

MAR 7-20 2002

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# Real Change

Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless • Volume 9, No. 6

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## Baby Budget Buster?

Inside: Save Our State • Back From the World Social Forum • End the Drug War • Foxes in Boxes • Secret to Eternal Youth

ONE OF THE BABIES TREATED AT THE PEDIATRIC INTERIM CARE CENTER IN KENT. PHOTO BY JACKIE RENN.

### In budget-crunching time, home that cares for drug-affected infants is threatened

By Jackie Renn

**A** Kent home that cares for infants born to drug-using mothers is just one of the programs facing budget cuts this legislative session.

In December, faced with a \$1.2 billion dollar budget deficit, Governor Gary Locke proposed cutting half of the Pediatric Interim Care Center's \$710,000 annual grant, which pays for nearly all of the facility's 15 beds. Last year, the center (PICC for short) cared for 143 infants.

"We have serious budget deficits. Budget considerations have to be made across the board," says LaVerne Lamoureux, Director of the Program and Policy Children's Administration, within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Still, she says, "No one wants to take anything away from these children."

That's why DSHS is suggesting another financial means to support the infants served at PICC: asking the federal government to chip in. Even this, though, requires state money — which continued to disappear this spring, as the bud-

get gap widened by another \$400 million.

PICC is the only place of its kind in the state; there are few programs like it elsewhere in the nation. As such, DSHS may have some problems figuring out how to persuade Medicaid to help pay for it. DSHS staff have found that PICC can be placed under what is known as the Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS) State Plan, which is federal dollars providing financial aid for medically fragile children. But one hometown legislator wants DSHS to restore the program's funding in full (see sidebar, page 14).

The legislators will probably have to stay in Olympia past the regular legislative session's end, on March 14, to decide the fate of PICC and other programs. Their deadline will be the end of the fiscal year, June 30.

Barbara Drennon, director of operations at PICC, says she's begun seeking money from the private sector to replace state funding.

If PICC is forced to close down due to financial loss the babies would need

to stay in the hospital until they are through the withdrawal process, stabilized and no longer medically fragile.

Staff at the state's hospitals, which regularly send newborns to the care center, say PICC is a necessary asset in caring for the babies of drug-addicted mothers. They don't know what they would do without it. Swedish Medical Center, in Seattle, and Tacoma General Hospital send babies to the care center after they spend an average of two to three weeks in the neo-natal Intensive Care Units, where the withdrawal process stabilizes and the babies gain weight. The hospitals spend \$1,700 to \$2,700 per day on each infant. Once they get to PICC, the cost for caring for each drops to \$145 per day — less than a tenth of the cost of hospital care. If all of the 143 babies cared for at PICC last year had been treated at the two hospitals instead — and had stayed for the average of 30 days of treatment at PICC — the additional cost could have been anywhere from \$6.67 million to almost \$11 million for that year alone. ■

#### What is PICC?

**N**obody knows how many babies are born addicted to drugs every year. They're only taken care of when someone is notified: when a social worker calls the hospital, or a doctor notices something wrong with the baby, or a mother steps forward to request special care for the child. One recent study suggests that only one out of four pregnant women who've used opiates, cocaine, or pot during pregnancy are detected by pre-natal or neo-natal caregivers.

Some drug-affected newborns are placed with foster parents trained to look after them. Others come to PICC. Still others, undetected, withdraw from cocaine,

*Continued on Page 14*

Help support *Real Change* by listening to great music!  
Join us at the Bill Frisell and Greg Leisz benefit concert on March 17. Details on page 5.





## Rainier Vista replacements

To the editor:

Carolee Colter is in error in her recent letter to Real Change ("Follow the lead, SHA," Jan. 24) when she claims the Seattle Housing Authority will not replace all the low-income housing units when it redevelops Rainier Vista.

The truth is that SHA is a leader among the nation's housing authorities in retaining and replacing public housing units.

The key provisions of the redevelopment agreement between the SHA and the Seattle City Council, with respect to replacement housing, provide for replacement of 100 percent of the

units serving those with very low incomes. Specifically the agreement says, "SHA shall either itself or in partnership with other non-profit housing organizations develop a minimum of 481 Replacements Units to replace the 481 public housing units demolished in the redevelopment of Rainier Vista." The agreement goes on to specify that these units "shall be affordable to public housing eligible households, with a minimum of 100 percent of the units available to households at or below 30 percent of median income." Nowhere does it say, as Ms. Colter suggests, that SHA is required to replace only 80 percent.

The City Council not only ratified this agreement unanimously, it also passed the legislative rezone necessary for the project to proceed. In the next several years, Seattle will witness the replacement of all these worn-out units for very low-income residents and the addition of much needed workforce housing in this area.

**Virginia Felton  
Communications Director,  
Seattle Housing Authority**

## Too P.C.

Dear Real Change,  
The food column touting vegetarianism ("Notes from the Kitchen," Feb. 21) is the last straw for me. Your edito-

rial masthead contains a policy of political correctness; that apparently includes promoting disrespect for non-vegetarians.

How about an editorial policy of writers keeping their facts straight, and the issues separate?

**Sincerely,  
Zachary Murphy  
Seattle**

## Worthless?

Dear Perfect's Harris:

I've just been to your website and I wanted to say "thanks." I buy Real Change from any of three men who sell same in front of Ken's Market. Then I put the paper on my microwave intending to read it when I find the time and read The Stranger, surf the web, watch TV, and read worthless old books. After a few weeks, I throw the paper in the recycle bin. This time I read it and found "Classics Corner." Thanks.

I started reading a particularly worthless set of books, The Story of Civilization, by Will Durant, and have begun the second book, The Life of Greece, wherein Helen and Troy are mentioned, so your article caught my eye. Then I saw the ad for your website (www.classicscorner.org) on the back of the paper and rifled through it. I added it to my favorites and will be checking back periodically and making extensive use of the links you've provided.

Thanks for letting me know that there's at least one other amateur "reader of things boring and pointless" out there.

**Joy,  
Tom Barrett  
Seattle**

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# Change

**Puget Sound's Voice of the  
Poor and Homeless**

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

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### Mission Statement:

Real Change organizes, educates, and builds alliances to create solutions to homelessness and poverty. We exist to provide a voice for poor people in our community.

### Goals

Provide a foundation for grassroots organizing.  
Publish the views of marginalized communities.  
Create direct economic opportunity. Build bridges with a broad range of allies in the struggle against poverty.

The Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Programs include the Real Change newspaper, the MacWorkshop computer lab, StreetLife Art Gallery, the StreetWrites peer support group for homeless writers, the Homeless Speakers Bureau, and the First things First organizing project. All donations support these programs and are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

### Editorial Policy

Articles appearing in Real Change reflect the opinions and perspectives of the authors. We encourage the submission of journalism, opinion, fiction, poetry, and artwork, and hope to create a forum where the many perspectives on poverty and homelessness can find expression. Real Change reserves the right to edit any material for length and style. Articles considered libelous or which encourage violence, sexism, homophobia, or racism will not be considered for publication.

## ARC Profile Sid Vicious

In 1996, a Siamese-Tabby kitten surprised us here at Real Change by volunteering to be our resident office cat, a position we didn't know we needed filled. Within months, this cat, named Sid Vicious, proved himself to be indispensable. So much so that we named him editor-in-chief, a position he still holds today.

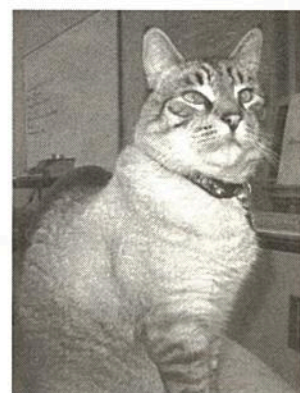
Sid's life has not always been easy. There was that really bad toothache. The untimely death-by-dumpster of his woman, the plush (stuffed) Siamese cat Nancy. The fleas. But Sid overcame it all, and he has come to regard himself as a survivor, not a victim.

Recently Sid joined the ranks of our vendors. Well, OK, not really. He sat through vendor orientation and got a badge (he's vendor 007) but he mainly just uses it to impress his endless supply of groupies. He has also made his mark on the Internet: Read about him at [www.speakeasy.org/~anitra/Sid](http://www.speakeasy.org/~anitra/Sid) and then follow the links from there to his page on the national site [shopcat.com](http://shopcat.com).

But Sid Vicious is not willing to be satisfied with these past triumphs. He has dreams. Right now, he's working on finding the source of those little cans of food he likes, so he can kill them where they live instead of relying on others to kill them for him.

His long-term goal? World dominance, of course. ■

—©Dr. Wes Browning



SID PONDERES HIS FUTURE.



# Getting Worse

**It's time for the Legislature to make hard choices. What would you do?**

By Nancy Amidei

Least anyone thought the budget news could not get any worse, it has. The legislative session began with a \$1.25 billion deficit; now it is somewhere between \$1.6 and \$2 billion. Roughly half the state's \$11.4 billion annual General Fund budget consists of debt payments and public education; it's off-limits to cuts. That means legislators have to cut \$1.6 billion (or more) in spending out of the roughly \$6 billion that protects children, nurses frail elderly people, houses prisoners, and protects public health and the environment.

We react in horror when people are neglected or abused: We recoil at the stories of Linda David, of mentally ill veterans living under a freeway, of people on waiting lists for drug treatment or food. A budget built on \$1.6 billion worth of cuts in state spending will multiply those stories. Guaranteed.

Voters are quick to say what they don't want cut and don't want to pay. But what are you willing to pay more for? What would you help sustain? Here is my own list. (It seems only fair to go first, when asking others what they would pay or do.)

- I would willingly pay more than my current car tabs. A few years ago the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax was providing \$775 million a year for public health departments, county sheriffs, and aid to our poorer counties. Those who felt the old assessment was outdated and unfair may have had a point; they should quickly develop an up-to-date, fair assessment, and ask all of us vehicle owners to pay.

- I am willing to pay more for gas. Across the state we complain about traffic/roads/ferries/transit/transport. Doing something about it will cost money.

- Extending the sales tax to candy and gum would bring in \$14 million a year and could preserve about half a dozen programs that prevent child abuse and neglect.

- Adding a penny to the cost of a 12-ounce soda would generate nearly \$30 million a year. That could save all of the drug or alcohol treatment currently on the chopping block (\$16 million), Medical Interpreter Services (\$5 million), legal services for low-income people (\$5 million), and cuts in Head Start, emergency food, and shelter (\$4.1 million).

- Extending the sales tax to cable TV would generate nearly \$33 million a year — enough to save General Assistance for the Unemployable (GA-U), which helps pay for food and rent for 18,000 mentally and physically disabled adults. If GA-U is eliminated, as some are proposing, these adults will likely become homeless. Similarly, some \$10 million in desperately needed mental health services and therapeutic child care are at risk. That seems a fair trade: thousands of troubled lives in return for a slightly higher cable TV bill.

- There is a certain logic in raising the tax on alcohol and using the resulting revenues to sustain some of the treatment programs for people struggling with alcoholism.

Under normal circumstances, I would not support any new tax that added to the unfairness of our tax system (which already puts its heaviest burden on the poor). But these are not normal circumstances. So, after much soul-searching, I also support the following:

- A temporary increase in the sales tax, at just one-tenth of one percent, along the lines of Senator Jim Hargrove's "Freedom Surcharge," would bring in nearly \$100 million in new revenue. Hargrove's surcharge would last only 12 months.

- A 1-percent flat tax proposed by Senator Pat Thibaudeau to pay for health care. I would prefer a progressive income tax to any flat tax, but constitutional restrictions make it impossible to pass any progressive income tax quickly. A flat tax can be passed with the legislature's majority vote.

