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JANUARY 25 - 31, 2006

DAY CARE SCARE

As the number of home-based child care providers plummet, families need affordable care.

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NO FÜHRER FUROR

A planned neo-Nazi rally draws one "National Socialist" and a bevy of counterdemonstrators.

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UP TENT

A bill seeks to impose higher standards of living for shelters, including Tent City.

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PROBLEM SOLVING

Community activists come together to discuss ways to unite for peace, not hate.

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Green Bay

Enviros, planners dream of eco-friendly remodel for Colman Dock

By ADAM-HYLA
Editor

It may be sittin' on the dock of the bay, but there's no time to waste. To replace its worn pilings, Washington State Ferries' Colman Dock is scheduled for a \$233-million remodel starting next year. And the dock's impending renovation is providing a group of environmentalists and urban planners a chance to do some dockside dreaming.

A salmon-friendly bay shore, replete with greenery and fed by clean freshwater — not the car-tainted, toxic-laced runoff pouring down from First Avenue. Shallow pools where people can get their feet wet. A viewing station to watch the Port's cranes load cargo. Heat-exchanger coils spiraling into the depths of Elliott Bay, helping warm or cool waterfront buildings. The world's first waterfront building that incorporates fish-friendly habitat right against its walls.

These are some of the big ideas brought forth in the monthly meetings sponsored by People for Puget Sound and the City of Seattle. It's an effort to make the Colman terminal "part of a new sustainable waterfront: Not a chi-chi place, a place that's not just where tourists go but an authentic, real, working waterfront," says Heather Trim of People for Puget Sound, who organizes the monthly discussions.

That's a point that might become contentious as the state Department of Transportation searches for greater commercial and retail success at the ferry terminal. A new waterfront hotel or shops might be in the works — which could substitute for fare increases on ferry passengers, but would continue chipping away at the traditional economic uses of the area, says Trim. And a larger loading dock for waiting cars would shelter more salmon-eating predators in the black-top shaded water.

"We can't go back to a pristine waterfront," says Trim. "That would

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A NEW STATE LAW IS INTENDED TO COMPENSATE TENANTS EVICTED FROM THEIR APARTMENTS BECAUSE THEIR LANDLORDS DIDN'T DO THE PROPER MAINTENANCE, BUT ZANE MORRIS AND HIS WIFE RENEE (LEFT) CAN'T GET LOCAL OFFICIALS TO ENFORCE IT. PHOTO BY CHRIS WILLIAMS.

Slumlord Survival

Family finds there's no claws in new law

By CYDNEY GILLIS
Staff Reporter

So much for holding bad landlords accountable: If Zane and Renee Morris can't get any help under the state's one-year-old anti-slumlord law, there's a good chance no one else can, either.

After six years of living in a duplex in the town of Spokane Valley, Zane, his wife Renee and their three children are being evicted Jan. 31. It's not what they did, but what they asked their landlord to do: fix an ant infestation so bad that, to wash, "We have to take out the bath mat and hose out the bathtub," Renee Morris says.

The ants are the end of a long trail that includes dry rot, moisture, serious mold and an electrical short in the \$625-a-month, four-bedroom unit, which is paid for by Section 8 federal housing assistance. At 32, Renee has had two strokes and Zane's work options are limited by a back injury.

The Morrisses believe the landlord owes them \$2,000 in moving assistance under a law dubbed the Slumlord Accountability Act, which the legislature passed one year ago to help low-income tenants like the Morrisses. Without the \$2,000, Renee Morris says, the couple

and their children, ages 15, 12 and 10, will end up homeless.

But just try getting the money. Despite contacting a myriad of city and state officials, "We can't get anyone to tell us how to enforce it," Morris says.

Whether the family is entitled to the money, says Siobhan Ring, director of the Tenants Union, a nonprofit tenant advocacy group that pushed for the anti-slumlord act, depends on the building code in the given jurisdiction and how the inspectors there interpret it.

On Dec. 29, after a month of asking the unit's new property manager, Moland Management, to fix the problems, the family filed a building code complaint and contacted the local Section 8 administrator, the Spokane Housing Authority.

A city inspector came out and issued the property manager a notice to fix the ant problem in five days. Moland responded by calling in an exterminator, who wrote a report stating no pest control could be done until the floor and walls were replaced.

The same day they filed the complaint, the Morrisses found an eviction notice posted on their door. Outside

See SLUMLORD, Continued on Page 12

From Agony to Organizing

Home-based providers are working together to achieve safe, affordable, high-quality child care

By NANCY GERBER
Guest Writer

I am one of 9,000 family child care providers in Washington State. Just two years ago, that number was 14,000. In Spokane, we have lost a third of our family providers in the last year alone.

For more than 30 years, I have been a family child care provider — caring for children in my own home while their parents work or attend school so they are better able to support them. Home-based child care is essential for families who cannot access child care centers because they work irregular hours, because there is no center-based care available in their area, or because their children need individual attention.

Seventy thousand children in Washington State stay with a family child care provider. One of these children is "Marty," a beautiful 7-year-old boy who has serious and complex medical needs.

When Marty was 3, his mother found herself the sole support for the family. I'll never forget how relieved she was to find someone who could offer the care and learning environment Marty needed while she worked to provide for him and his sister. She drove all the way across town and back twice a day for three years to drop Marty off and pick him up.

When Marty and his sister both began school, transportation became almost impossible with their full and half-day school schedules, and their mother had to find child care closer to where she lived and worked.

It took her almost a year to find care for her children, while making the same cross-town commute three or more times every day.

It's not easy to find a learning environment with the individual attention kids need to thrive, especially for children with special needs — and this is where the warm, home setting of

family child care makes an important difference in children's lives.

Still, it's getting harder and harder for working parents to find affordable, quality care for their children.

Providers are leaving the field in staggering numbers. I am one of 9,000 family child care providers in Washington State. Just two years ago, that number was 14,000. In Spokane, we have lost a third of our family providers in the last year alone.

Like other providers I know, I do this job because I love helping families and making a difference in children's lives. But for many providers, it's a painful choice between helping the families we serve and caring for our own families.

My yearly earnings average \$2.88 per hour.

Much of my income comes from Washington's subsidy program, which helps low- and moderate-income families afford child care. The rates at which our state reimburses child care providers are some of the lowest in the country. Family child care providers also have few opportunities for training and no paid sick days or other things that make it possible to stay in a job.

I am a cancer survivor, but because of a change in IRS rules, I lost access to Washington's Basic Health plan. Without health insurance, I don't know if I will be able to afford the follow-up visits my doctor recommended, and will probably have to miss them.

For every family child care provider who can't afford to stay in the profession, there are seven or eight children in Washington who lose their caregiver — and one less option for working families looking for child care.

Providers are tired of having to turn families away. After working for years to stabilize our jobs through child care associations and appealing individually to our elected representatives, we've joined together to strengthen our profession and build a stronger voice to improve child care by forming a union.

Although child care services are arranged with individual families, subsidy rates and other policies that affect providers' working conditions are determined by the state. Providers need a strong voice to help the state ensure that safe, affordable, quality child care is accessible to working families in Washington.

Now we're counting on our legislators to give us the freedom to bargain collectively with the state so we can raise standards, protect early care and learning for children, and help stabilize an industry that is crucial for families and vital to our state's economy. The Access to Quality Family Child Care Act would give family providers a stronger voice to improve child care so that working families have access to the quality care they need. And that would benefit everyone in the state — not just child care providers.

It's up to all of us in Washington to make sure our representatives know how important quality child care is to our families. ■

[Take Action]

If you're concerned about access to quality child care, call 1(800)562-6000 to leave a message for your legislator in support of H.B. 2353 and S.B. 6165. For more info, visit seiu925.org.

Nancy Gerber is a member of the Governor's Early Learning Council, a family child care provider, and a member of SEIU Local 925.



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

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Change Agent

The Turtle Theatre Collective won't win any Tony Awards, but Susan Alotrico, the founder of the collective, hopes that members of the theater will accrue their own personal prizes.

