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NOV 22 2005

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NOV. 16-22, 2005

Diplomacy

Seattleites to build relationships in oil-rich but ravaged Nigeria

By **CYDNEY GILLIS**
Staff Reporter

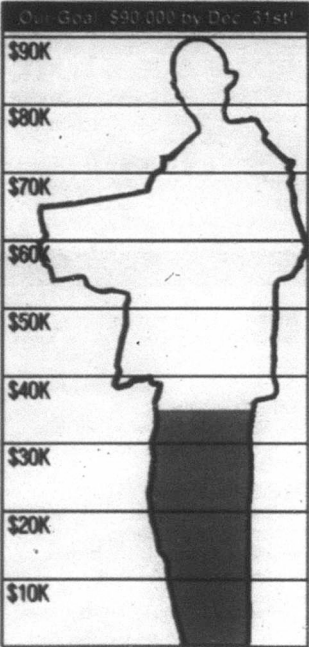
When Dokubo Goodhead was a boy in Nigeria, the waters on the island where he grew up teemed with life.

"We would go to the waterfront and catch fish," says Goodhead, a poet who now lives in Seattle. "We used to go to the creeks and hunt for crabs. That was our pastime. That was how kids in the Niger delta all grew up to be fishermen."

See **DIPLOMACY**, Continued on Page 10



STUDENTS PLAY AT THE EARLY LEARNING NETWORK PRESCHOOL, A FREE PROGRAM FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE FAMILIES IN SOUTHEAST SEATTLE. THE PRESCHOOL IS RUN BY THE REFUGEE WOMEN'S ALLIANCE AND PAID FOR BY THE CITY'S FAMILIES AND EDUCATION LEVY. PHOTO BY SUZANNA FINLEY.



[Please Donate]

Just two weeks into our fund drive, we're a third of the way toward our \$90K goal. We've raised \$34,857! We rely upon reader support to make *Real Change* happen. More than 275 poor and homeless vendors depend upon this newspaper for work that makes a difference. *Real Change* is building a community in action and we get there one donation at a time. Please do your part today.

A Step Ahead

Free pre-K offers educational boost to children of immigrants, refugees

By **ROSETTE ROYALE**
Staff Reporter

Lily Kuo witnessed the phenomenon firsthand in 2001, when she was an assistant teacher for a kindergarten class: students of immigrant parents, for whom English is not the primary language in the home, were struggling to grasp the ABC's, while holding on to their home culture. This observation led Kuo, who hails from Taiwan, to set a personal goal. "I told myself: I think I want to help with early childhood education, to advocate for these families," she remembers.

And, in that inexplicable manner in which personal goals are achieved with the help of outside forces, Kuo has got her wish: she now works as the program director for the Early Learning Network/Step Ahead (ELN) at Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA), in a program geared specifically to children of immigrant and refugee parents.

Housed in the Rainier Community Center in Columbia City, the ReWA site offers part-time preschool to 14 students whose primary home languages are Cantonese, Mandarin, Cambodian, or Spanish. The children, who spend mornings putting together puzzles or creating

images of turkeys shaped like their four-year old hands, receive class instruction from two multilingual teachers. But along with the good fortune to be able to speak in English as well as their native tongues in their classrooms, the students have another bit of good fortune: their preschool education is free.

"We're trying to get the word out to families that there are these free preschools in the neighborhood [their children] can attend," says ELN director Sonja Griffin.

The free preschool is being provided by the same outside forces that helped Kuo realize her goal of aiding children of non-native parents: Seattle voters.

In 2004, voters passed the Families and Education Levy Proposition, an expansion of a levy that first met voter approval in 1990. While that 1990 levy, and a second levy renewal in 1997, devoted some \$69 million for the academic advancement of all of the city's children, the 2004 levy created a sharper focus on school preparedness for children of

See **PRE-K**, Continued on Page 12

PR PEOPLE
With a process known as Proportional Representation, voters see themselves in elected officials. **PAGE 2**

GLOBAL WARNING
Until mainstream media takes climatic change seriously, earth's citizens will feel the heat. **PAGE 3**

EX TENT?
Despite Bellevue restrictions to the contrary, a temple tells Tent City 4 to stay put. **PAGE 4**

LONE CHANGER
James Garrett drops his loner status and takes a bow as our RC Hero. **PAGE 5**

PICK AND MUSE
Noam Chomsky cherry-picks from history's worst events to lend credence to his own ideas. **PAGE 6**

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No More Winner-Take-All

Tired of choosing between Establishment candidates? Let's rethink how elections are run

By **HERM ROSS**
Guest Writer

With proportional representation (PR), an election system creates legislative bodies that reflect the political, ethnic, religious, neighborhood, and socio-economic diversity of the constituents they represent. The legislative bodies would be like the electorate in microcosm.

Another local election has concluded, and those of us who supported minor-party candidates ask ourselves, yet again, why our favorites got eliminated in the primary. Why is it that, in the Seattle City Council races Nov. 8, we were typically choosing between two well-financed Democrats for each seat?

As voters, we are also fatigued by the negativity and fear-mongering of the candidates. We anticipate things like Democrat King County Executive Ron Sims showing in his campaign literature a picture of Republican opponent David Irons carrying a Bush-Cheney sign. But what's more interesting is how, for example, City Councilmember Jan Drago attacked her opponent, fellow Democrat Casey Corr, as being less Democratic because he had once praised a policy of former Republican Senator Slade Gorton. Why is a fear-based campaign the best strategy to win?

The answer to these questions is traceable, in no small part, to our antiquated winner-take-all election system: a system that engenders two major parties who bicker over details, creating the illusion of choice and democracy while agreeing on basic principles. Look no further than last year's presidential election, where both George Bush and John Kerry presented a "choice" between two C-grade-average Yale graduates who supported war in Iraq and opposed full rights for gays.

The answer to these problems is to replace winner-take-all with proportional representation (PR), an election

system that creates legislative bodies that reflect the political, ethnic, religious, neighborhood, and socio-economic diversity of the constituents they represent. The legislative bodies would be like the electorate in microcosm.

In our current election system, we have a primary that usually weeds out all but the well-heeled mainstainers — the top two of which face each other in the general election. One of them will win with as little as 50.1 percent of the vote, even at the expense of alienating and leaving unrepresented the other 49.9 percent of the voters.

If, however, we were to use proportional representation on the Seattle City Council, the outcome would be fair and it would enfranchise voters across the political spectrum.

First, proportional representation would allow Seattle to skip the primary election, saving the city about \$800,000 per election, which could be redirected toward needed services in this age of tight budgets.

Then, in the general election, rather than choosing between candidate A and candidate B for any given seat, voters would be presented with a list of all the candidates running for the council and would simply rank them, in order of preference, from most to least favorite — ranking as many or as few as they like. This solves the problem of having to choose between two candidates who you like for one seat — or having to choose the lesser of two evils for another.

The tabulation process requires little more than addition and division. To secure one of the nine seats on the council, a candidate would need one-ninth (11 percent) of the vote. The initial tabulation of the votes would

count all of the top-ranked candidates on everyone's ballots. If, after this first round of tabulation, a candidate gets 11 percent of the vote, the candidate is declared a winner and his/her name is removed from the ballot.

If the candidate gets, for example, 22 percent of the vote after the first tabulation, then half of all votes for that candidate would go to give the candidate the 11 percent threshold to win, and the rest of those votes would be redistributed to those voters' number-two choices.

Conversely, if a candidate comes in last place, the votes of his or her supporters are not "thrown away" like they are now; instead, they're redistributed to the subsequent choices on those voters' ballots. It's the transferring up and down of full and fractional votes over several rounds of tabulation, as opposed to throwing votes in the garbage, that would create the proportionality and the diversity of representation on the City Council.

One of the many advantages of proportional representation is the elimination of negative campaigning. In a two-person race, the most effective strategy is to cast doubt upon your opponent and avoid talking about substantial issues that might alienate potential supporters. But in a PR City Council race, you would be in a field of maybe 40 candidates, it's hard to sling mud in 40 directions and not look ridiculous.

