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FEBRUARY 15 - 21, 2006



A WOMAN FEEDS PIGEONS IN CITY HALL PARK, JUST SOUTH OF THE KING COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND NEARBY PIONEER SQUARE'S SOCIAL SERVICES. THE PARK IS TARGETED FOR A REMODEL.
PHOTO BY KATIA ROBERTS.

Next on the Cutting Block...

A proposed redesign of City Hall Park may displace disabled, homeless

By **CYDNEY GILLIS**
Staff Reporter

With the city moving to cut down 17 trees at Pioneer Square's Occidental Park in the next two weeks, it's now setting its sights on the old City Hall Park next to the King County Courthouse.

On Thursday, the Parks Department will hold its second public meeting on redesigning the park: a goal of Mayor Greg Nickels and his initiative to make downtown parks more inviting.

Often referred to as "Muscatel Meadows," the grass and large shade trees at City Hall Park serve primarily as a front yard for disabled residents of the nearby Frye Apartments and for homeless people who are sheltered at the Morrison — something the Parks Department has been working to change in a process parallel to that at Occidental Park, with one exception.

In the wake of citizens suing the city last year to save the trees at Occidental — a battle that continues — the City Council cut the \$400,000 in construction funds that the mayor had asked for this year to rebuild City Hall Park. Parks project manager David Goldberg says that means

no construction until at least 2007, provided the council approves funding.

In the meantime, the Parks Department is still working to redesign Seattle's old civic park using concepts set down by the mayor and Parks Superintendent Ken Bounds in a June 2005 planning document.

The concepts include turning City Hall Park into a city "gateway" that would draw both government workers and tourists with special features or activities — and be fenced, if needed, though Goldberg says that doesn't mean a locked gate.

Last August, Bounds formed an advisory group of 11 people he chose from businesses and human services in the area to consider the concepts. In monthly meetings since then, the project advisory team, or PAT, has looked at how to connect the park and courthouse, which once opened to the park but had its south entrance turned into a loading dock in 1967.

Because of the expense (and a retrofit after the Nisqually earthquake), re-opening the old courthouse entrance is off the table, Goldberg says.

In So Many Words

New report highlights Northwest immigrants telling their stories

By **ROSETTE ROYALE**
Staff Reporter

"The [guide] told us it would take five hours to walk across the border. It actually took three days," says Hector, an immigrant living in Washington. "We did not have enough water or food with us, and we thought we would die of thirst. You can't explain an experience like that in words."

Words. While Hector may think his fall short, he is not alone in his reliance upon words in potentially shedding light on what it means to be an immigrant in this country, in the Northwest. Literally hundreds of others — from Iraq and Honduras, from Eritrea and China, from elsewhere across the globe — give voice to confusion, frustration, longing, and fear in a report entitled *In Our Own Words: Immigrants' Experiences in the Northwest*. Released on Valentine's Day by the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations (NWFCO), the nearly 40-page report is a sampler of unsweetened tales, the bulk of which speak a similar theme: the immigration system in the U.S. is in need of serious repair.

Carrie Tracy, NWFCO research associate, says that her organization became determined to undertake such a project at the prompting of immigrants themselves. "All the people we worked with were saying that the stories they heard in the media, they weren't true," says Tracy. "So we decided to tell immigrants' stories in their own words because it's a story you don't hear."

Up until now, it was a story Tracy says hasn't been heard in the Northwest at all. But a smattering of reports had been conducted by various organizations in other regions of the country, she says. Representatives from those organizations helped her craft

IT'S YOUR TURN

Have something to say about downtown development? Well, now's the time to speak.

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INSURANCE SCAM

A bill looks to end insurance rate hikes for clinics, religious centers targeted by bombers, arsonists.

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FOUR OF A KIND

A quartet representing four ethnic racial groups the 'Four Amigos' don't have time for Bush.

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NO APOLOGY

Chaplain James Yee was detained wrongfully by the Army. They've yet to admit their error.

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See **WORDS**, Continued on Page 12

Get Out and Play

Boring land-use decisions to determine the future of downtown housing

By TIMOTHY HARRIS
Real Change Executive Director

What we know for sure is that if we act like we have no power, huge profits will be made by a very small group of people at the expense of a great many.

If you think Seattle has changed a lot over the last 20 years, you ain't seen nothin' yet. Demographers project that about 100,000 people will move here over the next decade and that at least 40,000 of them will want to live downtown. This has created a developer's gold rush, and the fight is on over who will reap the benefits of demand.

It's been said that government protects itself by being boring. Discussions of zoning are Exhibit A. Since Mayor Nickels was first elected, a quiet conversation has taken place behind the scenes. These mind-numbingly technical meetings aren't widely publicized and are mostly attended by developers, bankers, and government bureaucrats who speak a special language that only they understand.

The news reached most of us last summer when the Mayor released his downtown development plan reflecting the "consensus" they had reached. The City Council and affordable housing advocates (other than those non-profit developers that the Mayor chose to include) were caught off-balance and unprepared.

The Mayor wanted his plan fast-tracked for approval by last Christmas. Huge amounts of capital, after all, are impatiently waiting to be unleashed. To their great credit, Councilmembers Peter Steinbrueck and Tom Rasmussen took the time to ask the all-important question: *qui bono*. "Who benefits?"

While the City Council has succeeded in slowing down the process for public examination, the debate at Fourth and James has remained more or less one-sided. Developers and their lobbyists are conducting a full-court

press on City Hall. The rest of us, with far fewer resources, are playing catch-up. Here is what's at stake:

Affordable Housing: Seattle is fast becoming a city of the economic elite. Even now, prices for downtown housing range from unaffordable \$500-per-square-foot condos in Belltown to lavish \$2,100-per-square-foot luxury penthouses nearer the Market. Greater density will accelerate these trends, driving out working people and even middle-class professionals.

Open Space and Environmental Standards: What is built over the next decade will define the city well into the next century. Developers must be held to high environmental standards, and trees and open space must receive the priority we deserve.

