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FEB. 23-MAR. 1, 2005



BILL GATES SR. TESTIFIES BEFORE THE HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE.
PHOTO BY TOM COGBILL

[Resources]

For more information about the Tax Fairness Coalition and links to other tax reform sites, go to www.watextfairness.org.

A free training seminar is offered periodically to those interested in educating community groups about why the tax system needs reform and what steps can be taken. You can ask about this by phone at (206) 204-0404.

<http://www.leg.wa.gov> is the state's legislative website. You can learn more there about tax accountability bills pending (1069, 1094, 1096).

For innovative, alternative means of raising revenue, consult <http://www.northwest-watch.org/reforms/taxes.asp> and www.foe.org/res/pubs/pdf/foetax.pdf.

Broke & Busted Washington State's tax fairness organizes for reform

By TOM COGBILL
Contributing Writer

Is Washington state's tax system broken? With the state facing a projected \$2.2 billion deficit and citizens' reluctance to cut back state services, there is mounting sentiment that how the state generates revenues needs to be fundamentally overhauled.

"Our current system is unconscionable. I don't see how anybody can defend it. It is ultimate nonsense that poor people have to pay a higher percentage of their income [in taxes] than the rich." This is the conclusion of Bill Gates, Sr., testifying before the House Finance Committee last month. Gates was appointed to head a special commission to investigate the state's tax policies. The commission's findings were in line with what numerous economists and tax specialists have maintained for years: diversifying revenue sources helps stabilize the system and make future income more predictable. The current budget crisis, with attention drawn to either slashing programs or raising taxes, might have been forestalled with a more balanced system.

"[It is] the result of an inadequate tax system coupled with huge tax loopholes," says Curt Firestone. Firestone is a former tax accountant who

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No Respect

CASA Latina gets cold shoulder in Rainier Valley

By CYDNEY GILLIS
Staff Writer

Alex Garcia. Jose Torres. Chepe Orozco. The three men and two dozen more stand each morning raising a head or hand as cars pass them at Bell Street and Western Avenue. If they catch a driver's eye, they might get picked up for a day of moving furniture, roofing a house, perhaps even a few weeks of working a construction job.

Each supports a wife and children in Mexico, saving up each year to go home for a visit. To hear some Seattle residents talk about them, however, you'd think the three were drunks, pedophiles or "garbage."

That's exactly what some Rainier Valley residents — mostly white — had to say last week at a tense public meeting about what will happen to their neighborhood if Casa Latina, a Seattle nonprofit agency, moves its day labor center from Western to the former Chubby & Tubby garden store it wants to buy on Rainier Avenue South.

Casa Latina opened its day-labor program in 1999 specifically to dispatch workers off the street — a service that Garcia, 28, says he doesn't need or use. Like generations of men before him, he was getting work on Western, where the Millionair Club started a day labor center in the 1940s, long before Casa Latina opened its dispatch trailer at Battery Street.

Garcia, Torres and Orozco say bus service makes it hard to get to Casa Latina by 6 a.m., when the agency starts passing out its "raffle" tickets for the day. Fifteen to 20 ticket numbers are then called at random. After those men go out on jobs, another group is called.

Garcia doesn't use the raffle because, after 10 years, employers know him. If Casa Latina moves its dispatch center to Rainier Valley, he says with a laugh, he and other longtime freelancers will still look for work on Western.

"We came here first," Garcia says. "All these guys — we've got years here."

Last Tuesday at a Mount Baker hall packed with 340 people, Casa Latina Executive Director Hilary Stern tried to explain that freelancers like Garcia will stay in Belltown. So will the few chronic drinkers who urinate or cause other problems near the site. They won't move, Belltown developer Peter Erickson told the crowd, because they rely on downtown social services to survive.

Stern also said workers will be kept inside the new build-



CASA LATINA DISPATCHER DANIEL ANGUIANO SENDS AGUSTIN GRANADOS AND JOSE LUIS VILLA OFF TO WORK. PHOTO BY KEN DEAN.

SISTER SISTER

Women of Color celebrate themselves

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Courageous Sisters Unite

Women of color can see themselves in International Woman's Day

By K.L. SHANNON and TINA MAESTES

Community Contributors

A conference specifically for women of color was something I'd been thinking about for a long time. Mainstream conferences on International Women's Day don't attract many of them — which, I felt, had a lot to do with how the conferences are structured. They're usually geared for white activists with workshops where the presenter does all the talking and the audience is passive.

The more I started talking to other women of color, I realized they felt the same. There's a lack of awareness among them about the history of International Woman's Day, which is sad because it's celebrated all over the Third World in a big way. Our goal was to bring that awareness into our communities. We wanted to create a space for ordinary women of color from diverse backgrounds who are living our daily lives and who would like to connect, celebrate, build unity with each other, and get rejuvenated to continue our work in the community.

One of the founders of Courageous Sisters Unite, Connie Kim, suggested we hold a talking circle at last year's conference. It was a big hit. Women really opened up, shared themselves, and bonded by talking to one another about their lives and struggles. Comments were made that participants felt inspired by being able to share their stories and listen to other women. There was great bonding between younger and older women and across cultures.

Instead of an award to honor an individual, we create a unique

acknowledgement within our own cultural context and honor as many women of color as possible on a "Wall of Fabulous." Women are nominated by anyone in the community and then showcased with a picture and their biography on the "Wall." It was a way to acknowledge that the strength of our communities comes from all our daily efforts. You don't have to be "the one" to be a hero. In fact, it's our combined unsung efforts that always matter most. This year we've gone one step further and we'll have blank plaques that women can write the name of someone special they want to honor and place on the "Wall", alongside the pictured biographies.

This year, we need to show that the connection between local struggles and women's struggles around the world. Here at home, the policies of police brutality and the turning

back the clock on women's rights are connected by the same policies that cause war and devastation around the world. We need to understand that all our fights are interconnected, and get away from the concept that our struggles are different. Workshops will discuss the topics of HIV, Women and the War, Media Literacy, Women and Prison and Defining Family for Ourselves in Communities of Color/LGBT. Our cultural presentations will include an African American Youth Drum Group, a Peruvian storyteller, A Korean dance troupe, and an African American singer.

We're hoping to build on last year's strengths and inspire women to take action and become involved in their community beyond International Women's Day and of course in the process, celebrate our sisters' efforts and in so doing, celebrate ourselves.

[EVENT]

The Second Annual Courageous Sisters Unite Conference, a conference dedicated to celebrating the contributions of women of color, takes place March 5 at the Rainier Cultural Center from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Childcare provided. For more information contact Connie Kim (206) 320-1236 or Yolanda Sinde at (206) 720-0285.

Come celebrate International Women's Day
and honor the struggle for equality, justice, and
peace for yourself and women worldwide.

from the women who brought you
A Room Full of Sisters ...

Courageous Sisters Unite
A JOYFUL GATHERING

A celebration for women of color

Choosing peace for ourselves

Building community without borders

Join us for talking circles, multicultural performances, workshops, food (bring your favorite dish to share), and more!

Saturday, March 5th, 2005
11am-5pm
Rainier Valley Cultural Center
3375 South Alaska
has routes 7 and 42
(free childcare available)

For more information, contact Connie Kim at (206) 320-1236
or Yolanda Sinde at (206) 720-0285

Special thanks to: ... (text too small to read)



Real Change is published weekly and is sold by the poor and homeless of Seattle. Annual subscriptions are available for \$35.

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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.

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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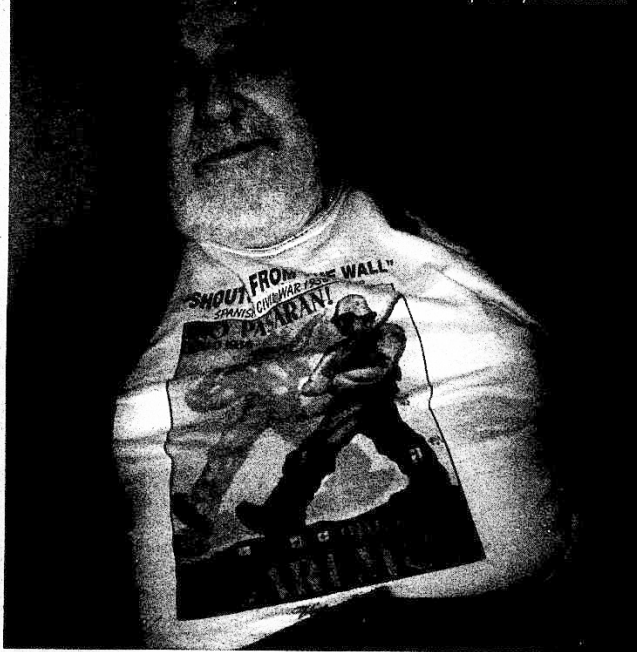
A few weeks ago, Abe Osheroff says he became aware of a national movement to fight military recruitment in schools. Since that time, Osheroff, 90, has started a small committee to lend the movement a local face. The as-yet-unnamed committee plans to meet with the PTA of Ingram High School this week, as a preamble to setting up anti-recruitment tables on campus. "I hope to make it part of a citywide movement against recruitment," says Osheroff.

That means that while Ingram may be the first school on the list, it won't be the last. Osheroff envisions tabling schools as diverse as Rainier and Mercer Island, to bridge the racial, cultural and economic divides that can keep students from realizing that what affects one affects them all.