Proportional representation, coupled with publicly financed campaigns and free and equal media coverage for all candidates, would create the level playing field that would finally allow ideas to triumph over privately-financed mediocrity. ■

Herm Ross is the treasurer for Citizens for Proportional Representation, a volunteer group dedicated to promoting more democratic election methods at all levels of government. Please join them for monthly meetings in the University District. For information, inquiries, or arranging for a speaker to talk to your organization about PR, call (206)366-2158 or email washington@fairvote.net.



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.

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ISSN 1085-729X

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Change Agent

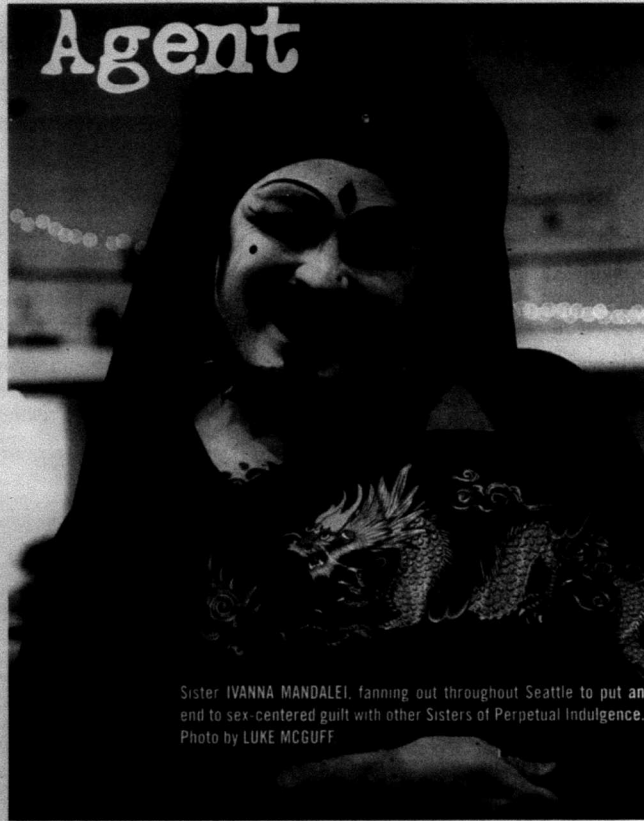
At least once a month for 10 years, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence have come together, put on their faces, and taken their mission of spreading the "promulgation of joy and expiation of guilt" to the streets, bars, and clubs of Seattle's gay community.

During any one night, they will work to visit every bar, handing out condoms and safe sex information to patrons.

Recently, the Sisters have been expanding their Bar Outreach program to surrounding cities like Everett and the Tri-Cities. The order also hosts annual and special events raising money for charitable organizations like the Lifelong AIDS Alliance, Lambert House, and Babes Network.

"We are there to provide the service of bringing fun," says Sister Ivanna Mandalei. "But we're also open to the possibility that someone may need a shoulder to cry on or an ear to listen. We work to put aside the garbage of feeling guilty for being gay or having AIDS and let love, joy, and happiness permeate to get across a message of safer sex and protecting others."

—Kimburly Ervin



Sister IVANNA MANDALEI, fanning out throughout Seattle to put an end to sex-centered guilt with other Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. Photo by LUKE MCGUFF

Hot Item

Is the media warming up to climate change?

"This will change life on this planet like nothing else, [but] the media usually give it less coverage than Jennifer Aniston's latest boyfriend."

—Aaron Ostrom, of Futurewise, an environmental advocacy organization

By TOM COGBILL
Contributing Writer

CLIMATIC warming over the next several decades is inevitable. "Among thousands of scientists who study this problem, there is no disagreement [about this]," says Dr. Edward Miles, leader of the University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group (CIG). "We are already seeing it, and it is certain to intensify in coming decades. My fear is, we in the scientific community have underestimated the magnitude and rate of change and the impacts that will be generated. [Furthermore], they are not reversible in a human time-frame."

Seven hundred area planners and policymakers got a look at CIG's latest research at the Oct. 27 Climate Change Conference in Seattle. The chief projections included a rise in sea levels leading to shoreline and habitat alteration, a continued rise of air and water temperature, which will increase flooding and harm salmon, and changes in precipitation patterns that will threaten agriculture, forests, the water supply, and hydroelectric power capacity.

In spite of such dire implications, the subject of climate change still evokes a shrug of the shoulders from citizens unaccustomed to seeing the issue discussed, as if it were somebody else's problem. This attitude puzzles many climatologists and activists.

"Media is asleep at the wheel," says Aaron Ostrom of the environmental advocacy organization Futurewise. "This will change life on this planet like nothing else, [but] the media usually give it less coverage than Jennifer Aniston's latest boyfriend." He welcomed an in-depth article in *The Seattle Times* of Oct. 9, but says, "it should be receiving non-stop coverage, if media were really in the business of publishing the most important news."

[Resource] The Climate Impacts Group sponsors regular speakers, classes, and seminars to disseminate its findings. More info: www.cses.washington.edu/cig.

CIG's Philip Mote was more charitable. "The *Times* article admitted the media had been incorrect to give skeptics of global warming equal weight. Media have picked up that there is a level of [scientific] agreement that this is a bad thing to the same extent that tobacco is bad for you."

Lisa Andrews of the Climate Solutions watchdog group concurs that coverage has improved of late. "The next frontier for the media is covering in a thoughtful way hopeful solutions to global warming. [These] can improve our quality of life across the board. Media needs to understand that this is not an 'environmental' issue, but an economic and energy one that affects people of all incomes and classes. However, the current media climate makes it not easy to cover some of these issues."

Can mainstream media — with its reliance on soundbites — keep a close eye on this complicated subject? A recent study of U.S. newspapers' coverage published in the journal *Global Environmental Change* suggests the mainstream press has often diluted or skewed the results of scientific research.

Amy Snover, who helps spearhead GIC's outreach, admits climate change reporting has been uneven but is encouraged by recent coverage. She is amazed at how the number of attendees at the recent conference had jumped sevenfold since the last conference, in 1997. Mote says the problem has garnered greater attention in parts of Europe. In Britain, because "Tony Blair feels passionately about the issue," British media have covered it more aggressively, although Mote thinks some German and British papers "have gone overboard about how we are wrecking the climate." The question is, what will it take for the big cannons of the American media to respond to the urgency?

"A nice, juicy catastrophe," says CIG leader Miles. "More hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding. It's hard to claim any single event is the result of global warming; it takes a trend. I don't think society will wait for us [scientists] to decide if there's a trend. If we wait another 10 or 20 years to start planning, then we will really be behind the eight-ball." ■

Just Heard...

Peace Offering

Some people get the book thrown at them, but Anwar Peace, local police-accountability watchdog, seems to have been thrown a golden opportunity.

At a Nov. 8 sentencing for two violations of a no-contact order against Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske, Peace was given a combined sentence of one day in jail and 50 hours community service. No fines were incurred. Peace says he will be able to substitute that day in jail with eight hours work on a road crew. As for the community service, Peace intends to offer his time to the NAACP. How would he like to focus his energies there? "Investigating the SPD," says Peace, who says he won't seek out the chief again.

Also during sentencing, on Oct. 19 arrest of Peace, for violating a different no-contact order against the chief, was expunged from his record. As such, no charges will be filed.

—Rosette Royale

Barn door's open

The King County Council on Monday made a prime investment in Pioneer Square, setting out \$7 million to build a new maintenance barn for the waterfront trolley.

The council's agreement with Pioneer Square developer Greg Smith also involves a monthly rent payment of \$30,000 for the barn, housed in the apartment and retail building he plans for the site — currently a parking lot next to Occidental Park. For councilmember Julia Patterson, who sided with Steve Hammond to cast two lonely no votes, the price was too high — especially since the trolleys will be mothballed as early as 2007, when the Viaduct closes.

