

MAY 2-15, 2002

# Change

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## Unreformed

Irene Hull at 89: Red But Not Scared!

Inside: Reforming Welfare Reform • A Tribute to Angeline's • Farewell Rooster • Amnesty International Breaks Out

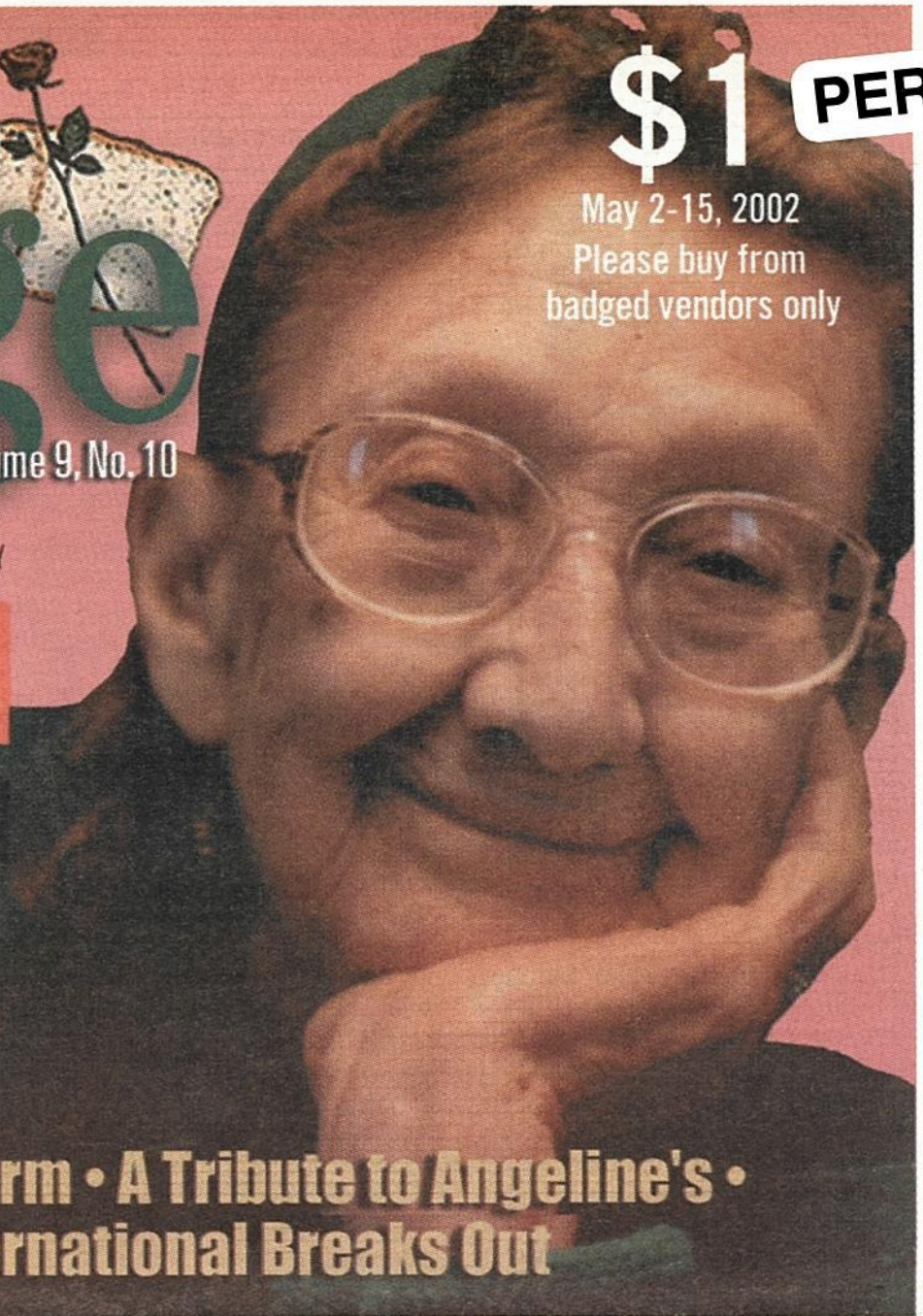


PHOTO OF IRENE HULL, BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

Interview by Jeanne Ryan

Even before entering Irene Hull's apartment, you can tell she's not your average 89-year-old. An American flag emblazoned with a peace sign hangs on her door, along with the slogan from former slave Frederick Douglass's abolitionist newspaper, *The North Star*: "Right is of no sex; truth is of no color."

A grandmother of 10 and great-grandmother of six, you are more likely to find her out protesting than sitting at home in a rocking chair. She has attended the anti-globalization WTO protests, marched against the Gulf War, and stormed the office of former Senator Slade Gorton to call for cheaper prescription drugs. She is presently a member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women's Diversity Committee. Irene started her activism more than 60 years ago, during World War II, working to save a child-care program despite the school district's plans to shut it down. Because of her affiliations as a Communist, she was questioned by the FBI, her phone was tapped, and she nearly lost her job during the Red Scare of the '40s and '50s. Earlier this year, *Real Change* sat down with her to chronicle it all.

**Real Change:** In what year did you become involved in the Communist Party?

**Irene Hull:** My father-in-law had introduced me to a paper that was supported by the Communist Party. I read that, and I met some Communists in Idaho. Somehow or the other I got an invitation to a dinner to raise money. I thought they knew everything. I thought they knew what they were talking about. And I got there and I had a good dinner and an interesting evening, and I discovered that they were a group

of people who were searching for answers, just like most people that were trying to figure out what we should be doing.

Seven years later, in 1942, [my father-in-law] told us that Earl Browder was going to talk in Portland, so we all went over to see him. That was the first time that I had ever heard of the man. [Browder was head of the Communist Party USA during the Great Depression and World War II.] And he made quite a lot of sense. And he was in Portland, and we had an interesting day, it was really nice. And again Earl Browder

came to Portland. And then I said, well, it sounds to me like that makes a lot of sense; I think we should join. So we joined the Communist Party there, in Portland, in 1942.

**RC:** And both your husband and you joined?

**Hull:** Both of us joined. And one time for a while my husband was the secretary of our club.

**RC:** And what was your experience with the House Un-American Activities Committee?

**Hull:** I worked in child care, and that's where we first met up with the FBI. They went into the offices of the child care administration. A woman, a young woman who didn't know, she let them look at my files. I don't know what they saw in there, but they came to our house and wanted us to report on who was at the meetings. They said it wouldn't be anything bad or wrong: Just tell us who was there and what we did — you know? We didn't agree to go with them at all.

**RC:** Were there any consequences to that?

**Hull:** No, except they tapped our phone all the time. After we came up here [to Seattle] we had our phone tapped.

But I got involved in trying to save the child-care centers. That was, in a sense, my very, very first political activity. We went to the governor. We

formed a citizen's child-care committee when the superintendent of public instructions in Seattle had an article in the paper that said that they were going to close the child care centers within a month... long before the men got back from the war.

**RC:** These were public child-care centers?

**Hull:** The child-care centers were started early on, in the beginning of the war. There was a man named Lanom, and he got a bill passed that said the federal government should pay two dollars and fifty cents, the state government would pay two dollars, and the parents would pay fifty cents per child. So for five dollars to

**"Ashcroft says, 'If you're not with us, you're against us. And if you're against us, you're an enemy.' They aren't calling it communism yet — the time might come when they will."**

— Activist Irene Hull

Continued on Page 14





## On Noel House

*Editor's note: We received an overwhelming (for us) amount of mail about our articles on new case management and time limits at the 40-bed women's emergency shelter Noel House from our April 18 issue. Here are some of them.*

Dear *Real Change*,

As someone who works with low-income and homeless families, I have a different perspective on the changes that Noel House has implemented. While I understand that change of any sort will of course meet some resistance, I think it is important to also highlight that while difficult in the beginning, structural changes often lead to never-imagined, positive results.

I would like to suggest a reframe on some of the contentions in the article: "The women have to meet with a case-worker and seek housing. If they don't want to, Noel House doesn't want them."

Put another way, this points to how fortunate the residents at Noel House are to have case management. There are plenty of understaffed programs that would not be able to provide such services. But the staff at Noel House are committed to helping these women. Having to turn things around so significantly in a program is never an easy programmatic shift, and I cannot imagine the staff at Noel House would be putting their residents (and themselves) through the change and the accompanying backlash without fully believing it was for the better.

"That marks a dramatic shift away from the way it was when I worked there," says Carolyn Frimpter.

Frimpter is correct that it is a big change, but isn't change and taking a chance that something will work, what our field is all about? If we left everything status quo, Noel House would have never come into existence 11 years ago, right?

"Although staff promise to make decisions on a case-by-case basis, they say the women will generally have one year. Then, when it's clear they have no interest in case management, they will be put into a different shelter."

We all know that having CHOICE is an often ignored human right for the homeless, especially mentally ill, population. The changes Noel House has implemented are finally recognizing that these women deserve to have CHOICE—CHOICE that often for years if not lifetimes has been physically, sexually, and societally taken from them. Noel House is not kicking their current residents out; rather it is allowing them the opportunity to make a CHOICE about their priorities, and decide for themselves whether working with case management and towards more stable housing is what they want, or whether they CHOOSE moving on to another shelter. And Noel House seems committed to leaving room for flexibility, if there are some clients who by a year's time are not ready to make the choice.

There are more points to this that I think are important to highlight, but for now I would like to end this with: Gillian Parke, the current director of Noel House, makes reference in the article to the funding stretch that AHA has been under, and that opening another shelter was not a possible alternative. All of us who deal with issues of homelessness on a regular basis (whether as homeless people or those who work in the field) are aware everyday of the lack of funding and re-

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## Correction:

Last issue's cover story, "Life Inside the Truman Show," (April 18, 2002) misstated the number of Iraqi children dying as a result of U.S. bombing. According to Unicef, 5,000 die every month — or a total of 500,000 from 1991 to 1998.

# 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.

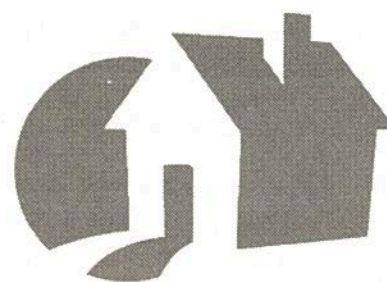
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Provide a foundation for grassroots organizing. Publish the views of marginalized communities. Create direct economic opportunity. Build bridges with a broad range of allies in the struggle against poverty.

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.

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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.



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# Memo to Congress

## Make welfare reform reduce poverty, not just caseloads

By Jean Colman

In 1996, President Bill Clinton fulfilled his campaign promise of ending welfare as we knew it. By signing the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, he ended over 70 years of federal support and commitment to poor families. With a swipe of the pen, Clinton told states that they could do what they wanted to, within some limited guidelines, with families on welfare. Most states have pushed them into jobs that do not provide a livable wage.

This year, Congress must reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Republican proposals are looking bad, and we are working to ensure that Washington's Democratic delegates join their party colleagues nationwide in voting them down. In the Senate, there's hope for a better bill. But Washington Senator Patty Murray, a champion of women, children, and families, needs to speak up.

The Campaign for Washington's Working Families 2002 is a coalition of over 100 organizations and individuals statewide, building congressional support for a plan that reduces child and family poverty. We want a welfare program that:

- ensures access to education and training as a way out of poverty,
- helps parents balance the needs of family and employment,
- restores benefits to legal immigrants,
- supports families regardless of composition, and
- works to strengthen families through work supports and a safety net.

Coordinating with national coalitions, the Campaign is seeing its work pay off. In the last eight months, we have held community meetings with Rep. Jim McDermott (D- 7th District) and Rep. Jennifer Dunn (R- 8th District) so they could hear from parents affected by the program. We are talking with the staffs of Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell.

Meanwhile, the action is heating up. On April 9th, House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee Chair Wally Herger (R-CA) introduced H.R. 4090, the Personal Responsibility, Work, and Family Promotion Act of 2002. The bill largely mirrors the Bush Administration's proposal.

Both the Bush and Herger proposals would limit what the state can count as a work activity, increase the number of hours a parent must spend in these limited activities, and not increase funding for child care or other support services. This would hurt all of the programs that actually help parents support their children. In this state, parents would no longer have work-based learning to gain skills that increase their earning capabilities. They would no longer have a Community Jobs program that places them in non-profits. They could no longer count the time that parents spend in counseling for domestic violence, in substance abuse or mental health treatment, or even in English as a Second Language classes, as eligible welfare-to-work training.

Combined with the scarcity of jobs, we could be forced to create workfare programs that provide dead-end, busywork jobs instead of much-needed education and training.

A vote on Herger's bill is expected before Congress adjourns for its Memorial Day recess. Rep. Dunn has signed on.

That's too bad, because there are better alternatives, even coming from Republicans. Representative Marge Roukema (R-NJ) introduced legislation called the From Poverty to Promise Act. It would make poverty reduction an explicit goal of TANF, increase funding to account for inflation, expand access to education and training, and soften the time limits.

