

MAY 30, 2002

# Real Change

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## Afflicted

Brother Void on the agony of being  
connected to everything in the universe

Also: Babysitters' Club, Tenters Unite, Ads for Panhandlers

COVER DESIGNED BY TIMOTHY HARRIS.

### Interview by Timothy Harris

**N**o one ever said living in late-capitalist consumer society was going to be easy. Sure, we can get a good toasted bagel whenever we like, but what does it all mean? What is the proper response to global poverty, ecological doom, and the popularity of "reality" TV?

"Let the darkness light your way," says Brother Void. Andrew Boyd, a long-time activist who reads too much, has turned the syrupy self-help genre on its head to bring us the darkly ironic book of *Daily Afflictions*, subtitled "the Agony of Being Connected to Everything in the Universe." Each page begins with a quote, such as Nietzsche's "Whoever despises himself still respects himself as one who despises," leads us through a few paragraphs of meditation, and concludes with a pithy aphorism — in this case, "My life is worthless, but it is mine." *Daily Afflictions* has been called "ammonium nitrate for the soul," and offers real wisdom to those of us who persevere because, well, what choice do we have?

*Daily Afflictions* is published by Norton, and will soon be serialized on [salon.com](http://salon.com). You can read excerpts at [www.dailyafflictions.com](http://www.dailyafflictions.com).

**Real Change:** In *Daily Afflictions*, you quote Kafka as saying, "There is hope, but not for us." Is this really helpful?

**Brother Void:** Every once in a while Kafka hits me with something that feels profound and important, but I don't know what to do with it. I don't know what this statement means, but it feels right. It's scary. There's a morbid fascination that I have for that quote. It's a funny paradox. And it's dense. Seven short words. It feels profound. It's brilliant, and I don't know what it means.

For me, there are four statements that are the touchstones of Compassionate Nihilism: There's A. J. Muste's "I don't do this work to change the world, I do it so the world doesn't change me." There's the Gandhi statement, "Everything we do is futile, but we must do it anyway," there's Kafka, and then Gramsci's notion of "Pessimism with the intellect; optimism with the will." Those four ideas are the touch points. We change the world not just because it's the right thing to do but because we must do it. There's an inner necessity. In the face of such circumstances it's the only way to bear them, to actually do something.

**RC:** Is *Skeptical Mysticism* for everybody?

**Void:** Probably not. I came to it as a paradoxical way to leave unresolved, or hold in some kind of beautiful tension, incompatible beliefs. It's for people who are inherently skeptical, and yet open to the wonder and mysteriousness of existence, or who even have had mystical experiences that are incompatible with an absolute skepticism. It's the belief system I use to create a conversation between skepticism and what you might call "revelation," and hold them in an ongoing tension.

**RC:** You came to this by way of epiphany, a Saul on the road to Damascus kind of thing. Do *Skeptical Mystics* need that, or can it be learned?

**Void:** Let me tell you about one person who said to me, "I spent five years in seminary, and it wasn't until I read your book that I realized I was a Skeptical Mystic." So here was someone pursuing the spiritual path, who after five years shrugged it off without understanding what he had been doing or why he hadn't "succeeded." Maybe he thought he didn't have what it took, or something like that. And then he came across the book — this odd hybrid idea of Skeptical Mysticism — the solution

Continued on Page 15





## Solution in the sticks

Dear *Real Change*,

I salute the Governor, the Legislature, and the media for their attention and support of legislation aimed at improving the conditions and availability of migrant housing. Yet the reality is that the vast majority of migrant housing is used, at best, for two months a year: vastly underutilized and subject to neglect. To solve this problem I believe we should open migrant housing to outdoor and sport enthusiasts, to nature lovers of all types, e.g., mountain bikers, whitewater rafters, hunters, fishers, and the like. That's right, let's time-share migrant housing!

With all the lakes and streams, mountains and trails, the hunting and

fishing sites, the wide open roads and plentiful roadside communities, wouldn't these areas thrive if more inexpensive campsite housing were made available year round?

Wouldn't schools, study groups, and fitness clubs enjoy the opportunity to rough it among the orchards of central and eastern Washington? And wouldn't pride of ownership — albeit limited — guarantee upkeep and repair?

It's true that seasonal worker facilities are primitive, but they are attractive for that reason. A few years ago I spent a summer at the south end of Lake Chelan in a "picker shack" where heat and light came from a single light bulb, shower water from a hose and bedding was a sleeping bag I had brought with me. But the price was right at \$150 a month, and at night the stars shone by the thousands; it was a stunning experience, one worth sharing.

I really think that if the "shacks" were made available they would fill up and thus be kept up! Indeed they would pay for themselves by showing the land owner a profit and show the state a return on its investment. Ideally, each year the grounds and cabins would be improved because people cared about the quality of their rural experience. They would become partners with the primary intended user, the migrant and seasonal worker. Affordability is key to lifestyles. Lets not look only to cities for ways to get the full potential out of

buildings and facilities. The rural life can contribute too.

Sincerely,  
Billy King, Seattle

## Say goodbye to the trees

Dear *Real Change*,

The Lillian apartment building ("Take the Money and Run," May 2) is not the only South Lake Union fixture falling before Paul Allen's ambitions. He plans to mow down 20 trees tucked away on a lot where he plans to build his new neighborhood at Westlake Avenue and Denny Way. Vulcan's developer, Milliken, will develop Allen's private Seattle Commons, once soundly defeated by Seattle voters.

Into a diverse neighborhood of affordable housing, social services, the Urban Rest Stop hygiene center, and an active gay bar, Allen will introduce a high-end living, working, and shopping environment in 11-story towers, townhouses, and retail places. City officials claim the planned 48,000 square foot grocery will fill an unmet need. Will a QFC "upscale destination shopping experience" proving "high quality items for urban families and professionals" (from a January 17 article in *The Stranger*) serve the needs of the area's current population, one of Seattle's lowest-income?

Fortunately, his permits to tear down the old Quinton building and all the trees in his path have been stalled due to "adverse transportation impact." Planning a 975,000 square foot project on Denny, the site of the biggest traffic snarl between Aurora and I-5, reveals Allen's arrogance and sense of entitlement. His plans take no responsibility for aggravating our traffic mess. And, despite our designation as a "Tree City," the existing trees have no place in HIS vision for Seattle.

Sincerely,  
Laura Schaack

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# Real Change

Puget Sound's Voice of the  
Poor and Homeless

*Real Change* is published every other Thursday and is sold by the poor and homeless of Seattle. Annual subscriptions are available for \$35. All material is copyrighted to the authors.

Submissions should be mailed to "Real Change," 2129 2nd Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. Tel. (206) 441-3247; fax. (206) 374-2455.

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### Mission Statement:

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

### Goals

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

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

### Editorial Policy

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



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# Bagged

The Tacoma Public Library's Ban is de facto discrimination

By Wes Browning

Recently the Tacoma Public Library decided to bar entrance to patrons who carry bags larger than a specific size, at least downtown. We are concerned with some of the reasons which have been applied to justify the new rule.

One argument is that the bags are representative of a safety hazard, because the people who bring them in are mainly criminals and drug dealers. This was implied by Library Spokesman David Domkoski when he tried to explain that the rule was not aimed at excluding homeless people from the library. He said, "Homeless are welcome here; criminals and drug dealers are not welcome here," suggesting that the rule is intended to bar the criminals and drug dealers.

This is way off target. There is no proof that those burdened with large bags are the same as the active criminals and drug dealers who should rightly be barred from the library. In fact, in our long career on and off the streets, we've seen drug dealers and we've had drug dealers try to do business with us, and we've not once encountered a drug dealer hauling a big bag. For all we know, and we believe for all Domkoski knows, criminal activity and drug dealing are lucrative enough in almost all cases that such people can afford to rent apartments.

It has also been said that the bags represent a terrorist threat. This argument was endorsed in a May 17 *Seattle Times* editorial, which guessed that the ban "may be more of an excuse to attack a problem of patron discomfort" — but "If it is, that is all right."

Smaller bags, much smaller bags, represent a threat, too. The truth is that as long as all bags aren't searched, the next terrorist who wants to explode a bomb in the Tacoma Public Library will bring one in a bag at most 10 by 16 by 18 inches, and it will fit under a chair, and it will still kill a hell of a lot of people, because it will still be a damn good-size bomb.

**Yes, there are homeless people who use the library as a drop-in center.... The solution is not to turn your backs on people who, as a result of homelessness, are forced to carry all their belongings with them everywhere.**

Those wanting to use this argument need to also demand that all bags and persons be searched for bombs and weapons. Otherwise, it is the height of unfairness to only inconvenience the homeless who are burdened with large bags, when we know that the inconvenience caused will not deter a single attack by a determined terrorist.

Here's a reason for the new rule that hasn't been given: there are homeless people who use the library as a drop-in center, and by means of the new rule, many homeless people can be prevented from entering the library.

We believe that if the board of directors of the Tacoma Public Library could acknowledge that this reason is the principal reason driving their decision, then they might see clearly that the course they have taken defeats part of their mission.

Yes, there are homeless people who use the library as a drop-in center. The solution to this is to cooperate with the city and others to create drop-in centers, and to help end homelessness. The solution is not to turn your backs on people who, as a result of homelessness, are forced to carry all their belongings with them everywhere.

Years ago, many libraries balked at the idea that wheel-chair users should be accommodated. Many believed then that the effort to accommodate the physically handicapped would not be worth it.

It was worth it. It is always worth it to increase the accessibility of our libraries and educational institutions. It should be the mission of the Tacoma Public Library and every other library to accommodate all potential users no matter how they are handicapped.

We want to urge our libraries to take up the challenge of that mission. Homeless people do not haul large bags around out of a malicious desire to annoy the middle classes. Those bags contain all their possessions, and for many of them, represent their only hopes of continuity in their lives, linking their past with their future. They should not have to give up those links in order to gain the information they need in order to have a future.

Our libraries should make themselves partners with homeless patrons who truly want to use their facilities, and work with them to find creative solutions to these problems. ■

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## 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).



## North American digest May 24, 2002

News from around the U.S. and Canada,  
provided by the Street News Service  
([www.streetnewsservice.org](http://www.streetnewsservice.org)).

Advocates for the homeless in Denver aren't amused by a local ad agency's scheme to promote themselves by handing out signs to homeless panhandlers in the area. The signs were handed out by Sumaato Advertising the end of May to 20 homeless people who frequent downtown Denver during busy commuter hours. Messages include "At least I'm not spamming your e-mail" and "It's not for me, it's for my invisible friend," along with the Sumaato logo and the phrase "Sumaato Advertising Works." Sumaato's creative director and CEO, Dennis Wakabayashi, "hopes the humorous signs will motivate people to reach deeper," as stated in the company's press release, and hopes the shelter and employment information printed on the back of each sign helps homeless people as much as getting their name out helps the agency. Even the national attention brought to the homeless advocates' concerns doesn't daunt Wakabayashi. "At the very least," he states in a personal website note, "we brought the issues of the homeless back to the forefront of media attention in a new way. We hope this also helps."

Homeless people in St. Petersburg, Florida, who hand over their shopping carts are receiving a free duffel bag on wheels in which they can store their possessions. Police and volunteers handed out 30 of the bags on Monday, May 20, according to the online news source Ananova.com. The duffel-donors hope that the bags, which can be taken on buses, will improve the mobility of homeless people, and result in a drop in the number of people ticketed by police for possessing shopping carts.

An audit by San Francisco's financial watchdog has harshly criticized local government's approach to giving assistance to the needy. It accuses the city of lacking a concrete goal or effective plan, and says there's no current information on how many of its residents are homeless or how much is spent on services for the homeless. City supervisors have introduced many conflicting and controversial plans, some of which will appear before the voters in this November's election. However, some have told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that it is a lack of resources rather than organization that hinders the implementation of effective aid programs.

The *Cincinnati Enquirer* reports that homeless people are suing the city of Covington, KY, south of Cincinnati, saying a recent camp razing violated



their property rights. Eight people filed suit, saying they lost clothing, blankets, books, and photographs.