Zeroed Out

Gov. Christine Gregoire decided last week to deepen the penalty for families who aren't following the state's welfare rules. Come May, a portion of the 3,500 households which aren't working or looking for work will get dropped from financial assistance. That's a harsh measure for some of the state's poorest, says Tony Lee of the Statewide Poverty Action Network: "Families that are sanctioned are less well educated, have fewer skills, and are less likely to be able to land on their feet, i.e. get a job" once they're cut off. And trying to rope families back on track by zeroing out their benefits may be no less effective than cutting just a portion, he says. Meanwhile, says Lee, there's the human suffering to consider: in other states, children in households where the benefits get axed are 30 percent more likely to be hospitalized.

—Adam Hyla

The Stand

Eastside temple spurns Bellevue law to host homeless camp for Tent City 4, despite restrictions

By LAURA CRUIKSHANK
UW News Lab

The 100-person homeless camp Tent City 4 moved to Bellevue's Temple B'nai Torah on Nov. 16, defying a city ordinance that limits the number of campers to 40 and shortens the time Tent City may stay there for 90 days to 60.

SHARE/WHEEL, which runs the camp, "approached us to house 100 [people] for 90 days," says temple president Brent Carson. "We are compelled by our faith to provide housing for the homeless," so the temple is making no attempt to comply with the city's restrictions.

In a press release dated Monday, Nov. 14, Carson stated, "The city's

Temporary Encampment Ordinance imposes more rigorous conditions than those which Tent City residents have imposed on themselves and that other religious institutions have embraced for over five years."

Also on Monday, Temple B'nai Torah together with SHARE/WHEEL filed a petition with King County Superior Court for an appeal through the Land Use Petition Act, says Chuck Wolfe, Attorney for Temple B'nai Torah.

Bellevue's law requires "one shower for 40 people and one portable toilet for 15 people," says Ted Hunter, Attorney for SHARE/WHEEL. He says that's unnecessary.

"Tent City 4 is one of the only shelters in King County that actually provides showers. The point of giving the homeless shelter is so they can get off the streets, so they can feel safe. There has never been a problem for people to stay clean in Tent City," says Tent City resident Bruce Thomas. "Bellevue obviously has a lack of understanding, and a blatant lack of compassion."

The camp provides a safe community for homeless people, says Thomas, allowing residents to look for work, save money, and seek

permanent housing. "They don't have to be on the streets just trying to survive; they have a place they can call home for 90 days."

King County developed an ordinance that has been enforced nearly since Tent City began, says Hunter. Tent City 4 has stayed in Bothell, Kirkland, and Woodinville and unincorporated King County, moving every 90 days, and he says there has never been a problem complying with the county's conditions.

"King County spent a long time developing an ordinance that would find a balance to protect the community," he says. "SHARE/WHEEL is very disappointed in the city of Bellevue in looking to restrict, rather than provide."

Tim Waters, spokesperson for Bellevue City Council, says that the local ordinance came after months of debate and public involvement. "The ordinance is a balanced attempt to serve the homeless, and at the same time, meet the needs of the Bellevue residents," he says.

The city's intent to regulate temporary homeless camps was legitimate, says Thomas. "The government does have a right to provide safety, but they have to show they have a compelling interest and do it in the least restrictive means. We don't see that there is a compelling health interest" behind the restrictions. ■

"Tent City 4 is one of the only shelters in King County that actually provides showers. The point of giving the homeless shelter is so they can get off the streets, so they can feel safe. There has never been a problem for people to stay clean in Tent City."

—Bruce Thomas, Tent City resident

Wet City: Don Goodwin, president and community liaison for the Eastside's Tent City 4, has lived there for more than a year. Photo by Sherry Loeser.



Short Takes

Walk-a-Mile pairs former foster youth, legislators

On Nov. 14, a county-wide project based out of the University of Washington will pair local legislators and policymakers with former foster kids, in an attempt to help lawmakers understand the ramifications of welfare reform.

This is the new spin on the venerable Walk-a-Mile program, which was founded in 1994 by Natasha Grossman of the Northwest Institute for Children and Families (part of the UW School of Social Work) and matches policymakers with low-income constituents to build relationships between those who create policies and those affected by those policies (thus "walking-a mile in each other's shoes").

The new project will extend over four weeks with each pair speaking on the phone at least weekly and participating in two in-person activities: one from a typical day in the life of the former foster-care youth, one from that of the policymaker. In addition, each policymaker is asked to live for a month on the same estimated minimum-wage budget as his or her partner.

State legislators, city and County Councilmembers, juvenile judges, and the mayor of Seattle have been invited to be a part of Walk a Mile, according to project coordinator Sierra Rowe. Nine have agreed to participate. They are state Sens. Karen Keiser and Jeanne Kohl-Wells; Reps. Mary Lou Dickerson, Ruth

Kagi, Jim McIntire, and Eric Pettigrew; Seattle City Council member David Della; Majken Ryherd, chief of staff for Speaker of the House Frank Chopp; and Greg Williamson, policy coordinator at the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The project ends Dec. 14.

—Maria Antonova

Homeless memorial ok'd

A design competition to create a "Place of Remembrance," a place for Seattle's homeless to mourn their deceased companions, has garnered support from city government and may soon lead to a permanent monument.

The City Council passed a resolution Monday to formally state their support for the monument. The resolution does not commit any funding or specify any public land, but Council member Peter Steinbreuck says the City needs a monument for the homeless.

"This is very important," says Steinbreuck. "We need to honor the lost and somewhat forgotten lives."

Dakota Keene, an architect at Seattle's Mithun architecture firm, said the monument gained support when the American Institute of Architects held a competition to showcase design for the proposed monument at their annual 2005 Honor Awards for Washington Architecture.

"There is a great need for a homeless memorial," says Keene. "The need to mourn is no

different from people who are homeless than people with means."

She said she envisioned a memorial much like the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington DC. Keene says she wanted to see a design where people could "touch the names and feel closer to them."

The competition had 18 total entries, three from members of the homeless community, says Keene.

A design called "Footprints" by a team of architects from Seattle's Callison Architecture firm received a citation and the most attention at the awards ceremony.

The jury called the design "Comprehensive in its address of the physical and emotional experiences of being homeless."

Steinbreuck called the project "doable" and warned against a memorial that "settled in one location."

"You don't want to underestimate the fact that surrounding neighborhoods will be resistant to a memorial," said Steinbreuck. "It's troubling but we have to deal with it."

Monday's resolution passed unanimously and many council members spoke in favor of it.

"Eighty-two homeless people died on our streets last year and the number is growing," Councilmember Tom Rasmussen said. "No one should be forgotten. This project will give a dignified place where everyone will be reminded of the plight of our homeless men and women."

—Phillip Thomas-Smith

Defining the issues

When it comes to tackling the problems of class and race, few Americans have the vocabulary to even talk about the problems, much less the support systems to deal with them — two things that author and educator Paul Kivel will address in a book reading and two workshops he will give in Seattle Nov. 18-21.

On Friday evening, Kivel will read from his latest book *You Call This a Democracy? Who Benefits, Who Pays, and Who Really Decides?* The event, which starts at 7 p.m. at University Friends, will include an interactive discussion on themes in the book, which examines the dynamics of power, economics, and inequality in the United States.

One of the goals for the book, Kivel says, was to give a vocabulary for discussing the issues — a theme that grew out of workshops Kivel gives across the nation as a board member of the Tools for Change Institute, a Seattle-based organization that offers programs for social change and community development.

On Saturday from 6 to 10 p.m., Tools for Change will host a fundraising dinner, followed Sunday by a community workshop with Kivel on "Tools for Democratic Social Change." The workshop will examine the critical analysis skills needed to articulate an effective vision, and how vision and accountability are related to creating justice.

—Justin Ellis

RC Hero

James Garrett

By ALEAH TIAM
Contributing Writer

If ever you find yourself passing through the intersection of 6th and Union, in the shadow of the Sheraton Hotel Towers and Nike Town, you may not notice him at first. But be sure not to miss Mr. James Garrett, a six-year veteran vendor of *Real Change*. James, a quiet man with kind eyes and a self-described "loner", is this month's *Real Change* Hero.

