

JULY 25, 2002

PEF

# Change

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## Summer Reading

Reviews: Mayor's half a plan • Canadians Take Charge • Changing the World • Racism and Poverty for Kids

COVER PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

# Reaching beyond the Stage

By Andrew Block

After spending three months "undercover" as a low-wage worker, journalist Barbara Ehrenreich discovered what so many Americans already know: a person cannot survive at the bottom of the labor pool. She was able to put a familiar face on the hardships of poverty by documenting her travails in the book *Nickel and Dimed: On (not) getting by in America*. In doing so, she called on her bourgeois colleagues and high-powered readership to implement systemic social change to support the poor, including comprehensive health care, affordable housing, and a living wage.

The response to the book, which is now a bestseller, brought to fruition Ehrenreich's hope of raising public consciousness and sparking a broader movement to minimize the income gap. Seattle's Intiman Theater identified with this effort, as well as the dramatic trajectory of the story, and decided to further broadcast Ehrenreich's experience and message by bringing *Nickel*

and *Dimed* to the stage. The production staff at Intiman felt, however, that dramatizing *Nickel and Dimed* would not carry the ideas far enough.

To buttress the theatrical performance, which begins this month, Intiman has included post-play forums where actors and Seattle-area experts in the fields of public service, policy, and outreach can meet the audience. A lobby-area photo exhibit documents local conditions of working poverty. Also, the education organizers at Intiman have created a website to assist those in need and those who want to help. Perhaps most importantly, Intiman is making tickets available for low-income families so that all parties can share in the experience.

### Drama as a catalyst

In order to adapt the heavily political themes of the book in a manner that all audiences — liberal, conservative, and moderate — can enjoy, Intiman imported Joan Holden, famed playwright

of the San Francisco Mime Troupe, who describes her work as "up to the minute social comedy with characters of every class and a satirical edge."

But, she explains, "It's what I call 'serious comedy.' It's not light entertainment. Laughter is the vehicle for action. Comedy is curious. It's a defense against despair for the writer, but it lowers the defenses of the audience. When people laugh, their minds open, and they are ready to receive ideas and information."

In the spirit of investigative journalism, Ehrenreich spent a year attempting to sustain herself as a low-wage worker in three different American cities. During her time in Key West, Florida, rural Maine, and Minneapolis she found that the life of waitress, Merry Maid cleaner, and Wal-Mart clerk is not only financially unsustainable, but also demoralizing and physically debilitating.

In contrasting the life of an affluent housewife with that of the Merry Maids, Ehrenreich at one point says, "Ours is

a world of pain.... Do the owners have any idea of the misery that goes into rendering their homes motel-perfect? Would they take a sadistic pride in what they have purchased — boasting to dinner guests, for example, that their floors are cleaned only with the purest of fresh human tears?"

To capture Ehrenreich's candor, the vivid view of her daily toil, and her transformation from a placidly detached intellectual to harried laborer, Holden wrote the script as a narrative. Barbara — or Barb, as she is called when her name shrinks in direct proportion to her status — reports directly to the audience.

"It's sort of like the style of a documentary film," says Holden of the play, set on a turntable stage, over ambient live music reminiscent of rhythmic restaurant clatter. "She carries on a running conversation with the audience. There's a distinct transformation. She

*Continued on page 8*



Look for Mockingbird Times one year anniversary issue inside!





## Do your own work

[In response to July 11, 2002 cover story, "Taxing Espresso." — ed.]

You people are as socialist as they come. If everyone lived off the hard work of others as you do... who would be left to pick up your tab? Put one foot in front of the other, and you too will move ahead.

Workin' Man Pete

## Great job, small corrections

Dear *Real Change*,  
Great job on the Initiative 77 article

["Taxing Espresso," July 11, 2002].  
Two small corrections:

Linda Gibson's first name is actually Dorothy.

Dorothy is not a member of the Early Learning and Care Campaign Committee. Instead, she's the Early Learning and Care Advocate for the Economic Opportunity Institute, a key organizational supporter of the initiative.

Thanks,  
Lisa

Early Learning and Care  
Campaign Committee

## Outstanding vendor

I just wanted to tell you about an outstanding *Real Change* vendor. I was walking along the Ave today and I saw a very elderly gentleman walking up the way with a violet seat cover sticking out of the back of his pants. Instead of laughing or such, one of your vendors walked behind the gentleman and pulled out the cover. I thought this was a very humane act and wanted to tell you what a great job your workers do.

Anonymous  
(from the *Real Change*  
website feedback form)

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## Deep appreciation

Dear *Real Change*,

I wanted to express my appreciation for all the fine poetry of Marion Sue Fischer, and in particular for her lovely poem, "Morning Tea." It is inspiring that a woman who has suffered so much can find still in herself such beauty — even in "the-world-of-man." It will always move me deeply.

Virginia Younger  
(letter included with donation)

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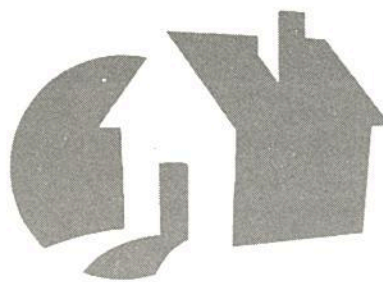


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Puget Sound's Voice of the  
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Mission Statement:  
*Real Change* organizes, educates, and builds  
alliances to create solutions to homelessness and  
poverty. We exist to provide a voice for poor 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  
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Articles appearing in *Real Change* reflect the  
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encourage violence, sexism, homophobia, or racism  
will not be considered for publication.

# Protecting our Social Fabric

## Eliminating King County human services funding only adds to the criminal justice burden

By Dan Merkle

King County, the City of Seattle, the state of Washington, and most governmental entities across the U.S. are in severe financial crisis. In response, King County Executive Ron Sims has just released his proposed budget, which includes cutting health, housing and human services funding by 50 percent in the upcoming budget, and eliminating all human services funding the following year. But like corporations on the eve of filing Chapter 11 bankruptcy, it is time to take a fresh look at what is necessary to avert short- and long-term disasters.

We have reached "political gridlock" on many of our complex social issues, such as transportation and budget priorities. We are also facing social and moral gridlock with a criminal justice system that is ineffective, inhumane, and outrageously expensive. We have spent the past 20 years expanding the "incarceration model" — where everyone who breaks the law, even for a relatively minor infraction, is thrown in jail — to the point where we are finally on the verge of a fiscal and social collapse. Approximately one-third of those in our jail are nonviolent: driving without licenses, missing court dates, nonviolent drug offenders, outstanding warrants, etc. It is difficult to justify spending \$30,000 annually to warehouse individuals who do not pose a threat to our community when there are cheaper and more effective alternatives to incarceration for many of these infractions.

For most of the history of Washington state, our criminal justice system was based on a model of rehabilitation. We understood the importance of supporting those in our community who had certain vulnerabilities and limitations, so they could re-enter society as productive members of our community.

### There's an increase in the possibility that King County government will soon become simply a jailer.

We also understood the importance of providing a strong community safety net that was proactive and preventative, so that the criminal justice system would only be used as a last resort (much like the use of surgery as a last resort). We also know that for every dollar we spend on prevention and treatment, we save \$7 in social costs, such as criminal justice and health-related expenses.

However, in the early 1980s, Washington state followed the national agenda of moving from a criminal justice system based on rehabilitation to one based almost exclusively on punishment. At the same time, the federal government severely reduced funding for the most important pieces of our social infrastructure, including mental health services and public housing.

Twenty years later, our government agencies are broke, scraping and fighting for scarce funding. We are finally paying for this failed social experiment. King County, one of the wealthiest regions in the world, can't keep its parks open and is preparing to eliminate all funding for the programs that could, in the long-run, help prevent incarceration.

But there are alternatives to this harsh and short-sighted proposal. It is time to take a hard look at where the county can save money without simply diverting a future social catastrophe. There is certainly room for the county to downsize and eliminate the programs that don't work and reallocate and re-prioritize the budgets.

The criminal justice budget is \$337 million, which represents 68 percent of the King County general fund. Of the entire King County budget, human services funding is only \$37 million, which represents 1.27 percent of total spending (\$2.9 billion). This paltry amount is inadequate and embarrassing. Eliminating human service funding will have the consequence of hurting our families, friends, and neighbors. It will also increase the possibility that King County government will soon become simply a jailer.

We have a clear and immediate opportunity to move in a better direction. Good leaders act now to make a difference for future generations. It's time to let our politicians know that we want to build better systems as we leave the old models behind. It's time to let them know that they can lead by being compassionate and caring while developing new policies that are more effective and cost less money. ■

*Dan Merkle is a Seattle attorney working to improve the criminal justice system and to preserve our human services programs. Dan co-chairs the Race and Class Disparity Task Force for the King County Bar Association Drug Policy Project (www.kcba.org). If you would like more information on the effort to save King County human services, please contact Laura Wells at the Alliance for Human Services, (206) 268-0533 or wells@childcare.org.*

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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.

## National News Digest

July 19, 2002

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

It didn't initially sound like such a bad idea. Two middle-class Seattle urban professionals took off a week from their lives this month to see what was like to be homeless from the inside, and posted their discoveries online, at [www.homelessweek.com](http://www.homelessweek.com). However, when the results of Scotty Weeks and Derrick Clark's week on the streets were published in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* ([www.seattlepi.com](http://www.seattlepi.com)), many were disgusted by the self-fulfilling stereotypes the daring duo had spent their time imitating. Yet rather than rattle off the perceptions of someone else who has also never been homeless, here's the thoughts of Gabby, a former resident of the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) who is now "A Seattle resident without a residence."

"To whom it may concern,

"I would not want to be on the misinformation and lack of information website of Derrick Clark and Scotty Weeks, who spent one week hiding out as homeless people. They were never in a soup line, waiting to eat the sometimes-edible breakfast. They never set one foot in DESC's shelter downtown, where people have died. They have never been up to the Morrison and seen the conditions there, or know anything of women having to stay out until midnight to go to Operation Nightwatch or the Women's Referral Center to get a place to sleep. Women get raped, beaten, and killed waiting for a bed at midnight. They never washed their clothes at the Urban Rest Stop.

Wait until you get sick and cannot pay rent anymore. You are then on the street fighting for housing. Derrick and Scotty do not even know about the waiting lists for such things. They call this the "easy life" [as quoted in the P-I, July 15, 2002]. I say to them, 'You idiots, you know nothing.'"

Seven years after they were first handed over by the French company J.C. Decaux, San Francisco's state-of-the-art public toilets are still suffering a spate of problems, ranging over everything from mechanical failures that clog toilets and flood floors to human use as private havens for prostitution and drugs. A survey conducted by the *San Francisco Chronicle* ([www.sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com)) found that only eight of the 25 self-cleaning pay toilets were working properly. Tourists still value the toilets when there's nowhere else to go, but some of the city's homeless and low-income residents would rather find a quiet corner in an alley than risk infection from a needle on a bathroom floor. Other public bathroom options are dwindling, however, as the city council voted the beginning of this month to ban urinating on the streets. ■

— Compiled by Molly Rhodes

## New place for street youth

In June, the City of Seattle's Human Services Department granted Street Outreach Services (SOS) \$30,000 for a youth drop-in center on Capitol Hill. Just about anyone who's walked down Broadway on a summer afternoon would agree there's a need for services for homeless youth in the area. But SOS, or any other group serving their needs, appears to have an uphill fight.

The city awarded the money to SOS because of its previous experience in working with street youth, young adults, and those with substance abuse problems. SOS previously ran a youth drop-in center out of the Pilgrim Congregational Church that closed in November, and a drop-in center for adults at Second Avenue and Pike Street downtown, which closed May 10.

The new center will be open at least three hours a day, five days a week. At a minimum, the center would provide a hot meal and access to basic hygiene supplies and health promotion materials. However, SOS will need to find a place for the center by August 8, 45 days after notification of the grant, and will have to find funds to keep the center going once the grant expires on December 31.

"We have identified two churches and one other nonprofit agency who are willing to act as host agencies for the drop-in center," says Kris Nyrop, Street Outreach Services' Executive Director, in his application to run the new center. In two years of running the Capitol Hill Drop-In Center and almost 10 years with the Second Avenue and Pike Street drop-in center, Nyrop has had a wealth of experience fund-raising. "We have been a relatively marginal non profit serving a stigmatized and demonized population through politically sensitive methods for over 10 years. However, we also realize that it takes money to raise other money."

Two other agencies based on Capitol Hill, Street Links and Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets, also had applied for the grant but were not interviewed. Prior to the youth center closing last fall there were complaints about vandalism, excessive panhandling, and unruly behavior in the nearby



neighborhood.

All of those problems persisted after the center closed, but one of the provisions for a new center is to establish a community board. Nyrop notes, "given the numbers who have expressed interest over the past several months in how the center will operate, we anticipate little problem in finding members who will serve on the advisory board." ■

— R.V. Murphy

## Youth shelter changes hands

Due to funding cutbacks announced in mid-June, Catholic Community Services (CCS), a western Washington family support agency, was faced with the prospect of closing Denny Place Youth Shelter as soon as July 15. Fortunately, YouthCare, another local agency assisting homeless juveniles and young adults, intends to step in and adopt the shelter, which has provided housing and educational programs for youth since 1991. Youth Care will assume control on August 1.

Denny Place program manager Rich King attributes CCS's financial shortfall to a \$25,000 reduction in Denny Place's contract with King County this year. He says the county was planning to terminate the contract in 2003. Denny Place also foresaw a funding drop from its other two main benefactors: CCS discretionary dollars, and United Way contributions.

"Even though the total amount of United Way dollars coming to CCS of King County has been relatively stable, a higher percentage of that money is going to South County because the need is there," King says.

