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# Change

Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless • Volume 9, No. 17

## Abandoned

King County opts out of social services. What now?

Inside: The INS and the Patriot Act • Luv Yer Country Music • Mockingbird Turns One • The Return of Notes from the Kitchen

JANINE BELL AND HER 19-MONTH-OLD SON, GABRIEL. BELL, WHO IS DIRECTOR OF THE DAY CARE, SAYS THE CENTER MAY LOSE \$50,000 IN KING COUNTY FUNDS NEXT YEAR BECAUSE OF CUTS TO THE COUNTY'S COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES BUDGET.

PHOTO BY HEDVIG HJELM.

By Andrea Iglar

“I like to sit by my friends in lunch,” explains seven-year-old Makayla Mulvihill.

It's the little things that make Makayla and her playmates happy at their daycare center: They like their friends there, the field trips they take, the slide on the playground, and the grown-ups who are nice to them.

Positive daycare experiences are important to children—and to parents and other adults who are responsible for ensuring their youngsters are in safe, stable, and enriching environments when they can't be at home. To afford this sort of quality day care, many parents need financial assistance. This is why budget cuts to the King County human services budget could devastate area parents and other people who rely on county funds to meet their basic needs.

“Childcare services is a program the county can't afford to provide, and there may be other services like that, too—and they all have very clear human impacts,” says Sadikifu Akina-James, manager of King County's Community Services Division.

Earlier this year, King County executive Ron Sims proposed a budget plan that would cut human services funding in half in 2003, and eliminate it by the following year. Why? The county is facing a \$110 million deficit over the next three years, and seeks to narrow the budget gap partly by eliminating huge chunks of human services expenses.

The budget proposal is a reaction to a lack of revenue, which has resulted from several factors: a general economic downturn, a decline in property tax rates, a tax structure that does not provide stable funding for human services, and Washington state requirements for a slew of criminal justice programs—but not human services, which is one reason the latter is likely to be hit so hard.

Reductions in human services spending will have far-reaching effects on a myriad of social services. It will affect day care, youth shelters, housing assistance, work training, food banks, domestic violence prevention, visiting nurse care for seniors — indeed, just about every type of social need provided in the county.

This is not good news for Colleen Mulvihill, Makayla's mother. The county pays half of her \$500 monthly daycare bill. Mulvihill, of south King County, must work 40 hours each week plus overtime to support Makayla and herself, as well as pay the other half of the bill that keeps her daughter in a quality, licensed daycare center.

Mulvihill predicted that if the county discontinues its child care subsidies, half of the parents who receive them will have to quit their jobs, and possibly move into public housing and sign up for welfare. Mulvihill says that is a possibility for her, too, because she has no suitable daycare alternatives.

“I don't know anywhere else that I

can take my daughter, really,” she says. “I wouldn't feel safe taking her to just anybody.”

Janine Bell, the director of a daycare center in downtown Seattle, expects the center to lose \$50,000 in county assistance next year. The funds allow the center to maintain four slots for families who are homeless, in transition, or attempting to leave domestic abuse situations.

These families, Bell says, rely on the center for a stable environment that the children might not receive anywhere else. One toddler came to the center at 15 months old not being able to crawl. After three months of day care, she recalls, the child was walking.

Bell says the families who benefit from this care are not eligible for assistance from the state Department of Social and Health Services and have no viable childcare alternatives. No child care, she says, can mean parents have no adequate place to leave their children when they go out and look for a job, attend work training, search for

housing, or engage in other activities that would lead to their self-sufficiency.

“It's going to hurt the families we work with,” Bell says.

Among other services that would be hurt by budget cuts are food programs.

“I would say food and meal programs are in severe danger of being severely cut over the next few years,” says Tony Lee, advocacy director of Fremont Public Association, which provides a variety of human services.

Boomtown Café, an eatery in Pioneer Square that serves meals for as little as \$1.25 each, is in danger of losing funding for its barter meal program. King County currently earmarks \$50,000 for the program, which allows a homeless or low-income person to work a 15-minute shift in exchange for a meal.

Charles Sawyer, 42, regularly participates in the program. “This gives a sense of pride because you work for your food, or pay for it, and eat in a restaurant-style atmosphere, and that re-

Continued on Page 8

“The repercussions could be bigger than the \$50,000 that King County provides. It's like the domino effect.”

— Boomtown Café Associate Director Elizabeth Osborne



## The gonifs in charge

In addition to the powerful, moving articles by Michele Marchand, I particularly applaud the stunning "Grace Under Fire" by Cynthia Lee Ozimek in the June 27-July 10 issue of *Real Change*. Ozimek captured, accurately and masterfully, my experience as a homeless woman in Seattle, the feelings and day-to-day existence, as I remember them. It is sad to hear of the same scenario now, as in 1993. Heartbreaking!

I must mention the dignity and sense of community that are often evidenced in the women's homeless group, which Ms. Ozimek also captured. And, I must say, I learned a lot from my time "on the streets" of Seattle.

I can only pray things get better, in a country where everyone has the right to own a gun, but NOT the right to adequate health care, or, I would add, a roof over one's head and nutritious food, not to mention unpolluted air and water.

Too bad the gonifs (Yiddish for "thieves") in charge value only money. What a morally bankrupt society we live in!

**My best to you,  
Marion Sue Fischer  
Morro Bay, CA**

## Real change in Texas

Dear *Real Change*,

Hi, I'm in Austin, Texas, but remember the early days of *Real Change* from my time in Seattle. I would like to know how I might begin to start something like *Real Change* here. Currently, there is a tiny homeless newspaper and the selling of it is unorganized and the publication irregular. *Real Change*, however, creates a voice for the homeless while providing them with work. Do you have any thoughts/advice/warnings on how to create an Austin version of *Real Change*?

**Thanks,  
Stacy Schoolfield**

*Ed responds:*  
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Tips for starting a street newspaper are posted on our web site at [http://www.realchangenews.org/real\\_change\\_org/streetnews.html](http://www.realchangenews.org/real_change_org/streetnews.html).

## Real Change on Tour

Dear *Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project*,

Thank you for your submissions to the 2002 MOBILVIRE-BOOKMOBILE project. We received several hundred book works! A jury was held in Philadelphia at the end of April. After a long two-day process, the jury has made its decision and we are pleased to inform you that your submission, "Real Change Volume 8, Number 26," has been accepted in the project MOBILVIRE-BOOKMOBILE project 2002 collection. This is an exciting opportunity for your work to travel from June-November 2002 across North America, and be seen by thousands of people.

**Thanks again,  
The BOOKMOBILE collective**

## Correction:

Last issue's interview with Christopher Paul Curtis ("A storyteller for all ages") was made possible by the Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas, which brings dynamic authors, politicians, and artists to town. Look for cool events on their web site, [www.cdforum.org](http://www.cdforum.org), or call (206)323-4032.

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# Change

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

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

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### Mission Statement:

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

### Goals

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

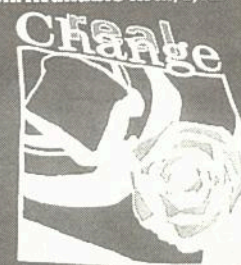
The *Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project* is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Programs include the *Real Change* newspaper, the MacWorkshop computer lab, StreetLife Art Gallery, the StreetWrites peer support group for homeless writers, the Homeless Speakers Bureau, and the First things First organizing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

### Editorial Policy

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

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# Information Is Power

## City funding for anti-poverty advocates holds government accountable

By Merrill Cousin

Ever wonder how human service providers and people who use human services get information about budget cuts, public hearings, and laws or policies that hurt low-income people or people of color? If you care about those things, you should know that advocacy coalitions are a driving force behind getting the word out. And if you've been paying attention to the news in these pages, you know that there have been ongoing cuts at the federal, state, and county levels for human services. You know that additional cuts are threatened from King County and the city of Seattle.

The irony of this is that, just at the time when communication between human service providers and recipients, policy makers, and the public is most crucial, the very existence of many of these coalitions is also threatened by these same funding cuts. Without city money, each of these parties will be less equipped to take on the challenges that poverty, racism, hunger, homelessness, and violence present.

Advocacy coalitions like the Seattle Human Services Coalition, the King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Meals Partnership Coalition, the Minority Executive Directors Coalition, and the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition are membership organizations, collectively representing hundreds of organizations and individuals working together to help Seattle residents meet their basic needs, and work together for economic, social, and racial justice. They work to raise public awareness and educate officials about issues affecting people of color, people with low incomes, and people who are in crisis situations. They work to strengthen the agencies that provide services. Some coalitions provide opportunities for networking between human service providers. Others offer professional development opportunities for staff. Still others provide opportunities and education so that Seattle residents can influence the policies that affect their lives.

Altogether, these coalitions play a critical role in keeping the voices and interests of Seattle's most vulnerable citizens in the forefront of policy discussions. Their work directly benefits Seattle residents and policy makers in a number of ways.

- Advocacy coalitions work to **increase the resources** committed to meeting the needs of our community's most vulnerable and marginalized residents.
- Advocacy coalitions work to **maximize how resources are used**, by coordinating different agencies' services, sharing information, and training staff.
- Coalitions can develop a **unified message from the community** on policy and funding issues, reducing the likelihood that policy makers and the public are bombarded with conflicting priorities.
- Coalitions can **facilitate the involvement of human service constituents** in public policy advocacy, and ensure that poor peoples' voices are represented.
- Coalitions can **connect policy makers and citizens to experts** on specific topics related to the issues they represent.

The City of Seattle currently allocates less than 2 percent of its general fund dollars for advocacy coalitions. With the current budget crisis putting the whole human services infrastructure at risk of collapse, it may be tempting to say that if the city has one dollar to spend, it should be spent entirely on food, shelter, and other "direct" services, not even a few cents on advocacy. But this would be shooting ourselves in the foot: It would shut the door on the possibilities of people working together to make the system better. It would make it a lot more difficult, and maybe even impossible, for people who care to come up with solutions together to create a system that keeps people from needing emergency food and shelter services in the first place. It would severely limit our ability to work together to increase funding from other sources, too.