We hope parts of this proposal will be added on to the Herger bill. That would be a victory — but still wouldn't make Herger's bill worthy of a Democratic vote.

There are bipartisan conversations among various Senators to identify principles to follow in the welfare reauthorization debate. These include increasing access to education and training, restoring benefits to immigrants, and increasing funding for TANF and child care. While they don't go as far as we would like, they are a better starting place than what we have seen in the House.

Sen. Murray is in a good position to take a leadership role in this debate. She has standing as a senior member, a friend and colleague of Massachusetts Sen. Ted Kennedy, and a supporter of children and families. She should rise to the occasion. The state's poor families are hanging in the balance. ■

Jean Colman is the director of the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition, which helps welfare recipients advocate on their own behalf. She serves on the Steering Committee of the Seattle Human Services Coalition. To get involved in the Campaign, contact Julilly Kohler-Hausmann, (206)694-6796 or julillyk@fremontpublic.org.

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## Closing Cedar Hills

Dismal news for people seeking drug and alcohol treatment came last month: the Cedar Hills Addiction Treatment Center will close by the end of the year.

About 125 people in recovery use Cedar Hills daily for drug and alcohol counseling or inpatient treatment. It can take four to six weeks to enter the program. Treatment costs anywhere from \$69 to \$96 per person per day, of which the state pays only \$37. Up through this year, the county has made up the difference.

"We just can't afford to run Cedar Hills, period," says Elaine Kraft, spokesperson for County Executive Ron Sims. "We're closing parks; we're trying to just do all our [legally] mandated functions."

Sims wants to divert the \$1 million in annual costs from Cedar Hills to correctional programs that provide drug offenders with alternatives to jail. He told the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* that doing so would save jail space.

As Cedar Hills prepares to shut down, those with the greatest needs will have to get admitted into other programs, says director Jodi Riley-Kauer. "We'll see people who need less long-term treatment — which is not who we typically see," she says. "Most people who come here need long-term treatment."

Riley-Kauer hopes the state Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse finds another recipient of Cedar Hills' money, but she thinks it's likely that the money will go to treatment programs in other counties — making it harder for local residents to get help. ■

— Adam Holdorf

## Amnesty International branches out

When the human rights movement came to prominence in the 1980s, one of its most visible champions was Amnesty International. Amnesty's lawyers would petition a court for the release of an inmate; members would write letters protesting her mistreatment. Now, in a few tentative steps, Amnesty will shift its focus from civil and political liberties — the right to vote, the right to assemble, the freedom from persecution based on one's beliefs — to the economic, social, and cultural rights upheld by the United Nations.

At their annual conference last month in downtown Seattle, Amnesty activists from the United States pondered the winds of change sweeping their organization. In the old Amnesty, "we would say, 'No, we can't work with you when they're taking you land or poisoning your water,'" said Larry Cox, a 14-



year veteran of Amnesty who now works at the Ford Foundation, "We can only work with you when you get arrested for defending those things."

Amnesty acknowledges that they're playing catch-up to a human rights movement that, in the last eight to 10 years, has seized hold of the Southern Hemisphere. Human Rights Watch and the World Organization Against Torture have also followed. "Everybody realized that for Amnesty to be relevant in a globalizing world, it would have to recognize the full spectrum," says Paul Hoffman of Amnesty. Agrees Cox, "If Amnesty had not decided to do this, we would have been the only human rights group not to."

There's an institutional shift going on. "Two longtime Amnesty researchers just came back from three weeks in South Africa, working with people punished for handing out anti-retroviral medicines against that country's laws," says Hoffman. "Before this, they said, 'People were talking about HIV and we had nothing to say.' But now, we're looking at [HIV] through the lens of a right to health. We're adjusting our focus."

For this kind of effort, Amnesty can rely on a growing body of international jurisprudence, based on the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights — "not dreams, not hopes, they are rights," said Cox. For example: Locals in the Dominican Republic worked with the Geneva Center on Housing Rights and Evictions to draw up a legally defensible definition of the right to housing. The Geneva Center convinced a U.N. committee to issue the government a warning, and 70,000 people were spared from eviction. A court in South Africa has considered the case of 700 squatters, who claim that their Constitution guarantees access to housing. In Argentina, a judge ruled that the government was bound to the Covenant and responsible for getting prescription drugs to sick people.

Cox reminded U.S. activists that their own government has yet to ratify the International Covenant.

Amnesty's fiscal constraints allow a half-step forward, and little more. This year, Amnesty is launching five or six pilot projects, one of them a health-care rights initiative in Bulgaria. Conference-goers were asked to come up with their own visions of future work. Hoffman emphasized that all this "won't squeeze out the things we do that are important, and that we continue to do."

"Whatever Amnesty does, it will be welcome," Cox told members. "It shows that there's one human rights movement." ■

— Adam Holdorf

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

### LETTERS Continued from Page 2

sources available to make the changes we would like to see. I wonder how much of the backlash towards Noel House's program changes is really misdirected frustration at why there isn't more funding available. It's easier to fight the "little guy" (in this case an individual program making a singular decision) than it is to spend everyday waking up angry at the entire system that such significant issues of homelessness exist in the first place, and that not enough is being done to work towards change. I would simply encourage all of us, whether proponents or opponents of the changes at Noel House, to consider where our frustrations really stem from, and put more change-oriented energy there.

Keep up the great work at *Real Change*, as your name speaks volumes.

Sincerely,  
Selena Shelley

Dear Editor,

I'd like to take a stand in support of the change taking place at Noel House, as it has been somewhat misrepresented by your publication.

Here is my understanding of the change, as I had it explained to me by one of the dedicated and compassion-

ate people who work as a part of the Noel House team.

I understand the leadership of Noel House to have taken a proactive position in engaging with the women who live there. They have decided to no longer sit by and watch women "de-compensate" and sometimes die in a place which can hardly be called a home, especially when there are better places for them to be. (I was in Noel House as a volunteer once and can echo that sentiment.) Noel House has no medical staff. They have never forced anyone to so much as lift a finger to work in their "home." They have operated based on what is essentially a "hospitality model" which seems to be contributing to a place of "stuckness" in the lives of these women rather than helping them.

What both articles also fail to mention is the immediate reaction of many of the shelter's residents, who after the announcement decided they were

"tired of living here anyway" and started applying for more suitable housing...places where they can stay all day long, and still live in community with other women.

**"Compassion provided without wisdom, especially that enables others to do harm to themselves, is really not compassion at all. Real compassion is found alongside the courage it takes to make attempts like this."**

—Sean Hatt

have been impatient with her because she cannot hear; she needs people to repeat things over and sometimes over again for her to understand them."

I don't know what "the right answer is." It think the systemic view paints a

pretty grim picture no matter what happens with the intended use of the beds in Noel House. I do know I support the staff at Noel House, and their knowledgeable and compassionate viewpoint, as well as their deep commitment to the homeless women of this city, and am glad they are in the thick of the debate.

I'm also of the opinion that compassion provided without wisdom, especially that enables others to do harm to themselves, is really not compassion at all. Real compassion is found alongside the courage it takes to make attempts like this, in spite of the great risk of public battering by vociferous activists shouting from their very easily defended and self-defined moral high ground.

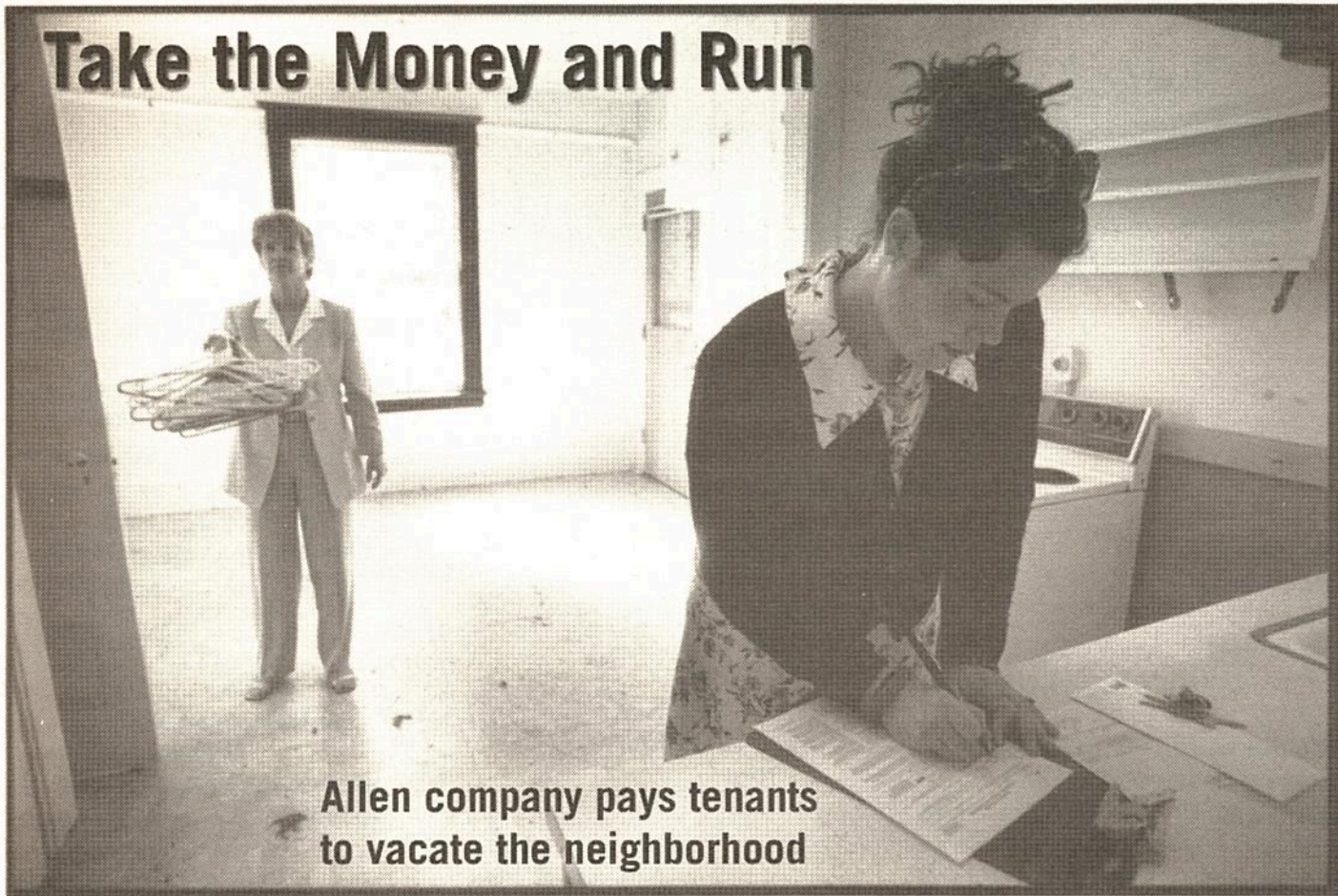
On a personal note, this situation challenges me both spiritually and as a citizen of this city that I love so much. How can I too not only see my mother (who is not at all like Ms. Marchand's mother, but rather the opposite in every way she described), but also myself in the faces of these women?

Clearly, I have much work yet to do.

Peace,  
Sean Hatt  
Seattle

*Continued on Page 15*





**Take the Money and Run**

**Allen company pays tenants to vacate the neighborhood**

DRÉ GORDON SIGNS THE PAPERWORK PRIOR TO GETTING A \$5,000 CHECK FOR MOVING OUT OF THE LILLIAN APARTMENTS. GORDON USED HER MONEY TO OPEN HER FIRST BANK ACCOUNT. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

By Adam Holdorf

Kevin Cameron feels a little bit weird in his third-floor apartment, overlooking the improbable forest paths at the nearby REI. The halls of his building are quiet; most of the other tenants have moved out. It's almost too quiet — *and in an old building, that gets scary.*

Standing in his kitchen, the whir of a document shredder destroying old papers in the next room, he turns and says, "Did you ever see *Omega Man*?"

In the 1971 movie, Charlton Heston stars as the last man on earth, a scientist inoculated against germ warfare between the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists. In the light of day, the streets of Los Angeles are empty, the stores free for the looting, and Heston is king of the town. After dark,

bloodsucking vampires rise from the shadows, and the man fights for his life.

What's happened to the Lillian Apartments is much less cataclysmic. The two dozen or so inhabitants each took an offer from the owner of the building, a limited-partnership named City Investors XIX, and left by the end of April. City Investors is affiliated with billionaire Paul Allen's development company, Vulcan Northwest.

Vulcan has no immediate plans for the 33-unit, three-story wood building that's graced 1258 John Street since 1907. Back then, the Cascade neighborhood was a place of small single-family homes between the docks of Elliott Bay and the lumber mills of Lake Union. A streetcar ran along Pontius Street

nearby. It was a place for immigrant working families who tended their gardens and went to church — Lutheran, Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox. By 1921, Immanuel Lutheran Church was home to the largest Norwegian congregation on the West Coast. Denny Hill loomed to the southwest, but would be sluiced into the Sound soon.

