

Change

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Paul Loeb on Love and Other Miracles

The Impossible Will Take A Little While

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Interview by Timothy Harris

For more than 30 years, Seattle author Paul Rogat Loeb has written and lectured about citizen responsibility and empowerment, asking what makes some people choose lives of social commitment while others abstain. His latest work, *The Impossible Will Take a Little While: A Citizens Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear*, is a tightly edited collection of essays by some of the most profound thinkers and activists of our era. This timely book offers long-range perspective and a framework for personal involvement during this very challenging period.

Previous books by Paul Loeb include *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in Cynical Times* and *Generation at the Crossroads*, a look at the values and concerns of students who came of age over the 80s and 90s. Loeb has written extensively on social involvement for *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Psychology Today*, *Utne Reader*, *Redbook*, *Parents Magazine*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Mother Jones*, *Salon*, *The Village Voice*, *National Catholic Reporter*, and the *International Herald Tribune*.

Real Change talked with Paul Loeb about how social change happens and why we do the things we do.

Real Change: By the time my one-year-old kids are my age, the planet will be completely trashed and America will look like Brazil, and it doesn't seem like there's much I can do, so denial is looking like a pretty good option. What's wrong with that?

Paul Loeb: Well, it's on one level a reasonable response to an unreasonable situation. I think a lot of people look around and think, "This is out of control." And it's larger than just George Bush. It's everything that's been happening that we haven't dealt with and that we brush under the rug. It's very easy to look at the bad news and feel like that's the only way it's going to be. And

it's real. They've been dismantling 30 or 40 years of progress, and they'll do more if they can. So that's understandable.

On the other hand, one of the central themes in *The Impossible* is that we just don't know how things are going to turn out well. Howard Zinn has this really great essay in the book called "The Optimism of Uncertainty." He just goes through the past hundred years, and he looks at everything that you thought was going to be one way and then wasn't. From the Russian revolution and these huge solid-seeming empires of the end of World War I that all crumbled. Then there's World War II and it's the Stalin-Hitler pact and then Hitler's at the gates of Moscow and then

Britain's about to fall but then there is D-Day, and some of this stuff maybe you could predict, but a lot of it you can't.

Vaclav Havel, in what I think is the pivotal essay in the book, is writing in 1986 when Czechoslovakia is a dictatorship. At one point, he circulated a petition to get some people out of jail and the cynics mocked him. Even the world-famous novelist Milan Kundera, the Czech exile, who hated the regime, says through one of the characters in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, "You're just being self-indulgent; trying to get attention. If you really wanted to do something you wouldn't be circulating this petition. You'd be quietly helping the relatives of the people in jail."

And Havel is thinking about this from a distance of about a dozen years. He says, "You know, on some level, Kundera is right. Nobody got freed by this petition. But on another level, Kundera is wrong, because when the people came out of jail, they said that our efforts, which everybody said were fruitless, were what kept them going. And because I brought all of these people together, now they've gone on to form this democracy movement, and this regime is getting challenged on every single front and it's not going to be able to last."

RC: I guess the other side of that would be The Pessimism of Uncertainty. One of my favorite lines from Herodotus is where he says something like, "Never say that this is the worst, because unless you're dead, you just never know."

Our cultural story about change is that it just miraculously happens and then things instantly change. That's not how it works.

Loeb: That's also true. Just when things can't get any worse, they do. I've felt that throughout this entire Bush administration. They cut \$130 billion in taxes for the wealthy and then they go into Iraq and then they gut the environment and then they come out and they try to have every non-profit in the world muzzled so they can't say anything, and you think, "There's all sorts of things they can come up with that we haven't even thought of."

We just don't know if something that's happening is a foreshadowing of worse yet, or — if we respond in the right way — whether it's a turning point. I take seriously the fact that Rosa Parks first got involved around issues of lynching long before the bus boycott. We know about the bus boycott, but we don't know about any of the other history of her 12 years of involvement, and some of it around some pretty horrendous issues.

RC: In your Rosa Parks essay you talk about how her story has become a bit

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From the Heart

Dear *Real Change*,

I have been homeless in Seattle and have found that in order to end the homeless problem you have to treat the underlying cause. To treat a problem with drugs or alcohol, you have to get to the nucleus of the disease. The only way to do this is to get the affected person help with what drove them to drugs or alcohol in the first place.

It is hard to erase the memories that haunt the human mind. Now, more than ever, people want instant results. It is also hard for a homeless person to get into a good program for alcoholism and drug rehabilitation.

Hopelessness or feeling they are alone is hard. The program that I would like to see would be one that treats the whole person and at least a year of re-training that would enable someone to be able to close chapters in their lives and learn their triggers and why they do certain things.

Why don't I see this happening in Seattle? Are we so wrapped up in materialistic things that we don't see the suffering of our fellow man?

I see plenty of people looking the other way. "Oh, if I look at them they'll want something from me." You know who you are. So please, if someone out there has the power to support a program that gives people back their dignity and helps them to get back into society, please let me know where I can sign up to help.

Linda,
Seattle

Welcome Erin and Stacey

Two new faces joined *Real Change* last week. One really isn't that new, and the other is the latest intern from Antioch College in Ohio.

Erin Anderson, who volunteered at *Real Change* while still attending the University of Washington in 2001 and 2002, joins the paper for one year as an Americorps/VISTA vendor service manager while Stacey Silliman begins a three-month internship during which she'll serve a variety of roles at *Real Change*.

Erin will join Vendor Field Coordinator Peter Verberg Sachs to expand services for our growing team of *Real Change* vendors.

Growing up in Kent, Erin became interested in street newspapers while attending Green River Community College in Auburn. *Real Change* executive director Tim Harris spoke at the school. When Erin transferred to UW, she interned at the paper through the Service Learning Project. Erin worked with vendors and with the North American Street Newspaper Association. She also started and taught an honors program seminar at UW on street papers. Erin has also interned with street newspapers in Glasgow, Scotland and Capetown, SA.



STACEY AND ERIN, NOT HERE FOR THE MONEY.

Majoring in Media Studies and Comparative History of Ideas, she wrote her senior thesis on street newspapers. "Street papers have been an integral part of my life since I began volunteering at *Real Change* three years ago," says Erin. "The experiences I've had and the people I've met have given my life meaning in ways I never expected. Working at *Real Change* is a great way to give back to the community."

Stacey is from Liverpool, NY and was drawn to Antioch by the school's progressive politics and its co-op program. Stacey's previous internships have taken her to a Buddhist retreat in Red Feather Lakes, Colorado and also working with youth in Tucson, Arizona. She looks forward to the opportunity to work with homeless and disenfranchised members of the community.

"I'm interested in advocacy and social justice and working at *Real Change* gives me the opportunity to merge my political and academic life," says Stacey. Stacey hopes to eventually find work with an East Coast newspaper. "I have a nine-week old nephew and a four-year old niece and I want to be the aunt that spoils them all the time." ■

Wes is Right

Dear *Real Change*,

I totally agree with Wes in his reply to David (Real Change letters, Vol. 11, No. 19)

I know of Republicans who are voting the Democrat ballot because they don't want Ron Sims to be the Democrat candidate for governor.

When I heard about the closed primary, my first thought was "if the par-

ties want a closed primary, let them pay for it." They think their corporate rights are more important than our human rights. Why should I pay for their primary?

Carolyn Plant,
Seattle

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Puget Sound's Voice of the
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Mission Statement:

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

Goals

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

The *Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project*

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

Editorial Policy

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

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A Hunger for Justice

Note to Mayor: poor people matter too

By Flo Beaumon

It is a quiet morning on the seventh floor of the new Seattle City Hall, with a view of the sun bouncing off the water of Elliott Bay. My cell phone rings, loud enough to make me jump. My sister is calling me to tell me that she is at Disneyland. "Uh, I can't chat right now," I whisper. "I'm doing a public fast outside of the mayor's office."

Since mid-July, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., a changing group of people hold vigil in Mayor Nickels' office, with empty tummies and full hearts. The Seattle Religious Leaders Task Force organized the fast for people of faith and hope to bear witness, until the Mayor and Councilmembers pass a city budget that preserves funding for our hungry and homeless neighbors. They are there because below City Hall, there are people sleeping on the streets. Around the new library, men, women, and children are hungry. While city planners design a streetcar for Paul Allen, human service programs throughout Seattle shrink for lack of funding. For three years now, the city's investment in shelter, food, and health for its poorest residents has been frozen, while the faltering economy sends more and more people looking for emergency help to survive. Seattle's human services have lost \$4.6 million to rising costs since 2002.

At the end of this month, Mayor Nickels will present his 2005-06 budget to the City Council. Will he make the large cuts to the Human Services Department he threatened earlier this year? The vigil pleads that he not. People from churches and temples, social service workers, and clients of these programs are making a personal sacrifice and public statement to persuade our Mayor to preserve funding for people in dire need.

We have all been to rallies and noisy City Council budget hearings. We have met with this Mayor and his predecessors, and with City Councillors present and past. Sympathetic Councilmembers tell us that it isn't enough anymore. We need to bring in Seattle residents — voters — not usually associated with human services to show our Mayor that poor people matter to them.

We need to sit in solidarity with those who go without regular meals and a roof over their heads not out of choice, but because locally and nationally, our governments are backing away from subsidizing just the basics for those our dog-eat-dog economy spits out. Traumatized veterans, families, discarded children who grow up without coping skills, laid off workers, abused women, mentally ill and addicted people

After I get off the phone with my sister, I go back to reading a book of articles from the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, which started in the slums of New York City during the Depression. I rest my eyes looking out at the bay, and over at the glass art and paintings that decorate the Mayor's waiting room. It is a mellow, quiet scene. With me are a staff member from the Rose of Lima transitional housing program for women and her husband, and a staff member from a Compass Center program. Most of the time we read to ourselves, or write in the journal the fasters share. I write a letter to the Mayor, trying to work in the Disneyland theme. "I'm in front of 'It's a Small World!'" my sister had exclaimed. You know the song: "It's a world of laughter, a world of tears"

Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske stops to greet us on his way out. Kathy Mulady, the *P-I* reporter on the City Hall beat, says hello, and that she always checks in with the fasters. We talk about the Mayor's mishandling of the courthouse park feeding programs last month, when he unilaterally shut them down in an overreaction to safety concerns. He reversed himself when the meal providers and their supporters rose up, along with some City Councilmembers, and refused to stop feeding hungry people each evening. That success cheers us.

"Poor people don't vote" is how one of the mayor's staff dismissed concern about the cuts. He's wrong, and he is mistaken if he thinks that only poor people care about their survival. That night, I read the emails from friends I had asked to contact the Mayor's office and the City Council to say that their friend was part of the public fast today, and that they too support full funding for Seattle's people in need. We are adding more voices to the chorus, and it is building every day.

Flo Beaumon works at the Archdiocesan Housing Authority and is a member of the Seattle Religious Leaders Task Force

Join the Fast

The Public Fast for Our Hungry and Homeless Neighbors is now taking place five days a week. We need to keep the pressure on our city government to produce a budget without cuts to the poor. Anyone can join the fast; contact publicfast@ccsww.org, or please call us at 206-794-3483.

We need to bring in Seattle residents — voters — not usually associated with human services to show our Mayor that poor people matter to them.