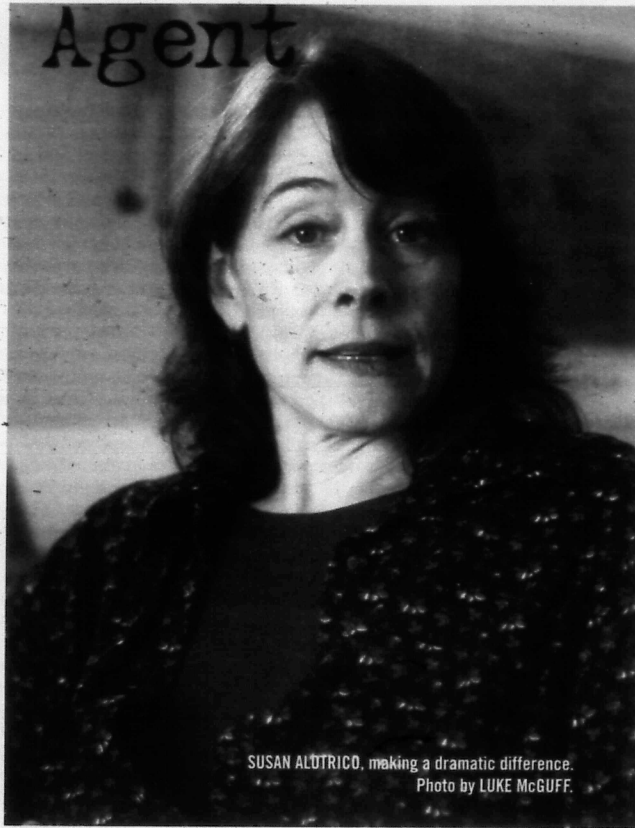
The Turtle players are all homeless teens in the U District, and the collective's a workshop where students learn communication skills in a storytelling format. They will perform Mar. 12 at the UW District Historical Theater in an anything-goes format.

"The performance could be improv. It could be variety. We don't want to enforce our ideas. The workshops are a developing process," says Alotrico, who has worked in theater, teaching, and social services.

The collective received a \$4,000 matching neighborhood grant, and Alotrico's helped by a group of approximately 10 actors, educators, and drama therapists: volunteers who are helping her attain a one-to-one ratio of instructors to students. Rehearsals are currently held at the U District YMCA on Sunday nights.

Alotrico acknowledges that "street kids" may have a hard time meeting their commitments, but she says that getting them to perform makes them "heroes in their own lives."

—R.V. Murphy



SUSAN ALOTRICO, making a dramatic difference.
Photo by LUKE MCGUFF.

Nazi No-Show

"National Socialists" shirk Space Needle for Olympia rally

By R.V. MURPHY
Contributing Writer

"I'm in favor of demonstrations against them. There's a difference between laws and pressure."

—Chris Smith, Freedom Socialist Party

The National Socialist Movement march Sunday morning at the Seattle Center was missing just one thing: the National Socialists themselves. A group calling itself the Oregon National Socialist Movement, a neo-Nazi organization, had announced on a website that it was planning a rally in Seattle on Jan. 22.

The NSM didn't announce a time or place for the rally on the website, but groups like the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) and the International Socialist Organization (ISO) called the number on the site to get more information. Trying to sound like potential recruits, callers learned about a noon rally scheduled at the foot of the Space Needle.

However at 12:30 the only marchers at the site belonged to left groups such as FSP, ISO, Radical Women, CURE (Coalition Undoing Racism Everywhere), ANSWER (Act Now To End War and End Racism), one gentleman selling a Revolutionary Communist Newspaper, some Teamsters, and about a dozen anarchists. And one man in his 20s who called himself an "independent skinhead."

The NSM is one of two major Nazi parties in the United States (along with the American Nazi Party). Group members admire Adolf Hitler; the term Socialism in the group's name is derived from an English translation of the German Nazi and not to be confused with the left-wing economic theory of the same name.

The skinhead, who wouldn't give his name but said he was from Los Angeles, was dressed in black and had Nazi symbols tattooed on his knuckles. The anti-Nazi protesters, particularly the younger ones, questioned him, but his answers were brief,

inarticulate, sometimes contradictory, and peppered with the *f*- and *n*-words. He said the protesters themselves were racist against the Nazis.

Lori McCliness one of the protesters who tried to talk to him, said the skinhead reminded her of the character in the movie *American History X* who was overly influenced by an older brother. "He said he didn't read and gets all of his ideas from the street," she said.

The Nazis who never arrived in Seattle may have been the nine men who went to Olympia later that afternoon complete with swastikas, brown shirts and stormtrooper regalia. They were greeted by a crowd of about 100 protesters that quickly grew, according to an eyewitness who posted Monday on portland.indymedia.org. The Nazis tried to march from *The Olympian* newspaper to the state house, but garbage cans were placed in their path. Eventually police had to escort them away.

When asked why protesters didn't just allow Nazis to speak, Stephen Leigh of the ISO replies, "when (Nazis) exercise their free speech the short-term effect of their rallies is that attacks go up. They want to test the waters in the big cities, but when they tried to rally in Toledo and Boston, activists counter-demonstrated and they had to leave under police protection."

"I'm not in favor of laws against Nazi's speaking," FSP organizer Chris Smith says, predicting that they would also be used against the left. "I'm in favor of demonstrations against them. There's a difference between laws and pressure."

Smith said the Space Needle turnout was "a victory."

"We kept the Nazis out of Seattle and we're forcing them to organize underground. They can't put their rallies on their web site." ■

[Read on]

Turn to page 6 for a roundtable interview on Seattle's response to the neo-Nazis' organizing efforts.

Just Heard...

Rainier: only near

The Seattle Housing Authority may be having a little trouble with its budget at Rainier Vista.

As the agency adds up what it needs to break ground on Phase 2 at Rainier Vista, a low-income garden community that's being rebuilt as mixed-income housing in Rainier-Valley, SHA may have realized it's short, says Carolee Colter, president of the Friends of Rainier Vista.

The Rainier Valley neighborhood group took part in a 2002 settlement in which SHA agreed to build 310 public low-income units on the site. In Phase 1 of the project, SHA built 120, but Phase 2 is on a smaller plot, Colter says, and the agency was recently shopping for land in the area.

It's a sign, she says, that SHA may be planning to build the remaining 180 public units somewhere else and leave the Phase 2 site for higher-end rentals and condos that will bring it more money. That would cover what Colter says is expected to be a \$10 million to \$12 million shortfall on the project.

"People could ask, 'Does it matter where it's built?' And I would say it does. Here we are using federal and state tax money to fund gentrification" — a city-driven effort, Colter says, that drives out the poor.

—Cydney Gillis

Pick: Nick

The Seattle City Council ended a month-long deadlock last week with a unanimously acceptable compromise: three-term councilmember Nick Licata will be the council's new president.

Licata has a reputation for respectful collegiality — even when he's on the losing side of 8-1 votes. Now, he and his staff are responsible for running meetings, directing legislation to the appropriate committee, and finding common ground among the nine-member council. Quite a different position for the councilmember once described as a maverick.

—Adam Hyla

Breathing Easy

One out of six ain't so bad, especially when you're the Vashon Island School District, which is one of six schools chosen as a recipient of the EPA Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools 2006 Excellence Award.

Bestowed upon the school for their pledge to make gains in waste reduction and recycling, water conservation, energy conservation, and environmental education, the EPA program cites schools that seek to curb indoor pollutants, which cause various health risks.

School superintendent Dr. Mimi Walker flew to D.C. to receive the award on Jan. 18. There, Walker credited the Board of Directors with ensuring local schools were "environmentally wise."

—Rosette Royale

Raising the Bar

House bill would up standards for Tent City

By LAURA PEACH
Contributing Writer

A House bill recently proposed for legislative review is seeking to create minimum housing standards for all homeless shelters that are equal to the state requirements for housing migrant agricultural workers. If the state legislature approves the bill, it may endanger the existence of Tent Cities throughout King County.

Tent City is a housing establishment which provides basic temporary shelter — such as a place to sleep and a portable toilet — for about 100 individuals at each site for up to three months at a time.