James's long-standing relationship with *Real Change* began after a visit to the Pike Market Senior Center clinic, where a social worker pointed him in the direction of *Real Change*. Since starting work, he has passed not only the 300 Club mark (selling a minimum of 300 papers a month, which earns him a part-time turf at Sixth and Union), but selling on average 400 papers a month.

James' work has spread awareness and enriched the lives of many people, including many of our Spanish-speaking vendors. James was instrumental in translating *Real Change's* Vendor Agreement and Orientation documents into Spanish to serve that population. These efforts make James, like many of our long-time vendors, a hero.

Years ago — "when I was young", he says — James came to the Northwest from Douglas, Arizona, for a job opportunity. You would not know it, but James is a youthful 72 years young and going strong. He enjoys working with *Real Change*, which he does sometimes seven days a week, early morning to late afternoon, depending on the flow of foot traffic and, of course, whether or not it's raining. James says besides the income he gets (which helps to make ends meet on top of his Social Security checks), he likes working outdoors on his own, without a boss, and during the hours he chooses.

After a hard day of work you might find this mild-mannered man enjoying a novel or non-fiction book about medieval times, his favorite historical period. Despite his penchant for quiet and solitude, James says that though he does not talk much himself, he "really enjoys meeting people and hearing their stories."

James is a man of few but warm words, and is always ready with a smile for those he meets. His regular *Real Change* customers can tell you: James Garrett is a Seattle fixture and a hero to this local community. ■

James Garrett, a seven-year vendor, has helped with translations of vendor agreements for Spanish-speaking vendors. He also happens to be our RC Hero. Photo by Aleah Tiam.



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Walls in our Minds

Influential intellectual Noam Chomsky overlooks history on the subjects of JFK, Vietnam, and 9/11

By JOE MARTIN
Contributing Writer

Long before 9/11, Noam Chomsky had disparaged the perennially unsettling questions regarding John F. Kennedy's assassination.

Politics by assassination is a staple of today's news. On Feb. 14, former prime minister of Lebanon Rafik Hariri was killed in a horrific bomb blast. Prior to his death, Hariri had vehemently disagreed with Syrian president Bashar Assad about Assad's desire to extend the tenure of Lebanon's current president.

No one thought for a moment that the carnage that took Hariri's life was the work of a lone psychotic incendiary. In fact, the United Nations has a team investigating the case. At least seven Syrian officials have been questioned in connection with the murder. Adding tension to the controversy was the recent death of Ghazi Kenaan, Syria's interior minister, who according to the AP "effectively controlled Lebanon for two decades." Kenaan had been one of the persons of interest in the investigation of the Hariri assassination.

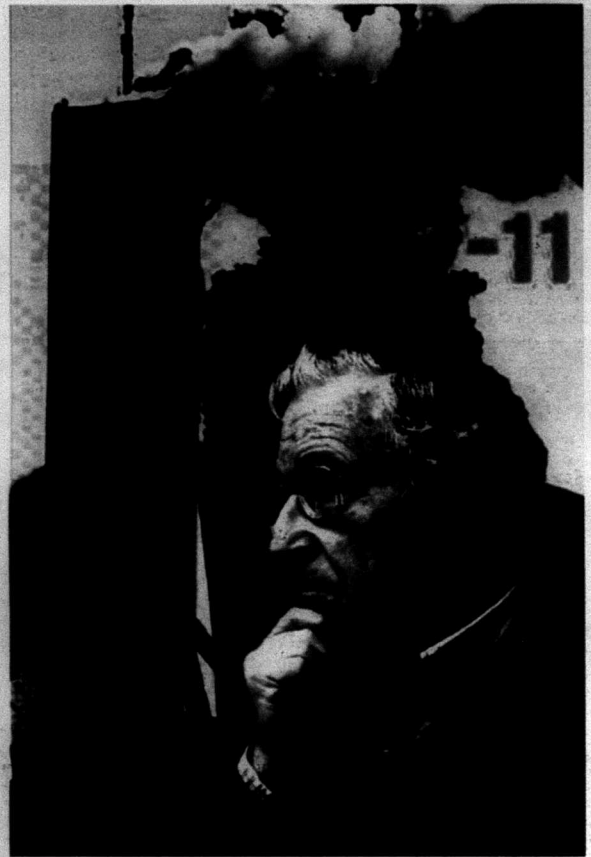
In many parts of the world, the murder of national and ethnic leaders is viewed politically, and conspiratorial implications are axiomatic. In the United States, conspiracy theory has often been derided as an eccentric pursuit by individuals who indulge in wild speculation instead of a sober study of historical events. And on the Left there are also those who declare their aversion to the consideration of conspiracy as a historical force. Systemic structures and institutions are paramount; men and women are incidental.

Noam Chomsky is notable for his thorough and consistent systemic analyses of world events and his equally deep disregard for even the

most meticulous conspiracy research.

Shortly after 9/11, Chomsky gave a series of interviews concerning those devastating events. In one exchange, a reporter with Italy's *Il Manifesto* asks Chomsky: "Could you say something about connivance and the role of the American Secret Service [in the 9/11 tragedy]?" It was an obvious reference to the suspicion that overseers of the U.S. intelligence labyrinth — not just the Secret Service — were somehow surreptitiously involved in the deed, if not in its perpetration, perhaps in allowing the conflagration to transpire in order to unleash the Bush cabal's hegemonic designs. "I don't understand the question," said Chomsky, calling the attacks "surely an enormous shock and surprise to the intelligence services of the West, including those of the United States."

Since Chomsky made this remark, the persistent research of David Ray Griffin and others has pointed to the real possibility of exactly such high-level connivance. The 9/11 Commission Report has actually left many nagging questions unanswered. The late Benjamin DeMott, author of *Junk Politics*, referred to the report as a document for "the idolatrous fool, the sucker, the clueless consumer, the ad person's delight." To this day,



Chomsky has not publicly expressed any interest in the work of Griffin or his cohorts.

Long before 9/11, Chomsky had disparaged the perennially unsettling questions regarding John F. Kennedy's assassination. He has been especially vocal

in criticizing the cogent argument that JFK intended to withdraw from Vietnam without a military victory.

In the early '70s, Berkeley professor and political analyst Peter Dale Scott contributed, at Chomsky's behest, a seminal and still controversial essay to the fifth

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by Tom Douglas.

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Continued from Previous Page

volume of the Gravel edition of the "Pentagon Papers." Entitled "The Kennedy Assassination and the Vietnam War," it was the first thorough assessment of JFK's apparent decision to withdraw from Vietnam. And Scott's piece contained an explosive insight: that Kennedy's plans to disengage American troops were annulled within days of his death.

Years later, Chomsky weighed in on this question due to two events: the publication of historian John Newman's expansive *JFK and Vietnam* and the appearance of Oliver Stone's powerful film *JFK*. Both Newman's historical work and Stone's drama expatiated upon Scott's original argument that Kennedy wanted out of Vietnam, and furthermore that his assassination may have been perpetrated to prevent such a withdrawal. Chomsky's response is recorded in a slim volume published in 1993, entitled

Rethinking Camelot, and contains his repudiation of the withdrawal thesis.

Chomsky excoriates any notion that JFK was moved to reconsider policies of violent military interventionism. Kennedy was simply another arrogant Cold War supremacist hell-bent on the expropriation, brutalization, and if deemed necessary, annihilation of the impoverished Third World. In parts, the author seems obsessed about what he perceives to be misguided Kennedy flagiography. His own tendentious portrayal of JFK borders on vilification. Chomsky concludes that the reckless course pursued by Lyndon Johnson was an obvious continuation of a belligerent pattern woven by his murdered predecessor. Ultimately, this book is a rant, rather than the measured analysis we have come to expect from Chomsky.