A Spanish Civil War veteran and an activist himself since the age of 16, Osheroff says he will speak to young people using a method that has proven effective for nearly a century. "I start with the assumption that if you want to move people, you have to speak to the best part of them," he states. "And the best part of people is not in their brain. It's in their capacity to feel for other human beings." ■

ABE ASHEROFF: Speaking heart to heart.

photo by JUSTIN MILLS



'Free trade' a free for all?

Congress to tackle CAFTA

By CYDNEY GILLIS
Staff Writer

Welcome to the "fast track": By the time you hear that Congress has taken up the Central American Free Trade Agreement, the vote could already be over.

That's because Congress will debate and vote on CAFTA, a Central American extension of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement, in 20 short hours without the right to make any changes, thanks to the special "fast track" powers that Congress gave President Bush.

The U.S. signed the treaty last May, but Bush has yet to present it for a vote — in part, opponents say, because organized labor has been running an effective campaign against CAFTA, which would lift tariffs on U.S. exports to Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic.

No one from Washington state's Congressional delegation has taken a stand on the treaty. Rep. Jim McDermott, for one, says he's waiting to hear the Bush Administration's arguments for what, if anything, the U.S. will get out of CAFTA.

Jeremy Simer, director of Seattle's Community Alliance for Global Justice, says the treaty could spell disaster for Central American farmers and small businesses, who would find it hard to compete with commodities and consumer goods made by giant U.S. corporations.

In Mexico, for instance, Simer says NAFTA allowed the import of super-cheap corn subsidized by U.S. tax dollars.

"What some people call free trade is a free-for-all where the biggest companies can squash the smaller producers," Simer says. "That's why 1.5 million farmers in Mexico lost their jobs."

In the U.S., according to the Washington, D.C.-based Economic Policy Institute, NAFTA has caused a net loss of nearly 880,000 jobs, most in manufacturing, 13,645 of them in Washington state. Though NAFTA supporters promised the treaty would create new jobs by boosting Mexico's middle-class and its ability to buy U.S. consumer goods, the institute says that hasn't happened.

What Mexico buys from the U.S., the EPI reports, are largely parts that it uses to finish and ship manufactured goods back to us, contributing to the U.S. trade deficit with Mexico.

Bill Center, president of Seattle's Washington Council on International Trade — which is hosting six ambassadors from the CAFTA states at a luncheon this Thursday at the University of Washington — says it doesn't make sense to judge the treaties on trade deficits or lost jobs, however.

"1999 was the best year [the U.S.] had and our balance of trade was negative," Center says. "If someone wants to argue CAFTA on the balance of trade, there's no rational argument."

Farmers in Central America could be impacted, he says. But, unlike NAFTA, the new treaty addresses labor, social and environmental concerns. Stopping CAFTA, Center says, wouldn't save any U.S. jobs, which have been going overseas for 20 years. What it would do, he says, is stop a company such as Nike from opening up a plant and hiring a poor Central American.

"It's ironic that labor expresses concern for the poor people in these countries at the same time they worry they're going to get jobs," Center says.

"If you were living in a poor country, you would not only want Nike to come and exploit you," Center says, "you'd want them to come and exploit you right now." ■

"If you were living in a poor country, you would not only want Nike to come and exploit you, you'd want them to come and exploit you right now."

[Action]

To find out more about the Central American Free Trade Agreement-Dominican Republic (CAFTA-DR) and anti-CAFTA efforts during this week's Congressional recess, go to www.stopcafta.org.

Just Heard ...

Pioneering Hatred

You never know where you'll encounter an image of historic Pioneer Square. Take for example, the website of The National Alliance, a white supremacist group.

Simply log on to www.natvian.com scroll down to the middle of the home page, then click on to the documentary, "America is a Changing Country." No more than three minutes into the 52-minute video, you'll see grainy footage of an infamous occurrence: television news coverage of the mayhem of Mardi Gras 2001, complete with King-5 insignia. Accompanying this unidentified footage, a narrator intones that today's young people are very concerned about how their children and grandchildren will fare by 2050, when non-whites are expected to constitute a majority of voters in America.

Hopefully, long before then, young people will be more concerned with stamping out racial hatred.

Bedtime for Gonzo

The state of independent journalism lost an innovator last week, with the death of Hunter S. Thompson. His obscenity-laden and, at times, illegal zeal to find not only "the story," but the story within the story and the story that wasn't part of the story, but become, simply because he chose to write about it, the story as well, had never been done before. Hell, it's probably not going to be done again, at least not on that level. Sure, by the time he committed suicide on February 20th — alone, save for a gun, at his home in Woody Creek, CO — people had long since written him off. But how can you write off a man who's been represented by a Jackson Pollock-inspired paintdrizzle adorned with a gaping hole for mouth? You can't. Which is why wehere at Real Change just wanna say:

Sleep well, bittersweet prince.

Save the 'Occidental 20'

Besides taking out its benches and pergola, the latest plan for upgrading Pioneer Square's Occidental Park calls for cutting down 20 of the park's 60 trees. Parks department staff say the move will let in more light, make the park more inviting, and cut down on nefarious activity.

City Councilmember Peter Steinbreuck says he's already fought this battle once — in the early 1990s. "They had planned to take out the pergola, the benches and the trees then," Steinbreuck says. "I organized an effort to stop that and we did."

Given that the council still holds the pursestrings on the project, Steinbreuck is asking anyone who cares to show up and speak March 2, 2 p.m., at the next meeting of the council's parks committee. Testimony will be taken at the start of the meeting in the council's chambers at city hall. Don't be late — the shade you save could be your own.

Glass Case

Cop harassment brings false charges, says South King County man

By JENNIFER GORE
Contributing Writer

"Cops are very sensitive about their authority, and come down on people who challenge them. Andrew is some one who says 'This isn't right,' and he winds up bearing the brunt of contempt."

—Paul Richmond, defense lawyer

Driving is not a safe activity for African-American Seattle resident Andrew Felix.

At least not in South King County, where he has been stopped over 80 times by the King County Sheriff's Department in the past four years.

On May 19, 2003, Felix says the harassment culminated when Officers Larry Gross and Daniel Shaw confronted Felix outside Skyway Auto Parts in south Seattle. According to his court testimony, Felix found Gross waiting for him when he left the store. He questioned Gross' concern with him, which the officer ignored, mocking Felix about whether or not he had a license.

The situation escalated when Shaw arrived, marched up to Felix and, without warning, pepper-sprayed him. Both officers proceeded to slam Felix to the ground, and then hurled him through the storefront window.

Felix's lawyers Paul Richmond and Lawrence Hildes believe harassment like this happens all too often.

"He started telling the officer he doesn't have a right to stop him for no reason, and then ended up getting arrested on trumped-up charges," says Richmond.

Hildes agrees that both of the officers' actions are highly questionable. "They actually tried to charge him with

malicious mischief for breaking the window," he says.

Felix spent most of that night in jail on the charge of resisting arrest and failure to show I.D. His trial is slated to begin March 1 in Burien Municipal Court.

The prosecution is on its fourth attorney, who has yet to be assigned, and the King County Sheriff's Department has not yet released a statement. Calls to the Sheriff's Department for comment were not returned.

For the defense, it is a clear case of racial profiling and intimidation. They've moved for dismissal on several accounts of witness tampering and intimidation.

During a probable-cause hearing seven months after the incident, Hildes and an assistant caught officers Gross and Shaw comparing their testimony in the courtroom.

Not surprising, considering the two officers' police reports contradict at least a dozen times.

"We know that cops do this stuff all the time and totally illegally, but I've never seen them actually sit in the courtroom and do it," says Hildes.

Felix's family verifies the police intimidation.

Testimony given by Felix's cousin Donald Alves says, "The person at Skyway Auto Parts stated that the police had come to him four times since the incident, wanting him to sign a state-

ment. Each time they brought him a statement, it was changed."

Richmond has had trouble getting eyewitnesses who live in the area to testify. "The witnesses are nervous about coming forward, since they have to live in the area with the cops," he says.

Despite their best attempts, Judge D. Mark Eide rejected both motions to dismiss based on lack of sufficient evidence.

Both lawyers hope to prove to the court that Felix has been a victim of harassment by Gross and Shaw.

"Cops are very sensitive about their authority, and come down on people who challenge them. Andrew is someone who says 'This isn't right,' and he winds up bearing the brunt of contempt," says Richmond. ■

Broken glass outside the auto store where defendant Andrew Felix's was confronted by sheriff's officers.

—Photo courtesy Paul Richmond.



Short Takes

Slumlords Beware

The State House Housing Committee passed a bill last week that would make relocation assistance payments available to tenants.

The Slumlord Accountability Act, House Bill 1583 and Senate Bill 5577, targets landlords who fail to comply with notices to fix health and safety code violations.

Landlords would be required to pay tenants three times the monthly rent, or \$2,000 per unit vacated, whichever is greater.

Under current law, taxpayers pay half the assistance payments. If passed, landlords will be required to pay 100 percent of the costs.

The bill is sponsored by Sen. Darlene Farley and Rep. Sam Hunt, and is co-sponsored by the Tenants Union of Washington.

"This legislation will prevent homelessness and keep housing from getting shut down because landlords will have an incentive to maintain their properties," said Michele Thomas, Tenants Union organizer.

