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ISSUES • INSIGHT • IMPACT

JULY 6-12, 2005

Cold Homecoming

More numerous than ever, injured veterans greeted with long lines and little help

By **CYDNEY GILLIS**
Staff Writer

A dirty little secret is finally out: While George W. Bush has been waging war in Afghanistan and Iraq, he's been cutting medical services for the veterans coming home.

Or, at least, grossly underestimating how many veterans would need — and be entitled to — medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Last week, in a major blunder for the Bush Administration, the VA revealed it had budgeted for serving 23,553 returning veterans in fiscal 2005 — far short of the 103,000 now expected.

The VA said the number was based on figures from 2002, when the U.S. was supposed to be out of Iraq in six months. It's an error that's put the VA's Health Administration \$1 billion short this year — with estimates it will be \$2.7 billion short in fiscal 2006.

Last week, led by Washington Democrat Patty Murray, the U.S. Senate voted an emergency supplement of \$1.5 billion for VA. The House followed with a bill authorizing \$975 million. While the two bills wait to be reconciled — Congress is in recess this week — Sheila Sebron and the veterans she works with continue to wait for services.

Sebron is a volunteer advocate with the National Association of Black Veterans. During her service in the Air Force between 1977 and 1984, she was injured in an auto accident — an event that left her knees permanently blown.

When she's in pain, Sebron sometimes suffers flashbacks of the accident — a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder for which the mother of two says she had to fight the VA for treatment.

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DEBBIE SALUSKIN, RIGHT, PADDLES IN THE CANOE OF CHIEF FRANK NELSON, TOP, OFF VANCOUVER ISLAND IN LAST YEAR'S INTERTRIBAL CANOE JOURNEY. SALUSKIN IS A MEMBER OF THE UPPER SKAGIT TRIBE; NELSON IS OF THE MUSGAMAKW TSAWATAINEUK OF KINGCOME INLET, BRITISH COLUMBIA. PHOTO-COURTESY JEFF SMITH / AFSC.

Rooted in the Water

Revived annual canoe ritual helps hold Native community together

By **KIMBURLY ERVIN**
Contributing Writer

With every dip into the water their strokes bring back the memory of their ancestors. At every landing, custom teaches them the ways of their elders as they ask permission to come ashore.

Starting July 14, Puget Sound's ancient water highways will be reinvigorated with paddles in a tradition showing all generations of Native people the meaning of the canoe and the waters that support them.

The Intertribal Canoe Society (ICS) will push off around 65 canoes for nearly two weeks of paddling around the waters of the Pacific Northwest. By the time the journey ends August 1 in Port Angeles, with a celebration hosted by the Lower Elwah S'klallam tribe, more than 5,000 people will have participated.

"There's all kinds of sentiment involved," explains Jeff Smith, a Makah tribal member who helps organize the yearly event. "The real meaning of the canoe journey is at getting healthy

— physical is only a part of it — but it is meant to hit at the mind, body and soul."

The journey was first conceived during the 1989 Washington State Centennial festivities' "Paddle to Seattle" — a gathering that showed Native tribes around Puget Sound the need to remember their ancestral roots. A challenge was made to the people involved to meet four years later. The canoe journey was formally established in 1994.

As attendance to the yearly event has increased, so has the involvement of the tribes already participating.

"We've seen more people interested in carving. Some want to carve their own paddles, their own tools," says Willard Bill, Jr., of Muckleshoot Tribal College — and skipper of the Muckleshoot canoe. "Some are interested in carving their own canoe. There is a want to learn."

During the journey, a canoe can be on the water anywhere from two to 10

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FAT OF THE LAND

The rich get richer, while the poor pay for war.

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QUILTING ABC'S

Quilting club's comforters comfort ill children.

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Union at Space Needle wants time to pin down new contract.

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War Pigs

Once, rich Americans shared the wartime sacrifice. Not any more

By **CHUCK COLLINS**
United for a Fair Economy

While the public's attention is riveted on the war in Iraq, Congress shirks its duty to find money to pay for it, and instead moves to repeal the estate tax, our most progressive tax.

Was there ever a time when Congressional tax cuts for multi-millionaires were more unseemly?

Recently President Bush spoke about the war in Iraq on national TV, asking Americans to be patient and to bear in silence the heavy sacrifice of American soldiers' lost lives. That number is getting close to 2,000.

Almost 60 percent of Americans disapprove of the way Mr. Bush has handled the war.

In 2001, when terrorism czar Richard Clark was trying to get high-ranking Bush administrators to meet about the al-Qaeda threat, the Administration was mounting a campaign to pass tax cuts for multi-millionaires. In June of that year, they succeeded in achieving cuts of \$1.35 trillion over 10 years. The major beneficiaries had the highest incomes in the land.

In 2003, as our troops were marching on Baghdad, Bush and Congress were pushing for \$330 billion in additional tax cuts, 57 percent of which went to households with incomes over \$337,000.

Last summer, as the death toll for American troops was passing 1,000, the administration was fighting hard to give corporate donors an additional \$140 billion in tax breaks.

Now, the Senate is preparing to vote on repealing the estate tax — a tax that is only paid by multi-millionaires and billionaires, fewer than 1.5 percent of estates each year.

If there ever was a time to limit tax breaks for multi-millionaires, this

should be it. The cost of our military involvements is growing, and we need to make additional investments to protect homeland security. Meanwhile, our budget surplus has disappeared, shifting from a 2001 estimate of \$5.6 trillion in the black to \$5.2 trillion in the red today.

Bush has asked for and gotten close to \$200 billion in emergency war funds, and it is rumored he will ask for more. Where is this money to come from?

None of this has deterred Congress from its relentless march to repeal the estate tax this year. Repeal would cost almost \$1 trillion over two decades. Giving such a tax break to wealthy heirs would only shift the burden of paying for security onto the rest of us.

It is unprecedented in U.S. history to pass tax cuts for the wealthy in a time of war. For over 200 years, estate and inheritance taxation has been linked with mobilizations for war. The first federal tax on wealth was levied in 1797, as our country faced the escalating costs of responding to French attacks on American shipping.

During the 19th century, income and estate taxes were imposed during the revenue emergencies of the Civil War and the Spanish-American War. Wartime taxation was viewed as fair at a time when many citizens were sacrificing their lives.

The 1916 passage of the estate tax was a fundamentally American response to the inequalities of the Gilded Age, as well as the U.S. entry into World War I. Even after the war, businessman Harlan E. Read argued in "The Abolition of Inheritance" that

war debts should be paid with heavy taxes on inherited wealth.

To pay for World War II, the estate tax was increased so that fortunes exceeding \$50 million would be taxed at 70 percent. President Franklin Roosevelt spoke out boldly against war profiteering, saying, "I don't want to see a single war millionaire created in the United States as a result of this world disaster."

Today the lives of U.S. citizens are again at risk as they face prolonged service in Iraq. Others are feeling the pain of recession, losing jobs, savings and security. State and local governments, facing the worst budget cuts since World War II, have gutted crucial community services.

Rather than facing these problems and appropriating the money to resolve them, congressional leaders are using the fog of war to pass another tax cut for the wealthy that would exacerbate long-term budget shortfalls at all levels. While the public's attention is riveted on the war in Iraq, Congress shirks its duty to find money to pay for it, and instead moves to repeal the estate tax, our most progressive tax.

