

# Change

Reaching Out to End Poverty • Volume 11, No. 2

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Jan. 8-21, 2004

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## Our Hero

Hate Free Zone's Melissa Bailey steps  
out front for the defenseless

Inside: MLK and the War • Go for Peace • Truth, Justice,  
and Homeless Youth • Conlin Hears from Homeless

Photo by Rob Casey

## Concerted and Concrete

Hate Free Zone advocate Melissa Bailey helps  
solve problems of those victimized post-9/11

By Chris LaRoche

**O**N FEBRUARY 22, 2002, AT 5 a.m., my parents and my sister were stolen away from us. About seven FBI and INS agents barged into our once wonderful home and, brandishing guns and flashlights, dragged them all out of bed.

My 14-year-old sister heard screaming outside her bedroom. She was walked upstairs. [My mother was walked in also with another INS agent.] After we were all seated, a few of the agents sat down on our dining room table. Three agents were standing discussing some "hilarious" book. One walked around. He looked at our pictures on the mantel. He stood staring at a picture of my father, which was taken when he was flying a plane. [We weren't allowed to get water or a tissue or talk. All of this went on for about an hour. They got annoyed when my uncle asked if they had a search warrant. Yes, they answered, without consideration....]

After a while of me wondering why they were dressed in FBI jackets, the agents on the table stood up and walked over. They asked us where our passports were. My father told them he had his in the bedroom, his voice breaking. They informed them they were go-

ing to be deported back to Syria. My family broke into tears.... They told my brother and my sister that they were to stay home. My brother asked them if they were going to send them back tonight. The agent gazed at him, annoyed. He replied, "Well, you don't have to worry about that. We're not just going to send them off to Syria on a plane. Not without you, anyway."

They got out a Polaroid camera. They told my sister to stand, her back to the wall. They took a picture and her eyes started to water, she was petrified. And then they were gone. We didn't even say goodbye to them. We didn't get to hug them.

—Samer Hamoui, on the detention of her family, as told to "Justice for All" commission, September 2002.

**S**amer Hamoui's words were spoken before a panel of nine commissioners, including local and state elected officials, which heard testimony from dozens of individuals about their lives after September 11, 2001.

Samer and other victims of the post-9/11 crackdown on civil liberties

vary in terms of their background, religion, and age. But the similarities in their stories are striking. Stories of unjustified assaults. Hate. Confusion. Mistrust. Not knowing where to go or whom to seek out for help.

One organization has risen to deal with the fallout for these victims: the Hate Free Zone of Washington. And as HFZ's advocacy coordinator, Melissa Bailey is in charge of "direct service."

In other words, she deals with the fallout first. When people call looking for help because of harassment, discrimination, unfair work practices, or because they find themselves the target of a hate crime, they talk to Bailey first.

Amelia Derr, HFZ's Education Director, sums up Bailey's work:

"Melissa is on the front lines every day. Sometimes seven days a week. Sometimes streams of people come into the office asking specifically for Melissa, knowing she is there to help. Often, their stories are overwhelming, devastating, and seemingly hopeless in the current state of this country, but Melissa listens to them with an open heart. She is an extremely effective advocate. She has worked with people abused by police, fired from their jobs, facing detention and deportation, and countless others. She takes very seriously her sense of responsibility to make this a better world and to fight for justice and equality. Without her, countless members of our community would suffer."

Bailey is at pains to point out the mundaneness of her job; she asserts that she's just an average person who

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cares. Indeed, there is nothing unusual about her. No radical upbringing has led her to this job. She has no super powers. She carries no banner for the outraged leftists of the Bush II Era. She simply helps people victimized by the post-9/11 social climate in modest but concrete ways.

And that work springs from being a person who acts on her principled com-

Continued on page 9





## Backyard Politics

Dear *Real Change*,

A clarification and a comment: Darrel Dusharme, mentioned in "Count Shortfall Pinches Public Health" (*RC* December 11-24), is the House Manager of Multifaith Works' Beacon House, one of five homes Multifaith Works operates for homeless or low-income people living with AIDS. We also run a house for people living with MS, in cooperation with the Multiple Sclerosis Association of King County. I think these are the six houses to which you refer. To our knowledge, Beacon House is the only facility in King County dedicated to people with AIDS who are also in recovery from alcohol and/or drug addictions.

The article's focus on the continuing funding hazards that face human services in our area is one more indication of the need for a comprehensive

plan for all of King County. The problem in doing this in the human service arena is no different — and as problematic — as any other regional endeavor.

When we have a regional issue, we think we're up against NIMBY (not in my backyard) but actually the opposition is one of extreme localism, OIMBY — only in my back yard. Meaning that if the problem isn't exactly mine, I don't want to deal with it. And that explains why our regional issues, from transportation to waste management, from assisting the homeless to funding public health, are stuck the way they are. Too few people want to look over their backyard fences to see what's going on next door, even though it could have a significant impact on their own well-being in the long run.

How do we foster a sense of collective responsibility and shared ownership of an issue when our natural inclination, it seems, is just the opposite?

**Anson Laytner, Exec. Dir.  
Multifaith Works, Seattle**

## Immigrants & Human Nature

Dear *Real Change*,

I read your Citizen Participation Project (Sept. 18-Oct. 1) on the CLEAR Act. (Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal, or H.R. 2671).

I agree that Congress shouldn't have to enact another law to solve a problem that existing laws, if enforced, could solve.

If immigrant communities contain only legal immigrants and are not intentionally violating other laws they don't have a lot to worry about. However, I believe all illegal immigrants should be arrested and deported immediately. Certainly they should not be given any rights or services. The key word is "illegal."

There are many reasons why no rich country can allow permanently open borders and remain that way, the primary one being human nature. If allowed to do so most people, wherever their origin, will take what they can easily as long as they can and move on when it's all gone or is difficult to get. It is not a moral thing but a survival instinct most living creatures are born with. The path of least resistance is universally sought, followed, and exploited.

That's the way it is, whether we like it or not.

**Sincerely,  
Walter Broadrick**

*Ed. note: The CLEAR Act has 112 Congressional co-sponsors, yet has not moved out of a House subcommittee since October.*

## Let it Shine

Dear *Real Change*,

I send this check in appreciation for the poem "Dark Days" by Morgan W. Brown in the December 11-24 issue of *Real Change*. It touched me to my heart and soul. Thank you! I have also ordered poet David Fewster's book after reading Anitra Freeman's and Kathleen Mitchell's article about him ["Bukowski Lives," in the same issue].

I know it will be hard for most of you to find Christmas "merry" and the New Year happy, but I continue to hope and pray that some good things will happen for *all* of you.

**Sincerely,  
Virginia Younger**

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# Change

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

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

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Mission Statement:

*Real Change* exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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

*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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# Prophet in Our Time

King's "triple evils" of racism, poverty, and war

By Jean Buskin

On January 19, 2004, we will celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day by marching in King's footsteps, and we will consider the words of a true prophet.

Every schoolchild knows of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s work toward racial equality. Every January, the media focuses on Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, in which he envisioned a world where children of all races would play together, unfettered by the chains of racism. Less known are Dr. King's work on other issues, and the wisdom of Dr. King in seeing the inter-relatedness of many issues. As Dr. King put it, "The problem of racism, the problem of economic exploitation, and the problem of war are all tied together. These are the triple evils that are interrelated."

On war, the Rev. King said, "The greatest purveyor of violence on earth is my own government." Sadly, that is still as true today as when the words were spoken. Speaking of Vietnam, King said, "We've committed more war crimes almost than any nation in the world ... and we won't stop it because of our pride and our arrogance as a nation." What would Martin Luther King say about the thousands of noncombatants killed in Afghanistan, and the thousands killed in Iraq?

Suggesting an alternative approach to international affairs, Dr. King lamented, "One of the first casualties of the war in Vietnam was the Charter of the United Nations .... It is very obvious that our government blatantly violated its obligation under the charter of the United Nations to submit to the Security Council its charge of aggression against North Vietnam." We could substitute either Afghanistan or Iraq, and be talking about the current decade. Dr. King would be aghast to see history repeating itself in rapid succession.

Relating war to poverty and economic injustice, Dr. King said, "I speak for the poor in America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home and death and corruption in Vietnam." On another occasion, he said, "The pursuit of this widened war has narrowed domestic welfare programs, making the poor ... bear the heaviest burdens both at the front and at home. It is estimated that we spend \$322,000 for each enemy we kill, while we spend in the so-called War on Poverty in America only about \$53 for each person classified as 'poor.' And much of that \$53 goes for salaries of people who are not poor." The numbers would be different today, but the same misguided priorities are causing suffering in Baghdad, in Kabul, and in Seattle.

Dr. King had many answers to the problems of his times, and they are just as timely today as when he spoke them. He called for increased domestic spending for social programs, as we do today, saying "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." However, Dr. King was not an isolationist, but had a firm grasp on the global economy, saying "We in the West must bear in mind that the poor countries are poor primarily because we have exploited them through political or economic colonialism."

Central in Dr. King's philosophy was the rejection of violence as a solution to violence. As he said upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, "Non-violence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time; the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love."

The MLK Celebration Committee invites all who honor the work and spirit of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to join us on January 19, 2004, at Garfield High School, 400 23rd Avenue at East Jefferson Street, Seattle. This year's theme is "March in MLK's Footsteps: Justice Begins at Home." Workshops start in the school building at 9:30 a.m., a rally will start at 11 a.m. in the adjacent gymnasium building, and a march will begin at the conclusion of the rally, approximately noon. For further information, please contact the Central Area Motivation Program at (206) 812-4940. ■

Jean Buskin is a member of the MLK Celebration Committee.