Ontario Premier Ernie Eves publicly reproached his Minister of Community, Family, and Children's Services, Brenda Elliot, for saying, in response to graphic images of an overcrowded Toronto shelter, that homeless people can't expect shelters to be as comfortable as the Holiday Inn. Eves said he himself was disturbed by the images, and that Elliot's remarks were inappropriate. A May 22 report in the *Toronto National Post* quoted left-of-center politicians saying that the remarks reflected the true nature of the Conservative government's attitude towards the needy. ■

— Kennedy Leavens, Molly Rhodes

### Artis: Recovering

The sparks of pain had been lighting up Artis the Spoonman's sternum for at least a month. He'd been laying down to let them pass, and chalking it up to heartburn. At 12:30 in the afternoon on Thursday, May 16, in the middle of a performance on the UW campus with guitarist Jim Page, the sparks turned to lightning. Leaning against a wall and still trying to play, Artis turned to Jim and said, "I got to wrap it up at 12:45."

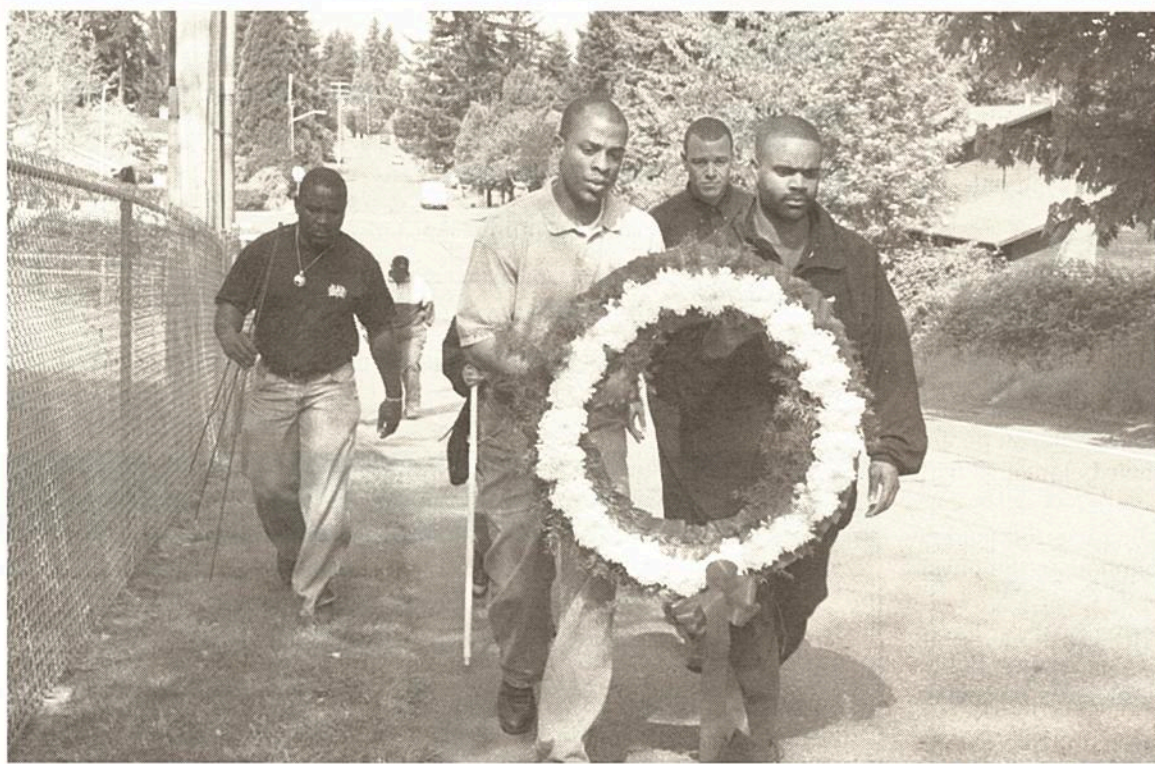
Artis drove Page home, took his van downtown, set the car keys in a hiding place, arranged for a friend to look after it, then called for help. Paramedics took him to Providence, where he spent eight days, recovering from what appear to be a series of heart attacks.

Doctors who ministered to Seattle's energetic, eclectic street performer says he's doing better, but will need plenty of rest — no playing the spoons for at least a month — and the requisite lifestyle changes. Artis says heart trouble runs in his family, and that 35 years of alcoholism hasn't helped either. Convalescence has its own surprises, among them, the price of prescription drugs. "The doctor says I'll have to take aspirin for the rest of my life" to thin the blood, Artis says. "I got 30 aspirins, special prescription, the other day; they were \$100. A hundred bucks a month."

If you've not got your health, fame is no comfort. But once the word gets round, it does ensure a dose of well-wishing. As Artis sat outside a Belltown café on a recent sunny afternoon, a driver stopped at the red light called out, "How are you doing?" Artis looked from side to side. "Me?" "Yes." "Weak, but I'm better. Thanks."

Fans, friends, and supporters opened a bank account for people wishing to donate money toward Artis's medical care. Just go to any Key Bank branch and ask the teller to make a deposit (no amount too small) in the *Artis the Spoonman Fund*. ■

— Adam Holdorf



FIFTEEN KING COUNTY CHURCHES AND THE LOCAL BRANCH OF THE NAACP USED MEMORIAL DAY TO COMMEMORATE ROBERT LEE THOMAS, SR., WITH A FIVE-MILE MOTORCADE TO THE SITE OF HIS DEATH AT THE HANDS OF AN OFF-DUTY KING COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPUTY. ALTON McDONALD, ALFOSTER GARRET, REV. CARL MACK, AND KELLY COLEMAN (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) CARRIED A FLOWER WREATH ALONG THE ROUTE TO THE PLACE HE WAS SHOT. THE NAACP ESTIMATES THAT 250 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE SERVICE. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

### Discrimination: a little light

A Washington State appeals court has cleared up a murky area of the law that prevented some tenants from fighting back when faced with an eviction order. The ruling affects hundreds of tenants across the state that suspect they're being discriminated against.

On May 6, the Division One Court of Appeals ruled that tenants may cite unlawful discrimination — on the basis of a protected class like race, age, or disability — as a factor in their eviction in court. Previously, some trial judges had held that tenants had to claim such bias in a separate suit; in cases brought by the landlord, the tenant's feelings of discrimination did not pertain.

The case arose from a dispute between Skye Kahli and the property managers of the Josephinum, a subsidized low-income apartment building on Second Avenue and Virginia Street where she lived. Court documents say Kahli lost a rent subsidy in January 1999, putting her \$506 monthly rent beyond reach. She asked management, which leases apartments at different income-restricted levels, to let her move to a unit appropriate to her lower income bracket. But her apartment

*Continued on page 5*

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



# Grenade Scare for Long-Time Vendor

Kennedy Leavens

**O**n Thursday, May 9, *Real Change* vendor Ed McLain was selling papers outside the Safeway that is located on the corner of Brooklyn and 50th, when a young white male approached him and threatened him with a hand grenade.

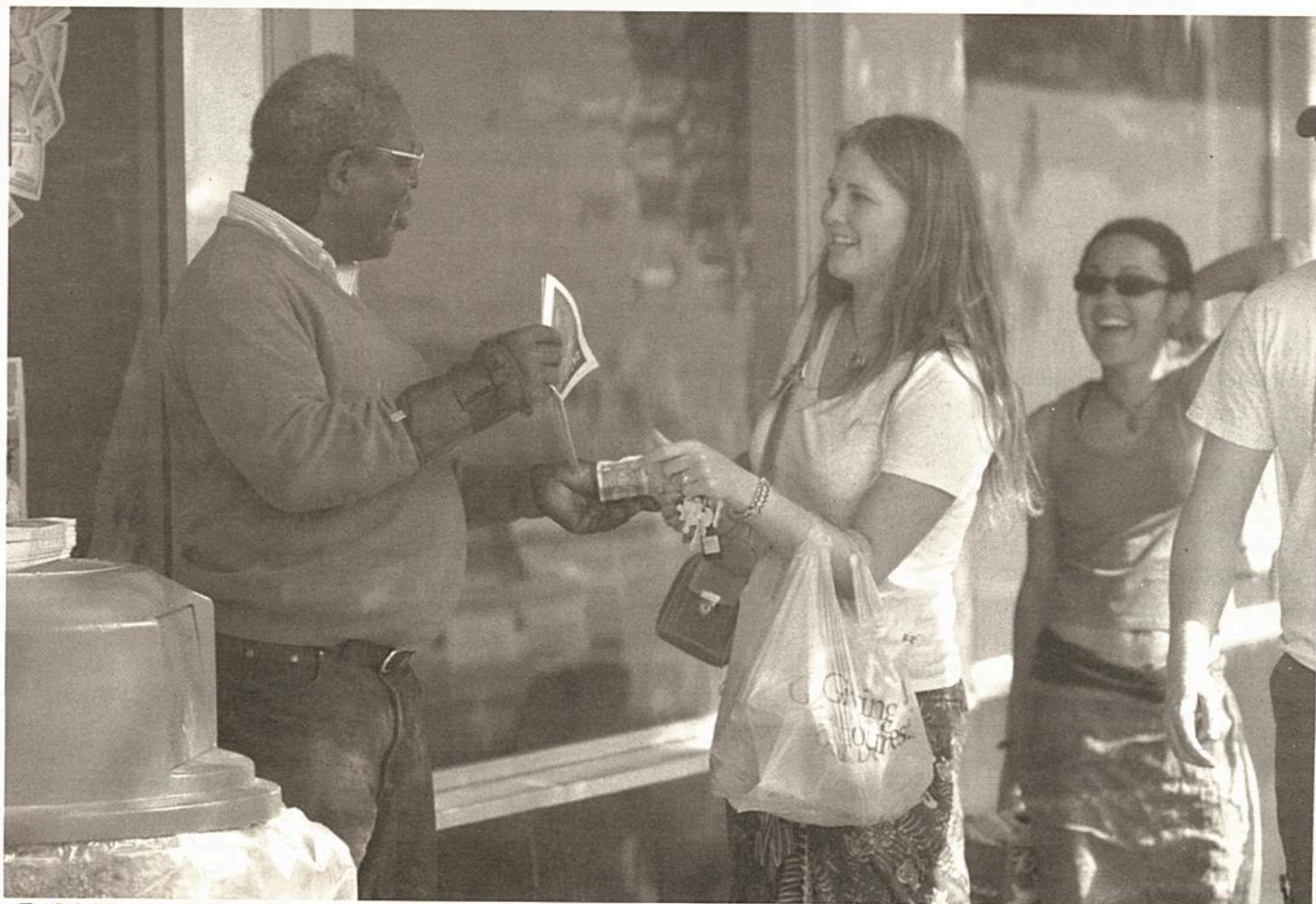
According to McLain, the man walked up to him and said, "Get a job, you fucking talking ape." He then took several of the shopping baskets that are stacked near the store's entrance and threw them at McLain. Finally, he approached McLain once more, and motioned as if he was going to throw the grenade at him, asking, "You want to fuck with this?" At that point, Safeway's security guards came out of the store and chased the man down Brooklyn. McLain believes he escaped in a brown car.

Sherri Marggraf, who has worked at Safeway for three years, witnessed the confrontation. "I was really scared," she says, describing the incident, which occurred around 8:30 at night. "[The grenade] was camouflage, and you could see the pin... I said, 'Please don't throw that,' and he looked at me.... He had this evil, mean look."

McLain, who is African American, suspects the threat was racially motivated. "He was a skinhead, I think," says the *Real Change* vendor matter-of-factly, "You know, extreme right. Talking ape - that's what they call [black people]."

"I didn't say anything to that guy," McLain told me. "I have a stellar reputation around here... nobody can say I've ever been dispolite or discourteous. Nobody." He has sold papers at the Safeway for nine years, and as we talked, he worked. "Real Change?" he cheerfully offered every passerby in his booming voice, and no matter their response, they received a polite "Have a nice day."