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Socialist wins, city eats legal cost

After spending over \$70,000 to fight the case in court, the Seattle Ethics Commission last month dropped its case against 2003 City Council candidate Linda Averill. Averill, running under the banner of the Freedom Socialist Party, had asked the Ethics Commission (SEEC) to allow her not to reveal the name of her campaign contributors for fear of retribution against them. The SEEC turned down the request, but Averill got an injunction from U.S. District Court judge Robert Lasnik that June.

Averill raised \$14,000 and garnered 11,000 votes in her September primary race against incumbent Margaret Pageler. Though she did not proceed to the November election, the city pursued the case. However, Lasnik granted a permanent injunction in July supporting Averill's right to privacy.

Last month, after listening to 40 minutes of public testimony, the SEEC backed off, voting unanimously not to appeal Lasnik's injunction. The city also agreed to pay Averill's legal fees.

Averill's request was consistent with how socialist candidates had been treated in the past. The disclosure requirements did not apply in 1991, when Yolanda Alaniz and Heidi Durham ran for the Seattle City Council, and in 1998, when Guerry Hodderson ran for a seat in the state legislature's 37th District. That year, the Federal Election Commission ruled that "there is a long history of harassment, disruptive efforts by individuals and government agencies, government surveillance, and threats against individuals identified with the Freedom Socialist Party. On several occasions in the past, Freedom Socialist Party campaigns and candidates have been either exempted or granted modification of campaign reporting because of the hardships met by the Party if required to disclose campaign contributors' or vendors' names."

The Seattle City Attorney argued that Averill's campaign was not connected to the Freedom Socialist Party and that she did not espouse views that were out of touch with mainstream Seattle. Averill, in turn, argued that her byline has appeared 40 times in the Freedom Socialist newspaper in the last six years, and related anecdotes about a woman who lost a child custody case because she was a member of the Freedom Socialist Party and of people fearful of their employers finding out they contribute to a socialist candidate.

If and when Averill runs for office again, she'll have to reapply for donor privacy status.

"I think Mel Kang had it right," says Averill, referring to a member of the SEEC who urged his fellows to drop the case. "Freedom of association comes before public disclosure.

"It's too bad, with the city cutting vital services. The city could have taken the money it spent fighting me and put [it] towards a hygiene center."

— R.V. Murphy

Breaking the ICE

ICE Melt, a coalition group made up of 25 member organizations, labor unions, social justice organizations, and religious groups, is currently working to organize immigrant communities as well as monitor Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for human rights abuses.

Recent months have seen a national increase in the arrest and deportation of undocumented immigrants in the United States. Rumors of immigration sweeps in public places have paralyzed the Latino community. According to religious organizations and business owners, day-to-day activities such as hospital visits, religious worship, and even grocery shopping are considered too risky.

According to official press releases by the U.S. Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the recent raids and deportations are part of a national initiative by ICE's Fugitive Operations. Called Operation Endgame, the program aims to apprehend and deport around 400,000 immigrants who have been denied permanent residency by the U.S. government. Of these 400,000, ICE reports that some 80,000 are convicted criminals.

Although efforts by Ice Melt to get to the bottom of the immigrant raids have gone on since the end of July, they have been unsuccessful. Activists from the coalition's various organizations are still trying to schedule a meeting with Neil Clark, ICE's Director of Detentions and Removals for the Seattle Field Office.

Carlos Marentes of the Committee for General Amnesty and Social Justice says that the Latino community just wants to know what's going on. "We know at least 36 individuals have been picked up. There are others we don't have information on, and the reason why is that people won't talk — they're afraid, they think they're going to be deported if they talk to the authorities."

He and others in the ICE Melt coalition worked to set up a dialogue between ICE officials and community members in order to voice community



concerns and lay to rest the rumors and fears currently paralyzing the Latino community.

Maru Mora Villapando, who manages English-as-a-second-language classes at Casa Latina and St. James Cathedral, says that the Latino community feels targeted by ICE. "We have been in contact with other communities, like the Cambodian and Vietnamese communities and others, and when we asked them if there's any similar things happening, they say no. So it's very specific."

ICE Melt also opposes a recent King County drug-bust initiative authorizing joint task forces between King County sheriffs and ICE officials. "Basically it's supposed to go after the dealers," says Marentes, "but the hard reality is that the people who will get picked up are the hardworking people that are just trying to get their families ahead."

Villapando concurs: "While they're looking for people who are documented with criminal histories, they pick up whoever they find."

This happened in a documented case near Tacoma on August 10, 2004. Police officers went into an immigrant community with warrants for criminal arrests. ICE officials came along as interpreters. They arrested both those named on warrants and undocumented immigrants in the same complex.

The King County Council has postponed consideration of the initiative until early October. In the meantime, ICE Melt is working to inform immigrants of their rights. The Northwest Immigrant Rights Project is circulating a flyer titled "Know your Rights" in multiple languages. You can find the flyer, as well as other important immigrant rights information at the NWIRP's webpage: www.nwirp.org.

—Shelly Martin

Informing the public

On September 30, the Seattle Human Rights Commission (SHRC), the Office of Civil Rights, and the Interfaith Taskforce on Homelessness will present a public forum on homelessness. The all-day conference takes a more detailed look at homelessness and focuses on issues, such as affordable housing, as a denial of basic human rights. The three sponsors will work together for the first time, and their larger goals include mobilizing the public and creating legal change that makes a difference for those without shelter.

"The conference will hopefully expose and inform the public to important homelessness issues that they are not familiarized with, such as income, health, and disabilities," stated Marta Idowu of SHRC.

Two keynote speakers will be Dan Merkle and Bill Grace. As co-founder and advisor to many nonprofit and for-profit organizations, Merkle has supported numerous social justice issues in Washington State. Merkle has been a Seattle attorney for the past 20 years, and his forum segment will discuss homelessness and the legal system. Grace is the founder and executive director of the Center for Ethical Leadership, a non-profit leadership development and training organization that helps people identify their core values. Grace's keynote address is titled "Homelessness: a matter of our social morality."

One important issue that will be raised at the September 30 conference is affordable housing. With the decline of wages and the increase of housing costs, the homeless are hit hard by the large disparity between rent and income. Low-wage workers are frequently unable to pay when the costs of housing, food, childcare, health care, and education compete against each other.

Participants at the forum will become familiar with economic issues surrounding homelessness and the lack of educational resources for children. They will also be informed of how to become more involved in current events on a local and state level.

In the 2000 Census, 38.7 million Americans had no health insurance, and a third of those people lived in poverty. Illness, injury, or loss of employment and income can wreak havoc on millions of Americans' lives. Education, public assistance, and affordable housing can be effective tools of prevention.

"Other larger goals of the conference include dispelling any myths or falsehoods about homelessness," says Idowu. "By making such concerns like affordable housing a necessary human right, sponsors hope to create solutions and remedies to end homelessness."

The forum takes place September 30 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral on Capitol Hill, 1245 10th Ave East. The conference is free; lunch is included. To register, go to www.cityofseattle.net/civilrights/hrc/hrcevents.htm.

—Gentle Vuong

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

Majority Opinion

County Commission sets guidelines on tent cities

By R.V. Murphy

There is a need for homeless encampments in King County but only as a short-term answer to the immediate crisis of individuals living on the street. That was the finding of the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Homeless Encampments (CACHE), a diverse group of faith, non-faith, city and county organizations that reported its findings to the King County Council last week.

"The commission has reached two very difficult decisions," says Council Chair Larry Phillips, D-Seattle, "that tent cities are not the best solution but are needed because they provide the safety and a sense of community not available when sleeping under a freeway, in a car, or a park."

The commission was formed after neighborhood protests in Bothell when Tent City 3 moved into that area. Some residents felt that they were left out of the decision process, leading to two cantankerous public hearings and Tent City 3 being moved to private grounds. Councilmember Carolyn Edmonds, who represents Bothell, sponsored the ordinance that led to the panel after meeting with 500 citizens at the First Evangelical Church in Bothell.

CACHE was comprised of 18 voting members and four advisors. The 18 voting members included 13 citizens who were nominated by the council. The other five members represented faith-based and non-faith-based organizations. The purpose of the commission was to assess whether homeless encampments are needed and to define the policies and procedures for locating homeless encampments.

After a two-month study that included two public forums, CACHE's findings were presented before the County Council. CACHE co-chairs Holly

Plackett and William Kirlin-Hackett presented the final report and explained their recommendations, which include using public and private land for homeless encampments subject to certain conditions. The council directed County Executive Ron Sims to use the commission's findings to develop King County policy on homeless encampments. Three members of CACHE have proposed a dissenting report opposing the recommendation that tent cities be allowed on public and private land.

The three dissenters, Steve Pyett, Shane Davies, and Ron Swicord claim that 13 of the 18 voting members, "make their living in the homeless industry" or are homeless advocates. Council member Kathy Lambert asked Sims to consider the alternate proposals of the dissenters. Pyett was one of the opposition leaders to Sims' original plan to place Tent City 3 next to the Brickyard park-and-ride lot in Bothell. Pyett, who has worked in the computer field for 25 years, also says that substance abuse problems and mental illness aren't addressed by tent cities.

A total of 13 members voted that there's a need for homeless encampments. "At least 10 homeless people without shelter have died in King County in 2004," says Phillips.

The committee members added three addenda to the vote: a date should be set for phasing out encampments based on the existence of adequate shelter and transitional and permanent affordable housing; homeless encampments are needed because the county and its communities have failed to provide adequate responses to homelessness; and careful management, oversight, size limits, and service linkages must be in place for the site to be approved.

The four commissioners voting against the statement felt that homeless encampments legitimize an unacceptable alternative for homeless persons and let King County "off the hook" for finding and securing more suitable and immediate alternatives to homelessness.

A total of 14 commissioners support the use of private lands for homeless

encampments, 11 support the use of public or private lands, and three do not support public or private lands. The commission also stated that local governments and communities adjacent to encampments must play a role in the placement of the facility, including formal opportunities for public input.

"If people haven't visited a tent city before, they should. It's a very humbling but enlightening experience."

"The committee members who don't approve of encampments want real shelters," says co-chair Plackett, who voted for the encampments. "They are undignified. It's an undignified way to treat human beings. However, encampments aren't run badly; in fact, it's the opposite. If people haven't visited a tent city before, they should. It's a very humbling but enlightening experience. A lot of people will lose their fear if they do that." ■



VOLUNTEERS FROM THE CHURCH OF LATTER DAY SAINTS SERVE UP THE GOODS AT TENT CITY. PHOTO BY JACKIE PRITCHARD.



NORTH AMERICAN NEWSBRIEFS WWW.STREETNEWSERVICE.ORG

A free voice mail service is helping the homeless connect with jobs and services. The nonprofit **Community Voice Mail** project is providing homeless people a way for employers and social service agencies to get in touch with them. It also allows them to apply for a job without the stigma of telling a prospective employer

they are homeless. Recently Dallas and Denver joined a list of cities where homeless shelters are offering the service, started in 1991 in Seattle. It has now grown to more than 37 cities in 19 states and is helping 47,000 people find jobs and housing, that's according to Community Voice Mail. "The intangible that Community Voice Mail provides is hope," spokeswoman Patricia Bonnell tells the AP. "Without a phone number on your resume, you can't get a job." Community Voice Mail gives each person a phone number where they record a message. The numbers cannot be used for outgoing calls, but people can check their messages from any phone.

