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Change

Puget Sound's Newspaper of the Poor and Homeless • Volume 10, No. 1

Dance this mess around

Inside: Locke cuts deep • Remembering Father Berrigan • Hope for the New Year

COVER PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

East coast hip hop company ignites the passions in Washington's only women prison

By Susan Platt
Photos by Casey Kelbaugh

The whole roomful of 200 women stood up and cheered for Belinda Stewart, the Superintendent of the Washington Corrections Center for Women, when she began to introduce Rennie Harris and his fellow hip-hop dancers for a special performance at the prison. The women were honoring Stewart as well as welcoming the dancers. Superintendent Stewart took it all in stride, encouraging the women to "act like the ladies you are so you don't give the staff heart failure."

"Staff" is, of course, in the context of a prison, a euphemism for guards, but the atmosphere in the gymnasium where the special dance performance took place was definitely full of high spirits and mutual trust. Although the photographer and I passed through a heavy security check (we had to be pre-approved to even be admitted) and one locked gate after another, set in fences crowned with barbed wire, once we got to the gymnasium where the performance was to be held the atmosphere was more like a high school basketball game — with the same noise level — than a prison.



A WOMAN AT THE WASHINGTON CORRECTIONS CENTER FOR WOMEN SHOWS HER APPRECIATION FOR RENNIE HARRIS' DANCE PERFORMANCE. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

The Washington Corrections Center for Women is the only corrections facility for women in Washington state. It currently has a population of 900 women, whose crimes range from aggravated assault and murder to first-time violators for drug possession.

Some of the women are in for life, others for only a year or two.

Christine Turull, the public information officer, told me that if a woman is pregnant when she comes to prison she

Continued on Page 12



Look for the Mockingbird Times January 9!





Appalled

Dear *Real Change*,

I shop at the PCC in Seward Park on a regular basis and am always confronted with the extremely dirty-looking man who sells your *Real Change* magazine. I've seen this man constantly sneaking off to smoke around the corner and most of the time he looks like he just rolled out of the gutter from a drunken stupor. I am appalled after learning from your website that the first 10 issues are free and then every issue after he earns 70 cents.

What "real change" is there I ask when the money is obvious going to the tobacco companies and supplying his liquor habit? This is awful, in my opinion, as he is no older than myself and is

more capable of getting a "real" job than peddling newspapers in front of the PCC smoking cigarettes.

I am totally for donating monies to organizations and to individuals as needed, but intuitively I have never felt drawn to give to this man. Unfortunately, this man is a bad representation for some of the good things your organization provides. I bet most people have no clue that the money goes directly to this man to fund his drinking and smoking habits. The whole thing really makes me sad. I consider myself to be a full of compassion, but this man is taking advantage of people and that is not right.

Micah Smith, Seattle

Ed. replies: *Real Change* exists as a work opportunity for the poor and homeless that meets people where they are and offers a dignified alternative to public begging. Our vendors have an opportunity to experience success, overcome isolation, and earn money through their own efforts. We require our vendors to be polite and, while they are selling *Real Change*, sober. We ask our vendors to behave responsibly. It is not our job to monitor their lifestyles.

I've observed that many people smoke. You can see them downtown, on their breaks, standing on the sidewalk, smoking. Do we angrily demand they stop? No. They are adults and can

make their own choices. The fact that someone is poor doesn't give us the right to judge.

Corrections

The story about the lawsuit against the Seattle Housing Authority's demolition of Rainier Vista ("Rainier Vista: All quiet, for now," *RC*, December 11) made at least three mistakes of note. First, it neglected to mention that plaintiffs include two community groups, the Friends of Rainier Vista and the Seattle Displacement Coalition. Second, demolition didn't stop until Thursday, December 6 — two days after the judge ordered them stopped. Finally, there were 481 units of public housing at Rainier Vista before demolition began, not 410.

Last issue's story on the Women's Justice Circles, which bring homeless women together to solve problems (*RC*, December 11), omitted contact information. If you want to get involved, call Chris Hillman at (206) 223-1138 or email ipjc@ipjc.org

A news story about the new King County winter shelter ("Moving on in," *RC*, December 11) neglected to mention the Northwest Labor and Employment Law Office, the Raging Grannies, and the Rev. Pat Taylor as volunteers who helped a six-week-long outdoor shelter survive. ■

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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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Mission Statement:

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

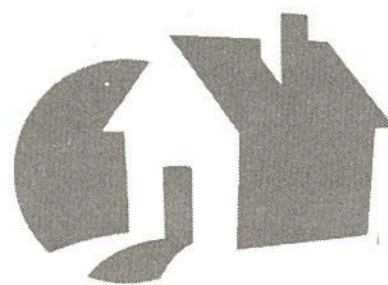
Goals

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

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

Editorial Policy

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



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Please telephone (206) 239-1500 to have an application mailed to you before attending a workshop.

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Give Like It Matters

Contributions to *Real Change* Plummet. Only You Can Help.

Every year, we at *Real Change* go through a predictable cycle. We run low on funds, the holiday season arrives, and we are then saved by reader generosity. Beginning late-November, our freakishly cheerful mail lady arrives everyday with envelopes from you, our readers, which contain checks both large and small.

Until now. We're not sure what has changed. Maybe we seem like we don't need the help. Maybe our readers are used to us and we've become yesterday's news. Or maybe, in this economy, bank accounts are just more stretched than usual. In any case, December is nearly over and we haven't really heard from you.

If we were a public television station, we'd be pulling out the Ken Burns, dusting off the James Taylor, and talking about "viewers like you." Maybe we'd be thinking about how to better appeal to our educated and affluent base. A wine-tasting column maybe. Articles about European travel. More writing for those to whom the word antique is a verb.

But we're not. We're a small, grassroots homeless newspaper that provides dignity, opportunity, and a voice for the poor and homeless. Here's what that means.

Dignity

Real Change provides immediate work for the poor and homeless that meets people where they are. Some of our vendors work it like a job, and to others it's a casual means of earning a few bucks. You don't need clothes, identification, or a good work history to begin. All anyone needs is a little initiative. When people begin to sell *Real Change*, they experience success. This is where personal change begins. We are a dignified alternative to panhandling and the sort of petty crime that comes of desperation. This year, more than 500 vendors have sold more than 400,000 newspapers.

So what happens if our readers don't respond? We'll lose valuable ground, and we don't have a lot of fat to cut.

Opportunity

Our newspaper is the starting point for bigger things. We have training workshops to help our vendors succeed. We have a writing program to help homeless people build the skills they need to express themselves. We have a computer lab where people can get on the internet for free, and learn the skills they need to be more employable. *Real Change* helps people get the money, services, and skills they need to get off the street.

A Voice

Real Change is the only place where you will always be able to find news about poverty issues and what you can do. We publish poetry and writing by poor and homeless people themselves. We break down class barriers and destroy stereotypes. Our advocacy work organizes poor people and their more affluent allies to make real differences in the lives of the poor. This year, our work was instrumental in restoring funding cuts to critical services, including funding for 180 shelter beds. We work for practical, immediate gains while keeping our eye on the big picture of ending homelessness and poverty.

So what happens if our readers don't respond? Will we stop publishing? No. But we'll lose valuable ground, and we don't have a lot of fat to cut. Just one and a half paid staff put this newspaper out every two weeks. We have one staff organizer. Our computer lab coordinator is a Quaker volunteer. Our vendor coordinator is paid through the VISTA program. Our Director doubles as a fundraiser, program manager, and staff writer. We have more than 100 volunteers who produce the paper, work the vendor desk, teach computer classes, and much more. After eight years, we are still a lean organization that does a lot with a little.

So please, don't take us for granted. We need your help, this year and every year. ■

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Yes! *Real Change* Matters.

Here's what I can do to support work, dignity, and hope.

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☐ I would like to pledge a monthly amount of \$ _____

☐ Please deduct pledge amount monthly from my card.

☐ Please send me a pledge payment coupon book.

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP _____

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☐ Please contact me about volunteering my time and energy.

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Mail to: *Real Change*, 2129 2nd Ave, Seattle, WA 98121

12/26/02

National news digest

December 18, 2002

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

Dignity Village is looking for a permanent home. Portland, OR, residents of the two-year-old self-run encampment for homeless people want to raise money to buy a site for a long-term homeless community, according to the *Oregonian* (www.oregonlive.com/news/oregonian/). They have been looking for more than a year — and have even put together a glossy brochure to help boost their efforts — but have yet to find a site where neighbors don't see their potential presence as a threat to their existing community. Its biggest supporter — retired transportation magnate Lee Larson — has agreed to pay the city \$2,000 a month to rent the land where they are now. Residents have raised about \$12,000 in cash, and have the support of a retired transportation bigwig, not to mention hundreds of volunteers, but it's still not nearly enough to purchase land. And until the city starts adding new services and improving access to other forms of permanent housing, the Village is the best option for many of the people who live there.

What'll it take the people of Northern Oklahoma to recognize the plight of the homeless? How about a trip for two to Las Vegas! Or tickets to see Tony Orlando! In an effort to help raise money for a new youth shelter and family service center in Ponca City, OK, local country radio personality Ryan Diamond has started living on a downtown street corner, according to the *Ponca City News* (www.poncacitynews.com). The broadcast of his "homeless" life encourages people to come on by and donate to his cause, as well as learn about what it's like to live on the streets. As an extra incentive, everyone who comes by and registers at his "homeless shopping cart" will automatically be entered to win the Vegas trip or the coffee or other fabulous prizes. Those who actually give money — not a prerequisite for winning a prize — will get a yellow ribbon for their troubles and for their car antenna. And Diamond will get to go home and rest up before his 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. "homeless" shift the very next day.