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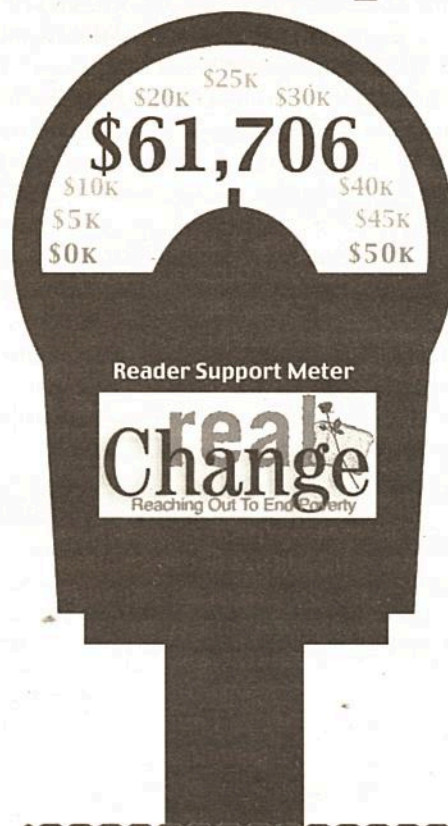
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# No one gets Free parking.



But we won't be getting ticketed anytime soon.

Last issue we asked our readers for a miracle. With a week left in the year, we at Real Change were \$14,500 sort of reaching our year-end fundraising goal of \$50,000.

We asked you to believe in what we do, and support our work with whatever contribution you could. Over the next week, more than \$25,000 in individual donations arrived in the mail. There were big checks and little, but each and every one of them made us feel equally loved.

Thank you. You have made our very ambitious agenda for 2004 a whole lot more possible.

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## Alps Hotel sold; new owner plans renovation

**R**inging in the New Year was a bittersweet experience for Rose James, previous manager of the Alps Hotel. The Alps, an International District residential hotel across from Hing Hay Park on Sixth Avenue and King Street, has provided cheap rent to thousands of low-income tenants for decades.

Ownership of the hotel was transferred at midnight January 1 in a \$2.25 million sale. James, who managed the Alps for 24 years, is out of a job. The hotel's 108 units of cheap single-room-occupancy units are going to be destroyed.

In a letter to tenants, new operator James C. Koh has announced that their rent would only go up when renovation begins, to help replace the four-story building's broken elevator and do other work — including tearing down



THE INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT'S ALPS HOTEL. PHOTO BY TERRY DIVYAK.

walls between the units, adding kitchens and bathrooms, and creating studios and one-bedroom apartments.

The new units would rent for substantially more than the \$300 monthly rate of the hotel's existing single-room occupancy units (SROs, for short).

SROs were prominent in downtown Seattle in the first half of the twentieth century, when residential hotels accommodated the working class. An SRO consists of just one room with a sink, and perhaps (if it's furnished) a bed, a chair, and a table. A shared bathroom and kitchen is down the hall. At one time there were as many as 20,000 of these units in the greater downtown area. As the automobile proliferated, suburbs spread, and the hotels aged, they became home to the "urban poor" — lower-income pensioners, the disabled — and a sign of "blight." Many hotels were torn down or renovated in the course of "urban renewal" in the seventies, eighties, and nineties — a historical process that, finally, has beset the Alps.

Even if they are now rare, the affordability of the Alps' SROs makes them popular. Rooms are currently available for \$75 to \$80 a week. In her time there, former manager Rose James recalls "no problem with vacancies. People are just begging for rooms."

The type of tenant she rented to was typically "down and out — they might be alcoholics, or estranged from their families and just want to be left alone, to live quietly." Some of her tenants had been there more than two decades. "I have a heart for poor people," she says. "They need a place to stay, too."

Koh is in the process of getting a building permit for the remodel. He says that a construction loan will be secured by the city's Office of Housing. ■

—Adam Holdorf

## A gloomy New Year

**I**nauguration Day at the Seattle City Council took place Monday, January 5, and three freshman councilmembers are faced with cleaning up an issue their peers left unresolved last year: picking \$4.2 million in spending cuts to mend a tear in the city's 2004 budget.

It's a doozy of an inaugural task, in light of the \$24 million in budget cuts the City Council made just before Thanksgiving — cuts which followed contentious debate over funding for health clinics and other social services that were jeopardized by Mayor Greg Nickels' original proposal.

While much of that social funding was retained in 2004, that money is threatened anew. After the \$4.2 million hole is patched, King County Supe-



rior Court may rule that the city must pay out \$23 million to City Light customers wrongly charged for the city's street lights.

The City Attorney's office is working with the court to devise an acceptable recompensation, which could be decided this spring. Mayor's spokesperson Mariane Bichsel says that the city hopes not to be required to track down previous City Light ratepayers (each year, one in five moves away) and send them checks for as little as two dollars apiece.

Looking past 2004, two-term councilmember Nick Licata prognosticates an equally bleak financial situation. "The 2005 budget will be horrendous," he says, predicting another \$24 million annual shortfall if the economy does not improve. Adding to the dire straits is a "bow wave" of newly completed capital programs (e.g. the downtown library) that will need maintenance and operation funding.

As budget hearings took place last fall, the Seattle Human Services Coalition circulated a list of 21 ways to restore funds for human services. Councilmembers generally took other measures. But since they still come in handy, here are a few of the coalition's ideas:

- Suspend cost-of-living increases for the highest-paid city staff. Freeze pay rates for workers earning over \$85,000 a year (20 percent more than the Seattle area's median household income). For every worker earning more than \$85,000, approximately \$2,000 would be saved.

- Cut the red tape by looking at the ratio of managers to line staff in each department. Review the "management and administration" budgets of various city departments. Training, printing, and travel expenses have been sliced, but not cuts in management personnel themselves.

- Settle any legal claims against the city more quickly.

- Take a look at micro-management. Nonprofit members of the Human Services Coalition have noted that federal, state, and local funding cuts have reduced the amount of money available in contracts for city programs such as housing — but not the number of city staff overseeing these programs. Why are so many positions needed to give out small amounts of money? "Whereas once we had six city staff overseeing \$6 million in grants to our members, now they have six staff overseeing \$2 million in grants," says Julia Sterkovsky of the Human Services Coalition.

Perhaps such ideas will land on the desks of freshman councilmembers Jean Godden, David Della, and Tom Rasmussen. ■

—Adam Holdorf

## Light in darkness



**A** candle is lit at a memorial service remembering 114 homeless or recently homeless people who passed away in 2003. The service, organized by the Compass Center, took place in Pioneer Square on January 2. Two homeless people joined the dead in the waning days of 2003: the body of Marlowe Sparks was found at a Ballard bus stop on December 29; and John Mansfield died December 31 in the alley behind the Uptown Cinema in Lower Queen Anne. At press time, amid cold weather and snow, the body of a woman presumed homeless was found on Capitol Hill. County medical examiners are still looking for the cause of their deaths. Photo by Terry Divyak.

*Do you have any stories we should look into? Call Adam at 441-3247 ext. 207, and just maybe we will.*





PHOTO BY TERRY DIVYAK

## Keeping It Real

### Councilmember Conlin talks issues with low-income constituents

By Jonah Knutson

**O**n Tuesday, December 23, Seattle City Councilmember Richard Conlin sat down to an informal forum with a host of individuals from various groups representing Seattle's poor and homeless. The meeting took place at Pioneer Square's Boomtown Café and saw *Real Change* vendors, volunteers and youth from the Orion Center, patrons of the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) shelter, Conlin, and a few others forging constructive dialogue around issues pertinent to Seattle's un-wealthy.

The subject matter was fluid: comments ranging from practical and technical suggestions to philosophical meta-critiques of the Seattle political status quo, from concrete suggestions for generating revenue and facilitating services to more general exhortations that the council "think for themselves" and be "more creative," and that society "stop treating children as property."

The meeting was put on by the Get Out the Vote Coalition (GOTV), a partnership of Seattle organizations (including *Real Change*) committed to empowering politically under-represented sub-populations within the community, and was organized with the intention of being not only a practical civic forum but, furthermore, an encouraging example for those feeling disillusioned with the political process. The message: as registered voters, and as constituents, our elected officials *will* listen to us.

And this afternoon Conlin got an earful. Patrons of DESC spoke of the need for a more comprehensive shelter system, one open 24 hours a day and responsive to the intimacy-oriented needs of the many couples inhabiting the system. Staff and youth from the Orion center advised those present of

how the Becca Bill (which mandates that shelter providers report under-age runaways to the authorities within eight hours of encountering their situation) has seriously imperiled the underage shelter system as a whole. *Real Change* vendors urged the council to get more creative in providing affordable housing spaces, perhaps taking advantage of the pre-existing bounty of empty and un-used spaces currently going uninhabited within the city.

Responding thoughtfully, jotting down notes, and nodding with varying degrees of enthusiasm, Conlin appeared to be listening attentively. In his introduction he spoke of the council's commitment to preserving services vital to the health and well-being of the community's poor and homeless, citing

their ability to maintain full funding for community health clinics in 2004, despite cuts proposed by the mayor. Following this, he soberly cited the financial constraints on the council's aims, stating "I'm not really sure how much we are going to be able to do in the next couple of years, because the resources are going to be very limited."

Likewise, in response to the talk of more comprehensive shelter services being needed, Conlin suggested that if we wanted this, we'd have to cut down on the overall capacity of shelter services. *Real Change* Editorial

Committee member and vendor David Trotter took exception to this statement, responding with "I don't see why it has to be an either/or situation," and again urging the council to get more creative as to facilitating services. Conlin more than once returned to the need for the city to get more assistance for funding services from local philanthropists, and was especially interested in the suggestion that the council do more work to publicize funding needs to potential donors within the community, working to match up philanthropists with service providers seeking funding.

The meeting had its highs and lows, seeming at times constructive, and at times lapsing into a sort of citizen/politician role-playing: Conlin the realist amidst the citizen idealists. Needless to say, some left more content than others. In the end, though, it seemed that all parties involved gained some understanding as to where each other is coming from — as politicians and citizens, as well as patrons and proprietors of human services in our city. And this is just the beginning: GOTV plans to facilitate these forums monthly in the coming year, eventually including the entire council, as well as other willing officials, in the process.