In his impressive work *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*, Peter Dale Scott takes Chomsky to task. Scott notes that what Chomsky frequently refers to as "the internal planning record" is in large part the "Pentagon Papers,"

the massive and initially secret study of America's involvement in Vietnam ordered in 1967 by then-Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. The team that produced this infamous 4,000 page, 47-volume study was headed by Leslie Gelb, who went on to work as an editor for *The New York Times* and is now President Emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations. Gelb and 35 others completed their work over an 18-month period. They conducted no interviews and based their analyses strictly on written materials primarily from the files of the Department of Defense, the CIA, and the White House. Thus Scott notes that the Pentagon Papers are "an edited version of the primary documents... based on selective editing and sometimes blatant distortion."

Chomsky's pervicacious aversion to a more open consideration of the evidence for political subterfuge and violent provocation in our nation's recent history is perplexing and unfortunate.

In his original 1972 essay, Scott wrote that "the 600 pages of documents [in the Pentagon Papers] from the Kennedy administration end on October 30 [1963]. It is unlikely that this

striking lacuna is accidental."

In recent years this informational gap has been partially closed. In 1997, 800 pages of documents from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, most of which had been withheld from the Pentagon Papers, were released. But documents are still missing; others likely have been destroyed.

Pertaining to the covert operations against North Vietnam that would lead to the Tonkin Gulf incidents, Scott states: "At present there is no evidence that Kennedy knew about, let alone authorized, these plans; and for what it is worth I have been assured by Kennedy-Johnson insiders that he did not know about them...." Contrary to Chomsky, there is ample reason to believe that JFK would have blocked their implementation. At the time of his assassination, JFK had endorsed a national security memorandum ordering the withdrawal of 1,000 Americans from Vietnam by the end of 1963 and a full evacuation by the end of 1965. That is where things stood as the bullets tore through Dealy Plaza in Dallas.

It is critical to recall the Cold War atmosphere of suspicion and paranoia that reigned when Kennedy became president. The late award-winning journalist Fred Cook wrote that "Kennedy was viewed by ultraconservative, big money men as a dangerous 'liberal' who posed a threat to the status quo. Conservative minds feared his New Frontier would become as obnoxious to business as Roosevelt's New Deal."

A respected leftist has expressed frustration with Chomsky on the matter of Kennedy's death. Michael Parenti in his *Dirty Truths* places the subject within the context of Kennedy's brief tenure. He states that JFK's decision not to intervene during the Bay of Pigs fiasco, his unwillingness to commit massive numbers of American combat troops to Vietnam, his atmospheric test-ban treaty, and his American University speech urging sane alternatives to the Cold War, among other things, infuriated the forces of reaction. "These things" says Parenti, "may have not been enough for some on the Left, but they were far too much for many on the Right."

Recently, James Kenneth Galbraith of the University of Texas has written in support of the thesis maintaining JFK's withdrawal decision: "A great many people since have attempted to solve the mysteries of Dallas.... Some of this work is useless, some is dishonest.... But much is valuable. And there are millions of pages of official records now in the public domain. The problem facing the historian now is how to assemble the whole body of evidence in a compelling way, taking account of both the conspiracy (for, once one rejects the lone gunman hypothesis, that is what it was), and the cover-up. The task requires both narrative power and analytical precision; jigsaw puzzles properly assembled only fit one way."

Chomsky's pervicacious aversion to a more open consideration of the evidence for political subterfuge and violent provocation in our nation's recent history is perplexing and unfortunate. The wall that he has erected between the structural and conspiratorial views of history is an artificial one. In the end, it serves only to cloud our critical understanding of momentous events past and present. ■

Earth-Bound


you with the arrow
you with the gun
you with the sister
with the vicious tongue
anthology of a diner
in a big city slum
or a wealthy neighborhood
neon signs harnessing
memories for revenge

the scapegoat has a sober face
while bearing the sin of the world
on pivotal Herculean shoulders
a vision carrying such consequence
strapped to a rugged cross
placed into the thick of things
trapped neither by life nor death

you with sovereign power
you with nuclear-bomb aspirations
you with invisible ink
on time-yellowed paper
kicking each other under the table
clamor will have its voice
pompousness echoing a trail
of steaming vapor

—CAROL KOSCHE

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There is an almost religious sense of wonder at the natural world that elevates *The Scorpion's Tail*, and offers profound counterpoint to the absurdities of human endeavor.

The Scorpion's Tail

By Sylvia Torti

Curbstone Press, 2005

Paperback, 269 pages, \$15

Review by TIMOTHY HARRIS

Contributing Writer

When the Chiapas uprising happened in 1994, I just didn't get it. To me, it looked like an old story: dirt-poor peasants rise up and get tragically crushed. My impulse was to look away. When the rainforests of southern Mexico became the new destination for lefty tourism, my cynicism only deepened. A decade earlier we called those people the Sandalistas. Subcomandante Marcos and his Internet communiqués were a nice innovation, but the ski mask, bandolier, and pipe were too gimmicky for words. It was tweed and suede elbow patches meets jungle camouflage. I couldn't take it seriously.

A decade later, the impact of this indigenous uprising is hard to overestimate. While the Indians themselves were largely outmaneuvered and militarily marginalized, the international movement it sparked and the deep support they found within Mexico kept the bloodbath mostly at bay. Chiapas, the opening gun in the revolutionary response to NAFTA, was in substance and style the beginning of a powerful movement against globalization.

Marcos' communiqués were the underpinnings of a new theory for the transformation of society.

My dismissal of this unlikely revolution couldn't have been more off the mark.

Sylvia Torti's *The Scorpion's Tail* is a fictionalized account of the initial uprising, as seen through the eyes of four different people on various sides of the conflict.

The central character is Amy, a young entomologist who loves bugs but doesn't know beans about the world. A research trip to the Mexican rainforest abruptly ends when the military swarms the area and makes conditions too dangerous to continue. While Amy is on a plane back home to Minnesota within days of arrival, she is haunted by the poverty and death she witnessed and by a new awareness of her own typically North American cluelessness.

Her coffeehouse philosopher boyfriend tries to help her come to terms, but his intellectualization of the issue just increases her sense of shame, impotence, and alienation. She struggles to come to terms with her new knowledge, and painfully builds a different sense of herself acting in the world.

Mario is a Mexican regular—drawn to the military by poverty and absence of options—who finds himself in a jungle war that he doesn't understand. Chan Na K'in is a guerilla fighter who is at odds with her accommodationist tribe and

bone-tired of the smell of death. Finally, Pablo is a closeted gay Mexican ornithologist who comes from privilege but joins the revolution anyway, for reasons that aren't entirely clear.

While there's enough background on Mexican politics to make the novel a decent introduction to the issues, anyone seriously interested will want to look for supplemental reading. This is an exploration of the emotional landscape surrounding the uprising, and the emphasis is on how the war makes people feel.

The novel is grounded in the author's real-life experience as a researcher who found herself in Chiapas on the eve of the revolution. Torti builds a world in which entomology and revolutionary politics intersect. There is an almost religious sense of wonder at the natural world that elevates the novel, and offers profound counterpoint to the absurdities of human endeavor.

While this first novel is an impressive debut for Sylvia Torti, some will find it a little formulaic. There's a leftist kitchen sink quality to the book, where people mostly think correct thoughts, and when they don't, it's to illustrate why they're wrong. While I tend to agree with the various pieties expressed, I wish she'd left the preaching to the Baptists. It would have made things more surprising. People are always more real when they're not polished to perfection. ■

Class and Chemistry: Austen onscreen

Pride and Prejudice

Directed by Joe Wright

Now playing at the Guild 45th and other locations

By LESTER GRAY

Arts Editor

A recent piece in the *New York Times Magazine* introduces us to Literary Darwinism, a fledgling school of literary criticism. Using Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* as an example, the article explains how Ms. Austen's fictional account of connivances spawned in the desperation of matchmaking could be explained in terms of humans needing to propagate their best specimens. Be that as it may, such an analysis belies the scrumptious mirth central to this film version of Austen's work, the first in 65 years.

