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VOL 12 NO 49

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DEC. 14 - 20, 2005

## Empathy Lessons

**Walk A Mile project matches  
lawmakers, former foster youth**

By MARIA ANTONOVA  
Contributing Writer

While many young people move back in with their parents even after finishing college, Anita Lynn Galicia has no such fall-back plan. She left the foster care system on her 18th birthday after bouncing through 52 different homes.

How does it feel to be forced to choose between sinking and swimming when you reach the age of majority? The new Walk A Mile project based out of the University of Washington attempts to answer that question.

In mid-November, Walk a Mile paired 15 former foster youth with 15 Washington state legislators to conduct a lesson in empathy.

Each pair was to meet twice between Nov. 14 and Dec. 14, participating in each other's activities and talking on the phone. The legislators were also asked to live on a minimum-wage budget typical for a foster youth.

"This project is a mutual educational experience for each of the two participants," says coordinator Sierra Rowe. "Legislators get a chance to put a human face on the problem, and the youth are empowered to be civically involved." This is especially relevant in Washington state, which is "not known for providing the greatest services for the youth," says Rowe — too many youth end up simply falling through the cracks.

Tyrone Davis considers himself lucky: brought up mainly by his aunt after his mother abandoned him, he was able to finish high school and continuously be near his extended family.

"It's good that politicians want to be involved," says Davis. "Usually we think they are distant people, but she" — referring to his match, state Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles (D - Seattle) — "seemed genuine and was pretty open."

Tyrone is 21 and studies sociology and journalism at Seattle Central Community



VIETNAMESE CITIZENS DANG THI HONG, DR. NGUYEN TRONG NHAN, AND HO SY HAI WANT THE U.S. TO PAY \$3.2 BILLION IN REPARATIONS TO THOSE EXPOSED TO AGENT ORANGE AND THEIR DESCENDANTS. IMPRISONED DURING THE WAR, DANG LATER SUFFERED THREE MISCARRIAGES AND A STILLBIRTH. PHOTO BY SUZANNA FINLEY.

## And Their Children after Them

**Four million Vietnamese still suffer after-effects of the U.S.  
military's defoliant Agent Orange**

By CYDNEY GILLIS  
Staff Reporter

It's been more than 30 years. But Ho Sy Hai is fighting to get a U.S. court to address his injuries.

At 64, Ho has a prostate tumor, diabetes, and intestinal ulcers. He says he and his wife have had four children: a daughter who died of cancer at 5, two sons who are deaf and dumb, and a third son who has a mental disorder.

All of it, Ho says, is the result of being sprayed with Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.

Between 1961 and 1971, the U.S. military dropped some 13 million gallons of the dioxin-laced herbicide on South Vietnam to defoliate forested areas used by the Viet Cong. Today, Ho and other Vietnamese citizens are trying to sue Dow, Monsanto, and other U.S. makers of Agent Orange in an effort to support more than four million dioxin victims in Vietnam — many of them deformed children and grandchildren born to veterans.

Victims such as Ho and Dang Thi Hong Nhut — who were in Seattle Dec. 5 on an 11-city tour organized by the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief &

Responsibility Campaign — say the United States owes them \$3.2 billion in reparations promised in the 1973 Paris Peace Accords.

Given the difficulty of suing the U.S., however, the victims are attempting to sue the manufacturers, in part on the grounds that they knew Agent Orange contained deadly levels of dioxin — a liability argument based on the Alien Tort Claims Act.

In March, a judge in New York rejected the claim, which is now on appeal. In the meantime, Ho, Dang, and Dr. Nguyen Trong Nhan, former director of the Vietnam Red Cross, are in the United States to win support for their cause.

At the time Ho was exposed to Agent Orange, between 1966 and 1969, he was a truck driver for America's enemy, the North Vietnamese Army, making supply runs south on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Dang, who was first exposed in 1965, was a member of the Viet Cong. After the South Vietnamese govern-

## This Issue

The second of  
seven new poems  
from

Sherman  
Alexie

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## CRY IN THE SKY

High-rise developers look down  
on proposal to increase payments  
to affordable housing fund.

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## CSI: SEATTLE

Under the Civil Streets Initiative,  
14 groups will address low-level  
crime with holistic approach.

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## EN MASSE MEDIA

The Free Culture Movement strives  
to bring the issue of intellectual  
property into public discourse.

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# ... And our Hearts Grew Three Sizes

A Real Change reflection on Christmas and community

By Timothy Harris  
Executive Director

Real Change is about nothing if it's not about bringing people together. People who otherwise might be isolated and alone find themselves within the caring community of Real Change supporters.

I don't usually think of Dr. Seuss as being especially deep, but this year I find myself thinking a lot about *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*. Around the 25th time you read the Grinch to your kids, it starts to feel more like a profound parable of our times than a children's story. At least it does if you're sleep-deprived.

You probably remember how the Grinch's heart was two sizes too small. He spent way too much time alone with his dog who didn't especially like him, and hardly ever thought of anyone other than himself. For him, Christmas was just about stuff, and eating, and hearing the annoying carols that some stores start playing in October.

As everyone knows, the Grinch hated Christmas.

Then, something happened. When he took all the stuff away, no one in Whoville much seemed to care, because Christmas to them was about their community. Once the Grinch got that, his heart grew three sizes, and he wound up celebrating the holiday along with the Whos, at the place of honor, carving their Roast Beast.

This holiday season, I'm feeling a little like the big-hearted Grinch.

It seems like every time I talk to a vendor, I hear a story that makes my heart grow a size or two.

There's an elderly vendor who is a regular in the Market. Last week she beamed as she showed me a huge gift basket that one of her customers gave her. Then she pulled some unopened envelopes out of her purse: "I'm not supposed to open these until Christmas," she explained. It was only De-

cember 6th, so she had a while to wait, but she didn't seem to mind at all.

Another vendor, who goes by the name of Merlin, told me how he got two \$100 tips in one week. This time of year, that's not nearly as uncommon as one would think.

Mike, a vendor who is a regular in Pioneer Square, was in this morning and couldn't have been happier. A half-dozen people from a Pioneer Square business had presented him with a new heavy Carhartt jacket, six nice pairs of socks, and a pocketknife.

"You know," he said, "selling Real Change isn't about the money. It's about the people."

Its stories like this that—despite what I read in the papers everyday—make me proud to be part of humanity. These stories remind me of what this season is really about.

The remarkable thing, to me, is that our community exists year-round. The holidays may be when it's most evident, but Real Change is about nothing if it's not about bringing people together. People who otherwise might be isolated and alone find themselves within the caring community of Real Change supporters.

Real Change is here all year around, helping people's hearts to grow a few sizes.

This is the time of year when we ask our readers and friends to remember that our work takes resources, and that the donations that come in during the holidays help us get through other times when things are more lean.

We have much to be grateful for this year. Over 2005, we really stretched ourselves to go weekly with the newspaper. This, we decided, was the best way to offer our vendors a

quality product that people want to read. While we didn't really have the resources to make it work, we had faith that our supporters would step up and help.

You did. Many of our donors increased their support this year, and many of our regular readers became donors for the first time. Our vendors are doing better than ever and we're on track for a very strong year again in 2006.

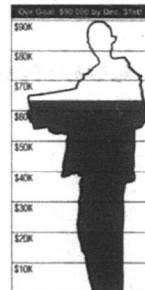
Our goals for next year are to help our vendors succeed by deepening our vendor community support, to continue to build upon the quality of our newspaper, and build a more effective model for advocacy and action around the issues that affect our vendors most.