Around 400 homeless people in Knoxville, Tennessee were treated to a screening of Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ", on two large screens under a downtown viaduct last week. Christian organizers provided the opportunity hoping to increase the number of homeless people seeking a way off the streets. Church volunteers from area churches ministered to individuals and offered them resources to get off the streets. The movie depicts Jesus' final hours before Crucifixion. "This is going to help every one of us if you just give it a chance," says Maxine Raines who runs Lost Sheep Ministries. She told the crowd. "You will all be blessed. Let God touch you, let him really touch you." Raines told the Tennessean the crowd applauded, "Let's go! Praise the Lord!" Homeless people started showing up at the viaduct 3 1/2 hours before the movie and sat

on folding chairs to watch the film. More than 250 of them left with backpacks filled with new Bibles, socks, ponchos, toiletries and other donated items.

A new 216-bed shelter and transitional housing facility for homeless men and women has opened in downtown **Vancouver, British Columbia**. The \$23-million Belkin House replaces the 50-year old Dunsmuir House just a few blocks away. The shelter, opened by the Salvation Army was built to meet the **growing homeless crisis**. As many as 1,200 people are sleeping on Vancouver streets every night, according to the CBC. The shelter was built with the financial support of three levels of government, the private sector and the Belkin Family Foundation. "When you see some of the people on the streets who are in very dire situations, you realize that we need Belkin House very badly and we need more than just one," says city councillor Tim Stevenson. The Salvation Army's Lieutenant Colonel Donald Copple tells the CBC, "This house will be a **bridge to a better life** for countless men and women who reside in this building."

Three more youth defendants have plead guilty in the **fatal beating of a homeless man in New Jersey during a "wilding"**. Shortly before their murder trial was set to start, Kareen McLeod, 18, Steve Williams Jr., 20 and Dontrell Briggs, 18 pleaded guilty to a lesser charge. According to Newsday, the group were part of a "wilding" mob that attacked Hector Robles, a homeless man outside a Patterson, New Jersey warehouse in 2001. He was beaten and stomped to death just after classes let out at John F. Kennedy High School. Four other people were also injured by the mob of 30 to 40 students. Those who pleaded guilty said the crowd planned to conduct random attacks on passersby, a **game they called "tag"**. The guilty please leaves just two of the original 13 defendants still facing trial. Williams and McLeod will face a maximum of 10 years in prison for riot and second-degree manslaughter. Briggs faces five years for riot and aggravated assault. They'll be sentenced in October. Two others still face trial.

Blame

meanwhile,
(as the world burns around us)
one greedy human yells at another:
"It's YOUR fault!"
and the other one yells back the same
(louder)
and if (somehow)
they traded places
(now believing both positions true)
each would yell (winking)
"It's YOUR fault!"

—ROGER STUKEY

Untitled

I Am A Person Without A Home
I am a person without a home,
Living under a bridge, just like a gnome.
Mostly I am just ignored,
Unless the police become too bored.
Then it's as if I have no rights,
Being kicked awake in the middle of the night.
Made to move my harmless camp,
Walking the streets in the cold and damp.
Always trying to keep out of sight,
Hugging the shadows, avoiding the light.
As I walk the streets alone,
I am a person without a home.

—JEFFERS JEFFERSON



Water

Here comes the waterfall cascading and careening down the angled hill of boulders and rocks. This waterfall does not plunge, but slides down the hillside more slowly, flanked on each side by green moss-covered boulders and rocks cascading and sliding up the hills on either side. To the left, they slide up and slip into the forest beyond, where maybe there are paths and maybe there are none, but the green trees shoot upward from the grasses and undergrowth bushes. To the right, they slide up to a dry gully and a path where folks walk to the edge of the fall, where it turns from a stream to a magic sliding down the mountain past green moss, trees, and grasses. cascading flow of liquid.

—DAVID TROTTER

Dry Leaf

dry leaf
still on stem
brown stiff leaf in the rain
behind brick building watching
standing in the rainy night
dry leaf
rain drop

—RICK UNGRICH



Adventures in Poetry with ©Dr. Wes Browning

OK. I was in a really foul mood when I was writing this column for last issue, and that may have caused me to froth excessively. But to refer to it as "my lamest column ever," as one person did, is simply ignorant.

My lamest column ever was in fact the one published September 1st, 1997, which opened with the words "In a world of Labrador Retrievers, I am a duck!! (OH HH YES!! OH YESSS!! A DUCK, I AM, a DUCK, ooooooh yesss!)," and ended with the sad admission that I was not a duck after all. When I think of lame, I think of that column, which forever set the standard of lame for all columns everywhere.

There is absolutely no possibility that any new column I write will ever be as bad as the duck column, owing to the superiority of my current anti-psychotic medication. Still, I want to try. Because, what is life without hope? If we don't challenge our challenges, what will we challenge? I, for one, vowed long ago that I would not surrender to a shallow, vain, pursuit of excellence.

I could just write "I suck" 400 times and turn that in as a column. The management of this rag has assured me that they are prepared for that eventuality. There is in fact a not-very-secret document in a file cabinet in the back room entitled "Wes sucks" that provides no less than two plans. Plan A is to run an old column (preferably the duck masterpiece). Plan B is to go ahead and print "I suck" 400 times and to sign my name to it.

But that would be too easy not only for me but everyone else involved. It would give the proofreader too little to do. I would not feel as though I had earned my complimentary copies. Homeless activists everywhere would be disappointed because I hadn't been active enough; they want me to break a sweat. At least every other line I should insert the words "and homelessness sucks too" in order to stay on topic.

**I could just write "I suck"
400 times and turn that in
as a column.**

So I am always on the lookout for creative new ways to suck without merely saying so. That's why I need television.

Without television and the great communicators that communicate to me on television, I would not know how to be as lame as I am. That's why I have shacked up with a sexy rich woman, Anitra "Pay-Pal" Freeman. I sweep the floor, buy the groceries, and do the dishes. In return, my woman buys TV and TV access for me. It's all so I can watch Andy Rooney and learn. ("Have you ever noticed how bourgeois I am?" is an actual quote. So is "Why do you think my head is so big?" and "Have you ever noticed lots of people call themselves people-persons but nobody ever calls themselves a thing-person?")

Thanks to television and to its cousin the Internet, I have learned that the only thing that matters to most Americans is the quality of middle-class life. Even poor people in this country don't really care about what other poor people are doing, or how things are going to get better so that there won't be any poor people. All they care about are the latest adventures of middle-class people like they wish they were.

But I digress. What's important here is finding creative ways to be lame. So what I want to do today is to join the chorus of hand-wringing over the fate of the American middle class. How about if I call attention to the tragedy of middle-class homelessness? Here we go:

"That's right. This is a huge problem, people. Every day tens of middle-class people become homeless. I'm not talking here about people who were middle-class who suddenly became poor and are now living on the streets. I'm talking about people who still are middle-class and are now living on the streets.

"OK, they aren't really living on the streets because no one with money would do that. But they're living in motels and hotels and RVs. Some of them are even living in Mexico, being forced to read Spanish for Travelers dictionaries and listen to Berlitz tapes at night.

"It is all the more a tragedy because these people pay the taxes that pay the truck drivers to deliver our government cheeses, and yet no one considers their plight(s)."

Yes! As lame as the campaigns! ■



Everything is so still

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

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

—ELIZABETH ROMERO

Giving Blood

Giving blood is beyond me.
 Blood I give the blood bank
 is poured out, taints the drain.
 If I give blood

The laboratory gives it back.
 I was born unclean,
 have never felt the need for purity.
 When the vampire sees me

He knows it's time for a fresh
 pint of plasma.
 Blame is a thirsty throat,
 anemic as the bleach an ocean

Of eclipses drowns in.
 I can't give blood
 but I can borrow a sleeve
 to strain my heart through.

—DAVID THORNBRUGH

Ronald at 68

His heart strong thru scarring
 Keeps pumping

He keeps going

His thighs thin/as/my/forearms
 Keep (barely) carrying him
 Bed-to-bath-to-kitchen

He keeps going

Skin and bones
 Weak as a starved kitten
 His will failing
 His fear flags

He keeps going

His mind strong thru adversity
 Can reason

He keeps going

Barely eating, barely talking
 Labored breathing/short gasps
 Smoking and drinking
 (No pain, thank God)

He keeps going

Some Day soon
 He will not wake up
 But
 to
 God

And I
 Will be alone
 Again

In
 the
 morning

—MARION SUE FISCHER

Untitled

It's a Lie!
 I'm a soldier
 Being all I can be
 Washing up the blood hammered out by the machine
 I take a good liking to soldiers like myself
 Able to free up the sky and earth to bring in all the wealth
 If my god is listening, try to understand
 The war we are fighting was never just or planned
 It's another day watching humanity get swept away
 It's no game, It's no game, It's no game.....
 TV takes all the blame
 I sit on a corner of a darkened Baghdad street
 Just had a rpg take out my whole goddamn fleet
 Head buried in my hands filling for my feet
 I cry.....
 I cry...
 I cry..
 It's a lie, It's a lie.
 It's all a lie.
 I'm a soldier
 Being all I can be
 Washing up the blood hammered out by the machine

—JRAY

Boomtown Blues

Nonprofit restaurant sees more customers, less money

by Tom Cogbill

Is it possible to be a victim of your own success? Ask Bob Kubinieć, executive director of Boomtown Café. Two years ago, the restaurant was serving more than 6,000 meals a month. Last month it served about 12,000. So has Kubinieć honed a razor-sharp business plan, or do these figures bespeak a different conclusion?

Located in the Morrison complex at 513 Third Ave. in the Pioneer Square area, Boomtown caters mainly to an indigent population, with meals priced at substantially below market price. Breakfast costs \$1.25, and lunch \$1.75, the same as when Boomtown opened in 1999. Every meal purveyed at those prices means a loss for the business. But that's part of the plan — yes, a plan that *expects* to lose money. Unlike a conventional small business, where the whole motivation is black ink below the bottom line, at Boomtown, the mission's fulfillment plays the role of the black ink.

"We are a unique hybrid between small business and social service. We want to provide an affordable, healthful meal to anyone who's hungry in an atmosphere of dignity and respect," Kubinieć sums it up. But distinct from charity programs which hand out food to the homeless and disadvantaged, Boomtown makes its customers pay — and if you don't come up with the cash, they'll take your labor. Many of its clientele lack the elementary experience of being responsible for their own well-being or for caring about others. Giving them the chance to help out, even

in a small way, encouraging them to socialize with others, maybe even be of service to someone else because they are able to buy them a meal, constitutes Boomtown's real "business plan." It is a first step towards becoming more functional in society.

"Some people's eyes light up when they say, 'I work at the Boomtown,'" Kubinieć smiles, referring to the restaurant's practice of allowing a hungry person to barter 15 minutes' work in exchange for a meal. In recent years, this barter option has jumped from 60 percent to 90 percent. Scheduling all those clamoring to work for a meal is a logistical headache, but the staff does its best to accommodate both the numbers and the relative ability levels of its temporary charges.

"We serve a lot of the DESC residents," says Kubinieć, referring to the Downtown Emergency Service Center's "at-risk" population living in the building above, "as well as surrounding SRO buildings." Aid workers are appreciative of Boomtown, he adds, because it often provides a social focus for their clients during the day, as well as allows them to eat nutritiously on their own dime.

With such bargain prices, one might think area workers and visitors would be flocking to the café. But it doesn't happen quite like that. Kubinieć estimates that 3 percent or less of his customers are not genuinely needy, a figure he regrets is so low. "We get the occasional juror [from the courthouse across the street] or someone else who

could afford to pay more — and a sign out front does ask them to contribute what they can," he says. It seems strange at first, but Kubinieć laments this situation. There used to be more.

