

# REAL CHANGE

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MAY 11-17, 2005

## Standardized

*City's shelters may get new  
health and safety rules*

By ROSETTE ROYALE  
Staff Writer

**H**ere's a question: What minimum standards are required of locally funded agencies providing shelter or transitional housing for the homeless? The answer: There aren't any.

Come this Monday, that's due to change, when the Seattle City Council begins considering a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) for Shelter and Transitional Services that will address "minimum physical and programmatic standards for shelters." The presentation addresses council legislation that the RFP would confront this lack of standards.

Alan Painter, community services director of the city's Human Services Department, says that his office has been aware there weren't any standard for shelters, but hasn't pushed the issue. Instead, he says, his office has tried to find a way to balance what services were provided with ensuring there was sufficient space for those looking for a warm place.

If, for instance, a facility didn't have mattresses to sleep on, or even mats, "the tradeoff was that at least people weren't sleeping on the streets," says Painter.

It's a good thing to get people off the streets, notes councilmember Tom Rasmussen, but what do people find when they get off the streets and into a shelter? He decided to find out.

Since Jan. 2004, especially during bouts of cold weather, Rasmussen says that he has toured a good number of shelters the city pays for through the RFP process. He says he found agencies varied tremendously in their condition. Some were much more comfortable, providing a wide range of services; other agencies didn't provide mattresses.

"I was surprised to learn that there were no standards for services, or facilities, or supplies," says Rasmussen. Visits such as the ones Rasmussen conducted helped to spur the council to create legislation asking for standards.

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KATIE MITCHELL IS WORKING TO PREVENT INFANT MORTALITY IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR BY FINDING HOUSING FOR PREGNANT MOTHERS. PHOTO BY KEN DEAN.

## Unequal Delivery

*Babies from region's families of color die in greater numbers*

By JENNIFER GORE  
Contributing Writer

**A** 22-year survey of infant mortality by King County's Public Health department found that Black and Native American parents are two to three times more likely than others to suffer the death of a child within its first year of life.

In general, says the October 2004 report, the local infant mortality rate is well below the national average. But comparisons like that "mask the disparities," says Dr. Alonzo Plough, director of Public Health.

"If you take a focused look—a race-based and income-based look—you start to see how great the differences really are."

The report's authors, Susan Barkan and Maria Carlos, found that women of color who are at lowest risk of losing their children are still more likely to experience infant mortality than the highest-risk white women.

Barkan suggests that institutionalized racism is, in part, increasing the stress placed on women of color—stress that suppresses the body's immune system and results in pre-term delivery and other adverse birth outcomes.

While social support from close family and friends often buffers the impact of stress on pregnant women,

the report found that African American women had "significantly lower levels of social support in comparison to white mothers."

For African American infants, the leading causes of death are prematurity, perinatal conditions (those occurring during labor and delivery), and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. For white babies, congenital abnormalities are the leading cause, followed by perinatal conditions and prematurity.

For pregnant American Indian/Alaska Native women, a relatively small group, there is much more variation. But in the three-year period from 2000 to 2002, native families had an infant mortality rate of nearly 19 deaths for every 1,000 live births. That's more than four times the rate of the white population, and the highest percentage of native infant deaths since the early '90s. Among native parents, says Barkan, "We're not seeing the declines we expect to see."

Other stressors increasing the risk of infant mortality include lack of income and overcrowded, inadequate housing.

Public Health's report concluded that monitoring the health of women before, during, and after pregnancy is essential. Carlos, who is educating policy makers in various arenas in an

## DIGNITY

Real Change is in our summer fund drive. What does it mean to our vendors?

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# What Were We Thinking?

Real Change fund drive goal of \$60K supports dignity for our vendors

By TIMOTHY HARRIS  
Executive Director

Corine Porch, who sells her papers in Pike Place Market, says her regulars are buying twice as often. Vendor Joe Armstrong says people "used to buy because you were working and not panhandling. Now they buy it to actually read."

After nearly two years of planning, Real Change took the leap last February and went to weekly publication. Now, as we struggle to keep up with the workload and the added expense, one question that arises is, "What were we thinking?"

There were many reasons to go weekly, but topping the list is dignity for our vendors. We want our vendors to be proud of what they do and proud to sell this paper. We want people to buy Real Change because we're the community newspaper that speaks most directly to the issues they care about, and not just to help someone out.

When you only publish semi-weekly, that's hard to do. For our vendors, that second week was a season of drought, sustained largely by those good souls out there who buy two, three, and five copies of every issue. Our readers and our vendors deserve far better.

Next, this isn't just a newspaper. It's a tool for activism. We want each of our readers to be inspired and have the information they need to take action. We offer up-to-date legislative information in each issue and try to make it easy for people to get involved. About 1,500 people have taken the next step and gone to [realchangenews.org](http://realchangenews.org) to sign up for our e-alerts. Weekly publication allows us to be much more timely in our activism.

Finally, we are a newspaper, and a damn good one. We cover community issues and events with integrity, passion, and professionalism. One thing

we kept hearing is that Seattle needs a weekly, grassroots, activist paper; that people are hungry for alternative news sources, and that the more established Seattle media isn't meeting the need.

We decided to go weekly during the summer of 2003, as part of our strategic plan, and spent the next year and a half getting ready. We lined up additional support from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, United Way of King County, and the Lucky 7 Foundation to help underwrite increased staffing. We built an active 35-member advisory board to ground us in the communities we serve. We went through a redesign and rethinking of our content that included a reader survey and two non-reader focus groups. We hired additional vendor support staff and journalists.

Even after all of that, we still didn't feel completely ready. Money was tight. Our year-end fundraising built a cushion good for a few months, but then it would be a leap of faith. We decided to go ahead anyway. We figured it was sort of like having a kid. If everyone waited until they were absolutely ready, humanity would die out within a few generations. Sometimes you just need to plan as well as you can, hope for the best, and rise to the occasion.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Readers have embraced the changes and our vendors are getting great feedback. Some vendors report a rise in sales ranging from 20 to 100 percent. Corine Porch, who sells her papers in Pike Place Market, says her regulars are buying twice as often. Vendor Joe Armstrong says people "used to buy because you were working and

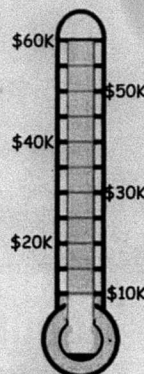
not panhandling. Now they buy it to actually read."

And yet ...

All is not happy here in Real Change land. While circulation is up, we have yet to reach the truly broadened readership we think we will attract. That takes time. Ad revenue, the other piece of making this change sustainable, has yet to take off as well. Right now, about \$40,000 in foundation funding stands between making it and staff-layoffs. That might sound like a lot, but it's only about a month's operating expenses. Our staff is already stretched very thin.

So, we're asking you to value what we do with your financial support. In the past, we've set a goal for November and December, and our readers have come through. This has meant that two thirds of our donations have come in over the last two months of the year, which makes for a very lean summer. This year, we've set a goal of raising \$60,000 over May and June. We're off to a slow start, but we think that, with your help, we'll make it through.

Over the long-run, we believe a quality weekly publication can be sustained by circulation, ad sales, reader support, and foundation funding. But right now, we're relying on reader support to help pull us through. Please help us make a difference. Join the more than 1,000 regular readers of *Real Change* who wrote a check last year to support our work. There's no time quite like now. ■



At \$27,752 for our first week, we have a long way to go.

**[DONATE NOW]**  
Please help Real Change meet our Summer Fund Drive goal of raising \$60,000. It happens one donation at a time. Visit [realchangenews.org](http://realchangenews.org) to make a secure on-line donation, or use the coupon on page 12 to mail a check today. Thank you for your support.



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

Real Change vendors receive 65¢ of the \$1.00 paid for this paper.

#### 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 StreetWriters 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.

Submissions should be mailed to "Real Change," 2129 2nd Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. Tel. (206) 441-3247; fax. (206) 374-2455.

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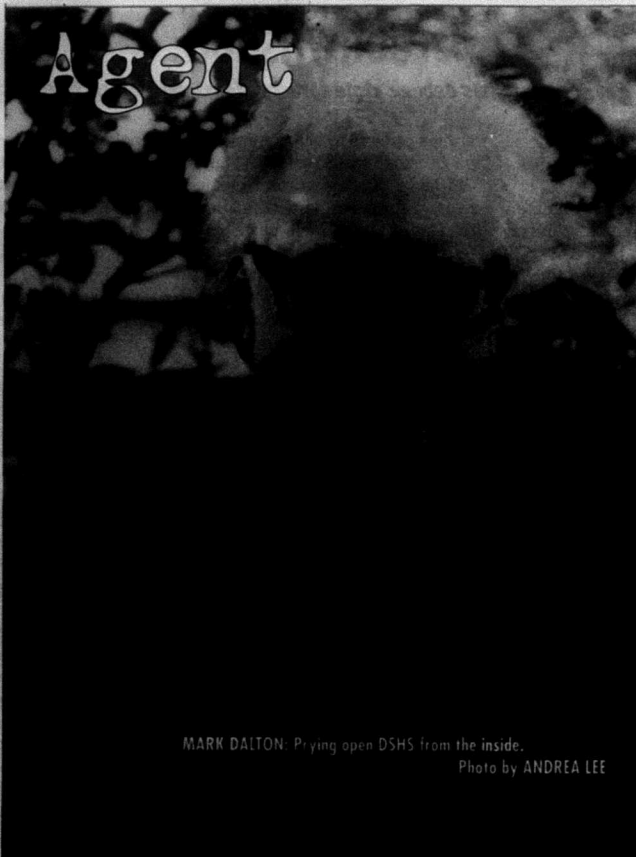
# Change Agent

When social services veteran Mark Dalton found out that he was selected for the Community Hero Award by the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless, he replied, "The real heroes are the ones who work with our clients [Washington's homeless] everyday."

He should know. The man described in his nomination as "consistently at the forefront of change efforts" got his start interning as an orderly in a Nebraska mental hospital, then began working as a caseworker at the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in 1974. Having now worked in the Belltown DSHS office as a supervisor since the mid-'80s, Dalton's progressive approach to DSHS services concentrates on partnering with other community service organizations. By placing its agents within the Seattle Municipal Court, transitional housing, and emergency centers, DSHS is becoming a more tangible presence for its clients and in the community.

Of his 30-plus years of service, Dalton says, "There's not a lot of perks. There's not a lot of prestige. What there is, is a real exchange of human kindness."

—Jade Ingmire



MARK DALTON: Prying open DSHS from the inside.

Photo by ANDREA LEE

## Just Heard ...

### Countering CAFTA

Three congressional representatives from Washington state — Brian Baird, Rick Larsen, and Adam Smith — said last week they will oppose the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) if and when it comes up for a vote in Congress this month.

Labor advocates say the treaty, a follow-up to CAFTA which the Bush Administration signed one year ago, will drain more jobs from the U.S. while exploiting workers and the environment in Central America.

Democrat Norm Dicks, whose district includes the Port of Tacoma, supports CAFTA along with Republicans Dave Reichert and Doc Hastings. Reps. Jim McDermott, Jay Inslee, and Cathy McMorris remain undecided, as do Sens. Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray.

—Cydney Gillis

### Protection

A local activist group aims to bring back Q-Patrol, a group of volunteers dedicated to protecting gay and lesbian citizens on Seattle's streets at night.

Action NW head Michael McAfoose says that private donors and local bars and nightclubs have raised enough money to run a new Q-Patrol for three months. With the upcoming sentencing of the assailants of Micah Painter, a gay man brutally attacked during last year's Pride Week, and the pending court decision on Washington gay marriage, McAfoose anticipates a new anti-gay backlash.

The group will need an estimated \$20,000 to \$25,000 to operate for a full year. Those interested in helping out can consult [actionnw.net](http://actionnw.net).

