

Change

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Braxton's Agenda

Today's struggle for human rights and economic justice

PHOTO OF REV. DR. LESLIE BRAXTON, BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

Interview by Bruce Lofton

As I sat in the offices of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, waiting patiently for a busy Reverend Doctor Leslie Braxton, I was privy to an unscripted entrance by what can best be described as a mentally challenged, low-income senior citizen — a “bag lady.” She had apparently just left an agency for the blind up the street, having received neither courtesy nor help. Now she seemed disoriented, and though the staff greeted her warmly they couldn't figure out what she wanted.

Enter the Reverend. The elderly woman turned toward him as he came to her and immediately beamed. Her whole disposition, which had been wrought with agitation and brimming with frustration, softened. She inquired as to his identity, though it was obvious she had already concluded who this man was. Her comfort permeated their brief conversation.

I was amazed at the charisma Braxton exuded. But more than that, I was impressed with the genuineness and generosity with which he tended to the woman's needs. Sitting there, I could see that this church and the city was lucky to have him.

Dynamic, energetic, effusive, honest, highly intelligent, reflective: Rev.

Braxton is all of these. In our conversation below, the minister tells his own side of the local and global issues we're faced with today.

Real Change: *Mt. Zion, specifically Rev. McKinney, has been a leader in civil rights back to the days of Rev. Martin Luther King. Where is the civil rights movement headed?*

Rev. Braxton: I think the movement for civil rights has been concluded, in that civil rights was a very legislatively specific agenda, having to do with the basic framework of the Constitution: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, all men are created equal, endowed with certain unalienable rights, among these which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Martin King and the movement made America apply its constitutive creed to all of the children of America, and that really amounted to a reconstituting of American society on a broader base of liberty.

Now, we're getting to the broader human rights issues and to issues of economic justice. That's really where we are. For instance, in South Africa they now have lived the freedom, but they don't have economic empower-

ment, they don't control the economy. Segregation is not about racial feelings, it is about economic exploitation of people of African descent. The racist attitudes were simply the mental framework that supported that economic order. We're looking for economic empowerment.

RC: *How do you see Mt. Zion dealing with economic empowerment locally?*

Braxton: We're a church and at the heart of what we say and do is the message of Christ. We're a Christ-centered, Bible-based Christian fellowship that preaches the redeeming love of God. Part of what is presumptive in that message is a message of justice, an expression of love between groups. As a society, we love things, love money, but we use people rather than loving people and using things and resources for the edification of people.

Mt. Zion as a church, preaching that gospel, moving from the salvation of the soul out to the salvation of society, cultivates recognition of the inherent value of the work of every individual and every group of people, because we're all made in the image of God. That's where we come in, as a moral force that im-

pacts the holistic nature of society. We deal with all issues, but our basis for doing so is spiritual. We start with spiritual principles, and then we make applications of spiritual principles to the economic order, to the social order, to the political order.

RC: *Give me an example of how you see that focus manifesting itself.*

Braxton: Well, right now there's a problem over in Bellevue, one of the wealthiest areas of the country. Buildings are cleaned by contracted cleaning companies who employ primarily East Africans, and Eastern Europeans who are immigrants, many of whom don't speak English. They're working for \$7 an hour, no health care benefits, no retirement benefits, no living wage, no type of security— nothing. The cleaning companies are getting lucrative contracts from lucrative companies, and those companies are exploiting people. It's exploitation. It defines the value of the people at the “bottom end.” We could meet with other groups in trying to negotiate with some of the businesses in those buildings...if we find that in fact you are

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Haggis for Body and Soul • Drug Busts, Public-Housing Style



No answer

Dear *Real Change*,

Question: Why does the number of homeless seem to increase in direct proportion to increases in the amount of money spent to support homelessness?

There is not a single item in this paper that might aid homeless people to seek or get work, enter re-hab or job training, or even get housing or increase self-responsibility. You don't seem to want to emphasize that aspect.

Your paper seems to dwell on homelessness as a criticism of society (until three months ago there were jobs for all in Seattle). Because that

approach offers little hope to actually getting people back into mainstream society, many advocates are part of the problem. Not the solution.

Anonymous
Sent in on the back of a *Real Change* paper

No laughing matter

Dear Dr. Wes,

Let me get this straight. You believe Viagra is for [the benefit of] women? ("Adventures in Poetry," March 7, 2002) This despite the fact that there are cases of elderly women sustaining rape and vaginal injury from their overeager husbands on Viagra? Despite the numerous women who become homeless fleeing their abusive husbands? Despite the one out of three women who will be raped at some point in her life? Maybe you need to keep your "column" zipped under your belt where it belongs.

Sincerely,
Shelly K.
Seattle

Into your soul

Dear Editor:

I am moved by the sincerity and

honesty of your publication. I've purchased a few issues of *Real Change*, at first perhaps out of some internal guilt, but now I do so because it's one of the few places where humanity still resides. Not an easy humanity, but the kind that spits in the face of modernity and forces us to see the choice we make in our lives and how they affect others.

Thanks!
Taso Lagos
Ph.D. Candidate
UW School of Communications

Homeless Speaker's Bureau and Bedless Bards

Are you involved with a church, school, or community group that would benefit from learning about homelessness from those who understand it best—homeless and formerly homeless individuals? Our speaker's bureau is available for small or large group presentations about the homeless experience. Sponsoring organizations pay speakers a \$35 honorarium. A slightly more artsy crowd? Our homeless writer's performance group—Bedless Bards—would love to visit and do a poetry reading for your organization.

To schedule a speaker or a performance, call 441-3247 and ask for Rachael, or e-mail organizer@realchangenews.org

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RC Profile Kevin Vanderhoef

Kevin Vanderhoef first became involved in *Real Change* seven years ago.

"I was Vendor number 970," recalls Kevin, who had just become homeless at the time. "I remember making \$300 the first week. Then I decided that was that."

However, Kevin couldn't stay away for more than a couple of years. Three years ago, he found himself in StreetWrites, the peer-support writing group at *Real Change*. He hadn't been writing that much up until then, but it wasn't long before he found himself putting out regular pieces, including a movie review in *The Stranger of Dark Days*, about homeless people living in the train tunnels in New York.

Kevin also has plans beyond Seattle. The 35-year-old hopes to travel, "to hop on a bus or a train some time and see where the wind takes me. It's not too expensive, you just get the funds and get going."

The Northwest native knows he won't have the easiest time traveling, as arthritic gout in his legs often slows his walking down to a painful crawl. Yet he also knows that walking is one of the best things to help his condition, and that, although he has been homeless for the past seven years, he still has a lot of his life in front of him.

"There have been good times and bad times," he says. "I know there will be better times ahead." ■

— Molly Rhodes



PHOTO BY MOLLY RHODES.

Change

Puget Sound's Voice of the
Poor and Homeless

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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.

Burying the Dead

By Molly Rhodes

When I settled down with journalist Philip Gourevitch's 1998 book *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with our Families* in December, I was struck by the connections I felt between Gourevitch's witness of post-genocide Rwanda and what I saw in post-September 11 America.

I don't wish to push the link between the events of September 11 and those in Rwanda — where, between June and August of 1994, an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered by their Hutu neighbors — too far. Yet as I continue to expect something greater to come from September 11 — something akin to justice — I found in the story of Rwanda an example of the struggle to come to terms with an act of great violence within one's own borders, and the desire to move beyond that violence, to find life again after death.

Faced with the overwhelming task of an entire country that had been killed, done the killing, or had their lives tied to these groups, the Rwandan government established after the genocide knew that finding, trying, and convicting those who had been responsible would not be enough. It was a way to deal with the crime, yet it did not guarantee that the immensity of the crime would be seen for what it was.

So in addition to trials, government officials "traveled the countryside," Gourevitch writes, "to spread the gospel of reconciliation through accountability." One popular method for reconciliation was mass reburial ceremonies, one of which Gourevitch attended, "on a hilltop amid the lush, mist-strewn tea plantations of Gisenyi. In this setting of astonishing tranquility, the newly grown grass was pulled back to disclose a mass grave. The broken bodies within it were exhumed and laid out on a long rack. On the order of the village leaders, the local peasantry had come to see, and to smell the death smell.... Soldiers distributed translucent plastic gloves among the villages, and put them to work, placing pieces of the corpses in coffins and wrapping the rest in green plastic sheets. There were speeches and benedictions.... Then the dead were placed in new mass graves, and covered up again with earth."

I realize that bodies in need of burial services are harder to come by in the case of September 11, but I feel as if all pictures of death associated with that day have been carefully kept from the public eye. We are asked by our leaders to accept all their subsequent actions both here and abroad because of what has happened, yet I have not been allowed to see what has happened, to make it real for myself.

Through the course of making the genocide as real as possible, Rwanda appears to have begun progressing beyond the hate and hopelessness that had marked the country for so long. Almost eight years after the genocide, three and a half million refugees have been repatriated and resettled, including those who had been associated with the genocide and those who had fled Rwanda years before. Five percent of the national budget goes towards a survivors' fund, some of which has helped 300,000 genocide orphans, 70 percent of which live with a foster family as opposed to in an institution. And in 2000, presidential elections took place for the first time in Rwanda's history, with the further goal of creating a new constitution to help institute national elections for all government positions by 2003. In the words of Rwanda's President Paul Kagame, Rwanda has "literally built itself from its ashes."

What I find so amazing about the story of Rwanda is not that it is a perfect country or that it has already overcome all its problems, which is hardly the case. What I cling to is that it could have slipped forever into hate and destroyed itself from within, and yet appears to have chosen a different path. It's a kind of defiant courage — of course steeped in the practicality of keeping a country from tumbling into ruins — that I find lacking in this country's ongoing battle to fight terrorism by simply annihilating individual terrorists.

"I would like to call on every Rwandan to be his brother's keeper," said Kagame in his 2000 presidential inauguration address. "Only when we commit ourselves to helping guarantee the security of others can we enjoy maximum security as a nation. It is in this spirit that I appeal to all Rwandese who are still living in self-imposed exile... to come back home so that we can rebuild our country together. I appeal to those Rwandese people still in Congo and elsewhere who still have the desire to fight and terrorize the people of this country, to stop, and return to Rwanda to participate in the reconstruction of their motherland." ■

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Tough on crime

In the effort to fight the raging drug problem in public housing, tenants who aren't even aware of guests or family members who have access to their home and are involved with drugs off the housing premises still face uncontestable eviction.

So ruled the Supreme Court the end of March in a unanimous 8-0 decision, overturning an earlier appeals court ruling that the eviction of four senior residents of Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) apartments was unconstitutional. All four women had been evicted based on a clause in their leases stating any drug-related criminal activity engaged in by themselves or any member of their household or a guest under their control would be cause for termination of their lease. The women had tried to argue that they should not have been evicted because they did not know about, and could not be expected to control, the crimes being committed away from their homes.

The lease clause came about after Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act in 1988 in an attempt to curb what was, and still is, widely held as a serious problem of drug and violent-drug-related crimes in and around public housing.

In his opinion for the court, Chief Justice William Rehnquist wrote, "Regardless of knowledge, a tenant who cannot control drug crime, or other criminal activities by a household member which threaten the health and safety of other residents, is a threat to other residents and the project.... [I]t was reasonable for Congress to permit no-fault evictions in order to provide public and other federally assisted low-income housing that is decent, safe, and free from illegal drugs."

While the problem of drug abuse and related crimes is rampant in Oakland's public housing system — according to testimony given by the OHA's lawyer, 700 felony drug arrests have taken place on or near OHA property since 1998, including 250 from January to November, 2001 — it does not appear to have a significant impact on Seattle public housing, according to Virginia Felton at the Seattle Housing Authority.

Of 1,500 initial eviction notices given in 2001, only 23 were for drug-related activity; the large majority was for failure to pay rent. In addition, only 59 people were actually evicted out of the roughly 12,000 people who live in SHA's buildings.

"We're in the housing business," said Felton, "not the eviction business." ■

— Molly Rhodes



Reading is fundamental

On Tuesday, April 16, the Comedy Underground will celebrate National Library Week with a show benefiting the Friends of the Jail Library group, a coalition organized to raise money for books for inmates in the King County Jail.

The special night, cleverly called BOOK 'EM, brings together award-winning comedians Kernet Apio, Rod Long, and Peggy Platt, along with National Public Radio humorist Brad Upton, to raise money for the often-neglected inmates.

Carl Warmenhoven, assistant manager of the Underground and organizer of BOOK 'EM, feels the need to give prisoners the respect and reading materials they deserve. "Once they're in jail, they tend to be forgotten," he said. "Books are good for you, and just because you're in jail doesn't mean that you shouldn't have access to them."

The money raised at BOOK 'EM will go directly to the library at the King County Jail in downtown Seattle, to help pay for a long list of books requested by inmates.

The jail librarian, who wishes to remain anonymous for security reasons, says that even though most of the books requested are in the genres of true crime, mystery, or horror, self-help books are also in demand. Reading provides inmates with an opportunity to maintain their literacy skills and seems to serve as a kind of stress relief as well, she said.

Jan Gallagher, member of Friends of the Jail Library and co-organizer of BOOK 'EM, says that organizing the comedians has been a breeze. She said that comedians are a generally civic-minded group, who often do fundraisers for multiple sclerosis patients, health care for the homeless, and other causes. Warmenhoven sees the night as an all-around beneficial event. "Laughter is good for you and so are books," he said.

He also thinks that a comedy show is a fitting fundraiser for a jail library. "I think a lot of comics have been in jail at one time or another," he said.

And in fact, James Heneghen, a comic performing at the fundraiser, proved Warmenhoven right. "I've been in jail," Heneghen said, adding with humorous empathy, "there was never anything to read."