Human services: Increased density has a hidden cost, and will create more demand for childcare, health clinics, food banks, and other services upon which people depend. We need to ensure these services can continue to operate downtown.

Good Jobs: The strength of our community depends upon jobs that pay a living family wage and offer access to quality healthcare. We can encourage companies to be good corporate citizens and not pass their expenses on to the taxpayers of Seattle.

Much of downtown's greater density will come with raised height restrictions for both commercial and residential development. The vision for housing is to build tall, slender high-rises, mostly in the Denny Triangle, that exploit projected demand for downtown living. While discussion has centered on whether these towers will cater to childless professionals or be more family-friendly, everyone agrees they will be enclaves of the affluent.

While there is some minimal provision for "workforce housing," this means people earning 80 to 120 percent of Seattle median income. In other words, the lowest income eligibility rung is set at people making close to \$40,000 a year. Benefits of increased density should, like the Seattle Housing Levy, target the majority of support to those at 30 percent of median and below.

The most intense debate is over how much developers will contribute to an affordable housing fund in exchange for building up to maximum allowable heights. Two different economic studies have supported Councilmember Steinbrueck's assertion that a reasonable rate is \$20 per square foot. The "consensus" of downtown insiders is that the rate should be no more than \$10.

Developers say that if we ask for too much, they will challenge the whole thing in court and the fund for affordable housing will get nothing. If socially responsible development is too expensive, they say, they'll just take their precious capital elsewhere. We're talking an increase of 1 or 2 percent in development costs for projects that deliver higher than 50 percent rates of return.

Neither of these threats consider what developers themselves will lose if they walk away.

What we know for sure is that if we act like we have no power, huge profits will be made by a very small group of people at the expense of a great many. The Mayor's development plan for the downtown will define our city for decades to come. It's high-stakes poker, and we need to be at the table, playing to win. The City's heard from the developers. Now it's your turn. ■

(Be There)

Zoned Out: Who Wins and Who Loses in the New Downtown: A Community Forum on Seattle's Future.

Panelists include neighborhood activist Jim Diers, representatives of labor, low-income housing activists, and others.

Thursday, Feb.

23, 6:30 p.m.

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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.

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

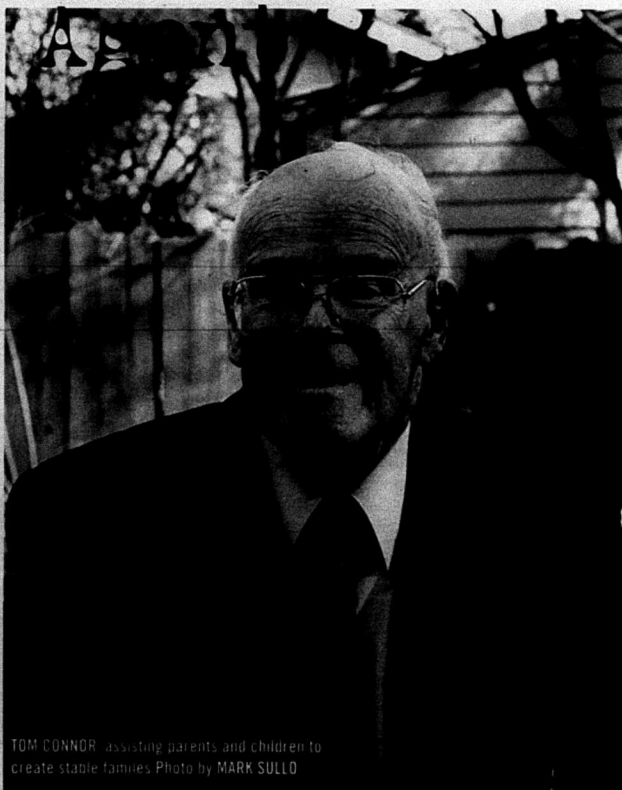
We hear quite a bit about burnout among social workers. Emotionally charged environments, excessively large caseloads, and ever-shrinking financial resources would be enough to exhaust and overwhelm almost anyone. But Tom Connor is not just anyone.

After devoting 35 years to social work, he remains energetic and optimistic. "I found in my retirement that I really missed working with children and families," he says.

So Connor, who recently celebrated his 83rd birthday, has dedicated his golden years to volunteering with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association. For more than a decade, he has assisted families in navigating the overburdened legal and social service system. He has watched over and advocated for the best interests of hundreds of children. He has guided their choices and has presented new prospects for those who might have slipped through the cracks.

"I believe that people can change," Connor says. "Parents can correct their problems. Children can adapt to new and secure family situations. The paths lives take can be altered. I want to be a part of that."

—Amy Besunder



TOM CONNOR, assisting parents and children to create stable families. Photo by MARK SULLO

Doubly Damned

Bill would help insurance rates for attacked clinics, religious halls

By LAURA PEACH
Contributing Writer

"We want to make sure that when lawful businesses are the victims of crimes, they are not victimized all over again."

—Kasey Schiewe, legislative aide for
Brendan Williams,
D-Olympia

On Jan. 9, 2005, an arsonist set fire to the Eastside Women's Health Clinic in Olympia. Though the fire destroyed most of the building's interior, dealing with the physical damage was not the clinic's greatest challenge.

Immediately after the attack, the clinic's insurer terminated their policy, forcing the owners to scramble for two 45-day extensions. The clinic's property insurance then jumped from around \$2,000 a year to upwards of \$90,000. Eastside had to stop providing abortions in order to obtain a more modest policy.

"The insurance companies are essentially helping the terrorists. They are shooting themselves in the foot — it is not in their best interest to stop providing insurance to places which have been attacked because it just encourages similar actions."

Rep. Brendan Williams, D-Olympia, concerned with the treatment that Eastside received, proposed House Bill 2481. The legislation is designed to protect medical facilities and religious organizations from losing their insurance policies as a result of arson and other malicious activities. It recently passed through the House with 71 representatives (including 10 Republicans) supporting the measure.