Decide which — if any — sources of new revenue sound fair to you, that you would be willing to pay, and send the result to your legislators. They want to hear from you — especially when hard choices are at hand, and an election looms around the corner. It is our job to tell our elected officials how we wish to be represented. ■

*Nancy Amidei is the author of POLICY WATCH, a weekly bulletin about issues and events in Olympia during the legislative session. It is available at the UW School of Social Work website (<http://depts.washington.edu/sswwweb/>); just click on POLICY WATCH 2002.*

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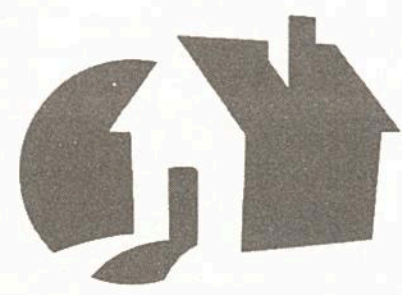
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## Prohibition back at Pioneer Square

Because of a few grocers who refused to go along, voluntary restrictions have failed. So now the Seattle City Council is asking state Liquor Control Board to ban the sale of certain types of alcohol in the Pioneer Square neighborhood during the day.

The Council's request caps two years of efforts by neighborhood activists to get convenience store owners to voluntarily comply with "Good Neighbor Agreements" restricting the sale of cheap booze.

In a final report to the city, consultants working to enforce the neighborhood's Alcohol Impact Area said that efforts to persuade local merchants to stop selling cheap liquor to so-called "chronic public inebriates" were ineffective because of just a few uncooperative stores. Sales at the Campbell Fuller Grocery on Yesler Way, for example, began every day bright and early. The owners refused to sign a Good Neighbor Agreement, which would have restricted single-can sales and banned sales in the morning, until the landlord forced them to. Even then, sales continued until the landlord evicted the store last year.

The Saveway story on Occidental Place continues to make these sales, even contributing to last year's volatile Fat Tuesday. "During the Mardi Gras riot in February, as many as 80 customers were observed lined up outside the Saveway's door as they sold a steady supply of alcohol to the throngs involved in the riot," says the report. "The community was furious at what was perceived as irresponsible behavior on the part of a neighborhood business."

To enact a ban, the Liquor Control Board will have to determine that neighborhood alcohol sales negatively impact the public's health. ■

—Adam Holdorf

## "Is it time to end the war on drugs?"

That is the title of a December 2001 report issued by the King County Bar Association, and the subject of a February 28 discussion hosted by Seattle City Councilmember Nick Licata. Both addressed the lack of effective prevention and available treatment for drug abuse, and the ineffectiveness of criminal sanctions to discourage drug using.

Around the discussion table were, among others, Councilmember Jim Compton, City Attorney Tom Carr, Roger Goodman of the King County Bar Association, and representatives from various community groups. Although on the guest list, Seattle Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske was mysteriously absent. Jim Prior, Captain of the SPD's Narcotics Division, filled in for his boss.

Nearly everyone around the table was well aware of at least two things: One, drugs hurt people and society, and two, yes, it is time to end an expensive but futile War on Drugs. Most of the 90-minute meeting was spent emphasizing these two points. Two citizens related their experiences with the War, and spoke of the need for reform. Community advocates rattled off statistics that reinforced this need, including:

- Treatment is available to one in five drug users who want to enlist in a program.
- For every dollar spent on treatment, we save seven to eight dollars in costs largely incurred by the criminal justice system.
- The exaggeration of the effects of drug use and the preaching of abstinence, or so-called "scare tactics," employed by prevention programs like DARE, have little effect on drug use.
- Prevention programs that target high-risk kids for more holistic "youth development" are proven to result in prevented, delayed, or more responsible drug use.
- A Los Angeles-based study found that the incarceration of rapists and murderers reduces the incidence of rape and murder. The incarceration of drug users, however, had no effect on drug use on the streets of the city.

Although the points made were powerful ones, those making them were, in Compton's words, "preaching to the choir." There is no question that users need more drug prevention and treatment, and less involvement from law enforcement, he pointed out after a long hour of statistics. However, he added, the state Legislature presents the obstacle to relaxing criminal sanctions and allocating money towards treatment and prevention programs.

There's been some progress this year, with the house's passage of HB 2338 last month. HB 2338, which still needs the Senate's approval, reduces the sentences for nonviolent drug offenders and uses the savings for drug treatment programs.

Near the end of the discussion, the point that should have been clear



at the beginning was finally made: Citizens hold the power to change the law, said Seattle City Councilwoman Jan Drago. Her point garnered enthusiastic applause from the audience, but before the community leaders around the table could act, they found themselves out of time. Maybe at the next meeting? ■

—Kennedy Leavens

## Mutual Interest doubles donations

Primarily through the help of local landlords and the real estate industry, the Seattle nonprofit Mutual Interest is set to distribute \$50,000 in rental housing assistance to put formerly homeless families in permanent housing. That's more than double what the nonprofit distributed in 2000.

But the group doesn't have much support for a legal effort in Olympia to take, by force of law, what they seek: the interest accruing in a landlord's bank account from the tenants' security deposits.

When tenants move into market-rate housing, most landlords get a so-called security deposit of \$500, to be returned when the tenant moves out again. Mutual Interest was founded in 1999 with the idea of using the interest earned on that \$500 for the move-in needs of homeless families. "When one of my housemates moved out, I thought that I had to return the interest from their security deposit, and it turned out that I didn't," founder Jennifer Gee told *Real Change* (Jan. 11, 2001). "At the same time, I was mentoring a guy in FareStart who was having trouble coming up with the money for a security deposit. My brain is the kind that just clicks in a situation like that."

Last year the group helped 52 families pay security deposits as they moved out of nonprofit "transitional" housing. Grants are administered through Family Services Transitional Assistance Program, Fremont Public Association's Housing Stability Program, Emergency Housing Services, The Homelessness Project, and the YWCA. Each family may need a gift of anything from \$500 to \$5,000. It is estimated that about 100 families in transitional housing will be able to move into rental housing this year due to these grants.

State House Bill 1942 would require landlords to pay tenants the interest earned from banking security deposits — the same source Mutual Interest has sought to tap. Mutual Interest director John Lang says that would come in the way of donations from its 150 to 200 contributors. The bill is dead for this year, but may return next legislative session. ■

—Jeanne Ryan

## Welcome home to Tent City



ON PRESIDENT'S DAY, SHARE/WHEEL'S TENTCITY3 FOUND ITSELF MOVING TO YET ANOTHER LOCATION WITHIN THE GREATER SEATTLE AREA. THE CAMP DESIGNED TO PROVIDE SHELTER AND A SAFE COMMUNITY FOR HOMELESS AND OTHER PEOPLE WHO WOULD NOT HAVE THOSE OTHERWISE WILL CELEBRATE ITS TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY IN APRIL — ASSUMING IT CAN FIND A NEW HOME. ITS CURRENT HOME AT THE NORTH SEATTLE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE IS ONLY SCHEDULED TO LAST THROUGH THE END OF THIS MONTH.

PHOTO BY JACKIE RENN.

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



# Night Final

## Farewell to Al Devany, Jr., Newspaper Hawker

By Michele Marchand

On a day I would've wanted to talk to Al about the news, he wasn't hawking papers on his traditional corner by the Bon Marché. Instead, Duke was keeping watch with the papers, wearing a photo of Al wreathed with black ribbon pinned to his coat. "Have you heard about Al?" he asked me.

Turns out Al had died at Harborview Intensive Care Unit that Monday, after suffering a stroke the previous week. "He was good people; he was my best friend. He had leukemia and didn't know it," Duke said. For weeks before he died, Al had been unable to wear shoes, and had been shuffling around the streets of Seattle with his portable newspaper stand wearing open-toed hospital flats. I'd wondered why he wasn't wearing shoes, but never asked. Duke said he thought it was part of the leukemia; for a long time Al's feet had been very painful.

"What's the good news, Al?" I'd shout out to him as I passed by every day. "There isn't any," he'd say, laughing. He had a wry, cynical eye about politics and people, but one of the biggest hearts I've ever known. I'd always stop to talk to him on my way to Westlake for the Thursday anti-war Women in Black vigils; even though he disagreed with the efficacy of our efforts, he would wish me luck every day.

"He would never complain about anything," said Duke. "He always tried to help everybody." Since he died, I've heard the extent to which Al was advisor to many people. "He always gave

me good advice," said JoJo Tran. Duke recently received a letter from one of Al's young friends from Boston, explaining she'd made a mistake about something, and wished she had listened to Al. She doesn't yet know he is gone.

Al is survived by his mother, Katherine Devany of New York City, his sister Ann of New York, and brother Richard of New Jersey. They flew out from the East Coast after Al's stroke and were able to see him before he died. They also heard stories from Al's many friends who loved him dearly here in Seattle.

Al came to Seattle in the late '70s from New York City; worked for a while at a travel agency, then as a telemarketer.

Then he got sick, lost his job, and started staying at SHARE's Bunkhouse Shelter. He then stayed at a nursing home on Rainier Avenue, according to Duke.

When Al started working for the *Seattle Times/Seattle Post Intelligencer* in the late '90s, he found his niche. One of 10 newspaper hawkers at various corners downtown from noon to 6 p.m., Al knew everybody; he drew people to his corner. "He made the spot!" said Duke. Vendors for the *Times/P-I* get a \$10/day stipend, and get to keep the 25 cent cover cost of every paper they sell. They are agents for circulation for the daily papers, but they are also our watchers. If we take the time to get to know them they can, like Al did, deepen our sense of community.

As I stood talking to Duke, a well-dressed businessman came up from the bus



AL DEVANY, SHOWN HERE AT WORK, DIED IN SEATTLE ON FEBRUARY 4, 2002, AT THE AGE OF 56.

## Save our state



THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS, UNION MEMBERS, STATE EMPLOYEES, CHURCH MEMBERS, AND NEEDY PEOPLE AND THEIR ADVOCATES FROM ACROSS THE STATE WENT TO OLYMPIA ON FEB. 18 TO DELIVER A SIMPLE MESSAGES, THAT THE LEGISLATURE PRESERVE HUMAN SERVICES, PROTECT WORKERS, AND FIND THE MONEY FOR TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING NEEDS. PHOTO BY GEORGE HICKEY.

tunnel and stopped to buy a paper. Hearing us talk about Al, he said, "Nice guy, never bothered anybody." "That was Jerry of Nordstroms," Duke confided to me afterwards. At least 30 of Al's regular customers came by the newspaper stand and signed a memorial card to send back to Al's family in New York. The nine other newspaper vendors wore their black-ribboned photos

of Al for the entire week after he died.

Al Devany was known among his peers as the best vendor on the *Times/P-I* team. He had a huge heart, and was a weather eye on the 3rd and Pine corner. He is mightily missed. "Some of his customers don't come by anymore," said Duke. "I think they don't want to believe Al is gone." ■

### 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.

#### Yes! *Real Change* Matters.

Here's what I can do to support work, dignity, and hope.

\$35  \$50  \$100  \$250  Other (\$ \_\_\_\_\_)

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# poetry

## Mundaneness of Living

mundaneness of living has  
taken a toll this day  
yearning, anticipation have  
hidden and slept in  
trapped in a city that  
cares not to care  
where is the mountain or  
road to unknown  
which one may escape  
and the spirit roam

— STEVE GOODMAN

## Carrying a Sign

leaves on the wind  
circle in the air  
frantic warnings  
emissaries  
from a wiser world

no one heeds them  
people push toward  
their usual destinations  
in their everyday faces

the leaves make the street  
wonderful —  
without them it would be entirely  
devoted to business  
and I would feel like dying  
I would have to walk up and down  
carrying a sign:  
“Bring Back The Leaves”

— ELIZABETH ROMERO

### Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning



**W**arning: I kept this column under my belt for a couple of weeks. Think about that. Under my belt.

I have made a discovery. In the six and a half years that this puppy (my column) has been alive, I have discussed sex only as follows: Male/hand, once. Male/water-fowl, maybe three or four times. Nonconsensual male/imaginary-anthropomorphic-being, once (my Muse Cindy made me emit a rhyme against my will.) Only once has there been direct mention of human couple sex. And that last was in a sextrain which described the sex in question as not really happening.

I have been the guy at the orgy holding himself in the corner, writerly speaking. Luckily I haven't minded, as I haven't had that much to say about sex, anyway. What would I know about sex? What's that? Besides, we are largely devoted to the concerns of homeless people. And since when do homeless people have couple sex?

In fact, having couple sex when you are homeless generally means doubling up in a latched one-seater somewhere, praying you finish before some irate would-be toilet user breaks the door down.

