn to the Citizens Participation Project on the back page. ■

Statistics provided courtesy of Silja J.A. Talvi, a Seattle-based journalist and member of the Real Change Advisory Board. Her information first appeared in a longer story in the July 2001 issue of ColorsNW Magazine.

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More Than Meets the Eye

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

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Dire straits in the cities

Homelessness in Seattle rose significantly last year, according to the 2001 Hunger and Homelessness Survey. The survey cited fallout from the Sept. 11 attacks on America, combined with the current recession, as having a significant impact on the level of homelessness across the nation.

The survey was released last December by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and compared the levels of homelessness reported by 27 major cities whose mayors were part of the Conference's Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness.

The survey found that an average of 52 percent of the shelter requests by homeless families across the nation went unmet last year, because of a lack of appropriate resources. In 52 percent of the cities surveyed, homeless families had to break up in order to be accommodated in emergency shelters.

In Seattle's case, officials say, sometimes teenagers in families go to youth shelters when family shelters are full because of lack of capacity or when the program does not accept teenage males in their program.

The survey also examined the causes of homelessness. The main one is, and continues to be, the lack of affordable housing. Seattle was one of the cities noted for its lack of affordable housing, a problem exacerbated by low-paying jobs, the second-most common cause for homelessness. Mental illnesses, the lack of needed services, and poverty were the other causes of homelessness prevalent in Seattle last year.

Across the survey cities, it was estimated that single men make up 40 percent of the homeless population, families with children 40 percent, single women 14 percent, and unaccompanied youth 4 percent. In Seattle, 41 percent of the homeless population comprises families, 40 percent are single males, and 18 percent are single women. Unaccompanied youth account for 1 percent of Seattle's homeless population.

Officials from the survey cities estimated that on average, 50 percent of the homeless population is African-American, 35 percent is white, 12 percent is Hispanic, and one percent is Asian. In Seattle, whites accounted for the majority of the homeless population at 40 percent. Thirty-seven percent of the homeless are African-American, 11 percent are Hispanic, 5 percent are Native American, and 2 percent are Asian. The survey also estimated that people considered mentally ill account for 22 percent of the homeless population in the cities surveyed, and substance abusers 34 percent. Seattle reported that 26 percent of its homeless population is considered mentally ill, while 29 percent are substance abusers.

Twenty percent of those considered homeless in the survey cities hold part or full-time jobs, while 11 percent are veterans. Seattle had a higher rate of employment among the homeless, at 28 percent, and veterans count for 8 percent of the homeless population.

The forecast for homelessness across the United States is generally gloomy. City officials are virtually unanimous in their view that the nation's weak economy will have a negative impact on the problems of hunger and homelessness. Nearly all officials agree that more people will fall into the ranks of the homeless in the current year. Officials in all the cities surveyed also expect that requests for emergency shelter will increase this year. ■

— Shantini James

Housing Levy pays for new housing

On February 14, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels announced the developers who were awarded part of the \$6.2 million dollars from the 1995 Housing Levy. The levy raised an additional \$59.2 million in Seattle property taxes, money that was designated to help produce and preserve at least 1,360 housing units for low- and extremely-low-income families over the past seven years. To qualify for housing, a person has to make less than 50 percent of the median annual income in Seattle — less than \$25,250 a year for a single person and \$36,100 for a family of four.

Some of the programs that the Housing Levy sponsors are homeowner rehabilitation, homeowner assistance, and rental products for low and extremely low-income families.

The \$6.2 million dollars was awarded by the mayor as low-interest, long-term loans for developers who specialize in providing affordable housing for low-income families. The stipulations to receive these loans are to set aside apartments for extremely low-income household or for transitional housing for homeless people in the effort to provide a home while getting back on their feet.

The developers who received the funding are:

- Lutheran Compass Center/Common Ground, to repair the damage the Com-



pass Center incurred last year. The center provides shelter and housing for homeless men and women. It would also use the money to buy more beds and provide a hygiene center for homeless men.

- Southeast Effective Development, to build seven apartments for working families.
 - Delridge Neighborhoods Development Association, to create 30 new units and a community building.
 - Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority (SCIDPDA), to support senior housing, assisted living, a library, and a community center.
 - Housing Resource Group, to support 65 apartments for low-income working people.
 - Low Income Housing Institute, to provide 14 transitional housing units for the homeless.
- Nickels also announced that the city would begin taking applications for a rehabilitation program for the International District and Pioneer square. The program would provide \$10 million to create up to 150 new affordable housing units in areas where there are older buildings standing empty. ■

— Angelique Ledesma

Be there

Reading and reception with Barbara Ehrenreich, author of *Nickel & Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*, marks the eve of the landmark conference **Building Alliances to End Poverty: Shaping the Impending Welfare Debate**. Peter Edelman, the former Assistant Secretary for planning and evaluation at the Department of Health and Human Services, who resigned when the 1996 Welfare Reform law passed, will also speak. The conference comes as Congress gears up to reauthorize that law. Let's make sure it treats people decently. The Ehrenreich event is free; tickets for the next day cost \$15 for low-income people and \$40 for everyone else. Friday, March 1, and Saturday, March 2, Pigott Building at Seattle University, 12th Ave. and Marion Street.

To register or for more information, please call (206) 694-6794 or www.povertyaction.org. ■

People interested in lending a hand for more shelter are encouraged to attend a **Family Shelter Symposium**, presented by the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness. Speakers from 13 different community organizations will talk to the public about homelessness among local families and ways to provide more shelter, and instruct the audience in how to create active new partnerships between providers, congregations, and individuals in the community. Some existing partnerships that have been helping to increase the number of housing provision for families will be presented. The symposium will be held from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Sat., March 9, at Bloedel Hall, St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E. on Capitol Hill. For more information, please call Margery Muench at (206) 615-1574. ■



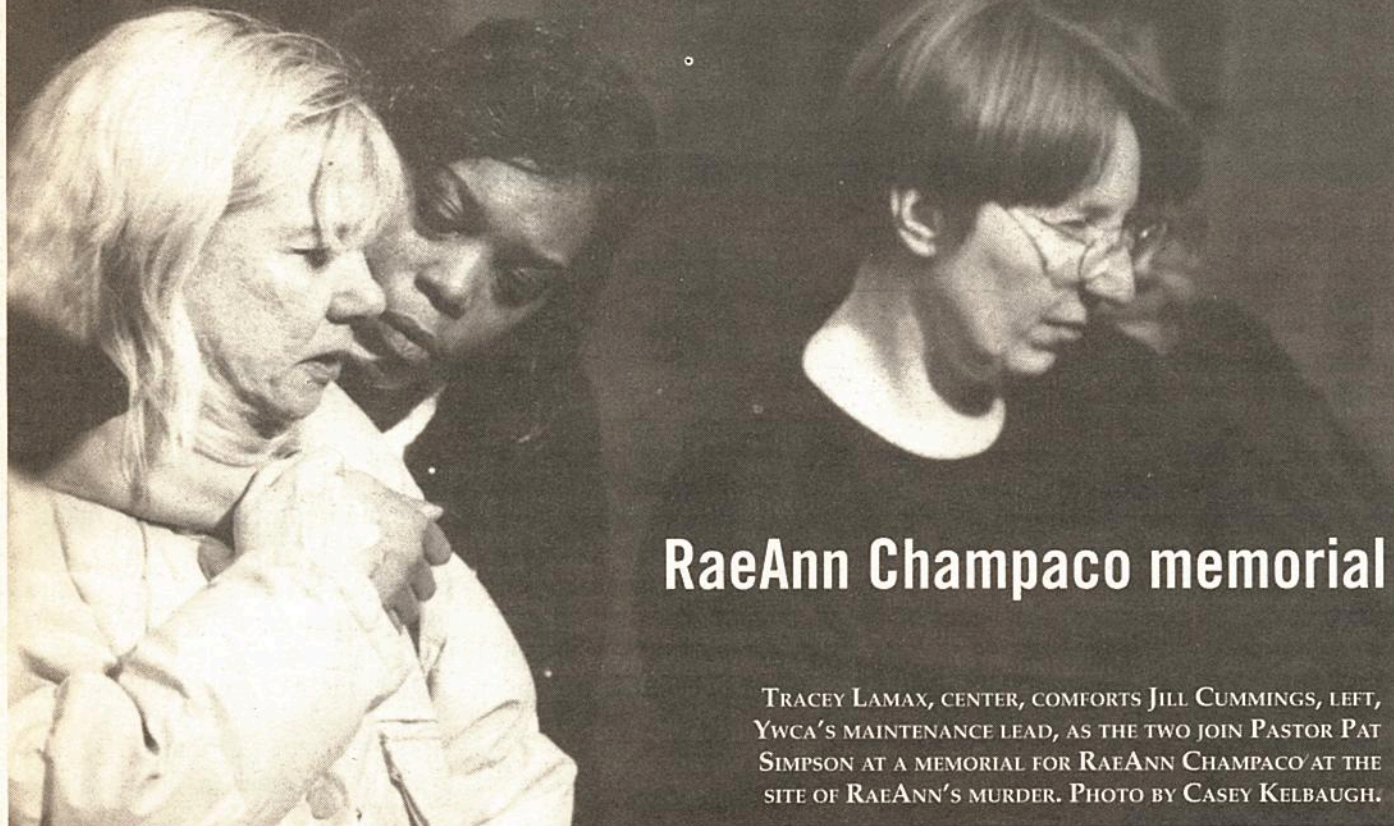
STANDING AT THE CROSSROADS

JANUARY 31 WAS TO BE THE LAST DAY OF STREET OUTREACH SERVICES' OPERATION AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SECOND AVENUE AND PIKE STREET (A.K.A. "THE BLADE"). GUERRILLA SUPPORTERS OF THE DAY CENTER, ONE OF THE CITY'S LARGEST, CHANGED THE INTERSECTION'S SIGNPOSTS TO READ RACE AVENUE AND CLASS ST. THE LANDLORD DECIDED TO LET SOS, A HAVEN FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE ADDICTED TO DRUGS, STAY UNTIL THE END OF APRIL. PHOTO BY MIKE HAMRICK.

