

REAL CHANGE

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FEBRUARY 16-22, 2005

What Drives You

Costly car is still king, but several initiatives can help make automobiles affordable

By **TOM COGBILL**
Contributing Writer

As the price of housing increases in the city, people find themselves commuting from the lower-cost suburbs to the higher-wage urban core — spending time and money on the road. Public transportation can be impractical because of other errands, second jobs, or family activities. But drivers beleaguered by the daunting costs of car ownership can take heart in some recent and developing transportation innovations.

One cost which creeps up every year is car insurance. Pilot programs underway in several states are testing the feasibility of mileage-based, or pay-as-you-drive, car insurance (PAYD). PAYD has an economic and an ecological benefit. By giving drivers a financial incentive to make only the necessary trips, it could both reduce air pollution and shrink one of the fixed costs of car ownership.

Ways of administering the idea are still being sorted out, but under one scenario, drivers would estimate the number of miles they expect to drive and pay the rate in advance. A vehicle's odometer could be logged periodically at official checkpoints. Drivers would pay more if they ended up spending more time behind the wheel, or get a

See PAYD, Page 12



ON THE ROAD AGAIN, WITH A CAR LOAN AND SOME FINANCIAL COUNSELING. PHOTO COURTESY WORKING WHEELS.

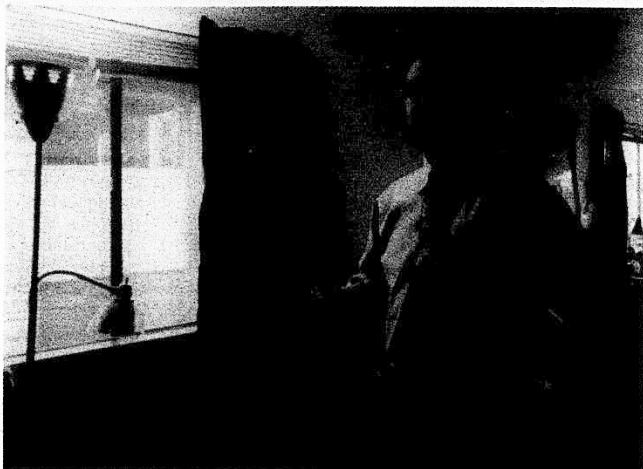


Photo by Linceo Hammond

Keeping Peace

Police chief uses court to restrain local activist

By **ROSETTE ROYALE**
Staff Writer

All Anwar Peace says he wanted was to have an audience with Seattle Police Chief Dan Kerlikowske. On February 24, he may get his wish.

That is when Peace, 30, is scheduled to show up in Seattle Municipal Court for violating an anti-harassment order initiated by Kerlikowske and the Seattle Police Department. Peace says he views the fact that such a hearing even has to take place as both peculiar and pathetic.

"It's funny," begins Peace, who claims Black and Italian heritage. "My pops always said 'One man can change the world.' I've been able to do that with the Seattle city government.

"It's also sad that a government official decided to do this [obtain an anti-harassment order], instead of sitting down and having a meeting. This is all it's been about: sitting down and talking to the chief about

the misconduct in the Seattle Police Department."

A representative for the Seattle City Attorney's office — which is providing legal counsel for Kerlikowske — says that while the case is in litigation, the office is unable to comment.

Peace says his zeal to deal with alleged police misconduct stems from the shooting death of David Walker, a Black man, in April 2000 by a Seattle officer. Walker, who had a history of mental illness, had shoplifted a carton of juice from a Safeway in Lower Queen Anne and fired shots in the direction of store employees. He was skipping down the sidewalk, holding a knife, when police surrounded him. When he made a sudden lunge, an officer shot Walker in the chest, killing him.

"I think it's a shame that David Walker died in this town," proclaims Peace.

An investigation by the FBI determined there was no racial motivation in the shooting. Peace funneled his feelings into addressing police misconduct. While the racial aspect of the Walker case motivates Peace, it's also, he says, a factor in his own case. "Hell yeah, hell yeah, hell yeah," he says, perceptions of him as a Black male have influenced the department's characterization of him as threatening.

"I could see if I was some muscle- See PEACE, Page 12

SMOKE BOMB

Stopping Bush's slash and burn budget.

PAGE 2

TOOTHLESS

State legislators weaken lending protections

PAGE 3

RELEASED TO WHAT?

Housing still the big hole in the net

PAGE 4

NAILED TIGHT

First Place kids bang it out

PAGE 5

INTERVIEW

Journalist Dahr Jamail on Iraq's horror

PAGE 6

THE SEA OUTSIDE

String of homeless suicides rock community

PAGE 8

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Change Agent..... | 3 |
| Just Heard..... | 3 |
| Short Takes..... | 4 |
| Dr. Was..... | 9 |
| StreetWatch..... | 9 |
| Letters..... | 10 |
| Classified..... | 10 |
| Director's Corner..... | 11 |
| Calendar..... | 11 |
| First things First..... | 11 |

Smoke Bomb

Bold moves needed to battle Bush budget

By **SIOBHAN RING**
Guest Writer

The President and his advisors aren't making tough cuts because of hard times. They've made hard times and now they are using them as a justification to advance their political agenda.

The Bush Administration proposed a slash-and-burn budget — chopping up social programs and feeding them to the neo-conservative fire. Here are a few examples of the cuts the President sent to Congress last week. They cut back the Community Development Block Grant program, which provides local funding for shelters, housing construction, and social services, cut funding for housing for people with disabilities in half, and drastically cut funding for fair housing enforcement. They are starving public housing by under-funding operating costs, and axing early learning programs for low-income kids. This is just a sampling of the cuts across education, health care, housing and social support.

Pundits and politicians left and right are quick to note that there's no way all these cuts will be upheld through the budget process. So why does the administration's proposal cut so deep with the budget knife? I think there are several possibilities.

The simplest explanation is Negotiating 101: ask for a lot more than you think you can get, so you've got plenty to bargain with. But this administration undoubtedly also has more calculated reasoning behind its actions.

Another strategic reason for the administration to put so many important social programs at risk is to secure systematic changes to these programs. By challenging the very existence of a government program, the administration positions themselves and their

allies in Congress to negotiate not only the funding but also the *substance* of the program. In fact, many of the proposed budget cuts really mask policy changes.

The president wants to save money on Food Stamps by eliminating a rule that provides automatic eligibility to families receiving other non-cash welfare benefits — setting up a roadblock that will make people go hungry longer.

The funding for Section 8 housing vouchers is no longer measured in terms of the number of vouchers provided, or the number of families helped. Instead, the administration and HUD are using a formula to calculate how much money to give to each housing authority. By squeezing the program, the administration is forcing local housing authorities to either serve fewer families or put in place policy changes that the administration really wants: more stringent eligibility requirements, increasing the share of the rent that tenants pay, or serving higher-income tenants before lower-income tenants.

A third strategic reason for the Administration to propose such drastic action is to distract, divide and conquer the opposition from those of us who think America should be a place where people can have a place to live, medical care, and enough to eat. The myriad of cuts and changes is kind of like a smoke bomb going off in the face of the poor and advocates — where do we run to first?

I've heard the president audaciously try and frame these cuts and

manipulations of social programs as evidence of his support of the poor and needy. He claims his cuts are only to wasteful, ineffective programs, despite the administration's own studies to the contrary. In fact, the President and his advisors are proposing these cuts because they believe housing assistance is destroying both poor people and communities, because they think that helping meet basic needs encourages people to stay in poverty, and because they believe that racism is a legacy of the past. They aren't making tough cuts because of hard times. They've made hard times and now they are using them as a justification to advance their political agenda.

Many voices will rise against this budget proposal. We can build a strong and unified voice by avoiding pitting programs and strategies against one another and speaking out to affirm the interconnectedness of services. It will take bold action to stand up against such unprincipled proposals and selfish values. Strategically, we also have to take a long and broad view and defend the integrity of whole programs, not only one-year funding allocations.

If we stand resolute in defense of the values of equity, compassion, and honesty, and also fight back with letters, lobbying, public awareness, outreach, protests, and direct action, we will defend these programs. Along the way we can use this opportunity to build a stronger and better organized movement for a just society. ■

Siobhan Ring is executive director of the Tenants Union of Washington State, which challenges and changes unjust housing conditions and policies through education, leadership development, and community organizing.