—Sean Reid

### Occidental: the final cut

City Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck tried to block the plan, but the city got the green light last week to cut down 17 trees in Pioneer Square's Occidental Park.

Last Wednesday, the Pioneer Square Preservation Board voted to give the city Parks Department a certificate of approval for its plan, a \$1.2 million project that includes cutting down 17 of the park's 39 London Plane trees, taking out the wood benches and pergola, replacing the cobblestones with smooth pavers, and installing a stage and bocce ball court.

The certificate of approval was the last step in a contentious process that many Pioneer Square residents say did not reflect their voices — much less those of the homeless who use the park. Construction is expected to begin at the end of the summer.

—Cydney Gillis

## Fanatic Finale

Star Wars junkie's street saga to end

By SEAN REID  
Contributing Writer

I am the biggest *Star Wars* fan you'll ever meet."

The words came as a shock to Jeff Tweiten's then-girlfriend, who had just confided her relief over the absence of *Star Wars* memorabilia in his apartment, the bane of previous boyfriends. "No, you're not," she replied, sensing a joke.

When Tweiten produced a page in his photo album, pictures with other *Star Wars* fans commemorating his Guinness World Record — 136 days waiting in line for *Episode II: Attack of the Clones* — his girlfriend realized it was no joke.

"It was probably the beginning of the end," he says with a grin, cigarette in hand.

Standing outside of Seattle's Cinerama Theater, Tweiten is also bearing witness to the end of his long personal saga. With the release of *Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* on May 19, there will be no more new *Star Wars* movies, according to creator/director George Lucas. Which for Tweiten means no more waiting.

"I'm looking forward to it," he says. "It's been a great experience, but it's for the young-at-heart. I'm a little too old."

The final journey has been a grueling one. Unlike his record-setting foray three years ago, Tweiten has seen his relative comforts of living outside a theater shrink over time and through politics.

In January, 14 days after he began waiting,

Seattle police served him with an order to vacate the Cinerama parking lot in accordance with the city's No-Sit law. Tweiten packed up his iconic couch and laptop, kissing goodbye to the hope of topping his previous record.

What's more, his adventure hadn't always been viewed as a colorful Seattle attraction. People noted how it pointed up the double standard of the No-Sit law, which is often enforced against homeless people.

Tweiten thinks the law is simply too broad. The original intent was to prevent loitering in retail areas, but, he believes, exceptions should be made to movie theaters just like coffee shops with outdoor seating.

Tweiten made a brief stint of waiting at the Seattle Imax, hoping to catch *Star Wars* there instead. Lucas, however, nixed the idea of *Sith* coming to the Imax chain on opening day. So, in late April, Tweiten was granted permission to return to the Cinerama, sans comforts. He spent his last round of waiting very much alone, standing for almost 16 hours a day.

"I think living on the sidewalk is one of the worse things you can possibly do, and I wouldn't wish it on anybody. I think I have enough passion to do it for a movie. But I look at it and [realize] this isn't fun."

He'll be glad to be away from what he considers the threat of nighttime drunks ("You never know what they're going to do"). In addition, he won't miss the dramatic mood swings that come with sitting all day in the rain and thinking to oneself.

As we wrap up the interview, a man walks by Tweiten's chair and sign that reads, "Waiting For *Star Wars*."

"Waiting for *Star Wars*?" the man exclaims. "What a waste of time!"

Tweiten flashes a smile that seems both relieved and sad. He knows he'll never hear words like that again. ■

Jeff Tweiten, in temporary exile at the IMAX Theater at Pacific Science Center.

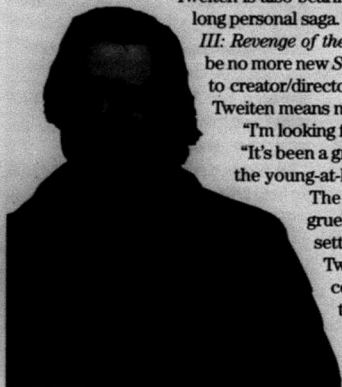


Photo by Ken Dean

# Greenwashed

Environmentalists debunk state forests' "sustainable" certificate

By BREEANA LAUGHLIN  
Real Change Intern

"This certification assures consumers and the general public that forested trust lands in Western Washington are managed sustainably and with environmental sensitivity." King County councilmember Jane Hague.

Environmentalists say Washington State's Department of Natural Resources' recent "Green" certificate for wood from state forests is a "greenwashing" program that the timber industry uses to compete with the truly meaningful label.

"Green" labels were created to help consumers select wood products that have been independently certified as being produced from responsibly managed forests. But now these labels come from different sources, and environmentalists say it's important for consumers to know which certifications to trust. They are asking the public to choose Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified wood to support good forestry.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was given certification by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), an industry-owned program. The SFI program is overseen by a 15-member "independent" organization, although five of those members consist of industry members of the American Forest and Paper Association.

A group of environmental organizations, including the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, the American Lands Alliance, and the Environmental Protection Information Center, call SFI a case of "the fox guarding the henhouse." The

groups came together to form a campaign called "Don't Buy SFI." They say SFI lacks many important elements needed for credible certification in the United States, including elements found in the FSC program. The FSC program is regarded as the most meaningful forest certification system.

Becky Kelley, campaign director for Northwest Environment Watch, says the Sustainable Forestry Initiative certifies standard industrial forestry practices including large clear-cuts, heavy use of toxic chemicals, and logging in old-growth forests.

"These are all things that are allowed under the SFI label," says Kelley. "It is not a credible label of sustainable forest industry."

In addition, Kelley says SFI doesn't deal properly with social issues protecting local workers and indigenous people. She says that unlike SFI, the FSC certification has a social component that balances environmental, social, and economic concerns.

The SFI certification is more of a financial goal than an environmental achievement. Many large retailers including Home Depot, Staples, and Office Depot have accepted SFI as an indicator of sustainable forest management. One of the benefits of the "Green" certification is that state forest lands will now be able to tap into this market.

Washington's DNR was praised for

being the first western state to obtain "Green" certification for trust lands.

"This certification assures consumers and the general public that forested trust lands in Western Washington are managed sustainably and with environmental sensitivity," says King County councilmember Jane Hague.

But environmentalists say the certification is a very attainable goal.

"It's better than nothing, but there's no good reason why our state shouldn't have already had these standards," says Eric de Place, senior research associate at Northwest Environment Watch. "What they should be looking to do is adopt FSC certifications."

The state lands were certified under the SFI program without having to change their practices. The certification acknowledged that forest management was already consistent with the SFI standard, says Public Lands Commissioner Doug Sutherland.

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative released their revised certification standards at the beginning of the year. The environmental organization American Lands Alliance found that while the SFI standards include some small improvements, many of the changes fail to require concrete outcomes. They report that until the SFI is fundamentally reformed, it will continue to certify forest destruction and mislead consumers. ■

## Short Takes

### Think Tank

Think just because your cash is low you can't be part of discussing the consequences of global oil depletion, or moving peacefully toward an economy based on alternative energy? Think again.

Money is not a factor in participating in *Beyond Oil: Challenges and Opportunities for Peace, Jobs, Justice*, a one-day conference this Saturday, May 14, at Seattle Unity Church, 200 Eighth Ave. N. Keynote speaker Michael Klare, defense correspondent for *The Nation*, will join 10 other panelists in addressing topics such as "What is 'Peak Oil?'" Environmental Justice, Personal Responsibility, and Lifestyle."

Registration for the conference costs \$20, which includes a vegetarian lunch. Still, spokesperson Ellen Finkelstein says no one will be turned away for lack of funds. "We don't want to make the financial thing the critical choice for those who want to come and talk about these issues," says Finkelstein.

You can pre-register at [www.wpsr.org](http://www.wpsr.org).

—Rosette Royale

### \$10.7 million for vets?

The Veterans Subcommittee of the King County Council got the OK last week to start drafting a new tax levy that would generate \$10.7 million a

year to fund services for veterans — an urgent need, council members say, for the droves of soldiers starting to return from Iraq.

The Veterans Subcommittee is part of the council's Regional Policy Committee, which voted to send the proposal to the full King County Council for a vote. The levy would add a tax of 4.1 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The council is expected to hold at least one public hearing on the levy before it voting to place it on the November ballot. If voters approve it, the money would increase trauma counseling, provide domestic violence counseling, pay for job training and assistance, fund housing assistance and cash grants to help prevent homelessness, and create a program to help incarcerated veterans from re-offending.

With more than 180,000 veterans living in King County — 1,600 of them homeless — "The levy will ensure our returning troops and their families receive the support they deserve," says Sonny Putter, a member of the regional committee.

Low-income advocates say the levy doesn't go far enough, however. Many nonprofit organizations in Seattle are currently working on a general levy that would fund human services across the board. If voters approve it, the veterans' levy could make it difficult to pass a broader human services measure in 2006.

—Cydney Gillis

### REET goes to street

The Seattle City Council voted Monday to spend \$2.5 million in extra real-estate excise taxes on streets improvements and the Mount Baker Boat House.

The city discovered earlier this year that it had collected \$5 million more in REET revenue last year than it expected. The council decided to keep half the money in reserve in case remodeling the city's fire stations costs more than expected. The rest will go to helping expand the Mount Baker Boathouse (\$300,000) and making street improvements.

The street projects include \$100,000 for lighting at the new hygiene center slated for Pioneer Square, \$100,000 for a pedestrian signal on Crown Hill where a boy was hit by a car, \$500,000 for signals at other intersections, \$500,000 for cameras that the city will use to ticket cars that run red lights, and \$1 million for street maintenance and arterial paving.

—Cydney Gillis

### CASA Latina pulls out

Baffled by a no-in-my-backyard groundswell, CASA Latina has withdrawn a bid to purchase the vacant Chubby & Tubby building in the heart of Rainier Valley.

But staff and supporters of the Latino employment and education agency said at a May 10 press conference that the reason for scrapping a plan to build housing and a day-labor dispatch center on

the site was mostly financial.

"They did due diligence, and decided it's not the right decision." CASA Latina "is not running away," said Rogelio Rojas, executive director of SeaMar Community Health Clinics.

Spending \$1.5 million to bring electrical and other systems up to code in the old retail store is less preferable than building from scratch on vacant land. It's not clear just where or when that land will be found.

Agency supporters said that they hadn't ruled out the Rainier Valley in searching for a place hospitable to families and within easy reach of public transportation. In fact, over several months of talks mediated by the mayor's office, they had gained the support for their search from a half-dozen neighborhood groups that had voiced their opposition to the Chubby & Tubby location. "We have buy-in [from the neighbors] to find a space in the Rainier Valley," said Matias Valenzuela, the agency's board president.

But those neighbors' opposition wasn't the deciding factor in disregarding the site.

"If we had wanted it, we would have won," said Roberto Maestas of El Centro de La Raza. He said he'd "pray for" a place "in mi barrio, the Rainier Valley."

—Adam Hyla



## Catalytic Creatives

Art of Resistance conference to embrace change in a divided nation

By CYDNEY GILLIS  
Staff Writer

**[Conference]**  
Art of Resistance, second annual conference of workshops devoted to strengthening artists and their imagery/messages, takes place May 14-15, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (\$30 or donation - no one turned away), with performances and talk by actor/activist Ed Asner (as follows) at Capitol Hill Arts Center, 1621 12th Ave., Seattle. For more information, call 206-359-1214 or go to [riseup.net/artofresistance](http://riseup.net/artofresistance).

**[Dance]**  
"Resistance is Fertile," closing dance performance by "Hands of Kali Belly Dance Troupe," Sunday, 4 p.m.

Graduate student Alina Padilla-Miller, who will lead a workshop Sunday on Chilean women's story-telling tapestries under Pinochet, is making her own contemporary-themed arpillera on same-sex unions.

Who is fighting for democracy? It would be nice if it were the soldiers. But really, it's the artists.