Dept. of Corrections: A news item in our last issue ("Shifting Priorities," Feb. 7) reported that the Seattle Housing Authority was changing its admission criteria for Section 8 vouchers. We got it wrong: the SHA Board of Commissioners voted to change admission preferences for their low-income public housing projects. We apologize for the error. ■

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

Louder than Words



RaeAnn Champaco memorial

TRACEY LAMAX, CENTER, COMFORTS JILL CUMMINGS, LEFT, YWCA'S MAINTENANCE LEAD, AS THE TWO JOIN PASTOR PAT SIMPSON AT A MEMORIAL FOR RAEANN CHAMPACO AT THE SITE OF RAEANN'S MURDER. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

By Michele Marchand

"She was no bigger than a whisper," said Debbie D. at a memorial service for RaeAnn Champaco. But RaeAnn's death, a stabbing in broad daylight at Freeway Park, shouted louder than words.

RaeAnn was a small, bright, cheerful, energetic Guamanian woman who had lived at the YWCA for just four months, since leaving her abusive ex-fiance in Port Angeles. She was only 30 years old, she was deaf-and-mute, and she was in the process of reclaiming her life in a new place with new friends.

As news of her murder started to circulate, fear filtered throughout the women's and homeless communities. It took a full week for the identity of the victim to be released; her stabbing is still unsolved. At the weekly Tent City meeting the week of the murder, a woman named Morgan warned, "I went to the bathroom in that park two days earlier. Be careful! Be careful!"

Unsolved crime

The stabbing happened on a sunny Friday morning. A group of women entering the restrooms at the east end of Freeway Park found a woman's body there. "As they ran screaming from the restroom, they saw a white man in a blue trench coat, 40 to 50 years old with brown hair," according to police spokesman Duane Fish. "The man pulled his coat over his head and ran north through the park." He was not found during a search of the park and environs.

The identity of the woman who was killed was not released, so by the following Monday many of us started calling the Medical Examiner's Office for information. The victim had no identification, jewelry, or wallet, and didn't match any missing-persons reports. By Tuesday the ME's Office began

leafletting the homeless women's and provider community, seeking help identifying the victim. The ME had no recourse, in struggling to make an ID, but to publish RaeAnn's morgue photo; I don't believe I've seen such a haunting thing in my life. Both WHEEL and the Church of Mary Magdalene also circulated a leaflet describing the victim, hoping to help identify her. By Wednesday, YWCA staff made the identification. Staff there had been worried it might have been one of their own, due to the proximity of the park to their facility.

A week later there were still no suspects in custody. SPD started leafletting the homeless community, this time with a photo of a person of interest: an African-American man named Larry Dorsey, RaeAnn's ex-fiance. Multiple domestic violence complaints against Dorsey are on file in Kitsap County. Last fall, he was charged with stabbing another man five times in Pioneer Square when the man refused to give information about RaeAnn's whereabouts.

On Friday, February 8, the *Seattle Times* reported that Dorsey had been apprehended in Chicago, but police are not yet calling him a suspect in RaeAnn's murder. The white man fleeing the murder scene hasn't been caught. Word on the street is that the white man who was stabbed by Larry Dorsey last fall was the one seen fleeing the murder scene, and that he might have killed RaeAnn. A homeless man interviewed for this story said he spoke to a friend of a friend who knows this to be true. But then, the streets are paved with rumors....

The spirit of RaeAnn's smile

Women started unfolding their fears as soon as RaeAnn's identity was made known, first at a small memorial at the YWCA, and then as a small group

of Y residents started organizing a cleansing ritual and Women in Black vigil with women from WHEEL.

At the YWCA memorial, and later, over endless cups of tea in the YWCA eighth floor lounge, women shared memories of their friend and mapped out their strategy for the public ritual, to take place at the restrooms at Freeway Park.

A couple of the women and RaeAnn had set up a signal system of waves through the windows of their facing rooms at the Y. "Can we close her curtains now? It's painful to have them open and know she's not there to wave back."

Debbie D. wrote a poem: "You could not hear and we never spoke, but now you speak with angels. I saw you walking in silent serenity, yet always with a smile and a wave Hello! We needed no words to share a greeting. My neighbor, I will remember you and thank you for the spirit of your smile."

Amanda spoke of RaeAnn's mother, who'd come to the YWCA to gather her daughter's belongings. She tried to comfort. "Don't be sad; she's in a better place now, with the angels."

We were all rendered speechless by a thought Ann shared: "Can you imagine what it was like for her the first time she could hear (in heaven)?"

Together, the women wrote their RaeAnn manifesto, to leaflet passersby at Freeway Park: "We are doing our ritual/witnessing to point out that the

Continued on Page 8

AN EVENING WITH
BILL FRISELL
 and
GREG LEISL
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GIANTS AND MIDGETS

And there was this giant that ran by with an unconscious person—survival visits again.
“We all have to survive somehow,” that said.

“The world will never know,” was the comment on the phone.

More poison dumped in the driveway. “We are saving you.” Can’t tell by the absence of a brain that a lot of the poison went into my veins in the night.
In the morning the midgets roll by “We are the right size.”

Late afternoon the giants and midgets walk together.

On the phone “All your rights raped you long ago”; and to “save your life” in the night they will call that way again or Dr. Fatal Shot will finish you off.
I’D BE BETTER OFF IN HEAVEN, was my reply.

They reply — above.

AND IN THE NIGHT THE GIANTS “STAND.”

We will all help Carol get that right. What’s right has about knocked my back off, cut more pieces of tooth off and steals from me constantly.

If I didn’t know that Christ is going to deliver me from all the Giants and Midgets—there wouldn’t be any point to go on with life at all.

ALTHOUGH CHRIST DIDN’T SUFFER SEXUAL ABUSE, HE SUFFERED IN EVERY OTHER WAY, BY THE PEOPLE HE DIED TO SAVE.

— CAROL LENO

VENDOR #1769

FEBRUARY 17, 2000

Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning



This column was going to be great. Anitra, Tex, and Cowboy, “the First Three of the Seattle Six,” were going to be tried by Seattle for the crime of sheltering people out of the rain under the King County Ad Building overhang. I was going to skip the boring bits, skip all the hours that Anitra et al would spend watching lawyers jockey. Just as the trial got interesting, I would be there taking notes, and this column would have been the distillation of all the awesome trial drama.

Well, guess what. There wasn’t anything BUT the boring bits. After about 12 hours of mind-numbingly dull motions, not counting breaks for lunch and paper copying, the city just asked the judge to dismiss the charges, and the judge

said OK.

That was it. No harangues, no “where were you on the night of.” No “I would like to remind the witness she is under oath.” No last minute note passed to the defense attorney by a handsome private detective. No brilliant cross examination. No map of the scene of the crime. No one screaming from the back of the courtroom, “Alright! I did it! Yes, I did it! I had to do it, don’t you see? I hated her so much, with her damn poetry workshops and her computer lessons! That’s why I framed her!”

It seems the defendants were charged with trespassing on county property, but the county wasn’t willing to have a representative appear in court to explain why it objected to allowing a handful of people to escape the rain on public property when they weren’t being a nuisance in any way. So the city, who was doing the prosecuting, realized it couldn’t win.

So instead of talking about that, I’m going to reminisce about my old ’69 Rambler. Long-time readers may remember her from my Opus 7, “Home was a ’69 Rambler / I’d rolled it away from the road / Home was a ’69 Rambler / until the state ha-ad it towed / etc.”

I didn’t just buy that car to live in it. We had a history together. We were a couple. A math professor and his wheels. I bought her at Rutgers NJ in 1979

for \$200. Her previous owner had lost her in a drug bust. I needed her to make it between classes in that sprawling campus.

When classes ended in 1980 I had to come here to Seattle. I decided to keep the Rambler by driving us across country. That trip was to cement our relationship forever. (Get it? “Cement.” Ha!)

There were “thunder strips” in Pennsylvania. Thunder strips shake your car apart if you are doing more than the speed limit. We met them in a rainstorm. I thought she was dying. I cried over her for hours on the side of the road. Then the rain subsided and I could see the strips.

The Man in the Yellow Beetle appeared in Pennsylvania. From there to Wyoming not a single hour passed that one of us didn’t pass the other, except for a detour over a mountain. It was amazing. We took breaks at the same times. We must have slept at the same times. We drove at the same speeds. Uncanny.

I saw an interstate shunt that went over a mountain alongside Mt. Rushmore. As is my wont, I thought, “What the hell?” That stretch of interstate inspired this Haiku (this is the original version).

’69 Rambler

Divided Highway Ahead

My Girlfriend’s Behind

The “highway” was one lane in each direction, no shoulders, usually no railings. Divided highway signs signaled such things as trees in the middle of the road. As we reached the peak, my love nearly died of high altitude asphyxiation. It was snowing. I will never forget her gasps of pain. But she made it. We both arrived here May 17, one day before we would have been ashed on by St. Helens.

This column is dedicated to her spirit—my ’69 Rambler, b 1969, d 1984. ■

“Alright! I did it! Yes, I did it! I had to do it, don’t you see? I hated her so much, with her damn poetry workshops and her computer lessons! That’s why I framed her!”



Idle Thoughts While Cleaning Alvie's Place

For forty years you have lived here.
You didn't keep house so very well,
But you loved it. I can tell.