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

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

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Change

Artists have lived illegally in old Pioneer Square buildings for many years. Thanks to Cathryn Vandenberg, 74 artists and their children now have a legal, affordable place to live and work in the Tashiro-Kaplan Artist Lofts.

The five-story, 50-unit building on Prefontaine opened last summer after a \$16.5 million remodel. Units run from \$668 to \$1,098 a month.

A former jewelry maker with no background in construction, Vandenberg got involved in the mid-'90s, when landlords were booting artists for high-paying dot-coms. To save Pioneer Square's artistic character, she and other activists founded a community association and decided to build artist housing. She got ArtSpace, a Minneapolis housing developer, to take on the project. She managed the fundraising, meetings, and construction, always asking questions as she went.

As ArtSpace's regional director, Vandenberg hopes to break ground in mid-2006 on her next project: the Hiawatha, a 60-unit artist building slated for Dearborn and Rainier Avenue South.

"Everyone has challenges every day," Vandenberg says. Success lies in "finding those people who can help you figure it out." ■



ROOT DOWN: Planting affordable artist housing in the Square.
photo by MARK SULLO

Tooth Decay

State bill would weaken local consumer-protection ordinance

By ADAM HYLIA
Real Change Editor

In an intergovernmental squabble, some of Seattle's most liberal state legislators have sponsored a bill that would erase a new city law protecting consumers against deceptive tax-refund lenders.

House Bills 1251 and 1419 and Senate Bills 5266 and 5692 deal with the subject of so-called "refund anticipation loans" offered by income tax preparers like H&R Block. Though sometime billed as advance payments allowing taxpayers to get their refunds immediately, these are loans, complete with fees and interest. If the anticipated refund doesn't come through, the tax preparer starts compounding interest — jeopardizing the financial footing of people living hand-to-mouth.

The four bills contain various stipulations requiring tax preparers to inform borrowers, in writing, that tax refunds are indeed loans, and give them a schedule of interest rates.

Yet the Seattle ordinance is tougher. It requires oral disclosure of all fees and rates, in English or whichever language the borrower understands. It covers not only loans but other refund methods. And it requires a lender to have borrowers sign a form affirming that they

understand the terms of the deal.

None of that is included in the state bill. But what the state bill does is nullify, retroactively, any local laws on the same subject.

Among the bills' sponsors are Seattle Reps. Sharon Tomiko Santos (D-Southeast Seattle and Federal Way), Bob Hasegawa (D-South Seattle and White Center), Jim McIntire (D-Northeast Seattle), and Senator Margarita Prentice (D-South Seattle and White Center).

Santos, who has taken the lead on HB 1251, says that her objective is dual: to protect consumers all across the state from deceptive lending practices, and reserve control over such practices at the state, not the local, level.

She says the Seattle ordinance, with its specifications for 14-point fonts and oral disclosure, is an exercise in micro-management.

The city council "passed a bad law," she says, pointing out that she represents both Seattle citizens and south King County residents. "I don't think it should matter where you live when you're going to get a loan." Under her bill, "You won't have these tax preparers conducting business from outside the city [with Seattle borrowers]. People know how to avoid it; that's why we need comprehensive regulatory framework."

Santos defends her bill's weak spots by saying that it is undergoing a revision — however, she says, she would not mirror the city's requirements on oral disclosure, or extend the legislation beyond the loans themselves. Her

current version has won the support of tax refund companies like HSBC, Jackson Hewitt, and H&R Block, which sent representatives to testify in support of it at a Feb. 1 public hearing.

And the state law will raise money for enforcement by the state Department of Financial Institutions. In Seattle, for instance, enforcement is handled by the city's Office of Executive Administration, which is shoehorning the new ordinance into a schedule of other duties that have nothing to do with lending.

Since local, state, and federal laws co-exist with each other on all types of subjects, why is it necessary to negate the stronger, local law? Santos says the city hasn't been given the authority to make lending laws. While other types of laws do co-exist, "there has been no incidence that I'm aware of that the state has delegated authority over financial transactions to the locality."

On Tuesday, all nine members of the Seattle City Council signed and issued a letter to the bills sponsors, pointing out the law's shortcomings and asking them to prioritize a stronger bill, SB 5796, instead. "If the state chose to regulate these loans, we'd be all for it," says Rasmussen's legislative aide, Michael Fong. "People all across the state are taking out these loans. But pre-empting us the way they have, we feel the type of disclosure [in HB 1251] would not be sufficient."

Seattle's ordinance was passed last year under the leadership of City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen. It went into effect on Jan. 1. ■

Just Heard ...

Offshore this!

State lawmakers got an earful Feb. 9 at a public hearing on two House bills aimed at companies that hire overseas workers for state contracts. Sponsored by Rep. Steve Conway (D-South Tacoma), HB 1724 would force companies to disclose outsourcing on state contracts while HB 1725 would outlaw offshoring on the state's dime. A resolution put forward by Zack Hudgins (D-Tukwila) would also create a task force to study the problem. Business lobbyists warned against the bills, saying the state's poor economy is the reason for so few jobs. If that's the case, says co-sponsor John McCoy (D-Marysville), "this is no time to be sending our tax dollars and jobs to businesses out of state."

Bully beware

A new bill introduced by state Rep. Kelli Linville (D-Bellingham) would recognize and define workplace bullying, along with paying for a study of the problem to help employers prevent it. For those lucky few who've never had a mean boss, the bill (HB 1968) defines bullying as the repeated use of derogatory remarks, continual intimidation or sabotage of an employee's work, or any single, severe act of the same. "This is health-impairing mistreatment, not awkward glances or misunderstood comments," says Gary Namie of Bellingham's Workplace Bullying & Trauma Institute (www.bullyinginstitute.org). HB 1968, he says, "is about stopping abuse."

Gates vs. suits

Microsoft is stumping for tort reform. In a lobbying newsletter e-mailed to supporters Feb. 9, the world's largest software company urged support of the Class Action Reform Act of 2005. Currently in the U.S. Senate, the bill would combine multi-state cases in federal court (read: make it harder to sue) and prevent the suing lawyers from getting unfairly high fees (read: make it harder to cover the cost of suing). "The class-action legal system helps protect consumers," the newsletter notes, "but that protection can be provided more efficiently and in a way that makes sense for all parties" — particularly Microsoft, which must be tired of wasting its billions to fight consumers and their pesky antitrust suits.

Art or trolley?

Before the Seattle Museum breaks ground this summer on its sculpture garden at Myrtle Edwards Park, the trolley maintenance shop at the park's entrance will have to be torn down. If a new shop site isn't found by then, Seattle's waterfront streetscars will have to stop running — perhaps permanently. The King County Department of Transportation has been seeking a new site for months, apparently without much luck. "There is no [site] recommendation at this point," says spokeswoman Rochelle Ogershok, who would not give the number of sites under review, if any. Still, she insists, "I think it's moving along."

—Cydney Gillis

From Sheets to Streets

Bad old days may be over, but patient dumping still challenges safety net

By **ROSETTE ROYALE**
Staff Writer

Western State Hospital (WSH) is being sued by a patient advocate group for discharging people to homeless shelters, indigent hotels or even the streets, bringing to the fore the issues of mental health and homelessness. But this suit is in relation to incidents occurring in Pierce County. What happens when mental illness and homelessness intersect right here in King County?

"We have lots and lots of services for homeless people, but there are many we don't have," claims Amnon Shoenfeld, director of Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services (MCADS) division for the county.

Of the services that are provided, the most visible is the hospital liaison program. Created when the state began managed care in the 1980s, liaisons conduct daily visits to WSH, ensuring no patient in the facility is released until a comprehensive discharge plan is in order. Release is also contingent upon a potential residence. Shoenfeld says until a residence is located, the patient remains at the facility.

If the patient stay extends past the originally scheduled release date, the county begins to accrue extra costs — referred to as liquidated damages. "And the more we have to pay for the liquidated damages, the less we can pay for services here in King County," says Shoenfeld.

