

# REAL CHANGE

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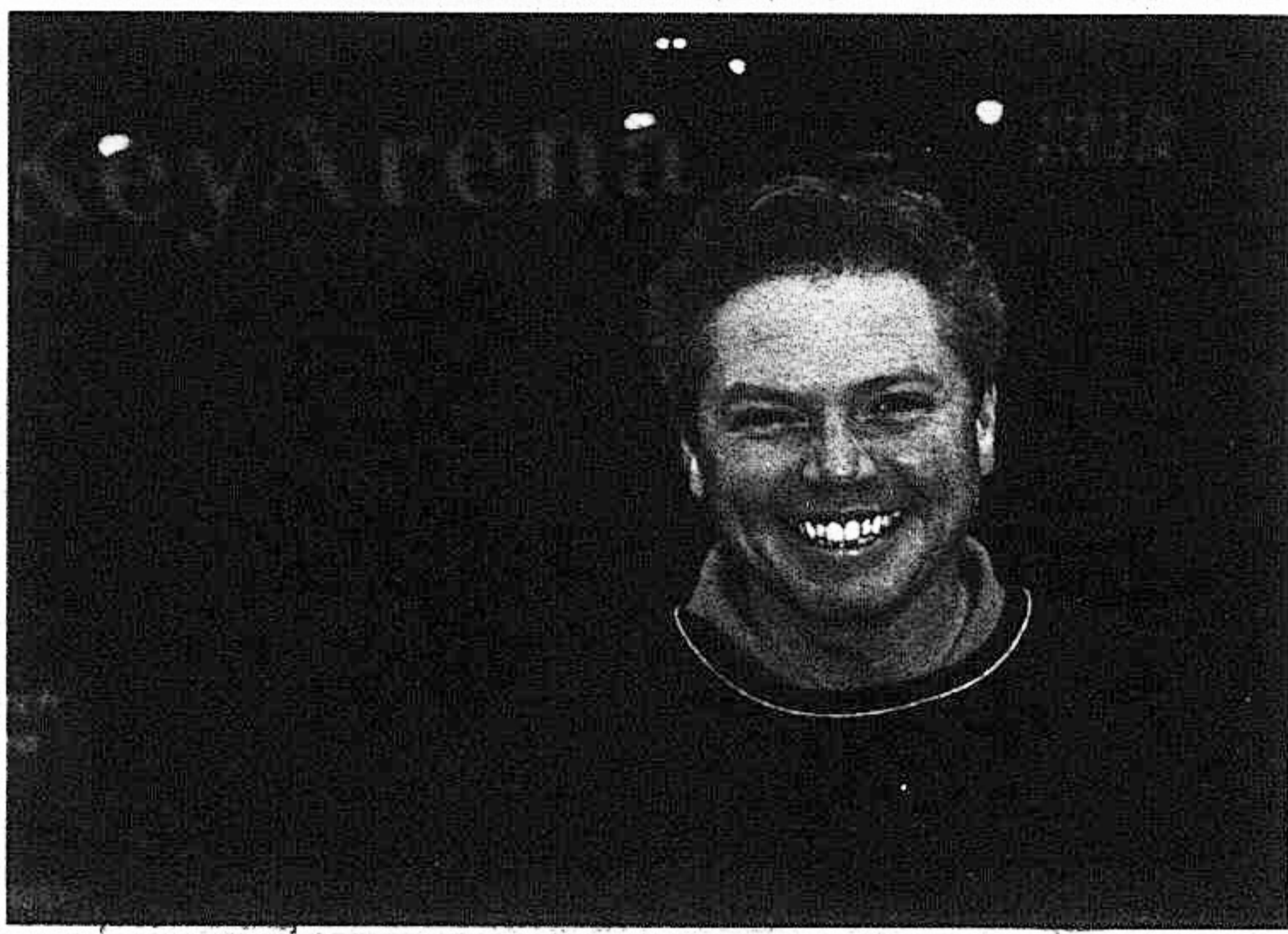
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JANUARY 4 - 10, 2006



LOWER QUEEN ANNE RESTAURATEUR BRIAN CURRY SAYS JOBS WILL BE LOST IF THE SONICS LEAVE, BUT HEARS NO SUPPORT FOR A TAXPAYER-FUNDED REMODEL. PHOTO BY MARK SULLO.

## Hoop Screams

*Sonics tell city: remodel KeyArena or we'll move*

By CYDNEY GILLIS  
Staff Writer

The Seattle SuperSonics have a lot of hungry basketball players to feed. That's why the team's owners want to sell more hotdogs, t-shirts, and parking spots at KeyArena.

That way, the team can meet its players' \$53 million annual payroll — and stop losing money, as it has for the past six years.

That's the idea behind the Sonics' pitch for a \$220-million tax subsidy, which would be used to double the size of the 368,000-square-foot facility at Seattle Center. Though some 500 premium seats would be added, the money would primarily add more parking, club, concession, and retail space, with profits going to the Sonics.

The Legislature turned down a similar request made last year by Mayor Nickels and the team's owners. But, with the Sonics' lease at KeyArena set to expire in 2010 — and newly released studies showing a team departure would be a calamity for Seattle Center — the Sonics say time is running out while the Seattle City Council dithers over studying the issue.

In October, the City Council passed a resolution denying the Sonics and the

mayor the right to lobby the legislature until the council agrees to a specific plan at KeyArena. As a result, says Terry McLaughlin, vice president of administration for the Sonics and Storm, the franchise isn't going to make it to the legislature again this year.

In December, Seattle Center staff presented the council with four lower-cost remodel options of \$20 million to \$140 million. But McLaughlin says that doesn't matter: If the Sonics don't get the full \$220 million remodel, they'll have to leave Seattle.

"We don't have any choice but to look at other options," he says.

Two Dec. 19 reports prepared for the mayor's Seattle Center task force, which began its work in September, show a Sonics departure that would be a disaster for the city, which guaranteed and would have to finish paying a \$74-million bond on the KeyArena's last remodel in 1994.

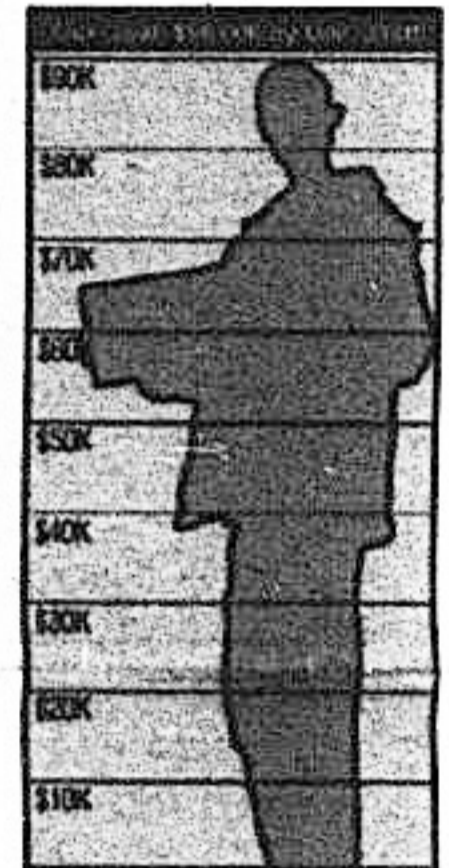
The city already pays part of the \$6.2-million annual debt service because sales of the suites and club seats that were earmarked to pay for KeyArena's last remodel have been short. In 2004, KeyArena was \$1.5 million in the hole.

See HOOP, Continued on Page 4

[Thank You]

The *Real Change* Holiday Fund Drive was, thanks to our readers, an enormous success. Over November and December, supporters donated \$105,560, surpassing our \$90,000 goal by 17%. An astonishing \$25,959 poured in over the last week alone.

Over the coming year, *Real Change* will focus on offering support and community for our vendors, publishing the

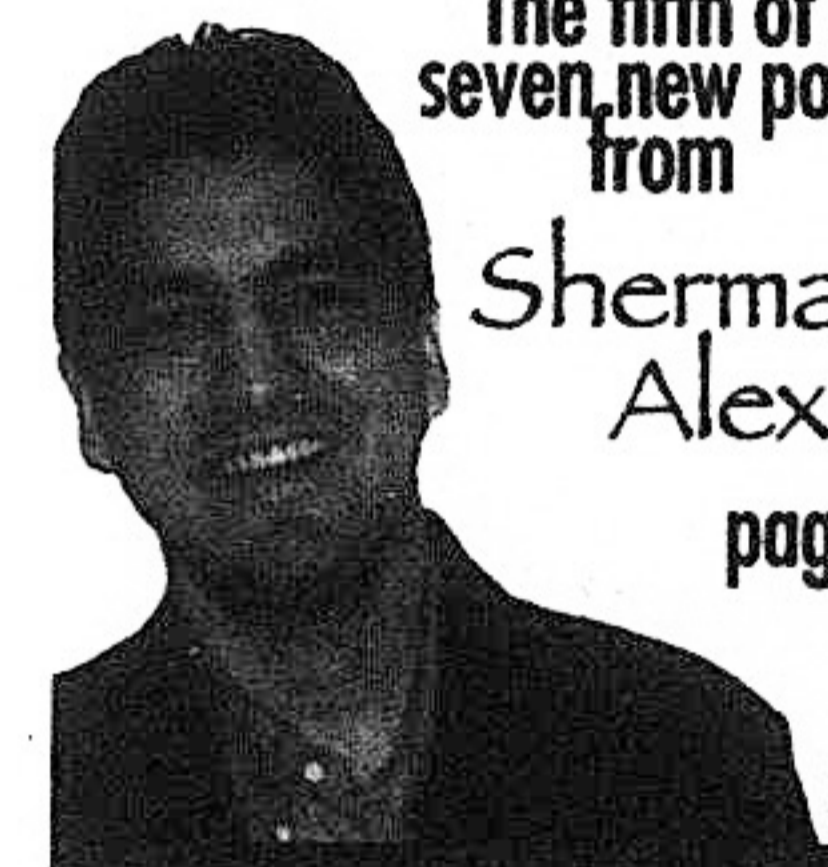


best activist community newspaper in Seattle, and building a broad base of advocates to take action on issues of poverty and homelessness. Without your support, our work would not be possible. From all of us here at *Real Change*, Thank You!

## This Issue

The fifth of seven new poems from

Sherman Alexie  
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## FUTURE STOCK

Foster youths with dreams of college need lawmakers' help, not to be sent home packing.

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## STREET ROOTS

Humanitarian Genny Nelson has devoted nearly 30 years to those living on Portland's streets.

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## Capitol Gains

*Hundreds seek economic justice with MLK Day march in Olympia*

By ADAM HYLIA  
Editor

It may not be Jan. 16, 1933, when 1,000 people overwhelmed the state capitol's downtown merchants and slept in the churchyards. But it's a start.

That's what Olympia activist Pat Tassoni is thinking as he plans for the 300 marchers who will gather Jan. 16 — the 75th anniversary of that Depression-era march and the day after what would have been the 77th birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tassoni, the part-time director of the Thurston County Tenants Union, is part of a statewide network of grassroots activists mobilizing people living in poverty to take their grievances to the legislature.

Like the 1933 assembly, today's marchers have demands. Back then, says Tassoni — who has combed through newspaper clippings of the day — they spoke of direct benefits to veterans and the poor, putting a stop

See MARCH, Continued on Page 12

# Bagging the Future

Foster youth with college ambitions deserve better

By JIM THEOFELIS  
Advisory Board

"If you happen to be among the 300 to 400 youth in foster care who 'age out' of the Washington state foster care system each year, you have a lot more on your mind than senior parties and graduation presents. The graduation present given to the majority of these young people is having all of their worldly belongings placed in a large black plastic bag and being sent on their way.

You're 17 and half years old and it's six months before your high school graduation. You have the perspective of a senior in high school which means you're absolutely convinced no one understands what you have gone through during your years of adolescent angst. No one in the adult world appreciates how hard you have worked to make it to this point, certainly not your parents. The daily struggle in third period Spanish class, the nagging reminder of completing those college applications and of course wondering if your sweetheart responded to your midnight email all conspire to ensure the graduation celebration barely hits your radar screen — besides, it's a whole six months away.

However, if you happen to be among the 300 to 400 youth in foster care who "age out" of the Washington state foster care system each year, you have a lot more on your mind than senior parties and graduation presents. Of those 300-400 youth, an estimated 30-35 percent do so with a high school diploma or GED. The graduation present given to the majority of these young people is having all of their worldly belongings placed in a large black plastic bag and being sent on their way. The craziest irony of this morally bankrupt situation is that if these youth had not found a way to prevail over the physical and sexual abuse, the neglect, the multiple and unpredictable changes in foster homes, the separation from their siblings and countless nights of loneliness and despair — if they had turned age 18 but not yet achieved a high school

diploma or GED — they could remain in foster care.