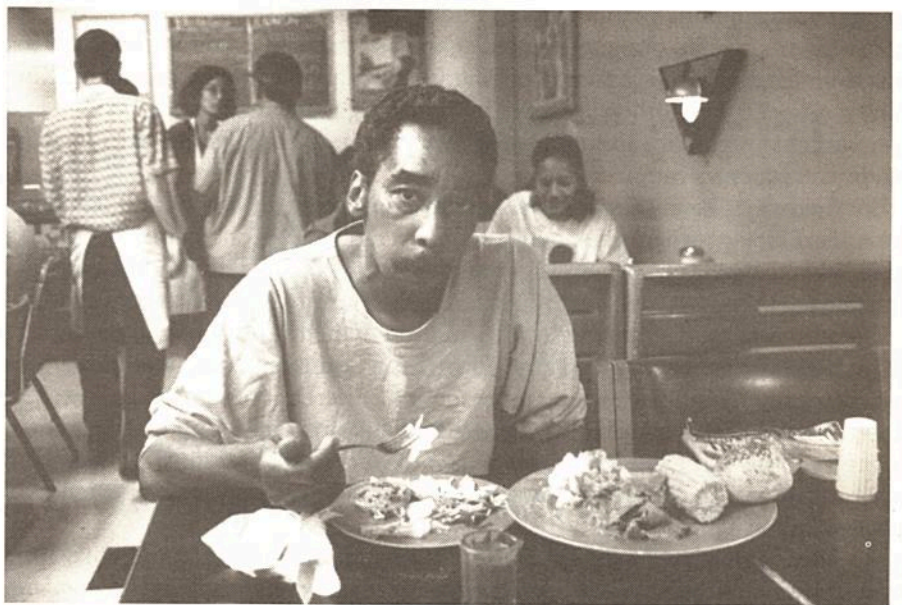
Thanks to YouthCare's specific focus on homeless youth in the Seattle area, and because of its close partnership with Denny Place in the past, organizers on both sides say that the merger is a natural fit.

"YouthCare seemed to be a logical program to approach," says King. "YouthCare's Orion Center, which is a drop-in center, is only a few blocks away from Denny Place and has been a major source for referrals for a long time."



THOSE WHO WORK AT DENNY PLACE, LIKE CORINNE OTAKIE, LEFT, AND CHARLOTTE TUCKER, WILL BE OFFERED THE CHOICE TO STAY ON WHEN YOUTHCARE TAKES OVER. PHOTO BY HEDVIG HJELM.

Continued on the next page



ON SATURDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 13, MARCO MARTINEZ, THE EXECUTIVE CHEF AT SAFECO FIELD, PROVIDED FREE MEALS FOR 200 HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS AT THE BOOMTOWN CAFÉ. IN THIS PHOTO, A GUEST ENJOYS HIS MEAL OF ROAST BEEF, CORN ON THE COB, GARLIC MASHED POTATOES, GREEN SALAD, CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES, AND FRUIT JUICE. THE MEAL WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY MARTINEZ AND SAFECO VENDOR VOLUME SERVICES AMERICA, ALONG WITH CHARLIE'S PRODUCE, INTERBAY FOODS, AND VOLUNTEERS FROM GETTY IMAGES. PHOTO BY HEDVIG HJELM.

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

# Let him Eat Cake! But only Half

By Andrew Block

**O**n July 18, Mayor Greg Nickels delivered his much-anticipated plan to increase police accountability and reduce racial profiling, a strategy which would commit the city to installing video cameras in all patrol cars, documenting all traffic stops, and building meaningful relationships between the police and the communities they serve. Nickels, who had balked at authorizing similar measures as part of a resolution that passed the city council in June, stated the \$200,000 plan was designed to "improve public confidence and trust in our police."

Other aspects of what mayoral spokeswoman Marianne Bichsel calls a "comprehensive strategy" include a semi-annual survey of residents to measure attitudes about police interactions, updates to the curriculum for racial sensitivity training, community forums hosted quarterly by the police, and an expansion of the Office of Professional Accountability's ability to record and analyze complaints alleging racial profiling by law enforcement officials.

"We've addressed this issue from multiple perspectives," Nickels said in a press release. "We're going to collect and analyze data from several sources, increase public involvement with the police department, put interpretation of data into improved training of our officers, and track our progress."

Community activists invested in eradicating racial profiling and police misconduct were encouraged by the announced measures, yet think them incomplete. The day after the strategy was released, the People's Coalition for Justice (PCJ), which has spearheaded the recent movement to increase police accountability, demonstrated its desire for more extensive measures by arriving at the Mayor's office with "half a cake, for a half a job done."

"We think some of the measures Mayor Nickels put together are good," said PCJ spokesman Dustin Washington. "But there's a long way to go in terms of real police accountability. We need an independent civilian review board. We need anti-racist training, not just cultural competency training. And we need to have a concrete way of analyzing the data that comes out of the citations and warning cards that the officers are going to give out, so we can see where trends of profiling are occurring in the city and so steps can be put in place to remedy the evil act of profiling."

PCJ member Vanessa Lee emphasized the need for an independent review board, citing the police department's historic inability to regulate and discipline its own personnel. Furthermore, she said, "The Office of Professional Accountability is not independent. The director, Sam Boca, reports to the chief of the police department. Their investigator actually works for the police department. We say, and the national experts agree, that a civilian review board has to be completely independent."

Of the community meetings, Washington had this criticism: "If the forums are hosted by the Seattle Police Department, people who've had negative interactions with the police aren't going to come. The idea would be better served by having forums hosted by community organizations such as the Urban League, the NAACP, or some of our churches. I think then more people would feel comfortable to come out and speak their mind about police issues."

PCJ's demands are part of an ongoing "No Confidence" campaign, which focuses on achieving systemic change in law enforcement by organizing the community to state its lack of trust in police.

that, for at the least next few months, Denny Place will be "exactly the same." He concedes, however, that there may be some changes once YouthCare has evaluated Denny Place's role in the organization's broader funding scheme. Youth Care runs seven other residential programs.

"We're going to need to look over the long run to see how we make the Denny Place program fiscally viable," Sullivan says. "I know we'll continue it as a structure, whether we'll change the structure that's right there, I don't know."

As of now, Sullivan cannot give a definite answer as to what demographic will be served. "It will remain a shelter for youth, I can't predict what the outcome might be," Sullivan says. ■

— Andrew Block

Actions have included two canvassing efforts, in which participants were asked if they had confidence in police to serve and protect all persons equally.

The results of a community vote on July 6th and 7th, staged by PCJ at six locations in Seattle's 37th District, were overwhelming: according to organizers, 87 percent of the 2,013 polled stated that they had "no confidence."

The landslide differential was not unexpected, especially considering the results of a student vote in June — at Franklin, Garfield, and Rainier Beach High Schools and Seattle Central Community College — in which 90 percent of the 1,049 students polled did not have confidence in the police.

For those in the 37th District, a region with a relatively high population of people of color, the polling efforts were not only a means of pressuring politicians at City Hall, but was also an opportunity to unify in a common voice. "One of our goals of the vote was to empower the community," said Megan Wilbert, of PCJ.

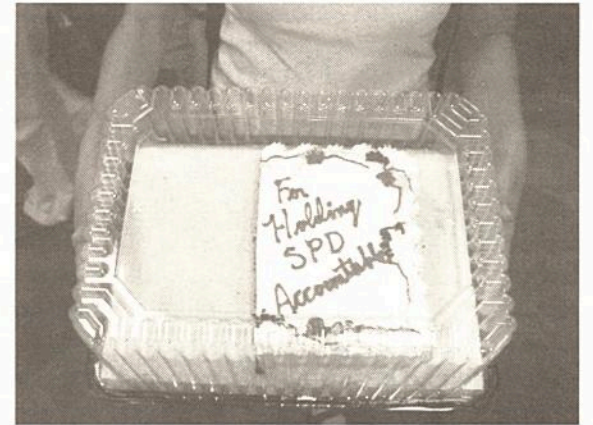
"It's like saying to people who feel alienated by police, 'you are not alone.'" When asked if the percentages were skewed because the votes targeted a community of color — a demographic critics say is predisposed to vote "no confidence" — Washington said, "People of color have had a historically bad relationship with police because of racism. This vote was a chance for this population to speak directly to the mayor and state that they will organize to oppose institutional racism."

Ironically, police response to the "No Confidence" campaign has provoked more distrust in law enforcement officials. Just last week, officers on Capitol Hill were spotted tearing

down signs announcing the vote, while leaving others not so topical.

"It is our belief that the signs were taken down by the Seattle Police officers because they disagreed with the specific political message of our signs," said Washington at a July 5th press conference in front of the East Precinct. "This selective taking down of signs was an inappropriate act of intimidation and a violation of our constitutional right to freedom of speech."

Further action by PCJ in response



PCJ PRESENTED SEATTLE MAYOR GREG NICKELS A CAKE REWARDING HIM FOR PARTIALLY "HOLDING SPD ACCOUNTABLE." PHOTO BY ANDREW BLOCK.

to the alleged discriminatory sign removal is pending.

When asked what action PCJ and its partners plan in order to achieve its goals, Washington said, "We're going to continue to organize in the community. We're going to continue to establish relationships with working-class people, people of color, as well as poor White people who are dealing with issues."

"We won't stop until it's right," said PCJ's Alonso Alvarado, while standing in the lobby of the Mayor's office.

Judging by the events of the last week, the vision of sweet success includes an entire cake, with plenty of forks, and justice for all. ■

## DENNY Cont. from previous page

It was particularly important to keep Denny Place open, King says, in order to maintain several services unique among the region's shelters. For example, Denny Place is the only shelter in the state that is licensed to house youths ages 16 to 20 years — an anomaly, considering that most youth shelters only serve people under the age of 18. Also, residents can stay up to 90 days and receive incentives for employment and school attendance, activity that can be monitored nightly. "We often get the comment from youth that Denny Place provides a very home-like atmosphere," King says.

When asked if any changes to the program will take place, YouthCare CFO Phil Sullivan is quick to point out

## More Than Meets the Eye

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

.....  
: **Yes! Real Change Matters.**  
: **Here's what I can do to support work, dignity, and hope.**  
:  \$35  \$50  \$100  \$250  Other (\$ \_\_\_\_\_)  
:  I would like to pledge a monthly amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
:  Please deduct pledge amount monthly from my card.  
:  Please send me a pledge payment coupon book.  
: NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_  
: ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
: CITY / STATE / ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
:  Please contact me about volunteering my time and energy.  
: **Payment Options:**  Check Enclosed  Please charge my card:  
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: me.  Yes  No  
: Mail to: *Real Change*, 2129 2nd Ave, Seattle, WA 98121 7/25/02  
: .....

# poetry

## The Smoking Room

Many  
Heads lay  
Upon these broken tables.  
It is 7 a.m. and time is still. Still moving, still weeping,  
Still weary, till seeping,  
Still breathing like a cancerous lung  
Rasping in my ear,  
Sad and beautiful, intricate and bare, desolate and free.  
Cold as a heater blows and mixes with ashes.  
Scattered about the room  
Smoke and madness.

—CYNTHIA LEE OZIMEK

## Poor Man's Cooky — 300 degrees for 20 min.

1 cup margarine  
1/2 cup + 2T sugar - white, brown, powdered  
2 1/2 cups - WHITE flour  
with your CLEAN HANDS -  
Mix and squish soft marg. and sugar.  
Mix and squish flour  
Preheat oven to 300 degrees  
Take a bit of mix in hand and  
squeeze. Drop on UNGREASED  
baking sheet.  
Bake 300 degrees for 20 min.  
sweet spices or cut up fruit, raisins  
can be added. Oil can be used  
instead of marg.  
My opinion - vegetable oil  
Real Butter instead of marg. doesn't work.  
Use white flour it works Best.  
Cinnamon mixed in sugar is  
Great - smell and taste

After mixing put in frig - so  
they'll set  
and-uncooked dough can be kept in  
frig or freezer  
before baking.

— ANONYMOUS

## Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning



I want to talk about the recent 9th Circuit Court decision about the Pledge of Allegiance in schools, because it's such a hot topical subject. But then I realized that the only experience I've had with reciting the Pledge in schools is more than 40 years old, so in order to talk about a hot topical subject I'd have to reminisce about my passage through the fifties as a grade schooler.

Oh well. We love irony.

Why do you suppose apples are called that? Why aren't they called brullers? Bruller sounds like an English word. A bruller should be something. Why not an apple?

In 1955, when I was 6, I solved this question by noting that "apple" is a reddish word, whereas bruller has a coffee color. Therefore "apple" would be more suitable for describing apples, which are far more often red than coffee colored. So we don't call apples brullers.

At that age, I spent a considerable amount of time testing the hypothesis that if a baseball was thrown at the air hard enough it would bounce off. I also believed that if I ran fast enough air would support my feet and I could climb skyward for at least 6 or 7 feet before I got tired.

Though I lived 35 miles from Boston at the time, I was sure that I could, given time and enough sandwiches in a paper sack, walk almost anywhere in the world. The question was not could I walk to Paris, but how many days would it take. I guessed somewhere on the order of a week. I knew that if I walked due east I would run into the Atlantic Ocean, but the plan would be to sidestep that.

The year before I started grade school, the Supreme Court banned the leading of prayers in public schools. However the news of their decision must not have made it from Washington, D.C., to Ayer, Massachusetts, in spite of the easy walk, because my grade school there required me to recite the Our Father thingie for two years.

I call it the Our Father thingie because at that point those were almost the only words I could make out of the whole thing. The teacher would say, "Ev-

eryone bow your heads and say the Lord's Prayer," and so everyone was mumbling into their shirtsleeves. I couldn't see their lips moving and it was almost impossible to follow along.

I do remember being able to make out the part about my cup running over and "give me my daily bread." These words had me worried. What cup are we talking about? What's in it? Why is it running (runnething) over? I pictured a boiling cup of potion like in a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde movie. I didn't want to

drink from a cup like that.

And since when do I have to beg for daily bread? What happened to full balanced meals? Don't I get dessert? What about give me my daily Mars bar?

I started school just one year after Eisenhower got the

**In my mind it went something like this:**

**I plej a lejents to the flag, something, mumble, something, for which it stands, invisible, with liberty and justice for all. What, I wondered, was a lejent?**

**And why was I plejng one?**

words "under God" added to the Pledge. Not all of my teachers accepted the change. My first grade teacher had us say it the "traditional way," i.e. without the addition. In my mind it went something like this: I plej a lejents to the flag, something, mumble, something, for which it stands, invisible, with liberty and justice for all.

What, I wondered, was a lejent? And why was I plejng one?

I'm still not sure. And that's where I stand on the 9th Circuit Court's opinion.