There is only one word for advocating such an inequality of sacrifice: shame! ■

Chuck Collins (ccollins@faireconomy.org), co-author with Bill Gates, Sr. of *Wealth and Our Commonweal: Why America Should Tax Accumulated Fortunes*, is Senior Fellow at United for a Fair Economy, an independent national organization that raises awareness of the damaging consequences of concentrated wealth and power.



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Mission Statement:

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

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

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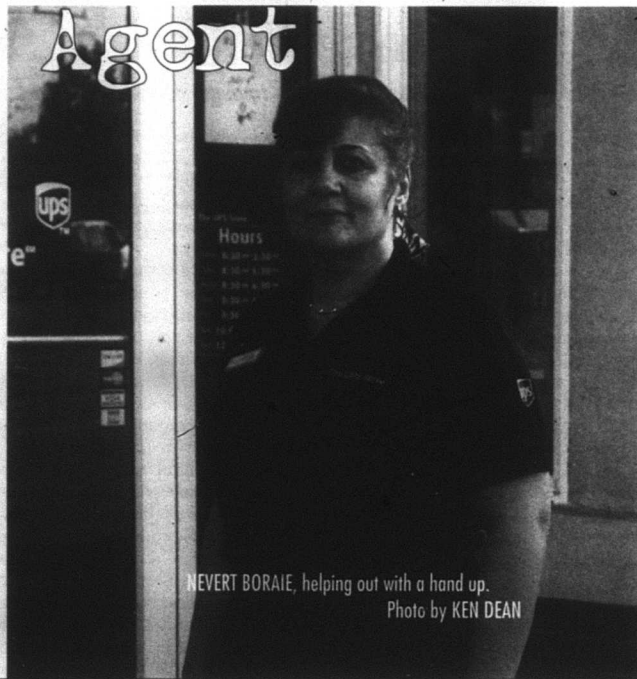
Nevert Boraie is using her station in life to offer stable employment to people who are down and out.

Every week, her son's teacher, who inspired the child on a field trip to Tent City, goes to a meeting of residents of the homeless tent camp and talks up an entry-level position at the Wallingford UPS store Boraie manages. At \$8 an hour part-time, the job is a good place to start. The first employee drawn from the homeless tent camp has stayed on for a month. Now he's leaving for a job at Costco — allowing someone else from Tent City to be hired.

This kind of employee turnover is just what Boraie wants. Based on her month of working with him, she wrote him a letter of recommendation describing his strengths. "I hope to do that for the next person," she says.

"I have a total belief that every individual has something in them. If they're not skilled in one thing, they're skilled in another. They just need a break."

— Adam Hyla



NEVERT BORAIE, helping out with a hand up.

Photo by KEN DEAN

Quilting for a Cause

Poulsbo club uses old-fashioned pastime for children's hospitals

By JENNIFER GORE
Contributing Writer

Quilting, a time-honored tradition in many American families, has found a new means of touching people's lives. Kitsap Quilters, a guild of over 200 women, sponsors ongoing charity work year-round by donating their time, fabric and talent to worthy causes. Located in Poulsbo, the guild has been involved in community service for over a decade.

For instance, Kitsap Quilters is part of ABC Quilts, a national organization that is dedicated to bringing comfort to at-risk babies in local hospitals.

"At-risk babies are those born with HIV, born addicted, or extremely ill or premature," says Barbara Wright, area coordinator for ABC Quilts and member of Kitsap Quilters. "Or the babies could be healthy but their family circumstances could be a disaster — like a teenage mother who lives on the street and has nothing."

Wright is responsible for the delivery of quilts to Harrison Hospital in Bremerton. There, nurses distribute the quilts to needy babies, who keep the quilts when they leave the hospital. There is no pattern or design requirement, though all quilts should have flannel backing and be no larger than 38 by 44 inches.

"When I first started," in 1999, "we were doing 80 or 90, and last year we sent in about 120 quilts," says Wright. "This year, we are at the halfway point and have already made 82 quilts. If we maintain that pace, we'll make over 150."

Following the lead of ABC Quilts' nationwide effort, the guild has expanded its charity work both locally and internationally, focusing on helping needy children, women in prison, cancer patients and women overseas.

One local effort involves the creation of

Doll Quilts, a program unique to Kitsap Quilters. The smaller 22-square-inch quilts are wrapped around stuffed bears and dolls, then donated to Child Protective Services, a local YWCA shelter, and Kitsap Community Resources. Children who receive the quilts have often been abandoned or removed from unstable homes.

"These children are at a traumatic point in their life," says long-time Kitsap Quilters member Mary Faille, "Something like this can save the child's sanity."

Part of Kitsap Quilters' budget goes to fund the project, though often the money is simply not enough. Inez Bird, co-coordinator of Doll Quilts, delivers the crafts three times a year to shelters and agencies in the area.

"Once I saw this little boy, about six or seven, who was very precocious and I thought to myself 'there's a doll quilt in here that's perfect for him,'" says Bird of a particular visit to a local shelter.

She, along with co-coordinator Joan Romrill, volunteered for the position almost two years ago, and since then it has become part of her daily ritual. "For me, a portion of every day is dedicated to the Doll Quilts," says Bird, "That can be shopping, planning, cutting or sewing." Her basement closets are filled from floor to ceiling with dolls, bears, stuffed tigers and, of course, quilts.

Another member of Kitsap Quilters has spearheaded the creation of Oncology Quilts for Harrison Hospital. Fellow guild member Norma Tipton is now teaching sewing to female inmates at the Washington Corrections Center for Women in Gig Harbor. As the guild continues to grow, its efforts expand. "We are a small group doing big things for the community," says Faille.

"Being a quilter is what gets you started," says Wright. "It feeds your passion because you're making the quilts for those who really need them." ■

[Resource]

For more information on Kitsap Quilters visit www.sewintimely.com/kitsapquilter. For more information on ABC Quilts visit www.abcquilts.org.

Two members of Kitsap Quilters with their handiwork. The quilting club's members spend much of their time making blankets for children who need them. Photo courtesy ABC Quilts.



Just Heard ...

Senate passes CAFTA

Washington Democrats Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell were among the 54 U.S. senators who sold labor down the river last week by voting to pass the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Forty-five senators opposed the treaty, which is now on a "fast track" for a House vote no later than July 27.

CAFTA is a follow-up to the North American Free Trade Agreement, a 1994 treaty with Canada and Mexico. NAFTA has cost U.S. workers nearly 1 million jobs — something labor activists argue CAFTA will do, along with putting Central American farmers out of business.

Washington Reps. Jim McDermott, Brian Baird, Rick Larsen and Adam Smith oppose the treaty. Locally, Rep. Jay Inslee has not announced his position.

—Cydney Gillis

Fatal assault

The Fourth-of-July weekend began with fireworks of a particularly sadistic kind: an attack on a man sleeping under an overpass on the corner of 15th Avenue West and West Nickerson Street in the Interbay neighborhood. The victim was taken to Harborview Medical Center with burns over 90 percent of his body, according to a report in the Sunday Seattle Times. By Tuesday, he had died.

The Medical Examiner's office can't release the victim's name until he is positively identified and his relatives notified. Seattle police are undertaking a homicide investigation, and Fire Department investigators have inspected the scene of the crime. It's the first such fatal attack on a homeless Seattleite since the death of David Ballenger under the Green Lake overpass in 1999.