Evicted tenants from Burien's Juanita Apartments and Lakewood's Garden Park Apartments testified about the need for this bill. They were vacated after landlords ignored demands to restore health and safety codes.

"I want this law passed so that there are consequences for their lack of concern of the conditions these people are forced to live in," said Laurie Strong, who was evicted from the Juanita Apartments with her family last year.

Both the Senate and the House have heard the bill, but only the House has voted on it. The Senate Committee must vote on the bill next, though it is unclear how soon that will happen.

All five Democrats voted in favor of the bill, while all four Republicans voted against it. With a great reception from Democrats, as well as limited Republican support, Thomas is optimistic about the passage of this bill.

"Anyone who votes against this is basically voting in favor of slumlords," she said.

—Jordanah Manjaze

Assault on Section 8

The Bush administration's proposed budget would substantially cut funding for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program and turn it into a block grant.

The voucher program is the nation's largest housing assistance program, serving about 2 million households that include senior citizens, people with disabilities and working families.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) released data last Friday about the impact of these cuts on local communities nationwide. In 2005 alone, Washington State would experience a shortfall of \$12 million, which means about 1,800 families would experience cuts according to the data. A slight increase in funding next year would restore half of these lost benefits, said Barbara Sard, director of Housing Policy at CBPP, in a

conference call Friday.

But "the 2006 budget has a possibility of fooling a lot of people," said Sard, because it will be followed by severe cuts. By 2010, the Washington program will lose about \$75 million, according to the data released.

And the shift to a block grant would result in set subsidy levels for each year, without taking into account the number of families that need assistance and the increase in rental costs.

The cuts are part of Bush's plan to decrease the country's deficit.

In the same conference call, Robert Greenstein, executive director of CBPP, said, "If you look at the president's budget as a whole, you'll find that over the next five years, the budget actually, slightly, increases the deficit beyond what it would be otherwise, because homeland security and defense spending increase cost more than all domestic program cuts save."

—Satinder Kaur

Social Security Insecurity

Rep. Jim McDermott spoke about Social Security reform to citizens of all ages Saturday, Feb. 10, asking his constituency to spread his message that the Bush administration's proposition for reform will only damage people's security.

The meeting, held at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral on Capitol Hill, addressed the "insecurity" of making major changes to or eliminating Social Security.

Currently, no plan for Social Security reform has been drafted, but President Bush, in his State of the Union address, said he favors allowing employees to invest a percentage of what they are giving to Social Security into "bonds and stock funds," which President Bush said were secure.

"Putting your Social Security in the stock market is like going to a gambling casino. There is no guarantee you'll come out a winner," meeting attendee Don DeLaney said.

In the current Social Security system, both the employee and the employer contribute half of the total 12.4 percent tax to a trust fund, which then goes to pay for current retirees, survivors of deceased heads of households, and disabled persons.

McDermott's forum drew in approximately 300 to 400 people, he estimated, most of whom voiced opposition to Bush's proposal. He acknowledged the potential bankruptcy of Social Security by 2042, as Bush has announced, but McDermott said there are other ways to solve this potential crisis.

"There's no hurry. Let's take our time making the correct decision," he said. One suggestion he mentioned was to raise the cap on payroll taxes from \$90,000 to \$140,000. In the past, amendments have been added to the Social Security Act of 1935 to accommodate for changing times and the needs of citizens.

McDermott said that he would bring these suggestions back to Congress.

—Emily Rose Johns

Baby Blue

Safe Harbors information system born
By ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Writer

"It's a hard thing.
It's chipping away
at the core belief
of maintaining
confidentiality at
all costs."

— Colleen
Neubert, Broad-
view Emergency
Shelter

There's a new baby in town for those providing services to the homeless, and its name is Safe Harbors.

A web-based application that seeks to collect basic demographic information on the homeless, Safe Harbors is a joint initiative of the City of Seattle, King County and United Way of King County. While Safe Harbors was conceived in 1999 by the Seattle City Council, the hands-on use of the system, according to Safe Harbors program manager, Darby Langdon, is still in its infancy. "We're just beginning to implement the system now," Langdon says.

Implementation rests upon the participation of agency and service providers in a two-month training program. Included in the training is a thorough assessment of agency and program services, along with their outcomes. While the program was in development, community focus groups helped determine the data that was necessary to collect to describe client demographics.

Information such as age, race, gender, income and employment history will be collected from clients, but social security numbers will not. Langdon says the ultimate goal of the program, which is the local arm of the national Homeless Management Information System, is to document how services impact the lives of the homeless, along with helping them move into transitional or permanent housing.

But for most local facilities, such as the Broadview Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing program, Safe Harbors has yet to be implemented.

Colleen Neubert, director of Broadview, says that will change, sooner than the facility expected. "It was a surprise to use that we had to participate to get local funds," says Neubert. Implementation for Broadview was planned for 2006, but had to be moved up a year in order to ensure the facility received financial assistance.

The surprise stems from the function of Broadview itself. Neubert says that since Broadview is a semi-confidential provider of services for those confronting domestic violence, the facility believed it was exempt from implementing Safe Harbors until 2006. (A semi-confidential provider allows certain providers, such as child protection services, to come on-site to provide services.) Instead, Broadview's status causes it to fall under Housing and Urban Development guidelines requiring participation in Safe Harbors in order to receive local dollars.

"It's a hard thing," Neubert says of the imminent implementation. "It's chipping away at the core belief of maintaining confidentiality at all costs." Neubert adds that she is planning to speak with Safe Harbor representatives next month.

Aware of providers' broader concerns, Langdon says that

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THE YWCA PLANS TO IMPLEMENT SAFE HARBORS THIS SPRING. PHOTO BY ROSETTE ROYALE.



Democracy Now!

Airing twice a day at 6:00 a.m and 5:00 p.m.

Hosted by the dynamic Amy Goodman, this award-winning national news program is committed to bringing the voices of the marginalized to the airwaves on issues ranging from the global to the local.

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High Roller, Do Gooder

Philanthropist and politico Ken Alhadeff glimpsed life in the gutter, and he hasn't forgotten it

Interview by R.V. MURPHY
Contributing Writer

Ken Alhadeff, a life-long Seattle resident, has carved a career as a philanthropist, businessman, political activist and social mover. His family's background in real estate, owning the Longacres Race Track and starting the Majestic Bay Theatres, today worth \$1.6 million. Despite coming from what many would call a privileged background, Alhadeff has taken an interest in the issue of homelessness. In 1998, he stepped forward to provide land for temporary shelter to the homeless shelter provider SHARE/WHEEL. He's also been a contributor to Operation Nightwatch by developing the concept of Hero Of

The Homeless — an annual award bestowed on a local helper by the shelter referral agency.

"Ken's a hero in his own right," says Operation Nightwatch Director Rev. Rick Reynolds. "He uses his wealth to help everyone."

Alhadeff and his wife run the Kenneth and Marleen Alhadeff foundation, established in 1997. Since its inception, the foundation has donated to hundreds of nonprofit organizations. Alhadeff currently serves as president, chairman, board member or trustee for almost 70 different civic, social, or political activities.

Alhadeff says his social consciousness came from his family but admits that his personal battles with drugs and alcohol has made him a more

spiritual person, teaching him to "follow his heart." According to an article in *Washington State Magazine*, the WSU magazine, medication for Alhadeff's migraines led to problems with prescription drugs and alcohol. Alhadeff says he's a 20-year recovering drug addict and alcoholic.

In the most recent election, Alhadeff supported Deborah Senn for Attorney General, King County executive Ron Sims for Governor, and the monorail recall campaign. In 2002, he was part of Mayor Greg Nickels' transition team after Nickels' election.

Real Change: You've often been labeled as a philanthropist. How and why does someone become a philanthropist?

Alhadeff: I think that a philanthropist is any man or woman who contributes to their community and gives to others. I think that sometimes we stereotype philanthropists as someone who gives a lot of money. I have tried to dedicate most of my adult life to helping people and being involved in nonprofit and social justice causes. I'm proud of the label philanthropist, but it's not just me, it's available to everybody.

RC: Is this something that sort of evolved from your own life experience?

Alhadeff: We're all products of our upbringing. I was brought up by parents and grandparents who taught me that we were a better community together than we could ever be by ourselves. And for those of us who have been blessed by financial or other resources, by sharing them and helping others we help ourselves.

RC: Would you say that was something particular to the Jewish community, getting involved in charity and social activism?

Alhadeff: I think the traditions of the Jewish people, as with many people, speaks to giving and helping others. If there is an extra emphasis on the Jewish community to give to charity, it's because of the oppression and the anti-Semitism that was cast upon them, that made them more sensitive towards others. It really is individual-by-individual, person-by-person. All the great religions of the world teach charity and giving.