It is essential that Mayor Greg Nickels and the City Council do everything they can to protect all of the human services infrastructure, including the coalitions that support, enhance, and improve the work of the entire system.

If the city does make these cuts, the network of people who care about poverty issues will have a lot less information, be a lot less organized to respond to threats, and be less able to make recommendations for solutions. In short, we will be floundering about with just our bleeding hearts telling us there is a problem, and no information available to tell us how to make a difference. When that happens, who benefits, and who pays? ■

*Merril Cousin is the Executive Director of the King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence and is a member of the Seattle Human Services Coalition Steering Committee.*

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## National news digest

August 1, 2002

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

Does your city have a problem with heroin users found dead in public toilets, hostile hackysack players, and women out for a downtown stroll being licked on the face? Blame it on the homeless! That's what the once über-liberal Santa Cruz, Calif., City Council decided to do, starting with the passage of a law last month to end aggressive panhandling, according to reports in both the *San Jose Mercury News* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. It appears the trouble started when the council had the audacity to consider legalizing car camping and allowing a homeless encampment to remain on a nearby riverbank before God himself intervened and wisely washed the encampment away. Local residents can now breathe a sign of relief that councilmembers are no longer intimidated by homeless advocates who dared to argue that homeless encampments are the most dignified alternative to the lack of affordable housing in an area where a studio now costs an average \$740 a month.

Santa Cruz isn't alone in its new lease on non-homeless-people life. San Francisco officials unveiled the spanking new Union Square plaza on July 25 in the heart of the city's downtown shopping district. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, residents, tourists, and politicians alike celebrated with glee that the 2.6-acre plaza would no longer be a "so dirty, so bad," "unfriendly place" which the homeless population used as their personal dumping ground. When Mayor Willie Brown proudly declared "Use it, it is your square," "your" only referred to the people who could afford to shop regularly in the surrounding department stores. As Jim Chappell, the planner of the S.F. Planning and Urban Research Association pointed out to a *Chronicle* reporter, "Homeless people only move in when middle-class people abandon a place." In the words of the emcee of the opening ceremonies, Oscar-winning actress Rita Moreno, "you can't get more San Francisco than this."

Homeless advocates in Snohomish County are aware that they are fighting an uphill battle; for every one person that is able to find emergency shelter in the county, another four are turned away. Last fall, the nonprofit project One Childhood Lasts a Lifetime decided it was time to try to do more for one part of the local homeless population, homeless children. As part of their efforts, they interviewed 125 homeless children and turned what they found into a book, *Living in a Box: The Hopes and Fears of Children Facing Homelessness*, which will be published this month, according to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. The book contains interviews and drawings from kids who must face domestic violence, mental and physical illness, and poverty as daily parts of their lives. ■

— Compiled by Molly Rhodes

## Backpacks beat the blues

It's almost backpack-to-school time.

For the 14th consecutive year, a program called Project Cool will supply hundreds of homeless children with new shoes, backpacks, and school supplies.

Since 1989, the Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless, a group of 90 social service agencies, has raised money and donations to supply children with back-to-school supplies.

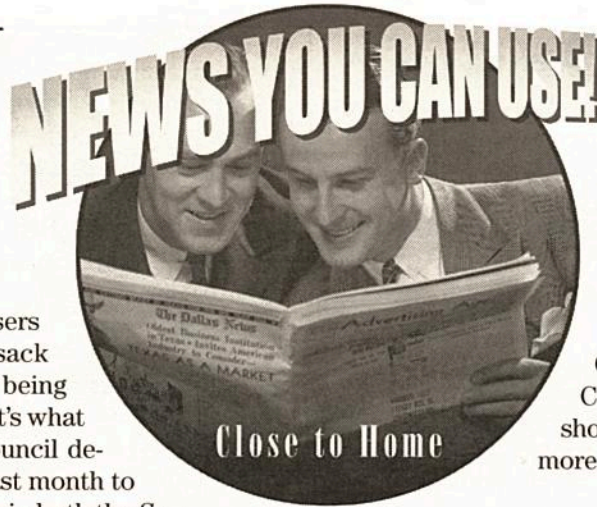
"We want to make sure each year the families have a good start for their children," says Doreen Cato, executive director of First Place School in Seattle, an elementary school program that teaches 70 students and aids their families. First Place is one of 52 agencies serving children that will benefit from Project Cool. Others include the YWCA, Hopelink, and Broadview Emergency Shelter.

Cato says children are "the invisible homeless," noting that media accounts of homelessness often focus on adults and teens. "People have a tendency to think it's so outrageous for children to be homeless that young. There's kind of a blind spot," she says. "(But) if the parents are homeless, where do you think the kids are?"

When school begins, Project Cool supplies children with backpacks full of school supplies and gives parents a \$15 voucher to use at a shoe store.

"For parents who are in the situation they are in, this gives them an opportunity to do something to prepare their children for school," Cato says. "They always like to see they've contributed to their child's well being as well."

Of course, the children are happy to have their supplies, too. "Each year that we've been a part of this, when the kids get their backpacks, it's like a



birthday party for them," Cato says.

In addition to the Coalition, Project Cool's monetary and in-kind sponsors include the Kiwanis, United Way of King County, Starbucks Coffee, the Windermere Foundation, and News Radio 710 KIRO.

Project Cool currently needs donations to buy shoe vouchers for the coming school year. Any individual or organization interested in making a contribution may mail a check to Project Cool, 1118 5th Ave., Seattle, WA 98101. Checks should be made out to the Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless (SKCCH), and the memo line should identify the donation as being for Project Cool. For more information, call Jason Shukis at (206) 461-4447. ■

— Andrea Iglar

## Against the espresso tax

The debate about the signature-gathering drive for Initiative 77, this fall's espresso tax initiative, has mostly focused on consumers: Would the typical gourmet coffee drinker stand for a 10-cent surcharge on their \$2.85 double grande latte?

Last month, a coalition of businesses that sell coffee weighed in on the issue. The Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce formed a political committee called Joined to Oppose the Latte Tax — JOLT for short — to campaign in opposition to I-77. Its membership includes small- and medium-sized local coffee chains like Uptown Espresso, Caffe Ladro, and Caffe Vita. JOLT campaign manager Stephanie Bowman, who works for the Chamber, says businesses that sell espresso were very concerned about news reports of the proposal. Starting in early July, she says, "I had all kinds of email and voicemail asking 'What do I do about this?'"

Kate Gill, owner of Lottie Mott's coffee shop in Columbia City, says she was "shocked" to hear the news. She believes that the tax would drive her espresso-drinking customers to drip (drip coffee, that is). That's a trend she can ill afford.

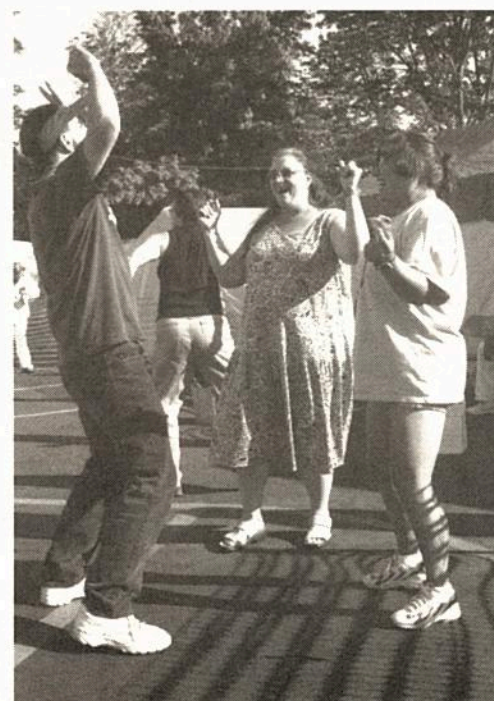
"Espresso is the life blood of a small coffee shop. I don't make any money off of drip," she says. And unlike the chains, Lottie Mott's doesn't carry the kind of big-ticket paraphernalia that serves as a revenue cushion: "We don't have \$350 coffee makers to sell."

The espresso tax's proponents are not happy to be in the gunsights of a business coalition. "We're surprised," says I-77 campaign manager Josh Gould. "Support for child care is good for business."

The Early Learning and Child Care Committee, which has sponsored the initiative drive, estimates that a 10-cent tax on each espresso beverage sold in the city will bring in \$7 to \$10 million annually. I-77 would establish the tax and dedicate it to training day care providers, supplementing their wages, and providing affordable childcare for working-poor families.

Gould, members of the committee, and other supporters marched their final batch of signatures down to City Hall on Wednesday, August 7. They have counted about 23,000 signatures endorsing I-77 for the November 5 ballot. In order to qualify, 17,228 of those signatures must be valid. The City Clerk will inspect the signatures and announce whether I-77 qualifies later this month. Then, and only then, will JOLT know whether to get its buzz on. ■

— Adam Holdorf



## Celebration

FOUR TENT CITY RESIDENTS GET THEIR GROOVE ON AT A BARBECUE AND DANCE AT ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL JULY 27. THE AFTERNOON BARBECUE WAS PAID FOR BY A RECENTLY DECEASED SEATTLE RESIDENT, WHO SET ASIDE THE MONEY IN HER WILL. THE PERIPATETIC TENT CITY, NOW WITH 100 RESIDENTS, PACKED UP AND MOVED NORTH TO HALLER LAKE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AT THE END OF JULY. PHOTO BY HEDVIG HJELM.

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

# Union Grounded

## Labor charges that INS helped squelch Sea-Tac organizing campaign

By Andrew Block

What is really going on when agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) disguise themselves and raid an airline meal preparation company to scoop up undocumented workers? Is it national security, or the PATRIOT Act gone wild? And was a federal agency aiding the union-busting efforts of the company?

In a series of demonstrations at Sea-Tac airport, a coalition of several labor groups led by the King County Labor Council has alleged that the INS allowed itself to be used as an anti-union tool in raids on the employees of airline food giant LSG Sky Chefs. LSG Sky Chefs is in negotiations with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union (HERE) about the meal workers' contract.