"Originally, we had 10 or 15 percent. It was kind of cool to see businessmen at the same table [as street people], but our demand is such now that people with other options are using them." It was the possibility of a dialog opening between the haves and the have-nots which excited Kubinieć and provided one of the restaurant's *raisons d'être*.

With customers who can pay their own way at a nadir, what accounts for Boomtown's continuing growth? The answer goes back to the nineties, when Puget Sound was in the midst of a "boom" economy but the numbers of homeless and socially disenfranchised kept on growing. "Not everyone's ship was rising," as Kubinieć puts it. (He also concedes an ironic twist to the restaurant's name.) Times have changed, and the budget cuts of recent years have taken their cumulative toll. "Other feeding sources are curtailing service," Kubinieć says. "The Millionaire Club has scaled back how many meals it serves. Recently, Operation Sack Lunch has come close to folding. The money just isn't there." Thus, Boomtown has been pick-

ing up some of the slack.

But as Julie Davis, the business's Development Director, points out, funding from the restaurant's backers has remained stagnant in recent years. The operation covers budget shortfalls by a combination of grants from private foundations, city and federal program funds, profit-making catering contracts, and fundraisers that it organizes periodically. This necessitates devoting a goodly amount of staff time to nothing

but securing new funds, instead of being utilized fulfilling the restaurant's mission. In this sense, raising money costs money. This disturbs Kubinieć, who would rather see a stable governmental funding source for what he sees as an obvious, continuing need. When asked if this does not smack of "entitlement," a concept that has fallen into disfavor with the neoliberal crowd in the last decade, Kubinieć simply replies, "people have to eat."

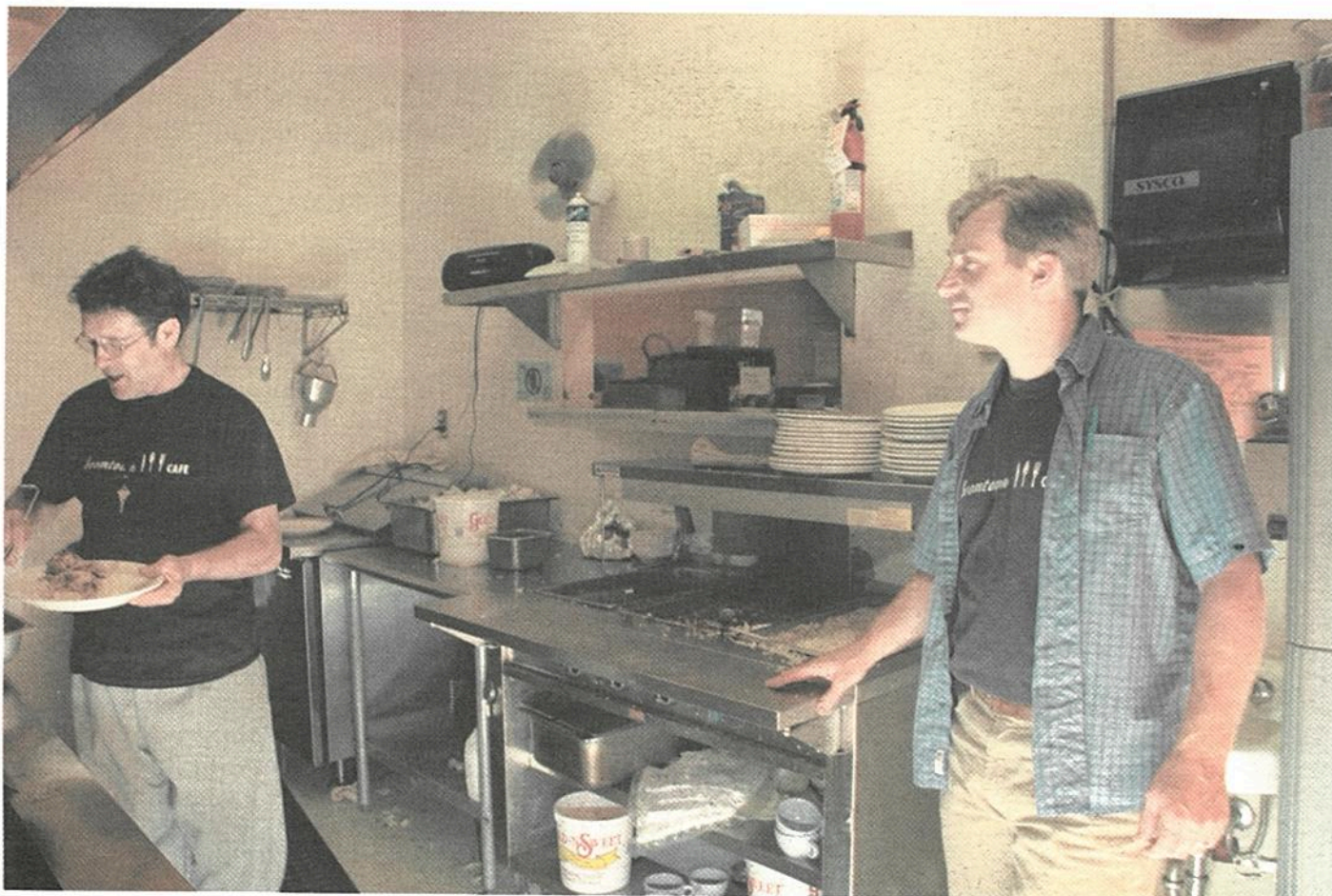
The seating was expanded last winter, but lines keep growing. In fact, at one time, people were lining up down the street, which generated some complaints from Boomtown's neighbors. Hours were expanded, which has helped. The restaurant is now open

from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. every weekday and may try to stay open on weekends. However, as Kubinieć concedes, they are close to the limit of how many people they can serve, both in terms of space and their budget. The space problem he is hoping to address by moving within the next couple years. They are looking for about 4,000 square feet in the Pioneer Square neighborhood.

Kubinieć says his job is rewarding: "It is a great feeling to be connected to the community." But the challenges don't disappear. Funding shortfalls have to be made up, which takes creative energy. One solution which has become popular is the regular "Evening at Boomtown," when a local celebrity chef comes in to prepare a special dinner for which patrons contribute \$20 (reservations advised). Special events, like the upcoming "Squash Ball," which will feature a jazz orchestra and ballroom dancing at \$60 a ticket, generate additional revenue.

Nevertheless, with so many people in the vicinity needing a decent meal from one day to the next, Boomtown will no doubt be enjoying a steady demand for a long time to come. As there aren't any other funding sources on the horizon, Kubinieć admits, it looks like his staff will be cudgeling their creativity to come up with additional schemes to replenish the coffers. That seems to be the price of too much success in Kubinieć's line of work. ■

Giving them the chance to help out...maybe even be of service to someone else because they are able to buy them a meal, constitutes Boomtown's real "business plan." It is a first step towards becoming more functional in society.



BOOMTOWN ED BOB KUBINIEĆ WATCHES A COOK PREPARE YET ANOTHER NUTRITIOUS MEAL. PHOTO BY TOM COGBILL.

Overlooking Baggage

Real Change sting operation finds a bunch of nice librarians quietly doing their jobs

By Shelly Martin

Here in Seattle, we are justifiably proud of our new Central Library. Its revolutionary architecture, its sparkling windows, and all the new carpet, furniture, and bathroom fixtures combine to make a public building that Seattle wants to show off to the world.

How does this need to display our cosmopolitan new library relate to the poor and homeless? It seems obvious that when city officers display Seattle's grand achievement to the press and public, they don't want to also show off the library's traditional congregations of those with nowhere else to go.

I spent four afternoons during the month of August observing the staff and patrons at the Central Library. Would a city library on display to the entire world really welcome everyone, regardless of attire, cleanliness, and general appearance? *Real Change* wanted to know.

Many of the Seattle Public Library Rules of Conduct seem targeted specifically to homeless people. One of the rules specifies that a patron's bags cannot be larger than what fits under a library chair. Other rules of conduct prohibit "using restrooms for bathing or shampooing, doing laundry, or changing clothes," "entering the Library barefoot, without a shirt, with offensive body odor or personal hygiene, or being otherwise attired so as to be disruptive to the Library environment," "lying down or sleeping in the restrooms or on any floor, couch, table, or seat in the Library," and "bringing pets or animals, other than service animals necessary for disabilities, into the Library, except as authorized by the City Librarian."

We found that the rules are there for when you need them, and apparently, most of the time you don't. Baggage, for example, was not a sure indicator of homelessness, or, for that matter, a problem. A few people wheeled large, expensive luggage through the library, while others worked on laptops on the fifth floor, their backpacks, laptop cases, and shopping bags stowed beneath adjacent desks. Some people shared couches with two or three duffel bags, while the minority carried numerous, overfull grocery bags and piled them by their feet while reading.

So there were plenty of people carrying large bags to be found in the 10 hours I spent at the library. Yet though all of them broke the library's Rules of Conduct, not once did I see anyone thrown out as a result.

Real Change also sent in a member of the editorial board to test the rules against bathing in the library bathrooms. One intrepid volunteer walked into the Central Library dressed in her rattiest clothes, with huge duffel bags on each arm and hair that hadn't been washed for three days. She walked up

to the first staff member she saw and asked the way to the bathrooms. Without batting an eye, the librarians on two separate occasions smiled and gave her directions.

If the rules went un-enforced, it certainly wasn't a result of a lack of security guards. During my time on assignment, the security presence in the Central Library was quietly obvious. The well-trained guards seemed polite and helpful.

On the rare occasion I observed a guard enforce the rules of conduct, the interaction was respectful on both sides. When one man appeared to be sleeping on the tenth floor, the guard on duty walked over and asked him if he was all right. After making sure the man was awake, the guard left. Later in the day, he asked a woman on the third floor to put her shoes back on before resting her feet on the seat opposite her. In none of these cases was anyone asked to leave.

So if having poor personal hygiene, sleeping, bringing in lots of bags, and/or taking up lots of space doesn't get

you kicked out of the library, what does? The answer? A dog.

One afternoon, I watched three homeless youth enter the library from Fifth Avenue. They carried two huge backpacks, one small book-bag, and sleeping bags. Moreover, they were accompanied by a leashed but very conspicuous golden bullmastiff.

These three companions piled their belongings on the fifth floor and proceeded to the public computer banks. With such large backpacks, the group's personal effects ended up partially blocking the aisle. Yet the librarians and staff members didn't intervene.

Twenty minutes later, a security guard wandered by and noticed the bullmastiff under the seat. He asked the young man to take the dog outside. Apparently satisfied with this, the security guard left. Yet though the youth took one backpack, two more remained, flagrantly sitting in the middle of the aisle.

It seems clear that the homeless youth was asked to leave not because of his backpack, but because of his dog. If

the large bag had been the reason, then his friends with huge backpacks and sleeping bags would have been asked to leave as well. Instead, they quietly worked on their respective computers for another twenty minutes before re-joining their friend across the street.

So despite the rules, it looks like if you find some way to quietly stow your large bags at your side and don't bring your dog, you'll be fine. For those of

us reading the Seattle Public Library's Rules of Conduct with an eye towards the rights of the homeless community, this is good news indeed.