The Real Change community makes an immediate difference in people's lives year-round, while building long-range for the more just society that we all want and need.

When you help Real Change, you help your community and your own heart to grow as well. You support a caring community that makes a difference year-round. Please give to Real Change this holiday season. Your support makes our work possible. ■

## [Donate Now]

Last week our supporters made a large dent in our holiday fund drive by sending in \$3,650. These gifts helped us exceed the \$60K mark, bringing Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project more than two-thirds of the way toward our fund goal of \$90K. Gifts from our readers and supporters have a direct impact on our vendors. Do your part today—visit [www.realchangenews.org](http://www.realchangenews.org) or use the coupon on page 12 to make a gift.



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 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.

Submissions should be mailed to Real Change, 2129 2nd Ave., Seattle, WA 98121. Tel. (206) 441-3247; fax. (206) 374-2455. <http://www.realchangenews.org>. Email [rchange@speakeasy.org](mailto:rchange@speakeasy.org). ISSN 1085-729X



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# Change Agent

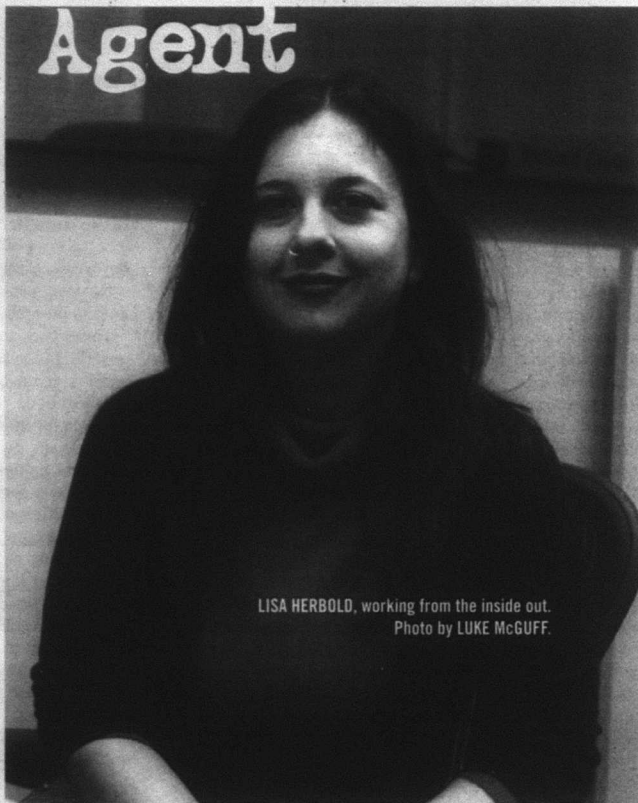
**A**s Lisa Herbold begins her ninth year as Legislative Aide to City Councilmember Nick Licata, she continues to show that there are people "on the inside" who are working for progressive causes.

"I see my role as helping citizens become advocates," says Herbold. "I work a lot with low-income people who are outside the system."

Herbold has had a long history working in social service programs. After arriving in Seattle from New York state, she jump-started neighborhood organizing for ACORN (Association of Community Organizers for Reform Now). She was an organizer for the Tenants Union, also serving on their board of directors, and worked for the Fremont Institute (the precursor of the Low Income Housing Institute) and the Downtown Emergency Service Center.

While the mayor and the City Council carved out the most recent budget, Herbold worked on a pilot program that's a social service response to low-level "quality of life" crimes. "It's an early intervention approach. We want to identify the hot spots. We're putting together a citizen organization, including a homeless group."

—R.V. Murphy



LISA HERBOLD, working from the inside out.  
Photo by LUKE MCGUFF.

## Counter Offer

**High-rise owners chafe at affordable-housing payments**

By TOM COGBILL  
Contributing Writer

**"Seattle needs to be livable for people of all incomes. That the city is not pursuing this principle is unacceptable."**

—Elana Dix,  
Seattle Alliance  
for Good Jobs  
and Housing for  
Everyone

**T**he future character of greater downtown Seattle is up for grabs — sort of. There's not much question about who will do most of the grabbing, only of how much will be left over for the rest of the community.

Mayor Greg Nickels put forward a plan last May that would reward developers handsomely by raising building height limits. In exchange, they would contribute to an affordable-housing fund for tenants earning between 30 and 80 percent of area median income. Last week, Peter Steinbrueck, Chair of the Council's Urban Planning and Development Committee, countered with his own re-zoning proposals.

While the proposal mostly embraces the mayor's plan, there are some key differences. Steinbrueck would require tougher energy and environmental standards in new construction, limit above-ground parking to two stories, require underground parking for the largest buildings, and double the contributions from high-rise residential developers to the affordable-housing fund.

This more exacting alternative leaves some developers fuming.

"Underground parking is very expensive. Same with building to the [higher energy and environmental] standard," says Richard Stevenson, president of Clise Properties. "A broad consortium has been working on the Denny Triangle plans for almost seven years. It was a process, and all the stakeholders came to an agreement in 2002. But Steinbrueck essentially throws this away. The mean-spirited aspect [of his alternative] is, development will move to elsewhere in the city, where there is no affordable-housing mitigation."

Downtown commercial developers have been paying into the affordable-housing fund since the agreement, but the latest proposals call for residential developers to do so as well. The mayor's plan sets the rate at \$10/square foot, which Stevenson calls "not legal. We agreed to it because we think mitigation is a good thing." But Steinbrueck's proposed rate of \$20 per square foot evidently goes too far for him: "Quite likely it would be challenged in court."

William Justen, head of Samis Land Co., a major residential developer, concurs. "They are creating disincentives for affordable housing with these fees. A number of lawyers have said they are unconstitutional."

How many new affordable units might be created in the area will depend on how the City Council ultimately legislates the zoning changes and how developers respond. However, even using optimistic projections, Adrienne Quinn, director of the city's Office of Housing, predicts the ratio of new affordable units to market-rate ones won't improve over the next 20 years.

The Seattle Alliance for Good Jobs and Housing for Everyone (SAGE) is uneasy about that. SAGE would like to see any low-income units lost replaced one-for-one, as well as creating additional ones.

"The city's proposals are wildly out of reach for very low-income workers" — those making less than 30 percent of the area's median, says spokesperson Elana Dix. "Seattle needs to be livable for people of all incomes. That the city is not pursuing this principle is unacceptable."

"Poor and moderate-income people bring diversity," says Anastasia Christman of the Service Employees International Union, which looks after the interests of lower-end workers. "Seattle has a long history as a working-class town. We

## Just Heard...

### Prohibition repetition

The Seattle City Council voted Monday to stop the sale of fortified wine and beer in the University District and Seattle's central neighborhoods.

The city will now ask the state Liquor Control Board to set up two mandatory "alcohol impact areas" in place of voluntary programs that now cover the U District and city core, including downtown, the Central District, Capitol Hill, the International District, Belltown, and lower Queen Anne. The board will make a decision regarding enforcement sometime next year.

Advocates says a mandatory program in Pioneer Square has reduced public drunkenness. But Councilmember Richard McIver, who voted against the measure, says it amounts to "getting too occupied with regulating morality."

### KeyArena: calling a timeout

Will that be \$20 million or \$140 million to remodel KeyArena? Some members of the City Council think it's the wrong question.

On Monday, Seattle Center staff and consultants presented the council with four new options for expanding the center's basketball and concert venue — something the Seattle SuperSonics are seeking just 11 years after the city issued \$73.4 million in bonds to overhaul the facility in 1994.