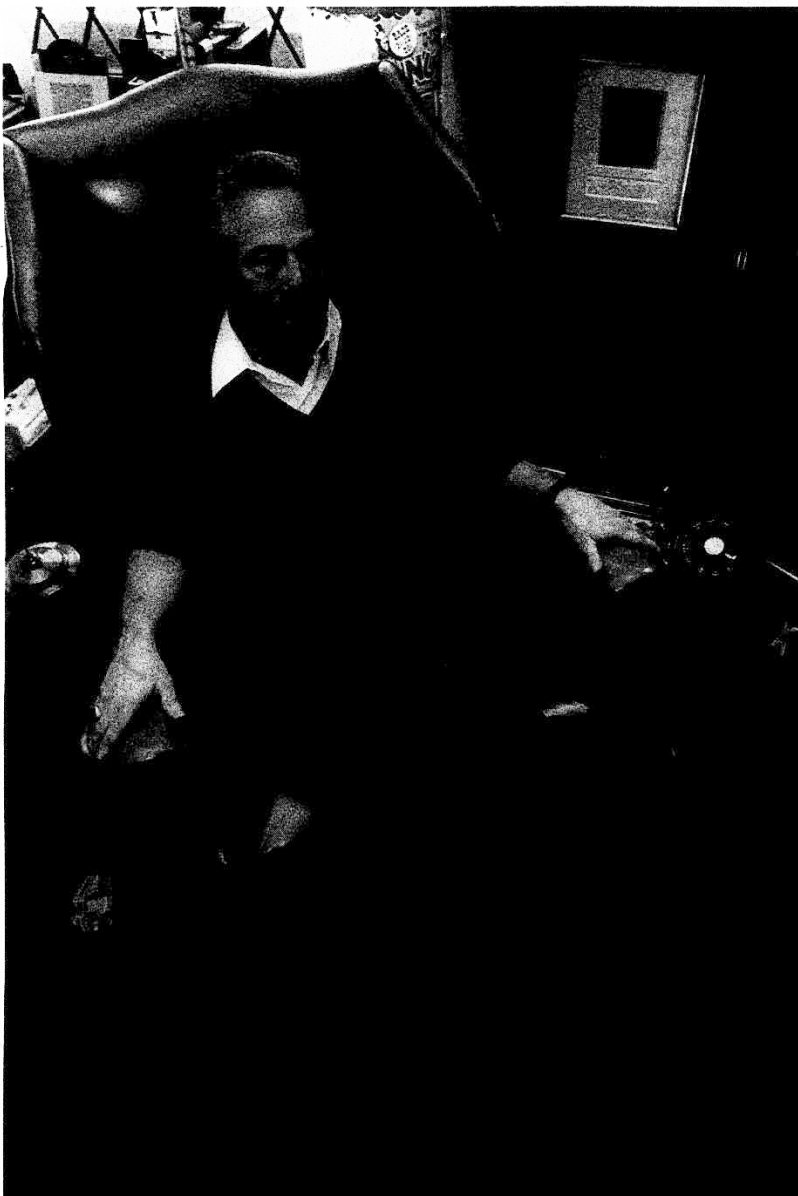
RC: You've talked before groups about your own personal experiences. It's easy for somebody to look at someone like you as sort of the ideal. But you've had personal problems that have brought you where you are today.

Alhadeff: Drug addiction and alcohol took away my sanity, and having a material advantage cannot protect you from the hell of disease and addiction,

I think that sometimes we stereotype philanthropists as someone who gives a lot of money. I have tried to dedicate most of my adult life to helping people and being involved in nonprofit and social justice causes. I'm proud of the label philanthropist, but it's not just me, it's available to everybody.

Ken Alhadeff in his downtown office.

—Photo by Rob Casey.



ALHADEFF, Continued from Page 6

nor can it protect you from the other issues that life has. You can take a Learjet to the Bahamas or a bus to First Avenue — you still have to go with whatever you are inside.

RC: Was there one thing that was a catalyst in your recovery?

Alhadeff: Oh, sure; my wife was involved in putting together an intervention, and I went in for treatment. And for 20 years I've been actively involved in recovery. It saved my life and changed my life. There were many people involved in my recovery who affected me as far as issues of people on the street and homelessness.

RC: You have your hand in a lot of different pies. What's a typical day for you?

Alhadeff: I spend over half of my time on my foundation and on philanthropic and social justice efforts, and the rest of the time I spend operating my businesses.

RC: Talk about your involvement with homeless issues.

Alhadeff: We've been involved in homeless issues for a long time. WHEEL and SHARE came to us when we were the owner of a vacant building that had some space in it, and they needed a place just for folks to get out of the weather on an emergency basis, and we gave them some space. Then, later, I chaired a commission on homelessness. But the main thing that I was able to get involved in that I really enjoyed was creating a shelter, a 42-bed shelter run by the Compass Center. And we run some day programs out of there too.

RC: And you've been involved with Operation Nightwatch.

Alhadeff: A friend of mine named Dick Patterson came to me and he said "I need your help with something called Nightwatch. And I said, "I don't know anything about Nightwatch." He said it was the last place that homeless men and women can go to get something to eat late at night and get a voucher for a place to get out of the rain. And that really hit me.

They all wanted to do a fund-raising event. So I said, let's honor somebody every year and we'll call them "Hero of The Homeless" and what's important is we'll do this the Monday before Thanksgiving every year. Because by doing it then it helps kick off that time of year when we're eating a lot, celebrating. We've been doing it for five years and I'm very proud to be a small part of a very important operation.

RC: You've talked about being involved in social advocacy. Does that spill over into the political field?

Alhadeff: I'm very politically involved. I think it's the responsibility of every

citizen to participate in the democracy. To vote and to put their time and energy into the process of picking the leadership that we have. My goal is to find the best men and women that I can to serve at every level of government. I'm also for the protection of our civil liberties and our Constitution.

I've given money, time, hope. Money is a piece of it. But there's a lot more than money.

RC: There's a theme that is running through what you say: It's not just about giving time but about giving yourself.

Alhadeff: For me, it works that way. It doesn't matter if you have a lot of money or not a lot of money, everybody can be a philanthropist. It's all a matter of listening to your heart.

RC: What do you see as the way to go about ending homelessness?

Alhadeff: Everyone will say the same thing on one level: It's a very complicated issue. There's no reason for anyone in our community to go hungry or to go without shelter.

The next step is to assess peoples' situation. If a person is deep into alcoholism or drug addiction, nothing else we do to help them will help them until that is dealt with. But if they choose not to deal with it, we should keep them warm and safe.

There's nothing we can do to help somebody unless they are ready to help themselves. The same with people with mental illness — we must deal with the illness. Along with that we have to address, through counseling, what in a person's life has helped to promote this situation.

And the hardest thing we need to do is access the resources that are available and intensely work on helping one person at a time change their life. Instead of putting a little bit of effort into everybody, we should put a lot of effort into maybe a smaller number at a time.

And we have to recognize that everybody matters. We all came from the same creator. We all deserve an opportunity at what this country calls life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It's not an obligation to help those less fortunate. It's my honor. When a man or woman says they don't want shelter that's their choice. When a man or woman says they don't want to stop drinking or drugging, that's their choice. Not everyone on the street has an alcohol problem or a mental illness problem. If there's no drug or alcohol issue, no mental health issue, then we need to go to the core issues of abandonment, self-esteem, lack of opportunity, that have put people in these situations.

We can't put a line and say these people don't matter. In the Second World War, Hitler put a line and said people under this line don't matter. Osama bin Laden has a line. America can't afford to have a line. ■

Rescue Attempts

Stories plunge early to their deaths, swallowed whole, an ocean of oblivion catches each one, consumes it. Nothing given back. The words die as easily as our bodies.

I mourn the fables and the mouths that unwittingly became their graveyards. These pomegranate seeds charge down my esophagus, as extravagant as your kisses. Your tongue has pulled my floundering chaos of syllables to the surface. Is this what it means to love? Every one of my ancestors fell quietly to their deaths. Unimportant, necessary only for hands and backs. Obliterated by history. Bodies vanish quickly like letters, the same imprint of carelessness tagged around each.

Words keeps hope alive. Breathing requires speech. He pulled the gag tight across my mouth. Then tighter. The act of a father. On the surface breathing looks like a quiet activity. The hummingbird exposes her emerald throat when approaching the cardinal flower. To steal someone's throat constitutes a crime. How long will the jury sit out? How long will the judge cast his eyes away from the one seeking justice?

Years ago, piano music fell into my dream. The song's Latin beat burst through Walls, exploding into complex and implausible life. I awoke. It vanished. I have lost a staggering number of things; two babies, one childhood, brain cells to electrical energy. My losses have always outnumbered my selves. Perhaps this explains why I crave stories. Crave them and mourn them. So many Arabs die with gags across our mouths. So many non-Arabs fail to notice the deaths or the gags. On the surface breathing looks like a quiet activity. Words matter. Words are matter. Matter makes up the universe. Therefore words make up the universe. Does this proof satisfy the logic requirement? I want you to kiss me, extravagantly, and pull more syllables to the surface.

—JOANNA KADI

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Travel by Stanza

Green Rice: Poems

by Lam Thi My Da

Translated by Martha Collins & Thuy Dinh

Curbstone Press, 2004

Paperback, \$13.95

Review by ARTIS

Real Change Editorial Committee

The term, "rest your eyes on this line" means something different, now that I've read Lam Thi My Da. I might ask the reader to rest your eyes on this review, perhaps as you might [listen] to the violin section of an orchestra — separating one vital section from the whole composition, while absorbing the whole, simultaneously. *Green Rice* is certainly not just words set to theme on page. Something much more intricate is going on here.

In 1988, I had the opportunity to go to Australia to perform in the World's Fair — Expo 88. I told a friend and she said, "Go to Bali." I went. Learning the language, Bahasa, and seeing Bali through a local perspective, hipped me to the difference of taste, feel, cultural perspectives, and beliefs, without translation. One must experience the poetry, the songs, the love, the pain, the passion, the desire, the weather, the food, and magnificence of their own mythologies to even begin to understand who might dwell in distant, mysterious and enchanting places.