Now forty years of fingerprints
Are gone — just vanished — with the spray
And a cloth. All washed away.

But are they? Washed away, I mean.
Houses keep portions of people they shelter.
I clear the trash and mementos and clutter

And clean it, paint it here and there;
Exorcise you till it seems I am heartless.
I know you'd be angry to see it so spotless,

'Cause I washed off all your fingerprints;
Small indication that just you, you alone
Had sole rights to think of this house as your home.

How fortunate you were, Alvie.
For as many years as the Israelites roamed
You spent putting fingerprints throughout your home.

— JOBI

Scream against Time.
Soft shadows whisper words
Of indifference.
Hollow ghost keeps laughing.
The hour glass is filled. Northern moon changes.

— J.L. NAVARRO

Silence knows our love.
Sadness hides my rage.
Falling words laugh their anger.
Tomorrow conceals my tears.

— J.L. NAVARRO

Rain breaking loudly.
Sun awakens.
Time happens elsewhere.
We wait patiently.

— J.L. NAVARRO

Dance Naked on the Balcony

I lean against the wrought-iron balcony
surveying the street below: junkies, hookers & drunks.
They emerge from doorways
their cries interrupting sleep
as if in a pagan ritual
they're drawn to the fountain on Yesler & 3rd.
Tubular glass pipes and lighters
they create Dante's constellation
bought
smoke. Exhuming their parent's dreams, they talk
of designer clothes, tennis shoes and cell phones...
bein' roun' a broke motherfucker/ you be broke/
tomorrow the first/ mother's day/ no, father's!
They laugh. I climb onto the ledge,
drink a 211 and the beer can reflects neon
splintering on
retinae. My wild woman wants to dance naked
on the rusted platform above Pioneer Square.
I inhale slowly drawing in the moist air
listening to...trying to discern
whether it is a train or ferry horn.
Later she calls me in and is slippery as a fish
wearing a necklace of
light
an amber color
like sodium-filled
streetlights.
Auburn hair shifts with doggerel movement
she professes knowledge smoking a filtered cigarette
and our subterranean audience laughing at me
fat drunk poet and wild woman on the antiquated balcony
The dance, the dance...
racing for the moon's halo like a carousel prize grasping,
realizing I, no, no, she will never
dance naked on the balcony. I lean on the stained
brick and into the night naked.

— EARLE THOMPSON

RAEANN Continued from Page 5

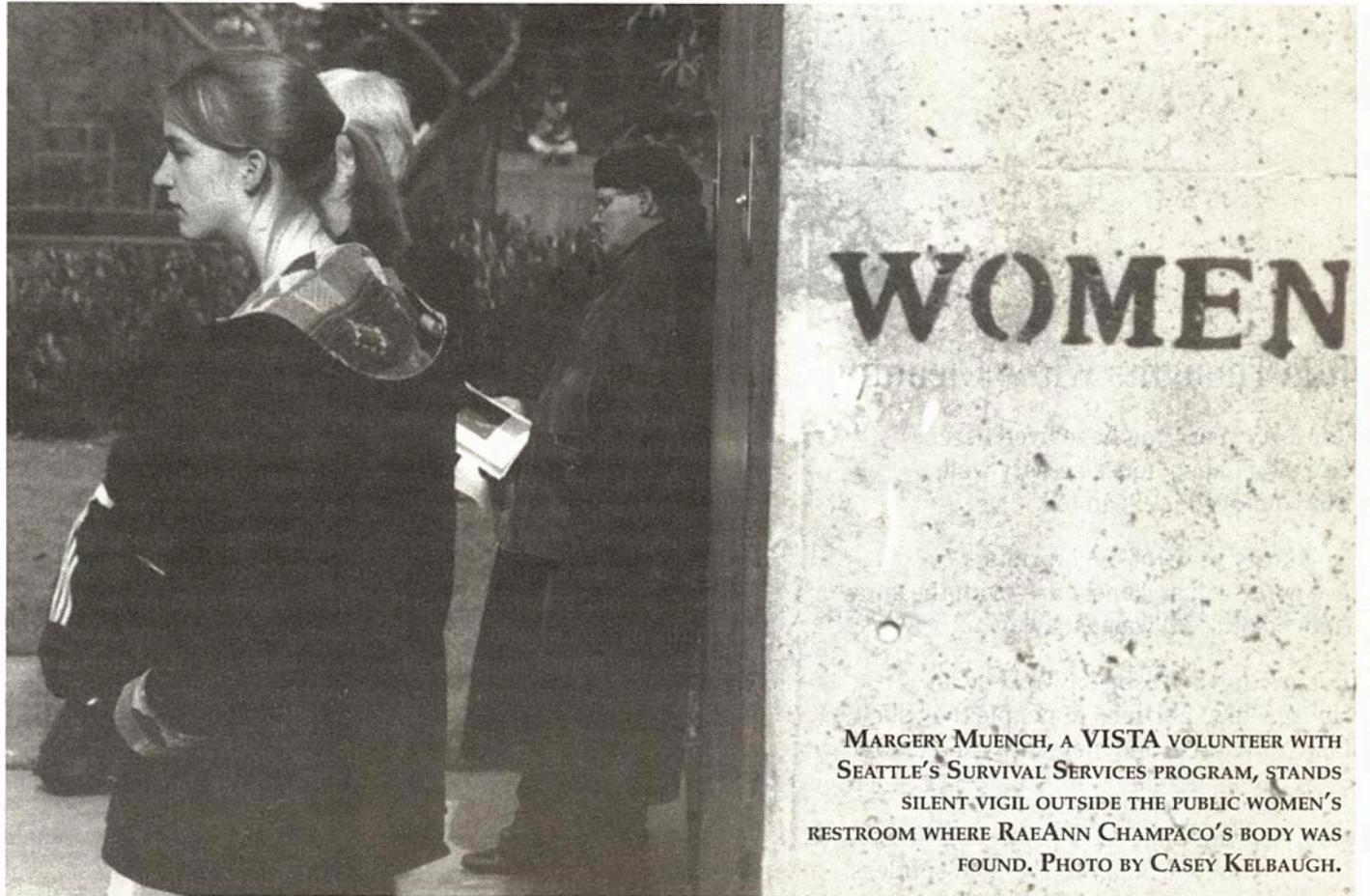
value of one's life is not based on the sum of one's wallet or socio-economic position. We demand that every effort continue toward solving this crime, as though it were still front page news and with the same vigor as if it had happened to the President's own daughter."

Women take back the park

On February 13, the day of the memorial vigil, fifteen of us made a black-clad procession through the labyrinthine park to the scene of the crime. The women from the eighth floor of the YWCA were ready: Amanda was dressed to the nines in natty black clothing; she had a feather in her hat and a pocketful of multicolored candles. Ann, just returned from the hospital, had her arm in a sling and her black leather jacket draped across her shoulders. Debbie D. brought a Valentine for RaeAnn: a potted pink tulip and greeting card.

Before we started our ritual, a bearded white man walked up to us. With no greeting he announced, "I just want you all to know I'm not the one who killed her." He was a little drunk; he wondered aloud why no one ever stands for homeless men who've died. "We do," we tell him. "We've stood vigil before, many times, for homeless men who have died. Last year we did a Women in Black vigil at the Public Safety Building for Timothy Dewitt, who fell off an embankment at this very park and died on a freeway onramp." Our bearded friend walked away.

There is power in this park, despite its blind spots, hiding places and dead silences. With a rattle, a woman from



MARGERY MUENCH, A VISTA VOLUNTEER WITH SEATTLE'S SURVIVAL SERVICES PROGRAM, STANDS SILENT VIGIL OUTSIDE THE PUBLIC WOMEN'S RESTROOM WHERE RAEANN CHAMPACO'S BODY WAS FOUND. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

the YWCA opened the circle and called the four directions. Pastor Pat Simpson of the Church of Mary Magdalene led us in prayer and the sharing of memories, and then an older Makah woman named Grace led us through a cleansing ritual with smoke and sage, blessing and cleansing each of us around the circle.

After each of us had been blessed, Grace stood silently in the center of the circle. The wind blew smoke from the still-burning sage directly toward the women's restroom door, as though the spirit of the wind itself were assisting

our cleansing. One by one we lit a candle; even the KIRO radio reporter set down her microphone and lit a candle in honor of RaeAnn.

I talked to women afterwards; almost all of us had the same thought during the silent vigil: *She couldn't hear*. She couldn't hear him enter the restrooms after her; couldn't hear her own attacker. *She couldn't speak*. She couldn't scream for help. Perhaps these were just prurient thoughts, or perhaps it was profound empathy. During the final closing prayer all of us, even those who did not know

RaeAnn, were in tears.

Pastor Pat went back to the park just after sunset to retrieve the candleholder. Our two dozen candles had melted into a multi-colored pool; the sage we left there had burned itself out. The orange, laminated sign the Parks Department put up had a new explanation. "This restroom is closed because (choose one): RaeAnn Champaco was murdered here."

And the pink tulips were still standing. We made our small mark; the women took back that park. ■

DALE Continued from Page 1

"It was either that, or go to jail."

Although two other men got tickets west to Seattle, so far Dale is the only one to come forward and tell the story. Besides him, there is just hearsay flitting about Seattle. One day center worker says she's met 16 to 23 Olympics refugees; another staffer at the Urban Rest Stop met a Salt Lake evacuee who showed up for a shower.

Dale's story exhibits an aggravating lack of substance. He doesn't know who gave him the ticket. He doesn't know that his friend is in jail. He isn't sure why he's in jail. Dale has only his word to prop up this tale.

But two things became clear as I talked to advocates and social workers in Salt Lake, trying to get to the bottom of this: First, the Winter Games create Olympus-sized problems for everyday people. Second, Salt Lake City tried to mollify the worst of them — but their efforts have been too little, too late.