Bill Hobson, executive director of the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC), agrees that services for the mentally ill have grown, while discharges from places such as WSH to King County have shrunk. Hobson says a number of what he deemed to be "notorious discharges" from WSH were made to King County in the '80s. He estimates the county saw five to 10 such discharges a month during that time. Hobson places the current figure between five and 10 a year.

"It's not to say that it doesn't happen, but compared to the bad old days, not nearly as much," Hobson declares.

Hobson says the sudden discharges that currently affect King County can occur because of standard miscommunication between people, the last minute refusal of the soon-to-be-released patient to accept his/her release plan, or unexpected changes in the status of a housing opportunity.

It is the last issue — housing — which is key, whether the release is timely or sudden. "I want to emphasize that we don't have nearly enough housing," Hobson states.

Shoenfeld concurs with the assessment of dearth of housing, particularly housing deemed affordable. He notes that a patient who's released may receive Medicaid, but that program doles out less than \$600 monthly.

"Where are you going to live on \$580 a month?" Shoenfeld asks.

The county, he says, puts up a fair amount of money, more than \$1.2 million, to deal with the issue of homelessness for those with mental health concerns, by way of outreach management and the PATH program. Above this, says Shoenfeld, the county allocates funds to DESC, Community Psychiatric Clinic, Seattle Mental Health, and residential dollars for apartment living at places such as the El Rey.

He says the county is hopeful that its upcoming Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness will assist in creating more affordable housing for everyone, including those in the mental health system. "We're very serious about implementing this plan," says Shoenfeld. ■

The lack of affordable housing in King County is the key reason mentally ill patients still wind up on the streets.

Short Takes

By bringing the film into people's living rooms, Himes hopes to stimulate conversation that will educate and help those who have PTSD and those who know little about it.

In the aftermath

Andrew Himes, Seattle resident and producer of the short documentary *Beyond Wartime*, is spreading knowledge of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) into homes across the nation. In Seattle alone he hopes to have a few hundred house parties in the upcoming months.

On Sunday, Feb. 20, the first house party will show a 12-minute trailer for Himes' upcoming movie, *Voices in Wartime*, as well as a 20-minute documentary *Beyond Wartime* that layers images of war with commentary from people who live and deal with PTSD.

In the short film, a father talks about his son calling him from the Pakistan border to tell him he will need serious counseling when he comes home. A mother explains feeling like a shell of her old self. The movie shows how nobody escapes war unchanged.

By bringing the film into people's living rooms, Himes hopes to stimulate conversation that will educate and help those who have PTSD and those who know little about it.

"I want to start this grassroots movement," says Himes. "This is the only way a film like this can make people understand how war is such a horrific and affecting experience."

While the Feb. 20 showing is full, people can visit www.voicesinwartime.org to sign up to either host parties or receive information about upcoming events. Himes' feature-length film *Beyond Wartime* will be in selected theaters in mid-April.

—Erin Whitcomb

Cap Hill: to the dogs

An off-leash area for dogs is planned for a Capitol Hill park that, neighborhood activists and Parks Department personnel say, had been a hangout for street folk

The reshaping of the narrow boulevard space cutting from Pike to Pine Street, and interrupted by Boren Avenue, began last spring when Parks personnel removed the park benches — benches frequented by people whose disruptive behavior was the subject of numerous complaints from neighbors nearby.

The bench removal, plus the cutting of several stately trees adjacent to the park's signature feature, the Four Columns, was the beginning of a plan to regrade the land and build a broad plaza for public events. When bids for the project came in over budget, neighborhood activists raised the idea of a dog park — much like the off-leash area that was built in Regrade Park in 2003 — and the Parks Department assented.

Money for the off-leash area comes from the 2000 Pro Parks property tax levy, which contributes \$825,000, and from mitigation funds from the Convention Center. All told, the Parks Department has more than \$1 million to spend on the renovation, which should be finished by fall.

—Adam Hyla

Losing it

Union janitors lost their paid family health insurance in the course of negotiations with Bon-Macy's in early January.

The janitors, who clean stores at Northgate and Southcenter Mall and in downtown Seattle (Bon-Macy's Dirty Work, Dec. 23), gained a wage increase and some time off, but lost their bid to keep paid health care plans issued by their workplace representative, the Service Employees International Union. The new labor contract puts the janitors in the same boat as retail employees organized under the banner of the United Food

and Commercial Workers, who also pay monthly premiums for their optional health plans. UFCW's retail workers will renegotiate their contract with the Bon next spring.

—Adam Hyla

Hardball at the Market

Changes continue at the historic Pike Place Market, where Ramazan Senturk, owner of No Boundaries Café, lost his court case to save his restaurant. Senturk ("Rising up down on Pike Place," Feb. 9) closed his café doors and is slowly leaving. A second eviction notice was served to another market merchant on Feb. 14 — Valentine's Day.

Trepidation has mounted among merchants and community members, as everyone waits to see what happens next. Many merchants feel that the No Boundaries situation sets a precedent; they are nervous about how this will affect the character of the Market. Approximately 60 Market merchants are operating with month-to-month leases.

—Megan Lee

Remembering Henry

Some people knew Henry Denrow as the Associate Director of the Capitol Hill Community Resource Center at All Pilgrims Church on Broadway. Others might remember him as the lanky Real Change vendor located across from All Pilgrims outside the QFC in 2001-2002.

However people knew Henry, they were shocked at the news that the 39-year-old recently passed away in California. Despite often being homeless himself, Henry would often work 60-plus hours at the center providing food and clothing to the needy. A frequent Bible reader, Henry also wrote poetry for Real Change.

—R.V. Murphy

Nailed Down Tight

First Place schoolkids hammer 'em home

by WENDY E. SMITH
Contributing Writer

"When you run out of choices, you've failed. So, I try to find ways of doing things that will work for any kid in any situation. Then you've got some sort of universal truth."

— John Vik, volunteer carpentry teacher

At First Place School, it's time for after-school activities. In minutes, the small play therapy room is transformed into a carpentry studio. Sturdy planks of wood are placed on the floor with thick nailing blocks on top of them. Kids dash in, laughing and breathless. Hammers and nails of all sorts, as well as a staggering variety of tools for removing nails, are arrayed within convenient reach. Goggles are lowered. And "nailing practice" begins. The sound is deafening.

"I've had a lot of assistants over the years," John Vik, the volunteer carpentry club coach, yells in my direction, "but usually the noise drives them away." Vik, who is now in his seventh year of volunteering at the K-5 school for kids who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, smiles serenely. He looks as if nothing is likely to drive him away.

Joyce Scoggins, the volunteer coordinator at the school, explains that the afterschool activities are organized in six-week cycles. This is the third week of the current cycle. In carpentry club, the students are about to begin constructing the little wooden boxes that will be the product of their efforts.

The four students in the club this time round are Sami (age 9), and Christian, Daniel and Esther (all 10).

Esther literally sings out her thoughts as she hammers nails into her practice block: "This is a good way to take my anger out from this afternoon." Bang!

Christian hammers two-fisted.

"I saw a spark," Sami announces.

Daniel is quieter, at least where talking is concerned, concentrating intently on driving his nails.

Vik spends some time reminding the students about the basics of nailing:

"If you're looking at me or your neighbor, you're probably going to get your thumb," he warns.

"Make sure the nail's right where you want it, and THEN drive it home."

"Practice makes perfect," Esther interjects happily, "or a little bit better!"

Sami cries out that she has indeed struck her thumb.

"Let me see," says Vik. "Is there blood? Nah, that's not so bad." Sami seems satisfied and returns to her work.

After nailing practice and a brief "nailing contest" that follows it, Vik dumps a pile of pre-cut cedar pieces in front of each child. These are the components of their boxes-to-be.

"Last week," he explains for my benefit, "we did a dry run on the boxes so we know how all the pieces fit together. This week we're going to start building them." Then, with an impish smile, he indicates how the name of each student is written in pencil on the base of his or her box.

"Do you know why I do that? In case I forget your name, I can just look on your box." The kids groan in response.

As he prepares to demonstrate how to drive the nails into the box components, Vik tells the students that they will have some extra time to work today because he doesn't have to go over to the university.

"He's a crazy professor!" Daniel exclaims affectionately.