The vendor says that the community



ED McLAIN SELLS *REAL CHANGE* OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT SAFEWAY ON MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND. AT THE SAME SPOT TWO WEEKS EARLIER, A MAN THRUST A GRENADE IN McLAIN'S FACE. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

has been very supportive. "Everybody has come up to me, because it was in the paper, you know," he says, referring to an article in the May 10 issue of the *UW Daily*. "They ask about [the incident], and they say they're sorry it happened."

McLain claims to know everybody in the neighborhood, and as we stood together, he greeted regulars and crooned at a baby. One man who ambled by introduced himself as a friend. Upon learning the topic of our conversation, he started to reminisce about past incidents.

"There was that one guy in the truck who stopped in the middle of the street to yell [at McLain], holding up traffic," the man said. McLain recalled another

man who stopped by and yelled at the manager for a half an hour about how the vendor should sign up for a job-training program. "He came back the next day, apologized, gave me 10 bucks, and bought me a meal," McLain says. "People are unpredictable."

McLain received another threat nine days after the grenade incident, on Saturday, May 18. A man, who McLain believes was drunk, reportedly approached him and asked for two dollars. When McLain refused to give him the money, the man became belligerent, shoved him, and said, "N\*\*\*\*er, I'll kick

your ass." That afternoon, McLain went to a sporting goods store and bought himself a Louisville Slugger bat for whatever is needed to protect myself," McLain says. "I'm 59, and I'm too old to be fighting.... But nobody is going to be intimidating me."

McLain has no desire to use the bat, but says he will if he feels threatened. He does not bring the bat to work every day; he has it only, he says, "when it's crowded. Like this weekend is [Memorial Day] weekend, so I'll have my bat then." ■

## DISCRIMINATION continued from page 4

was a mess — pets causing damage, pests invading, clutter everywhere — because Kahli's disability made ordinary housekeeping chores nearly impossible. Josephinum management had made six different attempts to fumigate her place; each time, Kahli turned the exterminators away. As Kahli and the landlord stood at odds, the rent assistance disappeared, and Kahli got an eviction notice for non-payment of rent.

In trial court, Kahli argued that (despite the repeated attempts at clean-up) the landlord had failed to accommodate sufficiently for her needs as a disabled person. The ruling didn't go her way, so Kahli appealed. But the Josephinum's lawyers added their own appeal, arguing that legal precedent barred tenants from raising discrimination claims as they defended themselves during eviction. That was the argument the Appeals Court weighed in on.

"Prior to [the Appeals Court's ruling], some judges let tenants raise discrimination, and others said they couldn't," says Hong Tran, attorney with the Northwest Justice Project, who was *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) for Kahli. Now, it's clear: "Tenants can raise unlawful discrimination as a defense."

Tran says the court's action will help evicted tenants confronting discrimination, and lawyers who want to represent them. "There's already few attorneys who defend tenants in eviction actions," she says. "And there's fewer who can help in a private lawsuit [alleging] discrimination."

Kahli has found a new place to live. The Josephinum's lawyers have until June 6 to take this issue to the state Supreme Court. ■

— Adam Holdorf

## More Than Meets the Eye

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

### Yes! *Real Change* Matters.

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# poetry

Some stories are hard coming down.  
I looked at her flat black eyes  
And knew that's how it would be.  
And so it was.  
Like hot ginger-scented lava  
Words slowly spilled over her lips  
And down into her lap,  
Joining the twisting fingers  
She had trapped there.  
Words and fingers entangled,  
Obscene in the metaphor they held.  
And still her story ruptured,  
Still hard coming down.

—CAROLE G. ANDERSON

## ill fortune

Holes, in the  
end!  
do  
change.  
These, [choose one: will/however!]  
fall—

change your  
own!  
arriving  
first...  
at last.

Now?

— STAN BURRISS



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

Let's talk about found poetry!

One of our unstated goals here at Adventures in Poetry is to find and expose the poetry in every doorway and alley, anywhere it seeks rest from the great outdoors. We do this partly because we are lazy, and it beats making up our own poetry, but also because we think it ends up pretty good, even if it usually doesn't end up looking like poetry.

Well, the art of writing and not writing found poetry, itself, is right up one of our metaphorical alleys, snoring away as we speak. Just let me sneak up and nab it by its metaphorical behind. I'll make it inhale some metaphorical chloroform — there, that does it, it's stopped struggling. Now

let's ease it ever so gently onto the metaphorical examining table, and — there! We're ready to talk about found poetry!

By the way, I call that last paragraph "Metaphorical Chloroform," or, when properly chopped into lines, "Opus Prose Poem Frank, Serial Number 05200230, PFC," or just Frank No Last Name, for short. It is my first poem named Frank No Last Name. I find that which I just said deeply poetic, so it's just the sort of thing that I am talking about. I do not digress!

But let's inject some Generality into our subject. Next, let's slice our subject in half. Doing so we find it consists of two pieces, one "found" and one "poetry." Well that's about as General as you can get. Now let's reel back in disgust and consider another example.

Remember that ordinarily, when we make a poem while being stupid or lazy, we do it by taking someone else's poem, throwing out all the words to get an empty form, and then stuffing our own words in. The result is an ordinary poem. But in the example I am giving, half the words stuffed into the form are found words, so the result is an ordinary-poem-slash-found-poem-slash-mutant-clone-poem, or something. And since it's half as hard as a regular poem, that means it's twice as easy, so we can be twice as stupid while we write it!

## "Song of the Printer's Dummy, Packed Reluctantly Into Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,  
How'd the heck I get so wet?  
Consetetur sadipscing elitr,  
that's not a very good space-heater.

Sed diam nonumy eirmod,  
I laid upon it with naked bod.'  
Tempor invidunt ut labore,  
The wetness came from out the floor.

Et dolore magna aliquyam erat.  
My song is not about a bat.  
Sed diam voluptua at vero.  
My song is not about DeNiro.

Eos et accusam et justo —  
I sing my song with cheer and gusto.  
Duo dolores et ea rebum —  
a printer's dummy is not at all dumb.

Cha, cha, cha.

See how that works? Only the half that I wrote is stupid. Or is it? You can't tell without a working theory of stupidity, but all the world offers are countless theories of intelligence, as if intelligence were something more than the absence of stupidity. Oh stupid world.

But I have been talking about found poetry. I will have to talk about theories of stupidity in another issue. Perhaps when I get distracted by politics again. ■





Another Brilliant Idea

Two unforgiving, Old-Line religions  
“An eye-for-an-eye”

PLACED

Face-to-face  
In competition

On a tiny God-forsaken  
Hard-scrabble, forbidding, dessicated  
UNYIELDING piece-of-our-Earth

A land BOTH lay claim to  
“On God’s Authority”

...So

It has been INEVITABLE  
Since 1948  
*And before that*  
And FOREVER

— MARION SUE FISCHER

Countdown to Show Business

Still didn’t have a friend that I could count on.  
Still didn’t have a pillow for my head.  
I don’t think it was all that.  
Good of a thing,  
But  
I earned a dollar of my own money.

The last thing that they could steal from me  
Was my integrity  
And they did it with starvation  
And with pride.  
I don’t think it was all that  
Good of a thing  
But  
I earned a dollar of my own money.

I don’t know who to tell  
I threw it away on a drink  
There wasn’t even a quarter left  
To give to charity.  
I don’t think it was all that  
Good of a thing  
~~But~~  
I earned a dollar of my own money.

—MAC CRARY

OASIS: Morro Palms Mobile Lodge

In Ancient Times  
In the desert-of-my-Ancestors  
Palms trees indicated  
A welcome OASIS

A green and lush place of Refuge  
Where the Wanderers  
Could rest and refresh  
Before continuing their journeys

So, here in this  
Too-ooo-much-asphalt trailer park  
In Southern California  
A desert, itself

Palm trees planted-by-man  
STILL denote an Oasis  
A Reservation  
Refuge from the busyness  
of Modern Amerika

A place peculiarly cut off  
psychically  
From the frantic streets  
That surround it

An OASIS  
Where old people  
Rest, refresh and WAIT  
Til/their/Time/comes

And their next journey BEGINS

— MARION SUE FISCHER



# Not Just Babysitters



FFN Care helps caregivers and parents provide more for their kids

IN A HECTIC GAME OF REDLIGHT GREENLIGHT AT THE PLAYGROUND AT THE SHORELINE CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES, CONNER ANDERSON, ERIC CHEN, AND ERICKA MENDEZ CHARGE AHEAD. PHOTO BY JACKIE RENN.

By Betsy Power

As the children begin to arrive, the previously calm room explodes with activity. Gabriella, a young Mexican woman, enters hesitantly, leading her young charge. She settles herself quietly, expressionless into the corner, while little Ricardo wanders off towards the other children. Once the playgroup activities are in full swing, Gabi joins Ricardo at the craft table to help him with the paints. Soon the children get restless and move on to another table, another activity. Gabi finds herself alone with another adult participant, also Latino, and the conversation begins. With fingers covered in purple paint, the two women discuss the challenges of child care, and pass helpful hints from one to the other.

Gabi is a participant in a revolutionary program: Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care. She is considered an "informal" caregiver, part of the ever-growing group of grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, neighbors, friends, and nannies who provide care and education for children under the age of 12 while parents are working or in school. More than 40 percent of Washington's

children are cared for by such people.

In Washington, one year of child care expenses is more than twice the cost of a year's tuition at the University of Washington. While child-care costs continue to rise, King County's subsidies for low- and moderate-income working parents are expected to disappear over the next year. Many more families may be relying on these informal caregivers for child care solutions.

But informal caregivers are likely to have little or no child-care training and most do not consider their efforts significant. The Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Care program aims to break this trend. It seeks to help informal caregivers like Gabi improve their child-care skills through workshops, support groups, and access to vital information. It provides both children and their caregivers an opportunity for socialization and support.

"*Sientate, Ricardo.*" Sit down. Out in the playground, Gabi interrupts her explanation of how she came to be part of the program to fret over Ricardo on the slide. At 25 years old, Gabi has little experience caring for children. As a

teen, she immigrated to Chicago and worked in an all Spanish-speaking factory for five years. She eventually moved west to live with her aunt in Oregon. During the day she cared for her young cousin. Night classes offered her the opportunity to finally begin learning the English language.

Three months ago, Gabi moved to Seattle to live with her cousin Sylvia Calvillo and to care for Ricardo, Sylvia's son. She knows no one and would have had little opportunity for interaction with other caregivers if it weren't for Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care. The program, offered through the Center for Human Services, has two weekly sessions; Gabi attends both religiously. On Mondays, she joins the group in a training workshop while the children are led in educational activities that promote school readiness in the adjoining playroom. The workshops focus on a different issue each week, such as safety in the home, cooking, and music and movement. On Thursdays, the caregivers work directly with the children to put into practice what they learned earlier in the week.

Alicia Roberts, the project coordinator, tries to have a translator available whenever possible, but worries that Gabi and the other Latino participants may not get as much out of the workshop as the English-speaking participants. To mitigate this challenge, she relies heavily on visual educational material. Although Gabi admits she was nervous in the beginning and didn't understand much of the discussions, she has become more comfortable with the program and the other participants. She appreciates the information that has been made available to her. "It helps me a lot," she explains. "They use words that are specific to caring for a child, and they are words that I need to know. I have learned what is dangerous in the household. I have learned how to be a better caregiver."

Her cousin Sylvia has worked at the center for the past two years. In fact, she began as a participant herself five years ago, back when the program, then called First Steps, was directed towards parents. "The opportunity to be part of

*Continued on Page 13*





ABOVE: ERIC CHEN CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF A PARFAIT-MAKING ACTIVITY DESIGNED TO EDUCATE CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND CAREGIVERS. BELOW: ERICKA MENDEZ, IN THE DARK SHIRT, AND HER CAREGIVER, MARIVEL OLIVERA, ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE CIRCLE, LEARN HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR TIME TOGETHER. PHOTOS BY JACKIE RENN.

#### CHILD CARE Continued from Page 8

the program at the center has changed my life." Sylvia declares. Her oldest daughter was only three at the time and spoke no English. Now she can read and write both English and Spanish with ease. Sylvia believes that the First Steps program deserves the credit. When she began working for the program, her youngest son Ricardo would come with her every day. In the beginning he was overly shy and would only sit in the corner. Now, although he is still quiet, he participates in all of the activities and enjoys playing with the other children.