The bill, sponsored by Representatives Toby Nixon (R - Woodinville) and Al O'Brien (D - Bothell), would require all transitional housing establishments to include amenities like insulation

and heat and to create dormitory-style housing for unrelated individuals and communal housing for families.

Tent City 4 was recently hosted in Kirkland, where Representative Nixon lives. As he came in contact with Tent City, he was "appalled by the low standards of infrastructure," according to his legislative assistant. Nixon maintains that the creation of these standards would be "entirely beneficial for those individuals" (whom the legislation terms as "our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and fellow citizens who find themselves temporarily homeless").

Nixon "thought that it would be better for [people in transitional situations] to have an expectation of plumbing, for example."

No funding is provided to help the transitional housing establishments meet the new codes. The bill would technically place the demands for the housing requirements on the property owner — meaning the faith-based institutions such as churches, schools, and synagogues that allow Tent City to occupy their space for a given period of time.

Ted Hunter, the attorney for SHARE/WHEEL, which organizes Tent City, thinks that the bill is inappropriate because it applies the same standard to two different situations.

"The problem of homelessness and migrant agricultural workers are different. Why

would we treat them the same? Migrant agricultural workers are coming back year after year, whereas the homeless are in emergency situations and need immediate shelter."

"It puts statewide restrictions on land use, which should be up to cities and counties. Cities and counties are doing a fine job of regulating land use."

The institutions that host each Tent City are required to obtain a land-use permit from their city, and both Tent City and the institution must adhere to the conditions that the permit sets.

Tent Cities have strict regulations about maintaining a high standard of cleanliness. Residents are forbidden to litter, and patrols are established to ensure that the surrounding streets and sidewalks are clean. Public Health officials monitor each site, and Tent City complies with their standards and recommendations.

The legislation incorporates some vague terminology that could be open to litigation, such as the phrase that transitional housing should be "substantially equivalent" to that of migrant agricultural workers.

It also contains an emergency clause, which would allow it to take immediate effect if it passes. "There is an emergency need for suitable housing," Hunter says, "but all this bill is going to do is put more people on the street." ■

"There is an emergency need for suitable housing, but all this bill is going to do is put more people on the street."

— Ted Hunter,
attorney for
SHARE/WHEEL

Upping the ante: Tent City 4 resident Bill Spencer plays cards with another resident. Photo by Bruce Savadov.



Short Takes

Power Rangers

New fencing, fewer trees, and park rangers were the main target of public comments at a Jan. 18 public forum at a city forum on downtown's parks.

About 20 people took part in the forum to voice concerns about recommendations from Mayor Nickels' Downtown Parks and Public Spaces Taskforce. Members of the task force and a sub-committee gave a presentation outlining their plan, then took comments from those in attendance.

One person voicing a concern about the rangers, Dave Giles, wanted to know how they would interact with people in the park, especially the visibly homeless. Members of the task force sought to reassure those who are worried the rangers will harass the homeless that that is not the committee's intention.

Ken Bounds, superintendent of Seattle parks, said that the presence of the rangers is meant to provide a presence in the park to discourage crime and increase safety. "Safety is about the law, not about what you look like," Bounds said.

Board member Catherine Stanford said that "the media has made this an issue of the homeless, but it's not, it's about behavior."

Giles doesn't think that the task force members have any ill will toward the homeless, but his concern — shared by others in attendance — is that the rangers may not always differentiate between those who are causing trouble and those who are not.

— Justin Ellis

Speed Dating

The Committee to End Homelessness in King County recently launched a "dating service," but not the kind one might imagine.

CEHKC, the Seattle/King County Coalition for the Homeless, and the non-profit Housing Development Consortium are working to solicit housing providers to apply for new state funding before a fast-approaching Feb. 15 deadline. The Washington State Housing Trust Fund (HTF) wants to allocate up to \$8 million among housing providers who agree to make their units more affordable to the state's poorest individuals.

HTF gives subsidies to housing for people earning below 50 percent of the area median income (AMI), about \$31,000 for a family of two. "To house the homeless, you must be able to accommodate people making below 30 percent AMI," says CEHKC project director Bill Block, "and many housing providers don't have enough funding to do this. HTF is now proposing to give these providers more money so that they can lower the rent on existing units," thereby making these units affordable to people with incomes in the lower brackets.

Looking to hook up the housing agencies with the counseling or treatment their new tenants may need, the dating service is part of the plan.

"A number of people coming out of homelessness still need services. We're trying to pair housing providers with service providers, such as case managers, chemical dependency counselors,

and mental health counselors," Block explains. "We hope that housing providers might be willing to serve people exiting homelessness if someone will provide services for their tenants."

— Emma Dumain

Gesundheit!

There's nothing like a loud sneeze to derail what someone is saying.

The sneeze that *Seattle Times*' editorial writer Joni Balter let go of Monday while U.S. Rep. Dave Reichert was talking was so loud, in fact, it's hard to believe she wasn't making a point.

Balter was the MC at a luncheon with Reichert, the Auburn Republican who represents the Eastside, and one of his Democratic counterparts, Rep. Rick Larsen, of Everett. She posed questions to the two on a variety of topics. On Iraq, she asked if the two agree with Rep. John Murtha's call to bring the troops home immediately.

No difference between the Democrat and the Republican on that one: Both said setting a timeline for withdrawal is not appropriate. "We were attacked. We are at war," Reichert stressed. Larsen took exception.

"The attack on Sept. 11, 2001, had nothing to do with Iraq," Larsen said. "You can't tie Iraq to the folks responsible for attacking the U.S."

"I think you can make a connection between Iraq and al-Qaida," Reichert responded: "Yes, the intelligence was faulty, but there's been much work done since that time —"

"ACHOO!" Balter bellowed into her mic. The audience at the Washington Athletic Club burst into laughter.

Balter said it was accidental, and Reichert finished his thought: New intelligence, he said, does show a connection. Of course, since the invasion, Larsen joked, the once top-down al-Qaida has become more like a franchise name for terrorist groups.

— Cydney Gillis

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In a Family Way

Fearing the feds, state legislators may shore up unpaid leave law

"It's an imperfect system, [but] this is an issue that transcends statistics; it is an issue about human dignity and compassion."

— Dr. Jay Fathi, family physician at Swedish Medical Center

By EMMA DUMAIN
Contributing Writer

"I want someone to tell me what's more important than caring for one's family," says Dr. Jay Fathi, a family physician at Swedish Medical Center. "It's the most important thing in the world — simple as that."

Fathi speaks from experience: he took time off from work to help his wife care for their newborn son.

"It was crucial that I be there," he says. "My wife had an unexpected C-section, our baby was colic, and breastfeeding was a huge emotional commitment. She needed someone there supporting her."

He and his wife were both able to leave work for three months by saving money and forgoing vacation days. But what really made time off possible was the Family and Medical Leave Act.

The federal FMLA protects workers from losing their jobs and health insurance for up to 12 weeks in the event of a family illness, personal ailment, or the arrival of a new baby. The 12 weeks may be taken at once or intermittently, allowing flexibility for doctors' visits, for example. While FMLA does not pay absent employees, their jobs are kept open for the 12-week duration.

To strengthen workers' benefits, activists are pushing to establish an FMLA bill specifically for Washington. Everything about the state bill would be the same, except for two important revisions. One would change the minimum number of employees to 25, whereas now only businesses of 50 or more get FMLA coverage; the other would give domestic partners the same status as spouses. Under consideration this month in the State Senate and House labor committees, the bill would cover an additional 330,000 workers.

Steve Olson, the director of the 40-employee Olympia Childcare Center, particularly wants to see the 25-employee minimum implemented. Even without being officially eligible, Olson has found ways to help staff in difficult situations — like the teacher who had to take time off when her brother suffered a coma from a severe car accident.

"If her absence was to continue for an unknown period of time, we would've had to say, 'We can't hold your position open any longer,'" Olson says. "Fortunately, she thinks she can return next month. If we can make this work without being officially eligible, I don't see why other businesses can't do the same."