That's the problem! Current policy requires that as soon as youth in Washington's foster care system turn age 18 and secure a high school diploma or GED, they immediately become ineligible to remain in care. They lose their housing, their health insurance, and perhaps the emotional and other support provided by their foster parents.

Research from across the county is demonstrating what most of us instinctively know: the vast majority of these kids are not prepared to be self-sufficient and this type of short-sighted public policy results in homelessness, dependency on public assistance, incarceration, early parenting, and health problems.

The Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study, conducted by the premier foster care organization, Casey Family Program, revealed that within six to 12 months after exiting the foster care system, one third of former foster kids were on some form of public assistance. A startling 25.2 percent of the youth in the study suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which is nearly twice the rate of war veterans.

Beginning Jan. 9, state lawmakers will gather in Olympia for the 2006 legislative session. It is estimated that as many as 5,000 pieces of new legislation will compete for votes and tax dollars. Representative Mary Lou Dickerson will sponsor House Bill 2002, the Foster Youth Achievement Act, which would allow those youth who achieve their high school diploma or GED and turn 18 to remain in foster care if they enroll in a higher education or a vocational-technical program. Simply put: if they go to school, they get to keep

their housing and health care coverage. The leadership of Rep. Dickerson is matched by Senator Debbie Regale, who will sponsor a companion bill in the Senate.

It is difficult to predict how many of the estimated 100-140 eligible youth would choose to remain in their current foster home and attend college; 50 to 100 is a good estimate. But even if the entire 140 all participated and remained in foster care, the 2007 cost would be approximately \$2.3 million. Most advocates agree that it is highly unlikely that all eligible youth would voluntarily remain in foster care in order to receive the benefits of the Foster Youth Achievement Act.

However, I am one advocate and taxpayer who believes that the return on this \$2.3 million expenditure would far outweigh the costs of youth being dumped on our city and county streets, utilizing hospital emergency rooms for basic health care, engaging in survival-based activity, getting jailed, and making babies while they're still babies themselves.

The Foster Youth Achievement Act would serve as an incentive for youth in foster care to earn their high school diploma or GED and continue on the path of achievement and true self-sufficiency while ensuring our most vulnerable youth receive more than a black plastic garbage bag as a graduation present. ■

*Jim Theofelis is the founder and executive director of the Mockingbird Society (www.mockingbirdsociety.org), whose monthly paper appears this week and every month in Real Change.*

*To contact your state representative about the Foster Youth Achievement Act, call 1-800-562-6000.*



Real Change is published weekly and is sold by the poor and homeless of Seattle. 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.

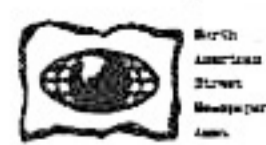
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# Change Agent

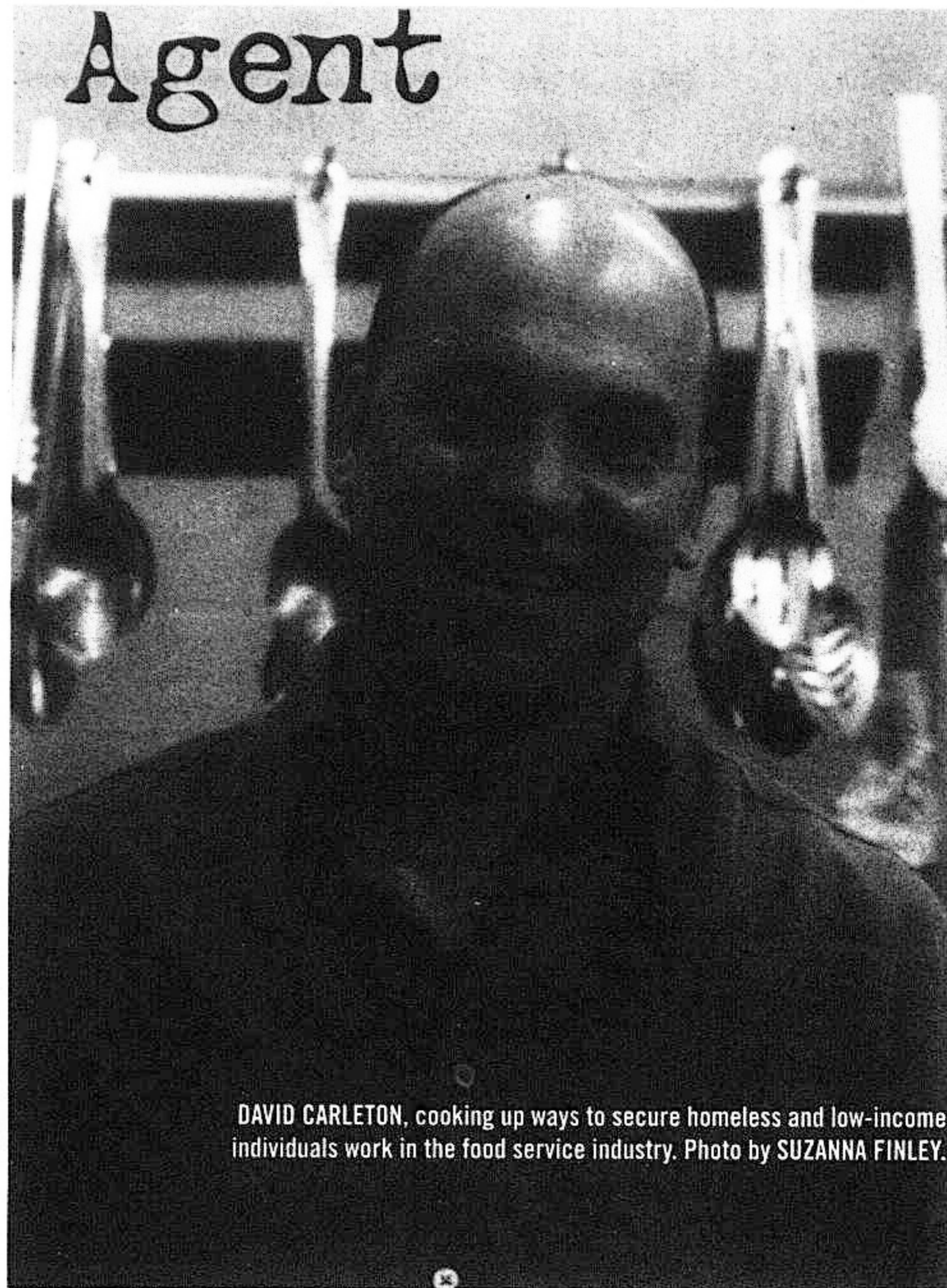
It's been said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. David Carleton, former development and community relations manager for FareStart, agrees.

"Since FareStart's inception, people have been asking, 'How can we get something like this started in our community?'" says Carleton. The country's most comprehensive and successful food service job training and placement program for disadvantaged individuals is certainly worthy of replication. Carleton spent the last five years developing a consulting firm to help interested parties create new opportunities using the FareStart model. The result was Kitchens With Mission.

Kitchens With Mission duplicates social entrepreneurial ventures associated with training and job placement in the food service industry. They offer assistance with business planning and development, program integration and execution, and ongoing oversight and management. Currently, they are working with organizations in Amarillo, Anchorage, Baltimore, Boise, New Hampshire, Portland, Wichita, and Yakima.

"Our goal is to produce a network of programs across the country that provide tangible roads out of poverty," says Carleton. "We look forward to sharing our success and creating a knowledge base for comparable projects."

—Amy Besunder



DAVID CARLETON, cooking up ways to secure homeless and low-income individuals work in the food service industry. Photo by SUZANNA FINLEY.

## The Voice Of Experience

The U.K.'s *Apprentice* winner lives to work another day

By MARC LEVERTON  
Street News Service

"It has given me a steely determination; lots of people told me I wouldn't amount to much. I was told by a careers advisor at school I'd work in retail and I didn't want to do that."

—Tim Campbell, on winning the UK's *The Apprentice*

One of the biggest reality shows in the U.K. last year was BBC2's *The Apprentice*, the British clone of NBC's smash hit. In it, 14 aspiring entrepreneurs were put through their paces competing for a chance to work for England's answer to Donald Trump on a whopping \$175,000-a-year contract.

The overall winner was Tim Campbell, an East End psychology graduate who was appointed Project Director for Amstrad's Health and Beauty Division. His first task was to launch the Integra Face Care System, which he currently promotes in the UK.

—What did you learn from such a long and tough recruitment process?

Some of the key things were that no matter how good you think you are, someone is always going to take you out of your comfort zone, and nothing can prepare you for that. You need to be very determined, and you also need a good team to support you. You also have to build a rapport with the person sitting opposite. Sometimes that can be difficult, since people like Sir Alan Sugar [the show's Trump] are very tough. It's not just schmoozing—

—"I don't like bullshitters," as Sir Alan put it.

Exactly. Doing your research is also important, so you can talk their language. You need to mold yourself, in the sense of targeting your application to the employer.

—It has been a year since you won the show. What is the difference between working for Sir Alan Sugar and for the London Underground?

Chalk and cheese. A public service company like London Underground is very hierarchical,

with lots of procedures and a lot of politics. On *The Apprentice*, you email an idea to Sir Alan and he says go for it and then wants it done by tomorrow and if you say yes, he expects it delivered. It is very empowering. Amstrad is a very flat company. On my first day, Sir Alan told me that there are no little empires here and I respect that.

—By winning the show you were rewarded with a \$175,000-a-year job. How has that changed your life?

Because I am so focused on the job, it hasn't had time to change my life. Yes, I have a new suit, but my family has had more holidays than me. If Sir Alan focused on the money, he wouldn't have achieved what he has achieved, and I've adopted the same attitude. But the money is nice, don't get me wrong!

—Sir Alan liked the fact you came from a poorer background. How has that affected you?

It has installed a work ethic: if I want something I have to go and work for it; nothing is going to fall into my lap. I have always planned out what I wanted to achieve. It has given me a steely determination; lots of people told me I wouldn't amount to much. I was told by a careers advisor at school I'd work in retail, and I didn't want to do that.

—What advice would you have for anybody battling against adversity?

You have to accept where you are now and focus on what you have, and not what you don't have. It is very easy to focus on the negatives; people are very good at playing the "Yes, but" game. Accept where you are and plan your way forward.

—What is the best advice you ever received about work?

The first advice came from my mum, which was always: clean your shoes! Seriously, you need to enjoy what you are doing. If we are going to be working until we are 67 or whatever, the earlier you can find that focus the better. Something you are passionate about is going to help you. ■

## Just Heard...

### Slim pickings

Three days before the deadline, the line of hopeful applicants to succeed Jim Compton is much shorter than 10 years ago, the last time the Seattle City Council appointed a replacement for one of its own.

After Friday, Jan. 6, the eight remaining councilmembers have three weeks to choose Compton's replacement. Peter Steinbrueck, for his part, is aiming to get someone with a "proven track record" of progressive politics. But he doesn't want any recent contenders for a council seat: they'd be "too disruptive" for council relations.

That line of thinking excludes two-time candidate Angel Bolaños and perhaps 2003 candidates Darryl Smith (who ran in a crowded primary against incumbent Judy Nicastro) and John Manning (who resigned in 1996 when faced with domestic violence charges, then cleaned up his act and faced off with Compton in a lackluster race), but it bolsters the case for Dolores Sibonga, a 12-year council veteran who also ran for Mayor in 1989.

Besides the 13 who have already sent in their résumés, a flood of applicants for Compton's job is expected to pour in before Friday.

### Yakima violence hits home

Scary fact coming from a November consultant's report on the Yakima County Jail, from which nine inmates broke out Nov. 25: violence at the jail roughly doubled to 30 incidents per month from 2000 to 2003.

Yakima, where Seattle judges send misdemeanor offenders, is behind schedule in opening a new facility to relieve the currently room, which is overcrowded, outdated and has been repeatedly perforated: the escapees made use of roof vents that had also provided passage in a 1994 jailbreak.

The consultants, hired by the city and other local governments that send inmates across the mountains, found that crowding, poor medical care, and lax supervision make conditions worse. Sick or injured inmates complained of having to wait several weeks before seeing a doctor. Staffing at the jail is also inadequate: five of the 13 prison guards have been on the job less than two years. And jail personnel don't investigate telltale signs of intimidation — a precursor to violence. Boredom, racial tension, gang affiliation, and geographic differences precipitated most of the fights. The exception to the "negative culture," the consultants note, is the "God Pod," where volunteers provide religiously themed programming like Bible study and AA meetings for those who want it.

The consultants say that these problems could be relieved by opening the Yakima County Justice Center, the new 250-bed prison that has been mothballed while county officials look for ways to pay for its operation.

—Adam Hyla

## HOOP, Continued from Page 1

After pulling in \$97 million in revenue, the Sonics lost \$9.5 million.