The Comedy Underground is in Pioneer Square, the show starts at 8:30, and admission is \$10. For more information, contact Carl Warmenhoven at (206) 784-1663. ■

— Ben Roseth

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

Allen Moss: A life full of talent and truth

The first thing you notice about StreetLife gallery member Allen Moss' work is the color, the flashy oranges and snappy pinks that add humor and warmth to the people and places he captures on canvas.

"He was a good artist," said a fellow gallery member, "was" because last month, after suffering from what his friends suspected was the flu or bronchitis, Moss passed away in the home he had only been able to enjoy for two days.

StreetLife gallery members don't know a lot about Moss' family and past

— the man, somewhere in his 50s, is believed to be survived by sisters and possibly a mother, and to have spent time in North Carolina and Kentucky — but they do have vivid memories of what he was like as a person and as an artist.

"He was a great American satirist in the strain of Walt Whitman," described Sean, a satire that was rooted in the life of struggle and survival he had lead. "And he's a brilliant artist. Few people really achieve the brilliance that he displayed."

Moss had a special affection for Samuel Clemens, whom he would paint traipsing over part of Seattle with a traveling pack on his back. In the piece "My World Upside Down," Moss was taken by the dead end near the intersection of Elliott and Prospect as a metaphor for his own battles with life.

Yet in this picture, as in his relationship with the people he met while in Seattle, Moss maintained a sense of dark

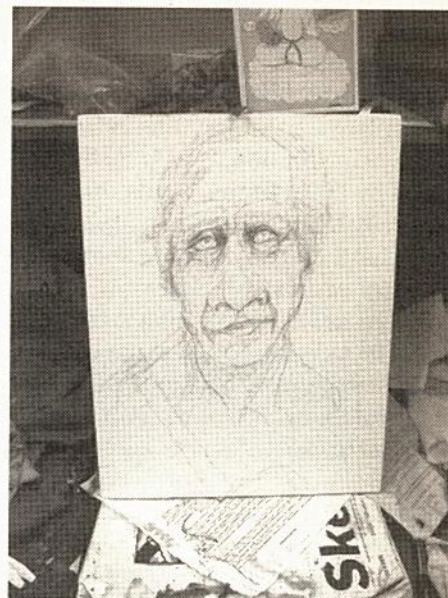
but compassionate humor. When the gallery was closed by *Real Change* last winter to try to settle management conflicts, Sean remembers Moss would say he was "dying to bring us together."

This humor and deep interest in the world around him also touched people who slept with him out on the streets of Seattle, like gallery member Robert.

"Many cold nights sleeping as a homeless person next to Al under a full moon with frost bearing down," wrote Robert in a tribute that now greets gallery guests, "his attitude and comments would reflect the beauty that surrounds us."

In tribute to this beauty, the gallery members organized a memorial for Moss this past Tuesday. They also plan to display all his work they can find — both what's left in the gallery and what can be found from past clients — and mount it on the show wall during the month of April.

One work that will be part of this memorial display is what is believed to be the last piece Moss had started, a sketch of a man's bust; the work still sat on Moss' desk at the gallery last week, along with one of the pens Moss used to begin the face. The work has none of the colors or polish Moss' complete works are known for, only a faint outline of a man's face in black and blue ink. Yet even in its early stages, the face



AN UNFINISHED PORTRAIT, BY ALLEN MOSS.

looking out has a nobility to it and eyes that seem to see and accept the truth of the world around them.

Sean once told Moss he thought it was a self-portrait; Moss countered that it reminded him of Chevy Chase. Yet whoever the subject, the artist behind it was able to capture him in all his intelligence and sorrow and acceptance. As Robert said in a moment of reflection, "I think the city has really lost a true treasure." ■

— Molly Rhodes



"MY WORLD UPSIDE DOWN," BY ALLEN MOSS.

Sound and Fury at Sand Point-Magnuson Park

By Kennedy Leavens

Outside the second-story window, blackness extends for as far as one can see, save for the twinkling city lights of Bellevue marking the horizon. No matter how I squint, I cannot tell where the park ends and the lake begins; the shore could be several yards from the side of the building, or several miles.

Kristine Reed, the resident of this studio apartment, likes it that way, and so she, like many other residents of the transitional housing at Sand Point-Magnuson Park, has joined the campaign against the Parks Department's plan for the re-development of the park.

The Department has proposed many drastic modifications to the park; however, those which most concern the Sand Point Community Housing Association (SPCHA) are the eleven lit sports fields and the 991 new parking spaces, 867 of which will be lit. According to the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) issued by the Parks Department in January 2002, the fields (and consequently, the lights also) will be in use until 11 p.m., 365 days per year.

Many of the residents who live or will be living directly across the street from the site of the proposed play fields and parking lots are in transitional or low-income housing. In the early '90s, when the naval station was conveyed to the city and the Sand Point Re-Use plan formulated, the City of Seattle agreed, among other things, that 200 units of low-income or transitional housing would be built on the former

federally owned land. (The Re-Use Plan also included plans for sports fields, but only recently were the details of this aspect of the plan composed.) The SPCHA is currently planning the construction of 106 more units of housing, and estimates of the number of residents that the housing will eventually hold range from 500 to 700.

The SPCHA currently owns 94 units of transitional housing at the former naval station, and has hired three agencies to manage it. The housing is in its third year of operation, and currently, approximately 170 people live in the housing. This figure includes roughly 26 families with children, 40 single adults, and 30 youth and infants, as one of the youth programs houses young mothers.

Most consider the transitional and low-income housing programs to be a complete success, including many of the nearby residents of View Ridge, who were originally opposed to the housing. However, the draft Environmental Impact Statement makes little mention of the impact that the proposed plan will have on the residents of this nearby housing, and almost no attempt to address the problem.

"Essentially, the DEIS seemed to say that there will be impact but there is nothing we can do about it, so tough," says SPCHA Director Bob Rench, "and that's clearly not an acceptable response for us. We need the Parks Department to look at the impacts and address them responsibly, and not allow our interests to be overwhelmed by the interests of park users."

The SPCHA and the residents of the housing have three chief concerns, relating to the increased level of light, noise, and traffic in the park.

One of the buildings, in which the single adults live, and the site of one of the new buildings, would be "fully exposed to direct glare from virtually all of the lit fields," according to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Additionally, the two buildings that currently house families "would also be exposed to direct glare from the field lights," although this exposure would be limited to the glare from between two and six of the fields, rather than all 11.

One evening in November, the Parks Department set up three floodlights on the site of the proposed playing fields, in order to simulate the lighted playfields and test the effects on the area. "Even on the dark, rainy night that they were testing it, you could see clear as day in the room," says Reed of the test. "And even closing the blinds like I did, it didn't help. If I had tried to go to bed early that night, I wouldn't have made it."

The SPCHA also believes that there is a "substantial likelihood" that the noise from the construction, which would last ten years, and from the park itself, would exceed limits set by city ordinances. They fear that noise from traffic, loudspeakers, and cheering fans, lasting at least until eleven o'clock each night, will create a "constant intrusion" into the lives of the adults and children living, in some cases, less than 100 yards away from the fields.

An increase in traffic gives rise to many different concerns, the most significant of which being safety. "We've got a number of children who live in our housing, and they use the grounds to play, just like kids do all over the city," says Rench. "We worry about traffic from the park coming through our part of the Sand Point area, and that our kids and adult residents might be at risk if there is substantially increased traffic here, and it is not carefully controlled."

Segia Lui, a formerly homeless resident of the transitional housing and the mother of four, says that after living in the city her whole life, one thing she values about living at Sand Point is that she is able to let her children roam around the area. "It's the tranquility, the peace," she says, while bouncing her 5-month-old son on her lap. "I feel safe here."

Many interviewed raised the concern that the housing was overlooked because it is designed for people of very low income, or who have just come off the streets. "It's an inescapable conclusion, in a way," says Ann Lester, the vice president of the Board of Directors at the SPCHA. However, Lester points out that the impact of the sports fields has the potential to be "much more devastating" on the transitional housing residents than it would on other neighbors.

"Anyone who has been on the streets [is] very fragile," she says. "They're coming to these programs here and really getting all kinds of fine support to get their lives back together. And they need a peaceful environment, they really do."

Twelve-year-old Morgan Cassell and her friend Me'Lissa Caldwell, 13, support Lester's argument. "I'd definitely have less sleep because of all the traffic...and the glare. I can't really sleep with the lights on, and it will be glaring through my window all night," explains Cassell, who also worries about the effect of the sports fields on the wildlife in the area.

Caldwell is worried also. "I won't be able to concentrate with all the honking, and cars driving by...And kids will be up, screaming, yelling, and having fun because the lights are on. They should just turn them off at night."

Other suggestions offered by those at the SPCHA to reduce the impact on the residents of the housing include scaling back the number of sports fields and the hours of use; moving the fields and parking to a location elsewhere in the park or elsewhere in the city; planting trees or building a berm (a small hill) to create a sound barrier; and finally, purchasing blackout curtains for the residents. ■

**the BELLTOWN
BARBER**

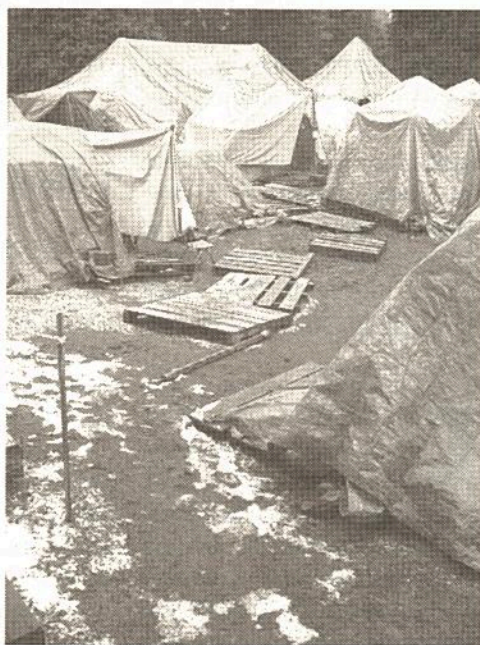
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poetry

911 Response

Finally,
The bully,
In his own front yard,
glistening crest neon stream,
got smashed in his nose;
And the spurting blood was deemed holy,
And the crest collapsed of its own weight
By the slaves rebellious and audacious blow.
And trumpets blared the stars and stripes forever,
In the minds of the small,
In the souls of the guilty ...
Someone of wisdom stood in a vacant intersection
At the leading edge of the dustcloud,
Closed tight his eyes, and saw the equation $e=mc^2$,
In the darkness appear, and reappear,
And understood...
I will mourn, with all my fiber, at least a
humanistic minimum for any and all of my species,
If they are in pain, be they "good" or "evil."
I will not mourn the message.
But knowing the common mind to repress and
Deviate that message will be my deepest mourning...
A poisoned soil,
Will always produce a poisoned harvest.

— GEORGE TRANSCENDER

Who Are You?

He said, "If you don't like them – if they really bother
you
"You can have them surgically enlarged." "Oh, really!
Is that true?"
He had to raise the subject. I hadn't said a word.
It was the most ridiculous idea I ever heard.

I never had considered that the dear things were so bad.
I thought of all the women who would cherish what I had.
And I recalled the handyman who solved my household quirks
Who used to say, "Hey lady, let's not fix it if it works."

So I went home and took a mirror and viewed them front
and side.

No reason for displeasure – no challenge to my pride.
To aid me as a mother – to help my dresses fit,
The Lord took tucks and darts and thus created me a tit.

They served me well and serve me still, for during
winter storms,
When my hands become too cold to write, I reach — and
they are warm.

And when I take a lover, they only are a part
of passionate expression. The love comes from the
heart.

-JOBI

Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning



Recently I had what I would call a Fran Lebowitz Moment. I was minding my own business, getting by, when it suddenly dawned on me how certain other people are nuts.

I suddenly feel an obligation from out of nowhere to become more specific. I will yield to this sense of obligation: morning people. Morning people are nuts. This we knew already. But now I realize precisely how they are nuts. Such a realization is valuable to me. Among other things, it helps make life more interesting for me. At least, more interesting than being dead would be.

Morning people are nuts because they have an insatiable need for useless experiences and information. To a sane person, for example, dawn is a time of day to sleep through. But to a morning person dawn is a time for wondrous observations, insights, and discoveries: "Look, wow, its another sunrise!" "Hey everybody! It's morning!" "The Earth is turning to face the sun again!" "Look, the sky is becoming light — just like it did the last trillion times this happened!"

I didn't arrive at this realization all at once. It began one day when I was forced to be up at the ungodly hour of 9 in the ungodly a.m. Maybe I had to go to some stupid ungodly committee meeting that morning. So that the morning wouldn't be a total waste, I turned on the radio and happened to catch a local call-in show, one obviously geared to the morning people audience, on big trees.

When I say it was obviously geared to morning people, I mean it is obvious to me now. Now I see the signs. Suppose sane people had been the audience. Then the program might have told us something useful concerning big trees, such as that you can get in out of the rain by means of them. But no, this program was not about conveying useful information. This program was about big trees. That there ARE big trees. I mean, that some trees are little, and that other trees are bigger. That some trees are biggest.

The show consisted of the local radio guy, I'll call him Steve, interviewing a Big Tree Expert, I'll call him Raoul (I forgot to take down their names, so sue

me, I'm too sane). Steve would say things like, "So I guess you've found some really big trees, haven't you, Raoul?" And then Raoul would say things like, "Once I was in British Columbia, near Vancouver, and I saw a really big one, Steve." And then people would call in, I swear they were all morning people, and they would say things like, "I saw a big tree once, you know the one I mean? It was in California." And Raoul would answer with, "Maybe you're talking about the big one I know of there. It's really big." And the listener would say, "Yeah, that's the one, it was big all right. Awesome!"

"Look, the sky is becoming light — just like it did the last trillion times this happened!"