Since January of this year, Sky Chefs has worked with the INS to facilitate two raids, resulting in the arrest and subsequent deportation of 38 undocumented Latino and Asian workers, according to the labor coalition.

"The close collaboration between an employer which refuses to agree to workers' demands for better wages and working conditions and the INS is deeply troubling," says HERE researcher Dana Wise. "We challenge the INS to demonstrate that arresting people who make food promotes national security. We don't believe it does."

Meanwhile, INS officials are defending their procedure as just business as usual in a post-September 11 world. The raids were part of Operation Tarmac, an INS operation that targets airport personnel, made possible by President Bush's PATRIOT Act. These officials say the operation's sole purpose was to root out airport workers who lack the proper documentation.

However, the labor coalition finds nothing normal about allegations that INS agents went undercover as Sky Chefs employees and arrested immigrant workers at a fake company meeting staged by Sky Chefs management. Coalition leaders say the company's deception of its workers was unjust, and the INS' deportation proceedings, during which the workers could not see their families, inhumane.

The coalition has led a number of demonstrations to call for accelerated documentation for immigrants and amnesty for the arrested laborers. The

most recent of these rallies took place on July 28, when a boisterous crowd of 100 filled a foyer of the departure gate at SeaTac, while travelers — appearing anxious, amused, and sympathetic — looked on.

"Does it make you feel safer to know that over 500 people have been raided, arrested, and deported because of where they come from?" demanded Pramila Jayapal, of Hate Free Zone of Washington, a local anti-hate crime group. "We are here to say that immigrants built this country with our labor, and our blood, and we deserve our rights! We are here to say that what it means to make America safer is for every one of us to feel safe."

A woman named Sandra, from the Latino Coalition, read a statement from the families of the airport workers detained on April 18: "As recognition of our arduous work, we received the betrayal of our employer. We feel we have been deceived by this country."

"If you ask us what has been the most difficult thing for us in this experience, the answer will be easy: the separation from our loved ones. Imagine that one day your husband or wife goes to work and does not return home, disappears, and you do not know what happened to them. What will you say to your children, when they ask for their parents?"

Lagaya Domingo, member of the Asian Pacific-American Labor Alliance (APALA) and Jobs with Justice, illuminated the coalition's concern surrounding Sky Chefs' labor negotiations with HERE when she said, "These attacks on immigrants are really attacks on workers who are organizing unions for better living conditions. For those of us in the labor community, the Sky Chefs raids were really about intimidating workers trying to negotiate a union contract. The raids are not making our communities any safer."

When asked whether the INS raid was part of a Sky Chefs conspiracy to disrupt labor negotiations, Wise's response is tempered with caution. "We can't speak authoritatively about the motives of the company," he says, "but we can tell about the context. Sky Chefs employees nationwide are bargaining and trying to get the company to agree to better wages and working conditions. These raids happened in the context of that bargaining and cause us tremendous concern."



AT SEA-TAC AIRPORT, MEMBERS OF SEVERAL LOCAL UNIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS MARCHED IN PROTEST OF WHAT THEY SEE AS A MOVE BY INS AGAINST AN ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN FOR SKY CHEFS WORKERS. PHOTO BY GEORGE HICKEY.

According to another international researcher at HERE, Sky Chefs and its 10,000 U.S.-based employees have been trying to reach a contract agreement since the spring of 2000. Since Sky Chefs is a subsidiary of Lufthansa Airlines, the Railway Labor Act, a federal initiative, governs its employee contracts. The right to strike must be granted by a national mediator. That makes pro-union workers' jobs more difficult; they need to build alliances not only in the workplace, but across the country.

Wise suggests that Operation Tarmac has only made the organizing job more difficult.

"The INS has an obligation not to step into what is a legal process: the bargaining between Sky Chefs employees and management. The INS walking into that, clearly on the side of the employer, impedes that legal process."

In response to accusations that the INS is in cahoots with Sky Chefs, local INS spokesman Garrison Courtney chuckles. "That's not really true," he says. "The only people we arrested were people that used fraudulent documents to obtain jobs. If you use fraudulent immigration documents, then it

becomes an INS issue because we enforce immigration law. That's perjury, that's against the law."

Courtney, who worked at the raids, disregards allegations that INS agents disguised themselves as workers during the raid. He also says that LSG Sky Chefs management, which did not respond to requests for interviews, did not have a choice about the arrests. "We investigated over 100 companies," Courtney says. "If was just a fact that Sky Chefs had more people with fake documents than other companies."

Immigration lawyer Pam Cowan, of Cowan and Miller Attorneys, admits that it is the charter of the INS to find and deport undocumented workers. In response to the coalition's claims that the INS practices ethnic profiling, she says, "Whether a person is from France or Mexico, targeting immigration necessarily takes race into account. It's not necessarily racism, it's just how immigration works."

But, she adds, "It's not immigration that's causing these problems of terrorism. We're a country of immigrants. I think the concept of putting immigration under Homeland Security connotes that immigrants, per se, are a security risk to our country. That's not the source of terrorism." ■

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8/8/02

# poetry

## Panhandler

Reach through your pocket!

lines

the

life,

there!

turn...

turn

into

life!

if you

care.

Even,

care! If,

here —

it's a journey.

— STAN BURRISS

## Cascade

From across the room  
I suddenly begin to feel my life,  
Her eyes strangely bright

An empty glance  
Reveals a quiet sadness,  
The sway of a woman lost.

When the sky is dark  
I can't see the clouds  
And when the sun is out  
I fail at everything.

— MARION MEADOWS

## Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning



Lately I've been obsessed, and I'm starting to get obsessed about it. Not just my own obsessions but other people's. I've come to think that no one does anything without some obsession being involved. I think this is one of my symptoms: I think too much. Did you know there are pills specifically designed to prevent people from thinking too much? I'm taking one right now. I should probably take two.

In ancient and/or pre-colonial times, I'm told that they had a sure cure for the propensity to think too much. They'd let you at it. They'd let you live by yourself in a bare hut out in the wilderness for a good long time, all the wheels in your head spinning away about your own private world. Usually a fast or two would be thrown in. By the time you finished you'd be an acknowledged entry level expert on the spinning wheels, AKA gods, or anyway you'd be considered to have had a valuable enough experience with them to deserve some added respect. "What's up with Jim?" "Oh, he went to the spirit world and only half of him came back. Go ahead, ask him about your ancestors next time you see him."

Nowadays there is no such thing as "by yourself." There is no wilderness. There aren't even bare huts. Bare huts are specifically outlawed, on the grounds that they are "substandard housing."

Don't get me wrong. I'm all in favor of decent housing for everyone. I just think that "standard" doesn't always equate to "decent." Sometimes, when the need is for some distance between the tenant and the rest of humanity, a standard SRO is a thing of cruelty. It stunts the spiritual development. In those cases a bare hut in the wilderness would be the more decent. I'm saying, the need for Walden didn't die with Henry D. Thoreau. And I'm saying, it's a need we're talking about here, not a luxury. People's sanity is at stake.

That word "sanity" really means "clean" as in sanitary, i.e., clean in the head. What I'm talking about here is that it's impossible to stay clean in the head when you are exposed to the dirt of everybody else's head wherever you go and never have an opportunity to take a head shower.

Life in the modern world is as mentally and spiritually unsanitary as city life in the medieval world of Western Europe was physically unsanitary. It is as if we can't walk down a street without someone tossing their head-crap out their windows onto our heads. It's like, everywhere we go we're unable to take a step without stepping in someone else's head-crap. You can't even read your mail without other people's head-crap oozing out of it, getting on your hands. Don't rub your eyes until you scrub down.

Some literalists think the solution is to limit the flow of ideas. The idea is that head-crap is made out of ideas so get rid of ideas and you won't have any head-crap floating around in stagnant puddles. This is like trying to solve a city's sewage problem by eliminating its food supply. We need the free flow of ideas, but we also need time and space apart to process them, and some of us need more time and space than others, at various stages of our lives. The average 18 year old, for example, needs maybe four years at 3,000 miles, while the average 80 year old maybe could settle for a nap-time at two paces.

When I was in my mid-30s, I desperately needed two years, at least, and a minimum of a mile or so. Instead, all I got were offers of shelter space — no more time alone than it takes to stir milk into coffee, no more space than the six inches between mats. Because the need could not be satisfied by the offer, I turned the offer down. The "choice" was really no choice. You can't choose to live without your spiritual needs any more than you can choose to live without food and water.

So I opted out of society for a year or so. 1983-84 is still a little hazy for me. I couldn't believe it when I later learned you had all re-elected Reagan in my absence. ■

**It's impossible to stay clean in the head when you are exposed to the dirt of everybody else's head wherever you go and never have an opportunity to take a head shower.**



## no reply

On the outside  
    (where  
you see it,  
        while  
        standing—  
        you're  
here!)  
    life,  
        follows.  
    Broken.  
        That's  
        natural!  
given, the way that you  
    move.  
    Aside!  
        you  
        move.  
— STAN BURRISS

## Stuart's Cafe

Fragments of the candlelit days  
Swing from the balcony  
Down into the eyes and hands  
Of the invisible.  
  
By nightfall  
We are shoulder deep  
In our memories,  
Pleading for our lives  
Only to find that we are entirely  
Lost within each other.  
  
There are a hundred stars  
To receive the ghost of abstract intention.  
  
The colors erupt and the light  
Of Fairhaven shines briefly on our  
Distant hope.  
  