OK, I'll clarify a little. What I'm saying is, let's use our schools more to teach kids things like where words come from and how big the world is, and less to indoctrinate them in religion or nationalism. The indoctrination doesn't work anyway. ■



## The New Gospel

In the beginning was Money and the Money was all Goods, and the Money was Goods. Goods right from the beginning. Through Money all things are made; without Money nothing has been made. In Money is all life and that life is the sole desire of men. Money shines brightly in poverty, but poverty does not understand it.

There came a man who was sent from Goods; his name was Economos. He came to testify concerning the desire (of Money), so that all men might believe. He was not the desire, but only a justification of the desire.

The Money became a real thing and made his presence among us. We saw his glory, the glory of the Truly Financial One, who came from the Most High Greed, who is above all Greed, full of desire and truth.

Economos testifies concerning him. He cries out saying, "This is he of whom I spoke. He surpasses me because he is before me and from his plenty we are repeatedly blessed. For the true law of all human life was given to Adam and was made full by Croesus who is the son of the Most High Greed.

Now this was the testimony of Economos. He recalled the words of the prophet Hayek, "Make straight the way of money."

Now some Union leaders had come to question him. "Why do you invest if you are not the Croesus, nor the Profit?"

"I invest with importance and authority," replied Economos, "but over you will stand one you cannot know. He comes after me and I am not worthy to unleash him."

This all happened at Dow on the other side of the street where Economos was investing.

Then Economos saw Croesus coming towards him and said, "Behold, the Bull of Greed, who takes away the care of this world! This is the one of whom I said, "He who comes after me surpasses me because he is before all that is in the world." I myself did not know him, but the reason I was investing was that the eyes of the people might be opened to him. I would not have known him, but those who tell me to invest and keep my Money for myself, my family and my insurance policies have revealed that the blessing of the Most High Financial Gain is upon him. I testify that those who believe and follow him, will be as Holy as the hand that guides the market.

The next day there was a wedding taking place and as always Croesus had been invited to the wedding. Part way through the afternoon the wine ran out. The hosts of the wedding were much dismayed and asked one another what was to be done. One of them went to Croesus and said to him, "We have no more wine."

Croesus replied, "Why do you ask me, can you not buy some more?"

One of the hosts stood forward and in a small voice said, "We have no more money to buy wine with, sir."

Then Croesus became cold and said, "He who does not have money shall never have enough. This is the bed you have made for yourself and you must lay in it, for nothing lowers a man from the Greed but Charity. For the root of all evil is the love of Charity. If a man should beg, let him be cast away, and if a man should approach you with filthy clothes and shoes, do not turn your back on him, but take away even that which he has, for it is written, "To those who have much Money, shall more be given, but to those who have little, even what little they have shall be taken away lest it be wasted on luxury."

And so the hosts went away and water was served at the rest of the banquet. The guests looked at one another and said, "This union is cursed from the start, for they have too little money."

This was the first of his hard facts of life, Croesus revealed in the country of Samm, and more disciples put their faith in him.

When it was almost time for the Shareholders' Annual General Meeting, Croesus went up to Hudson. In the main offices he found men comforting other men who had lost their small life savings on a Stock Market downturn. Some were standing in line for a soup kitchen which had opened up there, and was giving out free soup to the men who looked cold and frightened. So Croesus made a cell phone call to the local police and had them driven away from the offices. To those who were handing out cards with helpline numbers on them, he said, "How dare you make this place of business into a charity case!"

His disciples remembered how it was written, "Zeal for profit and business shall consume him."

Then Jesuits nearby asked him, "How can you show us your authority to do all this? These people were just trying to help!"

Croesus answered them, "Do you have a church?"

They replied that a short way off was a small chapel by a wood which they used for a retreat. Croesus then said, "Sell it to me and in three days I will have financed a profitable strip mall."

The Jesuits replied, "But it has taken twenty years to complete our retreat; many people use it and are able to find peace in the woods there."

But Croesus did not answer them, instead storing up this knowledge until such times as he could use it to hold sway over the local council's zoning committee.

— MICHAEL LLOYD

## NICKEL continued from page 1

stops talking to them so ironically. There's a place where she's basically saying, 'Help!'"

Holden has made it her life's work to inspire social change via the theater and performing arts. Therefore, she was naturally attracted to *Nickel and Dimed*, which she calls a perfect marriage between politics and art.

"I have, in different ways, tried to express what's happening to American workers," she explains. "As the gap between the rich and the poor grows wider and wider, what happens to the people in the middle? They either go up or they go down. I ask, 'What happens when they go down?'"

Considering the recent failings of the economy, welfare reform, and cut-backs in human services, many believe that *Nickel and Dimed* arrived at a time when the public is ready to confront issues of poverty.

"I think, for some reason, we're ready to see low-wage workers. They are the result of the economic transformation seen in the 1990s, and nobody's written about them before," says Holden. "Poverty was 'discovered' in the '60s; there wasn't any poverty in America until Michael Harrington wrote *The Other America*. Then there was *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson's book, where all of a sudden people said, 'Whoa, we're poisoning the planet!' There are certain books that arrive just at the moment that people are ready, that articulate what they know unconsciously. This book is one of them.

"This book is a best-seller. That, to me, means that people are ready to start re-thinking the condemnation of welfare, that they are ready to start thinking about subsidizing housing, raising the minimum wage. They are ready to make a turn."

### A time to talk

Given the gravity of the play, and that the theater can be a temporal experience, producers at Intiman determined that audience interaction was integral to completing the circle. To brainstorm modes of outreach, the theater assembled a Community Committee, comprised of local service providers, corporate leaders, and academics. The committee found appropriate personnel to lead the various discussions — which will focus particularly on women working poor, housing, and the living wage — and to establish the website.

"It's the strong position of Intiman that we are the platform for dialogue," says Liza Comtois, Director of Education and Community Programs at Intiman, "but we are not an advocacy organization. We're not trying to say 'one idea is right and another is wrong,' we are just saying that art is a way of engaging people in civic dialogue about a variety of change."

For committee co-chair George Griffin, the former deputy chief of staff for former Mayor Norm Rice, the committee was a call to action, in which education and community empowerment were imperative.

"It's not important to be a suit and say 'I made it, you can to,' says Griffin, a successful businessman and long-time community activist. "What is more important to do is give people a hands-on opportunity to see what they can do in whatever field that might be, where you don't have that disparity of looking at it either as 'I'm Oprah,' or 'I'm a drug dealer.'"

"Empowerment has more to do with the idea of equal opportunity for people to have access to career choices and to education choices that would help them have an opportunity to be more productive."

Given that the panel discussions only serve a limited number of people, in a relatively brief amount of time, the web site, [www.nickelanddimedtheplay.org](http://www.nickelanddimedtheplay.org), will serve as the primary extension of educational and empowering outreach. On the site, those interested can find information about the play, the process of adapting it, and, more significantly, find links to public and private service providers. At these affiliated sites, people can both donate resources — such as volunteer hours and money — and gain access to human service assistance.

"It's not about us re-inventing the web site," says Comtois, "because that's already there. It's how we channel those interested people to the places where real advocacy work happens. Or, for people who are one step away from needing those services, there's a way they can get some help."

### The faces of a bleak reality

To further familiarize the face of poverty, Intiman is displaying a photo essay exhibit that portrays the lives of several Seattle women struggling to get by earning a minimum wage. Susie Fitzhugh, who has undertaken the project with the funding support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, has built her career on capturing images of America's working class.

In preparing to shoot, Fitzhugh would interview her subjects, then discuss with them what shots would best depict their daily life. The questions used were variously concrete, abstract, and reflective. Queries included, "What is your monthly income?" "Do you wish you had what other people have?" and "What brings you joy?"

This documenting process meant Fitzhugh would spend all day with her subjects, spending time commuting to work, on the job, and in the home. Predictably, however, Fitzhugh was often barred from entering the workplace. "A lot of these workplaces would not be comfortable having me there," Fitzhugh

says. "I think somewhere in the back of their minds, they think it's an exploitive situation and I'm not welcome."

Despite the severity of her subjects' lives, Fitzhugh maintains that showing tragedy is always secondary to human dignity.

"I know that there are a lot of people that show things in a brutal way," Fitzhugh says. "I think that you can be real honest and show the reality of the situation in another way. I don't believe you need to sugarcoat it at all, but it's really doing people a disservice not to include the fact that they are dignified."

"The general audience that is going to go to these plays is upper-middle class and hasn't ever really been in a tight spot. But I'd like to show photographs that, even though the surface situation is very foreign to a lot of people, the actual human situation is totally understandable and can be appreciated. Photography tells a story that anyone can read."

### Affordable theater for all

Considering the context of the play, and the intent of the discussions, it would be antithetical to exclude the working-poor with pricey ticket expenses. Precisely because of this notion, Intiman has taken active measures to bring low-income families into the theater for free, offering ticket coupons

through certain service providers.

Comtois, who has been in charge of this effort, says that people using this resource can come in large groups organized by the service providers or independently. She is worried, however, that the targeted demographic will feel alienated by the theater.

"The thing that we're concerned about is that we make these available. We don't want nobody using them because they feel unwelcome or uncomfortable."

### Telling the truth

Part of what should make people feel welcomed is what also attracted Holden to work on the play: the organic tone with which Barbara, the narrator and the actor, speaks.

Says Holden, "In her previous work, Ehrenreich's a social critic. There's the kind of personal testimony I'm looking for in, for example, *Real Change*. I want to hear about homeless people's lives. Tell me where you spent last night; you don't have to write an editorial telling me why there should be housing. Just fire me up by telling me the circumstances of your life."

"Ehrenreich could have made all the points she makes abstractly, as in most of her other books. But this has so much body, that's why people grabbed onto it. That's what we're hoping to duplicate in this play." ■



NICKEL AND DIMED FEATURES SHARON LOCKWOOD (CENTER) AS "BARBARA" AND AN ENSEMBLE OF FIVE ACTORS PLAYING MULTIPLE ROLES: (FROM LEFT) JASON COTTLE, CYNTHIA JONES, OLGA SANCHEZ, CRISTINE MCMURDO-WALLIS, AND KRISTIN FLANDERS. PHOTO BY CHRIS BENNION.

### Nickel and Dimed: On (not) Getting by in America

A play by Joan Holden

Based on the book by Barbara Ehrenreich

Intiman Playhouse

July 26 — August 25

In addition to post-play discussions, a special talk between Ehrenreich, and Holden takes place Saturday, August 3 at 10 a.m. at Intiman Theatre. The conversation is free and open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis; reservations are strongly encouraged, which you can make by calling 206-269-1901 ext. 360.

For show times, tickets to the show, or more information, call the Intiman box office at 206-269-1900 or check out the website [www.intiman.org](http://www.intiman.org).

For information on how to receive tickets gratis and panel discussion schedule contact Liza Comtois at 206-269-1908, extension 213 or at [liza@intiman.org](mailto:liza@intiman.org).



# Book Reviews

## *Humbows, Not Hot Dogs!*

*Memoirs of a savvy Asian American Activist*  
by Bob Santos

International Examiner Press

\$18, \$15 students (Available at the Wing Luke Museum, Uwajimaya, and the offices of the International Examiner)

176 pages

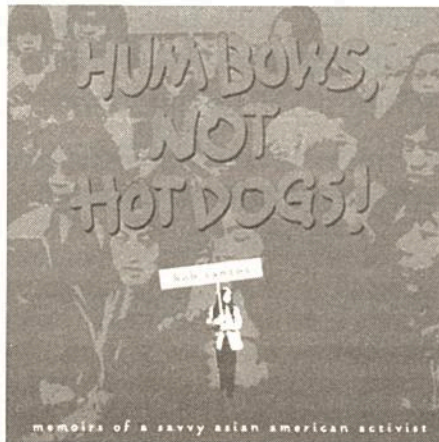
Review by Anitra Freeman

“Uncle Bob” Santos has been one of the driving forces in keeping Seattle as multi-cultural as it is. In both feisty public rabble-rousing and behind-the-scenes statesmanship, he has been a key force in building a thriving Asian-American community and an important figure in making Seattle one of the few cities where homeless and low-income people are a real political presence.

He also grew up during “interesting times.” His father was a local sports hero who became blind later in his life, giving the young Bob Santos, who was his father’s guide on his daily rounds,

entree into an adult world of bars and sports. He was 8 years old during the WWII internment of Americans of Japanese descent, when he and other children in his neighborhood had to wear badges that said “I AM FILIPINO” or “I AM CHINESE” to avoid beatings by other children. He was a part of the Civil Rights movement of the ‘60s.

After 68 years of living and shaping local history, the by-no-means-retired Bob Santos has written his memoirs-to-date in 176 detail-packed pages, *Humbows, Not Hots Dogs: Memoirs of a savvy Asian American Activist*. (I’m not counting title sheets and introduction.) He has done several readings from his book to crowds across Seattle. But I couldn’t find any



other book reviews to cheat from. The *Seattle Times* published an interview with Bob after his book came out (“Bob Santos, feisty defender of the Chinatown International District,” June 23, 2002) — why hasn’t anyone done a book review?

Part of the reason may be that Santos does not write his memoirs as a novelist, or a professional storyteller. He writes in very simple, straightforward language, as he speaks. His life might make a good action movie, but his book doesn’t read like one, even when he visits El Salvador and gets close enough to the war to see gun smoke.

I’m not much into action movies or suspense novels, however. I am into stories of “how it happened.” For instance, I loved reading about the building of the International District community garden: from the first negotiations for the land, through the cleanup, to the donation of the 4-ton stone Friendship Lantern from Kobe, Japan, and its in-

stallation in Kobe Terrace Park.

stallation in Kobe Terrace Park.

“The Alaskan Cannery Workers Association sent several crews to the garden work parties. I will always remember the sight of Gene Viernes, a farm boy from Wapato, running up and down the hillside with loads of heavy gravel, hardly taking a break, until the entire load was spread. I will always remember the sight of Silme Domingo backing down the narrow road to the staging area in his Monte Carlo, stepping out on a rock, wearing his black Italian shoes, and directing traffic to the dump site while never working up a sweat.”

This glimpse from 1976 is especially poignant:

“Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo were assassinated in June 1981, in a backlash against their work in organizing cannery workers.

“I also have enough of my grandfather’s farming heritage left to enjoy, God preserve me from the judgment of my vegetarian friends, the humor of Dan Rounds’ first attempt to kill a pig for the annual pig roast: ‘After about nine times of being stabbed, the pig, with its eyes bugging out, squealed. The farmer rushed over and asked us if we wanted him to shoot the critter.’”