Of course, however migratory we are, we cannot all travel, regardless

of our inherent wanderlust. We will not all fall madly in love or know the taste of exotic dishes on our own palate, for whatever reasons. Wars are no less tragic for being fought on foreign soil and sea, by stranger folk, or, by happenstance, one's cousin, for unknown causes. Still, our minds' lust must be sated.

Enter the poet; born in the south central part of Viet Nam in 1949, Lam Thi My Da spent the war, which the Vietnamese call the "American War," in Quang Binh province, near the scene of much heavy fighting.

There's a veil over the words in the poetry of My Da, a sheer membrane of Vietnamese culture that permeates the translation as one reads. One cannot be transported into Lam Thi My Da's world of jungle, whether pre-war, wartime, or postwar life in Viet Nam, without becoming verbally intoxicated. There is an elevating, moving sensation we feel from My Da's deft frankness of her perceptions, whether they're about Confucianism vs. Christianity, the peace of rice paddies, or the life-shattering cluster bombs. Contemplating her birthday or her death day, the consciousness with which she does it is — Ah!

Green Rice is not an easy read. One would want to take time to absorb and transpose one's thoughts comfortably. Then, flowers, water, jungle, people, legend, myth, war, rain, sea, terror, exhaustion, relief, rice, fruit, foreigner, family and friend will translate through the unique and fortunately sensitive life of Lam Thi My Da. ■

Sensitive as in Cricket Song:

Please let me go through life as a cricket
Singing a tiny song in the tender grass
Opening my eyes to shining dewdrops
My words ringing like little bells...

Sensitive as in the first lines of Bomb Crater Sky:

They say that you, a road builder
Had such love for your country
You rushed out and waved your torch
To call the bombs down on yourself
And save the road for the troops

—FROM *GREEN RICE*

Prayer for Peace

If peace begins with me —

disarm me
of arrogance
self-righteousness
the need to
always win;
shower me with humility
gentle my conceit
light another point of view
must I be
always right?
honor me with humor
and great good sense
to turn the storm sleeve
inside out,
its lining warm
with smiles
quick wit
and understanding;
center me if I seem confused
remove whatever clouds
my hopeful vision,

if peace begins with me.

—LOIS RALSTON CONKLE

Homegirl Moon

Homegirl Moon
We are United
in Wicked Weep,
Wannabe Rags.

Let's Score us Some Poetry:
Enchant'd Funk,
Stash of Peace...

Scam this Lowdown Trip
and Hang Outrageous in the Pond of Evening.

—PRIYA KEEFE

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Adventures
in Irony

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You Can't Say That!

It's a good time to recall the standard disclaimer: the author of this column, me, Dr. Wes Browning, is solely responsible for its content. Real Change, its management, staff, and volunteers have all said on many occasions that

I, Dr. Wes, am nuts, and they assume no liability for anything I say here or anywhere else.

I had just finished saying, last week, that Susan Sontag was right about something and that Ed Koch may or may not have been. I also mentioned the Planters Nut Company. What you all may not have known, because I didn't tell you, was that last week's entire column was an attempt to write about Ward Churchill that got sidetracked.

Ward Churchill is the Colorado University professor who has taken a lot of flak for an essay he wrote after the 9-11 attacks in which he pointed out that the Pentagon was a military target and indicated that many (not all) of the people in the World Trade Towers at the time of the attack were willing participants in "America's global financial empire." One particular phrase that fetched Mr. Churchill a heap of heat was "little Eichmanns."

"Oh boy, talking about this will be fun!" That's what I've been thinking. I thought, "Let's talk about Nazi technocrats and the Americans who can be compared to them, ha, ha!" That's when I remembered what Susan Sontag said and got distracted.

Now Bill Maher has got back in the news and distracted me. Bill Maher said essentially the same thing that Sontag said, that the 9-11 attackers had not been cowards, whatever else they were, and got his show yanked from TV. Now he's back with a new TV show and he's getting himself in deep by disparaging evangelical Christians, and the conservative Christians are romping all over him.

OK, he said something real bad about Christians in general, and it was TOTALLY inappropriate. Christians do NOT all have neurological dis-

orders. Bad talk-show man! BAD! No talk-show man cookie!

As if that isn't distracting enough, Chris Rock gets picked to host the Oscars and he lets fly that he thinks no straight black man would ever watch the Oscars and that, in general, awards for art are f—ing idiotic. You might think that would mostly offend gays, but actually right-wing conservatives are doing most of the complaining, with the same ones calling for his dismissal from the Oscars as are calling for Bill Maher's new show to be cancelled.

Just as I'm hearing about all this and I'm reassuring myself that everything is all right, we still have First Amendment protection of freedom of speech in this country, I find out that the House of Representatives passes a so-called Broadcast Decency Act which will give federal regulators power to levy massive fines against broadcasters for airing material the regulators deem indecent.

Remember when conservatives used to oppose regulation of markets?

There I go again, digressing. Which as I see it is the continuing problem, and what's wrong with the whole picture.

Instead of having a serious national discussion about what Ward Churchill said, we are immersed in a war of words over whether he should be allowed to keep his job, having said that much. We are all forced to join the fight to keep the debate open rather than debating. Things like the Broadcast Decency Act only serve to prove that we are right to be concerned. Today they would fine CBS for an exposed breast; tomorrow it will be for a quote from Chris Rock (or even Alfred Kinsey); the next day it will be for "unpatriotic" speech.

All of which keeps all of us from talking about the extent to which Ward Churchill was right, and in all the confusion no one notes what the corporations that built the World Trade Towers do next to the rest of the world in our names. ■

likely to still be asked as part of Safe Harbors. But whereas such information may have been kept in-house, now, through the use of application software, the data becomes part of a larger pool. When local officials or homeless advocates want to get a handle on the effectiveness of the services provided to the homeless, or obtain a broader view of the homeless community as a whole, they will be able to dip into the pool of knowledge. And it's this pool that is of the utmost importance.

"It's important to track outcomes," Wysocki admits. ■

BABY BLUE, Continued from Page 5

both privacy and security issues were of paramount concern in the design of Safe Harbors. All data is considered confidential. Langdon notes that the client has the ultimate say in what does and doesn't get entered into the database, including the ability to register under an alias. The collected data is then protected by three "firewalls," providing physical, application and operating system safeguards.

One group that advocated for de-identified data in the formation process was the YWCA. Sara Wysocki, community affairs manager for the YWCA of Seattle, King County, and Snohomish County. Wysocki, says she expects Safe Harbors to be implemented within their

system later this spring. Noting that her organization provided services to 55,000 people last year, whether once or on an ongoing basis, she says the YWCA wanted to make sure it spoke for the people it serves. "We understand that our clients have a lot of fear and concern around (privacy)," says Wysocki.

Langdon maintains that all clients entered into the system will be de-identified, a process by which a potential Sally Jones will be known, not by a name, but by a number that's formulated algorithmically.

The algorithms themselves may be new, but Safe Harbors intends to build upon techniques used in the past. Questions typically asked of those entering shelters and transitional housing are



Thursday Feb. 10, 1:11 p.m. Pike Street.

Officers contacted the suspect, a transient white male aged 28 for loitering in a high narcotics area. He was speaking with three known heroin users. Officers knew the suspect was on active Department of Corrections supervision. He was asked if he had any paraphernalia on his person, and he admitted he had several "dirty" syringes. Officers located about five syringes on his person, and he was also found to have other drug paraphernalia on his person, including a cooking cap and a tourniquet. He was arrested and transported to the West Precinct, where he and all the evidence were turned over to the DOC.

Thursday, Feb. 10, 3:00 p.m., Third Ave.

Officers observed suspect, a transient black female aged 35 loitering in the area of the 500 block of Third Ave. Officer has arrested the suspect several times in the past, and is aware of her active DOC status for drug violations. Officer stopped the suspect, and contacted her DOC officer — they requested that she be taken into custody. She was arrested and transported to their location, and was handed over to the D.o.C.

Friday, Feb. 11, 3:30 a.m., Eighth and Bell.

Officers were dispatched to a report of a loud verbal dispute between a male and a female at Fourth and Wall. They arrived and contacted the victim, a transient white female aged 44, who stated she had been assaulted over an hour ago at Eighth and Bell, in the alley east of the Quintana Inn. She stated that the suspect, a white male in his early 20s or 30s approached her and demanded money and/or drugs. She told him she only had 45 cents. He then slapped her twice on the face and told her he would kill her if she didn't give him money. She stated "Kill me, I'm suicidal." Suspect instead fled on his skateboard going east on Denny. Officers asked the victim if she needed to go to Harborview for medical or mental attention — she said she was not hurt, and would not hurt herself. Officers gave her a case number and informed her of the shelters in the area. The suspect is still at large.

Friday, Feb. 11, 11:30 p.m. Western Ave, Victor Steinbrueck Park.

Officers arrested a transient Native American female aged 20 for trespassing in Victor Steinbrueck Park. They were riding through the park when they noticed her sitting with a group of friends, and knew from past contact that she was trespassed from all zone six parks for one year. As she saw the officers approach, she got up and began to leave the park. They called her to stop, and explained that they had given her three warnings previously for the same offence. She said, "I know, I'm sorry." She was arrested and transported to King County Jail for Trespass in the Parks.