Proponents of FMLA are also responding to the U.S. Chamber of Congress' threats to impose restrictions on essential rights granted to workers under current law. Such restrictions would redefine a "serious health condition" from three days of incapacity and treatment to 10 days, give employers "checklists" to verify that a worker's number of absences is "typical," and eliminate the option of intermittent leave for less than half a day.

"This has been a priority of the Chamber of Commerce for quite some time," says Marilyn Watkins, the policy director at the Economic Opportunities Institute. "They see the possibility of a friendly administration in the White House right now, so they are taking advantage of that."

"These restrictions could happen anytime," echoes EOI communications director Laura Paskin, "so we want FMLA as a state law not only to help more workers, but also to solidify it in Washington."

Fathi has consistently seen the significance of FMLA in his job as a physician for low-income individuals.

"A patient recently injured his finger on the job," Fathi says. "It became so infected he almost lost it. He didn't ask for time off to get treatment because he was afraid he'd lose his job. I'm sure he wasn't aware that FMLA could have helped him."

"At our clinic, people express this fear all the time. They feel they have to choose between their job and their health."

While FMLA guarantees job protection and health insurance, unpaid leave is not always possible. According to the Department of Labor, 78 percent of those eligible for leave under FMLA said they declined it because they needed the money.

"Ideally, we'd like everyone to have paid leave," Watkins says. "There are many things about FMLA we'd like to see different, and we're working towards that."

"It's an imperfect system," Fathi concedes, "[but] this is an issue that transcends statistics; it is an issue about human dignity and compassion." ■

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Part of the Solution

A forum of activists discusses how Seattle can confront hatred, in all its many guises

"I think that our country has a history of having an elite class system survive by the mechanism of dividing people from each other. When you get people deprived of things that everyone should have, they're going to want to take it out on somebody."

— Jerry Saltzman, Caucasians United for Reparations and Emancipation

Roundtable moderated by ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Reporter

Last Sunday, a neo-Nazi rally was scheduled to take place in downtown Seattle. Orchestrated by a group known as the National Socialist Movement, neo-Nazis intent on participating in a "pro-white" demonstration were called to convene under the Space Needle. Only one individual — a young man, blond, clad in black trench coat, sweater, pants, and black boots accented with red laces — showed up to demonstrate. He was greeted by a phalanx of young anarchists, many dressed in black themselves, who were there to express disgust at his allegiance to fascism. For more than an hour, two groups, holding opposing viewpoints, acted out a minor drama under our city's most visible landmark.

But what about the existence, visible or otherwise, of neo-Nazis in Seattle? Is this something citizens should be concerned with, or was the rally merely a minor blip on the city's liberal radar screen? *Real Change* convened a number of local activists to pose these questions and more.

Gathered in our office were Michael Maidan, a high school student at Puget Sound Community School and member of the International Socialist Organization; Tim Harris, *Real Change* executive director; Jerry Saltzman, a psychologist and professor at Antioch University currently with Caucasians United for Reparations and Emancipation; K.L. Shannon, *Real Change* Advisory Board member and community organizer working on public safety and police accountability through the King County Bar Association's Racial Disparity Project; Ilana Kennedy, education director at Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center; and Steve Adler, survivor of the Hitler regime and a member of the Resource Center's speakers bureau.

As an entry point into the discussion, a recording of the National Socialist Movement's outgoing phone message was played. Claiming that the group speaks out on such issues as guarding "against the full-scale Mexican invasion that is happening

right now this second across our entire southern border," it reminds callers at its end that, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem."

Real Change: Is there a problem with the fact that a neo-Nazi rally was planned downtown?

Michael Maidan: I think it's a huge issue. To think this group, with its absurd concepts, won't become a presence is quite foolish. And as long as they're not opposed, they'll become greater, and then it's Nazi Germany all over again.

Tim Harris: Who here knows what the scale of the problem is now? My sense is that instead of this being a growing movement, it is a declining movement and that the neo-fascists are not doing particularly well these days.

Jerry Saltzman: The [Southern] Poverty Law Center follows them and puts out a quarterly magazine about all their activities. It's not so small.

Ilana Kennedy: It's actually on the rise. What they're finding is it's a little more underground and a little more subdued than it has been in the past. It's definitely there, it's just under the surface.

K.L. Shannon: One way that they're really getting to young people is through music. I recently saw something on "PrimeTime"—

Kennedy: I saw that too.

Shannon: —and it was two little girls—two little white girls—about 10- or 11-years old. And they were up-and-coming racist singers. It was scary. So we should be very concerned. And as far as the neo-Nazis' right to assemble, I don't support them having freedom of speech. I just have to put that out there.

Steve Adler: I'm a survivor of the Nazi regime, and I do everything I can to make clear to the students that I talk to what the issues are today. So I agree with you as far as that goes. What I'm saying is, any group has the right to assemble and speak and if we disagree with them — and I'm sure we do — we have the right to be there and have a counterprotest.

Shannon: Well, we can agree to disagree.

Saltzman: I want to go back to the original question: "Is this a problem?" I like to look at things in systemic ways, and so you have to ask yourself: Why do they exist? Why is it our society has 11-year-olds becoming up-and-coming racist singers? How have we failed? I think that's really the issue. And the second problem is, for me: Why are we not together in terms of preventing this stuff, rather than reacting to it?

RC: So those are great questions. Let's take the first one: How have we failed?

Shannon: When I was watching that show, it was interesting, because it's generational. They were twins. Their mother was brought up that way. [The grandfather] had a swastika sticker on his truck and on his belt buckle.

Kennedy: And he branded his cattle with swastikas. It's outrageous.

Shannon: It was scary just to know that this mentality is going on in this country.

Saltzman: I think that our country has a history of having an elite class system survive by the mechanism of dividing people from each other. When you get people deprived of things that everyone should have, they're going to want to take it out on somebody. And if you have it set up that there are certain groups to be targeted, they're going to go there, rather than the people who are oppressing them. That, I think, is the problem.

RC: Is there a different manner in which one can deal with an individual who may have racist ideas, versus an institution that may perpetuate racist ideas?

Saltzman: One of the questions I spend a lot of time thinking about is: "How do you reach people through their conditioning, through their defenses?" I actually believe inside the most rabid racist is a human being who got badly hurt. But how do you reach them through that hurt? The people who run the society are not going to do it.

"I think it's important that my white allies practice anti-racism, that they're doing anti-racism work, that they're challenging their white friends on their issues."

—K.L. Shannon, community organizer



A GROUP OF COUNTERDEMONSTRATORS, LOOKING TO VOICE THEIR OPPOSITION AGAINST A PLANNED NEO-NAZI RALLY AT SEATTLE CENTER. ONLY ONE NEO-NAZI SHOWED UP. PHOTO BY LUKE MCGUFF.

Continued from Previous Page

If they could have, they would have done it years and years ago, centuries ago. So how do we rely on ourselves? What do we need to do to be able to talk to people?

Adler: I have a core belief that the future of our society rests in our children. What I do is try to use the Holocaust experience as a teaching device. I want the student to understand that when they see a fellow classmate being treated incorrectly, unjustly, that they need to feel empowered to take action.

Shannon: As a community organizer, I think it's important that my white allies practice anti-racism, that they're doing anti-racism work, that they're challenging their white friends on their issues.

Harris: The conversation about race in America is huge and defining, but at the same time, not really on people's minds. People aren't really recognizing how huge race is in driving the national agenda. And I'll say something really controversial: I think that the difference between the politics of the National Socialist Movement and the politics of the Republican Party is largely one of degree.

Shannon: I don't agree with you about racism not being on their minds, because it is. I think that's why they do the things that they do to people of color.

RC: Who is "they"?

Shannon: I'm talking about the government, the police who have been allowed to kill so many men of color in this country.

Harris: My point is that the good progressives of Seattle don't realize the extent to which racism is driving this agenda. I agree that the Republican Party does; it's their strategy.

Saltzman: Again, divide and conquer. And the question is: How do we push through that to individual people who happen to be racist?

RC: And that leads me to the rally. There was a young individual there who got a flier about this rally and decided to show up. When I was there, he was being peppered with questions by a lot of young anarchists. I imagine he must have been in his early 20s.