Other changes arrived. Aurora Avenue cut off the neighborhood from Queen Anne's eastern slope; freeway construction sheared off the western slope of Capitol Hill and destroyed homes in the process. Now, with 50 acres to its name — that's three times the amount of property it owned during the Commons initiatives of 1995 and '96 — Vulcan is set to write the next

chapter of the neighborhood's history.

Among its holdings is an old brick building adjacent to the Lillian which once served as a laundry. Designated as a historic structure by the city Landmarks Preservation Board, it enjoys special protections and can't be torn down.

Cameron recalls the effort to get the Lillian the same status. But fire codes had caused a previous owner to wall up the open-air staircase — a disqualifying move, in the Preservation Board's eyes. He says city government "said to do one thing, and then said, 'Yeah, if you hadn't done that, your building would be historic.'"

Cameron will be out by the time you read this. He's sorry to leave, but his check eases the pain. "They didn't have to cut us any money," he says. "I don't care whether it's public relations or what — I'm getting \$5,000 that I wouldn't have had otherwise." The money, plus seven years of cheap rent (Cameron paid \$375 a month for a studio apartment) has helped him pay off his credit cards. Dré Gordon, who rented a large one-bedroom for \$475, said that her check was going to subsidize the rent at her newer, more expensive Capitol Hill apartment. She opened her first bank account with it.

Tenants Union organizer Siobhan Ring can recall other instances of cash gifts to tenants for leaving early. She says that it's a tactic landlords use when they want to make short work of a building's occupants, circumventing the city's mandated 90-day notice prior to an eviction. It's a no-fault dissolution; the tenants simply sign a form, get their payment, and go.

Five thousand dollars or no \$5,000, the exodus riles Linda Moore, a neighbor of the Lillian. "You give people money, and they'll take it," she says. Paul Allen has "displaced people by paying them off, and he's got so many other things going on — that building will just stand vacant," she says. "It's like he doesn't want to be a landlord. And as buildings start to empty, there's not so much of a neighborhood anymore." ■

RC  
Profile

Maryelva Varhley

Originally from New Jersey, Maryelva Varhley settled in Seattle accidentally. She visited the Northwest years ago, and decided to move to "that quaint town with little black bridges." Once she arrived, Maryelva realized the bridges were in Portland, but she stayed anyway.

Maryelva did freelance legal secretary work until a combination of world events and personal health problems made that impossible. "After September 11th, the freelance work dried up." Then she got pneumonia and was unable to work at all, and was evicted from the motel where she had lived for two years. She moved to a shelter and now lives at the Aloha Inn, a self-managed transitional housing program.

When asked about future plans, Maryelva is clear that she won't return to the legal work she did for 35 years — all the lawyers gave her headaches. She plans to continue selling *Real Change* and thinks that income will cover most of the rent for a small apartment. The petite 57 year-old smiles and admits that her sales may be helped because she looks like "everybody's grandmother."

Selling *Real Change* lets Maryelva do what she loves best, work directly with people. "The generosity astounds me." One customer, who recently called



PHOTO BY RACHAEL MYERS.

*Real Change* to applaud Maryelva's friendly professionalism at the Wallingford QFC, told her that she is a great addition to the neighborhood. "*Real Change* is a change for my life...a sense of freedom." Of course, there are other types of freedom too. "On the other hand, I wouldn't mind winning the lottery." ■

— Rachael Myers

.....

**Yes! Real Change Matters.**

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

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

☐ I would like to pledge a monthly amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please deduct pledge amount monthly from my card.

☐ Please send me a pledge payment coupon book.

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY / STATE / ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please contact me about volunteering my time and energy.

Payment Options: ☐ Check Enclosed   ☐ Please charge my card:

☐ Visa   ☐ Mastercard   Acct. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

News Subscription: I would like to pay \$35 for a subscription to be mailed to me. ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Mail to: *Real Change*, 2129 2nd Ave, Seattle, WA 98121

..... 5/2/02 .....



# 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 mourn the method.  
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

## grown breathless

You do have coins  
in your hand!  
Not, the,  
others —  
not  
many (if, your own  
words  
are  
the  
answer  
given so closely to  
friends...  
strange, even.)  
In time.

— STAN BURRISS

## panhandler

Reach through your pocket!  
the  
lines  
the  
life,  
there!  
turn...  
turn  
into  
life!  
if you  
care.  
Even,  
care! If,  
here —  
it's a journey.

— STAN BURRISS



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

I want to discuss a delicate subject today. It's a subject that we homeless and/or formerly homeless folks feel very uncomfortable discussing. It's not passing gas. It's not the heartbreak of psoriasis. It has nothing to do with hemorrhoids. Heck, homeless people almost never get hemorrhoids — they aren't allowed to sit anywhere that long.

Besides, what I have to say is more embarrassing than hemorrhoids.

Here it is: Hitler Was Homeless, Too, You Know.

A month doesn't pass by here at *Real Change* that some submission doesn't arrive from a well meaning supporter, which has as its gist the alternate thought that Jesus Was Homeless, Too, You Know. And we almost invariably reject said submissions, with extreme prejudice.

Writers want to know why. Now you all have it, here's your answer, I'll say it again: Hitler Was Homeless, Too, You Know.

You just can't have one without the other. If you make a big deal that one of us was a Son of God, you have to also allow that one of our number also turned out to be an icon of evil incarnate.

For that matter, if I have to own Christ's homelessness, I would also have to own the temporary homelessneses of William Shatner and Joan Rivers. Would YOU want to be compared to William Shatner and Joan Rivers? I thought not. There, now you know how I feel.

Recently a satisfied reader informed me of a site on the internet that lists "noted celebrities," both alive and dead, who have been homeless at one time, and pointed out that somehow the list mistakenly contains my name! When have I been a "noted celebrity?"

But there I am. the site is at <http://lists.hollywood.com/homeless.html> for

those who are internet linked and want to see this nonsense with their own eyes. I am on the same list with William Shatner and Joan Rivers! I'm on the same list as Sally Jesse Raphael! AND Jesus! Oh, the shame.

And the worst of it is, Hitler isn't on the list. That makes it worse, because it makes it look like we are all trying to say that we formerly homeless belong to one big club of good guys.

As if homelessness were ennobling, when it's only a very tiring and disabling experience, of itself.

Our goal here at *Real Change* is to break down stereotypes about homelessness while focusing attention on the fact that the real problem is a shortage of affordable housing. Not to make the homeless out to be saints.

Maybe Hitler could help there. In one respect, Hitler fit the stereotype of the lazy panhandler. At least, he DID turn down some work as being beneath his dignity. And he did resort to begging.

On the other hand, in spite of that, he managed to work his way out of park benches and into a hostel (today's readers, read "transitional housing") in a matter of months.

Also, Hitler's situation was clearly due to the overcrowding of Vienna at that time, and the corresponding

lack of affordable housing. Whatever else was wrong with him, he wasn't a drug addict or an alcoholic. He wasn't even mentally ill, so much as anyone noticed at the time.

I can't quit without mentioning some other "Hitler Was \_\_\_\_, Too, You Know" lines.

Hitler Was a Teenager, Too, You Know. Hitler Was an Artist, Too, You Know. Hitler Was a President, Too, You Know. Hitler Was a Self-Righteous Former Smoker, Too, You Know — he even came up with the idea of warning labels! Hitler Supported Light Rail, Too, You Know.

Hee. I made that last one up. ■

**As if homelessness  
were ennobling, when  
it's only a very tiring  
and disabling  
experience, of itself.**





## View at Jose Rizal Park\*

He walked to the park  
took his chicken out,  
began to wash before dinner,  
the sun set over the Olympics  
as he washed his hands  
for five full minutes,  
then he rinsed  
his store bought chicken,  
knees bent sitting  
on his haunches  
like old Vietnamese villagers,  
he watched the sun's  
last lavender light  
slip into darkness  
over the Sound,  
his utensils rested  
on his back pack,  
his face forever brown,  
unnatural for his race,  
his teeth white straight,  
he was a man  
with no shelter  
for the night,  
no matter,  
he ate off a plastic plate,  
counted himself lucky  
with his fresh fruit and grains,  
an art park scene floated nearby,  
a short dark girl goes by  
walking her tall white dog,  
a chubby African boy  
giggles on a swing,  
and he feels lucky to be  
counted again among the living,  
safe, clean and warm,  
human rays have replaced the sun  
smiles all around,  
he knows he'll rest soon  
to rise once more  
off the cold mother earth floor  
to look for work downtown  
by the Millionaire's club,  
once a name for swanky swells,  
now a place for men  
who need a day job,  
to push the hunger away,  
whet the whistle:  
brown men, white men, black men,  
sober drunks, men with a record,  
illegal aliens, students of mine,  
from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras,  
protected by an unwritten clause with the city,  
allowing corporate welfare,  
local independent contractors, restaurateurs  
to benefit under the table.

— ANGIE VASQUEZ

\*Jose Rizal Park is a park in Beacon Hill overlooking Seattle, WA

## December 31, 2001

So ends the first year of the third millenium.  
Cabin window frames dog shit piled on snow.  
Auden in his 1939 New York dive poem  
foresaw the low dishonest decade coming in  
fast and lethal between the high towers,  
more prophetic than any professional futurist  
could have been.

Our technology moves forward, improves,  
as dust collects on unopened books' ragged edges.  
Who would lament the passion of the Twentieth Century,  
humankind's bloody thumbprint on the sun?  
This was meant to be the third time charmed  
away from harm and mass misapprehension of what's possible.  
This was meant to be the year Americans on the moon  
uncovered the black monolith, like a ten-foot-high  
bar of Afghani hash to liberate space-suited minds  
and send the golden-eyed fetus of our future  
spinning around the green globe.

But Stanley Kubrick is dead,  
and American footprints on the moon will never fill in.  
The Chinese have promised to walk on the moon next,  
to liberate it for the People's Republic.  
But who will unscrew the orphans from the sun,  
premature wheat burning under their eyes?  
The last day of any year is just an arbitrary mark,  
chromatic yellow drilled in the snow  
that stretches forward and behind our collective lives,  
but last year disappointed so soundly.  
Black smoke from the Holy Land's combustible relics.  
Vapors of a new economic order burning off  
in the concentrated rays of the sun's focused rationality.  
And the outlandish, overstacked Legos coming down  
in a cold petulance of righteousness,  
leaving so many widows and orphans,  
launching so many intelligent bombs.

I am not sorry to see 2001 go,  
though I have little confidence the coming year  
will see the blooming of wisdom and compassion  
in such scorched gardens.  
Where does the seam end and the sewing begin?  
Is this a bandage or a banner I am unwinding?

-DAVID THORNBURGH



# Ringleader for Change

Nicholas Helhowski, a.k.a. Rooster, March 9, 1982 - April 14, 2002

By Michele Marchand

**"Y**ou'll have to excuse me," said Elaine Simons of Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets (PSKS) after the memorial service for Nicholas "Rooster" Helhowski. "I need to go give some kids some loving."

More than 300 people had gathered near sunset on Tuesday, April 16 to remember and mourn "Rooster," a young man who "at age 20 made more of an impact than many do in a lifetime," according to Pastor Shannon Anderson, who presided. The memorial was held at PSKS, one of the few programs that love and work with street youth on an empowerment model.

Badly beaten April 11 after exiting a bus at 85th and Wallingford, "Rooster" died four days later, after slipping into a coma. His friends were with him until the end. His friends never left him, and he was never estranged from his family. His family, like hundreds of street kids, gathered to mourn this man cut down too young.

"He spoke a universal language — look at all the different kinds of people here!" exclaimed a Seattle Police Officer. Businesspeople, politicians, bureaucrats, social service providers, and hundreds of street youth, a mosaic of multi-colored mohawks on kids otherwise all dressed in black; so many people that the Police Department closed Olive Way for the memorial service.