In 1973, after the assassination of Chile's elected president, Salvador Allende, General Augusto Pinochet began a U.S.-backed reign of terror in which thousands of supporters of democracy disappeared, never to be seen again.

Mothers, wives and sisters never gave up asking what happened to their men. Despite government threats, the women did something wonderfully subversive: they started sewing and smuggling out colorful tapestries that depicted Pinochet's murder and mayhem.

It took 17 years. But, eventually, the tapestries — called *arpilleras* — helped bring down the repressive regime. In Seattle, a group of artists is working to do the same by making art more beautiful — and more powerful.

That, in essence, is what Art of Resistance, a Seattle conference now in its second year, is all about. In two days of workshops and performances — ranging from hip hop to printmaking to a massive street performance Saturday titled "Sleepwalking Apocalypse" — organizers are hoping creative people will use the Capitol Hill event to clarify their artistic message and vision of the future.

"The idea is to send out legions of politically charged artists," says co-organizer John Boylan, a Microsoft employee and last editor of *Reflex*, a former arts journal in Seattle.

Boylan is part of a small group of longtime Seattle artists/activists who have organized the conference, including theater director Ed Mast and poet and filmmaker Meg McHutchison, the original project director for Seattle's Teatro ZinZanni.

McHutchison says the conference — a no-budget, grassroots event that drew 300 to the old Rainier Brewery last year — was started, in part, by anti-war activists who wanted to defeat George W. Bush.

"Last year, there was tremendous energy around getting Bush out of office," McHutchison says. "This year, in the sad aftermath, the question is how do we increase the conversation and build a movement that is based on a positive future?"

Boylan says the goal of the conference isn't to preach but provide tools and information to move forward. A workshop by Beverly Naidus, for instance, will focus on using art to create a sustainable, grassroots cultural movement. Naidus is an artist working with the University of Washington to create an interdisciplinary arts and sciences program.

Another seminar — "Art Across Borders: Mexico" — will examine murals that have come out of the Zapatista resistance movement. The murals will be the focus of a new Art of Resistance conference planned this August in Mexico.

See RESISTANCE, Page 10

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# Reclaiming the Land

*Dr. Owens Wiwa on Global Health, Human Rights, and Corporate Accountability*

By **ROBIN LINDLEY**  
Contributing Writer

Indigenous people must build a powerful network of communities to confront powerful commercial interests. That's one of the reasons I [came to] to Seattle. We must come together and find common ways to end this outrageous corporate behavior.

**N**igerian-born physician Owens Wiwa is an acclaimed advocate for the health and human rights of indigenous peoples, and for global corporate responsibility. He works as a research physician in Toronto and has been a leading voice for the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP).

Dr. Wiwa's brother, celebrated Nigerian writer and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, founded MOSOP in 1990 to protest the environmental destruction and human rights abuses caused by Shell Oil in Ogoni — a small, oil-rich area in the Niger Delta of west-central Africa with a population of about 500,000. Oil spills, sulfur-spewing gas flares, and faulty pipelines had devastated the land and water, while the Ogoni people remained impoverished. Dr. Wiwa treated diseases caused by oil-industry pollution and injuries from the actions of troops under the country's military dictatorship.

In response to MOSOP protests against Shell Oil, the military killed more than 2,000 people and burned 30 villages. Shell allegedly transported and paid the soldiers who attacked the Ogonis. Dr. Wiwa was arrested twice and tortured four times by the military government. In 1994, Ken Saro-Wiwa was arrested. After a trial on fabricated charges, he and eight other activists were hanged on Nov. 10, 1995. Dr. Wiwa escaped Nigeria with his wife and child. The full story is related in *The Politics of Bones: Dr. Wiwa and the Struggle for Nigerian Oil*, by J. Timothy Hunt, to be published in September.

Dr. Wiwa has sued Royal Dutch Petroleum (Shell Oil) in U.S. court for compensation for the arrest, detention and death of his brother, and for other human rights violations. Shell has moved to dismiss the case at every turn, but in a 2002 landmark ruling, the Supreme Court decided that the Wiwa family has a right to sue for human rights abuses under the Alien Tort Claims Act — opening the door for similar actions by non-citizens for abuses committed outside the U.S.

In Seattle on May 7, Dr. Wiwa addressed human rights and health at a conference sponsored by the

Community Coalition for Environmental Justice. Wiwa spoke recently with Real Change on Nigeria, human rights, and the case against Shell.

**Real Change:** You just returned from Nigeria. Has the situation changed there in the decade since the execution of your brother?

**Dr. Owens Wiwa:** Yes. There have been some changes. Politically, we now have a democratic government, elected representatives, and more freedom of speech.

However, in the area of oil, there is no change. We have more investment in oil by American companies, like Chevron and Mobil, and also European companies like Shell. The U.S. imports more oil from Nigeria now than before the execution of my brother.

In terms of the environment, the oil companies have not improved their methods: they're not clearing up spills, they still lay pipeline on the ground, and there is still no respect for the culture or the customs of the people. They do not consider the people when making decisions.

There also have been protests against both the state and the oil companies in the Niger Delta. The reaction of the Nigerian security forces has been very swift and very brutal, even with peaceful protests. The government terms people who try to protect the environment as "terrorists." The western governments keep quiet. All they want is oil.

**RC:** Have there been efforts to clean up the environment and correct the human rights situation in Nigeria?

**Dr. Wiwa:** In Ogoni, the people have not allowed Shell or any other company to drill since 1995. The companies have refused to clean up the mess they left behind. The oil companies also try to intimidate or bribe people to allow them back, but the people, especially the women, have said no. Oil drilling continues in other parts of the country.

After the execution of my brother and the eight others, the UN Secretary General sent a fact-finding team to Nigeria to investigate their trial and the killings. The UN recommended that the Nigerian government pay compensation to the families of the defendants who were hanged, set up a special commission to look into the environmental devastation, and recommend measures to ameliorate the damage done to the environment and the culture of the people. The government has not followed the UN recommendation because the oil companies will not allow the government to comply.

**RC:** How is the health of the people and the land and water in Ogoni?

**Dr. Wiwa:** There is some improvement. The trees are greener. We don't have smoke or sulfur dioxide from the gas flares. Ten years ago, we stopped gas flares and drilling. As a result, people have better health with less prevalence of respiratory disease. And the water is cleaner; there is more fishing. But the underground water and many farmlands are still polluted from oil spills.

The exit of Shell has meant good things for the Ogoni people: a total restoration of dignity because we moved

#### [RESOURCE]

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**DR. WIWA, Cont. from prev. page**

one of the biggest transnational corporations in the world out of our land.

**RC:** The Supreme Court victory was significant in permitting you and your family to sue for human rights abuses in federal court.

**Dr. Wiwa:** Yes, it was very significant. Now anybody can sue a company operating in the U.S. for human rights abuses committed abroad. We are very excited because indigenous communities around the world with grievances against big corporations that control the judiciary in their countries may sue now in the U.S.

We hope this decision gives corporations notice that they'll be held accountable for human rights abuses in foreign lands. We await the outcome of our trial because it will help activists around the world who try to protect what God has given to everybody freely.

**RC:** You've shown great courage. You've mentioned atrocities committed by the Nigerian military in collusion with Shell. Do these atrocities continue in Nigeria?

### Digging a Hole

Each day, I watch the terrible, beautiful machines tear at the earth. Each day, the hole where a building once stood sinks deeper. Blunt metal jaws open and close. Building walls shudder and thud. Only seagulls dare fly over. A city builds on ruins, covers its holes with effort that never ceases. This is the passivity of progress, to watch like a rock the current passing over our eyes, our flesh, shuddering with each blow of the beautiful, terrible machines.

—DAVID THORNBRUGH

**Dr. Wiwa:** Oh yes, definitely.

Right now, in the Niger Delta, this still goes on. Although the government says they're fighting terrorists, we know they are not. They are legitimizing murder.

This happens only in oil-bearing communities. Shell and other companies provide logistics for the military to commit atrocities.

For a long time, powerful commercial interests and governments have colluded to destroy communities. In Australia, the aborigines were reduced to nothing by bad laws made by officials and commercial companies. In Africa, entire communities were removed during the slave trade by commercial interests. It happens still in the oil-bearing areas of the Niger Delta.

Indigenous people must build a powerful network of communities to confront powerful commercial interests. That's one of the reasons I [came to] Seattle. We must come together and find common ways to end this outrageous corporate behavior.

**RC:** As a physician in Ogoni you treated illnesses caused by environmental pollution. Now you describe multinational corporations as "vectors." What is your public health view of multinational corporations?

**Dr. Wiwa:** In my earlier work, I treated the outcome of the environmental devastation, its impact on the health of the people. I saw many cases of respiratory diseases with a high prevalence of asthma, bronchitis, and even lung cancer. Women had a high prevalence of miscarriages. We had a high diarrhea rate from the pollution of the waterways. I treated the outcome of the diseases.

But when MOSOP started, my brother, who was not a physician, talked about the impact of pollution. He was trying to prevent what I was treating — he actually taught prevention. So I had a paradigm shift — why should I wait to treat these diseases when I can join them to prevent the diseases?

From this perspective, the corporations came as vectors, as carriers of diseases, that killed or made people very ill. Good public health practice addresses bad practices, such as the double standard of environmental racism.

**RC:** What can western countries and individuals do to help indigenous people adversely affected by multinational corporations?

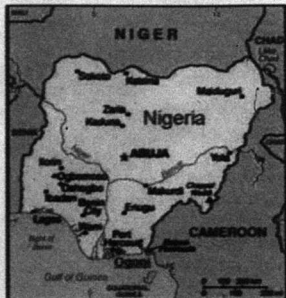
**Dr. Wiwa:** At the individual level, people must find ways to preserve energy in their daily lives. If people use less oil — if they bike or drive smaller cars than SUVs — there won't be a rush to extract as much as possible without caring for the livelihood or the culture of people in the places of extraction.

We also must stop the Bush Administration's continued arming of the Nigerian military. The administration says nothing about the people in the oil-producing areas who are killed or having their rights abused just because American companies continue to extract oil.

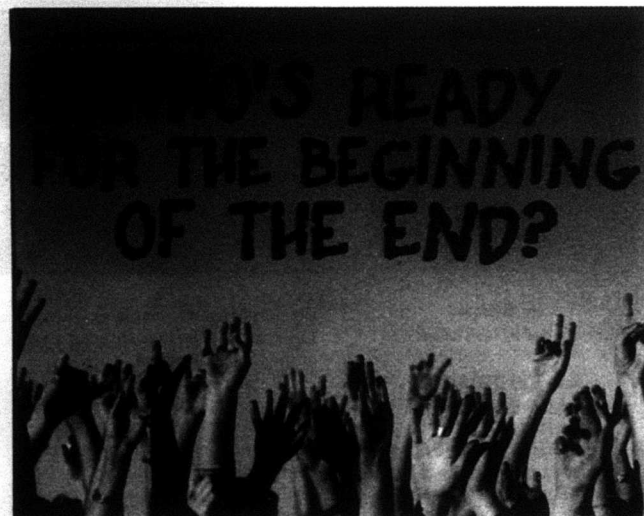
These issues demand American attention. America is still the biggest importer of oil from Nigeria. Americans consume 50 percent of the oil from Nigeria, and they get 10 percent of their oil from Nigeria. So there is a need and an opening for Americans to act to correct the injustices there.

**RC:** You have been very courageous in picking up the standard for your brother's work. I wondered if you feel safe now traveling in Nigeria?

**Dr. Wiwa:** I'm talking about global issues. If I'm afraid in Nigeria, I also must be afraid in Toronto, or anywhere. For me, fear is not a factor. My brother is dead. I was driven away from what I love the most: my people, my home. What else do I have to fear? I've been dead, and I've come back alive. The death of my brother with my colleagues was like dying. I think I've seen the worst anybody can see. What else is there to fear? ■



THE OGONI PEOPLE RESIDE IN SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA, ON THE GULF OF GUINEA.