In the Dec. 19 reports, consulting firm Convention, Sports & Leisure came up with three business models for operating KeyArena without the Sonics and Storm — a specific request made in the City Council's October resolution, which was sponsored by Councilmembers Nick Licata and David Della.

If the Sonics go, the consultant notes KeyArena's event dates would drop from 143 a year to 116 at best. Even in the best of the scenarios, the building's annual loss of \$1.5 million would more than double, to \$3.6 million.

Brian Curry, owner of Ten Mercer, a lower Queen Anne restaurant backed by partners who own nearby establish-

ments Floyd's Place and T.S. McHugh's, says the three businesses would have a combined loss of \$250,000 a year if the Sonics left — not to mention the dozens of jobs that would be lost throughout the neighborhood.

**"When players get \$50,000 a game, they shouldn't be getting help from the public."**

**— Kent Kammerer, president Seattle Neighborhood Coalition**

"In any city that's lost their sports franchise, it [the arena] does not succeed as a facility," Curry says.

According to the consultant's report, that's not always true: Of 26 arenas the study cites as being abandoned by major-league basketball or hockey teams, 11 were demolished and 10 still operate as arenas, with five of those losing money. (Of the facilities converted to other uses, the report shows the Great Western Forum, where the Los Angeles Lakers once played, is now a church.)

But the three non-Sonics scenarios the report presents for KeyArena — which include keeping the Thunderbirds hockey team as a tenant and adding concerts and events, keeping the

T-birds and finding an indoor summer football tenant with more concerts and events, and booking only concerts and events — all rely on minor-league sports and events without considering new options, such as moving Seattle Center's Fun Forest indoors.

"I'm not surprised," Councilmember Nick Licata says of the findings. "What's missing is that keeping the Sonics adds more debt. To reconfigure KeyArena as an entertainment center would cost less. That's my impression, and that's what we need to look at as a solid option."

With the Sonics able to leave in 2010 and the city on the hook for KeyArena's debt through 2014, Curry says the team has the upper hand. But, he says, "Where are the Sonics going to go? Who's going to build them a \$500-million arena?"

"I've done straw polls at Ten Mercer and nobody is really behind them," Curry says of the Son-

ics getting \$220 million in public funds. "It's not getting any positive response whatsoever."

Last year, Curry felt the same. Then Sonics managers convinced him that the proposed expansion is about selling more hot dogs and t-shirts — not competing with nearby restaurants for sit-down dining.

Still, Curry and others, including Kent Kammerer, president of the Seattle Neighborhood Coalition, say there's no call to provide public financing to a team whose majority owner, Starbucks chairman Howard Schultz, has a net worth of \$700 million, according to *USAToday*.

"You're looking at some pretty wealthy people there," Curry says. "If I'm going to spend \$30,000 to renovate a [restaurant] dining room,

my landlord may help, but I'm going to pay it back."

"When players get \$50,000 a game," Kammerer says, "they shouldn't be getting help from the public." ■

**"What's missing is that keeping the Sonics adds more debt. To reconfigure KeyArena as an entertainment center would cost less."**

**— Councilmember Nick Licata**

## Short Takes

## PIPE's Dream

Partners in Prevention Education, a coalition of Olympia homeless youth, students, and service professionals, is hoping that a recently produced documentary will shed some light on the plight of homeless young people living in our state's capitol city.

Entitled *Downtowners*, the 50-minute documentary — created by a pair of student filmmakers from Evergreen State College, Jessica Eskelson and Nichole Ketcherside — is to be screened on Jan. 13 and 14. The duo worked for a year interviewing advocates and service providers, along with youth, who talked about what it means to be under 18 and living on the streets. PIPE program coordinator Rosalinda Noriega says that when people in the community view the film, she's banking on an outcome. "We just want to create more legitimate spaces for youth to congregate," says Noriega.

Legitimate youth spaces are of importance in Olympia, notes Noriega. With few places for young people to go, many homeless youth have taken to gathering at the Intercity Transit Center. But that didn't go over so well with

some neighboring business owners, some of whom, Noriega says, may have been unsettled by the growing youth presence. As a result, she says, music — classical, it seems — was blared from speakers to drive them away. That deeply affected homeless youth, she says, who have only one shelter, Haven House. Noriega says according to a One Night count conducted last year, 249 young people live on the streets. PIPE's main focus, says Noriega, is working to raise awareness of connections between sexual violence and youth homelessness. While *Downtowners* doesn't deal solely with sexual violence, it is one of the conditions discussed. Also addressed is the dearth of sufficient shelter. Safety issues are touched upon, as well as the causes that lead to young people leaving home. For many, she says, it amounts to violence — sexual, physical, and/or emotional.

—Listening to young people tell their stories, Noriega believes, may very well accomplish another, difficult goal. "We're hoping that the film can humanize the youth in the eyes of our community."

*Downtowners* will be screened Jan. 13 at the Capitol Theater, 206 Fifth Ave., Olympia, at 7 p.m. The following day, the film will be shown at First Christian Church, 701 Franklin St. SE, Koinonia Hall, at 2:30 p.m. Open forums follow both showings.

— Rosette Royale

## Safeguard

The federal government's effort to gather personal information about homeless people got a mid-December tweaking in Congress.

A tiny section of a House-Senate conference bill prohibits publicly funded domestic

violence shelters from sharing personal information about their clients with the federal government's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The bill is now awaiting President Bush's signature.

Under HMIS, agencies that serve the homeless enter the name, last permanent address, Social Security number, and phone number of every client into a computer database — which hasn't been proven invulnerable to a hacker searching for his victim's whereabouts, advocates for battered women say.

Lois Lujens of New Beginnings women's shelter has not yet begun entering clients' information into the local version of HMIS, dubbed Safe Harbors. In talks with HMIS staff, she says she has been trying to ensure the confidentiality of clients whose lives may be endangered by a breach of privacy.

"We've been trying to work with Safe Harbors to find a way to get the kind of protections that we think are critical."

Lujens says the new privacy protection is a good thing. HMIS requirements violated protections mandated by the Department of Justice, she says: "On the federal level, the various agencies don't seem to be in line with each other."

Backed by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI)

pushed the new restriction into law. But the original bill was actually much more far-reaching. It would have flipped the data-gathering protocol, having all clients, whether or not they'd experienced abuse, provide "informed, reasonably time-limited, written consent" to share their personal information.

It also would have barred all agencies, not just abuse shelters, from gathering personal data on domestic violence victims. Because of the long wait for confidential, secure places to stay, victims of abuse often wind up in mainstream shelters — where even after the new law takes effect, staff will still be charged with gathering personal information.

— Adam Hyla

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### Holy Crow

When I saw that hungry crow  
Rip open the garbage sack  
(and squawk with delight)  
And dig into my son's shit,

I thought of another crow—  
Wiser, more loyal and black—  
Who flew with infinite wit

Into a forest fire,  
Perched on a brown bear's singed nose,  
And led that predator out.

(Who knew a crow could love  
a neighbor as much as it loves itself?  
Who knew a crow could do  
What Jesus always taught us to do?)

One crow, two crows, a choir  
Of unpredictable crows.  
Who knows what they think about?

(Who knew a crow could love  
a sack of shit as much as it loves itself?  
Who knew a crow could sing  
An honor song for a disposable diaper?)

Do crows love shit and fire  
As much as they love brown bears?  
Are crows honest about lust

Or are they hungry liars?  
In flight, do they love the air?  
If asked, would they love us?

(Who knew a crow would know  
about the loneliness of the brown bear?  
Who knew a crow would know  
About the loneliness of being human?)

Crow, you lover, scavenger, savior, comforter, and liar,  
I'm your choir of hunger, shit, brown bear, and forest fire.

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## Power Sister

Genny Nelson on three decades of humanizing street life and dignifying the homeless in Portland

By ISRAEL BAYER  
Staff Writer

"One story I remember is when this woman came in [to the Sisters of the Road Café,] and she was a prostitute, and she made that known to me. She was scared and hungry, and 10 minutes later this guy walked in and was acting like her pimp. And we said to him, you are welcome to stay and have a cup of coffee, but you can't tell this woman what to do, not in this café. So the man ordered up a cup of coffee, and eventually left."

**G**enny Nelson has been a community organizer working with people experiencing poverty in Portland since 1972. She is the co-founder of one of the nation's most unique gathering places for individuals to barter for a hot meal and build community, Sisters of the Road Café. Today, 26 years since its inception, the café serves more than 300 people a day.

Nelson has spent her lifetime organizing with a philosophy of non-violence and gentle personalism, earning her comparisons to the late Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, and Mother Teresa, who worked with the poor in Calcutta, India.

Nelson has co-authored a manual about how to replicate Sisters of the Road Café, and is currently writing a memoir of her life's work. In 2001, she spearheaded a project involving 600 one-on-one interviews with people experiencing homelessness in the Rose City that will be published in book form next year.

Earlier this month, Nelson traveled to Washington D.C. to accept an award from the National Caring Institute for her lifelong work in the community.

**Real Change:** Can you tell us a little bit about the philosophy of Sisters of the Road, and how it has evolved over the years?

**Genny Nelson:** The philosophy came from my experience with the Catholic Worker Movement. When we open the doors, we are going to ask people to practice non-violence, and gentle personalism, a philosophy [movement co-founder] Peter Marin brought from France with the idea that we don't need a government authority to tell us how to be good people.

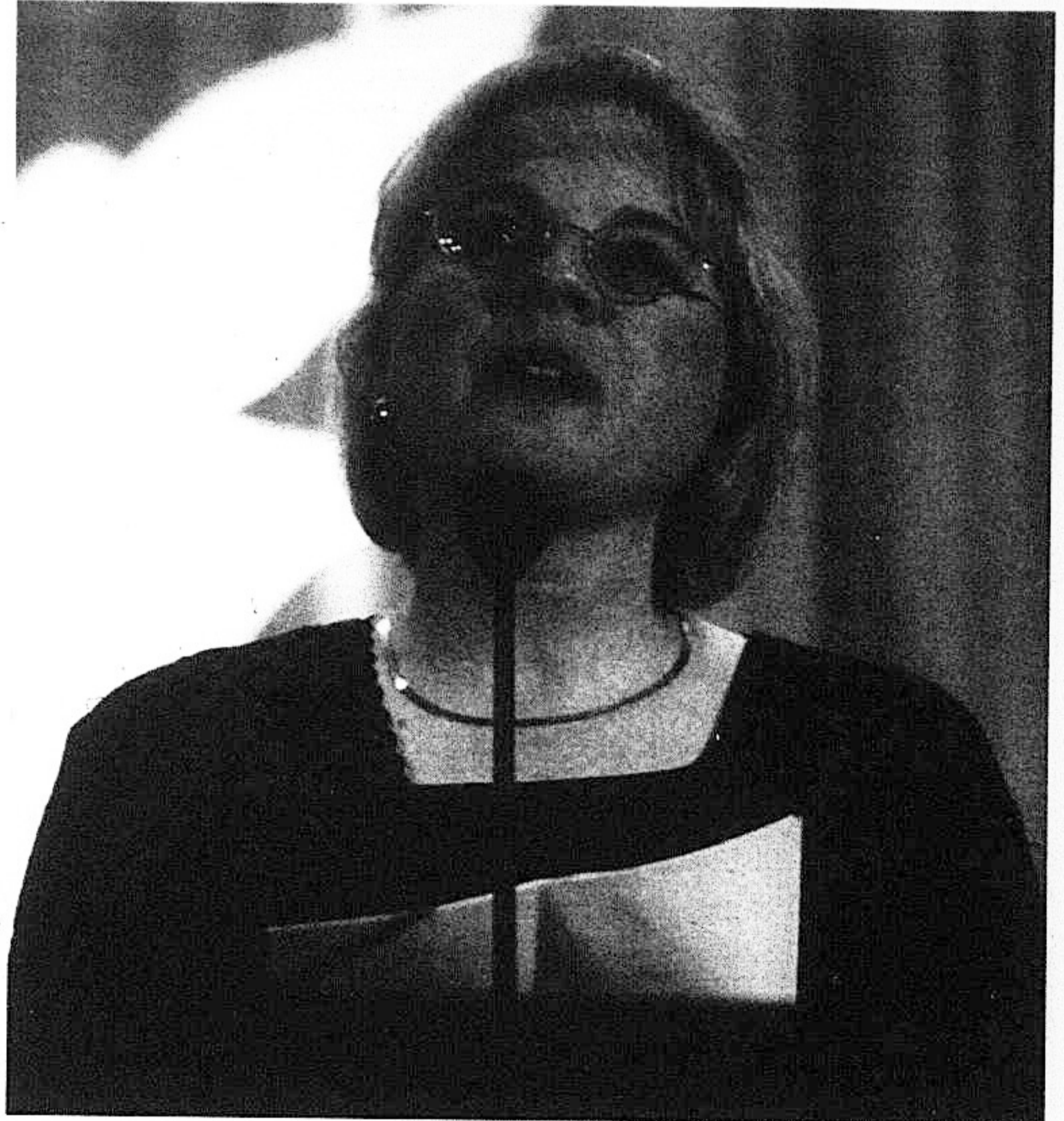
When we opened the doors in 1979, I think a lot of people on Skid Row

expected us to be like any other group in the neighborhood. We weren't. One story I remember is when this woman came in, and she was a prostitute, and she made that known to me. She was scared and hungry, and 10 minutes later this guy walked in and was acting like her pimp. And we said to him, you are welcome to stay and have a cup of coffee, but you can't tell this woman what to do, not in this café. So the man ordered up a cup of coffee, and eventually left.