When asked to comment on her expectations going in, as well as her thoughts on the meeting's outcome, Plymouth Housing Group member and event co-facilitator Laura Kramer was succinct, offering "I hoped people would come... I think it went really well." As this goes to press, there is another forum in the works for late January. Stay tuned. ■

#### Cascade Neighborhood Council 2004 Historical Survey Calendar



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## Everything is so still

Everything is so still  
So unyieldingly itself  
Keeping its own counsel  
How can it be still?  
When everything flows so swiftly  
When everyone we have ever known  
Has been covered over with leaves  
And the leaves have also been forgotten  
One day everyone climbed into  
Their cars, their trucks  
Slung their legs over motorcycles  
Pulled themselves up onto buses  
Trains  
Caught planes – everyone  
Waved goodbye from the restaurant  
From the doorway  
From the station  
From the car window  
From the other side of the street  
And disappeared

The house is quiet  
Except for the humming of the refrigerator  
A door squeaks  
Someone sneezes

—ELIZABETH ROMERO



## [untitled]

Chris, who looks like Leonardo with really red eyes, holds my hand for a long time after apologizing for telling me the things he tells me after we first meet, and I tell him not to apologize and I let him hold my hand because how many peoples' hands does he get to hold when he's worrying if he is going to die from methadone withdrawal if he has to go to jail, because he doesn't have enough red or white blood cells because he is not healthy and because he has no home to get healthy in and when the big kid tells him he's going to punch him I reach out in defense, a reaction I did not expect, but one that was motherly to this nineteen-year-old and I am only twenty looking at Leonardo who lies about his real name to the big kid and whispers his real name to me as he walks away, and I wonder if this young man with his McDonalds gift certificates will be back when I return: "Be here. Don't be in jail," I say, and he says, "That sounds nice."

—EMILY IRWIN

## 'hore story

"There are ghosts in here ..."  
She roams the apartment rooms  
brandishing her tits and ass  
for money  
dope addicts, alcoholics  
night animals  
haunt her

She hoards baking soda, vinegar  
and bent noodles

She froths at the mouth,  
lifting, I lay her  
on her side  
she vomits  
blood-filled needles, scattered  
white  
powder is on the scarred bureau

They take her to the hospital  
I'm not going  
to dream  
I'll watch television  
till morning  
"I don't believe in ..."

—EARLE THOMPSON

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



**B**efore I get started I want to make an announcement from the News You Can Refuse Department. On January 20 at 11 p.m., RCTV is scheduled to have its first airing on community-access television. That's RC as in *Real Change*, but it will be created, produced and hosted independently by Steve Schrock.

Now, a couple of days ago Steve came by the office and taped interviews with yours truly and fellow editor Anitra "On Whose Kitchen Floor I Have Sometimes Slept" Freeman. I'm afraid those interviews may form the basis of the first show, even though I might have let slip some things about my sordid love affair(s) or what I may have initially thought of Timothy "Our Glorious Founder" Harris, and even

though Anitra may have discussed whether I have ever been infested with invisible insects.

So what I'm saying is, this is News You Can Refuse. If you get the community-access channel, you don't HAVE to watch RCTV that night. No, you can watch *The Daily Show* on Comedy Central instead, in spite of the fact that they rerun it the next day at 7 and it wouldn't hurt you to watch Jon Stewart a day late for once. Or you could watch, say, News at Eleven on Eleven 'cause you were too busy watching Whose Line reruns to see News at Ten on Thirteen, but you still have to get your news fix. Hey, nobody's holding a gun to your head, you know? Sheesh.

Speaking of me getting started, in our last column I ranted a bit. I know that ranting isn't pretty, so I thought I'd get ahead of the game and warn people what sorts of things start me up. In other words, let's talk about MY pet peeves!

PEOPLE WHO JUST DISCOVERED MARS. "Mars is sooo interesting! Did you know that Mars was closer last year than it ever was in 60,000 years? Isn't that AWE-SOME? Don't you want to go look at it right now?" No, I want to chew beef jerky in front of a space heater. Go away for another 60,000 years.

REPETITION. For example, her or his very clever joke at my expense was hilarious the first time I heard it, and mildly amusing the next 20 times, but after the 100th time she/he could be replaced with a neurotic self-abusive parrot and the world would be a far better place.

DSHS CASEWORKERS. What are these people paid for? They don't know anything. They don't have any evident education into the challenges that their clients face. They don't even know how DSHS works. If you want to know a rule and ask three different caseworkers about it, you'll get three different answers. Paris Hilton knows more about poverty than these people.

OVERUSED RHETORICAL DEVICES. "Can you tell me what a rhetorical question is?" Well, I know that choking can prevent them.

SCRIPT SPEAKERS. These are people we have all known who compose and rehearse the conversations they will have with us, expecting us to follow their scripts even though we haven't seen them and don't care anyway. No matter what people like this say, I like to turn the subject to flightless birds or traditional Oceanic art, or both. "I had a great time this weekend." "Maori depictions of Kiwi were rather stylized." "Don't you want to know what I did this weekend?" "The small repeated triangle is seen most often in Micronesia." "Aren't you listening to me? I thought you would ask about my weekend." "Emus?"

PEDESTRIAN TAILGATERS. You get on a bus and someone gets on right behind you. Not only do they follow too closely, but apparently they think your plan is to walk all the way to the end of the bus and walk out the imaginary back door at the very end, because when you stop to sit in a vacant seat it comes as a total shock to them and they run into you.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION and the people who create and use them. Regarding weapons of limited destruction, many earnest people have told me that those have military uses, and that's a qualified Good in the face of Evil. But weapons of mass destruction target civilians, including innocent children: an unqualified Bad. So people shouldn't have them. Hello? That means us. ■





## SWEN from planet HTRAE (*News from planet Earth*)

The multibillion-dollar non-profit thrift stores lowered their prices today to accommodate those considered low-income.

Innumerable churches have conceded to the truth that charity and service rightly outweigh the need for outward appearances and checkbook balances.

Today diehard sports fans rallied at local emergency service organizations choosing to help the needy rather than continue to make the already comfortable more comfortable.

Landowners gathered collectively to jointly evaluate choice land areas for donation to local homeless families.

Several renowned rich and famous persons met with their local media, to announce plans to assist with medical and dental aid to low- and no-income individuals.

Various homeless shelters, jails, and institutions have admitted they have been guilty of treating humans less than humane, at times often disregarding human dignity and respect.

Food banks have taken notice of the outdated food items that were being distributed.

Recovering addicts and alcoholics have come forward to say that A.A. does not stand for abuse and arrest.

Many quality donators of various items to local charities decided to follow up on the outcome of their gifts. The results of these follow-up investigations are not permitted to be disclosed.

Local law enforcement officials have been ticketing those citizens guilty of feigning blindness to human need. Several government officials have been cited.

Hundreds of cold case files have been closed today. Suspects of murders, sex offenders, rapists, child abusers, criminally abusive, as well as those on the FBI's most wanted list have turned themselves in for the sake of justice.

Nursing homes and other socially acceptable facilities for treatment or rehabilitation for the socially, medically, or financially disabled have reported a decrease in stats. Reason given that families and friends have come to take their loved ones home.

Staff members of currently existing military veterans' facilities, organizations, etc., would like to thank the powers that be for placing staff needs and demands above the common veterans.

The national church peoples have declared that rather than exclusively focusing on a national day of prayer, that we human beings focus on a national day of care.

*another day in paradise*

—SUZANNE ARMSTRONG

## Clay *for my boys*

A dove of clay  
fashioned  
by the childhood  
hands  
of the Lamb of God  
trembled  
into life; ascended  
to the sun-splashed sky:  
gold powder poured out  
over harp-string blue.

A gift  
from man  
to Heaven. O angel  
of sweet mortal light!

And you,  
child of our dreams  
in dreamland;  
the green breath  
of earth  
tinctured  
the tremulant air.  
What shape  
is the clay  
from your hands?

Soften  
the stones of time  
with tender footsteps,  
my angel bright. A gift  
from child to man.

—DAVID SPARENBERG



# To Go for Peace

Legacy of a peace ambassador brings international Go championships to Seattle

by Polly Keary

**L**ike many masters of the ancient Japanese board game Go, Kaoru Iwamoto could remember the position of every one of the hundreds of stones played on the board long after the game was over.

So it was not hard for him to remember where the pieces were when his last professional game came to an inauspicious end; the game had hardly begun when the windows exploded inward on that August morning in Hiroshima in 1945.

Iwamoto stopped playing Go professionally after that, to undertake a new mission; spreading peace through the world by teaching Go, a game that promotes rational and strategic thought. He set up centers where people could learn the game and meet to play in Europe and South and North America, including one in Seattle. The sign outside each center consists of an oversized Go board, a 19-by-19 line grid, on which the stones are placed exactly as they were when the first atomic bomb ended that last professional game.

The center has thrived since Iwamoto, then 94, set it up in 1995 on the corner of NE 45th Street just east of I-5. Now, from January 15 through 18, the eyes of the worldwide Go playing community will turn to Seattle for two remarkable contests: the Kisei-sen (Go Saint) Championships will begin at Seattle's Olympic Hotel and the Toyota/Denso North American Oza Cup will be held at the Seattle Go Center.

The Kisei-sen Championship game, the first of the two events, is the first chapter in a best-of-seven match for the top title in Japan. Competing are 25-year-old genius and reigning champion Keigo Yamashita and challenger Naoki Hane. The game will start at 9 a.m. Thursday, January 15, and will be spread over two days. A room at downtown Seattle's posh Olympic Hotel is being specially fitted with tatami mats, on which the competitors will kneel as they play.

The game, which is sponsored by a Japanese newspaper company, Yomiuri, will be broadcast live in Japan and simulcast to the Seattle Go center. A commentator will explain the unfolding strategy to spectators coming from as far away as California. Spectators who are not members of the Go center will pay \$4 each day to watch.

The rest of the Kisei-sen match will be held in Japan, and the winner will receive 42 million yen, about \$400,000.

The first game of the series is traditionally played outside of Japan, but this is the first time it will be played in Seattle.

