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Reaching Out to End Poverty • Volume 11, No. 8

JOAN JETT

and violence against women

Inside: Guest Editorial from God •
Council Newbies' first 100 days • Living clean
at Traugott Terrace • North American Foolsbriefs

JOAN JETT PHOTO COURTESY BLACKHEART RECORDS.

Interview by Jess Grant

It was a strange coincidence that brought Joan Jett and the Blackhearts to Seattle's EMP Sky Church on Friday, March 26, the day after Jesus Mezquia was found guilty of the murder of Mia Zapata. Strange because Jett had worked from a distance to find Zapata's killer and give women the power to overcome attackers like him.

In 1993, Jett was working with punk band Bikini Kill in Olympia when Zapata, singer for the Seattle band The Gits, was raped and killed. Jett became interested in the case and ended up lending her support to Home Alive, a nonprofit self-defense group created in the wake of the murder by local artist-activists Valerie Agnew and Gretta Harley.

Jett told *Dazed and Confused* at the time, "I was amazed... how something so awful could give rise to something so positive."

Jett, along with Bikini Kill front-woman Kathleen Hanna, wrote a song in reference to the Zapata case called "Go Home." Jett filmed a music video of the song in which she plays a woman who gets away from her stalker. The video plugged the Home Alive project and was dedicated to Mia's memory. MTV refused to air the piece, however, claiming it was "too violent."

A couple of years later, when the

killer's trail had grown cold and police had all but given up, Zapata's family and friends hired a private eye to continue the investigation. Jett and the remaining members of The Gits played a series of shows under the name "Evil Stig" (Gits Live backwards). Though the short-lived musical project had all the rough edges one would expect from an off-the-cuff endeavor, it gave Mia's survivors the emotional and financial lift they needed to pay the detective and carry on in the face of discouragement.

Evidence finally led to Mezquia, a Florida ex-felon who had been living in Seattle close to the scene of the murder in 1993. A nationwide check of DNA evidence of former inmates fingered the 46-year-old fisherman. The late March conviction brings some long-awaited closure to this disturbing case. While the verdict lays to rest a crime that many had despaired of solving, it doesn't answer the broader, more troubling question: are our streets any safer now that Mia Zapata's killer is behind bars?

Jett's engagement at EMP seemed like an opportune occasion to reflect on the state of the women's self-defense and empowerment movement, so *Real Change* contacted Blackheart Records, where Jett's manager arranged the interview that follows.

Even non-fans usually recognize

Jett's signature tune, "I Love Rock'n'Roll." This rock classic is Billboard's #28 song of all time, and along with her other hits, it has earned Jett a place of honor in the rock pantheon. Though sometimes dismissed as power-chord fluff, her simple song has a radical myth behind it.

After her trailblazing girl-band The Runaways split up in 1978, Joan was having trouble kick-starting her solo career. She recorded some tunes in London with the Sex Pistols, then came back to Los Angeles and hooked up with songwriter-producer Kenny Laguna. She and Laguna went in the studio and recorded her first Blackhearts album, but they couldn't find a major label that wanted it. In desperation they formed their own label and released the album independently in Europe. Brisk sales there soon earned them a deal with Boardwalk Records and, after a year of touring, "I Love Rock'n'Roll" went to #1 on the Billboard charts for eight straight weeks.

Joan has never shirked from this role as a pioneering feminist. As the first woman in rock to start her own record label — with all the financial and artistic independence that brings — she has always preached the message that girls could do anything boys could do (and quite possibly better). As a sex-

positive, pro-choice, gender-bending rock headliner, Jett is at the forefront of the culture wars currently raging across America.

More recently, she's gotten involved in electoral politics. This winter she and Laguna stumped for Howard Dean, and were with him in Ohio on the night of his legendary whoop. Her support for this nominally anti-war candidate might at first glance seem to contradict her work with U.S. troops abroad, as a regular feature on USO tours for many years. But Laguna, in Seattle with Joan as her keyboardist and back-up singer, explained it to *Real Change* this way:

"She is strongly anti-war," he says, "but she feels a connection with these kids in the military. When she was touring around the world, lonely for America, those kids were there for her, so she tries to be there for them. She's been under hostile fire more than any other non-combatant. But it breaks her heart when we're bombing people."

Here, then, is Joan in her own words.

Real Change: What are your thoughts about yesterday's verdict?

Joan Jett: I was amazed that we hit town at the same time. I had heard they

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Look for the Mockingbird Times Inside!





Getting away with murder?

Dear *Real Change*:

We appreciate the article on the killing of Shawn Maxwell by Seattle police in 2002. Author Jess Grant wrote that "An internal investigation and inquest at the time both exonerated the officers involved, despite conflicting testimony by several eyewitnesses..." More than just "conflicting testimony," the eyewitness accounts were consistent with each other and greatly at odds with police accounts. Chief Kerlikowske gave the SPD version at a press conference (which we have on tape) the day after Shawn's death: Shawn raised a sword over his head and "leaned toward the officers," and after falling to the ground from being shot, grabbed the sword and began to "raise up" while swinging it before being shot again.

Five of the eyewitnesses made public statements at a forum we helped organize (which we also have on tape). All of them stated that Shawn was walking slowly and calmly with "a stick" at his side before he was shot, and that he had raised his head and shoulders a few inches off the ground before being shot again. At least two of the eyewitnesses said over 10 minutes elapsed between Shawn being put in an ambulance and that ambulance leaving.

Also, while nobody denies Shawn possessed a sword, the eyewitnesses strongly disputed that it was "a sword" in his hands when he was shot. The eyewitness with the best view stated it was like "rebar — metal bar that reinforces concrete." Remember, police have control of the scene after they've killed someone, and have every incentive to lie. Police have even been convicted of planting evidence to justify killings, most recently in Miami last year.

Absolute power corrupts absolutely. Always question the "official" version; to do otherwise attracts to police work people who want to get away with murder.

Dan DiLeva
Seattle Affiliate
October 22nd Coalition to Stop
Police Brutality

RC: Disappointing

Dear *Real Change*,

I'm writing to let you know that your front-page article "AKA Raiko" [RC March 4] about the police killing of Shawn "Raiko" Maxwell was disappointing. You contest the police

department's position that the killing was justified, asking "Was the use of deadly force really necessary?" You mention that there was conflicting eyewitness testimony, and a current investigation by the Justice Department about possible civil rights violations. But nowhere in the article do you make a case for why the killing may have been unjustified.

Now I acknowledge that your article successfully pointed out that Raiko was not a simple thug — which is an important point to be made. But it is more important when talking about a wrongful death case to explain why his death is considered wrongful. In other words, why shouldn't the police have killed him?

You give no answers to that question other than explaining that he was an artist, that he was going through troubling times and didn't get enough sleep the night before. But that provides nothing in the way of explaining why the cops shouldn't have shot him when he went after them with his sword after they chased him for driving recklessly. You imply that the police version of the story was wrong; that he wasn't about to attack them with his sword.

But instead of contesting specifics of their account, you instead explain that the sword he had that night was a prized Japanese antique that he was proud to own. But what does that have to do with the case? It doesn't matter whether the sword was Japanese or Roman, what matters is whether or not he was attacking the police with it.

Don't misinterpret my letter as being sympathetic to police brutality or unjustified police murder. But the fact is, you didn't give any facts to show me that the killing of Maxwell was anything other than justified. After reading your article, I'm left with the impression that he was generally a good guy, who was justifiably shot because he attacked police with a sword after crashing his car while being chased by police for driving recklessly.

Sincerely,
Tristan Heberlein
Seattle

Ed. replies: We reported on the testimony mentioned in Dileva's letter just after Maxwell died in February 2002. This follow-up story put a human face on his half-forgotten case. The U.S. Attorney's investigation and a wrongful-death suit continue. Stay tuned.

Shopper Support

Dear *Real Change*,

Thanks for the very informative article on grocery workers. As a shopper at QFC and Safeway, I was dismayed to learn how small the pay is, how few the hours are — and now the companies want to take away healthcare benefits. The companies' sob stories are not convincing when you learn that before the strike in Southern California, they cleared \$8 billion in combined profits.

The article prompted me to talk to a checker and pledge whatever support I can give as a customer. I'll write letters, I'll walk the picket line, I'll pass out leaflets to other customers — whatever it takes to help the Seattle grocery workers successfully fight against what their Los Angeles colleagues were forced to settle for.

I hope the union leaders here have the good sense to ask for lots of help, because it's here for the asking.

Monica Hill
Seattle

Change

Reaching Out to End Poverty

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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.

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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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Plenty to Go Around

Social Security: don't believe the hype

By Marilyn Watkins

We've all heard the scare talk and seen the shock headlines: Baby boomers will bankrupt Social Security!

Fortunately, this simply is not true. Social Security's finances are sound. The only threat to Social Security's future is the political attack by those who would like to see the program privatized so they could skim a healthy profit.

Social Security is one of our nation's most successful programs. It pays monthly benefits to 47 million Americans, including 4 million children and over 7 million disabled workers and their family members. Because of Social Security, dire poverty among seniors has been nearly eliminated, and millions of families who have experienced the death or disability of a wage earner receive a dependable income.

Can the program survive the retirement of the baby boomers and an aging population? Certainly! We've been preparing for the expected bulge in retirement benefits since 1983 by paying a little extra into the system. Last year, workers paid \$63 billion more in Social Security payroll taxes than were paid out in benefits. Those extra payments are building up the Social Security trust fund, which earned over \$75 billion in interest last year. That big savings account will get spent down once all the boomers are retired; then, as their numbers dwindle, the system will return to pay-as-you-go.

Every year, the Social Security actuaries project the program's income and expenses 75 years into the future. Using very pessimistic assumptions about what lies ahead, they predict that after 2042, Social Security payroll taxes *may* only cover about three-fourths of the promised benefits. But even under that unlikely scenario, retirees in 2043 will still have higher incomes than seniors today, because both wages and benefits rise a little faster than inflation as productivity goes up. Under cautious and more reasonable economic assumptions, Social Security will easily pay full benefits through the 21st century. When today's 25-year-olds retire, their benefits will be about 50 percent higher than their grandparents', even after adjusting for inflation.

We sometimes hear that the government has spent all the trust fund instead of saving it. Certainly, the government doesn't have a vault somewhere with bags of cash piling up, anymore than the bank keeps each depositor's savings in a separate cubbyhole. The trust fund gets reinvested back into the American economy. At its most effective, it is invested in Head Start, university research, college loans, public transit systems, environmental clean-up, and in other ways that provide opportunity and make the future workforce more productive — a worthy endeavor that will help keep Social Security healthy. Using part of the Social Security trust fund to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans was a poor choice, but the system is strong enough to withstand it. Following Greenspan's recommendation to cut Social Security benefits in order to keep the tax cuts and would be unconscionable!