Those experiences at Sisters got around on the streets, and people soon realized that in Sisters, it's not going to be business as usual. And over the years, it's the people on the streets who have mentored us. And we don't have the number of incidents of violence as we had in the early days.

**RC:** Can you tell us a little bit about the award you have received from the National Caring Institute?

**Nelson:** Last summer I got a call from the Caring Institute saying, "Congratulations, you're a nominee for a National Caring Award." In the 1980s Val Halamandaris, founder and executive director of the Caring Institute, had



*Genny Nelson, who works to bring dignity to Portland's homeless community, accepting the National Caring Award. Photo by Stephen Voss.*

an opportunity to meet Mother Teresa when she was in the U.S. He asked her what she thought was the greatest need in America. She told him in the United States you have a great poverty of spirit, and that's what you should concentrate on.

Mr. Halamandaris was very inspired by that, and decided to honor individuals making a difference in people's lives. On Nov. 7, Sisters' 26th birthday, we got the news that I had won the award. I asked them how they found out about me. The gentleman I spoke with told me they had been tracking me for a long time (laughs).

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### Continued from Previous Page

**RC:** What are some of the accomplishments you've seen over the years on the homeless front?

**Nelson:** As much as I would like to say there have been multiple accomplishments, I think homelessness has gotten worse, not better. When I started my work in '72 in [Portland's] Old Town/Chinatown [neighborhood], which was a skid row at the time, all of the hotels were still open. A person's pension or Social Security check could pay the rent in one of those hotels, with money left over for an eatery, or maybe even a show once in awhile.

Don't get me wrong, there's no romance about Skid Row. Were these stellar places to live? No. But the person who rented a room with their own income could build relationships with the people next door to them and maintain their self-esteem. You had very few people who were actually homeless.

But once we hit the '80s we started to lose that housing. Portland didn't lose as much as some cities; we had enough foresight to say let's keep some of these in place. But hundreds if not thousands of rooms were lost. In the '70s, with minimum wage, you could rent a modest place, but in the '80s minimum wage stopped keeping up with the cost of living, and the cost of housing skyrocketed, and it hasn't stopped. Also, accessing a room in a hotel didn't require case management. Now in low-income units, rules are strictly enforced. For instance, the hours you can receive guests. In my apartment my landlord doesn't tell me I can't have a friend over after 10 o'clock. Over time it wears on a person's dignity.

**RC:** Do you think the institutions that we've built for poor people are enabling them, or helping them get on with their lives?

**Nelson:** Unfortunately, I would say the former. I would never say any institution is all bad, or has a monopoly on the truth for that matter. However, what-

ever model you use, if it doesn't share power with the consumers then it's not going to lead to systemic change. What we've created by institutionalizing homelessness is a constituent base that too often feels entitled to services, or ashamed. People are not encouraged to do things for themselves.

What Sisters has found is that a first-time customer may walk into the café and ask us why they have to pay or barter for their meal. They might even have attitude about it not being free. They may have to come back in a

*"At this point in my life I think systemic change is the only approach that makes sense. We are learning what that will take. Build authentic relationships across the barriers that constantly separate us by race and class. Work in partnership, share power. Create a culture that supports a paradigm shift, including changing the underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions."*

few times before understanding their mutual participation makes a difference. And that's when they can begin to organize for lasting change for their own life and the others around them. Sisters has always said we are all in this together.

**RC:** Sisters was instrumental in being the first nonprofit café to pass federal legislation so people experiencing homelessness could use food stamps for a hot meal. Can you talk a little bit about those efforts?

**Nelson:** That was an organizing effort that came straight from the streets. When we opened in 1979, Sisters could take food stamps from elders, and people on disabilities, but people experiencing homelessness could not use their food stamps for a hot prepared meal. People would tell us, "What use are they?" The food you could purchase with the stamps had to be cooked up. Folks would exclaim, "I'm outside with a sleeping bag. I don't have a can opener, much less an oven and stove." It was that

simple. People asked us to take a look at this issue.

Sisters did an inquiry with the Department of Agriculture. We sent them a proposal for a pilot project that would allow us to accept food stamps from people dealing with homelessness in exchange for a hot, cooked meal. We got in touch with Mark Hatfield, who was an Oregon senator at the time, and he set up a meeting for us with representatives from the Department of Agriculture, and an aide in his office. Mind

an amendment to Reagan's drug bill. There was no way it wasn't going to get signed.

It took two years. Sometimes we think the system is so vast and unchangeable, but two years when you're thinking long-term isn't that much time for a campaign to change policy for a nation forever.

**RC:** What would you say to the next generation of people who are committing their lives to systemic change around the world?

**Nelson:** Take hope. At this point in my life I think systemic change is the only approach that makes sense. We are learning what that will take. Build authentic relationships across the barriers that constantly separate us by race and class. Work in partnership, share power. Create a culture that supports a paradigm shift, including changing the underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions.

In other words, if you always think the way you've always thought, you will always get what you've always got. Working together does not mean the absence of conflict; expect it. Struggle, reflection on that struggle, and love can transform the world. ■

[Online]

Check out Sisters of the Road Café at [sistersoftheroadcafe.org](http://sistersoftheroadcafe.org)



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## Double Shot of Truth

Gerard Woodward offers his readers a reality that is so uncomfortable at times that one feels compelled to shy away in disbelief and disgust. But these reactions suggest the importance of a novel like *I'll Go to Bed at Noon* as a darkly funny dose of the painful truth about addiction, and a careful look into the complexities of the love of a troubled family.

*I'll Go to Bed at Noon*  
By Gerard Woodward  
Norton, 2005  
Paperback, 288 pages, \$14.95

By AUSTIN WALTERS  
Contributing Writer

The encompassing story in Gerard Woodward's novel, *I'll Go to Bed at Noon*, focuses on the crippling cycle of alcoholism in a large, suburban, British family living in London in the early 1970s. Author Woodward breaks away from the scores of similarly themed tales to explore the deeply disturbing relationship between a mother and a favored son as they attempt to understand their roles in the family's misery.

The faint glimmers of hope, love, and dark comedy in the book shield the reader from utter despair, while the powerfully honest narrative deftly illuminates the dark and dangerous undercurrents of addiction swirling just below many seemingly calm surfaces.

The Jones family includes Aldous and Colette and their four children: Janus, James, Juliette, and Julian. Julian, the youngest, lives at home and is finishing high school. Janus, the eldest, has moved back in after a failed career as concert pianist and a severe problem with alcohol. The middle children live on the outside as functioning members of society, but everyone is called upon to participate in controlling Janus

— whose drunken episodes are increasingly violent and threatening.

The family's state of terror is peppered with such ridiculous and often humorous capers as Janus bringing his cat to sit with him in the bar or asking an arresting police officer to read him a story before hauling him into the station. Forced to cope with challenging and disastrous situations, the family finds relief in small triumphs and laughs at their own hopelessness. Colette merely giggles when Julian suggests that she would be happier if the entire world were always drunk.

Aldous is so defeated by Janus's failure in music and his shameful existence as the town drunk that he refuses to acknowledge his son's presence in the house. At one point, Janus has sawed off the bathroom pipes and sold them as scrap metal to fund one more night of drinking. Rather than address the issue, Aldous simply stops going upstairs and adjusts to bathing without the luxury of a tub. Looking through the holes in this ridiculous show of indifference, it becomes clear that Aldous squandered his own chances as an artist, and cannot bear the cyclical nature of denial and addiction.

Eventually, things get so bad that Colette is compelled to banish Janus from coming within a mile of the house, and peace is temporarily restored. Colette attempts to maintain an upbeat attitude, but an underlying sor-

row meddles with all of her thoughts — rendering her useless in her own fight to stay sober. As her world begins the final descent into ruin and death, Colette examines each of her failures in turn, wondering where things went the most wrong, and finds that everything hinges on her love for Janus. Considering her eldest son's problems, she finally understands some of the dire consequences of her actions as a mother.

In a wrenching scene, Janus explains to Colette that as the eldest child he met her as a girl of 24, "a sweet young woman," and has since witnessed her fall from grace through not only her "physical decay but [her] psychological disintegration and moral self-neglect." In watching his mother crack under the pressures of life, he lost his own will to survive. However defunctive and cruel the blame, Colette's failure to defend herself adds another dimension to her insecurities about adequately nurturing and caring for her family.

Gerard Woodward offers his readers a reality that is so uncomfortable at times that one feels compelled to shy away in disbelief and disgust. But these reactions suggest the importance of a novel like *I'll Go to Bed at Noon* as a darkly funny dose of the painful truth about addiction and a careful look into the complexities of the love of a troubled family. ■

## Yankee Doodle Dandies

Dear Wendy  
Directed by Thomas Vinterbert  
Screenplay by Lars Von Trier  
Runs at the Grand Illusion, Jan. 6-12

By LESTER GRAY  
Arts Editor

For Danish writer and director Lars Von Trier, America serves as a Galápagos to his anthropological speculations: an isolated environ of singularly identifiable behavioral types that serve as laboratory rats placed into sometimes sadistic, but fascinating, scenarios. His characters in previous works such as *Dogtown* and *Manderlay* (yet to be released in the US), are often the underclasses, their lives compromised by virtue of race, violence, or poverty. This mischievous and intriguing theater of sociology finds great appeal among European audiences, who enjoy what they interpret as a bit of reciprocal finger-wagging at the world's chief finger-wagger.

*Dear Wendy*, written by Von Trier and directed by long-time colleague Thomas Vinterberg, takes place in a small mining town below the Mason-Dixon line. There, Dick Dandelion (Jamie Bell), a recent high school graduate, finds himself without the necessary constitution to follow in the footsteps of his father and the other local miners — inanimate droids that descend into the bowels of the earth each day. With his prospects as dim as the underground into which the elder Dande-

lion beckons him, he finds unlikely salvation in a toy purchased, as it turns out providentially, several years prior.

However, the diminutive pearl-handled pistol is no plaything, soon-to-be cohort Stevie (Mark Webber) advises him. It's the real McCoy.

Setting aside some initial guilt, Dick, a declared pacifist, quickly finds this firearm a most comforting companion. With the emotion usually reserved for a first love, he names it Wendy. Reminiscing in his letter to her he emotes, "I found a new friend and it was you."

Dick joins with Stevie, also committed to nonviolence, in agreeing that the act of possessing a firearm without any intent of drawing it provides a powerful but otherwise innocuous tool in rounding out a personality, especially for the socially challenged. Excited by this epiphany, they share their wisdom with a few of the town's fellow misfits. Forming a club called the Dandies, they each adopt and name a gun with which they become skilled and personally intimate.

As a group they study the maintenance, science, and history of their weaponry, aided by bullet trajectory diagrams and medical analyses of gunshot wounds. Grown somewhat haughty, they are loath to see themselves in the same vein as your standard run-of-the-mill, conservative gun owner.

Clues are offered early on that *Dear Wendy* is somewhat farcical, an implied request to suspend our disbelief accordingly. In return we receive dark and clever allegorical humor, with lower-middle-class Americans serving as the vehicle for, if not the butt of the joke.

*Dear Wendy* is gutsy, aggressive, and provocative filmmaking riding on a screenplay from a man seemingly on a mission. A social critic of some note, Von Trier makes observations those inside our borders do not. For that he deserves praise. But one might question, as some already do, the intent of Mr. Von Tiers' edgy critiques of American society. Is he laughing with us or at us? ■

Dear Wendy is gutsy, aggressive, and provocative filmmaking riding on a screenplay from a man seemingly on a mission. A social critic of some note, Lars Von Trier makes observations those inside our borders do not.

Dick Dandelion (Jamie Bell) center, and the Dandies







Adventures  
in Irony

Dr. Wes Browning

All the information that the administration gets from wiretapping us needs to be made available to all Americans, so that we all will know where to go to kick Al Qaeda butt. The more of us who are in on Al Qaeda butt-kicking, the more butt-kickings are going to happen. This is America, and that's what we do.

# Today's Lesson: Cell Spy-ology

According to our Justice Department, our government can spy on us, but we can't spy on it.

Yesterday George W. said, "If somebody from Al Qaeda is calling you, we'd like to know why." I expect tomorrow he'll add, "If we don't know someone from Al Qaeda is calling you, it's because we didn't spy on you enough." Then he'll come up with, "You may not have had a call from Al Qaeda yet, but there's always a first time, and we're gonna need to be there, listening in. America's freedom is at stake."