How long do homeless advocates and Atlanta city officials think it will take to house the city's estimated 10,000 to 15,000 homeless people? Well, Atlanta's mayor Shirley Franklin is giving a 19-member commission three months to come up with a plan, according to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (www.accessatlanta.com). In this time, the commission must analyze the homeless population, rate the effectiveness of the various local and national organizations that serve them, and find enough money to cover their plan. They are starting with approximately 5,000 current shelter beds — less than half the total number needed — and 672 beds for people suffering long-term problems, when the estimated number of long-term beds needed is at least 3,500. There are also the immediate needs for laundry services, blankets, and job training that are not diminishing as the city waits for the commission's report.

Key West, FL, city officials are so tired of talking about "chronic public nuisances" that they have shortened the name to CPNs and started filming them. City workers will spend their days in beaches and parks and their nights in homeless encampments — the destinations of choice for CPNs — recording whatever activities they see and then handing over their findings to city commissioners and the general public. The hope is to use the video to build enough support for a shelter, the first on the island, without which local police cannot arrest someone simply for being homeless. Once there is a shelter, CPNs and all other homeless people can finally be arrested for sleeping anywhere else.

In his war against panhandlers tarnishing the image of downtown Cincinnati businesses and turning away tourists, Mayor Charlie Luken is going after almost anyone who sells anything on city streets, including the local street newspaper, *Street Vibes*. The Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless puts out the paper, which is then sold by vendors as an alternative, legal means to get enough money to help get them back on their feet. Mayor Luken counters that it's just another form of panhandling that only gives people money to buy more drugs and alcohol, according to the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (www.enquirer.com). Apparently preventing homeless people from making money legally is a vital step towards alleviating Cincinnati's homeless problem. ■



Locke swings his axe

Governor Gary Locke released his budget plan for 2003-2005 on Tuesday, December 17, seeking to sew up a \$2 billion state revenue hole. Locke would make unprecedented cuts in health care, social spending, and education, and contravene statewide school initiatives approved by the voters. It's a no-new-taxes, fend-for-yourself vision of the future that makes you wonder: isn't Locke a Democrat?

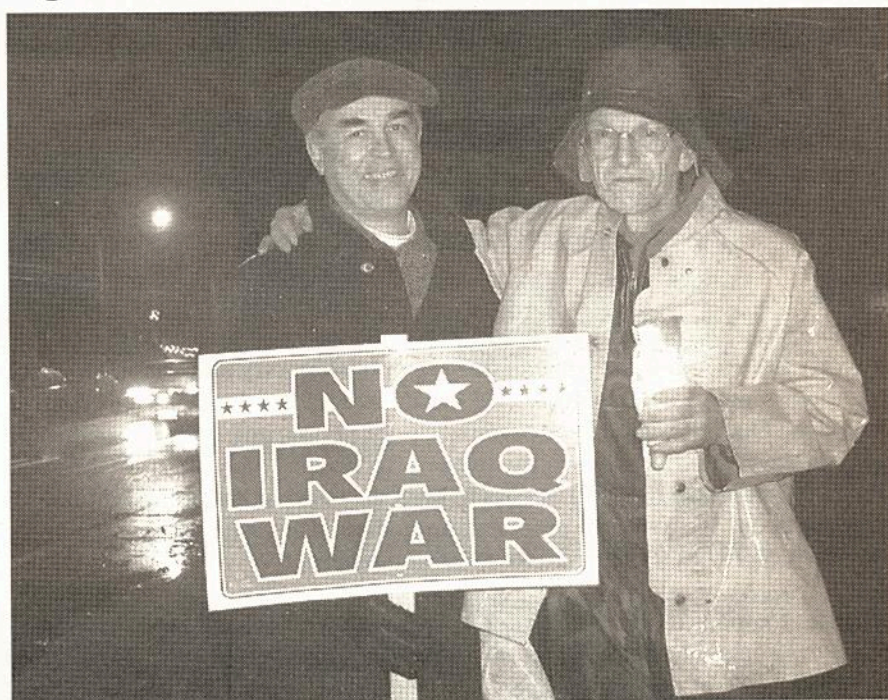
"If his intention was to shock people, that's what he did," says Tony Lee of the Fremont Public Association. Lee has compiled a list of Locke's worst ideas:

- Push 60,000 of the working poor adults off the state-run Basic Health Plan.
- Eliminate the General Assistance -Unemployable (GA-U) program. At least 8,000 poor, disabled people who have mental or physical problems that prevent them from working will no longer qualify for the state's \$339 monthly check. Axing GA-U "will be a disaster" to people who have fallen into a crisis and "are just making their way off the street," says Joe Martin, a downtown social worker. It will also axe disability assistance for immigrants and refugees who were made ineligible for welfare by the 1996 welfare reform law.
- End the \$100 million Medicaid program that provides poor families and elderly people with dental, vision, and hearing care. If you're on welfare and looking for work, says Lee, "Who's going to hire you with rotting teeth?" The last time the state tried eliminating dental care for the poor, in the early '80s, Harborview had to boost the number of oral surgeries.
- Cut \$40 million from the community mental health system, which provides counseling and case management.
- Put a spending cap on Western States Hospital, the mental health treatment center. Because of that, says Lee, more sick people will be diverted to a community health system that's already \$40 million poorer.
- Knock \$135 million from the state's Medically Indigent reimbursement system to hospitals which provide charity care. "Where do you think people who don't have health care will end up? The hospitals," says Lee. "And we're cutting funding for the hospitals."
- Cut \$15 million from the state's Housing Trust Fund, the capital kitty which helps build housing affordable to the poor.

Legislators from the Republican-majority Senate and the Democratic House will begin revising Locke's plan on January 13, when the state Legislature convenes in Olympia. ■

— Adam Holdorf

Light a candle



A GREEN LAKE HOLIDAY TRADITION, THE LUMINARIA, TOOK AN ANTI-WAR TWIST ON THE EVENING OF SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, AS HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE CAME TO THE NORTH SEATTLE LAKE WITH CANDLES AND MESSAGES OF HOPE. PHOTO BY SIGNE DRAKE.

— Compiled by Molly Rhodes

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

Peace Warrior

A talk with Jean Buskin, one voice against war with Iraq

By Mark Albonizio

Jean Buskin may be soft-spoken, but she is hardly at a loss for words. A genetic research scientist for the University of Washington, she says that children's deaths in post-Gulf War Iraq have "been weighing heavily upon me." She's found a way to shift that burden back onto the United States government.

On September 25, Jean and 11 other antiwar activists belonging to a new coalition called Sound Nonviolent Opponents of War (SNOW) visited the offices of Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell in the Seattle Federal Building, calling on each to vote against the war resolution the Senate was in the midst of debating (Murray ended up voting no, Cantwell voted yes). Buskin and her companions filled out comment

cards, spoke with several staff members, and even got through to a D.C. legislative aide. Buskin said the staff members were "very cordial" and "professional" and deemed the visit a success due to the extensive dialogue that went on between the activists and the staff members.

But when the office was ready to close, the group refused to leave. Two television stations showed up, while outside, a group of high school students held a sidewalk call-in session to Congress and offered their cell phones to passersby. Buskin and her partners were arrested — for failing to obey the command (to leave the office at closing time) of a federal police officer. Having pled not guilty at their arraignment, the 12 co-defendants will go back

to court on March 5, 2002.

Buskin and the other members of SNOW believe that economic sanctions are just as dangerous as chemical and nuclear agents.

To them, the sanctions that kill 150 Iraqi babies per day are just another type of biological weapon. Two preventable diseases, dysentery and cholera, are common killers of Iraqi citizens.

"These are infectious diseases," she says. "They are preventable and treatable. What's the difference between that and spraying somebody with anthrax? It's a horrible thing to do. The United States purposely destroys the water system in Iraq. Well, this makes people susceptible to all these microorganisms

that kill them. Sounds like biological warfare to me."

Jean is skeptical about accepting the government's assertion that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. "I don't believe the government because the government has a history of lying to us," she says — from the Gulf of Tonkin incident during Vietnam, to the repression of communist governments in Central America, to the myth that Iraqi soldiers removed Kuwaiti babies from their incubators during the first Gulf

"The United States purposely destroys the water system in Iraq. Well, this makes people susceptible to all these microorganisms that kill them. Sounds like biological warfare to me."

— Activist Jean Buskin

War.

Jean's mistrust of the accuracy of government-released information

Continued on Page 10

First things First: A Big Deal

In late November, when the Seattle City Council announced that they had plugged the holes in a \$60 million budget gap and restored money for social services, they praised citizens for raising their voices. Councilmember Richard McIver said, "If you don't think coming down here and sitting through a four-hour hearing will do anything, you're wrong. You changed the budget."

He was talking, in part, to the hundreds of people who took action at the urging of First things First, a special coalition of human service providers, advocates for the poor, and Seattle citizens concerned about the homeless.

For McIver and his eight peers, the issue was daunting. But he got a clear message from the overwhelming majority of people who spoke at the hearings: basic necessities, like food and shelter, need to come first.

Some bystanders take a cynical view when non-profit employees pro-

test cuts to the programs they work for. That's why the most highly prized participants in those hearings were plain old ordinary citizens. Organizer Rachael Myers says that city officials value the opinions of "regular people who go to work, take care of their kids — and also happen to be concerned about homelessness."