In fact, Vik, who worked as a carpenter for 19 years, is now a full-time "building envelope technologist" during the day and an architecture

Volunteer John Vik makes a point while First Place students (clockwise from top) Christian, Daniel, and Esther learn how to hit nails at the homeless kids' school's Carpentry Club.

— Photo by Mark Sullo.



See CARPENTRY, Page 9



Democracy Now!

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Postcards from the Edge

A high-grade guerilla war is going on in Iraq, says unembedded journalist Dahr Jamail, and we don't know the half of it

By **CYDNEY GILLIS**
Staff Writer

If Dahr Jamail survives his own reporting, it will be a miracle.

At 36, the Texas native has already had two careers — one monitoring the burning of U.S. chemical weapons and another as a mountain guide in Alaska.

For eight of the past 14 months, he has been a reporter in Iraq. But, unlike paid network and staff reporters who are embedded with U.S. forces, Jamail is an independent. He doesn't go where the military tells journalists to, he writes the news he sees, and scrapes by on meager freelance fees and the help of friends.

Except for the radio show Democracy Now! and *The Nation* magazine — which plans an upcoming article by Jamail on the power struggle between Iraq's Sunni and Shiite Arabs — Jamail's work appears mostly in the foreign press. Mainstream American media won't touch his work.

Jamail, who is Lebanese on his father's side, says that's ironic: He raised the money to go to Iraq in November 2003 so he could give Americans the truth.

The truth — which the unassuming Jamail will share in two talks he's giving this weekend in Kirkland and Seattle — is very painful. It includes the facts the U.S. military uses depleted-uranium weapons that sicken everyone in sight, stage media events like the "cleanup" of Fallujah seen on CNN, and slaughtered at least 3,000 innocents in the sieges on Fallujah, leaving wounded men, women and children to die in the street and be eaten by dogs.

Jamail is currently in Rome at the World Tribunal on Iraq, one in a series of nongovernmental forums that is recording the tragedies in Iraq for

posterity. On occasion, Jamail says, that has included staging mock trials in which President Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld have been tried for war crimes — something he says most Iraqis would like to see in real life.

Jamail spoke with Real Change by phone from Amman, Jordan, shortly after leaving Baghdad, where he plans to return after a two-month tour giving lectures to raise money for his expenses.

RC: What is the situation? Have you traveled all over Iraq? Were you last in Baghdad?

Dahr Jamail: The last couple of trips I've only stayed in Baghdad because it's been too dangerous to go outside. In my previous trips there, I had been in Kurdistan and all around central Iraq — Fallujah, Ramadhi, Baquba, and then I've been in the south as well, to Najaf, Hilla and Diwanyia. But it's gotten so dangerous now that I've basically stayed in Baghdad and worked around the capital city.

RC: How are people surviving?

Jamail: That is the question of the day, the main factor being security. More and more people are just staying in their houses, only going out to get food, living on their food rations. There is 70 percent unemployment and God forbid if someone has to go to a hospital because the hospitals are in worse shape than during the sanctions as far as lack of supplies and medicines and the doctors — all the specialists are leaving because of kidnappings. They are prime targets, because gangs figure they can get a good ransom from their families.

Before this gas crisis got really bad, people were driving their cars as taxis. Now they can't make money doing that. It's horrendous. With electricity

in Baghdad, there's around six hours of electricity per day. You get outside of Baghdad and most of the rest of the country has three hours, or less, per day — excluding Kurdistan, of course. People aren't making it, and that's a huge story that's not being told.

RC: Where is the oil? Why the gasoline shortage?

Jamail: What oil is being refined or extracted is being trucked or piped out of the country by Halliburton, and sold abroad. So Halliburton's getting paid to do that and then they're getting paid to ship oil back into Iraq.

RC: How do you live? How do you work?

Jamail: I stay in one of the less expensive [hotels] in one of the two guarded compounds of hotels. I grow a beard, I cut my hair really short as Iraqis do, I dress as best I can to fit in and I just go around with my interpreter. We leave the hotel at different times every day, and we always vary the route that we take and then we drive around for a few blocks to make sure we're not being followed and go do the interviews.

RC: How frequent is the fighting? From American media, it seems somewhat limited.

Jamail: [There's] a pretty high-grade guerilla war going on. Most of the U.S. bases get mortared every day or every other night. In one part of Baghdad, it seems life goes on relatively normally, aside from no electricity and a gas crisis and no jobs. And then you go to a different district and it will be completely sealed off because there's heavy fighting. That's the picture.

RC: Speaking of pictures, we saw Iraqis who were happy and proud to vote. Is that what the elections were like?

Jamail: Not to discount this historic event, because millions of Iraqis voted and they were very happy for the opportunity, but what was not reported by the mainstream media is that the media in Baghdad were only allowed to go to four polling stations that were designated as media polling stations. They were all in predominantly Shiite districts of Baghdad, and there was extra security there for the media to be there. These polling stations had some of the highest turnouts in the capital city.

But, really, the most important facet of the election that wasn't reported is why Iraqis were voting: They felt it was going to bring an end to the occupation. When people see these happy Iraqis dancing in the street with inked-up fingers from that lens, it paints a whole different picture.

[Event]

Dahr Jamail, a freelance American reporter blacklisted by the U.S. military in Iraq, will contrast the past year of his reporting with that of mainstream American media in two slide lectures he will give this weekend in Kirkland and Seattle. Jamail speaks Sat., Feb. 19, 7 p.m. (\$5) at the Kirkland Congregational Church, 106 5th Ave., Kirkland (www.epjc.net) and again Sun., Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. (free), at the University of Washington's Kane Hall (www.scn.org/ccpil). To read Jamail's reports, go to www.dahrja-mailiraq.com.

We have this atrocity-generating system, so we are seeing Vietnam-like reactions where some people have literally just lost it and they're turning into killers. Then others are dissenting and being conscientious objectors, even in Iraq. But there really isn't belief in any mission.



RC: Does Fallujah even exist today or is it completely bombed out?

Jamall: It's essentially a concentration camp. I have a colleague who was there for a week and found that just to get into the city, residents have to register and get an ID card. Before they get that, they have to get retina scans and fingerprints. They go through a very long checkpoint, razor wire on both sides, soldiers aiming guns at them, bomb dogs everywhere.

There's no running water, no electricity, no jobs. It's complete desolation. My two friends who were just there said that, when they went in, the army was giving pamphlets that said don't eat any of the food that you left in there and don't drink any of the water. [My friends] have been sick since they got out.

RC: What do they surmise caused it?

Jamall: All the different weapons that were used in there. There have been many reports of chemical weapon use. There's depleted uranium, of course, cluster bombs and phosphorous weapons like napalm. But [depleted uranium] is being used daily in Iraq any way. It's basically a low-grade nuclear weapon [that] burns extremely hot, so it will penetrate anything it hits. When it hits, the depleted uranium vaporizes into sort of a gaseous form, then goes into the ground. It basically irradiates anything it hits. And that's why in Iraq after the '91 Gulf War — I believe from '91 to '98 — there was a 400 percent increase in cancer in children.

RC: Is this what made the U.S. troops sick?

Jamall: Exactly. This is Gulf War Syndrome. This is why there are 125,000 Gulf War vets on permanent disability. And that's a conservative figure. It might be twice that. If people think Gulf War Syndrome was bad from '91, that's nothing compared to what it's going to be.

RC: What about reconstruction? Where are Bechtel and other contractors?

Jamall: Most of the work [Bechtel has] done — projects they have actually

completed — are in the far south. As far as central Iraq, they have done next to nothing. I've been to schools and hospitals that were in their contract to rebuild and, at best, they've put new paint on them. That's really symbolic of the so-called reconstruction.

I did an in-depth report for Public Citizen on Bechtel focusing on the work they were supposed to do on the water infrastructure [including] the water treatments plants in Hilla, Najaf and Diwaniya, just south of Baghdad. I went to all three of them. In the best-case scenario, the head engineer at one plant told me, yes, some of the Bechtel engineers came by and they replaced our sand filters, but that didn't even increase the potable water output. At the other two places, they basically said, 'Bechtel who?'

RC: Are Iraqis angry at us? What is the sentiment?