For the least, the least

Forty minutes on the phone line, holding for an attendant. An hour at the office, waiting for an appointment. These are some of the routine instances of poor customer service highlighted in a new report surveying clients of welfare offices in King County.

The report's authors, the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition, found that people on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families got the worst treatment. Caseworkers gave TANF clients no opportunity to create the contents of their welfare-to-work "personal responsibility plan," no meaningful information on education or job training, and insufficient instructions on how to avoid breaking the program's rules.

WROC also found unequal treatment between different Community Service Offices around the region. Belltown got the highest grade (a B), and Bellevue the lowest (D+).

—Adam Hyla

Needle Work

Seattle icon's workers seek more time to negotiate union contract

By JESSICA KNAPP
Contributing Writer

Workers at the Space Needle want seven dates to negotiate. Represented by UNITE HERE Local 8, employees at the Space Needle's revolving restaurant are asking for a chance to sit down with company management and discuss their terms.

The current contract expired on May 31. Since then, workers have been

allowed only one date to meet with the company. On June 2, both parties got together, but Unite Local 8 was only permitted to present their terms; no negotiations were held.

Now, workers are protesting in hopes of having their demands met, the most basic of which has become a chance to negotiate. "Our goal is to get the Space Needle to the bargaining table so we can negotiate a contract. Right now, they have refused to enter into negotiations," says Erik Van Rossum, Arbitration and Negotiation Director for Unite Local 8.

On Thursday, June 30, about 30 members of the union rallied at the base of the Needle. They inflated a 15-foot inflatable rat and posed for pictures with signs that read "Space Needle" and "7 Dates to Negotiate."

After about 30 minutes with no response from the company, workers stayed their own mock negotiations. Two men dressed in dark suits and wearing Grinch masks represented the Space Needle and categorically denied each of the union's requests — which elicited boos from the crowd on hand. The rally finished with a brief chorus of "We'll be back," from the protesters.

Unite Local 8 is trying what is a new strategy for them in these negotiations. They have halted talks with all other employers in the area so that they can focus their energies on the Space Needle and the Edgewater Hotel — another major employer whom Unite Local 8 is negotiating with at present. The hope

is to maximize change by directing all of their energies on a couple of locations, giving the union more power in these negotiations, and also building momentum for future ones.

In addition to their requests for negotiations, Space Needle workers are seeking living wages, better health insurance, and changes to a discipline policy they say is too strict. On June 23, representatives from Local 8 sent a letter to Space Needle management indicating their availability for negotiations in July. The union has yet to hear a response from that letter.

The restaurant workers' contract comes up for negotiation about every three years. According to Van Rossum, the union has not had significant difficulty negotiating in the past. He attributes the current problems to a new general manager, who Space Needle management recently hired from the Hotel Del Coronado in California. "That general manager took a very anti-union stance with the locals down there, and we've seen nothing but anti-union stances since he's been up here," Van Rossum said. This general manager has hired what Union Local-8 characterizes as a union-busting attorney.

"Traditionally," Van Rossum says, "at this point, we would almost be done with negotiations." Instead, restaurant workers will continue their protests until they are given an opportunity to negotiate with Space Needle management. ■

Two men dressed in dark suits and wearing Grinch masks represented the Space Needle and categorically denied each of the union's requests — which elicited boos from the crowd on hand. The rally finished with a brief chorus of "We'll be back," from the protesters.

Rating out the Space Needle. Photo by Luke McGuff.



Short Takes

Safe Haven: outdoors

Nearly 10 years ago, the homeless self-help organization SHARE began a new shelter with a sleepout in Pioneer Square. Now, it looks like the guests of Safe Haven shelter are once again spending the night outside.

The shelter was removed from a vacant space owned by the Port of Seattle earlier this year. St. James Cathedral let its denizens stay in a vacant space until late last week. As of July 1, they are sleeping under Interstate 5 downtown.

A shelter resident who will identify himself only as Johnny (because "I do business in this town"), who was living in an apartment on Queen Anne six weeks ago, says the downtown area offers good bus service and a pay phone — amenities that help him keep working as a human-resource consultant. Like him, most of the others at Safe Haven work: unloading trucks, cleaning restaurants, other "12-hour a day jobs," he says. "I'm just a white-collar guy trying to keep my head above water. I'm happy to have a place to sleep."

He says he's encouraged by Mayor Greg Nickels' plan to renovate the vacant ground-floor space at City Hall to accommodate homeless people. The new space would open November 1 — but, in accord with the city's plans, close down again at the end of winter.

—Adam Hyla

City Hall: tuning in

A panel of City Council candidates said last week they're all for giving tax breaks and public subsidies to Seattle's music industry.

Nice ideas. But none of the 10 incumbents or candidates who spoke at a Candidates Forum on Music said where the money would come from for any of their ideas, which ranged from building live-work space for musicians to allowing bands to practice in City Hall — an idea floated by Councilmember Nick Licata.

Still, the forum, which was hosted by the Recording Academy at Neumo's nightclub, made the politicians commit to protecting and supporting Seattle's music scene — a \$1.3 billion industry that employs more than 9,000 people, mostly at small businesses.

Given its size, studio owner Glenn Lorbecki said, Seattle's music industry should get the kind of tax breaks afforded Boeing. All the candidates and councilmembers — including Licata, Richard Conlin, Jan Drago, and Richard McIver — agreed on that and reducing the high costs of city permits for outdoor festivals.

In a city where crowds and their owners' noise complaints are conding in on clubs, Licata also said he's for creating a loan pool that small clubs could use to install soundproofing.

Conlin suggested a similar fund pool to cover

insurance for festivals. McIver said the city could create a preservation and development authority to buy or build live-work space at reduced rents. And candidate Robert Rosencrantz advocated making high-capacity broadband service — a necessity for sending large music files over the Internet — a public utility.

Musicians in the audience loved that idea. As for practicing in City Hall, producer Brin Addison said Licata's idea wasn't realistic — City Hall has nowhere to pull up and load or unload heavy equipment.

Ending homelessness: headless

The Committee to End Homelessness is losing its first director — just four months after Public Health of Seattle-King County hired him.

Jeff Natter says the move has nothing to do with the CEH, which he says is in good shape. He's simply moving on to a dream job he's wanted for 10 years — running the county's Ryan White HIV/AIDS program.

As director of the program, Natter will oversee an annual \$6 million federal grant that provides core funding for HIV/AIDS services. It's a field in which Natter has worked 22 years, most recently as second-in-command at Ryan White, where he

worked from 1995 until joining CEH in March.

At the time, "I was eagerly seeking new challenges," Natter says. "Clearly, my boss [at Ryan White] had no plans to move on."

Then she did. Two months ago, Ryan White director Theresa Fiano announced she was leaving Public Health to run a larger Ryan White program in Miami.

Within an hour of her announcement, Natter says, he started getting e-mails from former colleagues asking him to take Fiano's job. "I felt I could not say no," Natter says.

"The timing is not what I would have liked," Natter says. "At least I leave this position feeling very positive about where the Committee to End Homelessness is now."

In the past four months, Natter helped established a governing board and interagency council for the CEH, which the county, city, United Way and other human services groups formed in 2000. The committee has spent the last two years writing a countywide 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Natter and project manager Gretchen Bruce were hired in March as CEH's first staffers. Natter plans to leave July 22 and says the organization is moving quickly to replace him.