A previous plan called for spending \$220 million. The pared-down options presented Monday ranged in cost from \$20 million to \$140 million. But Councilmember Nick Licata said all the plans benefit primarily the Sonics without asking how KeyArena would operate with them — a question he and Councilmember David Della wrote into a "No New Funds for KeyArena" resolution the council passed in October.

Seattle Center owes the council an answer by Dec. 31.

### Tech workers win

It took WashTech eight years. But the payoff was huge: In November, the union local, which is part of the Communication Workers of America, signed up 926 workers at a Cingular Wireless facility in Bothell.

It's the first big win for the Washington Alliance of Technology Workers, which was started in 1998 by former Microsoft workers. After a 60-day organizing drive at Cingular's customer care unit in Bothell, workers voted to join more than 30,000 unionized Cingular workers nationwide.

The workers represent about a third of Cingular's Washington workforce. It's a significant victory that not only gives WashTech more clout, says organizer Marcus Courtney, but illustrates the importance of company neutrality.

"Without an organized campaign against [it]," Courtney says, "employees will vote for a union."

—Cydney Gillis

## Swing Low

Civil Streets Initiative to be tested by police, social workers

By J. JACOB EDEL  
Contributing Writer

The Seattle City Council recently advanced its interest in a progressive public health initiative by earmarking funds to test the effectiveness of linking law enforcement and direct services for people on the streets.

Beginning early next year, an oversight committee composed of 14 community-based organizations — including the Seattle Police Department, Seattle Municipal Court, Human Services Department, and the Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless — will investigate current methods of curtailing low-level street crimes, like public drunkenness or loitering, and propose a pilot program that offers a holistic solution.

"We recognize that there's a legitimate concern with public safety and health without just focusing on doing

things that put people in the criminal justice system," says Lisa Herbold, an assistant for councilmember Nick Licata. "Perhaps there are better ways to help both [offenders] and neighborhoods."

The oversight committee's main objective is to investigate how low-level crimes harm the offenders themselves and the neighborhoods in which the crimes occur. After the damages are identified, the committee will recommend to the City Council how to best resolve the problems. If the council believes promising changes can be made, then it must release the reserved \$400,000 to test the system.

People who work with chronic drug addicts "talk about harm reduction," Herbold says. "We want to focus on the harm that individuals do to themselves and the harm it does to the fabric of the neighborhood."

The pilot project, formulated by Councilmember Nick Licata, who is the chairman of the Public Safety, Civil Rights, and Arts committee, is designed to test the practicality of Licata's Civil Streets Initiative. According to Herbold, the City Council rejected the initiative last year because its funding depended on an increase in property taxes. Herbold says the council liked the idea of the initiative but was weary of increasing property taxes for human services, because tax levies are usually reserved for capital projects.

The Civil Streets Initiative would fund police and social services in equal amounts to focus on neighborhood "hotspots," Herbold says. It asked

for nearly \$3 million of the city's tax revenue to link a variety of resources in a unified system designed to reduce minor crimes.

"The idea is to have officers more visible," says Herbold, "not necessarily doing a lot of arrests or ticketing. They would work with the appropriate social services to try and get outreach workers into those areas."

This winter, the oversight committee will gather to establish the network needed between the police, the neighborhoods, and human services providers for the system to work. Herbold says she doesn't know if there's a working model to emulate. As the project goes forward, Herbold also says the different parties will have to make some compromises.

"It's going to be a good exercise for folks working on these issues," she says. "The challenge is going to be for public safety proponents who typically look to the police, arrests, and jail as an answer to these issues to realize those don't deal with the root causes."

"Equally, I think it will be a challenge for some of the human service activists — while simultaneously holding on to their passion and understanding — that while these folks have real problems, real mental health or drug addiction issues, there is an impact on the people who live and work in these neighborhoods." ■

Beginning early next year, an oversight committee composed of 14 community-based organizations will investigate current methods of curtailing low-level street crimes, like public drunkenness or loitering, and propose a pilot program that offers a holistic solution.

Nick Licata, bullish on combining police and social workers' efforts to stop minor crimes.  
Photo by George Hickey.



## Short Takes

## Tough choice: food or heat

Whether pumping gas or opening the utility bill, most Americans are no longer surprised by higher energy prices. While most can simply grin and bear it, many are left with a cold house or an empty stomach.

In Washington, energy assistance programs are reporting a marked increase in applicants — a number that only grows as the temperature drops. Most of them aren't in need of just a little assistance; instead, they are facing a power shutoff.

"We're definitely seeing an increase in the number of people," says Robin Chiles, director of the outreach department at the Central Area Motivation Program, which can help central-Seattle residents with the bills. "They're in imminent crisis, about to be turned off — they have a 24-hour notice. They're not just seeking assistance."

Many of these are first-timers who just a few years earlier never would have imagined themselves in such a situation. These "middle class" applicants are often turned down due to their "middle class" incomes — they make more than \$41,000 for a family of four or \$28,000 for a family of two.

Despite exceeding the federal limits for assistance, these families' wages don't keep pace with the rising costs, and many are forced to choose between buying groceries or paying the heating bills. "They do make that decision," Chiles says. "They have to decide between things like medication, food, or their bills."

That's where the food banks come into play.

Ava Smith, a food bank manager at Family Works, explains how this problem has greatly increased during October and November. "The past month I've seen a lot of people come in here who have given up on buying things like prescription drugs and even medication. What little money they do get may all go to keeping the heat on, [so] food banks are just supplements."

Most of these people hold jobs.

"A common misconception is that people who go to food banks are unemployed or on welfare," says Linda Purlee, director of emergency services at South King County Multi-Service Center. "Over half are employed" but their wages "don't keep up with the rising energy costs."

— Austin Haskell

## Shelter dollar loss equals transitional housing gain

Next spring, the city's Human Services Department will shift more than \$400,000 from emergency shelters to transitional housing opportunities for people who find themselves homeless.

The move from funding shelters to funding housing is one that city officials say is in keeping with the new, countywide 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. They say that beefed-up housing and case-management programs will provide longer-term berths where social workers can concentrate on moving people into a place of their own, for good.

Along with the funding shift comes the loss of the city's largest and cheapest shelter provider, SHARE — whose refusal to implement the personal-information tracking system Safe Harbors led to its disqualification. Without funding SHARE, the city estimates it will suffer a net loss of 75 beds. The actual number of beds lost won't be known until February. There are an estimated 8,300 homeless people living in King County.

Mayor Greg Nickels pledged to make up for this loss this fall, and the City Council added \$350,000 for next year's budget to do so. If that's not enough to maintain the city's supply of beds, says Human Services director Patricia McInturff, the mayor will find more money.

Nickels "has pledged to mend that gap," she says. "We'll make sure that there's no reduction in shelter beds — period."

Nicole Macri, co-chair of the Seattle-King County Coalition for the Homeless, says she hadn't heard of the mayor's promise. She says the \$350,000 figure won't be enough to make up for the beds lost — especially with the improved services the city says it wants. The coalition had originally asked city officials for \$750,000.

— Adam Hyla

## No respect

Try to do a good thing and see what happens: people jump on your case.

That's how Chukundi Salisbury feels after launching a campaign against sexual assault on behalf of South East Youth and Family Services.

Salisbury owns Seaspot Media Group, a Seattle company that promotes and produces hip-hop music and other events. As a former board member of South East Youth and Family Services, he came up with a grant idea for a year-long community service campaign called "Respect Yourself: No Means No," which launched Nov. 30 at [www.respect-yourself.org](http://www.respect-yourself.org).