— A morning person

Since hearing that program I have been alert to that sort of phenomena. I have noticed that such things occur to the greatest extent in the mornings and that morning people are usually involved. For example, it was morning people who first announced at the end of February that it had been a year since last year's Mardi Gras celebration. In effect, they were telling us all that calendars could be relied upon to that degree, a fact that was probably familiar to the ancients even prior to the invention of Tuesdays.

In the last few days since the vernal equinox, morning people have blitzed the media with the earth-shaking news that baseball will continue this year. That's right everybody, hop out of bed, you will want to be wide awake for this — last year's season did not end baseball! They've decided to have another go at it! Isn't that just incredible?! And look! The days are getting longer!

Knowing what I now know, I can identify morning people at all hours of the day. Let's say it's 5 p.m. and the person I'm talking to suddenly gushes all over me about the fact that it's the 21st century now. That would be a morning person.

Knowing that could be useful. I could recommend that person to take my place on some ungodly *Real Change* committee, for instance. My new motto: "Throw the morning people to the morning lions!" (Does not necessarily supersede pre-existing mottos.) ■



The New Watch

I bought a watch the other day
To help me be on time.
The price was right, four ninety-five.
The said it had a chime.

They set it for me at the store
And handed me a sheet
Of finely writ' instructions which
They said were quite complete.

I'd never had a watch like this —
It didn't have any hands,
And this one had a list of rules
No lawyer could understand.

And, yes, it had a chime — of sorts —
An electronic bleep
That marked time's progress through the day.
At night it ruined sleep.

I needed something that would just
Tell me the time of day —
Not bleep at every passer-by
Who chanced to come my way.

So, I took the instructions and
A magnifying glass
And tried to figure out that thing.
I felt like such an ass

When I wound up, for year and date,
No matter what I'd do,
The day Columbus set his sails
In 1492!

I read it calculates square roots.
Now, I don't really care
To measure roots of any tree
Who'd let then grow out square!

It counts the hours of my life
As each one passes by;
Divides and multiplies to show
It's smarter, far, than I.

I simply can't escape the thing—
It tracks me through the house.
Next time I'll get a timepiece that
Is made by Mickey Mouse!

— JOBI

Bus Shelter

With his hand, placed
flat on the
water
he stands
waiting. You
see him, where you
stand —
yourself —
waiting!
without your
need for the shirt on his back
with your
own
hand,
raised.

— STAN BURRISS

The Firefly Song

I have a firefly named Iron Hammer
cross the border
to the house next door
prying eyes
have seen this
before
Athiest thing, we tried to drown in the lake
keeps company for the Snake.
Lights Out!
on Memory Lane.
Tears fallen,
as rosy early waters of years
comes
cheap
The man of Malevolent Moods
A Domain disheveled: Song of the Devil
Bury me in Osaka (bury me)
Made for the Pleasure of Man
in a keepsake box on the streets of shame
there's been a firefly since time began
I have a firefly named
Iron Hammer
From the soap of a city
because I didn't get there in time
she sends me a sign
that sets my soul to shine.
I am a firefly, about to die.
bury me in osaka.
In the West we sometimes say
"Sayonara!"

— MAC CRARY

Book Reviews

Salty, Ginseng, and Redemption in Canada

The Door Is Open: Memoir of a Soup Kitchen Volunteer

By Bart Campbell

Anvil Press, August 2001

144 pages, paperback, \$14.95

Review by Adam Holdorf

Bart Campbell was a "compulsive scribbler" since adolescence, and when he began volunteering a few nights a week on Vancouver's Skid Row, he started jotting down what he saw and heard. Those scribbles make up the bulk of *The Door Is Open: Memoir of a Soup Kitchen Volunteer*, but Bart's got more than a big heart. This is also a story of his soul's search for rest after his marriage broke up.

As Bart tells it, "I was waking up in the middle of the night screaming, ringing in my ears, weeping in the hallways, rapid weight loss and night sweats, depressed. My life had become a very scary thing for me and I've worked around enough busy hospital emergency rooms to know that kind of deep depression can be fatal."

He found refuge from his problems serving sandwiches and cleaning up messes in the soup kitchen, dubbed The Door Is Open. And from his scribbles, he gathered up a sense of the public lives of poor people who visited for their daily meals.

The Door Is Open sits in the poorest slum in all of Canada, the Downtown Eastside, and while most of its regulars lived in the neighborhood, their domestic arrangements are so lonely, dangerous, and wretched that a free meal at a local charity is welcomed. The kitchen's run by Brother Tim, a Christian who, when asked why he doesn't make diners sit through a prayer service before dinner, simply says, "Because I'm not an asshole."

Besides Tim, every other person in Bart's account flits through quickly, telling their story and bowing out quietly. There's the 16-year-old boy, weeping hysterically as a cop cuffs him for snatching a purse, realizing he'd just screwed his life up. There's the man crying on the steps of the drop-in center, who responds to Bart's query with, "You know Johnny? That big ugly guy that always drinks with me? Well, he just raped my wife while I was passed out on the couch."

Implements of desperation crop up here that are foreign to us Americans. Rice wine, for example, a kind of Chinese cooking wine that kills you much faster than usual. Ginseng, the most expensive kind, is purported to have hallucinogenic qualities. The strongest strain is nicknamed Salty — "because

of its blood-blanching, high salt content that clogs the liver and corrodes the kidneys, and of course makes you thirsty with a capital T." One man who'd been drinking Salty for five months "can't talk because his thinking has become too random to articulate. His stumbling body is a cadaver of short-circuited reflexes. Nothing is left but a personality of tics propped up on crutches."

When things go from bad to worse here in the states, don't go to Canada. Socialized health care or no socialized health care, it still sucks to be poor.

So Bart has some stories, but he shores them up with numbers in a rather predictable sequence. Whole chapters are ordered like this: anecdote, statistic ("Only one in five Canadian women have steady full-time jobs with annual incomes over \$30,000"), insight, conclusion. It's an unobjectionable way to write a book, but Bart's inner workings are sometimes the more interesting aspect of this story. Some of his flitting characters ask some tough questions:

"You have to go now, it's closing time," I told a man I had just shaken awake.

"What good are you?" He angrily muttered. "Why do you people bother coming down here at all? You don't do nothing."

And later:

"An old man I caught trying to steal my jacket indignantly told me, 'What goes around never comes around, so why should I be nice to you, just because you're stupid enough to be nice to me?'"

Those are questions Bart must have been asking himself as he cleaned up vomit, served dinner, and gave away his smokes to the soup kitchen's visitors: What good am I to this place? A cynic might say he's doing time for being virtuous. But I am not that cynic, and I don't think Bart's spiritual path was paved with the misfortunes of others. The Eastside was his community — he couldn't help but help. Besides, if befriending a crew of drunks, ex-cons, and prostitutes gets you through tough times, so be it.

Bart's time led to more than that. He and his wife reunited after 17 months of separation, and "it probably never would have happened if I hadn't started hanging out at The Door Is Open and let the experience change some of my entrenched outlooks on life, and teach me some things — like that often the best way to help yourself is by helping others, and that the more you give of yourself, the more you forget yourself in work or in love, to that extent you will become happy." It doesn't promise heaven, but that's a precious gem of comfort, picked out of an urban jungle. ■

The Media View of Homelessness

Bias — A CBS Insider Explores How the Media Distorts the News

By Bernard Goldberg

Regnery Publishing, December 2001

234 pages, hardcover, \$27.95

Review by R.V. Murphy

As someone who has worked fulltime in the news media and has also been homeless in my lifetime, I'm especially interested in critiques of how the media portray the homeless. A lot hasn't been written on the subject, but author Bernard Goldberg spends a whole chapter on the homeless in a book called *Bias — A CBS Insider Explores How the Media Distorts the News*.

Goldberg's topic isn't a new one — the so-called liberal bias of the news media, particularly TV news — but it's one that appeals to readers despite much of the media rallying around the Bush regime since the September 11 attacks. *Publishers Weekly* recently ranked the book as high as second in sales in the non-fiction category.

When I was in the media, I felt that the bias was more often in the eyes of the reader or the viewer. Goldberg, who worked as a reporter and producer at CBS News for 20 years, certainly has his axes to grind, and his perspectives on the homeless come from a conservative bent.

"In the 1980's, I started noticing that the homeless people we showed on the news don't look like the homeless I was tripping over on the sidewalk," said Goldberg.

According to the author, the villains here are the homeless advocates who direct media outlets toward "blond-haired, blue-eyed families down on their luck." Goldberg claims the message of the liberal media is that the homeless are just like the people next door.

Goldberg hardly lets his former bosses off the hook either. He claims they also wanted him to find homeless who looked like the family next door — "white was better than black, clean was better than dirty, attractive was better than unattractive, sane was better than insane. The *New York Times* calls it 'prettifying of reality.' It could also be called the media only wanting to deal with people it can relate to."

While Goldberg admits that he doesn't know anyone personally who's homeless (he didn't know anyone who had AIDS either until he interviewed Randy Shilts), he smugly tells the reader who the homeless are — "the (homeless) on the sidewalk, by and large, were winos, or drug addicts, or schizophrenics, they mumbled crazy things, gave you the evil eye, had drool coming out of the sides of their mouths, and lived in cardboard boxes."

To Goldberg, good reporting on the homeless emphasizes drug and alcohol

abuse as the cause of their problems, along with a general lack of ambition. Biased reporting introduces topics such as high rents and downtown redevelopment into the homeless equation. In other words, bias is in the eyes of the beholder.

According to the statistics, Goldberg's right and wrong. Many observers believe as Goldberg does, that the media discovered homelessness in the 1980s. At that time, the Center For Media and Public Archives found that the media were profiling a certain type of homeless. A study showed that only seven percent of the homeless who were mentioned in feature stories on television were alcohol or drug addicts. Only eight percent were mentally ill. Surprisingly only 25 percent of those featured were even unemployed.

However, when Goldberg and others label the overwhelming majority of homeless as addicted or crazy, that's not accurate either. The US Conference of Mayors did a study in 1999 that found 34 percent of homeless with substance abuse problems and 25 percent who were mentally ill. The mayors found 77 percent unemployed, which means there are almost as many homeless with some kind of job as there are homeless with mental problems.

As for homeless advocates who "mislead" the media, every special interest group tries to put its best foot forward, i.e., they have their brightest, most articulate (and yes, best looking) to promote their cause. As for why the media gets misled, some reviewers of this book feel that Goldberg misses the mark in labeling. The problem with the media is more elitism than liberalism.

The newspaper people that I've worked with would be herded into the moderate to liberal camp. They're not overtly racist and would tend to think of George W. as a blunderhead. Their views are similar to most educated Americans. But most of them, particularly the newcomers, come from sheltered yuppie backgrounds. The quotable head of a homeless shelter is okay, but these people don't want to deal with the less attractive homeless.

Reporters going into entry-level jobs at newspapers today are hired as much (or more) for their computer skills than for writing or reporting ability. Preparing for a journalism career at some party college, young reporters don't have a feel for the street that a Jimmy Breslin or Pete Hamill did 30 years ago.

Plus, the journalism profession is also very white. According to Unity, a group trying to promote minority hiring in the media (it held its annual job fair in Seattle in 1999), almost 42 percent of the nation's newspapers don't have any reporters of color.

The real story of the media's coverage of the homeless is that it just doesn't have a clue. ■

Book Reviews

Shoot First, Ask Questions Later

The Militarization of law enforcement

Militarizing the American Criminal Justice System: The Changing Roles of the Armed Forces and the Police

Peter B. Kraska (editor)

Northeastern University Press, 2001.

175 pages, paperback, \$20

Review by Silja J.A. Talvi

As the line between the military industrial complex and the criminal justice system continues to blur, Peter B. Kraska, Professor of Criminal Justice at Eastern Kentucky University, brings readers his timely, tightly edited book, *Militarizing the American Criminal Justice System: The Changing Roles of the Armed Forces and the Police*.

In the last 15 years, as Kraska explains, the U.S. has witnessed a "rapid acceleration" of both militarism and militarization in civilian governmental functions.

And nowhere has that acceleration been as pronounced as in law enforcement.

Since the Reagan era, successive American presidential administrations — with the support of the Congress — have "further militarized crime control discourse by radiating the master metaphor of 'war' into a flood of taken-for-granted martial expressions and submetaphors."

It was Reagan who began to routinely equate the "evils of communism" with the threat of drugs and crime, and then took the first step toward the present-day omnipresence of drug-war rhetoric by declaring illicit substances as an official threat to national security.

In subsequent years, both the Bush and Clinton administrations eagerly engaged in a game of "political one-upmanship," arguing over who could push for the most authoritarian and punitive approach toward the War on Drugs. (The drug war mantle has since been passed onto President George W. Bush, who has not disappointed his predecessors in this regard.) As a result, the military and criminal justice systems now work together to handle

the drug/crime problem as a veritable social or political "insurrection."

The newly evolved perception of drug use and criminal behavior as a national security issue has thus served to justify a militaristic response, as Kraska explains, "including campaigns to occupy, control, and restore state-defined order to public and private space, as well as operating detention facilities designed to punish and warehouse the prisoners of this 'war.'"

In this acceleration of a militaristic approach toward criminal justice, Kraska argues that the military and the

The criminal justice system, in addition to a gross inflation of its overall budget, has also been able to tap into the surveillance, high-tech weaponry, computer technology, and personnel assistance of the military industrial complex. The losers, regrettably, have been the rest of us.

criminal justice system have emerged as the clear and indisputable victors. The military, for its part, has been able to stretch its mandate to include internal, social, and national matters, and thereby guarantee the expansion of its already inflated budget. The criminal justice system, in addition to a gross inflation of its overall budget, has also been able to tap into the surveillance, high-tech weaponry, computer technology, and personnel assistance of the military industrial complex.

The losers, regrettably, have been the rest of us.

To take but one example, police paramilitary units (PPUs) now conduct some 40,000 drug raids annually, with hundreds of such incidents resulting in fatalities, injuries, and wrongful arrests of innocent citizens.