The legislation prohibits an insurance company from dropping their policy for five years after a malicious incident occurs. The insurance policy may be cancelled for other reasons during that time period. The bill is not retroactive, so if it passes, Eastside Women's Health will still not be able to perform abortions under their current insurance policy.

Amie Newman, communications manager of Aradia Women's Health in Seattle, says that this bill is "incredibly helpful, more as a safety net than anything else" as it works to protect services like Eastside's. Allowing insurance companies discretion over the issue is "a bad road to go down," she says. "The problem would just snowball if legislation is not in place."

Security is a constant risk for abortion clinics: protesters have picketed outside Aradia's Central District offices twice a week, every week, for years. A police officer is kept on the premises to ensure the safety of patients, and the staff undergoes regular training for crisis situations.

There is a significant threat of similar crimes for religious organizations as well. After 9/11, certain mosques in the greater Seattle area experienced extremist attacks. On Sept. 13, 2001, Snohomish resident Patrick Cunningham attempted to set fire to two cars parked outside the Islamic Idriss Mosque. He was sentenced to more than six years in prison.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and the local police who are working on the attack on Eastside Women's Clinic have not yet identified the perpetrator.

"Criminals should not be rewarded for their actions," says Williams' legislative aide Kasey Schiewe. "We want to make sure that when lawful businesses are the victims of crimes, they are not victimized all over again." ■

[Take Action]

The State Senate needs to pass House Bill 2481 to ensure its enactment. To speak up for the bill, contact your Senate representative at 1 (800) 562-6000.

Just Heard...

Sonics' shuffle

Should the city pay \$220 million to remodel KeyArena again for the Seattle Sonics? A City Council committee started studying the question in early February and learned an important lesson: Keep your eye on the ball.

The basketball team's managers often say that KeyArena can't make money because, in a city that has added Safeco Field and Qwest Field, the team just can't sell enough high-end suites.

City analyst Bill Alves begs to differ. Of 17 comparable arenas nationwide, Alves told the Parks Committee, the Sonics' occupancy rate is dead last. While other teams keep all their suite revenues, the Sonics give the city 60 percent to pay off the bond for the Key's last remodel in 1994. The split, Alves said, encourages the team "to act contrary to the city's interest" by selling other seats.

—Cydney Gillis

Oversight and overstatement

Seattle Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske used some overblown language in his Feb. 1 letter to Seattle resident Caren Gilchrist, who's concerned about the Office of Professional Accountability's hamstringing Citizen Review Board.

Gilchrist wrote to City Councilmember Jan Drago asking the city to extend legal protection to the board, which sees a slice of the SPD's internal investigations. Kerlikowske's reply was unsolicited: "The OPA Review Board is part of a comprehensive civilian oversight system of the Seattle Police Department. I must tell you that we have more civilian oversight than any police department in the country," he wrote.

Investigations are overseen by a civilian auditor; they also have a civilian head. But this doesn't mean effective civilian oversight. Because of legal liability, the Citizen Review Board has been unable to release a report on police investigations in nearly two years — giving more weight to the case for genuine citizen-led investigations.

Heil Fremont

Fremont is home to many things: the Troll, the Lenin statue, a remarkably high number of Thai restaurants. On Sunday it played host to seven neo-Nazi protesters.

David Neiwert posted photos of the brownshirts' flag-waving on his excellent blog *Orcinus* (dneiwert.blogspot.com), where he tracks the far right. Neiwert says this and an appearance two weeks ago in Olympia mean white supremacists are "feeling that the tide is turning... They're showing up in notably liberal venues not to recruit, but to... send a message that they don't intend to hide anymore." And hate speech from the highest echelons of the larger movement — like Ann Coulter using the epithet "raghead" last week — only make them bolder.

—Adam Hyla

Together Again

"Four Amigos" bash Bush budget

By STEFANIE FURER
UW News Lab

Members of the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation (UIATF) gathered at the Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center last Friday to discuss the potential social and economic results of budget proposals made by the Bush administration. Approximately 50 people attended, plus about a dozen members of the news media.

The meeting was led by the "Four Amigos," a group of men representing four different ethnic and racial communities. These four groups — Latinos, Asians, Africans, and Native Americans — make up 80 percent of the world's population.

But, according to Bob Santos, one of the Four Amigos and interim executive director, their voices — and their concern over the social harm inflicted by the Bush White House — have been largely ignored. "I'm wondering why there's no outrage in this country," he said,

Four friends vs. a Bush: Gossett, Santos, Maestas, and Lane. Photo by Stefanie Furer



clenching his fists in a tight ball. "I'm surprised."

Nodding in agreement was King County Councilmember Larry Gossett. "[The government] needs to be challenged," he said. "We need to do it collectively."

Phil Lane, the new CEO of the United Indians of All Tribes, couldn't agree with Gossett more. "The only thing we lack right now is unity," he said. All four men all came to the same agreement: There needs to be a change in policy. Every move made by the U.S. government ultimately affects members of all communities. "Collectively right now, we have a vision," Lane said.

Their vision, they hope, will change the dynamic of the current administration so that members of all communities can thrive socially and economically.

Prior to the press conference held at the center was a discussion led by Roberto Maestas, Director of El Centro de la Raza. His brief introduction illustrated the key message the Four Amigos want people to know: The Bush administration is making cutbacks on the most important programs pertaining to the four ethnic communities they represent.

One of the biggest cutbacks, according to Maestas, affects the Head Start program. "An attack on our children is an attack on what our country is supposed to support," he said. Bush plans to cut back the program by 1 percent, which is enough to stir controversy in the education realm, he said.

Other major impacts of the Bush administration, according to the UIATF, are cuts to Medicare, the costs of war, and deficits from planning future attacks on terrorism in the Middle East.

Maestas, Santos, and Gossett played key local roles in the civil rights movement in the 1970s. With American Indian community activist Bernie Whitebear, who died in 2000, they were known as the Gang of Four — a loving term borrowed from a Maoist clique that references the friendship these four built working in concert.