## "The Perfect public servant"

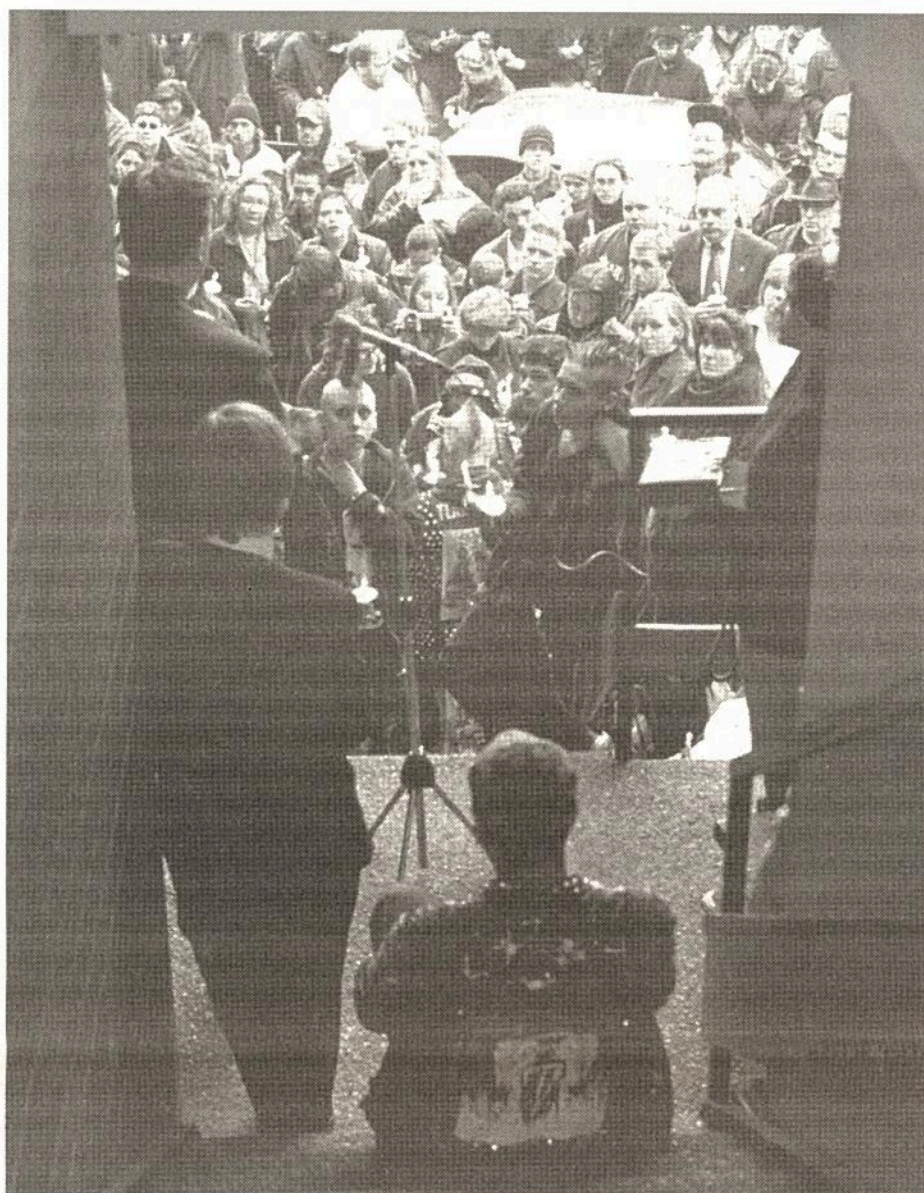
**"R**ooster" had followed a different trajectory than many street kids, and his transformation was an inspiration to many of his peers gathered to mourn his passing.

He was born in Royal Oak, Michigan, and grew up in the small town of Hebron, Indiana. He graduated from high school, and then came to Seattle to "explore life," as it said in the memorial program. Nicknamed Rooster because of his red mohawk, he lived on the streets for a while, but at 18, he traded in the 'hawk for a short, slicked-back do and pinstripe suit. He had a dream, and did everything in his power to follow it.

Looking very grave, Mayor Greg Nickels said, "The City is very sad," and explained he'd met Rooster a few weeks earlier at a meeting of the Music and Youth Commission on Broadway. "He made a difference," Nickels said. "He was the perfect public servant: He knew his constituents, he loved them, he stood up for them, and he never forgot them."

He was the co-founder of the Donut Dialogue, an informal dialogue among Broadway denizens — business leaders, street kids, other neighborhood folks — designed to strengthen the sense of community and real safety on Capitol Hill.

"He made friends with a cop," said Simons. "Figure that one out."



THE MEMORIAL FOR NICHOLAS "ROOSTER" HELHOWSKI DREW HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE TO PSKS ON CAPITOL HILL. PHOTO BY GEORGE HICKEY.

He was an AmeriCorps volunteer placed at PSKS; he also read to the elderly. Recently he had sought a mentor, and was trying to learn the techniques of running a small business from Barry Rogel who owns The Deluxe Bar and Grill on north Broadway. "I'll miss not having a chance to influence a very important person," Rogel said.

Rooster lived at Harder House transitional program, and was an inspiration, a human alarm clock to his friends who also lived there. He was "a ringleader for change and upward advancement for street youth," said a representative from the Park Hill Rotary, who broke down after she spoke of what a charismatic young man he was.

## Family

**C**athy Helhowski, Rooster's mom, started by saying to the kids, "You are our family, and you always will be our family." His sister Laura said, "Keep him alive in your hearts and never forget him." His father, Jim, said, "Your life doesn't belong just to you, it belongs to everyone who ever cared about you."

"I thought I'd put on my game face," said Officer Kim Bogucki of SPD as she started to cry. Having been befriended by Rooster early in her assignment to the Broadway beat, she and Rooster had gotten close, had celebrated Christ-

mas together. Officer Bogucki explained how one day she ended up taking him to get his drivers license — he in his huge red 'hawk, she in uniform. "Everyone looked really nervous, since they figured he ought to be in 'cuffs and he wasn't." One woman at the DMV asked, "Is he your son?"

"I am so glad I took my job personally with Nick," she said, as she broke down in tears again. And with a dozen others: she stood before us and went through a litany of names, pointing to other kids gathered in the street. "Thank you so much for sharing your family with me."

## Nonviolence

**"N**ick would call bullshit on me if I didn't say we have to do something about this," said Jordan Royer, head of the city's Neighborhood Action Team. He was referring to the brutal violence that ended Rooster's life so abruptly. Nearly everyone who spoke at the memorial implored the crowd to allow the system to go through its slow process for justice. (It is now two weeks after Nick's beating death, and there are still no suspects in custody.)

Mayor Nickels asked the crowd to commit to stopping senseless acts of violence, and to bringing the murderers of Nicholas Helhowski to justice. As

part of that vision, he declared April 16 Anti-Violence Awareness Day.

But what does that mean over the long haul? What does it mean to the kids mourning the loss of their friend?

Barry Rogel of the Deluxe said: "Stay involved, and work for meaningful change."

"We have to make this neighborhood a better place!" said Royer.

"Nick knew you could do everything with words and not fighting," said Marina, his fiancée, who implored her peers not to use violence to respond to an act of violence.

Tony Do of PSKS seemed unable to commit to these peaceful paths. He tried twice to get up to speak for his friend. Finally, he sat on the steps and poured out his questions, his own sense of grief and anger at his friend's death. At the end of his heartbreakingly intense soul-baring he shouted, "Oy!"

"Oy!" came the answering cry, from hundreds of youth in the streets, whatever "Oy" means.

## Seeds of hope

**P**SKS reached out to WHEEL and Church of Mary Magdalene to do a Women in Black vigil simultaneous to this PSKS vigil. We could not find each other in a crowd of hundreds dressed in black. "It's impossible to do Women in Black on Broadway," said Reverend Pat Simpson of Church of Mary Magdalene. "But I'm glad I was there."

It was impossible because black is, obviously, the cool color to wear. And it's also impossible because there is so much grief, so much loss, so many young people lost to us. This was the third PSKS memorial in the last few months; previously PSKS kids gathered to mourn the loss of their friends "Jello" and "Filthy." They have begun a haphazard memorial garden in the small patch of earth adjacent to their building.

In closing, Rachel, a young woman who was obviously strung out, said, "Nick'd ask me, 'Rachel, what're you doing, the drugs are ruining you!' The streets, they suck you in until they eat you alive!" Ann Donovan of the Capitol Hill Community Council said, "Nick shone a light on PSKS," but spoke of her own perception that these kids are a throwaway generation.

Even so, "These are the seeds of hope Rooster planted: If he could succeed, we all can," said a woman called Mama Sarah. "If an old hippie and a young punker can share dreams, we all can."

It's a start. ■

*WHEEL and the Church of Mary Magdalene are doing a cleansing ritual and vigil at the place Rooster was beaten on the one-month anniversary of his death. This vigil is May 14, at 4 p.m. at the 85th and Wallingford #16 bus stop. For more information, call (206) 956-0334.*



# The Strength of Pioneering People

*Fragile Dwelling*  
By Margaret Morton  
Aperture Press (2000)  
125 pages, \$40

Review by Michele Marchand

**M**y friends laughed when they learned I was writing a review of a coffee table book about shacks and homes made of found materials, but that's what *Fragile Dwelling* is.

For more than 10 years, Margaret Morton documented some of the ingenious ways homeless New Yorkers have found to create homes and communities. Now, Aperture Press has published a collection of 90 of her incredibly moving black-and-white photographs, which clearly and beautifully show the efforts of homeless people to shelter themselves with dignity and spirit.

Morton is an art professor at The

Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. She has been photographing and collecting oral histories of homeless communities in New York since 1989 — a time when there were more homeless people in New York City than at any time since the Great Depression.

In her short, stark prologue, Morton speaks of the precursors to these modern-day Hoovervilles. In 1981, a landmark lawsuit filed against the city of New York, and resolved in what is known as the Callahan consent decree, guaranteed single men the right to shelter. (Subsequent litigation extended the right to shelter-on-demand to women and families). The Callahan consent decree gave rise to the now-infamous armory shelters, which each housed up to 1,200 people. The degradations and dangers of these places gave rise, in turn, to some people's choice to sleep outside; many thousands more became homeless in the ensuing years due to



JIMMY ENJOYS HIS HOMEMADE POND IN NEW YORK. PHOTO BY MARGARET MORTON.

economic conditions and the drastic reduction in manufacturing jobs.

The proliferation of encampments

in New York has continued, and includes the famous Tompkins Square Park camp, which was bulldozed many times and rebuilt many times, until police in riot gear permanently shut down the camps in a fiery, bloody battle.

Notwithstanding the term "fragile dwelling," the people Morton photographs built their structures as permanent homes, until they were bulldozed by the city. Morton began photographing out of interest in people she grew to know and respect. She was moved to put them forward in book form after she witnessed the city bulldozing a camp as a "public nuisance."

In his introduction to *Fragile Dwelling*, Yale University Professor Alan Trachtenberg writes, "Morton's pictures invert the pathos and aversion usually attached to the word homeless. Not that they flinch from the facts of abject poverty... It's not simply the result of unemployment or hard luck we see, but something even more affecting: abandonment, reclusiveness, the out-cast condition."

More important: Morton's photographs illustrate the astonishing resilience of the human spirit.

In *Fragile Dwelling* we meet:

- Hector A, who says, "I figure this is my breakthrough to stay here (in a shack adorned with guitars, horse statues, a two-burner gas stove). If I don't do something here my mind will die."
- Pepe, whose shack now numbers many rooms, including a tool shed he was unable to complete because of the cold weather of an early winter. "I'm no architect," he says, standing in his living room next to an icon of Jesus and a statue of the Virgin Mary. "God is the architect."
- Angelo, who has erected a hut on Pier 87. His two raised-bed gardens are



THE DEMOLITION OF A MAKE-SHIFT HOMELESS VILLAGE IN NEW YORK. PHOTO BY MARGARET MORTON.

Continued on Page 18



## HULL Continued from Page 1

tal, they operated those child-care centers during the war. I was a child-care teacher down in Vancouver, and I became a child-care teacher up here.

When I saw the article in the paper, I flew to the phone and I talked to one of the mothers of one of the children in my class. She said, "Well, can't we do something? Can't we have a meeting?" And I said, well, I don't know how. But she was a Communist. She and three other Communists knew what to do, and they called a meeting. And that first meeting, we had about 75 people. We fought for three solid years before they were able to close the last one. And I was *persona non grata*, I'm telling you, with the school administration.

**RC:** *Quite an accomplishment.*

**Hull:** It's been one of the pleasures of my life.

**RC:** *And that got the FBI interested in you again up here?*

**Hull:** Oh, I'm sure, I'm sure.

And so then I got a job, I've forgotten how I found out about it... oh, my daughter had a friend whose father was the superintendent of the bindery. And I went to him and I told him I had done this work in the print shop. So he gave me the name of the union business agent. And he gave me a list of names of places that might hire me. And the last place I went in, by golly, he was getting a big job in, and some of his jobs got pretty big. So he talked to the powers that be to let them hire me as an apprentice. I was 43 years old. So I worked as an apprentice for three years and about eight months, well, nine months.

The FBI came in... I'm not sure what caused them to do it except there was an initiative to bring this state to be a right-to-work state. Well, we in the trade union movement called it "right to work for less." It's the right to work without a union, and to me that is no great privilege. And so I signed a great big ad, a full page ad in the paper—I don't remember which paper, maybe both—against it, it was called initiative 202. And I also joined this committee.

That was when the FBI came in and told the boss he had to fire me. Well, this was a pretty smart guy. And he said, No, I'm not going to fire her until I talk to her. So he gave me the list of these proscribed organizations [i.e., groups the U.S. government considered 'subversive'].

Right after WWII, the unions, progressive unions, not all of them I guess, I don't know how many unions, formed a coalition and established a labor school. They had subjects of all kinds of things—among the things that they



PHOTO OF IRENE HULL, BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

## "When I was young, I thought people who did what I do now were touched in the head." — Irene Hull

had was a children's class. And this woman that I mentioned and I were the teachers in the labor school. I joined a class to learn how to write, and that was all the classes that I joined I think. And I've forgotten how many other organizations I had belonged to.