The agency wrote up the grant and got \$35,000, which Director Jeri White says will help pay for a counselor whom young people can call for help if they've been sexually assaulted. The grant is also paying Seaspot to hand out literature at high schools and run a contest to create a mixed tape of non-negative music that Seaspot will distribute as part of the campaign.

Salisbury says the project is aimed at teaching young people that the sexist behavior they see on TV or hear in music is not the way to act in real life. But Seaspot's main website features women who couldn't push their breasts out any further or hike their skirts up any higher — some of them in ads for events that Seaspot directly sponsors.

"I've talked to people who said it's hypocrisy," Salisbury says. But "we're the media partner," he says. "Mothers Against Drunk Driving has a media partner in *The Seattle Times*. Does that mean *The Times* doesn't have ads for Miller High Life? No."

— Cydney Gillis



## Gentrification

Let us remember the wasps  
That hibernated in the walls  
Of the house next door. Its walls  
Bulged with twenty pounds of wasps

And nest, twenty pounds of black  
Knots and buzzing fists. We slept  
Unaware that the wasps slept  
So near us. We slept in black

Comfort, wrapped in our cocoons,  
While death's familiars swarmed  
Unto themselves, but could have swarmed  
Unto us. Do not trust cocoons.

That's the lesson of this poem.  
Or this: Luck is beautiful.  
So let us praise our beautiful  
White neighbor. Let us write poems

For she who found that wasp nest  
While remodeling the wreck.  
But let us remember that wreck  
Was, for five decades, the nest

For a black man and his father.  
Both men were sick and neglected,  
So they knew how to neglect.  
But kind death stopped for the father

And cruelly left behind the son,  
Whose siblings quickly sold the house  
Because it was only a house.  
For months, that drunk and displaced son

Appeared on our street like a ghost.  
Distraught, he sat in his car and wept  
Because nobody else had wept  
Enough for his father, whose ghost

Took the form of ten thousand wasps.  
That's the lesson of this poem:  
Grief is as dangerous and unpredictable  
As a twenty-pound nest of wasps.

Or this: Houses are not haunted  
By the dead. So let us pray  
For the living. Let us pray  
For the wasps and sons who haunt us.

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## Blockbuster

Nicholas Reville on breaking corporation's grip on music

By ERIN ANDERSON  
Contributing Writer

"The major record labels continue to lose sales and they're shrinking in power and influence. They're in an online environment where it's much more difficult for them to extend their monopoly and to keep people in their system. Things are moving in the right direction, and we just want to make sure that they continue to move that way."

On February 24, 2004, *The Grey Album* was the unofficial number-one album in America. A remix created by independent artist DJ Danger Mouse using samples of The Beatles' classic *The White Album* and rapper Jay-Z's contemporary *The Black Album*, this piece of music surpassed Norah Jones' *Feels Like Home*, the "official" hit of the day, by more than 50,000 copies.

Just weeks before, *The Grey Album* had been declared illegal and banned. In fact, when over 100,000 copies of the album were distributed that Tuesday as free online downloads, it still was.

Through an organizing campaign that brought together more than 170 websites, online music activist organization Downhill Battle took a stand against censorship by the corporate music industry in the name of independent artists and creative freedom. And because the looming threat of a massive lawsuit from EMI never materialized, Downhill Battle co-founder Nicholas Reville is still around to tell the story.

"Grey Tuesday" is one of the many innovative and defiant campaigns put forth by the organization since it was established two years ago. And while Downhill Battle continues to stake a claim for independent artists in the future of the music industry, the group's latest offshoot, the Participatory Culture Foundation, brings the battle for free culture to a new front: internet television.

Both Downhill Battle and The Participatory Culture Foundation are allied with a broader Free Culture

Movement. Free Culture aims to bring the public into conversation around issues like intellectual property, independent artistry, and free and open-source software, and build a creative, active, and informed citizenry through digital technology and the Internet.

*Real Change* recently spoke with Nicholas Reville about the Free Culture Movement and his fight to claim new frontiers in cyberspace for democracy, participation, and the public good.

**Real Change:** How did you first become involved in media activism and the Free Culture Movement?

**Nicholas Reville:** One of my close friends and I started Downhill Battle. Coming from a political activism background, we realized that the rise of corporate power was an enormous threat to democracy and to the ability of people to determine their own future. When we looked at this issue of the future of the music industry, we saw a chance to finally take these giant corporations that had monopolized the industry for decades out of the equation. The Internet was creating possibilities for musicians and independent record labels to directly connect with fans and really create a pop culture that was based on art and creativity rather than



being controlled by four — at the time, five — corporate record labels.

**RC:** Why "Downhill Battle?"

**Reville:** The name Downhill Battle is a pun on the phrase "uphill battle." The really crucial question was whether corporations were going to be able to dominate internet music in the way that they dominated radio and the physical distribution of CDs. We thought it was a really rare chance as activists to be fighting a fight that, in some ways, was already being won. The major record labels continue to lose sales and they're shrinking in power and influence. They're in an online environment where it's much more difficult for them to extend their monopoly and to keep people in their system. Things are moving in the right direction, and we just want to make sure that they continue to move that way.

**RC:** How did the Participatory Culture Foundation arise out of this context?

**Reville:** Whereas the music space is starting to be really defined and has been around for a few years on the internet, video is still in flux. There are all of these different technologies that are competing for the market, but we saw an opportunity to define a non-corporatized mass media space with a huge diversity of content that everybody has access to.

With Participatory Culture, we're in the process of developing soft-

*Free Culture activists Nicholas Reville, Holmes Wilson, and Tiffiny Cheng (l-r) co-direct Downhill Battle and the Participatory Culture Foundation. Photo courtesy Nicholas Reville.*

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## Continued from Previous Page

ware called DTV and a publishing tool called Broadcast Machine. Together, they're a package of everything you need to broadcast and watch video online. The software creates channels of video that anyone can subscribe to for free. Right now we just have the Mac version, but the Windows version will be coming out next month.

Our hope is that if something that's free and open-source and really focused on the public good can emerge at the same time that the for-profit companies are scrambling to get into this space, that we'll be able to define Internet TV in a way that's really democratic and built around the public interest.

**RC:** The Participatory Culture Foundation has been referred to as a "socially conscious software company." How would you define it?

**Reville:** We see ourselves as the same political activists that we've always been. Right now the best tool that we have at our disposal is software and the Internet. We want to make something that is, on the one hand, totally mainstream: something that your mom can download and understand and use really easily, something that's interesting and exciting and accessible. On the other hand, we're making it for social reasons: because we think that pop culture can and should be a reflection of the diversity of interests that make up our world. We're trying to make tools that allow independent creators to get their stuff out there and be on a level playing field with big corporations.

**RC:** What is your view of the larger Free Culture movement and how it's progressing?

**Reville:** It's amazing and wonderful to me that Free Culture has gotten the amount of attention that it has. You're talking about really obscure issues like copyright that are very boring, very hard to get people motivated about. But I think people are realizing how much it affects the world they're living in.

As more and more things move online, it becomes more and more about copyrighting, control of voices, and control of software. There's a huge amount of potential for change — for realistic change — to hap-

pen in a short amount of time.

At the same time, it's still a movement that's coming out of people that have been really technology focused or academically focused, and I think that it needs a healthy dose of activism and political strategy in order to really reach the most people.

