

Real Change

Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless • Volume 9, No. 21

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Bowling for Columbine

Michael Moore

On Unlearning Violence for the 21st Century

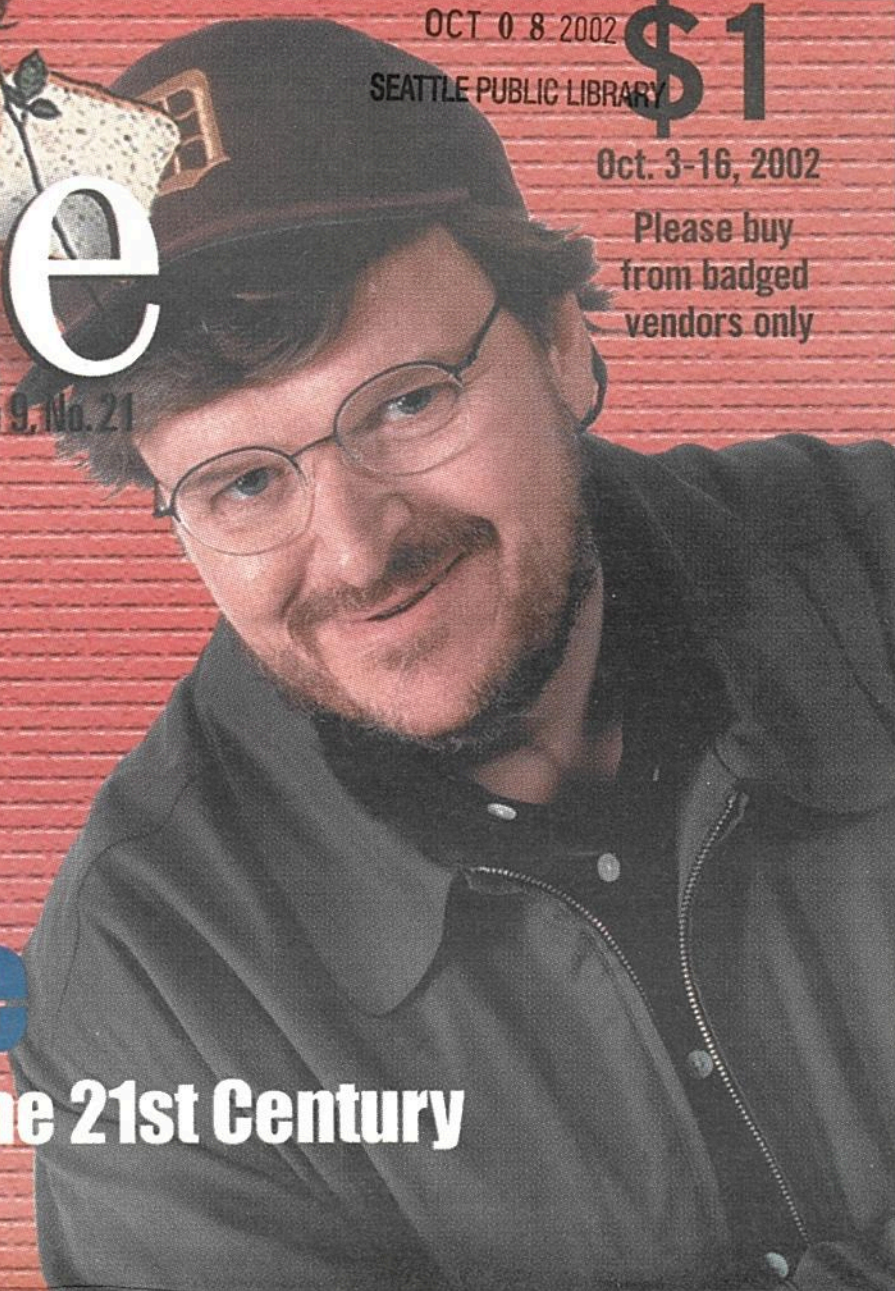


PHOTO OF MICHAEL MOORE.

America's unsettling obsession with guns is the focus of *Bowling for Columbine*, an award-winning documentary by Michael Moore, maker of *Roger and Me* and author of the bestseller *Stupid White Men*. This movie does far more than mock Charlton Heston and the nutty militiamen; it extracts a dark cycle of vengeance, fear, and death from a look at this country's history. The loss of innocent children in a Colorado school was one thing. Multiply it by the three centuries of brutality that preceded it. Now look beyond our borders, to each of America's imperial exploits. You get the idea.

There's no better time to consider this legacy than now, as the Bush Administration tries to pit freedom and safety against each other. And there's no better spokeswoman for the thousands of immigrants held without charge than Pramila Jayapal, the founder and director of the Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington.

Jayapal will speak before a special screening of *Bowling for Columbine* in

Seattle on Sunday, October 13. She hopes to put the film's message in a different light.

"We're broadening the discussion of violence to include the diverse communities that are impacted by hate crimes," she says, "particularly in the aftermath of September 11. We're tying that event to the systems of racism that make it harder to care for people."

In an interview with Anna Lappé of the Guerrilla News Network, Pramila shared the pain she feels from Seattle's immigrant community.

Anna Lappé: *Would you share how Hate Free Zone began?*

Pramila Jayapal: September 11 was a Tuesday. By Saturday, I had already gotten a number of calls, people from immigrant communities I was close to — South Asians, East Asians, East Africans. Many were being attacked, physically and verbally. They were afraid of going out of their homes. I had teacher friends calling saying kids were

showing up missing. Parents were afraid to send their children to school.

It was one of those times when you cry and then you wipe your tears and ask what can I do? I knew Global Exchange had passed a resolution for a "Hate Free Zone" in San Francisco. I thought maybe we could do that here, but make it for the whole state. I wanted a resolution to say we stand for something bigger. I knew I didn't want a Band-Aid fix; I knew it had to be systemic.

By Monday, I had an appointment with Congressman Jim McDermott and presented a plan for a statewide campaign that included political advocacy, direct community support, education and training, and public awareness and media. By Tuesday, working with other organizations, we had a press conference with the Governor, the mayor of Seattle, the King County Council, the Chief of Police, and the Seattle School Superintendent. And we launched the

Continued on Page 8

Bowling for Columbine Directed by Michael Moore

A special screening
to benefit Real Change

Sunday, October 13
8 p.m.

Egyptian Theater,
Pine Street between
Harvard and Broadway,
Capitol Hill

Tickets \$5 at door

Seats will give fast so please
reserve your tickets by
emailing rsvp@speakeasy.org
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Inside: Bye-bye drug treatment • Farewell to the Central District •
Seattle's unsung mental health workers • Taxicab follies



Look for the Mockingbird Times Inside!





We love Dr. Bramhall

Dear *Real Change*,

Thank you for the excellent article ("The Doctor is OUT," Sept 19, 2002). Dr. Stuart Bramhall has not only served low-income mentally ill persons well. She has been a leading activist for single-payer health care for all of us in Washington.

Since a public conference at Seattle University in 1996, she has given her all to lead the Washington Single Payer Action Network (WA-SPAN). Dr. Bramhall led the push for Initiative 725, called Health Care 2000. Her efforts failed but her commitment and leadership continued.

The ongoing plan is:

1. To have a committee in each of the 49 legislative districts to sell the concept of a single-payer plan
2. To raise funds for a successful effort
3. to obtain 250,000 signatures to qualify for an initiative
4. and to lobby legislators for enabling legislation.

For more than seven years, Dr. Bramhall has courageously spearheaded this effort, despite legal and corporate pressures from insurance companies. The state and all its citizens are losing a crusader in her leaving. She has my thanks and admiration. May others carry out her vision.

Sincerely,
Cora Lawrence, R.N., Ph.D.
Seattle

Healthiest or not?

I just found your article, "Sick of it all" (October 15, 2000)

I find it interesting that you don't mention the fact that Japan is a largely homogenous society. I wonder what the health rates are for Koreans and Chinese living in Japan? I wonder what the rates are for men compared to women?

I think we also should be careful to recognize that Japan is an island nation, isolated from the rest of Asia. Japan depends largely on the greater Asian economy and it is clear that many of

the countries where Japan keeps its factories and such don't hold such high health records.

I would say that Japan is a country that has an easy time sweeping its dirt under the rug. Japanese children are not taught the downsides to Japanese society; they are taught that, "Japan is the most peaceful country in the world."

I believe we must be careful to point out a place as a health utopia, because the health problems in one place are closely intertwined with the living standards in another. I wonder what the effects of the secondhand smoke will have on me as a foreigner working in a Japanese office.

I recognize that there are a lot of ways of looking at things, and I mean to say these things with a sense of humor, but these things occurred to me and I thought I would share.

Interesting article.

Sincerely,
Richie Stolzenhaller

Fearless

Dear *Real Change*,

Perfess'er Harris, in his last Classics Corner (September 19, 2002), compared the mad adventurism of our leaders to that recorded by Thucydides in 415 B.C.

Any way to make sure copies make it to the White House?

Love the column. Wish I got into Seattle more, I'd read it all the time!

And the rest of the rag ain't bad, either. It's fearless and on-target — especially the poetry.

Sincerely,
Donna Barr
Bremerton, WA

Ed. replies: Even if you don't get to Seattle often, you can read every bit of our fearless and on-target rag at www.realchangenews.org.

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Change

Puget Sound's Voice of the
Poor and Homeless

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

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

On the Web at
<http://www.realchangenews.org>
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ISSN 1085-729X

Real Change vendors receive 70¢ of the \$1.00 paid for this paper.

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.

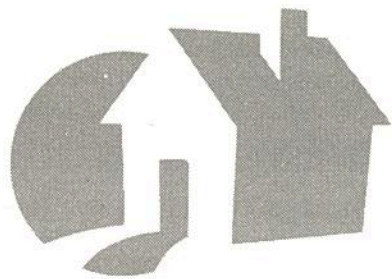
Goals

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.



PorchLight

Community Services of the
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907 NW Ballard Way, #200
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.

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Give Them Some Dignity

Anti-CRACK campaign offers real choices to would-be mothers

By Theryn Kigvamasud-Vashti

"We don't allow dogs to breed. We spay them. We neuter them. We try to keep them from having unwanted puppies. And yet these women are literally having litters of children."

These words, quoted out of *Marie Claire* magazine, belong to Barbara Harris, a middle-aged white woman in Orange County, California, who founded Children Requiring a Caring Kommunity (CRACK).

CRACK is a national population-control organization that offers \$200 cash to folks who struggle with chemical addiction to undergo sterilization or long-term birth control. CRACK's mission is to "save our welfare system and the world from the exorbitant cost to the taxpayer for each drug-addicted birth" by offering "preventive measures to reduce the tragedy of numerous drug-affected births." Since its inception, CRACK has enrolled almost 800 women around the country. Its Seattle chapter, called Positive Prevention, has posted flyers around town saying "Get Birth Control Get Ca\$h."

CRACK's strategy of paying women substance users for sterilization contributes to a problem larger than their drug use: the lack of support for parenting and pregnant women struggling with substance addiction in a climate where the "War on Drugs" demonizes them as undeserving and unfit, and labels their offspring "a burden to society."

CRACK's strategy of paying women substance users for sterilization contributes to a problem larger than their drug use.

Since the winter of 2000, shortly after Positive Prevention arose, a small group of activists has been organizing in the Seattle area to oppose the organization. Housed at Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA), the anti-CRACK campaign got its start during a community gathering for the Black People's Project (BPP). Activists expressed outrage that a message to curb the reproductive capabilities of people struggling with substance abuse disproportionately targeted Black women, other women of color, and poor women. They noted that all of the ads were located near or in the rear of the buses, and that the buses were routed through areas where large numbers of people of color and poor people lived.

The activists created a sticker campaign that offered information about the history of sterilization abuse and the assaults on the reproductive rights of women with disabilities, immigrant women, poor women, women of color, and women who are survivors of sexual and physical violence. The next step for the activists was to generate public discussions by sponsoring public forums on the dangers of population-control efforts by groups like CRACK.

Eventually the work of the local anti-CRACK campaign began to gain momentum. As new members joined, we developed an information packet called the CRACK Pack, gained the support of workers at local feminist women's healthcare agencies, and got national recognition and allegiance with other organizations that also oppose CRACK, including the Committee On Women Population and the Environment, the American Public Health Association, Family Watch, and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. The activists also developed a statement of opposition to CRACK/Positive Prevention modeled after a similar statement issued by Family Watch (www.familywatch.org) that became an effective tool for gauging public support for our anti-CRACK campaign.

At local public forums, people brought attention to the similarities between CRACK and other movements in U.S. history that attempted to control the population of oppressed people: the lynching period (1865-1965), and the Eugenics movement (circa 1907-1941). Specifically, the Eugenics movement "advocated the rational control of reproduction in order to improve society," says law professor Dorothy Roberts in her book *Killing the Black Body*. This resembles the position CRACK takes today. Racism was a part of Eugenics' theoretical framework, proposing that "deviant behavior was biologically determined." Groups like CRACK echo past eugenics ideas by "warning of the dangerous potential inherent in the notion that social problems are caused by reproduction and can be curbed by population control" strategies.