Naturally the time pressure at these events is seriously conducive to stress-related erectile dysfunction. Therefore, again, I find myself talking mainly about sex that doesn't really happen. I'm talking about male performance anxiety. I'm talking about high-pressure impotence. Whatever can be done about it? What should be?

Well, I'm ready to tell you, me and Bob Dole have something in common. We both take Viagra. You will all know by now, thanks to Bob, what Viagra does for us men.

But my goal here is to get down to the hard realities of life, and as I have discovered personally the hard reality is: Viagra is really for women. Let's face it. As a guy needing sexual relief, all I need is for a doctor to prescribe for me a truckload of porn and a velvet glove. Which come to think of it is comparably priced these days, and lasts just as long.

But men don't just have sex with their hands, with ducks, with imaginary-anthropomorphic-beings, or even with each other. Sometimes they have sex with women. And this is a good thing, for as Aristophanes or someone with a

similar looking name noted at length long ago, otherwise, something would give out.

I will go so far as to say that the entire social fabric of our social society depends on armies of straight women getting erect penises when they want them, and not next week. By next week, she'd leave you for a Greek lancer, and so much for America. So much for our American social fabric. Rock and roll as we now know it would die. Madison Avenue would crumble. We would become no different than the Taliban.

As our women left us, our pride and dignity would leave us. We would finally have to learn to play bridge to occupy our desolate souls. Eventually we would be forced to read, to learn how to pronounce French, and how to distinguish conifers.

Don't let this happen to our great society. Keep our country satisfied!

What I'm trying to say here is, to all you men out there who have ever found yourselves falling short in times of high demand, do us all a favor and get yourselves some Viagra. Especially you rich people who can afford it at ten dollars a pill. You may not thank me for it, but your partners will, and America will. Trust me, I know what I'm talking about. This stuff is truly awesome.

And, who knows? Maybe you'll help bring the price down. ■

**Having couple sex when  
you are homeless  
generally means doubling  
up in a latched one-  
seater somewhere, praying  
you finish before some  
irate would-be toilet user  
breaks the door down.**





## These are our Dreams

above these dark suburban streets  
the stars come out like children  
one by one  
the moon is like a mask of tragedy  
she is like a white heart  
beating in cold ribs

Christmas is just past  
and the silent lights twinkle  
in each small yard:  
a pine tree, a snowman

inside a woman in a kitchen  
bends towards the sink, a television  
illuminates a dark room

on the lawn a fat red-suited elf  
with magic reindeer and the holy  
family: a woman, a man and a baby  
in the clothing of a place  
half a world away  
these are our dreams

the ancient Celts  
the North Pole  
Palestine

where we clung together against the darkness  
where magically poor children got what they wanted  
where the Son of Man was born  
and we were taught to love and to give

here in the suburbs it is very dark  
every driveway has two chariots  
with hate on the bumpers  
and greed in the tanks

— ELIZABETH ROMERO

## Pow Wow 2001

Flying feet  
Drummers beat  
Soaring voices  
Swoop and swirl  
Dip and whirl  
Hawks and eagles  
Overhead  
Dropping feathers  
Sacred gifts  
To wear  
To share  
Dancers waken  
Mother Earth  
She rises  
Merges, blends with  
Father Sky  
Feet and feathers  
Weave their  
Marriage song  
Together  
Rising in the air  
Hot bodies  
Perfume the breeze  
Their incense  
Another note  
In the song  
The joyous love song  
Of life  
Sky Father  
Earth Mother  
All creatures  
Together  
One

— RENEENE ROBERTSON

## The Way

"So how come it's called the Ave?" asked the toothless  
drunk across the aisle from me, as the bus creaked and  
swayed along the Ave. "I mean it's University Way, right?  
How come it ain't called 'the Way'?"

Memory from my neurologically impaired past.  
Disorientation. Lost. "Excuse me... can you help me find  
'the Way'?" I asked. Wrong word. Sheepish smile. "Um...  
I mean... 'the Ave'?"

For whosoever wishes to survive this hell on earth must be  
reborn in the Life and Neon Lights. I am the Ave.

"Ten years I been living here, and still ain't got that one  
figured out," muses the drunk.

— ANONYMOUS



# The World at Your Door

## World Social Forum participants share their stories

Interview by Adam Holdorf

In late January, as prime ministers, chief executives, economists, and other celebrities-of-state flew in to New York City for the first-ever World Economic Forum to be held outside the tiny Swiss town of Davos, people with a different vision were gathering in the southern hemisphere. Like its evil twin, the second World Social Forum brought together people who study the global economy — to make it work for everyone. Over 50,000 people gathered in Brazil to learn from each other and affirm that “Another World is Possible” (the conference theme) through democracy, human rights, and global economic justice. It was a mirror image of the Davos forum, and of Seattle’s hosting of the World Trade Organization in 1999.

A handful of Seattleites attended, including Brenda Anibarro, Dustin Washington, and Katie Wepplo from the American Friends Service Committee, a community-action operation of the Quakers. The three do anti-racist work with local youth; Brenda also volunteers for the Port Profits for Human Needs Campaign, a grassroots effort to make the Port of Seattle more accountable.

**RC:** Tell me a little bit about Porto Alegre, the city that hosted the World Social Forum.

**Katie Wepplo:** I noticed how there was a parallel between the way Seattle welcomed the WTO and how Porto Alegre did, but it was for this people’s forum. It was so inspiring in that sense to see how the city government, and the state of Rio Grande Del Sol, actually wanted it there.

**Brenda Anibarro:** I feel like the city had a similar feel, because it was a port town like Seattle, but being in Brazil was very different because the people were just much more welcoming. Just the consciousness of people who are really well educated on neoliberalism was striking, because most people here don’t know what that word means. Being that we work on issues of racism, the common consensus of people there was yes, racism is a problem, which was also completely different from what you find here. I know that a large percentage of people in the town went and participated in this forum, and I don’t know how many people in Seattle would come out if something like that were held here.

**Dustin Washington:** While there was a definite police presence, it wasn’t overbearing. I was also amazed at the racial dynamics of the forum. I saw that the darker-skinned you are, the more oppressed you’re going to be, but I also saw the lines were blurred in ways that you don’t see in the U.S. For example, just seeing an older black woman and an older blond-haired, blue-eyed white woman walking down the street arm in arm — I can’t recall ever seeing that even once in the United States.

**RC:** So what were the highlights?

**Anibarro:** In the morning conferences,

you’d have these big names from the left or progressive movements from around the world, and there’d be a paper presented and people would argue different points. I went to all the economics conferences. I hadn’t had the opportunity, being a woman of color in this country, to see a lot of women from the global south give their perspectives on what’s happening regarding economic opportunities in their own countries. It was incredibly inspiring to see women talk about things in such a radical way. And these were economists, people who had, if not decision-making power in their own governments, then some influence.

Of course [political scientist and linguist] Noam Chomsky spoke — I didn’t see him, but it was amazing to see how many people went to see him — he spoke three nights in a row and every time [the audience] was overpacked.

There was a definite anti-American-government sentiment that went on there, rightfully so, yet there was also a recognition that while Chomsky is from the States, he definitely challenges the government and he was someone everyone wanted to hear.

**Wepplo:** The conference was extremely holistic. You would have workshops on detailed economic policies but also on culture and the arts. I went to one on Capoeira [the Brazilian form of martial arts and dance], and there were elders showing how each instrument related to Brazilian culture, and how that, in turn, related to social change. I went to another one on interpretation of your dreams, put on by a humanitarian organization in Argentina, with the idea that we need to deal with the violence within ourselves in order to transform society.

**Washington:** I was surprised by how many Americans weren’t there, and how little attention it got in the media here. I heard there was something on

NPR, and that’s it. Nobody outside our circles is talking about the World Social Forum.

One of the things I noticed there was that people from the Northern Hemisphere were much more reformist in relation to institutions like the WTO, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. Whereas the feeling that I got from people from the Southern Hemisphere was, “We need complete resistance and we need it from a grassroots level, not expecting our governments to do it.” I left feeling like people from the South talk about grassroots resistance, and they talk about culture too. African people were talking about how it’s gotten to the point that they can’t even create music free of western flavor because of the continuing conditions of colonialism.

**RC:** Was there a conflict between these two points of view?

**Anibarro:** I saw this North-South division — but it was also a class and racial division. On one side there was a push from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to build new institutions. [These were] organizations that are still controlled and will always be controlled by their funders, which weren’t necessarily making a radical push because they had no people base. It came largely from NGOs from the North, but also from well-educated people from the South.

**Washington:** The forums we went to that were organized by NGOs were very reformist oriented, and not really intimately connected to any of the real-life issues that people in the global South are facing.

**RC:** There’s no single blueprint for the world that comes out of this. Is that OK?

**Anibarro:** The beauty of that is it then shows that it’s a more rooted struggle, based on the politics of place: What are we dealing with in our communities? I think people who have wanted a blueprint out of these things either work at a policy level so high that it’s easy to do that because you’re ignoring what’s going on in the grassroots, or you fall under some kind of ideology where it’s

easy to have a line, and you’re not going to affect anyone anyway. I hope that [future forums] don’t move toward having one set goal.

The unity is that we recognize that there are interconnections: the same company that’s trying to privatize the Port of Seattle is also trying to privatize in Chile, and has been privatizing in Mexico and Vietnam. We can recognize those connections and know there’s a very real policy that permeates all of our lives in interesting ways.

We’re coming to a forum like this with all our own oppressions as well. We can’t expect the WSF to be as accountable to the youth that were there — which didn’t happen this time, to the degree it should — or to all the other communities that have been oppressed. We’re not even there yet as an anti-globalization movement,

so I think that there would be huge dangers in trying to come up with any points of unity beyond what we’re against.

**RC:** You mentioned anti-Americanism earlier. What was that like?

**Washington:** The thing that stood out for me the most was seeing T-shirts with the World Trade Centers being blowing up and “Fuck the USA” written on them. We did a workshop on militarism in the U.S., and I posed a question to the people in the room, about after they saw September 11, what was their gut reaction, and it was “Yeah! About time something like that happened.”

**“We recognize that there are interconnections: the same company that’s trying to privatize the Port of Seattle is also trying to privatize in Chile. We can recognize those connections and know there’s a very real policy that permeates all of our lives in interesting ways.”**

— Brenda Anibarro

**Wepplo:** When [white Americans] travel abroad, we have a lot of power based on our money and our white-skin privilege. What was different at this forum was that people were well aware of that. It’s not a proud thing to say that you’re an American knowing that what your country does has devastating impacts on other people. I left with a deeper sense of responsibility to tie my local work to broader global movements. ■

*Anibarro, Washington, Wepplo, and other Seattleites who attended the World Social Forum will share their experiences in person at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 16, at the Jefferson Community Center, 3801 Beacon Avenue South.*



# LETTING GO OF THE BOX

Gretta Harley believes in finding power through art

By Molly Rhodes

Artist Gretta Harley has always been interested in the deep connection between art and the community, especially the ability of art to give a voice to people who often lack one. So when she first came across one of Anitra Freeman's poems — at Bumbershoot's 2000 literary arts event — she knew it was the inspiration for just the kind of project she had always wanted to do.

"I went past the WHEEL table, and I hadn't heard of WHEEL before," recalls Harley, who began flipping through some of the poetry chapbooks the homeless women's group had on display. "I thought their use of art for expressing something that's coming from a place of disempowerment was beautiful. And every time I came across a poem that blew me away, it was by Anitra."

Harley was so taken with one of Freeman's poems, "My Father's Arms," that she wrote a musical composition for it and mailed Anitra a copy, along with an invitation to her latest show. Anitra came, and the two formed a bond that would, in a matter of months, become the basis for a collaborative, multi-disciplined fundraising performance for WHEEL, called Foxes in Boxes.

The kernel of the show's central theme — women struggling to tame and accept the "evils" inside and around them in the world — has actually been rooted in Harley for several years, as she herself has struggled to carve a place for herself as a woman in a musical world dominated by men. When she entered Cornish College of the Arts to study composition, she was one of three women in a program of 25 students.

"I think there's something wrong with this picture,"

says Harley, remembering one incident in a jazz history class she took. "We were going around the room telling our professor who we were going to do our reports on, and I said I'm going to my report on a jazz woman composer. And his response was, there aren't any."