Over the phone long-distance, I told Linda Hilton about Dale. She works in Welfare Square as an advocate with the Salt Lake Homeless Coordinating Council. She couldn't verify Dale's residency at The Road Home, and she said what happened to him is not policy. "Offering him help does jibe, offering him a

bus ticket does not," she told me.

The Road Home was formerly known as the Traveler's Aid Society, a charitable group which buys bus tickets for runaway children, or needy people with family emergencies, or workers stranded on their way to a job. They need proof: a reference from the employer-to-be, or a family member's voice on the phone to vouchsafe. "There has to be a valid reason," says Hilton. According to her, The Road Home had given out just two tickets in the last several months.

Hilton's Coordinating Council, made up of representatives from the city's social service agencies, meets once a month. She and her peers work in a "tight-knit community" that keeps its ears to the ground for stories like Dale's. "We're all kind of mystified" by the story I told her. She guesses that maybe it was an isolated case of mercenary ticket-distribution: "If it was a bigger thing, we probably would have heard about it by now."

Hilton and 14 of her colleagues sat on the Salt Lake Olympics Committee's Humanitarian Services Committee. They were charged with mitigating the Games' impacts on homeless people. For four years, they worked so that the games could accommodate the needs and rights of everyday people. There was a six-month battle to keep the public schools open.

"The argument [from proponents of schools closure] was, 'They'll all be at the games,'" says Hilton. "That's true if you're talking about [wealthy] families. Low-income people, they'll be working overtime."

The committee started a '211' shelter and referral hotline — a number to call anytime you need help, like a non-emergency 911. It came up with local, state, and federal money to convert a warehouse into a 400-bed temporary shelter space. It has been full since opening. Media outlets have recounted stories of cheap hotels going from \$200 weekly rates to \$180 nightly rates. Hilton says the victims of such gouging had nowhere but the shelter to go to.

Other press reports about the city's treatment of homeless people have lauded the new shelter and praised the co-mingling, downtown, of Olympian pleasure-seekers and needy hangabouts. They point to a grim precedent, Atlanta, where upwards of 10,000 people were bused out of the city. Nobody else has come forward to tell a story that matches Dale's. It remains one small speck in a story of Olympics-related hardship. It also stands in stark contrast to the pledge of Mitt Romney, the Salt Lake Olympics Committee president. "Just as we're not busing the homeless out of Salt Lake City, we're not asking protestors to leave town," he told

the *New York Times* last year.

"We've heard the rumors, and the only thing I can tell you is that the homeless men who frequent our mission haven't [been offered one-way bus tickets]," says Phil Arena, of the Salt Lake City Mission. "It doesn't mean it isn't happening — just that we haven't heard anything."

Dale got into Seattle Friday morning, February 8. The jobs that people spoke of in Salt Lake just aren't here. Over the weekend, he went down to the Millionaire Club, but since it was closed he simply found a piece of cardboard and wrote "Skilled and Sober" on it, then stood on Western and waited for a stop. Within minutes, the police came by and told him to move along. He went to Labor Ready; they told him to come back when he had a Social Security Card. He went to the Social Security Administration; they told him his card would be ready in two weeks. He's still looking for work.

Meanwhile, there's nothing else to do but be frustrated. When the police treat you like a criminal, it's rather tempting to break the law: "Robbing a bank, you might get caught and go to jail," he says. "Or, you might not."

"At least in jail my clothes aren't all ripped," he says, fingering a hole in the knee of his jeans. ■

Stalking the Halls of Justice

County court personnel step in between mentally ill clients and their attorneys

By Rick Giombetti

The Mental Health Courts of Seattle and King County were created to sentence mentally ill misdemeanor defendants to psychiatric health care instead of jail time. But there's a conflict of interest in the court's outreach work to accused jail inmates. The same company that does the outreach also manages the county's \$95-million-a-year mental health services system. It raises the question: Can the Mental Health Court monitor assess inmates fairly, when those sentenced to psychiatric treatment are good for business?

The court monitor (CM) position is unique to the judicial process in King County and Seattle. The CM, a court-hired mental health professional, recommends potential Mental Health Court candidates and helps fashion a psychiatric treatment program for newly booked inmates.

Since the beginning of the two Mental Health Courts four years ago, the two CM positions have been staffed by employees of a for-profit corporation called United Behavioral Health, a company with a vested interest in selling psychiatric health care services to the county's jail inmates.

UBH is a San Francisco-based business unit of Minneapolis-based United Health Group, a health insurance and services company with a \$22 billion annual budget. UBH receives \$3 million per year to manage the \$95 million King County Mental Health Division. The company determines where and how much of the Mental Health Division budget will be allocated among 17 different community psychiatric services providers. The King County and Seattle Mental Health Courts mean one thing for UBH: increased customers and revenues for its business. The bigger the case load in the mental health system gets, the bigger UBH's contract to manage this system gets. And its employee, the court monitor, offers inmates psychiatric health care services as a substitute to jail time.

On top of that, the modus operandi of the court monitor in King County Mental Health Court infringes on a defendant's Constitutional due-process rights — specifically, the Sixth Amendment right to consult with an attorney.

The county court's CM regularly interviews and obtains permission to read the medical records of King County District Court defendants within hours after they have been booked into jail, outside of the presence of a defense attorney.

"We were told by the court monitors that they would ask jail inmates if Mental Health Court was something they might be interested in," says Dr. Henry Richards of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Uni-

versity of Washington, who conducted a study of both the King County and Seattle courts. "The court monitor in King County Mental Health Court regularly does these interviews outside the presence of a defense attorney. While [the absence of a defense attorney] does raise due process issues, we were told nobody was being unduly pressured into opting into Mental Health Court."

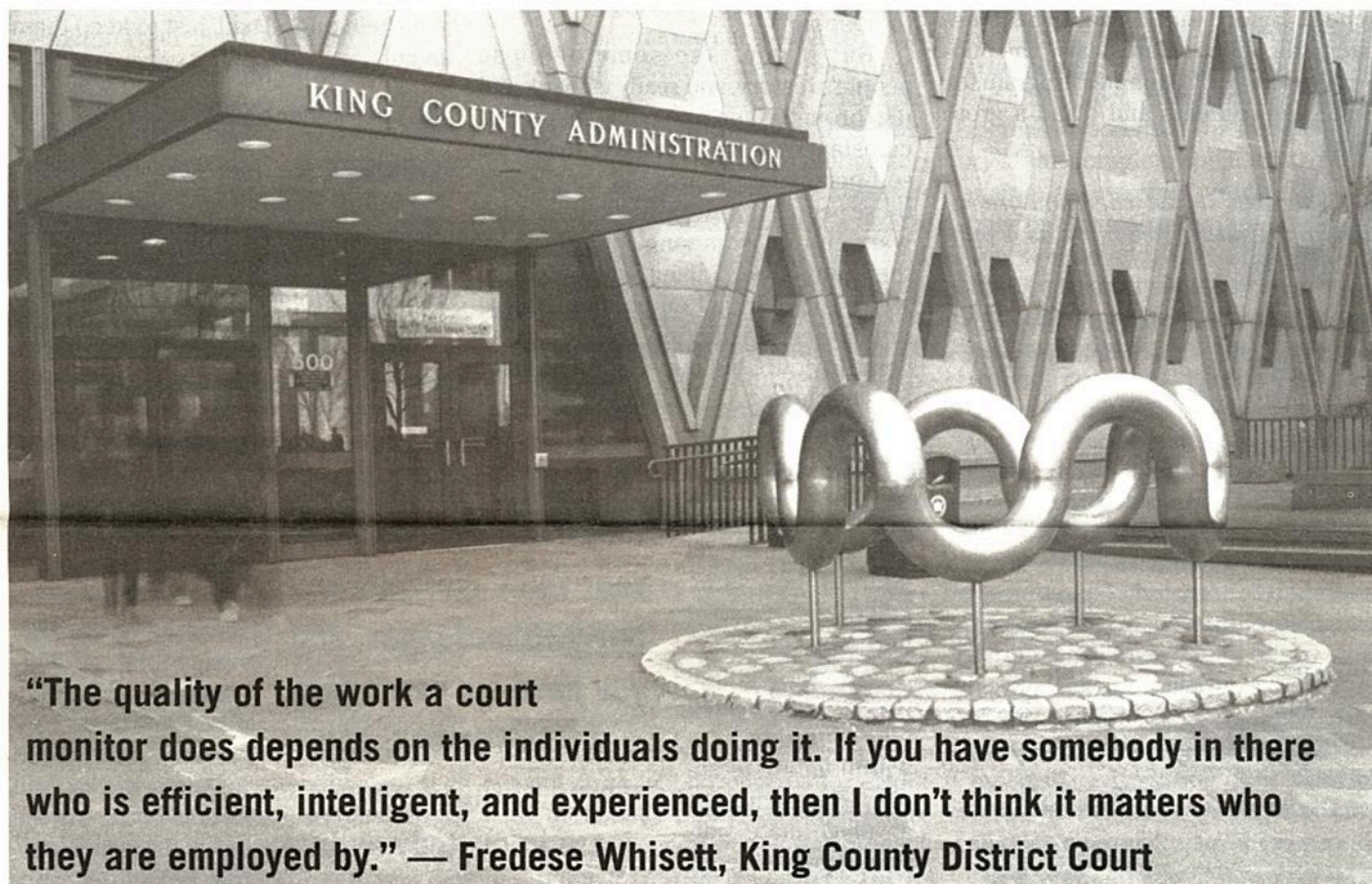
The current King County CM, Joyce

supervisor at the Public Defender's office. "About 20 to 40 percent of potential Mental Health Court candidates are advised to opt out. Many of them insist on opting in anyway. However, they don't make this decision without being fully advised by one of our attorneys."