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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

September 25, 2002

News from around the U.S. and Canada, brought to you by the Street News Service (www.streetnewsservice.org)

Horrified by recent national news stories that declare Toronto in a heavy state of decline, city officials decided to take action by taking out their frustration on homeless people who had been living in a self-made tent city along Toronto's waterfront for the past several years. According to the *Canadian Press*, city officials as well as Home Depot, which owns the land the 100 makeshift shacks were on, said they were concerned with drug use, garbage, and the health and safety of tent city residents. To show just how much they cared, Home Depot's security company bulldozed many of the homes and constructed a fence around the property so no one could get back in to collect their belongings, as Toronto police arrested anyone who didn't cooperate. The entire tent city was expected to be demolished within a matter of days.

More than two dozen squatters took over an empty Woodward's building in the eastside of Vancouver, B.C., in an ongoing campaign to turn the building into subsidized housing for the poor, according to *Global BC* (www.canada.com). While the former government had promised to create the affordable housing and associated services for people looking to get back on their feet, the new government made up of B.C. liberals has plans to sell the building to the highest bidder.

San Francisco activist Jim Reid thinks he's come up with a big solution to the city's homeless problem: miniature houses. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the 100-square foot houses contain everything a person could need, including a bed, a full bathroom, a kitchenette, and even a washer-dryer. Reid estimates the homes would cost about \$50,000 a piece to build, and envisions them being used by formerly homeless people all around town, in exchange for them cleaning up neighborhood streets. While San Francisco city hall has yet to take Reid up on his idea, even non-homeless passersby at the Civic Center where he set up his model thought the possibility of truly affordable basic housing was an idea whose time had come.

Northern Californian Dan Lyons doesn't just talk the talk about helping homeless people; he walks the walk. More than 3,450 miles of walk, to give a better picture, from Everett, Washington, to Washington, D.C., to raise money for a California church's hot meals program. In the past four months, Lyons has walked through 13 states and five pairs of shoes, covering 35 to 45 miles a day and resting in whatever places would take him, from city shelters and church basements to motels and private homes, according to the *Contra Costa Times*. While a similar walk last year raised about \$17,000 for Alzheimer's research, this walk has only brought in about \$1,200 in pledges so far. Yet Lyons, who has himself been homeless by choice for the past decade, doesn't let that stop him. "That's what life's about," Lyons told the *Times*. "You can waste your time buying houses and boats and collecting possessions when you can be out there helping those less fortunate."

Never say the Tennessee Titans never did anything for the homeless. In Nashville, the national football team's cheerleaders sponsored a free hair salon for homeless women. With the help of Paul Mitchell professional hair stylists, the cheerleaders set up a makeshift hair salon at a local homeless shelter for women, according to the Nashville TV news network, WKRN (www.wkrn.com). ■

— Compiled by Molly Rhodes

Last songs

Two homeless men were shot to death in Seattle within the past month. Although unrelated crimes, their murders occurred within a month of each other, within a six-block radius, and the two men had striking similarities: Both were African American. Both were singers. Both had been small-time drug dealers who were trying to get their lives back on track.

And, in both cases, news coverage of their deaths was shockingly slight: Phillip Tyrone Griffin's death garnered 116 words in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*; 57 in *The Seattle Times*. Samuel Brown's death was announced in just 66 words in the *Times*; the *P-I* chose not to report the 25th murder in Seattle in 2002.

On August 13th, Griffin, 23, was killed with a single shot, at the foot of the stairwell leading up to Yesler Terrace. Known as Priceless Game, he was a rising rap star, about to release his first CD.

Born and raised in Seattle's Central Area, Griffin had had a difficult life marked by poverty and violence. His mother became homeless after starting



to smoke crack when Griffin was a child. He started getting in trouble with the law in his teen years, spent time in prison, and was homeless himself at the time of his death. "The streets never showed me neglect," he wrote in one of his rap songs, but some of his music seethed with his despair and anger.

On September 13, Brown, 55, was found shot to death in the head and chest under the 12th Avenue Bridge. Rumors spread quickly that he was shot execution-style. There had been joy in his music: Sam was a fine gospel singer who often sang in Pike Place Market with the street group The Apostles. He had been evicted from his housing project a few months before his death, and had been living on the streets.

Originally from Chicago, he had children here whom he loved, and family. "He was very kind to women and children," says his friend Shirley. Brown had been trying to get clean for a while, although according to his friend Portia, he hadn't been doing it for the right reasons: he was trying to get a welfare check.

Although the homeless women's groups WHEEL and the Church of Mary Magdalene did Women in Black rituals for both Griffin and Brown, the homeless community seemed unsurprised by, even resigned to these murders. Approached during the Women in Black cleansing ritual at 8th and Jackson (the site of Griffin's murder), a dozen people who apparently live on the grasslands at the top of the Yesler Terrace stairs seemed to take the ritual, and Philip Tyrone Griffin's death, as a matter of course.

The first sign of a crack in this facade came during the vigil for Sam Brown two weeks later. Standing next to me that day, a homeless woman named Carol cried continuously through the hour, in part out of empathy for Sam, whom she'd known, in part because of intense bursitis in her left shoulder. She stood the whole vigil despite her pain, and later said, "It felt like the Lord descended on me during that hour."

After Sam Brown's death, there was much speculation about the cause of his murder. Rumors on the streets were rampant that Sam was killed for becoming a police snitch; that someone had snitched on his snitching. Sure enough, on September 26th, *The Seattle Times* reported:

"A Seattle man was charged yesterday with murder for allegedly killing another man expected to testify against him in a drug case. Bobby Joe Lyons, 54, is accused of shooting Samuel Brown.... Prosecutors said that earlier this year police had enlisted Brown as an informant and sent him on a controlled mission to buy crack from Lyons."

A day earlier, a suspect had been apprehended in Griffin's murder, although

Continued on Next Page

Driving for justice



WHILE THE SEATTLE SEAHAWKS WERE BEATING THE MINNESOTA VIKINGS INSIDE SEAHAWKS STADIUM ON SEPTEMBER 29, OUTSIDE THE STADIUM, PROTESTERS DEMANDED A BETTER INQUEST PROCESS THAN THE ONE INTO THE DEATH OF ROBERT THOMAS SR. A CITIZEN INQUEST RULED IN MID-SEPTEMBER THAT THE SHOOTING OF THOMAS BY AN OFF-DUTY POLICE OFFICER IN APRIL WAS JUSTIFIED. IN THIS PHOTO, CARL MACK, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SEATTLE CHAPTER OF THE NAACP IS HELD BACK BY SEATTLE POLICE OFFICERS AS HE AND OTHER PROTESTERS TRY TO MOVE INTO THE STREET OUTSIDE THE STADIUM. PHOTO BY GEORGE HICKEY.

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

A Neighborhood Transformed

Central District Forum looks for heart of Seattle's Black community

By Adam Holdorf

The changing character of Seattle's historically Black neighborhood will be in the spotlight later this month, at an event put on by the Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas.

Seven neighborhood leaders will look at how the neighborhood's businesses, homes, and cultural life have changed as the Central District struggles with gentrification. The question of the night is: Is the community that African Americans built still there for them?

It's a question tinged with history and personal perspective. When Adrienne Bailey came back to her mother's house in 1996, after 13 years living in D.C. and Dallas, she found a neighborhood undergoing "heart-wrenching" changes.

The U.S. Census bears her out: during the 1990s, the Central District's Black population dropped 20 percent. As people of other races moved in, housing prices went up.

Bailey is director of the Community Outreach Partnership Center, a new program on Union Street sponsored by Seattle Central Community College and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The center is dedicated to job training, business development, and the neighborhood's economic revitalization. She will take part in the panel discussion.

Bailey says she came back to find new neighborhood councils planning the District's future. But she detected an exclusivity in some participants' attitudes that would alienate longtime Black community members. There was, and remains, some "racial discomfort" on the local council, she says.

The media usually writes about gentrification when it ignites a skirmish. The Central District's transformation is no exception. Recently, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* exposed the First African Methodist Episcopal Church's struggle

to decide the future of its historic building on 14th and Pine Street. *The Stranger* recently reported on white neighbors' fears of appearing racist as they called on city officials to shut down a Madison Street nightclub owned and patronized by African Americans.

The more mundane side of gentrification is the story of African American landowners who can't get access to the financing and expertise that would enable them to do something with their land. Without it, their lots continue to sit vacant.

Bailey knows one man who owns property in the Madison Street area in such a

situation. "People ask him, 'Why don't you just sell, and let someone else deal with it?' Well, because he'll get displaced."

Bailey believes people who want to develop their property should get technical assistance from a local government or nonprofit agency.

The changes to the neighborhood are reflected in people's habits, says Bailey. "Some of the new people barely talk to their neighbors," she says. "They've got a good investment, they're living here, but they're still shopping outside the Central District. Mainly, they seem to say, 'Let's put up a fence.' Growing up here, I used to run through people's yards; now if you did that you'd just hit a wall."

Also on the panel that night will be Dr. Carver Gayton, grandson of the founder of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church; Adrienne Caver-

Hall, managing director of the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center; local real estate agent Paul Bascomb; and Ernie Dunston, organizer of a regular community meeting called The Breakfast Club.

Central District Forum program director Michele Lee says the evening will discuss more than gentrification. African Americans' access to artistic pursuits, for example, is a crucial question for the area.

Bailey says she is dismayed by the lack of support for African American artists. She wants more people showing up at events at the neighborhood's Langston Hughes Arts Center, for example. If things changed, maybe an artistic exodus could be turned around. Her sister,

a dancer who also grew up in the area, "comes back every once in a while and then says, 'I have to leave again.'"

The Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas was founded by Stephanie Ellis Smith three years ago, when she realized her goal of systematically presenting arts and intellectual fare to Seattle's African American community.

The Forging of a Black Community
Seattle's Central District from 1870
through the Civil Rights Era
Quintard Taylor



ONE VOICE IN THE ONGOING
DISCUSSION ABOUT THE PAST
AND FUTURE OF THE
CENTRAL DISTRICT'S BLACK
COMMUNITY.

"How Central Is the Central District to Seattle's Black Community?"

A panel discussion with longtime residents and leaders, second in the "Which Way Seattle?" series organized by the Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas

Tuesday, October 22, 2002
\$7 admission; \$5 for CD Forum members

For more information, call 323-4032 or go to www.cdforum.org.

"I was looking for a place to go where I could get contemporary Black cultural stuff. There's a fair amount of historical studies and events out there now. But there's so much going on, around the nation, and I wanted to harness that."

Contrary to Bailey's experience, Smith says Seattle's been a receptive environment. "This town is an unusually nurturing and supportive environment for Black programming," she says. "You wouldn't think that, in a city this homogeneous, there'd be much interest. But the kind of response we get shows there's a need." ■

For more on the Central District Forum's 2002-2003 season, go to www.cdforum.org.

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.

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10/3//02

SONGS Continued from Previous Page

that suspect's name has not yet been released.

Even though arrests have been made relatively quickly, there is still an ominous silence about Brown and Griffin on the streets and in the newspapers. It's though a part of Seattle has become inured to the violence that is cutting short the lives and the potential of so many poor people of color.

As I was riding the #42 bus to Columbia City a few days ago, a teenage girl pointed to the hill beneath the 12th Avenue Bridge and said to her young friend, "Did you hear what happened to Sam Brown?" They reminisced about Sam's singing, his family. As I was trying to screw up my nerve to interrupt their private conversation with news of WHEEL's vigil for Sam Brown, they turned to an acquaintance who was sitting next to me, dealt him a dime bag of marijuana, and started rolling the biggest joint I had ever seen. They were lost to me then; I became unspeakably sad. And I remembered what Sam's friend Portia quietly said to me at the women's day center: "I've had this feeling ever since I heard about Sam that things are going to get worse. I'm just scared." ■

—Michele Marchand

poetry

Backstreet Bum We Meet

Standing, straining our collective ears
toward some roughneighborhood understanding
thru his crackedpavement phrasing...
how he'd got bashed twice
by a trash truck
and still survived, told in that
hauntingly human-like language
which orchestrated our ears raptly toward
wanting to take on more —as his going on about "home"
in that vast jerryshack city of cardboard
hovels sprawling beyond the railroad viaduct
and his pridefully being
called on often to perform
coat-hanger abortions long after midnight
challenges even more grisly than
trying to control the screams
of dope fiends...
we could see ourselves leaning
noticeably closer to catch every detail
of his draft, sensing how this
mere derelict might well be
the worldly-wisest one
of us all

— JIM DEWITT

Reprinted from Street News, New York City.

I Can See You

I can see you peeking in through the windows
the windows don't really exist out here
exist out here on the cold hard streets
the cold hard streets where I have been
where I have been hiding from the world
the world that pretends we do not live
we do not live in the same way they do
way they do things like crossing roads
crossing roads to peek into windows
into windows of scared and defenseless
defenseless people and say I can see you

—TAIL

Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning



Well, now I'm distracted again. Saturday I was trucking right along, doing what I usually do, namely contemplating the meaninglessness of existence. That is, I was thinking how I was OK with the meaninglessness of existence as long as it (the existence) continued unabated and without any serious dips in quality. And then CNN reports that 34.6 pounds of possibly weapons-grade uranium was found in a Turkish taxi.

34.6 pounds of U-235 here, 34.6 pounds of U-235 there, and pretty soon, holy crap, WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE.

As many of you know I have a naturally distractible constitution. I take pills for it and nice doctors help me find ways to cope with irrational anxieties and fears BUT THIS

ISN'T ONE OF THE IRRATIONAL ONES.