Social Security is financially healthy. But Wall Street interests and their political allies would love to convince younger Americans that they would be better off under a privatized system. The system they envision would guarantee profits to investment companies, but it wouldn't guarantee benefits to retirees, most of whom would get less, and it wouldn't protect children, widows, and disabled workers when family tragedy strikes. It would also cost taxpayers an estimated \$2 trillion in new tax money to make the transition to that new system. A privatized system would be a bad deal for the vast majority of Americans, so the only way to sell it is by convincing workers that Social Security won't be there for them.

It's time to start dealing with the real problems of today, rather than hypothetical problems of the future. Social Security is a great program, but it's not perfect. Few seniors live in dire poverty, but far too many live too close to that line, especially elderly women. People who take time out of the paid work force to care for family lose Social Security benefits. And while the administration of the retirement and survivors' programs is relatively smooth, people applying for disability benefits encounter too many obstacles. These problems would be easy to fix if we accept the truth that Social Security's finances are strong, rather than buying the rhetoric of doom purveyed by Wall Street's cronies.

A privatized system would be a bad deal for the vast majority of Americans, so the only way to sell it is by convincing workers that Social Security won't be there for them.

Marilyn Watkins, Ph.D., is Policy Director at the Economic Opportunity Institute, which works to find new pathways into the middle class. For more information: coionline.org.

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4/01/04

City budget: a lose-lose

On Monday, March 29, the Seattle City Council passed a budget amendment that shaved another \$9.3 million in spending this year. It was one of the council's most rancorous decisions in months, and it meant a cut of \$293 million from three social service organizations.

Factions for and against the budget decision broke down into two camps. In one corner were Peter Steinbrueck and Nick Licata, who tried to find money for senior citizens, homeless youth and women, tenants, and low-income workers who need child care. In the other corner were the seven remaining councilmembers, who wanted to rubber-stamp the cuts that Mayor Greg Nickels and councilmembers Jan Drago, Richard McIver, and Tom Rasmussen had been working on since February.

The proposal before them withdrew money from a one-of-a-kind outreach and referral system for seniors, the YWCA's new hygiene and day center for homeless women, a non-profit program that finds affordable child care for working parents, and the tenant assistance service of the Tenants Union.

Steinbrueck referred to Mayor Nickels' commitment in this year's state of the city address that "no one [be] left behind," and told his colleagues that "fine tuning" the budget to restore social funding would keep faith with the mayor's wishes. "We've got to put people first," he said.

The majority restored money to just three of five programs which had been cut: \$14,000 to the U-District homeless youth agency Shalom Zone and \$36,000 to the senior citizens' agency. The Tenants Union, the YWCA, and Childcare Resources lost out on grounds that were principled for some, politic for others.

Councilmember McIver argued against funding the Tenants Union because that agency had vied for money from the City Council during last fall's budget negotiations. The council's job is "to set priorities and policies, not to fund programs," he said. By granting the Tenants Union their request, "we penalize the other 196 programs that aren't here before us, asking us to save their money."

Richard Conlin, in voting against fully funding the social services, said that tinkering with this budget proposal would sour mayor-council relations.

"We're engaged in somewhat of a game of chicken" with Nickels, he said, for only the mayor has the power to ensure that city departments spend money according to the council's direction. If the council tinkers too much, Nickels might just scrap the process and spend money as he sees fit, and then "I think we would be in a very difficult situation."

Licata said later that he was "disappointed" by the outcome, yet in a sign of support for the hard choices his colleagues were making, he voted yes on the final budget proposal, and it passed eight to one, with only Steinbrueck opposed.

—Adam Holdorf

Operation Impound: still around

The citywide budget cuts gave rise to another policy squabble, this time between councilmembers and City Attorney Tom Carr.

Councilmember Nick Licata wants to end the practice of impounding cars driven by suspended drivers. That's an old idea with new energy, supported by freshmen councilmembers Jean Godden, David Della, and Tom Rasmussen. It's been the subject of heated debate since 1998, when then-City Attorney Mark Sidran introduced Operation Impound and the Seattle Police Department began towing all cars driven by those with overdue traffic fines. Losing a car has an inordinate impact on the working poor — many of whom need their cars to get to work and can't afford to pay their traffic tickets.

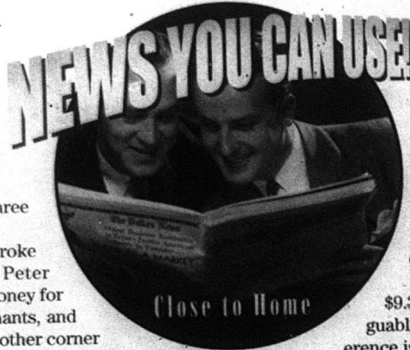
The proposal had a head of steam until a March 29 council briefing with Carr, when the city attorney pointed out that he had promised to save \$400,000 by ending the practice of jailing and prosecuting drivers suspended because of unpaid fines. If the council refused to let him do that, he said, he could not deliver the same budget savings. Carr, says Licata, "scared the bejeezus out of everybody."

Instead of a trip to jail, Carr wants to just give these drivers another ticket — and continue to impound their cars. Licata and his colleagues are asking the city attorney to continue to prosecute repeat offenders, arguing that once you've impounded the car, the city has no more recourse to punish someone but added fines.

Carr told *Real Change* that impoundment has "a deterrent effect. It deprives someone of the ability to commit a crime."

The city attorney is pushing for one reform, however: if the driver is at the wheel of a friend or family member's car, it won't be taken. The controversial impound law, passed in 1998 with the aid of former city attorney Mark Sidran, was set up to impound the drivers' cars no matter to whom they belonged.

While Carr's idea might be a relief to some — no one wants to go to what amounts to debtors' prison for not paying a ticket — another ticket just adds



to what can be a mountain of unpaid fines. That amounts to "no significant consequences" for approximately half of all these drivers, says Licata — that half that is driving someone else's car at the time they are stopped.

Licata's proposal might have cruised to passage by at least five to four. The March 28 briefing changed the tone of the debate, though, as Carr raised questions about the cost of not towing and continuing to prosecute.

And that afternoon, when the council shaved another \$9.3 million from the 2004 budget, Carr's approach was arguably set in cement. Licata says that since Carr's policy preference is outlined in the revised budget, that means now it will

be "very difficult to sign off on" any reforms to the impoundment process. Indeed, two of his three co-sponsors, Godden and Rasmussen, voted to divert the proposal they had supported into the Budget Committee.

Carr "could have been Sidran" at the council briefing, Licata said afterward. "It's the same old argument: I would rather jail cars than people. Tom didn't want to fire any of his attorneys, so he said he'd stop prosecuting. Then he thought, 'If people accuse me of being soft on crime, I can show them I'm still impounding cars.'"

—Adam Holdorf

Ending homelessness: let's do lunch

An overflow crowd of 150 bankers, developers, government officials, and housing advocates gathered on Thursday, March 26, at the downtown City Club to discuss a radical idea: housing all of King County's 10,000 homeless people.

After the assembled audience engaged in some chit-chat over lunch, four panelists spoke about the possibilities of ending homelessness. Katie Hong of the Office of Housing said such an endeavor would require a sufficient supply of affordable housing, plenty of living-wage jobs, and responsible conduct from jails, hospitals, and other institutions that release people to the streets. She noted how much more cheaper it is for the state to house people and provide services than to keep them in jail or care for them in an emergency — as much as \$64 per day in the King County Jail or \$150 per day in Detox, for example, versus \$18.53 per day in a non-profit housing program that offers supportive services like counseling.

Dan Bretler, CEO of the regional retail chain Car Toys and co-chair of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County, told the audience how a family friend wound up homeless and had a hard time getting back on his feet. Fortunately, he said, he had a supportive network of family and friends who were able to help get him connected with the right services. Government can't do this alone, he said: the fiscal reality at the local, state, and federal levels indicates that we'll have less, not more money, to tackle homelessness with. He also said that social services spend a lot of money taking care of people in an ineffectual manner, and called for a systematic look at redundancy and inefficiency in the array of services available to the region's poor.

Kate Joncas, head of the business consortium the Downtown Seattle Association, said homelessness was at heart a community issue, solved by a group effort that helps even the most chronically mentally ill or addicted.

The event, entitled "Ending Homelessness in 10 Years: Can We Do It Here?" coincided with the new release of a United Way-sponsored plan to do just that, put together by the Committee To End Homelessness in King County, which is a joint project founded by eight social-service and governmental organizations and supported by the United Way of King County. You can read the plan and submit feedback about it at www.cehkc.org.

—Rachael Myers



NADIA, LEFT, WAS ONE OF DOZENS OF FASHION MODELS FROM AREA HIGH SCHOOLS WHO SPORDED NEW AND VINTAGE PROM DRESSES AT THE FIRST-EVER "GOWNS AND GIVING" FASHION SHOW AND DRESS SALE HELD ON SUNDAY, MARCH 28. THE EVENT RAISED MONEY FOR YOUTH CARE, THE SEATTLE AGENCY FOR HOMELESS YOUTH. PHOTO BY ANDREA LEE.

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

The First 100 Days

City Council's newest members get settled in

By R.V. Murphy

First-term councilmember Jean Godden has the days marked off on her calendar: Friday April 2 marks the end of the first 100 days on the Seattle City Council for newcomers Godden, Tom Rasmussen and David Della.

The city's electorate voted out three incumbents last fall: Judy Nicastro, Margaret Pageler, and Heidi Wills, and the three outsiders had promised to bring a new maturity to a council that voters held in low esteem. They went through extensive training sessions in January, hearing from the legal and legislative departments, and now seem to be fully hatched. And the new hatchlings have brought a couple surprises to the table.

Notable among them was the mid-March approval of a tax break for builders of new housing in 17 neighborhoods around the city.

The Multifamily Housing Tax Amendment, a 1998 plan updated by Mayor Greg Nickels, cropped up in the Housing and Human Services Committee, chaired by freshman councilmember Tom Rasmussen. Expanding the program to new neighborhoods and changing the income criteria created the most controversy so far this year.

Rasmussen himself says that at first, he didn't support giving tax breaks to apartment developers in neighborhoods that already had steady housing growth, like the University District, Capitol Hill, and South Lake Union. But he says that "then I heard from residents, developers, and people in those communities who felt there was a need to be included."

Then the debate came down to the definition of "affordable": to qualify for the tax break, what level of rent should

each landlord charge? Rasmussen and the mayor suggested that 30 percent of the units should be available to a person making less than 70 percent of the median income. The tax break, which was passed 6-3, means that taxpayers will be indirectly supporting rentals that charge \$900 to \$1,100 a month per person. Councilmembers David Della, Nick Licata, and Richard McIver voted against the amendment largely because they felt it was giving tax breaks for housing that wasn't truly affordable.

Della actually voted for the amendment in committee, but switched over when it reached full council. He says that he had "no problem" changing his mind "as long as I explain to my colleagues why I did it. I talked to people whom I had worked shoulder-to-shoulder with, and they felt that 70 percent [of the median income, or \$38,000 for a one-person household] wasn't affordable housing. You have to keep in mind who your base is. I'm about the poor and I'm about the working class."