Neither Ellerby nor Mikkelsen believe that the CM's role compromises the legality of the county Mental Health Court's proceedings, because nothing

"I only make initial contact with jail inmates when they are in the presence of a defense attorney," says Rob Fors, court monitor for Seattle Mental Health Court. "An inmate's attorney will ask their client if he wants to be interviewed by me," he says. "They can talk to me if they want to or not. Many of them don't want to talk to me."

Because of budget cuts, King County can no longer pay United Be-



"The quality of the work a court monitor does depends on the individuals doing it. If you have somebody in there who is efficient, intelligent, and experienced, then I don't think it matters who they are employed by." — Fredese Whisett, King County District Court

PHOTO BY MIKE HAMRICK.

Burton, has confirmed that this practice of interviewing jail inmates without legal counsel present is still done on a regular basis.

Yet it's a process that attorneys representing the inmates observe with a little unease.

"We try to be there before the court monitor gets to the jail, to advise inmates about who the court monitor is. That hasn't been happening all of the time," says Carol Ellerby, a staff attorney at the King County Public Defender's Office who is assigned to cases in King County Mental Health Court. But Ellerby also believes that good defense will take care of any harm.

"My clients are always fully advised about what they are getting into when they opt into Mental Health Court," says Ellerby. "The majority of Mental Health Court defendants are prescribed anti-psychotic drugs that they may find have intolerable side effects. I make sure everyone of my clients knows this before they decide."

"The court monitor's role has been in the back of my mind for some time now," says Floris Mikkelsen, Ellerby's

the CM does with regard to a potential Mental Health Court defendant is in any way binding. CMs only make recommendations to Mental Health Court about who he/she believes qualifies for the court, and helps fashion a psychiatric treatment plan.

"The purpose of the court monitor's interview is to get mentally ill inmates linked up with a treatment program at, say, Community Psychiatric Clinic after they are released from the jail," says Ellerby. "I don't feel the court monitor's role in [King County] Mental Health Court in any way violates the due process rights of my clients."

"I don't think the court monitor position compromises the integrity of Mental Health Court," says Fredese Whisett of the King County District Court. "The quality of the work a court monitor does depends on the individuals doing it. If you have somebody in there who is efficient, intelligent, and experienced, then I don't think it matters who they are employed by."

Regardless of how it's viewed, the court monitor's position is more inobtrusive in Seattle's Mental Health Court.

havioral Health the amount it wants for staffing the court monitor positions. UBH will no longer be providing the court monitor after the end of February. The new CMs will most likely be provided by a private psychiatric clinic, like Seattle Mental Health.

But that, too, could be a conflict of interest. A private psychiatric clinic could use the CM position to directly benefit their business with insurance billings, most of it courtesy of federal, Washington state, and King County taxpayers.

All of the literature regarding Mental Health Court says that no coercion is being used to force defendants to opt into it. However, psychiatric treatment in place of a jail sentence might seem like a tempting offer to some inmates. It's actually a dangerous gamble. As Ellerby says, defendants may find themselves prescribed a drug that has severe side-effects. And a minority of Mental Health Court defendants find themselves committed to a psychiatric hospital against their will. Given the situation, defendants need a court monitor who doesn't appear to infringe on clients' rights. ■

The Trials of Public Defense

Interview by Trevor Griffey

Pete MacDonald, 44, went directly from law school to work for the King County public defender as a misdemeanor attorney for The Defender Association. He worked there for 14 months and left this past fall to pursue immigration law.

Real Change talked to MacDonald about his thoughts on the obstacles facing public defenders and the realities of poor people in the justice system.

Real Change: When did you decide that you wanted to be a public defender?

Pete MacDonald: My first year of law school. Before that, I had a vague desire to do public interest law. The public defender had a summer program for first year students and I had a great time.

RC: What was it like when you graduated and first started work as a public defender?

MacDonald: It was hell. It was crazy. It was completely overwhelming with a capital O.

RC: How so?

MacDonald: I used to do the felony "investigative calendar," the first appearance before a judge within the first 48 hours you're in custody. Sometimes you can make a difference, but most of the time you're this clown sitting there trying to make the proceedings look legitimate when in fact, in order for the proceedings to be legitimate, you'd need a lot more time. On any given day, they'll parade 30, 40, 50 — I think on one day there were 72 people on the calendar.

RC: And you did all 72?

MacDonald: Yeah. I think that took two and a half hours.

RC: That's less than two minutes per person.

MacDonald: If that.

RC: So what's the first appearance before the judge?

MacDonald: There are two questions that need to be answered at the first appearance. Number one: is there probable cause to hold this person in jail pending a decision by the state to charge them with a crime? Probable cause is a very low threshold. Question number one is almost always answered in the affirmative. Question number two is: will they be released on their own recognizance or required to post bail? One of the major factors is how many times you haven't shown up for court — how many warrants you've received. There's no question addressed in court as to whether these warrants are legitimate. There are other factors they consider, such as

whether you have a stable address and job, but homeless people are obviously unlikely to have either. They are more likely than others to be required to post bail.

But if you take some of these people's history, and really go back and dig through it and find out what the circumstances were, you'd see that it's a self-perpetuating process that keeps these people in jail. They can issue four warrants on someone, but three of them might be bullshit warrants, like when you're in jail on another charge in another jurisdiction and you can't come to court, but they issue a warrant for your arrest. Or if a person is issued a citation by a cop without a court date, and the court date will be mailed to him. But if he has no address, how is he going to know about his court date?

A warrant is supposed to be issued when you have a willful failure to appear. But even if it's an illegitimate warrant, it goes on your tally when you come to court and face whether or not you're going to be released. And that's a key issue. There's tons of statistics to show that defendants who stay in jail are usually convicted. Defendants who are not in jail are convicted far less.

RC: Can public defenders contest an illegitimate warrant?

MacDonald: On the spot in that situation, you have no ability to check on the legitimacy of the warrants. You have thirty seconds to read the police officer's statement to determine if there's probable cause.

RC: Literally 30 seconds?

MacDonald: Literally. Maybe a little longer. You walk into the courtroom,

and as the defense attorney, you are shown into a holding cell where there may be 50 guys, plus you have the women in another cell, though there's usually fewer women. And you have to make a big speech to them: OK, I'm your defense attorney! You explain to them what's going to happen. It's a terrible situation, because you can't do anything. If you're poor and not well connected in the community for whatever reason, then the presumption is that you won't show up to court and so you need to have a bail set. I've had clients held on \$50 bail, just to keep them in jail.

RC: Your client couldn't pay that bail?

MacDonald: No, they can't. We're talking about people who are bumming change to get a 99 cent Jack in the Box hamburger. Almost invariably the person wants to get out of jail, no matter what. So we come to the poverty plea.

RC: Who makes the poverty plea?

MacDonald: The typical poverty client is usually Black or Hispanic, about 70-80 percent. For example, let's say a person is facing a charge where the recommendation on a guilty plea is 10 days. He's already been in jail for three weeks. And let's say, just for the sake of argument, that he's either innocent or his rights were violated by the police and that would get him off. If he wants a trial, it won't be set for at least another three weeks. What is he going to do? Is he going to plead guilty and get out of jail and get on with his life? Or is he going to sit in jail? Most people plead guilty.

This system self-perpetuates. Prior convictions have a tremendous effect on a new case. They result in higher bail amounts and stiffer sentences that snowball in subsequent cases.

RC: Like what?

MacDonald: One of my clients was a homeless guy from Arkansas. He stole a bag of noodles from Uwajimaya. The retail value of that bag of noodles was \$1.09. The reason he stole that bag of

noodles was because he was hungry. He was going to eat them dry because he had no place to cook them. He had a lot of priors, almost all of them poverty related. The recommendation from fucking Mark Sidran's office was 180 days in jail. That guy didn't belong in jail at all. He belonged in a job-training program.

RC: Have you had clients who wanted to stay in jail?

MacDonald: There was a case where a guy had assaulted a bus driver. He was thrown in jail, but I was able to convince the prosecutor to let him plead guilty and get out that night. I triumphantly go back to the tank where they hold all the people in custody at night court, and I tell the guy: "Hey man, I got you a deal where you can plead guilty and get out tonight." He looked a bit stricken. He wanted another week to figure out what he was going to do with his life. It takes between 5 and 7 hours once the ruling is made so that you can get out of jail. That would have released him at 2 a.m. on a winter night to go find someplace to sleep. So I got him another week. It was one of the saddest moments of my public defender career.

RC: Is that demoralizing? You said you entered the profession with a desire for public service.

MacDonald: Some cases you get as good a defense as you're going to get. But for every extra hour you put into case A, cases B-Z are getting neglected. You're juggling a tremendous amount of work. You spend two days in trial where you do nothing but that trial. Then you come back to your office and finally check your voice mail and you have 38 messages, and you have six new cases in your file box, and three of those people are in custody and you're supposed to see them within 24 hours and they've been there since yesterday so you have to go to the jail and see them right now even though you're completely exhausted and emotionally spent.

RC: That's not an exaggeration?

MacDonald: No. Ask any public defender. It dispirited me to the point where I got another job. I'd love to still do public defense: it's about the most noble, honorable thing a lawyer can do. But I just didn't want that kind of life for myself. The starting pay at the prosecutor's office is \$10,000 a year higher than the public defender's. It's wrong, it should be changed. The people who suffer — the clients, most of whom are not bad people, but poor people stuck in bad situations — already suffer too much. ■

You come back to your office and finally check your voice mail and you have 38 messages, and you have six new cases in your file box, and three of those people are in custody and you're supposed to see them within 24 hours and they've been there since yesterday so you have to go to the jail and see them right now even though you're completely exhausted and emotionally spent.