With excuses like that, and a little torture here and a little indefinite imprisonment without charges there, pretty soon you've got a real totalitarian state. Happy New Year!

Evidently, those of us who care about preserving this country's actual freedom, and not just talking about it while destroying it, need to find creative new ways to counter the administration's rhetoric. I say, if you can't beat them, join them.

Let's let them know that we understand the need for spying. We need all the information we can get about our enemies, with whom we are at war. But we also need to fight this war with good old American initiative. Just like we beat the bad fascists in WWII, so that we could be ruled by good fascists now, we need to hit the terrorists with the full might of the U.S.A. We citizens need to lock arms together and fight this war united.

That's why all the information that the administration gets from wiretapping us needs to be made available to all Americans, so that we all will know where to go to kick Al Qaeda butt. The more of us who are in on Al Qaeda butt-kicking, the more butt-kickings are going to happen. This is America, and that's what we do.

Bush has said, "We're at war, and as commander in chief, I've got to use the resources at my disposal, within the law, to protect the American people." But, hey, in WWII, did we send only that old guy Roosevelt to Normandy? No! We sent everybody we had!

I'm not talking about sending people to France. That was then. This is a war of information. Bush himself has said that, too. He said, "There's an enemy out there. They read newspapers, they listen to what you write, they listen to what you put on the air, and they react."

They read newspapers! They react! We've got to read newspapers and react, too! You've got to fight fire with fire. They know where we are, and they can send suicide bombers after us. We've got to know where they are, so we can suicide-bomb right back at them. It just stands to reason.

They've got no freedom. We need to have no freedom. They've got to hide in cells and fight independently from each other, never sure what the other cells are going to do. We have to split up into cells too. But that's going to require information.

It's not just something that some few patriots among us should be doing. It's something we all have to do because it's our duty. We all have to know who's talking to Al Qaeda and when and why.

Let me illustrate with a potential scenario. Suppose Al Qaeda calls a pizza shop in our nation's capital and says, "Heh, heh, Pizza Hovel? Yeah, this is Al Qaeda, at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. Yeah that's right, we're THE Al Qaeda, Death to America, yadda, yadda, heh, heh, so we need 70 large pizzas, all with olives, mushrooms, green peppers, and anchovies. No pepperoni, no sausage. Ask for George, he's paying."

Our government needs to get a transcript of a call like that on the internet at once, so our loyal American cells in the D.C. area can take immediate appropriate action. And lay waste to that Al Qaeda party. ■



## "Highlights" of 2005

**Thurs., March 24, 5:45 p.m., Fourth and Virginia.** Complainant, a transient Black female aged 50, came to the precinct desk to report that she has been in a domestic relationship with the suspect for about five years, and that she is currently staying in a domestic violence shelter because of prior disturbances with him. On the above date and time, victim was walking on the street when the suspect, a transient Black male aged 40, approached her from behind and grabbed her by the arm. When she turned around he stated that it would be easy for him to kill her, and that he would kill her entire family. He stated that he was going to California for two weeks, and that when he got back she had better be packed and ready to move back in with him. He stated that if she didn't he would kill her and hang her from a lamppost — he then walked away. Victim believes he is able and ready to carry out these threats. She was given a card with her case number, and a brochure on domestic violence.

**Thurs., April 28, 2-4 p.m., Elliot Ave W. - Woods to east.** Victim, a transient white male aged 31, entered City Team Ministries to report he had been assaulted. He stated that he sleeps in the wooded area behind City Team, and that overnight he was assaulted by unknown suspects. He thinks he may have lost consciousness, but isn't sure, stating he fell asleep after the incident, and upon waking walked to the City Team Ministries to report the assault. He did not see who assaulted him, and wasn't sure if any of his property had been taken. He had suffered a contusion to the right forehead area, and had pain in his head and neck. He was treated at the scene by Seattle Fire, and taken to Harborview Medical Center.

**Thurs., May 19, 11:50 a.m., First & Pike.** Officer saw a known suspect, a homeless Native American male aged 41, walking eastbound on Pike from First. Officer was aware suspect was on active Department of Corrections supervision, and contacted him on Third Ave. Officer caught up with the suspect, who stated that he was going to catch a bus. Officer contacted his DOC officer, who stated that the suspect was under arrest for violations, and advised the officer to search him. Officer found nothing during the search, and the DOC arrived and took custody of him. They later had him sign a stipulated agreement, and the suspect was identified and released.

**Thurs., June 9, 7 p.m., Airport Way/S. Royal Brougham.** Officers were dispatched to a report of an assault at the above address. Upon arrival they contacted the victim, a transient Black male aged 36, who stated he was attempting to break up a fight between his two friends when he was struck in the head by one of them. He stated they had all been sharing alcohol together when his friends got into an argument over beer. After the victim was struck, the two suspects fled the scene in opposite directions. Victim was unsure how much time had elapsed after he had been struck, as he was intoxicated himself. He was instructed to call Seattle Police if he saw his assailant.

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.



## REAL-LIFE ANSWERS TO YOUR LEGAL HASSLES

**M**y father died recently and did not leave a will. How will this affect the distribution of his estate?

The law of wills and inheritance is very complicated and filled with many pitfalls. But, according to Judd Marten at LeSourd & Patten, P.S., a basic roadmap of how property may be distributed will help you to ask the right questions as you seek more thorough advice.

Generally, in Washington state, when a person dies intestate (without a will), the estate passes through one of two legal methods:

The first method is called a non-probate transfer. Essentially, a non-probate transfer is a means for people to distribute property while avoiding the formalities of the courts. A common example of an instrument that performs this function is a joint bank account. When a party to a joint bank account dies, the balance of the account automatically becomes the property of the remaining living party — it passes without a court having to determine where it goes. Other examples of non-probate transfers include real property held in joint tenancy, life insurance policies, and trusts.

In addition to non-probate transfers, community property laws will automatically pass most possessions acquired during marriage to a surviving spouse. However, community property may not include prop-

erty acquired before marriage or property acquired by gift or inheritance. If your father bought a house after he got married, the house probably went to his wife at his death, but if he inherited the house after marrying, it is his separate property.

How much of the remaining property goes to the surviving relatives depends on whether your father was married when he died and how many siblings you have. For instance, Washington statutes prescribe that a surviving spouse takes all community property and half of all separate property through intestate succession. The other half is divided equally among the decedent's children. If there is no surviving spouse, then the entire estate is divided among the children, and if no children, the deceased's parents.

As you can tell, slightly different personal situations can lead to drastically different results. It is highly recommended that you consult an attorney to learn how or if these laws apply to your specific situation.

For more information, contact one of the following resources:

Seattle University School of Law offers a trusts and estates clinic at Sullivan Hall, which you can reach at (206)398-4136.

The Access to Justice Institute occasionally presents an estate-planning clinic at its Community Justice Centers. Call (206)398-4173.

The King County Bar Association offers general law clinics, which are offered weekly at various locations around the county. For more information, and to make an appointment, call (206)267-7070. ■

Answers are intended for general information only and are not intended to replace the advice of your own attorney. Ask a Lawyer is in partnership with the Access to Justice Institute, Seattle University School of Law, and the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. Got a question? E-mail: atji@seattleu.edu.



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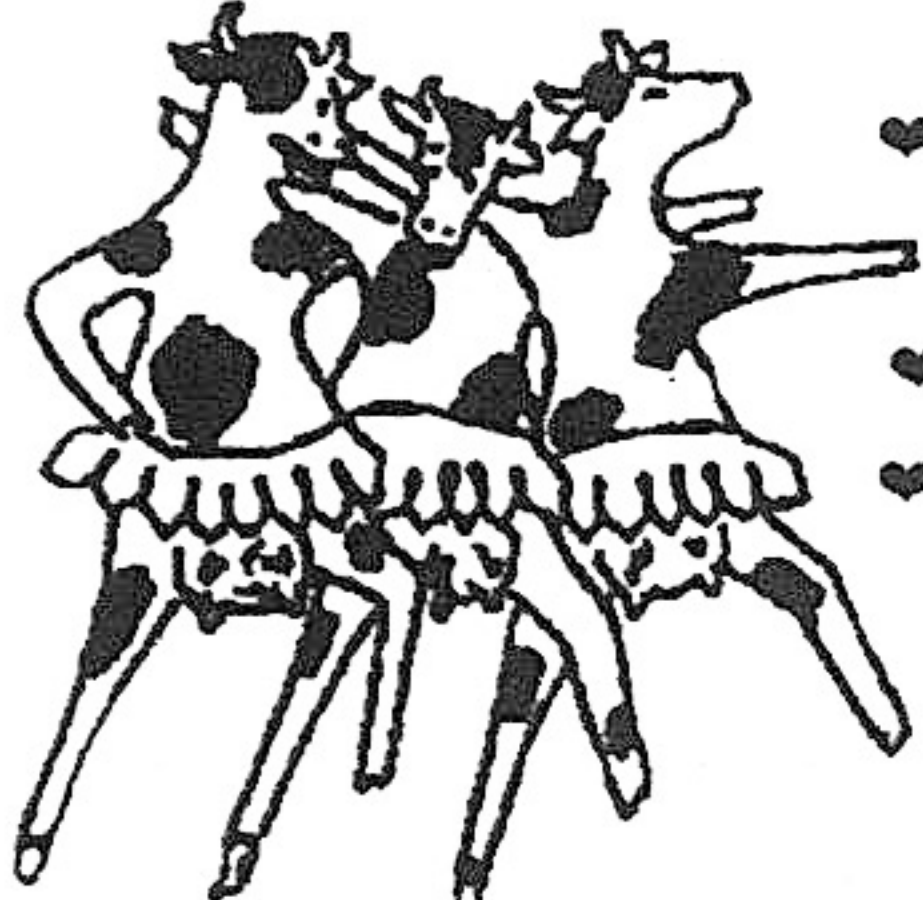
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*How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God! Indeed it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter Kingdom of God.*

— 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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United Church  
Of Christ**  
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Seattle WA 98103  
Worship Sunday 10:30

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

**Strike "three strikes"**

Dear *Real Change*,

I would like to thank you for the recent article printed in your newspaper *re* Three Strikes ("Locked Up for Life," Dec. 28).

This is an issue that needs to be continuously addressed for as long as it takes the powers that be to listen and act. I voted yes for the three-strikes law not knowing it would be so abused. Not knowing it would violate so many basic human rights. This law needs to be corrected and enacted as it was intended: to punish the worst of the worst.

**Sharon Dozier  
Federal Way**

[Ed. Note: Sharon is the sister of Stevan Dozier, the man serving life without hope of parole under the Three Strikes law.]

**Behind Wal-Mart's Smileyface**

Dear *Real Change*,

After watching the newly released documentary, *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*, I was greatly saddened and appalled. Wal-Mart and dozens of other American giant corporations have a deep-rooted history of exploiting their employees. This is readily apparent by the sheer magnitude of the 4,851 lawsuits filed against Wal-Mart alone in 2000. Keep in mind that the formation of a cor-

poration is granted, regulated, and continued only at the behest of the public it is serving.


During the past half-century, the largest corporations have been given increasingly disproportionate tax incentives and political consideration by our elected officials, with virtually no disclosure to the public they serve. Our actions and decisions locally are affecting people, animals, and the environment globally. Are "We the People" really benefiting by exploiting communities far away while adding to the wealth of individuals that "own" these corporations?

As the largest corporation in the world, Wal-Mart sets the example for other corporations to follow. Our rules and regulations governing corporate charters need to be reviewed and enforced. We Americans are already feeling the effects of corporate servitude with longer hours, lower wages, fewer benefits, and lack of job security. Just like anything else, we teach corporations how to treat us. Soon, all workers' rights, unions, medical benefits, wages, and more will be gone or secondary. Profit doesn't have to happen this way.

When you need to shop, slam the door on that smiley face. Drive by Wal-Mart and don't stop!

**Sheri A. Hilton  
Everett**


*Real Change* welcomes letters to the editor of up to 250 words in length. Please include name, address, phone number, and email for author verification. Letters should be addressed to Editor at *Real Change*, 2129 2nd Ave., Seattle, WA, 98121, or emailed to [editor@realchangenews.org](mailto:editor@realchangenews.org).



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# Calendar

## This Week's Top Ten

### Friday 1/8

Despite spending the majority of his life in prison and having his writing banned in his home country, Nazim Hikmet's work is celebrated internationally. Composer Robin Holcomb has set seven of Hikmet's poems to music to be performed by members of the Odeonquartet and Northwest Sinfonietta. Tickets \$10 general, \$5 students. 7:30 p.m., Richard Hugo House, 1634 11th Ave.