—Cydney Gillis

Fear Campaign

Union votes to take on worker safety at cement plant

By **CYDNEY GILLIS**
Staff Writer

"We're sold out to 2008. The plant's never been more profitable, but Puljan wasn't satisfied with those results without going to the workers and stripping benefits and wages."

When the votes are counted July 6, Seattle's Ash Grove Cement will be a union plant, workers say — in spite of all the nasty tricks the company has pulled on them.

First, the plant's manager refused to accept union authorization cards signed by 46 of the factory's 53 line workers. Then workers say he tried to set the union election on a day when many of them would be out and forced anti-union propaganda on them at what's known as a "captive-audience" meeting.

The tactics are not surprising, union leaders say. In fact, they're typical in today's anti-union America, where companies like Kansas-based Ash Grove — the nation's largest cement producer — routinely get away with trampling worker rights.

That's exactly what Ash Grove worker Ken Miller says the company has done in the 13 years he's been at the plant, which opened in 1992. At a rally held outside Ash Grove last week, Miller told about 50 union supporters that's one reason he supports unionizing.

Eight years ago, Miller says, the company asked its workers to sign a waiver releasing their right to an attorney in the event of an accident — this at a company that moves tons of cement every day and uses dynamite to clear the three towers at its Seattle plant, which is just south of downtown on Marginal Way.

Just two weeks ago, say organizers with the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen — the union that Ash Grove's Seattle workers would join — a conveyor that feeds the towers collapsed, dumping a load that could have killed someone. Workers say they pointed out the problem with the conveyor seven months ago, but management took no action.

Two years ago, Miller says, a new manager — Craig Puljan — took over the Seattle plant and worked to get its manufacturing costs down. Miller says that was good. What came next wasn't.

"We're sold out to 2008. The plant's never been more profitable," Miller says. "But [Puljan] wasn't satisfied with those results without going to the workers and stripping benefits and wages."

ILWU organizer Jon Brier says that includes cutting a paid holiday and sick days — at a company already known for its low wages. At the same time, the website of Ash Grove, which employs about 1,800 nationwide at nine plants, reports its revenues were \$822 million in 2003 — a 19 percent jump over 2002.

Though the company is private and doesn't report its net income, the website notes Ash Grove's profits were up 4.5 percent in 2003 — a year when cement shortages started driving prices through the roof.

Despite business being good, the union drive "has been anything but easy," Brier says. "In the last two days, they've been trying to put the fear of God in people."

Plant manager Craig Puljan declined to answer specific questions about the union drive or company operations. He did say it's up to the workers to decide.

"We want employees to weigh in," Puljan says, "and vote whichever way they feel is best for them." ■

In the shadow of Ash Grove. Photo by Luke McGuff.



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Good Faith Gone Sour

How Dr. Larry Diamond went to Baghdad hoping to jumpstart democracy, and got only catastrophe

By **ROBIN LINDLEY**
Contributing Writer

In November 2003, then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice called her friend and former Stanford colleague Dr. Larry Diamond, an internationally renowned expert on democracy. She asked if he'd help create an interim government in Iraq. Although he opposed the March 2003 invasion, Diamond joined the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) as a senior advisor in the belief that the U.S. owed it to the Iraqis to establish a stable, democratic government.

Dr. Diamond assumed the daunting task of establishing a new Iraqi government while balancing the interests of the three major population groups: the Shiite majority, the alienated Sunnis, and the separatist Kurds. He chronicled his experience in *Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq* (Times Books). As he told an audience at a World Affairs Council gathering in Seattle on June 23, U.S. policy since the fall of Saddam has been characterized by "arrogance, ignorance, isolation, and incompetence."

Diamond is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and professor of political science and sociology at Stanford University. He has advised the United Nations, Congress, and other agencies on governance and democracy. His speeches and views on Iraq can be found at his website: www.stanford.edu/~ldiamond/. He recently talked with *Real Change* in Seattle about his work in Iraq.

Real Change: You opposed the war in Iraq, and you were prescient in foreseeing an insurgency, opposition to U.S. occupation, and the limits of unilateralism.

Dr. Larry Diamond: I was reading experts on the region, and the histories of other occupations, and it seems that occupation always tends to be resisted if it can be. And moreover, the United States was a deeply distrusted power in the Arab world, especially among Iraqis. Any western Christian nation coming in and doing what we were doing was bound to be suspected and ultimately resisted, but especially the United States. I worried that if we didn't have more international legitimacy and better preparation, this was going to mean serious problems — and it has.

RC: Your former colleague Dr. Condoleezza Rice called on you to work with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in November 2003. Did she discuss your opposition to the war?

Diamond: No. I'm not even sure she knew my views on the war. I might have mentioned them to her briefly, but it wasn't relevant at that point. The question then was, how could we build a stable and viable post-war order, and a democratic one?

I was opposed to the war, but in favor of building a democracy in the postwar. I also felt an obligation, not so much to her or the Administration, but to our country when a lot of other people were risking their lives and this had become very important to U.S. national security.

RC: You paint a vivid picture of life in Baghdad's heavily protected Green



Zone, with isolation from the Iraqi people and imminent threats to personal security.

Diamond: The single best phrase written on the palace — a bubble within a bubble where the American occupation was centered inside the Green Zone — was from American journalist [George] Packer who said getting into the palace was like a jailbreak in reverse.

Because we were under so much threat, because the insurgency was raging, we had to have layers and layers of security. And then to get outside the Green Zone required enormous effort and initiative to get a car — hopefully an armored car — and a security detail. It discouraged any systematic effort to engage Iraqis. The result is that we were very isolated and detached — not completely, but substantially.

RC: It seems that isolation as well as a controlling, unilateral attitude permeated the Coalition Provisional Authority. You wrote that the U.S. did not listen to the Iraqi people or those they respected.

Diamond: Yes. Two impulses or goals competed for attention. One was the goal of building democracy. I think we sincerely wanted to do that. But the other was the impulse for control: to shape democratic outcomes in a manner we thought would be favorable to us.

These goals coexisted very uneasily; if there

Rumsfeld should have been fired a long time ago. He, more than any other individual, is responsible for the gross negligence in failing to prepare for the post-war and mismanaging the reconstruction after the fall of Saddam. We've piled mistake upon mistake, and arrogance upon arrogance, and many of the expressions of arrogance and flippant disregard for broader sensitivities come from Secretary Rumsfeld himself.



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was a tension between the two, the impulse for control won out, and this led to our unwillingness to let even local elections go forward in our effort to have a transitional political process we could dominate.

RC: Could we have pre-empted the insurgency immediately after toppling Saddam?

Diamond: We needed to do a number of things. First, we needed more troops and a stronger military presence to secure the cities, the roads, the borders, and to go after these insurgent cells, and stop the infiltration of Al Qaeda elements into the country. At the same time, we needed a stronger political outreach to disaffected elements, particularly the Sunnis, who had been marginalized in the new political order.

Some insurgent elements were sending signals through international intermediaries that they wanted to negotiate with the United States. They wanted to secure a clear commitment from the U.S. to withdraw and not seek permanent military bases. For the most part, we didn't follow up on those feelers, and we lost a lot of opportunities.

RC: Why didn't the U.S. follow up on the feelers?

Diamond: A combination of several things. First, there was a macho attitude that said we're the strongest military in the world, we're in charge here, we're not going to talk to these troublemakers. Second, there was concern that, if we did talk to them, we might look weak because we feared we couldn't prevail. And third, it's fair to say these groups were very fragmented, and in some early conversations with some from the Sunni community, we didn't gain confidence that they could deliver on their promises to wind down the insurgency.