**— Pete MacDonald
Former Public Defender**

Buyer Beware: Each individual tenant situation involves factors that cannot be addressed and people who may react differently. My responses are based on a general application of the law to the questions raised, and it cannot be assumed that following these responses will resolve the issues in the way that the law would seem to indicate. I have gone to court on many occasions feeling that I had a sure thing and come out a loser, and I have even gone to court with a case that I thought was a dead loser and ended up winning. Hopefully the responses will give you an idea of how to proceed to protect your rights.



Tenant Talk Educate Agitate Organize

Locked out for poverty

Dear Tenant Talk,

I can't rent an apartment in a certain part of town — the north, west, south, east — because I have a felony conviction. I tried to rent an apartment in Federal Way about six months ago, and I paid \$35 for the background check, and the lady told me that I couldn't rent because I had a felony conviction. I ask her how long the conviction would stop me from renting, and she told me 100 years. I could not believe what she said. To me she was saying, "We don't rent to niggers."

The statute of limitations on most felonies is seven years, so she was being mean spirited to me. I also ask her what else would stop me from renting here, she told me an eviction or a bill not paid up from the last apartment, such as for light or gas.

I never heard anything like that before. Can you imagine how many African Americans, Mexicans, and poor people can't rent in the King County area? Most people I know have at least one eviction and most poor people's bills are behind. I went to prison 11 years ago, I've been clean and sober 11 years, I'm a volunteer, I've worked a steady job for 11 years now, and there are probably thousands of people like me that could be homeless because of this racist practice. Can you imagine all the people getting out of prison that can't rent a place to live?

Please, could someone get the statistics on this growing problem before it turns into an epidemic, violent demonstrations, lawsuits, homelessness, heartbreak, people going back to crime, racism, and more people being found dead on the streets because of exposure to the cold, crime, and the mean streets. This should be against the law.

Thank you, Adriel Pane

Dear Mr. Pane:

I have been representing poor people in regards to housing issues in King County for 10 years, and I can't count the number of times someone has come to me and said that they couldn't find housing because some past landlord had sued them for an eviction or claimed that the tenant had vacated the apartment and left it in a mess. In those 10 years, all I have been able to do is to try and stop each eviction, one at a time,

and not really think about the overall situation and how it affects a vast number of people in King County.

This year, because of a new fellowship created by Seattle University's Law School, I have had the rare opportunity to look more carefully at the big picture, and it isn't a pretty one. Housing costs in King County are very high and a large number of working people cannot afford the average two-bedroom apartment in Seattle. The number of units set aside for low-income tenants are stagnant or decreasing and the regulations governing those units may exclude many of the people you express a concern about in your letter. Applicants can be denied public housing if they have a criminal record or poor credit. The very people we should be trying to provide housing to may be denied that housing because they are homeless or poor.

You may wonder why this isn't discrimination. Discrimination only applies to those in a protected class such as race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or familial status. You can be discriminated against if you are poor because poverty is not a protected class. The possibility that the number of minorities that are poor is disproportionate in relation to the overall population does not offer any protection to a minority who is denied housing because of a poor credit history, so long as the potential landlord treats all poor people the same.

The critical issue about housing is that it is one of our basic needs, along with clothing and food. For the most part, it is the only basic need where you must pass a credit check in order to obtain it. In general, we don't have to get an extension of credit to buy food or clothing, but even if you have the money to pay your rent for the first month, most prospective landlords are going to require an applicant to pass a credit check. That credit check is going to focus on your past housing experiences, and if you had one vindictive landlord in your past, you could be in for a tough time trying to find new housing.

There are innumerable ways that a past landlord could adversely affect your ability to get housing in the future. The most common is a negative report on how a tenant left an apartment. Af-

ter a tenant moves out, a landlord may claim that the carpet needs to be replaced or that he was required to hire a cleaning crew because the apartment was filthy. It is extremely difficult for a tenant to prove that these charges are bogus because when the charges are disclosed the tenant has lost access to the apartment. Even though the landlord was in the wrong, they can interfere with the tenant's search for new housing by turning over the account to a collection agency and reporting the alleged debt to a credit bureau.

A tenant's options are extremely limited and in essence amount to convincing a prospective landlord that your previous landlord is lying. This can be a tough sell. Although the tenant has grounds to file a lawsuit in most cases, the sad reality is that there are very few attorneys who could take such cases, and the legal services community is in no position to handle such a large influx of new cases. Small claims court is not an appropriate forum for disputing inaccurate information put out by landlords or reported by credit bureaus.

This situation becomes fertile ground for slumlords who know there is a growing number of people who

can't obtain decent housing. They will rent to prospective tenants without conducting credit checks, but the tenant can expect substandard conditions, increased potential for criminal activity at the complex, and if a tenant complains, an eviction notice. The cycle only continues on with a tenant suddenly facing eviction, a bad reference from an unscrupulous landlord, and the increasing possibility of homelessness.

I am only scratching the surface when it comes to the problems faced by low-income people looking for housing. This is not just a problem in King County. The same situations exist throughout the country and if we, as a society, continue to ignore this crisis, we can expect to see more and more of our most vulnerable citizens homeless or living in decrepit housing. ■

—Mark Chattin

Have you now, or have you ever been, screwed by your landlord? Got a tenant issue you'd like to raise? We want to hear about it! Send all gripes, anecdotes, or questions to "Tenant Talk" c/o Real Change, 2129 Second Ave., Seattle, WA 98121 or email editor@realchangenews.org.

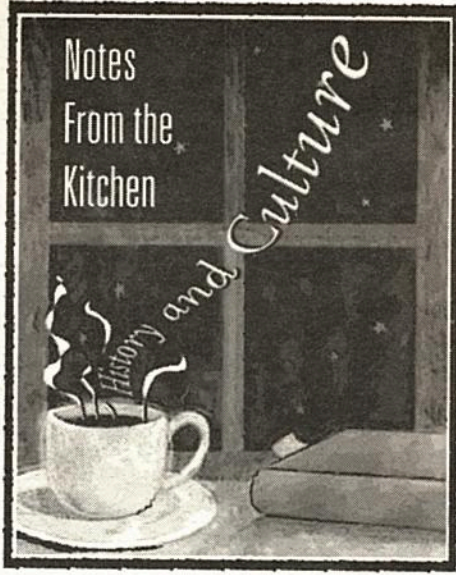
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The Unappreciated Vegetarian

By Liz Smith

It's tough being a vegetarian, isn't it? There you are, poring over cookbooks, having compassion for animals and eating low on the food chain. You're hanging out in the kitchen, trying to save the world one meal at a time. You open the refrigerator to get some soy milk and what do you see? The "meat" bin, right next to the "vegetable" bin. Ugh.

You have to answer rude questions. "What's the matter with you? Why don't you like meat?" There are subtle pressures. "I spent all day basting this turkey. If you don't have some, I'll be hurt." Usually said by your mom on Thanksgiving Day.

Vegetarians, you are not alone. Millions of modern-day eaters are making a conscientious decision to adopt a plant-based diet. It's better for the environment, it's healthier, and it could be considered to be a more ethical way to live. It's certainly more humane from the animal's point of view, and it's cheaper.

From the store to the dinner table, there are gradations along the path to being vegetarian. People usually begin by giving up red meat. If you're a "semi," you're for sure not having any roast chicken for your Sunday dinner. You can be a lacto-ovo-vegetarian and make a broccoli quiche instead. A macrobiotic diet, the next progression, was popular in the '60s, with foods classified as yin or yang. After that, there is the vegan diet, which means you don't eat anything that had a face or a mother. Then there are the fruitarians. It's just fruit. I think being a fruitarian would leave you pretty hungry and also overly attractive to bumblebees.

For those who are thinking of converting, there is the "center-of-the-plate" obstacle. In WWII, the G.I.s were fed a Midwestern diet, that is, meat, potatoes, and salad. When they came home from the war, that's what they had gotten used to. It became the "American standard" good meal.

Preparing vegetarian meals requires a whole new way of thinking about food, and at least one or two good cookbooks. As a person with a lot of cookbooks, most of which I don't use, here are some suggestions. Buy cookbooks with pictures, so you can see what things look like. Pictures motivate and encourage. Buy cookbooks that aren't so heavy. If it's a strain to pick it up, you aren't gonna use it. University Bookstore recommends *Moosewood New Classics*, by Molly Katzen, and *Quick Vegetarian Pleasures*, by Jeanne Gemlin. Elliott Bay Bookstore recommends *Diet for a New America*, by John Robbins, and *The Essential Vegetarian*, by Diana Shaw.

On March 2 and 3, there will be a Veg Fest at Seattle Center. It's in the Pavilion Room and will be from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. both days. Children under 12 are free, all others \$5. There will be cooking demonstrations, speakers, and a bookstore. For more information, you can call Vegetarians of Washington at 706-2635, or Seattle Center at 684-7200. At last, a place where no one will make fun of your tofu.

Here are two easy recipes, one for vegans and one for vegetarians:

Borscht — Russian Beet Soup (yields about 4 cups)

There are three kinds of beets — red, golden, and a red and white variety, called chioggia, also called bullseye or candy cane. The flavor is similar for all three types. Small and medium beets are more tender than large beets. When selecting beets, make sure they are firm, not musky, and have a smooth skin. The following recipe can be held in the refrigerator for up to three days.