### Saturday 1/7

Credited with inspiring the Black Power Movement, Robert Williams boldly led his North Carolina hometown to defend itself against the Ku Klux Klan and challenge the repressive Jim Crow laws. The new PBS documentary, *Negroes with Guns*, traces Williams' journey from southern leader to foreign exile. 5 p.m., Northwest Film Forum, 1515 12th Ave.

### Sunday 1/8

What will be the next hot transportation issue in Seattle? The League of Women Voters hosts a presentation on transportation by Julia Patterson, member of the King County Council and Sound Transit. 10 a.m., League of Women Voters Office, 1620 18th Ave., Suite 101.

### Monday 1/9

The 911 Media Arts Center presents a filmmakers' open-mic night. See the edgy, poignant, and humorous work of Seattle's aspiring and professional filmmakers. Submission and tickets \$2. 7 p.m., 911 Media Arts Center, 402 9th Ave. N.

Margery Williams rose through the ranks to become a writer for *The Washington Post*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Slate*. Her book *The Woman at the Washington Zoo: Writings on Politics, Family, and Fate* is filled with pieces on the high and mighty of D.C.'s politics. She also makes a moving address to her life and the human spirit as

she lived with, battled, and succumbed to liver cancer. Her husband, Timothy Noah, discusses how she realized that all life is finite, yet filled with generosity. 5:30 p.m., The Elliott Bay Book Co., 101 S. Main Street, (206)624-6600

### Tuesday 1/10

The Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility presents two workshops, *Eliminating Toxic Flame Retardants and Promoting Energy Independence Through Renewable Fuels*. The talks include an overview of the health effects and tips for speaking with legislators. 6:30 p.m., University of Washington, South Campus Center, Room 348 and 350.

### Tuesday 1/10 and Thursday 1/12

Woodinville and Roosevelt High Schools' brightest minds have written several 10-minute plays that will be performed by the students under the direction of the Seattle Rep staff. 7:30 p.m., Seattle Repertory Theater, 155 Mercer St. Reservations: (206)443-2210 ext. 1041.

### Through Thursday 11/12

Filmmaker Caveh Zahedi's success rests on his unabashed willingness to proclaim his human weaknesses on camera. With sincerity and candor, *I Am a Sex Addict* reveals Zahedi's obsession with prostitutes and his commitment to free love. Tickets \$8 general, \$6 students and seniors, \$5 members. 7 and 9 p.m., Northwest Film Forum, 1515 12th Ave.

### Thursday 11/12

What happened to the Viking colonies of Greenland or the Anasazi of the American Southwest? In *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Jared Diamond examined the roots of civilizations, showing why some flourish. In his new book, *Collapse*, he examines the other side, exposing why some fade away. Tickets \$5. 5:30 and 8 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 8th Ave.



Tamara Plush's photo exhibit *Journey to Burma* is a visual story of the people of Southeast Asia, showing their unique culture and their humanity. Even if they are in another country or continent, she teaches that they are our neighbors. Through Thurs., Jan. 12. Mon. - Thurs. 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., Fri. 9 a.m. - noon, Sat. 8 a.m. - noon, Sun. 9 - 11:30 a.m. and 4:30 - 6 p.m., Shakti Vinyasa Yoga Studio and Gallery, 2238 NW Market Street. Info: [www.smudgeproductionsllc.com](http://www.smudgeproductionsllc.com)

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

## Director's Corner

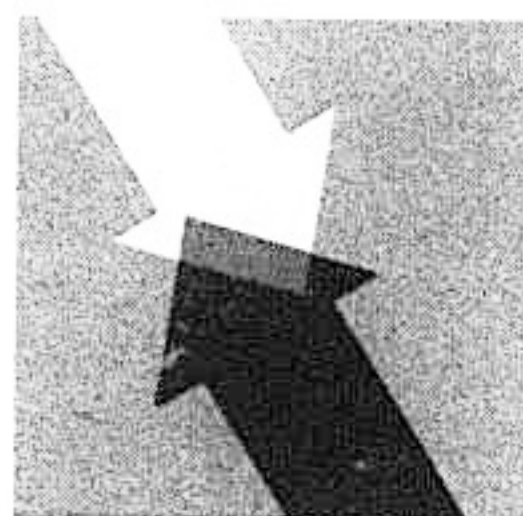


This MLK Day, *Real Change* urges our readers to take to the streets. Join us, the Statewide Poverty Action Network, and other anti-poverty activists in Olympia to send a strong message to our legislators that poverty can and must be ended now. For information about the Olympia march and rally, please see the SPAN website at [www.povertyaction.org](http://www.povertyaction.org). I've written about King's Riverside speech — which draws out the connections between a war economy, poverty, and race — in this space before, but as we enter 2006, his call of nearly 40 years ago for a "true revolution of values" is especially current.

"True compassion" said King, "is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. . . . A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

"Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism."

Come to Olympia, or join the Seattle March (Info at [www.MLKSeattle.org](http://www.MLKSeattle.org)), but do something. Now. To quote King again, "We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late."



## First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

### In Olympia: A State Budget for Justice

**Issue:** The Washington State Legislature convenes Jan. 9. During the short, 60-day session, they'll consider well over 1,000 bills and pass a supplemental budget that makes revisions to the two-year, \$27-billion dollar budget they passed last year.

**Background:** In Washington state, more than half a million people don't have access to health coverage. It takes an hourly wage of \$14.55 to afford the average two-bedroom apartment. In King County, you need to make more than \$13 an hour just to afford the average one-bedroom. Minimum wage is \$7.35 an hour. If you earn that — in fact if you earn less than \$20,000 a year — you pay about 17 percent of your income in taxes. (If you're part of the middle class, you pay about 11 percent, and if you're one of the wealthiest 1 percent, you pay 3 percent of your income in taxes.)

Like every year, starting next week, the Legislature will make choices about how to spend our tax dollars, including the \$1.4 billion extra generated by a growing economy. They'll decide things like whether to use limited resources to provide tax breaks for businesses or expand health insurance coverage for poor children. They'll have the choice to use our resources to help end poverty, or to maintain the status quo. Just some of the specific items they'll consider this year include:

- A \$100 million one-time expansion of the Housing Trust Fund to reduce the backlog of low-income housing projects waiting to be built in Washington state.
- A \$13 million increase to the Washington Families Fund that pays for supportive housing and services to families leaving homelessness.
- \$21 million for Medicaid to provide mental health care for low-income people across the state.
- Extending foster care for young adults enrolled in college or vocational-technical schools, so they remain supported as they prepare for the future.

We need legislators to be accountable to all of us, not just those with the most resources. They can decide to make ending poverty a priority. And you can help them make the right choice.

**Action:** Contact your legislators and the Governor and let them know that you want them to use the next 60 days to take steps to end poverty, and that you want them to use our tax dollars to do that, before they consider any more tax breaks for people and businesses that are doing just fine already. Call the legislative hotline at 1-800-562-6000 to leave a message for all of your legislators and the Governor, or visit [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov) to find out who represents you and find their email addresses.

On Mon., Jan. 16 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day,) join *Real Change*, the Statewide Poverty Action Network, and other groups from across the state for a march and rally in Olympia to call on the legislature to end poverty now. Details and registration available at [www.povertyaction.org](http://www.povertyaction.org).

"The existence of poverty in the U.S. should not be accepted as a necessary evil or an insoluble problem, but should be considered a crisis requiring emergency measures. It is a matter of will and priorities, not a matter of resources." -MLK Jr.

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-HENN HAUS

MARCH, Continued from Page 1

to evictions and diverting tax dollars from military to social purposes.

Today, organizers say, they're calling for access to jobs and educational opportunities; work that pays a decent wage; and the bare necessities — food, shelter, and medical care — required to keep people safe and well.

They're also acting in the spirit of King's final, unfinished project: assembling a multiracial poor people's movement to march on the nation's capitol for a guaranteed income.

The group's concerns represent "work that's been left undone since [King] was assassinated," says Tassoni. This MLK Day event is "not so much a celebration of what he accomplished as a message that we need to take up the gauntlet."

The march's organizers are planning beyond the one-day event, too: they are meeting via telephone monthly to support each other in strengthening local grassroots organizations of poor people.

Effectively organizing the poor isn't easy, says Aiko Schaefer of the Statewide Poverty Action Network, who convened the meetings at the urging of SPAN's board — many of whom are low-income and face real challenges having their voices heard in a large, diverse state.

"It's hard to organize people who have very challenging lives," she says. SPAN's primary mission is to influence decisions that impact Washington's poor, "and the only way we can do that effectively is to ensure there are strong local and regional networks of low-income people."

Such networks could branch out from groups like Tassoni's, for example, which currently can pay him only for part-time work advising 1,000 Thurston County tenants who face

problems with their landlords.

Or from Kathy Mann's, which is bringing at least 25 people from the Spokane area to take part in the rally and speak with their legislators.

Mann, the director and sole staff member of VOICES — which stands for Voices for Opportunity, Income, Child-care, Education, and Support — says convening meetings with the powerful is the heart of her group's work.

"People who want to become more participatory in civic life come to us," she says. "We hook them up with legislators, advisory boards, and committees. We're representing low-income issues from the perspective of people experiencing those issues."

Face-to-face meetings between legislators and constituents who are homeless, hungry, or unemployed can be particularly powerful, she says. She remembers when Sen. Lisa Brown (D - Spokane) sent the group a note after one meeting: "It said, 'This is the only way low-income people can get heard: when they group together.'"

"Usually, the people talking to her are paid to do that," says Mann. "She really respects that we don't get paid — that we care and are connected to one another and to our community."


The 1933 march on Olympia was followed by a second, larger march later that spring, on Inauguration Day of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first term. Police and vigilantes found shelter for women and children but stood guard while the men spent the night in the rain.

The marchers left the next day — but they had sent a message, Tassoni says, that FDR would stick to the terms of his New Deal or the government would face more evidence of misery.

That's the kind of message public officials still need, says Mann.

"I don't think Americans want to see children going hungry or vets going without homes," she says. "I think once they see it, they'll step up." ■

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[March on the Capitol]  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day Poverty Action Summit.  
Mon., Jan. 16, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
March on the Capitol: 1 p.m.  
To join: call toll free 1-866-789-7726  
or go to [www.povertyaction.org](http://www.povertyaction.org).

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# Mockingbird Times



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January 2006

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Volume VI, Issue 1

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## HB 2002 — The Foster Care Achievement Act

MISTY  
LOU COOK



It's a crazy world we live in, one where some people make more money than others, one where if you don't make enough money then you can not even afford to eat a loaf of bread, one where if you're a youth in foster care, you're penalized for getting your GED or High School Diploma. What else is insane in this world? If you're a youth in the foster care system in WA State, you lose all State support on your 18th birthday. Some 18th birthday present!! Can you imagine? "Happy Birthday Bobby, now I hope you've gotten absolutely everything you need together for your adult life, because you don't have our support for food, shelter or clothes anymore, or any healthcare. Good luck and good bye Bobby"!! Representative Mary Lou Dickerson, in the midst of discussing foster care youth dilemmas, told us that "less than 2% of foster care youth get a Bachelor's Degree". Foster care youth are essentially punished for academic achievements. As soon as a youth in the foster care system earns their GED or High School Diploma here in WA State, they are cut off from WA State support and will no longer receive medical insurance or money for food, shelter and other basic needs. Many of us would like to change this ignorant policy that forces way too many youth out of their nest before they have even begun to fly. Instead of kicking them out before they're ready, we should teach these young adults how to fly.

House Bill 2002 (HB 2002) would help foster care youth achieve and soar to the greatest of heights, and support them like any proud parent would. Essentially, HB 2002 acknowledges that any youth who just graduated from High School or earned their GED still needs assistance and guidance un-

til they are able to be self-sufficient and stable. Can you imagine if you heard of a parent that consistently cut off support as soon as one of their kids graduated or turned 18? What would you say to a parent if they kicked out a kid as soon as they turned 18, out onto the streets, and told them that they "aged out" of their parental care? I would say that's exactly what the State of Washington does every year to hundreds of foster care youth. The State of Washington has been an insensitive parent with bad policies for thousands of foster care youth, but there's still time to change these policies and learn from our mistakes.

While I was living on the streets, on and off for about 7 years, every other homeless youth I encountered was either running away from the foster care system or had recently "aged out" of the foster care system and had been booted out onto the cold, hard streets to fend for themselves. Something must be terribly wrong with the foster care system I thought, if all of these large numbers of youth were turning to drop-in centers for meals and cardboard boxes for shelters. These are the forgotten and abused children of a negligent State parent. What are the solutions to the epidemic of foster care youth being abused in placements and ending up homeless from "aging out" of the foster care system?