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.

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finds the eastern bit
of Europe and the other
lights on Asia's western edge,
ponder this peasant lineage
and our skewed relationships
to straight geometric elements
generated by the harsh realities
of beginnings, endings, middles
through (un)stable points of reference.
Now the taut thread knots me
into the center of this tangled mass.

Lives jangled by lines;
stake out scraps of land,
plow straight grooves,
measure water, measure grain
with scrupulous care.
Always a furrow between the eyebrows
leading directly to unlined pockets,
shadow this unequal triangle
again and again
until hard creases at the corners
of stubborn mouths
abruptly dissect it.

*Hunger drops unceremoniously
in the straightest of lines,
plunging directly from bare table
to mouth to stomach to intestine
to food-filled dreams
and morning's despair.*

Our names can be unearthed
in history books
but only by the most diligent;
sift letters
decipher blank space
between even rows
until buried codes and symbols
scratched out by our broken pencils
bump up against searching fingers.

Through this last century
we've proceeded diligently
across the planet,
reading well-worn paths.
From small pocket of dirt
to dark corner in boat
to earth marked by
someone else's beaded signposts,
then lurch from job to job
until working the line secures us.

My present line
follows family tradition —
magic
my grandparents' trick
pull survival from thin air.
I cling to the same top-hat
practice with scarves, rabbits, coins
determined to catch
pieces of these ancestors
before they reach
the point of no return,
force this apparition of a pen
to reinstate them
on a lined page.

—JOANNA KADI

*Published in Thinking Class: Sketches
from a Cultural Worker, South End
Press, 1996. ©Joanna Kadi. Kadi reads
at the Bush Hotel on Feb. 25. For de-
tails, see the calendar on page 11.*

Letters

editor: Real Change, 2129 2nd Ave., Seattle, WA 98121

Short & Sweet

Dear *Real Change*,

I prefer your new format & choice
of articles; it makes your 'paper even
more interesting!

Martin Paup

Seattle

Wrong Again

Dear *Real Change*,

Regarding your article "Keeping
Peace" in your February 16-22, 2005
issue, the author uncritically repeats
the police/corporate media version of
David Walker's killing, stating David
"fired shots ... When he made a sudden
lunge, an officer shot" him. David's
killing was captured on film, which we
can provide for you. It clearly shows
he did NOT lunge, but rather stopped
and made a throwing motion with
his left (and clearly empty) hand just
before being shot, without moving his
torso or legs.

We also question the "fired shots"
claim. Corporate media presented one
interviewee as a first-hand witness to
shots being fired, and implied a parked
truck and pop machine were damaged
by those shots. However, a local pub-
lic access TV producer had the same
interviewee verify he was a SECOND-
HAND witness, and proved the dam-
age was superficial and unrelated.
Remember, police can control access
to the scene of their own crimes, and
can plant any necessary "evidence". In
fact, 5 Miami officers were convicted
in August 2003 of planting "evidence"
on people they had killed.

At the very least, please qualify
such stories with "police claim ...".

Dan DiLeva, on behalf of
October 22nd Coalition to Stop
Police Brutality, Seattle Affiliate

[Correction]

"Disease Un-
ease" (RC Feb.
2-8) contained
information that
may have been
misleading. Dur-
ing a Board of
Health meeting,
Jim Jorgensen of
the Public Health
Preparedness
Section acknowl-
edged that invol-
untary isolation
and quarantine
would be very
difficult for many
groups, not only
for the homeless.

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email for author
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Events

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Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Wednesday 2/23

President Bush has proposed deep cuts in essential entitlement programs. Come learn how to present a unified message to Congress that deficit reduction plans must be responsible and equitable. 12:30-2:30 p.m. (note time change), at Fremont Public Association, Community Resource Center, 1st Floor Conference Room, 1501 N. 45th, Seattle. Call or email to confirm Aiko Schaefer, **Poverty Action Network** aiko@povertyaction.org 206-694-6794 or Linda Stone, **Children's Alliance** linda@childrensalliance.org or 509-747-7205.

Friday 2/25

"Hope is a Four-Letter Word," a reading and discussion by Joanna Kadi. A working-class Arab lesbian cultural worker, Kadi is author of *Thinking Class: Sketches of a Cultural Worker* and contributor to *Food for our Grandmothers: Writings by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian Feminists*. She will be reading works written since September 11th, followed by a discussion. 7 p.m. the Bush Hotel, 409 Maynard Ave. S. Info 206-324-8165 or joannakadi.org.

Saturday 2/26

Poet Tim Seibles, associate professor of creative writing at Old Dominion University, will read new works from his sixth poetry collection *Buffalo Head Solos*. Tim is a leader for Cave Canem, a workshop dedicated to the discovery of new voices in African American writing. He will be joined by fellow poet Elizabeth Austen, who will also read from recent work. 2 p.m., at Elliott Bay Book Company, 1st and Main, Seattle. Info 206-624-6600.

Celebrate Black History Month with a movie that pays tribute to **Black Steelworkers** and their contributions to the labor movement. *Struggles in Steel* documents how these workers won innovative Affirmative Action demands despite hostility from bosses and resistance from the union. Sponsored by the Freedom Socialist Party. Door dona-

tion \$3. 7:30 p.m., at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. Info 206-722-2453 or FSPseattle@mindspring.com.

Tuesday 3/1

Foolproof presents Paul Rusesabagina, the real-life hero whose courage during the genocide in Rwanda is portrayed in the critically-acclaimed film, *Hotel Rwanda*. He saved over a thousand lives by granting them shelter in the hotel he managed. Tickets are \$20. 7:30 p.m., at Town Hall, 8th and Seneca, Seattle. Tickets and info 206-325-3554 or www.foolproof.org.

Wednesday 3/2

"The Emerging Movement to Reclaim the Media," with Frances Korten, executive director of Positive Futures Network and publisher of *YES!* Magazine. Korten worked for 20 years at the Ford Foundation, where she funded programs on social justice and environmental sustainability. This is a free program. 7-9 p.m. at the Antioch campus, 2326 6th Ave., Seattle. Info Debra Alderman 206-268-4906.

Thursday 3/3

International Women's Day special meeting, **Solidarity with our Iraqi Sisters**. Local anti-war activist, Megan Cornish, will discuss conditions faced by women in Iraq under US occupation and escalating fundamentalism. Dinner, with vegetarian option, available at 6:30 p.m. for a \$6.50 donation. Hosted by Radical Women, everyone welcome. 7:30 p.m., at New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S., on the #7 bus line, Seattle. Info 206-722-6057 or RWseattle@mindspring.com.

National Abortion Rights Action League Pro-Choice Washington's Spring Fundraiser, "Chocolates for Choice." Special VIP Chocolate Truffle Lover reception with actor Tom Skerritt, Mayor Greg Nickels, New Wave Musician Reggie Watts, and many more. 6 - 8 p.m., at Ellis Pavilion at Safeco Field, Seattle. Info 206-624-1990.

My Jim: A Retelling

Seattle writer Nancy Rawles' new novel, *My Jim*, a retelling of the story of escaped slave Jim from the book *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, from the point of view of Jim's wife Sadie. 4 p.m., at A Contemporary Theatre, 700 Union, Downtown Seattle. 4 p.m., at A Contemporary Theatre, 700 Union St., Downtown Seattle. Info www.acttheatre.org.

Director's Corner



There isn't much encouraging news around homelessness these days, but a phone call I received last night definitely qualifies. Pastor Walter John Boris of Kirkland Congregational Church is initiating a daily prayer vigil at the gates of the eastside Tent City encampment to read off the names of homeless people who have died over the past year. As an additional message to the community, they will ring their bells each day at noon.

No big deal? Well, it depends on one's perspective. Kirkland Congregational has jumped into the trenches along with those crazy Jesuits at Seattle University to offer fellowship and acceptance to those that many in the community reject. By standing with the poor, these institutions send a clear message that hating the homeless is not an acceptable community value.

As recent community meetings on the Eastside and in Rainier Valley attest (see *NO RESPECT*, Page 1), fear and loathing of the poor is one of the last socially acceptable prejudices. The rhetoric of hate gets dressed up to look like someone you might want to have dinner with, but it's clear that in some quarters there's no room at the table for those at the bottom.

The longer Tent City goes on, the more I'm convinced that SHARE/WHEEL's peripatetic encampments are on the front lines of a new civil rights movement that stands for basic human dignity. "We exist," they say. "Deal with it." As America under Bush becomes a society of extremes, community support of these encampments is a strong statement that we need to do much better. ■



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Restore Voting Rights for Felons

Issue: A few weeks ago we asked you to contact your legislators to help restore voting rights to people with past felony convictions. The only thing standing between 150,000 potential voters, and restoration of their citizenship rights, is lack of money to pay off court related debt. A few weeks ago, Olympia activists were working hard to get a bill introduced, and hoping that the flap over whose votes should or shouldn't be counted in the Governor's election wouldn't overshadow their efforts. We hoped that our allies in Olympia would be successful, and that your calls would help. They were and you did help. House Bill 2062 has been introduced, and now that a critical cut-off date looms just a week away, we need you to help get this bill moving. If it doesn't have a hearing, and then get voted out of committee by March 2, it's almost certainly dead for this year.