Rules and regulations aside, the librarians and security guards obviously aren't looking to kick any of their less-presentable clients to the curb. Everyone is treated with respect. Tours are given despite piles of belongings in the corner of the tenth floor Reading Room. And visi-

tors, press, and the Seattle public see that the poor and homeless are treated the same as everybody else in the new Seattle Central Library: they're left in peace. ■

We found that the rules are there for when you need them, and apparently, most of the time you don't. Baggage, for example, was not a sure indicator of homelessness, or, for that matter, a problem.



BIG BAGS ARE NO BIG DEAL. PHOTO BY JACKIE PRITCHARD.

Book Reviews

You're All Wrong

Imperial Hubris

Why the West is Losing the War on Terror

By Anonymous

Brassey's, Inc., 2004

ISBN 1-57488-849-8, \$27.50

Review by Wes Browning

This book will have no significant impact between now and the election, if ever. How do I know? I know because Anonymous has written a book about the terrorist threat which completely defies not only the official party lines of the Democrats and Republicans, but also the views of every substantial minority wing of those parties.

For those who missed the brief hype that surrounded this book upon its release, Anonymous is a "senior U.S. intelligence official with nearly two decades of experience in national security issues related to Afghanistan and South Asia." He was permitted to publish this book on condition he remains anonymous so as not to expose those with whom he works.

Imperial Hubris does not reveal classified information. What garnered the media attention at first was not the release of new information, but the surprise that a senior U.S. intelligence official still on the job had denounced the invasion of Iraq. In fact, Anonymous refers to the 2003 Iraq War as our gift to Osama Bin Laden, who couldn't have asked for more in his wildest dreams, for the advantage it gives him in recruiting new converts.

So opponents of the Iraq war took heart, until they read further and found a writer with whom they have little else in common. This is not a liberal who wants to see more international cooperation in the "war on terror." Rather, Anonymous would support us "going it alone" even so far as cutting most of our current allies loose. He points out that most of our current allies have histories of colonialism and/or oppression of Muslim minorities, which only help the enemy motivate his ranks.

One of my favorite passages of the book, not because I agree with it, but because I think it's funny, compares those U.S. presidents of the past quar-

ter century who have worked so hard to form multinational coalitions to teenage girls "who cannot possibly go to the restroom in a public venue without the accompaniment of their closest friends."

Giggling girly-presidents!

Anonymous is actually an extreme hawk. He wanted the U.S. to crush the Taleban no later than Sept. 12, 2001, without any wimpy time-wasting congressional debate. At the same time, apart from supporting all out war on al Qaeda, he is otherwise largely an isolationist. So his conclusions won't give a lot of comfort to, say, Bush-Republicans eager to see Iraq "democratized."

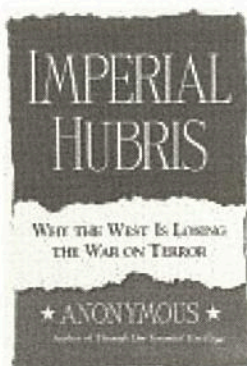
Still, I'm glad I read this book. Anonymous talks about the hubris of intelligence organizations that tend to neglect publicly available information or classified information out of laziness and a belief in the inevitability of American victory. He talks about the hubris of believing that Osama bin Laden is weak, or insane, or stupid and manipulated by underlings, when the facts show he is a formidable opponent.

Anonymous refers to the 2003 Iraq War as our gift to Osama Bin Laden, who couldn't have asked for more in his wildest dreams, for the advantage it gives him in recruiting new converts.

The book is especially worthwhile for the insight it provides into the goals and strategies of al Qaeda. Anonymous makes a strong and, I think, valid case for renaming al Qaeda as a worldwide insurgency rather than as a terrorist group. Bin Laden's goals are not merely to terrorize the U.S., but to change U.S. foreign policy, with terrorism as just one of his tools. Al Qaeda is a stateless guerrilla war machine, which happens to practice terrorism, rather than strictly a terrorist group.

Anonymous also rids me of any lingering notions I may have had that bin Laden cares much about undermining my way of life. He makes it

clear that Osama bin Laden's ability to recruit has hinged on his focus on U.S. foreign policy almost to the exclusion of cultural issues. It is U.S. backing of "apostate" regimes in the Middle East and its acquiescence, or perceived acquiescence, in the oppression of Muslim people from Bosnia, to Israel, to Chechnya, to Indonesia, to Xinjiang Province in China, and elsewhere, that bin Laden points to over and over again. ■



Buddhist Mush

A mean review of a nice book

Buddhism Is Not What You Think

By Steve Hagen

Harper San Francisco, 2004

\$14.95 277 pages

Review by Timothy Harris

I'm probably the last person on earth who should review a book on Buddhism. As I type, my monkey mind is out loading the dishwasher (to load the dishwasher), opening and closing the refrigerator door, and thinking about the nice bowl of soup I'll have for lunch. I'm a Buddhist wannabe. A meditation dilettante.

Buddhism Is Not What You Think is a collection of essays by Steve Hagen, a Zen priest who is head teacher at Minneapolis' Dharma Field Zen Center. Hagen received his dharma transmission (sounds like something you'd find in a Nissan) from Dainin Katagiri Roshi. I, on the other hand, wouldn't know a dogen from a donut, but I do know what bugs me.

Buddhism, says Hagen, is not just another form of self-help where you can read some books, take some classes, attend a few lectures, and then be enlightened. It's more about knowing the difference between delusion and reality and being in the moment. So far so good. The problem, ironically, is that Hagen writes in the self-help style. The still waters of my soul don't deal well with that.

Complacency with the world as-it-is, on the other hand, just pisses me off. In just one of the many annoying sto-

ries Hagen offers, Yang-shan comes up to Kuei-shan and asks, "When the ten thousand things come up to you, what should you do?" Kuei-shan says, "Green is not yellow. Long is not short. Each thing manages its own. Why should I interfere?" Hagen goes on to discuss the transitory nature of reality, the value in itself of being awake, and the egoism involved in thinking we can fix things outside ourselves.

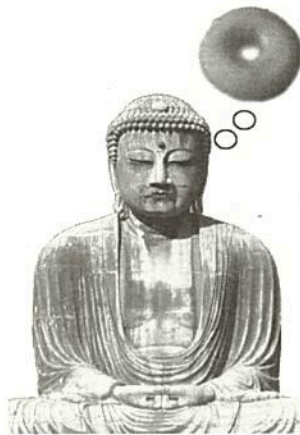
Puke.

I prefer the engaged practice of a Thich Nhat Hanh, who manages to mend a broken world and contemplate his navel at the same time. In Hagen's book, compassion barely gets a passing nod.

Since the beginning, there have been two kinds of Buddhism. There is the intense practice of yoga and meditation that demands — as Jesus did of his disciples — that we leave family and possessions behind and give of ourselves completely. And then there is Buddhism for the rest of us. Learn to meditate. Try to live in the moment. Be aware of your thoughts. Know that nothing is permanent.

This is Buddhism for people who like self-

help books of an Eastern persuasion but think they're above self-help books. In the spirit of *samsara*, there is nothing harmful here, and some will certainly find it inspiring. It's a bowl of warm oatmeal served with bananas and soymilk — more or less inoffensive, sort of sweet and good for you, and maybe just a little boring. ■



This is Buddhism for people who like self-help books of an Eastern persuasion but think they're above self-help books.

The Return of Stringer

Sleepaway School:

Stories from a Boy's Life

By Lee Stringer

Seven Stories Press, 2004

Review by Timothy Harris

Grand Central Winter, Lee Stringer's 1998 book about life as a homeless crack addict and being editor of New York's *Street News*, was a raw, funny, and flawed effort that left you wondering if this new author could ever do it again. The writing ranged from powerful to pretty average and the final chapters had the distinct feel of padding; old columns from *Street News* revised and set hastily to type. While Stringer's first book re-

mains one of the better first-person memoirs of homelessness, I never much expected a second act.

Stringer's new book, another memoir, this one about growing up poor, black, and troubled in Mamaroneck, a suburban town in the backwaters of New York, proves me wrong. This collection of more than 30 vignettes forms a classic coming of age novel that has the unmistakable polish of a writer compelled to get it right. If *Grand Central Winter*, even with all of its flashes of brilliance, didn't quite hang together, *Sleepaway School's* evenly sustained and compelling storytelling establishes Stringer as a writer of consequence.

The author convincingly puts us inside the head of a boy (think Claude

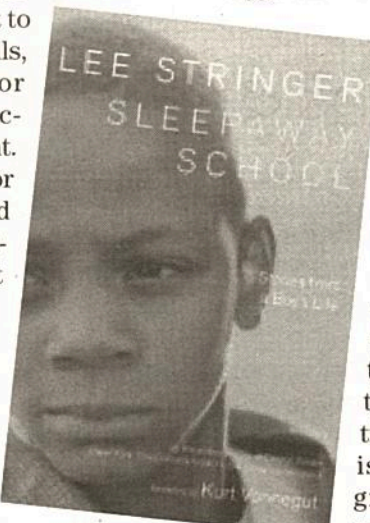
Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land*, but in the 'burbs, and with maybe a touch of Holden Caulfield) who screws up without really knowing why. It begins with casual lying and escalates to the sort of random violence that gets him sent to Hawthorne Cedar Knolls, a boarding school for troubled boys that accepts the odd state client.

Stringer's reasons for being such an angry kid don't come neatly packaged. Instead, he just focuses on the stories. One of the first involves keeping a terrible secret, and then, when he is found out, being celebrated as a hero when he only feels like a liar. Others concern the preoccupations and minor rebellions of adolescence: fitting in, discovering sex, sneaking cigarettes.

Race plays a major role in all of this, with Stringer growing up Black in a mostly white middle-class neighborhood. When he makes new friends, his mother asks, "chocolate or vanilla?" When the answer is vanilla, the reply always came back, "I'll bet you they have money." He wrote in *Grand Central Winter* that he "never did like what that implied about my own prospects."

Some of the most interesting moments in *Sleepaway School* come when

Stringer sees himself, distorted, through a white lens. The neighborhood bully who demands to see his penis. The school play about the Old South performed in blackface and exaggerated accents. There is a moment when, during a Friday fried chicken dinner, a boarding school classmate pegs Stringer as a welfare case who "never had it so good."



"My point of view does a complete one-eighty," he writes. "Not my own eyes I'm looking through anymore, but theirs. Seeing myself sitting there. In my charity-issue clothes. A big, greasy, chicken-eating grin on my face. Like I never had a decent meal before in my life. ... The fried chicken suddenly obscene. ... And smoldering with private shame. Because Pee Wee is entirely right. I've never had it so good."

Stringer finds, after a time, an environment in which he thrives. His small successes are encouraged, and he wins the respect of his classmates. His explosive temper fades as he learns his own strengths, and his free-floating anger at being poor, fatherless, and Black in a world made up of light-skinned "favored sons" finally subsides. When he

goes home, he knows he will miss the structured support of Cedar Knolls.