Harley shakes her head and laughs. "And so I found one who is amazing. Her name is Mary Lou Williams. In fact, she inspired the bee-bop movement. She was a composer and a performer in her own right and an arranger for Duke

Ellington, had her own record company, her own radio show, so why aren't we talking about this woman? Why isn't she uttered in the same breath?"

Harley was so frustrated by the lack of discussion and interest in women composers that she designed her own independent study project. And it was through this project that she began to discover the history behind the subservient position of women not only in music, but women in all walks of life. She was particularly taken with the controversial theories of a Lithuanian anthropologist and archeologist, Marija Gimbutas, who believed that cultures once existed in which life and death were equal, and death was honored as much as life.

"Then something happened and took over the death aspect and turned it into something evil," explains Harley. "And the death ended up being blamed on women. This is actually in the Bible. In 418 A.D., the church stated that death was the fault of women because Eve ate the apple and Adam was forgiven in the church and Eve and her daughters were sentenced to hell."

The same idea is found in Greek mythological story of Pandora, who disobeyed the gods and opened up a box they had given to her obedient husband,

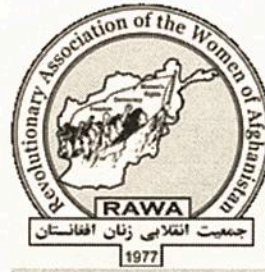
Epimetheus. When she opened the box, all the evils of the world spilled out, including disease, famine, and death. People suffer because Pandora, like Eve, couldn't leave well enough alone.

Yet Harley has a different interpretation of the myth, one that eschews the notion that the evils only existed when Pandora naively opened the box.

"Maybe Pandora opened the box of evil on purpose," says Harley. "Being a woman, full of intuition and curiosity, she knew what

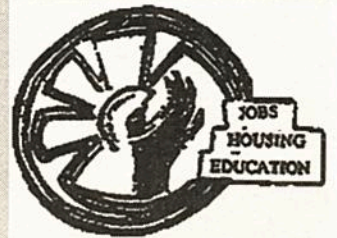
was inside of it, but she knew it was outside of it, too. And that boxing up evils and making believe they don't exist doesn't do any good. It actually is detrimental to human kind. We need to open things up and look at them, to try to understand them and work together, and to do what we can as communities. If it's something we can't overcome, we can at least find a way to make peace with them and make our lives a little bit more humane.

"Also, I think a lot of the evils that



**Foxes in Boxes**  
**A fundraiser for WHEEL and RAWA**  
**April 6, at 8 p.m.; April 7, at 3 p.m.**  
**Cornish College of the Arts**

**PONCHO Theatre**  
**710 E. Roy campus, by Harvard Exit**  
**Suggested Donation: \$10**  
**All donations will go to WHEEL and RAWA**  
**(Donation is not required to see show;**  
**no one will be turned away)**



are in the box are man-made. They're made largely because of the inhumane ways we treat each other, the ways we look at the world as being a hostile environment as opposed to the world we share with other beings."

With this idea in mind, and the inspirational push of Freeman's words, Harley found eight other writers by April of last year. They were told the story, and then they were told to take the next three months to write, after which Harley would write music for a performance of each of their finished works.

"There were no edits, there were no no's," says Harley. "The writers were told to pick an evil, write about it, and then I'll work with it."

What Harley found herself working with was not always what she expected.

"I expected war, it's not in there. I expected disease, it's not in there. But one thing that's really fascinating is silence. Anitra's poem is about depression. Another woman wrote about oppression. Tess Lotta, a local freelance writer, wrote about anger and did it in four sections, because anger isn't one and the same old thing we're looking at. Anger is something we have to really feel to get past a lot of it. I think our society doesn't encourage anger; it's a bad thing, especially among women. Her anger starts off as recognition and it moves through various processes. She's still pissed by the end of the show, but she's made peace with her anger."

The process of bringing the words together with the music, and bringing both onto the stage, has changed a lot of Harley's original ideas, mainly because she tries to remain open and re-

sponsive to the community of artists she has put together. Among the writers, in addition to Freeman, there are a variety of women, from those who are well-known within Seattle's literary community, like Martha Linehan and Trisha Ready, to those who are just beginning to find their voice, like 15-year-old Northwest School student Elise Fogel. There are six musicians, whom Harley has gathered from fellow classically trained students at Cornish and from among rock bands she has played with in Seattle since the early 1990s. There was also September 11, which inspired Harley to add the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) to the organizations who will collectively receive every penny of the door donations given at the two shows.

Yet a show like this without a set structure is a perfect means for the people involved — especially the writers — to discover something about their own fears and internal "evils" they weren't necessarily expecting.

"I want them to find what's in their box, what kind of movement. I want the writers to tell me if your evil had hope in it, what would be the outcome. Their box of evil, plus hope, would be what? So that's offered out to think about. Because there's both good and bad, the birth and the death. We like the categorize things, and put them in neat boxes. It simplifies something so intensely complicated. There are many, many layers of our human existence, and when you take a myth like Pandora and throw it out like it was all her fault because she opened that box — no, it was more complicated than that. You can't box up things, you have to look at them in order to grow." ■





THE BABIES IN ALL FOUR PHOTOS WERE BORN TO DRUG-ADDICTED MOTHERS AND ARE BEING TAKEN CARE OF AT THE PEDIATRIC INTERIM CARE CENTER IN KENT. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE, A BABY'S FEET GO INTO AN ADDICTION-RELATED TREMOR. PHOTOS BY JACKIE RENN.



## Babies Got Backing

State-funded social services would benefit from making friends with legislators or their families.

That's the conclusion you reach when you talk to Representative Dave Upthegrove, a Democrat from Des Moines who's willing to filibuster to make sure PICC gets all the state funds it needs next year. Upthegrove's mother was president of the nonprofit's Board of Directors, and it's one of the reasons why PICC is "near and dear to my heart."

"One, it has obvious human benefits, and two, it provides huge cost-savings to the state. It's the classic example of a cut that we shouldn't make."

He doubts that the Governor's plan to make Medicaid pay for part of the program is feasible. That's why he put a special line-item for PICC in the next budget. He's discussed it with Speaker of the House Frank Chopp and House Budget Committee Chair, Helen Sommers, and is "optimistic" that his request will be fulfilled. He's kept PICC in Olympia's limelight in another way, by passing a House resolution congratulating the agency for nearly a decade of good work. "I personally commend PICC for giving drug affected babies the chance to recover and lead

full and healthy lives," he said as the resolution passed late last month.

Human-services advocates tend not to share Upthegrove's alarm. In recent years, more and more programs have been shifted to the federal Medicaid fund, as the Governor proposes. PICC could join them, says Cassie Sauer of the Washington State Hospital Association.

What would Upthegrove say about all the other programs faced with the same budget deficit? Don't they need a champion too?

"People down here keep talking about how cutting services today increases costs tomorrow," he responds. But cuts to PICC's funds will have "an immediate and instantaneous impact" on the state's hospitals. "There are very few [services] that have such a direct link" between prevention and future costs. "If we cut it, I'd argue that we need to raise the Medicaid reimbursement to hospitals."

When the House is ready to pass its budget, Upthegrove says he's ready to vote no if PICC doesn't get its due. "I'm a Democrat, and Democrats have a one-vote majority [in the House]," he says. "They need my vote." ■

— Adam Holdorf

### PICC Continued from Page 1

methamphetamine, or heroin under the harsh lights of a hospital nursery.

Withdrawal symptoms for an infant are: extreme sensitivity to light and noise, body aches, tremors, quivering limbs, stomachache, a pounding headache, restlessness, sleeplessness, dehydration, diarrhea, and sometimes the inability to eat due to being lethargic or not knowing how to work their mouths. A baby's diarrhea can be so acidic that it burns their skin.

At PICC, the babies are closely monitored in a dimly lit, quiet, low-stimulus environment. Plush stuffed animals are propped up in the corners of the cribs; mobiles dangle from above. Everything is colored in soft pastels. All the toys are donated.

Even though newborns are small, the average birth weight of these babies is four pounds — about half that of non-affected newborns. Many are born premature. They are tightly swaddled in blankets, to stifle the force of tremors. Opiate-addicted babies are most fragile; they tend to be put on monitors. The withdrawal process for an opiate-addicted baby is generally treated with a low dose of morphine, which calms its stomach and controls the diarrhea.

For the babies withdrawing from non-opiate drugs like cocaine, crack, and amphetamines, "it's all about the environment, having a low stimulus," according to PICC's social worker, Donna Ellis.

Babies are released only after they have withdrawn from the drugs and are no longer in need of medical monitoring. For most babies, that takes about 30 days. Last year, 80 of the babies that left PICC were placed in foster care. The remaining sixty-three of them went home with parents or relatives. ■

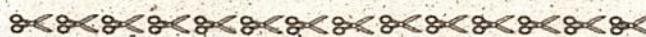
— Jackie Renn



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# The Cat on the Roof Incident

By Gordon Hilgers

**T**ake a look at me. I'm disgusting. My hair looks like the bird's nest thatch of a madman's. My clothes are dirty, covered with grease and grime. I'm sitting in a jail cell, and sitting on forbidding bench seats next to me are a motley of the toughest guys I've ever seen, exchanging trade secrets: the best way to break into a liquor store, how to unlatch a particularly difficult residential window.

Trying to act tough, then, I pitch a sidelong glance at one of my cellmates and, like a character in a Steven Seagal movie, ask, "What you in for?"

"They said I killed my wife with a hammer, but I didn't do it. Really, man." To which a half-drunk buzzard chimes in, "They're trying to pin some rap 'bout me raping my next door neighbor's daughter. She wasn't even pretty or nothing."

It's a round robin. From inmate to inmate we go, where we stop nobody knows. Arson. Assault with a deadly weapon. Possession with intent to sell. But when it's my turn, when the steely eyes of these literally deadly men bear down on me, what can I say?

"So, man. What's your deal?" one asks, his eyebrows lifting like a pair of scrub brushes. I say it: "Cat on the roof."

"Cat? On the roof? What kinda crime's that, man?"

"There was this cat on the roof," I insist, "and I called the Fire Department, and when they came out, they thought it was an emergency. But when they found out it was only a cat stuck on the roof of my apartment complex, I guess they pressed charges."

Almost on cue, all these hardened killers and robbers and rapists move away from me.

More than I admitted at the time, I was right there with them. I didn't think that what I'd done was particularly right-headed either. Of course, there's far more to this story.

The night I tried to get a yowling cat off the roof of my apartment complex, I'd been "in recovery" from major depression for about six months — pretty early in the game of getting over a serious emotional disease. By the time I'd gotten an appropriate diagnosis, my nerve endings were pretty frazzled. The near-constant cycling of mania and melancholy had worn me out. Doctors admonished me to get plenty of rest. They didn't want a relapse on their hands. Neither did I.

But a relapse is exactly what happened. In 1993, the cloud-wracked Christmas season — a particularly dangerous period for depressives — was in full, foggy bloom. Commercialism's crass co-optation of the most sacred religious holiday in the Western World littered the airwaves with a fairly trashy takedown on Christmas Spirit. Worse, my unemployment had dwindled to nothing. No food left in my refrigerator. I couldn't pay my rent. Afraid my telephone would be cut off for non-payment, I was calling everyone simply to ward off the coming crisis. But nobody listened to me. Although signs of impending relapse set up a clangor everywhere I went, depression's sudden visitation was an inevitable surprise to everyone.

My moods exploded when I found I couldn't buy Christmas presents. From there I slid into veering excursions of anger, anxiety, moroseness, and mania. In other words, I was caught in the maw of what happens when "stressors" coincide.

Next thing, I couldn't sleep. Thoughts raced. Irritability tweaked every idea. Grandiloquence coasted through my head like nuns on a merry-go-round. Paranoia cowed me. Concentration became snowy — like a television off-channel. Yes, I was bouncing off the ceiling, but heavy as lead. Then there was this cat. The one on the roof. The one that wouldn't stop yowling. It had howled for two days.

There is nothing more irritating than having a frightened animal mewing all night when your head feels like the entire German Army has just marched through it. By the end of those two days, I didn't think I could face another night of this feline operetta. So I got to work.