We crawled above the silent hours  
Of the village, with pieces of the sky  
And futures made of glass.  
— MARION MEADOWS

## Transient

the smoke stack owes its  
    allegiance to the sky  
where contaminated sea birds  
    hover in tainted emissions  
seeming only natural  
    in the gun gray dusk  
  
& while I am almost certain  
    the smoke stack has never  
        pondered my loyalties  
i'm most positive  
    its factory workers would  
  
convinced that the echo of my footfalls  
    resounding off flaking paint  
        & cracked masonic block  
streaming down bubble gum crusted sidewalks  
will somehow bring about  
    the abolition of their machines  
monotonously hammering out  
    industrial rhythms  
that enslave the free jazz of mind  
  
& while I am just a transient shadow  
    on the graffitied wall of existence  
no blackout shall bring about  
    the demise of my love affair  
        w/ uncertainty  
  
only the natural clock work of blood  
beating through punctured veins  
    & discordian brain's  
immediate & prolonged cessation  
    could bring about the end  
        of such romance  
  
i give it all away  
    to the momentum of a moment  
Seeking to return or some  
    kharmatic revenge

— EDWARD C. CONDART



ABOVE, JULIA STERKOVSKY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SEATTLE HUMAN SERVICES COALITION, SAYS CITIZENS SHOULD CONTINUE ASKING ELECTED OFFICIALS TO DEVELOP LONG-TERM FUNDING SOLUTIONS. BELOW, BOOMTOWN CAFÉ ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR ELIZABETH OSBORNE, RIGHT, AND VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR JOHANNES SCHNITTER SAY THE \$50,000 THEY COULD LOSE IN COUNTY FUNDS NEXT YEAR SUPPORTS A PROGRAM THAT ALLOWS PEOPLE TO WORK A 15-MINUTE SHIFT IN EXCHANGE FOR A MEAL. PHOTOS BY HEDVIG HJELM.

ally helps the self-esteem," he says.

"They shouldn't cut it," Sawyer continues. "Due to the current economic situation, a lot of people find themselves strapped for cash."

Boomtown associate director Elizabeth Osborne says the café has some reserve funding, and hopes it would be able to make up for the cut, but if other local meal services lose funding, Boomtown could get a large overflow of customers.

"The repercussions could be bigger than the \$50,000 that King County provides," Osborne says. "It's like the domino effect."

During a recent meeting of the King County Community Services Division, several program coordinators noted this domino effect and agreed that a loss in one service area can cause an increased need in other areas.

They noted, for example, that losing day care subsidy could mean choosing between paying rent and paying for day care. If a parent chooses day care so that she or he can continue working, the parent may face eviction, then require housing assistance or homeless services.

"It's all interrelated, definitely," says Carole Antoncich, the women's program coordinator.

Other services that would suffer from budget cuts are youth shelters. Richard

King, director of Denny Place Youth Shelter in Seattle, says the overnight emergency shelter for 16- to 20-year-olds normally receives \$50,000 of county money to help pay its staff.

"We've been told that we will be losing it," King says.

Due to other financial reasons, another shelter, YouthCare, began operating Denny Place August 1. (See "Youth Shelter Changes Hands," *RC*, July 25). This means a bigger financial obligation for YouthCare, yet potentially less monetary assistance from the county.

Human services advocates stress that cuts in social service programs will hurt everyone, not only the direct beneficiaries of the services.

"We will all pay the price," says Laura Wells, the director of community initiatives for Child Care Resources

(CCR) in Seattle and a member of the King County Alliance for Human Services. "This is not an individual agency issue. This is about a safety net and the fabric of our society."

CCR, the childcare referral service that employs Wells, could lose \$42,000 in county funding for a program that helps potential childcare providers pay for training classes so they can become licensed providers.

**Reductions in human services spending will have far-reaching effects on a myriad of social services. It will affect day care, youth shelters, housing assistance, work training, food banks, domestic violence prevention, visiting nurse care for seniors — indeed, just about every type of social need provided in the county.**

Wells says CCR has not found a private funding source to replace the county's money, and help is not available at other levels of government. The state, for example, already has cut \$250,000 of CCR's funding, as part of \$22 million in cuts statewide.

The burden cannot be shifted to local cities, either. In 2003, the city of Kent will stop funding CCR after 12 years because of growing financial obligations to its own residents. "We expect that that is a ripple effect from county cuts," Wells says.

Because of this scarcity of financial resources for human services, CCR will sponsor fewer classes; as a result, quality daycare options will be limited, even for families who are able to pay their entire daycare bill. The potentially devastating effects of a lack of human services funding

has led dozens of local groups to meet and discuss solutions to the looming crisis. Partly because of their efforts, the King County Council passed a motion on July 29 that asked the county's criminal justice officials to develop creative ways to increase their efficiency and reduce their spending. The council asked the courts, sheriff's office, and other criminal justice agencies to report back with their progress by October 1, nearly two months before the council votes on a final 2003 budget. The council's resolution was coldly received by some.

"The Sheriff's Office doesn't need a directive from the council to tell us to save money. We've already been doing that," says Sgt. Cameron Webster, the sheriff's media relations officer. He says the sheriff already has placed more offenders in home detention rather than jail and has been buying smaller, cheaper patrol cars, despite the possibility that smaller cars may be less safe in the event of an accident.

Julia Sterkovsky, executive director of the Seattle Human Services Coalition, says streamlining criminal justice operations is a good short-term solution to keeping money in human services, but citizens should continue asking elected officials to develop long-term funding solutions.

Wells says the county needs a stable funding source. Officials, she says, need to rally for changes in the tax system, push for the authority to implement a utility tax, or help establish a state income tax. Also, she says, Initiative 77 — a proposed 10-cent-per-cup tax on gourmet coffee ("Taxing Espresso," *RC* July 11) — would help support human services in Seattle.

Increasing taxes would bring more money into government, but a slow economy has contributed to the county's budget deficit in the first place, and some people may not be willing to pay more taxes when they are struggling themselves.

Akina-James, the county's Community Services Division manager, says county services really do help people; it is up to taxpayers to decide where they want their money to go.

"All of the residents of King County have to care enough about the other residents of King County to have these services provided to their neighbors," she says. "We all live here together." ■





# Working and Writing for Change

By Sara McCleskey

In a small office space just off Seattle's Fuhrman Avenue, three teens sit hunched over computer monitors. Clicking away on their keyboards, these young adults are working a part-time job unlike most others. It allows them to make a difference in the lives of teens like themselves: teens who have dealt firsthand with the foster care system, transitional housing, and homelessness. Researching and writing articles about issues that have a direct effect in their lives, these teens are giving voice to an often silent part of society.

The *Mockingbird Times*, a monthly newspaper found online and as an insert in *Real Change*, exists to provide teens throughout Washington State with a forum for their concerns, problems, and general musings on life. The paper, which recently celebrated its one year anniversary, has come a long way in its young life. Written by teens for teens, the newspaper covers issues pertinent to young people dealing with the foster care system. But more than just reporting on life in a foster home, the teen writers strive to emphasize the outside lives and interests of foster children.

Brittany Lucas, an energetic and outspoken 18-year-old, has been a staff writer for the *Mockingbird Times* for more than seven months. Referred to the paper through YouthCare, Lucas brings her own *personal experience and insight to the pages of the Mockingbird Times*. Like other staff writers, Lucas was placed into the foster care system at the age of 15 following neglect issues with her father. No longer in the system as of her eighteenth birthday, Lucas still has much to offer young people going through the same things she experienced. "A lot of things need to be changed within the foster care system," says Lucas, who believes strongly in the *Mockingbird Times* as a vehicle for advocacy. "Kids are not getting the services they need because of things like budget cuts and system overload."

Concerns much like Lucas' were what fueled the formation of the *Mockingbird Times* one year ago. It was Jim Theofelis,



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: VALERIE DOUGLAS, RIGHT, HELPS STAFF WRITER DENNIS FISHER WORK ON A PIECE FOR THE *MOCKINGBIRD TIMES*; DOUGLAS GOES OVER THE CONTENT FOR THE UPCOMING *TIMES* ISSUE; MOLLY RHODES, RIGHT, HELPS STAFF WRITER BRITTANY LUCAS WITH A PIECE; STAFF WRITER JUSTIN REYNOLDS. PHOTOS BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

executive director of the newspaper, whose vision it was to form some kind of organization dedicated to working with and for foster care adolescents. Working for years with different foster care agencies, and for 15 years as a therapist in his own practice, Theofelis experienced firsthand the problems existing within the foster care and group home system. Desiring to create and run his own company focusing on changing foster and homeless youth lives in Washington State, his vision finally manifested itself in the form of the Mockingbird Society.

The Mockingbird Society is an independent non-profit organization committed to improving the safety, quality of life, and future of adolescents living in the state's foster care system. Employing a staff with years of experience in designing and run-

ning effective programs for Washington's most troubled children, the Mockingbird Society works directly with foster parents, foster organizations, and foster adolescents. In an organization that focuses on a wide variety of issues within the foster care system, a newspaper designed and produced by youth is just one of the strategies employed to make a difference. But the *Mockingbird Times* is most certainly one of its most innovative and effective programs, working to empower foster teens who often feel powerless.

Over the past year, the newspaper has grown considerably and developed into a publication truly driven by foster youth. It took a few issues to get the paper on its feet, but the *Mockingbird Times* now employs five staff writers, as well as many contributing writers. "We no longer