While *Sleepaway School* has what passes for a happy ending, we know that Stringer did not live happily ever after. The complicated relationship between limited life prospects and self-loathing is more enduring than that. Hopefully, Stringer's gift for self-revelation will produce a third book to help us finally understand. ■

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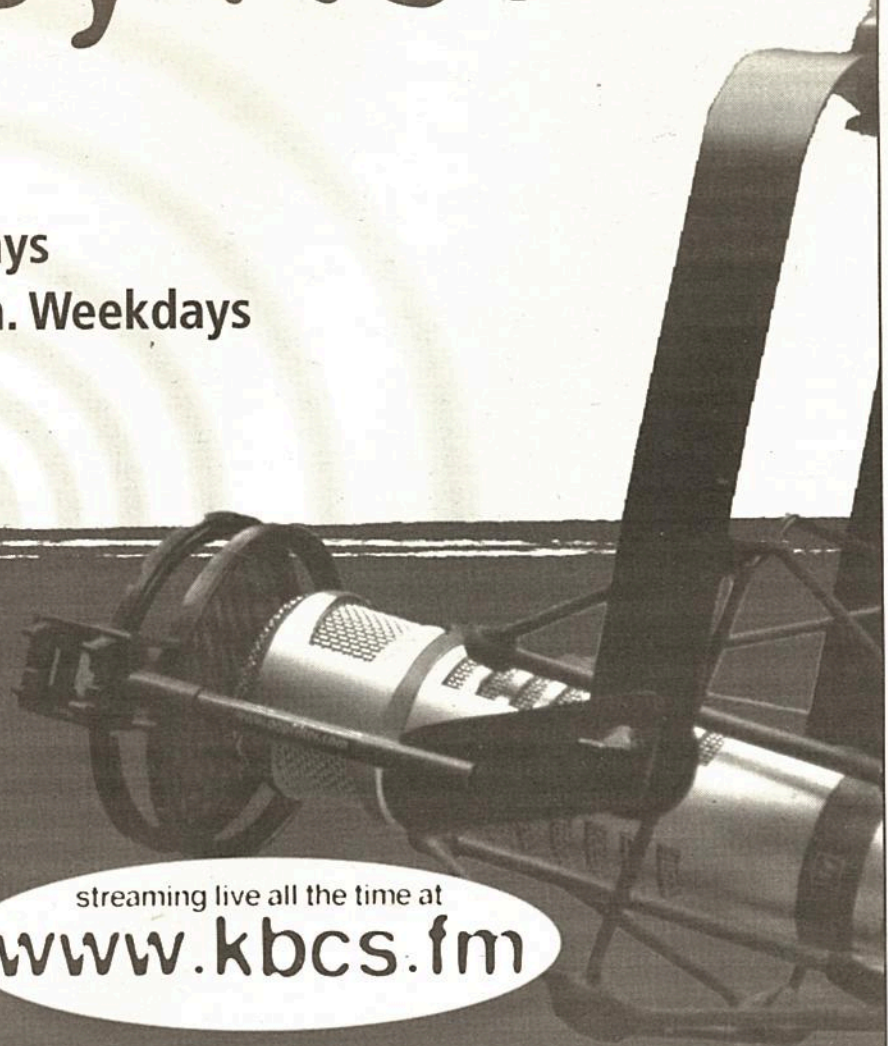
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Civilizations Clash

The Battle for God
by Karen Armstrong
Ballantine Books, 2001
In Paperback: 480 pages; \$15.95

Kindly Inquisitors
by Jonathan Rauch
University of Chicago Press, 1995
Paperback: 180 pages; \$11.00

Review by Anitra Freeman

In author Karen Armstrong's opinion, and in mine, we liberals have worsened the "culture wars" by acting as if we didn't have to pay attention to the opinions of fundamentalists. For a century or more, we have waited expectantly for them to fade into the mists of history.

They have not. The unsettling nature of constant change in a liberal society has only heightened the emotional need for certainty. Fundamentalism is a response to social stress. As you may have noted, we are now in one of those periods of stress, worldwide, in which fundamentalist movements are rising.

The struggles of the culture wars are so passionate both because the accuracy of our knowledge is essential to our physical survival, and because the security of our sense of meaning is essential to our emotional survival. In modern skeptical cultures, all individuals are free to hold personal, subjective, unverifiable beliefs — but the public realm is reserved to what can be publicly observed, checked by anyone and by no one in particular. This is the culture that fundamentalism rebels against, because it marginalizes subjective claims to authoritative truth.

In *Kindly Inquisitors*, Jonathan Rauch also deals with fundamentalist certainty: "the inability to seriously entertain the possibility that one might be wrong." In contrast, "Liberalism holds that knowledge comes only from a public process of critical exchange, in which the wise and the unwise alike participate." But although we basically assume that we all live in one common reality, we also acknowledge that we each perceive reality somewhat differently, some more differently than others. "How do you bring countless millions of subjective realities to some kind of convergence?" Rauch asks. "Given that our experiences and conclusions will be different, what will be the test of truth?"

The liberal answer, Rauch says, lies in its classic philosophy: "Interchangeability of persons (we all play by the same rules) is a hallmark of liberal social philosophy. Kant declared that an action can be right for one person only if it is right for any and all, and so codified the liberal standard of justice. The empiricists declared that a statement can be true for one person only if it is true for any and all, and so codified the liberal standard for knowledge." We can know, but we can never know for certain. We must always entertain the possibility that we may be wrong. No one gets the final say.

It is clear that both liberalism and fundamentalism are faiths with a strong ethic. Liberalism trusts that critical inquiry among diverse opinions will discover truth; the ethic of liberalism demands that no opinion be silenced, and simultaneously that no opinion go unchallenged. Liberalism is inclusive and expansive; it continually draws in more diversity and explores for new ideas. Fundamentalism trusts that traditional authority will be a safe guide to survival and good. The ethic of fundamentalism is to uphold the authoritative tradition unchanged. Because fundamentalists submit their beliefs for verification only to those who mainly agree with them, they tend to exclusiveness and schism.

As Armstrong says at the end of *The Battle for God*, "If fundamentalists must evolve a more compassionate assessment of their enemies in order to be true to their religious traditions, secularists must also be more faithful to the benevolence, tolerance, and respect for humanity which characterizes modern culture at its best and address themselves more emphatically to the fears, anxieties, and needs which so many of their fundamentalist neighbors experience but which no society can safely ignore."

It may be impossible for fundamentalism to expand to include the liberal search for truth. But liberalism can, and I think must, expand to include fundamentalists. I am not saying that we should teach "creation science" or anything other than tested, current knowledge. But we must practice more of the inclusiveness that is liberal public debate: allow all to make their claims, do not dismiss any, simply insist that all are equally subject to critical inquiry. This can only improve our common quest for truth. ■

Beyond Privilege

*Citizens of the Empire:
The Struggle to Claim Our Humanity*
by Robert Jensen
Consortium, 2004
160 pages, \$11.95

Review by Anitra Freeman

There are a lot of political books out in this most political of all seasons; and in this polarized climate most of them seem written to encourage Our Side of the Country and give them ammunition to use against Their Side of the Country. Reading many of them creates a mental picture of buddies around a campfire congratulating each other for not being one of Those Bastards.

Robert Jensen, as one would expect of the author of *Writing Dissent: Taking Radical Ideas from the Margins to the Mainstream*, does write a cogent critique of current U.S. policies, and of the poisonous blend of greed and ego that is called "patriotism." He articulates the frustration and alienation of citizens being pushed increasingly to the left by our government's accelerating rush to the right.

But he also challenges us to critique ourselves. Just as changing a racist society requires acknowledging that a lot of what we take for granted as "normal" is racism that we have been conditioned to accept and perpetuate, changing our Empire requires that we acknowledge that it is *our* Empire. We have been raised and conditioned to take for granted a position of pride and privilege that allows 5 percent of the world's population to use 30 percent of the world's resources and call it right; to consider it natural that few of our people

know any languages other than American English, or much of anything about the countries beyond our borders and their news; to regard our own culture as the peak of civilization to which the rest of humanity aspires. It is basic cultural assumptions that have created the mess we find ourselves in the midst of, not the ambitions of a few opportunists.

In his opening pages, Jensen identifies three key assumptions that provide the framework for all justification of corporate and political actions that seem to most of us to be immoral: the United States is the greatest nation on earth; we must support our troops because they defend our freedom; and patriotism is a positive value. He spends the rest of the book taking these assumptions apart, demonstrating why they are dangerous and why we should not — as many of us still, to some extent, do — buy into them; why it is not just the right wing's version of greatness, freedom, and patriotism that is wrong, but also our own.

Jensen ends on a note of faith: a call for us to "put our faith in each other to find a way to stop living on top of the world and start living as part of the world."

It is easy to rail against Those Bastards. There is a fierce pleasure in it. It is hard and painful to, as Jensen challenges us, "stop being Americans and become human beings." As another reformer once said, however, "Be the change you want to see in the world." Jensen gives a new dimension to Gandhi's admonition. Change the beliefs we ourselves hold that give rise to what we oppose in the world. ■

It is hard and painful to, as Jensen challenges us, "stop being Americans and become human beings."

Revenge and Restoration

Four Souls
by Louise Erdrich
HarperCollins (2004)
210 pages \$23.95

Review by Michele Marchand

Goethe once wrote that all writers are homesick, searching for home. If that is the case, Louise Erdrich, Ojibwe poet and novelist, has prepared the ground well for a homeland and heartland. She has peopled it with some of the most love-starved, hilarious, strong, and vivid characters in modern American literature, in a series of novels (*Love Medicine*, *The Beet Queen*, *Tracks*, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*) that share narrators and locations, and move from voice to voice through time, over the course of nearly a century.

In a way, her fiction is cultural reporting, and manifests the Native

American value of sharing power through sharing stories. In her tribe, everyone's voice and story is important.

Her new novel, *Four Souls*, fleshes out the history of some of her strongest characters. Although it doesn't maintain the power and pulse of its poetic opening chapters, it is obviously the work of a writer near the peak of her gift.

Four Souls' main protagonist, Fleur Pillager, leaves her reservation to seek revenge from the white man, John James Mauser, who bought her land and logged it to worthlessness. She is traveling across unfamiliar terrain, "trackless, unmapped, unknown and always bearing east." To the drumbeat rhythm of this opening line, we are drawn along with her to the Twin Cities, and hear her story there from the point of view of Polly Elizabeth Gheen, a prim white woman who hires her, having weaseled her way into the role

Continued, next page



StreetWatch is compiled by Emma Quinn from reports of the Seattle Police Department.

Thursday September 9th. 11.49 am., Victor Steinbrueck Park, Western Ave. Suspect, a transient female aged 45 was sitting on a bench in the park about two feet away from an open backpack. There was an open 24oz can of Natural Ice beer concealed behind the bag. Officers asked the suspect if the backpack was hers, and she said that it was. Officers checked her I.D. and found that she had been previously trespassed from Victor Steinbrueck Park, and she was arrested and booked into King County Jail for criminal trespass.

Thursday September 9th. 8.50pm., Occidental Park, S. Washington. The suspect was spotted drinking a beer in Occidental Park. A D.o.L name check showed that the suspect, a transient female aged 41 had been previously trespassed from the park — she was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Friday September 10th. 2.30pm., Pontius Ave N./ John St. S. Victim walked into the precinct to report that he had been assaulted by the suspect, a black male in his early 40's. Victim, a transient black male aged 49 stated he had been walking northbound on Pontius and John when the suspect approached him, stopped in front of him and said "I seen you watching me. That ain't cool — you told the white man!" Victim replied "I ain't told no-one." Suspect punched him in the face, cutting his lip. They then went their separate ways. Victim stated he thinks the suspect is suspicious of him because he's seen him doing drug deals. His injuries were treated at the scene.