We didn't have a comprehensive and sophisticated enough view of it. We needed to deal with a lot of different elements of the Sunni communities, and we needed to change perceptions that they had: that they were looking at an extended military occupation with no time limit, and an extended marginalization of the Sunni community. I think if we had a strategy to change those two perceptions, we might have begun to roll back the insurgency.

RC: These issues seem related to the de-Baathification effort and the dissolution of the Iraqi army.

Diamond: Yes. I think they were. Those two decisions were made in May 2003, at the same time that we decided to have an occupation and to set up the CPA. It was a real triple whammy that hit the Sunnis particularly hard that they felt was minimalizing, marginalizing, and shutting them out as a community.

One observer quipped that when we dissolved the Iraqi army with 400,000 members armed and [without] salaries, and when we banned from public life the top four tiers of the Baathist party — another 50,000 people — we made

450,000 enemies. And if you count their extended families, you're talking about several million.

RC: You compare U.S. policy in Iraq to a Greek tragedy with the elements of arrogance, ignorance, and isolation. Are you charge that the Bush Administration and the civilian leadership at the Pentagon are responsible for "gross negligence" in how they went to war and how they failed to plan for the reconstruction.



GUARDING BABYLON. PHOTO COURTESY USMC.

Diamond: Yes. It is certainly reminiscent of a Greek tragedy. The word that comes to mind is hubris. It's just inexplicable. The Bush Administration felt this was enormously important to American national security, we could not fail; we had to change this regime and change this country, and make it a responsible state within the Middle East. Yet, we failed to listen to the advice of many analysts who warned we would be resisted. We failed to put in enough troops, enough equipment, and to listen to the Iraqis who told us we would face problems. We failed to secure the public infrastructure of the country in the immediate post-war, and

an insurgency ensued.

Yes, when you add up all of the willful ignorance of early warnings, and expert advice from many different quarters, it amounts to gross negligence.

RC: You said Secretary Rumsfeld should resign.

Diamond: I do think he should resign. He should have been fired a long time ago. He, more than any other individual, is responsible for the gross negligence in

the terrorists, "Bring it on." It was the president who's been very reluctant to pursue political initiatives to wind down the insurgency.

RC: You say you haven't heard anything from the Administration in response to your book. I'm surprised that you haven't heard from your former colleague Rice.

Diamond: More surprising to me is that, when I came back in April 2004 and decided not to go back, I sent her a very long, detailed memo on what I thought was going wrong, and the changes I thought were needed in our posture, attitude, and policy. I know she received the memo, and I summarized its contents in a single page. But when I didn't hear back, it was clear I wasn't going to hear from her again.

RC: Given what you've said, is there still hope for democracy in Iraq?

Diamond: I haven't given up hope. It's important that we try to build as democratic a political system as possible. We must wind down this insurgency, if that's possible. We need to take the nationalist steam out of the insurgency by making clear that we will not seek permanent military bases in Iraq and that, when the country is able to maintain its own security, we will leave. As it builds up its capacity to do so, we will gradually withdraw.

RC: Can ordinary citizens take action to improve the situation in Iraq?

Diamond: The American people can demand that their representatives in Congress engage the Bush Administration in an open dialog on what our long-term plans are, and press the Bush Administration to clearly state we will not seek permanent military bases.

RC: Is the Bush Administration likely to follow your recommendations?

Diamond: Not at this time — not without very significant domestic political pressure. ■

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On Top of the World

A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush
By Eric Newby
Lonely Planet, 1998
Paperback, 240 pages, \$12.95

By JOHN SISCOE
Contributing Writer

One fine day nearly a half-century ago, two Englishmen decided to go mountain climbing in Afghanistan. Neither knew anything about mountain climbing or Afghanistan, but go they did and somehow they survived. More importantly for us, one of them, Eric Newby, wrote down their experiences in a book, *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush*. Newly reprinted by Lonely Planet, it is an enduring classic of true adventure — hilarious, surreal, and often terrifying.

Newby and his friend Hugh Curless prepare for their journey by learning how to climb up (but not down) a large rock in Wales. This will not stand them in very good stead when they attempt to scale Mt. Samir (19,880 feet), one of the more forbidding peaks in the Hindu Kush. Similarly, their attempts to communicate with those they meet on the way are not greatly helped by a phrasebook containing such conversa-

tion starters as, "There is a corpse in my yard" and "A great wind has blown all your clothes away."

Yet they soldier on, bickering, ill, hungry, cold: misfits wandering on the roof of the world. Remarkably, Newby's account of their travails is completely free of those twin devils of travel writing, self-importance and self-pity. With a gentle, self-deprecating humor, Newby conveys his awareness that he and Hugh are reckless fools and the sole authors of their considerable miseries. Our heroes are in fact bit-players, meddling in a part of the world they do not understand and care little about. The wild beauty of Afghanistan and the culture and daily life of its people are for our protagonists little more than an exotic stage on which to perform the great melodrama of, well, themselves. Only from time to time, and dimly, do they sense that the drama is a comedy and the joke is on them.

When this book was first published in 1958, Afghanistan was to the Western world a distant and little-understood

country. It remains so today, despite the course of events and a plethora of books. The Afghanistan that Newby walked through and observed had yet to experience the Russian invasion, the coming of the Taliban, and our own current involvement. But the essential characteristics of the people and their culture remain unchanged and as an introduction to those characteristics, this chronicle remains useful today.

Newby, who is still alive, went on to a long and deservedly successful career as a writer of travel and adventure books. Almost every title is still in print and every one has merit. But it is his first, *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush*, that remains his masterpiece. ■

"Below us on every side mountains surged away it seemed forever: we looked down on glaciers and snow-covered peaks that perhaps no one has ever seen before ..."

John Siscoe is the owner of Globe Books in Seattle. He can be reached at johnsiscoe@zipcon.net.



Close Up

Tell Them Who You Are
Directed by Mark Wexler
Running Time: 95 min.

By LESTER GRAY
Contributing Writer

Tell Them Who You Are is a documentary about a father and son attempting to accomplish what they have failed to do over several decades: communicate. This project (and it was truly a project), produced, directed, and shot by Mark Wexler, ostensibly began as a portrait of his dad, the legendary cinematographer, Haskell Wexler. That the original idea turned out to be as dysfunctional as the relationship is what makes this work so rich.

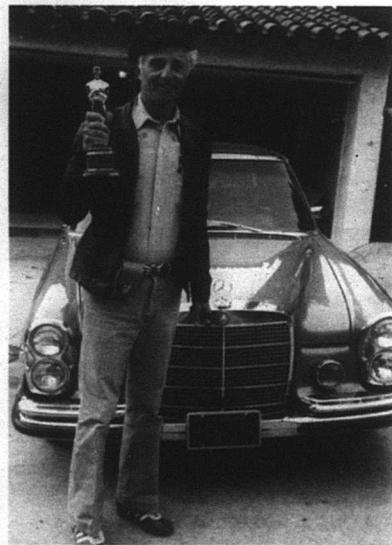
Through the film we learn that from early on Haskell, now 83, developed a passion for both photography and progressive politics. For him they often went hand in hand. The son of a privileged family, this future Academy Award winner had considerable resources at his disposal, allowing Wexler to develop his style with an unusual degree of independence. He pushed the envelope and developed a name for himself in both documentaries and feature films, blazing trails in style and content. As he became a much-sought-after director of photography, his function on the set became more defined, giving him less say in the overall product. Fame and fortune came at the cost of control. Judging from the interviews with his associates, it was a compromise to which he never seemed to quite adjust.