Rasmussen, who worked for Councilmember Jeanne Williams in the '80s, recently held a forum regarding city employees buying prescription drugs from Canada to save money for the city. He's also the only rookie among five councilmembers to join Mayor Nickels in rebalancing the budget after the Supreme Court said the city couldn't use \$10.5 million from City Light ratepayers to pay for street lights. Rasmussen says technology has changed local politics in a remarkable way.

"The big difference now is that everything is televised," he says. "We'll discuss something in a council meeting, and I'll have e-mails about it by the time I return to my office."

Godden, a 71-year-old former Seattle

Times columnist (who still writes at her website, www.JeanGodden.com), admits she was "stunned" to receive the chairmanship of Energy and Environmental Policy Committee — generally considered one of the more important committees charged with the oversight of the \$800 million public utility, Seattle City Light. It has also been one of the busier committees this year, overseeing the confirmation of Jorge Carrasco as City Light superintendent and the renewal of an energy contract with Nucor Steel.

The council approved Mayor Greg Nickels' appointment of Carrasco as head of City Light after a month of hearing and investigation. They also approved the energy deal Godden helped arrange with Nucor, a West Seattle steel producer.

"The city council gave Birmingham, Nucor's predecessor, a sweetheart deal, and they went bankrupt anyway," says Godden. "Nucor thought they would get the same deal, but we renegotiated."

Some still felt that Godden, in her role as chair of the Energy and Environmental Policy Committee, didn't negotiate hard enough. Councilmembers Licata and Richard Conlin voted against it, noting that the city will miss out on \$4 to \$6 million in utilities revenue. Under the new deal, Nucor pays City Light \$9 million to settle Birmingham's previous debt and will invest at least \$2 million into its Seattle plant.

While Godden was surprised to get the Energy Committee chair, others

were dumbfounded that it didn't go to David Della, who hammered City Light's oversight on the campaign trail. Della promoted a "four-point plan" to get City Light out of financial troubles; he called opponent and then-chair of the Energy Committee Heidi Wills "rake hike Heidi." But instead of setting rates for City



"People need to get off this. In the larger scheme of things, if I'm head of Energy or not, who gives a damn?"

—David Della

Light, Della chairs the Parks, Neighborhood and Education Committee and vice-chairs the Public Safety, Civil Rights and Arts Committee. He's on the Energy Committee, along with Godden and vice-chair Jim Compton. Each of the nine councilmembers is a chair, a vice-chair, and serves as a member on 10 council committees. Rasmussen heads the Housing, Human Services, and Health Committee; Della chairs Parks, Neighborhoods and Education.

"I'm on the committee, but I never made a promise that I would head the committee," says Della. "I didn't pursue it and I don't apologize for that. People need to get off this. In the larger scheme of things, if I'm head of Energy or not, who gives a damn?"

Incumbent councilmember Nick Licata, who's been on the Council since 1997, notices a change his new colleagues have brought to City Hall. "The pace and communication styles are different," says veteran Council Member Nick Licata. "Because these council members are newer, they're more deliberative. They ask good questions."

"The relationship between the council and the mayor is more cordial and won't be as personalized as it was in the past," says Licata. "The new council are willing to cut the mayor more slack." ■



NORTH AMERICAN NEWSBRIEFS

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A "Right to Sleep" rally was held last month in Portland, OR, where a city ordinance fines people for sleeping on public property. Rally organizers said there aren't enough shelters for all of Portland's homeless. "We want people to get into housing, but in

the meantime we want them to be safe and... get a good night's sleep," Keith Vann, one of Portland's homeless residents, told KGW-TV.

Home decor magnate Martha Stewart was sentenced to two years' community service in March. She will spend her time enlivening the look of the nation's tent cities, making them appear less alarming to neighborhood residents. King County Executive Ron Sims, who previously vetoed a proposal to site a tent city in a King County park, told *The Helix* newspaper that "I'd be glad to approve any Tent City that has the Martha Stewart imprimatur."

A city-sponsored census of Chicago's homeless population came up with 958 individuals — much lower, critics say, than the actual number. "It sounds like... a gross undercount," Chicago Coalition for the Homeless spokesman Samir Goswami told *NWI Times*. "I would hate to see them use that number as being the number of people who are homeless on a given night." The city says that the data collected — from interviews with the homeless about their personal history of arrests, drug use, and health problems — will help in evaluating potential programs in an effort to end homelessness in 10 years. The number did not include the estimated 6,000 people sleeping in the city's shelters.

The first National Homeless Experts Symposium is due to open April 12 in Washington, D.C., and experts from all over the country will be in attendance to compare notes on the strange behavior of homeless people and their ilk. Speaking will be President George W. Bush; who will unveil his administration's new initiative, *No Transient Left Behind*, which will require states to spend their own money to house the homeless or face forced secession from the United States.

Fourth-grade students in Danville, CA, are helping local homeless people by taking up a collection for socks, hats, gloves, soap and other essential items. Teacher Joanie Dillon told the *Tri-Valley Herald* that the essential-items drive is "a great team-building experience." She says learning about the 400 homeless encampments in their community has opened her students' eyes. "They already have a lot of compassion, but [through this project] their awareness increases."

A man pushing a propane refrigerator through the streets of Loxamuggee, FL, was arrested and charged with one count of parading an appliance without a permit, six counts of attempted public inebriation, and the public display of a device that might be pretending to be a bomb. The *Loxa Call* reports that a hearing for the man was set for April 3, by when the Loxamuggee City Attorney hopes that better charges will have been made up.

Officials at Our Lord's Song and Prayer Mission in Surely, MA, were both pleased and dismayed to receive an anonymous donation of 25 tons of beef and beef byproducts at their alley entrance in early March. "There's enough brains alone to make at least 1,000 omelets," mission director Patricia Downs told the *Surely Sentinel*. "If our clients only had propane refrigerators, they could each be eating hamburgers every day for a year."

No-lie newsbriefs by Patty Lane; April Foolsbriefs by Alfred E. Rumfeld. Can you guess which of the above news items are only fooling? For the answer, turn to page 15.



Angel

I met an Angel on the bus today.
Her husband asked her for money...
when he saw her on the street last week.

She showed me his handiwork.
Lifted her upper lip
revealing a renegade tooth
jammed above the gum line.

He used to stumble across the night...
into her room
Until the day she took a trip to the hardware
store -
bought the biggest screwdriver she could find.

Angel smiles at every single person she sees.
Shifts her large, dark frame onto the bus seat
tucking her bags around her like small children.

The fabric of her dress comes to life.
Swirls of fuchsia, neon, blue and gold
race through an undercurrent of black silk.

She was born with blond hair she hated,
too strange, she said, against her black skin.
Unwrapping a circle of tightly woven braids,
she releases festive ribbons
shows what's left of her hair.

A patchy scalp...
violently acquired case of epilepsy
the only crown of matrimony she now wears.

Gathering her bags around her,
she checks and double checks her belongings.
She wants to store a few things away from the shelter.

She tells me about the druggie who creeps around at night,
scavenging through people's things.
"She thinks I'm asleep," Angel scoffs.
"I never sleep with both eyes closed."

Opening her favorite backpack,
she shares her collection of neon pens.
A glimpse into a notebook,
lined with black pages,
uncovers swirls of vibrant color.
Finding their way into shapes,
Flowers, bursts of electricity -
Set free by the loveliest woman alive.

—CHRISTINA MEHL

Checking Out

You should know,
I had a room
For ten thousand years,
Plumbing, bed,
Even
Hardware.
Dishes,
Photographs,

A

Refrigerator.
But now,
The world is
More
Needy than
Any room.
Here's the key, Baby,
I'm checking out.

—MICHAEL JAMES BECK

Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning



Looking on page two of this rag you can learn a lot of things. Like for instance that Real Change is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, that we don't consider publishing libel, that we have hotshot friends, and that in addition to being on the "Editorial Committee" I am also a Board Member. Or as we like to say, a bored member. Ha.

What does being a Board Member mean, you ask? It means a two-hour meeting every month that almost always runs two and a half and feels like eight. It means sheepishly agreeing to man the phone banks periodically and then begging Anitra "talkmama" Freeman to go in my place. It means licking stamps. It means always having to be reminded which way is "in the red" and which way is "in the black." Port, starboard, port, starboard, how should I know?

It also means obeying the law. It turns out that Board Members have to not only NOT break laws themselves, but they have to keep the organization that they board legal too. What a pain! This is why, during Editorial Committee meetings I am always a dorky loser saying, "We can't say that."

Back before we got the 501(c)3 status we could endorse candidates. Those were good times. They would have been better if we really were high, like people said, but we had fun anyway. Remember when I endorsed myself for mayor? If only there were a loophole in the law that let us have that kind of fun again....

Maybe there is! I've been doing a lot of thinking about this, and I have been comparing the situation vis-a-vis various other federal rules. Let's consider the Prohibition of Assassination.

When it was learned that the CIA had planned to assassinate Castro, Jerry Ford issued an executive order that said, "No employee of the United States shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, political assassination." This order made no freaking sense whatsoever, since murder was already illegal, but Ford wasn't interested in making sense, he just wanted Castro to play nice in return.

But now George W. wants to say that Clinton screwed up by not ordering the assassination of Osama bin Laden when he had the chance, even though

Bush himself didn't get around to modifying the Prohibition of Assassination to exempt Osama until Oct. 21, 2001.

What's interesting here are the grounds given for the exemption. One: we're at war. This justifies, apparently, not only murdering political leaders, but also murdering innocent people (a.k.a. collateral damage) and imprisoning people (a.k.a. enemy combatants) without trials, indefinitely.

Another reason that has been put forward is that Osama bin Laden is said not to be a political leader in the sense that Ford had in mind. They are actually saying that it is OK to engage in political assassination if the political figure in question doesn't rule over territory! The assassination by Israel of three-quarters blind quadriplegic Sheikh "not a real Sheikh" Ahmed "the Bomb-ed"

Yassin has been offered up as an illustration of this new principle. He was leader of Hamas. Hamas wanted to control Palestine, but didn't. Ergo Hamas is not a government. Ergo the murder of Yassin, a political leader, is not political assassination. It is something else.

So there's the key. Maybe I can beat this 501(c)3 prohibition against endorsing political candidates by being very careful to only endorse people who aren't technically political candidates at all.

Back before we got the 501(c)3 status we could endorse candidates. Those were good times. They would have been better if we really were high, like people said ...

At first I was toying with the idea of endorsing a dead person. I've always had an appreciation of Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas. How about a Thomas/Debs ticket? (I'd put Thomas first to draw the youth vote. He's been dead less long.)

But now I'm thinking that any non-candidate will do, even if they're alive. And I was thinking, it's about time we had a female president.