Jamall: It's really mixed depending on who you talk to. Essentially to date the only positive thing that people agree on is the removal of Saddam. But everyone

also agrees that it's worse now: we don't have a dictator, but we have no security, we have no jobs, we have no electricity.

RC: The insurgents are characterized as outsiders. Is that true?

Jamall: It's primarily indigenous. As more and more people have been killed or humiliated by the occupation forces, they have joined for revenge. And then, of course, we have the economic situation. People get paid to be in the resistance and carry out attacks.

RC: They get paid?

Jamall: Oh, yeah. The resistance has no problem with money and weapons.

RC: Where's the money coming from?

Jamall: Everywhere. The U.S. likes to blame Iran and Syria for sending in arms and weapons, but the great irony is that most of them are coming through our friends Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan.

RC: What are U.S. soldiers saying? You've written that some have gotten to the point of enjoying killing Iraqis.

Jamall: We have this atrocity-generating system, so we are seeing Vietnam-like reactions where some people have literally just lost it and they're turning into killers. Then others are dissenting and being conscientious objectors, even in Iraq. But there really isn't belief in any mission. People get over there and see real quick that Iraqis don't want them there, that it's a horrible situation and that they've been misled. ■

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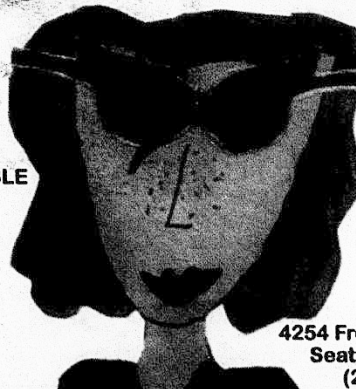
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The Sea Outside

Woman's suicide brings out community's pain

by MICHELE MARCHAND
Real Change Editorial Committee

Dinah Lane's was the fourth in a series of six suicides among homeless people in King County in the past two months.

On the streets, where last names are seldom important or even known, Dinah Lane was often called Dinah Shore. Although both these Dinahs had strawberry blond hair and amazing smiles, you couldn't imagine someone less like the sunny 1950s television hostess and singer than Dinah Lane. She was a homeless activist, a striver for justice, and was always reading thick tomes from the Public Library. She engaged for hours in intense, thoughtful conversation about government, systems, and conspiracies.

Last year, around the holidays, she fell silent. Suddenly she was never without Catholic prayer cards or her Bible. At women's day centers and her nighttime shelter, she would meditate for many hours, holding her cards between prayerful hands. She sat at the lunch table silently, also, and would always pack up and take away enough food for two people.

In the midafternoon of Tuesday, Jan. 3, Dinah Lane jumped to her death from the 18th floor of the Warwick Hotel in downtown Seattle. Her death, and that she chose to kill herself, shocked those who knew her, although everyone had seen her change. Hers was the fourth in a series of six suicides among homeless people in King County in the past two months.

According to statistics kept by the Medical Examiners Office and Women in Black, these six suicides comprise 30 percent of the deaths among homeless people in the past two months.

The first of these recent suicides in the homeless community was 35-year-old Frank Zanella, who hanged himself in the Greenlake neighborhood on Nov. 4. The next day, 38-year-old Victor Mitchell jumped to his death from the Aurora Bridge. On Nov. 15, Jayme Engleson threw herself in front of a moving train in Auburn. She was just 21 years old.

On Jan. 2, Jose de Jesus Gomez-Mora hanged himself in Kent. And on

Jan. 10, John Mark Perdue hanged himself, apparently at Harborview.

Experts say suicide is chosen by simple formula: the pain a person is experiencing outweighs the resources available for them to withstand the pain. Sometimes there is also magical thinking: for those who leap to their deaths, sometimes it's because they believe they can fly, or that they'll join the angels. A woman who saw Dinah Lane shortly before she jumped reports that Dinah said she was "on her way to join Peter." "You mean Saint Peter?" I asked, and Dinah's friend said she thought so.

Another of Dinah's friends reacted to her death in a way that surprised me, a way that has since been echoed by many homeless people I've talked to: "Geez, that's not how I would do it." "Is it something you think about?" I asked. "All the time," she replied.

At the first public meeting for the suburban Tent City 4, a man unknown to Tent City organizers stood and attempted to calm his neighbors, who were screaming themselves red-faced with fear and rage. He said, "I don't think any of you has gone through what I've gone through. My wife and I came home one day to find our son had hanged himself in the garage. He needed help; the kind of help these people" —sweeping his arms towards the homeless people of Tent City — "are trying to provide."

At this point, his rage-filled neighbors started screaming again: "That's your problem! That's your fault! He was your son; you should've been the one helping him!"

Even the television reporters, behind a phalanx of cameras, seemed slack-jawed with awe at this turn of events. It's this kind of rage and shaming, and also the perspective that any individual or family alone can save someone, that the poor man who lost his son to suicide was talking about. Families can never take care of their own completely; community support also is needed. And further: Estrangement from family, from friends, and from community is often one of the

precursors to suicide.

Dinah Lane had two children she had not seen for 18 years. Her son is on active duty in Iraq; her daughter is in college in the Midwest. When a friend of Dinah's learned this, she said, "I don't know how anyone could hold that in her heart and not talk about it."

A recent Canadian study of homeless suicides observes what shouldn't surprise us: being homeless is an increased risk factor for suicide, and the risk increases with the amount of time a person spends on the streets.

Here, this has been a particularly hard year for the homeless community. Pitched divisions between poor people and people of means have been laid bare. In the past several months, for instance, opponents of Tent Cities have publicly likened Tent Cities to "kennels," to a "gulag," even to Auschwitz.

The holiday season was particularly hard. This Christmas, for the first time in

See DINAH, Page 9

[Resource]
If you need help, call the Crisis Clinic at 206.461.3222, or toll free at 866-4CRISIS.

Dinah Lane, who jumped to her death Jan. 3. Dinah's is one of six suicides that comprise 30 percent of the deaths among homeless people in the past two months.

— Photo courtesy
Michele Marchand.



Michele Marchand works with SHARE/WHEEL, organizers of Tent City, and with Women in Black.

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Adventures
in Irony

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This column should get me to the Seventh Circle of Hell, for violence to God, art, and nature. Two more Circles to go, and I'll make a bull's-eye ...

some people who claim to love me say I incarnate it: Evil.

One reason I don't know anything about Evil is that it doesn't exist. There, I said it. I'll say it plainer: evil (small e) exists, in the sense that there are things in the world that I must, by my nature, oppose. But no objective Evil exists.

Here is where I insert the "prattling on" part. Going back to six weeks ago, I then said some words to the effect that righteous outrage is a moral neutral like a 5 on the gray-scale, whereas all the different kinds of justice in the world put together would be a moral rainbow, or maybe a Jackson Pollock.

To at least one reader on our very own "editorial" committee, that discussion was reminiscent of the late Susan Sontag's comments on the 9-11 attackers. Sontag was not talking about righteous outrage; she spoke of the moral neutrality of courage. She said the attackers didn't lack courage and couldn't be called cowards. Our reader, let's call her L with one big L, thought that I might have even cribbed from Susan, but actually I cribbed from some old friends of mine who hadn't heard of her.

But I'm interrupting my own prattle. The point is that moral neutralities are a lot more common than most folks in these parts give them credit for. That's because most folks in these parts are dualists. They believe there's Good and there's Evil and everything lies on one side or t'other, as my mother would've put it.

So let's say we contemplate a thing, like a bag of rice. A bag of rice has got to be Good, or a bag

Dr. Wes Goes Straight to Hell

Six weeks ago, annoyed by some injustice or other, I was moved to prattle on and on about the idea of justice and what I didn't know about it. Now let's talk about another subject that I know nothing about, even though

of rice has got to be Evil. Or take a box of ribbed grape-flavored condoms. It's got to be Good or Evil. Or take Susan Sontag, before she died. Susan Sontag has got to be Good or Evil. Well, which is she? Ed Koch, the former mayor of New York, decided a while ago that Susan Sontag was Evil, based on other unspecified but presumably similar statements she'd made concerning Israel. In fact he said that upon her death she would occupy the Ninth Circle of Hell for all eternity. That would be the innermost Dantean Circle of Hell reserved for traitors to family, country, guests, lords and benefactors, which is also the Circle occupied by Satan himself. I'm sure that Mr. Koch didn't change his mind when Sontag made her remarks about the 9-11 attackers.

