

SEP 5, 2002

# Change

Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless • Volume 9, No. 19

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SEPTEMBER 11: THE FIREFIGHTER'S BABY, BY KRSNA GOLDEN. SEE STORY ABOUT GOLDEN ON PAGE 18.

## Another Battle of Seattle

### Big Radio and tiny media-makers face off

By Adam Holdorf

**A** big interest group is coming to town, and protesters will be here to greet it at the door, educate the public about its evils, and offer up some alternatives. Sound familiar?

No, the World Trade Organization is not coming back for an encore. Instead, it's the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), an industry trade group of radio stations that spends hundreds of thousands of dollars getting cozy with the government bodies charged with regulating it. They're coming to the Washington State Convention Center September 12-14 for a typical junket — meeting, greeting, wining, and dining, discussing matters both serious and light in their business. Independent media activists have something similar planned, outside. They'll be talking about building a viable alternative on the sparse, plain media landscape, where faraway, unaccountable corporations own billboards, radio waves, television channels, and the wires that bring the Internet into our homes. They'll be broadcasting their own programs, and training others in how to get on air. For some, this is about civil disobedience. For others, it's just plain fun.

The NAB is at the center of the communications industry's lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C. Between 1996 and 2000, the radio lobby sent \$19 million to D.C. to pay for legislative trips, lunches, and election campaigns, according to data gathered by the Center for Responsive Politics.

As a result, the NAB gets what it wants. Case in point: in 1999, the FCC began considering opening up a new application process that would offer licenses to small, community-based radio stations in 20 states. The original proposal would have allowed for about 1,000 new low-power FM stations. Crying that new stations could interfere with their members' broadcasts, the NAB combined forces with National Public Radio to persuade Congress to ratchet down the number of spaces available.

Now, hundreds of would-be radio station operators are waiting to hear back from the FCC.

### Building Media, one transmitter at a time

**O**ne of them is Paul Nelson, the weekend jazz host at KPLU 88.5 FM. To Nelson, the FCC's cave-in is one of those revolving door issues: "Most of the people in government agencies have spent time in the private sector. An employee of Eli Lilly or Bristol Meyers/Squib might go to work for the Food and Drug Administration." The same with the FCC.

Nelson has been doing radio for 22 years. He's the president of It Plays in Peoria Productions, the Auburn radio

*Continued on Page 13*

Open shelter • Expand welfare • Treat the sick • House the poor • Help everyone who needs it



Look for *Mockingbird Times* Inside!







## Nothing is no answer

[Ed. —The following is an open letter to the Seattle City Council.]

Dear Seattle City Council Members,

I am writing to bring to your attention a problem that must be addressed.

We all know that homelessness in this city is a problem. I know that you are addressing it as best you can, however, maybe you don't know the current state of the issue.

As a supervisor at the Crisis Clinic, I listen to numerous callers looking for shelter every night. Homeless single women can utilize the Women's Evening Referral, but single men and families have to go through Operation Nightwatch.

Recently, Operation Nightwatch in-

formed us that they no longer wanted us to refer single men to them. They have no where to send them and are overwhelmed with turnaways.

We regularly refer victims of domestic violence to the domestic violence shelters, only to be told that they too are full. These women (and in some cases their small children), who fear their partner's return, have nowhere to run.

Let me tell you what happens to these callers. Some of them accept their fate and look for outside accommodations. Some profess to be suicidal and many are then referred to a local ER — usually Harborview. As a prior employee of Harborview, I can tell you that Harborview has to check everyone who requests services in for evaluation. Most of these folks have no health insurance; some are lucky enough to have Department of Social and Health Services coupons.

Some of these people will just benefit from some human contact (at a cost of at least \$100 just to be registered in the ER). Some may end up spending the night in the ER, feel better in the morning and go on their way ( food is provided and it's warm, but it's a far more expensive resource than a hotel voucher or mat on the floor of the Armory).

Others will go on to be hospitalized (on the tax payers' dollar) due to their suicidal thoughts. They may stay at the hospital for a few days or a week, maybe they are actually in need of getting connected to outpatient services

and this may get the ball rolling. A far more likely a scenario is that due to lack of resources in the community, nothing is arranged for them during their inpatient stay and they return to a life on the street only to repeat the process a few weeks or months later.

Is this a reasonable use of resources? Are we passing city issues onto the county budget through Harborview? What is the actual cost of having the Armory open year round? What about domestic violence shelter space? Are we putting women and children's lives in danger (and increasing jail/court costs for perps) in order to spend money on parks? Is anyone keeping track and reporting on the number of overflows at Operation Nightwatch in order to assess the need? Or are we just ignoring the problem by no longer referring?

I've worked in this system long enough to understand the complexities of the problem. I've also worked in the system long enough to know that what is currently happening is a ridiculous waste of resources. There is also the real potential for loss of life through suicide and domestic violence; to let this continue is inexcusable.

I have received Heidi Wills' newsletter and read a survey that showed that health and human services are at the top of the budget priority list for a lot of her constituents. They're at the top of mine too. Please let me know what is happening in regards to these issues. "Nothing" should not be acceptable.

Sincerely, Cheryl Carp

## Correction

In our interview with Buck Bagot last issue ("Power before Policy," August 22-Sept. 4), we quoted him as stating that the U.S. Post Office falls under the HUD, VA, and Independent Agencies Committee in the House of Representatives. He didn't say that, because it's not true; we misunderstood. We hope that didn't mess up your day.

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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.

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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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Open M-F, 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM  
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Please telephone (206) 239-1500 to have an application mailed to you before attending a workshop.

Take Metro #15 or #28 from downtown Seattle



# Shelter All Year Long

**Opening the Winter Response Shelter is the only humane choice for a caring community**

By Reverend Patricia L. Taylor

I pay property taxes and vote so the King County Council works for me and I have a stake in how my county buildings are used and how my money is spent. My last parish, at All Saints in the Rainier Valley, not only shared its space with a SHARE shelter, but was also the first congregation to host Tent City 3. So when Real Change contacted me to write an editorial about the county's Winter Response Shelter, I welcomed this opportunity to offer my advice.

There are some practical housekeeping reasons for opening the Winter Response Shelter this winter. At \$76,000 a season, it costs less to provide shelter for 50 people than to pay for extended hospital treatment for one person suffering from weather-related illness or injury, or from the trauma of an assault or accident.

It is easier to clean up after 50 people in a supervised public shelter than to find and pick up trash from 50 separate bivouacs. It is more sanitary to allow 50 people to use shelter toilets than to force them to urinate and defecate in alleys or under a freeway.

**There is every reason to find ways to use that space responsibly to house homeless members of our community. If the County Council refuses to find a way to take this right and good action on our behalf, people of goodwill will not sleep well this winter.**

People sleeping in shelters are more likely to stay on medications and to stay clean and sober than people sleeping outside. Fifty people in a shelter are less likely to be killed or get into mischief than are 50 unprotected, unsupervised individuals.

Beyond, above, and under the clean and tidy reasons for opening the Winter Response Shelter is the spiritual health of the people of King County. For a year and a half, we have been worn down by a steady stream of bad news. There were Pioneer Square, the earthquake, technology industry failures, September 11, Boeing layoffs, general economic downturn, lying and cheating by corporate officers, and suggestions that high level government officials may have dirty hands.

Most of the bad news is because people we should be able to trust have proven faithless. It's time for good news, for caring and concern for one another. Finding money and a place for the Winter Response Shelter will be good news because opening the Shelter is the right thing, the good thing to do. Opening the Shelter is the answer to the scandal of empty rooms in empty buildings, while real people have to sleep in the street. There is no excuse for hoarding space. There is every reason to find ways to use that space responsibly to house homeless members of our community. If the County Council refuses to find a way to take this right and good action on our behalf, people of goodwill will not sleep well this winter. Our consciences will not let us rest while homeless people are punished for being homeless.

Opening the Shelter will be the good news that our King County government has the courage to find a way to use one of our buildings for hospitality toward some of us who have no other place to be warm, dry, and safe. Opening the Winter Response Shelter graciously will send a message to children and young people in the area that neighborliness has positive value in King County; that we care about people who need help.

Until we have provided enough affordable housing so that the working poor can afford to pay for homes, until we have provided safe havens and care for the mentally ill and treatment for addicted persons, we will continue to need to open public shelters.

When the County Council opens this public shelter, I hope that there will be enthusiastic media coverage to inspire more churches, synagogues, and temples to open their buildings for private shelters, because every human being created in God's image deserves the offer of a roof to sleep under. ■

*Reverend Patricia L. Taylor is an Episcopal priest who retired from parish work in May of this year. Before she became a priest, Reverend Taylor was a nurse administrator. She is familiar with budget restraints and multiple needs, if only on a small scale. She has been associated with marginally housed and unhoused people for 20 years, including five years as a deacon at Trinity Parish at 8th Avenue and James, on the edge of downtown Seattle.*

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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

August 26, 2002

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

It's time homeless people, drug addicts, and prostitutes get some respect, at least from moviemakers who kicked them off the streets to make their films. So say the Housing Action Committee and the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users, of Vancouver, B.C., who have sent a request to 30 film companies asking them to compensate people who are displaced from the streets, just as businesses are compensated for lost productivity or sales should their store be used as a film location. Film companies already pay taxes in Canada, and many make large donations to local shelters and food banks, including supplies left over from filming. But the two advocacy groups want the film companies to deal in direct monetary compensation with the people they displace. They argue that if film companies are attracted to the streets of Vancouver for their "gritty feel" — about \$650 million is spent on films made in Vancouver every year — then they should pay for the effect.

Approximately 11,000 affordable housing units for people without homes could come from a recent set of interim proposals from California's State Interagency Task Force on Homelessness. The task force was convened in March to find ways to help the estimated 360,000 homeless people in the state, according to the *Miami Herald* ([www.miami.com](http://www.miami.com)). Along with the housing proposal, Governor Gray Davis also put emphasis on services that help homeless children, inmates, foster children, and veterans. The 11,000 housing units could be approved as early as November, as part of a \$2.1 billion housing bond on the upcoming ballot. Any other changes to existing homeless services won't come until next year, after the task force issues its final report in December. However, whatever the proposed bills, they will likely simply shuffle around existing money by 'streamlining' programs instead of adding new programs that would further tax a state budget that is already \$23.6 billion in the hole.

Seems like you can't be poor enough in Massachusetts. According to the *Boston Globe*, a new state law lowering the maximum income a family can earn to qualify for a room at a state shelter is expected to push at least 75 families across Massachusetts out into the streets. A family must now earn no more than \$15,024 a year, instead of \$19,536. The change comes as Massachusetts sees an unprecedented growth in its homeless population, with more than 1,000 families currently living in state shelters and another 440 in motels.

And Massachusetts' state Legislature wasn't done there! They also recently slashed a \$6.8 million cash assistance program, effectively cutting off 1,500 legal immigrants from welfare checks starting in September, according to the *Boston Globe*. The Legislature, citing severe budget constraints, did, however, manage to find \$24 million in additional funds for the Department of Transitional Assistance, leaving many immigrants to wonder why they were being targeted. ■

— Compiled by Molly Rhodes

## Posters: put 'em up, take 'em down

The State Court of Appeals ruled that the city's ban on affixing posters to utility poles violated First Amendment rights. That didn't change the behavior of CleanScapes' 23 street cleaners.

"There was a lot more crap to take down" after the August 5 ruling, says CleanScapes director Chris Martin. "I didn't think the poster ban kept people from putting them up, but apparently, it did."

Posters plastered to utility poles became a more frequent sight in business districts throughout the city last month; so too, was the sight of street cleaners scraping gummy tape off the poles. Paid for by the neighborhood business association, neon-vested CleanScapes workers tidy up sidewalks, gutters, and other commercial areas in the University District, on Capitol Hill, and downtown. Many of the company's employees are hired out of homeless shelters or prison work-release programs. Part of their job is to tear down posters on poles and kiosks, says Martin. When workers go about their jobs, they take everything down.

"We can't determine whether someone's car was sold yet or not, or if an event [that's advertised] has happened" he says. "We try not to play editor."

There's another rationale for a CleanScapes' clean sweep: Removing posters is actually beneficial to poster-pasters. When too much paper builds up on a telephone pole, the staples can't make contact with the wood below.

Besides, Martin observes, there is no law that guarantees a poster's ten-



ure and visibility. For example, lots of current, relevant posters are covered up by their successors. "If it's legal to put them up, it's legal to take them down," he says. "A business district can take care of how it looks."

Martin's comment aside, hold on to those staplers. The poster ban is not dead yet. On September 4, the Seattle City Attorney's Office asked the State Supreme Court to review the lower court's decision, says City Attorney's spokesperson Kathryn Harper. If the Supreme Court hears an appeal, it could eventually uphold the ban. Then the ban would stand — but CleanScapes' work would not be over. ■

— Adam Holdorf

## Rally for sensible welfare reform

August 22 was the sixth anniversary of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, the Congressional bill which launched welfare reform, and parents and protesters gathered in Westlake Park to mark the day and call for compassion in the federal government's assistance program to needy families. Congress resumed business after Labor Day, and reauthorizing the welfare program is on their agenda. A coalition of anti-poverty advocates called Washington's Working Families wants the Democrat-controlled Senate to pass a more humane alternative to the House of Representatives' version.