**RC:** Where do you see the potential to reach out and involve new participants?

**Reville:** Everyone who cares about these issues has a gut feeling about why they think it's important — why the copyright regime is restrictive and why closed-source software is a threat. We need to find ways of taking that feeling and expressing it in something that people can actually relate to. One of the campaigns that the student Free Culture Movement worked on was this one-time stunt, this National Barbie in a Blender Day. There was a court case where this artist who had shown Barbie in different positions—some of which were in a blender—had been sued by Mattel for misusing Barbie's image. This was a case that we

thought was clearly free speech, clearly artistic freedom, and the artist won the court case. So we had this celebration where people made their own Barbie-based art and we did an online exhibit. We took an obscure issue and related it to political expression, free speech, and also humor and pop culture, which is what you need to do to attract attention to these issues.

**RC:** What is the biggest challenge that the Free Culture Movement currently faces?

**Reville:** Right now, we have a huge amount of money moving in to control the Internet because it's growing so quickly. They want to control the browser, the operating systems, control how people buy music, watch movies, and get their news.

The threat is that corporations will beat us to the punch and set up

systems that lock users into one way of doing things. The hope is that free and open-source software, open public standards, and independent media will be able to get a foothold early on, make things free and keep them free. We need to make sure that the foundations of the Internet are controlled by the public, built by the public, and built for the public interest.

**RC:** What would a world defined by free and participatory culture look like?

**Reville:** What we hope for is a culture where a 15-year-old can make a documentary about his school that everyone in town will watch and that will change the way the school does something; where a couple of people get together and make a comedy show and it's wonderful and becomes the most popular show in the country; where musicians are all doing their thing, building off

each others' music, and maybe making a little money if they get popular.

We want a society where the public is just sort of flowing in this cultural soup, where the best things are rising to the top and everybody plays a part in deciding what the pop culture becomes. A culture where everybody feels like the media is really a part of them, and that their society is responsive to real people and real issues. So that it's something we can all be proud of, or at least something that expresses who we are as a people. ■

## [Resource]

Cornerstones of the Free Culture movement, where you can download the DTV program or:  
[www.downhillbattle.org](http://www.downhillbattle.org)  
[www.participatoryculture.org](http://www.participatoryculture.org)  
[www.freeculture.org](http://www.freeculture.org)

## Pariah

Sometimes a crumb falls  
and I want to pick it up,  
to clean what I can clean.  
Sometimes a bone falls,

a bone for my cat to lick  
like I lick sadness till it's flung  
out the window to be swallowed  
by the Belltown garbage trucks.

I talk to some people, really talk  
like birds gossiping in the morning.  
Love is given back to me then—  
a handshake, an occasional hug.

To others I'm a smoking pariah,  
a crazy person who rocks.  
Only heaven doesn't exist then,  
and I wish it did.

—CRYSTA CASEY

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# Vengeance is Mine, Sayeth Osama

Messages to the World: the Statements of  
Osama Bin Laden

Edited and introduced by Bruce Lawrence  
Verso, 2005

Paperback, 292 pages, \$16.95

By ADAM HYLIA  
Editor

The thrill of subversion in displaying the fact that you're reading this book — on the bus, at work, or in the living room when your in-laws come to visit — is a fleeting feeling. What's left when it's gone is a good long look into Bin Laden's thinking: his anger at the Saudis for their cooperation with infidel Americans, his passion for the Palestinian cause, his hopes of establishing a theocratic beachhead in Afghanistan.

In footnotes, Duke professor of religion Bruce Lawrence explains Bin Laden's references to 12th-century clerics and 20th-century Arab-Israeli relations. He also introduces the book with a few words of appreciation for Bin Laden's literary gifts.

Speaking as a member of the faithful, displaying a remarkable grasp of current events even while in hiding,

employing the language of populism, Bin Laden means to appeal to frustrated Muslims and to the exploited of the world, of any faith. In a variety of ways — from condemning the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to Vietnam, to saying Americans think liberty is for "only the white race" — he describes how our democratic experiment burned down the laboratory. The ferment of thought that's tolerated by countries like the U.S. (and prohibited under caliphates like the Taliban) has actually fleshed out Bin Laden's critique into an internationalist list of grievances.

In his introduction, Lawrence makes the acute observation that Bin Laden has no social answer to the moral problems he enumerates. Dying children in Iraq; western stormtroopers in the Holy Land; the occupation of Palestine: it's all part of the subjugation of Islamic peoples by the U.S. government, Israel, and Muslim apostates. The answer never lies in democracy or justice — but in establishing God's law on earth.

It's hypocrisy for the U.S. to target terrorism, says Bin Laden, pointing to

the terror it sets loose on Muslim civilians. "Those who kill our women and our innocent, we kill their women and innocent, until they stop doing so.... Who said that our blood isn't blood and their blood is blood?" he tells an *al-Jazeera* reporter.

That's one particular reading of the Koran. Like other Wahhabis, Bin Laden prizes the faith's instructions on self-defense (*jihad*) over its prescriptions of generosity and tolerance. When he justifies terrorism with a verse from the Koran, Lawrence footnotes the quote with the rest of the passage: "...but it is best to stand fast." Not unlike Christians who forget what Christ said about homosexuality (nothing), Bin Laden seizes upon one point of his faith and lets go of the others. Who says that some of God's words are God's and others are not God's?

In politics and in religion, it's wise to be wary of anyone who deploys the language of justice while excusing the blood on their hands. At least Bin Laden says flat out that he is on a quest for vengeance and that he doesn't believe in human rights or democracy. Would that our own leaders spoke as clearly. ■

Not unlike Christians who forget what Christ said about homosexuality (nothing), Bin Laden seizes upon one point of his faith and lets go of the others.

## New DVDs: From Avid Birder to State Murder

By LESTER GRAY  
Arts Editor

*The Parrots of Telegraph Hill*  
Directed by Judy Irving

*The Execution of Wanda Jean*  
Directed by Liz Garbus

In *The Execution of the Wanda Jean*, the eponymous death row inmate approaches the unfortunate distinction of being the first Black woman to be executed in the United States since the '50s.

Mark Bittner, a talented and out-of-work musician, was committed to finding his true calling — something in nature, he surmised. While the likelihood of finding a Walden Pond in the middle of San Francisco is daunting to most, Mark, inspired by the poetry of Gary Snyder, resolves to find nature right where he is. His steadfast belief and sincerity in this 13-year quest, occasioned by unemployment and homelessness, reaps its reward in a most unusual and profound manner.

Filmmaker Judy Irving finds Mark at his Mecca, a house on San Francisco's Telegraph Hill, in which he is a squatter. Surrounding his adopted dwelling, perched on limbs and wires, are dozens of wild parrots with whom he shares music, food, and affection. We behold a 21st-century version of St. Francis and his winged flock.

And a most righteous congregation they are: Mingus, who keeps beat with blues tunes; the recently hooked up Picasso and Sophie; and the cranky and insular Connor, who reveals a soft heart.

These cherry-headed parrots, disarmingly honest, show both uncomplicated affection and aversion for Mark and each other. Their life, short and dangerous, has little room for coyness and grudges.

The *Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*, moving and eye-opening, testifies to the possibilities opened by personal faith. The film is a poignant essay about us: people in bountiful surroundings starving for authentic signs of life.

In *The Execution of the Wanda Jean*, the eponymous death row inmate approaches the unfortunate distinction of being the first Black woman to be executed in the United States since the '50s. That statistic could imply an atmosphere of social tolerance. But it stretches credulity to

accept that the issues of race, poverty, and gender preference do not play a role in Oklahoma, a state cinched tight in the Bible Belt.