So I am coping away anyhow, ha, ha, thinking about taxi driving. There's nothing like a cab story to make me think of my own old cab driving days.

I drove for one of Seattle's big taxi companies back in the eighties when cab driving in Seattle sucked. I don't like to say the name of the cab company 'cause they still might have hard feelings about it all, but their cabs were green.

In those days I was even crazier than I am now and the dispatchers knew it so they didn't bother me too much. They let me sleep in my cab all I wanted and gave most of the good business to the one or two sane drivers. But sometimes the dispatchers would wake me up, if they had something that really seemed urgent, because they knew that I was kind of geeky and that, on account of that, they could trust me to find most any address.

So one day when I was up in North Seattle I was told over the radio to go to Stevens hospital in Edmonds and "get the package." Even though I'd never been to Stevens, the dispatcher was sure that I could find it. It was wonderful to inspire such confidence and I drove out there glowing with pride for being

so useful.

I wondered what it would be this time. Once it had been a cornea. I had wondered what the recipient would say if he/she knew that the cab driver that brought it to the hospital was a homeless man who couldn't, himself, afford cab fare. Sometimes I carried blood samples for AIDS testing. Once it was a mystery organ in an ice chest. The most important package I ever hauled was a heart monitor that I drove 100 miles to where it was needed for a child's surgery.

I loved the hospital package runs. Not only was I performing a valuable and possibly life-saving service, but also vouchers paid for the trips in advance and the passengers never started an argument.

Well, the package at Stevens turned out to be a bag of excrement bound for the Swedish Hospital pharmacy.

Now, I had enough sense to ask the people sending it what the Swedish Hospital needed with a bag of excrement. I mean, couldn't they provide their own, etc. But I was firmly told that the Swedish Hospital pharmacy would know what to do with it, and not to worry myself about it. So I shut up and took the bag and my voucher and headed south.

I made good time, so I was fairly happy when I set the bag on the counter at Swedish and announced, "package from Stevens." Then the pharmacist opened the package, looked in, and shouted at me, "WHAT THE HELL IS THIS SH*T?!!"

Damn my hide. I told him, "That, the hell, is exactly what that is." Then I tried to settle him by telling him, not to worry, it was paid for.

Speaking of not worrying — of course any geek could tell you instantly that there was no way that could have been 34.6 pounds of U-235 in that Turkish cab, or the stuff would've been too hot to handle. Literally.

Now I wonder, why did they say it might have been bound for Iraq, when all the signs were it was going to Syria? It was found near the Syrian border. You don't have to go through Syria to get to Iraq from Turkey.

You'd think someone out there WANTS us to worry, wouldn't you? ■



Like you,
I dream. I hope
and fear and love and laugh
and bleed. Inside, I'm a person
like you.

My life —
It's not like yours.
My struggles are different.
Those differences are all you see —
not me.

People
put ramps into
buildings — but attitudes
can lock me out as well as steps,
or steel.

Bullies
of all ages
taunt me in their weakness.
Mothers hush their children when they
question.

You stare
or, worse, ignore
me. Pretend I'm not there.
You assume, and let assumptions
blind you.

But I
still dream. I hope
and fear and love and laugh
and bleed. You and I could be friends
one day.

Tear the barriers down!

— RIA STRONG

Harlequin

She'll bus home alone,
No children, no hubby.
With mousy brown hair
And a little too chubby.

She dreams of that man,
She may meet all by chance.
And she goes home to leftovers
And a dimestore romance.
If they only knew,
The deep passion inside,
How she'd sing with abandon
Her glorious sighs.

That behind her pale lips
There dwells a soft pout,
A silk and lace woman,
She craves to let out.

Oh, how she longs to
Have someone to love her.
But they are all blind
And judge books
By their covers.

Next time you see her,
Specks perched on her nose,
Remember the seed
That produces the rose.

And take time to notice,
Cause some lucky stiff,
Will remember plain boxes
Hide fabulous gifts.

— ELIZABETH BROWN

Published originally in the April, 2001 edition of Calgary Street Talk.

JAYAPAL Continued from Page 1

Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington.

We started by thinking we'd focus on hate crimes by individuals against individuals, but ended up discovering this enormous need to be working on behalf of entire communities against government actions that targeted immigrant communities of color.

We're seeing the very presence of these communities being threatened. They are in some deep dark way becoming an endangered species.

The federal government is using immigration as a big hammer. But we can mobilize locally. So we worked with the Seattle mayor and the Seattle Police Department and passed a policy that says police officers will not ask about immigration status. We got agreements locally that local law enforcement doesn't have the resources to be handling immigration and doesn't want to be involved with these disputes.

One strategy of Ashcroft and the INS is to enforce technicalities ignored in the past and search out those immigrants with minor violations. For instance, when you get immigration status you must report a change of address within 10 days if you move. I lived here for 20 years on a green card and never registered a change in address. It's onerous to get the forms and do the paperwork. Now we are hearing that people, again selectively and according to country of origin, are being arrested for this minor violation. What used to be a slap on the hand is now detention and deportation.

Lappé: What's happening when people are detained?

Jayapal: A lot of times detainees aren't even allowed to call their families. Often, when people get detained they're moved from detention center to detention center so they're difficult to track. At a recent hearing, Ashcroft was asked whether detainees are being denied a right to legal counsel. He said there's no need for these people to have legal counsel.

What people might not understand is that while it may seem like it's not affecting you, this is just the beginning. Once you erode civil rights, it's hard to bring them back. It took 20 years after McCarthyism. There already is movement to restrain the rights of many groups; and if my safety is compromised, so is yours.

At a recent community meeting, a

Somali man said he's been getting calls from a man who claims to be from the FBI asking about family members. In another case, a man claiming to be from the FBI arrived at someone's home and asked to listen to their answering machine. I recently received a call from someone saying he was from the Department of Defense. But when I spoke with DOD they said they'd never heard of him. They'd done so much contracting out, though, they told me they're not sure who is working for them.

What we need to do is reclaim what it means to feel safe, what it means to have our country feel safe. Does it make you feel safer to know that more than 1,500 people have been detained? Does it make you feel safer that Operation Tarmac's raid on airport workers led to 375 workers—primarily Latino and Filipino—being detained, arrested, and deported? Does it make you feel safer to know that the government is actually prohibiting people from working because of their country of origin? Does it make you feel safer to know that the USDA just pulled all foreign graduate research students out of their labs, citing fears of bioterrorism?

Lappé: What have been the kinds of hate crimes?

Jayapal: We set up a helpline, and without even publicizing it we've been getting three to four calls every day—African Americans, Afghanis, Pakistanis, Sikhs—a lot of calls about employment harassment, housing harassment, a wide range of things. It's heartbreaking. I've heard of Sikh children being yelled at in school: "You terrorist, go back to your country!"

A month ago one of our Pakistani clients was being held in a detention center. The INS told his wife they would consider changing his status if she appeared. When she arrived, they detained her and her two children and put the kids in solitary confinement. When we called on their behalf, the INS said, "Oh, that was just a mistake." Meanwhile these kids, 12 and 15 years old, had suffered through being taken from their mother and a day and a half of solitary confinement!

Not only are people being detained, but in the process, are being humiliated because their religion or culture is not understood. One day as I was leaving a

detention center, I saw a Sikh man with a towel wrapped around his head as a turban. He was trying to communicate with a guard who was demanding he remove it. I approached and he spoke to me in Punjabi. I asked what had happened to his turban; he said they'd taken it away.

I explained to the officer that asking the man to take off this towel was against his religion. In Sikhism, I explained, you must always keep your hair covered. I talked to the director of the detention center and explained the situation. He eventually agreed to let the man have his turban back. But for a Sikh man, having your turban taken off would be like having your pants removed and standing with your penis exposed. That's what they'd done to him.

Lappé: How do you define a hate crime and who is being most targeted?

Jayapal: In order to be classified as a hate crime, there has to be proof that an act of violence

has been committed because of a protected status. Even if you came to me and said, "I think you're responsible for these terrorist attacks," and shoot me, but there are no witnesses, the incident just gets reported as a crime.

All of the people killed in the weeks following September 11 were actually Sikhs. But many of these incidents were not reported as hate crimes. On December 11, a tape of Osama Bin Laden was released. On December 12, a Sikh gas station owner in Connecticut was fatally shot. In California, two weeks after September 11, a Sikh man's body was found floating in a canal. In both cases, no witnesses; in both cases the murders were not reported as hate crimes.

There are other subtler "hate crimes" that are also hard to qualify, things like employment or housing discrimination. One Iraqi family called us after they'd been harassed by their neighbors who had been pounding on their walls and calling them terrorists. The family was afraid to leave the house. We negotiated a deal with the housing authority to move them, but only after they'd been harassed for eight weeks.

We're also seeing people beginning to leave the country. A man from Burundi came into our office recently. He said he wanted to go back. This is a man who literally walked thousands of miles across the desert to escape per-

secution, to seek political asylum here, and now he's saying he wants to return. When I asked why, he said simply "I don't feel safe here anymore."

You see all of this going on and it feels hopeless. One of the biggest challenges is to find a vision for the future. A part of that, for me, is believing that if people really knew what was going on, they would stand with us.

Lappé: I've been hearing people compare what's happening today with the internment of the Japanese.

Jayapal: There are similarities to McCarthyism as well: If you couch things in terms of safety, you can ignore rights. The federal government is encouraging citizens to report "suspicious activity." But what is that? If you are an Arab-looking man taking pictures of public buildings are you suspicious? If you are a Muslim woman in hijab walking in a neighborhood you don't know are you suspicious? When you have no parameters to define suspicious activity, it comes down to what you look like.

Lappé: In all these detentions and interviews and deportations, has anyone been found that has had definite ties to a terrorist network? What have we learned to help us fight terrorism?

Jayapal: The Justice Department says that their interviews—3,000 just after September 11, and 3,000 more recently—have yet to produce any links to terrorism.

I asked our U.S. Attorney why we continue with these policies when they're yielding nothing. He said, "We have to show movement, we have to show we're doing something. In the process, some communities are going to be sacrificed." I want to know which communities we are sacrificing, and if we're sacrificing them we need to be clear about that.

Lappé: At such a time of despair, fear, and violence, where do you find your hope?

Jayapal: We're in a cycle of great chaos in every sphere of life. Yet I have tremendous faith in the balance of nature to counter chaos. I don't know if I could do this work without that faith. I also see so much hope around me when I see the people who have no money, no status, no voice—they have so many "nos"—but still they are cheerful, strong, resilient. It's a resiliency I feel I must match.

And I get hope from my son and his friends. They don't define things by race, they have a natural appreciation for nature. Through them, I see we are not born to be exclusive; something in our country is making us that way.


Everything I've ever done has been out of a belief that we can have a world that can be different—maybe not in my lifetime, but I'm not so concerned about that. ■

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Tough Gets Tougher

Documentary shares mental health workers' stories of loss, perseverance

Interview by Betsy Power

In *Dignity*, documentary filmmaker Lorian Elbert chronicled the lives of mentally ill residents of two Capitol Hill group homes. When one of them closed, she went back to see the aftermath. When *Dignity II* premieres later this month, you can take a walk down the corridors of The Summit Inn, a Seattle home for the mentally ill, and sense the quiet dignity in the eyes of the patients as they watch you pass. Elbert and her camera are discreetly at home at the Inn, allowing the scene and the people to tell their stories. The stress, the overcrowding, the humor that is necessary to get through each day — each points toward the defiant dignity that Elbert's camera captured.

Dignity II focuses on Capitol Hill's Summit Inn as it struggles through some surprising changes. After the closing of the nearby Mercer Inn, the only all-women's home for the mentally ill in King County, the number of residents there swells from 41 to 63. The viewer is thrown directly into the midst of daily life at the Inn. Staff, residents, and case-workers have all contributed to this candid glimpse into the previously all-male mentally ill housing facility, whose residents have recently been forced to double up. Already fragile mental states are now living in conditions that people with more fortified systems would find stressful and downright unacceptable. Food quality and quantity, already a depressing situation, has markedly deteriorated further. The Summit's staff are so overworked and underpaid that one wonders that they haven't checked into the home themselves.

A lack of funding at both the state and federal level has left the Summit, like most group homes in the U.S., understaffed and unable to properly feed and clothe their residents. Just watching the staff as they do everything from cook, clean, write progress notes, issue medication, handle residents' crises, even take the occasional peek for lice, is enough to exhaust you from the comfortable distance of your movie seat.

Last year, *Real Change* spoke with Elbert after the debut of *Dignity* ("Dignity," October, 29, 2001), and we have caught up with her again as *Dignity II* is being prepared for its first public screening on October 23 at 911 Media Arts in Seattle.

Real Change: Remind us how the *Dignity* project came about.

Lorian Elbert: It started in Los Angeles at a place called Harbor View House, where I spent a year documenting the house and residents in black-and-white still photography. I also collected poetry and personal statements from residents. I was hoping I would find a book

publisher for those images. When I moved to Seattle, I tried to find homes similar to the one in Los Angeles so I could continue the book project, to make it more diverse. So I searched Seattle, and I found the Summit and the Mercer and started doing still photography. It was pure luck that I met Derek Stokes, who let me borrow his camera to shoot *Dignity I*.