What I’d like even better would be an audiotape of the book in Bob’s warm, chuckling voice. ■

*The Global Activist’s Manual: Local Ways to Change the World*  
Edited by Mike Prokosh and Laura Raymond  
Nation Books, 2002  
\$15.95, 324 pages

Review by Timothy Harris

Seattle on November 30, 1999, was, to stoop to an overused metaphor, the perfect storm. In this collision of unlikely forces — a labor town hosting the WTO, a direct action network organized over the Internet, and an unprepared Mayor, and police chief — we

caused the temporary shutdown of one of the world’s most powerful organizations.

The world found itself treated to images of urban warfare guaranteed to inspire even the most jaded of activists. I’ll never forget arriving downtown with 50,000 others to find every store closed at two in the afternoon. “No Business as Usual” was finally more than a slogan. Later that night, watching the looting of Starbucks on TV, it felt like Superbowl Sunday, and my team was finally winning.

Seattle quickly became more than just the culmination of more than a decade of organizing. It became the new standard for what was possible: a vision of broad-based militancy capable of forcing radical social change. After N30, the word “movement” came out of quotation marks to describe a far flung network of direct action junkies, labor activists, farmers, environmentalists, community organizers, and others who found themselves opposed to a remarkably large and entrenched process known vaguely as “globalization.”

Not all of these groups could be called natural allies. The youthful direct action faction that subsequently rushed to the barricades in L.A., D.C., and wherever else global capital presented itself, made the labor old

## *Outlaw Woman*

*A Memoir of the War Years, 1960-1975*

by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

City Lights Books

\$17.95, 440 pages

Review by Anitra Freeman

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz writes of living and making history. She is open about both her personal life and her public life, her failures and her victories. And she writes with the sensibilities of a novelist. The story of her journey from timid teenage bride to radical revolutionary parallels the journey of the country through the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam era. The way she tells it is intellectually analytical at times, gripping and often emotionally jarring at others.

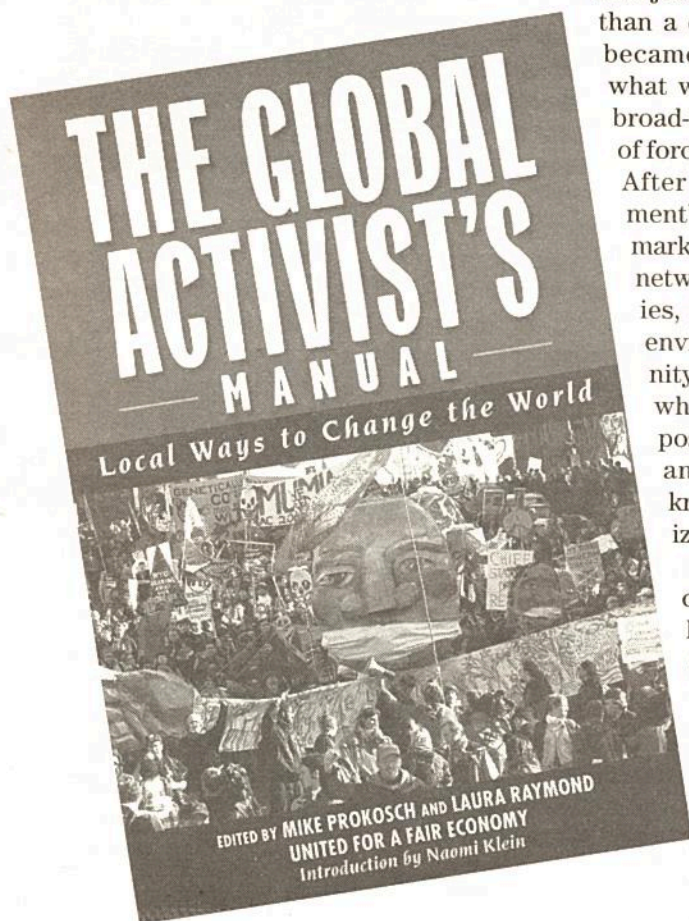
Unlike the memoirs of our local activist Bob Santos (*Humbows Not Hot Dogs!*), which I reviewed for this same issue, I did find several reviews of *Outlaw Woman* that I could cheat from. However, I disagreed with all of them.

It would be difficult to squeeze enough into 440 pages to satisfy all readers. For instance, Roxanne’s account wasn’t intimate enough to satisfy *Publisher’s Weekly*. Yet she does get intimate, as in her emotional turmoil over leaving her husband and child; shoplifting “like a natural” for a drug-deal-

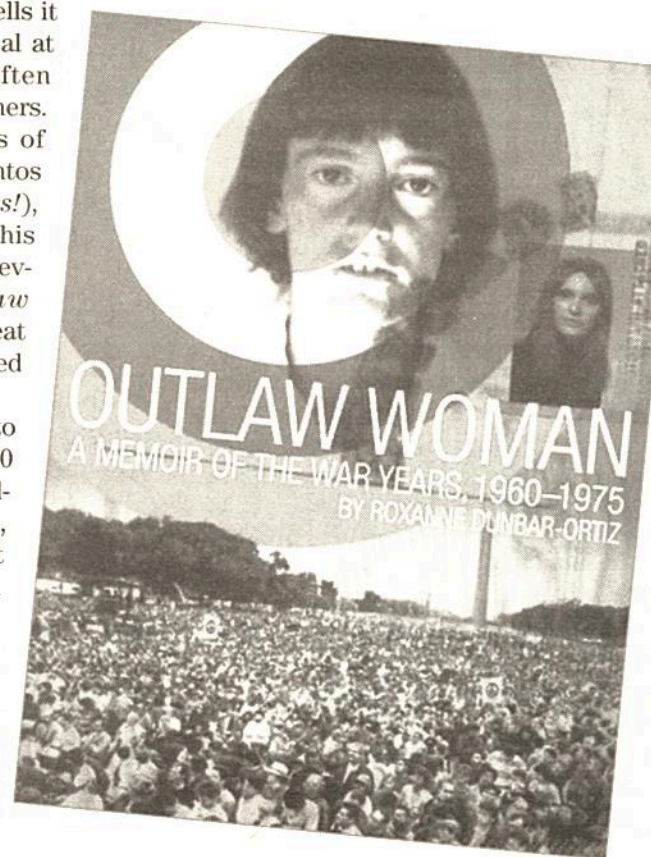
ing boyfriend; her anguish over the death of her good friend Audrey Rosenthal in the apartheid struggle; her reactions to the rape of another friend during the founding years of the feminist journal *No More Fun and Games*. But if she detailed her subjective reactions to all events from 1960 to 1975, this would be fifteen 1500-page journals instead of one book.

She doesn’t describe the Left’s agenda explicitly enough for one of the Amazon reviewers. In my experience, only simplistic philosophies can be summed up in a small pamphlet to be

Cont. on page 14



Cont. on page 14



# Book Reviews

*The New World: Poems*  
By George Evans  
Curbstone Press, 2002  
\$13.95, 95 pages

Review by Adam Holdorf

George Evans is a poet of little mass, but great depth. This is his second book published in the United States, and his first in 10 years. But his depiction of love, death, Vietnam, and deprivation is worth several thicker volumes.

It's a jarring, unsettling journey that begins where everyone wants a happy ending: one young man, whispering in a garden to his lover, "The moment I saw your face was like walking into the Hall of A Thousand And One Bodhisattvas," the Japanese hall of carved stone figures.

The Hall is a place of redemption and rediscovery, where, says Evans, "if you search the thousand faces, you will find the face of someone lost from your life." Bodhisattvas are do-gooders in the Buddhist faith: mortals so wise and so concerned for their fellows' fate that "they pause at the edge of nirvana to stay behind to help us all get through." Each Bodhisattva has one thousand arms that each holds a world, and can duplicate herself 33 times. Given "how much distress there really is," writes Evans, and all the worlds to be healed, "think of what it's like to stand in an ancient wooden

temple with all that sparkling compassion, even for those of us who believe in almost nothing."

But the thought is gone in a moment. The young girl looks away, bored with her lover's talk, and time, life, and love move inexorably on. We all get "a momentary understanding of life. Getting it only to watch it vanish."

Obstruction and deception runs riot through these poems. Stars shine weakly through the gases in our atmosphere — hindered further by the city lights. Evans wonders "why we don't just shut off all the lights in the world for one night so we can all see the stars at once for once (it has to do with people sticking guns in your face, I know but don't care — we all have these guns because we can't see the sky and don't know where we are)." All of us — you, me, our neighbors, our lovers, and the armies we unleash — are moving not in dark but under illusion, in "a black sea/ against night," black with no end. "There is no shore, no advice will create one, no amount of struggle/ do more

**"I must have hallucinated you. The one I embraced would never leave me alone, the arms that swept me through sweat and flesh would not have me settle for rifles and fear. The one I love would talk me through this death."**

— Poetry of George Evans

than invent the mirage of one before it sinks into some horizon."

And below the swimming hordes, "love is earth's mirror, its deepest fire below the weight of oceans, refracting the light of stars, the moon and sun, the engine that drives us though we are silly with the subject because times are bitter. The question isn't how to know it, but how one could not know it, not how to believe it, but how to disbelieve it."

How could one not know and not believe? Easy. Easy for the soldier writing home to a brief and silent girlfriend, telling her "I must have hallucinated you. The one I embraced would never leave me alone, the arms that swept me through sweat and flesh would not have me settle for rifles and fear. The one I love would talk me through this death."

Easy for the veteran, lying in bed next to a woman — the memory of a different woman, dead years ago, eyes sheathed in flies in the back of a pickup truck in Vietnam, also alive, also lying next to him.

Easy for the rough-sleepers wracked with memories, jolted with the electrical current of addiction, living in the streets of San Francisco. There, "facing the wall of onyx tiles that frame the window of Victoria Pastry/ without shoes, his feet/ black as the tiles but

without the shine," a man is "chattering over and over/ shut up, shut up, shut up/ to the hopeful tourist brides who stand above him leaning slightly to admire the triple and quadruple-tiered white castle/ wedding cakes in the window."

Despite and amid all this, beauty lives, as ineffable as the plastic bride-and-groom figures on each wedding cake are substantial. Yet still we grasp. "Everything is selfish in the heart," Evans writes,

The emptiness one feels is the collapsing of time from a seed that has sprouted the end of time, a seed we have tended carelessly with meticulous inattention.

Everything is generous in the heart.

The emptiness one feels is that same flower, the heart, which is too fond of life to wish it gone, but spends its days worried over what has not yet happened.

Everything and nothing is in the heart.

Evans' poetry stokes your mind with the force of e.e. cummings' work on love, death, and forgetfulness. The two poets also share the anti-war ferocity. Evans' last chapter, for which the book is named, is a parody/lament for the United States subtitled "translations from the English." The anti-war sentiments of cummings' "I sing of Olaf, Big and Glad," who would not "kiss your fucking flag" are here; so is the horror, less prevalent in cummings' time, of the totalitarianism we wring from any ideology, be it right or left.

George Evans has produced a spur to rage and to compassion. He reminds us that, if we are to live, our hearts must beat with both. ■

## GLOBAL Continued from page 13

guard nervous to say the least. Moreover, the anti-globalization crew looked in the mirror and saw overwhelming whiteness. People of color, historically, have concentrated on their own survival, and their organizing tends to focus on the more immediately winnable. While the issue of globalization offers an analytical framework capable of uniting across class, race, and gender, it is the white middle class that seems most drawn to the task.

*The Global Activist's Manual*, published by the impressive national organization known as United for a Fair Economy, attempts to gather the threads of this diverse movement into a strong fabric of unified resistance to corporate domination. The result is a fine-grained snapshot of the economic justice movement as we enter the 21st century, both as it is and as we would like it to be. We are both youthful and experienced, reasoned and angry, weak and strong, serious and playful, democratic and anarchist. Above all, we are homegrown and global.

While parts of *The Manual* are better skimmed, the more than 60 essays presented here include descriptions of campaigns and coalitions that reach across borders to build community power. There is analysis of the global economy and discussion of our role as

consumers and activists. Such perennial topics as racism within the movement, cross-class solidarity, overcoming insularity, and, my own favorite, the problems of building a leaderless movement by consensus, are given a good deal of thought. Finally, there is a brief "Organizing 101" section that discusses such essentials as media work, fundraising, basic research, and why tear gas won't stop us.

A brief analytical essay by editor Mike Prokosh, who came to United for a Fair Economy from a long career as a Central America solidarity organizer, outlines how none of our typical strategies — direct action, institutional campaigns, or local coalition building — are capable of winning on their own. What is needed, he points out, is a synergy of these strategies, with various actors playing the roles they know best.

While this may be a new movement, few of these are new issues. There is little to be said on the issue of hierarchy and consensus, for example, that wasn't said 20 years ago after Seabrook. Yet *The Global Activist's Manual* is a fresh addition to the literature of social change in that the shape of the movement for economic justice is defined more clearly than ever, and the lessons that need to be learned have a way of presenting themselves anew as each generation of activists gropes its way toward the future. ■

## OUTLAW Continued from page 13

handed out on street corners, and remain the same for all time. What Dunbar-Ortiz describes is the evolution of a radical: from a liberal working for reform, to an armed revolutionary, to a root reevaluation of the legitimacy of the American system itself — a dismantling of "the American origin myth" that supports white male supremacy, corporate capitalism, class oppression, and McDonalds for all.

She grew from being one of the first advocates of the militant feminist platform — that all men are the oppressor, that violence against the patriarchal system is not only moral but morally mandated, that female biology confers a mystic wisdom and innate superiority upon all women — to questioning and finally openly opposing these precepts when advocated by others. She continues to be a passionate feminist, but considers herself to be working for human liberation, liberation for all.

Over the period narrated in this book, Dunbar-Ortiz wrestled with issues that the Left movement has and still does wrestle with, including: the legitimacy of violence vs. non-violence; the frustration of working-class and non-white people with a movement usually dominated by middle-class white intellectuals; rumors and propa-

ganda designed to make members suspicious of each other; being passionate about what you believe and still able to work with others who aren't "100% Ideologically Pure." Another reviewer laments that she has not yet resolved these issues. I am pleased that she confronts them, because not enough of us do.