The Republican-controlled House's welfare reauthorization bill, which was passed earlier this summer, mirrors the Bush Administration's goals by increasing the amount of time welfare recipients must spend at work, limiting access to education and training, and not appropriating more funds for shelter and other assistance. The House bill would give the states \$300 million to promote marriage — "when the majority of women who are poor are already living with the father of their children," says Jean Colman of the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition. All in all, the House's bill "says that the states haven't done enough to push poor women into the labor market."

With only a month at work before another recess, the Senate must find a substitute to the House's bill quickly. A contentious alternative would drag them down into debate for weeks — weeks that Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle doesn't have, says Colman. Time is on the conservatives' side. "The Bush Administration thinks that it's more important NOT to have a bill than to have one that moves families out of poverty," she says. ■

— Adam Holdorf

## The wisdom of ages

We at *Real Change* know that there are a million stories in the naked city. Bleak stories filled with pathos; joyful stories replete with a sense of freedom, or dignity, or hope.

We'd like to take a moment to bring you none of those. Instead, here's a post-Labor Day note from Bob and Augie, who are here to tell you about the important lesson they live out while selling their hair tonic.

Augie DiRienz, age 85, and Bob Friedman, age 81, live in southern California and have found the secret to a long life: stay busy.

In a press release sent to us last year, and stowed away for just such an occasion, Augie says that he joined his inventor friend after a leisurely retirement started to feel boring. When he found Bob out in his garage, trying to come up with another product, he volunteered to help out. Bob is the longtime inventor of products used around the world.

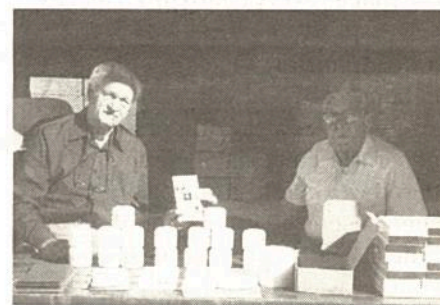
"We heartily recommend to all Seniors to ... KEEP BUSY. Be involved in some project that will keep aging minds challenged, fresh, and renewed. Exercising daily, swimming, walking, or cycling, will keep you healthier and add years to your life — and save on doctor's bills. TRY IT," their press release states.

Bob and Augie hope to make some money off their hair restorer, and it will help meet the rising cost of prescription drugs. It also keeps them alive.

"I am appalled at the many friends and neighbors who have died of Alzheimers, inactivity, boredom," Bob explained. "Sure, my wife Scotty and I still travel to Scotland, England, Hawaii, and take a few interesting cruises a year. Keeping active is still most important — a little work, some exercise, and many laughs keeps us from being dull guys. I highly recommend it." ■

— Adam Holdorf

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



AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THEIR PICTURE, BOB AND AUGIE'S HAIR-RESTORING TONIC WORKS VERY WELL.



# Tug of War

## Two unions fight over ill-paid, demoralized security officers

By Adam Holdorf

As standoffs between workers and management broiled on the docks, the baseball diamonds, and the airport assembly lines in August, a low-profile labor conflict simmered in the background.

Two rival unions are fighting over who represents 400 employees of Northwest Protective Services, the Seattle area's only unionized security guards. It's one part of a nationwide tug-of-war. On one end of the rope, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) says that the Security, Police, and Fire Professionals of America (SPFPA) is raiding its membership, converting its workers, and then negotiating poor pay and benefits agreements with employers. On the other end, the SPFPA claims that security officers are simply abandoning SEIU for a better deal.

In the middle, pulled both ways, is a demoralized and poorly paid workforce with an important job to do. In the year since the airplane hijackings that destroyed New York's Twin Towers, security needs at airport checkpoints have been getting a lot of attention. Security forces act as the first line of defense in office complexes like the ones destroyed on September 11. Yet labor activists say that security firms and public regulators have a dismal record in hiring and retaining a safe, satisfied, and skilled workforce. The SEIU gave Washington state an 'F' grade in its licensing and training requirements for security firms. The low standards and poor wages contribute to frequent job changes. The union also claims that industry turnover is as high as 300 percent — that is, every guard hired leaves in an average of four months.

Jono Schaffer, vice president of SEIU Local 24/7, which continues to represent the Seattle officers, knows the benefit of having skilled and even-tempered workers guarding a building. He's been escorted kindly out of office buildings before, in the course of making contact with janitorial staff during an organizing campaign. One time, though, hostile guards threw him to the ground. One "did a knee-drop" on the organizer's head, broke his nose, and cracked a rib. Schaffer recouped the cost of his injuries in court.

"The company [who hired this guard] lost \$50,000 because he violated my rights. The guy who escorted me out, and told me how to come back later — he didn't cost his company a thing."

That story encapsulates SEIU's organizing efforts, he says: "We want professional people who know how to resolve issues."

Schaffer's organization represents 5,000 security officers nationwide. In March, Local 24/7 absorbed the smaller guard-only union that had represented Northwest Protective employees, the

International Union of Security Officers (IUSO). According to SEIU, 70 percent of the IUSO's members voted in favor of the merger. They are now part of the nation's largest union with 1.5 million members — janitors, food service employees, and guards. That makes SEIU a so-called "mixed union." Under Section 9(b)3 of the National Labor Relations Act, federal mediators can't force an employer to recognize its workers' desire to join a union in which the fox watches the hen house — that is, where guards and employees are on the same team.

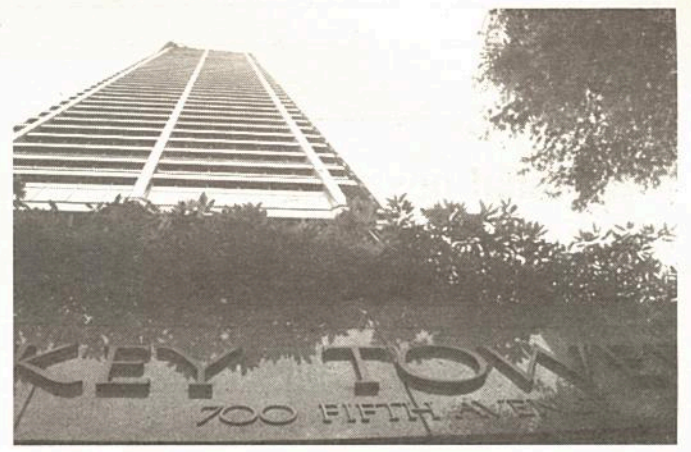
"How do you oversee the janitors, and see that they abide by the rules, if they're part of the same union?" says David Hickey, president of the Michigan-based SPFPA.

Hickey claims that his union has gathered enough support to supplant SEIU's representation of Northwest's officers. According to papers filed with the National Labor Relations Board, SPFPA provided evidence of the switch to Northwest Protective in late June, just before the employees' contract was set to expire. Northwest Protective CEO Jim Stumbles agreed to hand over the collective bargaining contract to SPFPA. But when SEIU threatened to picket Northwest's work sites, Stumbles backed out on SPFPA and extended SEIU's agreement.

For its part, SEIU officials counter that Northwest Protective treated SPFPA preferentially: the employer promised to extend the contract terms to the new union before knowing whether a majority of the workforce

had logged its preference. The NLRB will hear from both sides in court on September 23. Until the NLRB's proceedings are over and the workers are allied with one or another union, they continue to work under an old agreement with the IUSO/SEIU.

The IUSO affiliated with SEIU in order to gain clout and better represent its members. SEIU President Andrew Stern has a five-year goal of organizing the security industry. SEIU is the third-largest donor to politicians seeking office. This year, its locals, members, and



KEY TOWER IS ONE OF THE OFFICE BUILDINGS WATCHED OVER BY SECURITY OFFICERS IN THE MIDDLE OF A DISPUTE BETWEEN THE SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION AND THE SECURITY, POLICE, AND FIRE PROFESSIONALS OF AMERICA. PHOTO BY HEDVIG HJELM.

political action committees donated \$3.5 million to political campaigns, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. ■

### 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.

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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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

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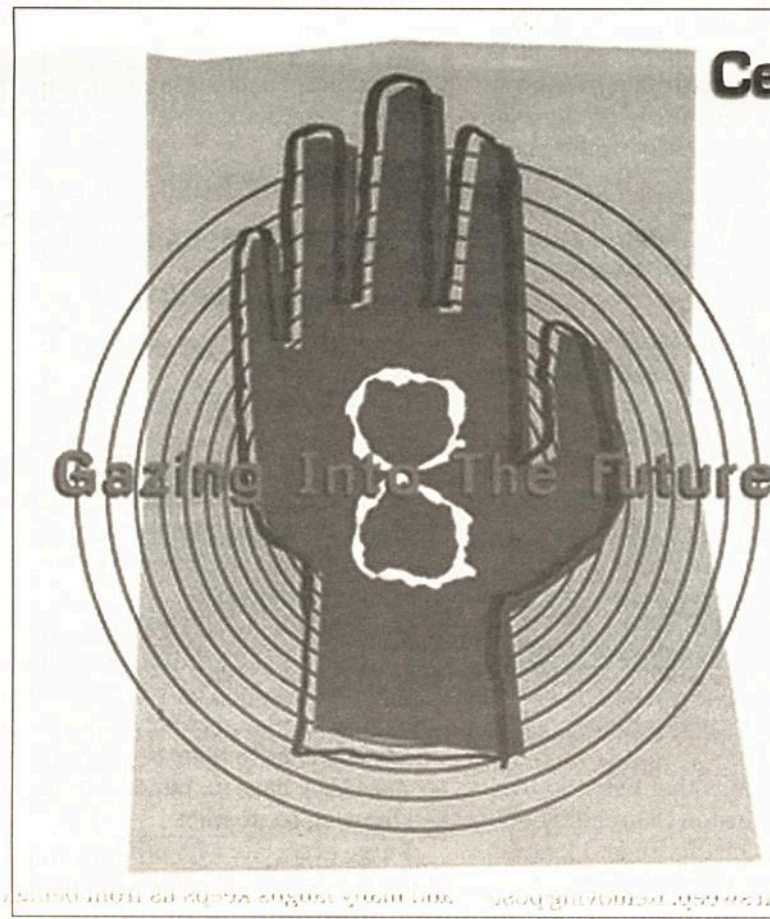
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9/5/02



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Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless

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Food by Farestart,  
Smoked salmon by Pete Knutson  
Suggested donation \$35 person  
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# poetry

## past tenses

In the

shadows!  
you  
know it.  
Words,  
are  
lost. . . promises.  
First  
names —  
these!  
never  
remembered  
(even

at home —)

because of the  
distance,  
there.

And then! the roads traveled.

— STAN BURRISS

## BITCH & MOAN

In a world where  
A refrigerator serves as my cricket  
in the evening

And there is  
Tooouoo much asphalt  
Outside/my/door

HERE

In Southern California  
A place my Soul only VISITS

I live YET  
in (relative) comfort

BELIED  
by my restlessness

...PERENNIAL and undefined...

— MARION SUE FISCHER

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



**R**ecently I was talking about how I am stupid. I was saying, actually, that everyone is stupid. The trick is to figure out, for each one of us, how. One of the ways that I am stupid is that I suck at history.

I don't completely suck at history. For example, I can be a part of history, no problem. You could in theory go back to certain of those old news tapes of events ("happ'nins") in the sixties and find me. OK, I would be the guy on the edge of the shot looking like I got lost on the way to the chess club, but I'm, like, there.

My problem is, I don't know where there was. In the case of the sixties this makes me good at history, because there wasn't any there there, actually. But it doesn't work for other

times.

I first realized how much I was going to suck at history right at the beginning, when my third grade teacher was explaining to my class that history had to do with things like the Hundred Years War and some French girl who got herself burned at the stake and that that would be on the test. I looked around and I didn't see any charred remains, know what I mean? How should I know this girl got roasted? Then I found out that we were even supposed to know WHEN she got roasted, down to the exact year, and that it was HUNDREDS of years ago, and I knew this history thing was not for me.

One of my big problems with history was figuring out why, when we were talking about battles and what famous people were getting burned at the stake, THAT was history, but when we were talking about, say, ancient customs and what kind of culture they had, our history books were supposed to be closed because talking about culture was some kind of social studies. If history isn't social studies, what is it? I still don't get that.

Sometimes people come along with audio-visual aids that help. So back when Masterpiece Theater showed its TV version of Winston Churchill's book, *The First Churchills*, I learned a thing or two about history then. I learned, among other things, what papists were, that there were such people as

Roundheads, that in the olden days (at least circa 1700) everybody was incredibly erudite, and that there might be worse things than just being burned at the stake — parts of you could be burned separately in front of you. Ouch!

The other thing I learned was that Winston Churchill, a former Prime Minister of England, who wrote the book, must have been incredibly erudite himself. Or else he couldn't have wrote it.

Speaking of audio-visual aids, I believe Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who also must suck at history but unlike me doesn't know it, has been watching too much of the History Channel. Mr. Rumsfeld is displaying all the signs of a man whose knowledge of the history of the world consists mainly in knowing how to make blowing-up sounds. I wouldn't mind, but now he's favorably comparing George W. Bush to the aforementioned Winston Churchill.

I mean, I didn't know Churchill. He wasn't a friend of mine. But shee-yeah, right.

I'd be less likely to scoff if Rumsfeld wanted to call G.W. Bush the William McKinley of the new millennium. Not that Churchill wasn't an imperialist in his own day — he was, he was — but I can visualize Bush being McKinleyesque without cracking up.