# UNITE to end homelessness

Join United Way of King County for an evening of music and hope.

Friday, May 20th at  
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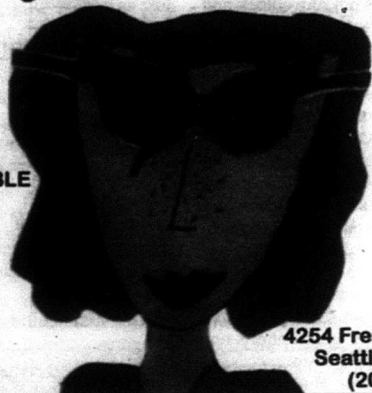


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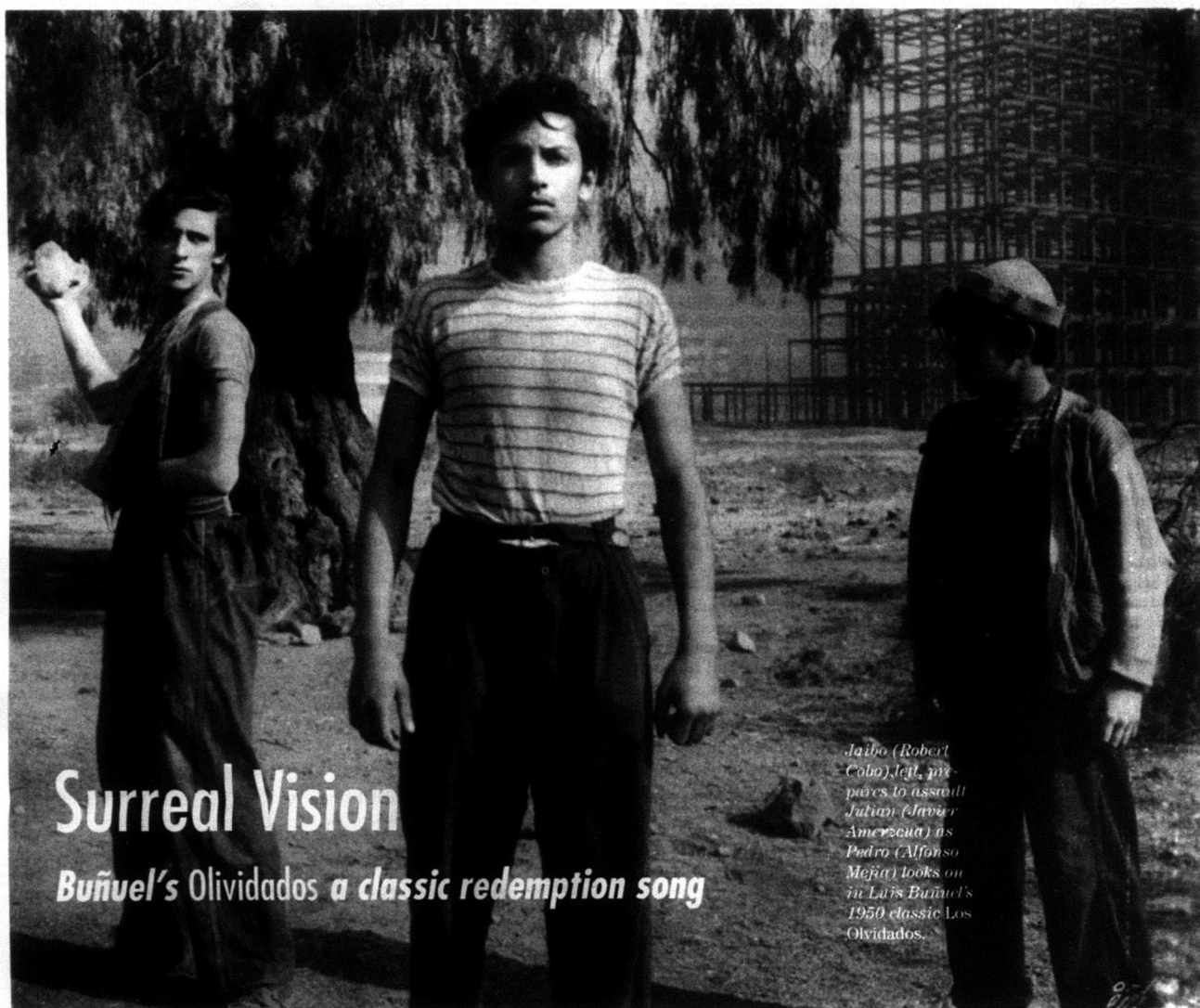
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## Surreal Vision

*Buñuel's Olvidados a classic redemption song*

*Jaibo (Robert Cobo), left, prepares to assault Julian (Javier Amerzuea) as Pedro (Alfonso Mejía) looks on in Luis Buñuel's 1950 classic Los Olvidados.*

**Los Olvidados**  
Directed by Luis Buñuel

Review by LESTER GRAY  
Contributing Writer

**L**os Olvidados suffers from an undeserved reputation, celebrated for the wrong reason. Released in 1950, the film is still noted for its genuine portrayal of poverty. That's a misread. Even for its era, the social depictions are shallow. Why Luis Buñuel's film should be applauded is for its measured application of surrealism and Freudian nuance to a classic framework, making a damned good story in the process.

Also entitled *The Young and the Damned*, this tale of impoverishment and violence in Mexico City premiered, unwisely, in that very same town. This airing of the metropolis' "dirty laundry" stunned audience members who felt that the movie was insulting, tarnishing the nation's image. One female viewer reportedly attacked Buñuel. This sen-

timent changed a year later when the film captured the Best Director award at the Cannes Festival.

*Los Olvidados* takes place in a shantytown, where a gang of pre-adolescents, devoid of purpose and sustenance, eagerly submits to the sociopathic leadership of a young adult named Jaibo, a recent escapee from a detention facility. Through unfortunate circumstances, Pedro, a member of this group, finds himself joined at the hip to this malevolent street general, who stakes a claim on the young man's soul and psyche, setting up a struggle that informs the heart of this classic.

Pedro's battle to extricate himself from this relationship begins when he forswears delinquency to pursue legitimate employment. His immediate goal is to capture the affection of his mother, who holds him in such a curious contempt, she won't even spare him a meal. His road to redemption is steep, and he is measured at every turn. It's a true hero's journey.

Counter to Buñuel's proclamations, this compelling tale could have been set anywhere on the social spectrum, with scenes in penthouses just as well as outhouses. Nonetheless, the opening voice-over classifies what we are about to witness as an inner-city infestation that defies remedial efforts, implicitly tying poverty to deviant behavior and loose morals. Pedro's mother is an illiterate but fetching washwoman whose life is saddled with conceptions out of wedlock and an indiscriminating sexual thirst. The street gang preys solely on the infirm—the blind and the crippled, rendering these craven acts as primitive, an everyday occurrence in the jungle.

These images however, were born of a noble effort by Buñuel, raised and educated as a privileged European, to chronicle a culture, an ocean and light years removed from his origins. A respected surrealist, he deftly employed his craft to disassemble the prevailing social assumptions of the time, his films escorting the gentry where neither their imaginations nor vacations could take them.

In *Los Olvidados*, Buñuel escorts

us all through a sophisticated allegory. There are no sentimental landmarks, good and evil are clearly defined, and the journey is rich.

Beginning this weekend the Northwest Film Forum screens a newly refurbished 35mm print. This new issue also comes with a two-minute alternative ending, discovered in 1996, which apparently plays after the closing credits. I'm not even going to watch this appendage. I like this story just as it is.

## The Alphabet Begins with Agony

The difference between agony and anguish is the old man seated at a bench just pissed himself dark stain gray sweat pants looking away as I walk past in anguish leaving him behind in agony.

—DAVID THORNBRUGH



Adventures  
in Irony

© Dr. Wes Browning



My main complaint about the movie is that the costume designers who created Marvin took the "brain the size of a planet" line far too literally. Also, a movie should be over when the credits roll.

folia in the brain. In normal people, this "flipping" occurs roughly as often as movie frames. This is why humans like movies. Deep down we recognize ourselves in them.

So when I saw *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (H2G2) movie, my first reaction was to greet it. My second reaction was to look for other things that the H2G2 movie and I shared, aside from discontinuity. Hobbies? Signs?

Before going there, I'll review the movie really fast.

Douglas Adams mostly wrote it. Douglas Adams mostly wrote H2G2's other incarnations. So objections that it differs from the book are irrelevant. Leave it. Anyway, it's more faithful to the book than you'd expect, given that Adams would hardly have wanted to merely repeat himself. Some jokes are missing, but new ones replace them. You want the old jokes? Read the book again. My main complaint about the movie is that the costume designers who created Marvin took the "brain the size of a planet" line far too literally. Also, a movie should be over when the credits roll. No fair inserting content two minutes after the end, so impatient Americans like me never get to see it. Also, Qwestular Rontok's relationship to Zaphod Beeblebrox sorely needed fleshing out, as they say.

**SPOILER ALERT:** I will soon give away portions of plot.

What I really want to talk about is how, gosh, did any of you ever notice how *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* is all about issues we constantly harp on here at *Real Change*? In case you haven't noticed this, I will list just some of the ways.

1) We at *Real Change* constantly bitch and moan about homelessness.

Likewise, Arthur Dent, the central character of H2G2, perpetually bitches about planetlessness.

SHELTER, Continued from Page 1

Painter says that his department has been working for several months on the RFP, soliciting information from 30 or so city-funded agencies on what standards should be required. "We're trying to pull together what are best practices that should be in place already. Most of which are in place [in funded agencies]," says Painter.

The RFP process, he says, is an opportunity for agencies, whether currently funded or not, to have a chance to demonstrate how they are best poised to serve the city's goals. Current funding hovers near the \$60 million mark. Future funding has yet to be determined, but Painter says he believes it will be close to the same figure.

Painter says once the RFP is finalized, applications will be disseminated to currently funded groups in early summer, through an email providing a link to download necessary forms. The department will use information from organizations such as the Coalition for the Homeless to contact those agencies not currently funded, to make applications available to them as well. The department anticipates receiving agency proposals by late summer. Final deci-

sions will be sent to agencies a month and a half after that, Painter estimates.

The notion of a shelter, as spelled out in council legislation, covers the spectrum from a "winter response" shelter, — an "interim" shelter — or longer-term shelter for the chronically homeless. Also to be included are outcome goals for transitional housing services. The standards are to be consistent with recommendations housed within "A Roof Over Every Bed in King County: Our Community's Ten-year Plan to End Homelessness."

"This [the RFP] is a way to move forward toward the goal of accomplishing the 10-year Plan," says Painter.

And lurking beneath the soon-to-be created standards lays a question: How can standards be implemented that all agencies, across the board, can afford to implement?

Rasmussen says he's not looking for the requested standards to be so high that they

H2G2

2) We complain about bureaucrats and their callous disregard for human needs. The H2G2 movie makes the Vogons primary antagonists. The Vogons are an entire alien species with callous disregard for human needs. Or even Vogonic needs, really. Arthur Dent can prevail against the Vogons largely because, being British, he knows how to queue. Likewise, having been homeless, I know how to wait at a DSHS office.

3) Vogons detest hitchhiking, a practice that involves getting an unauthorized ride. Many Earthlings detest panhandling. At *Real Change* we provide an authorized alternative — work.

4) In one scene Arthur Dent and company are trying to rescue Trillian (another human) and every time any idea occurs to one of them, he is whacked in the face by presumptuous entities to whom he had not been previously introduced. Likewise, whenever homeless people get ideas for solving their own problems, it turns out that presumptuous politicians, NIMBYs, and radicals who are more-radical-than-thou (but not themselves actually helping in any way) whack them. Figuratively.