And I said [to the FBI], Well, I don't know, all I wanted was to have people have the kind of things that I think they

ought to have. Like child care, and.... So my Communist friends told me, Well, you know, Irene, when you say that, then they go to those organizations [that I mentioned] and try to ferret out if there's any Communists in those. And of course the thing that was so awful: It was either the Girl Scouts or the Camp Fire Girls, I don't remember

which, was on that proscribed list. Oh, it was an utterly ridiculous situation.

I refused to sign [onto the list], because I knew a man that signed that, I didn't know him well, but he had signed it and then after he signed it they put another organization on it that he had belonged to. Well you can't trust those kind of guys [in the FBI] any farther than you can pick the Smith tower up and throw it around.

He went to court, and it took three years of his life, all his money, and not long after he proved that they had done that, he died. You know, a lot of people committed suicide. All kinds of things happened. They wanted to know what

kind of papers you read, what kind of books you read. It was disgraceful. And they're trying to institute it again.

**RC:** *Did you end up getting fired from that job?*

**Hull:** Yes, I got laid off, not fired. But I didn't get kicked out of my union.

**RC:** *I wanted to ask you about your opinions on September 11, and how the war on terrorism is being handled compared to the Red Scare.*

**Hull:** Oh, well, it's so very, very different. There is no real comparison, because the Red Scare was fabricated, and this was extremely real. September 11, I was sitting in a doctor's office getting ready to have cataract surgery, and I watched on the TV as the second plane went into that building. It was just unbelievable. I personally immediately thought the chickens have come home to roost. Because we have perpetrated very, very bad, I mean our government, my government has done some very awful things. I really think that some of this terrorism was a result of things that we have not been able to prevent our government from doing. And to this day I think Bush is a war criminal. Now I've never said that to anybody else. But I believe he has no right, and it's totally awful for him to be conducting this war on terrorism in the manner in which he is doing it.

I was opposed to the war against Iraq. I was quoted by *The Seattle Times*, interestingly enough, when we had 35,000 people marching on the streets of Seattle from Seattle Community College...And we had a rally at Seattle Central Community College and I said

then, "This is a war about power and oil, power and oil. It's not about what Saddam Hussein is doing to Kuwait." Kuwait was, and I still think is, a dictatorship. It isn't a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. You see Bush and company, Cheney, most of the cabinet, are all oil. There might be a few other corporate structures involved in it, but it's not a bit good.

So, to get out of it, I believe that the peace movement—the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, a group called Peace Action, and unfortunately I haven't been involved enough to know of all of them—has to start pushing, start pressuring, the news media of various kinds to publicize what we are saying and doing.

**RC:** *Would you say that political dissent, the whole idea of either you're with us or against us, is being handled in similar ways as during—*

**Hull:** —the McCarthy period?

**RC:** *Yeah.*

**Hull:** Bush is trying. Ashcroft says, "If you're not with us, you're against us. And if you're against us, you're an enemy." They aren't calling it communism yet—the time might come when they will—but they're calling it other things, and so it has a similarity that I don't think is scaring people as much. But people haven't found their voices adequately enough. There is no question that they are attempting to make it impossible for us to voice our dissent.

*Continued on the Next Page*



## LETTERS Continued from Page 4

Dear Editor:

Your article of April 18 criticizing the Noel House for our new focus on housing provides only half the story of Noel House and our response to homelessness.

The Noel House Programs, of the Archdiocesan Housing Authority, offer shelter and services to scores of homeless women in Seattle each night. What started as a 40-bed shelter with the bare essentials has evolved, over the past 11 years, into a fully-staffed program with a case manager and a mental health counselor for the residents; 45 additional shelter beds each night in partnership with four churches and a synagogue; and the Women's Referral Center, for up to 140 women seeking shelter and a hot meal each night.

AHA has grown right along with the Noel House, adding 80 transitional and permanent homes exclusively for homeless women at the Rose of Lima House, the Wintonia, the Broadway House, and the Dorothy Day House. Our programs are dedicated to bringing women off the street, connecting them with services to help them survive and thrive, and helping them move into their own home. Social workers call this model the Continuum of Care. We at AHA also call our work the Ministry of Presence, because we try to do it with the love and personal relationship

that all human beings need in a time of crisis.

One of the most distressing parts of providing shelter at the Noel House is the morning ritual of residents heading out the door into the weather, waiting out the day until we can welcome them back in the evening. We can only hope that this is a temporary measure until each woman can get back on her feet and find a safe and affordable place to

live, where she can control her own life.

The Noel House has been a temporary home for some of its residents for years. Many have been stuck in a limited circuit of crowded daytime and nighttime shelters, and have lost hope and initiative for positive change. Perhaps the brokenness and hurt of the women we serve had lulled us into not believing enough in the

women themselves. Deciding that they are only capable of night-time shelter and not housing is perhaps dehumanizing, and certainly inhibiting. Homeless women can flourish in a home of their own. We have seen it with our own eyes in the Dorothy Day House and our other programs.

Now, with sufficient staff expertise, and with many housing options for homeless women in our agency and other non-profits, the Noel House has begun to require the residents in its central location to take the next step towards independence, which is to apply for appropriate, low-income housing. The new time limit of one year should be sufficient time to apply for housing, as waiting lists for most

women's housing programs do not exceed three or four months.

We want shelter residents to have a real home, where they can come and go at will, rest up when they aren't feeling well, have a friend over to visit, cook a nice dinner, put their own pictures on the walls, and have a private space to relax, laugh, and cry when moved to.

The Noel House Programs will continue to serve homeless women in all stages of recovery from life on the streets. *Our off-site shelters will continue to allow women to stay as long as they feel necessary.* They can then move over to the Noel House central location when they are ready to take advantage of the opportunities in that program. Staff are addressing the special needs of current Noel House residents who are severely disabled. Those few residents who choose, in the end, not to pursue housing after the Noel House will be prioritized to stay in our off-site shelters. Nobody will be kicked to the streets.

We make this change because we are confident in its success. We are seeing progress already, and it is greater than we anticipated. The Noel House case manager and mental health counselor have seen a 100 percent increase in client contact since we announced the thrust for housing at the beginning of March. Ice cream socials and teas, as gentle means of introduction to AHA's transitional and permanent housing programs, are now well-attended and lively with curiosity and interest. The energy in the program is more positive, and many residents are seeing a brighter future for themselves. The Noel House is dedicated to working with each woman individually for the best possible solution to homelessness.

Flo Beaumon

Archdiocesan Housing Authority

Dear Editor,

I understand the fears of the people who criticize AHA's decision to change the focus at Noel House from shelter-without-time-limits to transitioning-into-housing. Critics fear that the plan will fail, and that a year from now Noel House will be kicking women to the streets. This fear is unwarranted. AHA has promised that no woman who reaches her Noel House time limit will end up on the streets for that reason, but will instead go to one of Noel House's satellite shelters. As Adam Holdorf's article makes clear, that information does not seem to be widely known or understood. It's too bad.

Shelters should take Harriet Tubman as a role model. As much as they possibly can, shelters should serve as an Underground Railroad from homelessness to housing. That seems to be the idea behind the change at Noel House.

While I deeply admire formerly homeless people who choose to identify themselves as such, in order to show their solidarity with others who are still making their journeys to housing, I question the term "homeless community." As train trips are temporary, I know we all hope that homelessness is temporary; indeed, as brief as possible. I've met perfectly lovely people on train trips and in homeless shelters, but I would hesitate to call a group of passengers a community. The word "community" implies a positive long-term state. I trust that advocates who use the term "homeless community" don't mean to seem to hope that homelessness remains an ongoing situation for the community's members, but that's what it makes me think of.

Sincerely yours,  
John Shaw  
Seattle

## HULL Continued from Previous Page

**RC:** They've turned it into a good vs. evil type of ideology.

**Hull:** And it's not fair, it's not right. Politically it's very, in my estimation, it's very foolish, because I don't think that the American people are going to stand for it...we are really on the verge of fascism. Although you never know, because in Germany, before Hitler took over completely, they had very advanced political and social systems.

**RC:** How powerful do you see citizen activism today as compared with in the past?

**Hull:** Oh, that's the hopeful part. There was a time during and after the McCarthy period when it was hard to get people to speak up. People are talking now. The corporations, through their henchmen, the press, convinced people for a while that the government wasn't their business, that there was nothing they could do about what Congress is doing. And there are those who

still say that and a great number think that, but there are a great many more now....

If you knew about the march on Washington with Dr. King: Thousands and thousands of people were there. My youngest daughter was there, and I would have liked to have been there, but it never even dawned on me at that time because there were other things that I had to do. But there will be hundreds of thousands again. And I don't know how long it will take but there will be another march on Washington, I am convinced.

When I was young, I thought people who did what I do now were touched in the head. And when I think that I was so ignorant when I got out of college. Because college didn't teach us. Now, these young people, you know. Yes, people are talking on the buses. They are talking at the bus stops. They're talking everywhere. Right here, when I moved in 16 years ago, I wore a button that said Shalom, Salom, and Peace. And they told me, "Nothing political Irene, nothing political." Now I am considered the political mentor. They ask me, you know, what do I think? Yes, I

have high hopes in the future, in spite of the difficulties.

**RC:** As an activist, what do you believe is the most powerful way to influence governmental and political policy making?

**Hull:** Letters to the editor. Letters to your congressman. Phone calls to your Congressman and this always includes Senators... Certainly leaflets. Street heat. Political action and political education are absolutely two most vital ways of carrying on a life. ■

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# Angeline's: Home of the Brave

By Cynthia Ozimek

There is a country western song that tells the story of a young struggling family whose blind faith and generosity of heart prevail over a brief but devastating tragedy. The song speaks of those of us wearied by day's end but, who, in observation of need, extend ourselves anyway. The words evoke a sense of compassion, an intrinsic belief in the power of humankind and, given a hostile environment, a rather queer feeling that everything is going to be okay. This odd leap of faith, this intensely compelling and bittersweet flavor, is the flavor of Angeline's.

Angeline's is the YWCA's day shelter for homeless women in downtown Seattle. Its inhabitants vary greatly, from black to white, from young to old, from straight to gay. This range of race and age, of values and vicissitudes encourages ingenuity; resources such as housing, food, bus tickets, and super-strength tampons are not in great abundance.

There is really no method to the madness which ensues when 80 to 90 stressed-out women are placed in the same anarchic environment. In this sense, Angeline's close quarters foster a general sense of confusion. Early last week, I observed three staff members separately searching out a can of deodorant for a woman who had since given up and left the building. But the women try. They struggle to make the best of a horrific situation. Together they are in a combination of right and wrong, of love and abandon, of pathos and quiet pride.

It is 5 a.m. on a cool weekday morning. The stretch of Third Avenue that runs through Belltown continues to awaken. A young homeless woman folds the contents of a tattered backpack in dull morning light. People pass swiftly around her. When you are homeless, you quickly and brutally learn that it is not those eyes which summon their disapproval, but those which never look your way that bore the deepest holes into your soul.

7 a.m.: Angeline's opens. It is said that familiarity breeds contempt and perhaps this is the reason that none of us look very happy. Sometimes it feels as if we have seen one another all too often, and in the worst possible light. Mindy works the front desk. She's a recent college graduate who has started off as both a counselor and an advocate. She is best known for her unabashed collection of personal and professional data. At Angeline's, we consider Mindy our information superhighway. Zimya sits at a nearby table scheduling naps in standard three-hour increments. Zimya is an Angeline's veteran. When she raves, hardly anyone listens; but in times of hardship there is no finer magician to conjure up solutions to some of our more (or less) imaginative problems: Zimya has seen and heard it all.

Lora and Jen make up the balance of Angeline's staff for the day. Lora has just celebrated her third year of sobriety. Her recovery acts as a catalyst to those of us who daily struggle with drug and alcohol problems and who are seeking a less brutal way of life. Jen is truly the non-seeker of Angelines. With her dog collar, torn sweatshirts, and multidirectional hair, she easily appears more homeless than any one of us.

Why do these women work at Angeline's? Most agree that they see themselves in the lives of the women they interact with. Jenny, a soft-spoken dark-haired advocate, speaks of wanting to amend the injustice she sees daily — injustice which has been mirrored within her childhood. K.T. takes a more philosophical approach. She says she looks at the lives of the women she works with and thinks, "There but for the grace of the universe go I." K.T. is cool, contemplative, almost aloof. Life is a serious business for her, and in an attempt to figure it all out, she has wandered into Angeline's. Lucky for all of us, K.T.

has yet to figure out there are no answers here.

I recently was asked why I had accessed services at Angeline's. I don't go for the peace and quiet; it is nonexistent. I don't go for the services; they are few and severely overburdened. Despite staff efforts, Angeline's is not a pretty place. The bathrooms are typically dirty, the furniture battered and torn, the tile floor stained and worn. A day at Angeline's means a day of stress, a day of waiting: waiting to get in, to eat, to go to the toilet, to use the phone, to sit in a comfortable chair. Walking into any homeless shelter, however well run, is like drinking a glass of liquid chaos. I know I should refuse, I shouldn't drink it, but I am thirsty and there is nothing else. The more I drink, the crazier I become.