Contrary to current public relation assaults on the death penalty, wrongful imprisonment is not at issue. Wanda Jean Allen's legal team does not dispute that she killed her lover, Gloria Leathers, and also another woman four years earlier for which she was convicted of manslaughter. Their 11th-hour challenges cite their client's mental retardation and brain damage — mitigating factors not introduced at the original trial due to inadequate representation. But a larger idea supersedes this legal wrangling: the right of the state to take a life.

Ms. Allen, in the days leading up to the execution, remains calm, even providing emotional support for her family and attorneys. Her crimes notwithstanding, it is clear she is a person with faculties of compassion and reason. It is impossible to dismiss her as a deranged murderer.

Documentary producer Liz Garbus allows her material to stand naked for appraisal. Absent the fig leaf of tendentious debate and political spin, *The Execution of Wanda Jean* exposes the death penalty for what it is. ■

Both DVDs were released this week.







Adventures  
in Irony

Dr. Wes Browning

It isn't simply that, "If torture is outlawed, only outlaws will torture." It's that outlawing torture is bad for business, for the economy, and costs us a valuable tax base. If we legalize it, we can regulate it. We can tax it. It can help pay for our prisons, our jails, our schools, and our other centers of indoctrination and discipline.

*Adventures in Irony* detest bringing you week after week. It isn't that we don't agree with these messages, it's just that we get tired of repeating ourselves.

Recently we have been forced to repeat, over and over again, "Torture is cruel and inhumane, and information obtained from torture is unreliable." Please don't make us say it again! We'll tell you anything else you want to hear!

So we were ready to eat our own brains from the inside out when we read some news that offered an end to our agony. An AP-Ipsos poll determined that 61 percent of Americans along with a majority of people in Britain, France, and South Korea think it's OK to torture terrorist suspects under some circumstances. The British, French, and South Koreans are hypocrites: even though they're for torture, they say they don't want it in their own countries. Whereas the Americans, by a sizable majority, don't have a problem with it happening right here in the good old U.S. of A.

We have been protesting torture here unnecessarily. If the majority of Americans want to be able to be tortured just because someone suspects them of being a terrorist, who are we to stand in the way of democracy? And if the rest of the world is for torture but doesn't want it in their own backyards, and Americans do, then excellent opportunities open up for American enterprise.

We hadn't been thinking creatively about torture. We need to think outside of the box, about the box. It isn't simply that, "If torture is outlawed, only outlaws will torture." It's that outlawing torture is bad for business, for the economy, and costs us a valuable tax base. If we legalize it, we can regulate it. We can tax it. It can help pay for

## This Is Sheer Torture

"Homelessness is bad. War hurts people. Starvation is wrong. Poverty sucks. Pollution ruins the Earth." These are just some of the messages that we here at

our prisons, our jails, our schools, and our other centers of indoctrination and discipline.

We can stem the tide of out-sourcing of American jobs overseas. We can make this country a leader in torture throughout the world. Let the British, the French, the South Koreans beat a path to our door. We can't provide technical assistance over the phone as well or as cheaply as Indians or Malaysians, but we can water-board better than anyone else, and we're willing to do the dirty jobs that those others think they're too good for.

Let's let Americans do what Americans do best: innovate for the sake of progress and financial reward! Why should torturing be limited to the CIA, the military, and Iraqi intelligence officers? We need to license ordinary American businesses to do the business of torturing.

When we have permitted the franchising of torture to creative American corporations, the rest of the world will gladly send us their business. As an international leader in a newly invigorated industry, our businesses will be able to define and dominate the world market. Just as, centuries ago, the word "China" came to mean dishes, just as the word "India" came to mean ink, so the word "America" will come to mean torture.

Torture can reverse our trade deficit, and tax revenues from torturing the suspects of other countries can help us pay off the national debt. At a time when we owe two out of every five of our United States to Germans, Arabs, and Koreans, we can, ironically, regain full ownership of our own land by letting Germans, Arabs, and Koreans pay us to torture other Germans, Arabs, and Koreans.

Then, 20 or 30 years from now, when those of us who haven't been tortured are all fat from torture money and our government coffers are overflowing with torture revenues, then we can ban torture from public places and 25 feet from their doors and windows.

While still keeping it legal, of course. ■

## Numb

I keep waking up with scratches on my arms,  
but I don't move when I sleep.  
I don't understand it  
maybe like you don't understand me.

I'm in a weird place in my life.  
You can say you love me,  
but I don't feel love  
because I'm numb.

I'm numb right now  
because of my rape, my sister's rape,  
losing my father, gaining a new friend  
my sister being so far away,  
& not being with my brother.

Being locked down has taught me  
that being mean & hateful about the world,  
& toward my family & my father,  
is not how I wanna live my life.

This place that everybody hates  
has changed me for the better.  
I hope my poem will help you understand me.

-SHERRIE

(The Poet is a 13-year old involved in the Pongo Teen Publishing Project.)



**Sat., Nov. 19, 5:15 p.m., Second Ave./Stewart St.** Officers responded to a 911 call of a man being assaulted by another man at the corner of 2nd and Stewart. Officers arrived at the scene and spoke to the victim, a transient Black male age 26. Another officer was able to stop the suspect a few blocks away. Victim stated he was standing on the corner holding a bag of tobacco when the suspect came up to him and asked for some. The victim declined, and the suspect attempted to grab the bag. He could not get the bag away from the victim and so punched him several times in the face with a closed fist, and then walked away. A witness stated that he saw the suspect punch the victim several times without the victim responding — he said he saw the victim hunch to the ground as the suspect continued to hit him. Suspect was arrested and placed into the back of the police car and began to laugh about the incident. There was no sign of intoxication or mental health issues, and he was booked into King County Jail for assault. Seattle Fire treated the victim at the scene for a bloody mouth and cuts and bruises.

**Sun., Nov. 20, 3:17 p.m., Pike Place Market.** Officers saw the suspect, a transient white male age 36, walking in the 1900 block of Pike Place, inside the market. Suspect had been previously trespassed for a year on Nov. 18 and was arrested and booked into King County Jail for criminal trespass.

**Tues., Nov. 30, 2:30 p.m., Danny Woo Gardens, S. Main St.** Officers conducting a premise check observed the suspect, a transient white female age 51, and another female enter the lower level of the gardens, walking towards a secluded spot. The officers knew both women from previous encounters, and both were self-confessed crack users. Danny Woo Gardens is known to have a chronic problem with drug users. The officers headed down to the suspects, finding them by some shrubbery. Asked what they were doing they stated "Nothing." When asked if they had crack pipes in their possession, both stated "Yes." They handed over their pipes, and the officers checked their names via a hand-held Blackberry. The first suspect was found to be on active supervision by the Department of Corrections, and her corrections officer was contacted. She was taken to the precinct and turned over into the custody of the DOC. The second suspect was clear — her crack pipe was destroyed, and she was allowed to leave. Both were issued a one-year ban from the park.

**Thurs., Dec. 1, 12:59 p.m., 100 Block Pike St.** Suspect, a transient Black male age 48, was contacted for urinating in public. A records check showed him to be active with the DOC. He was issued a citation, and his officer was contacted. At their request he was transferred to the DOC offices and turned over to their custody.

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.

## HIGH RISE, Continued from Page 3

have a mix of classes and cultures. What do we want the Seattle of the future to look like: a cosmopolitan city, or a homogeneous one?"