1 Tbsp butter or oil	2 cups vegetable stock
1 small onion	1 Tbsp vinegar or fresh lemon juice
1 rib celery	1 diced tomato
2 cloves garlic	1 bay leaf
1 carrot	1/2 tsp pepper
1 medium potato	1/2 Tbsp sugar
2 medium beets	4 ounces sour cream (optional)
1/2 tsp salt	8 sprigs fresh dill, finely minced (optional)
1/4 tsp allspice	

1. Wash and peel vegetables. In a big soup pot, heat the butter or oil. Chop vegetables into one-inch pieces and add to pot in order listed, stirring as you go.
2. Add spices and the rest of the ingredients, reserving sour cream and dill for garnish.
3. Bring soup to a boil and reduce heat. Simmer until vegetables are tender, about one hour. Fish out and discard bay leaf (if you'll pardon the expression).
4. Puree soup in blender. At service time, reheat on a low flame. Thin with a little stock if mixture is too thick. Serve in warmed bowls. Garnish with sour cream and minced dill.

Potato Cheese Casserole (serves 2)

1 Tbsp butter	2 Tbsp all-purpose flour
1 pound new potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced (hold in cold water)	1/4 tsp salt
3 ribs celery, trimmed and thinly sliced	1 cup milk
2 ounces cheddar or swiss cheese, grated	1/2 cup bread crumbs
	1 Tbsp dried parsley
	1/4 tsp pepper

1. Turn oven to 375 degrees. Butter a 5-cup-capacity baking dish. The leftover butter will be used to dot the top of the casserole.
2. Arrange the potato slices in three layers, sprinkling the celery and grated cheese over each layer and finishing with a top layer of potatoes.
3. Whisk together the flour, parsley, salt, pepper, and milk. Pour over potatoes. Sprinkle breadcrumbs on top and dot with leftover butter.
4. Bake 1 1/2 to 2 hours, or until potatoes are completely tender. Serve right away.

Note: This is a fairly simple recipe. If you have any other vegetables, like mushrooms or zucchinis, slice or chop finely and add in with celery and cheese. ■

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Friday, Jan. 18, Broadway Ave E., 8:24 p.m.
 The anti-crime team was conducting a buy-bust operation in the Broadway corridor. The undercover officer approached the suspect, a 20-year-old transient white male, and offered to buy heroin. The deal was made, and the arrest team moved in. The suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

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Friday, Jan. 25, Providence Medical Center, 17th Ave, 4:46 p.m. Officer responded to a complaint of a theft at PMC, and met with a security guard who said he had two suspects in custody. He explained he'd been alerted by a nurse that the suspects, a 57-year-old black female and a 51-year-old black male, both homeless, were looting a cooler filled with Ensure and Boost meal supplement drinks. Security stopped the two as they were leaving, and noticed they had large amounts of Ensure about their persons. Police questioned them as to why they took the Ensure, and the woman explained that she had been a patient at the hospital the week before, and the nurses had told her to help herself to anything she needed. A radio check on the female revealed outstanding warrants, and she was arrested for these, and theft. She was transported to King County Jail; the man was interrogated and released.

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Sunday, Jan. 27, 900 Blk E. Pine, 9:18 p.m.
 Police responded to a call from the janitor at the above address who stated that there were three subjects inside the building smoking and drinking. He positively identified one of the men – a 36-year-old transient white male – as trespassing previously. Police contacted the man, and a radio check revealed him to have a warrant, but no trespass admonishments. He was issued a trespass warrant, and then taken into custody and booked into King County Jail for the outstanding warrant. The other subjects were questioned and released.

Thursday, Jan. 31, 6th Ave and S. Jackson St, 4 p.m. A 36-year-old transient Asian male stated that he approached suspect, an unidentified black male in his 30s, and asked for a cigarette. Suspect immediately became hostile towards him, and motioned to his waistband as if he had a gun. The Asian male walked away, and entered a bus shelter to sleep. The suspect followed him, and shoved him to the ground, causing a possible dislocated shoulder. The suspect fled on foot, and a search of the area was unsuccessful. The Asian male was treated at the scene by the Seattle Fire Department, and transported to Harborview Medical Center for further treatment. ■

Streetwatch is compiled from Seattle Police Department incident reports by Emma Quinn. Do you have your own story to tell? Call Real Change, (206)441-8143, and we'll get the scoop.

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Jazz for Change



PHOTO OF BILL FRISELL BY LUCIANO VITI.

Any discerning jazz lover is no stranger to Bill Frisell. And on March 17, fans of jazz can show their support for *Real Change* by simply turning up to hear Frisell play.

Frisell has already graciously lent his time and talent to a handful of previous *Real Change* events, yet this night has the special twist of being his first Seattle-area performance with only guitarist Greg Lesiz by his side, one of his closest collaborators over the last three years. It'll also be the first time the duo has performed together in Town Hall.

"I heard it's a great space," says Frisell. "And my *Real Change* events always end up being great gigs."

Frisell is also pleased to continue helping out an organization like *Real Change*.

"*Real Change* is one of those things that actually really works," he says. "You can see something good happening. It's an incredible feeling to help something like that in any way."

After September 11, Frisell had res-

ervations over how large a role music could have in someone's lives compared with everything else going on. Yet as he began playing shows again, he found music provided a kind of connection people needed and enjoyed.

"Music is what I do," says Frisell. "I'm sure that music is a way for people to find joy again. And it feels good to plug my music into something that people find important."

Frisell has garnered numerous awards with his

smooth, infectious rich and playful style of jazz, including "Guitarist of the Year" in both 1998 and 1999 from the Jazz Journalists Association and the Knitting Factory at the Annual Jazz Awards in New York City. Frisell and Lesiz's blend of rock and country with jazz and blues has led them to work with a wide range of well-respected musicians and other artists, including Elvis Costello, Joni Mitchell, John Scofield, David Sanborn, Emmylou Harris, the Smashing Pumpkins, and film director Gus Van Sant. ■

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CLASSICS CORNER



by Perffess'r Harris

Lately, we at Classics Corner have been preoccupied with the Horrible Truth. We don't have a particular Horrible Truth in mind really. We're thinking more of the Idea of Horrible Truth, and how we mostly manage to avoid the topic.

It all began when our Communist friend reminded us that we, himself included, live better than 95 percent of the people on the planet, and all because we're simply in the right place at the right time. As Woody Allen says, 90 percent of success is in showing up. Why is there stuff everywhere we look? Why is our gas so cheap? Our clothes? Where does rice come from? What about lettuce? Who knows? We're too distracted to think about it.

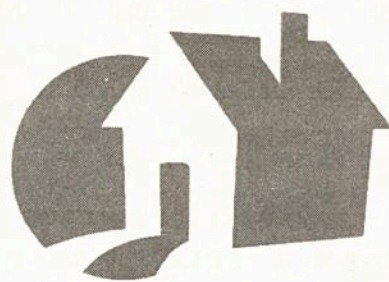
All of this brings us, obviously, to Oedipus, who also missed a few important details. In Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, the people are sick and dying and no one knows why. Teresias, who almost never has good news, reveals that the city is under a curse because Thebes harbors the murderer of its former King. After Oedipus threatens to drive the evil-doer from his kingdom, he discovers that he is the problem. As if that wasn't bad enough, he then finds he is the King's son, which means that he has had sex with his mother. Lots of it. Hot, steamy, Greek sex. At this point, Oedipus says, "Ew, gross," and stabs his own eyes out.

But being a motherfucker is the least of Oedipus' problems. Oedipus has lived his entire life in the dark. "How could I bear to see," he says, "when all my sight was horror everywhere?" And like our own, the moral blindness of Oedipus was probably more than a little willful.

Think about it. This is the guy who solved the riddle of the Sphinx to become King of Thebes. Yet it takes him nearly two decades to figure out that the folks he killed on the way into town happened to be the King and his entourage. It's not like the clues weren't there. The coincidence of timing. The crossroads. The description of the King. His own resemblance to his new wife. Her strangely maternal behavior. The prophecies. The rumors. Hello?

Even more interesting is the way everyone else colludes to keep the cat in the bag, even though it means that most people will sicken and die. Teresias wants only to leave things the way they are. "How dreadful knowledge of the truth can be," he says. "I should not have come." The shepherd, who is witness to the murder and knows everything, skips town. Mom doesn't want to talk about it either. "For God's sake," she says, "Let us have no more questioning."

In the end, however, Oedipus is ruined, and his brother-in-law Creon says it's his own damn fault. "Think no longer that you are in command here, but think that how, when you were, you served your own destruction." Oedipus had a pretty good gig going. He probably thought it would last forever. It didn't. Too bad for Oedipus. So sad for us. ■



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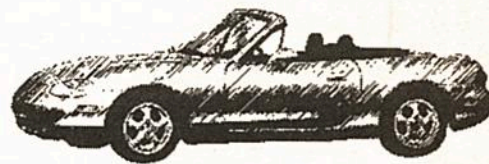
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Late Winter Notables

Thursday, 2/21

City of Seattle 2002 **Black History Month Celebration**, lunch hour performances of jazz, R&B, song, dance and poetry. 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., at Key Tower, 700 Fifth Ave between Columbia and Cherry, free.

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.

Beyond Letters to the Editor: **Citizen responsibility in an age of mass information**. This and subsequent Thursdays through 3/21, 7 - 9 p.m., at Keystone United Church of Christ, 5019 Keystone Place, (Wallingford); info Eric Carlberg 206-632-6021 or ccnrandall@igc.org.

Friday 2/22

Life and Debt, a documentary film about free trade that makes clear the link between Global Economic Policy and the decimation of the local agriculture/economy of Jamaica. Through 2/28 at the Varsity Theater, 4329 University Way NE; info 206-632-3131.

Saturday 2/23

Keeping America Safe and Free: Civil Liberties and National Security. **American Civil Liberties Union annual membership meeting**. 1 - 4:30 p.m., University of Washington School of Law, Condon Hall, 1100 NE Campus Parkway, suggested donation \$5; info 206-624-2184.