Maidan: Twenty-three.

RC: Did you have any dialogue with him?

Maidan: Yeah. On Saturday, I saw him on Broadway, and I handed him an anti-Nazi rally flier; he Heil, Hitler-ed away. Then I saw him show up, and he was sitting on a bench and a lot of the more liberal activists were really kind of questioning him. So, he was a neo-

Nazi, he had a lot of racism...[pause] But it was strange, because I kept thinking to myself, "I don't feel" like this whole group questioning him and talking to him is gonna be helpful." I felt like I could've done a lot more if I could've just taken him off with me and actually talked to him, because he was very vulnerable.

I never thought I'd think, "Oh, this poor Nazi," because my grandparents were in the Holocaust. But it's just incredible the kind of compassion I was feeling for someone who hated me because of my religion.

Kennedy: Everybody wants a place to belong, you know, to feel like they're needed and they're understood. For people who are feeling disenfranchised or misunderstood, [neo-Nazi rallies] are some great places for them, uniting around something you hate. I know there are a lot of fliers in the schools for neo-Nazi groups, and students are biting. They're looking for something alternative, something that's daring, that's different, reactive in our society. And I think our media eats it up. I don't know. I almost think it's best if the media doesn't show up at all and doesn't cover it.

RC: We're going to get to that media issue in just a moment.

Saltzman: We need to work together to act for what we are for, rather than against. [Maidan's] example of what you'd want to do with this young man is exactly a case in point. You want to be for his humanness. How do we have activists, people who care, try to bring them to a place where we can actually thrive together?

Kennedy: It would be wonderful if it could be that way, and I think there are individuals who are working toward such a thing. But we rallied around 9/11 with, "Let's go bomb the first place we can bomb." It was: "You're with us or against us." Over and over and over again it's "Let's all rally around this hatred." It's disgusting.

Adler: I think any group of individuals functions more effectively if they feel a common threat. That threat can be anything: a foreign government, a different group, whatever. The other way for a group to come together is to

share a common value. But maybe this is another ideal...

Shannon: Communities of color do that every day, every time one of us is murdered, or one of us is followed in a store, or when one of us is tazed while being eight months pregnant.

RC: Can a community of color come together with other communities,

so that we're all coming together at the same time? Or is that another ideal?

Adler: It's both: it is an ideal, and it is entirely possible. But it requires a lot of energy and a lot of commitment.

Shannon: I'm in there with you about the harmony and still believe in all that, but the problem is that you have this evil system continuing to push this racist platform.

Harris: And that's why this racist platform doesn't masquerade as a racist platform. We're talking about race all the time in our political system, but it's not recognized as a conversation about race: it's about "national security."

Saltzman: I have participated in a number of dialogues last year, a huge conference of Black people and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians, women and men, when people of "opposing groups" — and I put that in quotes because they're set up to be opposites — can actually listen to each other about what the circumstances of their lives are. When they listen to each other and can see each other's humanness, people change.

RC: Earlier on there was a comment made that perhaps the media shouldn't even be covering such events. Do you think, even if there's a potential for a neo-Nazi rally in Seattle, is it something worthy of attention by the media?

Saltzman: If it's handled right, it can be handled as a learning moment.

Maidan: It would be a wonderful possibility if the media could cover subjects in a non-racist fashion, but the fact is that the media is trying to make money and the best way to do that is to build off of people's insecurities and divide the people.

Kennedy: I feel kind of torn on whether or not the media should cover it.

There's a part of me that says, "Yes, we should know that this is happening and we should be aware and we should allow people to come out and counterdemonstrate." At the same time, sometimes the media gets a little frenzied and picks the two or three people who are the craziest. And then I wonder if they even deserve so much attention.

When I mentioned there was going to be this neo-Nazi rally, people were really surprised: "Really? Here in Seattle?" I thought, "Of course. Are you kidding?" I mean, I work at the Holocaust Center. Last Thursday, we came out of the door and there were swastikas all over our door. Not that that's an everyday occurrence, but it's certainly happening. To think that it doesn't exist just because we're in Seattle is a big mistake.

Maidan: I think that people are really afraid, and the only way to really come together and unify is not based off of these fears. We need to unify with love, and by love I mean kind of a divine connection. Perhaps this is foolish, perhaps this is idealistic, but I think it's possible.

Kennedy: We talked about ideals, and I don't think they're impossible to achieve. Just look at what we're doing here today. That's a great step to something that's better.

Harris: The reason I don't go to anti-Klan rallies is because, in my experience, they are nutzoid magnets. You see the same kind of hate coming from the left that you do from the right.

Saltzman: Somebody I respect very highly once said, "Fear is not the rational basis for organizing." A more rational basis for organizing is that we are in this together, we want to help each other, and we have ideals to guide our actions. We need to teach our kids about being "pro" rather than "anti."

Shannon: I organize because I hate injustice. I have a six-year-old nephew and a one-year-old nephew. I want a better world for them.

Adler: I want to get to a point that's easier for all of us to come to, and that is respect. You don't have to love me, and I don't have to love you, but I think if we can both agree that we should respect

one another, our opinions won't matter. We can go a long way down the road. And later on, let people come to love as well. ■

[Web Page]
For a more complete roundtable discussion, visit realchangenews.org.



THE LONE NEO-NAZI AT A PLANNED SEATTLE CENTER RALLY, HE DEFENDED HIS BELIEFS TO A CROWD OF COUNTERDEMONSTRATORS FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR. PHOTO BY JUSTIN VELA.

"I never thought I'd think, 'Oh, this poor Nazi,' because my grandparents were in the Holocaust. But it's just incredible the kind of compassion I was feeling for someone who hated me because of my religion."

—Michael Maidan, International Socialist Organization

"Everybody wants a place to belong, you know, to feel like they're needed and they're understood. For people who are feeling disenfranchised or misunderstood, [neo-Nazi rallies] are some great places for them, uniting around something you hate."

—Ilana Kennedy, Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center

iran.blog

"I write a weblog so that I can shout, cry, and laugh, and do the things that they have taken away from me in Iran today."

—anonymous blogger in Iran

We Are Iran: the Persian Blogs
By Nasrin Alavi
Soft Skull Press, 2005
Paperback, 361 pages, \$15.95

By ISRAEL BAYER
Staff Writer

Iran is proving to the rest of the world that, thanks to the power of weblogs, no totalitarian government will ever again be able to suppress the ability of people to communicate their inner thoughts, desires, political beliefs, or views on history and current events.

And more so, it's becoming impossible for dictatorships to keep information from the outside world out of their subjects' daily lives. To break the mind control of those in power, all you need is a computer and access to the Internet.

Two-thirds of Iran's population is under 30, and for the most part technologically savvy and more than willing to share opinions about topics ranging from dating to how to avoid detention from the state or harassment from the neighborhood militia's "Morality Police." Iran's blogosphere allows a public debate on key figures, politicians, poets, and pop icons.

"You have heard the story of my generation many times. A generation who grew up on bombs, rockets, war, and revolutionary slogans," one anonymous blogger writes in Nasrin Alavi's

anthology of the Iranian blogosphere. "Who can forget? For my generation, talking to a member of the opposite sex was akin to adultery, and its punishments are better left unsaid. These are just partial moments in all of our bitter lives: each and every one of us could write a book about them."

The Internet in Iran has become a beacon of light for journalists and editors who refuse to abide censorship.

Part of the movement has grown beyond its borders. In September 2001, Hossein Derakhshan, a young Iranian who had recently moved to Canada, set up one of the very first weblogs in Farsi, his native language. In response to a request from a reader, Derakhshan posted a how-to-blog guide in Farsi. Derakhshan currently writes in both English and Farsi on his popular blog Editor: Myself at www.hoder.com.

By 2002, more than 100 newsprint and online publications were shut down by the government. Hundreds of journalists and editors went to prison during the crackdown. In 2003, Sina Motalebi was the first blogger in the world to be imprisoned for the contents his blog. Motalebi spent 23 days in prison and credited his release from pressure mounted through the Iranian blogosphere. He has since been exiled and lives in Holland with his family, where he is an advocate for free speech.