"We have a great community, a great organization, and a beautiful city," says Jan Boley, one of two employees of the

Go Center. "People want to come here."

On January 17 and 18, local and regional players will have a chance to compete for the West Coast title, part one of the largest Go tournaments in North America. The winner in Seattle will play the East Coast champion for the opportunity to represent North America in the World Championships. Top prizes exceed \$10,000 for the Seattle event.

One doesn't have to be a Go master to play in the tournament, however. Go players are identified by skill rank, ranging from 35 *kyu* (the lowest) to 9 *dan* (the highest). Ranks are earned by playing other players whose ranks are known. There will be games and prizes for players of all strengths during the Toyota/Denso Cup. Players must belong to the American Go Association to play in the tournament, which can be joined at the Go Center online at [www.usgo.org](http://www.usgo.org) for a small fee. Registration for the Toyota/Denso Cup costs an additional \$10 to \$30, depending on skill

level. The game is hugely popular among the samurai class and the enthusiasm passed throughout all levels of society. Schools of the game were set up, some of which are still open, and noble courts kept professional players. Legend has it that a civil war between two brothers ended when, weary of bloodshed, they decided the matter with a game of Go.

After the fall of the samurai, the game nearly faded into obscurity, but a recent Japanese animé film called *Hikaru No Go*, in which a youth is inhabited by the ghost of an ancient Go master, has inflamed new and intense interest in Korea, China, and Japan. Korea now even has a 24-hour Go channel.

The game is also catching on among non-Asians, and most new players at the Go Center are White. Crowds at the Center seem to be evenly mixed, and Microsoft now has its own Go club.

The rules of the game are deceptively simple. Black and white stones, traditionally made of slate and shell, are placed at the intersections of the lines

ing of several stones already placed on the board in the best strategic spots. Although the game can be learned in minutes and played enjoyably in a few hours, becoming a master can take a lifetime.

"The good thing about Go is, no matter how much you study it, there's always something new to learn. The rules are so simple yet it is so complex," Boley, a 6-*dan* player, says. "Studying it teaches you to be really thorough, to think out options when presented with a problem, not just in the game, but in your personal life."

And perhaps in your political life as well. If the legend is true, one war already has been settled by the game, and Iwamoto hoped that Go would teach whole countries to think more carefully. In times like these, clear and logical thought is a worthy goal indeed. ■



(the highest ranked players pay more, but they have a shot at winning more). Players are encouraged to pre-register at the Go Center.

**G**o has long been important in Asia. It is perhaps the oldest game in the world, and although it originated in China as much as 4,200 years ago, Japan adopted it and developed it into a high art during the last millennium. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the game became

of a grid. The players try to capture territory and each other's stones by surrounding them. Because there are 361 intersections on the board, the possibilities are nearly infinite. The game when played by masters is highly nuanced, and many claim it is far more challenging than chess.

Boley gives lessons to new players as they come to the Go Center, and within a few hours, a novice is ready to take on other players. Stronger players will give the novice a handicap consist-

DEBORAH NIEDERMEYER AND HER SON, LUKE ALLEN, TALK OVER THEIR MOVES WHILE DEBORAH'S HUSBAND, BRIAN (LEFT), AND ANOTHER PLAYER LOOK ON. PHOTO BY CHARLES C. LABENZ.

*The Go Center is open Tuesdays through Fridays from 3 to 11 p.m. and on weekends from 1 to 11 p.m. Beginners will have the best chance of finding other beginners to play with on Tuesday evenings. Guests are welcome, and newcomers play for free.*



HFZ continued from Page 1

passion. Call it “practice what you preach.” As dozens of people will avow, her work is invaluable.

Raised in a small town in rural Michigan where “the first day of hunting season was a school holiday,” Bailey describes her parents’ sense of fairness as her counterbalance to an atmosphere of ignorance and bigotry. “I went to a public school where people wore KKK outfits on Halloween,” she remembers. “Confederate flags and Nazi symbols were normal. I cut my hair short at one point and was the sudden target of homophobic slurs.

“I did a lot of listening, too— because that’s key. Racism, sexism, xenophobia, etc. — it hurts all of us. Generally, people were just saying things their parents said and because they didn’t have any information to contradict that (because they had little experience or didn’t understand cultural differences) they assumed their parents were right. Hmmm. Kind of reminds me of U.S. citizens and our current Administration.”

During a break from college, Bailey worked with a nonprofit in Washington D.C. that focused on issues affecting runaway and homeless youth. “That’s where I realized I wanted to be affecting change on a large level, but I always had a problem with the way some national organizations seemed so disconnected from the people they were advocating for.”

In order to settle that disconnect, she started volunteering at a local youth center that worked with immigrant youth.

“That’s really when I started naming the privileges I had as a White person, but also as someone whose parents were able to scrounge enough money for me to go to college — neither of my parents went to college.”

Bailey came to Seattle in 2000 to work as an Americorps volunteer. “My first job was with the Seattle Police Department,” she says, followed by a significant silence. “It was, interesting, to say the least.” Her experiences could fill another lead story in RC. “Then I heard about Hate Free Zone and was amazed by the work they did. I started attending their events and volunteering. So when my year with the SPD came to an end, I begged Americorps to create a position with Hate Free Zone.” It took some maneuvering, but eventually Bailey started working at HFZ as an Americorps volunteer. A year later, her volunteer tenure expired. Rather than face the possibility of losing her, Hate Free Zone hired her fulltime this past fall.

Unassuming and humble, she insists that “most of the work I do isn’t very exciting. There’s a lot of office work involved: filing, phone calls, writing reports.” While this may be true to an extent — the FBI isn’t going to bash in to her office, guns drawn, Janet Reno style, any time soon — reading testimonies and sitting in on a few days of work reveals a side she doesn’t discuss.

Since the Hate Free Zone started in 2001, they’ve served more than 170 cases, from high-profile cases like the detention of Samer Hamoui’s family members, to more commonplace cases of alleged work discrimination.

HFZ fought on behalf of three Seattle-area Somali grocery stores that were disqualified from the federal Food Stamp Program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture accused the merchants of illegally exchanging food stamps for cash. HFZ pointed out the realities of the Somali community — very poor and very large, extended families whose traditional diet is heavily meat-based. They estimate that 90 percent of the stores’ customers pay with food stamps. In July 2002, the USDA reversed its decision.

In November 2002, a judge determined that five Seattle-area Somali men could not be deported to their native Somali because Somali has no functioning, recognized government, and it was highly likely that the men would be tortured and/or killed if they were returned. A couple of the men were apprehended by trickery. One said that he was informed that he had to come into the INS office to sign employment authorizations but instead was taken into INS custody. An appeals court affirmed the decision in September.

“ONE DAY I AM GOING TO SCHOOL, walking on my street, and one guy said, “What is on your head?” I said, “This is my big hair and I want to keep my hair on my head.” Then he was walking at me again and he said, “What you doing again, I can’t hear you!” then he ride my bike. Then I said, “Stop!” but he never stopped and then I tell my teacher. Then he did it again and again and again, and then he was suspended from my class.”

—Testimony from “Jaspreet,” age 5

Though not specifically Bailey’s case, one of the most heartbreaking stories is that of Gurteek (not his real name), a 13-year-old Sikh boy highlighted in *Asian Week* magazine. His life since his arrival in the U.S. with his family in 1996 has been marked by continuous, petty, malicious harassment at school. While such harassment is typical of U.S. middle schools, when you’re not White in “lily white” Auburn, it becomes particularly cruel. And when, after 9-11, you become one of “them” — students, following a national trend, automatically, and wrongly, assume that you, with your brown skin and “unusual” traditional turban, are somehow connected to the terrorist attacks — the harassment becomes unbearable. (Funny how no one with white skin and a crew cut has been accused of being kin to or in cahoots with Timothy McVeigh).

The family moved three times — three different Eastside suburbs, three different schools — in an effort to escape this harassment, all to no avail. Finally, in February 2002, after five years of such daily taunting, Gurteek broke. A fellow student was throwing pencils at

Gurteek and calling him “diaperhead” and “raghead.” Gurteek asked him to stop, but the student continued. Finally, Gurteek got out of his seat, walked up to the boy, and slapped him on the side of his head in such a manner that it caused a fracture to his skull. To avoid a very difficult juvenile court process, Gurteek — a hard working, athletic, honor’s student with strong family and community ties — pleaded guilty to a third-degree assault, a less serious count than second degree assault, but still assault nonetheless. The judge sentenced him to three days in juvenile detention and a permanent record listing felony charges.

In order to stop the racial slurs and hate, Gurteek cut his hair. While it sounds like a simple act, it was a tremendous sacrifice of his faith, religion, and cultural identity.

As he testified on videotape at HFZ’s public hearing: “I wanted to tell you that I have take a lot of abuse in my life in America. Ever since I have come to America, I haven’t fought back to anybody. Here in Auburn I tried to fit in. Then September 11 happened and people started being mean to me again. Calling me Habib, towelhead, pepperhead. People call me Osama and Osama’s son. And a lot of people did drugs so I was afraid that if I told anybody I might even get hurt bad.

“It made me feel very bad when they called me diaperhead because I love my hair, it is part of my religion, and I never want to cut my hair. I don’t know why they just don’t like different people. It hasn’t gone away since September 11 and people still call me those names. I wish kids who bully would just quit. Can’t they see it hurts people? Even if they don’t show it? I know teachers know it goes on in school and they just ignore it. Please don’t ignore it.”

During an interview, Bailey receives a call from someone wanting to make an appointment. A respectable and intelligent man, “Mohammed” probably would have a college degree and decent job if the education system in his native Somalia hadn’t been destroyed in the early 1980s. Instead, he spent time in refugee camps in Kenya before coming to the U.S. four years ago. But that’s not his problem. His problem involves

a broken car, a shady used-car dealer, and an apparent conspiracy with a mechanic. He painstakingly details the sequence of events, including unending runarounds trying to reach a boss who apparently doesn’t exist.