One of those ordinary citizens was Bob Brooks, a retired man who scoured the fine print in the mayor's proposed budget. He helped bring the City Council's attention to \$14 million in low-priority spending — on everything from unused streets money to marketing for a long-stalled Aquarium project. Bob is a member of First things First.

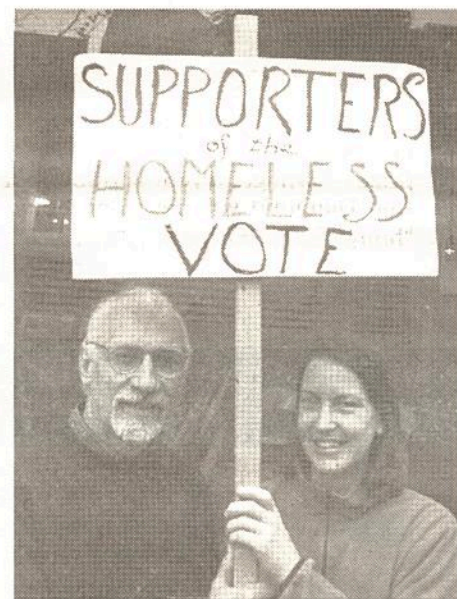
"We had to do more than just say, 'Don't cut human services,'" says David Bloom, who's active in First things First and helps educate congregations about homelessness. Brooks' action "was old-fashioned citizen participation at its

best."

Councilmembers were largely sympathetic to the message, and they appreciated the alternative suggestions. Rachael says that at one budget forum where she was handing out fliers, Council Budget Committee chair Jan Drago asked to take one. The next day, the flier was displayed on the City Council's web site. "That shows how much they were acting like they were with us," says Rachael.

The late-November vote restored cuts in health, human services, shelters, and housing. Not everything came up roses, though. Nonprofits weren't given enough money to raise their employees' pay to adjust for the rising cost of living; meanwhile, the city's highest-paid employees got pay increases. But everyone who participated should be proud of their hard work.

First things First has crafted an ambitious agenda for next year. They'll support a local levy that advocates are discussing, talk up a "right to shelter" initiative, and continue to mobilize citizens to take action to end homelessness. ■



FIRST THINGS FIRST ORGANIZERS DAVID BLOOM AND RACHAEL MYERS AIR AN OPINION.

For more information about how you can get involved, call Rachael Myers at 441-3247 ext. 201 or email her at organizer@realchangenews.org.



**Looking for work?
Volunteer for Real Change
and help us save the world!**

Real Change needs your help! Right now we need people for the following volunteer positions: front desk/reception, editorial support, MacWorkshop Computer Lab monitors, computer class instructors (Macintosh only), development assistants, and graphic designers. We need volunteers available during our office hours (9-6 weekdays), who are reliable, patient, friendly, and able to work well independently. You can find a complete list of volunteer opportunities on our website: www.realchangenews.org or call Shawn at 441.3247 ext. 203

**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.

poetry

On the Question of War

To agree
would be to give up life
embrace death
relinquish the cold night air
the sound of rain pitter pattering on the leaves
and the gorgeous trees with roots so deep
they must be what holds the earth together.

— ANGIE VASQUEZ

Untitled

I come in out of the

World-Wide Rain

To

Find

Him

WAITING

To Shelter me

May it be so

ALSO/with/you

— MARION SUE FISCHER



Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning

As you might expect, we here at Adventures in Poetry care a lot about freedom of speech. When I say “we”, of course, I mean mostly me, since I am the one spouting off.

However, an event has occurred that has made me concerned for the safety of *Real Change* from the enemies of free speech, everywhere. And do I ever mean everywhere. I am talking naturally about a recent High Court decision in Australia to let Joe Gutnick of Melbourne, Australia, sue the publishers of some website for libel in Australia instead of in the U.S. where the website originated. Needless to say, in Australia libel is easier to prove.

Can you see my concern? Prior to hearing about this decision, nothing could have induced me to say anything that could possibly be considered libelous about Joe Gutnick of Melbourne, Australia, or any of his compatriots. But now I have been tempted. I find myself uncontrollably entertaining entirely speculative thoughts about Joe Gutnick, about his personal and physical attributes, thoughts that if given expression might provoke litigation. I am even having these thoughts about Australians in general.

For example, there is Senior Sergeant Michael Purcell, police prosecutor somewhere in Queensland, the Australian state I have previously known mainly for its surplus of cane toads. Mr. Purcell has said, and I quote, “If we allowed everyone who wanted to drop their pants and moon police officers, we are undermining the authority of the police.” Mr. Purcell was reacting to the claim by a citizen, a Mr. James Togo, to the effect that mooning a police officer ought to be protected free speech in Queensland at least.

Here’s what I’m thinking. I’m thinking an Australian court has said Australia has a right to tell me what I can say on the Internet, even though I’m thousands of miles from Australia. OK, then I should be able to weigh in on the police-mooning debate in Queensland. I say, Queenslanders, go for it. Moon them all. It should be totally legal. If they can say you can’t speak with your butt, what’ll they say next, that you can’t speak with your fingers? That would be tyranny. Are you going to allow tyranny in Australia? What, are you all wusses?

But it doesn’t end there. Mr. Purcell had to go on to say that he could not imagine naked buttocks replacing the kangaroo and emu on Australia’s Coat of Arms. I read that and immediately Mr. Purcell fell into the Joe Gutnick category in my mind. It was all I could do to resist saying bad things about Mr. Purcell, things that in all likelihood could be proven to be libelous in Australia, if only Mr. Purcell were willing to say, “Liar, liar, pants on fire,” under oath.

If cross-burning is to be protected speech, then gun-pointing should be protected speech. They both mean the same thing.

In order to resist the temptation to libel Sergeant Purcell, I am right now imagining naked buttocks replacing the kangaroo and emu on Australia’s Coat of Arms. Hey, it’s easy! I bet you can do it too. Imagine a kangaroo. Imagine an emu, next to it. If you don’t know what an emu

looks like, think of Big Bird without all the yellow. Now instead of the kangaroo and the emu, imagine a naked butt. There you go, it’s not that hard when you take it step by step. I believe that proves that Sergeant Purcell has the imagination of a bottle of ketchup.

Speaking of butting in (ha!) on other people’s free speech issues, I’ve got to talk about the cross-burning case that just landed at the feet of the U.S. Supreme Court, because it is very important, even though there do not seem to be any Australians involved, only Virginians.

I’m not going to say how the Supreme Court should decide this one because I’m no lawyer and I don’t know, maybe there’s a flaw in the Virginian law that I don’t know about that needs addressing. But I am going to spout off about the free speech issue of cross-burning in the abstract.

I think if cross-burning is to be protected speech, then gun-pointing should be protected speech. They both mean the same thing.

In my opinion all would-be cross burners should go to Australia and moon policemen. Then this would be a beautiful world. ■



Charity

She was old,
she was fat,
she was ugly,
her hair streaked gray,
she was alone
with her baby
whose head
looked broken
bent over
like a too heavy
black capped sunflower
stuck in the grocery cart seat,
she was waiting
for someone to pick her up,
I saw her when I walked in,
her head looked out
every few minutes,
she checked at the counter
the door, the parking lot,
I saw her at the end
of every aisle waiting,
I stopped her frantic pacing
she was my sister, my mother,
my friend, my grandmother
who at the age of 35
found herself a widow
with three sons to raise
in a foreign country,
she was a welfare recipient,
she said, *yes, my baby is sick,*
we didn't share a common language,
but I took her cart full of WIC gifts,
things I recall from working
at the grocery store counter:
milk, eggs, cereal, peanut butter,
frozen juice, her monthly shop,
the taxi driver stood her up,
she lived alone with her baby,
too far to walk with groceries,
her green card expires in six months,
she was, how do you say, scared,
I took her groceries in,
she carried the baby girl,
she asked me to sit down
in her clean but messy house,
my baby likes to play, she said,
tengo mucho problemas,
but I said no my dog was waiting,
I gave her a telephone number,
a women's group to call,
shook her hand
wished her *buena suerte,*
cried all the way home.

— ANGIE VASQUEZ

Like Rimbaud on the #358

January cold seeps
into the evening bus making me feel
like an air-conditioned dragon
within a transit that seems unreal.
The fire of each breath swells
and subsides knowingly
in my awakened body.

There is a line of cars
with opal, staring eyes that brightly glow
winding onto Highway 99,
approaching like a serpent's shadow.
Over the arcing hills
of North Seattle, the lights
all lead into the rainy night.

Looking out at the laquered, pulsing dark,
I feel like Rimbaud
going home on the #358
in a sweet disorder of the senses —
oblivious to time and fate.

Strangers across from me
see my mind floating in its gentle craze
and talk about me but it burns off
in the fluorescent light like a haze.
From someone's head phones,
Debussy notes spiral
through a rhythm and blues cycle.

When I get off, I will walk
under a ragged, fading Monet sky
where blackened fir trees climb toward
the dark blue-gray clouds scudding by.
In the mist, I will approach
a house of memories
no longer holding agony.

Looking out at the laquered, pulsing dark,
I feel like Rimbaud
going home on the #358
in a sweet disorder of the senses —
oblivious to time and fate.

— JOHN GORSKI

Home Free: the short, happy life of Tyrone Douglas Lewis

By Davida G. Breier

I've had about two hours of sleep as I sit down to write this, but it is all I know to do right now.