Directed by Joe Wright, *Pride and Prejudice* takes place in very late 18th century England, not far in time or place from where the malnourished Oliver Twist had the temerity

to whine about his thimbleful of gruel. Also shared by the characters of these two classics featuring disparate social classes is a common urgency: basic survival. While Dickens' characters are indigent criminals and Austen's Bennet family is one of the gentry, the privilege of the

latter group is precarious. The spigot through which the family's just-adequate income flows has slowed to a drip.

Elizabeth (Keira Knightley) is one of six Bennet daughters. Like her sisters, she has few if any prospects for a secure future outside of marriage, and even that is far from assured, given the paucity of available men. But neither the specter of spinsterhood nor indigence governs her blunt speech and lack of deference in the company of potential suitors.

It is this uncompromising quality that makes her both off-putting and attractive to the handsome and well-situated Mr. Darcy (Matthew Macfadyen), a man whose considerable pomposity masks an underlying tenderness. The two are magnets of similar poles, generating energy on approach, but destined to repel. Their encounters, as in the book, are highlighted by mutually aggravating exchanges featuring spontaneous and incisive wit. Brought to the screen, this repartee dances with nuance and sexual chemistry.

Elizabeth is the bane of her mother's (Brenda Blethyn) maniacal commitment to getting each of her girls married, and if at all possible married well. Unabashed and even buffoonish in her efforts, she often appears in danger of alienating those she wants to endear. Mother Bennet is certifiably crazy—like a fox.

The adventures of the lovely Elizabeth Bennet and the gainfully unemployed are a treat. This is due in no small part to the supporting cast: Brenda Blethyn as Mrs. Bennet, Donald Sutherland as the sagacious Bennet patriarch, Judi Dench as the villainous Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Tom Hollander as the matrimonially desperate Mr. Collier.

Pride and Prejudice makes history so palatable. The fact that skulls are rolling like bowling balls at the guillotine across the Channel (which may also be seen in a Darwinian light) does not get in the way of the upper classes having a good time. They just needed to keep their heads. ■

Pride and Prejudice makes history so palatable. The fact that skulls are rolling like bowling balls at the guillotine across the Channel does not get in the way of the upper classes having a good time.





Adventures
in Irony

Dr. Wes Browning

Seattle is being so stupid, it might as well be shooting itself in the groin area.

I hate talking about SHARE. There are many good reasons for this. Their name is Anitra "Legion" Freeman, on whose kitchen floor I have sometimes slept.

If it weren't for Ms. Freeman I probably wouldn't know that SHARE was an acronym, or where to look up what the letters stand for. It's the Seattle Housing And Resource Effort, according to one of Anitra's 35 or so websites.

If I talk about SHARE I will surely get some detail about it wrong and Anitra will tell me about it, and then she will never stop telling me about it, because once she starts doing anything she can't stop. She has no brakes.

Unfortunately the city of Seattle has given me no choice. It has denied funding to SHARE because SHARE would not agree to comply with "Safe Harbors," AKA Tag n' Trak, AKA Seattle's version of HMIS (Homeless Management Information Strategies.)

You know a plan is a bad idea the minute someone calls it a strategy. "Strategy" is related to the word "stratosphere." Both come to us from the ancient Greek for "cloud." In the case of "strategy," the idea is that the use of one can cloud people's minds so they can't see how stupid you're being, so you can get away with being stupider than usual.

In this instance, Seattle is being so stupid, it might as well be shooting itself in the groin area. This can be demonstrated mathematically, as follows.

Seattle currently funds 1,275 shelter beds. About a quarter of those are administered by SHARE. The total funding costs a total of about \$5 million annually. SHARE's share of the city's funding, which is the money they will be losing as of next March when the funding year ends, is around a quarter of a million dollars.

That means that 75 percent of the city's shelter beds (the non-SHARE portion) suck up 95

A Heavy Cross to SHARE

percent of the city's funding, while 25 percent of the shelter beds (the SHARE portion) only suck up 5 percent of the funding.

If the city has to replace the 300 beds now provided by self-managed SHARE shelters with conventional shelters, the cost will be more than six times what SHARE has needed.

You can be sure that much money is never going to materialize. Last month Mayor Nickels said he'd work with the City Council to increase shelter funding by as much as \$500,000 in order to maintain the same number of shelter beds in the city. That's not counting the \$500,000 per year it's expected to cost us for the extra paper, paper clips, and the super-duper unhackable computer system Safe Harbors is going to require. But the facts show that without SHARE the city will need \$1.5 million to have the same number of shelter beds it has had with SHARE.

Since that money won't happen, we can expect to lose at least 200 shelter beds after March. SHARE proposes to make those up by setting up new tent cities. Those would violate SHARE's agreement with the city regarding tent cities. But I don't care, since by demanding that SHARE accept Safe Harbors I feel that the city has already in effect reneged on its agreements with SHARE on its own side, big time. I want everyone, and especially Anitra Freeman, to note my careful use of "I" statements here.

Oh, wait — who says the city can't provide beds as cheaply as SHARE? Why, they would just have to imitate the SHARE model without the help of SHARE! Why didn't I think of that before?

Here's how it will work. They'll set up 13 or 14 self-managed shelters all around the city. Only, because they'll be city shelters instead of SHARE shelters, they'll be able to make sure that the people who run these self-managed shelters comply with Safe Harbors. The city will be able to do that by managing its own self-managed shelters!

There's a perfect strategy! ■



Sun., Oct. 30, 7:27 p.m. Lazarus Day Center, 2nd Ave. Ext. S. Suspect, a transient Black male aged 53, was contacted for trespassing at above location. He is a known Department of Corrections client, and his DOC officer requested that police take the suspect into custody and transport him to the West Precinct. He signed a stipulated agreement for work release, and was released to his DOC officer. Another suspect at the scene, a transient white female in her 30s, was observed with an open can of beer. She gave officers an unverifiable name, and was arrested and booked into King County Jail for obstruction.

Mon., Oct. 31, 12:14 a.m., Parking Garage, 1st Ave. S. Suspect, a transient white male aged 25, was contacted at the parking garage, which is private property. He was in a fortified position on the third tier of the garage, which has large "No Trespassing" signs posted throughout. He was contacted, and stated he was just hanging out, drinking with some friends. They admitted to building the shelter. Amongst his friends officers recognized several crack addicts, a prostitute, and a felony warrant suspect. The suspect had the odor of intoxicants about him, and had bloodshot eyes and slurred speech. He was holding a bottle of beer, and there was an open bottle of liquor in the fortress. Suspect stated he had just been honorably discharged from the military last week. He also threatened to beat an officer, stating he would use ice hockey etiquette, and would stop hitting him once he hit the ice. Suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail for trespass. Another man inside the ersatz structure was questioned, and it was verified that he had a warrant for his arrest. He was also arrested and taken to King County Jail. The other suspects were investigated and released.

Mon., Oct. 31, 1:15 a.m., QFC, Republican St. Officers were dispatched to QFC on a report of a trespasser who was refusing to leave. The complainant, a store employee, described the suspect and stated he had threatened to assault him. Officers arrived and contacted the suspect, a transient white male aged 36, inside the front door. He was eating soup crackers he'd stolen from the deli counter, and had several other packets sticking out of his sweatshirt pocket. He was asked to step outside and did so, and began rambling incoherently, refusing to leave. He swore at the officers, but was given several chances to leave — officers are familiar with the man, and usually he just walks away. He refused to leave, and was warned he was trespassing, but stated he didn't care. He continued to curse, and was taken into custody. Officers spoke to the complainant, who stated that the suspect had been in the store the last few nights, eating the small packets of soup crackers that are for sale in the deli department. When the complainant asked him to leave today, suspect threatened to hit him over the head with a bottle. Complainant did not take the threat seriously, and wasn't overly concerned about the stolen crackers, but he did want the suspect removed from the store. A one-year Trespass Admonishment was issued, and the suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail for criminal trespass.