RC: How do *Dignity* and *Dignity II* differ in content?

Elbert: *Dignity* is mainly focused on the residents, and *Dignity II* is mainly focused on the staff. The closing of the Mercer had a major impact on the staff, and the fact that some of them were quitting or being laid off enabled them to speak very blatantly and honestly about what it was like for them. I went with what was the most emotional impact — in the first one, it was from the interviews with the residents and in the second it was more from the staff. I was trying to create a balance.

I also wanted to spend more time showing what their daily life is like; to really get that across to people so they could see it and feel it. And to show the impact of the Mercer closing: how crowded it is, how long they have to stand in line now just to eat breakfast, lunch, or dinner. You can see how they are crammed into the hallway and how boring it is to just stand there and wait to eat.

RC: How do the two films differ in style and form?

Elbert: *Dignity* was the first documentary I ever made. I tried to learn from it. I tried to get closer to people's faces. I used the tripod more often. I was able to borrow a lapel mike for many of the interviews in *Dignity II*. So hopefully that is an improvement for audio. For *Dignity I* the music was all-rights music. For *Dignity II* it was vital to me to get nothing but original music for the whole documentary. I found three local bands, ota-prota, Leisure World, The Northern Souls and a band in the U.K., Dean Cook of Tenboy, that I personally liked. In terms of emotional impact it really makes a difference to have original music.

RC: What has been the biggest challenge you have had to face in creating these two documentaries?

Elbert: For me the issues have been monetary. Sometimes you have to stop and ask what is the cost of this. I am spending so much time and energy doing these documentaries and so far I haven't been able to get any funding. I am about ready to stand on Broadway with a big sign that says I need money to complete my documentary. Most people that I know

in L.A. wouldn't even start one of these projects unless they got the money first. They think it's ridiculous that I am just doing them anyway. But I just feel if you can do them anyway, then you should do them because it is not just about the money to me.

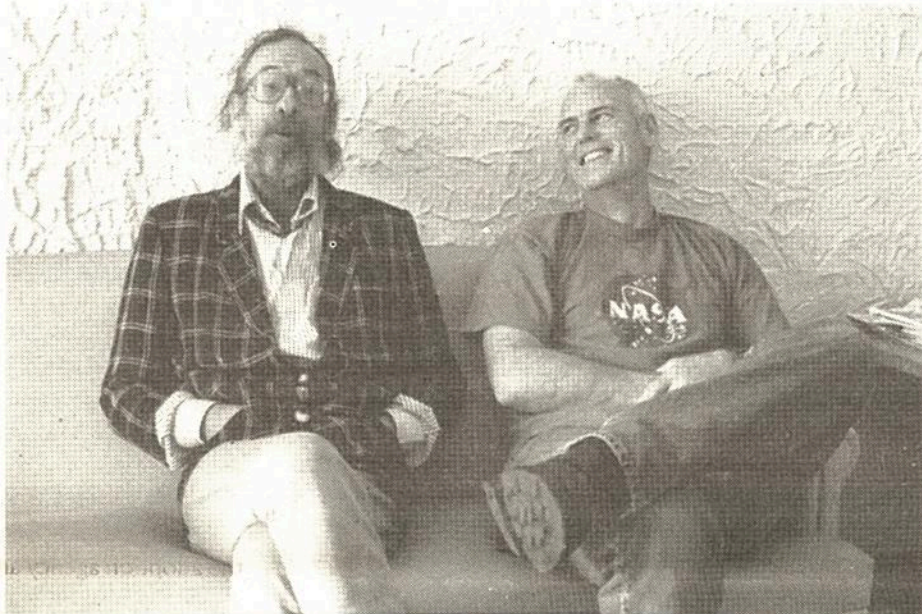


PHOTO BY LORIAN ELBERT

DIGNITY II

Director/Producer Lorian T. Elbert

Editors: Bill Zude & Mark Bauschke — www.CreativeMediaAlliance.com.

DIGNITY II is a one-hour documentary on the effects of the closing of the Mercer Inn, the only all-women's home for the mentally ill in King County, on The Summit Inn group home facility.

SCREENING: Wednesday, October 23, 7:30 p.m. at 911 Media Arts, 117 Yale Avenue North, Seattle. Admission: \$5. The screening will be followed by a question & answer period with Director/Producer/DP Lorian T. Elbert.

DIGNITY II will feature black and white photographs of residents and staff at the Mercer and the Summit Inn. Photographs and videos are available for purchase.

For more information, go to: www.schizophrenia.healthyplace2.com. Or contact the director at: documentaries1@yahoo.com. If you would like to support Elbert's work, send checks to P.O. Box 20765, Seattle, WA 98102

RC: How have you overcome these obstacles to actually make it happen?

Elbert: Seattle has been the ideal place to make documentaries, despite the hard work of actually doing it. All the non-profit organizations here are working together as a community and helping each other. There are more websites and networking meetings so that we all know each other and can help each other with our projects. It is not easy finding editors who are willing to wait to get paid or hope that maybe someday they might get paid.

RC: How have people responded to this work?

Elbert: The response I've gotten from *Dignity* has been very supportive. It means a lot to me to know that I have made a difference to somebody. Because you don't know; you're working really hard and worried about trying to get it edited. You're wondering if anyone is ever going to see it, if you're ever going to finish it, if you're ever going to be able to borrow a camera to go back and do what you need to do. So you get lost in all of that. You don't realize what you have done until you hear about it from enough other people, and you can say that all that hard work was worth it.

I got some really great emails from people just out of the blue that found out about *Dignity* from word of mouth —

psychiatrists and psychologists and people in King County. Those emails are really inspiring; they keep me going. I lend out the video to people all the time who have a sister or relative or friend who suffers from mental illness — there are a lot of people who are affected by it. I think that the more work people do, whether through writing or poetry or film or artwork, that mental illness won't have such a stigma.

RC: How would you like *Dignity II* to be received?

Elbert: I think that the timing of the screening is really good. It will give

Continued on Page 16

Cedar Hills: the final days

**County drug treatment center shuts down;
little alternative for poor addicts**

By Adam Holdorf

Photos by Casey Kelbaugh

Head out of Seattle over the I-90 bridge, turn south through Issaquah, and roll along through some forested hill country until you see signs for the landfill and a place called "Cedar Hills ATF." Turn off the main road toward the dump, and you're hit with the sardonic realization that King County hauls its garbage out to the same place that it takes poor people to get clean and sober.

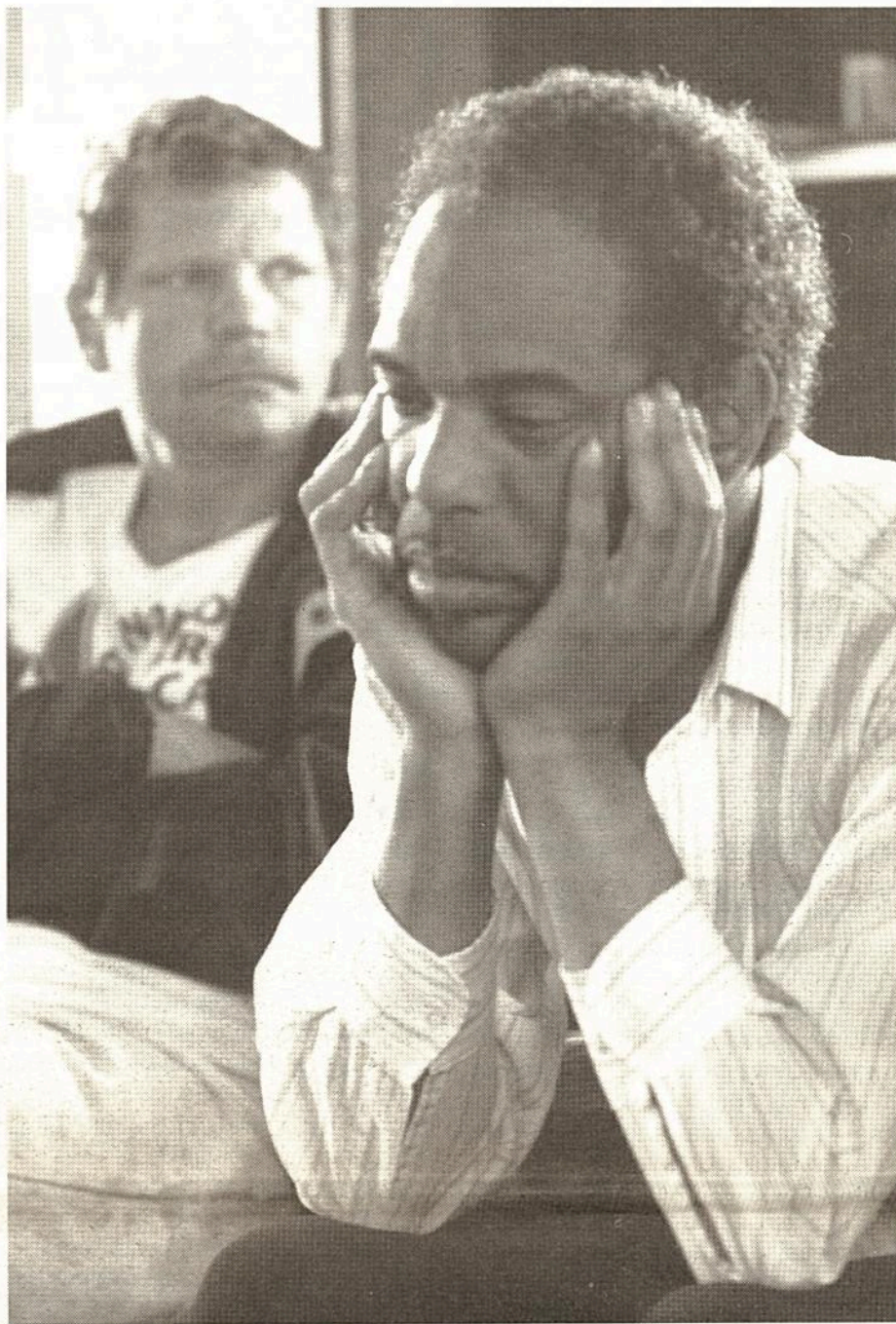
But on the way up Cedar Hills Addiction Treatment Facility's long driveway, where a red line demarcates the boundary over which patients can not cross, you also pass the county Parks Department's nursery. The same county land where trash is dumped is also a place for growth and new life. And in that sense, the 208-bed recovery center fits right in.

Cedar Hills stopped providing inpatient treatment for women earlier this year. The last man leaves the facility on October 15. After that, the beds will be stripped of sheets, the buildings locked up, the staff laid off. As the place shuts down, a window of opportunity for poor addicts is also closing.

Drug treatment is ostensibly funded with state money funneled through King County. But the state Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse pays only a portion of the costs of offering treatment and beds, and the county, historically, has made up the difference. To keep Cedar Hills running next year

would take \$3.6 million from King County's operating budget. That's money which county executive Ron Sims and the King County Council would rather spend on treatment and jail alternatives for the county's prisoners.

So next year, the state's treatment money will go to fund 70 beds in local nonprofits' treatment programs — places like Sea-Dru-Nar and Sea-Mar. There's a small, but crucial difference in the county's policy choice. Unlike with the county criminal justice programs, you don't have to commit a crime in order to recover at Cedar Hills.



One in 10 of Cedar Hills' patients are coming from the justice system — they're there because the terms of their sentence mandate it. It's treatment or a longer spell in jail. Nine out of 10 are coming from state case workers who certify they have a chronic alcohol or

drug problem that prevents them from working. But three out of four of Cedar Hills' patients have been convicted of some crime in the past.