Earlier this year my mother was reeling from another disastrous visit with my long-lost sister. We've been attempting to build a relationship for three years, nothing more than a shaky foundation of blood relations. My mother was nearly broken from the attempts.

She had seen a man standing around in Aberdeen, obviously homeless. He never begged, but he was visible on the highway and in the park behind the library. It was the start of a hot summer that would boast days upon days of temperatures exceeding 90 degrees. The man, who was dressed in multiple layers of clothing, was noticeably suffering in the heat. She brought him some clean clothes, hoping this might help, but he simply added them to the layers.

Concerned for his well-being, she began to stop and see him regularly, giving him cold drinks and a little cash here and there so he could get what he wanted from the convenience store.

Then one day, she decided to make a plate of food for him and took it to him down at the park. He had been scared and shy around her, but this simple acknowledgement that he was hungry opened a door. He hadn't had food regularly until she started to bring him dinner. They began to talk more and more. She would bring him at least one meal, sometimes two, snacks, and cold drinks. She'd continue to try and get him to take some of the layers off by bringing him new clothes, but they were either added to the huge duffle he carried or tucked inside his jacket where he carried his soda and water bottles. He only asked for one thing: a small transistor radio. He would listen to it all the time, often playing classical music.

She would learn his name was Tyrone, that he was from Connecticut, and that he was still suffering from gunshot wounds inflicted when he was asleep in his sleeping bag.

It was the start of a hot summer that would boast days upon days of temperatures exceeding 90 degrees. The man, who was dressed in multiple layers of clothing, was noticeably suffering in the heat. She brought him some clean clothes, hoping this might help, but he simply added them to the layers.

At a distance, Tyrone could appear imposing, standing over six feet tall and made bulkier by the multiple layers of clothes. He always wore a hooded jacket and knit cap pulled tight around his face. He had a dark complexion, and between that and the hood of his jacket, there were times his face was all but impossible to see. My mother looked straight past the exterior and saw a hungry, terrified man who needed both help and friendship.

The Aberdeen police, three cops in particular, started harassing him. They chased him from place to place around town, threatening to arrest him if he didn't move on. The temperature was in the high 90s, and it was obvious he was both sick and suffering mental problems. My mother, who was in contact with a shelter in the next county, offered to drive him to a new location where he could be

safe. They, like so many of the agencies she contacted, were a dead end.

He disappeared over the Fourth of July weekend. My mother was frantic. It took some doing but he was tracked down at the Harford County Detention Center. His crime: littering. When the police chased him from the small, seldom-used public park behind the library he was forced to leave behind the blanket my mother had given him. The police, eager to "get rid of the problem," charged him with littering and slapped a \$50 fine on him that he obviously couldn't pay. They issued a warrant and arrested him. We arranged for him to be released into my mother's custody. This was July 9, 2002.

Not knowing what else to do, she moved him into our home. I am going to admit there was some resistance to this arrangement, but she was determined, no matter what, to help this man. In the weeks

following his absorption into our home they became good friends. It became apparent he was autistic, with other unknown medical and physical problems. It turned out he loved watching movies as much as she did, so they frequently rented videos or went into Bel Air to catch a matinee. She told me he would often clap at the end of the movies. He liked Wesley Snipes action movies, as well as Robert Altman films. The more she got to know him, the more she saw he was like a child.

He was a very gentle man. Sensing that my mother was having trouble crossing a high bridge (one of her fears), he offered to hold her hand. On another occasion he made her stop the car so he could place an inch worm on the ground where it would be safe. At the flea market one morning I caught him playing in a rain puddle.

They were both survivors of childhood abuse. For Tyrone this meant an overriding fear of people. He would barricade his door and windows at night. My mother gave him a key for the bedroom door, so he could feel safe at night. He was afraid or shy around the rest of us, so we didn't get a chance to know him like she did.

He'd often shower with his clothes on, an idiosyncrasy my mother shrugged off. He wanted to be normal and she treated him as such. He'd jump out at the gas station and fill the tank or help by running into the store for whatever she needed. If someone stared at him, she'd walk over next to him and stare back. People doing this to him would infuriate her.

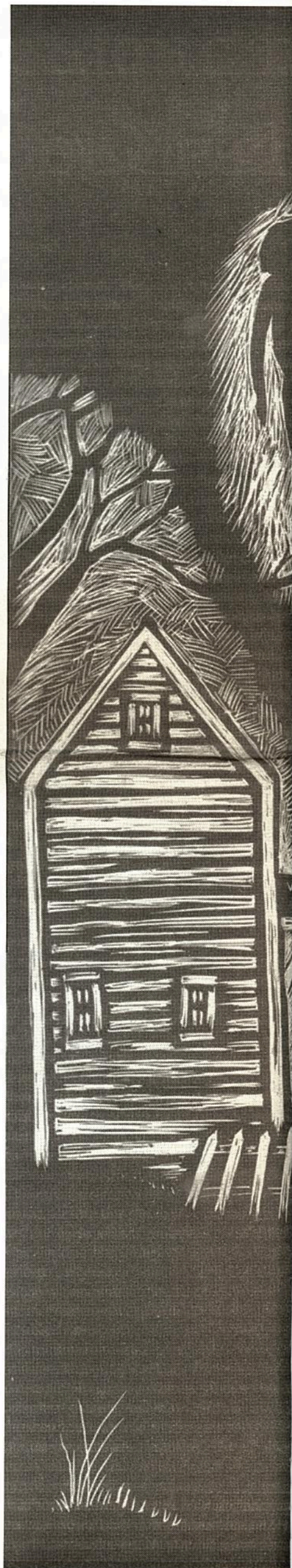
He'd have good days and he'd have bad days. He loved my mother's van, and he'd often ask to go for a ride. She took him to a nearby state park, and he said it was the most beautiful place he had ever seen. On other days he would hide in the room,

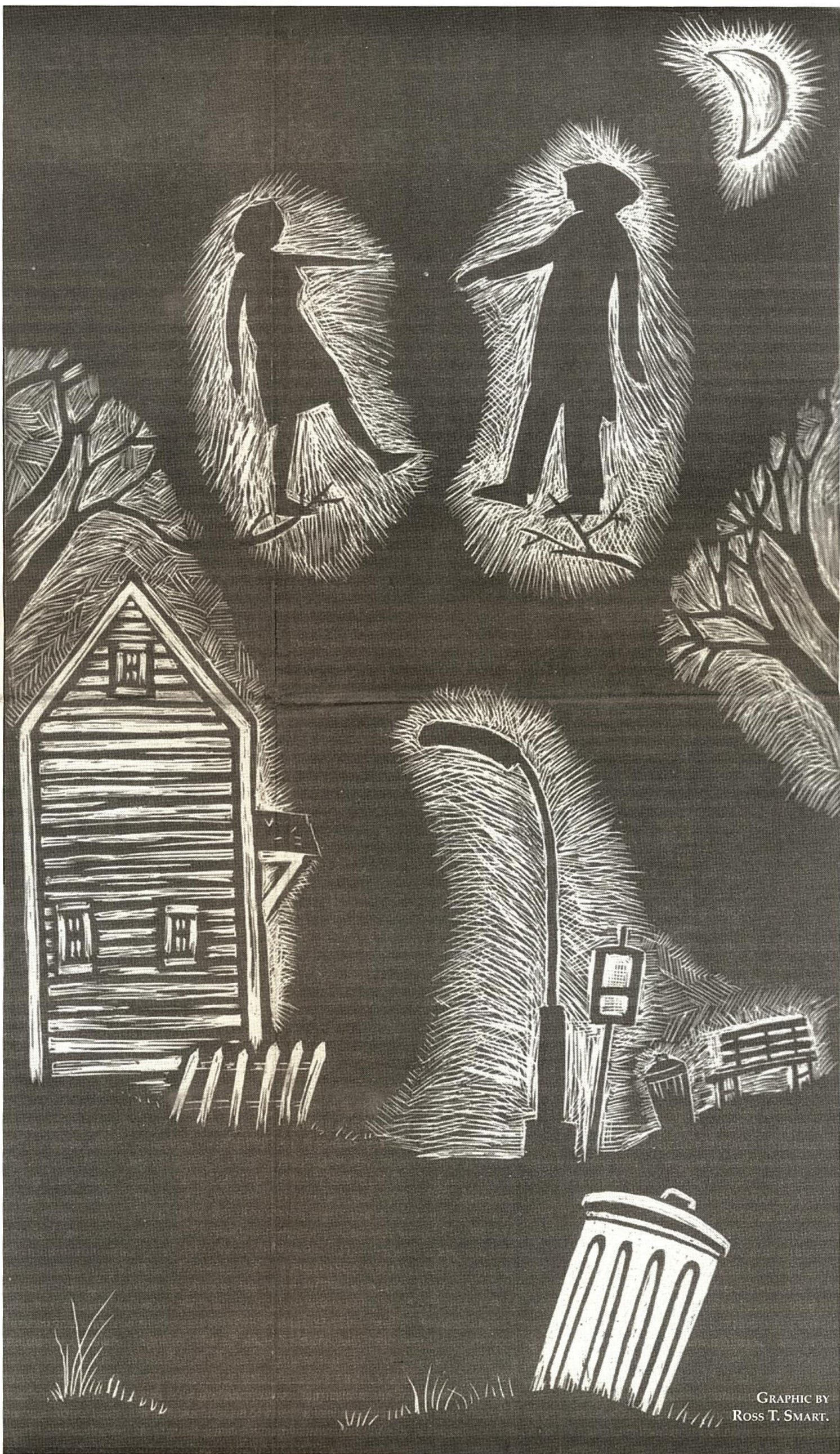
refusing to come out. He would often rock or tremble when he was scared or nervous. He was ashamed of this and tried to hide it as much as he could. We realize now he probably had a seizure disorder, which is common in people with autism.