Eventually it became too difficult to juggle work and Ricardo, the only child not yet in school. Sylvia needed to turn to daycare, which put a big dent in the family's finances. Gabi's arrival in Seattle has made a big difference for the family. And it coincided with the beginning of the Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care program. Sylvia was quick to sign Gabi and Ricardo up for the pilot program. "This training will prepare her in the future with her own children, and is helping us now by benefiting my children," says Sylvia.

Ultimately the goal of the FFN Care is to prepare our children for the future. School-age children spend 80 percent of their waking hours out of school. Studies have proven that the quality of this time is directly related to school performance. Risk-taking behavior and substance abuse are more likely to be an issue for children who are denied access to creative, quality, out-of-school care.

Alicia Roberts, FFN Project director for the Center for Human Services, explains that using the First Steps methodology for FFN Care allowed them to get the program up and run-

ning fairly easily. "It was a pretty smooth transition because many of the issues that caregivers are dealing with are parenting issues. The first time that we sat down and talked with caregivers, they told us that they wanted information on positive discipline, proper nutrition, and exercise. These were the same things that the parents were asking for too." The Center for Human Resources has had much success with their First Steps program, and Alicia believes that FFN Care will be equally successful.

Child Care Resources, which compiles all of the available resources for FFN caregivers and to share it with the other agencies, has also participated in this first pilot program. Alicia was pleased to note that they did a presentation on safety in the home for the FFN caregivers. "They usually only do this for certified care providers, but they see the need for FFN caregivers to have that same level of education and training."

Elaine Larson from Child Care Resources notes that the project "started

as one idea and then spread like a spider web - with all of the connections and complications." Child Care Resources has begun a pilot program of their own. They are organizing support groups for caregivers in four underserved King County communities. Two Spanish speaking groups have already begun in North and East King County. And soon groups will form for the Southeast Asian community in Seattle and the Somali community in South King County. The activities will include informal training on child development and safety, connections with local resources, leadership development, and creation of a parent/caregiver resource guide.

Irene Stuart, director of the City of Seattle's Office of Education, believes that these efforts will provide FFN caregivers with the skills that they need to "plan appropriate activities, provide creative learning materials, and respond to children's behavior most effectively. These strategies work well with caregivers' informal programs, but now they're being tailored to reach individuals in a wide variety of communities. This can make a real difference in the lives of thousands of children."

*"The wheels on the bus go round and round, round and round, round and round. The wheels on the bus...."*

The two-hour Thursday session is almost over and the children and their caregivers have gathered in a circle to sing a good-bye song. Gabi joins and grins as Alicia and the children show her the proper hand signals that accompany the song. By the fourth verse she musters the nerve to softly sing the English words. It took Ricardo only one verse to throw his whole body into it. The song is over and everyone noisily files out. Gabi waves good-bye to the group. She is smiling. So is Ricardo. Alicia comments on the day's progress. "Our hope is that the caregivers will realize how important their role is. They are not just babysitters." ■





# West Coast Refugees

## A report on the Santa Cruz "Right to Sleep" conference

By Michele Marchand

In early May, more than 60 people gathered in Santa Cruz, California for a conference about what one participant called "a homegrown homeless movement": the proliferation of outdoor encampments run by and for homeless people along the West Coast.

At least four organized West Coast camps have started in the past two years: Seattle's own Tent City3 (organized by SHARE/WHEEL), Portland's Dignity Village, and now, two newer camps in Santa Cruz and Isla Vista, California.

This "Right to Sleep" conference was sponsored by various Santa Cruz and San Francisco homeless groups and the Green Party of Santa Cruz County, and was held at a local Green Party member's house. Six of us from SHARE/WHEEL's Tent City3 drove 900 miles to Santa Cruz in a donated van, eager to share our experiences and learn from other camps.

Portland city government, notably City Councilman Erik Sten, Dignity members pointed out that you can't ultimately trust the political process for establishing camps. "Politicians flip and flop like fish," said Mubarek. It's been the strength of camp operations, support of the local street newspaper *streetroots*, and the development of broad community support that's helped this camp survive.

Their relationship with Councilmember Sten and community support resulted in their ability to negotiate a six-month lease on public land near the airport, which they leased for \$20,000 (donated by a local philanthropist). It is literally a few yards from the razor wire fences of the Columbia River Correctional Facility.

Over the course of the past several months, members of Camp Dignity have built structures and built a strong sense of community among members.

Santa Cruzans with criminal defense strategies. A Santa Cruz sleeping ban results in homeless people getting ticketed and then jailed for sleeping outside, despite the reality that there are more than 3000 homeless people in Santa Cruz County and only a couple hundred shelter beds.

Camp Paradise was flooded out around Christmastime last year. Many homeless Santa Cruzans we talked to believed this was a man-made flood rather than an act of God; they suspected city officials opened the floodgates upriver in a deliberate attempt to shut down the camp.

In an interesting parallel to Seattle's Tent City, the Pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church invited 12 members of Camp Paradise to camp on church property shortly thereafter. Folks from the camp started cleaning up the church and the neighborhood; within a few days, the church got such good feedback they invited Camp Paradise to stay indefinitely. Pastor Stan Abraham says the church offered the camp space "on the basis of faith, scripture, and conscience." The church is now negotiating with Santa Cruz County officials for permits.

Meanwhile, landscaping and cleanup efforts of the homeless camp members have continued, and a project called the Santa Cruz Service Corps started. With tools that were donated or bought at thrift stores, members have been doing landscaping and cleanups throughout the city. Of their efforts to fix up the land, Templeton says, "We're making it look like the Garden of Eden."

With the help of supporters, they have negotiated a pilot project with the Parks Department: three public parks will be opened up for homeless camps, on a two-week rotation, in exchange for camp members doing park maintenance. This "ecological restoration project" conserves the dwindling Santa Cruz park maintenance budget, and has been welcomed as a pilot project to preserve public parks at low cost.

### Camp Home Sweet Home(less)

#### Isla Vista, CA

"We speak from the heart," said Chris Omer, an earnest young co-founder of this fledgling camp, describing the discomfort his group sometimes feels in boardroom negotiations for the survival of their camp. "They say we're unrealistic. They say we're oversimplistic. We just say we need a safe place to stay."

Following the death of two friends in the Isla Vista homeless community, a handful of homeless people staged a sleepout in Anisq' Oyo' Park in late January 2002. Near Santa Barbara, the

small community of Isla Vista is unincorporated, which has resulted in members of Camp Home Sweet Home(less) negotiating with the local Parks Department, the only governing authority in the area. It also has resulted in a happy legal circumstance: although Santa Barbara and Isla Vista have a camping ban, an attorney working with their group discovered the ban is not authorized in local parks.

Now moved to Estero Park and gaining community support after three months of successful self-managed operations, Camp Home Sweet Homeless is hopeful for their future; so hopeful, in fact, that they have chosen to rename their camp to indicate they feel they've found their home.

In a report to strengthen their position with Santa Barbara County officials, they write, "Communal living and empowerment are essential to helping people help themselves." Camp members also have been supported by students at the University of California (Santa Barbara), and were offered a speaking slot at Ralph Nader's recent talk on campus.

### A Tent City movement?

"I'd like to show you the Camp Dignity salute," said Jack Tafari, towards the end of the conference. "Stick your right hand in the air, put your nose in your armpit, and shout, 'We're revolting!'"

The conference was extremely poorly organized: the agenda wasn't published in advance, and was subverted anyway by a bathrobe-wearing, teddy-bear hugging Santa Cruz activist who hoped to get camp members from other states to stage a protest rally in the Santa Cruz town square specifically regarding the Santa Cruz sleeping ban. Despite all this, homeless people managed to consult with each other about their efforts to destroy stereotypes, to stay together and safe in tents.

We're West Coast refugees, and perhaps the proliferation of camps like ours down the coast marks the fledgling beginning of a revolt, or movement. Notwithstanding obvious operational differences and different strategies around use of public-private land sites, conference participants took a lot of hope out of their connections at this conference, and made tentative agreements to continue building relationships. For all of us, the starting point has been safety in numbers, and basic attempts of homeless people to survive outside. All four of our camps are self-managed, with strict operating policies and security provisions established by camp members themselves. And all of us use similar, obvious allies: churches, street newspapers, colleges. These, more than activists who attempt to speak for us or subvert our agendas, might help us build a West Coast Movement.

There is much we can learn from each other: crisis coordination, logistics of operations, legal and fundraising strategies, what to do with all those day-old bread donations. It's a pity our need to survive, raise funds, and move our camps might get in the way of our continuing to meet. ■



TENTCITY3 CELEBRATES ITS TWO-YEAR ANNIVERSARY. PHOTO BY MICHELE MARCHAND.

### Dignity Village

#### Portland, OR

"We're viewed as upper middle homeless," said Jack Tafari, one of Dignity's founders and leaders. "We're one of the elite camps, because we have port-o-lets, showers, color TV, movies, electricity." Their camp even has computer terminals in a donated trailer for the 60 camp members, and a land-line phone.

Established in December 2000, Dignity Village initially was a moving target, shuttling among various under-the-bridge locations on public land. In the first month, camp members faced a Christmas eviction from a piece of public land, and moved to another site by shopping cart. Although they had garnered much community support, they were greeted by Portland police trying to bar the establishment of their new site. As we discussed moving strategies and dos and don'ts, soft-spoken co-founder Ibrahim Mubarek said, wryly: "That's a don't. Don't let the police know where you're going next."

Despite their good relationship with

A local architect/builder has helped them construct a large, domed community meeting place out of found materials. The community building has a Roundtable for Council meetings, a hearth (wood-burning stove), and a Quonset hut for guests.

But Dignity's lease on this site expires on July 1st, and for now camp members don't know what they'll do next. They're focusing their energy on building an organizational infrastructure, and fundraising (a local coffee purveyor has developed a "Dignity Blend" bean for them.)

### Camp Paradise

#### Santa Cruz, CA

Founded by two homeless men, Larry Templeton and "the infamous 'Dirt Clod,'" Camp Paradise sprang up under a bridge near downtown Santa Cruz in January 2001. "The essence of this camp is that it saved a lot of lives," said Kris Frederickson, an attorney who lived at Paradise after her alcoholism spiraled out of control. Now sober several months, she is helping homeless



## VOID Continued from Page 1

I had to invent because nobody was offering it to me. So he looked at it and said, "Yes, that is me. I am this, and yet I am that."

**RC:** How does one describe Compassionate Nihilism to the layperson?

**Void:** That, again, is something I had to fashion out of incompatible belief systems. A dedication to revolution and to addressing the heartbreak of the world on the one hand, and at the same time, the lack of inherent meaning in the universe and a distrust of the progressive teleology that things are going to get better. So what do you do? Suffering demands a response, but you know that simple charity isn't the way to go, that one must address structural problems. So the response has to be a paradoxical and ironic melding of philosophies, where I dedicate myself to revolution without necessarily believing it will happen. So revolution is necessary but impossible. That's the paradox. To address that one becomes a compassionate nihilist.

**RC:** The Amazon website says customers who bought your book also bought *A Day Without Rain*, by Enya. Is the Universe playing a joke on you here?

**Void:** The Universe is playing a joke on all of us. What can I say?

**RC:** Can someone live in the Ranch House of the Soul and still commute downtown?

**Void:** I think we all live in the Ranch House of the Soul, except maybe those saints among us. It's the part of us that chooses to cut ourselves off from others, to be satisfied with mediocrity. It's similar to the notion of the "comfort zone," but with more of a socially critical edge. Quitting the Ranch House of the Soul is the key to our own potential to encompass a greater reality. Eleanor Roosevelt said, "It's the things you think you can't do that you must do." Our destiny lies in those things we push away.