But that's not what I wanted to talk about in this column. What I wanted to talk about was the art of making blowing-up sounds. I don't think it's wrong to be good at making blowing-up sounds. I think it's a shame that more people aren't practiced at making convincing explosive noises with their mouths.

I firmly believe that the reason Rumsfeld and Bush want war with Iraq is because they have no buddies to play war with who can make good artillery and blowing-up sounds.

I urge everyone who is adept at making blowing-up sounds to contact the White House and offer their services in this regard. Thank you. ■

**Rumsfeld and Bush want war with Iraq because they have no buddies to play war with who can make good blowing-up sounds.**





## Two Mirrors At the Bus Stop Near the Hurricane Café

The light's on. Still I can't see  
the clock. I pick up the puzzle pieces  
I dropped earlier,  
a scene of maple trees.  
I reacted badly to my new meds;  
ran a fever. My head throbbed,  
a jumping jack inside.  
Now, I'm back to the old familiar  
pills with the elbow twitches,  
fingers counting nothing  
or everything, tongue thrusting.  
I don't care if I look crazy.  
It bothers my doctors  
and relatives more,  
strangers. I wait  
at the bus-stop  
at Sixth and Bell,  
not worried about the FBI —  
they chase down anthrax  
with no return address . . .  
Today I start the new  
program. Drug addicts  
and alcoholics. In the hospital  
I didn't go through withdrawal.  
My tox-screen came out clean.  
They thought I was under  
the delusion that I had used.  
Maybe I want to experience  
what it's like  
to enter an alternate reality,  
different from the voices  
gossiping outside my window.  
They make it hard  
to put out a cigarette,  
to turn off the stove.  
I watch myself fall  
asleep — to Oldies  
turned low, a moment  
of rest like a peaceful  
death or regeneration.  
When I walk to the bus  
stop, I don't care if it rains.  
I hold tight  
an umbrella  
which works  
if it's not too windy —  
then everything turns  
inside out.  
I see my reflection in the window  
of the bus shelter—it spins  
into kaleidoscope colors  
like the twirling yellow and red  
maple leaves that fall  
toward the sidewalk.

— CRYSTA CASEY

## Mirror Image

Mineral wisdom  
Youthful giants  
Tiny ancients  
Mountains crack and crumble  
Each smaller piece  
Retaining memories of  
Life as a Mountain  
as a Boulder  
as a Rock  
as a Stone  
as a Pebble  
as a Grain of Sand.

Sand melted to make glass  
Millions of Mountain memories  
Within each piece of glass

Deep in the earth  
Liquid metals flow  
Rising to cool into ore  
Ore dug and smelted  
Liquid silver to coat the glass

### Mirrors

Mountains and Metal  
melted  
merged  
made to reflect

### Images

Perhaps some of the images  
Seen in mirrors are  
Whispers of Silver and  
Whispers of Mountains  
Sharing ancient memories

— RENEENE ROBERTSON

## Poetry

Poetry is a brook from which I drink by,  
fish and swim, wade through, lay near and listen;  
envisioning the distant stars of the night sky;  
that it reflects, forever twinkling, upon to glisten;  
always satisfied, yet something is oft a miss'n.

— MORGAN W. BROWN



# Cluing them in

## The Housing Levy is up for a vote Sept. 17

By Adam Holdorf

It's the final weeks before Seattle voters weigh in on the future of local money to build, maintain, and preserve the city's supply of affordable housing. And the campaign's proponents are making sure that the voters get clued in.

"The whole strategy is just to make sure people are aware of it," says Carla Okigwe, chair of the Steering Committee of the Yes for Homes campaign. At her station staffing the phone banks, she says that people's typical response is, "You mean, there's a vote on it?"

Moreover, this campaign has taken place "in the doldrums of summer," she says. "There's no community groups to go talk to, or churches, because they've canceled all their meetings for the season."

People who care about the city's livability need to take note: Tuesday, September 17, is the day to vote yes for the \$86 million fund. An August survey of 400 area voters found that those who went to the polls in each of the last four elections are just about evenly divided: 53 percent said they'll vote yes on the seven-year, \$86 million property tax levy; 47 percent said they'll vote no. There's a 5 percent margin of error. That puts the levy on squeak-by status, at best.

Levy campaign manager Chris Gregorich is working to tip the odds. The campaign is reaching out to less habitual voters — those who missed one, or two, of the last four elections — to make sure they get to the polls.

"The regular voters tend to be more conservative, older, and more concerned about taxes," he says; hence the even keel. "Where we really strike gold is with people less than 55 years old. About 60 percent of them are in favor of the levy. We know where they are: Capitol Hill, Fremont, and southeast Seattle." The campaign is mounting a door-knocking volley in the final weeks; volunteers will also monitor polling places September 17, tally the registered voters who make it, and round up those who don't.

"The better the turnout, the better we do," says George Scarola, a Democratic Party campaign manager who ran the 1995 Housing Levy campaign. "There's a good, strong base of support for this in the community. The message is, just don't take your base for granted."

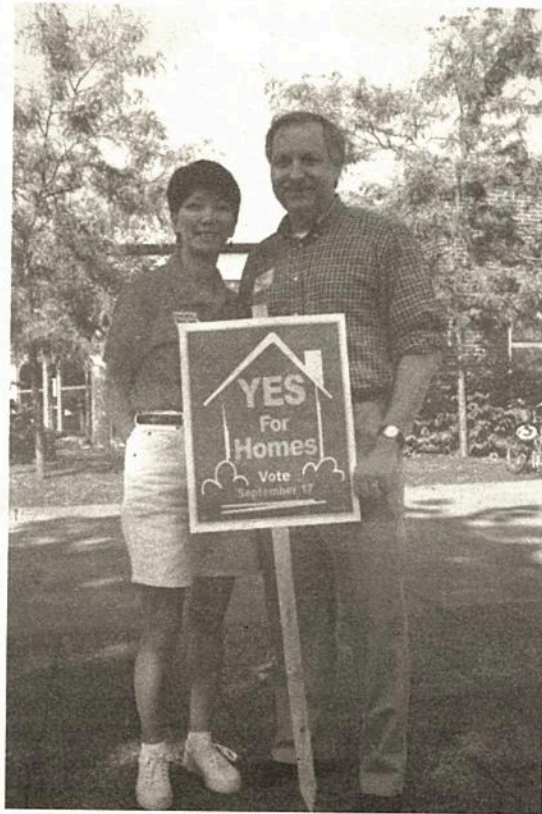
This year's campaign is the fourth of its kind in the city's history. A growing demand for senior housing led to a 1981 bond sale that raised about \$50 million for the construction of apartment buildings around the city. In two years, developers constructed about 1,000 units of senior housing, then sold the properties to the Seattle Housing Authority. In 1985, a voter-approved property tax levy raised funds for the Seattle Art Museum and low-income family housing. As the city began doling out awards in 1987, new local non-profit developers, who had begun tapping into tax credit and federal housing grants, began to compete for the funding.

The last levy, a \$59.2 million measure passed in 1995, paid for the construction of 1,623 apartment units for low-income families and individuals — 600 more than it promised. Since the city distributes levy monies to non-profit developers who combine them with state and federal gifts and public and private financing, the local funds go a long way.

Okigwe, who staffs the Seattle-King County Housing Development Consortium, remembers when the need for

local housing money wasn't nearly so pressing. When she came to work for city government more than 20 years ago, the average home price in the city's most affluent neighborhoods was only twice what it cost to buy a home in a poor neighborhood. "A cottage in Montlake would be \$25,000," she recalls, "and a house in Laurelhurst would cost \$55,000." Now, a Montlake bungalow is listed at \$429,000; a Laurelhurst house can fetch \$2.9 million.

Price rides like that are indicators of the need for assistance with housing. Here's another: More people are sleeping on Seattle's streets on any given night, according to last October's One Night Count, conducted by Operation Nightwatch. Other public funds are drying up: witness the city and county's talk of trimming the public budget for food, shelter, crime prevention, and other ser-



STATE REPRESENTATIVES FRANK CHOPP AND SHARON TOMIKO-SANTOS (43RD DISTRICT) WANT YOU TO VOTE SEPT. 17. THEY'RE PICTURED HERE AT AN AUGUST CAMPAIGN RALLY. PHOTO BY HEDVIG HJELM.

vices that homeless people use.

In the face of this, the levy is a powerful tool. A substantial portion of it — about \$33 million — would build or rehabilitate housing for the very poor: an individual, for example, making about \$16,350 yearly.

What would Seattle be like if the levy didn't pass?

"It would be absolutely tragic, devastating," says Sharon Lee, director of the Low Income Housing Institute. "We've made progress — we have some of the best affordable housing in the country — but we have more to do."

"We would have a different kind of city, over the long run," says Okigwe. "You would see more and more expensive housing going up." With home mortgage rates at record lows, the housing market is the one strong part of the local economy right now. That continues to drive housing prices higher. "There's huge pressure on housing in this area," she continues. "We'd see a very different kind of community."

"Historically, we've been an egalitarian city," she says. The upward trend of costs "will continue. But the levy is a way to buck it — to say, we like economic diversity." ■

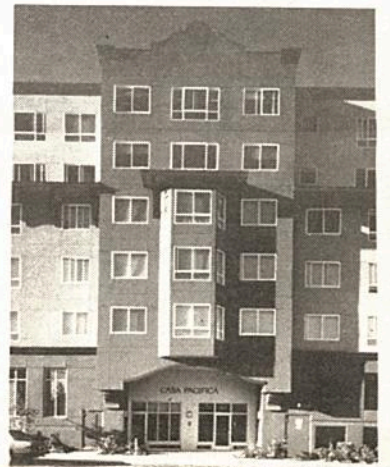
*The Housing Levy campaign needs volunteer to knock on doors, make phone calls, wave signs, and do other stuff from now until election day, September 17. Call (206)956-9238 for details.*

### Something to build on

The 1995 levy raised \$42 million to build 1,600 units of low-income rental housing. Among its results was:



Longfellow Court Mutual Cooperative (West Seattle), built by Lutheran Alliance to Create Housing.



Casa Pacifica (First Hill) for low-income seniors, built by Housing Resource Group.



The Harrison, built by Capitol Hill Housing Improvement Project.



The Aki Kurose Apartments, for low-income families, built by the Low Income Housing Institute.

Photos courtesy of Housing Development Consortium.





SICK OF ADVERTISING IMAGES OF WOMEN, CARLY STASKO BEGAN PUBLISHING THE MEDIA ZINE *UNCOOL* AT THE AGE OF 16, AND NOW USES PENS AND STICKERS TO DISCREETLY ALTER THE MESSAGES ON SUBWAY BILLBOARDS. SHE'S ONE OF THE HEROES OF JILL SHARPE'S DOCUMENTARY *CULTURE JAM*, WHICH PREVIEWS AT 7 P.M. SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, AT THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER, 1415 THIRD AVENUE DOWNTOWN. PHOTO COURTESY JILL SHARPE.

**NAB Continued from Page 1**

and community forum that hosts the syndicated radio show *Northwestern Exposure*, and runs the *SPOken Word Lab* (or *SPLab*).

When the FCC ruled that bandwidth could be opened up for low-power FM stations, It Plays in Peoria applied for a license. Nelson has yet to get approval. Meanwhile, he's turning to an AM amplitude that doesn't require the FCC's imprimatur, with the help of a \$15,000 grant from the King County Arts Commission. He's careful to not run afoul of the FCC's regulations; if you do, you can never get a legal radio license.

Ron Sakolsky, the author of *Seizing the Airwaves: the Free Radio Movement* (AK Press), wrote in an article for *LiP Magazine* in June 2001 that the blacklisting of prior violators was akin to telling Rosa Parks that, once the Montgomery bus system had been integrated, everyone but her could sit wherever they like. He says that the FCC's turnabout has effectively split microradio broadcasters into two camps: those who play by the FCC's rules in the hope that someday, they'll get a legal license — Nelson's camp — and those who scoff at the regulatory agency. Those who did apply "got demoralized," he says. "We

are back at square one, in terms of the FCC."

In light of that, he says, unlicensed low-power radio broadcasts will start "blooming across the FM dial as the NAB meets. Sakolsky recommends that people scroll through their tuners at that time; they may be in for a surprise. He says that such "pirate" broadcasts, as well as workshops on making other types of media, are all about "expanding popular participation in cultural production."

**"The airwaves are a public commodity colonized by corporations." The trouble with the NAB is that "they think they are the media."**

**— Ron Sakolsky, author of *Seizing the Airwaves***

**Culture: no trespassing**

Mark Hosler was ensnared by ownership laws long ago, and he no longer worries about such laws. He's copied and altered popular music for decades, as the founding member of the two-decade old music group *Negativland*. On Thursday, September 12, he'll be talking about the legal run-ins as he's worked to satirize and

skewer mass culture.

*Negativland* also prepared its own radio broadcast, to be aired periodically during the conference. Within the grave talk about the FCC and the techniques of microradio, Hosler's prepared a special show that pokes fun at KJR 95.7's "super hits of the '60s and '70s" format. Hosler's noted that a good portion of KJR's playlist consists of music from the '80s. So he created a distraught disc jockey persona to rail against the station's out-of-format

picks. KJR is owned by Clear Channel, a television/radio/billboard company which also owns KUBE 93. Clear Channel recently bought Seattle billboard company AK Media.

For Hosler, copyright laws and the corporate control of the airwaves are very similar issues.