Seattle Local Peoples Assembly presents "**Deepening Democracy, Continuing Conversations and Local Actions**." Suggested donation \$5 - \$10 (no one turned away), bring a sack lunch, 9:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., at Antioch University, 2326 Sixth Ave, ; info 206-721-5672.

Sunday 2/24

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

The Seattle Labor Chorus 2002 **Family Sing-A-Long**. Bring instruments and copies of your favorite songs. 5:30 - 9:30 p.m., 3100 Airport Way S, free parking and home-cooked potluck dinner, donation

\$10 each, kids, unemployed and over 65 free; info Sue Gibbs 206-723-6511.

Tuesday 2/26

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 the Peace Café, 5828 Roosevelt Way NE; info Jezanna 206-729-3843 or the café 206-529-8081.

City of Seattle 2002 **Black History Month Celebration**, lunch hour performances of jazz, R&B, song, dance, and poetry. 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., at Key Tower Lobby, 700 Fifth Ave, free; info <http://www2.ci.seattle.wa.us/events/default.asp>.

Wednesday 2/27

King County **Diversity Job Fair Extravaganza**. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., at Lake WA Technical College, 11605 NE 132nd Ave, Kirkland; info Hank Rivera 425-652-9250 or hrcinfo@aol.com.

Free health screenings for women with limited resources, sponsored by the Seattle Lesbian Cancer Project. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., at Renton YWCA, 1010 S. 2nd St, Renton; info and appointments 1-888-651-8931.

King County Labor Film Series presents the blacklisted classic *Salt of the Earth* and a **discussion of free speech organizing issues**, sponsored by the Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild. 7:30 p.m., at Seattle Independent Media Center, 1415 Third Ave, downtown, free; info 206-328-1190.

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, at the Downtown Seattle Sheraton, 1400 Sixth Ave. Tickets are \$70; info 206-322-9080.

Friday 3/1

First part of conference "**Building Alliances to End Poverty: Shaping the Impending Welfare Debate**," with speaker Barbara

Ehrenreich, author of *Nickel & Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Sponsored by many local organizations. 7 p.m., at Seattle University, Pigott Building, 12th & E. Marion, this session free; info Andrea Cohen 206-694-6794.

Saturday 3/2

Continuation of conference "**Building Alliances to End Poverty: Shaping the Impending Welfare Debate**," with speaker Peter Edelman, professor at Georgetown University Law Center. Sponsored by many local organizations. 8 a.m. - 6 p.m., at Seattle University, Pigott Building, 12th & E. Marion, \$40, \$15 low income, with possible full scholarship assistance, includes continental breakfast and lunch; info Andrea Cohen 206-694-6794.

Regular meeting of the Interfaith Network of Concern for the People of Iraq, with major focus on joining others nationwide in **challenging the U.S. embargo against Iraq**. 4 p.m., this and subsequent first Saturdays, at the Keystone Congregational Church, 5019 Keystone Place N.; info Dick Blakney 206-522-4934.

Tuesday 3/5

"Poems from Detention, Poems from Life, Poems from Hell," join Richard Gold and the **Pongo Teen Writing Project** for a discussion and poetry reading, sponsored by the Peace and Justice Alliance. 7 - 8:30 p.m., at the Peace Café, 5828 Roosevelt Way NE; info 206-527-8050.

Wednesday 3/6

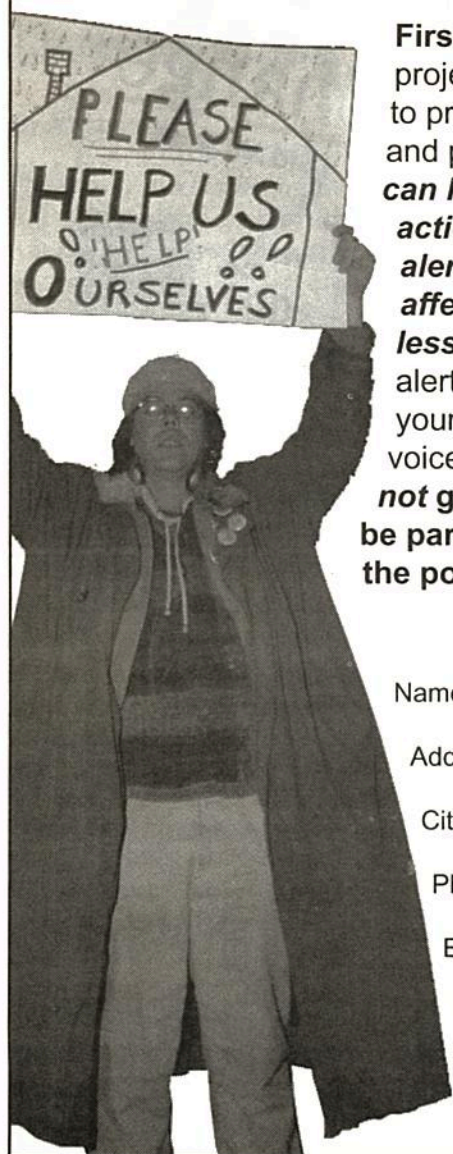
Jobs with Justice Seattle Organizing Committee meeting, this and subsequent 1st Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. at Labor Temple, 2800 1st Ave.; info 206-441-4969.

Ongoing

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.

Black Natives, a multimedia exhibit that examines the connections between Native Americans and African Americans. Presented at the M. Rosetta Hunter Art Gallery through March 5, at Seattle Central Community College, free; info 206-344-4379. ■

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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 Call (206) 441-3247 for more info.



Help Fulfill Our MacWorkshop Wish List!

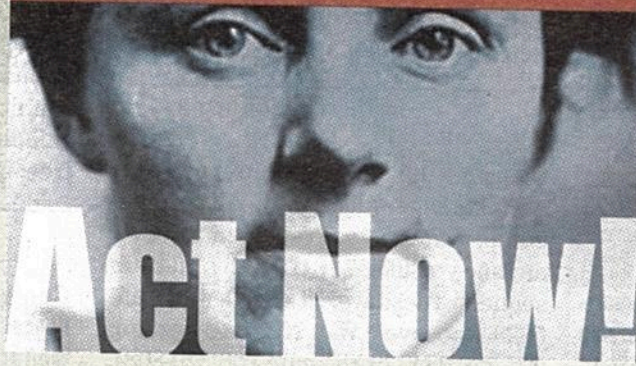
The *Real Change* MacWorkshop is sorely in need of the following items:

- A new lab computer. Our current lab computer, an HP IIIsi, is old bordering on non-functioning
- A new lab printer
- Size 1/2 AA, 3.6-volt batteries
- Gift certificates to Office Max to help us pay for any of the above items
- Committed lab monitors with good people skills. Extensive computer knowledge is nice, but definitely not needed. This is an exciting opportunity to help someone write a resume, find a job, or better their lives.

All donations are tax deductible.

If you're interested in getting involved, call Real Change at 206-441-3247 and ask for Lily

citizens participation project



More Treatment for Drug Offenders

Issue: Tell your state senators and representatives to support Senate Bill 6361 and House Bill 2338, which would reduce sentencing guidelines for drug offenses and use the money saved from not incarcerating offenders for drug treatment programs and drug courts.

Background: Statistics show that 80 percent of Washington state's incarcerated offenders were arrested for a drug offense or a crime that was the result of a chemical dependency. Most of these offenders are sentenced to a term in confinement in jail or prison, while only a small percent are placed in alternative sentencing programs, like treatment or drug courts.

Two bills currently in the state legislature would change the sentencing guidelines for people caught with heroin or cocaine, and allow the money not spent on sentencing to be redirected to treatment.

Currently, drug offenses are ranked from the lowest level, one, up to level 10. If it became law, the sentencing for possession or manufacturing of heroin or cocaine with intent to sell would drop from two years to 18 months. Over the next two years, an entirely new system of judging and sentencing drug offenses would be designed and implemented, one that had a greater role for treatment and takes into account whether it is a first-time offense. Offenders who sell for profit, deal in methamphetamine, or sell to children or in a drug-free zone will continue to get the highest sentences possible, up to 51 months in prison.

Moving sentencing away from mandatory prison or jail time to a greater availability of treatment programs is the best approach to truly rehabilitating an offender. If their addictions are treated up front, they will be less likely to re-offend and cycle back into the community as a continuous drug offender.

Only 20 percent of the need for treatment in prisons is funded. Currently, due to a lack of bed space and budget constraints, it can take a drug user up to five weeks to get a bed in a drug treatment facility. In some instances, this may be too late.

The purpose of these bills is to break the cycle of addiction and crime. The challenge is finding the money needed for treatment. Yet not only does treatment lower the costs of recidivism and law enforcement, it also lowers medical costs.

Action: While the fate of the Senate version of the bill was unknown at press time, the house bill is still alive and kicking. Contact your local representative and tell them to support this bill. For more information on House Bill 2338, contact the prime sponsor, Representative Ruth Kagi, at (206) 368-4691 or kagi_ru@leg.wa.gov.

For a list of who your local representatives are, visit www.leg.wa.gov. ■

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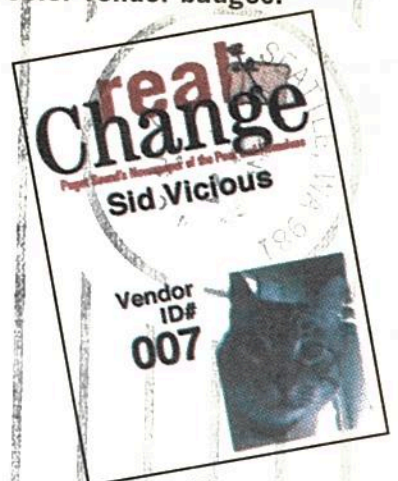
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