“This isn’t a typical sort of problem that we deal with, in that we usually don’t deal with used cars,” explains Bailey. “But it is typical in that it illustrates how the pitfalls of our society prey upon everyone, but even more so on those who don’t speak English fluently. All these sorts of problems, whether it’s dealing with a landlord or unfair work practices, or being unfairly laid off, all these things involve complicated, legal terms and knowing the system. When you don’t speak good English or know the system, it’s just that much more difficult.”

Bailey tells Mohammad she’ll do what she can and tackles the problem immediately. She promptly displays the sort of ingenuity, determination, and creativity that’s made her a hero among those she helps — doing all she can, even though she might not know what exactly that is. “I don’t really know what to do, but...” and with that she starts calling the car dealer and asks for the owner, “Steve,” who Mohammad says is never there. He isn’t there this time, either, and when Melissa asks when a good time is to reach him, she is told Monday through Friday, from 8 to 9 a.m., except Wednesdays. Eventually, Bailey helps Mohammad file a complaint with the State Attorney General. “It’s not much, and it’ll probably take a long time, but at least we helped him.”

“A lot of people are disillusioned with the judicial system, as people don’t have access to lawyers. Lawyers are expensive and limited.” Even though HFZ has received the attention that it has and has worked on high-profile cases, their legal reserves are limited and strained.

“Simply stopping what we are doing, listening to their story in its entirety without cutting them off, clearly explaining what we can and cannot do, and asking what they would like to see happen — [that sort of conduct] helps them to feel relieved. At least they were able to get their story out. At least some-

Continued on page 10

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## HFZ continued from Page 9

one was willing to listen to them and tell them that they don't deserve to have this happen, that they aren't crazy, that this discrimination and targeting is happening to a lot of people, and it's wrong."

Invariably, Bailey says that her relations with clients also touch on the businesses where they work or which they patronize. "Our goal is to work with the companies," she explains, "not be their enemy. Usually they are just operating on misinformation, and once informed want to do the right thing. But some companies aren't willing to cooperate."

Most of the cases Bailey deals with involve job discrimination, and often the infractions are blatant. "Right now, I'm working with five Somali women who were unfairly fired. They'd been fasting for Ramadan." Everyday during Ramadan at sundown (5 p.m. in Seattle), Muslims perform a short and simple food ceremony to end their fast for the day. "It takes five minutes, but the company said that it interfered with work. Their boss wouldn't let them take this time — five minutes — even though they're required by law to accommodate employee's religious practices."

"It's unbelievable what some companies do. They hire lawyers and really work the system. I can't name names,

except," Bailey pauses, then launches into another story. Originally, she had no hesitation about naming the company, but after some reflection, she decided a lawsuit wasn't worth it, so we agreed to leave the name out.

The story is complicated. It involves a Somali woman we'll call Qadra who had respiratory problems that prevented her from working in sub-freezing rooms. Qadra had worked at a Seattle-area seafood company for three years and they accommodated her disability without any incident. Then things started to happen: racial slurs, anti-Muslim comments, comments about her being Osama bin Laden's cousin. She complained to her supervisors, but they refused to do anything about it. That's when she came to HFZ.

"Qadra often felt she was treated as if she were stupid," says Bailey, "when I could clearly tell that she was a hardworking, intelligent young woman."

Bailey managed to negotiate a resolution with the Human Resources department. Problem solved, right? Not quite — just when things appeared to have settled, more issues arose. Management insisted that Qadra work in a sub-freezing room, regardless of her disability, regardless of the fact that others volunteered to work there instead. They even insisted that she go to their doctor. Qadra had already seen two doctors on her own accord, who

both confirmed her disability. The company's doctor, however, didn't examine her, but gave her a special mask, which Melissa explains, "is legally OK for them to do." Regardless, Qadra felt singled out. That's when they fired her. She was the sixth Somali woman to be fired from the seafood company. That made Melissa suspicious.

Bailey filed a formal complaint with the Office of Civil Rights. "That's when the HR [Human Resources] department stopped talking to me. They said, 'our lawyers said not to talk to you,' and simply hung up," she explains. "Unfortunately, Qadra had a family emergency and had to move out of state, so the issue was never resolved. [The seafood company] got off the hook."

"A lot of companies treat people badly," Bailey says. Her eyes focus off in the distance; it's evident that she's recalling some of the instances, instances she won't talk with the press about, instances that anger her still. "I have my own little list of places I won't shop," she says. "Make that shop, rent cars from, or use services from." ■

**Online:** an archived interview of Hate Free Zone director Pramila Jayapal is available at [www.hatefree-zone.org](http://www.hatefree-zone.org). Its helpline for victims of targeting, hate crimes and other incidents is 1-866-HFZone1 (1-866-439-6631).

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# Theory Meets Action

## CARA spearhead Alisa Bierria sustains a local movement against sexual violence

By Patricia Gray

Alisa Bierria says she was only in the "right place at the right time" in June 1999 when, as a young woman fresh out of college and new to the Seattle area, she sorted through the ruins of Seattle Rape Relief (SRR) and spearheaded its re-creation as CARA, Communities Against Rape and Abuse. Today, the people who have shared in her vision of uprooting the culture and causes of sexual abuse and domestic violence have the chance to tell it like it really is. What they would say is this: Alisa Bierria is a hero in our community.

Working as a volunteer on the crisis hot line for SRR when the president of the board unexpectedly fired staff members, denounced the work of 70 volunteers, and shut the doors on the 27-year-old sexual assault agency, Bierria stepped out from behind the phone to provide vision, leadership, and motivation to a group of fellow SRR volunteers.

"She really impressed me at a time when we [volunteers] were at a complete loss at what to do," says Shawn Steen, a fellow volunteer at SRR also involved with the early development of CARA.

Although Steen hasn't worked with Bierria since the summer of 1999, she says she'll never forget her ability to re-

spond to ideas and motivate and inspire other SRR volunteers. "I will never forget the people who have truly inspired and amazed me, and Alisa is one of those people — she just blew me away.

"Her uncommon ability to really connect with people. Her willingness to listen to everyone, take everything and see the big picture" is what Steen says led to the creation and vision of what became CARA.

Within three months of the dissolving of SRR, CARA was established as an anti-rape organization spearheaded by survivors who are marginalized from mainstream sexual assault services.

Combining her philosophical, academic background with her drive for community, grassroots organization, Bierria seeks to connect theory and action in CARA. Bierria describes CARA as a movement to end the institutional oppression and cultural oppression that causes rape.

CARA differs from other social organizations that deal with sexual violence in that it doesn't provide a traditional crisis line, legal advocates, or a

shelter, and that it zeros in on people who are young, of color, queer, incarcerated, poor, or have disabilities.

CARA operates through collective action, critical dialogue, and community organizing to undermine rape, abuse, and oppression. Community action teams coordinated by CARA and led by members of the community include the Black People's Project, the Young People's Liberation Project, and the Disability Pride Project. Specific CARA-sponsored events have included an art exhibit, "Political Bodies: On Show, Showing Off," composed of work by

people with disabilities. They have held debates on subjects ranging from sterilization of drug-addicted women, to resisting "The Prison Industrial Complex" and police brutality. CARA works as an alternative outlet for victims of sexual abuse, working to support the individual survivors and the community they are surrounded by.

CARA often faces controversy in the community because of its critique of the criminal justice system, a system that Bierria cites for prompting sexual violence.

Despite the politics of controversy, criticism from other social organizations, and budget cuts from the city,

**CARA often faces controversy in the community because of its critique of the criminal justice system, a system that Bierria cites for prompting sexual violence.**

CARA has strengthened and developed its roots in the community throughout the past four years. CARA's mission is to remain accountable to the community.

"Everyone I know who has worked with Alisa is humbled and inspired by her dedication. I feel privileged to know, work with, and share the same community with her," says Chris Pugmire, an advocate for survivors of sexual assault.

Others have experienced Bierria's honest work and commitment to the values of CARA and the community it represents. CARA community organizer Eboni Colvert speaks admirably about a decision Bierria made in rejecting grant money offered by an organization that conflicted with the ethics of CARA. "In the years that I've worked for non-profit organizations, you never hear of anyone rejecting money — now that was intense. She's been able to create a space where we don't get caught up in all the politics."

Working as a "vehicle for a movement that the community is driving," Bierria envisions the end goal of CARA to be just that, an end. Through CARA and the joint effort of other domestic violence and sexual assault organizations, Bierria hopes to see Seattle develop to the point that "we can close — when there's nothing else for us to work on."

Through her work, her example and her nurturing support, Bierria has changed the lives of people like Onion, a survivor of sexual assault, "She is like a mother to me," says Onion. "Through example she has shown me the type of woman I want to be." ■



# Elusive Terms

Truth, Justice, and the search for their meaning for homeless youth

By Casey Trupin

**M**Y PROFESSION IS CERTAINLY NOT ONE KNOWN FOR ITS MORALITY AND ITS VALUES, so for some, it might be ironic to have an attorney speak at an event praising ethics and justice. People are apparently not comforted by the fact that all lawyers have to pass an ethics test before they practice law. Perhaps people are justified in their discomfort. I have been told that the year I took the exam, someone was caught taping the rules of professional conduct to the back of a toilet seat in an effort to gain an unfair advantage on the ethics test.

And yet lawyers are often the ones who are called upon to help define values, morality, and ethics. We struggle to decipher the laws about how to treat each other and about how the government can treat its people. Occasionally the things we battle about are esoteric — they matter little to anyone or anything. But sometimes I think the battles are about the elusive concept of justice.

For the past seven years, I have directed a program with a team of law students to both educate youth about the law and work on non-criminal legal matters that are presenting barriers to their success. We work on everything from health care to family law to civil rights to public benefits to education. What we have come to realize is that the law and the courts and the concept of justice, or the lack of it, are common themes in the lives of our troubled youth and our homeless people.

According to the dictionary, there are four meanings for the term “do justice”:

1. To convey the true qualities, especially the merits, of somebody or something.
2. To deal with somebody or something fairly.
3. To bring somebody to justice.
4. To do yourself justice; to display your own abilities fully or perform to your full potential.