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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*How hard it is for those who have wealth
to enter the Kingdom of God! Indeed it is
easier for a camel to go through the eye of
a needle than for someone who is rich to
enter Kingdom of God.*

— Luke 18:24-25

SO WE HAVE TO ASK, FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR SOULS:
SHOULDN'T TAXES BE SUBSTANTIALLY RAISED FOR THOSE WHO
ARE SHARING-IMPAIRED (I.E. THOSE WHO HAVE WEALTH)?



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Letters

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Junkyard bombs

Dear *Real Change*,

I wanted to email you to thank you for the amazing article in your latest issue, "The Digital Dump" (Nov. 9), and to share with you some of the thoughts that went through my head on reading it:

I sit at home confronting my old broken printer. It is now a useless anchor that fills my home. Now, it is like an entire shipwreck that sits here, a gigantic lump in my throat. I just read that about half of electronic waste dumped in Nigeria comes from the United States. Basically, this here

printer must leave, but if it does, it becomes poison in some poor child's air and water. Our state of entrapment is so complete that we are helpless to stop this casual murder — and how oh so profitable!

Well, not completely helpless. I guess I will now have to research online where I should deposit this piece of junk with guarantees that it wouldn't be turned into an e-waste bomb, dropped not as rapidly as the more conventional ones but slowly and diligently: passed from one person to another, one ship to the next, until it explodes even more slowly. Its detonation is so invisibly protracted that (I also read), no longer able to tolerate its ugly threats, some Nigerians set it on fire. Why do these people have to live in my junk yard?

Karim Naguib

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.

DIPLOMACY, Continued from Page 1

Not anymore. Few Americans know that Nigeria is now the fifth-largest provider of oil to the United States, nor that the 1 million barrels the nation exports each month has helped kill rivers, jungle, and people's livelihoods along the coast of the West African country where the Niger River lets out to the sea.

Oil was discovered in the area in 1956. Since then, Goodhead and environmentalists say, the government has confiscated oil-rich lands owned by Nigerians and given the oil industry free rein to pollute while jailing and executing resisters.

In the next two and half weeks, 19 Seattle-area residents plan to call attention to the poverty and suffering by traveling to the Niger Delta village of Oporoza, where they will dedicate a library the group has paid to build — a first for the region and for a new Seattle nonprofit called Global Citizen Journey.

Global Citizen Journey is the brainchild of Susan Partnow, a veteran of "citizen diplomat" trips to Vietnam and other parts of the world. The Global Citizen delegation, which ar-

rives Thursday in Lagos, Nigeria, and returns Dec. 3, includes an engineer, graduate students, teachers, librarians, and a two-person video team that will document the trip — and provide audio for weekly updates to air on KBCS 91.3 FM Community Radio starting Nov. 24.

On arrival, each Seattle delegate will be paired with a Nigerian professional sharing similar interests. The hope, Partnow says, is to create lasting bonds that will lead to ongoing projects. The Nigerian delegates were recruited by the trip's host and inspiration, Joel Bisina, founder of the Niger Delta Professionals for Development.

Two years ago, Partnow and Global Citizen co-director Mary Ella Keblusek met Bisina at a peace conference they hosted on Whidbey Island. Keblusek says the two were moved by Bisina's description of the oil industry's impact on the Niger Delta and the violence it has sparked between the region's 40 tribes.

In an effort to get the tribes to stop fighting each other and start focusing on the oil companies, Bisina left a

See **DIPLOMACY**, Continued on Page 12

CLASSIFIED

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Calendar This Week's Top Ten

Thursday 11/17

How much money has Halliburton made from the War in Iraq? William Hartung, one of the nation's top military analysts and director of the Arms Trade Resource Center, leads the presentation *Private Military Contractors in Iraq and War Profiteering*. Noon, Central Lutheran Church, Social Hall, 1710 11th Ave. Info: www.worldpolicy.org/projects/arms

The Radical Women group presents *The "A" Word: Younger and Older Feminists Confront the Age Gap*, a discussion of personal stories and age-discrimination issues affecting women. 7:30 p.m., Radical Women, 5018 Rainer Ave. S., Info: Christina Lopez, (206)722-6057, rwseattle@mindspring.com

Friday 11/18

A new perspective on the growth of the United States, Peter Kwon's *Chinese America: A History in the Making* is a definitive portrait of the oldest and fastest-growing immigrant community. It begins with stories of Chinese frontiersmen and traces history to today's suburban high-tech transnationals. 7:30 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Co., 101 S. Main Street, (206) 624-6600.

At the world's largest and most profitable retail store, low wages, unpaid overtime, and unionbusting are a way of life. The film *Walmart: The High Cost of Low Price* reveals the expense of bargain prices on America's workers. 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Place. Info: ufnp@bridgings.org

Saturday 11/19

Is your vote counted? Leading scientists have shown that computerized voting systems can be hacked by a 16-year-old. *Votergate* is an investigative documentary that exposes the errors, glitches, frauds, and more. 12:15 p.m., Seattle Public Library, University Branch, 5007 Roosevelt Way NE.

Bringing together individuals and groups from diverse religious backgrounds, *The Power of One: Faith and Global Justice Seminar* aims to create an ecumenical goal of striving to end global poverty and hunger. Activities include speakers, legislative advocacy updates, workshops, and more. 8:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m., Seattle University, Campion Tower, 914 E. Jefferson. Info: www.bread.org/seattle

Sponsored by the Renton High School Gay-Straight Alliance, *Understanding Transgendered Youth* is a workshop by psychotherapist and gender specialist Jana L. Ekdahl. An excellent opportunity for teachers, youth mentors, and students to learn about issues facing adolescents today. 9 a.m., Renton Ikea Performing Arts Center, 400 S. Second St.

Monday 11/21

Doris Kearns Goodwin's *The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* examines the almost over-written president from fresh ground. She scrutinizes how a prairie-lawyer "nobody" achieved the Republican nomination, won the election, and then created a remarkable team to lead the Union during the Civil War by placing his political rivals in his cabinet. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Tuesday 11/22

Given the choice between french fries in a plain bag or a McDonald's bag, crows choose the branded bag every time. This is

an example of one of the many zany facts about crows in John M. Marzkluff and Tony Angell's *In the Company of Crows and Ravens*. After decades spent observing the corvid characters, the men analyze the birds through a cultural and scientific lens, revealing their cleverness and showing their influence on literature. 7:30 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Co, 101 S. Main St., (206)624-6600.

Director's Corner



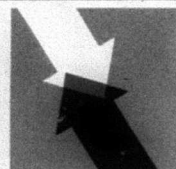
This morning I heard on the radio that a full two-thirds of Americans now question the war in Iraq. The latest indication of the turning of the tide comes from the United Methodist Church, a body that includes as members George W. Bush and Dick Cheney themselves.

The Methodist Council of Bishops recently released a letter repenting of their "complicity in what we believe to be the unjust and immoral invasion and occupation of Iraq" and calling upon others to "object with boldness when governing powers offer solutions of war that conflict with the gospel message of self-emptying love."

Ours is the first President in history to refuse to meet with the Methodist Council of Bishops.

Martin Luther King famously spoke out against the Vietnam War at New York's Riverside Church on April 4, 1967. "I am convinced," he said, "that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a "thing-oriented" society to a "person-oriented" society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered."

The shift that King spoke of has been too long delayed, but a better America is still possible. You can listen to King's speech at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/mp3clips/politicalspeeches/mlkgainstvietnam.mp3>



First things First Get Involved • Take Action

Protect Poor People's Right to Vote

Issue: On Oct. 26, H.R. 1461 (the Federal Housing Finance Reform Act of 2005) passed, authorizing the Affordable Housing Fund that will increase the supply of affordable homes for very low and extremely low-income families.

However, an amendment to H.R. 1461 disqualifies nonprofit organizations from participating in the Fund if they have engaged in nonpartisan voter registration, get-out-the-vote, or in some cases grassroots lobbying, in the previous year.