**RC:** Why is telling the truth so hard to do?

**Void:** There are both prosaic and deeper meanings here. Telling the truth can be, "Yes, I stole the cookie from the cookie jar." That's not what we're talking about. We mean the deeper, inner truth-telling. The confronting of who we are in our heart of hearts, and that is very difficult. There's also the truth-telling of creating. An Essentialist will say there's a buried inner truth that needs to be uncovered. A Constructionist will say that the truth is unwritten, and exists as a potential. The idea here is that our lives are a story, a text that we write and edit and play out. This kind of truth-telling is very hard: to shape our own destiny, to create a world that is us; to shape ourselves as unique and irreplaceable beings.

**"Take you, for example.... You've been a homeless activist for 15 years, and in so doing you are creating who you are, and you're in the world in a way that feels right.... It's a path toward humility. It short-circuits the self-righteousness and arrogance and grandiosity, and the noblesse oblige stuff. It's a more authentic act of solidarity. It recognizes that the people you advocate for offer you exactly what you want. And then it encourages others to get involved because you are modeling a way to be in the world that works for you, as opposed to being all moralistic about it. As activists, it behooves us to cop to that."**

— Activist Brother Void talking to fellow activist and *Real Change* founder, Timothy Harris



PHOTO OF BROTHER VOID,  
COURTESY OF  
ANDREW BOYD.

**RC:** How can selfishness lead to a better world?

**Void:** By recognizing that those of us who are engaged in making a better world are not just doing this out of selfless and altruistic motives. There is a component of egotism and selfishness. It's about who we want to be in the world, even if it's nominally for others. Take you, for example.

**RC:** Me?

**Void:** Yeah, you. You've been a homeless activist for 15 years, and in so doing you are creating who you are, and you're in the world in a way that feels right. And you seem like you've found the right place for you to be. So, as an activist, you are grounded. It's a path toward humility. It short-circuits the self-righteousness and arrogance and grandiosity, and the noblesse oblige stuff. It's a more authentic act of solidarity. It recognizes that the people you advocate for offer you exactly what you want. And then it encourages others to get involved because you are modeling a way to be in the world that works for you, as opposed to being all moralistic about it. As activists, it behooves us to cop to that.

**RC:** One of the more controversial aspects of your service is the *Killing of the Buddha*. What did Buddha ever do to you?

**Void:** It's a good question. I don't know that Buddha ever did anything to me specifically. But as a representation of idolatry, and a freezing of the quest, the idea here, I could use your help in articulating this —

**RC:** If you meet the Buddha —

**Void:** Right. If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him. Killing the Buddha is about not fetishizing the quest for enlightenment into an image that blocks you from the original intent. It's about freeing the existential, the human encounter with the divine, from the symbol that has come to represent it and has displaced the experience itself. This can happen with anything and everything, but religion is the classic example of that, where we no longer seek the encounter, but merely live by ossified rules and rituals and images. So we take the reified object, this Buddha thing that we think of fondly, and we smash it into little tiny bits with the end of a broomstick to bring us back to the absurdity of the universe and the open-ended quest. It reminds us that it's all really up to us, and that enlightenment isn't what we expect, and it isn't necessarily what we wish for. We need to shatter our own assumptions. It's a lot easier to bow to the statue than to have a terrifying encounter with absolute reality.

**RC:** One last question. What have you done with Andrew?

**Void:** (Laughs). I left him in the phone booth where I found the monk's cloak. ■



# The Homeless Ethicist

By Rafael Santana

New York City's monthly homeless paper, *Upward*, has enlisted a panel of conscientious consultants to draw a road map for the rest of us. This month: **Is it ever OK to lose control?**

"Before I became homeless I would lose my temper at times with my wife and children and people at work. In the street, however, I noticed that losing control could lead to violence and possibly a trip to Bellevue [New York City's mental hospital]. So I learned to be calm at all times."

—Haig

"I'd say it is never acceptable, which does not mean that I have not lost control at times. Usually, almost immediately, I feel sorry or silly, or both, and now try just to walk away before making a fool of myself and, being a little old guy, perhaps hurting someone's feelings or getting pounded on."

—Don Levit

"The best trial lawyers do it at times to sway a jury to gain freedom for a client in a capital case, for example. It may keep someone off death row. Losing control can be an art. The president uses 'controlled loss of control' when addressing Congress, if he wants to declare war on another country. Abe Lincoln used 'controlled loss of control' in his address to the nation in order to gain freedom for the slaves. Loss of control has its purpose when a nation is going to follow a weak leader. Loss of control shows one can lead. That doesn't mean the leader is right."

—Robert Sylvester

"It depends on how you lose it. It can be both beneficial and damaging. It certainly is an 'out,' but you have to get it out quickly, be done with it, and not let it fester on and on. Certainly, hurting others must be avoided."

"If you must lose control, have some control over where, when, and over

whom you lose it. Certainly it is best that, if you must lose control (and I am speaking of anger), do it away from other people, even from those you may wish it to be directed at.

"I had an experience in a soup kitchen when someone caused me to become very angry. I could have exploded right there, but I took it outside and directed it at some garbage cans on the street. It took 15 policemen to calm me down using mace. I ended up at Bellevue for observation, then released. I'd gotten out my anger on something, not somebody, though that was bad enough."

"It's really best to vent one's anger through non-human contact. If you're in contact with the person you're angry with, perhaps a therapist would help or better yet, take it to God."

"One needs to release anger, and being out of control sometimes is the best way to do this, so long as you control yourself a little. You can do this if you already have it in your make-up the desire to use reason. If you already have this, you must draw upon it at this most difficult hour, which it really is, when you're out of control."

"If you are someone who habitually loses control, seek anger management, a group like AA where you can share feelings with others suffering the same thing; it can help you deal with future anger situations."

"So, in short, being out of control can result in something good, so long as it is within reason and does not hurt anybody — yourself included. Channel it in the right way, in the right place, and with the right people." ■

—Toby Van Buren

Reprinted from *Upward*, January 2002. Submit your quandaries and dilemmas to *The Homeless Ethicist* via email ([upward-nyc@aol.com](mailto:upward-nyc@aol.com)), fax (212-883-0672), or old-fashioned letter (*The Homeless Ethicist*, c/o Rafael Santana, 211 E. 43rd St., Suite 1004, New York, New York 10017).

## LETTERS Continued from Page 2

### A lesson in humility

Dear *Real Change*,

I'm writing this because I owe a huge debt to a homeless man. He taught me not to judge by appearances, to recognize courage regardless of the source, to respect a person for his actions not his class, and the value of compassion. I learned all this not from his words but by his example.

But for the grace of God, whoever or whatever that may be, I would be homeless. I am a veteran, totally and permanently disabled by clinical depression. I am also an alcoholic/addict. If my mother hadn't let me stay with her when I was medically returned from the Navy, I could have been on the streets. For 5 years until I won my battle with the VA, I lived on under \$700 a month.

As for my alcoholism, again it's the grace of God. AA worked for me, almost 12 and a half years sober today.

Today I live in my own apartment. I did win my battle with the VA; six hospitalizations in four years proved my case. I also draw Social Security. I'm not rich but I am comfortable.

Instead of compassion I felt contempt for the homeless, especially alcoholics. A brave man changed that. This letter is my only way to thank him.

I had an hour between buses at the International District station so I went to Uwajimaya.

On the way I passed a group of homeless men. One was too drunk to talk; all I heard was gibberish. I knew I was better than him. Wrong.

Leaving the store, I saw him grab the arm of a very well-dressed black woman and stop her from going in. I stood by in case she needed help to get rid of him.

He kept babbling something and pointing toward the parking lot. Somehow I realized he didn't act drunk. I also knew that whatever he was trying to tell her was very important. She didn't realize that, she treated him with contempt. She was rich, he was a bum.

My head told me the same thing, my gut said to trust him. I told her, "Stay here, I'll find out what he wants." I followed him into the parking lot.

He stopped at a luxury SUV and I saw the fur coat caught in the door, dragging on the ground. I knew he couldn't, so I told her for him.

While we waited for her, I noticed

how he held one arm. I realized then that he wasn't drunk, he couldn't talk because of a stroke. At that moment I felt a huge amount of respect for him. His act of courtesy was so important to him that he risked her contempt to help her. Would I have? I really don't know.

After she put her fur back in the Lexus, she thanked me but ignored him completely. By then I felt contempt for her, respect for him. She had no appreciation for his kindness.

I did. I stuck out my left hand and he shook it with his good hand. I told him "Thank you sir" and walked off. I meant the "Sir," and he knew it.

I was about half a block away when I heard someone yelling. I turned, it was him. He waved and said, very slowly and very carefully, "Thank you, buddy."

I knew how hard that was for him and knew how important my simple action was to him. At first I didn't see why; then I realized how much I had given him.

I followed him into the lot, the gift of kindness. She wouldn't, so I thanked him, the gift of gratitude. I called him sir and meant it, the gift of respect.

To me, those are part of everyday life, not to him. He's used to the contempt she showed him. I treated him as a person, she didn't. To him, my small gifts were priceless. His was also.

To me, humility means being one of, not better or less than, equal to. I had forgotten that, I needed the lesson he taught me. I was and am still very grateful to him.

This was years ago but I haven't forgotten. I always look for him in the International District, but have never seen him since.


Maybe you know this man, maybe you are him. I would like very much to shake his hand again, and again tell him, "Thank you, sir."

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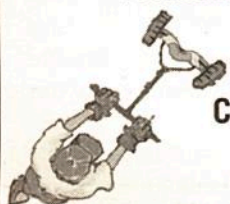


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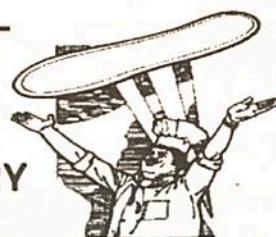
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Wednesday, May 8, 8:15 p.m., 5th and Bell. An officer observed two people walk against a traffic signal. He stopped them and cited them for jaywalking. One suspect, a 31-year-old white female transient, gave a false name and date of birth to the officer. She then gave her real name, and admitted she lied because there was a warrant out for her arrest. The warrant was verified, and she was placed under arrest. She was searched and found to be carrying several rocks of crack cocaine and heroin concealed inside a large black marker pen. She was transported to King County Jail for the warrants and possession of drugs. Her companion was cited for jaywalking and released.

Friday, May 10, 11:40 p.m., 3200 block W. Howe St, under City Bridge. The officer found the suspect, a 53-year-old transient white male, asleep under the bridge, and photographed him sleeping in his blanket. The officer has received many complaints of the suspect staying under the bridge, which is clearly posted with "No Trespassing" and "No Loitering" signs. The man was also photographed in front of the "No Trespassing" sign. He was warned by the officer not to stay under the bridge or he would be arrested. The suspect has mental problems, and SPD has received numerous complaints from residents who have seen him in their yards. Many residents are scared because of his size and mental health problems. He is often seen talking to himself. The officer has been in contact with the suspect many times in the last three years.

Saturday, May 11, 5 p.m., Occidental Park. An officer was dispatched to the park to investigate an assault. Upon arrival he met the victim, a 49-year-old transient white male, who said he was standing outside a food store by Occidental park when he was approached by a man who asked if he wanted to buy drugs. The victim said no, and began to walk away. As he turned, the suspect struck him in the face with a closed fist. He continued to walk away, and suspect followed him to the far side of the park, and stuck him again in the face. The victim contacted a Safety Ambassador who called the police. An area search for the suspect proved negative, but the victim thought he might be on the other side of the park. There he identified a man sitting with about 10 other men as his attacker. The suspect was taken into custody, but several witnesses stated that this man had just entered the park, and had nothing to do with the beating. He was identified and released. The victim suffered a swollen face and cut lip, and was treated at the scene. ■

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

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# Looking for a Cure

**Women and Madness**  
By Phyllis Chesler Ph.D.  
Four Walls Eight Windows  
1997, 25th Anniversary Edition  
Paperback, 416 pages  
\$15

Review by Anitra Freeman

**W**omen and Madness has been reprinted three times, had sold two-and-a-half million copies by 1997, and carries as much impact today as when it was first published in 1972.

As a woman whose life has been strongly affected by bipolar disorder, I was grabbed by the title. As a feminist, and as a "mental health consumer" whose entire family has both benefited and suffered from the medical and psychiatric professions, I was interested in what a long-time feminist who is also a psychologist had to say about the subject.