These PPU's, often referred to as SWAT teams or special response teams, are modeled after military special operations groups including the Navy SEALs.

Once only a peripheral part of larger metropolitan police departments, PPU's are now commonplace in towns and cities across America: By 1995, over 77 percent of police departments had a paramilitary unit, notes Kraska, a 48 percent increase since 1985. Altogether, nearly 30,000 paramilitary "deployments" were reported in 1995, at a

stunning 939 percent increase over such call-outs in 1980.

"The bulk of deployments that paramilitary units engage in today are for the execution of no-knock warrants," explains Kraska. "In both large and small departments, PPU's routinely carry out dangerous contraband raids on people's private residences, often in predawn hours, for purposes of conducting a crude form of investigation into drug and gun law violations."

In one of the most egregious examples, 11-year-old Alberto Sepulveda was shot to death in his own home in the predawn hours of September 13, 2000. With a SWAT officer standing over him screaming at the boy to lie down on the floor with his arms outstretched, Alberto complied.

Less than 30 seconds later, writes Kraska, "he was struck in the back and killed by a shotgun blast from a SWAT officer who stood over him — from all indications, an unintentional discharge."

No guns or drugs were ever found in the house. The elder Mr. Sepulveda did not have an arrest record. Yet 11-year-old Alberto had paid the price of the ill-informed raid with his life.

What this scenario exemplifies is the incremental erosion of the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act, which was signed into law after a host of Reconstruction Era abuses of the civilian population because of collusion between local law enforcement and military personnel.

In his essay, "The Thick Green Line," Colonel Charles J. Dunlap explains that the Posse Comitatus Act, which clearly demarcated the differing roles of these armed segments of society, first began to be whittled away by the Reagan Administration.

"Cognizant of the international dimensions of the drug trade, convinced

that local police forces were being overwhelmed by the problem, and impressed with the efficiency and renewed popularity of the armed forces," writes Col. Dunlap, "Congress passed a number of statutes designed to bring military resources to bear in the 'war' on drugs."

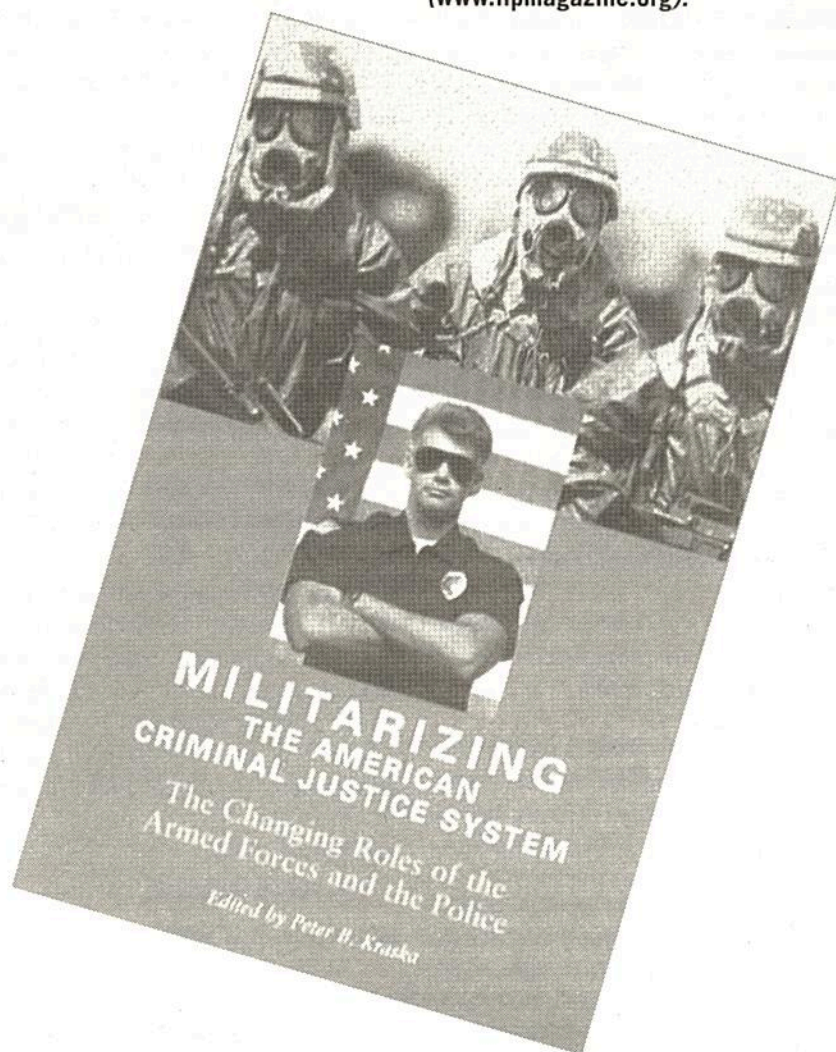
With contributions from an intriguing combination of academics, military writers, and attorneys, *Militarizing the American Criminal Justice System* covers a broad scope of topics, including the military's involvement in drug and immigration enforcement along the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as the creeping role of high technology, science, information management, and surveillance in the criminal justice system.

And still, as Kraska points out, most Americans hold firm the idea that the explosive growth of the "crime control industry" has everything to do with the perceived need to respond strongly to what has erroneously been termed a national crisis of crime and drugs.

But behind the scenes, as Kraska concludes, "the criminal justice system is developing into an 'industrial complex' It seeks out and constructs new problems for its solution, actively pursues its own self-serving agenda as opposed to working toward the 'public good,' and works closely with an array of for-profit organizations."

"Put simply," he adds, "growth becomes not a means to a laudable end, but an end in and of itself." ■

Silja J.A. Talvi is a Seattle-based freelance journalist who reports on criminal justice issues for publications ranging from In These Times to the Christian Science Monitor. She is also an advisory board member of Real Change, and co-editor of LiP Magazine (www.lipmagazine.org).



BRAXTON Continued from Page 1

exploiting people, we will give our business to somebody else. So we put pressure on them. Then, if they in fact want to take advantage because it keeps their overhead lower, then we call them to the carpet in terms of public scrutiny.

RC: *What do you see as your role in carrying on the legacy of Rev. Samuel B. McKinney, who brought Martin Luther King to Seattle? Does that intimidate you at all?*

Braxton: No, it doesn't. My calling is not to fulfill his legacy anymore than his responsibility was to fulfill Rev. Lloyd's legacy, or Rev. Lloyd's responsibility was to fulfill Benjamin Davis' legacy. Each one of us is called to walk in the footsteps of Christ. Each of us brings our particular gifts and abilities. Into this great commission, that expands over all of our heads, apply them at the given point in time in history in which we find ourselves. Rev. McKinney came along during the time of the great civil rights movement. My generation, we've kind of come along during the time of drive-by shootings, Columbine, terrorism, bio-terrorism, the digital revolution. It's a different world, there are different demons, but it's still a battle of the forces of light versus the forces of darkness.

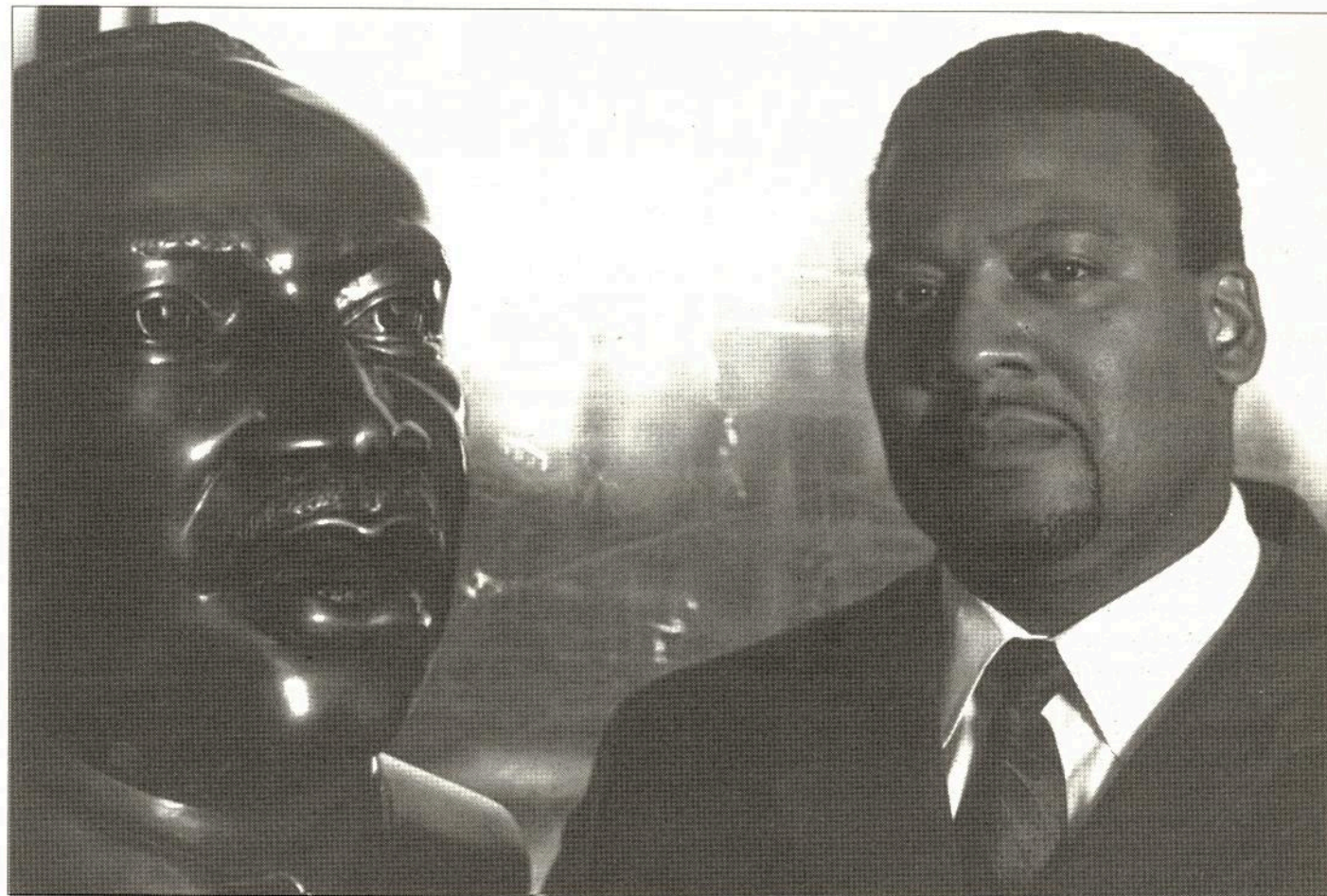
RC: *What do you think of Seattle Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske? Are you satisfied with his agenda as it relates to the African-American community?*

Braxton: Kerlikowske is a great guy. I knew him in Buffalo, New York. He was police chief while I was there. He was there for a four- or five-year period of time. We were so besieged by parasitical forces in our community — drug trafficking and so forth — that our choir members were afraid to come out to choir rehearsals and Bible studies. Decent people were becoming hostages in their own neighborhoods. So we were looking for the police to come in very aggressively, and bring some order. Kerlikowske came to town and he was able to mobilize the law enforcement department with block partners, and to do it without killing anybody. They used things like mace, stun guns, and all the things we asked for here. Some people complained that police were a bit too aggressive with the mace and stun guns sometimes — but you know the thing about that is, [you can argue about] the use of force if the victim is alive to tell the story.

RC: *What are your thoughts on the recent no-confidence vote?*

Braxton: The police chief is paid by the mayor. The no-confidence vote came from the rank and file — from the Police Guild. You've got a dichotomy there. They see him as the mayor's appointee. He's coming in trying to break up the blue code of silence. And to deal with the nepotism, all the recalcitrants, and he's a threat to them.

You have to consider the source: If



REV. DR. LESLIE BRAXTON POSES WITH THE BUST OF ONE OF HIS INSPIRATIONS, DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

the Ku Klux Klan gives Martin King a no-confidence vote, he'll wear it as a badge of honor. If David Duke and Pat Buchanan and George W. Bush give Leslie Braxton a no-confidence vote, I'll wear it as a badge of honor. The cross that Jesus Christ hangs on, we wear it around our necks — a lone symbol of shame becomes our badge of honor. Considering the source, I don't think Kerlikowske has any reason to hang his head.

RC: *How do you react to claims of racial profiling?*

Braxton: When Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols bombed the federal building in Oklahoma City, which to that point was the worst act of domestic terrorism in the nation's history, they were able to smoke them out with strategic law enforcement, without pulling over all white males. If you can find white men without harrasing white men in general then why, when dealing with smaller groups of people, must you harass everyone in that group? Only because it is an ingrained behavior of a people who are used to having a different set of rules when it comes to people of color. They've been doing it so long, and they do it so instinctively, they don't even realize that they do it.

RC: *How do you feel about Greg Nickels?*

Braxton: I can't say that the last election aroused a great passion in me. Nickels

is far more compassionate [than his opponent in the election, Mark Sidran]. But there was no compelling record of actualizing that compassion in any real form. So in a sense, the vote reflected that the majority of people in society said we are going to entrust the welfare of our city to an individual whose

heart we believe is more akin to our heart. It's not a statement that he has a record that makes him deserving of this sacred trust, but we took a gamble on his heart and we're gonna hope that he will actualize those sentiments now.

RC: *What role will Mt. Zion play in addressing gentrification in Seattle?*

Braxton: Dealing with gentrification in the city of Seattle in 2002 is almost like dealing with the tribal leaders in Africa, asking them to fortify themselves

against slavery in the 19th century. Well, you're about three centuries too late. Because the Portuguese came in 1444. And it took tribal leaders about 200 years to realize that while they saw themselves as men, white folks saw them as black gold. By the time they figured it out, the deal was done. We're 20 years too late to be having this conversation. The deal has been done.