"These companies are saying they own every goddamn thing. This is about notions of public space and privatization," he says. "Their narrow notion of the copyright law — it's the same idea as 'We own all the airwaves,

and you can't do anything with it.' If people say, 'Wait a second, I care about this,' or 'I want to make art out of that,' they are stifled. All we're supposed to do with the media is consume it."

But efforts to restrict cultural assets — be they airwaves, song lyrics, familiar tunes, or CD-burning technology — won't win in the long run, says Hosler. Hollywood stood in opposition to VCRs for years, he says, fearing that that "record" button would empty the cineplexes. That didn't happen.

And his own band's history is another object lesson: *Negativland* survived a lawsuit from U2 and built a cabal of lawyers to fight on the band's behalf. "We have our own record label. We're making media independently," says Hosler. "And as much as I don't like these laws or the lawmakers, I don't know how to stop them. I don't know how to stop Clear Channel from doing what it's doing."

"And I don't want to be a full-time activist; I'm in this group that does stuff that is legally shaky, and in the course of doing it we got sued. Instead of looking at it as a problem — 'Hey, we're getting sued' — we've just learned from it and learned to uphold creative rights."

Sakolsky says that "pirate" radio's use as a protest device runs strong, despite the divide-and-conquer effect of the FCC's licensing. "The airwaves are a public commodity colonized by corporations," he says. And the trouble with the NAB is that "they think they are the media."

Sakolsky and the organizers of the NAB counter-conference plan to prove them wrong. ■

*For a schedule of events, as well as stories about the NAB, microradio, and the corporate media, see [www.reclaimthemedial.org](http://www.reclaimthemedial.org). For more on It Plays in Peoria Productions, go to [www.inpeoria.org](http://www.inpeoria.org). *Negativland's* web site is at [www.negativland.com](http://www.negativland.com).*



ON AUGUST 24, THE ROLLING THUNDER DOWN HOME DEMOCRACY TOUR CAME TO RENTON, BRINGING NOT ONLY MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT BUT EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS ON EVERYTHING FROM GLOBALIZATION AND HEALTHCARE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AND ENGINEERED FOOD. POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS AND STATEMENTS — LIKE THE ABOVE AGAINST THE IMPENDING WAR ON IRAQ — ARE AT THE CENTER OF THE TOURING SHOW, WHICH WAS FOUNDED BY TEXAN POLITICAL AGITATOR JIM HIGHTOWER. PHOTO BY GEORGE HICKEY.



# Hitting Home

Curable diseases are killing the world's poor. It could happen here, too

By Janice Price

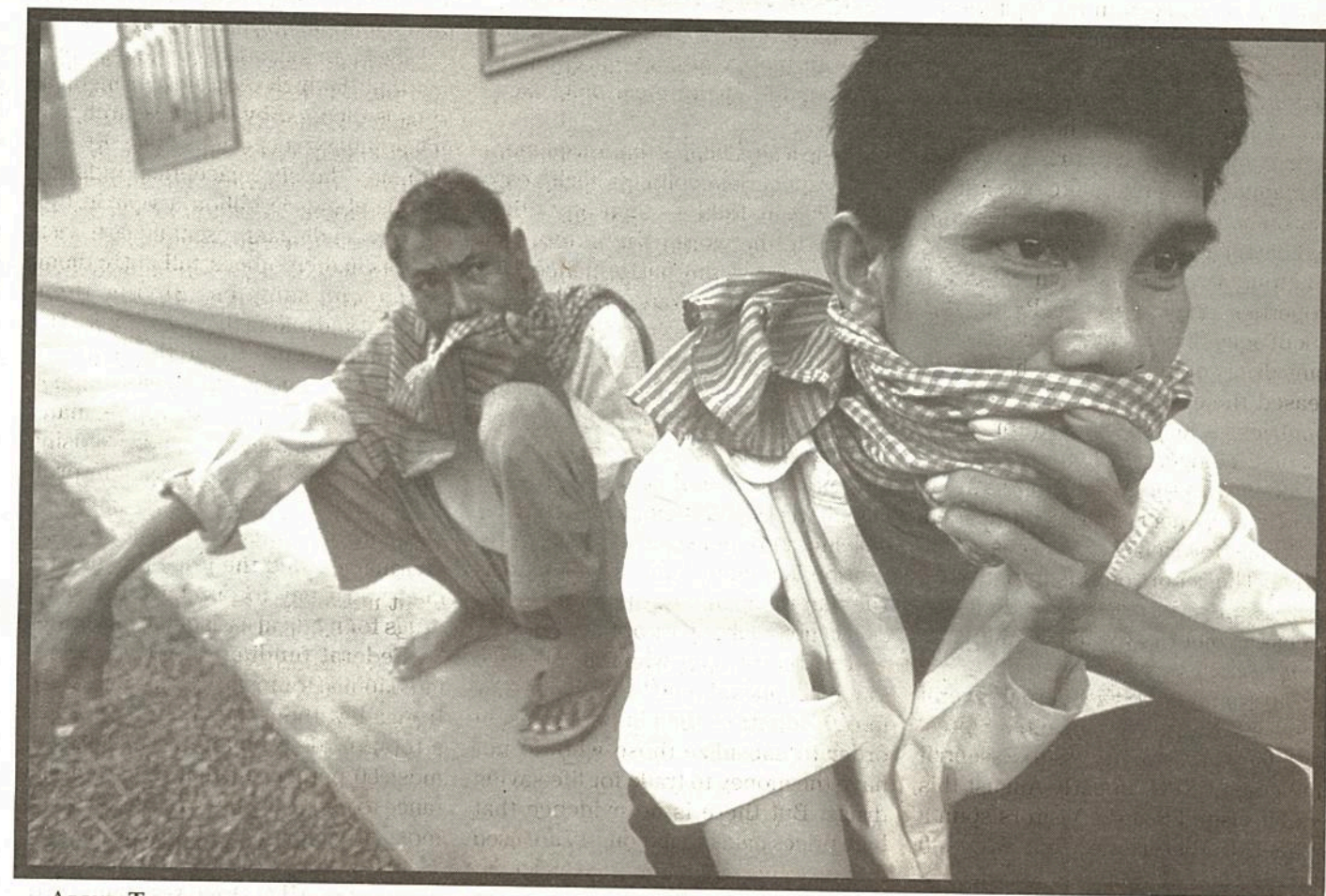
In the time it took me to shut off my computer and lock up my office, five people somewhere in the world died of AIDS, two children of malaria, and four people of tuberculosis. During my 20-minute walk home, 100 more died of AIDS, three of trypanosomiasis, two of Kala Azar, and 80 of tuberculosis. Forty more kids succumbed to malaria. I poured myself a glass of wine and settled on the couch, mentally doing the math. In the last half-hour, 337 people have died of the world's top five infectious disease killers, some of which most people in this country have never even heard.

Even if I weren't a nurse, these numbers would still matter to me. Sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty-two human beings dead every 24 hours should be enough destruction to get anybody's attention. Infectious diseases are the ultimate killers, but what is really killing people is poverty. They cannot afford to buy the medicines currently available to treat their illnesses, and they do not make a rich enough market to interest the big pharmaceutical companies in developing new drugs for the diseases that, as yet, have no treatment. As always, market forces instead of need dictate availability. For instance, eflornithine, an effective treatment for trypanosomiasis (African Sleeping Sickness), was out of production from 1995 to 2001 because it was a money-loser. Then a new use was discovered for it: compounded as a cream, this life-saving medicine would banish unwanted hair from women's faces. It is again available because it can be sold for profit as a cosmetic.

This story can be repeated for most of these diseases. Medicines to treat AIDS cost \$10,000-15,000 a year. For someone in Uganda making \$50 a month, these drugs may as well not exist. Kala Azar, a parasitic disease, is nearly 100 percent fatal. The current treatment was developed in the 1930s; it costs \$150 per treatment. The only new medicines being researched for this disease are those that treat the form that animals, not people, get. The pet market is more lucrative than the human market, as 80 percent of the world's population — people in developing countries — constitute only about 20 percent of the world's pharmaceutical market.

Do the medicines marketed for these diseases have to be so expensive? Probably not, as prices vary wildly throughout the world. Fluconazole, used to treat life-threatening fungal infections, can cost \$.40 a pill in one country and \$14 in another. Pfizer's Diflucan (the branded version of fluconazole) costs nearly 49 percent less in Thailand than in Guatemala.

Because of industry secrecy it is



ABOVE, TUBERCULOSIS PATIENTS WAITING OUTSIDE SOTNIKUM HOSPITAL IN PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA. PHOTO BY ROGER JOB. TO THE RIGHT, THE MINISCULE TSETSE FLY IS THE TRANSMITTER OF SLEEPING SICKNESS, A DISEASE IN PARTS OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. PHOTO BY SERGE SIBERT. BELOW, TUBERCULOSIS TREATMENT IN THE SIHANOUK HOSPITAL IN PHNOM PENH. PHOTO BY ROGER JOB. ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS.

very difficult to compare the price of a drug against its actual cost to make, but some of the statistics printed in the April 2000 issue of *Forbes* give indication of how drugs are priced.

In 1999, pharmaceutical companies posted an 18.6 percent return on revenue, more than three times the Fortune 500 median of 5.0 percent. In the same year, the top 12 pharmaceutical companies posted a profit of over 27 billion dollars. That comes out to about \$100 in profit for every man, woman and child in the United States. Jeffrey Sachs, a Harvard economist, estimated that it would cost about \$5 per American annually to provide HIV treatment for every person in Africa that needed it. Twenty dollars a year per American would provide treatment for the top three infectious disease killers (AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis) for every African that needed it. In short, company profits are enough to stop these deaths.

To make matters worse, many pharmaceutical companies are focusing on high-profit "lifestyle" drugs that treat such conditions as hair loss, impotence, obesity, and insomnia. They neglect the life-saving drugs for which there is no market, only great need.

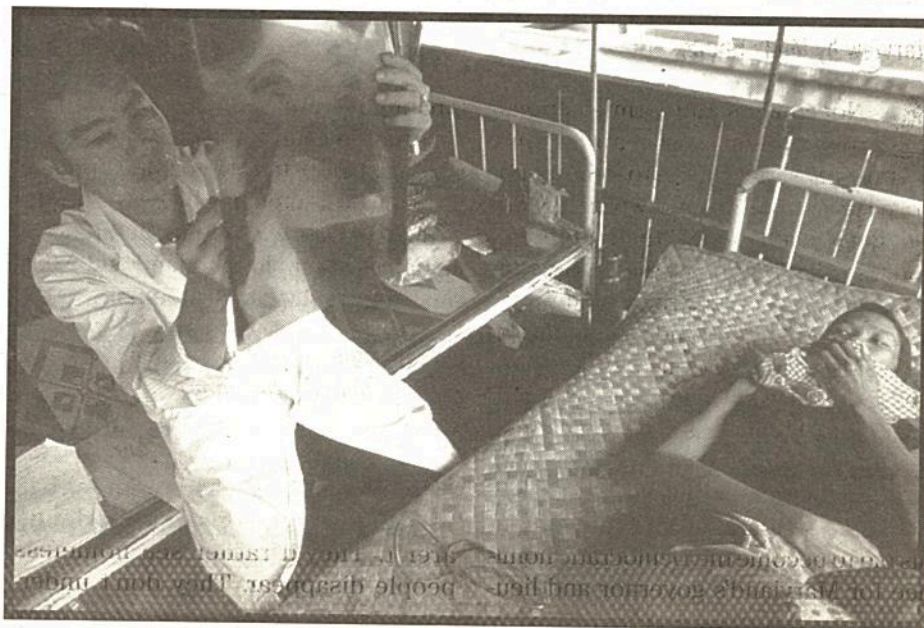
How enraging it must be to watch your child die of a treatable disease because you are poor. This problem has been framed by different interest groups as an economic problem, a political one, or a national security one. It

is all these things, but it is mainly a moral one. Some human beings are dying so that others can make money and, until recently, no one has been paying much attention. Edwin Cameron, a white judge on the South African equivalent of the Supreme Court, framed it in stark terms in his plenary speech at the International AIDS Conference held in Africa in 2000. "Those of us who live affluent lives... should not ask how Germans or white South Africans could tolerate living in proximity to moral evil. We do so ourselves today.... This [happens] because available [medical] treatments are denied to those that need them for the sake of



aggregating corporate wealth for shareholders who, by African standards, are already unimaginably affluent."

That conference brought wide attention to the problem many organizations and individuals have been laboring to solve. One of them is Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), better known in the U.S. as Doctors Without Borders. This independent aid agency is committed to two objectives: providing medical aid wherever needed, and raising awareness of the plight of the people





they help. Winner of the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize, MSF has volunteers working in 85 countries — many of whom risk their lives to serve those living amidst war and political turmoil. These volunteers push themselves to the limit to save the lives of their patients, then often watch in frustration as those patients die anyway from the lack of affordable, accessible medications. Out of this frustration grew the Access to Essential Medicines Project that has become such a thorn in the side of the large transnational pharmaceutical companies, bringing public opinion to bear on not only these companies, but on the contribution of the WTO and its infamous Trade-Related Intellectual Properties Agreement (TRIPS) to the lack of access in developing countries. Many drug companies have sharply increased their drug donations to poor countries — but this is not, for many reasons, a long-term solution.