A former Green Beret, Whitebear led an Indian reclamation of Army property at Discovery Park in 1970, and after seven years of negotiations the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation won a portion of the park.

Lane, one of the original members of UIATF, left briefly in 1980 for a career in education as an associate professor at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada. He recently returned as CEO of the foundation and was honored during the meeting.

The Four Amigos will continue to send a strong message to every community they represent. They strive to change the world politically, economically, and socially in a more progressive and positive manner, according to a recent press release.

"There are social consequences to pay," Maestas said, pausing for a moment to glance at his audience. "It's going to be up to us to decide how we're going to bring [the government] back to their senses." ■

"It's going to be up to us to decide how we're going to bring [the government] back to their senses."

—Roberto Maestas, director of El Centro de la Raza

Short Takes

Safe Harbors: clunky

Technical shortfalls with the city's new homeless tracking system are eating up time at homeless service agencies, where shelter staff are doing unforeseen and unbudgeted data-entry work.

The Safe Harbors computer system, which has cost the city and the federal government \$1.8 million over the past two years, is meant to replace the shelters' current recordkeeping on clients. Lutheran Compass Center program manager M.J. Kizer has entered data from the Lutheran Compass Center's client files, but she can't retrieve it — and she needs to complete reports for the agency's funders.

She's not alone. "I've heard of no one using the system who's able to get the information they need out of it," says Kizer.

Until that changes, agencies are stuck doing double duty, entering information into their old system and then into Safe Harbors. Sinan Demirel, director of the U-District young adult shelter program ROOTS, estimates it took 80 hours, not the usual 25, to enter information last month. He doesn't expect that to continue this month, but the Safe Harbors work still adds up. A 25-bed shelter, ROOTS currently has three full-time paid staff.

"It's one more thing to add on to staff that are already stretched to the limit and making choices to not do things we need to do," says Demirel.

"We would need at least another quarter-time [staffer], if not a half-time, to meet the ongoing demands of this system."

Part of that time is spent simply waiting. Using Safe Harbors software is "like trying to do MSNBC on dial-up," says Kizer. She says her staff experience frequent lag times of 10 seconds or more.

Remedies for these problems are possible, says HSD Community Services Division director Alan Painter. An advisory group of Safe Harbors users has been "very direct in telling us when we need to make the software more accessible." The computer program is slated for four to six upgrades per year, so that problems will be identified quickly, he says. And "any new program has things that need to be improved."

—Adam Hyla

Reason to be mad

Older African American women tend to be in poorer health than the general population. They have more functional impairments, more limited education, lower income, and pay more out-of-pocket costs for health care.

So says Dr. Maxine Hayes, State Health Officer of the Washington State Department of Health, who will address these issues at a forum called "The Plight of the Older Black Woman." The forum, to be held at the University of Washington School

of Social Work and presented by the Mayor's Council on African American Elders, will have a four-person panel discussion and a keynote address by Hayes.

Hayes plans to highlight areas of action in her talk. "The good news is that many of these issues can be prevented or mitigated," she says. Health promotion and disease prevention have been known to make a difference. "The talk is about preparing for the future."

One of the problems is the lower average income of older African American women. Economic resources and health are closely related, according to a study done by the State Department of Health in 2004.

For information on attending this event contact Margaret Boddie at (206) 328-6840.

Sweetening the pot

This week the state legislature considered a bill that authorizes local governments to enact or expand affordable housing incentive programs. House Bill 2984 is designed to allow counties, cities, and towns the ability to write affordable housing incentive programs into their own zoning laws. If it passes, local incentive programs to create affordable housing can no longer be interpreted by property owners as legally suspect "takings," says

Carla Okigwe, executive director of the Housing Development Consortium.

The goal is "to make the tools available to the local governments to use some of these incentives," says Representative Fred Jarrett, (R - Bellevue) a co-sponsor of the bill. Jarrett says that state legislators want to leave zoning laws to the local governments so that they can write them in the manner that best suits them.

As the housing market has heated up, the price of housing has priced out many lower-income families and individuals. Inclusionary zoning is a way to help mitigate that problem.

HB 2984 is an attempt to establish that local governments have the legal authority to enact programs that provide incentives for developers to include affordable housing in or adjacent to new construction. There is currently nothing in state law that says the local governments have this authority.

The bill seeks to avoid language that makes inclusionary zoning mandatory — which is opposed by development groups such as the Building Industry Association of Washington.

"Their main concern is with language that they are afraid will require them to do certain things," says the bill's primary sponsor, Representative Larry Springer, (D - Redmond.) Developers "don't like to be required to do anything."

—Justin Ellis

DOLLAR BILL

I dropped a dollar bill
on the sidewalk
hoping someone poor
might find it
"Good luck"
as I kicked it good-bye

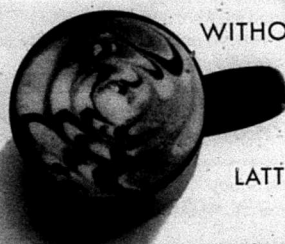
Looking around me
under the starlit sky
I noticed two people
a block or so away
who looked to me to be
in quite sufficient pay.

"I hope they don't see it!
I hope they don't see it!"

As I strolled on along
I looked back to see
the woman bending over
where the dollar would be.
"Isn't it fun to find money?" I said,
when they soon passed me by.
She said, "Oh! You saw it too?"
I said, "I dropped it"
She said, "So did I."
She said "So did I."
We don't need it,
felt guilty to keep it,
so we just passed it by."
So she just passed it by ...
Maybe you found it
and had breakfast the next day
I just mean to say
All money is not pay.

True story.

— ARTIS
JUNE, 1977
VENICE BEACH
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



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Buy a pastry or sandwich, get a free coffee (expires 3/31/06).


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Great Coffee. Better Lives.



PorchLight

Seattle
Housing
Authority

BAYVIEW TOWER

One-bedroom apartments for low-income elderly or disabled people



Accepting applications February 1-28, 2006

Bayview Tower, a high-rise for low-income elderly and disabled people, is located at 4th and Wall in Belltown.