Many of those who worked with him paint a picture of a gifted but arrogant man, frequently frustrated with the limits of his role and the talents of the people with whom he worked. But it appears that this somewhat Faustian exchange had rewards, with Wexler exulting in the limelight. Hence the name of the film, *Tell Them Who You Are*, based on the "trade-on-the-Wexler-name" advice he gave to his then young and bashful son Mark, on the ways of leveraging celebrity.

Son Mark, however, was determined to set his own professional and political direction. Although he experienced his first success as a photojournalist, he is now, ironically with this film, showing a fairly deft talent in establishing fresh and exciting approaches to the documentary genre. His politics, which he never specifically defines in this piece, are colored by his fondness for the Bush family. It is most telling that he gives his father, an aging preachy liberal, a framed picture of himself shaking hands with the elder Bush. This he offers as a birthday gift, suggesting his father place it on his wall.

This is not a biopic on Haskell Wexler, which most likely would not be as dramatic or intriguing as *Tell Them Who You Are*. It is a perspective by what might be known as an interested party. It is notable and somewhat melancholic that of all the projects in which the older Wexler has been significantly involved, he may have had the least control over the one that examines the most intimate parts of his life. The film shows that this portrayal as we see, drawn by a son emotionally estranged, gave him pause. He expresses concern about the final edit and shows reluctance to sign a release. That he finally acquiesces, with his signature, an action pointedly chronicled by the film, symbolizes a letting go. Whether this should be a moment of joy or sadness is left to the viewer. ■

Coming Home:
Oscar-winning cinematographer Haskell Wexler is the subject of son Mark's documentary, *Tell Them Who You Are*.



Tell Them Who You Are runs July 8-17 at Northwest Film Forum, 1515 12th Ave. www.nwfilmforum.org/tellthem or 1-800-838-3006.

The Good Ol' American Way

Adventures
in Irony

Dr. Wes Browning



The American Way is to let the majority of Americans coerce the rest of us to worship the little pieces of cloth and the little emperor who draws His Glorious Power from them.

See, I don't mention a certain Supreme Court justice once for almost 10 years here. Then, when I finally bring her name up and make one little paragraph of cracks about her, she resigns. Maybe I should have made fun of Scalia or Thomas instead.

The good news: her resignation is only effective upon the nomination and confirmation of her replacement, so we won't have to make do with just eight justices for the duration of the filibusters. If all goes as expected, the filibusters should end in time for Jeb's swearing-in as the new Caesar.

Speaking of Jeb Bush's future, I am one so-called liberal who is ready to back the repeal of the 22nd Amendment and end term limits for presidents. It just makes good democratic sense. We won't be able to pass and ratify the repeal (which by the way was initially proposed by a Democrat, Steny Hoyer, the House Minority Whip) in time to keep George president another four years. But we'll have it ready for Jeb.

Here's my thinking on this. What sense does it make to pervert the American will by, every eight years, forcing the people to find a new Bush family member to elect, when all they want is the one they have at the moment? Why make America go to all the trouble of getting used to a new style of sneering and winking, when we have a perfectly serviceable Bush already in place, with all the sycophants he requires, and a fashion of arrogance a majority of us can already get behind? What with the resignation of Sandra Day O'Connor we're screwed anyway. Why not stick to the one assailant you know? Why ask for a serial gangbang?

While I'm on a roll taking up conservative-looking positions, allow me to offer reasons to support the proposed Anti-Flag-Burning Amendment.

First of all, freedom of speech is vastly overrated. I distinctly remember, for example, using my own freedom of speech to point out that a war on Iraq would be illegal, immoral, and ill advised. Maybe I wasn't as clear about it as I could have been, but I wasn't the only one saying it at the time, and some of the others were clear as a bell. But the American people went right ahead and supported the invasion anyway.

Be honest. When was the last time you persuaded a conservative to renounce his convictions and convert to your Blue State ways, with your hippie flag-burning liberal rhetoric? Have you ever burned a flag in front of a conservative and heard him say, "Well, now that you put it that way, I find myself opening up to the Marxist critique of capitalist power and its role in history, although I am not ready to accept all of his conclusions, leaning as I am to a more democratic approach, similar to that favored by modern European socialists, for example"? It just doesn't happen.

Also, some of you may recall that the whole notion of the flag being a sacred icon arose in the '40s, when the Jehovah's Witnesses sued for the right not to be compelled to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, on the grounds that it amounted to making them worship the idol of a state religion. Well, they were right then, and they're right now. And a state religion is just what we need now to make this country the world empire the majority of its voters dream of living in.

Again, why should the people be denied their dream? That's not the American Way. The American Way is to let the majority of Americans coerce the rest of us to worship the little pieces of cloth and the little emperor who draws His Glorious Power from them.

In the future I plan to present arguments for criminalizing A) the granting of non-Christian names to newborns, B) consuming generic packaged foods, and C) humming in public without a license. ■

VETERANS, Continued from Page 1

Like the Vietnam War, waves of combat vets are now returning home with PTSD, Sebron says — only to face long waits for help, if they can get any at all.

At the Seattle VA, which is \$11 million in the hole this year, Sebron says there are currently 18,000 people enrolled. Their wait for an appointment can range from five months to one year, depending on their disability rating.

The higher the rating, the quicker the service. Sebron, who's lower on the list but suffering from depression in the wake of losing a loved one, has had an appointment for a mental consultation she needs bumped back twice in the past two months.

And that's for a veteran with a disability rating. Sebron says anyone not currently in the system is out of luck. A current hiring freeze at the Seattle VA, which is leaving vacant positions open for now, is only making the situation worse, she says.

"This is catastrophic. This is why I'm willing to come forward," Sebron says. "When I have to wait two months for a mental health appointment and I get bumped twice, there's a problem."

Sebron makes herself available to hear veterans' problems or help them get the services they need. She says many of the Iraq veterans she has talked with are suffering from sleep disorder, uncontrollable memories, and severe depression over killing people.

"For many soldiers, even though it was a given they'd have to kill, it's a horrible thing," Sebron says. "The reality of an exploding body and the mistakes — that you intended to kill the bad guys and it turned out to be a family in a house. They didn't have time to process it."

The flashbacks, Sebron says, are like having images of memories superimposed over events happening in the here and now — something she describes as surreal.

So were the Bush Administration's original estimates for how many veterans would need medical services, says Skip Dreps, government relations director for the Northwest chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America. PVA is one of the veterans' services organizations that has been demanding more funding, most recently in April, when Sen. Murray tried to get \$1.2 billion for the VA tacked onto an \$82 billion bill to continue funding the

occupation in Iraq.

"As of May 17, we've had 360,674 [soldiers] come out of Iraq and Afghanistan," Dreps says. "Twenty-four percent, or 85,857, have sought VA care. The administration figured two percent. You can see the differences."

Of those, Dreps adds, 24 percent have sought mental health care, with the most prominent problems being adjustment disorder, psychosis and depressive reaction.

"As we model this out, it may represent a 50 percent casualty figure," Dreps says. "That may mean one out of every two who serve will end up needing care."

With Vietnam, Dreps says, it was one out of every 10.