I first tried the City of Dallas. But no, I was told, we can't do anything about it. Stuck on the roof? A winter freeze coming on? Why don't you try again Monday? Next I tried the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which told me to call the City of Dallas. I tried animal shelters — which led me to the Dallas Fire Department. It seemed fairly appropriate. Pictures of the friendly firemen leaning their long ladders against a big tree and climbing up to remove a scared kitten from the top branch of the old family oak tree had, after all, nursed my sense of security since childhood.

"Listen, sir," the female Fire Department receptionist said, "the cat's going to get off when it's tired of being up there. If it got up there, it can get down." And I entered full panic mode. Through the mist of spotty memory, I realize I

wasn't thinking clearly. The cat on the roof was almost a metaphorical cat: a symbolic embodiment of how my brain felt. Still, I kept trying to get that yowling fuzzi-ball off the shingles. But no one would help me.

Impulsively, then, I called 911. Dangling at the end of my cord, the emergency number seemed symbolic, too. When the operator crackled onto the line, I breathlessly told her I needed the Fire Department—as soon as possible. I had an emergency on my hands.

*Bingo!* That generated action. In 10 minutes, three screaming fire engines manned by 16 ready firemen, each one of them wrinkling their highly-sensitive noses in search of the ghastly odor of smoke, screeched up curbside. For blocks, curious neighbors poured from their apartments. Firemen in rubber suits scrambling all over the property like an amphibious invasion. Expecting burning walls, one fireman asked, "Where is it?" And I said it again: "*Cat on the roof!!!!*"

For some reason that phrase literally rocked my world. "That's not an emergency," he growled, "that's a false alarm." But I insisted otherwise. The fireman wasn't amused: "Sorry, bud. False alarm." What could I say, other than, "Well, can you, like, just move your truck over there and get the cat off the roof...now that you're already here and stuff?" The chief fireman's crewcut might as well have caught fire. In a soldier's monotone, he cursed me out good. Then he got in his big red fire truck and scurried off, ready to save someone else.

To make a long story shorter, I was jailed for a pathological attempt to save a frightened animal. A false alarm, at least in Dallas County. According to all later accounts of the subsequent arrest, it wasn't the details that mattered, it was the money. By the time I got into that cell full of killers, I was ricocheting. After three days of incarceration with no medication, no special care for my illness, not even a telephone call to my case-workers and doctors, I was a literal lunatic when my beleaguered family bailed me out.

Miffed by the irresponsible way I'd been treated in a so-called "justice center," I decided to fight the charges. Meeting with my court-appointed attorney, who expected for me to plead no contest and pay \$1,500, I told him, "If some of the biggest corporations in the world can use block-and-stall tactics to wear-out their legal adversaries, we can too."

For nearly four years, we reset the court date something like 20 times. Three years into this Great Big Case, my life was improving: I was back to work, working way below my "normal" level in order to ward off unnecessary stress. Then, after an unexpected change of rules, my attorney, through a technicality, missed a "reset," and all the progress I'd made vanished in about 30 days. The court issued a warrant about the time a temporary job ended for me, and suddenly, I was stuck—unemployable, with a County DA hanging onto my heels like an angry pit bull. Soon, I was evicted from my apartment.

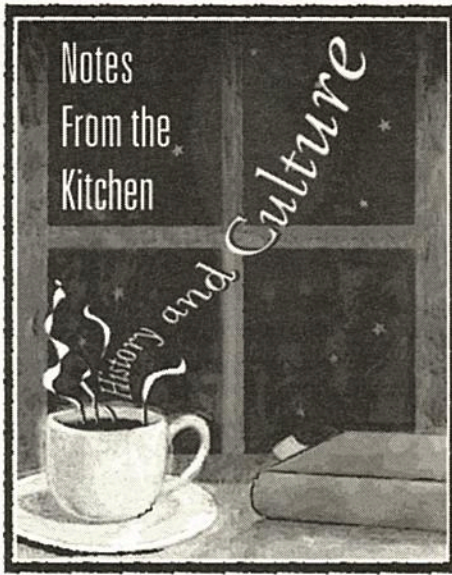
I'd had a lot of hope until the hot July afternoon when I threw a big black plastic garbage bag over my shoulder and headed for a homeless shelter. Emotionally, I had been doing just fine — but my illness had collided with the justice system. After about a year of living on the streets, I reached a settlement with the DA. But I still can't help but think, How hard do you have to punish someone for a false alarm call?

And what about that cat? The night after I'd made my call, an ice storm rolled over Dallas. The following spring, I watched as a maintenance crew scraped a mummified cat carcass off the roof. It still had its pretty pink collar on. ■

**There is nothing more irritating than having a frightened animal mewing all night when your head feels like the entire German Army has just marched through it. By the end of those two days, I didn't think I could face another night of this feline operetta.**

Reprinted from the June 2001 issue of *Endless Choices*, a Dallas homeless paper.





# A Modest Belgian Supper

By Liz Smith

**R**rrring! The doorbell. A visitor. The husband leaves his fireside chair to open the door. His wife calls, "Who is it, honey?" His answer, "It's the neighbors, come to fight a war in the living room. They brought their own guns and uniforms this time."

"Oh, no," she groans. "Don't they know we just fixed the house from the last war?"

That's the one constant in the history of Belgium—it's been invaded by everyone from Julius Caesar to Hitler, the boy next door gone bad. Napoleon lost his critical battle of Waterloo there in 1815. But there is more to any country than its wars and invasions.

Belgium has wonderful beer and chocolate. They have waffles and Brussels sprouts. They used to have rotten old King Leopold and the Belgian Congo. Now it's Zaire. When King Leopold was in charge, it was he who sent out Walter Stanley to find "Dr. Livingstone, I presume." Tin-Tin is Belgian, and so is Hercule Poirot, Agatha Christie's famous detective. As you will see from the recipes in today's column, the Belgians eat the way we used to, back before we had all those doctors pestering us about our cholesterol levels. Guess we've lost our innocence. Oh, well. The world is always coming to an end, isn't it? So we might as well have a good supper to cheer us up and strengthen our characters. ■

## Vlaamse Karbonade (yield: about 6 servings)

This is a savory Belgian stew, utterly delicious, yet made from humble ingredients. The secret is the long gentle heat and strong Belgian ale. I used Augustijn Ale, which has been brewed by Belgian monks since 1295 A.D. You can find a good selection of ales from Belgium at Ballard Market. Some other good brands to use are Fat Tire Amber Ale, or Trippel or Abbey Belgian Style Ale. Do not use a wimpy anemic American beer, as these give poor results and are not authentic. A very slight amount of alcohol remains in the finished stew, but it's O.K. for children to consume.

2 large onions, thinly sliced	2 whole bay leaves
3 pounds chuck roast, fat trimmed, cut into 2" cubes	1 Tbsp each salt and pepper
1/2 cup flour	2 garlic cloves, peeled and cut in half
2 tsp each salt and pepper	1 Tbsp red wine or sherry vinegar
2 Tbsp each butter and oil	2 Tbsp brown sugar
36 ounces dark strong Belgian ale	1 Tbsp grainy mustard
2 tsp dried thyme	1 piece of bread

1. Stir together the flour and 2 tsp each of the salt and pepper. Add the cubes of meat and stir around.
2. Melt the butter and oil on medium heat in a big pot. Brown the meat, 5 or 6 pieces at a time. Put in a separate bowl.
3. When all the meat is browned, put in the onions and stir well. Cook until lightly browned, about 20 minutes. Stir every 2-3 minutes.
4. Put the meat back into the pot. Pour in the ale. When it begins to simmer, turn the heat down as low as possible. The liquid will be foamy at first, then the foam will clear. There should just be a few bubbles here and there.
5. Once the stew is simmering, add in the thyme, bay leaves, 1 TB each salt and pepper, and the two garlic cloves.
6. Simmer, partially covered, for 2 1/2 to 3 hours. Stir every half an hour—scrape sides of pan—and keep barely simmering. Stew will be ready for finishing when liquid has tiny flecks of beef in it.
7. Stir in vinegar, sugar, mustard, and bread. Simmer 5 more minutes, and then serve.

## Knolselder En Aardappel Puree (yield: about six servings)

This celeriac and potato vegetable puree makes a perfect foil for the beef stew. If you have some dark-colored dishes, plate this and top it with the stew. It will look like a snow-capped volcano crowned by a lake of gravy. Don't be put off by the appearance of the celeriac, also called celery root. It's probably the home-liest vegetable in the produce department, but once it's peeled it doesn't look so bad. It's a special kind of celery cultivated for the root, with a mild flavor.

3 baking potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks	4 Tbsp butter
1 celeriac, under one pound, peeled and cut into chunks	1/4 cup cream
	salt and pepper, to taste

1. In a saucepot, cover the vegetables with cold water. Simmer until tender. Drain the water.
2. Put the pot back over the heat and stir for 30-45 seconds. Add the butter, cream, salt, and pepper. Mash until smooth and serve.

## Chocolade Vlaaien — Chocolate Pudding

(yield: six 3-ounce servings)

8 ounce milk	4 ounce bittersweet chocolate, chopped into small bits
8 ounce cream	1 tsp. vanilla
6 egg yolks	6 suitable cookies or slices of cake

1. Put all the ingredients, except the cookies, into the top of a double boiler. Over medium heat, whisk continually until all the froth subsides into the pudding. This will take about 10 minutes. Pudding is done when it coats the back of a spoon. You must whisk continually because otherwise it won't emulsify and you'll have chocolate scrambled-egg-soup.
2. Remove bowl from heat — watch out for drips of hot water — and whisk for a couple more minutes to cool. Place cookies in each bowl and ladle the custard in.
3. Let cool in refrigerator for a few hours, then serve.

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**Saturday, February 8, Sacred Heart Shelter**

**1:50 AM** Someone outside the church shelter in Lower Queen Anne kicked or punched in a window. Broken glass fell inside the shelter and awakened shelter residents. 911 was called to report the act of vandalism; no one was found outside during a brief search by church staff and shelter participants. Police said they would send someone to take a report.

**2:30 AM** The shelter coordinator noticed someone in the stairwell directly outside the shelter entrance. When he opened the door, he witnessed a young man (age 17-21) attempting to place a small sum of money on the broken window ledge. When asked whether he had seen the earlier incident, the young man said he had nothing to do with the broken window, but that he felt bad for the church and the homeless and so was leaving \$28 on the windowsill. The shelter coordinator asked the man to wait until the police arrived, took down information from his ID card, and noted that he was from Vashon Island and had fresh cuts on his hand. The young man left before police arrived.

When police officers came to take a report, the shelter coordinator relayed the information he had gathered about the young man from Vashon. Officers said that they couldn't consider him a suspect, since no one actually had seen the crime committed.

**5:15 AM** The police called the shelter to ask whether the shelter coordinator who they had talked to about the broken window was still there. The calling officer said a squad car was parked on the John Street side of the church. When the shelter coordinator and participants went out to explain a report had already been filed, police handcuffed the coordinator and booked him into King County Jail for an outstanding warrant. ■

—by Anton Gose  
Streetwatch special guest

*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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# Drop by Drop

By Adam Holdorf

*Another World Is Possible / New World Disorder: Conversations in a Time of Terror*  
Edited by Jee Kim, et. al.  
Subway & Elevated Press, 2001  
168 pages, paperback, \$12

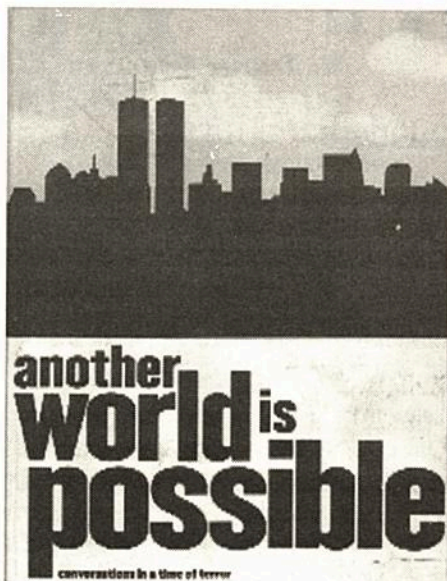
In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.