PorchLight Housing Center will temporarily distribute a limited number of applications for the Bayview Tower waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis, starting February 1.

Completed applications must be received by February 28, and applicants must be elderly or disabled to be eligible.

APPLICATIONS ARE LIMITED - APPLY NOW!

PorchLight Housing Center

907 N.W. Ballard Way, Suite 200

Tues. - Fri. 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Web: www.seattlehousing.org

Call 206-239-1737

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mailed to you, or for
more information

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Miscarriage of Justice

Chaplain James Yee was arrested for treason and espionage. Wrongly detained, he still awaits an Army apology.

"We hope the Department of Defense Inspector General Investigation will show that the military made mistakes, that I was targeted because of my faith and ethnicity, that I wasn't treated properly, that rules were broken. That would help in [my family's] recovery, but also it would help the American people regain trust in military leadership that has made a mess in Iraq."

By ROBIN LINDLEY
Contributing Writer

U.S. Army Capt. James Yee served with distinction as the Muslim chaplain at the Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, detention center for over 600 "enemy combatants." Despite awards for his work, he was secretly arrested for treason and espionage in September 2003. He was held in solitary confinement like an "enemy combatant" for 76 days after a military inquiry sparked by bigotry, not by evidence of wrongdoing. The Army leaked the arrest to the media, and Chaplain Yee was vilified as a traitor.

A third-generation Chinese-American, Yee was raised Lutheran in a New Jersey suburb. His family has a strong military tradition: his father served in World War II, a brother graduated from West Point, and another brother is as an Army doctor. Converting to Islam shortly after his graduation from West Point in 1990, he then studied Islam and returned to the Army in early 2001 as a chaplain, and then trained soldiers on Islam and religious tolerance after the September 11th attacks.

He was assigned to Guantánamo in 2002 to serve as the base's third Muslim chaplain in six months — a controversial role requiring him to lead prayer services, minister to detainees, and teach soldiers that Islam is not terrorism. Overzealous intelligence officers wrongly believed he was part of a spy ring of Muslim personnel.

Chaplain Yee recognized that his fellow Westerners held distorted views of Muslims, but he was shocked by his arrest. The case against him disintegrated. The government reduced, then dropped all charges, but Chaplain Yee's military career was ruined. He was honorably discharged in January 2005, but he has not yet received an apology from the military.

Chaplain Yee recently talked with *Real Change* in Seattle about his timely and engaging book, *For God and Country: Faith and Patriotism under Fire*, and his service, his arrest, his healing and his hopes.

Real Change: You haven't received an apology from the military for your wrongful prosecution?

Chaplain James Yee: No. Never. I haven't received an apology, [nor have] my family and my supporters, I'm fighting for one. We hope the Department of Defense Inspector General Investigation will show that the military made mistakes, that I was targeted because of my faith and ethnicity, that I wasn't treated properly, that rules were broken. That would help in our recovery, but also it would help the American people regain trust in military leadership that has made a mess in Iraq.

RC: What has happened with this investigation of your ordeal?

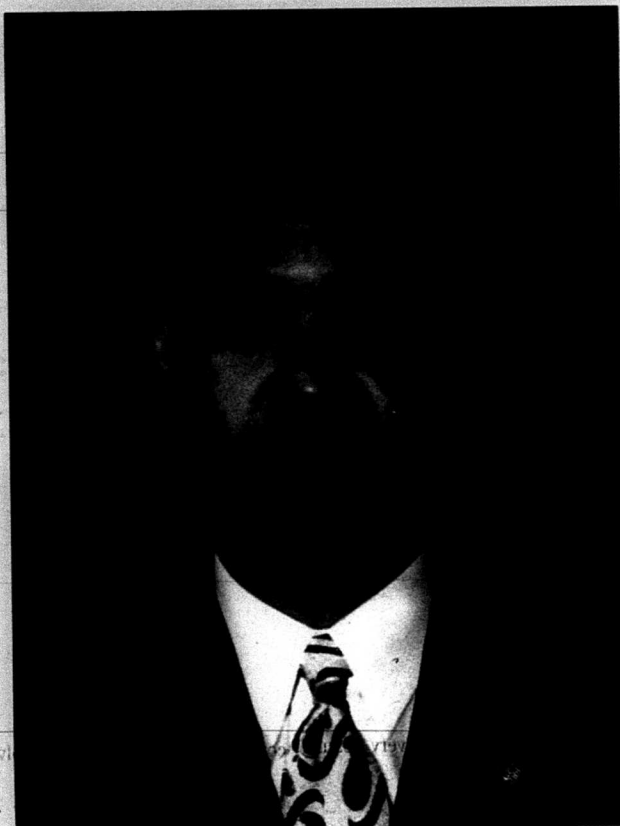
Yee: I have no idea. It's important for the American people to know that this gross miscarriage of justice has severely damaged the reputation of U.S. military justice when the Administration is using military justice to hold accountable terror suspects in Guantánamo.

RC: What are you doing now to heal, to move on from this Kafkaesque nightmare?

Yee: I produced a chronicle of my experience, toward something I hope will be positive and inspire others to struggle for the values that I struggle for.

RC: And you hope for military reforms?

Yee: There's much more work to be done in the military [for] diversity and tolerance and religious freedom.



I also see, one, a leadership failure, as well as two, an intelligence failure. My case has undermined senior military leaders. You have Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller connected with the abuses at Guantánamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, and taking responsibility for the decisions to arrest me, imprison me, bring charges against me. As the case collapsed like a house built on matchsticks, it undermined our senior military leadership. When they make gross errors in judgment, how can these leaders be trusted to lead our young men and women in battle?

There's also an intelligence failure. Many who investigated me were military and federal intelligence officers. If we have another intelligence failure like my case, who's to say it won't lead to another 9/11?

Chaplain James Yee, sharing his own story about being wrongfully detained by the military, while still awaiting an Army apology. Photo by Terry Divyak.