Now what we need to be thinking about is as we look down the road to Seattle in 2032: What do we want the Black community to be? How are we going to make the best deal out of this

thing? Land has been bought up. All the codes have been changed to meet the needs of all the developers. Houses that were bought 30 years ago, 20 years ago, for \$40,000 on paper are worth \$400,000 and people are paying more each year in property taxes than they once paid in mortgage. Seniors are being forced out of their homes. Their kids can't afford to buy in the neighborhoods that they grew up in. Black folks and Hispanic folks are being systematically moved south down Rainier Avenue and MLK Way. But as a person coming into this community, I look at this thing and I see the trend was set, the floodgates were opened years ago. And I'm coming after the dance complaining to the DJ about the music.

RC: *But what can be done, specifically, at this point?*

Braxton: In Washington, D.C., the voters put Marion Barry back in office not because they were amoral, or indifferent to reality, or stupid. They put him back in office because he developed what they called the Homestead program. If you bought your house at a certain level you were protected from the millionaires who moved into the neighborhood by capping how much your property taxes could rise. Hamilton said in his debates with Jefferson in the 18th century, "The power to tax is the power to destroy." So you have the power through taxation to strip me of my home that I rightfully paid for; that's a form of economic tyranny. Mayor Barry put in the homestead program to control that.

I think if the property taxes around here were kept in proportion to what they were when you bought the home, that would protect our seniors. It would also protect African Americans, and Hispanic Americans, in terms of our community's need to develop inter-gen-

If the Ku Klux Klan gives Martin King a no-confidence vote, he'll wear it as a badge of honor. If David Duke and Pat Buchanan and George W. Bush give Leslie Braxton a no-confidence vote, I'll wear it as a badge of honor.

Rev. Leslie Braxton

erational wealth, which begins with your home. We lose that because there are so many ways in which the state comes in and seizes property, so each generation starts over.

RC: What was your response to September 11? Start with the anti-terrorism agenda and the expense involved in that.

Braxton: September 10, we had no money for the 45 million Americans who had no health care, mostly women and children. The only Western industrial nation that doesn't have a national health care plan, which was one of Martin Luther King's tenets that he was fighting for at the time he died. September 10, no money for the homeless. September 10, no money for urban revitalization; in the last three presidential elections there's been no talk about the urban inner-city. September 10, no money for meaningful education reform. September 12, \$40.8 billion to catch a cave man we haven't caught, just like we didn't catch Saddam.

Martin Luther King said, "Any nation that year after year spends more money on the weapons of war than it does on programs of social uplift, is a nation that is fast approaching spiritual death." So in spite of all of this "God Bless America," which is nothing but sectarian, civil religion, our own domestic form of fundamentalism, in spite of all that misused "God talk" to justify our war agenda, we in fact as a nation, as

evidenced by our spending priorities, are a spiritually sick nation. Spiritually sick! We always invest in outbreaks of wars, but we don't invest in outbreaks of peace and outbreaks of literacy.

RC: What does Black leadership in the Bush Administration look like?

Braxton: Colin Powell has been treated as the left shoe of the Bush administration because he doesn't go along with this isolationist mentality, because he is global in his perspective, and because of the Black consciousness he has brought to the throne. I think he is beginning to see himself as a Black man who happens to be Secretary of State, but not a Secretary of State who happens to be a Black man. And I hope Condoleezza Rice will remember her blackness too, because there's no point having a black face if you've got white consciousness.

Powell has on his desk a slogan, "...that we must attack poverty, desperation, and destitution as our first objective in the war on terrorism, because it is that destitution in the shadow of America's affluence that is the larvae out of which the hornets of terrorism come." King said in his "I Have A Dream" speech that "Black folks live on a lonely island of poverty amidst a vast ocean of material prosperity." I'll take that domestic metaphor and apply it globally. One half of the world's population lives on less than one dollar a day. Yet America does mil-

lions of dollars of business in those countries.

I think that President Bush has directly benefited from September 11. He was an illegitimate president, the first 'president select' in the history of the country. His brother helped him steal the election. He had no domestic agenda, just like his daddy. September 11, because of the human impulse to circle the wagons when you're being attacked and you don't know where it's coming from, we suspend all internal fights, and we lock arms. Even if you're a fool, your approval rating is going to spike. But remember this: his daddy had a 90 percent approval rating when he went after Saddam. By the time the election came along, when he had no evil empire to distract the nation, he was left to face the reality that he had nothing to offer the American people. And we fired him. We are going to fire W. because he does not have a program. He never did. He will not. And a scripted president can't fool a learned American public for long, even in this celebrity, media-driven culture. Eventually we begin to see, like in the Hans Christian Andersen tale, that the emperor is naked.

All of his Texas tough talk about alive or dead ain't gonna fool the people. In fact, coming from a man who's never been in a fight in his life, has no record of ever whuppin' anybody's anything, ever developing anything, ever doing anything, who dodged real battle, it rings hollow. Particularly for people of color, who know what real fights are about.

RC: What is your goal for interacting with other local African-American spiritual leaders?

Braxton: Sometimes we are too compartmentalized, denominationally, and within denominations. Pride, ego, ambition is no less a curse to the church than it is for any other human organization. Sometimes we want to prove ourselves, we want our recognition for what we've done and we don't want to fall into the abyss of the collective effort that does not allow us to have our 15 minutes of fame.

As a result of that, I don't think we provide the biggest punch for a kingdom of God, or provide the most effective services for the people, for communities. I think churches need to collaborate more, jointly address issues of poverty, issues of justice, jointly address challenges to the economic arrangements.

In the political realities of American society, people respond to numbers. Leslie Braxton on his own can be ignored by anybody, but Leslie Braxton and all the Baptists, linked up with all the AME churches, linked up with all the Catholics, linked up with all the Presbyterians, you know, and the Black churches link up with all the white churches, and the Hispanic and so forth, collectively, we can be ignored by no one. Even if you don't respect our religious consciousness you have to respect the fact that everybody does link up, and we're voters and taxpayers. ■

Closing the Digital Divide

Generous community support takes Real Change's computer workshop to the 21st century.

It was only three years ago that *Real Change* opened the MacWorkshop, and like all of our other programs, it came together on a shoe-string. Six donated Powermac 6100s from Wizards of the Coast, a donated iMac server from F5 Labs, and a new VISTA volunteer was all it took to put us in business. Our total lab budget for the first year was just \$27,000, and most of that was in-kind. Since late-1998, those six computers have been in use about 60 hours a week.

And they've been dying, one by one. But help is on the way. Thanks to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Project Alchemy, GGLO Architects, and construction firm Lease Crutcher Lewis, we're about to get what we need. This May, the MacWorkshop will receive the latest hardware and software and a new, well-designed, central location. The change is overdue. As Paul, a frequent lab user, said it, "I'm excited for the new lab. It's about time."

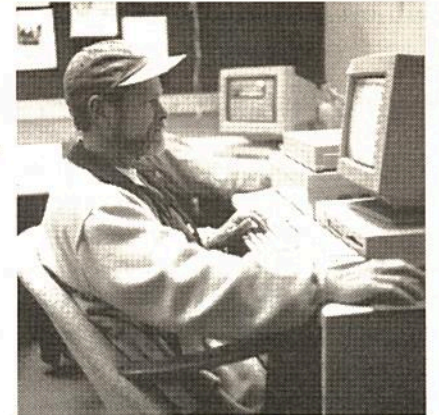
A \$45,500 grant from the Gates Foundation will purchase nine top-of-the-line Macintosh G4 computers with 17-inch monitors, a new server system to network the entire office, and everything else we need to make our computer lab a state-of-the-art facility, including a projector for hands-on trainings.

The office remodel will centralize our client services and create a classroom space suitable for trainings and large enough to accommodate more users. The cramped *Real Change* office is currently pushed to the limit with high traffic between two small MacWorkshop counters. While the majority of materials and labor for the remodel are donated by Lease Crutcher Lewis, GGLO, and various other subcontractors, your donations will help make the most of this amazing opportunity to improve our services.

Computer classes will be moved from their current, dark corner into a

clean well-lit space to accommodate an expanded training schedule. In addition to classes, *Real Change* will upgrade and expand its self-guided study opportunities, bringing GED study, typing practice, and software tutorials to all its lab computers.

With all these exciting changes, *Real Change* volunteers and staff will do extensive outreach to housing services and homeless drop-in centers in the Belltown area. The MacWorkshop transformation and intensive outreach should draw more people interested in increasing their career, communication, and computer skills. The MacWorkshop is just one more way that *Real Change* builds the conditions for homeless and very-low income people to have a voice of their own. ●



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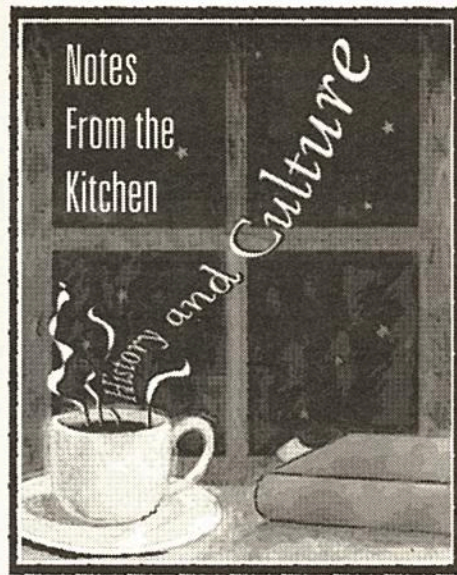
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Memories of Haggis

By Liz Smith

I begin with a caveat: this column is rated "M" for meat, and if you're a vegetarian, or have delicate sensibilities, avert your eyes and quickly turn the page.

There are some foods so fascinatingly awful that you know you'll never eat them but would enjoy talking to someone who does, because it's fun conversing with a person who's so clearly wrong-headed.

A few weeks ago I was happy to find myself in a slowly moving grocery store line behind one of these people. The gentleman, whose name was Ian, had a Scottish accent so thick that you could skirl a bagpipe with it. "Pardon me," I said. "You're from Scotland, aren't you?" Yes, he was. "Have you ever eaten any haggis?" Well, you never saw such a change in a man's face. He beamed. He became vivacious. He went into a stream-of-consciousness reverie about haggis. He told me how to cook it:

"You take a sheep's stomach." Ian looked at me to make sure I was paying attention. "You chop up a sheep's heart, the liver, some suet, the lungs, an onion. Mix all of it with oats, some salt, and pepper, and stuff that mixture into the stomach. Tie the stomach shut with kitchen string and simmer it in water for four hours. It's like a big sausage. You eat it for Burn's Night." With that, he finished paying for his groceries and said he had to go. I thanked him, and out the door he went,

looking quite jazzed.

If you are ever in Scotland, beware of dinner invitations on January 25. That is Burn's Night, in honor of their great national poet, Robert Burns. People gather by a turf fire (they don't say peat, but turf) and drink single malt whisky and cheerfully recite Burns' "Address to a Haggis." After a few hours of this, they sit down and drink some more, I imagine to help them face what's on their plate. I include Burns' "Address" because it's such a remarkable piece of work. He also penned "Auld Lang Syne." Where possible, I substituted a few more modern words to make his poem more understandable.

As for a recipe, I include my Scotch-Irish mother's recipe for tuna casserole, which she called Idiot's Delight because she said any idiot could make it. It isn't a glamorous meal, but it tastes good, and I am guessing you all would run like deer on the highlands if I gave you a haggis recipe.

Idiot's Delight (makes 2 generous servings)

4 ounces uncooked fettucine
 1Tbsp butter, plus a little for baking dish
 1 cup celery (3 stalks), sliced thinly
 1 cup onion (1 small), finely chopped
 8 ounces mushrooms, sliced
 6 ounce can tuna fish,
 drained and finely flaked with a fork
 1/8 tsp cayenne pepper
 1/4 tsp dried thyme (optional)
 1/2 tsp pepper
 1/2 tsp salt
 1 tsp dried parsley
 2 Tbsp all-purpose flour
 1 1/4 cups milk
 1/2 cup bread crumbs



1. Cook fettucine in rapidly boiling water and *remove from heat when still quite chewy*; it will finish cooking in the oven. Rinse in cold water. Drain and set aside.
2. Turn oven to 375. Butter a 6-cup capacity baking dish.
3. Melt butter in saucepan. Sauté celery and onion over medium heat for five minutes. Add mushrooms and cook until they release their liquid. Add spices and herbs.
4. Whisk flour in to milk until smooth. Pour into pan. Stir for about two minutes, until thickened. Add tuna fish.
5. To baking dish, layer half the noodles, then half the sauce. Repeat to finish. Spread crumbs evenly over top. Bake 45-50 minutes. Cover with foil if crumbs get too browned.

Address to a Haggis by Robert Burns

Fair fa' your honest jolly face, Great chieftain of the puddin' race! Aboon them and ye take yout place, Painch, tripe, or thairm: Well are ye worthy of a grace, as long's my arm.

The grooming trencher there ye fill, Your hudies like a distant hill, Your pin would help to mend a mill, In time of need, While through your pores the dew's distill, Like amber bead.

His knife see Rustic-labour dight, And cut you up with ready slight, trenching your gushing entrails bright, like onie ditch; And then, O what a glorious sight, Warm-reekin, rich!

Then, horn for horn they stretch and strive, Devil tak the hindmost, on they drive, Till all their well-swalled kytes belyve, Are bent like drums, Then auld Guidmen, most like to rive, "Bethankit!" hums.

In there that owre his French ragout, Or olio that would stew a sow, Or fricasee would make her spew, With perfect sconner, Looks down with sneering, scornfu' view, On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash, As feckless as a wither'd rash, His spindle shank a quid whip-lash, His fist a nut, Thro' bloody flood or field to dash, O how unfit!