5) To the Vogons, who have no imaginations, Trillian can't establish her identity unless she can legitimately claim a currently existing home planet. To the U.S. Postal Service in Seattle, it is unimaginable that Seattle residents who don't have street addresses might require a post office box in the same vicinity as the social services they need. No, none of us has a space ship that can get us to a suburban branch office that provides P.O. boxes to homeless people and back downtown in time to line up for food and shelter. Yes, we all need to get mail. It is no longer a luxury. The 18th Century is over.

6) In the movie, the bowl of petunias thinks "Oh no, not again," just before colliding with a medium-sized planet at several hundred kilometers per hour. Here at *Real Change*, that's our reaction to most every state budget announcement, and every election. "Oh no, not again."

Splat. ■

eventually force an agency to close its doors. He knows that most advocates believe it's better to be under a roof than out on the street, and he wants all agencies to be able to meet any requirements. "I think we should have standards that are attainable," says Rasmussen.

Painters says that the draft is just that — a draft — that he's unable to say just what the requested standards will be. But he hints the shelter standards will be common-sense, dealing with public safety and health issues for mass residences.

"As we begin to move from a mindset of basic safety to moving toward [a mindset] of helping people move on," says Painter, "we want to upgrade what we have." ■



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Thursday, April 28, 2-4 p.m., Elliott

**Avenue W. - Woods to east.** Victim, a transient white male aged 31, entered City Team Ministries to report he had been assaulted. He stated that he sleeps in the wooded area behind City Team Ministries, and that overnight he was assaulted by unknown suspects. He thinks he may have lost consciousness, but isn't sure, stating he fell asleep after the incident, and upon waking walked to the City Team Ministries to report the assault. He did not see who assaulted him, and wasn't sure if any of his property had been taken. He had suffered a contusion to the right forehead area, and had pain in his head and neck. He was treated at the scene by Seattle Fire and taken to Harborview Medical Center.

Thursday, April 28, 6:45 p.m., South

**Lake Union Park.** Victim stated he was drinking in the park when an unknown suspect came up to him and tried to take his backpack. Victim, a transient white male aged 42, and the suspect, a Native American male in his 30s, began fighting. Victim stated that the "suspect got the worst of it." Victim called the police, and was treated at the scene by Seattle Fire for a bloody nose. The suspect is still at large.

Friday, April 29, 10:19 p.m., 112 4th

**SE, W Seattle Hotel.** Officers responded to a report by W Hotel security staff that a male transient was in the hotel restaurant, and was refusing to leave. The officers arrived and contacted the suspect, a white male aged 50, and ran a routine radio check on his name. It came back with a misdemeanor warrant that was verified, and the suspect was placed under arrest and booked into King County Jail.

Saturday, April 30, Time Unknown,

**Downtown Seattle.** Victim, a transient white female aged 51, was being booked into King County Jail on a DOC (Department of Corrections) retainer. While she was in the pre-book area she stated that she had been raped earlier in the day. She was transported to Harborview Medical center for treatment and evaluation. At Harborview an officer attempted to interview her about the assault. She was uncooperative, but did provide some information. She stated an unknown suspect had attacked her during the daytime, and said that she did not want to talk about the incident because her attacker, a Black male in his 30s, had told her that if she spoke to police he would kill her, and said, "I'll be watching you." She at first said he had not removed her clothes or had any sort of sexual encounter with her, but then stated that he had forced her clothing off and slammed her to the ground, but had not had sex with her. She was unable to say where this had happened. Her left hip was injured during the incident, and she remained at Harborview for treatment and evaluation.

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.

## RESISTANCE, Continued from Page 5

In a program on the Chilean arpilleras, Alina Padilla-Miller, a UW graduate student in digital media, will talk about how she discovered the tapestries while working at a gallery at the University of Colorado.

"The colors were rich and vibrant and there was a variety of textures," Padilla-Miller recalls.

When the show was hung, however, she discovered dark stories of torture and despair in the brightness. That led her to research the burlap-and-fabric tapestries, which she learned were originally sewn by a group of about 20 women under the protection of the Catholic Church.

Once the arpilleras started getting out of the country, so did the horror stories. Padilla-Miller says some women even sewed small pockets on the back of their tapestries and included handwritten accounts of what had happened to them.

The images and messages drew such attention that Pinochet banned the tapestries. The dictator's wife even brought together a group of women to sew happy arpilleras.

"A lot of people in communications ignore small media," but it "has powerful effects," Padilla-Miller says.

"I'm just convinced that it's the arts that can bring about change in this extremely polarized country we have," says artist and co-organizer Lisa Bade, who will lead a mural painting during the conference.

"Art," Bade adds, "can help people see each other and understand realities from another point of view in ways that aren't as threatening as political rhetoric." ■



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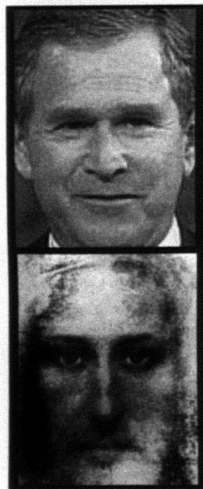
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President Bush claims that as a Bible believing Christian he must oppose same-sex marriage. He voices no concerns about granting huge tax breaks to the wealthy.

Jesus, on the other hand, says nothing about homosexuality, but he often denounces the hoarding of wealth.

### Keystone United Church Of Christ

5019 Keystone Place  
Seattle WA 98103  
Worship Sunday 10:30

## Letters

[editor@realchangenews.org](mailto:editor@realchangenews.org)

### County land: keep off

Dear Real Change,

The last paragraph of your Just Heard ("Camp Town Clampdown," May 4) states that churches uniformly imposed the moratorium. It should read, "uniformly OPPOSED."

Speakers on behalf of mainline faith communities spoke in favor of the use of county land for homeless encampments. The Republicans on the council, joined by a couple of Dems, passed a one-year moratorium on the use of public land, leaving it once more up to the faith communities to provide the hospitality that all citizens should be ready to give.

Pat Taylor  
Shoreline

### And now, a word from the homophobes...

Dear Real Change,

I used to buy the Real Change newspaper every month outside of Ballard Bartells, but stopped some time ago. I thought you may like to know why. I wanted to support the homeless and read about their issues but your paper was becoming, instead, a voice for the gay community. In one issue, especially, you'd have thought I'd picked up their newspaper by accident.

When you get back to the homeless and their concerns, let me know.

A former reader

### It's everybody's city

Dear Real Change,

I was a friend of Victor Steinbrueck, the visionary architect who was the driving force behind the community effort to save the Pike Market from short-sighted developers. For those newly arrived to this municipality — and who may now be some of the "Friends" of Victor's eponymous park — I have a few things to say about the unfortunate removal of

the benches and the proposals to install surveillance cameras in and around Steinbrueck Park ["Ground War" April 6-12].

The Market is a unique urban landscape that is ever teeming with humanity. The locals of every stripe are joined daily by tourists, travelers, and transients from everywhere on earth. Many of the locals are low-income and elderly folks who are able to remain a vital part of the Market thanks to subsidized affordable housing.

I recall Victor stating that one of the most striking transformations in downtown Seattle in his lifetime was the physical changes that affected Seattle's Skid Road community. In spite of the many problems that could be found on the Skid Road, there was always housing: flophouses, cheap hotels, and assorted affordable shelters. And in old Seattle there were places to sit and congregate. Chairs and seats inside old smoky taverns and greasy spoons and cheap restaurants and lounges and movie houses; and places outside, like parks with benches.

Most people who enjoy Steinbrueck Park do so in perfectly legal, healthy, and sociable ways. In no way should benches be taken out or cameras installed. Whoever proposed this idea is short-sighted, meanspirited, and desirous only of removing whatever social problems the park may host out of sight and out of mind. As for the benches in the northern end of the Pike Market itself, they should be restored. Period.

If the presence of homeless people in the park bothers you, I say work to end homelessness. If the presence of addicted people in the park bothers you, I say find out about the dearth of addiction treatment services in this county and do something about it. If the presence of unemployed people in the park bothers you, find out why this nation has long accepted an unemployment rate of anywhere from 4 to 7 percent as a definition of "full employment."

Unless something is done about underlying social problems, we could tear up every park and remove every public seating area and every public bench in the city, and we will do nothing but allow social ills to fester while creating a more unlivable city for everyone.

Joe Martin  
Seattle

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](mailto:editor@realchangenews.org)

### CLASSIFIED

#### Events

**THE HARMONY CONCERT.** Maestro Sri Chinmoy performs on traditional & exotic instruments from around the world. May 21, 8 p.m., Hec Edmundson, UW. Free. Tickets required. (206) 522-2700 or [www.harmonconcert.org](http://www.harmonconcert.org)

#### Jobs

**Teacher - Preschool Cooperative in Central Seattle.** PT lead position, minimum 2 yrs education/experience in early childhood development, ability to work well with parents and families. Call (206) 719-7574 or email resume to: [wwhathaway@excite.com](mailto:wwhathaway@excite.com).

#### Volunteer

**Volunteer Chore Services:** Want to make a difference? Help low-income elders and adults living with disabilities remain independent by volunteering with Volunteer Chore Services, a program of Catholic Community Services. Volunteers assist with light housework, transportation, or yard work for 2 to 4 hours a month. Flexible hours; locations throughout King County; groups welcome; endless rewards. For more information, call 888-649-6850 or email [vc@ccsww.org](mailto:vc@ccsww.org).

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# Calendar

## This Week's Top Ten

### Wednesday 5/11

The Eastside Fellowship of Reconciliation presents the film *Preventive Warriors*, featuring Noam Chomsky, Tariq Ali, and others speaking on the national security strategy released by the White House in 2002 that lays out a plan for anticipatory warfare — reserving the right to attack any nation that aspires to what the government perceives to be a potential military rival or threat. 7 p.m. at the Bradford Center, 700 - 108th Ave. N.E., Bellevue.

EMP presents Bob Dylan's *American Journey, 1956-1966*. The acclaimed retrospective features artifacts from the Bob Dylan Archives, EMP's permanent collection, and the Smithsonian, including handwritten lyric and letters instruments and rare memorabilia. The exhibit features early television and concert film footage. Runs through July. Experience Music Project, 325 Fifth Avenue N. Information: (206)367-5483 or [www.emplive.com](http://www.emplive.com).

### Thurs 5/12

Self-help author and life coach Toby Thompkins discusses his book, *The Real Lives of Strong Black Women: Transcending Myths, Reclaiming Joy*, a book that presents questions, makes suggestions, and brings good stories. 5 p.m. at Elliott Bay Books, 101 S. Main St. Information: (206)624-6600.

### Friday 5/13

The Pentecost Jubilee Festival presents noted biblical teacher and activist Ched Myers, who discusses the danger of the "end times dominionist" teachings of many evangelical ministries. Is this nation moving towards a fascist state that uses Christian symbols and language to justify militarism? The cost of the festival is \$25. Runs through Sunday, 5/15 at Trinity United Methodist Church, 6512 23rd Ave. N.W. Information: [www.tumseattle.org](http://www.tumseattle.org) or Rich Lang at (206)784-2227.

### Saturday 5/14

Washington state Jobs with Justice hosts a free screening of *Los Trabajadores / The Workers*. A panel discussion on how the development of South Lake Union may negatively impact immigrant workers follows. 7-9 p.m. at Consolidated Works, 500 Boren Ave. N.

### Monday 5/16

"How Many Species Will Survive the 21st Century?" is the topic addressed by Dr. Peter Raven. Various scientists calculate that as many as two thirds of all terrestrial species might be driven to extinction during this century.

Dr. Raven says that to rescue as many species as possible, we must double our efforts to attain sustainability everywhere. 3:45-6:00 p.m., Physics Astronomy Bldg., room A118, University of Washington Campus. Info: [depts.washington.edu/biology](mailto:depts.washington.edu/biology).

Local author Gloria DeGaetano talks about parenting well in a media age. She offers common-sense advice to parents about guiding their children through today's popular culture and screen saturation of television, computers, and video games. 7p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Avenue, or call 1-800-838-8006.