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Continued from Previous Page

RC: You grew up Lutheran, graduated from West Point, and converted to Islam?

Yee: I converted to Islam before being deployed in the first Gulf War, not long after I graduated West Point. Initially I rejected the Islamic doctrine because I was raised a Christian, [but] I learned that what I believed as a Christian was found right in Islam. Muslims are awaiting the second coming of Christ.... And you find the biblical prophets — Abraham, Moses, David, and Noah and his ark, Solomon and others — within Islam. All of them taught the simple message that God is one, as Jesus and Mohamed taught. I became Islamic based on the simple belief of one.

RC: Did you sense anti-Muslim attitudes in the military before 9/11?

Yee: In general, before 9/11, not many people knew much about Islam. You had the severe ignorance experienced by all Muslims. During the chaplain basic course, a Unitarian and I were earmarked for hellfire by the other chaplains. Even among these Army chaplains, where pluralism is supposedly ingrained, you find those who are very close-minded: their way is the only way.

RC: Did you immediately find hostility to Muslims at Guantánamo?

Yee: I had been warned by previous chaplains that it was a very hostile environment, as emphasized strongly by my predecessor.

RC: And you were concerned about abuse of detainees at Guantánamo?

Yee: I had an open mind initially, but I had read media reports before going to Guantánamo. For example, the first prisoners resisted medical examinations [because] the doctors sent were women. These prisoners came from a more conservative Islamic countries [and] forcing them to strip down in front of women physicians caused tensions. In another incident, the prisoners made turbans with towels so they could pray with a prayer cap, a tradition in Islam. The guards knocked these turbans off with the butts of their rifles, clearly [violating] religious practice of prisoners. How does this help the mission of holding prisoners and glean information from them?

RC: Did that pattern of abuse continue once you were at Guantánamo?

Yee: It increased. There were a growing number of [incidents]: the most infamous was the desecration of the Koran reported in *Newsweek*, [and] an investigation confirmed several incidents where the holy Koran was desecrated, abused, and mistreated.

RC: And this led to the prisoner protests and disturbances?

Yee: Protests, disturbances, riots, hunger strikes, [plots] to commit suicide in protest of how the holy Koran was treated and how prisoners were treated as Muslims.

RC: The hospital was considered a showplace at Guantánamo, but you describe disturbing conditions there.

Yee: Right. The detainees at the hospital who were despondent had to be forced with tubes that were forcefully inserted through the nose and into their stomachs so they could be kept alive. Recent reports say that up to 30 [detainees] are currently being force-fed. There were two [when I was there, so] conditions have worsened, contrary to what the military says.

"I was threatened with the death penalty. I was treated like an 'enemy combatant,' transferred to the Consolidated Naval Brig in Charleston, South Carolina, where the U.S. citizen 'enemy combatants' — as declared by our President — were being held. I was chained and transferred under sensory deprivation: [placed in] blackened goggles so I could not see, and in heavy industrial earmuffs so I could not hear."

RC: And juveniles were also detained at Guantánamo?

Yee: It's common knowledge that youngsters as young as 12 years old were held there.

RC: Did you report your concerns about abuse of detainees to your superiors?

Yee: I had an ongoing role as the Muslim chaplain to provide my observations and recommendations, so I was making these issues known to the command. My report helped resolve problems, and I was recognized with awards. Two days before my arrest, I received the best officer evaluation report [of my] 14 years as a commissioned officer.

RC: Were you the subject of suspicion before your arrest?

Yee: I had heard rumors, but my commanders assured me that I was doing more than [expected]. When I was arrested, I thought it was absurd and ridiculous, that it would be cleared up in a matter of hours.

RC: And then you ended up in solitary confinement for 76 days.

Yee: Seventy-six days of being accused of espionage, spying, aiding the enemy, and mutiny and sedition. Capital crimes. I was threatened with the death penalty. I was treated like an "enemy combatant," transferred to the Consolidated Naval Brig in Charleston, South Carolina, where the U.S. citizen "enemy combatants" — as declared by our President — were being held. I was chained and transferred under sensory deprivation: [placed in] blackened goggles so I could not see, and in heavy industrial earmuffs so I could not hear.

RC: And you were held incommunicado?

Yee: Yes. I wasn't allowed to contact my family. I had disappeared off the face of this earth. They actually found out where I was from media reports.

RC: Then the government case collapsed because there was no evidence against you.

Yee: Zero. It's the most disturbing part. I was accused of having classified documents and a review was not initiated on classified information. They dropped the case.

RC: Do you think the arrest was to silence your concerns about abuse at Guantánamo?

Yee: It was the result of the inexperience of the intelligence officers — their overzealousness — as well as bigotry towards my ethnicity and my religion. Someone asked, "Who the hell does this

ation Chinese-American, an individual whose family is deeply rooted in the military, who's been recognized at the highest levels by the U.S. government — it could happen to anyone.

Second, [I hope] my book will inspire others to invest their time and resources in struggling for diversity, tolerance, religious freedom, humane treatment of prisoners.

Third, my book [illuminates] the Islamic culture which would help those who are fighting this war on terrorism. By reading my book, they'll be better able to analyze information correctly. I saw gross misanalysis of information — a huge waste of time and money. They're getting the wrong people, like me, and that only hurts the U.S. and puts our own soldiers and civilians in danger.

RC: It's appalling that the government completely contrived a case against a person with your distinguished record of service without any evidence to support it.

Yee: Yes. We see a pattern in this post-9/11 era of people who dissent being cast off by many as unpatriotic, when this is completely against what America stands for. Thomas Jefferson, I believe, said, "Dissent is the best form of patriotism." ■

Chinese Taliban think he is, telling us how to treat prisoners?"

RC: Your book has a strong message on injustice and civil liberties.