Background: We care about this issue because we believe that the more people involved in the democratic process, the stronger our democracy. We believe that people can make mistakes, even big ones, and that their voice still matters. We believe that people can change, and that they deserve a second chance. We know that the criminal justice system has flaws. Every step disproportionately punishes people of color.

Real Change is committed to making room for people who are usually unheard to have a say in how we govern ourselves, to have a voice. For the last two years, we've worked to help low-income and homeless people register to vote, become informed, and to cast a ballot. We engaged in this non-partisan effort because we believe that when poor people vote, poor people's issues are taken more seriously by politicians. We heard from almost every volunteer that they were told over and over again that so many people wished they could register, but couldn't because of a past conviction. It frustrated some volunteers, energized some, and outraged some. We hope it does the same for our readers — and inspires you to take action.

Action: Contact the chair of the committee responsible for HB 2062 and ask her to hear and pass the bill. Everyone can do this — even if you don't live her district. If you have a legislator who's on the committee, contact her or him as well. Ask them to help make sure the bill is heard and passed, and for their own yes vote.

Committee members, districts, and contacts: bold names are Representatives from King County districts. Bill sponsors are noted — be sure to say thank you if one of them represents you.

Kathy Haigh@leg.wa.gov, 30, (360) 786-7966 (chair)
Tami Green@leg.wa.gov, 28, (360) 786-7958 (sponsor)
Toby Nixon@leg.wa.gov, 45, (360) 786-7878 (sponsor)
Jim Clements@leg.wa.gov, 14, (360) 786-7856
Sam Hunt@leg.wa.gov, 22, (360) 786-7992 (sponsor)
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Mark Milosic@leg.wa.gov, 30, (360) 786-7898
Lynn Schindler@leg.wa.gov, 4, (360) 786-7984
Bob Sump@leg.wa.gov, 7, (360) 786-7908

Visit www.realchangenews.org to take action online. It's simple, effective, and takes less than two minutes. See *Real Change* news, Feb 2 for more info on this issue, or visit www.aclu-wa.org.



TAXES, Continued from Page 1

has joined an expanding body of citizenry calling for major changes in Washington's tax system. Dating from the 1930s, that system relied on a mostly manufacturing and agricultural economy, whereas today, "we have a highly service-driven economy, so we need to tax more services."

Firestone was one of 14 participants in a recent seminar aimed at training advocates for tax reform to help disseminate accurate information on the issue. "We are on the cusp of some dark days. It is critical to be talking about this," says Lois Canright of the Tax Fairness Coalition, which sponsored the seminar. The non-profit group, representing more than a million people and 67 organizations, has been spearheading efforts to educate Washington taxpayers as to why they have the most regressive tax system in the country and what can be done about it. "We have some catching up to do," Canright added.

Whether legislators are ready to pick up the gauntlet is another matter. Though a constitutional mandate obligates them to balance the budget, the political will for genuine tax reform seems airy, at best. Current proposals call for band-aid fixes on a hemorrhaging patient (e.g. elevation of sin taxes, Sunday liquor sales, etc.).

"In private, some legislators support change, but they are afraid they will lose office if they go public with it," laments Firestone. Giving voters the information they need to elect legislators willing to undertake systemic reform is what motivates him and others who sat in on the seminar.

"The legislature needs to look at some different options," says Kristin Pula, who volunteers along with Canright to lead the seminars. One of those options is apparently a state income tax, since the Coalition, in support of the Gates Commission's finding that "an attractive tax system relies on an array of sources," advocates a triad of revenue sources: sales, property, and income taxes. This combination has proven reasonably stable elsewhere through varying economic times. But Washington voters have a long history of rejecting a personal income tax, and if Ron Sims' primary campaign for governor last fall is any indication, it won't be any easier a sell now.

A spate of dim-sighted anti-tax bal-

lot initiatives in recent years can only have sharpened lawmakers' leers about tinkering with the system. But what message voters are sending is open to interpretation. As Lois Canright sees it, the people voting for such initiatives are largely the ones suffering the most under the current tax system. Getting people to see the real causes of their discontent—"dispelling the myths," as she puts it—is the soul of her mission. She emphasizes that the Coalition's recommendations are revenue-neutral, seeking only a redistribution of how much comes from where, not an increase.

The B&O tax may present the most accessible near-term target. Highly unpopular with small business because it taxes gross receipts instead of actual profits, it is the only tax of its kind in the country. "Our criticism of the B&O tax was unrelenting," Gates told Committee members. "It is essentially an irrational approach to taxation." While most states tax profits, modifying our B&O tax won't necessarily add anything to the state's coffers. Wealthy corporations eschew much of their tax responsibility by swaying politicians by intense lobbying, campaign contributions and other sweetening tactics. Ellie Menzies, representing the Service Employees International Union, has testified in Olympia that corporate giveaways and loopholes in effect rob citizens of funds for important state services. Taken in aggregate, the recent proliferation of largesse to big business could well make up for the perennial budget shortfall.

"Baby steps," commented one tax reformer of bills now pending in Olympia to enact elementary oversight over corporate tax breaks. Whether such breaks really stimulate the economy or job growth is subject to dispute, and many think their freeze, if not a large-scale rollback, would be the fairest approach to tackling the budget deficit.

"The kinds of cuts being proposed [to state services] will only escalate the level of crumbling [in government services]," Canright says.

"What's overlooked in criticism of the tax system is the enormous contribution of taxes to the state's assets," Gates reminded the House committee. "Those who prosper so significantly in our economy ought to be the people who give back the most to fund those investments." ■

RESPECT, Continued from Page 1

ing, which has a small lot for employers to park at the corner of Rainier and South Walden Street. The agency wants to raise \$2 million to buy and remodel the two-story building so it can combine its separate job dispatch, women's program and English courses in one place.

But to make the move in early 2006, and get the \$250,000 the city has promised it, Casa Latina must first prove to the city council that it has a viable plan the community supports.

Last week's meeting was the agency's first public outreach for the move. But members of a Rainier Valley neighborhood group called the South of McClellan Action Committee were already against it. After hearing of the plan, SOMAC member Peter Donnelly said, the group canvassed business owners and residents near the site and found opposition to the move "nearly unanimous," in part because two schools are within blocks of the site and children wait at the corner for school buses.

"You put 200 men there -- and I don't care if it's men in suits with briefcases -- it's not a good mix. It's not safe," resident Joby Moore said.

Assuming workers do stand outside -- something SOMAC claims is inevitable based on a 2004 report on five day-labor centers in the U.S. -- the group says the dispatch program would create safety and traffic hazards at a site where an established neighborhood development plan calls for commercial use. At the larger Chubby & Tubby store across Walden from the garden center, Rainier Valley's SouthEast Effective Development program plans to build a residential complex with up to 100 units and ground-floor retail.

"This program and its activity have been very sugar-coated," SOMAC member Poppy Storm said of Casa Latina's dispatch center. "From the research that we've done, it looks as if you couldn't find a less viable site" for contractors to hire workers.

"They're dumping our garbage on us," daycare owner Gwen Anderson said of the city. After struggling to clean up the drugs and gang activity that plagued the area for years, "it's really an insult to us," Anderson said.

Others, such as 49-year resident Kiel Capistani, spoke for the move, calling the reaction to Casa Latina far more disturbing than any safety issues. But, after SOMAC's effort in the neighborhood, Casa director Stern says the negativity didn't surprise her.

"It wasn't an unbiased survey," Stern says. "They were trying to get people to sign a petition against us."

That's what a manager says happened at Mekong Rainier Market & Gift. If Casa Latina comes, a SOMAC member told the store's owner, it will mean littering and beer cans thrown down in the street. As a result, the manager says, the owner signed a petition against the move.

Staff at the nearby Somali Community Services say they never heard from SOMAC. The owner of the Emerald City convenience store next door and the cooks who work down the street at the El Asadero taco truck say the same thing -- that is, with the help of an interpreter.

"I think language is a barrier," SOMAC member Paul Kohl says of whether the group and its volunteers skipped non-English speakers.

Kohl insists, however, that no one would have spoken badly of Casa Latina and the good work it does. "I cannot imagine anyone choosing to use that description," Kohl says.

Stern responds that she's heard worse stories. She also says she's visited at least six other day-labor centers around the country where no workers were standing outside.

Still, SOMAC's Jason Taylor says the risks are too high for any day labor center to be located in a single-family residential neighborhood like his.

To Alex Garcia, that makes no sense: Half the people who hire him, he says, are homeowners.

"You could put a Labor Ready or a Labor Express in the same place. It's the same thing" -- only better, Garcia says. Unlike the commercial agencies, he says, Casa Latina pays at least \$10 an hour and doesn't charge workers a fee.

"No one wants poor people in their neighborhood," Garcia says. "But there's a big difference between poor people and poor people who are working." ■

Washington State: Making the Poor Pay More

Fact: In 2002, the lowest 20% of Washington households parted with nearly a fifth of their earnings in taxes, while middle incomes paid about 10%, and the top 1% of households -- averaging \$922,000 a year -- just above 3%.

Fact: Though other states are experiencing budgetary problems of their own, most, including neighboring Idaho and Oregon, show no large disparity across income lines, meaning lower-income households generally have more money to spend.

Fact: Including services such as legal, financial, personal-care, and others currently exempt, would broaden the revenue base. Because higher-wage earners use such services more, it would help even out disparity in the system.

Fact: A high sales tax disproportionately harms the lowest income groups. Reform advocates would like to scale it back from its present level of over 8% to 3% or so.