But mark the Rustic, haggis-fed, The trembling earth resounds his tread, Clap in his wallet near a blade, He'll make it whistle, And legs, and arms, and heads will sned, Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye pow'r's what make mankind your care, And dish them out their bill o' fare, Auld Scotland wants no skinking ware, That splashes in luggies, But, if ye wish her gratefu' prayer, Gie her a Haggis!

From *The Complete Works of Robert Burns* by William P. Nimmo

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Sunday, Feb. 10, between 7 and 10 p.m., Freeway Park at Seneca. Officer was flagged down on Feb. 13 on 12th Avenue by the complainant. He stated that he knew a woman who was sexually assaulted in the Freeway Park on Feb. 10. He then stated that the suspect was well known around transient camps, and he had known the suspect for three years. He then took the officer to 8th and Spring, where the victim was camping out for the night. The victim stated that she had met the suspect at the bar he worked at near the International District and they walked together to Freeway Park, where he then forced her into the bushes and forced intercourse. The suspect threatened to kill the woman if she did not comply. The suspect then fled the scene after the act. She stated that she felt he had done this to other women and thought he may have been involved in the Freeway Park murder but did not give any further details. She did not want an investigation but was given a case number if she changed her mind.

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Wednesday, Feb. 13, 11:39 p.m., Goodwill South Lane St. Officers contacted the suspect, a 29 year-old Asian male, for trespassing in the Goodwill parking lot after the business had been closed for several hours. Suspect was seen digging through the donation items that were left at the front of the store. A routine check of suspect's name showed an outstanding warrant, and the suspect was booked into King County Jail.

Friday, Feb. 15, 4:52 p.m., Columbus Motor Inn, Aurora. Police were conducting a premise check at the Motor Inn when they contacted the suspect, a 50-year-old black female transient, entering and exiting a room that according to the guest register was only leased to a white male. The officers recognized the woman from a previous narcotics-related incident at the Seals Hotel in October and ran a computer check on her, which revealed two outstanding warrants. The officers then took her into custody. A search of the room turned up several crack pipes and a rock of cocaine. She was booked into the King County Jail.

Saturday, Feb. 16, 3:36 p.m., I-5 Overpass at South Holgate. Officers were dispatched to the South Holgate Bridge, where there was a report of a person attempting to jump off the bridge. Upon arrival they noticed a 40-year-old white female transient straddling the guardrails, holding a beer bottle and swaying in an attempt to jump from the overpass. The officers approached the woman and grabbed her as she attempted to jump. She was intoxicated and combative, and the officers transported her to Harborview Medical Center for a mental evaluation. She told officers she wanted to die because she was raped and molested by men but gave no further details. ■

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



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Book Reviews

Stupid White Men... and Other Sorry Excuses for the State of the Nation

By Michael Moore

HarperCollins 2001

277 pages, hardcover, \$24.95

Review by Timothy Harris

Since the demise of Ralph Nader as a viable political entity, documentary filmmaker Michael Moore is probably the closest thing to a star we progressives have. But don't tell Moore this. He still hasn't realized Nader is dead.

While one would expect a leftist celebrity in America to be an oxymoron, Moore's *Stupid White Men* has somehow made #1 on the *New York Times* non-fiction bestseller list. Maybe this shouldn't surprise us. *Roger and Me*, Moore's film on deindustrialization and the working poor, is the top-grossing documentary of all time, and his previous book, *Downsize This*, was a *NYT* bestseller as well.

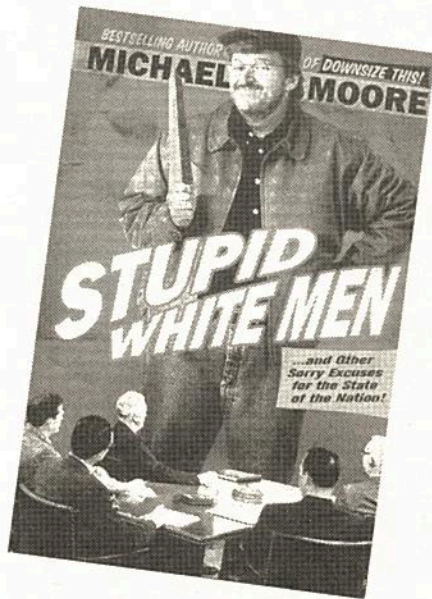
With the installation of Son of Bush, Moore has lots of new material, and the strongest essay, "A Very American Coup," leads the way. While Moore has always grounded his satire in solid journalism, the level of detail has become much more impressive. Success, evidently, means a bigger research staff. By the time Moore is done with events in Florida, his plea for the UN to send in the Marines and Jimmy Carter sounds like common sense.

Although Moore takes on a number of topics — the dangers of white people, peeing on toilet seats, our public penchant for executions, and American stupidity, to name a few — his book is built around the dismal fact of Bush and how we arrived there. The President's cabinet is described in horrifying detail and is far more craven than you might imagine. By the time Moore lists out the damage of Junior's busy first year, you're pretty much ready to slit your wrists, and this, mind you, is all pre-9/11 and Enron. Things have only become worse.

But this is where Moore's confusion over Nader takes over. He spends page after page arguing, against his own evidence, that a Republican White House is not qualitatively worse than the Democratic alternative. It's like he's trapped in the final days of Campaign 2000, and the Nader/Gore debate is still ringing in his ears.

To his credit, Moore's disgust with the Democratic Party comes out of the same honest impatience that makes him so compelling. He hates recycling, for example, because it feels like we're doing our part while, in truth, the polar ice caps are melting around our ankles.

But politics is much more complicated than most blanket generalizations will allow, and the proposition that there is no difference between Democrats and Republicans is a case in point. While this is great rhetoric, it's lazy analysis. When I was a smart-ass social



theory major we called this "repressive desublimation," a wonderfully opaque term for the idea that what feels like action is sometimes just an excuse for things to stay the same. The logic, apparently, extends to voting Democrat.

Moore dismisses progressives who voted for Gore as SUV-driving suburban "sell-outs" who've "made the trek down the dial from Sgt. Pepper to AOR to Kenny G." This is awfully glib, even for Michael Moore. It ignores the mathematical unpleasantness of Third Party spoiler politics in the United States as well as the problem of Nader himself. When all was said and done, Ralph received just 1.6 percent of the vote. Overwhelmingly, people of color, women, and labor felt too much was at stake to vote Green.

It is surprising that Moore, who can usually see his way past the white-leftist ghetto to what normal people might be thinking, has so completely lost his perspective when it comes to Nader and the Greens. Clinton, as Moore so aptly points out, was a disappointment as the great progressive hope. But then, the great progressive hope is not about to become United States President, is she? Not anytime soon.

The funny thing is that Moore, when he's not trapped in his own lefty feedback loop, thinks so too. Leading his agenda for political action is the imperative to go out and become elected ourselves, and we should begin, he says, by becoming precinct delegates. By getting involved and taking over the democratic process from the ground up, we build the power, either as Democrats or Greens, to change the system.

Moore's epilogue, which details the final weeks inside the campaign and his own disagreement with the eleventh-hour decision to campaign hardest against Gore in swing states, distances himself a bit from the Naderites while still defending their actions. It feels defensive and conflicted and at the same time painfully honest. It's a mix that only Michael Moore could achieve.

For all this, *Stupid White Men* is an apt reminder of how bad things are, why we should care, and our own power to change the world, should we decide we're worth the trouble. This is a book that needs to be read. ■

CLASSICS CORNER



by Perffess'r Harris

The astute reader of this newspaper will have observed last issue that we made fun of that weird thing Greg Nickels does with his lips, dissed his Deputy Mayor, and unfavorably compared the dough boy to Saruman the Black, and all for no apparent reason. This, we suppose, was our childish reaction to being told that the Mayor's dedication to solving homelessness would be more or less proportionate to how well he is treated in the pages of *Real Change*. After careful consideration of his offer, we decided the only appropriate answer is something along the lines of "Fuck You." In this, we imagine we are probably more like Electra than her accommodationist sister Chrysothemis.

Electra, for those of you who haven't recently read the complete works of Sophocles, explores the age old question of just when one should sell out and for how much. The story is another take on the Orestes myth,

After careful consideration of his offer, we decided the only appropriate answer is something along the lines of "Fuck You."

which by then had been done to death by both Homer and Aeschylus. In a nutshell, Clytemnestra kills Agamemnon, Orestes plans his revenge, and Electra mourns like crazy. Thanks largely to Freud, Electra is known mostly for being over-fond of her father, but in this version, the issue is whether Electra, Orestes' sister, should remain unreconciled forever or, in the manner of her little sister, go along to get along.

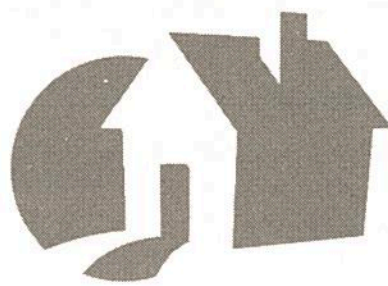
Decent arguments are offered on both sides. "If I had strength I would let them know how I feel," says Chrysothemis, "but under

pain of punishment, I think, I must make my voyage with lowered sails, that I may not seem to do something and then prove ineffectual. But justice, justice is not on my side but on yours." This does not stop her, however, from doing her best to convince Electra to shut up about the murder of Dad and get family life in the dysfunctional House of Atreus back to "normal."

Electra, on the other hand, can see no compromise. "Have your rich table and your abundant life," she tells Chrysothemis. "All the food I need is the quiet of my conscience." Her refusal to accommodate has predictable consequences. Clytemnestra refuses to return her phone calls, she can't get any meetings with the King, and so forth. She isn't even allowed in the main castle, which by all reports was somewhere up on the 12th floor. But none of this bothers Electra, who has been standing outside of the gate for years and by now wouldn't have it any other way.

In the end, everything works out just fine. Orestes kills his mom and her lover, and he and Electra, presumably, live happily ever after. We're not told how Chrysothemis fares under the new arrangement, but we can probably assume that there was a loss of respect all around.

In these times of terrorist threat, we at Classics Corner feel compelled to clarify that we in no way wish Greg Nickels dead. We don't even want him to catch cold. He should, however, talk to his staffers about threatening the press. Someone might take offense. ■



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Notables

Thursday 4/4

University of Washington Arms Control and Disarmament Class on "Arms Control and International Law," first hour of class open to the public. 5:30-6:30 p.m., this and subsequent Thursdays through June 6, at Kane Hall, Room 220; info Dr. Charles A. Meconis 206-543-9031.

American Civil Liberties Union and University of Washington host a series of events addressing threats to civil liberties by the USA Patriot Act following events of 9/11. Through April 7; info Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies 206-543-7946 or pcls@u.washington.edu.

General Radical Women meeting. Learn more about their current activities and campaigns. 7:30 p.m. Dinner with vegetarian option 6:30 p.m. for a \$6.50 donation, at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle; info 206-722-6057 or 206-722-2453.

Friday 4/5

"Is There a Future for Arms Control and Disarmament?" by Ambassador Thomas Graham, Jr., a Public Forum sponsored by UW Jackson School. 7:30 p.m., at Kane

Hall, Room 110; info Dr. Charles A. Meconis 206-543-9031.

Saturday 4/6

"In Our Diversity, Can We Find Common Ground For Social Change?" A Gray Panthers Community Forum, with speakers and a facilitated discussion. 10 a.m. - noon, at Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., light brunch refreshments served; info 206-675-8859.

Pacific Crest Biodiversity Project hosts a talk by Dr. Mike Dombeck, recently retired chief of the U.S. Forest Service, on "The Big Ten Conservation Challenges," 7 p.m., preceded by a reception at 6 p.m., \$8 talk, \$25 talk and reception, at the Seattle Art Museum, 100 University St., Downtown; info 206-545-3734 ext. 11 or michaels@pcbp.org.

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

Sunday 4/7

Author Andrew Boyd performs his comic church service from his book *Daily Afflictions: The Agony of Being Connected to Everything in the Universe*, 7 p.m., at Hugo House, 1634 11th Ave., \$5; www.dailyafflictions.com.

Monday 4/8

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.

Delegates to the UN World Conference Against Racism will host a photo exhibit "Reflections from Durban - A Visual Exploration of the UN World Conference Against Racism," through April 22nd, at the United to End Racism site, 719 2nd Ave. N. in lower Queen Anne; info <http://www.ncadp.org>.

Wednesday 4/10

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

Howard Zinn, author of *The People's History of the United States*, speaks at 7:30 p.m., at Shoreline Community College, "PE Building" 3000 Building Gymnasium, \$5 - \$10 ticket, reservations 206-546-4606.

Thursday 4/11

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.

Friday 4/12

Charles Ogletree, Attorney and Professor at Law, Harvard University, speaks on slavery reparations, 7 p.m., in Kane Hall, Room 130, University of Washington, free but a ticket is required, available at University Bookstore; info 206-616-1825.

Saturday 4/13

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.

"Expanding Our Circle of Compassion," Dr. Marshall B. Rosenberg teaches nonviolent communication, 7 - 9:30 p.m., at Garfield Community Center, 2323 E. Cherry, \$15 suggested donation, no one turned away for lack of funds; info 206-382-8576.

Sunday 4/14

Americans for the Environment, participate in **Earthwalk**, a march, rally, and community celebration. Organized by Save Our Children's Heritage. 1 - 3:30 p.m. from Westlake Center to Memorial Stadium at Seattle Center; info 206-284-0688 or 206-691-3056.

Thursday 4/18

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.

Eight distinguished UW African American Faculty discuss their paths toward university teaching, sponsored by **The Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas**, 6:30 - 8 p.m., at Franklin High School, 3013 S. Mt. Baker Blvd., free. info Millie Russell 206-685-0774.