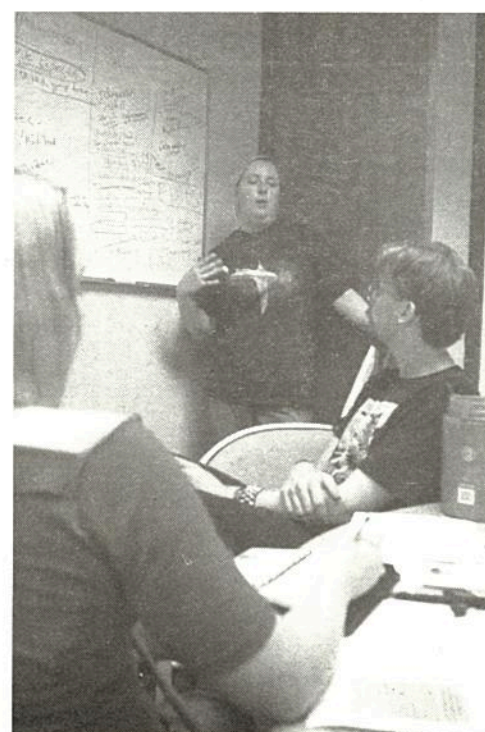
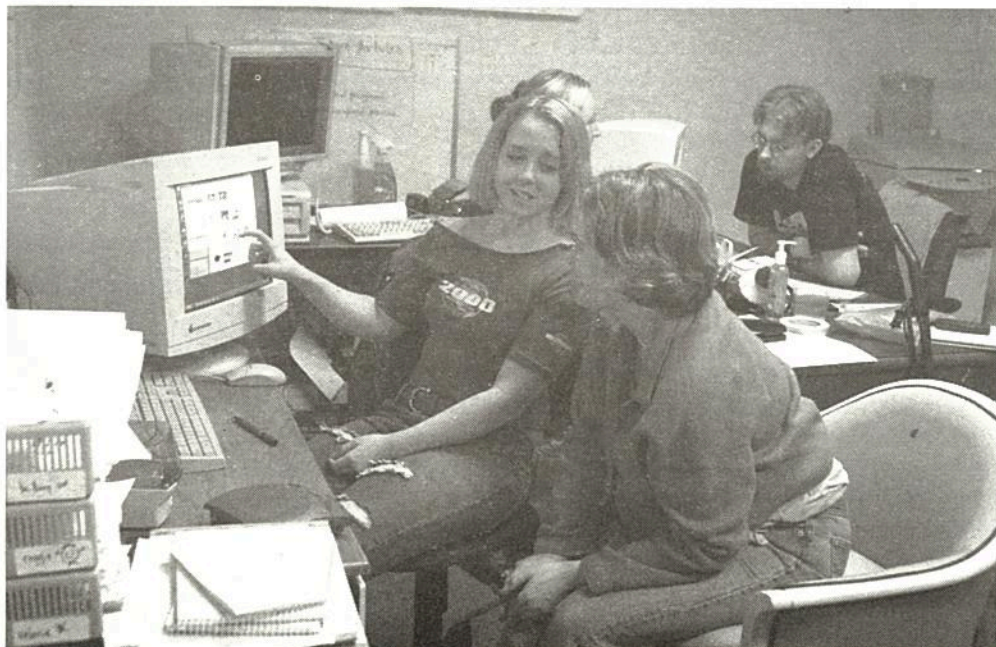
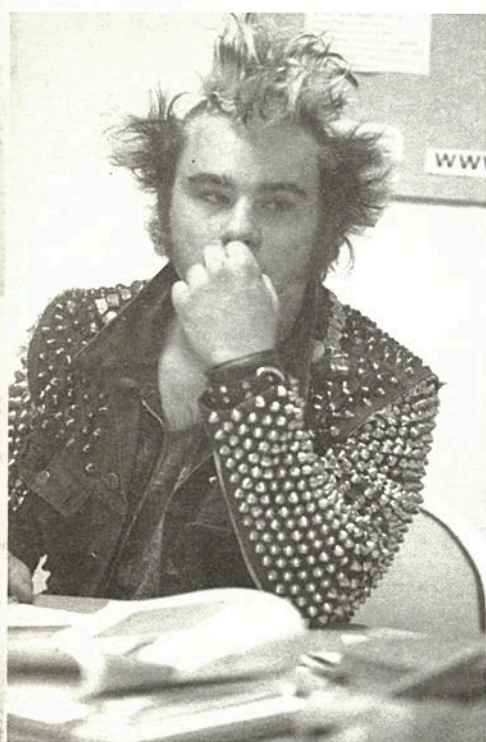
struggle to fill the paper, like we did in some of our first issues," says Molly Rhodes, technical advisor for the *Mockingbird Times*. Valerie Douglas, staff advisor and program supervisor, adds, "Now young people are more active and there are more unsolicited submissions. We're no longer scrambling."

One reason the *Mockingbird Times* has enjoyed such strong participation stems from the fact that it remains the only paper in the nation that employs a paid staff of youth reporters who have firsthand experience with foster care and homelessness. "Kids who haven't even gone to college yet have a decent job paying over minimum wage," explains Brittany Lucas. This is quite a change from living on the streets, one that the *Mockingbird Times* is especially proud of.

While the *Mockingbird Times* has helped to create a sense of community for many troubled adolescents and has provided a much-needed voice for foster teens, writers and staff members alike still see a long road ahead. "I'd love to see the paper distributed throughout the state and in other states so youth can truly feel they're not alone," says Valerie Douglas. Brittany Lucas agrees, hoping the paper will get bigger, offering full-time hours for staff members as well as more advocacy training that stretches beyond just the paper. Lucas adds, "Offering scholarships to people who work here who want to go to college should be another major goal of this paper."

The *Mockingbird Times* has set its sights high for the future and continuously struggles to ensure that the drive behind the paper comes completely from the young people who write it. Rather than simply criticizing its inadequacies, writers and staff members remain focused on working for positive change within the foster care system. The *Mockingbird Times* staff expects that through hard work and dedication, the foster care system will eventually undergo necessary changes — changes that may ultimately eliminate the need for such a paper. ■

Look for *Mockingbird Times* online at [www.mockingbirdsociety.org](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org), or in the September 5 issue of *Real Change*



# Sweet Odes to God and Country

By Paul Rogat Loeb

It's been almost a year since Sept 11, but the flags remain. They decorate our clothing, cars, and houses, to convey a sense of common spirit in a land now vulnerable and threatened. Bush officials play on these sentiments, insisting that true patriots don't question.

The anthem of Bush's patriotism, Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A.," was actually written during the Cold War, in 1985.

Reagan made it his campaign theme while his advisors were backing men like Osama bin Laden and the Nicaraguan Contras as anti-Communist "freedom fighters." The song has now been resurrected for a new fight, against invisible enemies, which we're told may last our lifetimes. Greenwood climbed onto the World Trade Center rubble to sing it for rescue workers. Sept 11 launched his 10-year-old album, "American Patriot," back on the charts. And a recent AOL poll ranked "God Bless USA" above all other patriotic songs, including "God Bless America" and "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Greenwood's song begins with the specter of loss—"If tomorrow all the things were gone, I'd worked for all my life/ And I had to start all over with my children and my wife." Then the wounds disappear before they're felt: "I'd thank my lucky stars to be living here today/ Because the flag still stands for freedom and they can't take that away."

Companies may be laying off workers by the thousands, while their CEOs grab ever more. We may end up on the street with the kids crying, the bills unpaid, and our retirement burned through by Enron and WorldCom. But these are mere inconveniences amid blessings that redeem all possible losses, uniting rich and poor. As the refrain shifts from violins and a church organ to a military march, Greenwood repeats, "I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free/ And I won't forget the men who died who gave that right to me."

Let's respect those, like the World War II soldiers, who fought in wars that had no alternative. We could use their spirit of sacrifice in a time where greed too often trumps community. Yet cherishing those who've bled for native soil

gives us no special grace over citizens of other lands. And because Greenwood says nothing about what freedom might demand of us, it becomes just an empty phrase blessing whatever we do, no matter how much our actions evoke that classic sin that the Greeks called hubris and the Bible called pride. We must be right, because God loves America.

**Maybe this is indeed a time to stand together, but we can still decide which kind of patriotism we embrace.**

**Greenwood's song is once again being cast as a vision for all America. The one sung by Waylon, now forgotten, asks something more.**

We were defending freedom, according to this view, when supporting dictators like Augusto Pinochet, Ferdinand Marcos, the Shah of Iran, Saddam Hussein, and the succession of Persian Gulf autocrats who helped turn bin Laden against us. We were defending freedom when the Bush administration gave \$43 million to the Taliban early last year, a few months before Sept 11. We're defending freedom when the Justice Department recruits our friendly postman, meter reader, or cable technician to report on what we do, say, and read. When Greenwood sings, "There ain't no doubt I love this land. God Bless the U.S.A.," he never suggests what qualities of justice would redeem the love he declaims. He just says we need to be proud.

Greenwood wrote the song following the U.S. retreat from Lebanon and Reagan's invasion of Grenada, to reflect "the spirit of America being proud." It rose to a top-five country hit, and both the Democrats and Republicans invited him to sing it at their respective conventions. Greenwood turned them both down due to scheduling conflicts. But after letting Reagan staffers use "God Bless The U.S.A." to frame their 18-minute campaign film, he began singing it at Republican rallies.

But Greenwood's is not the sole patriotic ballad to choose from. The late Waylon Jennings' "America" reached number six on the charts the year "God Bless the U.S.A." first came out. Written by Sammy Johns, the song affirms connection to native soil, as Jennings repeats, "America, America," slowly and tenderly as if to a woman he loves; then admits, softly, "You've become a habit to me." But he also makes tough demands—recounting his own history as an Anglo yeoman "from down round Tennessee," then continuing, "But my

brothers/ Are all black and white/ Yellow too/ And the red man is right/ To expect a little from you/ Promise and then follow through/ America."

Honoring promises of justice gives us problems. Our culture too often gives them lip service, then dismisses them by explaining, "We're sorry. This is the future. Get used to it." Yet we're stronger for respecting common ties, even if they raise difficult questions. Echoing Walt Whitman's poems of Brooklyn blacksmiths and welders, Jennings celebrates "all the men who build the big planes/ And who live through hardship and pain." But he also honors those "who would not fight/ In a war that didn't seem right," and a nation strong enough so "you let them come home." Once more, questions are raised about a past that's no longer so clean. He judges us wiser for respecting those who challenged their government—and might once again.

Because Greenwood says only that living in America makes us free, his message feeds what historian Christopher Lasch once called "the minimal self"—with patriotism reduced to pledging allegiance. Only malcontents or ex-Enron employees might question our blindly delegating our most important national choices. Instead of creating a standard by which we can judge our leaders and hold them accountable, Greenwood writes a blank check for

whatever they choose to do.

Waylon's song, in contrast, is no political manifesto—just a ballad celebrating the diverse and contradictory land he calls "my home sweet home." But his "America" respects the difficult, unsettling questions, and deems us wiser for heeding the dissenters too often dismissed. He suggests true greatness does not flow, like automatic grace, from the now concrete-paved soil of our land—but is fulfilled when we choose those hard choices that honor common responsibility and connection.