**T**he first concept, doing justice as conveying the true qualities of somebody or something, is important when talking about these populations.

The law in the United States, for the most part, operates as an adversarial system. The adversarial justice system was set up with the theory that with the hashing out of two extremes, a neutral individual or group of individuals would be able to discern the truth. Unfortunately, often the judge or jury is left to find the truth when it hasn't necessarily been presented to them. And they are left to do justice without necessarily finding the truth.

But sometimes truth is more important than immediate justice. In South Africa, some have certainly decided that is the case. After a history of vicious racism, some felt that justice would ultimately come only if the truth came out, and adversarial trials would not necessarily bring the truth. So the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was developed to investigate crimes committed during the Apartheid era. The idea was that if someone told the complete truth about a political crime, they would be granted amnesty and not be punished. One thing most people in South Africa could agree on is that the Commission certainly came closer to the truth, although perhaps not justice, than thousands of individual trials would have. Tens of thousands of people came forward to testify in that

process — tens of thousands.

When we speak about truth and homelessness or truth and troubled youth, some people turn to truth in the form of statistics. Sometimes I, too, try to do justice to the plight of at-risk youth by using statistics. When I talk about troubled kids and young homeless individuals, here's who I'm often talking about:

- 1.6 million children are abused and neglected each year. As many as 1.5 million kids run away from home each year.
- 75 percent of runaway youth are subject to severe maltreatment in the

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**You can see that abused youth and homeless adults are really often the same group, different in chronology alone.**



Photo by William Bossen



## JUSTICE continued from Page 11

year prior to running. 36 percent of runaways run because of physical or sexual abuse. Forty-four percent leave because of other severe long-term problems. In the last year I could find statistics on this topic, 2,000 children were killed by their own parents and 200,000 more were beaten badly enough by their parents to require medical treatment. Five thousand children are buried in unmarked graves annually.

- 11 million American children are without health insurance.

And what about those children when they grow up?

- 25 to 40 percent of youth who "graduate" from foster care will end up as homeless adults.
- 30 to 60 percent of abusing parents say they were abused as children.

So you can see that abused youth and homeless adults are really often the same group, different in chronology alone. But statistics are not enough to tell the whole picture. Stories are needed to bring to light what is truly going on in the lives of these youth.

I represented a 16 year-old in her attempt to get services and safety from the state. Her mother was a methamphetamine user and dealer, and her father, who had a substantial domestic violence history, had not been significantly involved in her life. After being rejected by the state for services because she was too old, her mother transferred custody to her father, forcing her to change schools for the sixth time in five years, change counties, and be separated from her counselor, friends, and support network. After two weeks of physical abuse, she left home, moved to the other side of the state, enrolled in school, rented an apartment, and obtained counseling. She was accepted into college but needed

parental consent in order to enroll and obtain financial aid. Upon her return to Seattle, at age 17, her father attempted, with the assistance of a sheriff's deputy, to force her to live with him instead of with her maternal grandparents, who had played a significant parental role.

When that deputy took her down to the Department to get her services again, they told him she was too old, and one worker stood up in the middle of the office and said "Anybody want this case?" When nobody responded, they sent the deputy away. Our program represented her in a contested emancipation proceeding, allowing her to attend college, receive financial aid, and continue living with her grandparents instead of her father. I should note that one of her witnesses in court that day, something that meant a lot to her, was the same deputy who had originally picked her up at her father's request.

We've seen hundreds of other teens who were thrown away as well. One of our clients was a 17-year-old youth who was abandoned by his parents at age 14 when they left the country without him and left no way for their son to contact them. He lived in and out of shelters for more than three years. Through hard work and the assistance of private caseworkers, he identified a transitional living program where he could receive housing and services. However, without parental consent, the program could not legally admit him. He was also unable to open a bank account, and therefore had difficulty budgeting. Despite living on the streets, he had obtained his GED, counseling, and employment. Our program successfully helped him become an emancipated adult, allowing him to give his own consent to enter the program. He got in and received housing, counseling, and independent living training.

Emancipation represents a small part of what we do. Some of my clients were young mothers who were on the streets because they ran from a partner who was abusive — they were homeless to protect their child from a father who would try to take them away. Some were homeless individuals desperately trying to keep in contact with their families, lawyers, doctors, and children. This last group has taken the U.S. Postal Service, often their only method of communication, to court. The case, in which they point out the numerous ways in which access to the U.S. mails have been withheld from them, will likely be ruled on by the Ninth Circuit United States Court of Appeals sometime this year. The Postal Service continues to say that it has the right to withhold from the homeless the services it offers to people with homes in order to save money. They don't understand the whole picture.

But the Postal Service's myopic view is an affliction which, from time to time, affects all lawyers and judges. We lawyers don't necessarily always understand the full picture. We don't always sit down with the other side to see what we can do for them, or try to understand why they did what they did to our clients.

Even the greatest attorneys do this. Abe Lincoln represented people on both sides of issues — representing slaves who were trying to get their freedom, as well as a man who was trying to recover his runaway slaves. There's a story about him arguing two similar contract cases in one day, one in the morning for the plaintiff and the defendant's side in the afternoon. When questioned about this by the judge, he said: "I may have been wrong this morning, your Honor, but I know I've definitely got it right this afternoon."

It seems pretty obvious why kids and the homeless are skeptical of the law, when they do not see the roles of lawyers and judges to be to seek out the truth. They become more and more pessimistic about the meaning of the law, and of those who are paid to make and enforce it. It must seem a little odd to kids that in a trial, the lawyers and the judge are the only ones who don't swear to tell the truth. Perhaps that's because we are merely vehicles by which the truth is supposed to come out. But it means that in every trial there are two truths being asserted. Maybe the search for truth, then, is more elusive than the search for justice. In fourth grade my class did a school play, *Inherit the Wind*, the story of two lawyers who fought for what they were convinced the truth was. One of the attorneys, Clarence Darrow, thought that teachers should be free to teach their students about evolution. He poignantly argued that, "if you chase after the truth like all hell you'll free yourself, even though you'll never touch its coattails."

I think that's why I love working with kids who are on the verge of being, or who are already homeless. It often feels like a constant search for truth, much as people who work with the environment, health care, seniors, families, science, and art feel about their work. And there is something very freeing about it, despite the constant bombardment of horror stories.

I suspect we can glean some truth from the conversations that, in effect, our clients have every day. I offer you an opportunity to listen in, free from charges of voyeurism:

The youth says, "Where can I find a sense of stability?" The child welfare system says, "You'll find it in the 30 different foster homes you'll be placed in."

The homeless child says, "Where can I find an education?" "You need a home before you can be in school," replies the school district.

"Where can I find a home?" pleads the street kid. "Stop living on the streets," retorts the state, "your home hasn't changed, it is where you left it."

"How can I be protected from the abuse of my parents?" cries the young girl. "Stop being such a horrible kid first," the community responds.

"Where can I get the tools to live like an adult?" wonders the young man. "Show me you've lived on your own, taken care of your housing, financial, emotional, and educational needs, and then and only then will we give you the ability to be an adult," replies the legislature.

"How can I stay out of jail?" asks

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the gang kid. "Do something about your abusive parents, your learning disability, your inappropriate sexual orientation, your lack of adult skills, your emotional deficits, and then we'll keep you out of jail... or maybe instead we'll just charge you as an adult."

## 2. To deal with somebody or something fairly

Our young people have gotten into these situations sometimes because they haven't been dealt with fairly, the second notion of doing justice.

Many kids in foster homes or kids and adults on the streets have given up waiting to be dealt with fairly. They have experienced so many disappointments, they figure waiting is a waste of time. Dr. King, writing from jail in 1963, spoke of waiting for justice, and spoke of the experiences of African Americans "living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next... plagued with inner fears and outer resentments, when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of 'nobodiness'— when you understand this, 'then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait.' No doubt this is how many youth today feel as well.

But it is not always such a bleak picture. There are people who refuse to sit and wait for youth to do themselves in. There are people and programs that aren't sitting around waiting. These are the people and programs who sometimes outwardly say, "Give me a dollar to spend on a kid and I will save you \$10 down the road." But these are also the people who whisper among themselves, "Give me a dollar because it's the right thing to do, because our children deserve it."

These people attack our society's tendency to devalue adolescents. They refuse to legitimize the ultimate catch-22: that youth are expected to behave as adults while the tools of adulthood are kept out of reach from them until they reach 18. Youth who are living on their own, whose parents are no longer in the picture, generally cannot rent an apartment, work a real job, or continue in school unless they show that despite their troubled past, they are much more mature than other kids.

I can tell you in all honesty, it is easier for a youth or adult to get into jail than it is to get mental health care. A youth can get into jail here in Wash-

**Sometimes the  
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ington even without breaking a law. Here's how you do it: you miss a few classes, go to truancy court, and then miss another class.

It could be because you are gay or different and you are being teased at school, so you don't want to go, but you don't want to tell your parents. In any case, you miss that next day of school and sometimes find yourself locked up as a result. And for some youth, you're in detention with youth who know a lot more about committing crimes than you do. You come out a different kid, a hardened kid, a kid who has friends who know how to commit crimes. All because you were afraid of going to school.

For that kid, the system doesn't often work, which is why we all must educate ourselves as to what works and what doesn't. Does it make more sense to keep an adolescent in their family's home until we are sure they can't stay there, or should we remove them at the first sign of trouble and then work with the family to get them back into the home? I don't know. Should we allow kids to make adult decisions at a younger age, or should we allow them to live as children in every way until they are 18 or 21? I'm not sure. What do we do about seriously mentally ill homeless youth and adults who can't care for themselves, but won't let others do it? I can't give you a clear answer. But I am sure that there are a lot of people working to figure this out, and it's not just the lawyers — it's businesspeople who volunteer with kids and the homeless, it's foster parents, it's students who study these issues, it's elected officials and doctors and teachers and child welfare case-workers. I don't know a lot, but I do

know that the only way we won't get to the answer of how to treat kids and the homeless fairly is if we don't share with each other what we've discovered.