Most parties agree that more housing affordable to service workers needs to be built in and adjacent to downtown. "It's our top priority," says Kate Joncas, President of the Downtown Seattle Association. The real question is, where will the money for it come from and how much can be generated?

Justen calls the Seattle Housing Levy, passed by voters in 2002, "the best way" to ensure affordable housing in the area. Let the entire community pay for it. Why should just downtown homeowners subsidize it?"

"We much believe in the workingman's plight," says Clise's Stevenson. "We want housing for a broad range. But we need a clearer understanding of the economics." When asked if he thought developers would still make a decent profit after complying with affordable-housing provisions, Stevenson replied, "It's nobody's business how much money we make." ■

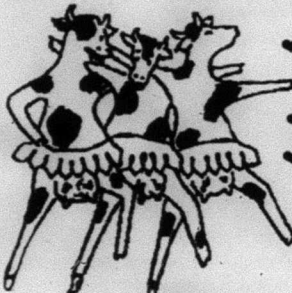
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*How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God! Indeed it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter Kingdom of God.*

— 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

editor@realchangenews.org

**Death penalty: personably perverse**

Dear Real Change,

Early Tuesday morning, Dec. 13, Tookie Williams was executed.

There are reasons to have strong doubts about Mr. Williams's guilt, and we will have to wait to let the people continuing to work to clear his name bring out new information on that score. But we can know right now that Mr. Williams, who described himself as once having been a "wretched" person, lived for the sake of helping other people, especially young people, avoid the mistakes he had once made. That he has been nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize is evidence of the impression he has made on so many people in this world (at least the sane and decent ones).

There's a lot of work to be done to get this country on the track of sanity and decency. My sense is that

not only does capital punishment, in itself, rarely do anything but keep despair careening around, but that the execution of this man, this real man, is nothing short of evil.


The mental state of those okaying Mr. Williams's execution—and, for that matter, the okaying of such things as torture—cloaks itself in the language of "morality," "the rule of law," "national security." Beneath all of this, I have the sense, is that evil feels an ugly excitement at fear and despair.

So, this doesn't really seem to be about a difference in abstract political values. The real difference lies in that there are those who find the notion of torture and execution as attractive as rotting garbage, and those who feed on it as if it were gourmet chocolate. Plain and simple, the execution mentality gets off on grief, fear, and despair.

Part of the work to create a better world involves revealing this mental state for what it is: not a state of "morality," "wisdom," "righteousness," or "respect for the law"—but perversion hiding behind a personable mask.


Erin Snow

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.

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**Employment**

**Social Services - Director.** The Homelessness Project. Successful transitional housing program for homeless single parents and their children. Supportive staff and Advisory Board. Committed to diversity. 525-1213 x3333. www.thpinfo.org

**Fund Development Associate.** Coordinate nonprofit FD campaigns. Part-time. Please visit our website for more details. www.childrensalliance.org.

**Volunteer**

**Meet someone new...** Volunteer Chore Services is looking for volunteers to assist low-income elders and adults with disabilities with household chores and yard work. The program is flexible; volunteers choose the time and location. Make a new friend while helping someone remain independent. For more information call Volunteer Chore Services, a program of Catholic Community Services, at 1-888-649-6580 or email vc@ccsw.org.

**Event**

**UNITY Day.** Free Clothing - Food - Gifts. Come get what you need! Fri., Dec. 16, 12 - 5 p.m. 309 Pontius. Sponsored by the Cascade People's Center. Call Myla for Info: (206)587-0320.

Real Change classifieds are a way to reach 30,000 loyal readers. Call 441-3247, or email classified@realchangenews.org.



# Calendar

## This Week's Top Ten

### Wednesday 12/14

In the past 11 months, 122 civilians have been politically assassinated by suspected elements of the Philippine Military under the leadership of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Witness the public signing of a demand statement to the President, a human rights speak out, and a tribute to the martyrs. 6:30 p.m., 2100 24th Ave. S. RSVP, [usco\\_laborandhr@yahoo.com](mailto:usco_laborandhr@yahoo.com)

The 12th Annual Reading of *Charles Dickens's Scrooge* features one of Seattle's finest actors, John Gilbert, and Ishbel Dickens. This is the most important fundraiser for the Seattle Displacement Coalition. Following the reading is the presentation "Operation Homestead," which honors the activist effort that saved hundreds of housing units in Seattle. Suggested donation \$20 and up. The Carriage House, 1551 10th Ave. E, (206)632-0668.

### Thursday 12/15

The Washington State Human Rights Commission presents a community discussion about discrimination and social justice pertaining to Native Americans living in urban areas. 7 p.m., Daybreak Star Cultural Center, 3801 W Government Way, (206)285-4425.

Radical Women, a Trotskyite feminist group, holds

a forum on the three currents of communism, including their attitudes toward democracy, women's rights, homosexuality, and ending racism. Tickets \$7.50 including dinner with vegetarian option. 7:30 p.m., New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S, (206)722-6057.

### Friday 12/16

Every day we are bombarded with commercial images. The film *Advertising and the End of the World* evaluates consumerism, including the environmental consequences and the effects on happiness. After the film, Cecile Andrews, author of *The Circle of Simplicity: Return to the*

*Good Life*, discusses living simply. 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. Info: [wufp@bridgings.org](mailto:wufp@bridgings.org)

The famous three-term senator from California Barbara Boxer has written her debut novel, *A Time to Run*. Fictional Senator Ellen Downey is fortuitously rocketed into political life after her husband dies during his senatorial campaign run. A file of incendiary documents about a conservative Supreme Court nominee is dropped into her lap, and making the documents public could change history or ruin her career. Tickets \$5. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 8th Ave.

### Saturday 12/17

Smooth jazz saxophonist Darren Motamedy performs two shows to benefit the restoration of Powell Barnett Park. Tickets \$20. 1 and 2 p.m., Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, 104 17th Ave S, (206)684-7556.

Celebrate the holiday season with a vibrant multicultural concert, featuring the distinctive Croatian singers Dave and the Dalmatians, the lively songs and dances by the First Samoan Congregational Church of Seattle, and the extraordinary Voices of Praise gospel choir of Renton's Martin Luther King Jr. Baptist Church. 2 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 - Eighth Ave.

### Monday 12/19

Socialist Alternative hosts the presentation and discussion "Where is Iraqi Society Heading After the Elections?" The Shiite factor, the feelings towards Iran, the stabilizing of a war-torn country, and more will be considered. 6:30 p.m., Seattle Central Community College, Room 4156, 1701 Broadway.

## Director's Corner



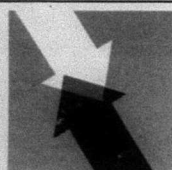
It takes a lot of courage sometimes to do the right thing. Last week, when Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck presented his proposed changes to the Mayor's downtown plan, the developer community went on the attack. The problem? Some proposed heights were slightly curbed, building requirements were made more environmentally friendly and safe, and, most outrageously of all, the affordable housing bonus was doubled.

In the new Seattle gold rush, developers are racing to meet projected demand for downtown housing. A few people are going to make a ton of money, and they don't want any big ideas about "social responsibility" to get in the way.

What is it with rich people anyway? Screw the future, screw the environment, and above all, screw the poor. Never let tomorrow's problems get in the way of today's profit. This is no way to run a society.

Seattle is going to become a more densely populated city, land values are going to rise, and housing is going to become even less affordable than it is now. These are facts to be dealt with. Our job now is to find what advantage we can in the inevitable. The burden of fairness should rest upon those who stand to profit most.