Yee: The first message is that the current approach to fighting this war on terrorism within our own borders is a threat to the civil liberties of ordinary Americans. If this could happen to me — a West Point graduate, a third-gener-



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Don Quixote

By Miguel de Cervantes (trans. by Edith Grossman)

Harper Penennial, 2005

Paperback, 992 pages, \$16.95

Don Quixote

By Miguel de Cervantes (trans. by John Rutherford)

Penguin Books, 2003

Paperback, 1,032 pages, \$10

By JOHN SISCOE

Contributing Writer

Don Quixote de la Mancha, the first great European novel, is an undisputed classic of world literature. It has remained in print

for 400 years and has been translated into more than 100 languages. Aside from its literary prestige and influence, it has inspired scores of paintings, sculptures, musical works, plays, and films. Its two protagonists, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, are two



of the most well-known and loved characters in literature.

And yet, when out of a sense of cultural duty, simple curiosity, or a desire to be amused we actually sit down to read *Don Quixote*, a curious thing is likely to happen. Within a few pages we grow increasingly baffled, bored, and even repelled. After a while we place the novel on the shelf — never, in most cases, to touch it again.

What we'd expected was a comedy about a man who, imagining himself a knight-errant, goes around Spain righting wrongs and getting into trouble. And it's true that Don Quixote is that, but only in the sense that *King Lear* is about an obnoxious old man who misjudges his daughters. In fact, *Don Quixote* is a complex and ambitious work that eludes summary. It is, among many other things, an elaborate satire on chivalric tales, an extended series of philosophical meditations, an unrivaled portrait of Spain in the late 16th century, and a sustained examination of human cruelty. Cervantes incorporates pastorals, romances, ballads, literary criticism, and fantasy into this sprawling grab-bag of a novel, where the romantic and the bawdy, the idealistic, and the idiotic jostle against one another. Our puzzlement with *Don Quixote* stems in part from vertigo: the book is a great

deal more than we had bargained for.

The complexity and range of *Don Quixote* make it a daunting task for the translator. In English we've had some excellent efforts, beginning with Sir Thomas Shelton's marvelous translation of 1612 and Tobias Smollett's lively *Quixote* of 1755. The 20th century saw three distinctive and first-rate versions by Samuel Putnam, J.M. Cohen, and Walter Starkie.

The surprising and very good news is that all these versions have now been surpassed by the recent translations of John Rutherford and Edith Grossman. Each has delivered a *Quixote* in lively and idiomatic English that is as close to Cervante's original as is possible. Grossman's version has gotten more press, but that's because her publishers took the trouble to pay for it. The truth is that both translations are equally fine.

If you want to give Cervante's masterpiece a first (or another) try, but can't decide which version to pick, read the same passage in both translations and let your ear be the judge. Whatever your choice, you can't lose. I tried this with five passages before ending up with Rutherford. Good luck on the journey if you take it — it's quite a ride. ■

In fact, *Don Quixote* is a complex and ambitious work that eludes summary. It is, among many other things, an elaborate satire on chivalric tales, an extended series of philosophical meditations, an unrivaled portrait of Spain in the late 16th century, and a sustained examination of human cruelty.

Order Restored, and a Gag Reprised

The Eel

Directed by Shohei Imamura

Now on DVD

By LESTER GRAY

Arts Editor

There are two distinct styles represented in *The Aristocrats*. One is the male locker-room school of humor: a gross-out contest. The other employs a bit more creativity and finesse.

The *Eel*, a sort of love story from director Shohei Imamura, blends a brutal murder, deep remorse, and borderline slapstick. This hybrid commentary on Japanese society collected the Golden Palm Award at Cannes in 2000.

Protagonist Takuro Yamashita is a blue-suited, white-collar automaton — one of millions. He dutifully does his nine-to-five and fishes on the weekend for relaxation. So stereotypically is his character drawn that comic relief seems inevitable. Imamura decides to first give us some graphic violence.

Takuro's compartmentalized life minimizes variables and surprises; the exception is his spouse whom he suspects of cheating on him. Sneaking home early from his angling retreat, he finds his wife expressing more pleasure in the act of infidelity than a husband should ever have to witness. Taking leave of his dispassion, Takuro slices the two lovers into pieces. Covered with blood he turns himself in.

After eight years in prison, he emerges, stolid as ever, with a few quirks from institutionalization. His only treasured possession is an eel, his preferred conversation partner. The pet doubles as a gag metaphor for the guilt he nurses.

On parole, Takuro sets up a barbershop, doing his best to avoid trouble. That this won't be easy is evident from the moment an attractive female, a dead ringer (get it?) for his deceased wife, offers to work in the salon for free. Her presence draws her dastardly ex-beau, who is after the estate of the young woman's licentious and demented mother.

There's a mild hilarity that winds through the life of Takuro, a fellow who only wanted to retreat into self-indulgent grief with his pet, mourning that one tragic lapse of discipline and his wife's death — in that order.

While there's no doubt *The Eel*, a send-up of the Japanese preoccupation with order, plays more intimately for audiences in Japan, its humor is to a large extent universal.

The Aristocrats

Directed by Paul Provenza

Now on DVD

Vaudivillians and the comedians who spawned in their tradition had a joke they saved, with good reason, to share with fellow entertainers off-stage. The framework of this gag features a family who, after auditioning an off-color skit for a talent agent, is asked what they call themselves. The reply is a somewhat haughty "The Aristocrats!" — a punch line standing in stark and humorous irony with the act, e.g., an aging couple farting "Yankee Doodle" in harmony.

What keeps this joke alive is its mutability, which allows comedians to riff both on the makeup of the family and the act, the only constants being the talent agency and "The Aristocrats" kicker.

The Aristocrats, produced by comedy veterans Penn Jillette of Penn and Teller and Paul Provenza, showcases contemporary comics, who reminisce, reflect, and improvise on this old standard. As you might imagine, material considered inappropriate has changed considerably over the past several decades. The result is some extremely blue renditions.

There are two distinct styles represented. One is the male locker-room school of humor: a gross-out contest. The other employs a bit more creativity and finesse.