Who are the women who come to Angeline's? They are equally compelling, equally diverse. They are homeless for a multitude of reasons: addiction, economic hardship, domestic violence, mental illness. Some sleep in real beds at night. Others are not as lucky. They sleep on mats, in church basements, in municipal buildings. And then there are those who simply walk the streets in search of a dry bench, a deep doorway, an open alcove. When all else fails, crack cocaine suffices, tempers the night's more turbulent winds with intense, temporary escape. It is an escape which leads to ruin, as most of us have learned, but at 4 a.m. when you are cold and tired, when there is no place to go, no one but the streets to turn to, cocaine offers a moment or two when your discomforts, your failures, and your loneliness cease to matter. This chemical refuge is powerful, vicious, and at times, all-consuming.

1 p.m.: Time rolls oddly towards the later afternoon. Natalie enters the telephone booth, much to the chagrin of a woman who has been waiting to make a call. "Don't worry," another woman responds, "the only person Natalie ever calls is herself, and she is hardly ever home. She won't be long." As much as Natalie's life lends itself to tragedy, her proclivities make us laugh and we like her for this.

3 p.m.: Shelli and Melissa apply their makeup in the bathroom mirror. Melissa is part gothic, part pussycat, and part artist. In an effort to make her mark upon the space, she has glued a collage of various wildlife to the columns standing floor to ceiling. Shelli most reminds me of the coyote born of Native American mythology, a natural born trickster whose antics are designed to teach us humility, humor, and grace. Like Coyote, Shelli finds light in darkness, humor in chaos. She encourages us to laugh when we feel most like crying.

6 p.m.: The proverbial smoke of the day has cleared. One by one, women repack their bags and slowly make their way out, towards their respective shelters. Staff and clients remaining at Angeline's breathe a collective sigh of relief: They have made it through another day of needs unrequited, of questions unanswered, of lives undone. There is no sole response, no singular direction that leads the homeless to sanctuary. It is simply hit and miss, and some days we miss more than others.

But there is a bridge that lessens the gap between those who have homes and those who do not. Its framework is human kindness. Its strength lies in tolerance and compassion.



Graphic  
by Tabor Sabin.

Angeline's, for all its faults, continues to positively affect the lives of its inhabitants because of a willingness on the part of staff and clients alike to evolve, to grow, to help one another through the process of trial and error. It is not always successful. It is sometimes comical. It is often sad. But it is ours, the heart and soul of the homeless women's community in downtown Seattle. ■

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

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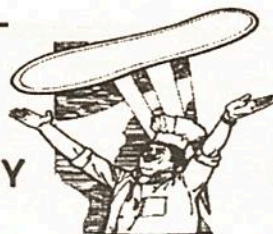
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Wednesday, March 27, 11:23 p.m., Columbia Street apartment. Complainant called police and stated that his girlfriend, a homeless black female aged 34, was intoxicated and would not leave his apartment. He also stated that she was taking numerous pills in an attempt to commit suicide. Seattle Fire Dept. arrived, but were unable to determine the amount and type of medication she had ingested. She claimed to have swallowed a bottle of sleeping pills and her boyfriend's anti-depressants. She was argumentative and hostile, and had been drinking. She was transported to Harborview for examination and a mental health evaluation.

Wednesday, March 27, 12 p.m., 600 Block 12th Ave. S. A two-person patrol team was out checking the fenced area under the north side of the 12th Avenue S. bridge. They observed a homeless Asian male aged 27, under the bridge, holding a glass pipe in his hand. He attempted to conceal the pipe, but was unable to. The officer secured the pipe and advised the suspect that he was trespassing in a clearly marked area and was released.

Saturday, March 30, 12:19 p.m., Broadway QFC. An officer was dispatched to investigate a shoplifter in custody. On arrival, QFC security explained they had observed a transient white male, aged 50, open the cigarette cabinet and take out a carton of cigarettes, which he then concealed in his jacket. He was stopped by security, and it was discovered that he had been trespassed from the store for the same offense. The suspect explained that he knew he wasn't supposed to be in the store, but needed the cigarettes for money. He was placed under arrest and booked into King County Jail.

Wednesday, April 10, 9 p.m., QFC, W. Dravus. The witness observed the suspect, a transient white male aged 40, pick up a pack of hard salami and conceal it under his jacket. The suspect then walked to the front door and exited to the parking lot, without attempting to pay for the salami. He was confronted by security, who recovered the stolen item. A records check revealed no outstanding warrants, but he was not able to provide a valid current address. He was booked into King County Jail for shoplifting.

Friday, April 12, 5 p.m., 2900 Block Airport Way S. A maintenance worker stated that unknown transients had gained access to an abandoned building across from where he works. They had been entering by a broken window frame on the west side of the building. He reported that transients are also using the neighboring abandoned Rainier Brewing Co. building. The damage the transients did to gain access to these buildings is unreported, as it will not be repaired. Both buildings were due to be demolished later in April. ■

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

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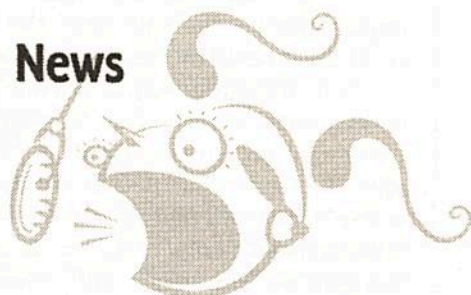
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ANGELO MAKES HIS HOME ON A NEW YORK PIER. PHOTO BY MARGARET MORTON.

#### DWELLING Continued from Page 13

planted with children's toys and guarded by a driftwood snake. The whole of his complex is protected by a tattered American flag.

● Jimmy, who built an oval, brick-lined fishpond in an abandoned lot on the Lower East Side. He filled his 6-inch pond with water from a nearby fire hydrant and four goldfish. He lived in a tent, and planted beans and corn in a garden. Morton writes that she returned after first photographing Jimmy's fishpond and, "a week later, Jimmy, his tent, his garden and his goldfish pond have all vanished. The tracks of a bulldozer crisscross the lot."

"It's with a shock of recognition that we see these people as pioneers of a sort, camping out on the frontier of bottom-rung urban existence," writes Trachtenberg, towards the end of his introduction.

In Paul Dorpat's first collection of *Then and Now* photographs of Seattle, there is a lovely photo of Princess Angeline's shack, circa 1890. She — Chief Seattle's daughter — is sitting proudly on a crate in front of her shack near the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks. A *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reporter visited the "humble palace of this wizened aboriginal princess," and reported of "various benevolent ladies who tried to move her to more comfortable quarters." Nonetheless, Angeline stayed in her shack until her death, at age 86, in the spring of 1896. Why on earth should she leave? To give way for more railroad tracks?

*Fragile Dwelling* includes photographs of the bulldozing efforts of city government, and of memorials homeless people have constructed for their friends, their pets. These, more than anything else about this book, illustrate

Morton's politicization.

Where should these people whom she has grown to love and respect go? And why? And haven't we learned by now that if we bulldoze this camp here, it'll just spring up in another form, in another way, there? Haven't we learned that although the dwellings homeless people create may be fragile, the spirit of the architects is not?

*Fragile Dwelling* is a stirring testament to the strength and resilience of a community of pioneering people. It is a book that is, sadly, hard to come by. The publicity agent at Aperture Press sent us an unbound dummy print, since "copies are very scarce."

But it is a book that should be on coffee tables from Manhattan to Mercer Island. ■

*Margaret Morton's previous published work includes the critically acclaimed The Tunnel (published by Yale University Press), which shed light on one of New York's oldest surviving homeless communities: people living in the railroad tunnel under Riverside Park.*

*Fragile Dwelling was sponsored in part by Coalition for the Homeless, an organizing and advocacy group in New York City. A portion of proceeds from the sale of this book will go to the Coalition for the Homeless.*

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## CLASSICS CORNER



by Perfess'r Harris

Speaking of foreigners who don't deserve to live, we at Classics Corner can't stop thinking about the Lemnians, the obscure island race that everyone loves to hate. Aeschylus, during an odd passage in *The Libation Bearers*, calls them "detestable, so that a man names a hideous crime 'Lemnian' in memory of their wickedness." One wonders if they were really all that bad.

Once upon a time, long before Betty Freidan gave name to the ennui women felt when their automated appliances weren't enough, the women of Lemnos refused to sleep with their husbands. They must have had their reasons, but Aphrodite, a male-identified goddess if ever there was, took offense. The Lemnian women were made to smell like a bunch of Klingons with gum disease. Having little alternative, their horndog husbands took up with a bunch of whores from Thrace.

**The Lemnian women form consciousness-raising circles and kill all the men, thus earning the horror of ancient society. This may be the first recorded instance of anti-feminist backlash.**

Were the story to end there, this would just be another misogynist little ditty by some dead white guy. But then something wonderful happens. The Lemnian women form consciousness-raising circles and kill all the men, thus earning the horror of ancient society. This may be the first recorded instance of anti-feminist backlash.

Their "crime" seems to have branded Lemnos the armpit of classical Greece. When Zeus throws Hephaestus off Mount Olympus and he falls for 10 days before finally breaking his leg and becoming a geek for life, where does he land? On Lemnos, the worst place on earth. When Philoctetes is bitten by a holy snake and is exiled because his gangrenous leg makes everyone within 20 yards gag, where does Odysseus strand him? Lemnos. Where else would he go?

Since these stories originate in Athens, one has to wonder what happened to give the place such a bad name. The historian Herodotus may offer an answer. According to him, the Athenians and the Pelasgians were locked in a bitter turf war over this sulfurous scrap of land. For a time, the Pelasgians prevailed. They killed the men, and, as was the custom, enslaved the women. The Athenian women refused to get over it. When their uppity ways became a problem, the Pelasgians killed them along with their children, making the name "Lemnos" synonymous with evil itself.

While it's hard to say at this point just who killed who, the smelly murderous women of the first version sounds suspiciously like a Pelasgian cover-up. Herodotus also tells us the Pelasgians were forced to apologize after the Gods retaliated by making their fields and women barren. An oracle demanded that they make reparations. When asked what it would take to make things right, the Athenians laid out a sumptuous banquet and said the Pelasgians could abandon their country to them in similar condition.

The Pelasgians said they would surrender their land when a north wind takes them from Athens to their home, located conveniently in the opposite direction. Everyone hates a smart-ass, and happily, the Athenians finally sacked the city of Myrina and retook Lemnos for themselves. Justice prevailed. At least, that's what the Athenians say. ■

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# Early May Notables

## Thursday 5/2

Johnny Moses, an acclaimed storyteller and traveling ambassador for Northwest Coast Cultures, shares Native American stories. 5-6 p.m., at Antioch University Seattle, 2326 6th Ave., Room 100; info [pmountain@antiochsea.edu](mailto:pmountain@antiochsea.edu).

League of Women Voters Forum on the topic "Alternatives to Juvenile Detention." 7:30 p.m., at Seattle First Baptist Church; info 206-329-4848.

## Friday 5/3

23rd Annual Washington Women in Trades Fair, featuring apprenticeship information, tradeswomen demonstrations, tool, and trade exhibits, at Seattle Center's Alki & Snoqualmie Rooms; info Robin Murphy 206-903-9508.

University of Washington presents Rodolfo Acuna, the Father of Chicano Studies, on "May Day, Cinco de Mayo, and the Struggle for Workers Rights." 7 p.m., reception 8:30 - 10 p.m., at Kane Hall, Room 220, free; info ASUW Raza Commission 206-543-9244.

## Saturday 5/4

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 Pl. N.; info Dick Blakney.

Second Time Selections Garage Sale presented by Royal Esquire Women's Auxiliary. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., at Royal Esquire Club, 5016 Rainier Ave. S.

## Sunday 5/5

Celebrate May Day with a tribute to the art, culture and achievement of revolutionary workers, featuring Zimbabwe trade union organizer Steve Gwinyayi. Door donation \$2, 2:30 p.m., at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S. Chinese dinner served for \$9.95 donation (sliding scale and work exchanges available); info 206-722-2453.

Friends of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committee Dinner and

Presentation by Dr. Mustafa Barghouti on "Health Under Occupation." \$25, proceeds go to Friends of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief, 5:30 - 9 p.m., at St. Mark's Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E.; info and tickets Amineh Ayyad 206-313-1608.

## Monday 5/6

Send-Off for Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility delegation to Iraq. Noon-1pm, at Keystone United Church of Christ, 5019 Keystone Place N. Delegation will use money for essential items for the Iraqi people. Questions call 632-6021.

Seattle International Human Rights Commission Coalition presents Moin Kadri on "Communal Violence in India," the first of a "News You Can Use" series. 7 p.m., at the Peace Cafe, 5828 Roosevelt; Info 206-547-7735.

## Wednesday 5/8

Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) sponsors a panel discussion with Seattle-based women scientists, focusing on their education and career paths. Noon, at Seattle Central Community College, Room BE 1110; info 206-587-3854.

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](mailto:homesteadclt@yahoo.com).