Background: The establishment of the Affordable Housing Fund in H.R. 1461 is a critical, long-overdue step toward addressing the housing crisis that confronts very low-income families across the nation. It provides grants to support the work of nonprofit organizations that provide the bulk of housing services for our poorest communities. For the first two years, money in the fund would be prioritized to rebuild housing in the areas that were devastated by Hurricane Katrina. But an amendment to H.R. 1461 prevents many nonprofit organizations from participating in the Affordable Housing Fund. This provision disqualifies:

- (1) any organization that has engaged in voter registration, voter identification, or get-out-the-vote activity in the previous year;
- (2) certain organizations that have engaged in lobbying or grassroots lobbying during the same period; and
- (3) any organization that is "affiliated" — a term defined very broadly — with any organization that has engaged in prohibited voter participation or lobbying activities.

These restrictions are in conflict with the "Motor Voter" law and are unnecessary and unconstitutional!

Instead of simply prohibiting federal funds from being used for purposes not envisioned by H.R. 1461, the language in the House amendment prohibits grantees from using even their own funds to encourage citizens to exercise their right to vote — and would retroactively penalize organizations that have done so in the past, even if they no longer do so at the time of application. This prohibition strikes at the core of the First Amendment.

The legislation still has to pass through the Senate, and currently their version, S. 190, does not include these restrictions on nonprofits. The goals of the Affordable Housing Fund can be achieved without the restrictions that are in the House version of the bill. The Senate must not allow their version to be corrupted like the House version has been.

Action: The House version is unsound on both public policy and constitutional grounds. We need you to strongly urge your Senator to vote NO on any Senate bill that would include the amendment when they vote on their version.

Senator Maria Cantwell
(202) 224-3441
www.cantwell.senate.gov

Senator Patty Murray
(202) 224-2621
www.murray.senate.gov

For more information, visit the Brennan Center for Justice (www.brennancenter.org) or the National Coalition for the Homeless (www.nationalhomeless.org).



Featuring photographs from the Canadian group PhotoSensitivé, the CARE International show humanizes the efforts of those coping with the AIDS crisis, specifically in Zambia, and inspires viewers to take action in the fight against AIDS. Through Wed., Nov. 23, Mon. - Fri., 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Tues. and Wed., 5-7 p.m., Seattle Central Community College, M. Rosetta Hunter Art Gallery, 1701 Broadway, www.seattlecentral.edu/artgallery

Calendar compiled by Dena Burke. Have a suggestion for an event? Email it to calendar@realchangenews.org.

DIPLOMACY, Continued from Page 10

banking career in Lagos 10 years ago and returned to the delta to start brokering peace deals and lead empowerment workshops.

It was just after one workshop in July 2002, Keblusek says, that 150 women from the village of Warri took over and occupied a Chevron oil terminal at Escravos to demand jobs, utilities, schools, and other services — demands Chevron agreed to at the time but has not met.

Keblusek — who has since married Bisina — says Global Citizen is going to Oporoza for its inaugural trip because it's close to Warri (where team videographers Sandy Cioffi and Pamela Dore plan to interview the women protesters) and because it's the site of a school in great need of books and supplies.

"Most of those other delegations did things like plant trees, which is lovely," Keblusek says. "We're building a library. We really wanted to do something that would have a major, ongoing, long-lasting impact on the delta to help empower the people there to help their own situation."

It sounds idealistic, but Keblusek and Partnow say that, as Americans, just going to Nigeria opens doors and brings resources that delta villagers would not otherwise be able to get. For instance, Chevron is also donating money to the library and plans to make an official available to answer the delegation's questions.

"This is the power we have as ordinary citizens when we work with each other," Partnow says. "We are leveraging our privilege as Americans."

"Things are already coming out of it that are extraordinary," Keblusek says. In August, when the two were in Oporoza laying the library's foundation, she says, "we were able to attract people from the opposing tribe. Just two years ago, that tribe and the tribe where we're going to be staying had been killing each other."

Before the oil industry destroyed the region's farming and fishing, "these tribes didn't notice they were different tribes," Keblusek says. "We're hoping to create a culture of brotherhood and trust again so they can work together as a unified front." ■



SEATTLE-FILMMAKER SANDY CIOFFI WILL INTERVIEW NIGERIA'S WOMEN LEADERS OF AN OCCUPATION OF CHEVRON PROPERTY TO DEMAND JOBS AND SCHOOLS IN THE AREA. PHOTO BY LUKE MCGUFF.

www.globalcitizenjourney.org

Nigeria on KBCS
Real Change is working with KBCS 91.3 FM Community Radio to cover the issues that Global Citizen Journey and its video team will encounter in the Niger River Delta, an environmentally devastated area of the West African coast that is now the world's No. 6 producer of oil. Starting Nov. 24 (Thanksgiving), the station will air three half-hour specials on the trip as part of its Thurs. evening news show One World Report, a half-hour news magazine on social justice issues. Coverage continues via satellite Dec. 1 and Dec. 8 (news at 6 p.m.; extended coverage of Nigeria at 6:30 p.m.)

PRE-K, Continued from Page 1

parents with low economic means. The newest levy provides funds for, among other things, high-risk youth, student health services, and early childhood support. Falling under the early childhood support umbrella of the levy, ELN in its inaugural year will rain down assistance on these specific children in their attempt to meet developmental standards. ELN funds for the current school year amount to \$1.24 million.

A city of Seattle website for the levy reports that data from the city's school district showed that low-income students were concentrated in southeast and southwest regions of the city. Within these areas, the children facing the most risk for academic failure were those in foster care and children of color. "And refugee and immigrant children were identified as needing additional help to be ready for kindergarten," says Griffin.

The levy, says Griffin, has set aside funds for 37 preschoolers in ReWA's ELN program whose parents fall within federal poverty guideline levels. With only 14 current enrollees, ReWA has spaces for 21 more young students.

Throughout the entire city, there are 11 sites hosting ELN programs, of which ReWA is but one. This year, spaces exist for 280 children to attend preschool in these sites, the whole of which are scattered throughout southeast and southwest Seattle. One half of those 280 children will receive full levy funding. The plan, says Griffin, is to add 70 children each year to the city's program, with half that number to be levy-funded each year. By 2012, the expectation is that there will be 700 children gathered in ELN sites, half funded by levy dollars.

While Kuo hopes the ReWA's ELN program will reach this year's capacity, she's already looking to the future. Space limitations at the Rainier Community Center mean the preschool there can only enjoy part-time status. To provide full-time care, which Kuo says she wants to do, ReWA will have to find a bigger space for ELN students next year. But that's okay with Kuo, since the physical moving of a ReWA center is a further extension of her earlier goal.

"If a teacher speaks a student's home language in preschool," says Kuo, "it helps those kids to care for their culture. We want them to continue their culture for generations, not just have it stop in school." ■

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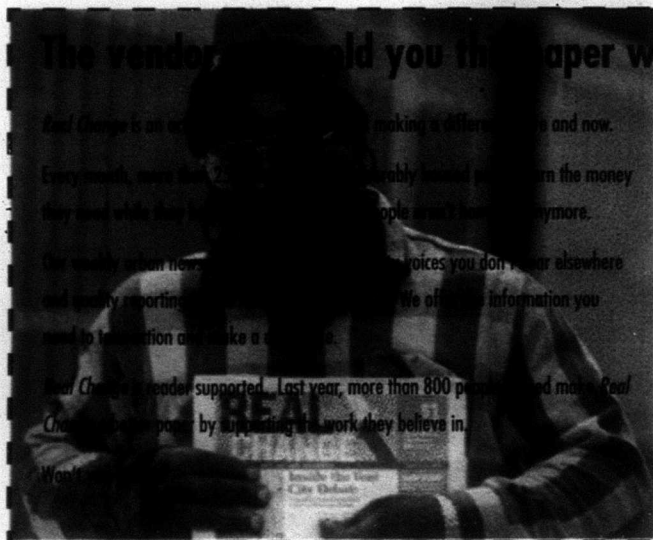


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