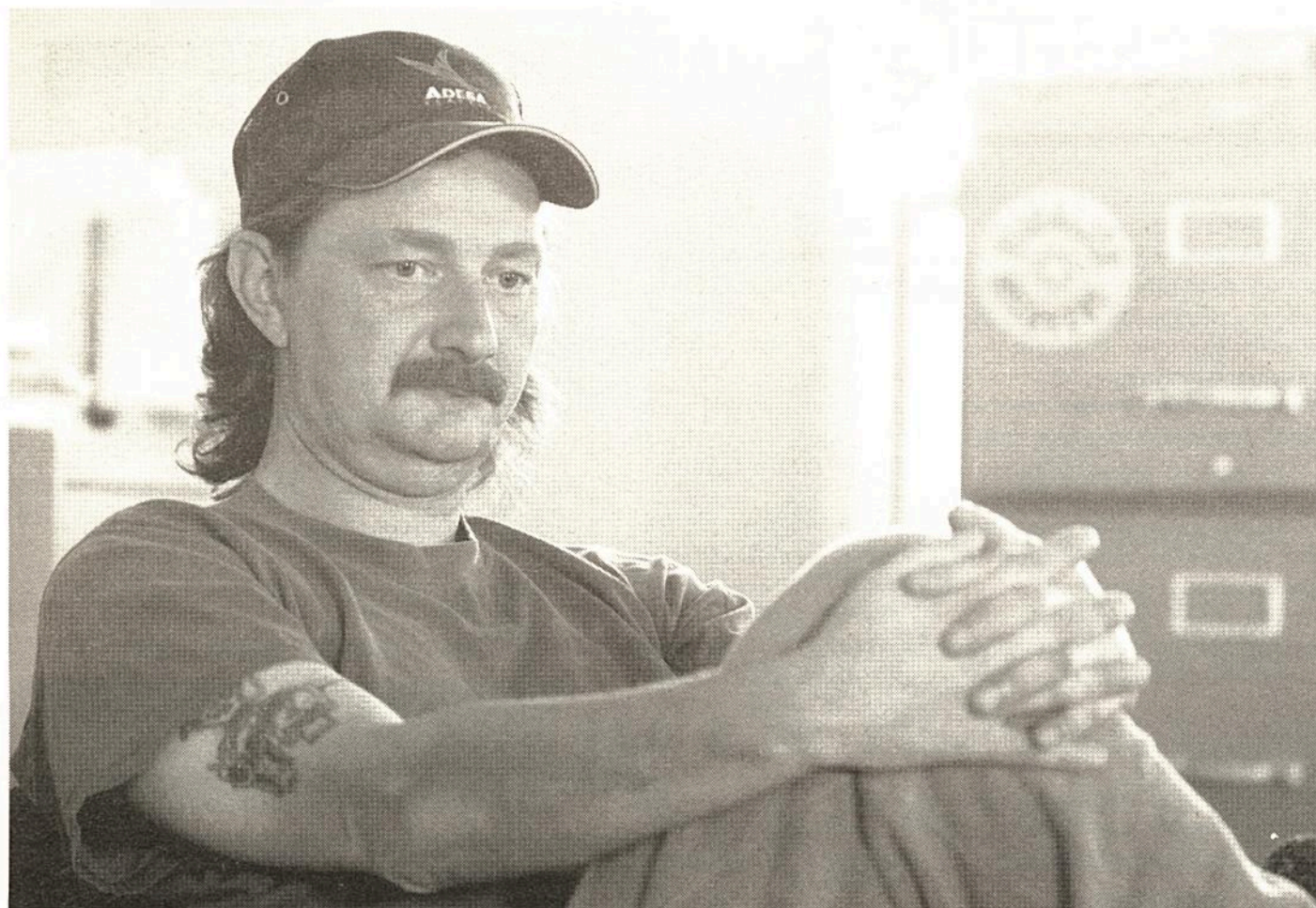
"To some degree, we're a jail diversion program," says Tony Cebollero, Cedar Hills' assistant administrator. And the element of coercion — the fact that some people have to be here, if they want to avoid years in prison — distracts people from recovery. Counselors believe that their patients should be thinking of nothing else besides the need to stay sober. It's a common challenge, says Cebollero.

"Any time you look at the percentages, you have to be aware that even the non-criminals come here with a hidden agenda," he says. "They want their wife or kids back, maybe. They want their job back." They don't necessarily want to be sober.

And that's the crucial task of the Cedar Hills staff: persuading every patient that you can't have anything when you're using, but you can have everything when you're not.

It's 8:30 in the morning, just after breakfast in the large cafeteria, and time for the day's first group session. Counselor Phil Rohrer's office is dim. More than a dozen men file into the room, find seats in a circle, and sit up, expectantly. When everyone's there, one person speaks: "Hi, my name is Pat, and I'm an alcoholic." In his turn, each





CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW: PHIL ROHRER WENT THROUGH RECOVERY AT CEDAR HILLS AND HAS BEEN A COUNSELOR THERE SINCE 1977. HE DECIDED TO QUIT THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS WHEN A FRIEND TOLD HIM, "WHEN YOU SPEAK IN A.A., YOU MOVE PEOPLE. YOU HAVE A GIFT AND YOU SHOULD SHARE IT." "THIS IS POWERFUL STUFF," HE SAYS. "WHAT A GIFT, TO BE ABLE TO DO THIS FOR 25 YEARS."; BELOW, LEFT: CEDAR HILLS' RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM IS SITUATED NEXT TO A LANDFILL AND A NURSERY. THE CENTER OFFERS BOOKS TO PATIENTS FROM THE KING COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM; FAR LEFT: REUBEN, A PATIENT NEARING THE END OF HIS TERM IN CEDAR HILLS, SAYS HE'S STARTING TO FEEL LIKE "A FINE PIECE OF LEATHER, WELL PUT TOGETHER." CEDAR HILLS CLOSES OCTOBER 15; LEFT: CASEY, SPEAKING IN THE COUNSELING SESSION, SHARED THE VICTORY OF BEING CLEAN AND SOBER 92 DAYS. PATIENTS AT CEDAR HILLS ARE REQUIRED TO HELP COOK THE FOOD, DO THE LAUNDRY, AND KEEP THE GROUNDS CLEAN.

ALL PHOTOS BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

shares the victories of being in treatment for 30 days, or being clean and sober 80 days.

Steve leaves next week. He had a dream the night before: he was in a glass box, and in there with him were all kinds of people smoking, drinking, using drugs. He was frantically searching for a way of getting out. The day before, one of the patients had asked him for drugs. "I thought he was joking at first. Then I found out he was serious. That was incredible," he says.

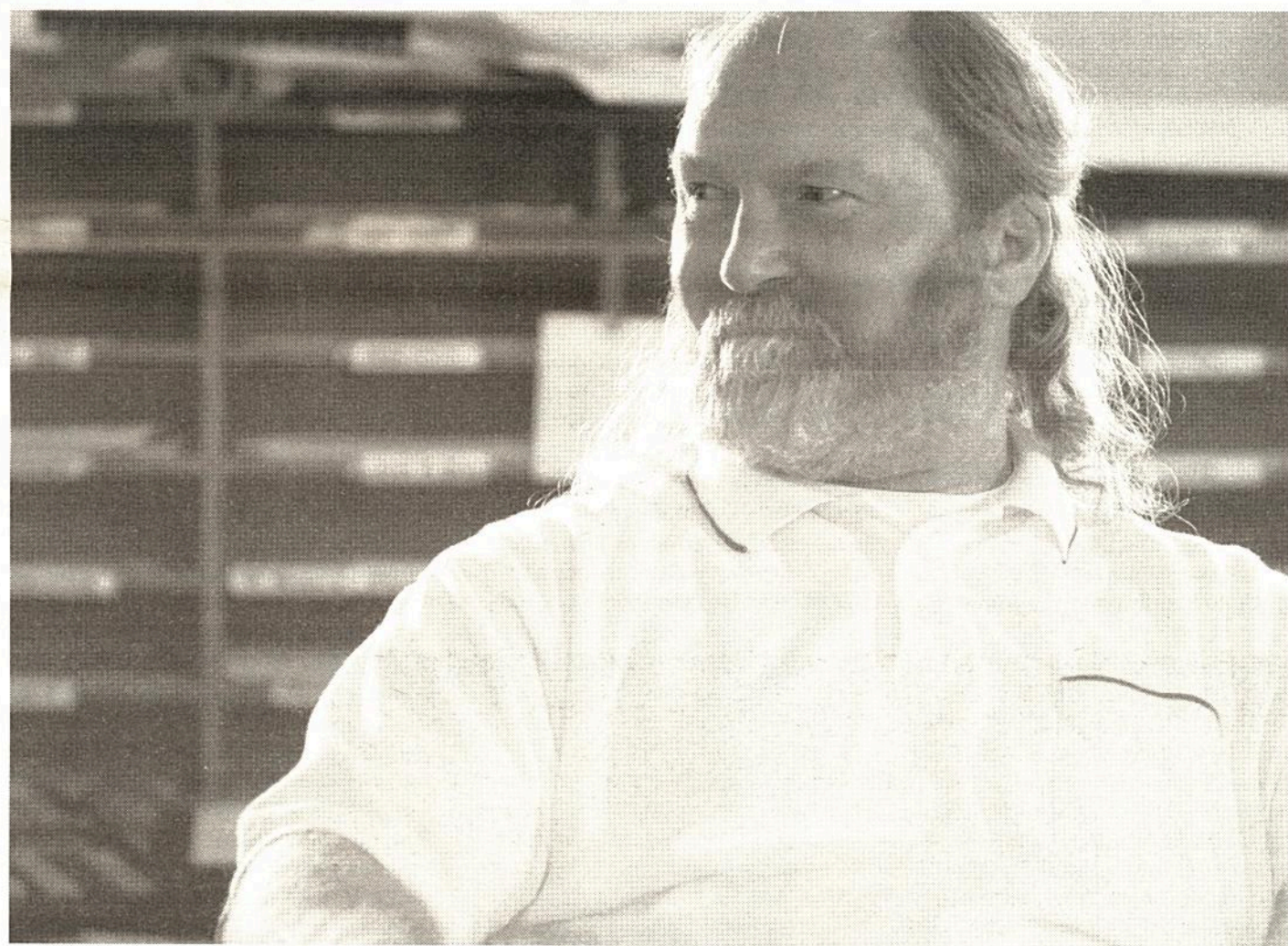
The circle finished up to the left of Rohrer. "Well, we could go around again," he says, glancing at his watch. "Or I could talk for the next 21 minutes." The men's assent to the latter was silent. He began to riff off what each had shared.

"There's a saying in these things," he says. "If you can't remember your last drunk, how do you know you've had it?" He looks around the room.

Then, there's a point in your recovery when the machinery of addiction just doesn't work anymore. However it would have been used before — in the course of celebrating a success or coping with a setback — you just don't get the prompt, says Rohrer. So there's nothing to fight against.

Case in point: "My wife walked out after 19 years of marriage; she just up and said 'I'm gone,'" says Rohrer. "I'd been sober 21 years. That night I laid my head on my pillow and had no thought of it. I said, 'Lord, do what you will, not what I want.'"

But everyone in recovery should be certain they know what taking that drink or smoking that pipe will do. Rohrer does. Even after 27 years of being sobriety, he was crystal-clear about it. "I'm a runner. I'd just get in the car and go. No note, nothing to tell anybody. I'm gone." He'd drive south, he said, "and probably wreck the car by the time I get to Portland." A week later,



he'd be in Reno, because "I'm a gambler when I drink." Same clothes on, using the credit cards. One time, "I had one clerk take my card away from me; he got paid \$25 to do it" by his creditors, he said. "I nearly came across the counter at him."

"The disease doesn't want us to think about it," Rohrer explains later, after the session had ended and the men left for the rest of their day. Inpatient treatment is designed to take an addict into a clean environment; keep him there long enough so that his body and mind regains some of its old self; and then install all the machinery of ab-

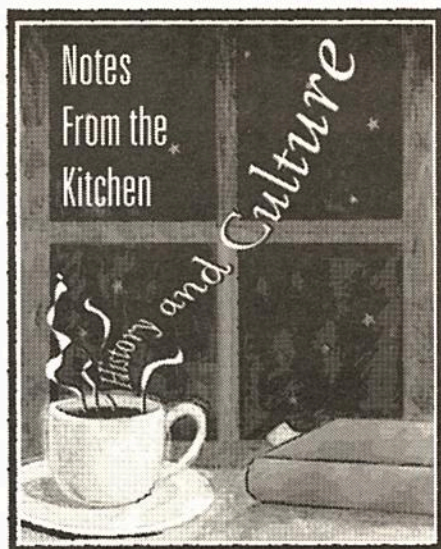
stinence: the reasons why, once you get out of Cedar Hills, you'll never want to touch another drink again. Rohrer's task is to keep offering up those reasons. He described a typical weekend for himself and another buddy who he'd met through Alcoholics Anonymous. They went for a hike, then came home and shared some smoked salmon — "the belly strip from a King salmon my friend had caught up in Alaska. He goes fishing there every year. And it was like ice cream, just melted in your mouth." If that's not enough to lure you into sobriety, what is?

That's the difference between Cedar

Hills and the kind of outpatient treatment where the temptations of using are all around you, says Rohrer.

"What inpatient treatment is selling is hope," he says. "Hope that they can get back to society, can change. And then, when they do make it back, what I'm saying is hold on to both cheeks and enjoy the ride. Because it will be like being catapulted to another dimension."

The men in Rohrer's circle seemed gladdened by his talk. And thankful to be at Cedar Hills. "It's a shame they're closing it down," said one. Around the circle, there was silent agreement. ■



The Ghost that Saved Josiah Willbarger

By Liz Smith

The sun burned hot on that August morning in 1833. Five men set out on horseback to survey boundary lines for land given by the Mexican government. They did not expect any trouble as they rode through the gentle rolling hills of Tejas, as it was called back then. The five men who rode out that day from Reuben Hornsby's settlement, where they had spent the night, were Mr. Strother, Mr. Haynie, Mr. Christian, Mr. Standifer, and Josiah Willbarger. After a morning of exploration, they spotted a lone Comanche Indian and gave chase, but he escaped into the brush. They stopped at Pecan Springs to eat their noon meal of cornbread, beans, and coffee.

All of a sudden, blood-curdling war cries pierced the air. They were set upon by a large band of Comanches firing guns and shoot-

ing arrows. Strother was killed outright. Christian received a mortal wound to the chest. Willbarger, though both legs were pierced with arrows, went to Christian's aid and dragged him behind a tree. Standifer and Haynie, firing their pistols as they ran, made for their horses. Willbarger staggered towards them, calling for them to wait. As they galloped madly away, they saw him shot through the neck with an arrow, falling to the ground.

Standifer and Haynie fled to the safety of Reuben Hornsby's cabin some eight miles away, thankful they still wore their hair, certain their companions were dead.