Maybe this is indeed a time to stand together, but we can still decide which kind of patriotism we embrace. Greenwood's song is once again being cast as a vision for all America. The one sung by Waylon, now forgotten, asks something more. We should take as our ballads those that demand the most of us. ■

*Paul Loeb is the author of Soul of a Citizen: Living With Conviction in a Cynical Time (St Martin's Press, www.soulofacitizen.org) and three other books on citizen involvement. This essay was originally published in www.workingforchange.com, July 2, 2002.*



GRAPHIC BY  
ROSS SMART.

# The True Philanthropists

By Susan Platt

**T**he workers are the stars. Joan Holden's brilliant theatrical adaptation of *Nickel and Dimed* makes that clear.

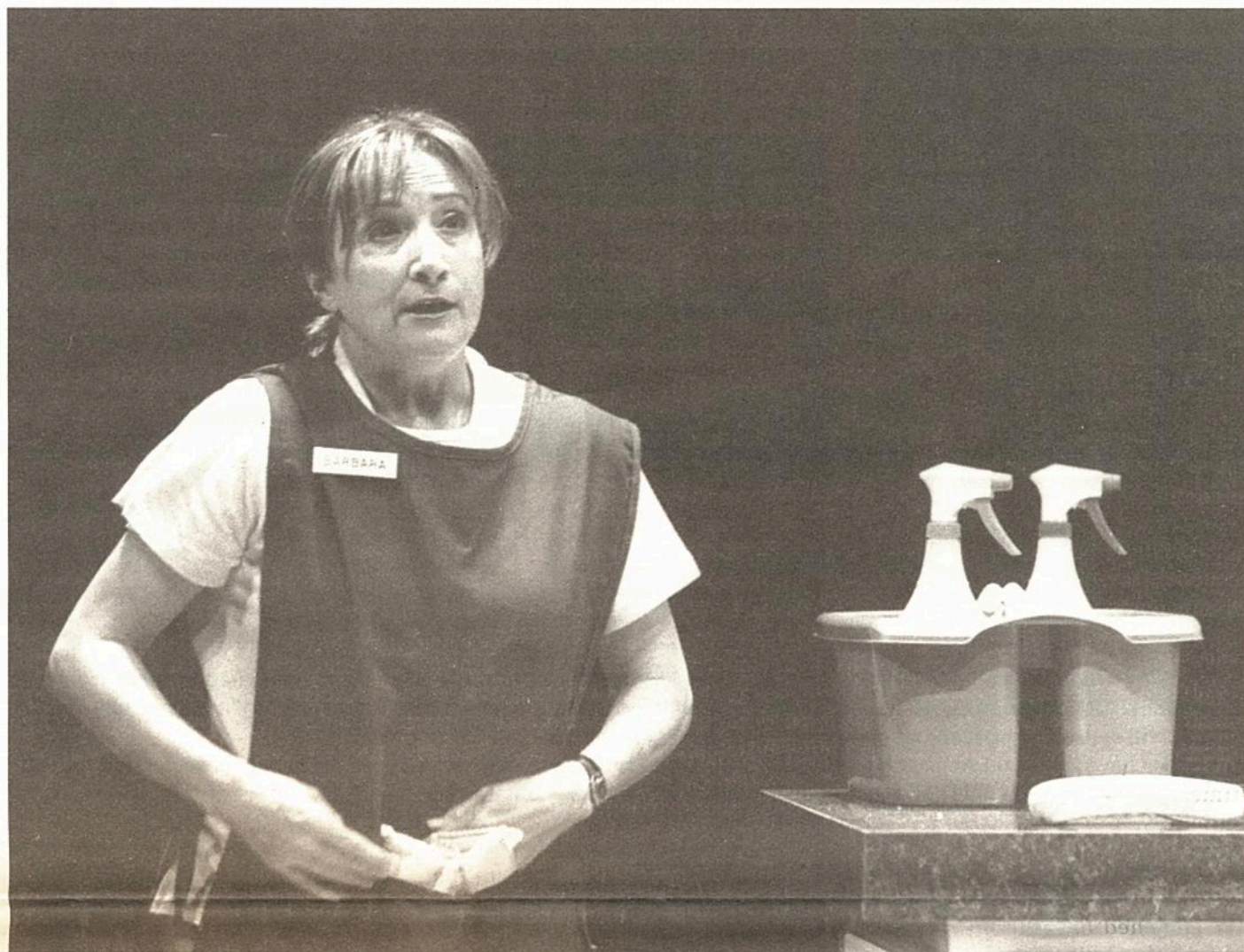
Many of us already know the story from the best-selling book: Barbara Ehrenreich, PhD. Sociologist, decided to live on a minimum wage in order to discover what it's really like beyond all the windy rhetoric of government administrators who are cutting funding for welfare. For three months, in Florida, Maine, and Minnesota, she discovered that it is backbreaking, but that the people who live on low wages are powerful survivors in jobs that often don't even give them time to pee.

Holden employs theatrical devices that perfectly presents the many sides of the story. She flashes the low wages of each job on a wall, uses clothing racks and neon lighting as a means of harassment, interrupts the action with oddball choreography that serves as a fleeting fantasy in the midst of the hard realities of the play.

At the beginning, Barbara (convincingly played by Sharon Lockwood) is pushed out onto the stage and bangs against closed doors while talking non-stop about the anxieties of losing her identity. Holden and director Bartlett Sher's use of a rotating stage that flips, near the beginning, from a high volume all-American restaurant to a snooty Manhattan café is the perfect device for setting up the class differences that run through the center of the story. It also rotates between two sequential jobs, which, we are told, is the only way to make ends meet.

In her first job at a food chain restaurant, Barbara immediately discovers that she can barely manage the many complex details and the physically and emotionally draining work. The regulars teach her to carry a tray, set a table, charge up meals on a computer and a myriad of other acts that eventually become so internalized that they are a complex choreography (the pace doesn't allow time to think). She manages to survive to return for a second day, a humble triumph. But when the going gets really rough she simply leaves. She walks out of the job and out of that chapter of the story, almost like Dorothy who opts for Oz (which is what Barbara's middle-class life seems like) over the realities of Kansas.

Barbara frequently addresses the audience directly with various insights, philosophical tidbits and witty asides, but, as seen in her exit from the restaurant, she is never the star of this show. She is the middle-class woman, stumbling over her own privileges all the time (like her high-dollar Reeboks) and admitting to her weaknesses and mistakes as she is confronted by the difficulties of "getting by." That phrase translates into a place to sleep, something to eat, and



ACTRESS SHARON LOCKWOOD AS BARBARA, TRYING HER HAND AT LOW-WAGE WORK. PHOTO BY CHRIS BENNION.

enough employment to pay for it.

It is her fellow workers, presented by only five talented actors (Jason Cottle, Kristin Flanders, Cynthia Jones, Cristine McMurdo-Wallis, and Olga Sanchez) each playing multiple parts, who are the heroes, as they deal with housing, bills, oppressive regulations, employer harassment, domestic abuse, and health problems, but still get up to work another day, help out fellow employees, and even crack jokes. It all comes through with wit and pathos in this fast-paced show.

Holden shapes some wonderful characters from the people in the book. One of the most memorable was the tough, fiftyish waitress at the chain restaurant, who is still waiting for her health benefits and has a dicey home environment with an abusive partner, but is always able to find 10 seconds to talk cheerfully to customers.

Another is the pregnant young house cleaner who wouldn't ask for time off after she fell down the stairs. Barbara grabbed the phone and tried to make her employer cover a trip to the hospital. That interference was obviously a major lapse and Holden conveys that by giving us her co-workers' desperate thoughts of their own vulnerable conditions as they return to base. Union rights? Workers Compensation? Pregnancy Leave? These don't figure in this minimum-wage world.

The various scenes, focusing on dif-

*Nickel and Dimed*, the play  
A Theatrical Adaptation of Barbara  
Ehrenreich's book  
*Nickel and Dimed, On (Not) Getting  
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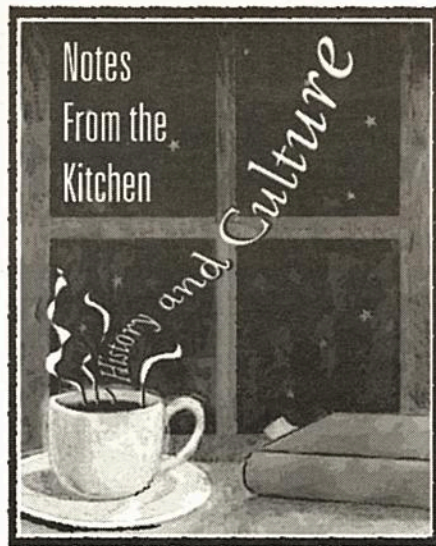
ferent jobs — nursing home, Wal-mart, hotel room cleaning, maid service, as well as food service — are also laced with many other issues, particularly the punishing abuse of the body in low wage work, the lack of time to actually do anything other than work, the unnecessarily petty requirements of working environments, the abuse of women, the gap of housing costs and wages, and the impossibility of finding any type of housing at all.

About halfway through the play, Barbara brags that she herself has never hired a maid. Holden interrupts the action as the actors rush out onto the stage and perform a survey of the audience on how many of us have maids and what we pay them. This disruption of the illusion that this is a play about someone else hits home. Well-off upper-middle-class theatergoers, as well as middle-class intellectuals (even including the actors themselves, as they declare) sit at the center of the issues,

as we make decisions about consumption, childcare, and housecleaning. We are beneficiaries of the fact that "the working poor are the major philanthropists of our society."

The play is accompanied by information on various organizations that are trying to address some of these problems, an opportunity to send a post card to President Bush, as well as an exhibition of photographs by Suzie Fitzhugh of people in Seattle who are scraping by to make ends meet. Again what comes through is, as Fitzhugh puts it, "the power of love and hope for the future." Fitzhugh combines her photographs (selected by the participants) with brief narratives of their lives, and a few questions. The subjects include a farmworker, a vegetable packer, a childcare worker, a resident of Tent City, a Home Care Assistant, a security worker, and a clerical worker who is going to night school. Children figure prominently in these stories, although they are barely referenced in the play, except for one single mother trying to keep track of her children by phone.