Many journalists and editors did not

return from prison, but those who did became even more determined to utilize the Internet as a means of distributing the news. Some of them went underground or began to use pen names or post articles and opinions anonymously. Astonishingly, Iran has the fourth-largest web community in the world today.

Alavi also sheds light on the fact that Iran is one of the most educated and literate countries in the world. Ironically, the very educational programs established after the 1979 revolution that forced people to read, write, and study Islam are now responsible for millions of young people's ability to utilize the Internet and read and write whatever they choose.

"I keep a weblog so that I can breath in this suffocating air," wrote an anonymous poster. "In a society where one is taken to history's abattoir for the mere crime of thinking, I write so as not to be lost in my despair. So that I feel that I am somewhere where my calls for justice can be uttered. I write a weblog so that I can shout, cry, and laugh, and do the things that they have taken away from me in Iran today."

We Are Iran: the Persian Blogs is for anyone who wants a glimpse not only into Iran's modern-day culture, but at the tools that will be used for years to come for critical thinkers and common people who are all too often cast aside by the powerful elite. ■

Three Dimensional

Three of Hearts: A Postmodern Family
Directed by Susan Kaplan
Runs at the Seattle Film Forum Jan. 27 - Feb. 2

By LESTER GRAY
Arts Editor

The legally unsanctioned but very real marriage of three attractive, intelligent adults — two men and a woman, an actual functioning family — promises a fecundity the likes of which sets documentary filmmakers adrift. When you add that each member is articulately reflective, it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Several producers approached the threesome offering to document their social experiment, which stands apart even in an age of creative conjunctions.

For several years the family demurred on such offers — most likely concerned that their loving union of then nine years would be rendered as spectacle. Such a fate was unavoidable to a degree — given the rarity of their commitment to each other.

The reluctance to open their home and hearts to a camera crew softened following a chance encounter with a friend from the men's youth, Susan Kaplan, a film producer. Initially her request to chronicle the group's story was turned down. But due in part to a camaraderie that formed between

Ms. Kaplan and the trio, the group itself actually requested that she record their experience.

Steven and Sam, two bisexual men, were already seven years into their relationship before being joined by Samantha, a woman of Indian descent.

Sam had for some time suggested that adding a woman to the relationship might bring an enriching complement. Steven, less enthusiastic, remained open to the idea. They both agreed that an acceptable candidate would need to be attracted primarily to the emotional and intellectual components of the relationship, not the sexual. It was Sam who first discovered Samantha Singh, a struggling actress.

These three New Yorkers boast a diversity of character. Sam, the son of a heavyweight criminal who is serving time for murder, proves to be the most energetic, innovative, and insecure. Samantha brings a wonderful and strong femininity to the group. She provides the grounding for what otherwise would be day-to-day improvisation. Stephen accommodates: a passive-aggressive who is less accessible than the other two and somewhat less committed.

Although the group does occasionally engage in *ménage à trois*, they prefer their carnal intimacies one-on-one. These interactions present few complications on the surface, but emotional strains are occasionally manifest, as when Samantha becomes pregnant and the identity of the father remains in question.

The trio's relatives are made aware of the marriage in bits and pieces — measured servings based on their ability to digest it. Parents, in-laws, siblings, *et al*, are shown as polite and do us the favor by sucking out bits of exposition that we are unable to, such as, "How do you know who the father is?"

The individual spouses, through much of the film, are shown to treat each other with unfailing cordiality. So much so that it stretches credulity and begs the question as to whether Susan Kaplan's admitted affection for her subjects influenced the editing.

The characters seem to be having so much fun there should be a disclaimer at the end: "The scenes you have witnessed feature New Yorkers. Under no circumstances should you try this on your own." ■

The individual spouses, through much of *Three of Hearts*, are shown to treat each other with unfailing cordiality. So much so that it stretches credulity and begs the question as to whether [director] Susan Kaplan's admitted affection for her subjects influenced the editing.

Three of Hearts' unconventional family (l to r): Baby Siena, Steven, Sam, and Samantha.



For more film and DVD reviews please go to realchangenews.org.



Adventures
in Irony

Dr. Wes Browning

Going Gaga for Google

The word of the day — commander — tells you everything you need to know about what's wrong with the Department of Justice's subpoena of Google records pertaining to pornographic searches. It isn't about privacy; it's about piracy.

During the national emergency, the authorities commandeered private buses to aid in evacuation. Admiral James T. Kirk commandeers a self-cloaking Klingon Warship and flies it to the Seventies. The Bush Administration's Department of Justice commandeers Google.

The word of the day tells you everything you need to know about what's wrong with the Department of Justice's subpoena of Google records pertaining to pornographic searches. It isn't about privacy; it's about piracy.

Where does government commandeering come from? Exactly where I have told you it comes from, in this very column, before. It comes from fear and cowardice. I said as much in a column for Oct. 17, 2002, at which time I said I thought I was onto a grand unifying principle of the workings of the universe, possibly involving vinyl. I didn't say so at the time, but I had in mind vinyl automobile seating rather than recording media. But I will not rule out recording media as a factor in the grand unifying principle.

Let me recall the principle. The principle is that reacting from fear, rather than reason, just gets you more stuff to be afraid of. So, generally, whenever the public is afraid of some so-called threat, even a threat that is non-emergent, that's been around since the beginning of time and didn't just land on our doorsteps today, the public can be induced to look the other way when the government orders everybody but its own employees to do something about it, resulting in illegality.

The word of the day: commander.

Some sentences using the word of the day: The dictator commandeers the airwaves. The pirate commandeers the gold shipment.

I illustrated the problem with a practice I learned about in my cab-driving days. When the police in Seattle want to break up a domestic violence situation, they often commander cabs and order the drivers to kidnap one of the parties. They don't call it kidnapping, they call it telling the driver to take them where they (the police) say to take them, but you know it's kidnapping when the party in question says, "I don't want to go where the police say I should go, I want to go to the 7-Eleven, and if you don't take me there I'm jumping out of this cab while it's moving and getting a lawyer and suing you from here to Jankistan."

So far as I know this practice is still going on. No legislature ever authorized it. No cab driver has ever been deputized to do the police's business and take people places against their will. The police never offer to even pay for the commandeering of the cab drivers' services: the kidnappers are supposed to pay to be kidnapped! The practice isn't enforced with court orders; it's enforced with physical intimidation. Or, as in my case, with actual police violence, following a "failure of communication."

Which is what we have in this instance, with Google. The government demands they turn over their records of searches. Now, farmers farm dirt. Bus companies bus people and luggage. Mercenaries deal in hurt and death, anything but mercy. Search engines store and move information. And here it comes to pass that the Department of Justice demands that Google turn such information over, at their own cost and at their own liability, without one stitch of legislation authorizing the commandeering of any company for such purposes. Communism!

Presented with demands from a government that has all the biggest guns and the world's biggest army in history, it wouldn't be surprising if Google caved and preferred to risk litigation from the ACLU rather than from the United States. Why not? Yahoo, Microsoft, and AOL all wimped out.

But Google didn't. Way to go, Google! ■



Sat., Jan. 7, 2006 Block Taylor Ave N., 3:38 a.m. Officers noticed the suspect, a transient white female aged 25, standing on a corner near Taylor and Thomas. She was standing with another woman, watching cars go by. Both women were dressed in a manner consistent with prostitution: tight, tight jeans and thin, thin tops. As they saw the officers approach, they began walking briskly south on Taylor. Officers stopped both women, feeling reasonably certain that both were involved in a vice crime. Suspect admitted she was out prostituting "to help feed her baby." They ran her name and found that she had a Department of Corrections order that stated she had to stay out of high vice areas. Due to the time of night and the area she was in, she was arrested for prostitution loitering and booked into King County Jail.

Sun., Jan. 5:15 p.m., Payless Shoes, Third Ave. Suspect, a transient Black female aged 41, was inside the shoe store pretending to be shopping. She was acting nervous and suspicious and caught the attention of a store employee. The store employee found an empty shoebox for boots by where the suspect was standing trying on shoes. Suspect had a large handbag, and the employee asked if she could check inside for the missing boots. The suspect refused and hurried out the door. The employee followed her to the corner of 3rd and Pine, where she flagged down a police officer. He followed the suspect into an alley where the boots — worth \$29.99 — were recovered and returned to the store, slightly damaged. Suspect was interviewed and released; charges are requested.