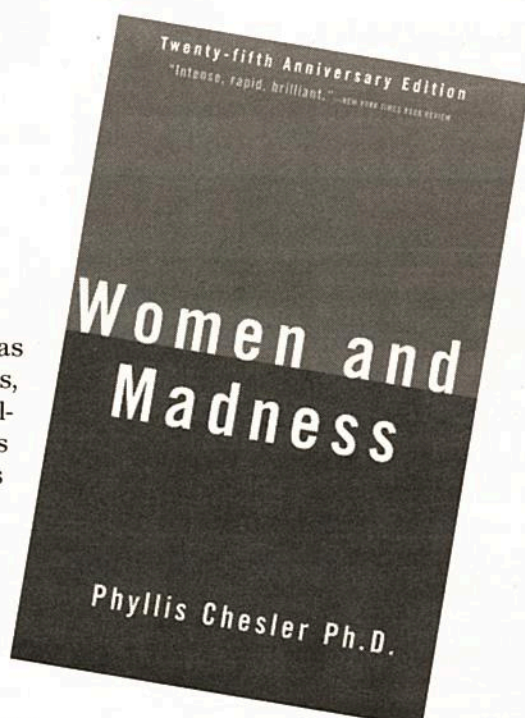
I ended with mixed feelings, because Chesler seems to be sending mixed messages in her book, arguing at least three theories of "women and madness" that to some extent contradict each other.

First is the argument that "madness" among women is extremely over-diagnosed. Chesler observes that women who exhibit traditionally "male" traits like independence, self-assertiveness, and dominance are often diagnosed as mentally ill — paranoid, schizophrenic, manic, etc. Women whose behavior is more typically "feminine" — passive, underachieving, and retiring — are diagnosed as depressed or compulsive. And medical illness is often misdiagnosed as mental illness, especially in women, poor people, gays, and people of color.

I am well aware of this over-diagnosis and mis-diagnosis. If you have doubts about it, please read this book — Chesler documents cases thoroughly. Some of the most powerful portions of her book are the testimonies of women themselves.

A second argument is that women (and poor people, gays, and people of color) who are in real suffering from either medical or mental illness are less likely to get adequate and appropriate treatment. They are less likely, even, to get understanding and support from family, friends, or employers and co-workers. Again, this is well documented and gets no argument from me. The point at which I begin arguing with Chesler is when she categorizes all mental illness, including depression and schizophrenia, as normal human response to abuse and stress — an understandable reaction to an oppressive patriarchy that can only be cured by social change.

Hey, I'm all for social change, and I believe a healthier society would make everything easier, including getting over pneumonia. But you're still going to need antibiotics for pneumonia, and



people who suffer many mental illnesses will still benefit from medication.

I agree with Chesler that if you are in an intolerable situation that is driving you nuts the cure is not Prozac; the cure is to get out of the situation. But if your own body chemistry is sabotaging you, the right medication can be the only thing that makes it possible to change your situation. And even after the change, you can benefit from therapeutic counseling.

Chesler's psychological prescription for the future is for women to become passionate about their own survival and self-development, not focusing all that passion on others. Let me make that image more concrete.

For 45 years, my life was disrupted in cycles by bipolar disorder. I would either be going a mile a minute or be dead in the water. I drove everyone around me nuts. They all accused me of being deliberately aggravating. I felt increasingly guilty for all the misery I caused, but will power alone changed nothing.

I was finally told that it was *not my fault* — I had an illness that could be treated medically. I dropped the guilt, no longer felt I had to defend myself, and began living as if I had a right to "my own survival and self-development." I became passionately persistent about getting the *right* treatment, not accepting mis-treatment from anyone, including doctors and psychiatrists. It will still take many years of counseling to learn to live on level ground instead of on a roller coaster.

Chesler's prescription works. But please, if medication is what works for you, don't let anyone, including Phyllis Chesler, tell you to take a political demonstration instead.

Storm the barricades *after* you take your meds. It's more effective that way. ■

*Phyllis Chesler has also written Letters to a Young Feminist and Woman's Inhumanity to Woman.*

## CLASSICS CORNER



by Perfess'r Harris

**W**e at Classics Corner are always gratified to discover readers more nerdy than ourselves. In a world where the domestic life of an aging rock star famous for certain oral acts involving bats commands the attention of millions, we are relieved to find there are those who not only know who Antigone is, but actually have strongly held views that they feel compelled to share.

Last issue, as you no doubt recall, we posed the question that has preoccupied greater minds than our own for more than 2,400 years: Antigone, self-indulgent twit or beacon of moral clarity? The question was prompted by a nagging fear that we, in our increasingly decrepit middle-age, had finally and irreparably lost our moral moorings. At least one reader was happy to agree.

"Your first instinct, (that of your youth and idealism) was correct. Your second (that of tired old age, Classical cliché and cynical nihilism) — is the predominant one today. You should abandon it, as you would a necrotic limb that threatens the rest of your body with gangrene; and look around you for more fruitful, revolutionary ideas. You're just letting Them beat you down. It happens to all of us, sooner or later; and you've held the bridge, all by yourself, for quite an admirable length of time. It's time you found more allies, and rallied around some ideology more powerful than your own mere conscience and force of will."

Wow. It's like he can see straight into the unfathomable darkness of our soul!

If you're like us, you're probably wondering what the heck "necrotic" is. It's the adjectival form of necrosis, a word coined from the Greek root in 1665 that means "to make dead," as in "I got cable for my 52-inch flat screen TV and became, like, necrotic."

Other readers presumed to understand a little less of our own particular mid-life crisis.

"Antigone's a twit," says another. "There, I've said it." The emotional release this statement represents fairly leaps off the page. Those of us in the twit camp have kept our necrotic opinions to ourselves long enough. When the cork comes off the bottle, there's no going back.

Our friend, however, goes on to qualify. "If Antigone were not a twit, there would be no tragedy and no play." He compares a twitless Antigone to a resolute Hamlet. It just doesn't work.

To Sophocles, of course, none of this is all that complicated. Antigone is right and Creon is wrong. But we

humans like to complicate things. We keep reframing the issue to reflect our own ambivalence. We love a good dilemma, so we make our Creons and Antigones more like the ones we know: more multi-dimensional but still half-blind; sure of their own truths, even when it destroys them.

One reader finally brings us as close to the answer as we'll get. Antigone: self-indulgent twit or beacon of moral clarity? Yes. The answer is Yes. ■

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# Early May Notables

## Thursday 5/30

The Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas highlights the accomplishments of African Americans through a public reading with **children's book novelist and Newbery Prize winner Christopher Paul Curtis**. 7 p.m., at Richard Hugo House, 1634 11th Ave.; info 206-322-7030.

Community Meeting with **Congressman Jim McDermott**, who represents most of Seattle. 7 - 8:30 p.m., at NOAA Auditorium, 6929 Sand Point Way NE; info 206-553-7170 or <http://www.house.gov/mcdermott>.

## Friday 5/31

Public Forum series on "Arms Control, Disarmament, and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction after Sept. 11," sponsored by UW Jackson School. 7:30 p.m., at Kane Hall, Room 110; info Dr. Charles Meconis 206-543-9031 or WPSR 206-547-2630.

Dave Lippman's **Singing CIA Cabaret**; George Shrub, the world's only singing CIA agent and his counterpart, Dave Lippmann, will perform. 8 - 10 p.m., at Indymedia, 1415 3rd Ave. near Union, downtown, \$6 - \$12, sliding scale; info [plip-1@hotmail.com](mailto:plip-1@hotmail.com).

## Saturday 6/1

**NW Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO)** annual awards dinner. 6 p.m., at Blaine

Memorial United Methodist Church, 3001 24th Ave. S. on Beacon Hill. \$30, call to order tickets as event may sell out; info 206-860-1400.

The Peoples Project for Progress, a **community activist fair**, held by students of Seattle Central Community College, with live music, booths, speakers, workshops, and discussion groups. 11 a.m., at Seattle Central Community College. To participate as an information provider contact Colin Hain-Davidson, [pict1123@hotmail.com](mailto:pict1123@hotmail.com).

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 1st Saturdays at the Keystone Congregational Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. N.; info Dick Blakney 206-522-4934.

## Monday 6/3

**Jubilee 2000 NW Coalition** meeting working for debt relief for the world's poorest nations, this and subsequent 1st Mondays, 5:30 p.m., at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E.; info Betsy Bell 206-933-1889.

## Wednesday 6/5

**Jobs with Justice** Organizing Committee meeting, this and subsequent 1st Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m., at Labor

Temple, 2800 1st Ave.; info 206-441-4969.

## Thursday 6/6

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

## Saturday 6/8

**World Peace Day**, Buddhist Festival and Change Your Mind Day sponsored by Dharma Association and East-West Buddhist Coalition. 10:00 a.m. - 5 p.m., at Volunteer Park.

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).

**Bike Works Third Annual Summer Cycle Challenge** Bike-a-Thon and Barbecue. It's time to gather pledges to benefit Bike Works programs. This is an event for the whole family. 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. To register contact Bike Works at 206-725-9408 or [bikewrks@scn.org](mailto:bikewrks@scn.org).

## Sunday 6/9

Seattle Chapter Fellowship of Reconciliation meeting with speaker Mike Yarrow on "Robust Peace Making in Time of War." 5 p.m. potluck, 6 p.m. program, at Woodland Park Presbyterian Church, 225 N.

70th near Greenwood; info 206-789-5565.

## Monday 6/10

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

## Tuesday 6/11

Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility delegation to Iraq reports back on **effects of U.S. economic sanctions**. Come hear their stories. 7 p.m., at Keystone Congregational Church, 5019 Keystone N.; info 206-632-6021.

## Wednesday 6/12

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 6/13

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

## Ongoing

The **Young Adult Shelter** has an immediate need for caring volunteers, especially those willing to sleep overnight in the shelter. For more information, contact Sinan Demirel 206-979-5621. ■

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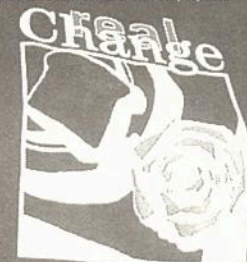
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## Protect Medicaid for Those Most in Need

**Issue:** The state hopes to convince the federal government to require patient co-payments and premiums for Medicaid coverage, and possibly limit the number of people who can enroll in some low-income health care programs.

**Background:** In an effort to save money during the ongoing statewide economic slump, Governor Gary Locke and his administration are trying to get waivers from the federal government to allow them to place tighter controls on the joint state-federal Medicaid program. The proposal has created alarm among several health-care advocates and politicians — including all 11 members of the Washington congressional delegation — who have demanded that the public be allowed to offer greater feedback on when and how the waiver can be used before it's sent to the federal government in July.

Concerns about the potential impact the new proposed Medicaid system could have include:

- Clients will not receive the care they need because they can't afford cost-sharing.
- The waiver could lead to increased ER visits.
- The waiver may erode mental health benefits.
- The waiver is about cutting costs, not about demonstrating improvements in health care coverage or access through Medicaid.
- The waiver may hide possible changes in the Medicaid program from the light of public scrutiny

**Action:** Thanks in large part to a substantial outcry from citizens across the state, additional public workshops have been added to address the concerns that have still not been resolved. Upcoming workshops in the greater Puget Sound area are as follows:

Thursday, May 30, 2002, 6 - 9 p.m.  
**Bellingham**  
Garden Street Family Center Conference Room  
1231 N. Garden St. #200

Wednesday, June 5, 2002, 6 - 9 p.m.  
**Port Angeles**  
Vern Burton Center Council College  
321 E. 5th St.

Thursday, June 6, 2002, 6 - 9 p.m.  
**Seattle North**  
Shoreline Community College  
Building 1100, Room 1102  
16101 Greenwood Ave.

Thursday, June 20, 2002, 6 - 9 p.m.  
**Seattle South/Des Moines**  
Highline Community College  
Building 7, East Parking Lot  
2400 S. 240th St.