Along with the Access to Essential Medicines Project, MSF spearheaded the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative. The report on this initiative as well as more information about the Access Project is available online at [www.accessmed-msf.org](http://www.accessmed-msf.org).

This summer MSF is touring several countries, including the United States, with an interactive Access to Essential Medicines EXPO. In early August this exhibit visited Seattle. Visitors spun a "Wheel of Misfortune" that assigned each of them symptoms of one of the five diseases prevalent in developing countries. Through photographs, audio-visual displays, and testimonials, the visitors learned about the symptoms of "their" disease and the people afflicted by them. At the end, MSF medical volunteers provided a diagnosis and estimated both the chances of receiving proper treatment for it and the chances of survival, both of which remain dismal. Most visitors came out of the experience wanting to do something to help. MSF gave them a chance to sign postcards asking President Bush and Big Pharma to devote more attention and funding to this global crisis. The

postcards and signatures will be presented to Bush at a press conference. If you missed the expo but still want to add your voice to the plea, you can sign the petition at [www.doctorswithoutborders.org](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org)

### "...then they came for me"

Do these issues affect us? Will the profit motive affect your ability to buy your life at the local pharmacy? You bet.

In the United States there is far more money spent per capita for health care — \$3,708 in 1996 — than any other country in the world. Yet, in terms of health care system performance, the World Health Organization rated the US number 37, right below Costa Rica, which spent about \$300 per capita that same year. There are many reasons for the alarming differences between the large amount of money we shell out and our national level of health — income inequity is one and emphasis on high-tech life support instead of primary prevention is another. But no one can argue that the high cost of pharmaceuticals is not a large part of the pie.

I am one of many who firmly believe that medicines should be priced higher in rich countries than in poor ones, in order to subsidize those who do not have the money to trade for life-saving drugs. But there is no evidence that high prices paid in this country are used for anything more than pharmaceutical company profit. Although every business has the right to make a reasonable profit, emphasis might be better focused on the "reasonable" than the "profit." Many of the drugs under commercial patent were developed using taxpayers' money.

The amount of money drug companies pour into a project before being able to recoup their investment is huge, yet many spend a far larger percentage of their sales on marketing than they do on research. The company that makes the antifungal drug fluconazole spent, by their own estimate, about \$500 million in the drug's development.

(Independent agencies dispute this estimate as too high.) They recouped this cost in six months, but have yet to lower the drug's price in this country during the many years it has been on the market. Generic competition generally lowers drug prices dramatically, but pharmaceutical companies employ a number of tactics that often extend patent life beyond its normal 20 years.

The pharmaceutical companies' protest that the high cost of their medications is dictated by their research and development costs rings false. By one estimate, the pharmaceutical industry spends about \$5 billion a year in this country sending representatives to visit doctors in their offices, talking to them, giving out samples, buying them lunches, and taking them to dinner. The companies would not do this if it were not effective, earning them more money than it costs them. Although many health care providers are now refusing such ploys, the technique remains profitable, and it increases the retail price of the medications we buy at our local pharmacies, and the price the government must pay to purchase the same drugs for medical assistance programs.

Federal funding on HIV/AIDS-related items, for instance, has increased from a few thousand dollars in 1981 to a total of \$14.7 billion in FY 2002. Almost 60 percent of that is care assistance to people living with HIV or AIDS, most of which goes to programs providing anti-HIV drugs. One such program is the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP). This program is federally funded, but many states also contribute funds.

Washington has an excellent program, called the Early Intervention Program, that provides not only drugs but other services: dental, mental health care, housing, and access to drug treatment. It is one of the best in the country, and depends on state as well as federal funding to function. This year, because of various citizen tax initiatives and other factors, state monies have been reduced, forcing the Early Intervention Program to make difficult bud-

get decisions. Between now and June 2003 it is facing a shortfall of \$1.3 to \$1.7 million. The shortfall for the next budget cycle may be five times as much. For the first time in Washington, people accessing these services face a waiting list.

One response has been to restrict program eligibility to people with an income less than 300 percent of the federal poverty level, down from 370 percent in previous years. If this sounds like a lot of money, consider this: a single person making \$30,000/year working for a company whose health insurance plan does not cover prescription medications won't qualify for assistance. Yet, after paying taxes, Social Security, and \$15,000 for HIV medications, there is only about \$6,000 left to pay for food, rent, clothing, and transportation back and forth to work.

Another response has been to cut down the list of the medications the program will provide. The most costly ones will be cut first, and none of them will be the so-called AIDS cocktails. But to the person who needs a certain expensive antibiotic to fight an infection her immune system can no longer handle, or the person who depends on an expensive anti-psychotic to maintain his precarious hold on daily routine, the effects of the budget cuts are all too distressingly clear.

Dental services have been eliminated, and "cost-sharing" is already mandatory. This will probably mean copays for drugs and doctor visits; it will surely mean fewer people will get the services they need to stay alive. There will also be budget cuts in substance abuse programs, Medicaid, and mental health programs — more hardship for people who, many of them, are already marginalized. ■

*The AIDS Treatment Action Campaign has an excellent and informative web site that also lists advocacy activities at <http://atac-usa.org/adap.html#anchor57444>. The Washington State Department of Health has a useful website at [www.doh.wa.gov/cfc/HIV.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfc/HIV.htm).*

## Life Where Her Mouth Is

Tired of politics as usual, a Maryland homeless advocate takes to the campaign trail

Interview by Molly Rhodes

As November's mid-term elections grow closer, more and more people slowly begin to once again wrap their minds around what they do and don't want out of their political leaders — and who are the options to fulfill these wants. Turned off by the options she saw around her, Linda J. Atkins decided to go one step further. The long-time advocate and personal champion of homeless and low-income people in Maryland — and a woman who was herself homeless for six and half years — joined Robert Fustero in his bid to become the Democratic nominee for Maryland's governor and lieu-

tenant governor.

Atkins recently took time out of campaigning before the Democratic Primary Election on September 10 to talk briefly with *Real Change* about the state of homeless affairs in Maryland and what she believes she can do about it.

**Real Change:** *First of all, we're very pleased to hear that you're running for office.*

**Linda Atkins:** That's good to know. Lot of people right here [in Maryland] aren't. They'd rather see homeless people disappear. They don't under-

stand that the people out here are human beings. They think if you're homeless, you're incompetent. Most of the people I've met are intelligent people who just need help. Kind of like all of us, really. I wanted to do something to help not just the homeless, but everyone.

**RC:** *Is that why you decided to run?*

**Atkins:** I've been helping homeless people long before this. You've got to get out there and help them, interact with them. I help them every day, rain, sleet, or snow. Last night, I was out there with food — and I hardly have any money myself. But somebody's got to

get out there and speak for them. I've met people by word of mouth — if anybody's in trouble, they'll get told by somebody, "Don't worry. Linda will help you." When Bob [Robert Fustero] asked me to run, people I knew were happy I decided to join him. They still tell me, "If anybody can represent us, you can." I feel like I was meant to do this.

**RC:** *What are some of the issues you're campaigning on?*

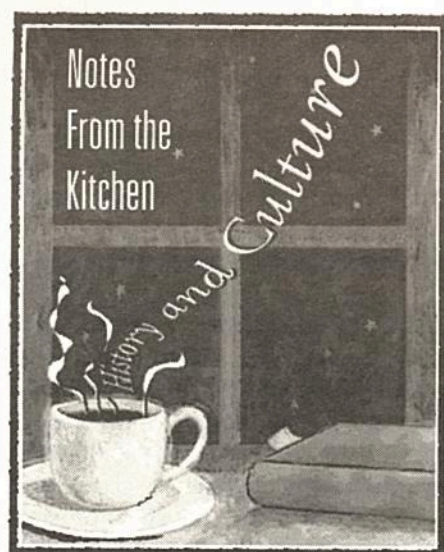
**Atkins:** Well, there's no housing to start, especially for

**"I help homeless people every day, rain, sleet, or snow — and I hardly have any money myself. But somebody's got to get out there and speak for them."**

**— Maryland lieutenant governor candidate, Linda J. Atkins**

*Continued on Page 18*





# The Two-Cent Man in the Twenty-Dollar Suit

By Liz Smith

If by my title you suspect I am going to gripe and complain about something, you are right. I'm going to tell you my policeman story, and I hope you'll find it more amusing than I did. While I want to assert my naïve belief that most cops try to do a good job under tough circumstances, the cynic in me thinks they are like a field of land mines — quiet for the moment, but apt to explode if you make a wrong move. Since the better part of valor is discretion, I won't name names, as I don't want my door kicked in one fine and lonely midnight.

My story begins when I was walking in Queen Anne, doing errands. It was the first day of Bumbershoot, and there on Queen Anne Avenue was an official Bumbershoot fence that was partially blocking the sidewalk. As I was walking past the beginning of this fence I heard yelling. Like this: "Hey! Hey!" As any sensible person would do, I sped up my pace. I am afraid when yelling goes on, thinking it could be some sort of lunatic or aggressive, irrational person.

The next thing I heard was a lot of huffing and puffing. It was a policeman and he was very mad at me. "What do you think you're doing?" he bellowed. "Why, I'm just going to QFC," was my meek reply. His face grew red and he puffed up with fury. "Didn't you see the sign? You can't walk there. That sidewalk is closed!"

"Then I'll just walk in the street." Mistake. "I'm giving you a ticket for walking on a sidewalk-closed sidewalk," he said sternly.

He whipped out his citation book. A young couple came up to me and said, "This is absurd that you're giving her a ticket!" He told them to move along, and they inched back but did not leave. Now he was even more angry, because here were two total strangers sticking up for me.

"What's your name?" he bawled. When I hesitated he said, "If you don't tell me you're going to jail." With visions of slamming bars and a prison jumpsuit, I told him. I was very polite, and he treated me like a five-year-old. "You're wasting my valuable time," he scolded. I resisted the impulse to tell him that's what criminals do, and waited for him to finish his damn ticket and let me go. He was infuriated, also, because I told him I was a writer and was going to write about him. Perhaps I saved myself a beating. Who knows?

After I received my ticket, the couple and I crossed the street, with the walk sign I might add, and we talked a few minutes. They gave me some sympathy and their business card, and we parted company.

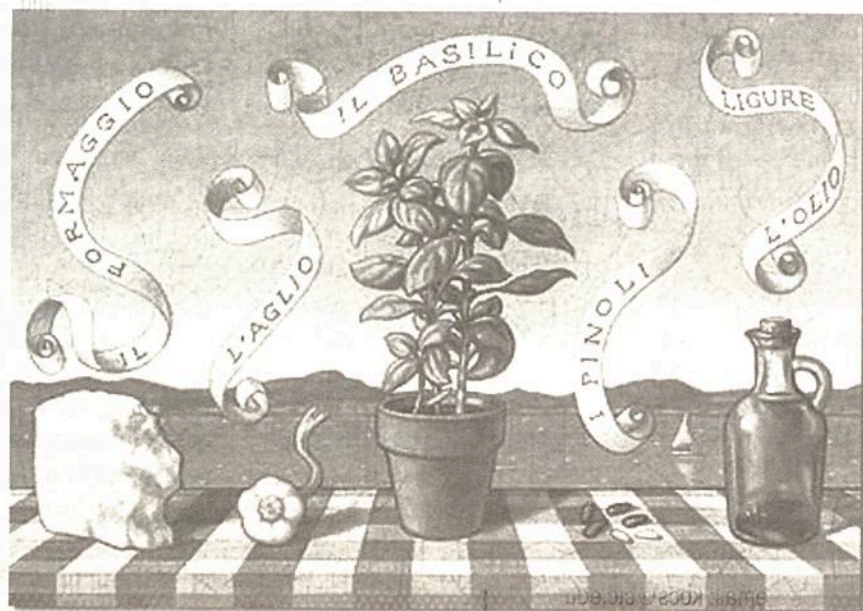
After my heartbeat and respiration got back to normal, I finished my errands and went home. That was a year ago, and I am still bothered about it all. My ticket ended up being dismissed because the officer didn't attend my court hearing. I am left with two questions. Aren't professional police officers supposed to have control of their emotions? And what do they do when faced with a real criminal and a truly serious criminal situation?

I don't have all the answers, but I do have two great Italian recipes. In our house we always have pesto at summer's end. At farmer's markets, basil can be had cheap right now. The desert is easy to make and features summer berries.

## Pesto

- 1 cup toasted walnuts (about 3 oz.)
- 5 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 3 Tbsp sun-dried tomatoes
- 7 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 8 oz. basil (about one small bunch), rinsed, dried and stemmed
- 2/3 cup finely grated parmesan cheese (about 2 oz.)
- 12 oz. dried pasta — linguine or fettuccine

1. In a food processor, blend the walnuts and garlic for 30-45 seconds, making sure garlic is well-distributed.
2. Add in tomatoes, olive oil, and a handful of the basil, and blend. Add the rest of the basil and process to a smooth paste. Transfer to a big bowl and stir in the cheese.
3. Cook pasta in boiling water until it just resists the bite (al dente, that is). Serve on a warmed plate and top with the pesto sauce.
4. If you make pesto sauce in advance, take it out of the fridge and let it warm to room temperature on the counter. Heating on a stove will ruin the taste and texture.