### Monday 5/16

Author John Vallant talks about the odd events surrounding the cutting down of the world's only giant golden spruce, an act of environmental vandalism in a protest of the clearcutting of British Columbia's old-growth forest. 7p.m., University Book Store. Information: [jsis.artsci.washington.edu/programs/canada/](mailto:jsis.artsci.washington.edu/programs/canada/).

### Wednesday 5/18

Journey to Nigeria in November 2005. Become an international citizen diplomat. Global Citizen Journey is taking 20 U.S. delegates to live and work for two to three weeks with a diverse group of Nigerians. Together, we'll build the first library in the "creeks" riverine area of the Niger Delta and participate in workshops to build compassionate listening. Find out how you can get involved. 7 to 8:30 p.m., Safeco Jackson Street Community Center, 306 23rd Ave. S. Information: Susan Partnow, (206)789-8697, or [www.globalcitizen-journey.org](http://www.globalcitizen-journey.org).



The great sitarist Ravi Shankar, with whom the Beatles studied, returns for an evening of raga. Accompanying him is his daughter, also a highly respected musician. 8p.m. Saturday, May 14, Benaroya Hall, Third Ave. and Union Street. Tickets by phone (206)215-4747 or online at [www.seattlesymphony.org](http://www.seattlesymphony.org).

## Director's Corner

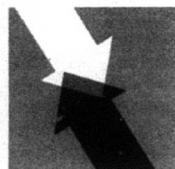


Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with the Concerned Lifers' Organization, a prisoners' group at Monroe State Reformatory. The "reformatory" part of the prison's name has long been an anachronism. All society wants to do now is punish. Most of the programs that once existed to offer prisoners a different future have been eliminated.

Among those that I met were Al-Kareem Shaheed, Vance Bartley, and Stevan Dozier, all African-Americans and all part of the first wave of prisoners sentenced under Washington State's 1993 Three Strikes rule. The crime that put Shaheed away, second-degree burglary, would have normally earned him 13 months. A dozen years later, Shaheed, still a young man, is behind bars for life.

Under the cover of bureaucracy and in the name of fear, society has developed a voracious appetite for bodies to feed the prison system. The economic top two-thirds of us lives in fear of the rest, and Black men in particular, in the words of one advocate, have gone from the "plantation to the projects to the prisons."

Even as Washington State constructs yet another prison, efforts this legislative session to exclude second-degree burglary from the Three Strikes rule failed miserably. Prisoners are the political untouchables. If ever a social justice issue deserved a higher profile, this is it. Look for us to shine a spotlight here over issues to come.



## First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

## Support Farm Worker Justice

**Issue:** The people who put the food on our table are often faced with fear and intimidation because many employers use the threat of deportation to ensure their silence. AgJOBS (S. 359/H.R. 884) would allow undocumented farm workers to earn the right to permanently stay in this country by continuing to work in agriculture. With broad bipartisan support, this is a comprehensive bill negotiated by the United Farm Workers and the agricultural industry.

"...We have already been here 11 years and we have not been able to go to Mexico. In my husband's case, his mother died and he carries the pain of not having been able to see her one last time, at the funeral, and all because he is undocumented. I also start to think a lot and I worry about what would happen with my family if they deport me. I would have to take one of my children with me and leave the others. They would suffer and so would I."

—Undocumented farm worker from Washington State

**Background:** United Farm Workers president Arturo S. Rodriguez says, "AgJOBS is clearly the only viable, bipartisan solution for our nation's agricultural industry. It places farm workers at the front of the immigration debate. No genuine immigration reform proposal has gotten this far."

"AgJOBS is a milestone for growers seeking a legal and stable work force. It means hope for immigrant farm workers who perform some of the most important labor in our nation but constantly live with danger and fear. No worker should have to sacrifice his or her life to feed, clothe, and house a family. Yet that tragedy happens regularly along the U.S.-Mexico border. More people died crossing the border in the last 10 years than perished on Sept. 11, 2001."

AgJOBS means:

- Undocumented farm workers earning the right to permanently stay in this country by continuing to work in agriculture: 100 days during the 18 months before enactment to earn temporary legal status plus another 360 days over three to six years after passage to earn permanent legal status.
- Guarantee of workers' rights, including decent pay, working conditions, and protections from abuse.
- Encouraging families to stay together and fully participate in the society they help feed.

**Action:** AgJOBS may come to a vote in Congress soon. Help farmworkers by urging them to vote for the bill when it comes to the floor for a vote. Visit [www.ufw.org](http://www.ufw.org) to learn more and to take action to stop the abuse and exploitation that undocumented farm workers endure.

## UNEQUAL, Continued from Page 1

effort to raise community awareness, says it's about doing whatever it takes to get pregnant women at highest risk the help they need.

"That could be helping women find housing, helping a woman who is 'using' to get substance abuse treatment, or helping a woman feel good enough about herself to leave the house to get the prenatal care she needs," says Carlos.

"It means establishing trust with people who have a reason not to trust the system."

Carlos and Barkan agree that infant mortality is not simply a problem for Public Health; increased funding and community effort is needed.

Dr. Plough agrees: "This is a whole health care system problem, not just a Public Health problem."

He reasons that proper state funding for early access to prenatal care, coupled with a community focus to make sure institutions are doing their job, would drop the infant mortality rate dramatically.

Among the many organizations raising awareness of the issue, the People Of Color Against AIDS Network (POCAAN) has developed a specific program to combat infant mortality.

Katie Mitchell, POCAAN's program manager for infant mortality prevention, has focused specifically on housing issues for pregnant women of color.

"A pregnant homeless woman may be less likely or able to keep up her prenatal appointments, prepare regular meals that are nutritious, or follow her doctor's orders if special precautions like bed rest are ordered," she says.

POCAAN has been involved in infant mortality prevention since 1991, providing educational workshops and attending community health fairs. Their services include providing temporary gift cards, free home pregnancy tests,

emergency diapers, and referrals to agencies that supply more services.

Mitchell also believes that racism has had a major impact on women of color — affecting everything from their access to housing to their apprehension about seeing a doctor.

**"African Americans fear being judged by those in the social service systems and health care providers. Pride and not wanting to be labeled or stereotyped exists as well."**

**—Katie Mitchell, People of Color Against AIDS Network**

"African Americans fear being judged by those in the social service systems and health care providers. Pride and not wanting to be labeled or stereotyped exists as well," she says.

POCAAN is establishing an African American Women's Dialogue on Infant Mortality and planning an infant mortality prevention awareness week. The Seattle Indian Health Board has already created its own women's dialogue on the subject.

Dr. Plough says that aligning these efforts with proper funding is becoming increasingly difficult. "We are only able to hold these coalitions together for periods of time," he says. "When we can, we make a difference."

POCAAN's program is now required to bill for its services through Medicaid, which requires matching funds — which means POCAAN has had to find funds elsewhere.

Carlos agrees that all these efforts need to be taken to another level. She says change will only take place once the community takes on the issue "from the inside out."

For Plough, it comes down to a simple question: "Why can't all of our population, every part, have the lowest rates which are now only enjoyed by the white population?" ■

**[Resource]**

For more information or to volunteer for POCAAN, please call 206.322.7061 or visit [www.pocaan.org](http://www.pocaan.org)

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—STAN BURRISS

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# Mockingbird Times

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



May 2005

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak out Across the Nation

Volume V, Issue 5

Visit us online at [www.mockingbirdsociety.org](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org) or call 206-323-5437 (KIDS)

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## Youth Advocacy Day: The Survey Results Are In

MOCKINGBIRD STAFF

IN FEBRUARY 2005, A GROUP OF APPROXIMATELY 100 YOUTH AND SERVICE PROVIDERS GATHERED IN OLYMPIA, Washington to advocate for youth in the homelessness, juvenile justice and foster care systems. Youth Advocacy Day, organized by Advocates for System Kids and Youth, (ASK-Y), included youth from the Mockingbird Society and other agencies around the state. Throughout the day, youth met with legislators, Governor Christine Gregoire, and advocates for the rights of children and youth. At the end of the day, youth and service providers completed surveys about their experience. The results from those surveys are now in.

Youth reported overwhelmingly positive experiences with the day. When surveyed, 91% of youth felt they made a difference. One youth stated that, "by being present and being seen, I felt like I made a difference." Other youth reported that talking to legislators and "open[ing] doorways in legislators' heads" demonstrated the youths' impact. Primarily because they felt they had made a difference, all youth surveyed would recommend Youth Advocacy Day to others.

Youth and service providers listed many favorite aspects of Youth Advocacy Day. Meeting legislators topped the list; one youth loved meeting Representative Ed Murray: "I really enjoyed hearing that man!" Youth and service providers also enjoyed hearing stories of everyone's experiences, spending the day with like-minded people, and learning about advocacy issues.

Youth had many other positive things to say about Youth Advocacy Day, as well. One youth said, "speaking up does have an impact!" Another commented that "it was so empowering to see people fighting for equal rights today and it felt so good to be a part of that."

ASK-Y is already planning for Youth Advocacy Day 2006. The results from this survey will help make the day even more effective and positive for all involved. If you would like information on how to get involved with ASK-Y and/or Youth Advocacy Day, please visit [www.mockingbirdsociety.org](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org).

## YOUTH REFLECT ON ADVOCACY DAY

- "[I feel I made a difference because I] expressed thoughts, feelings and beliefs and opened doorways in legislators' heads."
- "Of course [I would recommend Youth Advocacy Day to others]! This day was so inspiring and makes you feel like you really matter."
- "Thank you for caring about homeless youth. There are too many individuals out there in society who walk through life with blinders on, barely acknowledging our existence. It is people like you who make it possible to succeed."
- "I'm so glad I came."
- "[I felt prepared to talk to my legislators because] they're just like me."
- "[I felt I made a difference] because legislators actually listened to us."
- "Just by being here I made a difference."
- "I loved hearing from all the Reps and being able to question them."
- "It was really interesting to see how our government works, while advocating for what we believed in."
- "Advocacy is the most effective way to reach our legislators!"
- "[My favorite part is] the energy that everyone puts into advocating for the issues. It's very exciting to see so many people wanting to make a difference."
- "I really enjoyed learning what exactly youth advocacy was about and why it's so important."
- "I liked hearing about this year's advocacy topics, since I didn't know about them at all and it was very interesting."
- "I have never experienced homelessness or the foster care system, but it was so empowering to see people fighting for equal rights today and it felt so good to be a part of that."

## David Pelzer's *A Child Called It* Recalls Horrors Of Child Abuse

### ECHO SPEED

I RECENTLY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ DAVID PELZER'S *A CHILD CALLED IT* and meet the author himself at an event in Seattle. Pelzer's memoir gave me chills and a strong sense of sympathy for Pelzer, whose childhood was highlighted in this dreadful, and very true tale of abuse. I had so many questions to ask Pelzer while reading this book: questions about his childhood and how it affects him now, questions about his father, questions about his mother. This story is definitely worth the read, not only for the important content but because it's very quick and easy to read. I was able to knock it out in only a couple of hours.

What's strange about *A Child Called It* is that it opens with a happy ending but by the time you get to the end it leaves you with no sense of happiness. It ends abruptly...no closing, no anything (of course there are the sequels). Pelzer reminisces on many childhood stories, and at the end it's almost as if he ran out of horrible stories so he just stopped writing when he finished his last one. I am used to books that close with happy endings...or at least an ending period. However, at the beginning of the book Pelzer puts in a bit about being rescued from his life with his family, so you understand that somehow he survived long enough to be saved.