"We thought that was bad," he says. "That's why Vietnam veterans like myself and World War II veterans are outraged."

The war in Iraq, Dreps says, "is the equivalent to the first two minutes of [the movie] *Saving Private Ryan* over and over and over again with no relief. We expect that everyone going through that would be a casualty."

Despite the reports of long waits, Megan Streight, a spokeswoman for



Street Watch

Saturday, June 18, 5:43 a.m., S.W. corner of Columbia St. and Alaskan Way. Officers on routine patrol were driving under the Alaskan Way Viaduct and observed a person sleeping on Dept. of Transportation property. The person was sleeping next to a concrete pillar, where visible "Rules of Conduct" signs were posted stating "No Camping." They initiated a stop for trespassing and woke the suspect, a transient white male aged 50, who was on the ground covered in blankets. They ID'd the man, and asked him to step over to the car while they performed a weapons check around the area where he had been sleeping, not wanting him to have access to a weapon upon returning to his sleeping area. The second officer began his check and found a long box by the pillow where the man had been sleeping. He unlocked the box and found syringes, cotton balls, and other drug paraphernalia. Suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Saturday, June 18, 5:04 p.m., Western Ave. Officers on routine patrol observed the suspect, a transient Native American female aged 40. They knew she had a warrant out for her arrest, and contacted her. A name check was conducted, the warrant was confirmed, and she was booked into King County Jail.

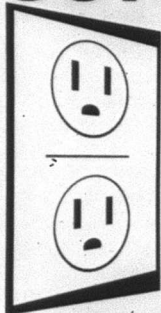
Friday, June 24, 4:02 p.m., 811 5th Ave. — First United Methodist Church. Church staff had contacted police to request that they move the persons sleeping on the premises. Staff said that the sleepers had gotten out of hand, and that nobody had permission to be there. The church has a trespass agreement with Seattle Police Department, and the grounds of the church are posted "No Trespassing." As an officer was checking the church premises, he found the suspect, a transient Hispanic male aged 55, at the location. He ran his name via the police computer, and found he had been previously trespassed from the location for a year. He was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Saturday, June 26, 12:25 a.m., Elliott and Blanchard. Suspect was contacted in an area under the on-ramp to southbound Highway 99, at Blanchard and Elliott. He was in an area that was clearly posted with large signs in Spanish and English, stating "No Trespassing." From his experience and training, the officer knew that this area was a haven for drugs, prostitution, drinking, and car prowls. He immediately arrested the suspect, a transient white male aged 34, and during a routine name check discovered an outstanding warrant for his arrest. Suspect was booked into King County Jail.

Sunday, June 26, 12:05 a.m., Prefontaine Park. Suspect was observed standing in Prefontaine Park, just west of Fontaine Rd. Officer was aware that the suspect, a transient Black male aged 39, was currently excluded from all Zone 4 parks, including Prefontaine. He was contacted, arrested, and booked into King County Jail for violating the city's "Trespass in the Parks" ordinance.

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

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Letters

editor@realchangenews.org

Prison sentences: lighten up

Dear *Real Change*,

The piece that you published on Three Strikes (*Real Change*, May 11, 2005) really disturbed me. I had no idea that there are some non-armed low-level offenders sentenced to life without parole under the state law.

King County Prosecutor Norm Maleng and many judges are allowing numerous murderers, rapists, and armed offenders to enter into plea bargains for lesser marginal sentences while at the same time supporting the practice of sentencing non-armed, low-level offenders to Forever.

I have always believed that these officers of the court were interested

in justice. Obviously that is not that case. Otherwise, Norm Maleng and the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and Superior Court Judges would step up and lobby the legislature to fine-tune the 3 Strikes Law in a matter that prevents non-armed, low-level offenders from being sentenced equal to serial killers. Public safety is of the utmost importance.

I do not believe sentencing non-armed offenders to death increases the public's safety. Such a sentence is in no way a reflection of their criminal behavior. Over-incarceration is not fiscally responsible, nor is it good policy.

I have never felt sorry for a criminal in my life, but these low-level offenders serving life without parole is barbaric. I believe it is very important for the media to inform and educate the public on policy issues such as this one. I am sure certain media personalities will continue to misinform the public and scare politicians from doing what is right.

Real Change is a refreshing publication, due to the fact that your writers keep it real.

Thank you,
Sharon
Federal Way

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 tor@realchangenews.org



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birthing, rupturing, caring
woman creates Mother

—DAVID TROTTER

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Events

The Lord's Table will again be serving The Lords Supper to all homeless & low-income. 9:00 pm M-Th at The First Presbyterian Church, 7th & Madison. Also accepting \$5, in kind, clothing, bibles or religious materials. Contact Cal @ 206 325-7764 for more info.

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This Week's Top Ten

Wednesday 7/6

What does The Love Boat TV series and no-holds-barred capitalism have to do with the success of the ocean cruise-line business? Journalist Kristoffer Garrin discusses his book *Devils on the Deep Blue Sea: The Dreams, Schemes and Showdowns That Built America's Cruise-Ship Empire*. 7:30 p.m. at Elliot Bay Books, 101 S. Main, (206)624-6600.

Saturday 7/9

"Love Welcomes All" is an alternative conference in response to "Love Won Out." James Dobson's (Focus on the Family) traveling ex-gay and reparative therapy conference. Focus on the Family teaches that homosexuality is preventable and treatable. Information and testimonies will be shared that respectfully present a different perspective. 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., Newport Presbyterian Church, 4010 120th S.E., Bellevue. Information: www.lovewelcomesall-wa.org.

Friday 7/8

The Yes Men is a movie that follows a couple of anti-corporate activist-pranksters as they impersonate World Trade Organization spokespersons on TV and at business conferences around the world. The film is presented by **Wallingford Neighbors for Peace and Justice**. No admission fee, 7 p.m., 5019 Keystone Pl. Online: www.groups.msn.com/wallingfordneighbors.

Monday 7/11

Michael Chorost is part human and part machine. Having lost his hearing in 2001, he regained it with a cochlear implant. This meditation on the swapping out of technology for failed body parts is shared in Michael's book, *Rebuilt: How Becoming Part Computer Made Me More Human*. Mr. Chorost appears at 7 p.m., University Book Store, 4326 University Way N.E. www.ubookstore.com.

Tuesday 7/12

The University of Washington Alumni Series presents another installment in *World War II: The War that Changed America*. This lecture focuses on what the men and women who fought in the war returned to

and the opportunities that awaited "The Greatest Generation." Admission \$15, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Kane Hall, Room 130, www.UWalum.com.

At one time Bellevue was a farming community renowned for its strawberries and one of the few places Japanese immigrants were able to make a home for themselves. But after their placement in internment camps they were unable to reclaim their land. Author David Niewert reads from *Strawberry Days: How Internment Destroyed a Japanese American Community*. 7 p.m. University Book Store, 4326 University Way N.E.



The Chinatown-International District Summer Festival

presents good eats, cultural music, children's activities, dance, and entertainment on the Dragon Main Stage and a Karaoke Idol contest with cool prizes. July 9 and 10, Hing Hay Park, International District. Information: www.seattlechinatown.org.

enue, (206)441-9729.

Wednesday 7/13

A potent and lyrical novel, *Free Enterprise* brings to life the passionate struggle for liberation that began in America not long after the first slaves landed on its shores. A mix of myth, legend, and history evokes the vivid life of a frontier legend and abolitionist. Author Michelle Cliff discusses her newly reissued novel at 7:30 p.m., Elliot Bay Books, 101 S. Main St., (206) 624-6600.