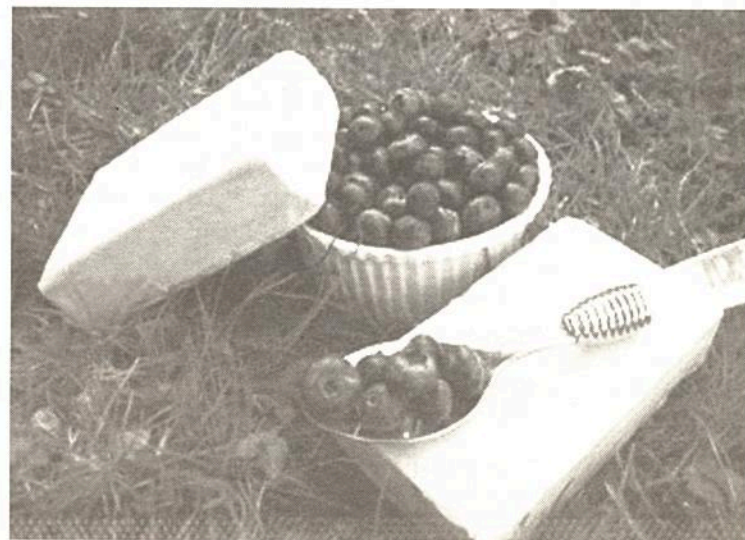
www.kpc-ml.com

## Panna Cotta with Blueberry Sauce

Makes four portions

- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons gelatin
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 c blueberries, rinsed and patted dry
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp sugar

1. In a small bowl, sprinkle the gelatin over the milk and stir in to soften.
2. In a saucepan, stir the cream with the sugar and vanilla until it simmers.
3. Whisk gelatin mixture into cream for about one minute.
4. In a cold-water bath in the sink, whisk cream until cool. Pour into four six-ounce size cups, cover with plastic wrap, and chill at least six hours, or overnight.
5. Rinse blueberries. Pat dry and remove any stems. Puree in blender with lemon juice and sugar until very smooth, about two minutes.
6. At serving time, run a spatula around edges of cups, and invert onto a chilled plate. Spoon about three ounces of blueberry sauce over top and serve. This dessert will have a rather lurid appearance, but after the first bite, you won't care. ■





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**Saturday, August 10, 12:20 a.m., 11 Ave., Bobby Morris Playfield.** The victim, a 30-year-old transient white male, stated that he and a group of friends were sitting near the wading pool in the park when another group came in. The second group sat by them, and began using illegal drugs. The male asked the group to move, as they didn't want drugs there. He stated that he and a friend — a 28-year-old transient white female — were standing by the edge of the pool by the rockery, when one of the males in the second group approached him and shoved him. The victim lost his balance, and fell onto his female friend. She fell and struck her head on a rock, and began having a seizure. The suspect and his group left the park, and an area search was unsuccessful. The female victim was transported to Harborview for medical attention.

**Interested in Volunteering for Real Change?**

Check out <http://www.realchangenews.org/issue/volunteer.html>.

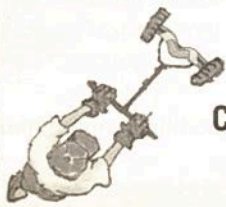
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**Saturday, August 10, 5:31p.m., Broadway QFC.** The Seattle Police Department called QFC on a report of an assault that had just taken place. Upon arrival the officer found the suspect, a 48-year-old homeless white male, being detained by QFC staff. They said there had been a struggle, but they had just brought the suspect under control. The QFC manager stated that she observed the suspect select an 18-pack of Budweiser, then exit the store without paying. She and another manager followed him outside and attempted to stop him. He dropped the beer and attempted to flee. During the scuffle, managers said he fought actively to escape, but did not hit them — neither complained of injuries. The officer questioned the suspect, and he stated that he was broke, and had needed some "cool refreshment" on such a hot day. He stated he had only been in Seattle for four days. Due to the nature of the incident, and that he had no address, suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail. He was also issued a trespass admonishment for QFC.

**Sunday, August 11, 8:18 a.m., Boylston Ave. E.** An officer investigated reports of a transient Native-American male that had just taken clothes from a carport area. The witness was sitting in Tashkent Park, 75 yards away, and stated he watched the 37-year-old male enter several carports. He entered the southernmost carport with nothing in his hands, and exited with a handful of clothing. Officers in the area contacted the suspect after getting the description from the radio. The suspect was not carrying anything. The witness was brought over to identify the man, and stated he was "pretty sure" that was the suspect. A routine check on the suspect showed that he was a missing person. Officers attempted to call the number from the missing persons hit, and reached a nursing home. However nobody there had any information, and did not appear to know the man. With no positive ID from the witness, and no verified missing person's hit, the suspect was released from the precinct. ■



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



# Heroes and Nemeses: the art of Krsna Golden

By Adam Holdorf

**F**orces move, thrust, feint and permeate Krsna Golden's art — just like they do, he says, in real life.

Krsna thinks of his paintings in terms of opposing forces. For every painting that is bathed in sunshine, there's what he calls a "nemesis" — a companion piece, steeped in darkness. The oil painting on the cover of *Real Change* has its opposite, also hanging in the Streetlife Gallery: it depicts a woman in a shawl, seeking refuge as U.S. warplanes zip through the background.

The nemeses come from Golden's belief that for everything — every sensation, mood, taste, or social condition — there is an equal and opposite, somewhere out in the world.

Krsna — his real name, given to him by his mother, a Buddhist who named him after the Hindu god Krishna — says he doesn't draw on any particular religious philosophy, in his art or his life. Instead, his work is more strongly influenced by his first artistic pursuit, tagging graffiti across Chicago. His street name was Orek, and the path toward his current work came when "Another guy told me, 'You have a signature, but you got to have a painting, something to sign,'" he says.

He flips open a small photo album, and points to a railyard wall where he'd written the jagged, bulging letters of his name. Each letter is a painting in itself; they appear to be windows, looking out on a lightning-strike in a twilight sky.

Coming to Seattle about a year and a half ago, one night he was going door-to-door at Belltown's restaurants in search of work, when he came upon the gallery. One lone artist was inside, making jewelry, "and I walked in here and was like, 'Woah, what is this place?' He explained it was for low-income people, and I said 'This is for me — I'm no-income!'"

His work since joining the gallery has moved away from the hip-hop



PHOTO OF KRSNA GOLDEN,  
BY ADAM HOLDORF.

stylings of his earlier artwork. He continues to exhibit the cartoonish figures he used to do, but is now concentrating on oil painting. The 9/11 painting aside, portraits are his passion. He was moved by an exhibit by groundbreaking portraitist Chuck Close that he saw in 1997. Close achieves minute detail by breaking up a photograph into a tiny grid, then concentrating on each square to make a whole.

Golden has dabbled in that too, but he prefers to take a wider view. Instead, his portraits sacrifice detail in order to convey a mood that the viewer can sympathize with. That, he says, gets closer to the communal value of artwork.

"I walked away from that exhibit saying, 'What are [portraits] for?'" he says. "It's to show the common in all of us."

Krsna is continuing his oil paintings, trying to produce enough for a gallery exhibit. Someday, he hopes to find a space large enough to launch a full-scale performance — details will have to wait, since Krsna's way of people knowing too much. ■

The elected officials now, they just say, "Get a job." Well, a lot of these people had a job. Me, I've been working since I was 11. I started out delivering papers, then worked in a restaurant in junior high. People aren't homeless because they're lazy. But it's amazing how people treat you when you're homeless. They don't even want to sit next to you on the bus. The homeless are not a disease. With just a little compassion and kindness, we can help these people. ■

*Because of the extremely low-budget nature of Fustero and Atkins' campaign for Maryland Governor and Lieutenant Governor, they don't have a website to follow their progress at the September 10 Democratic Primary Election. Results can be found through the Baltimore Sun (www.sunspot.net).*

## ATKINS Continued from Page 15

women and children. Plus, they've cut the funding for shelters, so people can't afford to rent a place and have to live in the woods. And there's no mental health care. You've got to wait around for six months just to get seen.

**RC:** *What's your own experience with homelessness?*

**Atkins:** I'm not homeless anymore — I've had a home for the past two years — but I haven't forgotten where I was for six and a half years. I came from a wealthy family, but then I went through a bad divorce in '89, which led to me starting to drink in '92. It was like a domino effect from there.

CLASSICS CORNER



by Perfess'r Harris

**W**e at Classics Corner seem to piss people off no matter what we do. Last issue, dear readers, you wrote to say that our "Age of Pericles ideation" wasn't "worth a damn," and to beg us to stop "soiling" classical thought. Even more recently, William Black (USMC, Retired) wrote to say our last column on the Houses of Atreus and Bush was "arrogant" and "idiotic." Finally, Ms. Royce B. MacGinnitie takes us to task for the same column, not because we portray the President's family as rapacious, amoral, thugs, but because we called Helen a slut and Cassandra a whore.

On reflection, we apologize. Cassandra, the virgin priestess of Apollo, was certainly no whore. She was, rather, an instrument of divine revenge. In Euripides' *Trojan Women* she tells Hecuba, "It is by marriage

**So Helen, groundless accusations aside, was really no slut. No. As she says, she was actually more of a bitch.**

that I bring to destruction those whom you and I have hated most." This of course, would be Agamemnon, who, after 10 years away raping and pillaging, announces to his wife that the younger, more attractive Cassandra

is moving in. This gets him murdered in the bathtub, which makes Cassandra's brief stint as sex slave all worthwhile.

As for Helen, Hecuba says she ran off with Paris because he made "her senses itch," whatever that means. But if blame is to be assigned here, it really must rest with Aphrodite, who simply awards Helen to Paris for saying she's cuter than Hera or Athena. Even Priam, the King of Troy, says "I don't blame you. I blame the gods." So Helen, groundless accusations aside, was really no slut. No. As she says, she was actually more of a bitch.

This is where it becomes useful to have numerous translations of *The Iliad* available. In Book Six, when Hector returns to Troy to share a touching moment with Andromache and Astynax, he runs into Helen, who wishes she'd been killed at birth. Richmond Lattimore, whose translations run to the literal, has Helen call herself a "nasty bitch evil-intriguing." In Robert Fitzgerald's more lyrical translation, the lines come out as "dear to a whore, a nightmare of a woman!" Alexander Pope, who can usually be counted on to be boring, cleans things up to read as simply "I accursed." As usual, my favorite translation is that of Robert Fagles, whose sinewy prose translates the lines as "bitch that I am, vicious, scheming — horror to freeze the heart." A.T. Murray's Loeb translation, generally most straightforward of all, renders the lines as "I that am a dog, a contriver of mischief and abhorred by all." The offending word here seems to be the Greek "kunos," which translates as "she-dog."

But just because Helen says she's a bitch doesn't necessarily mean she is. According to some versions, she isn't even real. As Euripides has it, the real Helen spent the war in Egypt, and the Helen in Troy was just an illusion, mired, apparently, deep in self-hatred. Helen, denied authentic sisterhood, internalized the oppressive ideology of the phallogocentric hegemony. We need to be careful about that sort of thing. ■

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# Late Summer Notables

## Thursday 9/5

League of Women Voters Forum on **Police and Policing in Seattle**, with Panelists Gil Kerlikowske, Chief of Seattle Police, Sam Palica, Director of the Office of Professional Accountability, Juyla Hampton, Legal Services Director, ACLU of Washington, and others. 7:30 p.m., at Seattle Baptist Church, Harvard & Seneca, free; info 206-329-4848 or <http://www.seattle.wa.lwv.org/>

**Hamoui Family Support Rally**, to support this immigrant family who have lived peacefully in the U.S. for 10 years, now imprisoned; call on the INS to do the right thing. 4 - 5:30 p.m., this and subsequent Thursdays as long as necessary in front of the Key Bank Building, 1100 2nd Ave. at Spring. Endorsed by American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) - Seattle Chapter, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and Asian Pacific Islander Coalition (APIC) - King County, among many others; also please phone Bob Okin, INS Acting Director, 206-553-4145 and ask for the release of this family; info Rita Zawaideh, Arab American Community Coalition, 206-545-7300 or <http://www.hatefreezone.org> or [theaacc@yahoo.com](mailto:theaacc@yahoo.com) or Arab American Hotline, 206-634-9001.

## Friday 9/6

Premiere viewing of video by the Seattle **Nonviolent Communication Community**, *Ta Da!, Love the Jackal, Talk Giraffe*, includes demonstrations using puppets to present nonviolent communication. 6:30 p.m., at 911 Media Arts, 117 Yale Ave. N., requesting \$5 - \$20 contribu-

tion, no one turned away; info 206-682-6552.

International Socialist Organization presents **"Stop the War on Iraq,"** a discussion on the history of the region, truth behind sanctions, and organizing to stop the war on terrorism. 7 p.m., at Student Activities Center, Seattle Community College, 1718 Broadway, Room 209; info 206-292-8809.

## Saturday 9/7

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.

## Sunday 9/8

**Seattle Peace Concert** "Wild Card Concert." Noon - 6 p.m., at Magnuson Park Beach Area, free, please bring food bank donations for Northwest Harvest; info 206-729-5232.

## Monday 9/9

**Stop the War Before It Starts**, organizing meeting of a network of students and teachers against the war. 6 p.m., at Seattle Central Community College, Broadway just north of Pine, Room 4143; info 206-789-5565 or <http://www.icaer.org/nowariraq>.

**Jubilee 2000 NW Coalition** meeting working for debt relief for the world's poorest nations, this and subsequent 1st Monday (2nd Monday this month due to holiday), 5:30 p.m., at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E.; info Betsy Bell 206-933-1889.