### 3. Bring somebody to justice (to arrest somebody to be tried in a court of law)

Although I don't practice criminal law, some of my work is spent explaining the basics of criminal law to young people. Young people on the streets have a significantly higher interaction with the police and with our juvenile court system than young people living with parents. And not surprisingly, they don't feel like they are treated fairly.

The third concept of doing justice as it relates to kids and the homeless, bringing someone to justice, is key. Sometimes the opinion that there is little justice in our community results from a failure to understand where each other is coming from. I remember speaking with an officer who told me, with tears in his eyes, "You don't know how scared I get sometimes, wondering whether I'm going to be hurt or killed." And ironically, that was the same thing a number of kids were saying about dealing with the police. There have been some real successes in this area, dialogues between kids and cops, and they both point to the shortcomings of the law, but more remains to be done. I agree, sometimes the law is the culprit for why kids and the homeless and cops don't get along. The way the law works is often shortsighted, and does more harm to the rest of us than

*Continued on page 14*



**Wednesday, December 24, 8:34 p.m., Fifth Ave. and Lenora St.** A transient Black male aged 59 was blocking traffic on 5th and Lenora. He then walked over to the reporting officer's car and said "Help me, I want to kill myself." He was transported to Harborview for a psychiatric evaluation.

**Wednesday, December 24, 11:01 p.m., Maynard Ave. S.** A homeless Black male aged 28, was contacted for smoking crack in a doorway. A routine name check showed a Department of Corrections (DOC) warrant. The warrant was verified, and the man was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

**Thursday, December 25, 12:04 a.m., 7th Ave. S.** The suspect, a transient Asian male aged 30, was involved in a drug trafficking loitering incident at Hing Hay Park. He was ordered to leave the area, but was re-contacted on 7th Ave. A routine name check showed he was on active DOC status, and he was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

**Saturday, December 27, 4:47 p.m., Alaskan Way S.** Officers were dispatched to the Coast Guard facility to investigate a trespass. Suspect, a transient White male aged 23, had been asked to leave the facility once, but had been located again on the property. Coast Guard security had already placed him in handcuffs and removed all belongings from his person. Officers took custody of the man and his effects, and transported him to the East Precinct police station. The suspect

stated he was trying to find a place to sleep, and had left the facility when asked the first time. He stated he was unaware that he had re-entered the facility. The Coast Guard security had contacted the suspect's father, and he arrived at the police station and took custody of his son.

**Thursday, December 25, 3:57 a.m., Third Ave. S.** Officers patrolling their beat found the suspect, a transient White male aged 36, and his girlfriend sitting in an alcove of the Seattle Public School headquarters, drinking beer. They contacted the man and found he had a warrant for his arrest from California. The warrant was verified, and the man was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

**Saturday, December 27, 12:30 a.m., 8th Ave. and S. Dearborn St.** Officers made contact with a suspect loitering in the area of 8th & Dearborn. A radio check showed that the man, a transient Asian male aged 44, had an outstanding warrant. He was placed into custody and booked into King County Jail.

**Saturday, December 27, 8:25 p.m., Third Ave., DESC.** A Native American male aged 48 was sitting next to his open third-floor window, and told staff he was going to kill himself by jumping out. He then told staff he was willing to go to Harborview for mental health treatment, and agreed to wait in the lobby. Officers arrived and found the man in the lobby. He asked to use the officer's gun, but would not say why. He was transported safely to Harborview for treatment.

*Streetwatch is compiled from Seattle Police Department incident reports by Emma Quinn. Do you have your own story to tell? Call Real Change, (206)441-3247, and we'll get the scoop.*

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to the person we intend to punish.

There's a great example of this in the Jewish folk story of a town full of shortsighted individuals. A rich skeptic came to that town, and he would deliberately ride in his coach each Saturday, to enrage the villagers by his open violation of the law that one doesn't ride on Saturday.

So the town sought ways to teach the rich skeptic a lesson. They thought and conferred and decided that every Saturday, when the skeptic rode through the streets, a few of the townspeople would lie down beneath the wheels of his coach, so that the coach would turn over and the rich skeptic would break his ribs.

Well of course it was the townspeople, not the rich man, who broke their ribs. Our city and state sometimes operate in the same way. We look at some behaviors as being inconsistent with the way our society is supposed to work — like people sleeping on the streets. We look at them sleeping in

tents in a parking lot, or in a park itself and we proclaim, "something must be done." So our townspeople go out to teach them a lesson, to make them sleep somewhere else. And in the process of outlawing their ability to sleep, we push them to find other ways to house themselves in a city without enough housing. We push domestic violence victims to return to their abusers, children and adults to commit crimes to end up with a bed in jail, the mentally ill to roam the streets all night. Yet, at the same time, we all haven't done enough to help the homeless with their real issues, we have only laid down in front of their coach while it rolls over our bodies and hurts all of us.

There are other examples of shortsighted solutions. Our city has let people sleep in the parks only if they don't use anything, such as a sleeping bag or a blanket, which causes people to freeze to death. Our state requires that professionals almost immediately report their runaway clients, never mind that they have just told the client that their information is confidential. Never mind that they need time to establish a rapport to be successful. What happens is clear: professionals stop asking runaways if they are runaways so they don't trigger the reporting requirement, they don't ask if this 14-year-old has a family with whom they might be reconciled, and that option is then never explored.

Nobody is brought to justice when we take shortsighted approaches that merely push the problem onto another person or segment of our society. The shortsightedness is most apparent on the criminal side of the system. As we continue to lower the age that we can consider young offenders to be adult criminals, we lose sight of the fact that these kids are products of our system's failure to support them. We fail them, and then we punish them. Each month I get calls from young adults and caseworkers who tell me that the public disclosure of a kid's crime, a felony such as taking their parents' car without permission, is preventing them from getting a job to support themselves. We prevent young people from getting jobs because of their youthful indiscretions, but we lose sight of the fact that we're closing off legal ways for them to live. This is perhaps the worst punishment for kids: not the time they spend in jail, but the fact that their records are open to the world, for all, especially employers, to see. There must be a better way to do this.

Individuals who think the current system is not doing justice have come up with different concepts, including restorative justice victim-offender dialogue, community justice committees, and victim impact panels. These and other innovations within our courts, jails, and prisons are meant to engage the victim, the offender, and the affected community in search of solutions that promote repair and reconciliation. What is clear in all of this is that we must challenge ourselves to re-examine how we do justice to individuals. We must make sure that in doing justice to some individuals, we are not doing an injustice to our society. Un-

fortunately, with adolescents and with the homeless, we are too often cutting off our nose to spite our face.

#### **4. Do yourself justice — to display your own abilities fully or perform to your full potential.**

To be unjust to others is to be unjust to yourself. The last meaning of doing justice is just that— doing yourself justice means displaying your own abilities fully or performing to your full potential. We know that young people and the homeless are victimized. Just like everybody, some of them will, with help, rise above it. Helping someone to understand victimization doesn't do any good unless it helps them understand how to empower themselves. The same is true with our region. We are the city on the hill, both literally and figuratively. Others look up to us. And as our region finds itself in a time of economic hardships, created both by voters and nonvoters, and by unforeseen circumstances, it is the perfect time to show our best side.

For years, we've been litigating a case about whether the state is violating the constitutional rights of foster kids. We presented testimony that the state was and is doing a number of things to foster youth which severely hurt them, including failing to provide them with timely and adequate mental health assessments and care, with safe places to live with their siblings, with ways to stay in their schools, with a foster parent who knows what their history is and who is trained to care for them. The state often asks caseworkers to handle 30 kids at a time. This leads to fingerpointing, everyone saying it's someone else's fault that this kid was moved five, 10, 20, 30, 40, or more times. More than 3,000 kids in foster care in our state right now have been in at least three placements. The vast majority of our foster kids don't ever get a diploma. One-quarter to half of them will end up as homeless adults. Nobody can argue with a straight face that you can deny a kid his or her constitutional rights because something else seemed like a better funding option. Nothing is more important in the law than our constitutional rights. It would be like giving lawyers to only half of the accused because we ran out of money after paying for new freeways.

Now we all need to put our money where our mouth is and come up with solutions for foster kids and other troubled kids before they hit the streets — better support for them, for their biological families, for their foster families, and for the caseworkers who take care of them.

My first client as an attorney was a 16-year-old homeless girl who was beaten and then abandoned by her parents when they moved to another state, and then abandoned by the state when they didn't have enough foster homes to house her, and left on the streets. She just needed a little legal help to access services and housing. We were success-

**We must make sure that in doing justice to some individuals, we are not doing an injustice to our society. Unfortunately, with adolescents and with the homeless, we are too often cutting off our nose to spite our face.**

ful, so I was blown away — crushed — when the next time I saw her, she was on the streets again. I asked her what she was doing there, why she was hanging out with street kids at midnight on a cold, damp Wednesday evening. Hadn't we solved her problems? I asked her. She looked at me with the face of a child and the eyes of an adult and laughed at my ignorance.

She told me that she wasn't back on the streets — she was now working as a peer outreach worker for a youth service center. And I thought, if anyone had earned the right to go out and earn money in a high-paying job, it was she. But instead she had chosen to work to make sure that others wouldn't have to suffer the way she suffered.

While she had suffered many injustices, I can't think of a better example of justice than that young woman. She was striving to do herself justice — to perform to her fullest, by doing justice to others. If a youth like that can persevere, we can certainly make a commitment to strive to do the near-impossible: both advocate for our principles and live up to them.