It was obvious he needed to see a doctor, but he refused.

Far from being one-sided, their friendship helped my mother as well as Tyrone. In recent weeks my mother had taken a great deal of ribbing because she had begun to cook huge meals for him. None of us had ever seen her cook like this before. He didn't bat an eye when he found out he had been eating as a vegetarian for months.

Sensing that she was having trouble crossing a high bridge, he offered to hold her hand.





GRAPHIC BY
ROSS T. SMART.

My mother began to cook huge meals for him. None of us had ever seen her cook like this before.

Tyrone told her he was in care of some kind as a child, state or foster — it was never made clear. Recently he told her that this was the happiest he could remember being since he was a child. He had never stayed at a motel until last month, when she took him with her to an antique show in Virginia. He apparently had never had anyone care for him like this. She'd try to do a little something to make him happy each day, even if it was a simple little gift, and she did. They often spent the evenings watching movies in his bedroom.

Last night my mother and I went out for a few hours, to spend a little time together. When we arrived home about 10:30 p.m. she knocked on his door, but there was no reply. If he was having a bad day this wasn't unusual. She came into my bedroom to talk to me about the situation. She feared his mental health was getting worse lately. He hadn't wanted to leave the room for several days. She decided to get the other skeleton key and open the door. It looked like he was asleep on the bed. He didn't respond. He was cold to the touch. We called 911.

The paramedics, who arrived a few minutes later, said he had been dead for about six to eight hours. They remembered picking him up over the winter and taking him to the hospital. He had been living in a vacant lot, wrapped in three sleeping bags, exposed to the elements, and lying in his own waste. Though he refused treatment the first time, the second time he was unconscious, and they were able to take him to the hospital. Tyrone had massive sores all over his body, and he had somehow interpreted these sores to be gunshot wounds. He spent months recovering in the hospital, explained the paramedic, with an injury to his Achilles tendon so bad that he was left with a permanent limp. The paramedic was especially nice.

The state trooper and coroner arrived next. Both were very compassionate. The coroner even started crying when she heard the whole story. She said it was the first time this had ever happened on a call.

This was shocking and unexpected, and overwhelmingly unfair. Tyrone had been happy, safe, and loved for the first time in his life. My mother had set every-

thing up with Legal Aid for his court case, and was waiting for a call that should have come today detailing how he could apply for both disability and medical assistance. She was prepared to take care of Tyrone as his legal guardian for the rest of his life. She had grown to love him and wept last night that she felt as if she had lost her best friend.

We have so many unanswered questions. His background is still a mystery. It is unknown how long he was on the streets and what all had happened to him. He was 47 years old, but his body appeared much older.

His death may have been caused or exacerbated by the heat, or from any one of many health problems. He said he wasn't feeling well, but he never said what was wrong or that he thought it was serious. It is also likely he was hiding how sick he was, so he didn't have to leave or go to the hospital.

If my mother hadn't taken him in, it is likely he would have died on the street. His unclaimed, unknown body would have been donated to science, something this fearful, shy, modest man would have abhorred. We will have him cremated. He will be remembered. Most of the questions will remain — joined by sorrow.

She'd try to do a little something to make him happy each day, even if it was a simple little gift.

Last night about 4 a.m., my mother asked me to write about Tyrone. She wanted people to know who Tyrone was. She wanted people to stop and consider the person under the plastic tarp, seven layers of clothing, or cardboard box. She is angry and mournful that Tyrone and people like him are invisible in our society. Most importantly, she wants people to know that this tragedy could have been avoided if someone had seen Tyrone and helped him sooner. Last week I gave a speech where I credited my mother with teaching me compassion. I think she could teach all of us a thing or two on the subject. ■

In Memory of Tyrone Douglas Lewis, (March 7, 1955-August 13, 2002). Davida Breier lives in Maryland. You may contact her at PO Box 963, Havre de Grace, MD 21078.

GRAPHIC BY
ROSS T. SMART.

BUSKIN Continued from Page 5

forces her to get information from eye-witnesses: people that have been to Iraq and have seen the conditions in which the Iraqi people live. Denis Halliday and Hans Von Sponeck are former directors of the Oil-for-Food program who resigned due to the restraints they and the Iraqis were working under. Others who brought back stories from Iraqi visits include Kathleen Williamson, Gerri and Bob Haynes, Bert Sacks, and Kathy Kelly. Visitors present slide shows to their community about the effect of U.N. sanctions and the U.S. military action that has crippled Iraq's infrastructure.

Why risk arrest to express your disagreement with U.S. actions? After all, Buskin admits, "It's an inconvenience" for the protester and the surrounding community. When streets are blocked

off, drivers sit in traffic. When large rallies are planned, Police officers work long hours.

"I keep getting calls from lawyers, prosecutors, and judges, telling me that 'actions have consequences.'" But turn that around, she says, to the U.S. government. "I want the federal government to know that actions have consequences. If you're going to talk about war, there are going to be consequences. People that don't want a war are going to be upset."

In an email correspondence, Jean added, "I want to tell the world that inactions have consequences too. If I don't act strongly to oppose a war, then I am guilty of worse crimes than the one I am charged with for my action on September 25." ■

For more information on how to get involved, go to <http://snowcoalition.org>.



JEAN BUSKIN, CENTER LEFT WITH A FILE OF PAPERS UNDER HER RAINCOAT, AMONG OTHERS ARRESTED FOR OCCUPYING SENATORS CANTWELL AND MURRAY'S OFFICES SEPTEMBER 25, IN AN ATTEMPT TO STOP THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING WAR AGAINST IRAQ. PHOTO COURTESY JEAN BUSKIN.

Street Talk

Interviews and photos by Sean Berger

Each issue, *Real Change* hits the streets and finds out what gets people talking. In honor of the looming end to 2002, *Real Change* asked people what hopes they had for the New Year, both for society and for themselves, and what they expected to change whether they liked it or not.

"I wish I had a job painting in the next year. Jobs are slow. I'd like to see things more affordable for the working class. I don't do resolutions though. I want a more improved economy. I voted against all those taxes this year because I can't afford them. There's all this money and no affordable housing, I would change that."

— Bob, painter



"I would like to see people not so afraid of paying taxes; the money has to come from somewhere if we want more schools and infrastructure. We all have opinions, but

it would be nice to see people be more tolerant of each other. We need fewer politicians who want to run the world."

— Melanie, sales rep.

"There should be more things for the youth, more things to do that could keep kids busy and out of trouble, off the streets. There probably will be more terrorism next year because it seems like since 2000, everything has been going down hill. I want to follow my religion more strongly for myself."

— Verina, student



"Next year I'd like to spend more time with my friends. I'm at school and work a lot, though, so it is difficult. I think there will be a war next year but not much will happen in

Seattle, although they should change transportation, like the monorail."

— Scott, cook



"The monorail is a toy; I would like to see an emphasis shift to light rail. I hope they catch Bin Laden. Probably not much will change... another Super Bowl, another World Series. I will keep trying to get off the streets. More affordable housing is necessary because those with money will continue to push the rest of us out. America is going to become more militarized, just like Israel."

— Michael, unemployed

"I'd like to change the buses: they should just be a flat \$1, not \$1.50 or \$1.25. I already started my resolution of not smoking. I hope they change the terrorist that is running our country. I see the monorail happening. We need to change the way we transport human beings. I want to see more public transportation used, maybe even a free day. You get to meet people that way. Also, they should legalize marijuana."

— Seth, Pike Place Market produce worker



"I'd like to see big changes. The war in Iraq is ridiculous. I'd like our focus to be on taking care of our own country, working with the economy, which is tough right now for a lot of people. On a local level, it probably is going to keep going the way it is, if Tim Eyman doesn't get out of control. Personally I am very happy, I am very lucky. People aren't receptive to change right now unless it benefits them. People have a 'How does it help me?' attitude."

— Bethany, homemaker



"I don't make resolutions because I don't stick with them anyway. Seattle should control the growth problem. I hope we don't go to war but if Bush gets his way.... I'd like to see people treat others the way they would like to be treated, and animals too. We don't need fur and ivory. If we all stayed home one day we could put Iraq out of business. I want to give back more because we take too much."

— Jan, Bon Marché employee



"My hopes for the New Year are to graduate from UW and then figure out what I want to do and where I want to go in the next five years. I would like to see a change in our social view about our international and environmental policies, what we should do about our dominance in the world. For myself, I would like to have a more firm set of my own beliefs. I bet we will go to war next year, too."

— Kris, student



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Still Going

Despite the odds, Central District nursing home survives



SOME RESIDENTS OF BRANCH VILLA "WERE DUPED INTO LEAVING," SAYS CALVIN HALL, THE PRESIDENT OF THE NURSING HOME'S RESIDENTS COUNCIL. "OR THEIR RELATIVES WERE DUPED INTO TAKING PEOPLE OUT." THE HOME REMAINS OPEN UNTIL AT LEAST MARCH 27. PHOTO BY CASEY KELBAUGH.

By Adam Holdorf

Linda Colby, 52, fell off a nine-foot ladder and landed in the Branch Villa Health Care Center. Her brothers and sisters live close by, so they keep in touch, but she often gripes about being in a nursing home.