Discrimination?

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REAL CHANGE

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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

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"I want to be my own man, shape my own destiny. ..."

Real Change offers you an opportunity to earn money and grow."

— Edward McLain

Creating Opportunity

After 10 years, *Real Change* is more effective than ever at creating opportunity and a voice for the poor while doing the long-term work of creating a more just society

This February, after nearly two years of planning and preparation, *Real Change* began weekly publication. To make this work, *Real Change* tripled our vendor services staff and added two part-time reporters. This took resources that we didn't really have. We went to our readers for help, and you came through. \$106,500 in contributions poured in over November and December of 2004, helping us beat our end of year fundraising goal. With the additional support we received from our foundation partners, we enter 2005 on solid ground.

Our goal for this year is simply to become Seattle's most widely read community newspaper. One of our vendors called me last week to say we're on the right track. "I've never been more proud to sell *Real Change*," she said. Our new look and upgraded news capacity, she said, was turning heads and putting money into her pocket. For the first time in years, she's putting money in the bank.

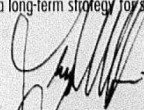
Pride and success. That's what it's all about. After ten years, *Real Change* continues to improve and grow:

- Circulation is at an all-time high at 11-12,000 copies a week.
- The number of vendors we serve rose in 2004 by more than 20 percent, to more than 230 vendors per month.
- We have organized a new 35-member community advisory board to inform our editorial policy and deepen our community roots. Members range from author/poet Sherman Alexie, to respected community organizers like K.L. Shannon, and community leaders like Peter Steinbrueck, Larry Gossett, and Alice Woldt.

Real Change offers opportunity to those who have too little, advocates for basic fairness in a society gone wrong, and builds community between the haves and the have-nots.

Our sustainable, practical vision for social change involves all of us in the work of building a better society. We have made an immediate difference in the lives of thousands of people, and have built the foundation for a long-term strategy for social change. Our work matters now more than ever.

Real Change is reader supported. Please help us to continue our work with your gift today.


Timothy Harris,
Executive Director

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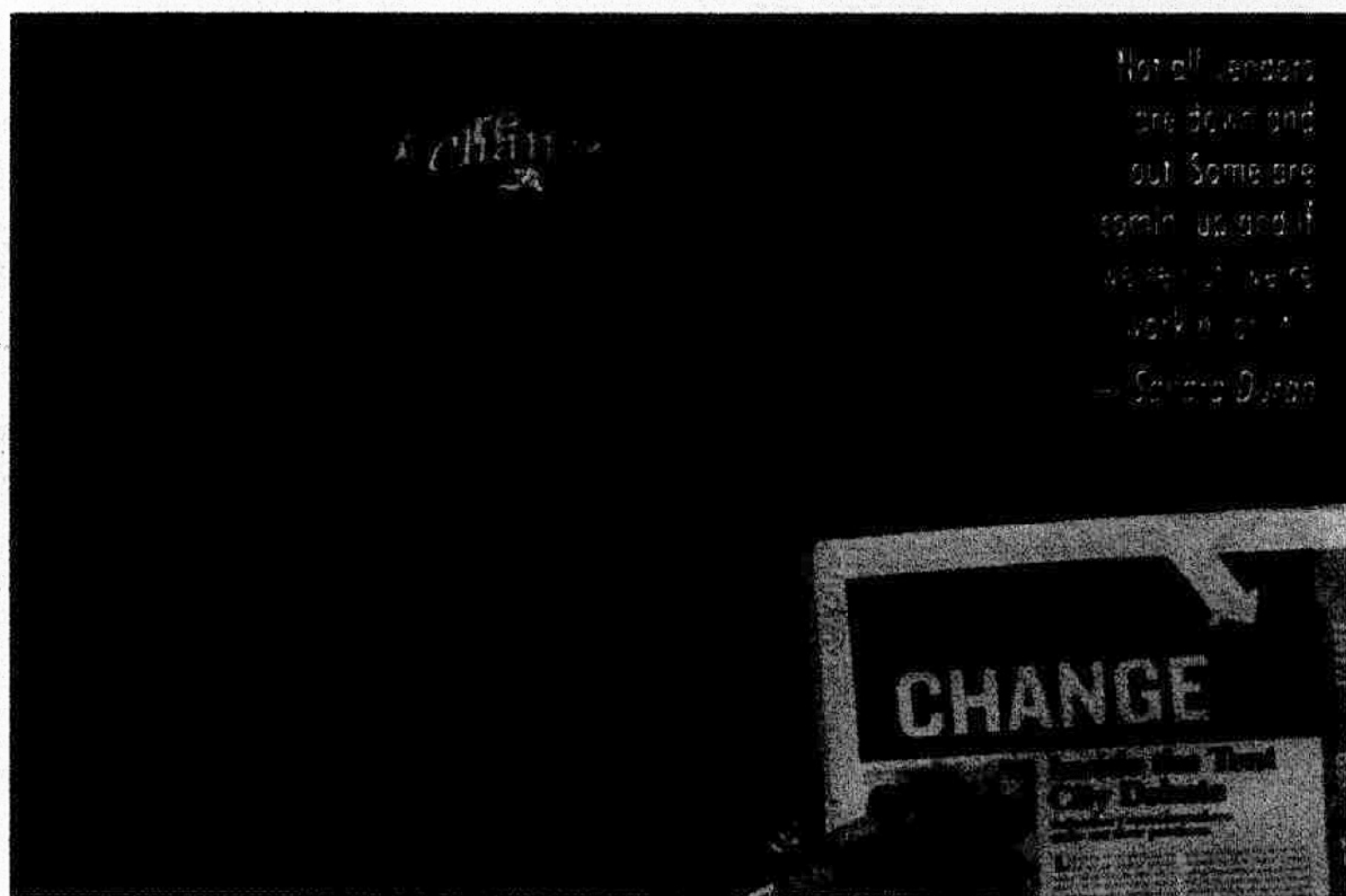
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"I just think it's cool they've got something like this and I get to be a part of it. ... Since I've started selling this paper, I've dared to hope." — Rick Clarke

Effective Advocacy

In 2004, we mobilized readers and homeless people themselves to increase voter participation and to fight for a city budget that prioritizes human need and moves us toward ending homelessness. Specifically, we:

- Registered close to 300 homeless voters through a volunteer effort in shelters, meal programs, and day centers and followed up with GOTV calls and letters. Almost 100 volunteers and homeless services staff were trained in voter registration techniques.
- Lobbied the City Council at hearings, and through visits in their offices as they deliberated the budget, asking them to put people first. More than 300 faxes were generated to Mayor Nickels urging him to avoid any cuts to human services or homelessness funding.
- Created a new online action center that allows readers to make their voices heard quickly and effectively. Greatly improved our eNewsletter to include images and direct links to our action center, which is now sent to almost 1,000 activists when their voices are needed the most.

What difference did it make?

- The Mayor delivered the Council a budget that was a great improvement over previous years. The final budget preserved most human services spending, and included funding for a homeless service center.
- The City Council restored most of the human services cuts proposed by the Mayor.
- The final city budget included \$3.2 million for a homeless service center downtown.
- According to King County Elections, more than 200 voters used the King County administration building as their voter registration address. This is an option for homeless people wishing to vote, who don't have another mailing address.

A Voice in the Community

Out of the Margins literary arts workshop is a project developed in partnership between *Real Change* and the Seattle Public Library. This workshop series aims to empower and build confidence, develop writers for *Real Change*, and build community among homeless writers. Workshops have included topics such as Writing from Pictures, Where to Begin, From Wordplay to Poem Creation, and Elements of Vivid Poetry, and instructors have included Hugo House writers-in-residence, University of Washington students, homeless activists, and more.

After a successful pilot project, careful planning and promotion, troubleshooting with the new Central Branch Library, and volunteer outreach to the local arts community, we kicked off the first official series of Out of the Margins in October of last year. The workshops brought together homeless and other library patrons with community arts volunteers to discuss, create, and express themselves through avenues ranging from poetry and memoir to bookarts and drama. As the workshops have progressed, more and more of the participants have begun to attend on a regular basis, creating a safe and welcoming sense of community for often marginalized individuals.

Real Change 2004 Profit/Loss Statement

Income

Donations	164,630
Circulation	126,031
Grants	80,000
Advertising	14,222
Events	43,00
Subscriptions	4,285
Investment and other Income	614
Total Income	\$432,782

Expenses

Payroll Related Expenses	278,643
Printing and Copying	59,474
Events and Promotion	17,980
Office Supplies/Equipment	12,631
Rent/Utilities	11,790
Professional Fees/Contract	10,320
Postage and Delivery	6,073
Phone and Internet	5,965
Travel	3,708
Dues & Subs	2,555
Training	2,300
Insurance	1,971
Bank Fees	1,724
Taxes	1,630
Repairs and Maintenance	931
Misc.	877
Total Expense	\$418,572

The reader told you the paper works. So does *Real Change*.

Real Change is an extraordinary paper making a difference then and now.

Every month, more than 25,000 people are better housed because of the money they need while they look for a place to live. People aren't homeless anymore.

Our weekly urban newsprint 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* what we call the "REAL" work they believe in.

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Make checks to *Real Change* and mail to: *Real Change*, P.O. Box 121, or use our secure online giving option at realchangenews.org. *Real Change* is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

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