Aeschylus wrote that, and Robert F. Kennedy quoted it hours after Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968. It's a kind of promise: that from so much sorrow the world is made wiser.

But who can be sure? In *Another World Is Possible / New World Disorder: Conversations in a Time of Terror*, a collection of essays, poetry, photos, and scraps of passing interest about September 11, it's a subject of debate. "For those of you who didn't lose someone close to you, your feelings of outrage, sorrow, and anger pale in comparison to that of family members," writes Kathleen Pequeo, whose brother was killed by terrorists at his Air Force base in Germany in 1985. "You think that America will never forget, but sadly, some greater act of violence will soon eclipse this and this event will, for many, fade into memory. It is the nature of violence that each act builds upon the preceding unthinkable act, making it impossible to keep track."

This is the first post-September 11 anthology I know of, and very good, especially considering it was published just three months afterward. It brings the edifice of violence in which that day is housed into focus — and challenges us to tear it down.

The best parts of *Another World Is Possible* (which was edited by young people, most of them of color) offer a perspective missing from most media, even from the "alternative" press. A 19-



year-old tells how he started the vigil in Union Square, which became Manhattan's ground zero for public grief. Spoken-word artist Danny Hoch relates

**"bush was reading some dick and jane shit to some kids in florida, next thing you know, he told them kids— peace — got on his bulletproof plane and started makin zigzig type shit real quick."**

— Danny Hoch

corner talk from his Brooklyn neighborhood: "hey yo. bush was reading some dick and jane shit to some kids in florida, next thing you know, he told them kids— peace — got on his bulletproof plane and started makin zigzig type shit real quick." Arab-American poet Suheir Hammad confesses her dilemma — how to grieve for the dead while speaking out against a military response: "When people sent emails saying, this was bound to happen,

let's not forget U.S. transgressions, for half a second i felt resentful. Can i just have a half second to feel bad?"

It's a rhetorical question, but Aeschylus might respond that there's no respite from knowledge, any more than from grief. "Through the awful grace of God," it comes on us unawares, like the violence that precipitated it.

*Another World Is Possible* will bring up fresh questions and spark conversations. It shows that Americans from all walks of life want the violence to end — even as, drop by drop, new horrors bury September 11 in our memories. ■

CLASSICS CORNER



by Perless'r Harris

For most people, the Antigone story is pretty cut and dried. Antigone is best known as the Henry David Thoreau of ancient Greece, tediously asserting her conscience against the unreasonable demands of the State. We say tediously because, well, let's face it, Antigone has been done to death. Her revolutionary message is, like Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, yesterday's news.

Antigone has always bugged us. We know we're supposed to be on her side, but self-righteous martyrs are just so annoying. Fortunately, we've found a way to get on with our lives. The play, we realize, isn't really about Antigone's glorious death at all. It's a feminist commentary about male ego.

For those of you who have no idea of what we're talking about, *Antigone* is one of three plays Sophocles wrote about Thebes and all the tragic people who lived therein. These, most notoriously, included Oedi-

**Creon would make an excellent King of a deserted Island.**

pus and his wife/mother Jocasta. As *Antigone* opens, Oedipus is dead. Thebes has just survived an assault by a foreign army led by his exiled son Polynices, who is also dead. Eteocles, brother to both Polynices and Oedipus

is dead as well. So, we got a buncha dead guys. What to do?

Creon, Jocasta's brother, buries Eteocles with full honors but decrees that Polynices must be left on the field as dog food. This sounds pretty harsh, but it probably made sense at the time. Antigone, however, doesn't think so, and defies the King by performing the forbidden funeral rites. Creon, after much ado, responds by walling her up in a cave. Eventually, a soothsayer clues him in that this may have been a mistake. He rushes to rescue his daughter-in-law/niece, but, sadly, she's already dead. His son, Haemon, who was to marry the dead girl, impales himself upon a sword, and for good measure Creon's wife kills herself as well, leaving the King, ironically, alone.

This is all very sad. Creon's dilemma, however, has much less to do with upholding state and community than defending his male privilege, which, to our mind, undermines his tragic stature completely. If she wins, he says, he is not a man. Creon sounds more like an abusive spouse than a tragic hero. "While I'm alive," he says, "let no woman lord it over me." Later, he says "Never be rated inferior to a woman, never." The chorus, made up of a bunch of old men, agrees. "You seem to say what you have to say with sense," they say.

Sensitive-new-age-guy Haemon, however, tells Dad to get over himself. "Please don't be quite so single-minded and self-involved.... Whoever thinks that he alone possesses intelligence ... such men, I tell you, spread them open—you will find them empty." He says Creon would make an excellent King of a deserted Island.

In the end, this is what Creon becomes, and the chorus is left to say, "I told you so." He pretty much ceases to exist. "I am no one," he says. "Nothing." Antigone, at least, is a martyr. Creon is just an arrogant nobody who figured things out too late. ■

## Help Real Change Grow

The Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project is growing our Board of Directors to help us "organize, educate, build alliances, and be a voice of the poor." The commitment is for at least 10 hours a month to attend a monthly meeting and participate in committee work. If you have time, energy, and commitment to our mission, please think about becoming an important part of the Real Change Team.

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# March

# Notables

## Thursday 3/7

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); Eric Carlberg 206-632-6021 or [ccnrandall@igc.org](mailto:ccnrandall@igc.org).

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.

## Friday 3/8

In celebration of International Women's Day, two films by **Palestinian women** presented by the Palestine Solidarity Committee. 7 p.m., at Seattle Independent Media Center, 1415-3rd Ave, Downtown, \$5 donation requested, no one turned away; info [palestinejustice@yahoo.com](mailto:palestinejustice@yahoo.com).

Radical Women hosts an **International Women's Day** coffeehouse with open mic and music, free. North African supper with vegetarian option for a \$6.50 do-

nation. 8 p.m., at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle; info 206-722-6057 or 206-722-2453.

## Saturday 3/9

**Spring Fling Dance**, a celebration of life, with DJ.NONAME. 8 p.m. - 12 a.m., at Ballard Eagles Hall, NW 57th and 24th Ave. NW. Clean-n-sober, all ages welcome, \$6 at the door; info [mygrouchspeaks.com](http://mygrouchspeaks.com).

Antioch University Seattle Center for Creative Change offers a series of free educational classes, **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](mailto:habib@thegarden.net).

A one-woman play **Women Can't Wait** by performance artist and spoken word poet Sarah Jones, sponsored by ASUW Women's Action Commission and La Raza Student Commission. 8 p.m., at University of Washington Husky Union Building Auditorium. Tickets \$5 at UW Women's Center or \$8 at the door; info 206-860-1400 x 5 or <http://www.iwd-seattle.org>.

## Monday 3/11

**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.

## Tuesday 3/12

Free public forum on **Trade & Democracy**, featuring a viewing of the Bill Moyers PBS program "Trading Democracy," with discussions followed by a reception. 6:30 - 9 p.m., at UW Law School, Condon Hall, 1100 NE Campus Parkway; info [cagi@riseup.net](mailto:cagi@riseup.net).

## Wednesday 3/13

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](mailto:homesteadclt@yahoo.com).

## Thursday 3/14

The first visit to Seattle of Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams, major architect of the **Irish peace process**, come and hear him speak at this free presentation. 3:30 p.m., in Kane Hall, room 130, University of Washington; info 206-329-5514.

**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 3/16

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 3/17

Seattle Chapter Fellowship of Reconciliation meeting and potluck dinner with speaker Hossein Alizadeh, national intern **working on Iraq sanctions**. 5 p.m. potluck, 6 p.m. program, at Woodland Park Presbyterian Church, 225 N. 70th near Greenwood, Seattle; info 206-789-5565.

Come hear Bill Frisell and Greg Leisz playing their smooth blend of jazz to benefit the **Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project**. 7 p.m., at Town Hall, 1119 8th Ave., tickets \$20 through <http://www.TicketWeb.com> or 1-866-468-7623; info *Real Change* 206-441-3247.

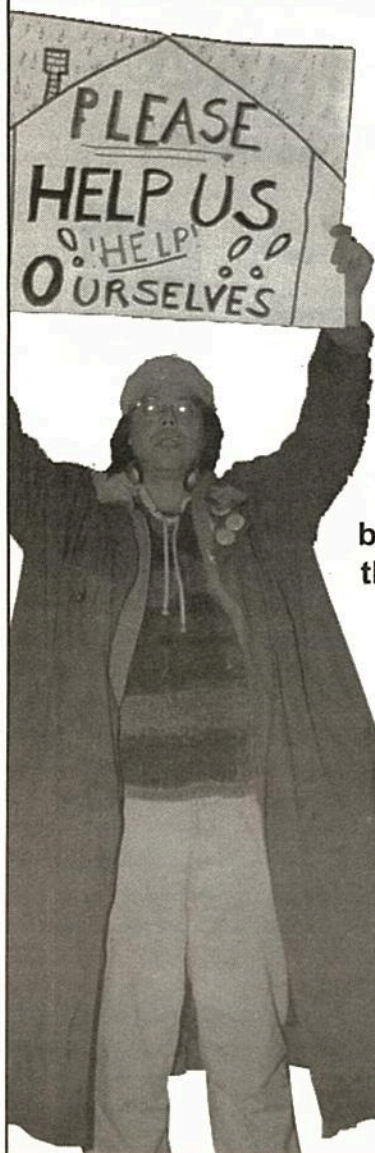
## Monday 3/18

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.

## 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. ■

# 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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## Urge Federal Gov't to End Homelessness for Everyone

**Issue:** The Bush Administration and Congress need to abandon their "Chronic Homeless" terminology and policy initiative and begin looking at ways to combat the root causes of homelessness, like the lack of affordable housing and job training programs.

**Background:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Mel Martinez has stated that "ending chronic homelessness" is a primary goal of the Department's homeless assistance programs. A variety of federal legislation now directs federal agencies to prioritize their efforts and target their resources toward the so-called "chronically homeless." This misguided initiative pits vulnerable populations against each other for scarce federal resources and undermines communities' abilities to create programming that responds to local needs.

Worse, the "chronic homeless" initiative does nothing to prevent people - with or without disabilities - from becoming homeless. Thus, it is fundamentally flawed as a strategy for ending homelessness. Although the term "chronic homelessness" is rarely defined with any degree of specificity, it is generally used to characterize people who are homeless and who also have mental health or addiction disorders, and who are therefore more likely to experience homelessness for longer periods of time.

In a detailed paper released today, "Poverty Vs. Pathology: What's 'Chronic' About Homelessness," the National Coalition for the Homeless charged that the terminology distorts the history, causes, and nature of homelessness. Furthermore, the "chronic homeless" initiative as a whole is short-sighted and likely to exacerbate, rather than end, homelessness.

The paper notes that the "chronic homeless" initiative is especially misguided at a time when the affordable housing gap is at a record high and the economic recession is forcing many people out of work and into homelessness. "People who are homeless and who have disabilities do not need yet another stigmatizing, pathologizing label," said NCH Executive Director Donald Whitehead. "Homelessness is primarily an economic condition, not a medical condition."

NCH called on Congress and the White House to abandon the terminology and its attendant misguided policies, and to focus their efforts on the underlying causes of homelessness: lack of affordable housing, insufficient incomes, and inadequate health care. In particular, NCH urged Congress to work to enact the National Housing Trust Fund, legislation that would create 1.5 million units of housing for people with the lowest incomes.

**Action:** Please urge your federal legislators to:

1. Stop using the stigmatizing label of "chronic" to describe and pathologize people who become homeless and who have disabilities;
2. Abandon misguided federal mandates that ignore local realities and pit populations against each other, such as the HUD policy of giving preference in awarding federal grants to communities that use funds for programs to address "chronic" homelessness;
3. Work to enact measures that address the underlying causes of homelessness, such as the National Housing Trust Fund.