Pelzer's life as a child was filled with cruel and unusual torture. Something went terribly wrong in his mother's head and she cruelly focused her frustrations on his small little frame. Whenever something went wrong in her life she abused little David. Whenever she was

bored she abused little David. Whenever she was drunk (which was every night) she abused little David. Now, we've all heard abuse stories and maybe even experienced it first hand. It's unfair to say one's abuse story is more significant than another's; abuse is abuse and being traumatized is — well you get the picture. Pelzer's story, however, is very unusual and bizarre. Why you ask? Because his mother was very unusual and bizarre...and unfortunately for David she had a very creative imagination. Here's a short list of some of the things she did: dislocated his arm while beating him; stabbed him with a knife while drunk; forced him to eat spoonfuls of ammonia; forced him to eat food he had vomited up; because she was starving him, she made him vomit everyday after school just in case he had eaten there; tried to make him eat fresh baby poop from his brother's diaper; made him stick his hand over a burning flame; on their kitchen stove; had him clean the bathroom while breathing a toxic gas that was produced from the bucket of bleach and ammonia she locked in there with him (an idea she got from a newspaper).

That's not all...his mother was a woman with serious mental issues. His father—his "hero" felt sorry for little David, but always just stood by and watched as if he could do nothing to stop it. Also, the reaction of his teachers and others is unbelievable. It took them seemingly forever to figure out why David was covered in bruises, famished, and stealing food from other kids. Little David was so brainwashed and afraid of his mother that he wasn't going to say anything. Even the social worker who visited him ignored his skinny body and bruised limbs when he said that it was nothing (hint: don't ask a kid if he's being abused while he's sitting next to his abuser).



Echo Speed with author David Pelzer, May 2005

PELZER CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Letter from the Editor

JIM THEOFELIS



Life at the Mockingbird Society has been a little like getting a drink from a fire hydrant. It's all good and exactly what we want, but there is also a lot of it coming very fast. First, let me remind you that May is National Foster Care Month. I encourage you to give thanks to the 174,000 licensed kinship and non-relative caregivers across the nation. Governor Christine Gregoire has joined other states in celebrating National Foster Care Month on behalf of the 6,000 licensed foster parents across Washington who contribute every day to the lives of children and adolescents. As noted, the Mockingbird Society has been very busy this past month and the forecast looks like more of the same. We are in the process of moving from the third floor to the second floor in the amazing 2100 Building in Seattle. This will allow us to double our space, including a new facility for the Mockingbird Times, ASK-Y and our Youth Speakers' Panel. Additionally, the documentary that youth have been creating is close to completion and we are all excited to see the final product. We continue to be immensely appreciative to the good folks from Wild Geese Productions for all of their support and help in leading this project.

The Mockingbird Foster Family Constellation Project continues to demonstrate quality results through our collaboration with UJIMA Community Services with plans to replicate the Mockingbird Model in five new sites for 2006. This remarkable opportunity is due to a private

philanthropist's generosity and commitment. The Mockingbird Society youth and staff were again active during the Washington legislative session which recently concluded. The children and adolescents in out-of-home care benefited from some very good advocacy and a lot of hard work from several individuals and organizations who deserve recognition: Representative Kagi, Representative Dickerson, Representative Pettigrew as well as Senator Regale, Senator Hargrove and Senator Stevens. Additionally, the good folks at the Children's Alliance as well as Laurie Lippold from Children's Home Society and Casey Trupin from Columbia Legal Services did amazing work on behalf of children, adolescents and youth. Of special note is the passage of SB 5583, sponsored by Senator Regale, which mandates that Washington's Child Protective Service train CPS workers in adolescent development, track the number of adolescent referrals received, and the disposition of such referrals. Many of us have been concerned about undeniable trends in which adolescent referrals are deprioritized based on the age of the adolescent rather than on the risk of harm. Mockingbird sponsors the Advocates for System Kids and Youth (ASK-Y) coalition, which worked very hard on advocating for SB 5583. This bill will be signed into law by the Governor on Monday May 9th.

Finally, we at Mockingbird want to welcome Ros Ghan as the new Operations Manager. Ros comes with a remarkable set of skills and commitment to the children, youth and families we serve. As you can see a lot is going on at Mockingbird, but then again it takes a lot to build a world class foster care system.

6-9-05

Jim Theofelis

jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

PELZER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I had the recent pleasure of meeting the famous David Pelzer at a local event. Pelzer seemed very wrapped up in himself. He did not appear very interested in talking to a youth reporter. The only question of mine he answered was the one question he kept badgering me to ask him (this question was, "How did you get through?" which he already made crystal clear his books). When I finally asked the question, Pelzer became this lively actor: animated with a well-practiced song and dance. I asked if he'd ever let me interview him and laughingly he said no...because he turns down interviews with reporters who are "much more famous and important." I can't be sure, but I think that he meant I wasn't good enough to talk to him if I wasn't Barbara Walters. He also mentioned how lucky I was and that "now I can tell people I talked to the famous David Pelzer."

Yes...how lucky I am indeed. For all the horrors this man dealt with as a little boy, I'm sure he probably deserves more than others to be rich and famous. It's just so sad to see someone who made it through so much be consumed by his own fame and ego that easily. Though Mr. Pelzer is a busy man, I assumed he of all people would take a little time to chat with a young girl and former foster kid anxious to speak to the author of a captivating book about hardship. One other thing I learned while listening to David was that because he was rescued into the "system," he has no stomach for anyone with a single complaint about the foster care system. I didn't make the mistake of mentioning any of the many things that unfortunately go wrong inside the "system," though I was shocked to see he was oblivious to certain realities about state care. So the lesson here is that people are not what you expect. The book is worth the read, however. Enjoy!

## Letter to the Editor

Hi Shannon,

We heard about the Mockingbird Society from Nicole Ayala at AMARA Parenting and Adoption Services. We adopted our son, Camron, through AMARA. Camron was in foster care system for several years before we were lucky enough to meet him at the Kids Fest event.

Camron loves poetry and loves to write. The one I've attached here is very special, so special his teacher made sure I got a copy right away. Camron is 8 1/2 and a wonderful little boy! He is going to be working with Nicole at AMARA to help give back to kids in the foster system.

Regards,  
Cheryl Pomp King

### Where I'm From by Camron

I am from my pillows that I like to relax on  
I am from the puffy bushes that I like to relax on.  
I am from my neighbors who are sweet as can be.  
I am from my mom and dad who say if something is bad or good.  
I am from the trip to Hawaii that took a very long time.  
I am from the tall leafy branches that hang over my front window.  
I am from the first day of school.  
I am from the juicy hamburgers that I like to eat.  
I am from the yummy chicken noodle soup that my mom makes.  
I am from the soundless night.  
I am from the spirits in the graveyard.  
I am from the nicknames and conversations that go about my house.  
I am from my mailbox always having letters for me.  
I am from my naughty cat and my crazy dogs.  
I am from the dark soundless universe.  
I am from my mom's belly.  
I am from everywhere.

## Aging Out

AGING OUT, a new 90-minute documentary by Roger Weisberg and Vanessa Roth, chronicles the struggles of three young adults who must learn to fend for themselves after being discharged from the foster care system. AGING OUT premieres during National Foster Care Awareness Month on Thursday, May 26 (2005) from 10 to 11:30 p.m. ET/PT on PBS (check local listings).

## Thank You's

Leslie and Jen from Sanctuary Arts, CASA, Seattle PI, Amy from Aradia Health Center, Bruce Cross & Perkins Cole, LLP, Joe Kahn

ABOUT US: The Mockingbird Society is a private non-profit organization dedicated to building a world class foster care system and improving the other systems that serve children and adolescents involved in homelessness and foster care. The Mockingbird Times is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of Mockingbird Society are paid between \$7.50 and \$8.50 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work and poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. The Mockingbird Times has a monthly circulation of 40,000 copies being distributed across Washington State and the U.S.A., through a private distribution list and as an insert in Real Change. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of The Mockingbird Society and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. Donations to The Mockingbird Society may be tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. No part of Mockingbird Times may be reproduced without the written permission of The Mockingbird Society. All contents © 2005 The Mockingbird Society.

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MISTY LOU COOK



**SO, YOU'RE YOUNG, FRUSTRATED AND NEED AN OUTLET TO EXPRESS YOURSELF.** You've tried all sorts of instruments, but that tuba from 7<sup>th</sup> grade just isn't letting out all of that angst that's been building since forever. You wanna play the guitar, but you're on a budget. Luckily for you, there's an article about how to get everything you need to get started rocking your socks off for under \$200. This article has everything you want and need to know: where to get cheap guitars, what you'll need to get started, the only guitar book you'll ever need, the best sites for free and readable guitar tabs, etc., etc., etc.

First of all, you'll need a guitar. The best places to go are used guitar shops. Steer clear of sketchy pawn shops or uptight corporate shops if at all possible. The place you want to find is a nice, independent New and Used Guitar Shop, preferably run by musicians who genuinely want to help you get started on your road to rockin' and rollin'. These people are nice and sincere, not sketchy or constantly asking if you want to buy the priciest item in the whole store. Ask about deals and tell them the budget that you're working with. My first electric guitar cost \$100 for both the guitar and the amp. I got it at Smash Your Guitar, a nice, independent shop


in Bellingham, WA, my hometown. Be sure to try the guitar before you take it home, you want to make sure that you enjoy the guitar's unique sound before you purchase it. Don't be afraid to look around and check out various guitar shops so you get the best sound for your dollar! Buy the guitar that calls out to you and the one that's in your price range - it should feel and sound right in your heart and soul.

While you're at the guitar shop, you'll want to buy a guitar tuner. You'll use the same tuner for both electric and acoustic guitars, and tune them in the same way. These generally cost around \$20 and I've had the same one for 2 years, with no need for battery replacements. Once you have your guitar and guitar tuner, you're well on your way to Rock 'N Roll High School. The only book you'll need to study in Rock 'N Roll High School is by Terry Burrows. Burrows wrote a book for the Keep-It-Simple-Series (K-I-S-S) in 2000, entitled "K-I-S-S Guide to Playing the Guitar," that is jam-packed with everything: how to string and tune your guitar, how to play different chords, scales and keys, how to play blues, country and rock, even how to record yourself and find handy Internet sites for further details on everything (from scales to home-recording). The full U.S. price of this book is \$20 and this is the last item you need to purchase - the mp3's and music, the songs and tablature you can get from the internet; the practice, practice, practice, is all absolutely free. You can most likely find this book for a fraction of the price at a discount book store like Half Price Books, Sam's Club or some other used/discount book store that is in your region. I got

this book from a friend and he got it for \$8. Your friends are your best resource.

You'll need a computer for free music/mp3's and tablature. Your friend, your cool aunt, your friend of a friend, your mom, your dad, your foster-sister, your homeless youth drop-in center, your work or your school buddy most likely has a computer and a printer that you can borrow for an hour or two. First, what tablature is and what it's all about. Tablature is an easy way to distribute, write and read music. It is written on six lines that represent the six strings on a standard guitar, either acoustic or electric. The numbers written on the lines represent the fret numbers where you will be placing your fingers. The frets of a guitar are the different sections on the guitar neck, usually divided by metal bars, where you place your fingers to create chords, tones and rockin' sounds.

The best Guitar Tab Websites that I have found are [www.guitartab.com](http://www.guitartab.com), which features over 40,000 different guitar tabs, and [www.mxtabs.net](http://www.mxtabs.net), which, as of April 5, 2005, had 155,161 tabs, including drum, bass and guitar tabs. You can search for your own favorite tablature sites at [www.TabFind.com](http://www.TabFind.com) or just enter "Free Tablature" into [www.google.com](http://www.google.com). Tablature is a great method to teach yourself guitar, and this article is all about do-it-yourself guitar!!

Now that you have the tools, go out there and show 'em what you got, and, after all, it's like Ani DiFranco once said, "every tool is a weapon - if you hold it right." 