Saturday September 11th. 3.58am., Union Gospel Mission. Subject, a transient Asian male aged 33 walked into Union Gospel Mission and stated he had been assaulted. Officers arrived and noticed bleeding abrasions to his right eye and cheek. At first the subject claimed he'd fallen down, but then said he had been "jumped" and pushed to the ground. Officers were familiar with the man, who has a history of mental illness. After attempting to lunge for an officer's taser, he was transported to Harborview for a 72 hour involuntary commitment.

Saturday September 11th. 4.40pm., 15th Ave W./W. Dravus. Suspect confronted the victim over panhandling rights on 15th Ave. The suspect, a white male aged 51 struck the victim numerous times in the face with his fists, causing cuts to his ears and lips. Victim, a transient white male aged 31 was able to identify the suspect by name. Officers located the suspect in a transient camp not far from the scene of the incident. Record checks showed two felony warrants, and he was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Do you have your own story to tell? Call Real Change at (206)441-3247 ext. 207, and we'll get the scoop.

HOPE, Cont. from page 1

of an unhelpful myth. Why is it important for you to help set the record straight here, and why do you think the Parks story so often gets told the way that it does?

Loeb: Well, it's interesting because if you look at the way the Parks story is conventionally told: so glad they had Rosa Parks; one day she refused to move to the back of the bus, and that started the civil rights movement —

RC: — Her feet were tired. I was at a Michael Moore event at Town Hall about a year ago —

Loeb: — I was at that same event.

RC: And he repeated the myth, and a woman in the audience called him on it, and he basically blew her off.

Loeb: He did, I was really pissed. I emailed his webmaster and said, "Michael needs to get it right. He's reaching a lot of people." It's a myth that just makes it harder for us to act. It makes it sound like: a) She acts completely on her own; b) She acts just kind of unconsciously — her feet are tired, so she doesn't move — and c) she acts and then things instantly change.

Well, none of those are true, because she's acting as a part of community. She's been active for 12 years; she's acting very consciously. She went to the Highlander School civil rights center the summer before her arrest. She met with people who had been active before; she strategized and brainstormed with them, and her action was a very conscious action. There was another woman who had refused to leave to the back of the bus about six months before, but she was unmarried and pregnant — a bad symbol for a movement — so they didn't make a case around her.

Our cultural story about change is that it just miraculously happens and then things instantly change. That's not how it works. They change from people coming together and acting intentionally. That doesn't mean you know how it's going to turn out. It just means you have to take the lead, do the best you can, learn from whomever you can, and take the leap of faith that something's going to turn out. And then you have to keep on doing it.

RC: A recurring theme of your book is the difference between hope and optimism. Hope being something more fundamental and real than just somehow thinking everything's going to work out in the end. Tell us about that.

Loeb: Vaclav Havel made the distinction very explicitly. Optimism is this notion, as you said, that things will turn out. And the problem with that is that it's transient. So I read a poll, for example, about Bush and the election and I think, "Great! Bush's popularity is dropping. He's going down, big time!" And I hope that happens.

RC: Do you hope that happens or are you optimistic about it happening?

Loeb: Well, I hope that happens. And I'm even slightly optimistic that it will happen, but if it doesn't happen, then we get two choices: we either give up or we go on. So then we get to the question of what keeps us going in the hard times?

Maybe October 2 Bush pulls Osama Bin Laden out of a hat and all of a sudden everyone is cheering. And we think, oh my God, we're done for! And then we have this choice: Do we give up in those last four weeks, or do we just work our tails off, knowing we don't know what's going to happen?

What anchors us? I would argue, and the people in *The Impossible* would argue, that it's some larger relationship to the world. It's about the process; it's about your dignity; it's about being true to yourself. Or, as a young woman I interviewed in *Soul of a Citizen* said, "You gotta pick your team. There's a team of the people of hope and there's a team of the cynics. The question is, what do you want to stand for?"

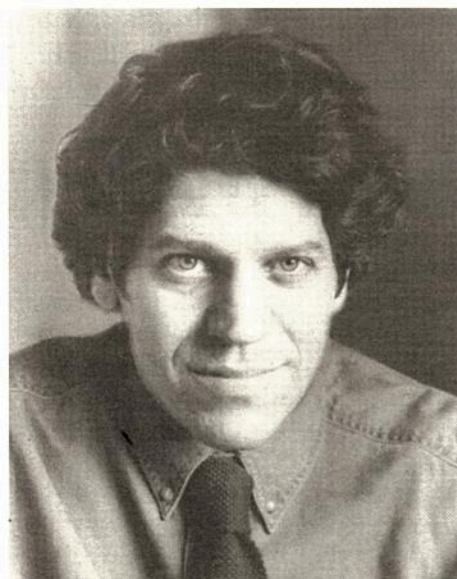
There's a phrase that a woman named Victoria Safford uses. She's a Unitarian minister in St. Paul, Minnesota. One of the ways that the book came together is that I gathered essays by people that I most admired in the world: Nelson Mandela, Alice Walker, Jonathan Kozol, Marion Wright Edelman, Desmond Tutu, and lots and lots of folks like this. I also sent out an email to my 10,000-name list, asking "Is there an essay that you just love?" One of the things that came in was somebody saying, "There's this amazing Unitarian minister that I have in my congregation and she posts her sermons on the web." And she knocked me out!

She said, "In our lives, we make our answers all the time to this ravenous, beautiful, mutilated, gorgeous world." I love that phrase. It choked me up, because I thought, "This world is gorgeous." We need to be able to turn it around and take strength from that world to be able to have hope. If we only see the mutilated part, we will live

in despair.

RC: In the end, aren't hope and despair both selfish?

Loeb: It's interesting. Despair is a blind kind of selfishness. It's shortsighted. It's a sense that we all have something to lose and it's all going to get taken away. We can be the richest man in the world and still be worried about what people will take away from us. I don't think that really serves us. We're served best when we're not focusing on that, but rather on what is it that needs to be done. How do we live in the way that we're meant to live?



"What anchors us? I would argue, and the people in *The Impossible* would argue, that it's some larger relationship to the world. It's about the process; it's about your dignity; it's about being true to yourself."

You have to start where you are. If you look at any significant movement for social change — the union movement, civil rights, the environmentalists, or the abolitionists, or women's suffrage — they're up against what they're up against.

In Eastern Europe they were up against dictatorship. In the civil rights movement, those who were most oppressed couldn't vote to change it because their vote was taken away. So there's always obstacles, and the challenge is to figure out an intelligent angle to chip away from, and to then do that with heart and not give up. Courage is contagious, as is cowardice.

Imagine if nobody had spoken up against the Iraq War. We'd have the exact same result we have now — exact same lies, exact same everything else. But now Bush is boxed in a bit more because there were all of those voices, all those ordinary people who said, "Look, there's something really wrong and we need to do something about it."

I use that example because in some ways the book was written as a response to people's despair in the wake of this war. But action changes the nature of the debate. We had an impact. We just can't always see what the results are. And think of all those people who came into action. Which of them are going to be a Rose Parks or a Mandela or a Havel? We don't know. ■

More information is available at www.theimpossible.org

FOUR SOULS, Cont. from prev. page

of matriarch of the Mauser household. Later, in flashback, we learn more of Fleur's story from the Ojibwe points of view of her adopted Grandfather, Nanapush (a trickster, wise and foolish by turns) and his wife, Margaret (Rushes Bear), who is de facto matriarch of the tribe.

We never hear Fleur's voice except as reported by others, perhaps because Fleur is too strong and mysterious a character for even her creator to inhabit. Fleur is "Four Souls" — powerful and detached, she has managed to escape death more than once by throwing her extra souls out into the world.

But in this novel, Fleur loses her resolve, her passion and purpose, stunned by the cityscape, seduced by alcohol,

and confused by the attachment she develops to her surprisingly weak, war-wounded and dissipated enemy, Mauser, and the autistic son she eventually bears him. She heals her enemy, and finds she cannot kill what she has healed.

Four Souls is told in three voices, through four parallel situations (two major and two minor) that mirror each other in failed attempts at revenge, ridiculous trickery, and the sharing of unexpected gifts. In this slim, wise novel, Fleur, Nanapush, Margaret, and even prim Polly Elizabeth learn about love; its redemptive power, and its corresponding darker urge for ownership.

But in Erdrich's world, despite the intensity of our longings for them, neither the land nor other human beings can be fully known or owned. ■

A Lefty Book Worth Reading

Banana Republicans

By Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber
Jeremy P. Tarcher, 2004
\$11.95, 264 pages

Review by Trevor Griffey

It gives me hope to see the books by Al Franken, Molly Ivins, Garrison Keiler, Michael Moore, Maureen Dowd, Paul Krugman, and others hit the bestseller list, but most of the time, I don't actually read them. *Banana Republicans* is different. The authors aren't pundits. They're the co-directors of *prwatch.org*, one of the most important information clearinghouses in the country.

If you want to know who's behind a supposedly grassroots campaign that marches lockstep with industry; why an obscure group of right wing wackos has curiously deep pockets; or how the revolving door works between federal regulators, industry lobbyists, and marketing firms, there's no better place to turn. In fact, there pretty much is no other place to turn for this kind of information.

So when these guys put out a book, it's worth listening. Here, in brief, is what they have to say in their latest book: "The direction in which forces in the GOP are moving looks—at times absurdly, at times ominously—similar to the 'banana republics' of Latin America: nations dominated by narrow corporate elites, which use the pretext of national security to violate the rights of their citizens."

The book details six ways in which Republican power is perilously close to being complete: the promotion of policy ideas; the control of the media; the depth of collusion between business and government; the use of popular entertainment to promote an Americanism that is another word for Repub-

licanism; the rigging of the electoral system to ensure Republican majorities (and, by extension, control of the courts); and the expansion of state powers to quash dissent as treason against the growing one party rule.

The danger is not just that ideas you personally find odious will increasingly rule your life. It's that an extremist minority will, through brilliant political maneuvering, marginalize dissent and undermine our democratic system of checks and balances. What follows is one party rule, with unpopular ideas forced down the throats of the disempowered, and the inevitable human catastrophes that follow.



The direction in which the GOP is moving is similar to the banana republics of Latin America.

Because this argument is so serious, and so important, the end of *Banana Republicans* is a huge disappointment. "Progressives should emulate the right's planful discipline," the authors recommend. They should employ a similar "dual strategy" to work both inside and outside political parties, encourage lefty foundations to promote progressive policy ideas the same way right wing think tanks have, and use the democratic potential of the internet.

There is a problem here. By putting control of electoral politics and media spin before first principles; by calling for power without saying what should be done with that power — and by largely ignoring the international movement for global justice that has emerged over the last decade to counter corporate globalization by Democrats and Republicans — *Banana Republicans* offers an unintentional final lesson about the dangers of one-party rule: it's impossible to mimic your opponents without giving up the ability to define yourself in your own terms. Being anybody but Bush or anything but Republican is no different from being nobody at all. ■

Music in the Market

Third Annual Buskers' Festival. Come feel the love.

Imagine Pike Place Market without street musicians. Tossed fish and statues of pigs aside, the buskers of the Market are the very heart and soul of Seattle's heart and soul.

The third annual Pike Place Market Buskers' Festival takes place this Sunday, September 19 at the Market. With the generous help of the PDA and support from the surrounding community, Market buskers produce this festival themselves. It's a seven-month long project, born of chaos and love.