For that reason, and because I feel like it, I hereby endorse Anitra "I'm Alive!" Freeman for president of the U.S. I have just informed her of my endorsement and she says she would like Alice Walker to be her running mate. So there you have it: Freeman/Walker. They're something else. ■



Sunday, March 7, 2:46 p.m., Seventh Ave. Officers were dispatched to a possible suicide attempt on 7th Ave. Upon arrival, they were informed that a fire truck stopped at a traffic signal had noticed the victim sitting in her car, which was parked in a lot. They also observed a hose running from the exhaust pipe to the driver's window. The fire department notified the police, and said that the engine to the car was not running. Officers contacted the subject, a White female aged 44, who stated that she was very depressed because she was a heroin addict and did not want to go through withdrawals. In addition, she stated that she was living out of her car. She was taken to Harborview for a mental health evaluation.

Tuesday, March 9, 12:10 a.m., Broadway Market. The Broadway Market janitor was working upstairs when the suspect, a transient White male aged 36, approached him and asked to be let out of the market. The witness knew that the suspect was in the market unlawfully as it was locked and closed, and called 911. Police arrived and found the suspect, and detained him. He stated that he had fallen asleep in the bathroom and had just woken up. He was arrested for criminal trespass and searched. A large amount of loose coin was found on his person. The money was confiscated, as officers suspected that he had entered some of the small stands and shops that are accessible in the market, and they were not able to determine if the money was stolen. He was booked into King County Jail for criminal trespass first degree.

Wednesday, March 10, 12:06 p.m., Rainier Ave. and S. Charles St. Subject, a transient White male aged 24, was contacted on Rainier. He stated he was being chased by someone, and was shaking and could not speak coherently. He said that he had not slept in a few days, and was hallucinating and hearing voices — he also admitted that he had used narcotics a few days previously. He volunteered to go to Harborview for an evaluation.

Sunday, March 14, 12:42 a.m., Salvation Army Shelter on Pike St. Officers were dispatched to a report of a suicide attempt at the shelter. The caller stated that one of the residents had cut her wrist with a piece of glass. The victim came out of the shelter with cloth wrapped around her wrist, which was already soaked in blood. Fire officers began treating the wound, and the police officer interviewed the victim. She stated she had cut her wrist because she was upset, but would not elaborate. When asked if she had a history of mental illness, she said "Yes, depression." She stated she did not have a permanent address or contact number. She was transported to Harborview for a mental health evaluation.

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

JETT, Continued from page 1

caught the suspect. It's unbelievable news. The Seattle musical community had worked so hard to keep the story alive. It's great to see they caught him, so far down the road. It brings some peace, knowing that he was convicted. There's far too much violence against women and people generally, it's pervasive in our society. I try not to be cynical, and find ways that I can help, but sometimes it's hard to find the positive energy. Wherever you look there's always something to do.

RC: Did you know Mia Zapata?

Jett: I knew of Mia, but I never got to meet her. As I was reading about the Zapata situation, and talking to folks in the Seattle music scene, it was frustrating figuring out how to get something done. I could so relate to her: there have been so many times that I was hanging out in some club or coming home from a show.... We're not aware of the danger around us. That's no way to live, with the knowledge that life can be taken so quickly, that it could be any one of us.

RC: What's the bigger picture for gender equality, with the recent attacks against gay marriage and legal encroachments on reproductive rights?

Jett: I'm aware that Congress just passed a law that grants a fetus legal rights. Yet we don't take care of the people who are already here! I don't get the logic — because it isn't logic, it's insanity.

Of course, we don't make social change in leaps and bounds; it's usually taken in tiny steps. You have to have a passion for these things, but sometimes I worry that my emotionalism clouds my intellect. For the first time I came out and supported a candidate this year, and I'm learning how important it is to be respectful of all sides in a political dialogue.

RC: What can people do to help change things?

Jett: How do we make lives better for homeless people? Awareness is a big issue — we have to draw attention to

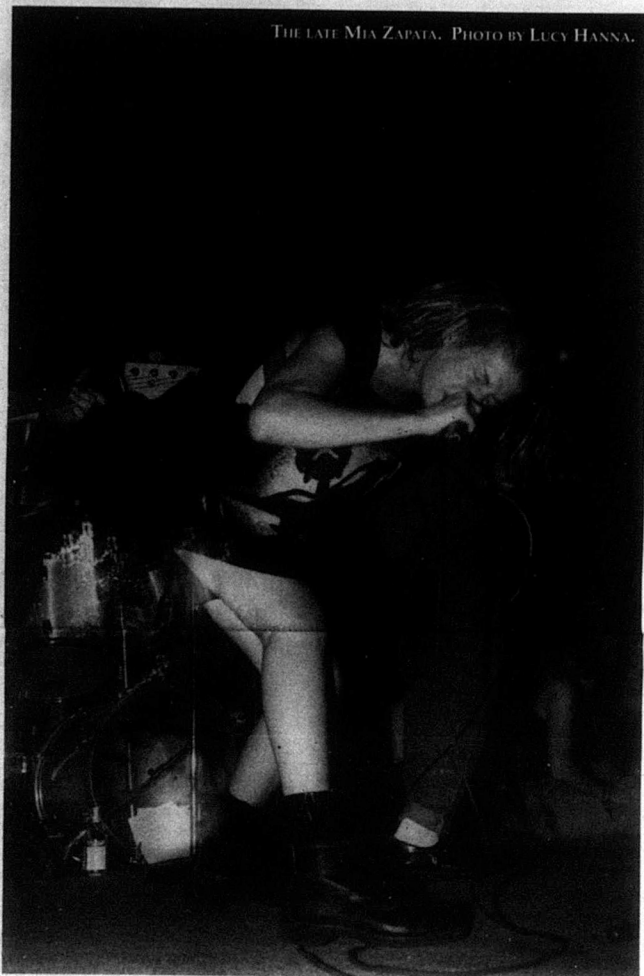
the homeless problem, because it's everyone's problem, it's a community problem. We're conditioned not to help others, so I try to break down my own conditioning. I'm aware of the stigma placed on homeless people, and I try to do what I can, even if it's only to make eye contact or offer a smile.

RC: Is there a role for men in ending

violence against women?

Jett: Men have a powerful voice, since the violence stems from them. My own reaction is that it's powerful to see men discuss this issue. Men don't speak out much, and I don't get it. They don't realize how much power they'd have on this issue. ■

THE LATE MIA ZAPATA. PHOTO BY LUCY HANNA.



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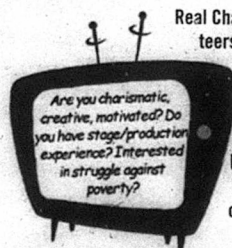
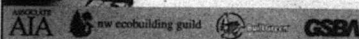
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Let There Be LIGHT

Traugott Terrace opens up new worlds for recovering addicts

By Kevin McCullough

The Matt Talbot Center is abuzz with activity. Chairs fill the main meeting room, and a steady stream of friends, family, and coworkers take their seats. Dozens of conversations compete to be heard, but they're all talking about the same thing: the seven nervous people assembled in the front of the room.

Today is one of the Belltown recovery and ministry center's commencement ceremonies, and the seven people at the front of the room are the honorees. The ceremonies are a regular occurrence; those in front are celebrating a range of accomplishments: six weeks, six months, two years sober.

Case managers and administrators are seated at the back of the room. For them, the process is comfortable, regular, and even routine. It's hard not to be swept up in the energy of the room, however, and before long, the staff are smiling and pointing, admiring the sharply dressed honorees, and sharing stories of fellowship and recovery.

The room falls silent, however, when Gregg Alex, the center's director, steps up to the podium. Solemn and intense, it's not surprising that he is the driving force behind the morning's activities.

"We've come here to honor the labors of seven folks," Alex begins, and he proceeds to introduce the honorees and some of the gathered guests, and then continues. "We're here to acknowledge their work. It's almost impossible. By yourself, it is impossible. That's why we do this in community. That's why it's important to get your spiritual life in order."

Heads nod in agreement throughout the audience, and there are more than a few murmurs of affirmation.

"We see people out of their addiction," Alex continues, gesturing to the assembled guests and staff. He goes on to remind the audience of the role they play in shepherding these seven through the process of recovery.

"There are a cloud of witnesses around you," Alex tells them. He pauses for a moment, and when he speaks again, it is to

make clear to the audience that they are here to celebrate a commencement, not a graduation. "This is not the end of something. It is the beginning of something."

It is the beginning for Pedro, who is celebrating six months of sobriety. Originally from Guam, Pedro found himself homeless and addicted in California. Something drove him to make his way to Seattle, where he began the long road to recovery. Pedro worked through his recovery program at the Matt Talbot Center. Now, he is employed, working nights while he attends community college during the days. He plans to enter the nursing profession.

"I asked God to help me," Pedro reflects. "I came up here with no money, with nothing. This is exactly what I needed. I found out more about myself, reestablished my foundations."

"I made sure I was going to be one of those who made it."

Hope is a hard thing to come by, especially for someone who is battling addiction and homelessness simultaneously. During the Commencement, recovering addicts speak over and over again of the successive opportunities for housing available to someone coming off the streets. Shelters for a night or two, halfway houses, transitional housing — each one is a blessing, they say. There are good places, and there are bad places, and as you clean up and remain sober and stable, you become eligible for the good ones. Yet eventually, you outgrow the need for halfway houses or transitional housing. And then another major difficulty arises: finding permanent affordable housing that will support your efforts to stay clean and sober.

Pedro himself moved through a series of shelters and halfway houses into

transitional housing. Now he has a permanent place of his own. Six weeks ago, he moved into Traugott Terrace, a unique housing opportunity for low-income recovering addicts.

James Smith, the building's chemical dependency caseworker, speaks fondly of Pedro. "At Traugott Terrace, we believe that love covers a lot of sin... Pedro is one of those people who Traugott Terrace is all about."

Nothing else like it

Located just above the room where Pedro's Commencement took place, Traugott Terrace is the first low-income, permanent housing opportunity for recovering addicts. According to the Archdiocesan Housing Authority, most of the buildings' residents have been previously homeless, living without the privacy, permanence, and dignity that a permanent apartment can provide. Traugott Terrace is also notable for unmatched construction quality and environmentally friendly design features.

Traugott Terrace was literally constructed on top of the Matt Talbot Center, and they operate in partnership. Many of the residents take part in the Matt Talbot Center's outpatient recovery programs, courses, and counseling for chemical dependency. Traugott Terrace itself is a program of the Archdiocesan Housing Authority, a part of

Catholic Community Services. Thirty-eight of its units are permanent apartments, while 12 are transitional housing (up to two years) for residents who were previously homeless. Rent is charged based on a resident's ability to pay. To be eligible to live there, a resi-

"The vision we shared was for healing and restoration for everyone who walked through our doors. We believe God didn't change his mind just because we made bad choices."