If you cannot attend a meeting in your neighborhood, please send your comments and concerns to DSHS either through their hotline — 1-800-737-0617 — or at the website for the proposed waiver at [wws2.wa.gov/dshs/maa/medwaiver/default.htm](http://wws2.wa.gov/dshs/maa/medwaiver/default.htm). ■

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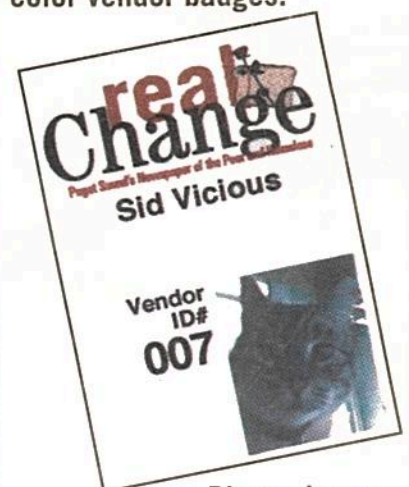
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# Mockingbird Times

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## An Explanation of Juvenile Residential Facilities

BY BRITTANY LUCAS



**IF VISIONS** of the movie *Reform School Girls* haunt you when you hear the term Residential Facilities, you might want to learn a little bit more about what they are before judging them so harshly.

Residential facilities are placements where a team of professional staff care for anywhere from five to 15 residents, 24 hours a day. Youth can be kept in these placements for as little as three months or for as long as three years, depending on the special needs of the child. Not all residential facilities are lock-down confinements. In fact, some of them can be better than living at home and offer incentives of generous weekly allowances and private bedrooms. Of course, we can't say that for all of them, but there are many different levels of care in the residential bracket to look at to meet the individual needs and interests of the youth.

The lowest level of care is Independent Living programs. Independent living is for older teens that have done well in the Department of Social and Health Services or the Juvenile Justice system. The programs can be set in campus environments or home environments. The youth are taught self sufficiency skills by being allowed to cook their own meals, have a job, and sometimes even live in their own apartment. Though the residents are still monitored while they are living in the facilities, the supervision is minimal, considering the

youth have already developed the ability to manage their behaviors. The kids in Independent Living tend to be given a fair amount of freedom, such as late hour curfews and extended passes out into the community.

Group homes are for children who need a higher level of care in less of a family-type environment. Group homes can also be set in a campus or home-type environment. In group homes, there are usually a lot more rules that the youth must face. Level systems and group therapy are often included in the group home curriculum. In the majority of group homes, the child can attend school outside of the home, though some of the more intensive group homes have their own schools. As the youth's behavior and progress improve, he or she usually obtains more privileges, like day passes and overnight stays with family members or friends.

Treatment centers are for youth that need more intensive, acute care. Each treatment center specializes in caring for youth with specific issues. The issues that can send kids involved in the DSHS and the Juvenile Justice system to these placements are chemical dependency, emotional disturbances, sexual trauma, behavioral problems, and severe learning disorders. Treatment facilities can be set in institution-type buildings or on campuses. The security in these facilities range from open to lock down. Open facilities are treatment programs that allow the youth to interact with the community, surrounding them on a regular basis. Secure facilities, on the other hand, are for kids who might run away if given more freedom or who have been labeled a danger to self or the community. In secure facilities, the youth can usually only leave the premises or building for business related matters. When the resident leaves the building, they must be accompanied by one or more staff members, and must assume a position while walking that keeps

### A Personal Experience

**I LIVED** at River House. The River House was a group home for teens. One of the things that the staff at River House did that upset me was restrain me for no reason. When someone restrains you, they force you to the ground and hold you down until you have calmed down. When fights at River House occurred, they often used restraining as a method to control their residents.

There were some good things about River House I liked. I love working. They would pay me up to five dollars for every job I did for them. River House was eventually shut down. I remember that they had pods (little sections where they kept small groups of kids). They had two floors of pods. During the night, the staff would supervise these pods closely. They would walk up and down the stairs making sure that kids weren't trying to escape.

The place I'm at now, Jon Baby House, is just like River House. The staff also walk around at night to make sure the kids don't run away. They have pods, but not as many as River House did. Those are the few placements I have been to.

— TYRONE W.

them in check, such as holding on to the arm of the staff worker. When the youth shows progress they may be allowed to take recreational passes out into the community but they must always be with a staff worker.

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

### A Personal Experience

**THE TRANSITION** from a lock-down facility to a residential home is both hard and confusing. When you are locked down in an institution, you are very restricted to certain things. You are limited to where you can go because you must always be with a staff or authority figure. You are escorted pretty much everywhere you go. You may not leave the institution, unless you are in a secured vehicle, with the proper restraints on. (Handcuffs, shackles, etc.)

After almost two years of lock down, I became aware of my surroundings and adapted to it. I became more and more institutionalized, and I realized how hard it was to be in that situation. Being there really opened my eyes, I guess it "scared me straight." I made a mistake and because of that I had everything and everyone I loved just ripped right away from me. I was left feeling empty, all alone, sitting in a cell, pondering what was going to happen next. Then, I was eventually released into the care of a group home, in the community.

I have to admit, at first I was very scared. I hadn't seen a day of freedom in quite some time. I was worried about relapsing and getting sent back. I still do. It is very hard to get your life back on track when you're so used to the other side of your life. Being in this group, I have made a few mistakes. I am grateful they haven't gotten me sent back. I guess I still have a lot to learn. I'm still here, trying to learn what I can.

Being incarcerated has taught me a lot about life. What good can come from trying your best, and what bad can come from giving up when you must proceed. Now I know I must proceed. I'm in college and for once, I know I am doing something that makes people proud of me. I am very grateful for getting a second chance in life.

— SARAH P.



# Letter from the Editor

**UNIVERSITY CHILD DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL (UCDS)**, located in the heart of the University District in Seattle, can feel great pride in their young students. Each year the graduating fifth graders must complete a "moving on" project. Jenny Hoyt decided her moving on project would be one that benefits The Mockingbird Society and educates her schoolmates regarding the issues that face children in foster care. Jenny organized a school raffle, gave a presentation to the classes at UCDS, and spoke individually with teachers, administrators, and students. At the May 20 Mockingbird Board of Directors meeting, Jenny presented me with over \$300 she had collected from students at UCDS. Jenny said it best when she presented me the donations: "Just because you're little doesn't mean you can't make a difference." I am appreciative of the effort and compassion that Jenny demonstrated and am especially appreciative that she would choose The Mockingbird Society as the recipient of her hard work.

Speaking of hard work, there is plenty of that going on around the *Mockingbird Times*. The current issue has a circulation of over 22,000 copies distributed around



Jenny Hoyt and Jim Theofelis celebrate her fundraising on behalf of The Mockingbird Society. Photo courtesy of the Mockingbird Board of Directors.

the state of Washington and indeed the USA. Our first issue in August 2001 had a circulation of 12,000. This past month the youth writers received some wonderful training on issues critical to developing a newspaper including the First Amendment, the Freedom of Information Act, and liability issues. We also were written up in yet another national journal as a creative, innovative, model program. The Mockingbird Society continues to grow and be a voice for the thousands of children and youth who live in the foster care system.

I invite each of you to reflect on young Jenny Hoyt and her effort to support the work we are doing at The Mockingbird Society. We at The Mockingbird Society are committed to "building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood kids." Please consider making a gift to The Mockingbird Society so we can continue to serve children, youth, and families. Remember, it doesn't really matter if you're big or little: you can make a big difference.

Jim Theofelis

## Correction

In the article "New Bill Passed" (May 2, 2002) Laurie Lippold, policy director for the Children's Home Society, was misquoted. The quote should have read: "Even though this bill doesn't exactly require the child to live with their siblings, it at least allows the siblings to stay connected on a regular basis."

## 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.

## FACILITIES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Treatment facilities put emphasis on therapy and a set treatment plan. School is almost always attended on campus or in the building where the residents live. The goal of residential treatment is to solve the issues that the youth has through therapy, medication, and/or behavioral modification programs.

The last and, might I add, scariest level of residential care are long-term, high-security facilities. Most often, these facilities for juveniles are institutions, but they may also be camps. The only way a youth can be sent to these placements is if they are charged with an offense or found guilty of a crime. Detention centers temporarily detain the youth until they are either found guilty or innocent of a crime they have been charged with. Kids are detained in cells and only let out for certain activities. Depending on the detention facility, the child may be let out of their cell for an hour a day or they may only be locked in their room when it is bed time.

Youth correctional facilities are long-term placements where youth are sent to when they are found guilty of a serious crime. Though these facilities offer more activities than detention centers do, they are just as secure. Passes are never allowed and outside excursions may be limited to a fence-in courtyard.

Boot camps offer kids an alternative to correctional facilities. Boot camps allow the youth to have more space, but are often a lot more strict. The youth must engage in strenuous routines and excursions and regard all authority in a godly matter. The point of youth correctional facilities is to reform the youth's behavior before they become adults and have to go into a sometimes much less forgiving system. Though these institutions are often regarded as a poor alternative to treatment facilities, sometimes they are the only option to prevent criminal youth from hurting others.

Except for the Independent Living programs, youth don't often have much choice in being sent to residential facilities. They can represent themselves with court-appointed lawyers if they feel they are being sent to these placements unjustly. Also, if there is any kind of abuse in the facility they live in, they can report it to the Ombudsman office in Washington State at 1-(800)-571-7321 and request to be moved out of the placement. Hopefully, in most cases residential facilities only have to be short-term living situations that allow the youth to learn skills that will help move them out into the real world. 🐦

## A Personal Experience

**I AM A** 17-year-old female, who has been incarcerated off and on since I was 13 years old. I am going to tell you about residential care and where I am today. I have been to four different lock-down facilities, including a treatment facility, a boot camp, and a youth camp. None of these helped me to learn how to live in the "Real World."

I became comfortable with people telling me what to do and when to do it (which is exactly how it is when you get "locked up"). I never had to worry about any responsibilities. I had someone feeding me, doing my laundry, and waking me up in the morning. I never had to worry about doing the wrong thing, 'cause you do what you're told. In these places your opinions don't really matter. You can't ever do anything you want to when you want to. You can't go outside when it is a nice day, unless there is someone to supervise you. You need to ask permission to speak to the staff, and in some cases you need to ask to use the bathroom. It is a life that you become accustomed to and you live by it. So, like myself, you re-offend, making it so you can go back to your "comfort zone."

**EXPERIENCE CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**



"There are few things more dishonorable than misleading the young."

— Thomas Sowell,  
author and intellectual

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# Positive Power: How to Survive a Job Interview

By JUSTIN REYNOLDS



## Picking up the Job application

(Selling out to the corporate world isn't easy is it?)

**IN THE CASE** of many service jobs, such as fast-food restaurants, clothing stores, and the such, you can ask for an application from the front counter or customer service counter. Often, you can fill out the application on the spot and turn it in. Maybe consider carrying copies of your resume to leave with the job application, but be careful not to wrinkle them up and **NO COFFEE CIRCLES!** A resume is your chance to show a professional image and give information about yourself that might not be requested on a job application. And be respectful to anyone you see — don't go in there cussing and a hollering or stealing the ash trays. Be on your best behavior — anyone could be your boss. It's also good to dress neatly depending on the employer. Don't go in there with your Mohawks charged and you skins on ("skins" a slang for punkers meaning your leather coat and boots bullet belts and the like).

## Filling out applications

(Don't do it in blood or crayons — they don't like that)

- Use proper spelling and grammar. Yeah, like don't fill it out on the side walk with nothing underneath it or your writing is going to look horrible. If you're unsure, take the application to someone who can help you before you turn it in.
- Be truthful about your experience and skills; don't say you only have three felonies instead of six.
- Avoid information that could hurt you, especially in your reasons for leaving a previous job, like getting fired.
- Double check your answers.
- Use your best handwriting. **NO ANARCO WRITING!** (Like drawing circles around your a's and

every letter that is supposed to be curvy is slashes instead). Printed English is the way to go.

Keep a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of businesses where you have applied.

## Checking up on an application

Wait a couple of days, then call wherever you applied and ask for the manager. If the manager is not there, ask when he/she will be in and then call.