Thursday 7/14

"Fair and Honest Elections" is a community forum featuring a video with Bill Moyers showing how public campaigns work in other states. Speaking live is Gail Jonas, citizen-activist and Californian attorney, who led a delegation of observers to Ohio in November 2004 to investigate the national election process. 7-9 p.m. at Southwest Community Center, 2891 S.W. Thistle, Information: John Repp, (206)932-9522.

Director's Corner



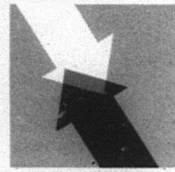
The summer fund drive is over, and we're very happy to say our readers have responded. We met our \$60,000 goal and *Real Change* will continue to publish weekly. For now, the donations thermometer is officially retired.

There's more good news. Last month, with 45,322 copies sold, our vendors had their best month ever. They could not have done it without you.

Real Change is well on our way to our goal of becoming Seattle's most widely read community newspaper, covering the issues you care about from the bottom-up. Over the coming months, we're focused on three things: producing a quality activist newspaper that gets read, attracting new readers, and building the funding base that we need to be around for the long-haul.

We've mentioned before that many people think the only reason to buy *Real Change* is to help a homeless person. We call that a pity purchase, and it's an image we can do without. You can broaden the circle by passing your paper on to someone who doesn't get it. Creating new readers builds success for our vendors.

Meanwhile, we haven't stopped fundraising. You just won't hear as much about it as much. Success for us means making sure we're still here ten years down the road, offering opportunity and a voice to low-income people and taking action to end homelessness and poverty. *Real Change* matters. Pass it on.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Hunger doesn't take a vacation

Issue: Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana proposed the expansion of the Lugar Pilot summer feeding program to an additional seven states in the FY2006 Agriculture Appropriations Bill. This summer, when the school lunch program is not available, nearly three million kids a day will be fed lunch. You can help expand access to nutritious summer meals for children in Washington!

Background: In 1999 the Lugar Pilot program began, reducing administrative obstacles that prevented many institutions from participating in the Summer Food Service Program. The pilot program currently runs in 19 states. Since 2000, summer meal participation in Lugar pilot states has increased by 25 percent while participation in non-pilot states declined by 9 percent.

The U.S. Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee has approved expanding the Lugar pilot program to seven new states, including Washington. This will bring the total states in the pilot to 26 — and provide a major push for expanding the program nationwide in the next few years. This expansion has bi-partisan support.

For too many Washington children, not being in school means missing meals. Currently, only 15 percent of low-income children who eat subsidized school meals have access to summer meals through the Summer Food Service Program or year-round school lunch program. Adding Washington next summer would help reverse the downward trend in sites and participation we are beginning to see this summer, as school and park programs close due to local funding cuts.

If the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee agrees with the Senate's recommendation, then Washington could be one of seven new states to be added to the pilot program. However, the House has approved a version of the Senate's bill that does NOT include expansion of the Lugar pilots. The House and the Senate subcommittees will hold a conference shortly to iron out differences in the two bills.

Action: Help Washington kids access nutritious meals year-round, including the summer, by contacting your members of congress with the following message: "Help Washington kids access nutritious meals year-round by urging appropriators to accept the Senate recommendation to expand the 'Lugar Summer Food Pilots' to 7 new states — including Washington. Remember, hungry kids can't learn!"

For more information and to take action online, visit www.childrensalliance.org, then click the link to their action center.

Senator Maria Cantwell
(202) 224-3441

www.cantwell.senate.gov

Senator Patty Murray
(202) 224-2621

www.murray.senate.gov

Representative Jim McDermott — 7th Dist.
(202) 225-3106

www.house.gov/mcdermott

CANOE, Continued from Page 1

hours per trip. Upon landing at a destination, there is traditional protocol that is to be followed, including asking permission to come onto the land. The host tribe then provides dinner as well as the cultural sharing events of the evening, where each tribe in attendance is asked to share the songs and dances of their people.

"By asking permission to go on shore, it teaches us how our ancestors behaved when they traveled within different canoe societies. It created relationships," explains Bill. "It is teaching through travel."

But the teaching is not limited to the journey itself. Months of preparation must be done by each tribe, or family, before leaving for the first destination.

"Many families have standing weekly meetings to conduct business of having the canoe family address the physical, social, mental and spiritual demands," Smith says. "They offer training on different things like aids and safety."

But not everything has been smooth sailing for the ICS. Many obstacles have kept the society on their toes, from dealing with border regulations in Canada to coping with weather hazards.

Conflicts may also brew between tribes. "We are new at organizing on this scale," says Smith, "and are dealing with our old feelings: the internalized oppression that could manifest in generations-long difficulties and make it difficult to accomplish the things we want."

In order to make the canoe journey a success, organizers not only depend on the hospitality of their tribal neighbors but their non-native neighbors, especially to work the support boats in case of emergency or to carry extra paddlers.

More than a resurgence of tradition, Bill says, the canoe journey connects people of all generations to create a thriving community.

"There are many hours together, just like a family," Bill asserts. "There are the hours on the water, the hours preparing and the hours after the journey."

"When I say family, I really mean it's a family." ■

[Resource]

For more information on the ICS or to get involved, contact Jeff Smith at jsmith@afsc.org.

VETERANS, Continued from Page 9

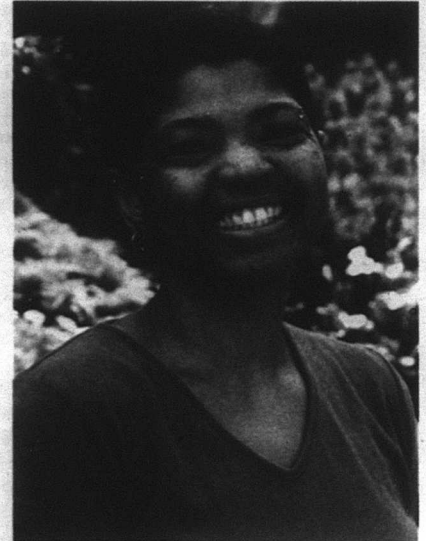
VA's Northwest Health Network (which includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Alaska) says facilities in the region have actually had a drop in demand over the past few months — and that the VA is mostly meeting its guidelines of providing all eligible veterans with an appointment in 30 days.

Dreps warns, however, that the Bush Administration plans to drop the number of eligible veterans. Today, he says, six million of the nation's 25 million veterans receive medical services, but the VA only budgeted for four million — and has stated it wants to pare that down to 2.2 million.

"They need to re-examine how they modeled [the numbers]," Dreps says. "Until they do that, they're doing a disservice to the country and veterans." ■

Air Force veteran Sheila Sebron says other vets returning from Iraq can't get needed services.

Photo by Dean Ritz.



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www.farestart.org
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FareStart Café at 2100, 2100 24th Ave. S., Rainier Valley.

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The vendor who sold you this paper works. So does Real Change.

Real Change is an actual vendor in Seattle that's making a difference here and now. Every month, more than 250 homeless and vulnerably housed people earn the money they need while they help build a world where people aren't homeless anymore. Our weekly urban newspaper brings you community voices you don't hear elsewhere and quality reporting on the issues you care about. We offer the information you need to take action and make a difference.

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

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