"It's nothing serious, I'm just venting," she says. "If they really wanted to shut it down, I'd be the last person out the door."

A shutdown is just what began November 8, when nursing home owner Andrew Branch informed the state's Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) that he was facing a cash-flow crisis and couldn't meet the next payroll. State officials sent in another company, West Care, to move residents out.

The state's takeover of the Central District nursing home inspired a community outcry from African-American leaders and elected officials. It raised rancor about the loss of a Black-owned business that employs more than 200 people, and about the impact on families who would no longer be able to keep parents close to home.

The coalition that formed, calling itself the Proud Friends of Branch Villa, has achieved the kind of success that hundreds of endangered nursing homes across the state can only envy. They won a temporary restraining order December 9, allowing the nursing home to stay open for three more months.

But the cash-flow problems for Branch Villa will not go away by March 27, when, as advocates hope, a new owner takes over. Public assistance for nursing homes continues to evaporate,

and it can only get worse.

Medicaid only pays Branch Villa 91 cents for every dollar spent on a Medicaid-eligible resident. The home hit a budget gap of \$191,000 in 2001. And on top of that, the Bush Administration took away Medicare funds for nursing homes October 1; \$197 million will be lost over a three-year period.

Brendan Williams of the Washington Healthcare Association, a coalition representing 300 long-term care operations in the state, says that without Medicare, "it's that much more difficult to bear the gap in Medicaid" — a gap that's amounting to losing \$12 per resident, per day.

Top off Bush's Medicare cut with Governor Gary Locke's proposed \$35 million cut to the state's Medicaid nursing home budget. Then the state loses out on another \$35 million in federal matching funds, to boot.

How do nursing homes survive as they bleed money? By finding "private payers" — more affluent residents who either finance their care out of their

own pockets, or have insurance to cover their care — to swell the ranks of elderly patients on public assistance. Two months ago, when the financial troubles came to light, a scant six of Branch Villa's 171 residents were private payers.

"If you have 90 percent of your residents dependent on Medicaid, the 10 percent who aren't will have to pay at a rate that will subsidize the rest," says state 37th District Representative Sharon Tomiko-Santos, who joined concerned citizens in the fight to keep the place open.

That subsidy is what helps keep nursing homes, which are often desperate to fill their beds, afloat. As rumors of the closure spread, patients and supporters say that competitors began closing in on the more affluent among Branch Villa's residents. Linda Colby says that people handed her cards and told her, "We have openings."

Twenty-four of the residents who left have gone to two places: the Washington Center for Comprehensive Re-

habilitation in the Rainier Valley, and the Greenwood Park Care Center in Greenwood. Others moved as far away as Tacoma and Bremerton. Robin Low, an advocate for the elderly who works at the King County Long-Term Care Ombudsmen's Program, says there's no adequate protocol for the state to follow when it begins to shut down a nursing home.

"The problem was that everybody was reacting so fast," she says. "There was anxiety and chaos; a lot of panic was going on in the first few weeks," she says. In the middle of that, competitors "are trying to get residents' records and take a look" — which, legally, they can't see without residents' permission.

"It was like a cattle market," says Peter Masundire, a member of the Proud Friends of Branch Villa. "People were going in, saying 'I want this one, I want that one.'"

What can the state do about the Medicaid reimbursement rate? Not much at the moment, given the exigencies of a \$2 billion revenue gap. DSHS only recalculates the Medicaid compensation rate to nursing homes once every three years, and even an inflationary adjustment is up to the Legislature.

Medicaid's failure aside, there's a more profound attribute of a nursing home in a historically Black, historically low-income neighborhood, says Tomiko Santos: people there are likely to have been poor all their lives.

"Think about the clientele that can afford to pay their way," says Tomiko Santos. "They are people that may have been relatively affluent in the '30s and '40s, owned their own homes. While people who weren't — perhaps they were part of the great migration out of the South, or were prevented by existing law from owning anything. It is a fact that many of the elderly at Branch Villa are children of sharecroppers, or children of migrants.

"There's a reason Branch Villa is mostly Medicaid-funded — it's because of the neighborhood it's serving."

In a neighborhood that may have been historically bypassed for jobs, schools, or other public goods, a nursing home is a valuable asset. Yalonda Gill, also with the coalition, says that Branch Villa's troubles serve to galvanize the community. "Talking to people about this, you find that everybody knows somebody who lived here. They say, 'Branch Villa? Yes, my mother was there' or 'My great-aunt was there.' This place has stood for something very important. We should keep it." ■

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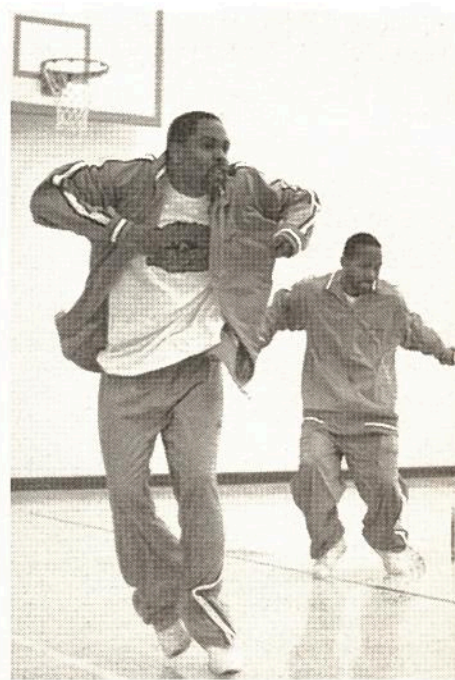
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ABOVE AND ABOVE LEFT, DANCERS BROUGHT TO THE WASHINGTON CORRECTIONS CENTER FOR WOMEN BY THE PAT GRANNEY DANCE COMPANY AND RENNIE HARRIS' PUREMOVEMENT DANCE COMPANY STRUT THEIR STUFF, AS THE WOMEN IN THE AUDIENCE, BELOW LEFT, RESPOND IN KIND.

PHOTOS BY CASEY KELBAUGH.



DANCE Continued from Page 1

can keep her baby with her for up to three years of age; currently there are twelve babies in the prison and the prison provides early childcare programs. Of course, practically all the women at the prison are mothers and the rest of them only rarely have the luxury of seeing their children, since most of them live far away, and frequently with foster families.

But this type of anguish was far from everyone's minds as the women eagerly greeted Rennie Harris. His performance, "Legends of Hip Hop," came to the prison through the initiative of Pat Graney and her "Keeping the Faith: The Prison Project." Graney has been offering classes, workshops, lecture demonstrations, and performances for women at the Corrections Center for eight years. This year, she decided to have an inmate advisory panel that would suggest performers to bring into the prison. Rennie Harris is the fourth artist to come; others have been Amy Denio, a composer and vocalist, Gabriele

Gutierrez, a poet and performance artist, and the poet Gail Tremblay. All the visiting performers also hold workshops with the prisoners.

Harris and his performers taught a master class in the afternoon, then performed twice in the evening (each time for about 200 women). The performance itself, "The Legends of Hip Hop," included several different types of hip hop and dance. The point of the performance, as it is being performed in art and theater venues all over America, is to demonstrate that hip hop has roots in African tradition and culture of the diaspora (African American, Afro Brazilian, Afro Cuban, Puerto Rican), and that this vernacular street dancing, with its popular roots, can also create riveting dance theater. Harris has pioneered the transition of hip hop from the street to the stage.

Hip hop emerged as part of a street culture of rap music, break dancing, and street graffiti in the 1980s. Originally it developed as an alternative to gang warfare, as a way of "fighting without fighting." A hip-hop artist only

needed a piece of cardboard and a boombox to go off to a street corner and perform.

"Legends of Hip Hop" is a more consciously orchestrated presentation than its casual street-based roots. It began with moves like "popping," demonstrated by Harris, then featured one of the living legends of hip hop, Don Campbell, in his "lockin'" technique. Campbell — in red and white striped stockings, a black and white striped shirt, bowler hat, red jacket, and red pants — cut a striking figure as he danced with the flexibility and energy of a 20 year old.

Next up were the "Untouchables," three young men who performed a choreographed piece with rapid changes of pace from fast to slow. Last was a group of three dancers who performed individually. Richie Soto, Flipz, and Forrest Webb each had his own style, lifting, diving, spinning on heads, hands, or legs.

Although he invites various other groups to perform with him, Harris has his own "Puremovement" company that he started in 1992 as a hip hop dance company. One of his early pieces, "P-Funk," is dedicated to dancers "who have lost their way or have been slain in the streets." "Facing MeKka," his current work, consciously draws attention away from hip hop as spectacle to hip hop as a dance performance that has the same universal appeal as any other art form. (See his website puremovement.net for more information). He sees movement as a means of creating community.

That is certainly what happened at

the Washington Corrections Center for Women. By the end of the high energy performance, we were all equally dazzled by the creativity and talent of the dancers. These young men were all as powerful and formidable as dancers in elite ballets or modern dance performances. One reviewer has compared the head spins to an upside down version of a tour de force classical ballet move.

Choreographer Rennie Harris emphasized that little separated the dancers from the women in the audience.

Harris followed the performances with a question/answer period. He emphasized that he and his performers succeeded through hard work to make a living, but that little separated them from the women in the audience. "We all came from the streets, from the projects," he declared, as the women cheered. "These dancers went ahead and committed to performing once they realized they could make a living."