Maybe that is where the truth lies, in the lives of these youth and adults who are resilient, who will not lament their woes but will instead work for justice. If that's so, maybe the solution is to spend more time asking children questions and spend less time questioning what children ask for. ■

*Casey Trupin is a youth law staff attorney with Columbia Legal Services. Adapted from a December 2001 speech on truth, justice, and homeless youth at the Center for Ethical Leadership ([www.ethicalleadership.org](http://www.ethicalleadership.org)).*

**It must seem a little odd to kids that in a trial, the lawyers and the judge are the only ones who don't swear to tell the truth. Perhaps that's because we are merely vehicles by which the truth is supposed to come out, but it means that in every trial there are two truths being asserted. Maybe the search for truth, then, is more elusive than the search for justice.**



# Dead of Winter Notables

Thursday 1/8

Discuss voting rights, the pros and cons of touch-screen voting, and more at **Your Vote Counts: Making Democracy Work**, a free public forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters. Speakers: Sam Reed, Secretary of State; Dorry Elias, Executive Director, Minority Executive Directors Coalition of King County; Dean Logan, Director, Records, Elections and Licensing Division of King County; Bob Terwilliger, Snohomish County Auditor; Dr. Barbara Simons, Founder and Co-chair, U.S. Public Policy Committee of Association for Computing Machinery; and Rachael Myers, Associate Director, Real Change. 7:30 p.m. Seattle First Baptist Church Harvard Avenue & Seneca St.

Friday 1/9

**Seattle Thunder Benefit Concert** in an intimate coffeehouse setting with Seattle recording artists Grace Hearn and Michael Savage. 7:30 p.m., at the Tribal Gathering Place, 3400 Phinney Ave. in Fremont (old Redhook building), tickets \$12. Info <http://www.graceandsavage.com>.

Saturday 1/10

"The USA PATRIOT Act: Threats to Liberty in Times of Crisis," presentation by Mark Kolner, Board of Directors, Washington ACLU. 7 p.m., at Wedgwood Presbyterian Church, 8008 35th Ave. NE. Potluck dessert 7-7:30 p.m. Presented by Wedgwood/SandPoint Neighbors for Peace. Info [jlavelle@w-link.net](mailto:jlavelle@w-link.net).

Sunday 1/11

Outspoken Congressman **Jim McDermott** will give an update on Iraq and Afghanistan, and what he thinks Bush is planning for the year. He will also respond to questions from the audience. Sponsored by Capitol Hill Neighbors for Peace and endorsed by Seattle Nonviolent Opponents of War (SNOW). 7-8:30 p.m., social hour 8:30-9:30 p.m., at Central Lutheran Church, 1710 11th Ave. Info [capitolhill@snowcoalition.org](mailto:capitolhill@snowcoalition.org).

Wednesday 1/14

**Labor Employment Law Office** 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 1/15

Foolproof presents renowned scholar, author, and activist Saul Landau, speaking on his book, **The Pre-emptive Empire: a Guide to Bush's Kingdom**. 7:30 p.m., at Town Hall, 1119 8th Ave. at Seneca St. Info and tickets <http://www.foolproof.org>. Mr. Landau also

speaks earlier at 5 p.m., at Elliott Bay Books, 1st Ave. S. and S. Main in Pioneer Square.

**Seattle Radical Women** present a special video to celebrate the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, **Can We Now Be Heard**. This documentary features women from various grassroots organizations who were part of the movement to win reproductive rights. Dinner, with vegetarian option, available at 6:30 p.m. for a \$6.50 donation, movie 7:30 p.m., at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S. Info 206-722-6057.

Friday 1/16

8th Annual youth-driven celebration of the life and message of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "The **Power of Non-violence Now**." This free event, presented by YMCA of Greater Seattle features teen speakers and performers from greater Seattle sharing their interpretations of Dr. King's legacy. 4:30-6 p.m., at Meany Middle School, 301 21st Ave. Info Jamie Lynch 206-382-5009, ext. 2345 or [jlynch@cs.seattleymca.org](mailto:jlynch@cs.seattleymca.org).

Seattle Young People's Project 5th Annual **Martin Luther King, Jr. Hip Hop Show**. Doors open 6 p.m., show starts 7 p.m., at the Vera Project on 4th between Virginia and Stewart. Info 206-860-9606.

Sunday 1/18

Seattle Chapter **Fellowship of Reconciliation** program, on the WTO and privatization of the public sector, with speakers Ian Murray and Sally Soriano. Potluck 5 p.m., program 6:30 p.m., at Woodland Park Presbyterian Church, 225 N. 70th. Info 206-789-5565.

"**Remembering the Dream**," a celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., featuring several men's choruses and the Boeing Employees' Chorale and presented by Church Council of Greater Seattle. Proceeds will benefit the **Emergency Feeding Program**. All are encouraged to bring canned foods for the many families around King County or make a financial donation. A community sing-along will be led by Pastor Pat Wright and the Total Experience Gospel Choir. 6:30 p.m., at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 19th and E. Madison. Info 206-723-0647.

Monday 1/19

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Rally and March**, with music, talks, and workshops. The theme is "March in MLK's Footsteps: Justice Begins at Home." Workshops 9:30 a.m., rally 11 a.m., march noon, at Garfield High School, 23rd Ave. at E. Jefferson. Info CAMP 206-812-4940.

The Total Experience Gospel Choir pays tribute to **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** in conjunction with the City of Seattle and the Rain City Women's

Chorus. This is part of an all day celebration of the life and legacy of Dr. King at the Center House Pavilion, Seattle Center. The concert begins at 6 p.m. Info Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas 206-323-4032 or <http://www.cdforum.org>.

Wednesday 1/21

University of Washington presents Mari J. Matsuda, Professor of Law, Georgetown University, speaking on "**Higher Education: The next frontier of the Civil Rights Movement**." Professor Matsuda is a nationally recognized expert on legal history, civil rights, feminist theory, and affirmative action. Co-sponsored by the Office of Minority Affairs. 7 p.m., at University of Washington Kane Hall, Room 110. Info [cyn@u.washington.edu](mailto:cyn@u.washington.edu).

Thursday 1/22

**Cuban Film Festival**, this night showing **The Revolution Will Not Be Televised**, a documentary that follows the struggles of democratically elected Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. A discussion will follow. \$10 donation benefits the education fund and Right to Travel Fund. Sponsored by Seattle-Cuba Friendship Committee. 6:45 p.m., at 911 Media Arts Center, 117 Yale Ave. N. off Denny near REI. Info 206-682-6552.

Elliott Bay Books presents author Mark Kurlansky speaking on his book, **1968: The Year That Rocked the World**. Mr. Kurlansky makes a case for why 1968 has lasting relevance in the United States. 7:30 p.m., at Elliott Bay Books, 1st Ave. S. and S. Main, Pioneer Square. Info Dan Rather 206-624-6600.

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## Tell Olympia: End Corporate Welfare Fraud

**Issue:** State tax breaks for high-tech firms do not achieve the economic impact they were intended to. Legislators should not bow to industry wishes by renewing them.

**Background:** In 1994 the Washington legislature passed two tax incentive measures for high technology firms conducting research and development in advanced computing, advanced materials, biotechnology, electronic device technology, and environmental technology.

Both of these laws are scheduled to expire in 2004. The governor and legislature are considering extending these tax breaks, which would result in a loss of \$93.2 million for state and local government services in the current biennium. The hole in our government's purse will only widen as time goes by. In the 2005-07 biennium, the losses from these tax breaks would total \$257 million.

As corporate tax breaks like this one are sustained, we must remember the dire monetary situation of the state in recent years. The full state budget has already seen more than \$2 billion in cuts, including to education, children's health, and health care for low-income workers. As these cuts take effect, the state's lowest-income residents continue to pay a grossly unfair portion of their income to taxes. A 2003 study by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) says that Washington's tax structure disproportionately burdens low- and moderate-income families more than any other state in the nation. Families earning less than \$17,000 pay 17.6 percent of their income in state and local taxes, while the richest Washingtonians pay only 3.3 percent of their income to local and state governments. Our state is bleeding poor families dry, and giving away the farm to wealthy interests.

There are two parts to the high-tech incentive program:

- **The B&O credit:** Firms can take a credit of up to \$2 million against their state B&O tax for research and development (R&D) expenditures. From 1995 through 2002, 1,311 firms took the B&O tax credit, costing the state a total of \$204 million. This credit is set to expire on December 31, 2004.

- **The sales tax deferral:** Firms may defer sales tax payments on facilities and machinery for R&D, if they are building a new facility or expanding or renovating an existing facility. Firms have taken \$323.9 million in sales tax deferrals for 393 projects since 1995. Overall, 85 percent of the firms that have taken the sales tax credit have been in King County. The sales tax measure expires on July 1, 2004.

**Have these tax breaks produced new jobs? Signs point to no.** According to the Department of Revenue, overall employment grew in the firms benefiting from the tax preferences between 1995 and 2002, but the same rate of growth occurred among high-tech firms in all other states. Washington's share of the nation's high-tech jobs has remained steady at about 2.3 percent since 1994.

Meanwhile, the public costs of sustaining these breaks are astronomical. If they continue, in the 2003-2005 budget biennium the state will lose \$93 million as a result. In 2005 and 2006, that number will soar to \$257 million. By 2009, it will reach nearly \$285 million. And the amount of state tax revenue passed down to local counties and cities will decline, exacerbating local budget crises.

**Action:** Call your state representatives in Olympia and tell them that we can't afford to renew ineffective tax breaks. Tell them we need a method for reviewing all current tax exemptions, assessing the efficacy of each of them, and getting rid of the ones that don't achieve a public benefit.

Call 1(800)562-6000 to leave a message for your two representatives and one senator. Or, go to the State Legislature's DistrictFinder web site (<http://www.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/Default.aspx>) and look up your representatives there.

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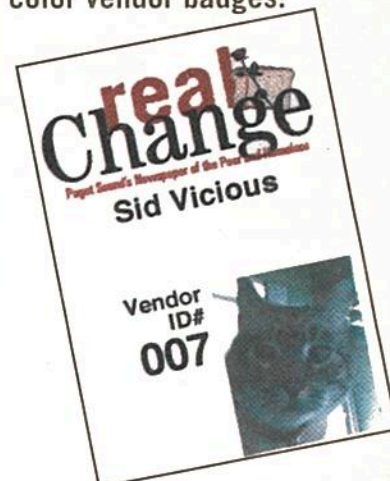
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