The Comanches killed Christian by cutting his throat. They scalped him and stole his clothes, as they also did with Strother. Believing Willbarger to be dead, though he was not, only paralyzed by the arrow through his neck, they did not cut his throat but only scalped him. He heard sounds like distant thunder, and felt the jerks, and then they left him.

Willbarger woke from unconsciousness, and with great difficulty, he extricated the arrow from his neck. Seized with terrible thirst, he crawled to the stream and drank. He fell into exhausted sleep and woke again near nightfall. Alarmed by his injuries, he labored to drag himself to Hornsby's, but was too weak. He stopped and sat under a large oak tree, waiting, alone, for the end.

He looked up to see, distinctly, a vision of his sister, Margaret Clifton. In his fevered state he wondered how this could be, as she was living several hundred miles away, near St. Louis. She spoke to him: "Do not despair. Stay here and help will come." She then moved off in the direction of Hornsby's cabin. He called after her, "Margaret, my sister Margaret, stay with me until they come! Margaret!" But she was gone.

In the meantime, the two men back at Reuben Hornsby's told their grisly story. It was decided to send for reinforcements and ride out the next day for the bodies. Finally the turmoil settled somewhat, and all went to an uneasy sleep.

At midnight, Sarah Hornsby, Reuben's wife, awoke from a vivid and startling dream. She shook her husband awake. "Josiah is wounded and bleeding, but alive." Her husband tried to pacify her, saying she was overwrought. They lay back down to sleep. Mrs. Hornsby dreamed the identical dream twice more and then, near daybreak, she awoke from her vision of Willbarger and his terrible plight. She rose and prepared breakfast and awakened the men to eat. She was firmly convinced he was alive. She gave them sheets to wrap him in and a gourd of milk. The rescue party easily found Christian and Strother and buried them. They continued the search until late afternoon, when suddenly a lone red figure rose from beneath a tree. The figure spoke: "Don't shoot, boys. It's me, Willbarger."

They wrapped him in a sheet and, with Hornsby holding the injured man in his arms, brought him to the homestead where Mrs. Hornsby and Mrs. Willbarger tended to his wounds.

Many weeks later, the Willbarger family received a letter which told that Margaret Clifton had died on the day of the Indian attack. The night she appeared to her brother was her first night in the grave. There may not be such a thing as a ghost, but how else to explain Willbarger's vision, or the three dreams of Sarah Hornsby? ■

Hill Country Red Beans and Rice

- 1 cup dried red kidney beans
- 1 Tbsp oil or butter
- 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 pound chicken Italian sausage, thinly sliced
- 1 four-ounce can Anaheim green chilies, diced
- 1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 tsp each salt and pepper
- 2 teaspoons chili powder

1. Sort, rinse and soak beans 24 hours in advance.
2. Heat oil in a large pot, add onion and garlic, sauté for 10 minutes on medium heat.
3. Add sausage and chilies and cook five minutes more.
4. Drain beans; add to pot along with tomatoes and spices. Add fresh cold water to cover.
5. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Cook for two to two and a half hours, stirring occasionally. For the last half hour, turn heat lower to avoid burning. You will need to add some more water two or three times. The dish is done when the beans are completely tender.
6. Cook rice according to package directions.
7. Spoon onto plate and ladle beans on top.

DIGNITY Continued from Page 13

people time before the holidays to donate a few things that are new and clean. It is tragic that the residents as well as staff are living below poverty. You can see it in every shot. You just roll your eyes, thinking, this is ridiculous, this can't be happening right here in Seattle. How can they feel they have any dignity, when that is what they're eating and what they're wearing everyday? On top of sharing tiny little rooms, on top of it being really crowded, on top of feeling like people don't understand them and looking down on them?

We need to take care of the people right here in our own city, right under our noses. That's really important to me; it's one of the main reasons I did this. I'm hearing them and it's affecting me. I'm not in a position to help them monetarily, but I can make the documentary and hope that there are people out there who are in a position to donate what is needed. It would make a radical difference for those residents who are living below poverty.

RC: Do you think these two videos could



PHOTO BY LORIAN ELBERT.

have an effect on the mental health industry?

Elbert: I think it would be a very useful video for anyone who is thinking of working in the mental health system. When I had a screening of *Dignity*,

there were a whole group of psychologists that came up to me after and told me that after four years of studying psychology, that video had more impact on them than all the statistics and text book research that they had read. And that they weren't the same after having watched it. That meant a lot to me. I would really like to get it out there in the schools. I think it would be good for high school students too — it would give them a sense of compassion. All of those people are likeable; you can see it in their smiles. How honest they are always amazes me. And they are very wise. It's just right there.

RC: What is the future of these two documentaries?

Elbert: I am going to try to get the documentary on a cable channel or PBS station so that more people can see it and have exposure to it. I also just sent *Dignity* and *Dignity II* to London to submit it for a four-day mental illness documentary festival in April 2003 called Mind Matters. We need to do this type of festival in all the major cities in the U.S. because there are so many people

suffering from mental illness or who work in the field and feel really alone. The stigma is still really high.

RC: What is next for you?

Elbert: I just finished shooting a half-hour documentary on chinchillas. God was in a really goofy mood when he made chinchillas. After doing two documentaries on mental illness, I really needed a mental break. I needed something light and quirky and silly and soft and fluffy and adorable, just to balance it out.

The video I am working on now is called *Dangerous Strangers*. I am working with the Seattle Police Department. It will be a 15-minute video for very young children on how they can avoid child abduction situations. I'll be working directly with officers and their children, who will be the actors. I'm hoping to get it into the school system to have it available as an educational video.

And I still have a list of about 50 documentaries I would like to do and I'm always thinking of new ones. It has always just been a lack of funding that has kept me from doing them. ■

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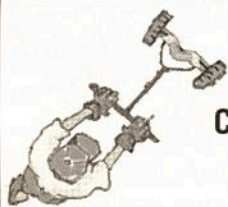
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Thursday, August 29, 8:51 a.m., 18th Ave Apt. Building. An officer responded to a call about a trespasser. He arrived and spoke to the manager of the building, who stated that the suspect — a 29-year-old white male — had been staying at the apartment of his girlfriend's sister, but that she had kicked him out. He had been sleeping on the stairs of the building for the last two days. The manager asked the officer to trespass him from the building. Officer discovered the suspect asleep on the stairs, and ran his name for warrants, finding a Department of Corrections (DoC) warrant. The suspect was verbally warned not to return to the apartments, and was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Wednesday, September 4, 2:30 p.m., Western and Virginia, Victor Steinbrueck Park. Officers working with the Neighborhood Corrections Initiative — a collaboration between the Seattle Police Department, DoC, and the INS — were conducting an "emphasis" on Victor Steinbrueck Park. Citizens have complained about liquor and drug use in the area. While observing a group in the corner of the park, an officer noticed a person known to him to be on active supervision with the DoC. He contacted the suspect, a 25-year-old transient white male, and checked his name with the DoC. He found that the suspect had been previously deported for. He contacted the INS, who interviewed the man and detained him on charges returning to the U.S. after deportation. The suspect was taken and detained at the INS holding facility.

Same day, time, and location as above. Another officer patrolling Victor Steinbrueck Park as part of the Neighborhood Corrections Initiative observed a suspect drinking from an open can of beer. The man spoke very little English, and was interviewed by an INS agent. After this interview the suspect was detained for entering the U.S. illegally, and removed to the INS holding facility.

Saturday, September 7, Victor Steinbrueck Park. An officer observed the suspect, a 29-year-old transient black male, in the park after closing. He was contacted and ID'd, and a drug warrant was turned up and he was arrested. A search prior to arrest recovered a small bag of suspected marijuana. The suspect was transferred to the precinct, where the contents of the small bag tested positive for drugs. He was booked into King County Jail. ■

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

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ANTI-CRACK Continued from Page 3

This is not unlike statements made by Ella Sonnenberg, one of the founders of Positive Prevention. In a *Seattle Weekly* interview, Sonnenberg states, "It seems to me that birth control is just a simple idea that would solve the whole problem." Sonnenberg goes on to state that she would rather spend "two hundred dollars to prevent such a disaster — where a child is born with a lot of birth defects, maybe HIV-positive, and then after they get out of intensive care the parents don't get them back out of the hospital and they end up in foster homes or in prison... a child born drug exposed is doomed to fail."

What Sonnenberg's position fails to reflect is that it is highly unlikely for women who are known to have drug addictions to an illegal substance to even keep their babies once the child has been born in a hospital. It is often the case that Child Protective Services removes the child from the mother's care shortly after delivery.

Joelle Brouner community organizer at CARA and founder of the Disability Pride Project, sheds light on the concept of the "damaged baby."

"The damaged-baby image establishes that infants born to drug-using mothers are worth less, and that the diminished worth is based on the assumption that these babies will experience short- and long-term health effects based on their parent's drug use," she says. Brouner points out that the potentially extensive medical needs of the baby due to birth defects is something that negatively impacts the broader public.

"The assumption is based on really old thinking: that people with disabilities are more likely to be criminal, have poor character, and be a burden to society," Brouner argues. Brouner describes a Nazi propaganda poster that features a large Aryan farmer holding a scale across his back with a person with disabilities on each side of the scale. At the bottom of the poster, in bold letters, the German word for "burden" is printed.

"Similar to this poster, CRACK's image of a damaged baby on their website projects the idea that people with disabilities need to be taken care of. This image of babies with disabilities that become burdens is something that the broader society begins to loathe because caring for them takes too much energy and resources." If we become a society that never learns to support people with additional needs, the result is a collection of disconnected people who are in proximity to each other, rather than a community of people who value interdependence.

So, what would it mean to actually work towards reducing the number of drug-exposed births? As a society, we could begin with supporting pregnant and parenting women. Among the possibilities:

1 Strive to see the connections between stress, racism, and infant health. "Things like change of residence, bills that cannot be paid, the death of someone close, and domestic and sexual violence are contributing factors to the stress of pregnant women," according to the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, a survey new mothers statewide by public health advocate Maria Carlos.

● **Do a better job caring for women who survive sexual and physical violence.** The United States Department of Justice shows that rape victims with post-traumatic stress disorder are 26 times more likely to have two or more major serious drug abuse problems than non-victims.

● **Protect the most vulnerable.** The National Black Women's Health Project shows that young urban women of color who've been divorced or separated experience the highest rates of rape. Poor women and women of color are more likely to experience sexual violence, more likely to have post-traumatic stress disorder, and more likely to have drug abuse problems as a result. Further, poor women often turn to drug-related income sources to support their family in situations of crisis. They are more likely than men to engage in sex work or sell drugs in order to gain resources to finance their addiction or to feed their families.

● **Prepare for drug-affected babies.** Very few drug treatment centers offer neonatal care. Thus, women struggling with addiction are almost at a complete loss as to what to do when they become pregnant.

Drug treatment centers are losing support as we saw with local drug treatment center Street Outreach Services being forced out of its downtown location earlier this year. Besides neonatal care, few, if any, drug treatment centers offer prenatal care or childcare. CARA feels that it is critical to support pregnant and parenting women who are drug users. The answer to solving the problem of children born drug exposed is not to give money to women to not reproduce, but instead spend money on drug treatment that supports pregnant and parenting women.

To help CRACK lose steam, critics must support real solutions for women and their families including providing necessary resources such as food, housing, free or low cost health care, prenatal care, child care, and accessible drug treatment. We can help find these resources by continuing to pressure local, state, and national representatives to divest from the War on Drugs, take funds out of counter-productive institutions like prisons, stay away from racist quick-fix strategies, and invest deeply in long term sustainable strategies for women and our communities. ■

Theryn Kigvamasud-Vashti is the Community Organizer with the Black People's Project and Communities Against Rape and Abuse (<http://www.cara-seattle.org>).

CLASSICS CORNER



by Perfess'r Harris

Lately, we at Classics Corner have been thinking about how life continually kicks some people in the teeth while others get nice comfy chairs in which their posteriors are eternally caressed. Here, in gloomy Seattle, this is what we do while we wait out the long rainy days with a nice hot espresso, or maybe sit alone in our room contemplating suicide.

This cheerful ideation was brought on by *Cinderella Liberty*, the 1973 Seattle waterfront film starring James Caan and Marsha Mason. *Cinderella Liberty* depicts a Seattle where skid row stretches all the way down First Avenue and up Pike to the freeway. Smith Tower dominates the skyline, and the pre-Amazon PacMed Building broods alone on a hill like a medieval castle, far above the serfs of our gritty little town.

Some of us like to romanticize the period when bars and strip joints were everywhere and we commoners could always find a crappy job and a cheap place to crash, but we realize that poverty sucks, even when there's beer.

Some of us like to romanticize this period, when bars and strip joints were everywhere and we commoners could always find a crappy job and a cheap place to crash, but when we stop to think about it, we realize that poverty sucks, even when there's beer.

But anyway, back to the movie. Caan plays John Baggs Jr., a Navy grunt who is left ashore when a nasty boil on his ass keeps him from sailing. He sets out to get laid and strikes up a relationship with Maggie Paul, a bar hooker who's 12-year-old son has a switchblade and a head full of rotten teeth. It's love at first sight.

After a brief, scary courtship, consisting mostly of stalking activity, Maggie,

Baggs, and the boy start to talk marriage. She's already pregnant with a child of indeterminate origin, and her fondest dream is to shop at the PX, holding her head high as a Navy wife. The baby, however, dies, and their lives predictably return to shit.