Harris himself works on the principle that "every individual is a creative reservoir waiting to be tapped." He believes in the power of art to transform people's lives as a creative and spiritual force, and he uses his performances to emphasize the common ground among people of different cultures.

At the end of the performance I attended, one of the women stood up and asked, to wild cheers and laughter, "Will you be my Daddy?" It was a poignant moment. ■

Julian Matthew provided background information on hip hop. Susan Platt is the author of Art and Politics in the 1930s (Midmarch Press 1999) available at Elliot Bay Books and the Seattle Art Museum.

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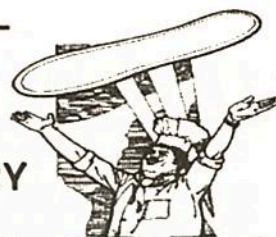
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Thursday, Dec 5, 12 p.m., Westlake Mall.

Suspect, a 45-year-old Hispanic male transient, was searching through the outside ashtray at the Mall when security approached him. He told the suspect to get out of the ashtray and trespassed him from the property. The suspect then threw an unlit butt at the security guard and left the area. The Security Guard want the simple assault reported.

Friday, Dec 6, 6:10 a.m. Officer observed suspect, a 32 year old white male, sleeping in a Seattle Center Community College doorway. The suspect did not attend the school and was thought to have prior trespassing violations in the area. When the suspect could not be positively identified, he was placed under arrest for criminal trespassing and transported to the East Precinct. At the Precinct the suspect was correctly identified but shown to not have received any prior Trespass Admonishment Cards for the location. A card was then issued and the suspect was warned about returning to the area and released.

Friday, Dec 6, 1:58 p.m., 12th Avenue and Pine St. While in a parking lot the victim, a 33-year-old white male transient, was drinking a 40-oz. beer when the suspects, two 25-30 year old white males, approached him and asked if they could have a drink. When the victim refused and said the bottle was empty, the suspects and victim exchanged words and the suspects hit the victim. The suspects then fled eastbound on Pine but an area check proved negative. The victim was taken to Harborview Medical Center for stitches.

Friday, Dec 6, 7:55 p.m., 25th Avenue and East Cherry. On November 24 the suspect, a 48-year-old black female, was warned about trespassing in the area and acknowledged that she understood the warning. On December 6 she returned to the area and entered a restaurant and began panhandling seated customers. The woman then fled the area once police arrived to the scene. After a short pursuit the responding officer arrested the woman and booked her into King County Jail.

Saturday, Dec 7, 4:52 p.m., 2000 block of Denny Way. At around 4:50, a citizen called 911 to report that a 65-year-old white male was in the street at 23rd and Madison pouring something out of a bottle onto passing traffic. At 4:52 the responding officer saw the subject walking into heavy traffic at 23rd and Denny, waving and yelling unintelligibly about "looking for his \$100 bill," "wanting to go to Jack-n-Box," and "where is the bus?" The Officer escorted him out of the street, where he admitted to having a beer earlier in the day. The man was then taken to Harborview Medical Center for a mental evaluation. ■

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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Purifying the World

The Philip Berrigan Legacy

By Michele Marchand

"Dissent without resistance is consent."
— Henry David Thoreau

Variouly canonized and vilified, and for the past two decades dismissed as too single-focused, Philip Berrigan was a radical in the great Catholic tradition, rooted in fundamental Gospel values of poverty, protest, and pacifism. For more than four decades he was faithful to the beliefs that drove one of his first public actions: In May, 1968, Philip, his brother (Father Daniel Berrigan), and seven others entered the Draft Board offices in the small town of Catonsville, Maryland, withdrew several drawersful of draft records, placed them in wicker baskets, and burned them to cinders using homemade napalm.

He was an unparalleled war resister. The first Catholic priest in United States history to be imprisoned for a political crime, he was arrested more than 100 times, and spent 11 of his 79 years in prison.

Born in Minnesota in 1923, Berrigan served three years in infantry and artillery units during World War II. ("I was a good young killer and only woke up later on," he said.) He was ordained a Josephite priest in 1955, and became involved in the American Civil Rights movement, becoming the first priest to join the Freedom Rides in the Deep South. He spent several years starting community centers modelled after the Catholic Worker Movement, serving in parishes among black Americans (the primary work focus of his religious order), and deepening his conviction that racism, poverty, and war are inextricably intertwined.

The Catonsville action catapulted the Berrigans to fame, but it marked only the beginning of their antiwar work. By 1980 Philip Berrigan had left the Josephites and married an ex-nun and fellow pacifist. He, his wife (Elizabeth McAlister), and members of his community (Jonah House, a pacifist community in Baltimore) founded the Plowshares movement, named for the prophetic proclamation from Isaiah 2:4 to beat swords into plowshares. Since 1980, more than 80 Plowshares actions have been done throughout the world.

In the Aegis Plowshares action, at dawn on Easter Sunday, 1991, Berrigan and four others entered the Bath, Maine Ironworks and boarded the U.S.S. Gettysburg, which docked there for repairs (no sentries). For two hours they had free run of that ship, and yet they did nothing but pour their own blood, in a ritual action, on the warheads they eventually found (still no sentries). They prayed for a while, left the ship, sought out the sentries on the dock, brought a sergeant aboardship, showed him what they had done, and then waited for the police to come arrest them. (The federal government declined to prosecute the Plowshares for this action; two years



later Berrigan and six others were again able to board a ship in the Ironworks Shipyard, and again performed a ritual bloodpouring. This time they were arrested, prosecuted, and sentenced to two years in prison.)

This story shows the astonishing hubris and thoughtlessness with which the United States holds onto its weapons and then sends them out into the world. It is also a lesson in the core values of Berrigan and Plowshares: their action wasn't about getting away with anything, or literally disarming an unguarded warship. It was about something bigger than that: a symbolic act of resistance and accepting the consequences, an act of example and prophecy.

In a fine 1970 *New Yorker* article entitled "Acts of Witness," Francine du Plessix Gray called the Berrigan's actions uniquely Catholic, as much directed at the blind nationalism of their church as against war, and further, steeped in symbolism and ritual — the blood of the lamb, martyrdom, powerlessness to the greater power of the God of the Gospels.

Were these actions effective? Berrigan acknowledged in a mid-'90s public letter that Plowshares "looks ridiculous now, a sermon to the converted, ignored by Government and media, the public no longer listening. Most Americans would agree that Plowshares is a Theatre of the Absurd."

Berrigan wasn't into building movements for power; he said in a 1993 interview, "We have to place far more emphasis on the development of human community rather than on the development of a mass movement which would speak power to power...We're called to something different. We're called to serve the poor, resist the state, and be ignored, ostracized, and sent to jail because we do that."

Perhaps his legacy is reflected in the words of his partner in resistance and brother, Daniel: "Since politics isn't working anyway, one has to find an act beyond politics, a religious act, an act of witness. If only enough men could offer this kind of witness, it would purify the world. Wasn't there a time in England when every Quaker was in jail? Perhaps that's where all Christians should be today." ■

CLASSICS CORNER



by Perfess'r Harris

Lately, we at Classics Corner have been thinking about words. Words, it seems, are reality. Trent Lott, for example, built a career as a racist demagogue and no one much seemed to care. In the past decade or so alone he's voted against minority contracts for federal construction projects, attacked the African-American exhibit at the Smithsonian, opposed the Civil Rights Act, and worked to defund M.L.K. day, and this was all in a day's work. But a few dozen words at a banquet for a half-dead relic and the man, to our unending amusement, is political toast.

Gorgias, the Sicilian orator who came to Greece in 427 B.C., said reality is all about words. Everything we know, he said, is probably wrong,

Our knowledge of the past is limited, and that of the future even more so, so how can we really know anything? We only "know" what we are persuaded of, and most of this, apparently, is bullshit. Truth, he said, is simply a matter of what we believe.

limited by the provisional nature of human existence. Our knowledge of the past is limited, and that of the future even more so, so how can we really know anything? We only "know" what we are persuaded of, and most of this, apparently, is bullshit. Truth, he said, is simply a matter of what we believe.

He and Socrates agreed that most "knowledge" is mere opinion, but Socrates thought a higher, truer way of knowing was possible. Gorgias did not. We are all, he said, duped by words. "All who have and do persuade people of things do so by molding a false argument," he said. "Opinion is counselor to our souls, but opinion is slippery." This seems to us a very 21st century idea.

Consider the transformation of the Bushes. When George Senior was President, he was beset by the "wimp" factor. This was always a bit silly, since he had, in fact, run the CIA, but the man was East Coast Connecticut Ivy League Elite to the bone. Upper crust is often confused with effete, even when on steroids. Soon, however, George was proclaiming his distaste for broccoli and his desire for the lowly pork rind. He became a Texas rancher. Photo ops in bomber jacket and Levis became standard. His fractured sentences fell in the measured cadences of Dirty Harry. "This will not stand," he said. As a nation, we swooned.

Gorgias, in his *Encomium on Helen*, said that words are not just about logic. Words, to deceive completely, must appeal to the whole person. This involves image. It's not so much what one says as how one says it. It's the whole package. Paris, for example, deceived Helen not just by words, but also by his great beauty. She is not to be blamed.

George Junior, who could never survive on rhetoric alone, is another case in point. This is a man who has said "Families is where our nation finds hope, where wings take dream." And "The reason we start a war is to fight a war, win a war, thereby causing no more war!" Thinking makes George's head hurt, but that's OK. It makes him one of us. We Americans have never trusted anything or anyone more complicated than, oh, say, an episode of *Friends*.