For More Information: Please contact Brad Paul at 202.737.6444, ext. 13, or [bpaul@nationalhomeless.org](mailto:bpaul@nationalhomeless.org). ■

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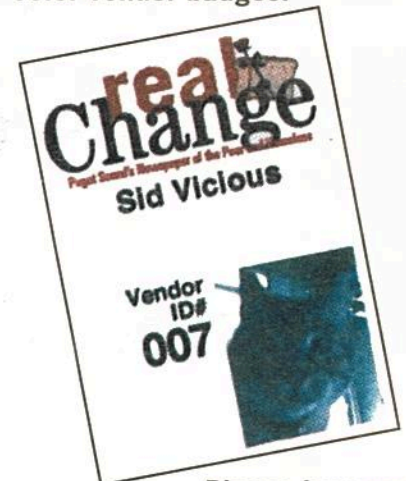


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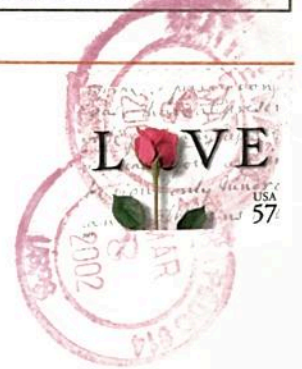
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# Mockingbird Times

Washington State Foster Care  
and Homeless Youth Speak Out

MARCH 7, 2002

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## Youth Speak Out in the State Capitol



Above: Tiffany Snow takes a break from lobbying to eat lunch. Right: Youth gather in the rotunda to make their voices heard. Photos by Brittany Lucas.



BY BRITTANY LUCAS

**"I don't want the [Emergency Shelter] Program cut because**

***I just lost my home and know how important it is to have a place to live while you are waiting for something more permanent to come along."***

**Tiffany Snow**

ON FEBRUARY 8, street youth from around Western Washington arrived in droves at the state capitol in Olympia to advocate against the reductions that are facing street youth services. Teens from programs like The Orion Center and P.S.K.S (Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets) used the Street Youth Lobby Day to make their voices heard in the legislature by acting out plays, making speeches, and talking personally to legislators.

The day was started out with Paul Barry (organizer of Street Youth Lobby Day and a lobbyist for the Children's Alliance) discussing the appropriate ways that the youth should get their views across to legislators. At the meeting, youth discussed why they didn't want cuts to programs like Emergency Shelter Funding, a program which supplies money to temporary shelters for homeless youth. One youth

commented that she felt that some of the senators should spend the night in a homeless squat with her and her friends to get a clear idea of what it was truly like to be living on the streets.

Throughout the day, youth spoke vehemently about how vital the programs were to their current situations, and what a great impact these programs had on improving people's lives. The youth were not the only ones that felt so strongly about the budget cuts. Legislators and advocates alike were more than happy to put their two cents in on the issue at hand. Throughout the day I interviewed youth, advocates, organizers, and legislators on the proposed budget reductions.

A lot of the youth I talked to felt they would be affected negatively if the youth programs were slashed from the budget, especially when it came to the Emergency Shelter Funding program. Tiffany Snow, a youth from P.S.K.S said, "I don't want the program cut because I just lost my home and know how important it is to have a place to live while you are waiting for something more permanent to come along."

Many of the youth at lobby day believed that taking away some of the programs that help them would only cause more problems. In the view of Kim Clark, a youth from The Orion Center, "If they cut services that monitor the homeless and assist them with their needs, they will make it harder for the homeless to stay on track. I feel that crime will become a problem, especially if they cut programs like the Juvenile Violence Prevention Grants, a program that prevents kids from re-offending."

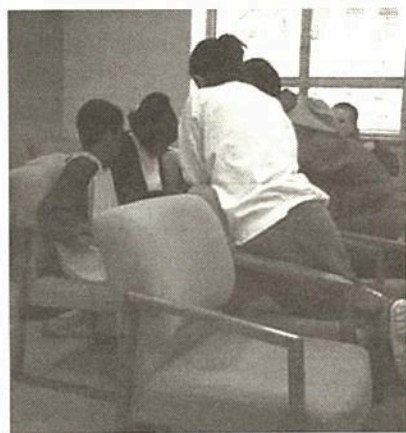
The advocates at lobby day originated from all walks of life. Welfare moms to lawyers, teachers to graduated foster youth lined the halls waiting for the chance to be heard. What they all had in common was the belief that even in the hardest of times, social security

LOBBY CONTNUED ON PAGE 4

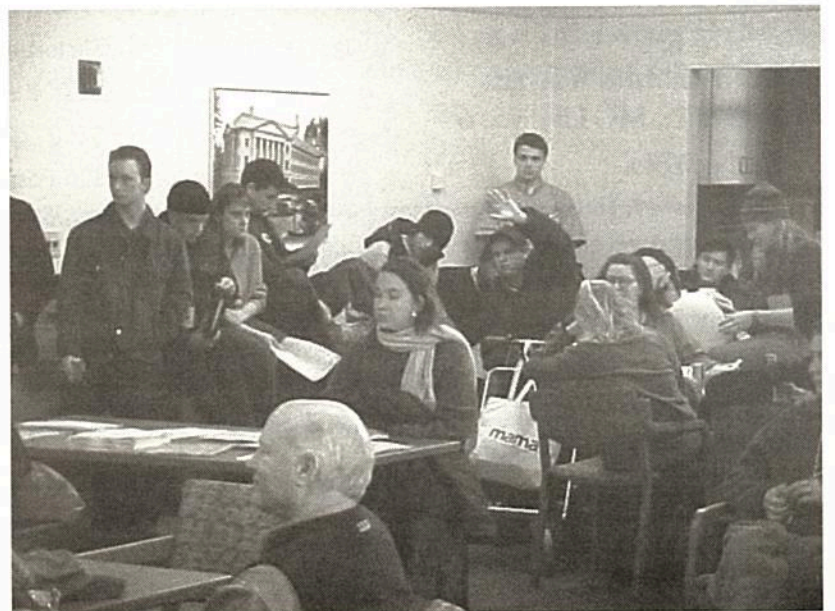
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Mockingbird and nest logo by Julia Higuera  
Mockingbird Times is special insert in *Real Change*



Above: Youth prepare their plan for the foster youth lobby day. Right: Street youth and their providers learn how best to approach a legislator. Photos by Mockingbird staff.





# Letter from the Editor

GIVE A FISH AND FEED THEM FOR A DAY,  
TEACH THEM TO FISH AND FEED THEM FOR A  
LIFETIME

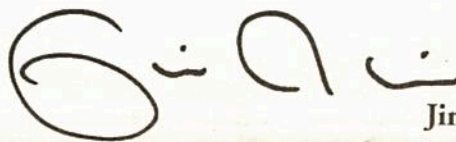
**AT THE** Mockingbird Society we strive to offer children and youth who are in foster care and/or homeless more than the traditional roles that have been thrust upon them. Typically, young people who have been involved in the system know too much about the pain and limitations of being a "victim," "throw-away," or "client." While we might not be able to protect them from all the life circumstances that befall them we can create new opportunities that encourage their healing and healthy development. At the *Mockingbird Times*, young people function in the role of "journalist," "writer," "advocate," and "employee," new roles that strengthen their ego, empower their spirit, and enrich their vision of their own future.

In June 2001, we introduced the inaugural issue of the *Mockingbird Times*. This current issue marks a new milestone with a circulation of more than 20,000 issues published and distributed across Washington State. If you are reading this newspaper, I ask you to consider

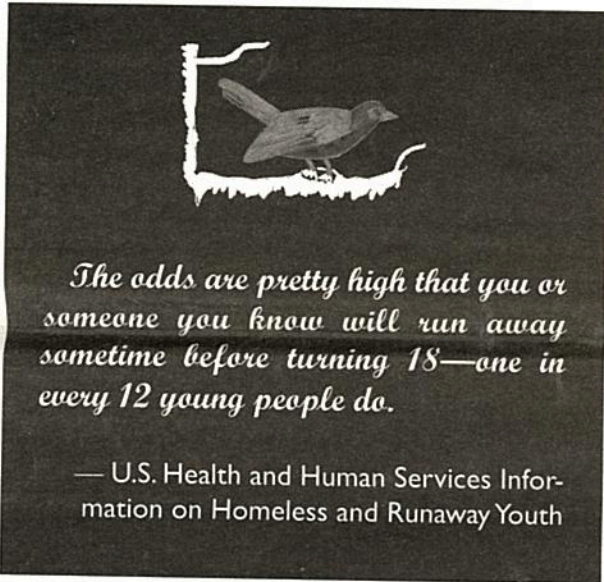
what it takes to produce the only monthly newspaper in the United States written by youth who are in foster care and/or homeless. What does it take to support these youth to transform from the role of "invisible victim" to being active and engaged in their community and their own self-sufficiency? If you are reading this newspaper and you support the idea of young people experiencing the rewards of honest labor, then I ask you to make a contribution to The Mockingbird Society. As a grassroots organization two months shy of our first anniversary, our only source of income is through grants and contributions.

The *Mockingbird Times* provides our most marginalized young people with meaningful work experience and the opportunity to participate in the development of public advocacy and education. Young people who are accustomed to being ignored, blamed, or shamed are now ever-present with energy and passion in the most unlikely of all roles: leaders, advocates, and role models for the 12,000 children and adolescents across Washington who live in the foster care system.

Without financial support, the *Mockingbird Times* is in serious jeopardy. If you can contribute, please do. If you know of a foundation, organization, or business that would be willing to be a sponsor, please help connect us. I ask you to do what you can and help us give these incredible young people the opportunity to learn how to do their own fishing.



Jim Theofelis



## Meet Our Staff

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Jim Theofelis

**OPERATIONS MANAGER**

Siri Throm Saxe

**STAFF ADVISORS**

Valerie Douglas, Molly Rhodes

**STAFF WRITERS**

Reggie Herts, Brittany Lucas

**STAFF WRITER ON LEAVE**

Julia Higuera

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Angela L., MC Lil' Syco 6

**THANK YOUS**

*Real Change*, state Senators Rosa Franklin and Jim Hargrove, the Children's Alliance, the Homeless Youth Task Force, all the youth who attended the capitol lobby days, the University District Youth Center, Angela, Lil' Syco

The Mockingbird Times  
3302 Fuhrman Ave. E., Suite 107  
Seattle, WA 98102  
(206) 323-KIDS (5437)  
[www.mockingbirdsociety.org](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org)

## Positive Power: Credit and Debt



### The Wonderful World of Credit

BY BRITTANY LUCAS

**IT'S SAD TO SAY**, but check books and cash don't give the consumer very many choices today. Without a credit card or some other type of purchase card, it's very hard to find any businesses online who will sell you their merchandise. A lot of times you can't even get a decent hotel room without one.

Having a credit card may speed up your business transactions, but it will also empty out your bank account and cause you to fall into a debtor's hole if you're not careful. All credit cards have limits on what you can spend with them.

For instance, if you had a credit limit of \$7,500 dollars, you could not spend anything over this amount. You not only have to keep up with the monthly payment minimums for the card, but you also have to eventually pay for everything you have bought, plus the interest rates that are set by your credit card company. If you get behind in your credit card payments, you will be billed even more money that you will have to pay off, in addition to your regular card-user fees.

You need to be 18 before you can get a credit card. To get a card with a low interest rate and high credit limit, you need to have good credit. You can get good credit by paying your rent on time every month, returning all your library books promptly, and keeping up with all your bills.

If all this sounds depressing, don't worry, there are many other cheaper forms of plastic you can use that will give you some of the same advantages of using a credit card. Often, if you have bad credit because of missed payments or bankruptcy, a credit card company may offer you a secured credit card. A secured credit card is a card that you put down a deposit beforehand, so that if you bail out of

**CREDIT CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**

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**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.

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## Staff Reporter: Reggie Herts

### Tell us a little about yourself

I'm 18 years old and I'm a huge sports fan. I enjoy watching and playing baseball and basketball. In my spare time, I love to fish and enjoy the outdoors. My favorite meal is fried chicken, potatoes, and biscuits. I also enjoy listening to gospel and jazz.

### What are some issues that you find important?

One of many issues I find important is equal rights. An issue I believe is indeed important is the training and supervision of licensed foster homes around the country.

### What is your foster care experience?

My older brother and I were placed in foster care when I was 13, yet we were not placed in the same home. My mother was unstable and we were neglected for days and sometimes weeks. My father was abusive and had a drinking problem. I was unhappy and reported the situation to a school teacher. When the state separated my brother and I, it got to me. I ran away from numerous foster homes and group homes. There was a time I stayed on the streets of Seattle because I couldn't get in contact with my "social worker" for help.