At a time when the economy is moving down, and the benefits from the government are being even further cut because of the war on terrorism, this play, as well as Ehrenreich's book, couldn't be more timely and important. In Holden's adaptation, we never lose sight of the issues even as we laugh and cry with these memorable characters. ■



# Man Woman Sun Lake Rowboat

By Liz Smith

I begin today's column by offering some sympathetic advice to male readers — in particular, those of you guys who have ever asked the age old question, "What do woman want?" Women can be so mysterious and so maddening. If you are an average decent kind of guy, it may seem that what the average woman wants is a tough guy, someone threatening, and she will want to "just be friends" with the likes of you. Sometimes women are obtuse, and simply don't recognize a man's good qualities, no matter how obvious.

So — how best to impress the lovely creature who's been overlooking you? I cannot speak for all women, but I can tell you there's hardly a woman alive who doesn't like romance. Invite her along for a romantic interlude in a rowboat, where she can admire your muscles and listen to you reciting poetry. A kayak won't do: she would have to do some work, and that is not romantic. A sailboat is

at the mercy of the wind, and she may not be a good sailor. It has to be a rowboat, where you and she are face to face, you looking heroic and she looking cherished. Also, in a rowboat she will have a place to put the flowers you've given her while you're having your picnic lunch.

As for the poetry, I have a few suggestions. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has some beautiful dreamy passages in Act Two. The Song of Solomon from the Old Testament begins this way, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." Powerfully suggestive. There is a wonderful poet, Billy Collins, who was the Poet Laureate of the United States in 2001. Here is the opening stanza from his poem "Days":

Each one is a gift, no doubt,  
Mysteriously placed in your waking hand  
or set upon your forehead  
moments before you open your eyes.

That's from a larger collection called *The Art of Drowning*. If none of these seem right, try something else, whatever you both like. It could be M.C. Hammer, it could be Metallica. What matters is you are reading poetry especially for her, and she will appreciate it, if she's not obtuse.

I hope I have given you some good ideas, and that you go forth and enjoy yourselves. The menu I have devised for your outdoor picnic is very simple and relentlessly wholesome. What else but, to eat:

## Hero Sandwiches for two

Two hoagie or French rolls  
4 ounces sliced meat  
4 ounces sliced cheese  
lettuce, tomatoes, cherry peppers  
mayonnaise, mustard, or Italian dressing.  
If you hollow out the bottom half of the roll, your filling will stay in place better.

## And to drink:

Lemon-limeade for two  
4 Tbsp fresh lemon juice  
4 Tbsp fresh lime juice  
6 Tbsp sugar  
1-1/2 cups cold water  
6-8 ice cubes  
You may want to double this, in case you get thirsty later.



Here are three places that rent out rowboats, and an inexpensive shop that sells flowers:

**U.W. Waterfront Center**  
(206)543-9433  
Boat rentals are \$6.50 per hour

**Green Lake Boat Rentals**  
(206)527-0171  
\$10 per hour

**Center for Wooden Boats**  
(206)382-2628  
\$15-\$25 per hour

**The Flower Lady**  
(206)325-5751  
3230 Eastlake Avenue E., one block south of the University Bridge

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**Wednesday, July 17, 4:45 p.m., Second Avenue and Columbia St.** Officer was dispatched to a report of a man causing a disturbance with the Metropolitan Improvement District's Safety Ambassadors. Officer contacted the ambassadors, who stated they had approached this subject several times during the day. Subject, a transient black male aged 46, dressed in hospital clothing, had been asked to leave several locations. He was now sitting on the sidewalk blocking pedestrians. An officer asked him to leave the area, but the man refused, and asked to be arrested. Officer obtained his name, and ran a computer check. He located a "missing person with a disability" hit on the man's name. The hit indicated the man had untreated schizophrenia, and was assaultive to others, including police officers. His father had reported him missing. Upon questioning, the subject admitted he had schizophrenia and did not take his medication. He denied he had a father. He was transported to Harborview Medical Center for involuntary mental evaluation.

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**Wednesday, July 17, 11:30 p.m., 500 block Yesler.** The victim, a black male aged 47, stated he was sitting on a bench in a park just east of Fifth and Yesler, drinking a beer. Suspects (a black male and two white females,) approached him and struck up a conversation. Victim tried to leave, but the male hit him in the face, knocking him out. When he woke up, his wallet was gone.

**Friday, July 19, 6:08 p.m., Pike-Street sidewalk.** Seattle Fire Dept. requested police help with a patient being taken into protective custody and delivered for involuntary mental evaluation. Police responded and found the subject, a transient black male aged 44, lying on his back on the sidewalk. Firefighters said he had professed to them that he was God. Also on the scene was a chemical dependency counselor hired by the subject's family to find him and get him into treatment for paranoid schizophrenia. Subject did not want to go into rehab, and had to be physically lifted into the ambulance and taken to Harborview.

**Friday, July 19, 12:43 a.m., Freeway Park.** Victim informed officers that he went to Freeway Park to see some friends. While waiting for them, the suspect, a white male in his thirties, started bothering him — he was drunk, and began yelling at the victim. Victim, a homeless white male aged 27, told suspect to leave him alone, and pushed him away. Suspect took offense, and began punching. Victim went down, and suspect began to kick him in the ribs. He was finally able to get up and run away. He had never seen the suspect before. He suffered bruising and soreness to the ribs, but declined medical care. ■

*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.*

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# Blind-sided

*Blinded by the Right: The Conscience of an Ex-Conservative*  
By David Brock  
Crown Publishers, 2002.  
\$15.00 paperback, 336 pages.

Review by Bill Butler

The greatest bare-knuckles battle in the national political ring in a century — the Clinton scandals — has died down. Are you still scratching your head as to what it all meant?

Remember Hillary's complaint in 1997, that her husband was being hounded by a right-wing conspiracy? According to a new book, Hillary was prompted by private confessions of David Brock to a Clinton administration figure. In a final break from a career as a journalistic "right wing hit man," Brock tipped the GOP's hand.

Now he sets his story down on paper with *Blinded by the Right: The Conscience of an Ex-Conservative* (Crown Publishers, N.Y., NY, 336p \$25.95) turns the political scandals of the past decade on their head in these revelations "about lives lost and reputations ruined." Brock tells us, "This book is an act of conscience, to correct the public record on events in which I played a central role, and to illuminate for others the danger I see in an empowered conservative movement."

The tactics that the conservative characters in this book employ while in pursuit of "the other team" can leave you slack-jawed. Theodore Olson, for example, used to advise Paula Jones's attorneys, and regularly contributed his anonymous, scathing criticism of Clinton to the conservative mag *American Spec-*

*tator*. He later blatantly perjured himself about these efforts, according to Brock. But last year, the GOP Senate confirmed him to the post of Solicitor General, the government's top lawyer.

Is Brock lying? Perhaps the best evidence that he's not is silence from the Right. If this is a pack of lies, wouldn't the Republicans be screaming their lungs out and suing the daylights out of him? To date, they've only quibbled about minor inaccuracies and sniped at Brock's personal peccadilloes.

In *The Nation*, columnist Katha Pollitt wrote that "so far no conservative... has seriously disputed Brock's

**If this is a pack of lies, wouldn't the Republicans be screaming their lungs out and suing the daylights out of him? To date, they've only quibbled about minor inaccuracies and sniped at Brock's personal peccadilloes.**

revelations beyond expressing a general skepticism that this self-confessed liar and suck-up artist has changed his spots. Virtually every page of *Blinded by the Right* makes an assertion that is, if true, embarrassing, and if false, libelous."

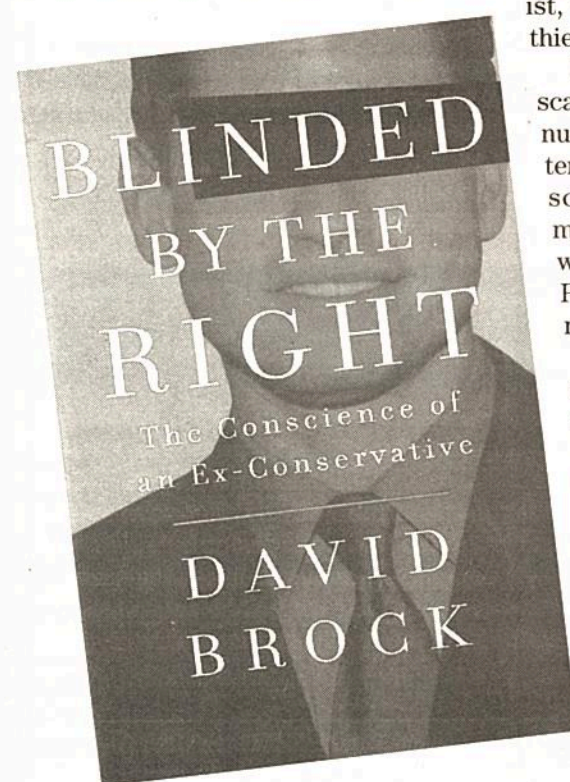
Fellow *Nation* columnist Christopher Hitchens

begs to differ. He wrote that Brock's book: "(is) a dank filthy tissue turned inside out.... There are very few revelations... unless you are surprised to learn that a cabal of right-wingers tried to frame the Clintons for killing insider Vince Foster." Unfortunately, many Americans do believe Foster died by foul play. Hitchens pretends to be hurt by a personal jab: He was the subject of a physically unflattering portrayal in Brock's book.

It would have been more pertinent for him to mention that Brock held him up as an example of Clinton-bashing fever at its apex, taking the mic on the conservative speakers' circuit to call Clinton "a real serious crook, a rapist, a war criminal, a perjurer, a thief...a monster."

Brock debunks every Clinton scandal that prompted feverish denunciations like Hitchens'. His contention that Whitewater and other scandals were stoked by the money of right-wing zealots "who would not accept a Democratic President" seems plausible, but more than that, tragic.