Sweet seduction. It's the next best thing to knowing. ■

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Holiday Cheer Notables

Friday 12/27

Screening of the documentary film, *Urban Warrior: Turning Cops into Troops*, a look at the rise of domestic militarization. The phenomenon of using the military to control the populace predates the 9/11 terrorist attacks, but those attacks have served as a tool for the administration to accelerate implementation of this activity. 7:30 p.m., at Independent Media Center (IMC), 1415 3rd Ave., near Union, downtown. Info Paul 206-297-6810 or paulr_urbanwarrior@yahoo.com.

Monday 12/30

Sound Nonviolent Opponents of War (SNOW) meeting, a new explicitly nonviolent coalition to prevent a U.S. war on Iraq. Organizations and individuals interested in working with others who commit to nonviolence are invited to join together with 37 member organizations, including Seattle Chapter Fellowship of Reconciliation, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, People for Peace, Church Council of Greater Seattle and others. 7 p.m., at Phinney Neighborhood Center, use the parking lot on N. 67th St., halfway between Phinney and Dayton. Info 206-789-5565 or <http://www.snowcoalition.org>.

Tuesday 12/31

Event Cancelled - Radical Women's New Year Celebration.

One Big Union, last of series of four half-hour documentaries exploring the colorful history of the Industrial Workers of the World, the Wobblies, a **Radical Labor Movement**. 9:30 p.m., on KUOW 94.9 FM radio. Info Jeff Hansen 206-221-2731 or jwhansen@kuow.org.

Saturday 1/4

Regular meeting of **Interfaith Network of Concern for the People of Iraq**, with major focus on local organizing for the Campaign of Conscience. 4 p.m., this and subsequent 1st Saturdays, at the Keystone Congregational Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. N. Info Andrew Fung 206-568-8178 or <http://www.endiraqsanctions.org>.

Sunday 1/5

"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 1/6

Jubilee 2000 NW Coalition meeting, working for debt relief for world's poorest nations. 5:30 p.m., this and subsequent 1st Mondays, at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, 1245 10th Ave. E., 2nd floor conference room. Info Betsy Bell, 206-933-1889.

Wednesday 1/8

Homestead Community Land Trust general meeting, membership based group **creating permanently affordable homeownership** opportunities. They help prevent displacement of lower-income families, strengthen our neighborhoods, and maximize limited housing subsidy funds. 6:30 p.m., this and subsequent 2nd Wednesdays, at Homestead's office, 1309 13th Ave. S. Info or to confirm meeting time, 206-323-1227 or homesteadclt@yahoo.com.

Northwest Labor Employment Law Office (LELO) sponsors a current affairs show, "Speaking for Ourselves, To Each Other." 7:30 p.m., this and subsequent 2nd Wednesdays, on SCAN TV Channel 77. Info LELO, 206-860-1400.

Thursday 1/9

"It's About Time Writers Reading Series," beginning and experienced writers reading from their work. Open mike precedes scheduled readers and speaker, Anne Pitkin on the Writer's Craft. Each reader has three minutes to recite poetry or five minutes to read prose. This series is dedicated to peace. 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., at Seattle Public Library, University Branch, 5009

Roosevelt Way NE. Info <http://www.itsabouttimewriters.homestead.com>.

Saturday 1/11

Washington Environmental Council (WEC) annual **legislative workshop**. Learn how environmental issues play out in our state Legislature and how to impact them. You will hear from legislators, environmental lobbyists, and others regarding the top environmental priorities for the next legislative session. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., at the Mountaineers Building, Tahoma Room, 300 3rd Ave. W. Free, please RSVP, call Amy Zarrett, 206-622-8103 or amy@wecprotects.org.

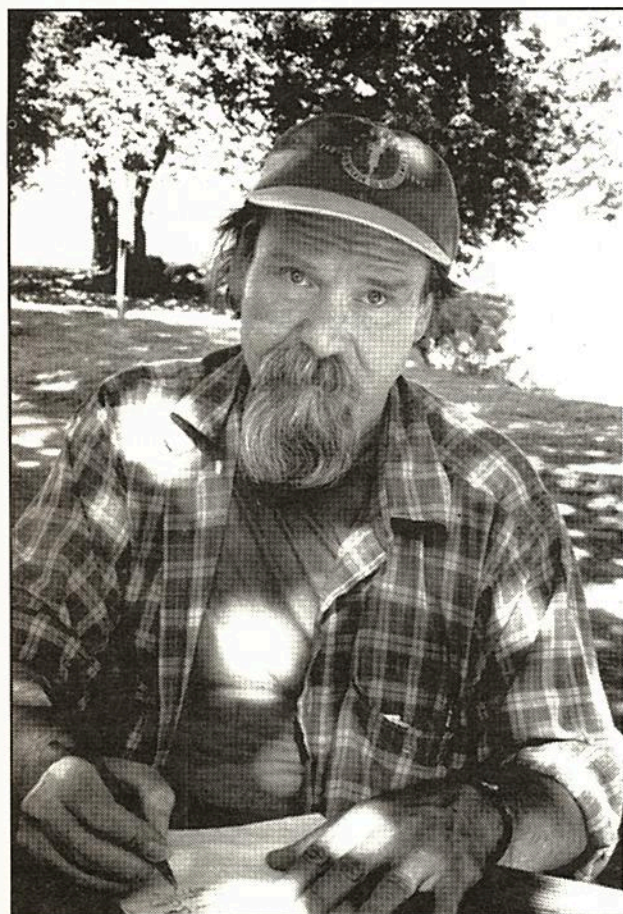
Community Alliance for Global Justice presents a workshop on the **Free Trade Area of the Americas**, "FTAA: The Basics." In this workshop we will discuss what the FTAA is, how it will affect people locally and overseas, and what people are doing to stop it. The FTAA will hand over more authority than ever to the biggest corporations without any real safeguards to protect civil and human rights or environmental and health standards. Now is the time to act. 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., at 606 Maynard Ave. S. in Seattle's International District. Free, snacks and beverages will be provided, RSVP appreciated. Info, directions and RSVP, 206-405-4600 or cagj@riseup.net.

Ongoing

"Ultra Art" exhibit featuring cover art reproductions from Adbusters Magazine, Buy Nothing Day propaganda in all of its forms, an interactive installation by artist John Bain, with sampled music by Otis F. Odder, and **subvertising ad pranks**. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. during the week and during evening theater hours on the weekend through Jan. 11, at the Little Theatre, 608 19th Ave. E. at Mercer. Info 206-329-2629.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War Anti-Imperialist will be doing anti-war tabling. Noon - 3 p.m., every Saturday, at Westlake Park near 4th & Pine, downtown. All are welcome to help. Info vvawai@oz.net.

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 of leaflet. 5 - 6 p.m., every Thursday, at Westlake Park near 4th & Pine. 206-208-9715 or <http://www.scn.org/~wibnw>. ■



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Support a fair and equitable state income tax

Issue: In early December, the Washington State Tax Structure Committee released a report calling the current state tax system unfair and recommending implementing a state income tax as a viable and fairer alternative.

Background: Washington state has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, the second-worst hunger problem, and a \$2 billion-plus budget gap that will undoubtedly lead to further cuts in essential services. Washington state places the highest tax on the poor of any state in the nation. In fact, households earning under \$20,000 a year may pay as much as 16 percent of their income in state and local taxes, while those earning as much as \$130,000 pay as little as 4 percent of their income. The system also does not raise sufficient revenue to keep up with the growth in the state economy and our spending needs over time. Legislators and the Governor need to hear from us, that we support tax reform that is fair and equitable and that pays for the public needs of our state.

After a year of examining the most pressing problems with our current tax system, the Washington State Tax Structure Committee, chaired by Bill Gates, Sr., presented its report to the Legislature on December 3, 2002. The committee's report said the state's tax structure is unfair to low- and middle-income residents, as well as many businesses. State revenue is also subject to wide variations, contributing to our current budget crisis.

The report outlines major alternatives to the tax structure, including implementation of a personal income tax combined with the elimination of the state portion of property taxes and lowering the sales tax rate, as well as many incremental alternatives that would make our system more fair and stable. The report's recommendations result in the same amount of revenue, but the tax burden is shifted from those least able to pay to those residents most able to afford it.

In order to make real changes to ensure the long-term security of funding for state programs the poor, elderly, and children rely on, policy-makers must take bold steps in order to bring about long-term change. Implementing some of the tax reform policies that alleviate the tax share paid by the poor, like an income tax, may require amending the state constitution. Now is the time for legislators and the Governor to take bold leadership in promoting a fair and sufficient tax system in Washington.

Action: Call the Governor and your state legislators and urge them to take leadership in reforming our state tax system so that it is fair to low and middle-income families and raises sufficient funds to meet our educational, health and human service, and environmental needs.

Legislative Hotline: 1-800-562-6000 (You can use the legislative hotline to leave a message for both the Governor and your legislators.); Governor Locke's Office: (360) 902-4111. You can also email your legislators and can find their email information at www.wa.gov.

Script of what you could say or write: "I urge you to take a strong leadership role in ensuring that our state tax structure is both fair and sufficient to fund our state's needs. We must ensure that our revenue system is fair and equitable for all residents in Washington, and raises sufficient funds to pay for the education, environmental, and health and human services people rely on."

For a copy of the commission's report or more information about their recommendations, visit their website: <http://dor.wa.gov/content/WAtaxstudy/wataxstudy.htm>. ■

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