## Benefit For Art Center a Smashing Success

COURTNEY KONIETZKO




**THE SANCTUARY ARTS CENTER HAS BEEN AROUND AS AN ALTERNATIVE** resource for homeless young people in Seattle to express themselves since 1999. It is a unique place because it is a non-profit art center in a church where homeless youth up to age 21 can come and create work using various media like stained glass, paint, charcoal, and beads. I used to go to the Sanctuary Arts Center when I was living on the streets of the University District and it was a great experience for me. I am glad they are still going strong and able to be there as a positive resource and creative outlet for street-involved youth.

The recent Sanctuary Arts Center benefit, held to raise funds for this program, was a smashing success. Not to sound like Austin Powers, but yeah baby yeah! They raised a total of \$4,000 for the Art Center and an additional \$2100 was raised for the youth artists whose work was displayed at the benefit.

I was stoked to get to see Captain Smartypants for the first time performing at this benefit. I plan on attending their performance on June 4<sup>th</sup> at the Nordstrom Recital Hall. Captain Smartypants is a group of incredibly talented individuals, and a sub-division of

the Seattle Men's Chorus, who can sing better than anything I've heard on American Idol! There is emotion and fluidity behind their voices, their faces are expressive while they sing, and they are proud to be queer. They sing silly songs about "straight guys looking at the floor" and "songs that were never meant to be covered" like a harmonic rendition of Sir Mix A Lot's *Baby Got Back*. I think I'm a hard one to make laugh but Captain Smartypants and Jet City Improv had me rolling in my seat. Jet City Improv is a group of performers who take suggestions from the audience and act them out while the Improv guy in the corner makes sound effects that somehow manage to match up perfectly with the movements of each performer on stage. They are extremely talented and I hope to see more of them in the future.

It was a dual event: entertainment provided by Jet City Improv and Captain Smartypants and an art show of amazing work by street-involved youth. Two pieces I really liked are going to be available to be seen on the Mockingbird website. These two vibrant nature pieces are by the artist Rat. I liked them because of their brilliant colors, the blues and yellows, and the mellow feeling emanating from them.

Sanctuary Art Center is a safe place to express yourself in a world of chaos. Every single piece sold as far as I could tell and the crowd was very enthusiastic about bidding on them. Art is a positive outlet and the center really is a 'Sanctuary' in a world where it's not always safe to express yourself in words. 



Collage by street-involved youth.



Outside the Peanut Gallery Sanctuary Arts show.

## Poetry Corner

### My Day and How I Spend It

JAY-SON FOREMAN

When I wake up I wipe the crust from my eyes  
Thinking how the day is going to go  
Fast or slow

It's 8:30am so I got to get my clothes on and go  
With my CD player on bumping my 2pac keep  
your head up song

I look off the bus and something goes wrong  
A black kid hits another black kid same old drama  
Not going to school living on the streets when they  
should be home with dad and mom

My mom was the only mother I had but no pops  
Life is hard for a kid, selling drugs and getting  
harassed by the cops

I never wanted that so that's why I make the best  
of myself so no one can bring me down  
I got better stuff to do than post up in the town

My clothes are matching I look real nice  
Everything that I have cost a price  
So why do I have to settle for less

Clothes don't make the person  
The personality makes you who you are  
I'm myself no one else

Work is stressful bosses on my back  
It's the only job I can find until I can get some  
money stacked

School, work, everything that you go through I  
feel the same way

So sometimes I just get on my knees and pray  
That's my only way of relieving stress  
This life is only for a short period of time so make  
the best of it

Before it's too late  
I'm doing the best I can  
Owning a business is my plan  
So when I snap back into reality I'm on my way to  
the coffee house

Lonely room, been like this for a while need a  
spouse

I'm not writing rhymes I'm telling feelings  
I want to be successful so everybody can  
remember me

I got no more else to say, if I don't talk to you  
tomorrow it was nice telling you about my day.

Mockingbird would like to recognize the work of John Stout, Executive Director of Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program for Children in Foster Care, who passed away recently. We want to offer our condolences to his family and to the CASA program. He will truly be missed.

# Abortion: Facing A Tough Decision

JAMICA HENDERSON



**FACING TEEN PREGNANCY IS DIFFICULT.** It's hard especially when you don't know if you should get an abortion or keep the child. A pregnancy is one thing that women can't get rid of easily. It's not like a cold where we just take a couple of aspirin and go about the day. It's a part of life that we can never forget. A cold or flu comes again and again, but sometimes you don't get that second time to become a parent. You might feel trapped especially when you don't feel ready to have a child or you don't think you can care for or afford it. I interviewed two people who have faced this decision and want to share their experiences with you.

## Alicia's Story

"Alicia" is a young lady who has experienced the choice of getting an abortion or keeping the child. When Alicia found out that she was pregnant, the first thing that she thought about was getting an abortion. The reason she wanted to get the abortion was because she could not afford to raise a child and she was still in school. She didn't think she was ready to become a mother. She had a few relationship problems with the father, but he wanted to keep the child. Here is what Alicia had to say:

**Did you want to get an abortion?** Yes and No.

**Why were you going to get an abortion?** I wanted to get one because I wasn't working. I was going to school but it was hard because I was pregnant and I could not afford it.

**What made you change your mind?** I changed my mind because while being pregnant I wanted to keep her but then I did not. So by the time I came up with the final decision it was too late to get an abortion and I figure by that time I could make it.

**How did you feel when you did not get the abortion?** I felt good. I looked forward to it, especially after I found out it was a girl. I felt relaxed about the pregnancy. Just now I was worried about the labor pains.

**Who or what encouraged you to keep the child?** Cortez (the baby's father), Jamica (the God mom), the father's mother, and my friend Kamaria. Some family members did not want me to keep the baby. Some thought I was not ready and did not see me as a mother, did not think I was capable of taking care of a child.

**What do you think would have happened if you got an abortion?** I would have regretted it for a while. I probably would have felt sad and depressed. I would have felt like a murderer taking an innocent child's life. It would be a part of me I could and would never forget.

**By not getting an abortion, do you feel that you made the right decision for you, the baby, or both?** For both. Corliea is well taken care of. She's got everything she needs. She's a blessed child. I made the right decision because having her has motivated me not only for myself but the both of us.

**Did you ever think about having the child and giving it up for adoption?** No, because after going through nine months of pregnancy I would want to keep the child and raise him or her.

**What did you learn from the situation? If you could give the next person some advice, what would you say?** I learned that even though I'm happy with my daughter and love her to death, you should really think about the decision before it gets too late. From this situation I also learned how to sacrifice because when you have a child is it not all about you anymore. My advice would be following your heart, if you really believe in yourself that you can handle all the responsibility of being a parent go for it. You also learn, while raising the child, ways to become a better parent. If it comes down to getting an abortion just think about what's good for baby. Because that's who you're really concerned about if you narrow it down. An abortion might sound bad and be bad but could be the best thing at the time.

## Brenda's Story

"Brenda" is a young woman from Aradia Women's Health Center who agreed to answer my questions about her decision to have an abortion. Here is what "Brenda" had to say:

**Why did you choose to get an abortion?** It was just not the right time for me to become a parent. I had just returned from abroad, was unemployed and staying on my friend's couch. My partner was still overseas where he lived and it would not have been possible for him to come to the US so I would have been a single mom.

**What are some reasons you struggled with in making your decision?** It really wasn't a struggle for me. I felt like my choice was very clear. All of the circumstances of my life and my own thoughts and feelings were pointing towards abortion as my most practical option.

**How did you feel after the abortion?** Relieved—like my life had been on hold and I was free to move forward again.

**What did you learn from the situation?** That women in Washington state have a lot of support...financial support to help them pay if you are low income like I was. I had great access to doctors and information...

**What kind of advice would you give the next person who wants to get an abortion?** So many women have no access to information, doctors or anything else or they live in a conservative area and face a lot of judgment. My advice is to think about what is best for you and don't let anyone else tell you what you should do. No one can force you to have an abortion if you don't want one. But don't let anyone keep you from it if you decide you need one. Nobody knows what's best for you as much as you do. Trust yourself and your choice even if no one in your life is on your side. There are people and places that can help you.

For info on what to do in this situation, check out [www.aradia.org](http://www.aradia.org), [www.yppo.com](http://www.yppo.com), [www.adopting.org](http://www.adopting.org), [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org), [www.teenage-pregnancy.net](http://www.teenage-pregnancy.net)

## Congratulations Advocates!

Bill 5583 was passed by Washington State's legislature this May. This bill mandates that DSHS provide adequate training to CPS workers and that CPS track the number and disposition of all referrals related to adolescents. Mockingbird and other advocates have been concerned about adolescents being de-prioritized in the past and referrals not being adequately investigated. This bill will prioritize the needs of adolescents who are facing neglect and abuse in Washington State.

## May is Foster Care Month!

Recognizing the commitment foster parents make to ensure a better life for abused and neglected children, Gov. Christine Gregoire has proclaimed May as Foster Care Month in Washington. On any given day in the state, about 6,000 licensed foster parents are providing safety and security to about 8,000 children whose parents are unable care for them. Gov. Gregoire will speak May 17 at a State Capitol ceremony recognizing the work done by foster parents.

## What Makes a Good Foster Home

LARISHICA ASHER



**IN THIS NEWS REPORT I WILL BE TALKING ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES** between functional and dysfunctional foster homes. A dysfunctional foster home is one where the kids are not cared for and loved. The house might be dirty, there might be too many kids, the parents might never be around and there might even be abuse and neglect happening in the home. There are many reports of neglect and abuse in foster homes. Sexual abuse in foster homes is about 12.5% and neglect is about 55.9% ([www.casey.org/mediacenter/mediak/factsheet.com](http://www.casey.org/mediacenter/mediak/factsheet.com)).

One of the dysfunctional homes that I lived in was really dirty. I got sick from the smell and all of the dirt that was in the home. I caught an infection and the foster parent would not take me to the doctor so that I could get checked out to see what I had. When I moved I finally got taken to the doctor and my infection started to heal slowly but I still have a scar. I always thought that you were supposed to get taken care of in foster care, that the state puts you with people who can take

care of you. You think they are moving you somewhere safe but they really are not.

A functional foster home is one where the family takes care of you. The home is clean and the foster parent takes care of you when you are sick. Some very great functional foster homes are organized and make time for the child to be in the home and activities for the children, to do so that they don't get bored sitting in the house. And they also have to go to school. The foster parent treats you to things when you do well in school like your parents would do if you were to live with them. So a functional foster home is like a regular home with kids who live with their parents still. I have been in some functional foster homes while I have been in the foster care system. But I really like the foster home that I am in right now. I like it because the foster mom cares for me and she shows me new things. One of the things she does to show me that she cares is to let me know what I can and can't do. She is helping me get my driver's license and soon will be helping me find another job so that I can get a car and pay for the insurance of the car. I have also experienced a lot of new things while I have been in this foster home. Some of the new things that I have done are flying to Florida, and riding a motor scooter. I will soon be taking my Driver's Ed class. I am also going to Las Vegas.

Right now I am hoping that my little sister can come and live with me in this foster home. But it seems like

the foster care system does not want the little girl to come and live with me even though she wants to and so does her mother. It doesn't seem like they are doing anything to help her move in with me. When she does come to live with me she can be free just like I am and happy from here on out.

I interviewed two of my co-workers about their opinions on functional and dysfunctional foster homes. Here is what they had to say:

Jamica Henderson has never been in a dysfunctional foster home. She was first placed in a foster home when she was 14 years old. She has never been moved from the foster home she is in and she is there till this day. She is now 18 years old. Her opinion on what a dysfunctional foster home is when a child is not getting enough attention from the parents. And the parents of the foster home are very careless.

Ashley Grant says that when she first moved to her home it was dysfunctional home at first. She realized that she couldn't do anything about it. So she came to the conclusion that she had to age out of the foster care system. Her opinion of a dysfunctional foster home is when no one can get along and there is constant bickering, arguing, and lots of verbal violence. She entered in the foster care system when she was 14 years old also. And she has also been in the same foster home and has never been moved not one time and she is now 18 years old.