Saturday 4/20

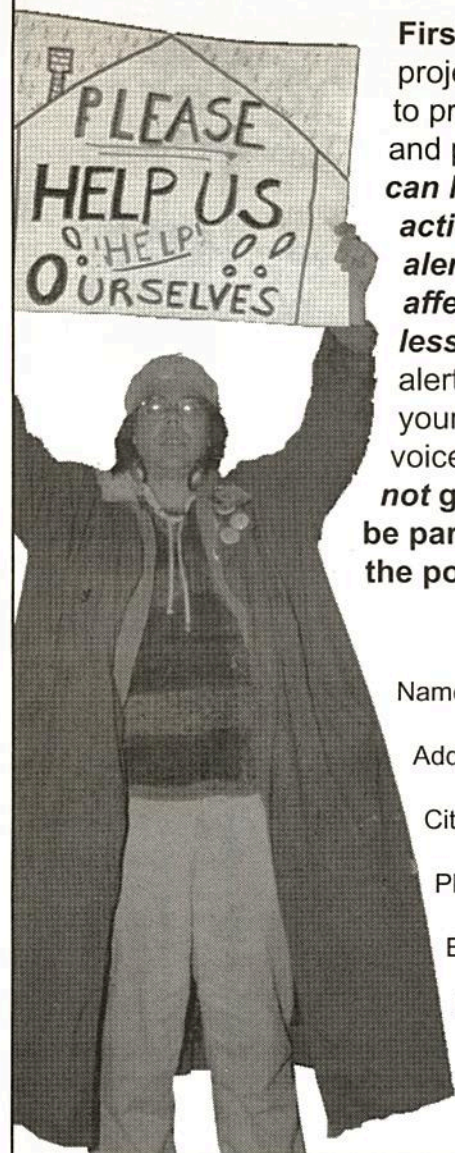
Community-Based Solutions for Environment, Health & Justice Conference hosted by the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., at UW Ethnic Cultural Center, 3931 Brooklyn Ave. NE. Register in advance by April 15, \$0 - \$25 sliding scale; info 206-720-0285 or <http://www.ccej.org>.

Ongoing

Free reading, writing, math, and ESL classes for adults at the People's Learning Center, 7301 Beacon Ave. Call 206-325-8308 for more information.

The **Young Adult Shelter** has an immediate need for caring volunteers, especially those willing to sleep overnight in the shelter. Early morning and evening shifts are also available. For more info, contact Sinan Demirel at 206-979-5621 or yashelter@hotmail.com. ■

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.**

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____

Mail to: Real Change
 2129 2nd Ave.
 Seattle, WA 98121.
 Call (206) 441-3247 for more info.

Help Real Change Grow

The Real Change 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, including monthly meeting and committee work. If you have time, energy, and commitment to our mission, please think about becoming an important part of the Real Change Team. We are especially interested in new board members with marketing or fundraising expertise and people of color.

For an application, please call or write:
 Jon Gould, Real Change Board President, at (206) 328-8310 or at jgould@u.washington.edu



citizens participation project



Celebrate TentCity Anniversary

Issue: On Saturday, April 6, TentCity is celebrating its second anniversary with a community get-together at the Trinity United Methodist Church.

Background: Every year, on April 1, Seattle's Winter Response Shelters close. This is a loss of 130 shelter beds. The streets are still dangerous, even without severe weather conditions.

As the end of the winter season approached in 2000, SHARE and WHEEL spoke at City Council hearings and wrote to and met with City officials, letting them know that unless other provisions were made for those 130 people, SHARE/WHEEL would set up a Tent City to keep them safe. They asked that, if they set up their Tent City on private land with the consent of the owners, City Attorney Mark Sidran and the Seattle Police Department should hold off on legal action against the campers.

On March 31, 2000, First Things First held a rally in front of the Municipal Building, advocating for "A Roof Over Every Bed": shelter for everyone, an increase in affordable housing, and services with dignity. Reverend David Bloom proposed a Million Millionaires March: for all the millionaires in Seattle to parade past City Hall once a year and throw \$1,000 into a hat, which would increase the budget for human services by \$1 million a year. Food Not Bombs served lunch. And SHARE/WHEEL announced at the end of First Thing's First's rally that we were heading out to set up tents.

Tent City was set up on March 31 on vacant land owned by King Vn, Inc., at Martin Luther King Way South and Charleston, in south Seattle. The neighbors and the landowners had not been notified ahead of time, because of the circumstances, but they were notified within hours of our arrival.

The land was owned by a group of ten businessmen, who took some time to discuss the matter among themselves. But after seeing that the campers were cleaning up the area, removing brambles, and patrolling for undesirable behavior in the underbrush, they expressed willingness to have Tent City stay there indefinitely.

Since that first camp, TentCity has been hosted by numerous organizations and has had to move 26 times, primarily to and from church parking lots. The encampment — run entirely through the efforts of those who live there and organizers at SHARE and WHEEL — relies on the donations of individuals and organizations for its very survival.

Action: Join TentCity3 members for a second anniversary extravaganza, on Saturday, April 6, from 2 – 6 p.m. at the Trinity United Methodist Church, 6512-23rd NW in Ballard.

There'll be music, a raffle, and speakers to celebrate the occasion. A barbecue of hotdogs and burgers will be provided, along with cake, and potluck side dishes would be most welcomed. In addition, there are several donation items TentCity is sorely in need of, including:

- Food and gift certificates for food
- Barbecue supplies, paper products, and utensils
- Miscellaneous items/ gift certificates for our fundraising raffle. (TentCity has an operating debt of \$20,000 it is trying to retire.)

Please contact SHARE/WHEEL at (206) 448-7889 if you are able to help or for more information. ■

Looking for a plan
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the RCP, U.S.A.



Revolution Books, 1833 Nagle Place
(206) 325-7415, rbsea@yahoo.com

The website at the end
of Western Civilization
classicscorner.org



Central Lutheran Church

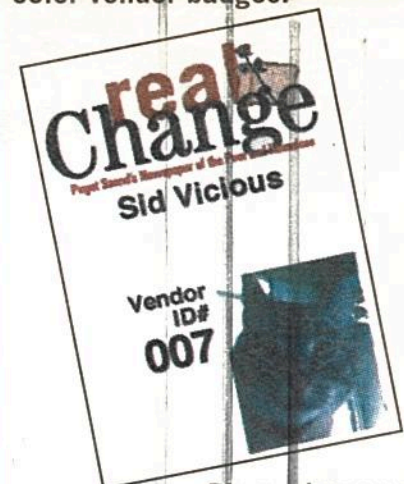
of the Holy Trinity (ELCA)
*An open and affirming congregation
expressing our faith in service to others.*

Education Hour: 10:00
Worship Service: 11:00

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www.loveiscentral.org
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Seattle, WA 98101



Mockingbird Times

Washington State Foster Care
and Homeless Youth Speak Out

APRIL 4, 2002

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VOLUME II, ISSUE 3

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Foster Parents Gather Together to Learn

By BRITTANY LUCAS

HUNDREDS OF FOSTER PARENTS drove through the unpredictable weather on March 18 to get to the three-day foster care conference in Yakima. Some even Risked being trapped in the Snoqualmie pass by sudden avalanches and closures of the highways. The majority of foster parents made it to the conference unscathed.

Dozens of booths were scattered in the Yakima conference center promoting foster kid associations alongside vendors with intentions of profiting from the event.



Above: Governor Gary Locke meets foster parents at the Yakima Conference; Below, right: Mockingbird staff reporter Brittany Lucas interviews foster parent and speaker Charmaine Mandell. Photos by Mockingbird staff.

The objective of the conference was to educate foster parents on how to improve their skills in dealing with the different types of youth that come into their homes. Some of the training groups discussed issues that centered around mental health, while others took on more controversial issues like meeting the needs of children of color and gay/lesbian/bi/ and questioning youth. A few meetings highlighted the legalities of foster child policies, and got into the more political and legal aspects of foster parenting.

Many of the attendees at the conference were inspired to be foster parents because they were in foster care when they were young. Michelle Strong is a parent through Pierce County Alliance and works for a foster parent recruitment center called Families for Kids. She felt that by being in foster care herself once, it really shed light on what her foster kids go through emotionally. "I've been in the same situations as many foster youth, like being in and out of homes, running away, and being sent to treatment centers. So I've been there and done that, I've got that something that a lot of foster parents don't have," she said.

Charmaine Mandell a foster parent, U.N Delegate, motivational speaker at the conference, and named Woman of the year in 2001 by Washington State University had her own experiences during her childhood that led her to her abundant advocacy for foster youth. "When I was a baby I was found by two teenage girls abandoned on a beach. I am so lucky that they found me. Who knows what could have happened to me. I spent years going in and out of foster care. I was an angry, bratty little girl until I found my permanent foster parents. They loved me and showed me a lot of patience. They taught

CONFERENCE CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Foster Kid Secrets

I wonder, sometimes, how come the social workers took me here,
now I'm lost at your house,
where is my little sister and baby brother?

I wonder, sometimes, if you know I'm kinda scared,
I'll try not to cry anymore,
do you know the hug felt good?

I wonder, sometimes, why I'm not good enough,
not even me, I'm really scared,
so I lie - do you?

I wonder, sometimes, why you yelled at me,
are you really that mad, 'cus then
You said, everything is gonna be OK?

I wonder, sometimes, if you know what my broken heart feels like
or do grown ups have 'um
am I really a rotten eleven-year-old kid?

I wonder, sometimes, how come I'm here
you already have kids in your family,
how come my mommy threw me away?

I wonder, sometimes, in the dark, in my head,
in my new bed,
about foster kid secrets?

SECRETS SHARED WITH ME BY FOSTER CHILDREN, AGES 8-11

CHARMAINE MANDELL
WWW.ADOPTEDLIFE.COM



INSIDE

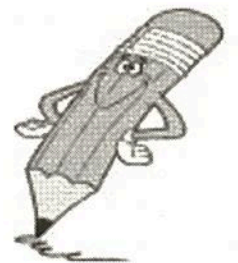
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Mockingbird and nest logo by Julia Higuera
Mockingbird Times is special insert in *Real Change*

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. Or mail us at *Mockingbird Times*, 3302 Fuhrman Ave. East, Suite 107 Seattle WA 98102. We want to hearing from all over the state.



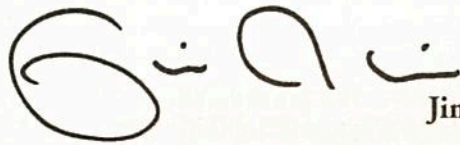
Letter from the Editor

THE MOCKINGBIRD SOCIETY is dedicated to improving the current and future life of those children and adolescents who must rely on the foster care system. The key strategy to building a world-class foster care system in Washington State is expanding the pool of quality foster parents. Some of us from Mockingbird Times attended the recent foster care conference in Yakima (see related article). I was reminded once again of the dedication and investment that Washington's foster parents bring to the work of caring for children and adolescents. The current situation reveals a system that is under funded with a critical shortage in homes for children especially older adolescents, children of color, sexual minority youth, and those with a history of sexually aggressive behavior. Our philosophy at the Mockingbird Society is rooted in the knowledge that we must "take good care of the folks who take good care of children". Making certain that those families

who are active and have already opened their hearts and homes to foster kids are respected and supported is critical. Without a doubt the most effective foster parent recruitment campaign begins with an effective foster parent retention plan. While in Yakima I was also reminded that building a world-class foster care program in Washington State is now and forever will be dependent on the quantity of quality foster parents. Based on what I experienced in Yakima we're off to good start.

QUICK NOTE: A special thank you to the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* who have agreed to provide some training and mentoring to *Mockingbird Times* reporters/youth. Recently, *Mockingbird Times* and *P.I.* staff collected around a table in a *Seattle P.I.* conference room talking, sharing and learning about the business of writing, developing a newspaper and the value of different perspectives.

FINAL NOTE: May is National Foster Care Month an opportunity to express appreciation to those foster parents and child welfare professionals who provide services, support and love to our kids in care. A great time to find a special way to express your appreciation and respect for someone you know who is helping us build that world-class foster care system.



Jim Theofelis

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Let all of Washington state know about your upcoming event! Send us the details of your foster or street kid-oriented event, and we'll print them in the *Mockingbird Times*

Send your info via email to: newspaper@mockingbirdsociety.org or at (206) 323-KIDS.

William Willoughby — Staff Reporter

Tell us a little about yourself

I am 18 years old and I currently attend Franklin High School. I am involved with a lot of different clubs and sports at school including Soccer, Student Body, and I also help other clubs like the Diversity Club and the Latino Club. I try to take part in many different organizations outside of school that better the community and the natural habitats around the city.

What are some issues that you find important?

One issue that I find important is the need to have teachers in school that have a curriculum that teach the student and don't just bore the students. I agree with many people that a student's school life is very important but I feel that parents and guardians who care should take more part in a child's learning experience.

What is your foster care experience?

I was put into the Foster Care system when I was around the age of two. My mother was not devoted to my siblings and I. She was very unstable to the point where she could not handle taking care of us. My father died when I was a toddler. Between the ages of 2 and 10 I was put into over 20 different foster homes. At the age of ten my two brothers and my sister and I moved into a house together, where we first were really aware that we had brothers and a sister. We were all adopted together when I was 13 years old, an experience that has changed my life in a very positive way.

WILLIAM CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



"As with flowing water,
the lives of young people are
directed by forces, both
apparent and hidden, that they
encounter."

— Unknown

Meet Our Staff

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Dawn and Paide Felker, Jennifer

THANK YOUS

Real Change, the University District Youth Center, Paul Allen Foundation, City of Seattle project Lift Off, Foster Parent Association of Washington (FPAWS), the Washington Association of Family-based treatment Services (WAFTS), Seattle YMCA, foster parents attending the FPAWS conference, William Bailey of Fury Bailey Attorneys, Chris Pence of Pence and Dawson, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer

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

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

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

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

I want to support The Mockingbird Society

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

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\$250 - \$499 Organizations \$ _____ \$50 Supporter \$ _____

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Address _____

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Pay by Visa Mastercard

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My employer will match my gift, enclosed is my matching gift form.