—Gregg Alex



BUILDING MANAGER JACQUELINE MURPHY SHOWS OFF ONE OF THE UNIT'S FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOWS, DESIGNED TO ILLUMINATE THE BUILDING NATURALLY. PHOTO BY REIKO ISOBE.

eyes ON FREMONT

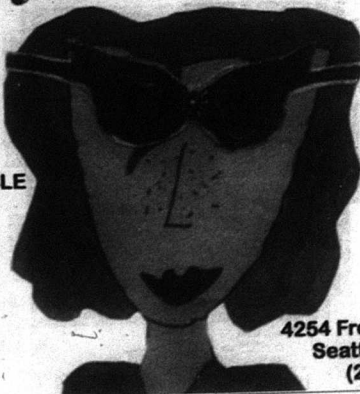
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TRAUGOTT TERRACE'S TEMPORARY RESIDENTS SHARE A COMMUNAL KITCHEN INSTALLED WITH ENERGY-EFFICIENT LIGHTING AND APPLIANCES. WHILE THEY MIGHT COST MORE TO INSTALL, SUCH FIXTURES SAVE THOUSANDS IN OPERATING COSTS OVER THE LIFE OF THE BUILDING. PHOTO BY REIKO ISOBE.

dent must make 30 percent or less of the Seattle area's median monthly income. That's less than \$17,000 a year.

Both the Matt Talbot Center and the housing above it are products of the co-founders, Traugott Tom Zurcher and current director Gregg Alex. In co-founding the Matt Talbot Center in 1985, both felt that a successful recovery from addiction was fundamentally dependent on a person's living situation. Alex says that from the start, they had wanted to build a clean-and-sober housing project adjacent to the center. Zurcher died in 2000, but his vision continued, and the apartment building was named after Zurcher, whose first name in his native German means "Trust God."

"We named it in honor of the life he lived: committed to folks on the streets. The vision we shared was for healing and restoration for everyone who walked through our doors," says Alex. "We believe God didn't change his mind just because we made bad choices."

Traugott Terrace is also notable for its focus on environmentally friendly design and sustainable building practices, also known as "green building." Alex worked in concert with the developers and architects to create a building that offered a healthy, safe environment for residents with a minimal impact on the environment. One benefit of the design is the plentiful natural light, which illuminates even the interior hallways. The natural light is even more striking in the apartments because it streams in through huge windows, each with a breathtaking view of either downtown or Puget Sound. The air in each unit is always fresh, even in an unoccupied unit: an airflow system continually circulates and filters fresh air throughout the building. The furniture is made from recycled materials, and the kitchen and bathroom are equipped with energy-efficient appliances.

The design is an essential part of the philosophy and process of recovery. To Alex, Traugott Terrace is "A first-class environment for people who will become first-class citizens." He made clear that the recovery programs at Matt Tal-

bot Center and in the apartments are not "about what they've done, this is about what they can become."

Own your own life

The nine-month-old building's residents have been clean and sober for as long as 13 years and as little as a few months. If a resident relapses, they have 24 hours to contact building staff and develop a plan to get back on track. If they relapse again, or fail to follow the relapse plan, they are asked to leave the building. After a relapse, though, the Matt Talbot Center will still extend the help and support of their recovery programs.

Alex compares the recovery process to surgery: "You do clinical work in a sterile environment, free of foreign matter and its distractions; it's as clean as possible. The cleaner the environment, the less the chance of re-infection." In the same way, "You have to have a clean-and-sober environment" — free of drug and alcohol contaminants — "to facilitate recovery."

Jacqueline Raymond, Traugott Terrace's program manager, explains the mission of the building and its program: "For me, it's lifestyle issues: how do you live a life that keeps you off that destructive road? How do you live free from all that?" Traugott does not offer simply housing or recovery to its residents, Raymond says, but also ownership over their own lives: "You can get services anywhere, but here, the expectation is to go beyond that." She says the underlying philosophy of Traugott Terrace's work is kind of like the proverb "Give a man a fish, and he'll eat for a day, but teach him to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime." Except here, there's a new twist: "What we're doing here is allowing them to own the pond." This sense of ownership over the recovery process defines her mission.

She stands in front of one of the building's floor-to-ceiling bay windows, looking out over the Sound, smiles, and says, "This is an opportunity to come from ultimate darkness into light." ■

Easy on the Earth: Traugott leads the way in eco-friendly design

Builders usually worry about the environment only in high-end housing projects, because of the extra expense of design and materials. Traugott Terrace was the first project in the city to show that "green building" practices can be affordable, provide a healthy environment for residents, and save money in the long term.

"Most people feel the additional cost of sustainable development won't work," says Environmental Works' Bill Singer, the project architect for Traugott Terrace. "We proved you can do sustainable development on affordable housing."

Karen Brawley of Beacon Development, which assisted Environmental Works in the course of the project, says she understood the need for a home, not simply an institution. "Building green doesn't mean that it's sterile or industrial," she says. "It's still friendly and inviting."

Environmental Works, as the name suggests, has a major interest in sustainable building practices. Singer says the major challenge specific to sustainable building practices in affordable housing is funding. The benefit, however, is immeasurable, because "it's not just a social good," he says. "Long-term, it is going to be a better building for the owner."

A green building should be more durable in the long term, and provide a more maintenance-free lifecycle. This, in turn, makes the building cheaper to own and operate, and reduces both the cost and the environmental impact of repairs and upgrades. Also, it provides a healthy environment for the occupants. This means plentiful natural light, continually circulating filtered air, and non-toxic, low-emission finishes, paints, and sealants.

Green building practices also seek to minimize the construction's impact on the environment. This means using mostly recycled materials and recycling the waste created in the course of construction. The lumber that is used is certified to come from a forest with sustainable management practices. Close to 85 percent of the waste materials in this project were recycled. This is another area in which green building

practices are environmentally conscious as well as cost-effective, considering the considerable price of hauling waste to a landfill.

Minimizing a building's impact doesn't end when it's complete. The design calls for conservation: low-flow water and energy-efficient heat, lighting, and ventilation. One of the innovative features of Traugott Terrace is its gearless traction elevator, which uses a third of the power of a comparable model, saving at least \$3,000 per year. It was one of the first of its type to be installed in the city.

Singer understands the need to design housing with the community in mind, especially for an area that is undergoing significant change. "Belltown is in transition, going upscale, but it's critical to keep affordable housing available."

Some of the building's other notable features:

- All of the cabinetry and furniture for the interior was made by EcoDura, a furniture manufacturer that uses only recycled materials or wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.
- German-designed EuroLine windows were installed because they are energy-efficient for heating, saving an estimated \$2,500 per year. They are also extremely water resistant, preventing leakage into the siding, a costly and resource-intensive repair.
- Metal siding was used, precluding the need for painting and saving the owners around \$30,000 every 10 years.
- Traugott Terrace's rooftop is coated with a reflective surface, to minimize the "heat island" effect in urban areas, when asphalt and black tar surfaces raise the temperature by as much as 10 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Low-flow plumbing fixtures conserve water and save nearly \$4,000 per year.
- Roof and wall insulation were installed for energy efficiency of more than 10 percent beyond the city's building code requirements. This is expected to save \$1,500 per year. ■



Come ON, People!

By God

No
Photo
available

I submitted these thoughts to CNN, Fox News, *The New York Times*, and even the *Seattle P-I*. But since none of them responded, here we are. Aren't you rapturous? No Media Left Behind.

I know I'm awfully abstract, and some of you might prefer if I sent a physical manifestation, say a son, to show you the way. But you get this today.

Anyway, I've been thinking lately, you know, that there's a lot of great energy right now in San Francisco, Portland, New Paltz, N.Y., and places like that, pushing for same-sex marriages. It's all good. I mean, I love weddings — especially the wine and the dancing and the cakes; the more the better, you know? But wouldn't it be great if you guys also could put energy like that into doing something like ending homelessness, for instance? Wouldn't it be nice if homeless people got to be part of that party too? I would really like No People Left Behind. As you do unto the least of these my children....

Sure, times are tough, and sacrifices need to be made. But why do you continually ask the people who have the

least to sacrifice the most?

Don't worry so much about my suffering. I hear that now they're making a killing on eBay, selling big, iron nail jewelry. You've got to be kidding! But hey: if you're into shameless acts of promotion, listen up! I really like my show, *Joan of Arcadia*, which airs at 8 p.m. Fridays on CBS. It directly precedes PBS's *NOW* with Bill Moyers, which I also highly recommend.

But my point is, you should worry about the suffering of people who are all around you. If you leave people out in the streets, how are they going to be part of the party? If you don't share the food, what kind of party is that?

I mean, isn't this all already written down? Remember the parable of the wedding? The guests were all no-shows (maybe there was something good on TV that night, like *Joan of Arcadia*), so the host sent his servants out to gather all the poor folks to feast and to celebrate.

Speaking of suffering, should I even bring up the war metaphor? Yes, I should! There's your Passion, over and over again, in the lives of ordinary people who just happen to be born in the wrong place and time.

Here's one of my pet peeves: You remember that great thing my son said,

about how the only sign his generation of vipers would get was the sign of Jonah? It was a great line... if only everybody didn't get it wrong! Who in Hell (and I can say Hell) ever said that the whale was the sign of Jonah? The whale was just a device to carry the plot forward. Don't any of you people know how to read literature?

The sign of Jonah was that after I told him to tell the people of Nineveh to repent or I'd smite 'em, you know? They repented, right? And then, I spared 'em, right? And I went on and on about how pretty their cattle were and how I didn't want to hurt the pretty cows anyway?

The sign was that I would do justice by anyone, even your enemies, if they did the right thing. You might want to remember that. Sometimes, justice is a twist in the story. A real surprise.

It's a big surprise party, you know. Did any of you expect to be born? Sur-

prise! So how about — how do you put it - how about everyone gets to come to the table? How about not dismissing any of the lives I create? Did you ever read, oh, somewhere, things like, "As you give, so shall you receive?" You might want to, you know, think about it.

So let's see. We've just done the party metaphor, the marriage metaphor, and the war metaphor. How about the tent metaphor?

Did you know that when I introduced marriage back in the goat-herding days, I had the wedding parties conduct themselves under a symbolic tent?

Do you see where I'm going here? Do I have to spell it out?

Tents good.
Marriage good.
The more the better.
Duh!

So let's party! ■

God is a major deity — ageless, ineffable, gender-neutral, omniscient, omnipotent, and some would say omnipresent.

The sign was that I would do justice by anyone, even your enemies, if they did the right thing. You might want to remember that. Sometimes, justice is a twist in the story. A real surprise.

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Hoppy Easter Notables

Thursday 4/1

Seattle **School Board President Mary Bass** will speak at the West Seattle Study Circle Kick-off. The study circle program will be addressing racism, the achievement gap, and other issues impacting our youth and is sponsored by City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods and many others. 7-9 p.m. at Chief Sealth High School, 2600 SW Thistle in West Seattle. Info Matt Remle or Lorna Considine 206-666-7723.