## Thursday 5/9

Disability Dialogue Series "Sex, Money, and Disability," a discussion on relationships and disability. 5 - 7 p.m., in Room 305-B of the School of Social Work, University of Washington, use blue elevator at south end of building, refreshments provided; info and to RSVP 206-543-5676 or [armstraj@u.washington.edu](mailto:armstraj@u.washington.edu).

## Friday 5/10

Public Forum series on "Arms Control, Disarmament, and the Proliferation of Weap-

## Saturday 5/11

ons of Mass Destruction after Sept. 11," sponsored by UW Jackson School. 7:30 p.m., at Kane Hall, Room 110; info Dr. Charles A. Meconis 206-543-9031 or WPSR 206-547-2630.

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

Annual Mother's Day Weekend Million Mom March Event. Let your voice be heard that common sense gun legislation is long overdue. Speakers include the Mayor, police and fire Chiefs, and students involved in anti-violence programs, also music and entertainment. 1 - 4 p.m., at Seattle Center House; info 206-769-9666 or [MMSeaKing@aol.com](mailto:MMSeaKing@aol.com).

## Sunday, May 11

Join Boomtown Café for its annual Mother's Day brunch celebration! Contact the café at [www.boomtowncafe.org](http://www.boomtowncafe.org) or 206-625-2989 for volunteer opportunities.

## Monday 5/13

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.

## Thursday 5/16

Eight distinguished UW African American Faculty discuss their varied paths toward university teaching, sponsored by The Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas. 6:30 - 8 p.m., at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 1634 19th, Seattle; info Millie Russell 206-685-0774 or <http://www.cdforum.org/home.html>.

## Ongoing

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 also available. For more info, contact Sinan Demirel at 206-979-5621.

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

Red Eagle Soaring Native American Theatre Group presents "Cedars," a theatre work that brings to life the powerful poetry of contemporary Native American writers. Friday and Saturday 8 p.m., Sunday 2 p.m. May 17 - 26, at Richard Hugo House, 1634 11th Ave., on Capitol Hill, suggested donation \$7-\$20; reservations recommended, 206-323-7350 or info Martha 206-323-1868.

Women in Black silent vigil for peace, every Thursday from 5 - 6 p.m. at Westlake Mall. ■

### Learn about homelessness through the Real Change 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.



Weaving together stories from the homeless community, our homeless writer's performance group — Bedless Bards—can bring their street poet medley to your organization.

To schedule a speaker or a performance, call 441-3247 ext. 201 and speak to Rachael, or e-mail [organizer@realchangenews.org](mailto:organizer@realchangenews.org).

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## Support Legislation for Increased Housing

**Issue:** The Housing Affordability for America Act, H.R. 3995, would help address the shortage of affordable housing by streamlining confusing or duplicative housing programs and giving states more leeway to meet their local housing needs.

**Background:** On March 20, 2002, New Jersey Representative Marge Roukema introduced The Housing Affordability for America Act. The bill would make mid-course corrections of housing programs that are underused, duplicative, or have been hindered by muddled objectives. It also provides increased flexibility for local governments and programs so that they can better meet the needs of their individual communities.

"This country is facing a growing affordable housing problem for low and moderate-income families and for those with special needs," Roukema said. "If we are to expand homeownership and affordable rental opportunities, then we must encourage new production of affordable single and multifamily housing."

Highlights of the bill include:

**Housing production and preservation** — Creates a separate production program to increase the production and preservation of mixed income rental housing that is affordable for extremely low-income families.

**Federal housing loan program** — Strengthens the federal housing loan program with additional resources and tools to encourage homeownership opportunities for all, and increases the supply of affordable rental housing nationwide.

**Elderly housing preservation** — Establishes a demonstration program for nonprofit-sponsored elderly housing properties for modernization purposes.

**Housing impact analysis** — Requires the federal government to assess the additional costs to housing production associated with regulation. One source of high production costs is in the area of regulation. Reducing the cost of producing housing would greatly expand the amount of affordable housing available.

**Section 8 rental housing assistance program** — Provides flexibility within the Section 8 rental housing program for public housing authorities and tenants alike.

**Public housing** — Provides flexibility and relieves some of the administrative burdens impeding the success of public housing authorities.

**HOPE VI** — Reauthorizes and reforms HOPE VI to reduce down-payment requirements for loans for teachers and public safety officers. Offers public safety officers the opportunity to purchase HUD-held single-family properties at a discounted rate.

**Homeless housing programs** — Reauthorizes HUD's homeless programs through 2004 and funds renewals of contracts through the Housing Certificate Fund, for one year at a time, through 2004.

**Native American housing** — Reauthorizes the Indian Housing Block Grant Programs.

**Voucher program** — Establishes a thrifty production voucher program that can be used for new construction or property rehabilitation. The voucher initiative is different than other voucher programs because its value is based on the property's operating costs rather than the "fair market rent" used by other vouchers.

**Action:** The bill has already passed out of both the Financial Services and the Judiciary Committees in the House, yet it needs your support to ensure that it's heard favorably when it reaches the full floor. Contact your local representatives and urge them to support increased flexibility in housing programs for low-income and homeless people, as well as expand homeownership and rental opportunities.

To find out how to contact your local representative, visit [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov). For more information on The Housing Affordability for America Act, call Rep. Roukema's office at (202) 225-4465. ■

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# Mockingbird Times

Washington State Foster Care  
and Homeless Youth Speak Out

MAY 2, 2002

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VOLUME II, ISSUE 4

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## Show Foster Parents, Kids How Much You Care

COMPILED BY MOCKINGBIRD STAFF

**MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE** Appreciation Month. Here are just some of the ways you can show everyone in the foster care system the respect and recognition they deserve.

### How foster youth can show foster parents how much they appreciate them:

1. Write your foster parent a letter about how they have helped you.
2. Throw a party for your foster parent.
3. Call an ex-foster parent and tell them how much they meant to you.
4. Help start a support group for foster parents and kids.
5. Make your foster parent their favorite meal.

### How foster parents can show foster kids how much they appreciate them:

1. Give your foster kid a journal when they come into your home; encourage them to keep a diary for themselves.



2. Sit down and tell your foster child how much they really mean to you.
3. Take your foster kid out to their favorite restaurant.
4. Start a family day where the foster kids get to decide where to go and what to do.
5. Make a photo album of their time with you.

### How agencies can show foster parents how much they appreciate them:

(According to information found on the Casey Family website, [www.casey.org](http://www.casey.org), there are five main things agencies can do to keep a foster family around.)

1. Communication: foster parents like open communication and sharing of information as well as easy access to their caseworker.
2. Clear role definition: foster parents need to be clear about their rights and responsibilities.
3. On-going training: foster parents want continual training opportunities that help them deal with more difficult behaviors.
4. On-going support: foster parents must have access to a supportive network of more experienced foster parents and caseworkers. *And don't forget respite care!*
5. Inclusion: foster parents want to be seen as part of the team that helps make decisions.

### How anyone can show a foster care caseworker they appreciate them:

1. Send them a thank you card.
2. Tell their supervisor what a great job they are doing.
3. Remember their birthday.
4. Take them out to lunch.
5. Tell them in person how much you appreciate the work they do.

### A Brief History Of Foster Care The Past and Present

COMPILED BY REGINALD HERTS

**IN 1853**, Charles Brace, a minister and director of the New York Children's Aid Society, began the free foster home movement. Brace had a deep concern about the extremely large number of immigrant children sleeping on the streets of New York. He formed a plan to assist and provide them homes by advertising in the South and West for families willing to provide free homes for these children. In many cases, these children were placed in circumstances that allowed abuse and exploitation. However, it was a start. During the early 1900s social agencies and state governments got involved in foster home placements as a result of Brace's daring and creative action. This became the foundation for the foster care movement, as it still exists today.



Today, children enter foster care for a number of reasons. Mom abuses or neglects one of her kids, dad is using drugs or is arrested, or simply the parents are just having a hard time dealing with the responsibilities of parenthood. There are more than 600,000 children in foster care at some point during the year. Of the 500,000 children in foster care, 36 percent are White, 42 percent are Black, while 7 percent are other races/ethnic origins. Most kids enter foster care at an early age: 24 percent of the children in care are between the ages of 1 and 5 and 29 percent are between 11 and 15.

On a note closer to home, specifically in Washington, there are 8,688 children in foster care. Youth come from all walks of life and ethnic backgrounds. This number continues to grow in our state and across the nation. To find out more about the history of foster care and the current statistics, visit these websites:

DSHS: [www.wa.gov/dshs](http://www.wa.gov/dshs)

Child Welfare League: [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)

Casey Family: [www.casey.org](http://www.casey.org)

Children's Aid Society:

[www.childrensaidsociety.org](http://www.childrensaidsociety.org)

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



# Letter from the Editor

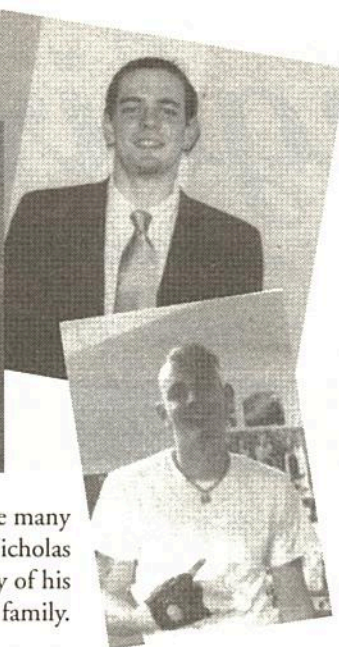
**NICHOLAS HELHOWSKI**  
**ROOSTER**  
 3/9/82-4/14/02

**ON APRIL 14**, those of us who work with homeless youth in the Seattle area lost a special young man. Nicholas Helhowski, a.k.a. Rooster, died from major head injuries after being assaulted by two men after departing a bus.

By all accounts, this 20-year-old young man had made a lasting impression on people of all ages, colors, and job descriptions. A memorial was held at the headquarters of Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets (PSKS), a Seattle-based organization providing advocacy and other services to homeless youth. The City of Seattle, in conjunction with PSKS, sponsored the memorial, attended by everyone from Rooster's family members, Seattle mayor Greg Nickels, police officers who had developed a close bond to Rooster, and city administrators typically more accustomed to working with budgets than kids. Advocates and service providers were well represented, with direct service counselors accompanied by program administrators from most of the Seattle programs that serve homeless youth. There were also those good folks who had no direct connection to Rooster or homeless youth other than a need to



Photos of a few of the many faces of Rooster/ Nicholas Helhowski courtesy of his friends and family.



express their sadness at yet another young life expunged far too early.

However, the most important group in attendance was the young people who know Rooster as their friend and brother. Sporting their Mohawks, black leather, tattoos, and anarchy symbols, they gathered in solidarity to express their deep sense of grief and sorrow. They spoke of how Rooster had been an important influence on their lives, encouraging many to exit the streets, get off drugs, and to make good choices for themselves. They shared how he had made major changes in his life and was working toward goals beyond the streets. No longer homeless, he remained active in his advocacy for more services and opportunities for youth who are homeless and/or street-involved.

Across the crowd were young people intently and carefully protecting the vulnerable flame in their hand-held candles. Their faces exposed the stress of having once again been reminded of the vulnerability that comes with human connection. One by one, as the youth speakers clutched the microphone and gazed toward the sea of faces in the crowd, their voices cracked, their heads fell to their chest, and they cried. These youth are no strangers to life's dark side. Most learned at a very early age that the only "fair" in life is in Puyallup and that only comes once a year.

I do hope the message sent from services providers, city authorities, and many general citizens was received by the youth. The message is that there are many people who care about Rooster and all those who call him Brother. Hopefully, the other message these and all youth remember is Rooster's message: "Take care of yourself, you can succeed and make good choices."

Jim Theofelis

## Ways to Help

- **Donate money and receive Mockingbird Times at home**
- **Submit articles, poetry, or art work, and get paid**

Find out more by calling our office at (206) 323-KIDS or visiting our website at [www.mockingbirdsociety.org](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org)

## 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](mailto:newspaper@mockingbirdsociety.org) or at (206) 323-KIDS.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Mockingbird,

Just a short note to say I came across the Mockingbird Times online and commend your foster kids for an excellent publication. I am a social worker in the New Jersey child welfare system, and hearing the voices of your children thousands of miles away just emphasized the universality of kids who are part of the system.

THANK YOU!

MARIA DONNA LITWAK, MSW, LSW

Dear Mockingbird,

Hi, My name's Devin. I'm a foster boy, 19 now, that got dumped at 18. I graduated from high school and got a 2.88 gpa and am in community college, but I work fulltime nites to eat and pay my rent and get my clothes which are used ones.

I spent 11 years in foster care and had 39 foster homes and only two I stayed at over a year. You know you aren't worth much when that happens all the time and I wasn't trouble and never have touched drugs or smoked or been drunk. When I was 18 and outa school, I got handed a garbage bag of used clothes, drove to a real rat place to live for a month free, and handed \$250 which doesn't buy anything. I also got handed my Pell grant and state grant for college which I use to go to school.