This is a valuable book, in my opinion, for anyone who wants to understand an important period in our nation's cultural history. It is also a good book for any liberal, radical, progressive, or other Lefty to invigorate their own confrontations with the issues that still trouble the Left, like class divisions and other infighting.

Roxanne doesn't have any final answers. You and I may not come up with any either. I have seen a lot of damage done by clear and simple answers, and more good done by people who continue to wrestle with the questions. ■

*Another good book on the independent radicals of the 1960s and 1970s, recommended by Dunbar-Ortiz, is Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che, by Max Elbaum, Verso Books.*

*You can see and hear Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz herself speaking about the period if you can get hold of a copy of Rebels with a Case: a Documentary of the SDS Years, by Max Elbaum, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, and Susan Martinez.*

# Book Reviews

## O Canada!

Three Canadian writers tap into the story of homelessness

*Unless*  
Carol Shields  
Fourth Estate Publishers  
\$24.95, 213 pages

*Stanley Park*  
Timothy Taylor  
Counterpoint Press  
\$ 25, 432 pages

*Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing*  
Margaret Atwood  
Cambridge University Press  
\$18, 219 pages

Asked by the *New Yorker* to comment on the 9th Circuit Court's recent decision about the Pledge of Allegiance, comedian Robin Williams quipped, "Why don't they change it to 'One nation under Canada?' That way everybody would be happy!"

"I think Americans see us as cowering in their shadow," says a Canadian friend. Americans often ignore our northern neighbor; it's only been in the past three decades that Canadian writers have come into prominence here. When she started writing, in Canada in the 1960s, "there were no living role models," says Margaret Atwood.

It is therefore a pleasure for *Real Change* to review three terrific new books by Canadian writers. Two of

them feature homeless characters, which perhaps show our northern neighbor — usually known for its sensible social welfare policies — has started experiencing the American problem of the proliferation of homelessness.

### Unless

"It happens that I am going through a period of great unhappiness and loss right now," begins Reta Winters, narrator of Carol Shields' new novel *Unless*. It is impossible, when reading these words, not to think about Shields' own situation: terminally ill with breast cancer, this is likely her last book.

Shields is known for her sharply drawn short stories and Pulitzer-prize-winning novel *The Stone Diaries*; her new book is slim and poetically written, and explores themes her readers will be familiar with. In a recent interview, she says, "They say you write the same novel over and over, and the idea of women being fully human has been a preoccupation."

Reta Winters is a writer, wife, and mother of three lovely daughters, the oldest of whom, Norah, has chosen to leave University and live in a Toronto shelter, panhandling each day on Bloor Street with a sign that simply says "Goodness." Until Norah's unexplained

estrangement, Reta has had a lucky life: Good children, strong marriage, respected career translating the works of iconoclastic philosopher-writer Danielle Westerman. Her light, romantic novel, *My Thyme Is Up*, has become an unexpected commercial success.

Her attempt to understand Norah's life on the streets forces Reta to question her own experience, and to see parallels to her own unfulfilled and unarticulated longings. She hears a relentless interior monologue, and imagines it is the same for her daughter:

"Our daughter Norah teased us with curious notions. Voices talking in her head, she said. All the time. But we understood at once that this means nothing, only that she had become conscious of the lifelong dialogue that goes on in a person's head, the longest conversation we'll ever know, and the most circular and repetitive and insane. Please, not that woman again! Doesn't she ever shut up?"

In addition to Reta's interior monologue, we hear the theories of Reta's peers and family. Danielle Westerman "believes that Norah has simply succumbed to the traditional refuge of women without power: she has accepted in its stead complete powerlessness, total passivity, a kind of impotent piety. In doing nothing, she has claimed everything." Or: She can have "goodness but not greatness." Reta's husband believes Norah's choice must have been caused by some particular traumatic event, but Reta is not sure she believes

in "the thunderclap of trauma."

Reta starts writing increasing sharp, slightly mad — and always unsent — letters to the Great White Men of Letters. The sequel to her successful light novel starts to go awry in her writing of it—she finds herself unable to write another sweet romance, and her publisher is worried.

Against the odds, her family remains intact. There are heartbreaking scenes of the whole family traveling to Toronto to visit Norah's shelter. Every month Reta writes a donation check to the

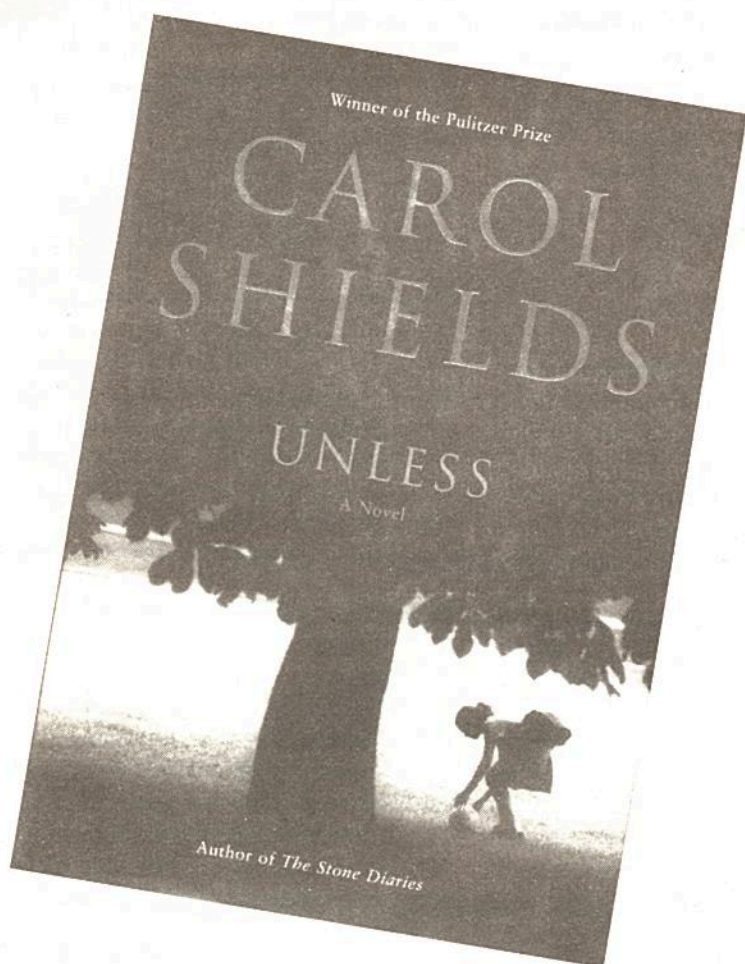
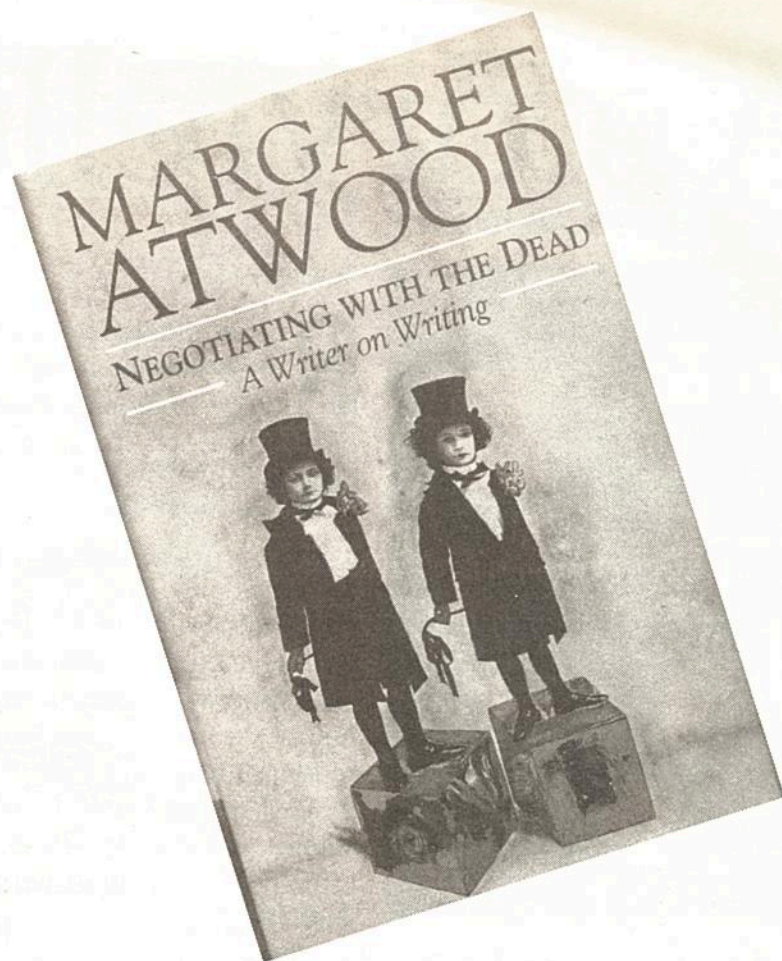
Promise Hostel, crying. Norah's two younger sisters, without telling their parents, take Norah clothes, toothbrushes, and food. They begin making an every-Saturday pilgrimage to Toronto, and spend the day quietly sitting on the sidewalk with their sister who does not speak. In holding onto this connection, Reta thinks, "They are co-conspirators in the ef-

fort of faith."

In this haunting novel, Norah's estrangement is seen through the particular, reluctantly feminist filter of her mother Reta's own analysis of what it is like to be a woman. "The world isn't ready for us yet; it hurts me to say that," she thinks. "We are too kind, too willing... reaching out blindly with a grasping hand but not knowing how to ask for what we don't even know we want."

Other women writers have mapped out the same theme, for decades now. But as an end-of-life exploration, what

*Continued on page 18*



# A storyteller for all ages



PHOTO COURTESY OF RANDOM HOUSE.

By Andrew Block

**R**acism. Poverty. Life in Flint, Michigan. Although these themes may seem more dreary than typical children's book fodder, author Christopher Paul Curtis incorporates all three to create vibrant stories of African-American family life in the early to mid-20th century.

Each of his two books — *The Watson's go to Birmingham—1963* and *Bud, Not Buddy* — has won both the Newberry Medal and the Coretta Scott King Award, the two most prestigious accolades in children's literature. Despite the fanfare, Curtis stays true to his roots — which include a “tedious” 13-year stint on the assembly lines at General Motors — and remains the humble and personable man he was before the acclaim. His heartfelt candor is refreshing and reminiscent of that of his characters.

This spring, Curtis appeared at the Richard Hugo House where he shared anecdotes from his youth, read passages from his books, and offered advice to up-and-coming writers. Before this event, *Real Change* was able to glean some additional wisdom from Christopher Paul Curtis.

**Real Change:** Did you anticipate that your writings would have such a great impact on students, teachers, and adult book readers?

**Christopher Paul Curtis:** I think the ultimate goal of writing is to reach out and touch somebody, a young person or an adult. But when I start, I only try to write to myself. I'm my own harshest critic. And I feel like, if I can write a story that I enjoy, a story that I would have liked to read, then I feel like I've accomplished something. I'm not the kind of writer who outlines everything; half the time I have no idea where the story is going to go; I don't know who the characters are going to be.

**RC:** Now that your influence has been felt, do you embrace your current status as a pre-eminent storyteller?

**Paul Curtis:** I do embrace my role. I'm thrilled with the fact that the stories have been well received and that people enjoy the books and that they touch somebody. I think that's the most you can ask for as a writer.

**RC:** How do you try to challenge readers to confront issues of race and class, in both a historical and a contemporary context?

**Paul Curtis:** One of the things that I do when I write is discuss with my editor the perspective of the narrator. Ten-year-old Kenny Watson (narrator of *The Watson's go to Birmingham — 1963*) grew up in a segregated area and it was a benign segregation, really. The doctors were Black, the lawyers were Black, and it was a self-contained Black community.

My editor wanted to know, “What does Kenny think of White people?” We had quite a few discussions about it, because I don't feel a 10-year-old Black boy growing up in those conditions would have a real sense of how he feels toward White people. He lives in a Black world. He's seeing Black people all the time.

Another thing that my editor wanted was for Kenny to describe people as they are, to describe a man who is Black as a “Black man.” I said, “Well yeah it's a Black man. Kenny's a Black child. He wouldn't use a ‘Black man,’ or a ‘Negro,’ because you only use the adjective when you describe something different.”

I think that as a writer you're walking a tightrope. You have to be able to make something that's realistic, and racism is realistic and was realistic in Kenny's life. You want to emphasize the themes of racism. But you have to be very careful, because it's not a theme that you really want to hammer the kids with. That's one of the biggest turnoffs for young or adult readers. They feel like they are being written down to. As a writer, you don't want to do that. I try to make the issues of race and class, which the characters deal with throughout both books, something that is not really a focal point of their lives, but something that touches on them and has an effect on them.

**RC:** What are the keys to your literary success?

**Paul Curtis:** I think one of the reasons that people enjoy the stories is because the characters are real. I know when I'm reading a book, I keep my fingers crossed: “Oh please don't let this 10-year-old go off on something a gradu-

ate student would do.”

Also, *Bud not Buddy* is not really a story about the depression; *The Watson's go to Birmingham* is not really a story about the Civil Rights Movement. They're stories about family. Hopefully,

people can identify with the characters and feel that they're part of the family.

In *The Watson's go to Birmingham*, when Joetta goes to the church that is bombed eventually, hopefully by that point in the story the students are a part of the Watsons. They can have some kind of idea of what it would be like to have a loved one exposed to those kinds of dangers.

**RC:** Do you incorporate autobiographical information into your stories?

**Paul Curtis:** I don't think you can help doing that. Part of a good story is that you do have to have some of yourself in

it; that makes it a lot more real.

**RC:** You include a lot of information about early 20th century Flint, Michigan. How has your hometown changed over the years?

**Paul Curtis:** Flint is a very interesting city. For many decades, Flint had the highest per-capita income for African Americans in the country because of the car factories that were there. It was a bustling, one-industry town.

As General Motors pulled out, Flint

**Another thing that my editor wanted was for Kenny to describe people as they are, to describe a man who is Black as a “Black man.” I said, “Well yeah it's a Black man. Kenny's a Black child. He wouldn't use a ‘Black man,’ or a ‘Negro,’ because you only use the adjective when you describe something different.”**

— Author Christopher Paul Curtis



has just collapsed. The state has even taken over the finances. It's a tragedy. It's depressing to go back to Flint and to see what's happened.