This year's festival harkens back to the early years of Folklife and Bumbershoot — a regional event drawing from a small pool of performers. In 2001, Jim Page, Jim Hinde and Artis the Spoonman helped found The Pike Market Performers' Guild and from that organization sprouted Seattle's premiere Buskers' Festival.

More than 35 performers will occupy three stages, doing shows throughout the day between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. An acoustic stage will be located in Post Alley between Pine and Pike streets. The sound stages will be at the north and south ends of Pike Place Market.

The Market will also be bustling with its everyday business while other busker pitches will be occupied with entertainment as well. Along with many familiar faces, such as Jim Page, Rio Cole, Reggie Miles, Briggs, and Dog Mafia, there will be new talent from outside the Market.

Joining the show this year will be veteran Seattle singer/songwriter and comedic bluesman P.K. Dwyer; Jerin Falkner, a young songstress who can belt or croon with equal value; Charlotte Thistle, who wrote Shoreline Community College's Alma Mater and is a forceful guitarist and significant songwriter; and political satirist Fred Miller.

There are many other buskers' festivals around the world. Some of the larger ones are Covent Garden, London; Puck Fair in Killorglin, on the west coast of Ireland; Adelaide, Australia; Hong Kong; Barcelona; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Christ Church, New Zealand; Edmonton, Alberta; and Key West, FL.

The difference between many of the bigger events and Seattle's own Buskers' Festival is that others are sponsored by beer companies or radio stations that would no more play music by buskers than their own mothers'. This festival is real, organized from the ground up by the musicians themselves. Support home grown music. Come to the Seattle Buskers' Festival, Sunday, Sept. 19, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

—Artis



MIKE GUTHRIE AND GREG SPENCE WOLF. PHOTO BY ANITA LAFRANCHI.

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Upcoming & Notable

Thursday 9/16

Benefit Concert for Church of Mary Magdalene, which has a ministry for **homeless women in Seattle**. Featured artists will be Steeplechase, Michael Stern, Linda Allen and Martha Reeves. 7:30 p.m., at Broadway Performance Hall, 1625 Broadway at Pine, Capitol Hill, Seattle. Info <http://www.churchofmarymagdalene.org>.

Friday 9/17

Reception and viewing of **Chisolm '72: Unbought and Unbossed**, the documentary on Shirley Chisolm and her campaign for the Democratic Party Presidential nomination in 1972. Sponsored by Vote, Run Lead, an organization working to engage young women in the political process. 6 p.m., at the University of Washington, Smith Hall, Room 120. Info 206-963-5820.

Wallingford Neighbors for Peace and Justice present "Friday Night at the Meaningful Movies," featuring the film, **Store Wars**, about corporate power and shareholder advocacy. This film depicts the "store war" that occurred when Wal-Mart decided to open in Ashland, Virginia and presents all viewpoints on this controversial issue. Free, donations appreciated. 7 p.m., at Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. N., Seattle. Info wfnfp@comcast.net.

Saturday 9/18

Strides for Stability sponsors a 5k run/walk to benefit vital **mental health and housing services** provided by non-profits Community Psychiatric Clinic and Sand Point Community Housing Association. 9:30 a.m., at Sand Point Magnuson Park, Seattle. Info 206-545-2398.

Sunday 9/19

Seattle Peace Concert, featuring music by the cast of the Akwada, June Rushing Band, Jude Bowerman Band and many more. Drum Circle after the concert. Free, please bring food donations for Northwest Harvest. Noon - 6 p.m., at Gas Works Park, Seattle. Info 206-729-5232 or <http://www.seapeace.org>.

Monday 9/20

Annual Statewide **Affordable Housing Conference**, with local and national experts discussing urban and rural issues. Presented by Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance and others. Monday and Tuesday, at Meydenbauer Center, Bellevue. Info conf@wshfc.org or <http://www.wshfc.org/conf> or 1-800-767-4663 ext. 773.

Tuesday 9/21

John Nichols, Washington D.C. correspondent for The Nation and co-founder

of a national media reform group, Free Press, discusses his new book, **Dick: The Man Who Is President**. The "Dick" in question is our current Vice President, Cheney, and this book covers many issues, including his evasion of military service during the Viet Nam War. 5:30 p.m., at Elliott Bay Book Company, 1st Ave. S. and S. Main, Pioneer Square, Seattle. Info 206-624-6600.

Wednesday 9/22

The American Arab Community Coalition and the ACLU present the film, **Unconstitutional: The War on Our Civil Liberties**, by Robert Greenwald. This documentary details how civil liberties have been rolled back since 9/11. Free to the public, donations welcome. Reception to follow. 7 p.m., at Broadway Performance Hall, 1625 Broadway, Seattle. Info ACLU 206-624-2184 or AACC 206-634-9001.

Friday 9/24

Progressive Party of Washington General Meeting. The public is invited to participate in planning an election reform meeting. 7 - 9 p.m., at East Precinct Police Dept. meeting room, 1519 - 12th on Capitol Hill, Seattle. Info simahoyo@coolindian.com.

Saturday 9/25

Home Alive **Basic Self-Defense Workshop**, covering safety planning, awareness, basic strikes and getting out of common grabs. Home Alive is a non-profit organization dedicated to offering self-defense classes to the public on a sliding scale basis. Cost \$50-\$0, pay what you can, when you can. 1 - 4 p.m., at 1415 - 10th Ave., 2nd Floor, between Pike and Union on Capitol Hill. Info 206-323-4663 or selfdef@homealive.org.

Sunday 9/26

Palestinian Concerns Group invites the public to the **Annual Fall Middle East Luncheon**, with Mary and Fred

Pneuman, who recently returned from the Sabeel Conference in Jerusalem. Proceeds go to the Palestinian University Women's Scholarship and to critically needed medical relief. Tickets \$25 available from David Sires 206-329-1900, Huda Giddons 206-527-1291 or Husniyeh Kouttainay 425-787-8900. 12:30 p.m., at St. Mark's Cathedral, Bloedel Hall, 1245 - 10th Ave. E., Seattle.

West Seattle Crop Walk, a way to **help ease the pangs of hunger**. Join in the walk along Alki Beach, funds raised go to international relief programs and to the West Seattle and White Center food banks. Sponsored by West Seattle churches. 1 p.m., at Alki Market, 63rd SW and Alki. Info Mary Anne 206-932-5054.

Monday 9/27

"It's Time to Talk - Forums on Race XIX," with keynote speaker, Yolanda King, the eldest daughter of Martin Luther King, Jr. and an internationally known speaker and actress. Ms. King's mission is to **inspire positive social change and world peace**. Sponsored by the Urban Enterprise Center. Tickets are \$45 and the presentation is followed by lunch and facilitated discussions. Register by credit card at <http://www.urbanenterprise.com> or via Novelett Cotter 206-389-7263. Noon - 1:30 p.m., at Fairmont Olympic Hotel, 411 University St., Downtown Seattle.

ACLU and Book-It Repertory Theatre present **An Uncensored Celebration**, with actors reading works old and new threatened with censorship. Free, donations welcome. 7 p.m., at Intiman Playhouse, 201 Mercer, Seattle. Info ACLU 206-624-2184.

Tuesday 9/28

Informational Picket to call attention to the crisis in funding for **VA Medical Centers** across the country. Employees, Veterans, Union Work-

ers and the public are invited to stand up for the VA, the healthcare system for those who have served. 3:30 - 5:30 p.m., every other Tuesday until November, across the street from the Seattle VA Hospital main entrance, 1660 S. Columbian Way on Beacon Hill. Info Barbara Phinney 206-992-9529.

Thursday 9/30

Homelessness: A Denial of Human Rights, a homeless forum and silent auction sponsored by Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness, Seattle Human Rights Commission and others. The purpose of this forum is to raise public awareness of homelessness as a human rights violation. Free and open to the public, lunch will be provided. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., at St. Mark's Cathedral, Bloedel Hall, 1245 - 10th Ave. E., Seattle. Register at http://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/hrc/homelessnessforum_reg.htm, info 206-684-4514.

Calendar compiled from Jean Buskin's **Peace and Justice Events Calendar**, available in full at www.scn.org/activism/calendar. Email calendar submissions to calendar@real-changenews.org.

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citizens participation project



Support Tent City in King County

Issue: CACHE and the King County Council agree that tent cities have an essential role in the fight to end homelessness. Support the establishment of tent cities on both public and private lands while continuing to demand a permanent, county-wide solution to homelessness.

Background: On Sept. 7th, The King County Citizens Advisory Commission on Homeless Encampments (CACHE) presented its final report to the King County's Committee of the Whole. While indicting King County for its failure to adequately serve its estimated 8,000 homeless residents, CACHE also presented their recommendations regarding the specific issue of tent cities.

In their report, CACHE recommends that tent cities be established on both public and private lands. CACHE sets out specific guidelines for choosing encampment sites, as well as establishing and maintaining the camps themselves. Finally, CACHE advocates tent cities as a short-term solution that in no way excuses King County from taking permanent steps to address the chronic homelessness currently accepted as a way of life in our county.

In response to the CACHE report, the full King County Council passed a unanimous resolution directing King County Executive Ron Sims to implement CACHE's recommendations. According to the resolution, Executive Sims has until October 28, 2004, to create new county policies for siting and establishing new homeless encampments. Sims will also write county-wide recommendations for abolishing homelessness altogether, in accord with the recommendations set forth by the 10 year Plan to End Homelessness (soon to be completed by the Committee to End Homelessness).

Action: Take the time to thank Ron Sims and the King County Council for their leadership in addressing homelessness. At the same time, tell Sims and all the Council members that you support the full implementation of the CACHE report's findings, including siting Tent City on public land.

King County Executive Ron Sims, 206-296-4040
516 Third Avenue, Rm 400, Seattle, WA 98104
email: exec.sims@metrokc.gov

Metropolitan King County Council
516 Third Ave, Room 1200
Seattle, WA 98104

Email/Comment form: http://www.metrokc.gov/comments/council_comment.cfm



Volunteer Chore Services needs volunteers to help with house chores and yard work for low-income disabled adults and seniors. The program allows each volunteer to choose time/location. Please call Heather at 425-284-2240 or 888-649-6850 for more info.

Shoreline YMCA has "tons" of rewarding volunteer opportunities to care for area teens and kids. Make a lasting difference today! For a complete list of "opportunities to serve" log onto our website, call us at (206)364-1700, or email us directly at jmack@sh.seattleyymca.org.

Volunteer at Community Lunch on Capitol Hill! Serve hot, wholesome meals to the homeless and low-income of Seattle. Volunteers needed Tuesdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Contact Brian Johnson at (206)322-7500.

Executive Service Corps www.escwa.org is a nonprofit providing affordable consulting services to schools and nonprofits. ESC includes 90 volunteers of all ages from the professions, business, education, government, and non-profit providers. If you are interested in volunteering (or are part of a nonprofit needing services) contact Nancy E. Long, executive director, (206)682-6704 or execdir@escwa.org.

We want to hear from you!



Bring story ideas, comments, suggestions, and questions to the fourth monthly open meeting of the **Real Change Editorial Committee**. Wednesday Sept. 29, 4:30 p.m., at the *Real Change* office. Everyone welcome. For additional information about the meeting, please call Adam Holdorf, editor, at 206-441-3247, extension 207.

Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project
2129 2nd Ave.
Seattle, WA 98121

Seattle Public Library, Serials Unit
1000 - 4th Ave.
Seattle, WA 98104