What others identify as treason in Sontag's remarks was actually reason and the honesty to speak it. Courage IS morally neutral. A charging bull elephant doesn't earn a special place in heaven for disregarding the elephant gun. The 9-11 attackers were on a suicide mission. To deny the courage that their mission required is to forever deny a key ingredient in understanding them and understanding what happened.

Here are some prattling questions to round out the discussion. Would you think I was Evil if I said that peanuts kill people? How about if you were the head of Planters? What if I were an employee of Planters?

To be a traitor you first have to be a loyal servant. But what if you serve an Evil master? What if you serve Satan? Does disloyalty to Satan get you into the Ninth Circle?

[No, I am not suggesting that Planters is Evil. There IS no Evil!]

Incidentally, this column should get me to the Seventh Circle of Hell, for violence to God, art, and nature. Two more Circles to go, and I'll make a bull's-eye - maybe next week. ■



Thursday, January 27, 10:26 a.m. Lenora St. - alley to the north. Several units responded to a 911 call from a payphone from a man reporting he had been stabbed. Upon arrival officers observed a man, later identified as the complainant, walking away from the pay phone. He was uncooperative at first, but displayed cuts and lacerations to his face and mouth, and damaged eyeglasses. The complainant smelled of alcohol, and stated he had not been stabbed, but had been assaulted by a Black female in an alley on Lenora. Officers checked the alley and located the suspect - a transient white female aged 41. Victim, a transient white male aged 46, identified her as the suspect. He stated he confronted the woman after she tried to take items from his shopping cart in the alley. He stated she beat him up, but kept changing his story. When questioned, the suspect, who stated she knew the victim from the streets, said he accused her of stealing his stuff. He then attacked her, and she defended herself. She displayed no injuries, but smelled strongly of alcohol and feces. Several witnesses at a nearby construction site stated the incident appeared mutual. Both parties were provided with case numbers. Victim was treated and released at the scene.

Friday, Jan. 28, 5:50 p.m., S. Jackson St. Victim, a transient white male aged 55, was near the bus stop on the south side of S. Jackson selling *Real Change* newspapers. The suspect, a Black male in his 30s, approached and grabbed the papers, taking them away from the victim. Victim grabbed them back, and the suspect became upset and punched the victim once, near the left eye. He then left northbound on Fourth Ave. Victim could not give a detailed description of his attacker, but stated he had an African accent. A half-inch laceration near his left eyebrow was treated at the scene by Seattle Fire - he declined to go to hospital for further medical attention. The suspect could not be located.

Saturday, Jan. 29, 3:00 a.m., Courthouse Park, Third Ave. Officer observed suspect, a transient Hispanic male aged 41, in Courthouse Park after the park had closed. After running his name via the police computer it was found he had been issued a Parks Exclusion notice on January 4 from Courthouse Park. He was taken into custody and booked into King County Jail for criminal trespass.

Saturday, Jan. 29, 3:41 p.m., Pike Place Market. Officers responded to Pike Place Market to investigate a trespass - the suspect was in custody of the Market security guard. Upon arrival the witness/security guard was contacted and stated that he observed the suspect, a transient white male aged 47, walking through the market. The guard stated that he had firsthand knowledge that the suspect is currently trespassed from Pike Place Market. He then contacted the suspect regarding the violation, and took him into security custody. Officers performed a routine name check, which confirmed that the suspect had been trespassed from the market on two previous occasions. He was transported to the precinct for further investigation, and was identified and later released.

Compiled from incident reports of the Seattle Police Department by Emma Quinn. Got your own experience to relate? Call us at (206)441-3247 ext. 207 and we'll get the scoop.

DINAH, Cont. from prev. page

the nearly 20 years I've worked among homeless communities, homeless people spoke openly of the hard holidays. This year, Christmas was something to be withstood, if you could, not enjoyed.

Recently, two homeless women, struggling to write a press release for a Women in Black vigil for four new deaths (including two suicides), ended up writing: "We're considered a throw-away group. Sometimes we throw ourselves away."

Here, I fear, is the effect: I bumped into an overly polite, very courtly, Spanish-speaking homeless woman I've known for some years on the streets the other day. "Miss Michele," she said to me, "I had the most horrible dream last night. In my dream, I had gotten a new job, a cleaning job. They took me to the place I was supposed to clean, and it was where they - how do you say it - they make people into toast. You know, with the ovens..."

"You mean you were supposed to clean the concentration camps?" I asked.

Her eyes got very wide, and she said, "Oh yes! But they did not want me to clean the ovens, they were going to push me in and I ran away, very fast." ■

CARPENTRY, Continued from Page 5

student in the evenings. Once a week he leaves work early, races over to First Place, coaches the carpentry club, and then races to the UW, sliding into his seat at the very last second.

"The instructor usually gives me a look," he shrugs, "but it works out."

The students begin to work on their boxes and Vik circulates, checking on each one's progress. Sometimes he simply suggests a possible way of solving a problem and moves on to the next child. Sometimes, he fixes the problem himself and tells the student to proceed afresh.

Vik later explains his teaching philosophy. He tells me he's trying to provide kids with a lot of different problem-solving options (which is evidenced by the array of tools spread across the floor).

"I let them make mistakes, and I let them fix their mistakes. But when you run out of choices, you've failed. So, I try to find ways of doing things that will work for any kid in any situation. Then you've got some sort of universal truth."

During the class, I watch Sami, the youngest student, get frustrated with her work repeatedly. Vik is watching her too.

"Every class I learn more," he tells me, as he straightens out one of her nails. "You have to step in at the right moment, the moment between challenge and too much frustration."

I ask the children what they are going to do with their boxes when they're finished. Christian volunteers that he is going to give his to his Mom.

Scoggins tells me how proud the students always are when they can present their boxes to a parent or a sibling. Once, when one of Vik's students finished his box early, Vik started him on a more advanced project.

"In the end, he made a birdhouse and we hung it outside the school. Everyone was so excited," Scoggins remembers.

Alternating with carpentry club, Vik offers a "polyhedron club" in which students construct elaborate geometric structures that can serve as mobile sculptures.

"That's a quieter class," Vik laughs. Today at First Place, it's time to clean up. Sami, who has been frustrated and malingering for a good part of the session, calls out that she just wants to drive in three more nails.

She does. And they are perfect. ■

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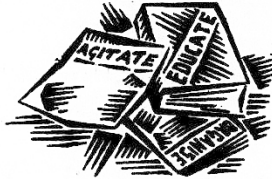
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Letters

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Real Change: The Usual Socialist Stuff

Dear *Real Change*,

I don't know if Real Change takes letters to the editor? I just finished reading Real Change for the first time and I can say that I'm pretty put off. All the usual Socialist stuff: free health care, free housing, what to do about global warming (It's actually caused by the sun.) I would like to have more compassion, but I've had way too many bad experiences with homeless people. More handouts will just bring more homeless to Seattle (on Greyhound.) Sorry to sound so negative.

Clint Gawthrop

Real Change: Losing Our Soul

Dear *Real Change*,

First of all, congratulations on moving to weekly publication. I know it must have taken a lot of effort and fundraising.

I am, however, disturbed by the change in focus of the February 2-8 issue. My favorite Real Change vendor always points out stories he'd like me to read, but this time he didn't. When I read it, I wondered if it was because he didn't see anything to which he related. How can you let the PI and the Times do a better job than you covering the homeless and street issues like Tent City? What about the changes in social services funding proposed by the City? I know you cover more than homeless issues, but I don't see the point of a cover story about the Sonics arena upgrade within the context of the mission I expect from you.

Your reader survey strongly supported keeping the focus you have had. Sure, experiment with different layout, story length and paid writers, but please don't abandon the issues we count on you to cover. I can't see that it makes good business sense to become another struggling *Stranger* or *Weekly*.