This city's future is being decided right now. The downtown developer community's guns are being trained on Peter Steinbrueck and his allies on the council who dare to stand up for a Seattle that includes all of us. Now is the time for the rest of us to stand up as well.



## First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

## Let Tent City 4 Put Down Stakes

**Issue:** St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Bellevue has voted to host Tent City 4 for a standard full 90-day term. Temple B'nai Torah has also stated they wish to host Tent City 4 for this standard time period. In response, the City of Bellevue has allocated \$250,000 of taxpayer money for use in legal fees to fight St. Luke's, Temple B'nai Torah, and members of the Church Council of Greater Seattle who are in support of the full-term stay for violating the city's maximum 60-day stay ordinance for homeless encampments.

**Background:** Last week, Bellevue's St. Luke's Lutheran Church voted by a landslide (92-9) in favor of hosting Tent City 4 for a full 90-day stay. This term is 30 days longer than Bellevue's 60-day maximum stay stated in the city's controversial homeless encampment ordinance. St. Luke's and other members of the Church Council are being sued by the City of Bellevue for supporting the standard 90-day stay. The allocation of \$250,000 of taxpayer money to sue the homeless advocates who are fighting for the homeless in Bellevue is a move that church council leaders say causes them "sadness and shame."

While homeless encampments are controversial within certain neighborhoods on the Eastside, they have become a part of life in the affluent, middle-class, and poor neighborhoods of Seattle, Tukwila, and Shoreline. They have existed in harmony with their neighbors and have not been the source of an increase in safety or health risks. The stays of tent cities on the Eastside, while controversial, have been equally free of adverse impacts.

The success of St. Luke's invitation to Tent City 4 depends on timing. The church can host the camp no earlier than mid-February 2006, which would coincide with the camp's exit from Temple B'nai Torah after 90 days, but not 60 days. It is crucial for the Temple to host Tent City 4 for the full 90-day stay; otherwise, there will be a 30 day waiting period for a new location, leaving about 100 Tent City community members out in the cold.

**Action:** Contact Bellevue City Councilmembers to let them know that until we end homelessness, emergency temporary shelters like Tent Cities are essential for survival; congregations that welcome them should be thanked, not sued. Bellevue's \$250,000 could be used to help eliminate homelessness, not sue those who are working to end it. Call (425) 452-7810 or email the councilmembers today at [council@ci.bellevue.wa.us](mailto:council@ci.bellevue.wa.us). If you live or work in Bellevue, your voice is especially important, but even if you don't your message will remind them that homelessness is a regional problem and that we need every local government working to end it.

To take action online, visit [www.realchangenews.org](http://www.realchangenews.org) and click Take Action.

The church council is continuing a Daily Vigil at Bellevue City Hall for people to come to pray, meditate, fast, and be a visible witness to the needs of people who are homeless. Contact the Church Council at 206-525-1213.

Calendar compiled by Dena Burke. Have a suggestion for an event? Email it to [calendar@realchangenews.org](mailto:calendar@realchangenews.org).

## EMPATHY, Continued from Page 1

College. Next year he hopes to transfer to a university. To support himself he is working three jobs. He says he has been lucky, but adds that "a lot of foster youth go the other way because they don't get basic support. They bounce around foster homes and can't keep up with education."

The statistics are indeed bleak: foster kids generally score 20 percent lower on scholastic tests, and only 60 percent of 11th-graders ever finish high school. Through meeting with him, Davis hopes Kohl-Welles "can better understand the problems foster youth have to face."

"I'm very, very impressed with Tyrone," Kohl-Welles says. The two met for coffee once and are planning to meet again. "It is always very informative to get to know people on a personal basis." Kohl-Welles says that legislators need to get out of Olympia more often to come in direct contact with issues they are debating. "I hope me and Tyrone stay in touch after the month ends," Kohl-Welles says, adding that a crammed schedule at this point in the year is why they have not met more often.

Lack of time is also a major impediment for other participants. Galicia

was paired with Rep. Ruth Kagi (D-Shoreline), and wished she had a chance to talk to her more often.

"I thought we would meet at least once a week," she says. "I wanted more time to get out what is on my mind." A student at Bellevue Community College majoring in criminal justice, Galicia wants to make a difference for foster kids as there are "too many with no voices." Galicia



ANITA LYNN GALICIA, WHO MOVED THROUGH 52 DIFFERENT HOMES IN 10 YEARS AS A FOSTER CHILD, IS SHARING HER STORY IN MEETINGS WITH STATE REP. RUTH KAGI, CHAIR OF THE HOUSE CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES COMMITTEE. PHOTO BY MARIA ANTONOVA.

went through 52 homes, treatment centers, and juvenile court. At 14 she entered the YMCA's independent living program, which teaches youth to budget and live independently.

"I was basically a street kid at eight years old, and coming from that background it was tough to understand and deal with my feelings, since I never had a model for that," she says. "If I try to get Ms. Kagi to understand why kids run away, why they grow up the way they do, maybe it can be prevented in the future."

Although the couple met twice for lunch and dinner, Anita feels disappointed: "I want to lay the foundation and finish it. Time is an issue but communication is important and valuable for me."

Kagi, who has worked with foster youth before, says she never met anyone who went through 52 foster homes.

"It was useful to have her explain her circumstances — why she ran away, for example," she says. "Clearly, sometimes children need to be removed from foster care because the environment is harmful or dangerous. We have to find a better way of addressing this issue."

Kagi had done the original Walk a Mile several years ago with low-income constituents, but this time was interested in the specific experience of foster youth. Recovering from hip surgery and trying to lose 17 pounds before the legislature convenes, she is foregoing the minimum-wage income requirement. "From doing it last time, I know I would basically be living on rice and beans," she says.

When asked about the budget requirement, Kohl-Welles also says that it was unrealistic given her busy travel schedule with meetings and provided luncheons.

"We hope this project spreads nationally, like the original Walk a Mile," says Rowe. Advocates in 31 states have adapted the concept, according to the group's website. "Foster care is becoming a more important issue, and the legislators need to contact youth directly to see what is and isn't working." ■

## VIETNAM, Continued from Page 1

ment arrested her in 1966, she spent nearly seven years in an infamous prison in Con Son known as the "Tiger Cages." During her imprisonment, she says she received no medical treatment for the rash and diarrhea caused by the dioxin.

Before the war, Dang, 68, says she gave birth to a normal, healthy son. Afterward, she had three miscarriages and a stillbirth of a seriously deformed fetus.

"I never expected that the chemical could have stayed with me that long," Dang says.

She has since had two tumors removed and says she worries about what will happen to her and other victims of Agent Orange.

"Around me there are many friends whose situation is worse than mine," Dang says. "They have to take care of deformed children. Therefore, they cannot earn a decent living."

Merle Ratner, a tour organizer with the New York-based Agent Orange relief campaign, says more than 300,000 Vietnamese children suffer spinal and other deformities, including enlarged heads and missing limbs.

"This is just the beginning of this case," Ratner says. "We think the case will be won in court, but ultimately it will be won due to public pressure" — perhaps including a boycott.

"Dow Chemical makes every household product known to humanity," Ratner says. "If they don't do the right thing as a good corporate citizen, it will cost them dearly." ■

## [Resource]

More information about Agent Orange and the Vietnamese lawsuit against its U.S. makers is available at [www.vn-agentorange.org](http://www.vn-agentorange.org).

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