Sun., Jan. 8, 12:33 a.m. Warren Ave N. homeless shelter. Officers responded to a call about a suicidal man who wanted to shoot himself. The description of the man stated he was wearing a green army jacket, and officers were able to locate the man in a courtyard behind the shelter. Subject, a Black male aged 56, stated he wanted to kill himself and wished he were dead. He stated he had a history of suicide attempts and was on medication that he hadn't taken in a long time. He continued to state that he wanted to hurt himself and that his wish had increased since the police were called. He was transported to Harborview Medical Center for a mental health evaluation.

Thurs., Jan. 12, 8:38 p.m., S. Washington St. Suspect, a transient Black male aged 40, was observed by officers trespassing on S. Washington St. He was in the company of numerous convicted felons and drug users. Officers were aware that he was on active parole with the Department of Corrections, and his parole officer advised the police to retain the suspect on a detainer for failure to report. He was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

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

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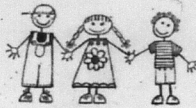
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We bomb and invade Iraq, kill thousands of civilians, arrest thousands more and torture some of those arrested, and leave the country in chaos. All of this, so that we can arrest a dictator who arrested and tortured and killed thousands of civilians?

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit."

Matthew 7:15-19



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Worship Sundays 10:30 a.m.

Letters

editor@realchangenews.org

Watching in horror

Dear Real Change,

I would like to understand the reason a person's race is listed in the StreetWatch section of Real Change. Do you think the listing of race might reinforce, or even amplify, public biases? Might it be better to use descriptions relevant to the story, such as "distracted" or "upset person"? If StreetWatch is intended as an extension of police operations to identify suspects, could you make the descriptions less blunt, so vast numbers of innocent people are not falsely suspected?

With respect for your work against (homeless) oppression, could you explain this policy?

Steve Richmond

RC director Tim Harris replies:

The StreetWatch section is not your typical police report and focuses on the intersection of the very poor and the law. Most incidents remind us of how violent, degrading, and arbitrary life can be for the homeless and extremely poor. A homeless man is repeatedly punched in the face

by another homeless man over a pouch of tobacco. A homeless woman falls 30 feet and breaks her ankle, leg, and jaw while trying to climb over a bridge. A sick man shits into a garbage can after being turned away from a McDonalds restroom. This is not an especially pretty or "entertaining" column, but it is a gritty and real reminder of what life is like for far too many people. Just as being a Black male greatly increases one's chance of incarceration, being a person of color also increases one's odds of being poor. My quick survey showed mention of Black and white male "suspects" running more or less even, with white females coming in a strong third, and a variety of other races and genders mentioned as well. Our sense is that the identification of race does contribute meaning.

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

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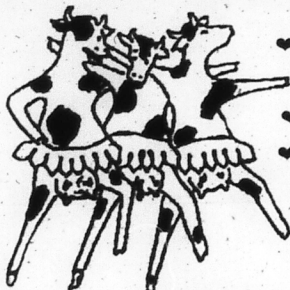
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Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Friday 1/27

More than one million American women have an abortion every year, yet their feelings and experiences are often kept behind closed doors, rarely to be discussed. Penny Lane's film *The Abortion Diaries* gives a voice to this silenced community. 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. Info: wfp@bridgings.org.

Saturday 1/28

Every Sunday a "temporary cemetery" is erected on a beach in California by the Veterans for Peace. A flag-draped coffin and more than 1,900 wooden crosses are affectionately placed on the beach in honor of fallen soldiers. Military families come with dog tags, photographs, and other mementos. Arlington West intimately documents this movement, the families, and the soldiers. 2:30 p.m., Seattle Public Library, West Seattle Branch, 3411 SW Raymond St.

Despite the destitute life inside the Terezin concentration camp during World War II, many courageous artists continued to produce music. "Murdered!" celebrates the music of those courageous musicians whose lives were cut short, including Hans Krasa, Gideon Klein, and Viktor Ullmann. 2:30 p.m., Frye Art Museum, 704 Terry Ave.

Natalie Hrizi, national co-ordinator of Youth and Student ANSWER (Act Now to Stop the War and End Racism), delivers *Hong Kong: Junk the WTO*, her first-hand accounts of the WTO meeting and protests in China. 7 p.m., 1423 Tenth Ave. Info: answer@answerseattle.org, (206)568-1661.

Through Sunday 1/29

The Northwest Asian American Film Festival showcases vibrant films and shorts, including *Grassroots Rising*, *In Time of War*, *The Grace Lee Project*, *What's Wrong With Frank Chin?*, and more. Tickets \$5 and up. Various locations and times. Info: (206)340-1445, www.nvaaff.org

What happens when a medieval fertility experiment goes awry? *The*

Onion Twins, a dance opera in two acts, is a tightly woven collaboration by Seattle artists that is based on a Swedish folktale. The show includes a dance ensemble, singers, narration, a live chamber orchestra, and surprise guest performers. Tickets \$20 general, \$15 students. Friday and Saturday 8 p.m., Sunday 4 p.m., Richard Hugo House, 1634 11th Ave. Info: www.theoniontwins.com

Monday 1/30

Today's college graduates are finding financial independence nearly impossible: depressed wages, inflated educational costs, and skyrocketing health care expenses are almost insurmountable challenges. Tamara Draut's book *Strapped: Why America's 20- and 30-Somethings Can't Get Ahead* offers compelling evidence and liberating social solutions. Tickets \$5. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Tuesday 1/31

Jamie Mayfield, University of Washington Professor of Political Science, presents his talk "Above the Law: How U.S. Avoidance of International Human Rights Obligations Eased the Way for Torture." Mayfield's writings focus on the obligation to human rights and relieving suffering. His two most recent articles were published in the *Human Rights Quarterly* and the *Finnish Yearbook of International Law*. Noon, 2101 Fourth Ave, Suite 400. RSVP: rewinn2003@yahoo.com

Souled American: How Black Music Transformed White Culture traces race relations using the unique medium of music. Spanning gospel, jazz, rap, and other musical genres, author and journalist Kevin Phinney shows the contributions Black Americans have made to developing pop culture. 7:30 p.m., The Ellfott Bay Book Company, 101 S Main St.

Director's Corner

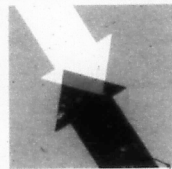


Last weekend a handful of neo-Nazis called a rally at the Space Needle and a hundred protesters showed up to denounce fascism. This is as it should be. When the symbolism of hatred gets trotted out for public show, the best strategy is to respond with the language of tolerance.

Neo-Nazi freakshows, however, are not the real threat. The problem is when racist, militarist, and authoritarian politics become so ubiquitous as to seem almost normal. Sinclair Lewis, whose 1935 novel *It Can't Happen Here* is experiencing new popularity, is known for saying, "When fascism comes to America, it will be wrapped in a flag and carrying a cross." It certainly won't be wearing a swastika.

So I'm not worried about a few goose-stepping Hitler admirers. They're a sideshow at best. I'm much more concerned about the gradual erosion of tolerance from the national debate. I'm concerned that America is out of step with the civilized world on the issue of torture. I'm concerned that popular support for a broadly anti-poor agenda is sustained by appeals to racism. I'm concerned that America is at permanent war for all the wrong reasons. I'm concerned that the earth will die within my children's lifetime because there will always be enough wealth and hired security to insulate the elites from the consequences of global devastation.

We shouldn't need neo-Nazis to get us out into the streets. We should be there everyday.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Stop Payday Lending's Vicious Debt Cycle

Issue: Everyone in our state regardless of their income has the right to fair and reasonable consumer protections when they borrow money. However, Washington law allows payday lenders to engage in loan practices that trap people in deep debt. Payday lending is illegal in 15 states.