Allice Quaintance

[The Director replies] Thanks for sharing your concerns. As you can imagine, we didn't take moving to weekly publication lightly. We surveyed 1,038 readers, did one-on-one interviews with about 50 of our closest allies, and held two focus groups of non-readers,

Here's what we heard. Seattle needs an activist progressive news alternative, and it needs to be weekly. Seattle doesn't need another source for restaurant, music, and movie reviews. People want to know more about what's happening in their community and how they can be part of the solution.

We also heard that Rwe are widely seen as the charity newspaper that you buy as a good deed but don't really read. Loyal readers know that *Real Change* has always had quality writing and reporting. Most people, however, think a "homeless newspaper" is by definition a depressing and poorly edited rag.

We want people to value *Real Change* as the community paper that covers the issues they care about. This means countering perceptions, and putting articles on the cover that people don't think are "our" issues. If it's about social justice, it's our issue.

Recently, we redefined our editorial policy. I'd like to share that:

Real Change is a trustworthy source of in-depth news, crucial facts, and opinion of consequence for readers in the Seattle area. We exist to inform our readers, create opportunity for our vendors, and promote activism on the issues that matter.

Our focus is advocacy-based journalism rooted in class issues — specifically the problems of poverty and homelessness. The balance of our work is on issues important to Seattle's progressive community: those who support efforts to see justice done and democracy's promise fulfilled.

At *Real Change*, advocacy journalism is fair journalism. We will act with the same integrity we expect of the people and institutions we cover.

These are critical times. Greed has congealed into a political agenda and is on the ascendance, often eclipsing those who stand for fairness, solidarity, and stewardship. There is a great need for reliable, visible, credible alternative media in this city. Our goal is to be the newspaper of the progressive community — bringing to light people, institutions, and issues insufficiently covered in other media.

Thanks again for writing, and I hope you continue to support *Real Change*.

Real Change welcomes letters to the editor of up to 250 words in length. Please include name, address, phone number, and email for author verification. Letters should be addressed to Editor at Real Change, 2129 2nd Ave., Seattle, WA, 98121, or emailed to editor@realchangenews.org

CLASSIFIED

Help Wanted

Western States Center seeks an Individual Donor Developer to work with the Executive Director to develop and implement strategies for individual giving, including work with small, large and major donors, as well as on special fundraising and communications/publications projects. Our mission is to build a progressive movement for social, economic, racial, gender and environmental justice in the eight Western states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada and Alaska. Our vision is of a just and equitable society governed by a strong, grassroots

democracy. Annual salary of \$35,000-\$40,000, depending on experience. Excellent benefits. EEO employer. Applications from people of color and women encouraged. Send cover letter, resume, writing sample and 3 references by February 15th to selenam@wscpdx.org.

Volunteer

A SISTERHOOD OF WOMEN FACING HIV TOGETHER. Women with HIV need you! The Babes Network is an agency of, by, and for woman living with HIV/AIDS. To volunteer, contact Mindy Gresham at 206-720-5566 Ext. 13

Real Change classified's are an inexpensive way to reach 40,000 loyal readers. Call 441-3247 today, or email classified@realchangenews.org

Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Thursday 2/17

Muslim Students Association sponsors a presentation by Ali-Salaam, who is traveling the nation to bring about a **true understanding of Islam's position on terrorism**. Free and open to the public. Noon to 1:30 p.m., at Highline Community College, 2400 S. 240th St., Bldg. 7, Des Moines. Info: 206-227-2312.

Writer and photographer Rev. Paul Jeffrey speaks on his work in areas hit by the **tsunami** as a member of Action by Churches Together (ACT). He will speak about the political and economic issues that will make recovery difficult. Noon to 2 p.m. at Grace Methodist Church, 722 30th Ave. S. Info: 206-525-1213.

The Conciliation Project presents **Uncle Tom Deconstructed**, an original poetic drama that examines and demonstrates how the racial stereotype of "Uncle Tom" is still with us today. 12:30-1:30 p.m. at Edmonds Community College. Info: 206-312-2815.

Friday 2/18

Wallingford Neighbors for Peace and Justice present the film **Bush's Brain**, which follows the career of Karl Rove, the man designing the president's win-at-all-costs strategies. Free, donations appreciated. 7 p.m., at Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. N. Info: wufp@bridgings.org.

Saturday 2/19

Any legislation concerning **Social Security** will be assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee, where Rep. Jim McDermott is a senior member. He wants to hear his constituents' ideas and concerns. 10-11:30 a.m., at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Bloedel Hall, 1245 10th Ave. E. Info: 206-553-7170.

"From Basra to Seattle: Bringing Home the **Iraq War and Occupation**," an evening with pediatrician Janan Hassan, who will talk about the conditions in her country today and, more specifically, about the health effects of depleted uranium on Iraqi children. 7 p.m., University of Washington Health Sciences Hogness Auditorium. Dr. Hassan will also speak on Wednesday, Feb. 23, 7 p.m., at Seattle University, Wycoff Auditorium, 900 Broadway.

Sponsored by Capitol Hill Neighbors for Peace and Justice and the Coalition for Global Concern. Info 206-322-8846 or info@snowcoalition.org. Both events are free.

Sunday 2/20

Fellowship of Reconciliation presents a program with Marilyn Watkins, Policy Director at the Economic Opportunity Institute, a Seattle-based nonprofit, speaking on "**Straight Facts on Social Security**." Potluck at 5 p.m., program at 6:30 p.m., at Woodland Park Presbyterian Church, 225 N. 70th. Info: 206-789-5565.

Monday 2/21

John Judge, co-founder of 9/11 Citizens Watch, will speak on **The 9/11 Omission Report**: What the Commission Didn't Answer. The 9/11 Citizen's Watch supports a thorough investigation into the events and causes of 9/11. \$10 at the door. 7 p.m., at Trinity United Methodist Church, NW 65th and 23rd NW, Ballard, Seattle. Info: talkingstick@yahoo.com.

Tuesday, 2/22

Join Bill Fletcher, Jr., former AFL-CIO Education Director, for a discussion on "**Is There a Future for the U.S. Trade Union Movement?**" 4-6 p.m. at the Labor Temple, 2800 1st Ave. Info: 206-441-7102. Fletcher also speaks on

Empire Building vs. Democracy in his current role as president of Trans-Africa Forum and co-founder of United for Peace and Justice. Immaculate Church Social Hall, 810 18th Ave., Seattle. Info: 206-782-2565.

Ongoing

The Freedom Socialist Party sponsors a study group on the book **The Politics of Anti-Semitism**, edited by Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair. Participants will gain an understanding of the nature of Jewish oppression and learn to differentiate valid criticisms of Israel from dangerous ethnic stereotypes. Free. 7-8:30 p.m. every Monday, at Seattle Central Community College, 1701 Broadway, Room 3201. Call Adrienne at 206-328-2509 or adrienne.w@earthlink.net.

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

Director's Corner

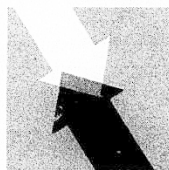


Moral values. We all have them now. Exit polls credit Bush's slim victory to his "values-based" agenda, and now everyone to the left of Congressman Joe Lieberman is redefining social justice in theological terms. Well, fine. But let's not forget the other part of the equation. It's not just about Jesus; it's about building for power. And it's about making people do what they'd rather not. The folks who won in 2004 didn't need to figure this out. They knew.

The leaders of the civil rights movement understood this too. MLK's theology was informed by the likes of Gandhi and Reinhold Niebuhr: clear-eyed political and moral thinkers who understood that idealism and a quarter will get you a cup of coffee and not much else. Moral suasion on its own, Niebuhr argued, can never compete with self-interest. While there were those within the civil rights and Black power movements who felt that King didn't go far enough, everyone agreed that the language of morality disengaged from the tactics of power is a dead letter.

"The selfishness of human communities," wrote Niebuhr, "must be regarded as an inevitability. Where it is inordinate it can be checked only by competing assertions of interest; and these can be effective only if coercive methods are added to moral and rational persuasion."