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

I would change a lot of things in the foster care system if I had a chance, especially with the experiences I had. One would be the opportunity for youth to be heard by service providers. No one really knows what's best for a youth but the youth themselves. When decisions of placements, parental visits, etc. are made, it should always come down to the voice of the youth, not what someone in a black robe thinks. I feel foster kids need more than just a roof over their head, but support and opportunity as well. That is also why I would change the steps of transitioning for youth. More needs to be done to assist the youth while in placement for transitioning into adulthood. The foster system needs to get youth ready for that next step, rather than a boot and goodbye when they turn a certain age.

### Why did you join the Mockingbird Times?

When I was given an opportunity to share my thoughts, feelings, and views regarding the betterment of the foster and juvenile system in a paper that speaks to those issues, I couldn't turn it down.

### What do you hope the Mockingbird Society will accomplish?

I hope the Mockingbird Society will improve the foster care system as a whole, through youth and for youth from all walks of life. I also hope it will keep people aware of what foster kids have to face, and will motivate them to want to do something for the future of foster kids.

## CREDIT FROM PAGE 2

paying your monthly payments, the bank will have the extra money to compensate for the payments you missed. You still will need to pay interest rates on a secured credit. The credit limits on secured credit cards tend to be much lower and the interest rates much higher, but if you keep up on the payments, it will show up positively on your credit report and eventually the bank will offer you a regular card.

If paying interest rates on credit cards sounds like something you wouldn't be in to then you might want to get a debit card. If you're just starting out and don't trust your compulsive spending tendencies, you might want to get one of these little pieces of plastic. The advantage of a debit card is that you don't have to pay interest rates or monthly payments. The money that you deposit into your debit account is how much you can spend.

These cards are almost impossible to go into debt with. You can withdraw or deposit money from the card using an ATM. If you get a debit card, it is best to get one from the main credit card holders like MasterCard, Discover, or Visa, so that you can use it to purchase things from stores or from the Internet. Of course, you don't get some of the goodies you get with credit cards, like frequent flyer miles and extra credit bonuses.

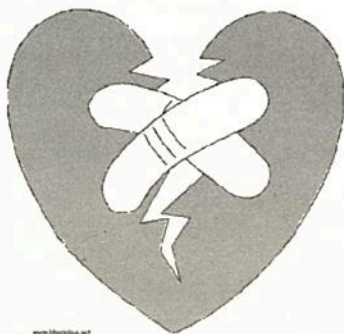
Carrying a purchase card on you instead of cash is safer. If someone steals it, you can immediately report it to the bank and have the card canceled so no one can purchase items with it. Remember, don't look for the brightest and best-looking deals; look for the card that fits your needs the best. When it all comes down to it, peace of mind is worth much more than anything you could buy with a credit card.



## Poetry Corner

Yeah, I'm that lil' guy  
 who likes to ride  
 that aint no joke  
 cause i aint broke  
 I make my cash everyday  
 when I write I'm on fire to get paid  
 I go to school to get my education  
 my gang history I'm erasing, not tracing  
 I flow but don't use no profanity  
 I'm still banned from television fo insanity  
 I do math, writing, and reading to get my GED  
 so i can be free  
 I don't care  
 people think I look like a big headed bear  
 cause when I roar  
 you can hear my roar  
 even if you inside  
 I'm outside  
 are we ready to ride  
 to the south side  
 of seattle  
 I'm here for peace no to battle

— MC Lil' Syco 6



Dear Mom and Dad,

It's me, Angela Marie. Your First Daughter. You abandoned me when I was really little. I am just writing to let you know how much you have hurt me, and how both your stupidity has not only hurt me but Jennifer, Matt, and Julie as well. Mom, it is sad but one of the earliest memories I have of you is when you used to chase me around the Cherry Field with a belt. How could you do that to me? I was only but a young girl. Dad, I feel like I never knew you very well. To me you were just a sperm donor to my mom. I know you tried very hard to be a good father and I knew you worked a lot. But you failed. I hate you both. I really do. I wish you both could feel the pain ripping through my body and my heart, that you caused me. The last 17 years I have been ok... just ok. My life has been very depressing. Bouncing in and out of foster homes, group homes, institutions and wherever else the state may put me. I never knew where I was going to sleep at night, or where I would be in six months. The next time I eat or get beaten up. Whether or not tomorrow I be alive or dead. Many times I tried to kill myself, and sometimes I still want to. But I know I am stronger than that. I just wanted you to know that I don't need you guys. You are nobodies in my world. I will soon be 18 and out of the system. I WILL NOT make the same mistakes you guys did. I am going to make something of myself, and not be failures like you. Don't try to crawl back into my life. Dad, you belong in prison. Mom, you belong with the bum of a husband of yours. You both are the lowest of the low. I don't need Parents to live. Thank you for nothing.

— ANGELA L.

## Write about your Experiences in Placements and Get Paid for it!

The *Mockingbird Times* is dedicating a whole upcoming issue to residential facilities. We would like youth to tell us about their experiences in treatment centers, detentions, and other longer-term placements. If we decide to use your work, we will pay you up to \$25.

E-mail your submissions to [Newspaper@Mockingbirdsociety.org](mailto:Newspaper@Mockingbirdsociety.org). Or mail us at *Mockingbird Times*, 3302 Fuhrman Ave. East, Suite 107 Seattle WA 98102. We want to hearing from all over the state.





## LOBBY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

programs that assist the neediest of Americans should be kept alive. Some advocates viewed family as an important aspect in the lives of street youth and felt that cutting out programs like, The Family Reconciliation Services — which works on bringing the family unit back together — would only put more obstacles in the way of youth who are trying to get off the streets. In the words of P.S.K.S.'s school teacher, Janaea Bellows, "I think they shouldn't cut the family reconciliation services. Even if the child can not live with their family, they should at least have their family involved in their lives, either through visitation meetings or counseling."

Casey Trupin, a lawyer at Columbia Legal Services, also viewed family as an important issue, but he was primarily concerned with the proposed cutting of the Emergency Shelter Funding. "I believe that if you make shelters weaker, you also take away from other services," he said. "As an attorney who works on health care and education, I know it's very hard to get anything accomplished unless the youth has a place to sleep at night."

A few of the advocates at lobby day felt the governor's decision to add the Juvenile Violence Prevention Grants

program to the death list would only cause more harm than good to teens involved in the juvenile justice system in Washington. In Janae Bellow's opinion, "I don't think they should cut The Juvenile Violence Prevention

Grant Program. There are so many places to lock kids up today but there aren't many programs that support these kids after they are released from jail. I believe that the key to preventing these kids from re-offending is having good support programs for them."

The kids at homeless lobby day seemed to portray Senator Jim Hargrove as a tyrant because of his abundant support of the Becca Bill. The Becca Bill makes it illegal for people under 18 to live on the streets without the supervision of their guardian. In Senator Hargrove's opinion, the streets are unsafe for those who are underage. He believes that without proper protection, these kids can easily fall into harm's way, by either being taken advantage of by predators or being put into unsafe situations on the streets. He seemed to care deeply about the welfare of homeless youth today, but had a bit of trouble realizing that a lot of kids can't go home to their parents because of abusive or neglectful conditions. However, he does support bills like the Hope act, which prolongs the time that homeless kids can reside in short-term facilities and shelters.

When I asked the Senator his opinion on the proposed budget cuts, he seemed to be a bit overwhelmed with the question and said, "That's like asking, 'How do you feel about a nuclear bomb going off.' It's an absolute disaster. Because of

the tragedy on September 11, the government has to cut into its program costs. I have proposed a freedom premium to increase the social security net. Not many people are happy about that idea though, because they

don't like paying more taxes. If people in general are more supportive about paying a little extra in taxes and not cutting into our state's social security net, I believe we can reduce the devastation of the budget crisis."

Senator Rosa Franklin has advocated heavily for issues concerning the safety of foster youth in our state. She also has supported bills that provide counseling services to juvenile offenders, like parent education classes and youth courts. She has sponsored the Becca and Hope Acts. Senator Franklin is greatly concerned about the budget deficit facing Washington State today. She thinks it is tragic that we have to take money out of our youth services, but she feels it is something that is unavoidable.

When I asked about her views on the budget crisis, she explained, "I don't like the budget cuts, as they are affecting some of the bills I support. But we are in a crisis, a \$1.25 billion dollar hole. We need to cut costs and find revenues to fill some of the holes. It will take 25 senators to pass the budget. We will try to spread the cuts over many different areas to lesson the devastation. I do feel that cutting some of the youth programs will only cause more problems."

Paul Barry told me that putting together a lobby day has a lot to do with "tapping in to people's energies and bringing different groups together who are in to supporting the cause." With the professional drama teacher, the snacks, and the transportation at lobby day I was curious how much the event cost to put on. Kristin Rodgers told me that YouthCare paid for the drama teacher, and organizations like the Children's Alliance and the Homeless Coalition supplied the food. The city of Seattle also pitched in for the transportation.

I don't think that there was a single advocate or youth at the lobby day that wasn't there to be heard. The youths seemed to believe that if enough people spoke out against the budget cuts, they could prevent reductions to the programs that kept them warm at night, supported their rehabilitation, worked on improving their relationships with their family, and raised their standards of living. I think that Valence Price, a youth, summarized it best: "One less voice adds to one more problem." 🐦



Staff reporter Brittany Lucas, right, talked about youth issues with Senator Rosa Franklin. Photo by Mockingbird staff.

***"We need to cut costs and find revenues to fill some of the holes.... I do feel that cutting some of the youth programs will only cause more problems."***  
***Senator Rosa Franklin***

## Speaking Out:

Thoughts from youth advocate  
 Paula Maranan of the Children's Alliance

INTERVIEW BY BRITTANY LUCAS AND REGGIE HERTS

### What programs do you not want cut from the budget?

There are certainly a lot. We are particularly concerned about kids and families. I can give you a couple of examples. One is that there is a proposed cut to medical interpreters, a program to make sure that there are interpreters available to people who are on Medicaid — that's low income folks — so that they can speak to their doctors. We are also concerned about funding for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, money for pregnant women, parents, and young kids. We want to make sure not only the food but also the time they can spend in clinics is maintained.

### Why did you come today?

Frankly, because I get a real jazz out of coming down with youth to the capitol day. But we want people to come down here mostly because we want them to know that this is their place, that they have a right to expect something out of this government. Even if the youth is under 18 and can't vote they



Mockingbird staff reporters Brittany Lucas, center, and Reggie Herts, right, got a chance to sit down with Paula Maranan at a lobby day at the state capitol. Photo by Mockingbird staff.

still have the right to have their interests represented by the legislative. It's the people's responsibility to speak out no matter what their age.

### Do you think that foster care should be considered...to keep kids off the streets?

We are not serving adolescents. I think there is this certain age that there is the unspoken write-off where they become less of a priority in the system. There are people who say if I have to choose between protecting a teenager who can run away or a baby who can't, I have to protect that baby. Not to say that we shouldn't protect babies and young children, but we need to protect everybody and give everybody what they need. We are not helping people get the stability that they

need to transition into an adult life.

### What do you think about kids who turn 18 and are dropped from foster care and may still be going to school or not ready to be on their own?

I think that as a society we are accountable to the youth that are put into a public system. It's not just about the state Department of Social and Health Services on its own, it's about all of us owning up to the responsibility that we have for kids. There are all kinds of things we could do, like assisting in housing and education. We've had a proposal at the Children's Alliance aimed at extending Medicaid coverage for youth exiting the foster care system until they are 21. It's the least that we can do to make sure that kids who are aging out have something to fall back on.

### What got you started on advocacy?

When I was a kid, I had a fascination with the civil rights movement. I was amazed at what people could do when they came together. When I was at Franklin high school I had a civics teacher who really changed my life and showed me that I could be a part of that system. I've worked on voting rights in Alabama, I've worked on prison reform, but I really feel like here and now is the place where I belong, working with young people and working around kids and family issues. I'm lucky I get paid. I live out my passion and work everyday on the things I care about. 🐦