Friday 4/2

The International Socialist Organization presents the documentary **Gaza Strip**. American filmmaker James Longley's film captures the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with candor. 7 p.m., at On the House, 1205 E. Pike St. Info 206-292-8809.

Saturday 4/3

National folk favorites Charlie King and Karen Brandow in concert. Charlie and Karen are singing for **peace and justice** and reminding us of the resilience of the human spirit. \$14 at the door, \$12 in advance, low-income tickets available. 7 p.m. at University Unitarian Church, 6556 35th Ave. NE. Reservations and info 206-524-7753 or rebelvoz@aol.com.

Tuesday 4/6

Free Workshop on **Discrimination, Fair Employment, Fair Housing, and Public Accommodation**. These

Key to the April Foolsbriefs: The first, third, and fifth of page 5's North American newsbriefs are true. The rest are fooling.

workshops are for everyone. Training sponsored by King County Office of Civil Rights. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at two locations: Auburn Library, 1102 Auburn Way S., or the Vashon Library, 17210 Vashon Hwy SW, Vashon. Info 206-296-7592 or Civil-Rights.OCR@metrokc.gov.

Wednesday 4/7

Home Alive four-week **Basic Self-Defense Series**. Home Alive is a non-profit, community-based organization that provides affordable self-defense classes. Cost is \$0 to \$50, sliding scale. 6-9 p.m., four consecutive Wednesdays at 1400 - 18th Ave. Info 206-720-0606 or homealiveclasses@hotmail.com.

The Center for Creative Change Antioch University Seattle presents the second lecture in a series on global issues and perspectives: "Reason for Hope: **Grassroots Initiatives for Social and Environmental Progress**," featuring Mark Dubois, organizer of the first international Earth Day. 7-9 p.m. at Antioch University, Room 100, 2326 - 6th Ave. Info <http://www.antiochsea.edu>.

Thursday 4/8

Seattle Art Museum co-sponsors "**Passed Imperfect: Assumed Identities in Black and Jewish Culture**." This free event explores the history of disowning one's identity in African-American and Jewish-American culture. Co-sponsored by Nextbook. 7:30 p.m. at Seattle Art Museum, Lecture Hall, 100 University St., Downtown.

Saturday 4/10

The first in a series of the **Best Labor Films** ever made. Admission is free and the general public is invited. Sponsored by IBEW Local 46, the King County La-

bor Council, and others. 7 p.m., at IBEW Local 46 Union Hall, 2700 1st Ave. Info Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, 206-543-7946.

Benefit Dinner to support the **Iraqi Community Center**, which has been providing critical social services to the Iraqi Immigrant and Refugee Community since 1999. The event includes an Iraqi Art Exhibit, excellent speakers, and wonderful food. \$30, all proceeds benefit the Iraqi Community Center. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m., at New Holly Gathering Hall, 7054 32nd Ave. S. Info Muhamed Qatrani mqatrani@swyfs.org or 206-937-7680.

Monday 4/12

A Community **Anti-Racism Forum** sponsored by the Fremont Public Association on "How Drug Convictions Break Down Along Racial Lines." All interested people are invited. 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., at the Treehouse, 2100 24th Ave. S. RSVP and info Gillian 206-694-6715.

Wednesday 4/14

Free Workshop on **Discrimination,**

Fair Employment, Fair Housing, and Public Accommodation. These workshops are for everyone. Training sponsored by King County Office of Civil Rights. 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., at Maple Valley Library, 21844 SE 248th St., Maple Valley. Info 206-296-7592 or Civil-Rights.OCR@metrokc.gov.

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

Thursday 4/15

Poets Against the War meeting and poetry reading. All poets are welcome, friends of poets too. 7 p.m., at Ravenna's Third Place Books, 6504 20th Ave. NE. Info Beth Coyote beth@poetsagainstthewar.org.

Calendar compiled from Jean Buskin's Peace and Justice Events Calendar, available in full at www.scn.org/activism/calendar. Are you holding an event? Email calendar submissions to calendar@realchangenews.org. Please allow three weeks' notice.

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Preserve federal funding for low-income housing

Issue: Last month, George Bush & Co. proposed a 2005 budget that makes huge cuts to the federal Section 8 low-income housing program. Bush's proposal assists fewer people, and charges higher rents. As many as a quarter of a million families would lose their housing assistance next year.

Background: Citing concerns over excessive spending growth in the federal Section 8 low-income housing assistance program in recent years, the president has proposed Section 8 funding cuts for the 2005 fiscal year in excess of \$1.6 billion, leaving the program funded next year at a rate 12 percent shy of what's needed to maintain current services. In lieu of garnering additional program funding in coming years, these cuts would amount to a stifling \$4.6 billion — or 30 percent of the federal Section 8 budget — by 2009.

For about 30 years, the federal Section 8 vouchers program has served to bridge the gap between the rent low-income tenants are deemed able to afford — federally the current rate is about 30 percent of income — and the market rate charged by their landlord.

Recent growth in Section 8 spending by the federal government owes largely to the recent recession, which saw the incomes of families served by the program drop while residential market rents continued to increase. This widened the gap between market-rate rents and what poor tenants could afford, in turn increasing the dollar amounts demanded from Section 8 to make housing affordable. However, the trend has slowed. The Congressional Budget Office now estimates that the growth in voucher costs will slow dramatically in the coming years as the economy recovers — increasing the earnings of Section 8 clients — and the growth in market rents stagnates.

On the local level, if Bush's proposed 2005 budget is passed by Congress this summer, the Seattle Housing Authority will be forced to either cut the number of families it serves, or reduce the level of services provided across the board. Opting to do the former would result in over 800 low-income Seattle households losing their Section 8 benefits next year. That number grows to approximately 2,000 households if the cuts persist through 2009. The Seattle Housing Authority currently provides vouchers for about 7,500 households in the area. Families losing assistance will be forced to prioritize paying newly unaffordable rents against such other basic needs as food, health care, and child care. Many will be forced to move in with friends or family, or into shelters already ill-equipped to accommodate people currently homeless.

While the national economy has recently shown some signs of recovery, market-rate rents remain out of reach for a large segment of the population. Section 8 rental assistance is as vital now as ever, and needs to remain fully funded in these precarious economic times. Speak out against this wrongful attempt by the Bush administration to rectify their recklessly unbalanced budget on the backs of the nation's — and our cities' — poor.

Action: Contact your congresspersons and urge them to speak out and vote against Bush's proposed cuts to Section 8 funding in the 2005 federal budget. Pen an editorial to the *Times* or *P-I* demanding that our president and congresspersons not abandon the cause of affordable housing in the 2005 budget.

Senator Patty Murray: email to senator_murray@murray.senate.gov or call 206-553-5545.

Senator Maria Cantwell: email to maria_cantwell@cantwell.senate.gov or call 206-220-6400.

Rep. Jim McDermott, 7th District: email by logging onto www.house.gov/mcdermott or call 206-553-7170.

Rep. Jennifer Dunn, 8th District — email to dunnwa08@mail.house.gov or call 206-275-3438.

Rep. Jay Inslee, 1st District — email to jay.inslee@mail.house.gov or call 800-226-7144

Rep. Adam Smith, 9th District — email by logging onto www.house.gov/adamsmith or call 253-593-6600

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-Tracy Huddleston



Mockingbird Times



Building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood youth

April 2004

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak out Across the Nation

Volume IV, Issue 4

Visit us online at www.mockingbirdociety.org

ILP Helps Young Face Challenge of Adulthood

J. EBOH



EVERYONE KNOWS THAT BECOMING AN ADULT is a difficult task. There are some hard questions you have to find a way to answer. For example, how will you be able to afford housing that isn't entirely infested with rats? How can you manage to eat every day? The most important question to answer is, how will you find a job that can actually help you achieve this? This is especially difficult if you are in foster care, in which case you probably don't have too much support coming from your family. An additional problem for foster kids is that they usually aren't taught many skills about how to live independently.

Due to a lack of public awareness (and funding), there aren't enough quality programs available. However, one such program does exist. The Independent Living Program (ILP), is a national program that offers life skills training through weekly group sessions, individual case management, career and education planning, job preparation/readiness training, leadership development, community referral, and special activities. The services are available for youth between the ages of sixteen to

eighteen who are transitioning out of state care and have been referred by their DSHS social worker before emancipating from care (before aging out of the system).

The YMCA of Greater King County manages the ILP program for Seattle and is making efforts to go beyond providing youth with just the basics. According to Marlon Buchanan, the State Coordinator for the ILP program throughout Washington State, "The biggest thing youth get from the program is being mentored and getting long-term ongoing support. Foster kids don't get that." Buchanan intends on continuing to improve the program throughout the state, claiming, "In three years I want to make this the best program for foster youth in the State." When asked

why he is so enthusiastic about his work, Buchanan responded by saying, "It may sound like a cliché, but our youth really are our future. The better we prepare youth, the better our communities will become."

One feature of the program is a sixty dollar a week allowance for six months after a participant turns eighteen. When participants turn eighteen, they receive five hundred dollars to buy any necessities they might need (i.e. a toaster or a suit for a job interview). They pay fees for rental applications and move in fees after a participant has

secured housing which they can afford. The program also make referrals for youth if there is a need that can't be addressed by the program. Youth are informed about the Education and Training vouchers available for youth who have been emancipated from state care. These vouchers provide up to five thousand dollars a year in college or vocational school tuition assistance until a youth reaches age twenty three.

The ILP program has high expectations for their clients in return for the services they provide. Participants are expected to be motivated to live independently and be willing to make effort in achieving their goals. Seventeen-year-old Christina Turlington, who is currently involved in the ILP program states, "This program is different. They act like they really care and they want to help us. If I hadn't started this program my life would be hectic and there would be a lot of stress. Before I started this I worried about paying for college, rent, and a car. Now that I have been going to groups I know that I can actually achieve those goals. I want to get an Accounting degree. I know that I don't have to just limit myself to a community college." While transitioning to independence can be challenging, there are programs out there that can help you gain the skills you need to do so successfully. For more information about the ILP program, call (206) 749-7540 or your local Department of Social and Health Services office.

"Destiny is not a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved."

—William Jennings Bryan

"I'm not afraid of turning 18. I know what to expect. I'm not suddenly going into the situation blind."

—Christina Turlington

"Being Who You Are" Provokes Passionate Reader Response

My applause to Bridgett for her piece, "Positive Power: Being Who You Are!" On a recent trip to Seattle, I picked up a copy of the *Mockingbird Times*. What an incredible newspaper. I live in Washington, DC and I can tell you that we have nothing like it here. I also run a nonprofit organization called Metro TeenAIDS. For many years I have been witness to the devastating effects of pushing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and same-gender-loving folks back into their closets.

I know Sammy. At 12 his mother asked him if he was gay. He said he thought he might be. She kicked him out of the house! Sammy was raised in foster care and

group living homes. By the time he was 21, he could barely read, he had few job skills and he was living with HIV. It seems so obvious that his life could have had a very different course if his mother had known Bridgett.