In the movie's most poignant moment, Maggie says, "I'm glad he's out of it. If you have to die anyway, you're better off doing it in the first week. You're better off not even being born."

"Shut up Maggie," says Baggs.

"So, Perfess'r Harris," you're probably thinking, "this is really quite fascinating, but what has it to do with the Classics?"

This brings us to Sophocles, who said pretty much the same thing in *Oedipus at Colonus* 2,400 years ago. Oedipus has been reduced to a blind beggar, and the Chorus, reflecting on the futility of long life in a hard world, says, "Not to be born is best when all is reckoned in, but once a man has seen the light the next best thing, by far, is to go back where he came from quickly as he can."

This, to us, is a timely reminder that there is a difference between those of us who have normal problems and those of us born to tragedy. In the streets of Belltown it's hard to miss. A *Real Change* vendor recently told us "The character of a person's life is in the lines of poetry on their face." The lines here in Belltown run deep and long. ■

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October

Notables

Thursday 10/3

The City of Seattle Office of Civil Rights offers a free **anti-discrimination law workshop** for anyone interested in learning the basics of fair employment, housing, contracting and public accommodation. 1:30 - 3:30 p.m., at the Skyway Fire District #20, 12424 76th Ave. S.; info OCR civil-rights.ocr@metrokc.gov or 206-684-4500.

Homestead Community Land Trust will host **"Permanently Affordable Housing: The Community Land Trust Model,"** a free educational event about the Community Land Trust Movement. 7 p.m., at Homestead's office, 1309 13th Ave. S.; info 206-323-1227 or <http://www.scn.org/neighbors/helt>.

General Radical Women Meeting. Learn more about their current activities and campaigns. 7:30 p.m., at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S., dinner with vegetarian option at 6:30 p.m., for \$6.50 donation; info 206-722-6057.

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. Info Rita Zawaideh, Arab American Community Coalition, 206-545-7300 or <http://www.hatefreezone.org> or theacc@yahoo.com or Arab American Hotline 206-634-9001.

Friday 10/4

The City of Seattle Human Services Dept. Homeless Training Program presents **"TANF: The Clock Has Run Out!"** with Anne Dederer, J.D. The program provides legal representation to applicants and recipients of public assistance whose benefits have been reduced, terminated, or denied. At this workshop they will answer questions and discuss local resources. 9 a.m. - Noon, at

American Red Cross, 1900 25th Ave. S. between Plum and Holgate, free, RSVP required, call 206-386-1146 and include your full name, phone number, and agency name.

Saturday 10/5

Nonviolence Training by Rosy Betz-Zall, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., at Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. N., Wallingford; info 206-782-9305.

Tree of Africa Art Festival with African music, dancing, art, food, children's activities, drum circles, and a special evening performance presented as a benefit for **Ustawi**, an African Solidarity Organization. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., plus performance at 7 p.m., at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E., day admission by donation, tickets for evening event \$15 general, \$10 student, seniors, and low-income people from Ticket Window 206-325-6500 or <http://www.ticketwindowonline.com>.

Free tour of Carlos Bulosan Memorial Exhibit; he was both a union activist and famous literary figure from Seattle. Learn about his impact on both American and Filipino-American history, presented by the Labor and Employment Law Office (LELO) and sponsored by Gabriela Network, UW-Filipino American Student Association and others. Noon - 2 p.m., at Eastern Hotel, 506 Maynard Ave. at King, International Dist.; info 206-427-2999 or <http://www.anakbayan206.cjb.net>.

Sunday 10/6

Rally, performances, and a mass **Protest Against the War on the World and U.S. Plans to Attack Iraq.** Come participate in the Not In Our Name Project. 1 p.m., at Volunteer Park on Capitol Hill, near the amphitheater; info 206-984-6256 or seattle_notinourname@speedymail.org.

"Don't Kill Your Television," Seattle Independent Media Center invites you to a night of political TV on the big screen, a monthly series featuring the best in artist and activist television programming found on "good TV" sources on a full-sized video screen. 7 - 9 p.m., this and subsequent 1st Sundays, at IMC, 1415 3rd Ave.; info Susan 206-709-0558.

Monday 10/7

The Palestine Solidarity Committee presents **South Africans Speak Out Against Apartheid in Palestine**, with Na'eem Jeenah of the Palestine Solidarity Committee of South Africa. 7 p.m., at Independent Media Center, 1415 3rd Ave., donations requested; info 206-633-1086 or <http://tour.palsolidaritygrp.org>.

Tuesday 10/8

U.S. speaking tour of Segun Aderemi on the topic **"From the Frontlines: The Struggle Against Poverty and Neo-Colonialism in Africa."** Mr. Aderemi played a leading role in organizing resistance to the military dictatorship in Nigeria. 3:30 p.m., at University of Washington, Husky Union Building, Room 200-B/C; info Greg Beiter 206-526-7185 or <http://www.socialistalternative.org/meetings.html>.

Wednesday 10/9

"The Art of Grantwriting: Telling Your Story," the Puget Sound Grantwriters Conference with keynote speaker Cheryl Clarke, author of *Storytelling for Grantseekers*. There will be opportunities to network with other grantwriters and a resource table. 7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., at Seattle Center Northwest Rooms, register by Oct. 4, tickets are \$120; info 206-367-8704 or <http://www.grantwriters.org>.

Thursday 10/10

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

Saturday 10/12

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.

The 8th Annual International Indigenous **People's Day for Justice** for Leonard Peltier and The First Nations, march, rally, and pot luck dinner, for more information, contact Harold, 206-723-5393 or Jim, 206-325-0085

Sunday 10/13

Seattle Premiere of Michael Moore's **Bowling for Columbine**, a benefit for *Real Change*. 8 p.m., Egyptian Theater, 801 E. Pine, between Harvard and Broadway on Capitol Hill, \$5. Reserve seats by calling 441-3247, x203 or emailing rsvp@speakeasy.org.

Thursday 10/17

Diversity Book Talk Series with speaker Deborah Meier, an education activist and author of *The Power of Their Ideas: Lessons for America from a Small School in Harlem*. Sponsored by University Book Store. 7 p.m., at University of Washington Kane Hall, Room 130. Admission is free, but tickets are required and available at any University Book Store.

Ongoing

Peace Vigil and leafleting to protest U.S. policy in Afghanistan, Palestine/Israel, and Iraq by Women in Black. Women wear black, men welcome to stand on the side or leaflet, 5 - 6 p.m., every Thursday at Westlake Park near 4th and Pine; info 206-208-9715. ■

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Urge Congressmen to Support Health Care Access Resolution

Issue: Close to 100 representatives have signed a resolution calling for legislation to provide health care access to all Americans by 2004.

Background: America's health system is failing: it costs too much, covers too little, and excludes too many. One seventh of Americans, 40 million people, lack insurance and suffer unnecessary illness and premature death. Tens of millions more are underinsured and cannot afford needed services, particularly medications. In addition, communities of color endure major disparities in access to quality care.

With all this in mind, the Congressional Universal Health Care Task Force was created in 2000 to promote discussion and strategic planning in Congress and the nation on how to achieve affordable, high quality health care for all. In April 2001, members of the Task Force introduced the Health Care Access Resolution (House Concurrent Resolution 99) directing Congress to enact legislation by October 2004 that provides access to comprehensive health care for all Americans. While the resolution does not specifically endorse any one model of health care reform, it does spell out 14 key attributes of a just and efficient health care system. These include a health care system that:

1. is **affordable** to individuals and families, businesses, and taxpayers and that removes financial barriers to needed care;
2. is as **cost efficient** as possible, spending the maximum amount of dollars on direct patient care;
3. provides **comprehensive** benefits, including benefits for mental health and long term care services;
4. promotes **prevention** and **early intervention**;
5. includes **parity** for mental health and other services;
6. **eliminates disparities** in access to quality health care;
7. addresses the needs of people with **special health care needs** and **underserved populations** in rural and urban areas;
8. promotes **quality** and **better health outcomes**;
9. addresses the need to have **adequate numbers of qualified health care caregivers**, practitioners, and providers to guarantee **timely access** to quality care;
10. provides **adequate and timely payments** in order to guarantee access to providers;
11. fosters a **strong network** of health care facilities, including safety net providers;
12. ensures **continuity** of coverage and continuity of care;
13. maximizes **consumer choice** of health care providers and practitioners; and
14. is **easy** for patients, providers, and practitioners to use and reduces paperwork.

Action: The only Washington representative who has signed on to the resolution is Seattle's Jim McDermott. Write the other representatives to let them know the necessity of creating a health care access law.

Norman D. Dicks, 6th District (Pierce, Kitsap, Olympic Peninsula)

Jennifer Dunn, 8th District (Bellevue)

Jay Inslee, 1st District (Kirkland, Bothell, North Seattle, Bainbridge Island)

Rick Larsen, 2nd District (San Juan islands, Skagit valley)

Adam Smith, 9th District (Kent, Auburn, Puyallup, Sea-Tac, Tukwila)

Contact information for these representatives can be found at www.house.gov. ■

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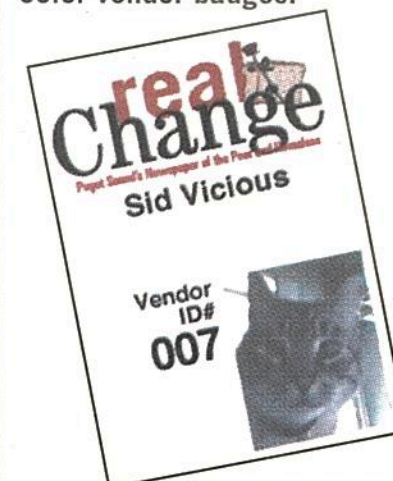
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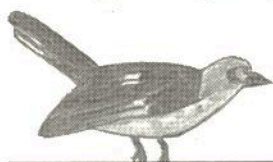
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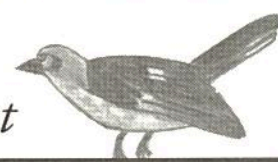
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Mockingbird Times



Washington State Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak Out



OCTOBER 2002

Written for youth and youth advocates by youth with experience

VOLUME II, ISSUE 9

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What's up with DSHS After Hours?

By BRITTANY V. LUCAS

NOW THAT THERE is a policy ordering the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services to refrain from storing homeless children in the DSHS offices during the evening hours, what does DSHS plan to do with them? I interviewed Phil Bayne, Central Intake Administrator for DSHS to get the info on the new setup.

Phil Bayne was soon to point out that the term "After Hours" had been discontinued and renamed "Central Intake." According to Bayne After Hours wasn't even a program: it was just something that "happened" because police officers had no where else to bring kids who were unable to stay with their guardians during the night. "No one ever really liked the way after hours was ran, we were all just waiting for a more efficient statewide system to be issued," Bayne explained.

Finally, after years of debating, the more "efficient system" was finally ordered into construction by Whatcom County Judge David Nichols. "Centralizing" and keeping the system smart and inexpensive became the primary objectives of building Central Intake. "We wanted a system of placing children that could be used statewide. To do this we needed to centralize our location in Seattle," Bayne said.

Central Intake works like this: Police officers or caseworkers who need emergency placement can call into the toll-free number and be referred to an actual placement in the child's residing county. In each county there are on-call caseworkers prepared to transport

and counsel kids who need emergency placements in their counties.

Bayne likes the system because it saves money and prevents lawsuits. He states that centralizing the system has saved the state more than 1.3 million dollars in Child Protective Services spending. According to Bayne, the new system has received very few complaints, though the system does have its critics.

Some people feel that centralizing the system could take away the sense of community in most counties and decrease the amount of control that communities have over their foster

youth. Bayne refuted this opinion by commenting that, "We wouldn't be taking away from the individuality of the regions in Washington. We have caseworkers stationed in every county across the state that will be dispatched to pick up youth that are in need of out-of-home placement. Centralizing the system will not take away from the individual communities involved. It will only make the system as a whole less expensive and more efficient."

Now that DSHS has formed a working referral

DSHS CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



View from Inside the System

BEING AN ADOPTED CHILD is extremely difficult in the sense that there is an inside secret to you that makes you different from other people around you. It separates you from the "perfect family" media glamour that our society publicizes and strives for. So I mainly keep my adoption to myself or only tell others that I feel I can trust. It is difficult to know the situation which brought me here and why at times I am ashamed to share with others about my adoption. I never wanted to talk about it. I felt like a freak. I felt isolated with my adopted family at times, even though they never treated me like an adopted child. I was always just "family" to them. I just knew on the inside that I was not truly connected to that family. Even now I still feel connected to no one. I have to deal with pain and confusion on a daily basis and often times it leaves me depressed and not wanting to face the world. This is my cry out to the world for everything that I am struggling through in my day-to-day life.