I want to graduate college in a bachelor degree way and do something about what foster kids go thru. The state of California doesn't care nothing about kids in foster care. If they're cutting out money in budgets we get the knife first. That's why I work full time now and give myself \$38 a week for clothes and food is all. I save \$125 a week for rent money then have about \$85 to save, which I do for when the state takes away my grants. I got \$4,480 saved up for now because it's going to happen. I buy just used clothes, ride a bicycle since a car would put me in brokenness just for gas, and after I bought one pair of shoes and they wore out in a month I cried over it. So I go barefooted now and wear flip flops which is ok since it's cheap.

It's not easy being a foster boy out trying to live and be happy because there's nobody I can talk to and get helped by. One boy I met in the library where he works helps me and is my friend and brings me stews and spaghetti his mom makes and sends over to me. My friend got me my first time ever new shirt for Christmas and I love my shirt but its too big for me and I won't let him change it because it means something in my heart. The shirt is a man small size and I wear stuff for boys about 13 or 14 since I'm little. I'm 5 ft. 4 in. and weigh 108 lb. but I never have missed one day of school or one night at work in the burglar alarm place. I watch for alerts and I go to work sick sometimes with fevers because I don't want to lose my job. But my boss is nice and lets me work barefooted and he gives me sandwiches and fruit and gave me my raise from \$8 an hour to \$8.50 an hour and a Christmas bonus, \$300.

I don't go to movies and don't have no tv but I have a phone and a computer my boss got for me. It's old but it's my computer and I am learning about it and pay \$12.95 a month to have Internet service, plus I have lifeline telephone for \$11 a month. My apartment is one room is all with my bed, a stove, and little icebox and a bathroom and little closet. I study hard.

I like seeing what Mockingbird is doing and thank everybody for me for them doing it. I just wanted you to know about me. I try to do right always.

DEVIN



*"A true family is not always one's own flesh and blood. It's a matter of the heart."*

— Shirley Barksdale

## Meet Our Staff

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# New Bill Passed by Legislature Eases the Tension of Sibling Separation

By BRITTANY LUCAS

**THE MAJORITY** of the 500,000 children that enter the foster care system every year have at least one sibling. Seventy-five percent of these children will be torn apart from their siblings as they enter the foster care system. Recent studies show that severing additional family ties only causes greater chaos in foster children's already chaotic lives. Not until recently though has there been a bill passed in the Washington State legislature that has stood up against this grim reality.

One of the new sections in foster care legislation, added by the new bill — House Bill 6702, Sibling Visitation — shows this new commitment to sibling relationships:

"It is the intent of the legislature to recognize that those sibling relationships a child has are an integral aspect of the family unit, which should be nurtured. The legislature presumes that nurturing the existing

sibling relationships is in the best interest of the child, in particular in those situations where a child can not be with their parents, guardians, or legal custodians as a result of court intervention."

Of course this bill, like all bills concerning the welfare of children, must take into interest the safety of the child. The visitation rights of parents are not allowed to interfere with the siblings' visitation rights. Also, if the relationship between the siblings has been deemed abusive or inappropriate, the visitations may be restricted. The a regular basis."



child's wellbeing and the relationship they have with their siblings will be evaluated before visitations are arranged.

House Bill 6702, Sibling Visitation, gives the child the right to visit their siblings while they are in foster care. According to Laurie Lippold, Public Policy Director for Children's Home Society, who was instrumental in getting the bill passed, "Even though this bill doesn't exactly permit the child to live with their siblings, it at least allows the siblings to stay connected on



## Positive Power: How to Afford College

By JUSTIN REYNOLDS

### *The good news and bad news of foster kids and college*

**NEARLY 18,500** children in Washington were placed in foster or group homes between June 2000 and July 2001. About 70 percent of those were of school age.

The bad news is, according to a new report to the state legislature, foster youths in Washington State score, on average, 15 to 20 percentile points below other youths on statewide achievement tests. Also, students in foster care repeat a grade twice as often as other students, and only 59 percent of foster youths enrolled in the 11th grade completed high school by the end of 12th grade, compared with 86 percent of other students.

But there is hope. The good news is there are college scholarship, grant, and tuition waiver opportunities especially for youth who have been in foster care or who have been adopted.

Here is what we found:

### *Statewide scholarship program*

#### **Governor's Scholarship Program for Washington Youth in Foster, Group, or Kinship Care**

Governor Gary Locke started the scholarship program to assist youth in foster, group, or Kinship care in the state of Washington to enroll in and complete college programs. Scholarship award amounts vary and the requirements for acceptance are specific and can be found at [www.waedfoundation.org](http://www.waedfoundation.org) or by calling (425) 416 2001.

### *National financial aid opportunities*

#### **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

All youth planning to pursue post-secondary education should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and check for other financial aid opportunities.

Contact info: [www.fafsa.org](http://www.fafsa.org) phone 1-800-433-3243

### *National scholarship opportunities*

#### **Casey Family Scholars**

Up to \$10,000 to young people, under the age of 25, who have spent at least 12 months in foster care and were not subsequently adopted.

Contact info: [www.orphan.org](http://www.orphan.org) phone (571) 203-0270

#### **Hildegard Lash Merit Scholarship**

\$5,000 per academic year, available to students who

are currently in foster care or were in foster care at the time of their high school graduation and/or 18th birthday, who are entering their sophomore, junior or senior year as a full-time student at a four year college or university.

Contact info: [www.orphan.org](http://www.orphan.org) phone (571) 203-0270

#### **Benjamin Eaton Scholarship Program**

From the National Foster Parent Association Scholarship: for foster youth who wish to further their education beyond high school, including college or university studies, vocational and job training, and correspondence courses, including the GED.

Contact info: [www.nfpainc.org](http://www.nfpainc.org) phone (253) 853-4000 or 1-800-557-5238.

### *National loan opportunities*

#### **Burtrez Morrow Educational Loan Program**

Low-interest loans for young women currently in foster care or in foster care at the time of their high school graduation. Recipients can also be enrolled full-time at a four-year college or university and entering their junior or senior year in college.

Contact info: [www.orphan.org](http://www.orphan.org) (571) 203- 0270.

### *Mockingbird Times in the News*

**LESS THAN A YEAR** after the paper first hit the streets, the *Mockingbird Times* is already gaining recognition in other publications around Washington state and across the country. Check out these articles for yourself on our website at [www.mockingbirdsociety.org](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org):

- *The Children & Youth Funding Report*, a national publication, February 20, 2002 — featuring the *Mockingbird Times* as a model program.
- *Brevity*, a weekly newsletter released from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, April 6, 2002 — describing *Mockingbird Times* to family court professionals across the country.
- *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, April 18, 2002 — A profile of *Mockingbird* by *Seattle P-I* columnist Candy Hatcher, "Teen Journalists Learn the Power — and Responsibility — of the Press."



# Family

By Jeff Ried and Stephanie Garlich

**WE WEREN'T SURE** we wanted a full-time foster kid in our home, especially someone who didn't want to be part of a family. We had done respite care and short-term placements, but never had someone stay with us for longer than two months. We both worked and didn't see how we would manage to juggle our schedules and a full-time teen.

But then the state Department of Social and Health Services had asked us to consider Dan. Dan had been living on his own for a few months after being bounced around in the foster system for nearly 10 years. He was looking for a little more structure as he started his senior year in high school. His caseworker had told us about his strong reaction to doing family things with his foster families. He hated things like going to Thanksgiving or Easter gatherings with his foster family and all their relatives.

Although childless, family was still important to us. To be fair to Dan and ourselves, we wanted to talk with Dan about family and what it meant to us and to him. After that, we hoped that all of us would be able to see if the placement might work.

But before we could talk to Dan, we needed to define what family meant to us. We examined our own upbringing and looked beyond traditional definitions. We looked at what goes on in a family rather than simply seeing a family as so many members on a genealogical tree. We had friends and distant relatives (and even pets) that somehow had

to fit in. Ultimately, we decided that a family consisted of people (or pets) who cared about one another regardless of how they were related; that a family provided support as each family member tried new things or struggled through rough times; and that members of a family shared what was going on in each other's lives so that deeper bonds could be formed.

When we talked with Dan about family, it was clear that we were talking about the same things. Dan had problems with his foster families forcing their expectations on him and trying to make him someone he was not. Ironically, we had problems with those things, too, from our own parents, brothers, and sisters.

In the end, all of us thought it would work out. That was in 1996. Today, Dan is finishing his last year at Central Washington University. Over the years we did a lot of things together like hike, travel, and just hang out. We don't spend as much time with Dan as we used to, especially since he is living several hundred miles away and engaged to be married. However, all of us have continued to support each other, care about each other, and share our hopes, dreams, and disappointments with each other.

A few weeks ago, he and his fiancé sent us a card with words from Shirley Barksdale. We immediately remembered the first time we met Dan and had our conversation about family. The card said "A true family is not always one's own flesh and blood. It's a matter of the heart." We couldn't agree more. 🐦

## Bloom Where You Are Planted

By Travis Rosenfelt

**LIVING IN A FOSTER HOME** is hectic. Sometimes too much to handle and sometimes too boring to move. But in my home, something we could always count on was a kid coming and going. Here today and gone tomorrow.

In our family, we had kids that my family liked and some we disliked. For example, a little after my sister and I came to live where we live now, a pair of kids came in, a brother and a sister, which really helped me cope with my new surroundings. The siblings were just like my sister and me, so we really bonded. We had sibling rivalries but mainly we just had fun. Those first kids could have been really mean and they could have made the experience the exact opposite, but the first kids were compatible with our family so we had a great time.

In addition, there is a pair of kids that were in our house that we were not compatible with. It was a boy and a girl who were not siblings. The boy would lie, steal, and antagonize everyone. I physically fought with him several times (I never lost of course). The girl would throw temper tantrums, had a mean streak, and had terrible manners; the two kids were in trouble constantly. They had some good traits but overall they were annoying. There are good kids and there are angry kids. But it's better to know where they are coming from before you judge them.

My sister and I were the first to come to the family that we live with, so we have seen what we should

act like and what angry kids act like. Not that my sister or me are perfect, but I have seen what children act like, and for the kids who are just getting into care here are some pointers and some facts.



Not everyone in your foster home is your enemy, so try not to be too angry with everyone.

● When you go into a new foster home, try to be honest about any problems you may have, not necessarily to your foster siblings but with the foster parents, because they are bound to find out, either through your caseworker or through your file.

● Not everyone in your foster home is your enemy, so try not to be too angry with everyone.

● There is one thing about new foster kids that 95 percent of foster kids go through in every home, and that is what my family calls a honeymoon period which lasts anywhere between a couple of days and a couple of weeks. It is when the foster child tries to act perfect for a while, but when they get settled in a whole new side jumps out.

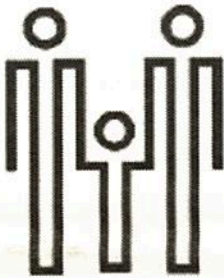
I wish the boys who came through my home were compatible with me, because it seems like all the boys who come through my house are either crazy, mean, uncoordinated, or just a little kid. I am an athletic teen. It seems like all of the boys who come to my house don't like sports. I just wish that I could get a foster brother who likes having fun rather than sitting around being lazy and dwelling on things that he can't change. 🐦

## Poetry Corner

### Crossroads

Every week through all the years  
Shattered dreams to shedding tears  
Burning pain from being torn apart  
Families that left me with a broken heart  
All the times that I wanted to cry  
Let it all out at the end of the night  
Why do people say that they'll always care  
Then they leave us alone with nobody there  
I have dreams of becoming a doctor  
To help others out with all I can offer  
Please do know that I always will miss you  
I need to move on and work on my issues  
Through all my bad choices, through all my strife  
Going to treatment ended up saving my life  
It is always good to get a second chance  
To lead my life strong, to build as a man  
Thinking about my future, the impact I'll make  
Grow up and be somebody, make it someday  
Life is a journey we all end up making  
Make your life easier by giving, not taking  
Though all that this says is to trust what's inside  
Please do what you can, please do what is right

REALDEAL  
DAVE WILLIAMS-NYHART



### FELICIA'S FREE STYLE

Upward bound I am headed.  
Demons falling from my headache  
Making my pulse sweat  
Unsured of what or who's ahead of me  
White blurs make it hard to see.  
Strictly unjust.

I am 21: responsible for teenagers and toddlers.  
Everyday gets harder. Bills grow larger.  
Finding a job? Why bother?  
Tired of those, sorry but thank you letters.

Bright, soft baby blues and yellow light  
Lift the strain from these hopeless eyes of mine

False situations, pushing down on my mind.  
Other peoples hate; tries to create a hold on me.  
Tare me apart. Make my thoughts speed.

Can you feel my break down?  
Can you hear my cries?  
If I asked you to take my burdens,  
How would you reply?

Will you understand how I survived?  
Maybe shy and walk right by.

Perseverance, blood, sweat and grieving  
Will be my reason.

I will be fine  
Only because I have heart  
I will never part from what I start

FELICIA WRAY