Coercion. It might look like a picket line, or a boycott, or the simple threat of public embarrassment, but it means growing a spine and creating meaningful consequences for those who refuse to do the right thing. War and poverty are moral travesties. So what? What are you going to do about it? ■



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Send This Budget Back

Issue: Last week the President released his 2006 budget. The \$2.57 billion dollar plan calls for extending tax breaks while reducing domestic spending — reductions that reach 16 percent or \$65 billion a year by 2010. *Defense spending is increased, even beyond the cost of the wars in which we're already involved.* The budget breaks promises, contradicts Bush's own "priorities," and sells out middle- and low-income citizens, in order to benefit the wealthiest.

Background: The budget eliminates opportunity by cutting student loans and vocational training. It reduces health care for veterans, even as current wars are creating a wave that will increase their need for many years to come. It makes taxes less fair by permanently exempting the wealthiest. It hurts communities by gutting housing, Medicaid, and other needed social programs.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the budget cuts the Department of Housing and Urban Development by 11.5 percent. It cuts \$118 million from housing for people with disabilities. It eliminates the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), a \$4.1 billion dollar program last year, which funds affordable housing, day care centers, shelters, senior centers, and more. 60 percent of that funding is shifted to the Department of Commerce for undefined economic-development activities. Funds are increased to provide permanent housing and services to people considered "chronically homeless," but this is more than offset by the cuts in related programs.

An analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities shows the budget will eliminate food stamps for 200,000 to 300,000 people. It puts a time limit on childcare funding, which will cut the number of children receiving care by 300,000 in 2009. It reduces Medicaid funding by \$45 billion dollars, which will almost certainly increase the ranks of the uninsured.

The budget cuts numerous programs that serve middle- and low-income people, even though those cuts have almost no impact on the growing deficit. According to OMB Watch, by 2010, the deficit will reach \$6.2 trillion, more than doubling since Bush took office. The reason? First-term tax cuts, cuts benefiting the wealthiest Americans, that he now wants to make permanent. Individual income taxes are the lowest they've been since 1951, and federal revenue as a percent of GDP is at its lowest point since 1959. The deficit is growing because of tax cuts, not out-of-control spending on domestic programs.

The way the President describes his priorities shows that he knows the same thing we do: most people in this country share important values like fairness, opportunity, and community. The budget he's proposed doesn't reflect those values and Congress should reject it in favor of one that does.

Action: Your congressional representative and senators need to hear from you. It strengthens their position, not to mention their resolve, when they hear from constituents. Contact them and urge them to reject the President's unfair and irresponsible budget. Encourage people you know to do that same.

Online: www.murray.senate.gov/email
maria_cantwell@cantwell.senate.gov
Find and contact your representative at www.house.gov/writerep/.

KEY ARENA, Continued from Page 1

credit if they drove less. Studies suggest PAYD could reduce unnecessary driving by up to 10 percent, with a corresponding savings to the consumer of up to 25 percent.

As yet there has been no consensus on adopting PAYD industry-wide, since it drives up the expense and risk for individual companies. Still, the idea continues being pursued on a national level, with, among others, the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Organization for Women promoting it (women pay disproportionately more for insurance).

Metro has looked into working with an insurance company to offer PAYD to bus riders, but so far, no one has been championing at the bit to do so. Says Metro's Bill Roach, "the insurance industry is notably conservative," meaning, they want to make sure profits are not reduced at the same time as premiums. Hence, the PAYD option is still only a future bet. Washington state lawmakers are looking south to Oregon to see how legislation passed there in 2003 pans out. That state is offering insurers tax incentives for introducing the PAYD option.

Insurance aside, there are other people for whom a reliable set of wheels make the difference between getting to work and getting fired. Public transportation to and from either doesn't exist, takes too long, or they need a car to go somewhere after work (like a second job).

These are the kind of scenarios a program known as Working Wheels is meant to address. Applicants who meet the program's criteria become eligible to purchase a reliable, inexpensive automobile. The program also accepts private donations. All cars are certified by a mechanic and guaranteed for 30 days.

Prices range from \$800-\$2,400, with vehicles often being worth more. Payments are made in low monthly installments over a three-year period at a fixed 7 percent interest rate. But "Working Wheels does more than sell used cars. We also offer other

PEACE, Continued from Page 1

bound, going-to-the-gym-everyday brother," says Peace, "but I'm some skinny, nerdy-looking dude. And they're afraid of me?"

Kerlikowske's anti-harassment order is part of a saga that began back in the summer of 2003, when Peace attended the Torchlight Parade wearing a sign painted like a target bearing the words, "This is how the Seattle police look at crowds."

Peace is alleged to have approached the chief and was arrested. Days later, he encountered Kerlikowske outside of police headquarters, allegedly yelling at him and waving a sign. He is also alleged to have left messages on a public voicemail account at police headquarters — messages that he says did not contain "true threats."

These events provided the impetus for Kerlikowske to obtain an anti-

services," says program manager Fritz Cutchlow. "We take [our clients] and shake them up," with the goal of showing them how to handle money responsibly.

Clients must meet with a financial counselor, who shows them how to calculate a budget, take care of the car, find the most economical insurance, resurrect a battered credit history, and take advantage of other banking services — since now they have become loan-holders.

Working Wheels has sold 114 cars since its inception in 2002. At present, there is about a two-month wait period before successful applicants are offered a car.

If you need a car only on an occasional basis, there's a creative alternative to traditional car rental called Flexcar. By paying a \$35 annual membership, you get access to a fleet of 130 vehicles — pickup trucks, vans, conventional and hybrid automobiles — parked at various locations in and

harassment order in late August. The order made it illegal for Peace to be within 1,000 feet of the chief. The next month, the 1,000-foot distance was sliced in half, to 500 feet, to ensure Peace and the chief could both be in City Hall.

"I could see if I was some muscle-bound, going-to-the-gym-everyday brother, but I'm some skinny, nerdy-looking dude. And they're afraid of me?"

anti-harassment order — a conviction that he believes happened not because of his actions.

"It's because me and the chief don't

around Seattle. They can be reserved via phone or the web. You gain entry to the vehicle by a special card (the key is in it already), drive it for as long and far as needed, and return it to the same spot. One plan costs \$9 an hour, with an additional 35 cents a mile for trips over 30 miles per rental hour.

Flexcar was imported to Seattle from Switzerland by Metro, which was looking for new ways to increase ridership while making a dent in traffic. The idea seemed to suit the needs of urban-core dwellers who could get around without any car at all most of the time, but still wanted one for that trip to the suburbs or mountains, or for commuters who spurned public transit because they were loathe to be without a car for errands. Metro ponied up some seed money and floated a grant proposal for a trial venture. Flexcar the private company got off the ground in 2000 and now boasts 28 employees in five cities and 25,000 members.

Public transit agencies and the

get along," claims Peace.

This current misdemeanor trial will provide the opportunity for Peace and his pro-bono legal team to plead their case that the conviction was unjust. And waiting in the wings is a federal case, initiated by Peace, which claims his constitutional rights were violated by an ex parte hearing that extended the duration of the anti-harassment order past its original expiration date of September 26, 2004. (An ex parte hearing is one in which only one party — in this case, the chief's legal team — is present.)

Peace says that he is willing to face the consequences of the trial. But no matter the outcome, he claims he still wants to see his goal of speaking to the chief come to fruition.

"It's time in this city to have an open communication about our city government and how we feel about our officials," he says. "Voting is one thing, but we need to get involved with the actual policies." ■

private car company have a symbiotic relationship, promoting one another and helping reduce sprawl. Since many people use one Flexcar, it can decrease the footprint needed for parking facilities. For this reason, too, the company seeks out urban developers. Offering Flexcar service right in a new condo increases value to potential residents, while maximizing the utility of the parking garage's finite supply of spaces. ■

More on pay-as-you-drive car insurance: www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm79.htm or actionnetwork.org/campaign/payd. To find out more about Working Wheels, call 206-860-8000 or go to www.working-wheels.org.

The vendor you hold you this paper works. So does Real Change.

Real Change is an action news outlet making a difference here and now. Every month, more than 250,000 people are better housed because of the money they need while they help build a better city. People aren't homeless anymore.

Our weekly urban news outlet gives you the voices you don't hear elsewhere and quality reporting on the issues that matter. We offer the information you need to take action and make a difference.

Real Change is reader supported. Last year, more than 800 people helped make Real Change a better paper by supporting the work they believe in.

Won't you help?

I Support Real Change. Here's what I can do.

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