The first solution is having amazing and effective new foster care models in WA State like the Mockingbird Family Model (MFM), which is currently being replicated throughout King County in five different sites (1). The MFM can prevent a myriad of youth from ever feeling alone and in a place where they feel they have to escape. Results from an evaluation by the University of Washington's Northwest Children's Institute indicated that the MFM kept siblings together, parents felt supported, grades and concentration in school improved and caregivers were "very satisfied with the availability and quality of respite care" (2). The second solution is having safe HOPE beds available for runaway youth. This is essential

to preventing youth from having to sleep on a stranger's couch or under a bridge. Having a safe bed for abused foster care youth to stay at until they find a safe and healthy home is very basic and it works. Finally, in order to prevent youth who "age out" of the foster care from being homeless, we have to support them. Most youth who are 18 and have just graduated from High School still heavily rely on parental support before and during college, and foster care youth are no different in this way.

Statistics represent a small percentage of incidences reported. According to King County's website, half of the youth in homeless shelters throughout King County are ages 12-15 (3). Youth ages 16-17 make up more than a quarter of some of the estimated 2,000 youth on the streets of King County alone (4). It is sickening to me that there are more than 1,000 kids on the streets of Seattle that are merely 12, 13, 14 and 15 years old. The fact that there are over 500 youth who are 16 and 17 and homeless in King County is disgusting. We need to protect these vulnerable youth. The reasons that youth have resorted to running away to the streets vary widely, but statistics from King County's website indicates that, "physical abuse ranges from 40-60%" (5) and that the amount of youth running away from inadequate foster care homes "ranged from 21 percent to 53 percent" (6) I can tell you from personal experience that more than half of the youth on the street are youth from the foster care system, aged out or not. I've seen these youth fall through the cracks of the pavement first-hand for over half a decade and it needs to stop.

House Bill 2002 would benefit everybody in WA, from Spokane to Seattle to anywhere else in WA State. HB 2002 helps people from every cultural, financial, class, gender or educational background. It has strong appeal to all political spectrums, because these kids will become tax payers instead of financial re-

HB 2002 CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## What's Your New Year's Resolution?

JAMICA  
HENDERSON



At the end of every year many people in our society think of a New Year's resolution we want to achieve. How many of you have ever made a New Year's resolution and stuck to it? Well I can be the first to admit that I have made many resolutions and forgot about them. When I was younger I did not quite understand the purpose. A New Year's resolution is something you want to work on personally. It's a goal that you set for yourself. Not to please other people but to please yourself and knowing it can be done.

Do you know the history of New Years? New Years started 4000 years ago. It was first observed in ancient Babylon. Back then they did not have calendar so they celebrated New Year's on March 23. This was a time of rebirth

and a time to plant new crops. The Egyptians celebrate new years at the end of September. They celebrate at this time because it was the time the Nile River flooded and it was a good time to grow crops. The Romans also celebrated their new years in March but the new emperor wanted to add some changes to the calendar and decided to celebrate New Year's Day on January 1. New Years 400 years later is still celebrated on different days of the year. Have you ever had a hard time keeping up with your new year's resolution? Resolutions are not going to be easy especially if it's something you have a hard time trying to do. Example: I have a problem with road rage. It really irritates me when I am in a rush and a slow driver is in front of me. Or when I'm driving and an impatient driver cuts me off. So what can I do to prevent road rage is: Not let it get to me because eventually I will get where I need to go.

Let's say you have a list of New Year's resolutions and you want to know how to get them all done. Well here is some advice: 1. Take your time. If you choose a resolution that you know is going to take a while to work on, take

as much time as you need to complete your goal. Remember, your resolution is about you. 2. Word you resolution carefully. Make sure what you put down is what you really want to do. Be detailed, so you can know for yourself if that's what you want to do. 3. Once you have done the first two steps, now you can come up with a plan; remember you want it to be a plan that you can achieve. 4. When you come up with a plan that's good for you, write it down and stick it where you know you will look at it everyday. 5. Ask for help. Some resolutions take more than what you think. If you know that in order for you to keep this resolution, you need someone to remind you, it's okay. Do what you need to complete you goal or goals. 6. Remember you're not perfect. If you forget it's okay. You have all year to finish. Don't give up, keep on going, you will be happy that you did.

<http://www.fridgedoor.info>

<http://adoptionworld.org>

## Letter from the Editor

JIM THEOFELIS



Happy New Year! The Mockingbird Society welcomes 2006 as the Year of Opportunity. The opportunity to strengthen the services and supports available to the children, youth and families involved in the foster care system. The Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) is set for replication and we are excited about working with our community partners to bring this promising practice to scale. I'm convinced that the MFM is a practical, cost-effective model that promotes increased stability for kids and families, allows siblings to remain together and offers quality and timely support to caregivers including respite care. Increasing stability in kid's lives is paramount to improving their well being and permanency.

Our Youth LEAD programs (*Mockingbird Times*, Youth Speaker's Panel and ASK-Y) will also continue to grow and be forum for youth from foster care and/or homelessness to express their views while developing their leadership, employment and literacy skills. Despite the myth that "troubled youth don't care" the young people from Youth LEAD continually

demonstrate their passion and investment in creating a better world for themselves and others. The Mockingbird Society offers them the opportunity to participate in something meaningful which hopefully reminds them of their special meaning to all of us. Unlike many youth employment programs Youth LEAD does not operate on an internship model where time in the program is limited to a certain number of weeks. Youth LEAD operates on a business model which clearly states our goals, deadlines and the skills necessary to develop a product that is relevant and fundable. Last year the Mockingbird Society paid out nearly \$16,000 to over forty youth; twenty-two of which were hired as employees of the Mockingbird Society. We embrace the opportunity to teach youth how to fish rather than simply giving them the proverbial fish that keeps them stuck in the "client" role. At Mockingbird youth are employee's, writers, public speakers, interviewers and a host of other positive role's.

I am hopeful that you will continue to support us in our work with children, youth and families and to join us in the opportunities that come from *building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood youth.*

 Jim Theofelis  
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org



Sisters Larishica and Terasa have holiday meal



Dennis pondering new hat



Courtney and former staff William



Staff and photographer Zorn sharing holiday cheer

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

## A Mockingbird Inside Your Mailbox

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## Letter to the Editor

Jim:

I sat down to breakfast this morning and read the Dec. 2005 *Mockingbird Times*. I just wanted to tell you how impressed I am with the thoughtfulness and quality of writing in your publication. I was especially captivated by the lead article written by Jacob Harrison. It was compelling reading and allowed me to experience Washington DC from a very different perspective than my 60 year old point of view. That young man can write!

So can the rest of your crew. I could hardly finish Alicia Morris's article, it was so disturbing to know what she is experiencing every day and night, but I am glad I did because it looks like she is going to have a chance to end her homelessness.

The *Mockingbird Times* should be available in every high school and college in the Seattle area. It is a gem.

All the best,  
Curt

## Mockingbird Society: The Story Behind the Name

The 1962 American classic *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee is the inspiration for our name, Mockingbird Society. Atticus, the widowed father of Jem and Scout, joins Miss Maudie in teaching his kids that it's a sin to kill a mockingbird because "...Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for

us." What if we created an organization, a community, indeed a world in which our most vulnerable children and youth were protected and valued with the same commitment that Atticus had for mockingbirds? Join the Mockingbird Society today and help us give young people a safe place to nest and sing.

## Thank You's

Roberta Blayney; Virginia Blayney; Kathryn Brooks; Washington Women's Foundation; Camp SeaStar and Roz Owen; Lucinda Richmond; Robert and Deborah Fleming; Ms. Faith Ireland; Dr. Alan Rothblatt and Sima Kahn; Linda Mihalov; Deborah Fiscus; Dawanda Pesicka; Janet Dwight and Patrick Gemperline; Elizabeth Strickland and Daniel Klepinger; James and Lauriann Garland; Howard Muntz and Barbra Goff; David Rawlings and Kathryn McGonigle; The Black Family; Kimberly Faucher; Diane, Kelsey and Darcie Gray; David and Shirley Allen; Douglas and Ann Ferguson; Kelly Jo and Christopher Macarthur; Charles Janeway

## Mockingbird Society's 3rd Annual Auction and Fundraiser: We Believe We Can Fly

### ORDER TICKETS NOW!

Thursday, March 30, 2006  
6-9 pm

Wine, hor d'oeuvres and dessert  
Silent and live auction  
Premiere of the Mockingbird Society documentary, *A Place to Sing*

At the Broadway Performance Hall  
1625 Broadway  
Seattle, WA 98122

Tickets are \$35 and may be purchased in advance or at the door.

We are looking for articles, poetry, artwork and photography from our young readers who have experience in the foster care system and/or homelessness. If you want to be published in the *Times*, contact us at 206-323-5437 or via email at newspaper@mockingbirdsociety.org. For more info and to check us out, go to www.mockingbirdsociety.org.

## MEET OUR STAFF

**Executive Director**  
Jim Theofelis

**Youth LEAD Coordinator**  
Najja Morris

**Operations Manager**  
Ros Ghan

**Public Relations**  
Darcie Gray

**Executive Assistant**  
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Dietra Clayton

**Senior Staff Reporters**  
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**Staff Reporters**  
Ashley Grant, Jamica Henderson, Echo Speed, Larishica Asher, Terasa Asher, Jacob Harrison, Anthony Guess

**Contributing Writers**  
Leona, Alicia Morris, Starcia Ague, James Milner, Brett Horejsi

**Volunteers**  
Patricia Gray, Anna Trombley

## FAFSA 101

COURTNEY  
KONIETZKO



If you are a new college student, it takes awhile to learn the ropes and the mountains of paperwork can seem daunting. Take a deep breath and remember it gets easier, once you fill out your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) you are on your way. Remember, now is the month to do it! Fill your FAFSA out in January every year in order to get the most money you can in order to go to college for the Fall '06-Summer '07 year. There is also money available for Spring and Summer of '06 on a case by case basis; so do not hesitate to apply even if you didn't make the deadline. If you do not fill out your FAFSA in January, the money award you get to pay for classes and books will be significantly less and you might have to look at alternate sources of funding. It took me awhile to learn the ropes coming from a background of being self-supporting since I was 15. Being homeless, in foster care, or having previous experience with either can also serve you well by helping you qualify for certain scholarships.

Everybody else is just as nervous as you are on your first day of school. Remember that usually after the first few weeks you settle in and the nervousness starts to ease. Some of the best things you can do to deal with this nervousness of meeting new people is to sit in different places in the classroom, try to smile and talk to different people, know that nobody knows that you are a foster kid or a homeless kid, form a study group with other people in your class, and get involved with a club, event, or group on campus.

Remember that your first two years of college are about exploring who you are and what you want to do. You don't have to declare your major immediately, but it is a good idea to meet with a college advisor and talk about what you want to do. If you don't know what you want to do advisors will help you figure it out; advisors will help you plan classes that meet the requirements of whatever school you hope to go to afterwards or whatever program you wish to get certified in. On most campuses, there are also counselors to help you deal with stress and anxiety around working with groups or/and speaking in front of the class, and any other issues that you are concerned with. Access these resources!

There is a section on the FAFSA that asks for difficult things about mom and dad; like how much money does mom and dad make in a year, their birthdates, social security numbers, and all this information that may not be accessible to somebody

who has been or is homeless or in foster care. There is a way around it though. If you are homeless or formerly homeless and have not had any financial support and will not receive any financial support from your parents, you can claim independent status, which means you do not need to report any of this information on your parents. You will need two letters from a caseworker, teacher, or someone similar who knows your situation well and can vouch for the fact that you have been on your own and have been fully self-supporting. If you are in foster-care, you automatically qualify as an independent and can also avoid filling out this section of the FAFSA by getting a letter from your worker.

### TIPS FOR FILLING OUT YOUR FAFSA

- 1.) Do not leave anything blank; write NA if it does not apply to you
- 2.) Use the 1040 federal tax return, not the W-2 form, for reporting income and taxes paid. You can obtain one of these at your local library.
- 3.) Before you sit down to fill out your FAFSA make sure you are prepared with the proper documents: driver's license/ID, social security card, income tax returns, current bank statements, and records of any other untaxed income like welfare or social security.
- 4.) It is free to fill out the FAFSA; you can pick one up at any college or fill it online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

- 5.) Ask for help if you need it.

### SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE TO FOSTER YOUTH AND HOMELESS YOUTH

(Go to these websites to read more about whether you qualify or not)

**Governor's scholarship**  
[www.waedfoundation.org/g/](http://www.waedfoundation.org/g/)

**Gates' Millennium scholarship fund**  
[www.gmsp.org/](http://www.gmsp.org/)

**Seattle Education Access**  
[www.seattleeducationaccess.org/](http://www.seattleeducationaccess.org/)

**National Foster Parent Association Scholarship**  
[www.nfpainc.org/scholrsp.html](http://www.nfpainc.org/scholrsp.html)

**OFA/ Casey Family Scholars**  
[www.orphan.org](http://www.orphan.org)

**Zenith Foundation (scholarships for youth ages 13-19 to attend sail training and maritime education programs)**  
1-206-855-9443

**Queer Foundation Essay Contest**  
[http://home.comcast.net/~threepennynovel/queerfoundation/essay\\_contest.html](http://home.comcast.net/~threepennynovel/queerfoundation/essay_contest.html)

## January Calendar of Events

COURTNEY KONIETZKO

**The Dream Deferred** - Martin Luther King the III, the second oldest child of Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King speak. January 23<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 7-9pm at the Lynnwood Convention Center, 3919 196<sup>th</sup> St. Admission is \$10. Seniors \$5. register via <http://www.edcc.edu/boxoffice>, For more info contact Michele Graves at (425) 640-1313.