But, like anywhere else, there are a lot of stories. The factory where I worked was where the sit-down strikes took place in the 1930s, which was really the birth of the UAW (United Auto Workers), where the workers had taken over the plant because General Motors wouldn't recognize the union. And GM brought in tanks to make an example of these workers and blow them out of the factories.

So, it's an interesting city. It is kind of sad that Flint isn't known for anything except depression and Michael Moore's *Roger and Me*.

**RC:** Do you plan writing for adults?

**Paul Curtis:** I don't really think of what I write as children's books, I just write to tell a story. The stories just happen to have young narrators.

**RC:** What do you want kids to draw from your work?

**Paul Curtis:** I want them to have fun. I want them to see reading a book is fun. From there, a lot of good things can happen. Hopefully, once they've read my books, they will ask questions about the Civil Rights Movement or the Depression. Ideally, that's the best that I can hope for, that it peaks their interest, makes them want to look at other books.

**RC:** What do you recommend to aspiring writers?

**Paul Curtis:** You gotta have fun with it. Write everyday. The third thing I tell writers is “ignore all the rules.” You'll find your own way; you'll find your own style.

Writing is strange in that there aren't any prodigies. In almost any other field there are prodigies. But with writing, you have to live for a while, let it percolate. You have to be patient with yourself. ■

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**Thursday, June 23, 5:23 p.m., Harrison Ave.** Officers responded to a 911 call from a man in the apartment saying that his friend, a 53-year-old transient black male, had attempted suicide. He was depressed about being evicted from his apartment, and took a razor and attempted to cut his arm. His friend took the razor and threw it out the window, along with a knife. He then called 911, but the subject left the apartment in an unknown direction. Officers checked the area, and found the man in an alleyway by the apartment. He stated he did not want to live, and would end his life by any means. He was transported to Harborview for an involuntary mental health evaluation.

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**Monday, July 1, 6-7 p.m., 1900 Blk. Elliot Ave, Ballard.** According to the Seattle Fire Department, a transient cooking with a barbeque started a fire that destroyed the Tsubota Industrial Supply Company. The building was abandoned and on the Fire Dept.'s 'Dangerous Buildings' list. The building had been used by transients for at least eight months – but most moved out two weeks ago, when asbestos cleanup prior to demolition began. A Fire Dept. spokesman stated that no one had been inside the building as it burned. The building was entirely destroyed, but the value of the warehouse was negligible as it was due to be demolished soon. (From the *Ballard-News Tribune*.)



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**Friday, July 5, 4:55 p.m., Occidental Park.** While on patrol, officers noticed the suspect, a transient white male, sitting in the park, consuming alcohol. He had four open cans of Budweiser by his side. He was ID'd, and it was discovered that he had been placed on a 90 day parks exclusion notice on the June 20, 2002. The suspect was arrested and booked into King County jail for violation of the parks exclusion order.

**Sunday, July 7, 3:09 p.m. 8th Ave. S. Parking Lot.** An officer responded to the parking lot regarding a suspicious vehicle. He located the vehicle, and saw the suspect, a 24-year-old transient black male, sleeping in the driver's seat. When awoken he stated he was waiting for a friend. The officer asked if it was his vehicle, and he stated he did not know to whom the car belonged. He was asked to step out of the vehicle, and provide ID. He said he had no ID, but provided a name and an Ohio ID number. The officer conducted a records check, and the man had no warrants. The officer then examined the inside of the car, and found some old letters from when the suspect had been in prison. The suspect then confessed his real name. Another radio check found a warrant hit, and he was booked into King County Jail. ■

*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.*

## CANADA Continued from page 14

could be more poignant than a terminally ill writer wondering if being good-not-great is enough for women at the start of the 21st century?

**Stanley Park**

Timothy Taylor's first novel, *Stanley Park*, quickly hit the bestseller list in Canada when it was published there last year; it also won Canada's Giller Prize. Newly published in the US, it is being heavily promoted by its publisher, Counterpoint Press. It is an unusually strong first novel — interesting, well written, and combining the disparate elements of cooking, homelessness, and mystery.

The novel's protagonist, Jeffery Papier, is a European-trained chef who has started his own cafe, focusing on locally grown, seasonal foods, in Vancouver. His father, The Professor, is an eccentric academic currently living with homeless people in Stanley Park. He calls this process participatory anthropology.

The novel begins with Jeffery visiting his father, watching "an erratic stream of homeless people making their way into the forest for the night." The theme inherent in homeless people deeply rooted in the park runs parallel to the other main theme of the novel: modern cuisine, and the increasing prevalence of fusions, far-flung ingredients, often ignorant of particular place. Papier articulates his food philosophy: "I am trying to remind people of the soil beneath their feet."

Both father and son, in their separate explorations, witness a modern polarity, a human tendency to either root or move. "Lived among, talked with, clothed similarly to, learned from, these homeless were observed to include both the derelict and the celebrant. And each of these, in turn, revealed evidence of the life left behind, tracings of despair and of manic joy, broken and rejuvenated spirits. My job, you might say, has been the mapping of these qualities within the community. For in this topography, I have come to believe, is the seed of how we live."

And how we live, of course, is often related to how much money we have. The Professor says, "I know a man without a home who lives in a place where other people park their cars. He knows his city like no other person, from the inside out and at all hours. But he cannot let himself attach to any one square foot of it more than any other. He cannot afford it." Similarly, Jeffery can no longer afford to run his beloved restaurant in the way he'd like. Never a good businessman, and especially beleaguered in the modern era of chains and conglomerates, Jeffery makes an unholy bargain with the founder/magnate of a now-international coffee conglomerate, Inferno Coffee.

In order to survive financially, he at least initially relinquishes his focus on locally grown fresh foods, as his new restaurant rises in gold-gilded glory. But then he finds a way to subvert the takeover process, using the homeless people he has grown to know and admire

through his father's work, and local ingredients from a very unusual source.

"In our rootless day and age, our time of strange cultural homelessness — and worse, our societal amnesia about what used to constitute both the rewards and limitations of those roots — I wonder if we might look to these homeless," and here the Professor extended his thin arm, pointing into the park to signify all of its occupants, "to find an emblem of the deepest roots of all." In a peculiar sort of way, both father and son do so in this fine first novel.

**Negotiating with the Dead**

"I was told, in 1960, as a twenty-year-old poet, by an older poet who was a man, that I would never come to anything as a poet until I had been a truck driver," writes Margaret Atwood in *Negotiating with the Dead*. She also writes that she was told that for poets to be taken seriously, "it helps to have committed suicide."

Without driving trucks or committing suicide, Atwood has managed to garner fame, respect, and awards for her numerous works of fiction and poetry. *Negotiating with the Dead* is the description of her process for becoming a writer, but it is not a how-to manual; rather it is an intellectual exploration of the roots of any writing, and the tensions within writing and writers themselves.

In the epigraph to one of this short book's six chapters, Atwood uses a quote from Nadine Gordimer to make a point about a writer's double process: "excessive preoccupation and identification with the lives of others, and at the same time a monstrous detachment. The tension between standing apart and being fully involved: that is what makes a writer."

"Is it necessary to suffer in order to be a writer?" aspiring writers are in the habit of asking, she writes. "Don't worry about the suffering," I have tended to say. "The suffering will occur whether you like it or not." (This is my second favorite Atwood response to a questioner. My first favorite response came at a talk she did in the mid-'90s at Seattle Arts and Lectures. A man in the audience asked, "Ms. Atwood, why don't you make the men in your books stronger?" To which Atwood responded, "That is a question I feel is better asked of God.")

Her hypothesis is that "not just some, but *all* writing of the narrative kind, and perhaps all writing, is motivated, deep down, by a fear of and a fascination with mortality — by a desire to make the risky trip to the Underworld, and to bring something or someone back from the dead... It's somewhat daunting to reflect that Hell is — possibly — the place where you are stuck in your own personal narrative for ever, and Heaven is — possibly — the place where you can ditch it and take up wisdom instead."

Filled with literary allusions and humorous asides, *Negotiating with the Dead* is a fascinating description of wrestling with the demons, deities and dead heroes that mark the process of any good writer. ■




by Permess'r Harris

Lately, we at Classics Corner have been obsessed with Bruce Springsteen, Dionysus, and Friedrich Nietzsche. This Holy Trinity of wine, ecstasy, and madness, we believe, offers a path to the Eternal. This is what the "E" stands for in E Street.

To begin at the beginning, Dionysus is just about the best thing since Jesus Christ, but having a millennium or so on the Savior makes him the best thing ever. His father was Zeus, his mother was mortal, and he had a virgin birth of sorts. He enjoyed wine miracles, rode on donkeys through adoring crowds waving branches, died and rose from the dead, and granted eternal life to his followers. He was gentle to the point of effeminacy, but, if his shorts got in a twist, was not above the occasional act of creative dismemberment.

But this column is not about how Christ stole Dionysus' act. It is, rather, about Dionysus and art, specifically tragedy. Nutbar philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche was somewhat obsessed with Dionysus as well. In his famous essay, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche makes much of the opposition between Dionysus and his brother Apollo.

Apollo, of course, represents intellect and control, while Dionysus is associated with loss of self, excess, and "union with the one," which is how nihilists like Nietzsche tend to visualize God. Nietzsche saw Greek tragedy as a contest between the Apollonian dialogue and the Dionysian

chorus, or the rational and the eternal. Dionysian art, says Nietzsche, "wishes to convince us of the eternal joy of existence: only we are to seek this joy not in phenomena, but behind them."

In this relationship, the Dionysian always struggles to "break through." Lately, he points out, the Dionysian has been losing. The appeal of art to the merely rational, says Nietzsche, has resulted in "a vain, distracted, selfish, and moreover piteously unoriginal society."

**"You have to come to grips with the horrors that are out there, and then all people have is hope ... That's where I always found faith and spirit."**

— "The Boss,"

Bruce Springsteen

As we at Classics Corner contemplated this essential duality in art — Nietzsche's words still ringing in our head — we came upon a Springsteen interview wherein our man from New Jersey described the verses of his songs as "the blues" and the chorus as "the gospel." "You have to come to grips with the horrors that are out there," said Bruce, "and then all people have is hope ... That's where I always found faith and spirit."

Could Bruce, we thought, be onto something as old as tragedy itself? We pulled out our copy of *Nebraska* and listened hard for the truth, and there, in "Reason to Believe," it was. "Take a baby to the river Kyle William they called him/wash the baby in the water take away little Kyle's sin/In a whitewash old gun shack an old man passes away/Take the body to the graveyard and over him they pray" Then the chorus: "Strike me kinda funny kinda funny sir to me/how at the end of every hard earned day people find some reason to believe."

Sadly, Nietzsche's thoughts on Springsteen will forever remain a mystery. We can only surmise that he would agree Bruce is, clearly, "The Boss." ■

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# Mid Summer Notables

## Thursday 7/25

**Fair Housing Workshop** for Human Service Providers. Learn how to assist people who experience discriminatory treatment. 1:30 - 4:30 p.m., at North Bellevue Community Senior Center, 4063 148th Ave NE. RSVP to Patty Reilly at the City of Bellevue 425-452-7928 or [preilly@ci.Bellevue.wa.us](mailto:preilly@ci.Bellevue.wa.us).

Rainier Valley Youth Theatre and Columbia City Gallery in collaboration with Isangmahal Arts Kollektive presents *Self(less): Identity in the Filipino American Family*. Proceeds from the sale of artwork at this exhibit will be donated to the Rainier Valley Youth Theatre's SummerSTAGE program. Through Aug. 10, Wednesday - Saturday 12 - 7 p.m., Sunday 12 - 6 p.m., at Columbia City Gallery, 4916 Rainier Ave. S.; info 206-725-7169 or 206-760-9843.

## Friday 7/26

*Nickel and Dime: On (Not) Getting By in America*, a play based on Barbara Ehrenreich's research on living on minimum wage jobs, post-play discussion after each performance. At Intiman Theatre, Seattle Center through August 25, tickets and times vary; info 206-269-1900 or <http://www.intiman.org>.

**Central Area Community Festival**, a celebration of the community features art and cultural exhibits, games, rides, crafts, food and entertainment. Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. - 10 p.m., Sunday 12 - 8 p.m., at Garfield Community Center, 2323 E. Cherry St.; info Victor Minor 206-999-3482 or <http://www.seafair.com/x110.xml>.

25th Anniversary Book Sale to benefit the nonprofit **Peace & Justice Resource Cen-**

**ter.** Friday 7-9 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sunday 1 - 5 p.m., at Central Lutheran parish hall, 1710 11th Ave., 1 block north of Pine, free parking; info 206-720-0313 (1 - 5 p.m.)

## Saturday 7/27

Free Panel talk "Contract's Up - Summer Labor Struggles in Seattle," and discussion. A panel of speakers from different workplaces will share their experiences and discuss strategies. 2:30 p.m., at Seattle Labor Temple, Hall 6, 2800 1st Ave.; info International Socialist Organization 206-292-8809.

## Sunday 7/28

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

People for Puget Sound's "Picnic for Puget Sound" an annual benefit for Kids for Puget Sound, an environmental, education and action group. 12 - 4 p.m., at the north end of Golden Gardens Park, \$15 ticket includes shellfish buffet and more. Ticket info Jerome Chroman or Corinne Kelly 206-526-7081.

**Seattle Peace Concert**, featuring Alice Stuart, Jeff and the Jet City Fliers, Holly Figueroa, Bijou and Childhood Zen. 12 - 6 p.m., at Magnuson Park Beach Area. Admission free, please bring food bank donations for Northwest Harvest and contribute what you can when bucket is passed to cover expenses; info 206-729-5232.

WTO Reflections: The Impact of Globalization on Food & Water, an evening with Vandana Shiva, whose compelling public talks on corporate control of the global food supply played a key role

during the Seattle WTO protests. 7:30 p.m., Kane Hall, University of Washington, tickets \$10; info 206-467-0384 or 360-341-1884.

## Tuesday 7/30

Seattle Community Access Network presents a 90-minute episode featuring historian **Howard Zinn**, delivering his recent lecture at Shoreline Community College. 8:30 - 10 p.m., on SCAN TV channel 29/77.