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>.

## Tuesday 9/10

Volunteer orientations at **Independent Media Center**. Learn about the IMC facilities and how to get involved. 5 - 8 p.m., at Independent Media Center, 1415 3rd Ave., near Union downtown; info Sarah 206-309-8646 or <http://www.seattle.indymedia.org>.

**No War Against Iraq** planning meeting sponsored by Radical Women, International Socialist Org., Freedom Socialist Party, Eastside Fellowship of Reconciliation and others. 7:30 p.m., at Central Lutheran Church, 1710 11th Ave., two blocks north of Pine; info 206-292-8809.

## Wednesday 9/11

**Rally Against U.S. Wars**, sponsored by Radical Women, Palestine Solidarity Committee, Ground Zero Center for Nonviolence and others. 5 p.m., at Seattle Central Community College, Broadway just north of Pine; info 206-984-6256.

Interfaith Service commemorating the first anniversary of the **attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon**. 7 p.m., at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E., doors open at 5:30 a.m. and bells will ring at the times the attacks occurred; info 206-323-0300.

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 9/12

"It's About Time Writers Reading Series," **beginning and experienced writers read from their work**. Open mike precedes scheduled readers and speaker. Each reader has three minutes to recite po-

ems or five minutes to read prose. 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., at Seattle Public Library, University Branch, 5009 Roosevelt Way NE, this and subsequent 2nd Thursdays; info [eahelfgott2@attbi.com](mailto:eahelfgott2@attbi.com) or <http://www.itsaboutimewriters.homestead.com>.

## Saturday 9/14

The Positive Impact Business Alliance's 1st Annual "Independent Mall at Seattle Center" with 100 independent small business vendors that are having a positive impact in the following areas: fair trade, labor and working families, health, environment, and local economics; giving Seattle residents an opportunity to engage in socially responsible spending. Saturday and Sunday, at Seattle Center; info Melissa Roberts [seattlepa@yahoo.com](mailto:seattlepa@yahoo.com).

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

## Sunday 9/15

**Seattle Peace Concert** featuring The Kathy Walker Band, Susan Robkin, Groove Merchants, and others. Noon - 6 p.m., at Volunteer Park, free. Please bring a food bank donation for Northwest Harvest; info 206-729-5232.


## Wednesday 9/18

Interfaith vigil for **Peace in the Middle East**, pray for the end of the violence, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m., 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.

## 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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citizens participation project



## Support Fairness in Labor Practices

**Issue:** Show your support for a national bill to improve and protect the rights of day laborers.

**Background:** Congressman Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) has introduced a bill in Congress, the "Day Laborer Fairness and Protection Act," to improve regulation of day labor agencies. Currently, day laborers are abused and exploited far more than permanent employees. This legislation would help to hold day labor agencies to the same standards as other employers.

Some of the disheartening facts about the current work situation for day laborers include:

- Three million people a year work as temporary (day) workers; over half of them are blue-collar workers. These workers are in an industry characterized by low wages, no benefits, and often-unsafe working conditions. The myth is that day labor is a transitional stage that allows people to better themselves and their families. The reality is that day labor perpetuates homelessness, and punishes people who seek to rise out of poverty.
- Most day workers earn less than minimum wage.
- The average yearly wage for a day worker is \$8,800.
- The average daily wage, nationally, for a day worker — after deductions — is \$28 for a 16-hour day.
- Labor companies engage in policies that are illegal and immoral.
- Workers are not paid for required waiting time before and after work; this can be as much as four hours a day.
- Labor companies have been found guilty of misclassifying workers in order to lower their insurance and workers' compensation rates.
- There is documented evidence of "black only" or "Latino only" work tickets.
- Almost all of the labor companies charge for cashing of paychecks. They also round down to the dollar when cashing paychecks. (One company earned \$7 million last year from this practice.)
- Illegal transport is often used to move workers to job sites; in a Massachusetts accident in 2001, a van being used had no insurance or permit to be used as a passenger vehicle. There is documented evidence that this was not an isolated incident.
- Labor companies take dubious deductions from workers' paychecks. The following are some of the documented deductions: using the restroom in the company offices (\$1); use of safety equipment, such as gloves and visors, when they are required on the worksite (\$2); transportation to the worksite from the offices (\$5).

**Action:** Send an email or letter or call Congressman Luis Gutierrez to show your support. Thus far, more than 250 businesses and organizations have pledged their support, including banks, real estate agencies, and other financial institutions.

Congressman Luis Gutierrez, U.S. House of Representatives  
2452 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515  
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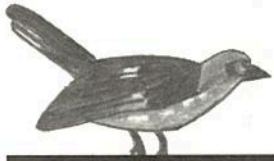
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# Mockingbird Times



Washington State Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak Out

SEPTEMBER 2002

Written for youth and youth advocates by youth with experience

VOLUME II, ISSUE 8

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.MOCKINGBIRDSOCIETY.ORG

## Beating the Odds on Education

By DENNIS FISHER

**HOMELESS KIDS** and kids in foster care have a much tougher time in school than most other kids do. According to a report to the Legislature in November 2001 prepared by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, foster care youth score 15 to 20 percentile points lower than other youth on statewide achievement tests. Foster care youth repeat a grade twice as often as other youth and youth in short-term care did just as poorly as youth in long-term care. Also nationally only 50% of foster youth graduate high school, compared to 86% of overall youth.

There are a lot of things that contribute to these statistics. Moving is an issue definitely affecting foster kids. Moving from placement to placement can often mean moving from school to school, making it more difficult to keep up with the classes. The schools may all have Tenth Grade Science, but the classes may have completely different subject matters.

If a youth is sleeping on the streets, it can be really hard to wake up on time for school every morning. Assuming they are able to get up on time four days

out of the week, they are still missing out on 20 percent of their classes. That might make it hard to keep up with the workload.

After running away from home, a kid really wouldn't want to go to school, where their parents can likely just come and pick them up would they? This also makes it difficult to get into any school, as most schools require parental contact to get registered.

Finally, the isolation a homeless or foster care youth experiences while separated from family & friends can

lead to depression, drug and alcohol abuse, and other things that don't go well with school.

Fortunately, there are ways to get past these problems. It is possible for foster kids and homeless kids to go to college. This issue is focused on how to get past these barriers and get your GED or high school diploma, and get into college. Mockingbird staff and others share their experiences and successes, hoping to make it easier for other youth in the system.



## A Look from the Other Side

INTERVIEW BY BRITTANY LUCAS

**I SAT DOWN** with Erin Hitchcock, a resident manager of a YMCA transitional youth house, and talked with her in-depth about her experience teaching at Seattle Urban Academy for seven years. When I first brought up the subject of the education of at-risk youth with her I could tell that she had a passion for the subject that one could only receive from hands-on experience.

Fresh from the University of Boston Erin Hitchcock returned to the city she grew up in with a desire to teach young people. Ever since she was in high school, she pictured her self teaching in the Rainier Valley. So it was to her delight when she was hired as a teachers assistant at an alternative high school that just happened to be located on south Othello street, in the heart of the Rainier Valley. After her first two years as a teacher's assistance she was promoted to an English teacher. Through the years, as her students grew in their knowledge and skills, so did she. After spending the beginning of her career trying to teach some of the youth whom the Seattle Public School system had failed, she had quite a lot to say about her experience.

**How many students a year are usually enrolled at Seattle Urban Academy and what is the student to teacher ratio?**

The school usually holds only about 30 to 35

TEACHER CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## School Experience

**MY NAME IS** Katie and I am almost 17. I have been in foster care off and on since I was 18 months old. I get moved around a lot because it seems to me that the Washington State government is inept with dealing with children. They make horrible parents. I have not finished the school year in one school since I was in HeadStart at the age of 4. Now that I'm in high school it makes it even harder to concentrate when I'm worried whether I'll be in the same school the next day.

The foster care system also seems to be hiring some really cracked out parental-units. I had a foster parent who refused to let me go to school because I wouldn't eat breakfast. I also think the State should teach teachers how to be in control without power-tripping over the foster kids' bad behaviors. For one thing, if a foster kid even gets suspended, they'll get moved out of the foster home.

I think upon entering the school year, foster kids should be given a chance to go to alternative schools. Kids at alternative schools are less likely to care about trivial matters like if your a foster child or not. But in public schools, foster kids have a bad rep because everyone assumes that since we don't live with our parents that we did something wrong.

And as for putting foster kids in Juvie (Juvenile Detention) until foster homes open up, I think it's wrong. That happened to me when I was 11, I was in Juvie for 12 and 1/2 weeks. I guess what I think foster kids need is a little bit of tolerance and a little bit of respect. Thanks for reading this.

SINCERELY,  
KATIE H.

## New Staff Reporter:

**Felecia James**

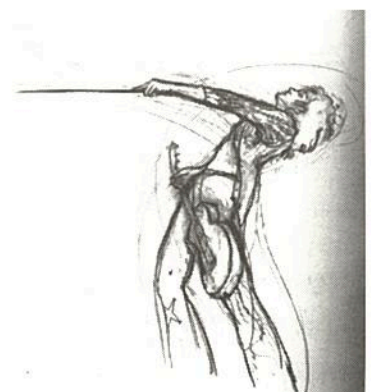
**Tell us a little about yourself.**

I am 19. I like all kinds of music, mostly rock. I enjoy reading, writing poetry, and short stories.

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

It is important to me that youth in foster care are not separated from siblings. A foster parent should be

FELICIA CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



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Mockingbird Times is special insert in Real Change	



# Letter from the Editor

## ON THE ROAD...

I recently returned from California where I spoke at a youth employment conference sponsored by the **Department of Labor**. I was asked to present the *Mockingbird Times* as a creative approach to youth employment, particularly for a population of young people that is largely ignored. I was able to attend several other workshops and received some exciting ideas that I will put to good use at Mockingbird. I can also tell you that the *Mockingbird Times* received high marks and great praise as a cutting-edge approach to youth employment. In fact, while many of the programs searched for ideas regarding how to attract youth and keep them interested, we at Mockingbird seem to have the opposite problem: how to generate the funds and organizational infrastructure necessary to meet the demand of youth who want to participate.

## CITY OF SEATTLE TAKES TIME FOR MOCKINGBIRD

On August 5, Mockingbird Society was presented a proclamation signed by all members of the **Seattle City Council** and the **Mayor of Seattle Greg Nickels**. The proclamation was presented by **Council President Peter Steinbrueck** at a city council



Members of the Mockingbird staff who were presented with the proclamation from Seattle City Council (clockwise from upper left): Dennis Fisher, Jim Theofelis, Brittany Lucas, Valerie Douglas, William Willoughby. Photo by Mockingbird Staff.

meeting with all council members in attendance. It recognizes the achievement of the youth who have participated in developing the *Mockingbird Times*. It was wonderful feedback to our youth to be acknowledged for their excellent work this past year.

## ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

I want to thank those of you who have contributed to our annual campaign. Many of you have added notes expressing your appreciation for the work we are doing and offering congratulations for having made it through our first year. Indeed! I am very proud of what we have accomplished, especially given the economic climate. If you have not yet sent in a donation, please do. We continue to operate on a very thin margin and anything you can contribute will help us to serve the children and youth in Washington's foster care system.

**FINALLY**, let remind each of you of our interest and determination to ensure that *Mockingbird Times* has a statewide presence and focus. I encourage the thousands of children and youth across the state who have experience in foster care or homelessness to submit your artwork, poetry, and essays. Get published, get paid, and participate in the social justice movement to create a **world class foster care system** in Washington state.

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)

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).

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## TEACHER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

students yearly, and the teacher student ratio is typically one teacher for every nine students.

## How is Seattle Urban Academies curriculum designed compared to the public school systems?

It is typically the teacher's choice in what they want to teach. Seattle Urban Academy, for the most part, stays in line with the public school system's curriculum, except they teach the subject matter at lower reading levels to meet the needs of the student. They also set high academic standards for their students. Students must at least get an 80 percent of an assignment or test correct or they have to do it over again. If they have problems maintaining an 80 or above, their teacher of course tutors them, until they learn the subject matter.

## What appealed to you about teaching at SUA?

Seattle Urban Academy appealed to me because it allowed me to freely share about Jesus, to help shape a school, and to develop real and lasting relationships with students who, have these relationships with other students and staff.

## What sort of youth did you come into contact with while teaching at Seattle Urban Academy?

I came into contact with a whole range of students. Primarily, though, the students were ages 14 to 19 and mostly of African American descent, though there were other races at the school. Some of the kids that came to SUA weren't successful in mainstream public education because of issues with truancy, drug and alcohol problems at home, and general family problems, while others just came to get away from public education. Some of the kids I taught had been in and out of detention centers and hand gang affiliations. The kids who were not living with their families because of difficulties usually were staying with relatives.

What I have noticed about this community, through the students I have taught, is that if a child is taken away from their parents or can not live with them, a relative usually takes responsibility instead of allowing outside forces to care for the youth.

## What was a highlight of teaching at Seattle Academy for you?

I loved that the school was so small that it gave the teachers a chance to get to know the students and the students to get to know us. Also, as a teacher, I really liked designing my own curriculum.

## How do you think a teacher or other school faculty can assist youth who may be in the foster system or in an unstable living environment while attending school?

The first key is to realize that it may not be possible for the students to check their feelings at the door, but to also let students know not to be overcome with their personal lives at school. A good idea is to encourage students to get their feelings out through creative writing and to have a sincere and honest relationship with them about yourself.