I recently connected with my birth family in August of 2001. This was 12 years after my adoption into a new family, a new life, and a whole loss of identity. The connection consisted of triumph and pain and things that I remain ashamed of. It was hell and at times still is. I did not go back to an emotionally stable birth family. I am a person that wants things to be done and over with so that I can move on, so I expected things that never worked out in my time. But as my birth mother says, "Time takes time." But before I get deep into moral values and excess virtues, I want to let you know about where I came from:

I was born in Seattle, Washington. I was born a drug-infected baby weighing 5 lbs. and 12 oz. with poor eye sight. My birth mother tells me that I could have fit into a shoe box. At 9 months old, I began my journey in the foster care system, along with my older brother,

when my mother left us at a relative's home while she was out using drugs. From then on I was in and out of the system as my family struggled between homelessness and my mother's neglect. My brother and I had different fathers. Mine was left back in California, uninformed about my birth, while my brother's father was in Seattle with a family that took care of the both of us when needed.



I believe that the first time my brother and I were taken, my mom was in shock and realized that she needed help. She took us to the agency at one time while struggling with her drug addiction. She tried to get herself together and get help from the system that kept my brother and I while she tried to get clean. Unfortunately, she did not receive

adequate help, causing me to be placed in more than four different foster homes until I was 2. When I was 2, my mother still did not get clean and her rights as a parent were terminated. She also lost her rights when she had my younger brother, who was also a drug-infected baby, with a separate father that did not want to claim him as his child. She told me that she did not even get a good-bye visit and that no services were offered to her in order for her to get clean.

I stayed in a foster home for three years until I was adopted by a woman that at the time was not all that interested in children. (But hey, who could resist such a cute little girl!) I grew up knowing that I was adopted. My adoptive mother made it clear to me that it was not her right to deprive me of that knowledge. My younger brother and I had no family that would take care of us, so both of us were only left with the alternative to be adopted. Unfortunately, no precautions were taken in getting us placed together. My older brother's father's family took him in, so when he turned

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Mockingbird logo by Julia Higuera

Mockingbird Times is special insert in Real Change


Letter from the Editor

WHAT IS THERE TO SAY about the beauty and bounty of Washington State as we bid farewell to a glorious summer and enjoy the vibrant colors of autumn? However, there is something to say for those of us who care about the stability and future of children and adolescents living Washington's foster care system: **DON'T BE FOOLED!** The political and economic landscape in Washington is full of anxiety and major uncertainty, especially for our most vulnerable kids. Washington economic forecasters have made it official with a projected state budget shortfall of \$2 BILLION. Governor Gary Locke and the entire state legislature are facing what many are already characterizing as one of the most difficult budget sessions in state history. There seems little doubt that "everything is on the table" and those who care about the stability and future of kids in foster care are called upon to ensure that the needs of children and adolescent in foster care are protected and prioritized.

The Mockingbird Society is joining other community organizations, advocates, and concerned citizens to ensure that the budget is not balanced on the backs of the most at-risk kids in our state. We need your participation. During every legislative

session there are pivotal times when a two-minute telephone call or a quick email from the voting public is critical. This is really no different than calling your own child's school, doctor, or coach to make your presence as an involved adult known. It reminds decision makers that this child is not alone in the world — that in fact competent, caring (and voting) adults are paying attention.

Please, **DON'T BE FOOLED!** Having a Communication Tree that can respond with short notice and send direct messages at critical times to legislators is a powerful strategy to ensure they understand the impact of their decisions on our most vulnerable kids. Please, contact us at www.mockingbirdsociety.org and join our Communication Tree. During the session we will send you information about critical issues and who in the legislature to send your message. We will have the links, phone numbers, and all the information you need to help us ensure that kids in foster care are not ignored, abandoned, or sacrificed but instead are protected and prioritized. Don't be fooled. **KIDS NEED YOU TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!**



Jim Theofelis

DSHS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

system, how do they plan to come up with the 6,300 foster homes or alternative placements that Judge Nichols ordered? The specifics on how DSHS is going find additional placements is still being worked out, including plans to improve the recruitment and retention foster homes. But Bayne believes centralizing how foster kids get to these homes is a good start. "The concentration on increasing the foster care resources we have for placing children has made more placements available and improved the system for finding them."

The new phone number to report a child needing a temporary emergency home is 1-800-END-HARM (1-800-562-5624).

Ways to Help

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

Find out more by calling (206) 323-KIDS or visiting our website 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.

ABOUT US:

The Mockingbird Society is a private non-profit organization dedicated to improving the foster care system and other systems that serve children and adolescents in foster care. The *Mockingbird Times* is a monthly newspaper that is written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth are paid for their work at a starting wage of \$7 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the state submit articles, art work, poetry and are reimbursed up to \$20 per published piece. The *Mockingbird Times* has a monthly circulation of 24,000 issues being distributed across Washington and the U.S.A. Youth involvement is key to the success and values of The Mockingbird Society and as such are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. All donations to The Mockingbird Society are tax-deductible. No part of the *Mockingbird Times* may be reproduced without written permission of The Mockingbird Society.

Letter to the editor

Dear Mockingbird Society,

I really like the paper, not only your insert, but *Real Change* as well. It is one of the best newspapers I have ever read. It tells the truth and has good poetry and people can hear from other people they don't usually hear from: it's real.

Today is my birthday and so I thought I would give your readers something, especially kids in foster homes who don't understand why their lives are harder than other kids'. How to say this? Anyway, when I was a kid I was put in a foster home because my mother was, one way of looking at it, not a successful hooker. Another way of looking is that she had a crippling depression after her mother's death. Dad was nowhere to be found; he sent \$45 a month. Mom was afraid to go on welfare. She thought I might be taken away.

To make a long story short, I was sexually abused and suffered from poverty and shame. I was actually glad to get into a foster home because I knew where the meals were coming from and I could go to school regularly with a lunch. I had a nice young social worker who came and talked to me and encouraged me about my dreams of joining the Peace Corps. She just listened as I told her I stayed up all night praying for my mother who had become homeless after I was put in foster care.

The dream of one day helping kids put into foster care I kept to myself, like a beacon that helped me through the hard times. Victor Frankl said that the biggest problem in the Nazi camps was the inability to find meaning in suffering; that is what killed most people. He survived and credited that to using his experience to help others.

I believe kids in foster care need to have a dream to survive. Otherwise, life has no meaning. I am close to realizing my dream. Never let go of your dream, no matter how hopeless it seems. Sometimes it is all you have, but that is enough.

MARYANNE D.G.

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Real Change, Lori McDonald of DSHS, Phil Bayne of DSHS, Oliver Tuthill Jr. or Autumn Tree Productions, Washington State CASA, Seattle YMCA

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Running to Get Out

By BRITTANY V. LUCAS



(This is the story of a composite character named Nick. Nick's story was compiled from a combination of experiences of street youth the Mockingbird Society has known.)

NICK WANTED A WAY OUT. He was tired of the beatings, the yelling, and the hatred that had clouded his existence from the time his crack-addicted mother brought him into the hellish existence that was his life. School was one of his few solaces but even that had begun to deteriorate into a nightmare. Nick was smart but no one every cared enough to tell him. His stepfather made sure that Nick knew how worthless he was. He could tune out his father's stinging words and even forget when the blows came causing purple splotches to appear on the surface of his skin.

What finally broke Nick, though, was when his stepfather started to violate him. Disgust and confusion filled his every waking moment. Nick needed a way out. He thought about suicide. Nick could picture himself as the gun when off, suffering only for a moment and than being devoid of pain for the rest of eternity. He would leave, not only the world, but also his family with a painful, final thought of the misery they had caused him.

In the end Nick didn't kill himself. The hope still lingered inside of him that if he could escape, he might be able to reach a better place. Nick decided to runaway. He knew exactly what he faced when he slipped out of his bedroom window. He understood that he could end up on the streets without a home to call his own. He realized the dangers of being underage and alone. But he went anyway. Living in a

gutter, surviving off of nothing but ramen noodles, turning tricks, and succumbing to crimes of survival was better than where he was now. Finally Nick was getting out, on his own terms.

Covenant House accounts that about 2 million youth leave or are thrown out of their homes a year. 400,000 of these youth find themselves homeless. Contrary to popular belief, the majority of these teens to do not runaway to simply "defy authority" or immerse themselves in "drugs, sex, and rock and roll." A national survey given to teens entering shelters in 2001 reported that almost all of the youth questioned stated that their primary reason for leaving home was because of disruptive family conditions. Fifty percent of the youth that participated in the survey said they were told to leave home or that their parents didn't care. An astounding 46 percent of young people who were questioned claimed that sexual or physical abuse played an influenced on their decision to vacate their homes prematurely (National Coalition for the Homeless). 18-year-old Jennifer N. explained why she decided to runaway from a foster home she lived in while she was a teenager, "I fought a lot with my foster parents and their family. I also disagreed with some of the things that were going on in the family, like illegal substance abuse." Though there are a plethora of other reasons why kids runaway such as issues with sexual orientation, involvement in the juvenile justice system, difficulties in school, mental problems, poverty, neglect, and dangerous living conditions; common sense dictates that youth aren't running away because they are happy.

When your home life is in shambles, even the streets can start looking good. Runaway youth may be so focused on escaping their unpleasant surroundings that they overlook or deny the possible consequences. Jennifer N. voiced some of the struggles she experienced while on the streets: "I had no money for the things that I needed or wanted. There were

times I had to sleep outside when it was cold and raining. Sometimes there wasn't even any food to eat."

Though not all teens face the perils of death, illness, and pain when they runaway, the numbers of youth who do fall casualty to the mean streets is disturbing. The National Homeless Coalition reports that 10,000 homeless or runaway youth die annually from assault, illness, and suicide. This makes them one of the most at risk populations in the United States! Putting the risk of fatality aside, there are also those that love to prey on the vulnerability of homeless youth. One-third of runaways are lured into prostitution or pornography within 48 hours. Even worse, thousands of youth who runaway are never seen or heard from again, according to Think Quest Library's article entitled Running Away.

It's been made apparent that running away is a major problem, so the question now is what's being done about it? Most states have laws making it criminal offense for a minor under 18 to be living alone with out the supervision of an adult. In 1995, a law called the Becca Bill was passed in Washington State that requires youth shelters to report runaways. If runaways are picked up by police, the bill states that youth must be delivered to secure crisis residential centers to be evaluated and returned home or placed in an appropriate placement. Statutory laws such as the Becca bill may be the reason why some youth avoid the shelters, the very place a community creates to help them.

Some runaways are thrown into juvenile detention facilities until alternative placements can be found. Parents and agencies may be able to send a youth involuntarily to a secure treatment center for compulsive running away. In most cities there are shelters that are provided for homeless youth. Covenant House is currently expanding nation wide to cities that have few resources for street youth.

Institutionalizing a runaway youth may seem like the safest decision to make for them but many times it can have adverse results. A study conducted by the U.S. Committee on Juvenile Justice concedes that incarcerating juveniles in treatment centers and other placements for

RUNAWAY CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Life After Foster Care: Independent Living Programs

By DENNIS FISHER



LIVING IN FOSTER CARE, you're covered until you turn 18. On your 18th birthday however, the coverage stops. Worst case scenario, you end up with no place to stay, and become homeless. This can be easily prevented though, which is why there are many independent living programs scattered throughout the state. There are various different types of independent living programs, all with the same goal: to help youth transition from foster care (or homelessness) into homes of their own, surviving on their own. This article covers the different types of programs available, and how to utilize them.

Transitional Housing

Transitional housing is essentially group living. However, part of the requirements to stay in a transitional home is that you are working towards becoming independent. The staff at the home will help you learn the skills you need to become fully self-sufficient once you leave the home. Transitional housing can be further divided into two sub-categories: under 18 and 18 and over. The under-18 programs focus on the more basic skills, such as setting up a savings account, getting a job, housekeeping skills (in the form of chores), and usually some other lesser life skills components. The over-18 programs delve into more hardcore skills

such as managing a savings account and a checking account, managing college and a job, more advanced cooking, budgeting, and various other life skills components. The over-18 programs frequently charge rent, although usually a fairly low amount, typically one-third of your gross monthly income.

Support Groups

Support groups are out there as a way to meet other youth who are sharing the same experiences. By going to a support group, you can swap resources and stories with other people, and get emotional support to help cope with transitioning out of foster care. It's a great way to help make you feel that you aren't alone in what you're going through.

Rent Assistance

A more basic form of transitional housing, rent assistance is just what it sounds like. If you have an apartment, and for some reason are not going to be able to pay your rent, then there are programs out there that will help you. Another type of program that could be classified as rent assistance is low income housing. There are various programs out there that offer cheap housing if you meet certain (low) income requirements. The focus of these programs is to offer

you a cheap place to stay, while you save up money to get back on your feet.

Life Skills

Life skills are not so much a program of their own, as they are a component of most other programs offered. Life skills usually consist of groups that get together to learn about thinks like how to open up bank accounts and pay your bills, to cooking lessons and time management. Although life skills are primarily a component of other programs, there are various life skill groups available on their own, especially for youth still in foster care.

Educational Assistance

Educational assistance is available in the form of scholarships and grants. Before you think, "Well, aren't scholarships and grants available to anyone?" let me clarify. There are a great many scholarships and grants out there that are specifically for foster care and homeless youth only.

To get hooked up with all these resources available, you can contact either your caseworker or get a hold of your regional Division of Children and Family Services office, and ask for your region's Independent Living Programs Coordinator. 🐦

DCFS Regional Offices	
Region 1:	Spokane 509-363-3348 Omak 509-826-7266
Region 2:	Yakima 509-454-7867
Region 3:	Everett 425-339-1772
Region 4:	Seattle 206-352-2103
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