## Wednesday 7/31

Episcopal Peace Fellowship meeting, a community of **Christians working for peace, justice, reconciliation, and nonviolence**. This and subsequent 5th Wednesdays, 7 p.m., at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E.; info Thomas Walker 425-641-9247 or Rev. Diane Belsford 206-270-9170.

## Thursday 8/1

Doctors Without Borders invites all to its Access to Essential Medicines Expo, traveling across the US. Meet workers and learn about the **Global Crisis in Access to Medicines** killing 14 million people annually. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. through Sunday, Aug. 4, at the Seattle Waterfront between Seattle Aquarium and Anthony's Seafood, free; info <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org>.

25th Anniversary Book Sale to benefit the nonprofit **Peace and Justice Resource Center**. Thursday 4 - 9 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sunday 1 - 5 p.m., at University Lutheran Church, 16th Ave. NE & NE 50th St, free parking; info, to donate books or to volunteer 206-720-0313 (1-5 p.m.)

## Friday 8/2

The Independent Media Center and Northwest **Animal Rights** Network present screenings of *A Cow At My Table*, a film by Jennifer Abbott that explores factory farming plus a "Factory Farming Expose." 8-10 p.m., at IMC, 1415 3rd Ave. near Union; info 206-309-8646 or <http://www.imc.org>

[www.factoryfarming.com](http://www.factoryfarming.com).

## Saturday 8/3

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 8/5

**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.

## Tuesday 8/6

Seattle Prayer Flag Project invites participation in the **Commemoration of the Bombing of Hiroshima** in 1945, the first use of a nuclear weapon in war, including keynote speaker, Ratnesh Nagda. At dusk, attendees will participate in the Toro Nagashi lantern floating ceremony. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m., at Green Lake, just south of the Bathhouse Theatre on northwest shore of lake; info Fred Miller 206-527-8050 or [organizer@peacejustice.com](mailto:organizer@peacejustice.com).

## Thursday 8/8


Prescription prices are out of control. Come to a **town hall meeting** with U.S. Congressman, Rick Larsen and local state legislators. 9 - 11 a.m., at Everett Station, 3201 Smith Ave., Everett; info Washington Citizen Action 206-389-0050.

## 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.

Peace Vigil and leafleting to **stop the war in Israel and Palestine**, by Women in Black. Women wear black, men welcome to stand on the side or leaflet, every Thursday at Westlake Park near 4th and Pine, 5 - 6 p.m., info at 206-208-9715. ■

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## Call on Mayor to Do More Against Racial Profiling

**Issue:** Let Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels know he's made an important first step in reigning in racial profiling but still has a substantial way to go.

**Background:** On July 18, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels unveiled his new plan to address racial profiling in Seattle (see related story in this issue, Page 5). The People's Coalition for Justice asks for your support to congratulate the Mayor on *half* a job well done, and to call him to task for what he left out.

We commend the Mayor on these points of his plan:

- Emphasis on police accountability
- Video cameras in all patrol cars
- Community surveys of public attitudes towards the police
- Contact logs for traffic stops where only warnings are given

But we have serious *concerns* about:

● **The Mayor's data collection strategy**

As written in his plan, the strategy offers little more than the status quo. The police already collect data, but without ongoing and comprehensive analysis, that data is useless. How will it be systematically analyzed and used? How will it be made easily accessible to the public? How exactly will it lead to greater police accountability?

● **The quarterly community forums**

While we are excited about the emphasis on community input, we know that forums hosted by the Seattle Police Department will not encourage honest and open dialogue, especially with communities of color, who have a historic distrust of the police.

● **The "racial sensitivity" training**

We are very pleased that the Mayor wants to review and update this training for new recruits, but we believe that effective training must go beyond diversity and culture, and examine institutional racism, power and equity. The community must be involved in determining the content.

- And we still want to know whether the Mayor is committed to a strong, independent civilian review board, and if he will promise to push for such a board in the upcoming negotiations with the police guild. Or will he settle for less, and play politics with our lives?

**Action:** Please join the struggle for police accountability by calling the Mayor and thanking him for a step in the right direction, but reminding him that he has a long way to go. ■

For more information, contact PCJ at (206) 632-0662 ext. 51

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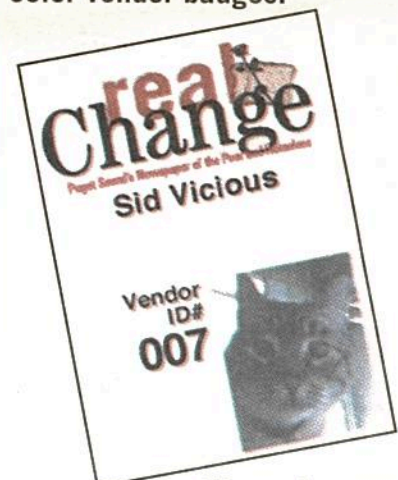
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# Mockingbird Times

Washington State Foster Care  
and Homeless Youth Speak Out

AUGUST 2002

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VOLUME II, ISSUE 7

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## Mockingbird Celebrates First Anniversary

**THIS ISSUE MARKS THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY** of the *Mockingbird Times*. The MBTimes is one of a few papers in the country that covers issues affecting foster kids and street youth. It is also, as far as the Mockingbird staff can discover, the only paper focusing on these issues with a paid staff of youth reporters who have experience with homelessness and the foster care system.

We are proud of the fact that we put a priority on paying youth, and that we emphasize the voice of young people. We are proud that our staff has participated and contributed to statewide policies and laws affecting foster and homeless youth. We are also proud that we have simply survived a year, especially at a time when so many non-profits are struggling to survive.

In this issue you will find letters and greetings from folks across the state who wanted to share their support for the Mockingbird Times. There are more responses from people than we could fit in these pages. Hopefully even more people will join us over the next year and many years to come.

### Improving the community

Dear friends:

I am pleased to note that *The Mockingbird Times* has been "on the streets" for just over a year. I commend you all for your fine work in producing and publishing it. Your efforts provide readers a much-needed perspective on foster care and homelessness.

As a Member of Congress, I am a strong proponent of measures to improve the lives of community members who are homeless or in need of foster care and to expand alternatives available to them. I applaud your efforts to raise public awareness on these critical matters and to offer both an outlet and a resource for those who have a background in these issues.

I offer my best wishes and my support for the continuing success of the *Mockingbird Times*.

Happy Anniversary!

JIM McDERMONT

MEMBER OF CONGRESS

REPRESENTATIVE FOR WASHINGTON STATE

### Creative public awareness

I am honored to be a part of the Mockingbird Times' birthday issue. Your work through the Mockingbird Society is making a valuable contribution. By sharing your experiences you are helping others to understand that foster care kids, like all children, want a safe, happy, childhood and a chance to succeed. I encourage you to keep using the Mockingbird Times as a vehicle to express your opinions, raise public awareness, and convey your creativity.

I wish the Mockingbird Times a very happy birthday!

SINCERELY, SENATOR PATTY MURRAY

### Worthwhile connection

Working with the Mockingbird Times is a no-brainer, as it combines two of my life's passions — children and journalism. To be honest I might not have become involved if Jim Theofelis hadn't been running the show; through my work on the P-I editorial page, I've found him to be an amazingly energetic and sincerely committed advocate for children in need. I look forward to another dozen installments of the Mockingbird Times, which, above all else, is worthwhile because it connects foster children to one another.

KIMBERLY MILLS,

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

EDITORIAL PAGE FOCUS EDITOR

### More stuff for us

I submitted my poem to the Mockingbird Times because I wanted other foster kids to know that they are not

COMMUNITY LETTERS CONT. ON PAGE 3

### Reflections from Staff

By JUSTIN REYNOLDS



**WELL**, when I started with the *Mockingbird Times* in November of 2001, I was living in a group home. They wanted me to get a job or they were going to kick me out. I didn't do anything about it for a while (I always wait 'til the last minute, that's just how I am, lazy).

Then one day, one of the staff members showed me the first issue of the *Mockingbird Times* and said that I should write for them considering my foster care background. I told him I would look into it and threw the paper on the floor in my bedroom, where it sat for another three weeks. When the group home really started to get on my case, I figured what the hell, I'll go check it out. Maybe it will be cool.

I scheduled an appointment and went in for an interview and well, what do you know, I got the job. (Since then, their production rate has never been up to par.) Anyways, it's been great. They feed me, treat me with respect, and let me do almost anything I want. I get to write articles about things that trouble me. It gives me a chance to make a change for the better or to challenge people's ideas. Either way, it's great.

One thing that's really crazy for me is that I'm still here. People here at the Mockingbird Society understand the positions that I get myself into. Being homeless is not a steady, easygoing life, and sometimes I might not show up because I will be sleeping in a gutter and there isn't an outlet for my alarm clock.

I've been through a lot of hard times since I've been with the *Mockingbird Times*. In December of 2001, I was kicked out of my group home with nothing except my clothes, guitar, amp, and CDs. I lived in a squat for three months, and then when I was kicked out of the squat, I lived in a tent near Magnusson Park for three months. Then I lived in an apartment with my girlfriend for two months. Now I squat in my friend's basement and dig through dumpsters to find enough food to eat. Times have been good and bad. All of it has been a struggle, but through all that I have stuck with the *Mockingbird Times* and they have stuck with me.

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

## Letter from the Editor

"Mockingbirds don't one thing but make music for us to enjoy... they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us".

—To Kill A Mockingbird.

**THE MOCKINGBIRD SOCIETY** is an organization dedicated toward improving the current and future lives of the children and adolescents who must depend on the Washington State foster care system. Our belief is that building a world-class foster care system for our most vulnerable children and adolescents is a realistic goal that must be embraced by parents, policy makers, professionals and the community. A world-class foster care system that provides all children and youth with a safe, warm, nurturing environment to live, grow and thrive in. The *Mockingbird Times* is an example of the creative and unique work that we hope you come to expect from The Mockingbird Society.

In the past year we have distributed 12 monthly issues for a total of over 236,000 copies circulated through six states including Washington D.C. Over the course of the past year we have paid over \$7,000 in salaries to over 30 youth who have worked at The Mockingbird Society. Our intention is to generate public

awareness regarding the amazing talents, strengths and attributes of these remarkable young people.

Along those lines, I would like to thank a few of the exceptional individuals who have worked so hard this past year. Of course the many, many youth who have come to Mockingbird and shared their stories, their energy, their ideas and mostly their voice. **Amanda Shaman, Julia Higuera and Eli Wilson** were the original youth writers. **Brittany Lucas, Justin Reynolds and Reginald Herts** have been incredible. We continue to look for great things from **William Willoughby and Dennis Fisher**.

Many youth from across the state and nation have submitted their poetry, opinions and essays. I want to thank each of these young people for their courage, passion and involvement. I also want to thank the Mockingbird Society staff for this past year of hard work and excellence. All of the adult staff at the Mockingbird Society are accomplished professionals. Their commitment to children and youth, their willingness to "go above and beyond" the call duty and their determination to build a new organization that does its work with youth instead of to youth has been inspirational.

**Siri Throm-Saxe** is our Operations Manager, **Molly Rhodes** is our Technical Advisor and **Valerie Douglas** is the Program Supervisor. Finally, I would like to thank a friend and colleague for his support. When I first introduced the concept of The Mockingbird Society to him he was encouraging and supportive. He ultimately served as the first President of the Board of Directors for Mockingbird. Everyone should have a friend like **Steve Hardy** and I'm glad I do! I hope you continue to read the *Mockingbird Times* and let us know what you think. As you consider giving financial and other support to the many quality organizations throughout our community I hope you will remember the Mockingbird Society. We're the ones who are focused on ... "building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood kids."

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Mockingbird Society,

Your newspaper was shared at our board meeting in June. We are very impressed by the topics and the authors! Foster Families are such wonderful caring people and it is important to positively acknowledge them and the children and youth that share their lives with them!

Thanks for your commitment to these fabulous people!

MIKE OLIVER

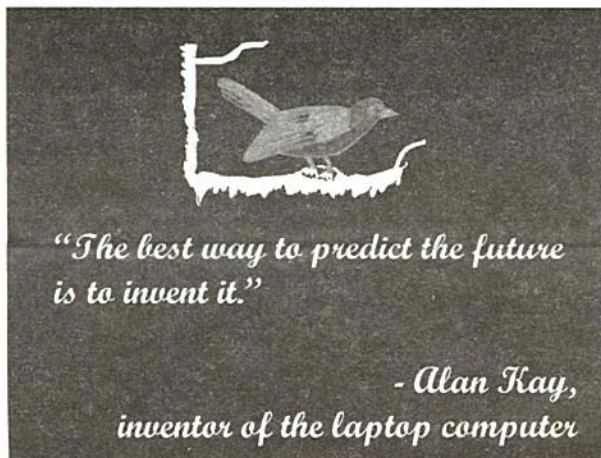
WASHINGTON RE-EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

## Reflections from Staff

By WILLIAM WILLOUGHBY

**THROUGH THE LAST** couple months, off and on, I have been working for the *Mockingbird Times* as a part-time job. I am a writer and I also help with the distribution of the paper to local stores and cafés. Working for the paper is giving me the chance to share my opinions on different ideas and the way things are run throughout the foster care system. I also enjoy writing for the paper because it is something that youth in foster care and homeless youth can relate to. Having gone through many foster homes, I know how important it is to have that friend — or in this case, the paper — to relate to.

I think that the paper is unique because it gives youth a chance to know what is going on outside of the foster care world. The paper also focuses on things like music and movies reviews. The paper has made me realize how critical it is to share the knowledge of what is and isn't correct about the system with everyone, and I intend to do so.



## Meet Our Staff

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jim Theofelis

### OPERATIONS MANAGER

Siri Throm Saxe

### STAFF ADVISOR

Valerie Douglas

### TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Molly Rhodes

### STAFF WRITERS

Julia Higuera, Dennis Fisher, Brittany Lucas, Justin Reynolds, William Willoughby

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Christopher Lorentz

### THANK YOUS

*Real Change*, Jim McDermott, Patty Murray, Kimberly Mills, Angela L., Davidson Dodd, and all the youth who have read and contributed to *Mockingbird* over the past year

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

Jim Theofelis

## Ways to Help

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

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

**Are you a foster kid with experience in a Washington state school? We want to hear from you!**

*Mockingbird Times* is putting together a back-to-school issue that deals with the special circumstances facing kids who are trying to go to school while also living in the foster care system. We want stories/ ideas/ impressions/ experiences of what going to school was like from current and former foster kids.