**Trans Night** - a support/discussion/youth group for Trans and questioning youth who are ages 14-22 that takes place at Lambert House which is located at 1818 15<sup>th</sup> Ave. in Seattle. Lambert house is a nationally recognized activities and resource center for GLBTQ youth. For more info call (206) 322-2515 x16.

**Free Author Reading** - Author Christopher Paul Curtis gives a

presentation from his book, Bud, Not Buddy (the story of a 10-year-old orphan who runs away from an abusive foster home in order to find his father) on Friday January 13<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the downtown library. For more info go to [www.spl.org](http://www.spl.org)

**Get Your Hair Colored or Cut for Free!**  
- Seven Hair Salon needs models for cuts and color every week M-F. Salon located in Bellevue. For more info call (206) 903-1299.

**Free Web Design Class** - Tuesday January 10 6-9 p.m. at the Lake Forest Park Towne Centre. Space is limited so call to reserve your spot. (206) 533-6700.

**Show off your Photography Talents!**  
- CLSL Productions is hosting a photo exhibition for anyone who wants to

take part. There will be chances for outstanding photos to win prizes. For more info go to [www.myspace.com/clslproductions](http://www.myspace.com/clslproductions)

**Screening of The High Cost of Low Price** - movie about Wal-Mart's practices. Thursday January 19<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm reception, 7pm screening at Planned Parenthood of Washington located on Madison at 20<sup>th</sup> Ave. For more info call (206) 632-8547.

**Fremont Freedom Flicks** - every Sunday at 7:30 p.m. (doors open at 7) at Visionary Studios located at 4128 Fremont Ave N. Admission by donation, suggested donation \$5. but no one turned away due to the inability to pay. For more info go to <http://www.weaponsofmasdistractonproject.org>

### HB 2002 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sponsibilities of other tax payers. Invest in your own children and you will be taken care of in the future, because these children will grow up and run this nation one day, and they will lead it with the knowledge that we bestow on them. If we think about the future costs of not helping these youth, we'll need to incorporate the costs for the increase of cops needed for patrolling the streets, the cost of the tax payers paying for hospital bills due to no health insurance or education for sustainable jobs and so many other unpredictable expenses. Tax payers will lose money, businesses will lose money, cities and counties will lose money and we'll need more teen feeds, drop-ins, shelters and staff to run these services. Ask yourself how much money that costs, then ask yourself how much the happiness and safety of a foster care child means to you, and I know that you will agree that we need HB 2002 to protect these children and young adults.

Due to the negligence of this State, in regards to it's foster care young people and children, the counties and cities "jobs" are and have been to pick up "aged out" and runaway foster care youth from off the streets. Preventative measures like the HB 2002 are a sure-fire solution that works towards ending homelessness. Trust me, I know the kids on the streets, or at least I knew of them and their struggles before they died. I am speaking on behalf of the youth in the foster care system when I say that we need HB 2002 so that young people can lead healthy, happy and productive lives.

- (1,2) <http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org/pdf/jul05.pdf>  
(3,4) <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/humanservices/fys/HomelessYouth/HomelessYDemographicData.htm>  
(5,6) <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/humanservices/fys/HomelessYouth/HomelessYMyths.htm#Underlying>

## Walk-a-Mile a Success

JAMICA HENDERSON

On December 14<sup>th</sup> this year's Walk-a-Mile program had it's closing ceremony at the University of Washington. In this great program, a legislator gets matched up with a young person who is, or has been in, foster care. The idea of the program is for them to "walk a mile" in each other's shoes. This gives them a chance to meet one on one. While the legislator is doing this activity, they have to live off the same income as the student has to live off of. The legislator must also spend one day with their student to see how they live their daily life and the student must do the same with the legislator.

At the closing ceremony, the legislators and participants were asked to explain the time they had together and what they liked about the program. All the pairs

that spoke had great stories to tell. The legislators we excited to see how hard the young people worked throughout their life and still were accomplishing goals in their lives. The former foster youth who participated were excited the legislators took the time to do the program. They also spoke about seeing how hard it was to be a legislator. Both parties were happy to be involved in the program for the month and most still want to keep in touch with one another.

In all, this was a great program. If you don't know what it's like to be a foster kid or legislator then you should join Walk-a-Mile next year. If you're interested and would like more information, you can call Sierra Rowe at 206 683-6979 or visit their website at [www.walkamile.org](http://www.walkamile.org)



Carneisha Grace and Rep. Eric Pettigrew (37<sup>th</sup> Dist.) at Walk-a-Mile closing ceremony.



# Creative Corner

## Exorcism

COURTNEY KONIETZKO

Feeling raw and feeling sick  
 Pores oozing out oil, the demons threaten to get in  
 Purple clouds and black shadows with grey tinges  
 Dance and fade at the edges of my eyes and expel from my body  
 Body shakes and stomach churns  
 No solution makes me burn  
 There is an answer and things I need to do  
 But I am broken and hurting and making excuses  
 Full of apathy, full of pain  
 Covering myself in makeup  
 Buying clothing and CDs and goods in vain  
 Stuffing myself with food to cover the gaping hole  
 Caving in, craving in  
 That's the way it goes when you don't listen to yourself  
 Plane Jane wears baggy pants and over-sized shirts  
 Hiding everything that hurts  
 The package that conceals the feelings  
 I feel you and I feel them  
 Walking down the street  
 I absorb the conversation and the emotion behind people's eyes  
 I stare blank out the windows at nothing  
 Avoiding the glances and loud unspoken thoughts of men  
 I take care of the basics and forget about the rest  
 Always talking about things that take up to years to do  
 That's the end of that  
 This is the beginning of this  
 A personal Hell created by two  
 Drug mentality ever more  
 What has changed?  
 At one time he took away the hurt  
 He took away the pain  
 He was the savior as I was too  
 Now he sits there running on empty  
 I'm afraid to label him  
 Afraid to run away from him  
 Afraid to save myself from him  
 But once I do that I will be free.

December 21, 2005

# No Spanish in Schools?

JACOB HARRISON



What is the world coming to? In my articles, you're bound to find issues dealing with racism, homelessness and various problems. In this particular one, I type with fury and anger. Don't be scared. This is a different kind of anger. This is "WHY CANT WE ALL JUST BE TREATED LIKE PEOPLE WHICH WE ARE?" anger. This anger that I am feeling is directed at a Kansas City alternative school. It's come to my attention that a 16 year-old Hispanic student was suspended for speaking his native language in school.

When I first read about this, I couldn't believe it! As I further investigated the story, I started to see more and more harsh reality, and it hurts. Zach Rubio was walking down the hall during break. His friend came up to him and asked him for a dollar in Spanish. He responded in Spanish and this is what set off the entire incident with teachers. They told them not to do it again. Then in his class after lunch, Zach was speaking it again. This time he got sent to the principal, Jennifer Watts, who suspended him for two days. She said that they had to ask him too many times not to speak Spanish at school. She cited a school "English only" policy put in place to assist ESL students in their learning of this countries supposed "national" language. His family was furious. Wouldn't you be? This kid, his family and lets not forget his culture had just been, in my eyes, assaulted.

I go to Ingraham High school, one of the most, if not the most, diverse school in the Seattle school district. When I walk

down the hall, I hear English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, French, Japanese, Ethiopian and many other languages in different conversations. I feel so happy because we can all be together in one school and nothing can separate us. That's how it's supposed to be. School is where youth my age spend a lot of time. I've never heard of anything this ridiculous in my life. I know for a fact that if something this stunning went down at my school or anywhere in Seattle for that matter, somebody would have to answer for it. What do those teachers think? They're just going to teach us Spanish and expect that we're not going to put those new acquired skills to use? We say and do what we know and a lot of what we know comes from our education.

Today in the U.S, Spanish and other languages are taught in almost if not, every public school. In fact, here in Seattle and surely a lot of other districts, at least two years of a foreign language is required to graduate! The sad part about this whole thing is, Zack didn't need to take Spanish class because it's in his blood! How dare those people insult his blood?! How dare every adult in that community for this matter!!! How dare the teachers, parents and superintendent for acting like everything was fine and filling all of the students minds with their ridiculous and oppressive reasons that they have for Spanish speaking not to be allowed in school?! This is far from over and this may also be the just the beginning of a long fight!

I'm very interested in hearing your opinions about this. Your ideas, suggestions, input and feelings are important to me!! In order for me to become a stronger writer, I need to hear the voices of the people. Please don't hesitate to e-mail me at (trackstarharrison@yahoo.com) This article must end here for the anger may burn a hole in this paper!!!

## Let's Stop Punishing Foster Youth for Earning Their High School Diploma or GED

Currently: Washington foster youth who turn age 18 and have their H.S. diploma or GED become ineligible to remain in care-they loose their housing, health and emotional support from caregivers.

HB 2002: Youth who earn a high school diploma or GED and attend college/voc-tec can remain in foster care!

**DO YOUR PART TO CHANGE THE WORLD! - To contact your state representative about the Foster Youth Achievement Act, call 1-800-562-6000.**

ASK-Y meeting January 9th, 3:30-5 @ 2100 Building  
 Advocacy Day Training February 2nd 2-5:30 @ 2100 Building

Youth Advocacy Day in Olympia, Wa February 3rd 9:30 am- 3 pm  
 For more details, please contact Lauren Frederick @ 206-323-5437.

# The Life and Death of Stanley "Tookie" Williams

LARISHICA ASHER



Stan "Tookie" Williams was put to death December 13, 2005 at 12:36 am., after being on San Quentin's death row for 16 years for murdering a family and an individual two weeks apart from each other. His death came after much debate and pleads from his supporters to save his life after he made a big transformation in prison that included writing books to help keep kids away from gangs. His fight ended after a last request for clemency from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger was denied.

In 1971, Stan and a friend of his founded the Los Angeles Crips gang. In 1981 he was convicted of murdering four people during two robberies and sentenced to death row at San Quentin State Prison. Stan deeply regreted his gang involvement

and had always maintained his innocence of these crimes. Before Tookie died, there were many people who had a lot to say about not killing him. People like rap artist such as Snoop Dogg (a Long Beach California Crip) and music artist Pharell (who is not affiliated with gangs but had some really thoughtful things to say about Tookie before he was set to death). Snoop Dogg was against Tookie's death because he is a crip and he saw how Tookie was turning his life around. Pharell was against it because of the simple fact he was a black man that turned his life around during his time in prison. Snoop Dogg also made a video called "Real Soon" which was dedicated to Tookie. He and the group D.P.G.C. came together to try and get the word out about Tookie. In the video, Snoop has a shirt that says save Tookie.org. (which was an organization he started to try and get support to save his life)

Many other celebrities were against Tookie's death such as Danny Glover, Nick Hart, Marylon Boyd, Darrel Myers, Barbara Becnel, Martin Strayer, Nick Chin, and

Phil Gasper who nominated Tookie four times for the Nobel Peace Prize. Phil Gasper says "Tookie should have clemency because he is a remarkable character who turned his life around without help from the authorities. He should also have clemency because no one should die if they can reduce gang violence."

As Tookie was growing up, he was a very troubled child. He had so much anger inside him that he didn't know what to do with, so he and some other friends of his started the Crips street gang. The Crips ended up being one of the largest gangs in the history of this country and made their way to almost every state. Tookie was tried and convicted of four cold blooded murders that he says he didn't commit. Stanley has always claimed that he was innocent, but he was still sentenced to death row. Many people felt that Tookie had an unfair trial.

In the last 16 years of Tookie's life in prison on death row, he wrote eight children books about staying out of gangs and one book about his life in prison. While

writing his books he was nominated four times for the Nobel Peace Prize and a movie was made about his life starring Jamie Foxx.

I feel that Tookie should have gotten clemency because he had an unfair trial and if he would have went back to court around 2000, I believe he would have only gotten 25 to life and would have gotten out on parole. In his 1981 trial the prosecutor removed three African Americans from the jury. I also feel that it was not fair for him to die and not have a fair chance to fight for his life and that his life wasn't spared because he was a black man in prison that succeeded in changing his life and became a successful book writer and children loved to read his books. I think Arnold Schwarzenegger (the governor of California) did not like the fact that he could have all that influence in prison and felt that he should die. Now that Tookie is dead, I hope that his soul rests in peace and the Crips and other fellow people around the world will miss you and we love you Stan Tookie Williams.