A few hours of conservative talk radio should tell anyone that many people are convinced that the former president committed treason and murder, and got away with it. It's a consensus that Clinton damaged the Presidency, but Brock points to the fact that in pursuit of him, conservatives put real hurtin' on the body politic, too. They created a cynical public disgusted, in the end, by nothing more than myth and hyperbole. ■



CLASSICS CORNER



by Perfess'r Harris

Were we at Classics Corner to contemplate the full injustice of our times for just three consecutive minutes we would surely implode. The black hole of our righteous anger would irresistibly attract all matter and the entire universe would condense to a golfball-sized lump of unimaginable weight. This lump of existence would fall through the void, surpassing the speed of light and reversing time, annihilating reason and history.

This, we believe, would not be good for anyone. So we confine our investigation of the world to quick, agonized glances. Over here, a country we've never seen and a people we've never met are repetitiously and ingloriously murdered. Over there, an unelected "President" thinks up new ways for his friends to steal. Meanwhile, the worst people masquerade as the best, and their interests are presented as our own.

A better person than ourselves, we think, would be more pissed off. Oh, we're kind of upset, but the depth of our pique seems wholly inadequate to the gravity of the moment. The occasion demands more than

we can somehow muster. We have decided, therefore, that Sophocles' Electra should be our new role model.

**Electra is crazy for justice. We could all be a little more like her.**

In Aeschylus, Electra is just a bit player who grieves her father more or less normally and obligingly disappears when other, more central, characters take the stage, but to Sophocles, she is The Shit. This daughter of Agamemnon is memory and justice personified. Her rage makes her crazy and keeps her sane. It is what she is.

As you no doubt recall, Clytemnestra, Electra's mom, and her adulterous boyfriend Aegisthus murdered King Agamemnon upon his return from Troy. Electra never really got over it. Normal life for her is not an option. "In such a state, my friends, one cannot be moderate and restrained, nor pious either. Evil is all around me, evil is what I am compelled to practice."

Electra indecorously hangs about the house wailing and rending her clothes for 20 years or so. This is enormously embarrassing to the ruling family, so they dress her in rags and keep her out of sight. Her rage, the chorus says, is not normal. "You will only destroy yourself in a matter where the evil knows no deliverance," they say. "It is only your discomfort. Why do you seek it?"

Her sister, on the other hand, is someone we can relate to. Chrysothemis has moved on. She eats at the royal table and wears royal clothes. Electra, she says, should too. "Will you never learn, in all this time, not to give in to your empty anger?" To Electra, her father's memory demands a witness for justice. Her sister, on the other hand, has learned to compromise.

Injustice, she says, is how things are. We can still be comfortable. In the face of this, Electra's rage just seems crazy. Still, there it is, Electra says. Deal with it. Electra is crazy for justice. We could all be a little more like her. ■

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

# Mid-August Notables

## Thursday 8/8

R00\$+3R Fest, benefit concert in memory of murdered street youth advocate Nicholas Helowski, to call attention to issues surrounding **homeless and at-risk youth**, organized by homeless and formerly street-involved youth, Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets, and Fremont Unconventional Centre (FUNC). The event will feature music from Children of the Revolution, New Soul Tribe, Pyro Sutra, and Infernal Noise Brigade, and DJ Miss Kick will be spinning. 6 p.m. - Midnight, at Fremont Unconventional Centre, 160 N. Canal St., in Fremont, tickets \$12 and open to the public, 10 percent of proceeds goes to Nicholas Helowski Reward Fund.

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

## Friday 8/9

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.

## Saturday 8/10

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

The **YWCA Leaders in Progress** program with workshops for Asian American, Chicanas/Latinas, African American, Multiracial and Caucasian high school girls; info Jackie Martinez 206-932-3224 or [jmartine@ywcaworks.org](mailto:jmartine@ywcaworks.org).

## Sunday 8/11

**Seattle Peace Concert** featuring Charles White Band, The Howlers, Stickshift Annie & The Overdrive, and The Jellyrollers. Noon - 6 p.m., at Gas Works Park, free. Please bring a food bank donation for Northwest Harvest. Cosponsored by the Washington Blues Society; info 206-729-5232.

Meeting of Seattle area Affinity Group for the **Nonviolent Peaceforce**, working for practical and peaceful responses to world conflict. 1 - 3 p.m., at University Friends Meeting, 4001 9th Ave NE; info Dave Berrian 425-482-3206 or [dberrian@earthlink.net](mailto:dberrian@earthlink.net).

## Monday 8/12

**Cohousing Salon** sponsored by Northwest Cohousing, 6 - 8 p.m., this and subsequent 2nd Mondays; at Delfino's Restaurant in University Village, no reservations required; info 206-763-2623 or <http://www.thefoundry.org/cohousing>.

## Wednesday 8/14

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

## Thursday 8/15

First Nations performers take part in a performance piece dealing with the Columbus invasions of the Arawak

Nation and Columbus' Legacy of Genocide. Info Qwo-Li 206-329-1606 or [knitbone@hotmail.com](mailto:knitbone@hotmail.com).

## Friday 8/16

The Independent Media Center and Northwest **Animal Rights** Network presents film screenings with Josh Harper, from Stop Hunting and Animal Cruelty. 8 - 10 p.m., at IMC, 1415 3rd Ave. near Union; info 206-309-8646 or <http://www.shac.net>.

## Saturday 8/17

**Arts in Nature Festival** teaching environmental lessons through the creative arts, including workshops, visual arts, dance, music, theatre, performers and an outdoor museum of sound. Saturday 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., at Camp Long, 5200 35th Ave. SW, West Seattle, free with \$5.00 suggested donation; info 206-923-0853 or <http://www.naturec.org>.

Home Alive **Basic Self-Defense** Workshop, covering safety planning, basic strikes, and getting out of common grabs. Please register by Aug. 10th if possible, but feel free to attend without registration. Registration 206-903-9747; info 206-720-0606.

Radical Women presents a **Women's Rights Day Celebration**, an evening of feminist humor, outrageous songs, and theatrical farce. 8 p.m., at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S, 4 blocks south of S. Alaska St, door donation \$2. Dinner with vegetarian option at 6:30 p.m. for a \$9.50 donation, all welcome; info 206-722-6057 or 206-722-2453.

## Sunday 8/18

Interfaith Vigil for **Peace in the Middle East**, pray for the end of the violence, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m., in Thomsen Chapel, this and subsequent 18th of each month at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E.; info 206-270-9170 or 425-641-9247.

**Fellowship of Reconciliation** picnic with shared potluck meal, 5 p.m., at Magnuson Park, shelter 3, all welcome; info 206-789-5565.

## Monday 8/19

Newly formed book discussion group on **Doing Democracy, the Map Model for Organizing Social Movements**, by Bill Moyer. 7 - 9:30 p.m., at Antioch University, 2326 6th Ave., at Battery. Please RSVP to Ariana Cahir 206-526-0233.

## Friday 8/23

Benefit for **Northwest Harvest**, a space-time themed costume party, featuring some of the best trance and NRG DJs in the northwest. Select few of the best dressed get in free. 8 p.m. - 4 a.m., at Fremont Unconventional Centre, 160 N. Canal St., in Fremont. Limited \$10 presale tickets online <http://www.ChangeTheRave.com>, \$15 with food at the door.

## Ongoing

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 206-208-9715. ■

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## Computer Corner



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## Take Time to Mark National Prison Justice Day

**Issue:** Activists will gather in Vancouver, B.C., on August 10, to call for reform in North American prisons.

**Background:** August 10th is the day set aside to remember all the men and women who have died unnatural deaths inside Canadian prisons. While the event was born in Canada, activists especially encourage those in the United States to join forces to end unnecessary violence and incarceration on both sides of the border.

The goal of the main event taking place in Vancouver, B.C., is to recreate the climate of the struggle and oppression in the prison system during the early part of the '70s leading up to the first National Prison Justice Day. All the events organized for this day are set among core principles:

- a day to fast and refuse to work in a show of solidarity to remember those who have died unnecessarily — victims of murder, suicide, and neglect.
- a day to raise issue with the fact that a very high rate of women are in prison for protecting themselves against their abusers.
- a day to remember that there are a disproportionate number of Natives, African-Canadians, and other minorities and marginalized people in prisons. Prisons are the ultimate form of oppression against struggles of recognition and self-determination.
- a day to raise public awareness of the demands made by prisoners to change the criminal justice system and the brutal and inhumane conditions that lead to so many prison deaths.
- a day to publicize that, in their fight for freedom and equality, the actions of many political prisoners have been criminalized by government. As a result, there are false claims that there are no political prisoners in North-American prisons.
- a day to raise public awareness of the economic and social costs of a system of criminal justice which punishes for revenge. If there is ever to be social justice, it will only come about using a model of healing justice, connecting people to the crimes and helping offenders take responsibility for their actions.
- a day to remind people that the criminal justice system and the psychiatric system are mutually reinforcing methods that the state uses to control human beings. There is a lot of brutality by staff committed in the name of treatment. Moreover, many deaths in the psych-prisons remain uninvestigated.

Just a few of the issues prison activists are struggling to overcome include youth incarceration, women self-defense review, reinstating the right to vote, general medical care, health care needs for prisoners with HIV and AIDS, alternatives to incarceration for some crimes, recognition of political prisoners, education, and needle exchange programs.

**Action:** Even if you are unable to make the event, take time this day to write, call, or email your county and city corrections department and let them know that you support the rights of prisoners. The push to improve the criminal justice system is especially important in King County, as politicians move towards creating a budget that deals solely with courts, crime, and police.

For more information on the day's events in Vancouver, B.C., go to [www.vcn.bc.ca/august10](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/august10). ■

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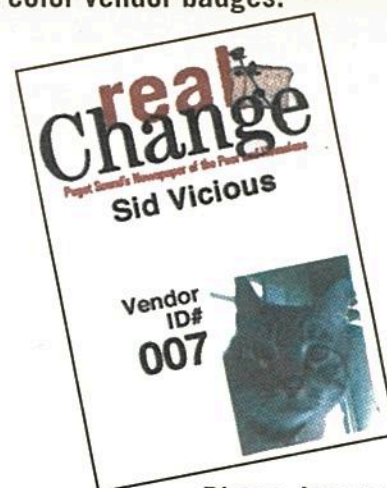
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