In the HIV field, much has been made recently about men "on the down-low" or "DL", a phenomenon where men often have primary female partners but are playing around with men on the side. While an often racist media would have us believe that this primarily occurs in communities of color, the DL is far too common in all of our communities. The stigma associated with not conforming to heterosexual standards is literally killing people. (www.cdc.gov/hiv/pubs/facts/msm.htm)

In a recent issue of POZ, a magazine by and for HIV Positive people, actress and comedian, Mo'Nique, is quoted as saying, "Let's say you meet a brother and you really like each other. And he says, 'Hey, I'm bisexual.' What are you gonna do? You two haven't had sex but you're not ready to deal with the honesty. They're on the Down Low because nobody's talking to them. We can't deal with the honesty. We want to be lied to. 'How dare you tell me the truth?' So he's gonna be on the DL and tell you you're the only one."

Homophobia is killing us. Homophobia is making us sick. We need more folks to speak the truth [about] HIV, speak the truth [about] homophobia, speak the truth [about] racism. We need more folks like Bridgett.

—Adam Tenner
Executive Director, Metro TeenAIDS
Washington, DC

MORE FEEDBACK AND BRIDGETT'S RESPONSE
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Where are the Youth?

DARIUS REYNOLDS



"We've created a system that punishes kids for running away from intolerable situations... this is an incredible violation of children's rights. Meanwhile, there are kids who want off the streets everyday and we have nothing for them." —Greg McCormack, former manager of youth outreach services in Seattle

Why do youth run away? According to statistics, most youth run away to escape from physical or mental abuse; only to run to a situation that could be almost as bad. In 1999, the U.S. Department of Justice estimated that almost 1.7 million youth experienced a runaway or throwaway (A throwaway is a youth who has been kicked out of their house by their parents) episode. From my experience, most youth turn to street life when they run away or are abandoned by their parents. As early as 1960, youth were running away from abusive situations. In 1968, a study on male youth prostitution stated that most of the youth had come from an abusive family. It doesn't seem like that much has changed in 36 years, which suggests that we as a community should pay closer attention to this issue.

WHERE ARE THE YOUTH CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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Letter From the Editor

The Mockingbird Society presents this issue of the *Mockingbird Times* with the same enthusiasm and hopefulness that we welcome this fresh Spring season. Our youth reporters have been busy researching, interviewing and writing articles that reflect the range of interests you might find in any newspaper. Of special note in this issue is a letter from a reader expressing his views on an article written by Bridgett Siroshon in the February issue of the *Mockingbird Times*.

Interestingly, you will also find an accompanying letter from a professional who works with teens in Washington D.C. All three letters reflect the discourse that is occurring on the national stage as well as in American homes and families across this nation. Also worthy of special note in this issue is an excellent article by new reporter Jennifer Eboh, who skillfully demonstrates her journalistic proficiency. Finally, I draw your attention to the cartoon below by Echo Speed, our newly hired cartoonist and reporter. The Mockingbird Society is proud to provide these and all of our youth reporters with a forum to present to you the evidence of their thoughtfulness and creativity. Happy Spring!

Jim Theofelis

jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

MORE FEEDBACK AND BRIDGETT'S RESPONSE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Dear Mockingbird Times:

I am a Christian male who buys a "Real Change" paper every week. I believe in the effort to help people help themselves and also help the poor, which I have been and still am to a large degree.

I am writing in response to an article entitled "Positive Power: Be Who You Are" which appeared in the February 2004 edition. As a Christian I believe in showing respect and love to all people, but I feel that I have to respond to this article that claimed gay people cannot change and it is an innate condition of their nature.

First of all there is no scientific proof of this statement. Secondly, many people who have lived a gay lifestyle for years have changed and live in long-term heterosexual relationships. I believe that it is an unhealthy and destructive lifestyle, and that people should be shown that they have alternatives, and I believe that God can and will help people who do want to change. I know that some people say that my views are either hateful or ignorant, but I am convinced that they are not, in fact the opposite, in any case they are my sincere views, I hope that you will print this.

Sincerely,
Aaron Martin
Seattle, WA

Dear Aaron Martin,

I appreciate your response to my article and I'm not closed off to your beliefs. You are entitled to have your opinions. But I have my beliefs too, and this is what I believe in. I believe that everyone has their life and how they choose to live it. I believe that gay and bisexual people do not live a destructive lifestyle; they are simply struggling to live like we all are every minute of every day. And I do not think less of them at all. I know I have been given a voice and I intend to use it to speak for all the people who aren't vocal about their decisions in life.

My article addressed how someone should not change who they are. However, if someone wants to change their sexual orientation because that's not who they are then I highly recommend them making whatever decision makes them happy. Research suggests that homosexual orientation is in place very early in the life cycle, possibly even before birth. Laura Allen & Rodger Gorski offered a similar conclusion while studying brain tissue. A scientist named Simon Lavey discovered that sexual orientation is at least partly physiological. Even in the bible it says that God loves you for you!

According to The American Psychological Association, "Efforts to repair homosexuals are nothing more than social prejudice garbed in psychological accouterments." My article was meant to be provocative, and that's the kind of response I guess I received.

Sincerely,
Bridgett Siroshon



Meet Our Staff

Executive Director
Jim Theofelis

MFFCP Coordinator
Shannon Barello

Administrative Assistant
Anna Trombley

Staff Reporters
Dennis Fisher, Courtney Konietzko, Darius Reynolds, Bridgett Siroshon

Satellite Reporters
Shay Doney, J.Eboh, Rico Evans, Ashley Grant, Anthony Guess, Jamaica Henderson, Princess Hollins, Echo Speed

Volunteers
Lori Ammons, Liz Gelinis, Josh Kaplan-Lyman

Thank-You's:
Seattle Post Intelligencer, Tara Fisher, Valerie Ramisch, Tom Hundley, Roberta Blayney, Virginia Blayney, Kathryn Brooks, Tom Rembiesa, Medina Foundation Visitors, Knowlton, Rocky Hill, Lisa Revelle, Graphica Solutions, University Baptist Church Youth Group, King County and City Council Members Bob Ferguson, Peter Steinbreuck, and members who took the time to respond to Courtney's article on gay marriage.

The Mockingbird Times
2100 24th Ave South, Suite 350
Seattle, WA 98144
(206) 323-KIDS (5437); Fax (206) 323-1003

ABOUT US: The Mockingbird Society is a private non-profit organization dedicated to building a world class foster care system and improving the other systems that serve children and adolescents in foster care. The *Mockingbird Times* is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of Mockingbird Society are paid between \$7.50 and \$8.50 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. The *Mockingbird Times* has a monthly circulation of 28,000 copies being distributed across Washington and the U.S.A. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of The Mockingbird Society and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. All donations to The Mockingbird Society are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated. No part of the *Mockingbird Times* may be reproduced without the written permission of The Mockingbird Society. All contents copyright 2004 The Mockingbird Society.

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SHAY DENEY



Positive Power: Are You a Registered Voter?

ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE figuring out the voting process? You're not the only one! Millions of people in America ignore their right to vote. With a little bit of information, the voting process isn't too tough to figure out and is an extremely important aspect of being an American citizen because voting gives you, *yes you*, the right to have your say on what happens in your country and in your state.

Step 1: Register

Before you can vote you have to register. You can register online at Rockthevote.org or Getoutthevote.org. If you do not have access to the internet, you can pick up voter registration information at places like some grocery stores, community centers, some post offices, and libraries. You can sign up to vote if you are:

- A U.S. citizen
- A resident of the state you are signing up to vote in
- At least 18 years old by the next election
- Not serving time in prison or on parole for a felony

Step 2: Get Ready to Vote

Here in America, we vote on two types of things:

- **People:** Candidates who are running for elected office
- **Plans:** Ballot measures (propositions) that make or change state or local laws

You don't have to vote on everything on the ballot, you can choose just the topics that interest you. After you

sign up to vote, you will start receiving voter's pamphlets in the mail that have information about candidates, measures, and initiatives that may be on the next voter's ballots (you should always research who or what you're voting on).

Step 3: Vote!

Once you sign up to vote, you will receive a voter's card in the mail that tells you where your polling place is. This is a nearby location (usually a school or church) where you can go to vote on voting day. You can choose to vote either at your polling place or at home by mail.

Any voter can choose to vote at home by mail. If you are going to be out of town or will have a problem getting to your polling place on election day between 8 am-8 pm*, then you should plan to vote by mail. This is called an absentee ballot. To get an absentee ballot just check the box on your voter registration card that asks if you would like to receive an absentee ballot.

**Opening time is set by the Election Commission, so it may vary from state to state.*

Did You Know?

Did you know that you do not have to have an address to vote? You can put down your local post office's address or a place where you can safely receive mail. You also don't need to be able to read or write English to vote. You can have someone get the form for you and help you fill it out, but **REMEMBER** that **ONLY YOU** can sign your form.

Now you know how to sign up and vote, so **NO EXCUSES!** Get out there and take advantage of your right to vote. It's the best thing you could possibly do. Good luck! ➤

What Happens at the Polling Place?

There are three main steps at a polling place:

- Check in
- Mark your ballot
- Turn your ballot in

Check In:

Once you get to your polling place and go inside, you will see volunteers who are stationed around the polling place. They should have signs that have the letters of the alphabet on them. Go to the volunteer who is serving the first letter of your last name. They will ask you to sign your name and then they will hand you a voting ballot to mark your votes on. If your polling place is using a computer voting system, they will hand you a card to put in the computer.

Mark Your Ballot:

You will then need to go into a booth to vote in private or stand in front of a computer screen. There, you will begin to mark your ballots. Remember, you do not need to vote on everything on the ballot. Vote on the subjects that are most important to you and vote for candidates that you support.

Turn Your Ballot In:

If you vote on a paper ballot, slip your ballot into the box provided to insure confidentiality. If you vote on a computer system, your vote will automatically be turned in after you look over it and push the "cast your ballot" button ➤

Keep Kickin' it Safe

ECHO SPEED



Unsupervised. Music is blaring, people are dancing, and most everyone has had a great deal to drink. Not to mention the group of young adults who are gathered in a small room somewhere, doing everything from passing around a Blunt (marijuana), to popping Ecstasy, to shooting up Heroin. More youth than you'd think are familiar with this party scene, but very unfamiliar with what to do when things start to get out of control.

Being a teenager or young adult comes with a lot of pressure and hard work. Any young person should be able to enjoy their youth, be curious, try new things, and make mistakes that are better learned now than much later in their lives.

Many high school and college students alike love to pull together for an excellent party where they can socialize and be themselves. There are plenty of perfectly safe situations where all these kids are doing is having a good time; hangn' out, dancing and being generally safe with a total absence of illegal substances.