## What was the biggest challenge you experienced while teaching at Seattle Urban Academy?

One of the biggest problems that I dealt with,

## TEACHER CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## Meet Our Staff

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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### OPERATIONS MANAGER

Siri Throm Saxe

### STAFF ADVISOR

Valerie Douglas

### TECHNICAL ADVISOR

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Katie H., Jennifer

### THANK YOUS

*Real Change*, Katie H., Jennifer, and Seattle City Council, Mayor Greg Nickels, Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck, and Neil Powers for all their work on the proclamation for Mockingbird Society

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# Positive Power: GED Tips

BY DENNIS FISHER

**THE GED**, or General Education Diploma, is a series of tests anyone can take to get the equivalent of a high school diploma. Here's a handful of useful tips to remember before you take the test.



- Study for the week before, especially in the areas you are lacking in (for me it was science...)
- Take the pretests to judge your abilities before taking the real test

• For harder multiple choice questions, try to eliminate the unlikely answers first

- Make sure to bring your I.D. and social security card
- You don't have to take all 5 tests at once, depending on how confident you are with your level of ability, you can take 2 or 3 tests at once, or take them all separately
- As of January 1, 2002, the test format and questions changed; make sure any books and/or pretests that you get are for this new edition
- Be aware of the time limit: if a question is taking too long, come back to it later
- If you can, eat before you take the test. It's usually pretty hard to think when your stomach is growling, and lack of food also means lack of energy
- Try to get as much sleep as you can the night before taking a test
- The GED tests themselves vary from state to state, and scores may not be transferable

## Passing the GED: taking the first step towards success

BY BRITTANY LUCAS



**THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM** isn't always a great place for someone to spend 12 years of their life. Drop out rates show that five out of every 100 students enrolled in high school each year don't complete their high school degrees (2000 US census report). Some students even drop out before they reach high school. In the 1950's and even through out the seventies, a high school diploma was considered a valuable asset on the work force, but as technology grew so did education expectations. Today, a high school equivalence diploma is only the minimum of what you need to be eligible to work in most industries.

There aren't many people who dream of working behind a counter for minimum wage for the rest of their lives, but with out a diploma that is often the reality many drop-outs have to face. If you didn't graduate high school though that doesn't mean you're stuck in the middle of an ocean with out a lifesaver. Even if you don't have the chance or the desire to go back to high school, you can still get a degree that 95 percent of employers and 90 percent of colleges' nation wide consider equal to a high school diploma.

You can earn your GED (General Equivalency Diploma). The GED is a test that measures achievement in subject areas generally associated with a high school program of study. The GED tests your knowledge in five areas of study: Language Arts Reading, Language Arts Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The examinations are available worldwide and are open to anyone over the age of 16 with out a high school diploma. The majority of community colleges in the United States offer GED courses and testing. The prep courses are usually at no expense but the tests can cost any where from \$10 - \$12 each. If you call the GED hotline (1-800) 626-9433 a representative can locate organizations in your area that may pay for your tests if you cannot afford to or agencies that can supply you with any extra prep courses you might need.

Before you take the GED, it is always a good idea to schedule an appointment at a GED training center to take the pre-GED. The pre-GED exam will tell if

you need to study more before you take the final test. The lowest you can score on both the pre-GED and final GED is 200 while the highest score you can earn is 800. If your overall score is in the very high range you may be eligible for a college scholarship, so it's a good idea that you hit those books hard if you are looking for ways to pay for college. An average score is 500 while a passing score is 410. If you score below 460 on any of the pre examinations, your GED instructor may recommend that you study the subjects you had difficulty with in more depth before you go in and take the final test. If you have learning disabilities it may affect your test scores. If you show documentation as proof of your disability to the GED examiner, they may be able to alter the way the tests are given to you (you might be able to take the exam untimed for instance).

Once you have thoroughly studied and prepared for the GED, it is time to take the test that will decide your future! It is normal to be a little nervous, but don't worry if you don't pass, you have two more chances to retake the test(s) you failed. You may use a calculator on the first part of the math exam. Each test will be timed unless you have permission from the examiner to have it administered untimed. You can take all five tests together, or space them out individually over a period of time. Usually, you are given a year to complete all tests before your old scores are taken off record.

When you are finished taking the examination, the test examiner will ask you to call the center the following business day to find out if you passed the GED. Right after you pass your transcripts will be available if you need to show employers or schools proof that you obtained your GED. You may have to wait anywhere from two weeks or a few months to receive your certificate in the mail.

Passing the GED is an accomplishment. More than 860,000 people world wide take the GED annually. Those that pass the GED out perform more than 1/3 of high school seniors. Getting a GED instead of a diploma won't halt your progress unless you let it. Actor and comedian Bill Cosby, Wendy's founder Dave Thomas, and US senator Ruth Ann Minner all received GED diplomas (Official GED website statistics). A GED may not seem like a big deal, but that five hour test could open door ways to a world of opportunity and potential you might have not had access to otherwise, and that is a big deal.

## The Future of Crime

REVIEW BY DENNIS FISHER

**THIS FUTURISTIC FILM** is centered around a new and groundbreaking law enforcement agency in Washington D.C.: the Pre-Crime division. Pre-crime is centered around three "pre-cogs"; people who are psychically enhanced and see murders before they happen. Because only fragments of the murders are shown, it is up to John Anderton (Tom Cruise), the leading agent and a main proponent of pre-crime, to decipher these images and discern the location of these murders and lead the Pre-Crime unit to prevent them.

*Minority Report*  
Directed by Steven Spielberg,  
starring Tom Cruise.



For once in a movie, Tom Cruise does **not** play a perfect character. He

lost his son before pre-crime had been "invented", ruining his marriage and turning him into a drug addict.

If you've seen the trailer, you know the basis of the plot, so I feel safe about not ruining the movie before you've seen it. The Pre-Crime system marks Anderton as the next murderer; destined to murder a man he's never met within the next 36 hours. The movie starts out pretty fast-paced while the basis of the plot is being formed, but slows down in the middle while the plot unfolds, then picks back up again with the finale of the plot. There are surprisingly few action scenes compared to the plot scenes, but these obligatory action scenes were done really well. There's one scene where Anderton takes on his entire squad, who are all wearing jet packs and wielding what appear to be stun prods, and wins.

The movie looked great; the way the future was depicted was awesome. One of my favorite touches was personalized advertising based on retinal scans. Walk into the Gap and a personalized computer character would say something like, "Welcome back Mr. Fisher! Did those jeans work out for you?" It was really scary, yet really cool. Another thing I liked about the movie was that it was unpredictable. You'd be pretty hard pressed to know what was going on before Spielberg was ready to let you in on the secret.

Aside from a few seemingly missing parts of the plot such as characters making unclear references to past conflict, this was a really good movie, and one that I really enjoyed.

## TEACHER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

was being forced to decide if a student would be better served at a different program. Often, that meant letting go of students I really liked. Though the school was small, some needed one-on-one assistance the entire time they were in class. That is pretty hard to do even if you only have eight other students to teach. I didn't want the students that I had to refer to other programs feel rejected, especially after many of them and been rejected in other areas in their lives.

Another problem was just finding a balance of high academic standards and being realistic where each individual was academically. At a public school you can get nothing but D's and pass right through, but at Seattle Urban Academy they want every pupil to be an A or a B student.

### Do you think you will continue to teach at-risk students?

Yes, I prefer teaching at-risk students even though on the bad days at SUA (Erin laughs) I wanted a class of well behaved students who had a desire to learn. Right now, I would like to teach seventh grade at an urban public school here in Seattle.



## My College Experience

By DENNIS FISHER



**THIS PAST SPRING**, I finished my third quarter at Shoreline Community College (SCC). Things have gone really well for me there, and hopefully I'll have my Associate in Arts degree for Computer Programming by this time next year. Getting into SCC was rather easy for me, because of the Career Educations Options (CEO) program there.

For the CEO program, the registration process was a little different than normal, and a lot less complicated. The first step was to attend a CEO orientation, where they tell you about the program, the eligibility requirements (age 16-21, no high school diploma), among other things. If you still want to go after the orientation, the next step is to sign up for your first quarter to take a required class: CEO 101.

The CEO 101 class is meant to transition you into college, and is really helpful if you haven't been in school for a while. The class itself is 2 hours long, and covers basic college skills such as essay writing, as well as some employment skills such as resume writing and the like. There is also a business technology class which is immediately after CEO 101 and meets 2-3 days a week for one hour. The class is centered on typing skills and basic computer and internet usage.

For the second Quarter (assuming you do aren't driven insane from CEO 101), you are able to take only one class, but it can be any class of your choosing. The reason for this is so that you don't overburden yourself, and you can get used to "real" classes. After that, you are welcome to take as many classes as you think you can handle.

Once that is all out of the way though, college is really interesting and pretty fun (for me it was anyway; your mileage may vary). The main thing that was hard for me to get used to, was that the instructors weren't constantly pressuring me to make sure I had all my work in, I was on my own to make sure I kept on track. If you really think about it, that makes sense, after all, going to college isn't something required of you, it's something you do because you want to.

College is overall quite a bit of work, but I think that it's fun, and it's more than worth it. If you can find some way to pay for it (a program like CEO, scholarships, grants, loans, etc...) it's something I strongly recommend looking into.

## Poetry Corner

### Cry

Some people don't cry  
 don't show the world that it's won!  
 Then others say cry, who cares!  
 No one that's just it.  
 No one is there to hold my hand  
 No one is there to tell me things are going to be  
 okay.  
 No, no one at all.  
 Life is hard!  
 You can't just throw a blanket over  
 your feelings  
 but you can't let people think you are weak  
 so you ask, then what do you do?  
 I just simply cry.

— JENNIFER

# Heads Up on Getting into College

By WILLIAM WILLOUGHBY



**A NEW CAMPUS**, no familiar faces, a new beginning is what many see as they walk to their first college class. It is not easy to be one of those lucky students who has a chance to continue your education.

During their senior year most students are very stressed out and have many things on their "to do list." They are faced with filling out applications to all the schools they are considering, which usually consist of letters of recommendation, official transcripts, personal essays, required information, and of course, SAT scores. You have to find people who you believe will write you good letters and whom you have known for a period of time (usually a year or more).

The applications are given a deadline. Although you can get the applications early, somehow a majority of students often end up rushing them out or turning them in late. Some of the many reasons students have for turning their applications in late are often waiting to receive items from the schools (transcripts, SAT scores) and then also waiting to receive the letters of recommendation from people. Students also have to come up with time to fill out the required information sheets that accompany the applications.

Finding time is a big issue. Most seniors have other obligations that they still wish to keep to, such as clubs, jobs, hobbies, sports, or the homework that they still have to keep up with. It is a big task to turn in applications with all of the requirements on time. Filling out applications and all the mandatory letters of recommendation just added chaos and stress to another student who only wishes to continue his or her education.

After you apply, the next big step is to figure out

how to finance your college education. There are a few options like scholarships, grants, loans, and family contributions if your family can afford it.

The most popular way of paying for a college education is through scholarships. There are many scholarships for students these days. Scholarships are the best bet for many because there are so many available and they don't require an application fee. Scholarships are also popular because, unlike a loan, you don't have to pay it back.



After you receive those college letters of acceptance, you have to then decide what school is best for you and who can offer the best financial aid package. There are many reasons to go to a school over another, including the size, the teacher-student ratio, the different programs offered, and even by its reputation. No matter what the reasons are that you choose a certain school, I highly suggest you take a visit to it and also talk to people who have attended the school.

For those future seniors, I encourage you to start early in determining what schools you are interested in and also allowing plenty of time for yourself to do the requirements of the applications. If you know what you want to do or what fields you would like to pursue in college, try to talk with people who have gone through the same fields and also try to talk with professors about what you need to do in order to be fully prepared.

Now that I look back and see what I could of done to better prepare myself, I realize that allowing time to discuss college plans and talking to people to get yourself ready is very important and something that should not be ignored. If you wish to go farther in life, take the chance to realize how much farther and then do what is needed to get there.

## My College Experience

By WILLIAM WILLOUGHBY

**THIS YEAR** I will be attending Western Washington University in Bellingham. I will face many new challenges there that will remind me of the ones I faced in my senior year of high school. Although the same task won't be there, the stress surely will.

I have chosen to attend Western because it has many programs I know I will be interested in like journalism and also Pre-med studies. The school is close enough to home that I will feel comfortable

but far enough to be on my own. The population of the school is a lot lower compared to others and offers a lower student to teacher ratio, which will allow me to feel like I can go to my teacher for help and not a Teachers Assistant. Although TA's may know the work it is better to be able to talk to the professor on a one-on-one basis. The dorms are also comfortable for me and are not as small as other dorm rooms I have seen.

I have chosen Western because it will allow me to continue my education in fields that interest me. I know that when I graduate from there I will have the skills to pursue jobs and careers that I have learned about and prepared myself for.

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found who will take both siblings.

### What is your foster care experience?

I was placed in the foster care system when I was 16. At first I was moving around a lot, then finally I was placed in a foster home. My foster parent was 82 years old. I left her home because she told me my family was evil.

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

Foster parents would be required to know about the cultures of different kids.

### Why did you join the Mockingbird Times?

I joined because I thought it would be a good way to share my talents and my ideas about foster care.

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

I hope that Mockingbird can make people more aware of problems in foster care so improvements can be made.