*Mockingbird* will pay up to \$20 for every story we receive that we publish.

Questions? Call (206) 323-KIDS or email us at

[news@mockingbirdsociety.org](mailto:news@mockingbirdsociety.org).

Do you have a story for the *Mockingbird Times*?

Or a comment on a story you've seen in our paper?

**Let us know!**

Give us a call at (206) 323-5437 or email us at [news@mockingbirdsociety.org](mailto:news@mockingbirdsociety.org).

## COMMUNITY LETTERS CONT. FROM PAGE 1

alone in suffering in all of these foster homes and institutions. That despite your gender and race all of us are going through alot right now, we will get through it.

I think the paper is still the same as it was when I started reading it about a year ago. I think there should be a listing of scholarships and stuff. Some of us are working on college and I think there needs to be more resources for foster children in the newspaper.

ANGELA L.

## Getting to know the Mockingbird Board President

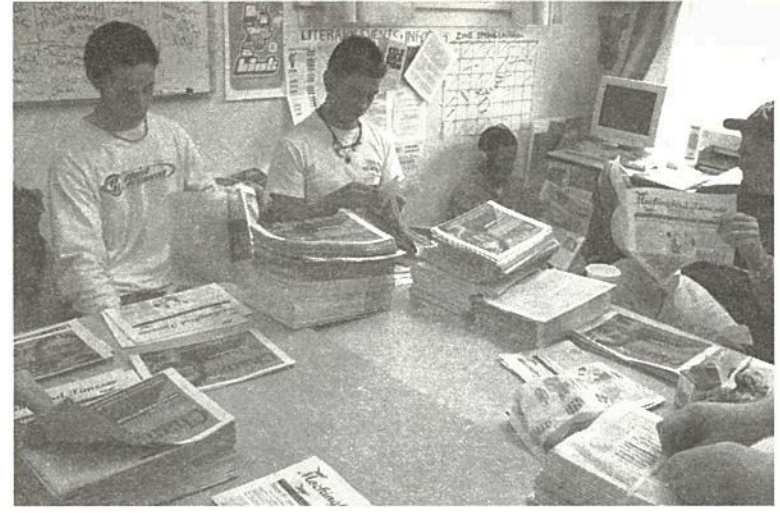
**EVEN IN** a small non-profit organization like the Mockingbird Society, there always seems to be a lack of connection between the board of directors and the general employees. Up until now, I never got the chance to meet any of the people who make the decisions that keep the Mockingbird Times ticking. So it was a bit of a surprise for me when I found out that I would be interviewing the guy who leads all of the ticking, board president Davidson Dodd.

Davidson was first attracted to volunteering for the

board of directors because it impressed him that youth were getting involved with politics through writing for a newspaper. Davidson, a man with a strong sense of community, believes that all Americans, no matter what age they are, should become more involved with their communities through volunteering their time and care, not just their vote or opinion. His personal motto, which he hopes to be the basis for his thesis on community responsibility, is, "America suffers from extreme individuality."

Davidson's duties as a board member include calling and running board meetings, heading the board's fundraising efforts, and fulfilling the objectives the Mockingbird Society was founded on. He hopes that in the future the Mockingbird Society will be able to focus more of its attention on training foster parents. He also hopes that the Mockingbird Society will be able to reach out and unite good foster parents around the state. To Davidson, volunteering for the Mockingbird Society is a way for him to show his support for the community through a cause he believes in, "teaching the birds how to sing." 🐦

— INTERVIEWED BY BRITTANY LUCAS



Youth at the University District Youth Center help to get Mockingbird Times ready for mailing across the state.

## Covering the News

**August 2001 – Teaching the Birds How to Sing:** Interview with Mockingbird founder, Jim Theofelis

**September 2001 – Never Fear, the Ombudsman's Here:** Creation of the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman

**October 2001 – Youth Reflect on Attack:** Youth response to 9/11

**November 2001 – Struggles and Costs of Sibling Separation:** Sibling separation and the foster care system

**December 2001 – What do Street Youth want for the Holidays?**

**January 2002 – Working to Change the Foster Care System:** Interview with Adam Cornell, foster child turned lawyer

**February 2002 – Stabilizing the Education of Foster Youth:** Keeping foster youth in their original schools

**March 2002 – Youth Speak Out in the State Capitol:** Street Youth Lobby Day

**April 2002 – Foster Parents Gather Together to Learn:** Yakima foster care conference

**May 2002 – Show Foster Parents, Kids How Much You Care:** National Foster Care Appreciation Month

**June 2002 – An Explanation of Juvenile Residential Facilities:** Residential facilities explained

**July 2002 – Will Lawsuit Improve Foster Care System?:** Judge demands the state Department of Social and Health Services start changing foster care program 🐦

## Mockingbird By the Numbers

**A look at Mockingbird over the past year**

- 12: Monthly issues in the past year
- 236,000+: Total issues distributed (through Real Change and mailings.)
- 6+1: The states the Mockingbird Times has distributed to ( Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Connecticut, California, Washington D.C.)
- 40: Subscribing CASA locations in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho
- 20: Subscribing DCFS offices across Washington State
- 26: Subscribing libraries across Washington State
- 15: youth writers
- \$7,076.53: Amount paid to youth writers
- 21: Percentage of total Mockingbird salaries going to youth
- 97: Different donors
- 5: Different foundation grants
- 180 square feet: Size of Mockingbird office
- 15: Calls per week asking for foster care information
- 5: GED/ High school diplomas earned by staff reporters
- 2: Mockingbird Society staff members who are/have been pregnant this past year
- 1: Staff who have given birth in the last year
- 0: Fulltime staff 🐦

## Reflections from Staff

BY BRITTANY LUCAS



**I BEGAN WRITING** for the *Mockingbird Times* six months ago. Actually, I'm in awe that I have been able to hold on to a job for this long. Previously, I had failed at finding stable work because I was either stuck in the system, or on the run for most of my teenage existence, I never really got the chance to succeed. Even when I was able to get employment, I usually found myself too displeased with the work to continue. I was never really a service industry kind of girl. I hated working behind a counter and taking orders from haughty customers. I wanted to get paid to do something I loved, like writing.

When I was first heard about the staff position at the *Mockingbird Times*, it more than caught my interest. I was 17 at the time, with no chance of getting a real job. I jumped at the opportunity and went to the interview. At the interview, the supervisor Valerie Douglas told me that the mission of the paper was to "advocate for street and foster youth." Well, that was definitely a subject I had some strong views about and when I was assured that I would be doing a lot of writing, I knew that I had found my niche. Not only did I find a place where I could pursue my interests, I also found a place where the management was easy to work for.

After I was hired, I met the head guy Jim Theofelis, who had a lot of passion for youth in the system. It kind of surprised me at first how Jim asked my opinions on things like foster care and life on the streets. He talked to me like I was a professional adult, not a teen client. I wasn't used to being treated with that level of respect. In the past, my caseworkers, care providers, and other system workers acted so clinically towards me, almost as if they were on one side of the glass window and I was on the other.



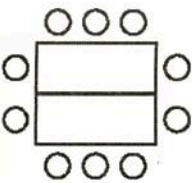

Valerie Douglas also impressed me because she could relate to the staff workers well. Since the moment I met her, she urged me to accomplish other goals outside of work. I've never met a supervisor like her. Usually they tend to yell a lot and are rather impersonal. The paper editor Molly Rhodes has taught me more about grammar just through editing my work. I think I have inherited some of her editing skills from the hours she has spent going through punctuation mistakes with me.

Though my supervisors deserve a lot of recognition for my recent achievements, I feel that the fact that I have been paid to be a journalist has caused me to see more of the potential I have. I have written articles for seven issues already. Though I usually enjoy writing the features and reviews the best, I have had fun writing a few of the hard news stories. One of my favorites was the article I wrote on Street Youth Lobby day. I was able to interview senators on the latest youth services' budget cuts and sew together the different views of youth, advocates, and politicians.

Writing isn't the only reason I enjoy working for the *Mockingbird Times*. I also like working here because the people who run the MBTimes are aiming for higher things, just like me. They want to actually make improvements in the foster system, not just vent about its shortcomings. Up until recently, I never really truly grasped the Mockingbird Motto, "Teach the birds how to fly." After receiving my GED, earning an hourly pay raise, beginning the process it takes to get into college, and stabilizing my living situation, I finally realized what that motto truly means. If you want to teach birds to fly, then you don't keep putting them into different nests for 18 years and hope that they teach themselves how to fly. You make sure that the birds stay in as few nests as possible and that the birds not only feel safe in the nests they are put into, but also comfortable. Then you slowly but surely teach the birds to spread their wings and fly away, assuring them that if they ever start to falter they can come back to the nest for guidance. 🐦

# Timeline Tidbits: Interview with Staff Reporter Dennis Fisher



- Early 2001:** 501c3 status, \$60,000 in start up funds
- June 2001:** original MBT staff are hired and meet for the first time. Julia Higuera, Eli Wilson and Amanda Shaman
- August 2001:** first issue of the MBT, street distribution 15,000 issues, mailing list 1,000
- September 2001:** Jabrille W. joins MBT staff.
- October 2001:** MBT Staff Julia Higuera participates in spoken word at the Northwest Bookfest  

- November 2001:** first Board fund raiser at Textura, community contributes \$10,000 Justin Reynolds joins the MBT Staff  
  
Street distribution 19,000 copies, mailing list 5,000
- January 2002:** MBT Staff attend Homeless Youth Lobby Day at the State capital Brittany Lucas joins MBT Julia Higuera gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Javier
- February 2002:** Reginald Herts joins the MTB staff
- March 2002:** William Willoughby joins the MBT Staff  
  
First workshop with *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*  
Youth at UDYC assist MBT staff in mailing 5,000 copies  
MBT staff attend Washington State Foster Care Conference in Yakima
- April 2002:** Youth at New Horizons assist MBT staff in mailing 5,000 copies
- May 2002:** Law firm Preston, Ellis and Gates provide first consultation to MBT staff on general principles of libel and copyright.  
  
MBT Staff attend "The Journey Home", a day long bus tour to show what a foster child experiences when they are first removed from their home, sponsored by One Church One Child/UJIMA.
- June 2002:** MBT Staff Brittany Lucas obtains her GED  
  
MBT Staff William Willoughby graduates from Garfield High School.
- July 2002:** Dennis Fisher joins the MBT Staff
- August 2002:** Mockingbird celebrates First Anniversary

**Tell us a little bit about yourself:**

I'm 18. I love music (pop-punk, ska-core, and industrial), reading/writing fantasy books, working on websites, and playing/making video games as well as role-playing games.

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

The main issue I find important is the current lack of resources (particularly shelters) for young women.

**What is your foster care experience?**

I don't have direct experience with the foster care system, but I have lived in several transitional housing programs, in a few youth shelters ranging from church basements to rather nice houses, and on the streets.

**If you could change one thing about the foster care/transitional living system, what would it be?**

This is almost two things, but they are closely related. I'd want to make sure that there were consistent rules in transitional living programs, as well as make sure that the youth at the programs were aware of the latest rules. It sounds like a minor change, but it could potentially prevent youth from getting kicked out of their housing for breaking a rule they didn't know existed.

**Why did you join the Mockingbird Times?**

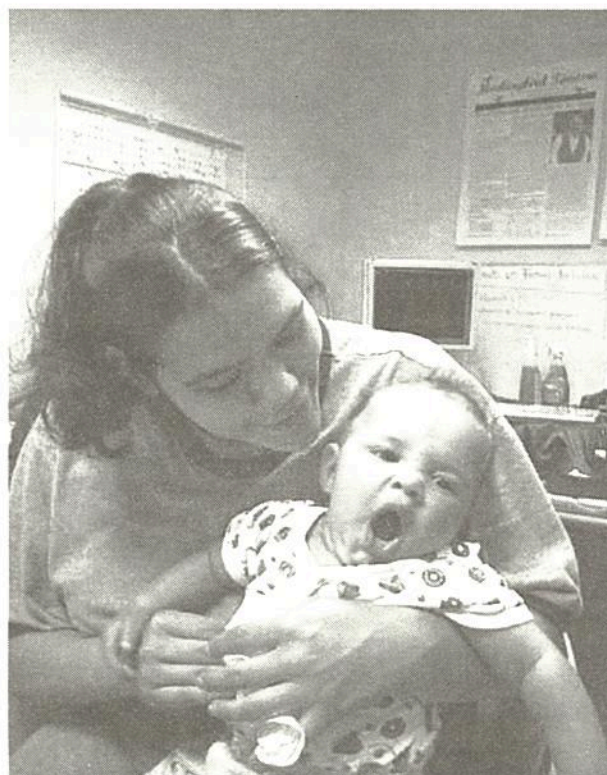
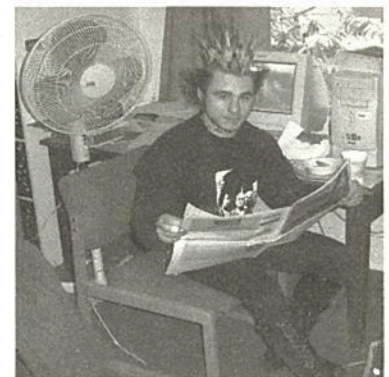
I joined the *Mockingbird Times* because I have a love of writing that I haven't fully realized until recently, and because of a hope to influence the Mockingbird Society's website in a good way.

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

I hope that the Mockingbird Society will improve the foster care system, and then spread the message that the system has improved.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The original *Mockingbird Times* staff (absent, Siri Throm Saxe); members of the current *Times* staff hangout with founder Jim Theofelis (center), Justin Reynolds (left) and Reginald Herts (right); Justin Reynolds takes a break to read while preparing an issue for mailing at the University District Youth Center; Julia Higuera and her son, Javier Jones, drop by the Mockingbird office to say hello. Photos by Mockingbird staff.



## Poetry Corner

### My Brother

I have a brother who's like  
no other.  
I think you would agree.  
He's smart and kind and  
certainly fine for me.  
In stormy  
weather we stick together.  
He is my foster brother.  
And I hope it will  
be that way forever.

— CHRISTOPHER LORENTZ