Background: A responsible government is accountable, collects taxes fairly, and ensures the well-being of its people. But today in Washington, our tax system is not accountable, is not fair, and does not provide enough revenue to address the needs of residents. Our state law also fails to protect Washington consumers from predatory lending practices.

Washington's law allows payday lenders to:

Charge triple and quadruple annual percentage rates of interest.

In 2003, nearly three million payday loans were made in Washington state. That's nearly one and a half for every state resident over age 16. Payday or cash advance lenders charge exorbitant fees on short-term loans that result in incredibly high annualized percentage rates (APR). A typical such loan in Washington has an APR of 391 percent, with some as high as 1,825 percent.

Loan money without considering the borrower's ability to repay.

These fast-cash loans trap people living paycheck-to-paycheck in serious debt. Once borrowers take out a loan, they have a short time to pay it back and are charged additional fees if they cannot pay up quickly. The typical loan is for 14 days only, but some loans are for as little as three days. When a borrower cannot pay, they often end up taking out multiple back-to-back loan transactions in order to pay fees to the payday lender, resulting in greater and greater debt.

Issue loans back-to-back, charging people more fees to pay off previous loans.

Charging high fees on short-term loans to people living paycheck to paycheck is big business for payday lenders. In fact, the payday business has grown by more than 84 percent in Washington in the last three years. In 2003, payday lenders indebted Washington residents by \$1 billion and made over \$150 million in profits off loan fees. The industry reaps the bulk of its profits from people who are caught in debt. In fact, 91 percent of the payday loans made in Washington state are to borrowers who take out five or more loans per year.

As a result, many Washington residents living paycheck to paycheck are getting caught in a never-ending cycle of debt that prevents them from meeting their basic needs and keeps them from getting ahead.

Action: Washington state must not allow people with lower incomes to be the targets of lending practices that trap them in debt. State lawmakers should pass legislation to stop payday lenders from gouging their customers. Lenders need new rules: they should be required to offer lower rates, longer loan periods, and fair repayment plans. Urge your state lawmakers to pass fair and reasonable consumer protections on payday lending.

Contact your legislators at 1-800-562-6000. For more information on this issue or to use an online form to send a simple letter to the editor of your local paper, contact the Statewide Poverty Action Network at www.povertyaction.org.

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

WATERFRONT, Continued from Page 1

mean tearing out everything up to First Avenue, since it originally had a bluff not unlike Magnolia's. Instead, we're looking for biological function to protect the juvenile and migrating salmon that are going along there."

Doing the right thing, Trim says, is another example of jobs and the environment aligning: native tribes like the Muckleshoot have economically viable rights to fish the three to 12 million salmon that travel through Elliott Bay. Cleaning up stormwater runoff and building more eco-friendly piers would help protect their livelihoods.

One concept drawn up by People for Puget Sound shows the future ferry terminal extending onto an island in the bay — with sloping beaches and greenery nurturing fish and the food they eat. Piers would allow cars on and off the boats, leaving the banks untouched. Visions like this are a piece of the waterfront revisionism that has gone on since the Alaskan Way Viaduct was damaged in the 2001 Nisqually earthquake.

The state is still \$400 million short of the \$3.6 billion needed for even a scaled-down version of a downtown tunnel — the stated preference of Mayor Greg Nickels and the City Council. Over the next year the city plans to spend more time envisioning a freeway-free waterfront.

Yet People's Waterfront Coalition leader Cary Moon says planners need to still grapple with one hard fact about the tunnel plan: the \$3.6 billion project will only hide the highway from King to Pine Street, just about half its entire length. Neither is there money for the revitalized shoreline in the \$3.6 billion tunnel plan.

The highway is projected to run above ground up to Pioneer Square,

where it dives into the tunnel until Pike St., then re-emerges to soar over Elliott and Western Avenues on a rebuilt (and bigger) viaduct.

Moon's group has noted that a central downtown without a highway is possible if traffic on the remaining street grids is effectively managed ("Highway Killers," RC July 13, 2005). Most of the artists' sketches of a future downtown don't incorporate a highway at either end of the central waterfront. "You have to ask: are these honest and realistic?" says Moon of such pictures.

The money is there for Colman Dock, however, and the waterfront meetings are meant to "push the envelope" on fish-friendly design, says Trim. With environmental woes hitting Puget Sound from creeping sprawl and age-old pollution, she says we need all the habitable shoreline we can get.

"We are at the point that we have to hold the line on hardening any more shoreline in Puget Sound. And we're working hard on trying to reverse the damage in heavily industrialized areas." ■

[Get involved]

An eco-friendly future for the central waterfront takes shape every second Wednesday at lunchtime. Contact People for Puget Sound: (206) 382-7007 x215.



FROM VIADUCT TO GEODUCKS: A HIGHWAY-FREE WATERFRONT ENVISIONED BY URBAN PLANNERS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS. PHOTO COURTESY PEOPLE FOR PUGET SOUND.

SLUMLORD, Continued from Page 1

of Seattle, a landlord doesn't need any cause for eviction, so the notice might have been legal — except that state law prohibits retaliatory eviction and, as it happens, Section 8 rentals do require a just cause.

On Jan. 6, Morris says, Moland sidestepped the law simply by giving the family a new eviction notice citing "economic reasons": The Morrises have to vacate so that Moland can replace the bathroom floor and walls as ordered by the exterminator.

Siobhan Ring says it's a common switch for a landlord to make.

"It is illegal for a landlord to terminate tenancy in retaliation for a tenant asserting her rights," Ring says. "But the landlord can come up with a non-retaliatory reason like 'Oh, I need to do all this work.'"

In order for the Morrises to qualify for the moving assistance — which the anti-slumlord act sets at \$2,000 or three times the monthly rent, whichever is greater — Ring says a code inspector from the city of Spokane Valley would have had to declare the unit uninhabitable.

But, under Spokane Valley code, "The infestation did not rise to a level that it would require that declaration," says city spokesperson Carolbelle Branch.

According to Branch, the city had no jurisdiction to order the landlord to pay the moving assistance.

Since then, the Morrises have contacted the Northwest Justice Project in hopes of suing Moland Management, which represents landlord R. Ryan Properties. They've also been frantic in looking for help to move. The state turned them down for \$1,500 in emergency cash known as a "diversion grant," but a private nonprofit called the Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs (SNAP) has offered to put the family up in a motel for 30 days.

Bob Peeler, the Morrises' counselor at SNAP, says he sits on a local homeless commission that includes 45 agencies but had never heard of the anti-slumlord law. That's a problem the family has run into over and over.

With eviction day just around the corner, Renee Morris says her children are stressed out and having trouble sleeping. Her grandmother just paid for a storage unit for the family's belongings, but Morris says she's worried five people, two dogs, and a cat aren't going to fit in one motel room.

"How are we going to manage to live like that for 30 days?" Morris asks. "Granted, we won't be living on the street, but it's all because these rich people can't divvy up a couple thousand to help us get out of this dump." ■

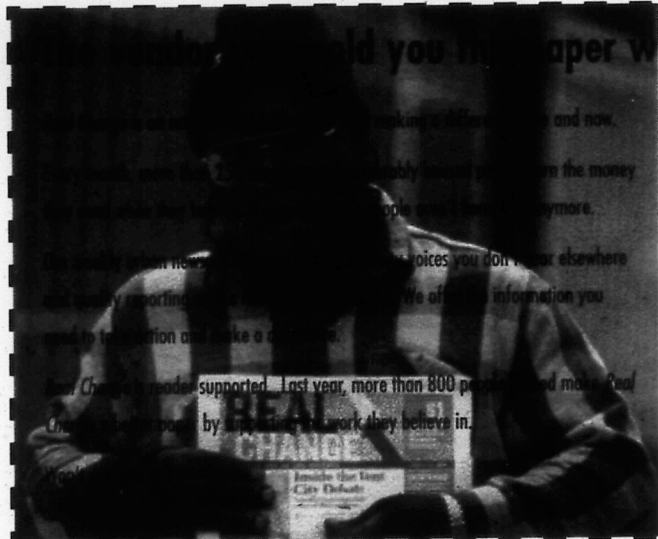
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