First things first — **TURN DOWN THE MUSIC** and tell your friends to shut up before you call — you don't want your manager to know what you really do on your spare time, keep pen and paper handy to write any information they may tell you - scratching a name and number on a milk carton with a thumb tack isn't a very good idea.

## The Interview

(Where you sit in a chair for way too long sweating through your undie's hoping to get some job you may or may not want.)

So you got this far! Good job! You must think you're really special now! The purpose of this interview is:

- To tell the boss how great you are and what experience you have.
- To see if you really want to work there.

## Physical appearance

Whether you get the job or not can depend on how you look. First impressions count.

(Blame this on the Conservatives)

So look sharp — keep your hawks down and cover up your tattoos. If you don't have good clothes, borrow them or steal them (well actually, don't do that).

## The interrogation

Don't worry about being nervous during the interview (the Gestapo expects that and feeds off of it). This is normal and will be expected. Most interviewers will begin the interview with some "small talk." Just play along like you're interested and go along with it as long you don't incriminate yourself. This may seem like it has nothing to do with the interview, but you

are still being judged. You may want to ask some questions to get a sense of what they are looking for.

## The second phase of the interrogation

Relax? Ha! You're going to be intimidated, you're going to wish you never turned in that application. Following are some typical questions.

- Tell me about yourself
  - What are your short-term goals? What about in two and five years from now?
  - What do you think you will be looking for in the job?
  - What kinds of problems do you handle best?
  - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
  - Why did you apply to our organization and what do you know about us?
  - Why should I hire you?
- After they are done asking you questions, they usually ask if you have any. Here are some questions you can ask to make you look smart and interested:

- What are the hours and dress code?
- Are there any other job requirements I should know about?
- When will you fill the position and when will you let us know?

And don't be aggressive about questioning the interviewer. You don't want to bombard him or her with questions or make it seem like he or she is the one being interviewed. They don't really like that.

And don't forget to thank the interviewer and give him/her a good firm handshake

## After the interview: follow-up

If it's a highly competitive position, send a simple thank you card to the interviewer with the name of the interviewer and how much you appreciate her or his time. Make it out of good stationery paper or that marbled stuff that costs way too much. If you don't hear from the job in a week, call and ask about the job.

And **GOOD LUCK!** 🐦



# From the Comic, to the Action Figure, now to the Theatre

By WILLIAM WILLOUGHBY

**AS WE RAPIDLY** approach summer, we have a tendency to do many things. We like to go to the malls, go on vacations, and love to watch movies. This is not a big secret to the movie producers as they aim to debut many movies during the summer. One of the new summer movies that came out was *Spiderman*.

*Spiderman*, based on a comic produced by Marvel, has hit the movie theatres breaking records and giving many people a remembrance of their childhood dreams and heroes. *Spiderman* proved to be a blockbuster hit after making around \$115 million its first three days. It also made \$79 million its second week, setting a new record. The movie has many people exiting the theatre with many "oohs" and "ahhhs" along with "too much talk" and "I don't know."

The movie is about a young man named Peter Parker, played by Toby Maguire, who is a senior in high school. Peter lives with his grandparents in the suburbs and is a smart student who appreciates the sciences

along with photography. He is portrayed as a "loser" and a "geek" who gets bullied around by Flash Thompson and his friends. He manages to become friends with a new student named Henry OsCorp, whose father is a wealthy man in charge of OsCorp Industries.

On a school field trip, Peter is bitten by a super spider that changes his life forever. The spider bite gives Peter new abilities, such as wall crawling, Spider sense, Web slinging, and enhanced agility. With these new powers, Peter decides to protect the innocent from the criminals. The main criminal throughout the story is the Green Goblin. The Green Goblin, played by Willem Dafoe, is really Norman Osborn, who was created in an accident to form a new kind of super soldier. The experiment failed, giving

Norman another personality that was full of pure hatred.

The movie has a couple good fighting scenes between *Spiderman* and the Green Goblin, but mainly seems to focus on the introduction to who Peter Parker is and the kind of life he is now being awakened

to. The movie goes back and forth between life as Peter Parker and as *Spiderman*. Although he is almost caught in between the two lives he seems to quickly gain an understanding of what it takes to live a double life, like Batman or Superman.

Peter's elementary school crush on Mary Jane Watson became a major part of the story. He seems to be in love with her, although she shows her affection towards *Spiderman*. The struggle between keeping the personal life out of the life of a super hero came up as Peter almost loses his Grandma and also Mary Jane.

The movie continues to be a major hit and has put many people back into the days of their childhood. I really enjoyed the movie and the way that it followed the story line of what I had known about the life of *Spiderman*. The stunts of having *Spiderman* jumping building to building along with climbing walls makes it worth seeing. The movie gives *Spiderman*'s abilities a boost and allows them to use your imagination more. I would highly recommend anyone to watch the movie and to not miss out on an experience that can bring back memories and to make new ones of *Spiderman*. The movie easily gains the attention of the viewer by fulfilling its expectations. 🐦

*Spiderman*  
Starring Tobey Maguire,  
Willem Dafoe





# Your Life, Your Rights



By REGINALD HERTS

**IF ONLY** I knew what I know now regarding my rights in foster care. I believe it would have been easier for me and less stressful. I mean, I wasn't told my rights by anyone. Nobody handed me a handbook that said "Your Rights in Foster Care" after being removed from my home. Now that could have had been useful, but hey, it didn't happen, and because of it I went through some things and faced some problems that I more than likely didn't have to if I would have known my rights.

So who's to blame and who's at fault? Whose job is it to let a child know what their rights are when being placed in foster care by the state? From education to foster care placement, legal proceedings, health care, and family issues, youth and their families do have rights. Did you know this? I wonder how many youth out of the 8,688 youth in foster care in Washington state know their rights.

The usual experience in foster care for youth is not a walk in a field of tulips, and I can say that from my own experience. When Child Protective Services removed my brother and I from our home, I knew why, yet I didn't know what was next or where I was going. I was unable to speak to my family and I was not told what was going to happen next. Not right at all, yet how was I to know?

Now I know I have the right to have placement with a relative be the first place to be investigated and considered. Was it investigated? If so I wasn't told, and I can't change that now. But what I do want to do is share with you some rights that you have that you might not have known about while placed in a licensed home. Being placed in a licensed home does not mean you lose your freedom or you're disconnected from the world. Someone once told me the best advocate you can have is yourself. I don't know why, but for

some odd reason I had a tendency to just go with the flow and not say a thing, which resulted in weary days for me. So on that note, know you have a right to be heard regarding your life as well as the right to the following:

## Family

*I have the right:*

- To live with my brothers and sisters.
- To visit my family.
- To have placement with a relative be the first placement to be investigated and considered.

## Foster Care Placement

*I have the right:*

- To be treated with dignity and respect.
- To practice my own religion (attend church, temple, mosque, or other religious services).
- To not be forced to take medication unless prescribed by my doctor and approved by the court.
- To confidential telephone calls and unopened letters. Calls and letters to and from my social worker, parents, and attorney may not be restricted.
- To participate in plans for my well being and future.

*Filing a complaint*

*I have the right:*

- To file a complaint about my care, if I am living in a foster home, group home, or other residential facility. (They may not take action against me for doing so).
- To file a complaint with my social worker, and the licensing agency if I am living in a licensed facility.
- To file a complaint about my placement, care, or services with the State Foster Care.

For more information on youth rights and other rights on issues not listed, log on and visit [www.Youthlaws.org](http://www.Youthlaws.org). To find out how to file a complaint if you think your rights have been violated, contact the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman at 1-800-571-7321.

## EXPERIENCE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

I liked not having to worry about anything, and the fact that everything was being done for me. I didn't like the days when I would want to call a friend or family member, or go outside, but couldn't. Sometimes I felt like an experiment, which is sort of what it really is. (What method can we use to change these people?) Life seemed so pointless at times, but yet I would continue to follow my "program."

Eventually, when you follow your program so well, you are able to move to a group home. Some people are given the opportunity and reject it (fear of reality I guess). I got lucky, and was interviewed and accepted to come to a group home where I was able to be in the community with staff and other kids who lived with me. I was being shown how to act and live outside the "jail life."

Soon I was able to go to community college, and learn how to take the bus to and from school. I then became eligible to apply for transitional living. This allowed me to go to stores and take a walk to a designated area on my own. (No staff breathing down my neck.)

I was becoming comfortable with the independent living style. I liked everything, but was becoming irritated with being "told things." I grew farther and farther away from being "programmed."

From there, where I am now, I was able to move into an independent living home. Here I do everything on my own, from cooking to making my own appointments. I am in the process of finding work. I am able to do many things, and to think that I am still serving my juvenile sentence makes me feel good about where I am, because I have all this trust and support. I feel ready to be free and completely on my own. I feel totally confident in being successful in society.

I think that there should be more programs to help juvenile offenders transition into the community step by step. I think this is what most teen offenders need, somewhere to support them and help them learn independent skills.

— CARRIE R.

# Getting in Touch with the Fatherhood Group

**SINCE SEPTEMBER 2001**, the East Cherry YMCA in Seattle has been having support groups for young fathers every Thursday night between 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The group is open to young fathers aged 14-24, based on available space.

Here's what one father in the group has to say:

The Fatherhood group (Fatherhood) is a very important part of my life. Fatherhood gives me the opportunity to learn and teach, plus grow at the same time. I look forward to every Thursday because I know that will be a day that I will be able to obtain important and critical tools to be a great and successful father.

Fatherhood gives me the ability to talk to brothers who are going through, or have been through some of the same things I have, and sometimes still go through. It gives me a place where I am able to express my feelings and also help others. Fatherhood gives me the chance to be an important factor in other young fathers' lives. It lets me know that I am important and am able to help others.

Fatherhood members and facilitators give me overwhelming support. It is a place with people I can relate to even though some of us come from different roads in life. When we're together, it is as if we were family. My father died when I was three so I never really knew my dad. I've never known the importance and responsibility of being a father. I've seen and experienced the support given to young fathers like

myself. This support is the type of support that is needed in our lives. Fatherhood gives young fathers a positive place to be. Many young fathers are running the streets because they don't know how to be responsible fathers and make the right decisions. Fatherhood gives such people the opportunity to learn what's right. It also gives them the support and confidence to make a change. Once you have been a part of the Fatherhood group, the streets and things you thought were so important don't seem that way anymore. By effectively helping young father's change, Fatherhood is making a positive impact on the community.



The Fatherhood group has been very beneficial towards me and others. By helping me to grow as a father it helps my wife and kids. Not only I but my family reaps the benefits as well. Fatherhood took me and my wife to a play called *Jitney*. This was my first time ever to a play and I loved it, so did my wife. I've also seen young fathers given tools such as how to deal with child support.

Things like this have a positive impact on a young father's life. It not only keeps us focused on doing what's right but helps us get through obstacles and stumbling blocks.

There are places where I don't see improvement, such as outings for the fathers. Things like a Fatherhood basketball, soft/baseball, etc. team would be positive steps and useful tools to reach and aid young fathers.

I see the Fatherhood group growing unbelievably. Now more than ever, young fathers need such support that Fatherhood offers. There are so many people, if who, are given a chance to be a part of the group, would be able to change their lives. I've even gained a vision of us being able to help youth. I've been places and done things that many of these young people are doing today. Because Fatherhood has successfully helped me change my way of thinking, I am able to help others change their way of thinking. Again, I am proud to be a part of such an important group.

The future of the Fatherhood group is very important in my life as well as others. The need for the group is extremely important. It not only helps young men but it helps the men's families and communities as well. The Fatherhood group, wanting and willing, helps young men become fathers. Such a thing can only be beneficial for everyone.

LOVE AND RESPECT,  
PROUD MEMBER OF THE FATHERHOOD GROUP

One of the groups facilitators, Zorn, says "If a person is interested in contributing to the group they could do so by: providing support services such as food or coffee or tickets to a ball game, by giving a presentation in keeping with the groups curriculum such as a presentation on safe sex or how to be an entrepreneur or by volunteering time to help out with phone calls and preparing materials for the group."