The problem is that there are many more of these parties where young people are drinking too much, and using illegal drugs. I've been to quite a few parties such as this in the past few years, and I know from personal experience how quickly things can go wrong. I have my own scars that mark how bad these situations can get, and I've seen with my own eyes how easily a person can lose their life.

So how can we solve the problem of a dangerously out-of-hand party? Well, the only way to do that is by not having one. However, in reality, we all know that as long we have young and curious minds looking for a

good time, the idea of eliminating an unsafe teen party is really a very futile thought. But I do know that a big part of the problem these unsupervised parties have is that many young people (when it comes to the over consumption of drugs and alcohol) suffer from a massive lack of information. When no one is willing to call for help for fear of getting busted, and nobody knows the important steps they can take that might determine whether a life is saved or lost, bad situations easily turn worse. If more youth had the knowledge they would need to help their friends or even someone they don't know (because besides maybe learning CPR, or the Heimlich Maneuver, we've generally only been taught to immediately call 911 in an emergency), things might not turn out as ruinous as they could.

First of all, a person needs to be able to recognize the symptoms of someone who is overdosing. This isn't always as easy to see as you might think.

According to www.urban75.com, here are a few signs of what you should be looking for:

Alcohol: A large dose of alcohol will cause overdose leading to loss of consciousness and possibly even death. Even if they don't overdose, they could vomit while they are unconscious and choke - this is how Jimi Hendrix met his maker.

Cocaine: For those rich enough to overdose, expect them to be confused and dizzy with a dry throat. Their breathing will be erratic with short gulps followed by deep gulps.

Speed*: People can collapse after overdosing on speed,

Ecstasy: Look out for hyperventilation, overheating and unconsciousness.

Heroin: The telltale signs are slow or erratic breathing, tiny pupils, semi-consciousness with little or no response. Lips and skin can turn a deathly shade of blue with blood pressure falling. Coma and death can follow.

Poppers*: Can cause collapse if overdone. Poisonous if swallowed.

GHB*: Look out for convulsions, inability to breathe and even coma.

Ketamine*: Temporary and sometimes near-total paralysis, nausea, vomiting and heavy slurring of speech.

Magic Mushrooms: The risk here is from people eating the wrong mushroom resulting in poisoning. This can cause diarrhea, vomiting, cramps, breathing difficulties, black outs and, very rarely, death.

Rohypnol and other 'date-rape' drugs: Slurring, sleepiness, near paralysis.

I can't stress enough the importance of seeking immediate medical attention (such as 911) as soon as you start to notice the signs of an overdose in someone. To learn more about detecting symptoms and taking action with overdose, visit www.healthcentral.com/mhc/top/000016.cfm and www.urban75.com/Drugs/drugfirst.html ➤

*Speed: whizz, billy, sulphate, grudge, tweek, dexys, blues, base, etc.
*Poppers: amyl nitrate, butyl nitrate, isobutyl nitrate, TNT, liquid gold, rush, etc.

*GHB: Liquid ecstasy, GBL, BDO, GBH, Blue Nitro, Midnight Blue, Renew/Trient, Reviarent, SomatoPro, Serenity, Enliven
*Ketamine: Ketamine Hydrochloride Special K, K

For more information on first aid steps to take in an emergency, and more bonus articles, visit our website online at www.mockingbirdsociety.org/

LOVE DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE

COURTNEY KONIETZKO



"To me it's a matter of fairness, equal rights, and equal protection." - Bob Ferguson, King County Council Member, WA State

According to www.metrokc.gov/health/gblt/, "Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered (and questioning) people are a diverse group of people who have struggled with issues of sexuality and gender identity, and may therefore feel a sense of kinship. GLBT people are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, age, education, political affiliation, income, and the degree to which they identify with other GLBT people."

Same sex marriage is a HUGE topic. A topic that is in hot debate right now across the United States because of marriage licenses being issued to same sex couples in San Francisco, Portland, and New York City. According to www.wordiq.com, there are currently two countries, the Netherlands and Belgium, where same-sex marriages can be legally performed. Same sex marriages are also performed in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and British Columbia. Same sex marriage is illegal in the majority of the States because of the Defense of Marriage Act, which defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman. In 1974, the issue of same sex marriage was brought before a Washington State court and the ruling was not in favor but the issue has not been taken before the Supreme Court...yet. According to Bob Ferguson, King County Council member (district two), the issue of legalizing same sex marriages will end up in the Supreme Court no matter what approach is used, it is just a matter of who - gay and lesbian couples or their opposers - brings it to the court first. According to Ferguson, Ron Sims is being very careful for this reason.

Here in Seattle, marriage licenses are issued at the county level. Ron Sims is the King County Executive and holds the power to issue licenses to same sex couples. To do so, Sims would be going against the 1998 Defense of Marriage Act and therefore against the law. Even though Sims is in support of same sex marriages, he has made it clear that in order for him to issue licenses he must not break the DOMA law.

In order for same sex marriage to become law there are various approaches to creating change. One is civil

disobedience, like the mayors of San Francisco and Portland issuing licenses when it is not legal. Another approach is to challenge the law in court by claiming that it goes against the constitution and suing for equal rights as six same sex couples in Seattle are doing. There is also the legislative approach where an advocacy group proposes a bill, gets a legislator to sponsor the bill, and encourages the legislature to turn the bill turned into law. Bob Ferguson spoke about these approaches stating: "There are lawsuits now being filed on behalf of groups trying to get a declaration that same sex marriage is unconstitutional. I think what will help that effort is an equivalent movement in the gay community and folks who support the gay community to write to their elected official, to protest, to apply for marriage licenses and be revoked and to be visible in that way. It raises the issue to the general public. A movement like that can be very powerful and sway public opinion." It seems like there isn't any one way to go about making this change happen but a combined approach of many efforts.

These approaches are similar to how African American people fought for equal rights during the civil rights movement, because both groups faced discrimination.

"There are things in this world that are really wrong and worth making a big fuss over, like how many people across the United States are homeless or live in sub-standard housing"

Some religious leaders and people are offended at this comparison because they see homosexuality as a choice and unnatural. Others who see this similarity believe that the law is unconstitutional and should not discriminate against a group of people because of their sexual orientation. Ferguson is in support of same sex marriages stating: "To me it's a matter of fairness, equal rights, and equal protection. The arguments that I hear against same sex marriage...our societies not ready for it yet...to me it reminds me of arguments made against allowing interracial marriages in the 1950's."

Love does not discriminate and two consenting adults who want to make a commitment to each other to be together for a lifetime should be able to regardless of whether they're a male and a female, two females, or two males. There are things in this world that are really wrong and worth making a big fuss over, like how many people across the United States are homeless or live in sub-standard housing, or the millions of people who are addicted to drugs and the lack of community supports and treatment to serve this population.

Same sex marriage is a politically hot volcano that is going to erupt soon and we will see things change! Civil unions which are allowed in some of the fifty states are not the same thing as marriage and it is time that we are truly equal - not separate. ♡

2004 Fashion from Head to Toe

BRIDGETT SIROSHTON



This fall, spring and summer have fun girls! This doesn't mean dressing up everyday, but having fun with fashion. Here are some suggestions to make your style more daring and prominent. If you're going out for the night, wear your hair in an updo with either a hair clip or a fun, friendly ponytail. For hair accessories wear your hair part up and part down with a headband, it makes you look like a Jackie O. of the 2000's. But most importantly, wear whatever makes you feel comfortable, or what you think you look best in.



Photo Illustration by Bridgett Siroshton

The look right now is studded belts; even JC Penny's and Target carry them! So if you want a glam/hardcore image you can get one for cheap.

Accessories like necklaces go with anything and they accessorize your look. The look is wearing fun light colors for spring like yellow, green, red and light blue. All of these colors will stop traffic and potential boyfriend's hearts. Of course jeans are always in anytime. Camouflage pants or capris (high flood pants) are in; the Gap and even Old Navy have them from time to time. Stripes are still very big this year (horizontal, vertical). Spring and summer wardrobes include capris and sandals and tank tops with cute and cool designs on them, because who wants to swelter in the heat with a shirt.

Black and white patterns are in this year, and if you can find a mixture of the two like houndstooth fabric, then go for it. Houndstooth fabric is in, it can make you look sophisticated and you can buy it even at Bon Macy's and at Trendy Wendy in Seattle. Handbags are in with patterns of tweed and houndstooth. Spring is almost here and summer will be here before you know it. Experiment, be daring, and have fun ladies! ♡

WHERE ARE THE YOUTH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

One of the main youth groups that run away are foster kids, suggesting that there is a very close relationship between homeless youth and foster care. In my opinion, many youth are being placed in homes that they are really not comfortable in or where the parents neglect the youth and they eventually run away and are left without services and guidance. They usually end up homeless or in some other unsafe situation as a result. I recently conducted a survey of youth shelters in Seattle and talked with one youth who stated that the foster parents he was living with made him and his brother sleep on the floor.

Johnny Ohta, a Drug and Alcohol Counselor for Spruce St. Secure Crisis Residential Center (SCRC—a secure facility where police take runaways) says that youth get older in foster care and realize that they have no real relationship with the family they are placed with so they leave. Ohta also mentioned that half the youth at Spruce Street are foster kids. Ohta stated that the most common answer he gets when he asks youth why they run away is "my house is messed up." Ohta also stated that he can tell the reason why a youth ran away just from talking to them for a short period of time.

In October 2003, the University Youth Shelters in Seattle changed their age range from 13-20 to 18 thru 25 because young people under the age of 17 were not accessing the shelter. Sinan Demirel, a shelter director from the University District, stated, "I am concerned about what the guests under the age of 18 are doing now, but I did support the age change at UYS (University Youth Shelter). There were very few guests under the age of 18 utilizing UYS, sometimes not even one per week." Ohta claims that one of the reasons youth stopped going to the University Youth Shelter is because youth come to the University District and see all the older youth and they realize that they don't want to be part of that lifestyle, so they find another shelter like Teen Hope or Youth Care. Ohta does not believe the government is doing a good job handling runaways. Ohta stated that the government is putting a lot of money into the Becca Bill (A law that allows police to arrest runaway youth) but not enough money into services for youth who are not breaking the law. Ohta also stated that there should be more youth shelters.

In closing, I would like to say that I agree with Ohta. There should be more youth shelters for runaways and I would love to see a better way of handling runaway youth rather than throwing them in Juvenile Detention or a SCRC. That's not going to stop youth from running away. The only way to stop people from doing something is to understand why they do it in the first place. "It is important to understand that runaways are not 'bad kids'. They are not running to something but away from something." (The National Runaway Switchboard) ♡

Governor Locke Signs Bill Into Law!



WA State Governor Gary Locke signed the sealing of juvenile records bill into law on March 22nd. (House Bill 3078, Senate Bill 6609.) For more information, visit our website at www.mockingbirdsociety.org!

Are you a young writer or artist? We want your poems, news articles, and artwork and will pay you between \$15-\$25 for each piece we publish in the Times! Visit us online at www.mockingbirdsociety.org!