I am interested in receiving information on the advantages of planned giving.

Please do not include my name on published donor lists.

To donate by mail: Please fill out and mail this form with a check or money order payable to The Mockingbird Society, to The Mockingbird Society, 3302 Fuhrman Ave E Ste 107, Seattle, WA 98102

CONFERENCE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

me how to be a foster parent. If it wasn't for them I don't think I would be where I am now," Charmain told the conference attendees.

There were a few advocates and foster parents who were greatly concerned with the dilemmas facing fostering gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender and questioning youth (GLBTQ). Tracy Kakchtick-Anders is the founder of a non-profit organization called Open Arms Campaign (www.openarmscampaign.org) that is dedicated to the recruitment of foster and adoptive parents. They have support groups for GLBTQ foster parents and youth. "My partner and I are foster parents. Caseworkers don't give you all the resources that you need and we wanted

to do something to address that. One of the first things that we wanted to do when we started Open Arms was to get information to people who might want to help foster children. The other thing that we wanted to do was outreach to the Gay community. Our main focus is to get good people to help kids," Tracy stated.

Mark Richards-Wetzel is a foster parent, member of FPAWS, and a Liaison for Region Four. "One of the things that I found interesting was a workshop about homophobia and youth. I really enjoyed that because

as more people identify as gay, lesbian or straight, the issue needs to be dealt with more. For those who don't identify with the norm, it makes it really difficult because there is no support for them," he explained. Richards-Wetzel felt strongly about the prejudice surrounding putting kids in families with same sex parents. "I think that it is a travesty for the kids because

one of the things they are finding is children who are adopted or are in same-sex families are as healthy if not healthier than those in different-sex families. It is such a waste of resources when there is a shortage of foster parents in the system now, to not allow gays and lesbians to become foster parents because of a state's prejudice. And I think it makes it even more difficult for children in the system who identify as gay or lesbian, because they don't have a support system. They don't have someone who can understand them and support them in their journey," he said.

The foster care conference took nearly a year to prepare and was

previously scheduled for the week of September 11 but was rescheduled for March because of the events of that day. Some of the organizations that sponsored were DSHS, The Division of Children and Family services (DCFS), Foster Parents of Washington State (FPAWS) and the Washington Association of Family-based Treatment Services (WAFTS). If you're interested in attending the next conference or getting involved in Washington State Foster Youth, you can visit www.FPAWS.org.

"I was an angry, bratty little girl until I found my permanent foster parents. They loved me and showed me a lot of patience. They taught me how to be a foster parent. If it wasn't for them I don't think I would be where I am now."

— Charmaine Mandell, foster parent

Poetry Corner

Me

I, yes, I
 have been through a lot
 I have no family
 I have no love
 I have not spirit
 I have no life
 I may be here in flesh, but inside
 I am nothing
 I have tried to see the brighter side
 But there is none and that is the worst part
 People say why do you focus on yourself all the time?
 'Cuz I am nothing and I have nothing
 so I try to make something.

JENNIFER

Positive Power:
 How to Find
 an Apartment



BY BRITTANY LUCAS AND JUSTIN REYNOLDS

FINALLY, you are old enough to rent your own apartment. At first, searching for the right place to live can seem overwhelming. There are many options you need to consider before choosing your first place of independent residency. Three main aspects that you should look at when apartment browsing are safety, price, and your own personal preferences.

When searching for an apartment you should always take into consideration the safety of the apartment building and the grounds surrounding it. Secured apartment buildings are much better choices because they monitor the people coming in and out of the residential area. You should also find out if the area has problems with crime or if it is regularly monitored by the police. You can usually find this out by contacting your local police department. You might want to reconsider your apartment choice if the landlord seems a bit shady in how he handles his business or if the tenants seem less than desirable to live with. Paying attention to these important details can cause you a lot less heartache in the future and make your first rental more pleasant.

Price is probably one of the most frustrating and challenging obstacles in finding your own apartment. Studios in the city can range anywhere from \$400 to \$700. One- and two- bedroom apartments can range anywhere from \$650 to \$1,000-plus. Apartments outside of the metro area tend to be cheaper. Sometimes landlords do credit checks. Keeping up on your bills now will insure future success in obtaining rentals and many other post-pay

purchases. To get a current summary of your credit you will need to order a credit report from a credit agency. There is also usually a deposit involved and in a lot of apartments you must pay the first month's and last month's rent. Check with your prospective landlord to see if you will get the deposit back, and keep receipts of all the money you pay to the landlord.

One method to alleviate some of the rental cost is to find yourself a roommate. When choosing a roommate, you should choose someone that you can get along with. Look for proof that the roommate can handle paying his or her share of the rent every month. Checking their proof of employment and charging them first months rent, up-front, might be something you should demand from your roommate.

Also, find out if the cost of utilities is included in the rent. Make note of when the rent is due and if there are any late fines for missed payments. Budgeting your finances is vital if you wish to keep on top of your rent. Recording your payments and what you owe in a computer or log will help you stay financially on track.

The final aspect you should look at when apartment browsing is your personal preferences. Certain things you might want to look into are if the apartment is furnished, if they allow pets, if they permit smoking, if the apartment is spacious enough, and if the apartment is clean. Also, find out where the bus lines pick people up in the area you want to live in, and if they have routes that will lead you to where you need to go. You should definitely take a tour of your future home before you rent it. While you are inspecting the prospective apartment, test light switches, turn on faucets, be really quiet to check how noisy it is, and check the cleanliness of the building. Open drawers and cabinets. Remember to flush the toilets and turn on the shower to check the water heat.

And remember, no matter what obstacles befall you, don't give up, no matter how frustrating your

Reading the descriptions for apartments can be confusing. Here are some of the common abbreviations you should know.

- BR- Bedrooms
- BA- Bath
- FP- Fireplace
- W/D- Washer and dryer
- PKG- Parking garage
- N/S- No smoking
- PVT- Private
- NP- No pets
- DPLX- Duplex
- BSMT- Basement
- D/W- Dishwasher
- STRG- Storage
- NEG- Negotiable
- MIL- Mother in law apartments
(attached apartments to house)
- EFF- Efficiency



search for your own place to live becomes. There are still options for people who can't afford their own apartment and also for people who need help finding one. Below are some helpful numbers you might want to contact if you need a little guidance or information on your quest to independent living.

Equifax-Call: 1-800-685-1111 This toll-free number to get a copy of your credit report.

Seattle Housing Authority: 206-615-3300 or call information for your local housing authority Places low income and disabled people into low-cost housing

Porch Light: 206-239-1500 Assists people in finding places to live. They also case manage and can find you temporary housing while you are waiting.

Congrats to Our Book Contest Winners!

DAWN AND PAIGE FELKER are the winners of the *Mockingbird Times* book review contest. We've included not only their winning entries, but also their first letter to the *Mockingbird Times*.

The Power of Reading

By DAWN FELKER

DO YOU LIKE magical adventures? Well *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is the thing you need. The book is full of magic that lets you use your imagination. The first book is about Harry's first year at Hogwarts. In the beginning, it tells a little bit about his life when he lived with the Dursleys. His uncle and aunt were Vernon and Petunia and his cousin, Dudley. Mr. and Mrs. Dursley like to pretend they were normal. They hated Harry, they were afraid of his magical powers, and they were scared of him. They wanted to try and squash the magic powers out of him by being mean and unfair. The story moves on to talk about how Harry realizes that he is a wizard. The story unfolds further to talk about what happened to his mother and father. A dark wizard named Lord Voldemort murdered them.

Harry learns that he will be going to the best school in Britain, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Hagrid, the grounds keeper at Hogwarts, rescues Harry from the Dursleys. Hagrid takes Harry to Diagon alley to get his money from Greengotts bank (at Greengotts, Hagrid got a mysterious package) and buy his school supplies. He is then transported on the Hogwarts express, a train that takes the students to school. He meets two students named Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger.

Upon arrival at Hogwarts, he meets the ghost in the entrance hall. He and the other first years are sorted into the different dorms. Gryffindor housed the bravest students, Hufflepuff hard workers, Ravenclaw the cleverest, and Slytherin includes students who are power hungry and ambitious. The sorting hat wanted to put Harry in Slytherin but he didn't want to go into Slytherin, so he went into Gryffindor with Hermione and Ron.

Weeks passed and Harry learned more about magic. On Halloween, a troll was in the castle. After charms class, Ron said something mean about Hermione and she had heard him say it about her. So she hid in the girls' bathroom. Harry and Ron went to tell her about the troll, but they saw the troll and locked it in the girls' bathroom where Hermione was. Harry and Ron knocked out the troll. They got points for Gryffindor. From that time on, they were all best of friends.

The magical adventures in this book are many. They find a hatched dragon egg, they discover someone killing unicorns in the forest, Harry learns how to play Quidditch — a high-speed game played while riding a broom, they explore the castle in an cloak that allows you to be invisible. The story ends when Harry and his friends discover a magical stone that has been killing the unicorns. You'll want to read the book in order to discover the magical power in the stone and the other details of the adventure.

I like *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Maybe it's because it takes me on a magical adventure that I would never be able to experience in my life or maybe it's because Harry goes through hard times but he begins to realize how special he is. Perhaps it's because I know what it feels like to have a desire to see your parents, or maybe it's because Harry too needs to make new friends at a new school. Books can take you through these kinds of adventures and feelings, so pick up a book and read. May I recommend the magic of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*! 🐉



Dawn Felker, left, is 11 and is interested in writing about all things Harry Potter, as well as everything to do with animals. Her sister Paige, right, is 10 and is interested in writing about clothing, fashion, snow skiing, and Harry Potter. Photo courtesy of Dawn and Paige.

Inside J.K. Rowling's Mind

By PAIGE FELKER

MUGGLES, Quidditch, gold gallons, buggart, Whomping Willow.

If these words sound alien to you, then you have not been introduced to Harry Potter and the world J. K. Rowling created in her Harry Potter book series. J. K. Rowling is a present-day writer who has worked hard at writing the Harry Potter books. J. K. Rowling is special because she invented the character Harry Potter in a well known children's book that has been adored throughout the country.

Jennifer Kathleen Rowling was the older of two girls; her sister was two years younger. She was born in Chipping Sodbury, England, and lived there until she was 9. Then she lived in and around Bristol. She lived in a cottage next to the church in Tutshill in the South of Wales. Her friends at the time thought it was spooky to live next to a graveyard, but she and her family enjoyed it. A castle on a cliff dominated the town.

Many of J. K. Rowling's characters in her novel were a part of her life while she grew up in Scotland and England. An example is when she named the driver and conductor of the Knight Bus, which comes to rescue Harry Potter, after her grandfathers, Stan and Ernie. Sean Harris was a friend of Rowling's in high school, and the character Ron Weasley is a lot like him in many ways.

Quidditch is a game. It is played while riding broomsticks. There are two teams, with seven players on each team that compete against each other. It has four balls. One is called quaffle, which you hit through the goal post to score points. Two balls are called bludger; the two chasers on each team hit the bludgers at the opponent's team. The fourth ball is the golden snitch the seeker needs to catch in order for the game to end. J. K. Rowling invented this game after having a fight with her boyfriend. She stormed out of her house, went down to a local pub, and created the game Quidditch.

I liked the book *Conversations with J. K. Rowling* because she is my favorite author. It was fun hearing about how the books came together, especially the part where she tells how she invented the game Quidditch after an argument with her boyfriend. The game involves knocking someone off their broom and I am sure that is what she felt like doing that to her boyfriend at the time.

One of her teachers thought she was dumb because she did not know her fractions. So it was fun hearing about someone who is such a famous writer struggled with math too. This book was like having a conversation with J. K. Rowling and hearing a friend tell all of their secrets from their childhood. 🐉

WILLIAM CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

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

I would like to change the way siblings are sometimes separated. I feel that it is very important that they have the chance to stay together. Although I know that it can be impossible I feel that there is always a way to keep them together. When I moved in with my siblings I was not very aware that I had them as my siblings and I feel that I don't have a normal relationship because of what we have been dealt.

Why did you join the Mockingbird Times?

I joined the *Mockingbird Times* because I feel it is very important to reach out to people and allow them to receive the knowledge of what foster and homeless kids go through. Many people who are homeless or in foster homes I feel need something that they can relate to and I hope that me having the chance to share my feelings and opinions can be that something.

What do you hope the Mockingbird society will accomplish?

I am hoping that the paper can send the message to people that there are children and young adults who go through many obstacles and should deserve more respect and recognition. I believe it is a great tragedy that many youth have to face what ever is put in front of them. 🐉

Governor Locke's Scholarship Fund Wants Your Help

Volunteer groups sought for car wash to raise college money for foster children

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS are needed for an April 27 statewide car wash to raise money for the Governor's College Scholarship Fund to help send children in foster care to college.

The event also will focus attention on foster care and the urgent need for more foster homes in the state to help some 11,000 children who need safe and supportive places to stay. Event organizers will be asking community leaders, government officials, and the public to have their cars washed 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. on April 27.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact the following coordinators:

Region 1 (Northeast Washington, including Spokane) Brandi Seekins: (509) 343-5058; bseekins@lcsnw.org

Region 2 (Southeast Washington, including Ellensburg, Walla Walla and Clarkston) Gail Brown (509) 735-6446; cbrown@lcsnw.org.

Region 3-4 (Northwest Washington, from King County to the Canadian Border) Nancy Underwood Long (425) 776-6325; nunderwoodlong@lcsnw.org

Region 5 (Pierce and Kitsap Counties) Stephenie Burbach: (253) 272-8433; sburbach@lcsnw.org

Region 6 (Olympic Peninsula and Southeast Washington including Olympia Vancouver) Omi Cummings (360) 423-8542; bobomi@kalama.com