Among the many displaying their wanton wit are Whoopi Goldberg, George Carlin, Jon Stewart, Drew Carey, Steven Wright, Bill Maher, Eddie Izzard, Harry Shearer, Martin Mull, Hank Azaria, Paul Reiser, and Sarah Silverman.

View at your own discretion. ■

Adventures
in Irony

Dr. Wes Browning



Kvetch-a-Sketch

Once more into the breach.

Even when I write about something only mildly controversial I tend to get that feeling. I think it stems from growing up in a world-class dysfunctional family, in

which my official name was "Your Idiot Son" — as in "what did Your Idiot Son just say?" or "When is Your Idiot Son going to shut up and take out the garbage?"

My trepidation is doubled when I realize that the controversial subject may itself be about dysfunctionality, so all my thoughts on the subject will probably serve to stimulate recollections of being backhanded for expressing thoughts.

That's what came to mind when I heard of this whole Mohammed-cartoon controversy. First: the world is one giant dysfunctional family. Second: Ouch, I'm the poster-child. Third: Shouldn't I be ducking right now?

Is it too much to ask people professing to defend a religion of peace to be merely nonviolent? Nonviolent doesn't mean peaceful, it just means not hurting people. You can still raise a lot of hell within those parameters.

In case you've been in a padded cell for the last couple of weeks, lucky you. The news is that back in September a Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, published a bunch of cartoons, most of which depicted the prophet Mohammed. This was done because the paper's cultural editor, Flemming Rose, had learned of difficulties a Danish writer had in getting his children's book about the prophet written. The editor thought that sounded like self-censorship right there in the State of Denmark.

Self-censorship! Man the ramparts! Don't shoot till you see the whites of your own eyes!

I mean, what's the proper remedy for self-censorship? If I cut off the hand that wags at me, do I not bleed? Yes I do, it's my own friggin' hand.

I'm trying to fathom the thinking on all sides of this issue. So Flemming Rose was one of those kids who realized at a certain age that he had never previously said the f-word to his parents (a word which in Danish means "pull my finger,"

I imagine), so all at once said it to them and found out immediately why he had never said it before. It was because, before then, he had had some sense. After that, he had no sense at all, as any that remained was knocked out of him, so he continued behaving senselessly to this day, and here we are. This is what they call the cycle of abuse.

Sure, (understatement alert) the widespread violent reaction has been dysfunctional also. What is especially dysfunctional is the reaction that says, "Oh yeah, well then, here are 12 hideous cartoons that will be certain to insult the Jews," or, "Now we will burn American flags, or we will burn the embassy of the country your paper is printed in." "Oh, well, if you're going to insult me, like that, I'm going to punch this other guy. Then you'll be sorry."

Is it too much to ask people professing to defend a religion of peace to be merely nonviolent? Nonviolent doesn't mean peaceful, it just means not hurting people. You can still raise a lot of hell within those parameters.

I'd wish a pox on everyone's house but it seems to have already arrived. Now it's become necessary for an ex-president to warn the general public against substituting anti-Islam for anti-Semitism, and that some of the cartoons in question did in fact cross the line from political commentary to religious intolerance. That would be the same ex-president that came up with "Don't ask, don't tell."

A little more than 500 years ago, Muslim Spain had a similar rule regarding non-Muslims, which made it more, not less, tolerant than the rest of Europe. Far slightly more than two hundred years ago American revolutionaries were publishing tracts under fake names because there was no freedom of speech here yet. As recently as the 1940s, Europe fought a big war in which freedom of speech was a peripheral issue.

Maybe that's a clue. It wasn't much later that I got my first chemistry set, and had the urge to



Fri., Jan. 20, 4:50 p.m., First Avenue and Bell Street.

Officers at the request of his parole officer contacted suspect, a transient Black male aged 44. They had been informed that a warrant had been issued for his arrest for failing to report. He was placed under arrest. Suspect was found to have a crack pipe in his possession that field-tested positive for cocaine. He was booked into King County Jail for parole violations.

Mon., January 30, 6:30 p.m., 800 block S. King St. - Under the I-5 Viaduct.

Officers contacted the suspect, an Asian male aged 30 for camping under the I-5 overpass on the 800 block of King St. This is known as a high narcotics area, and is posted "No Trespassing, No Loitering." During the investigation officers discovered that the man was active with the Department of Corrections. They contacted his DOC officer who stated that the suspect was in violation of his probation and was to be placed into custody. He was arrested and released to the DOC, and was trespassed from the I-5 underpass area for one year.

Wed., Feb. 1, 11:30 a.m., Pike St.

Officers patrolling the Post Alley area observed a transient Native American male aged 60 in the doorway of the Il Bistro Restaurant, located in the Pike Place Market. He was known to officers from previous contact, and is known to be trespassed from the market for one year. Suspect was also drinking a beer. He was given a citation for violation of the open container laws, trespassed from the market for another year, and released. Police requested that charges of Criminal Trespass be filed.

Wed., Feb. 1, 5:52 p.m., Bell St.

Officers working with the DOC spotted the suspect with a couple of other people on Bell St. The suspect, a transient white male aged 36, was known to be active with the DOC, and has several drug conditions to his parole. He saw the police car and attempted to avoid detection by walking quickly southbound and then running through a parking lot. Officers were able to contact him, and the DOC officer present found him in violation of his probation. He instructed the police to take him into custody, and the suspect was arrested. He was interviewed and released to the DOC for work crew.

Wed., Feb. 1, 6:44 p.m., King St.

Suspect, a transient Black male aged 45, was observed by the police and DOC officers walking on King St. He is a known parole violator, and was stopped and contacted. The DOC officer directed police to take the suspect into custody and search him. During the search, unspecified drugs were found in his pants pocket. He was interviewed and released to the DOC for work crew.

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.

Bus Chick,
Transit
Authority

Carla Saulter



Bussin' it in the Motor City

Earlier this month, I traveled to Detroit for Super Bowl XL. My fiancé, Adam, is from "The D," as he lovingly calls it, and we planned the trip long before we knew the Seahawks

would be playing. Though we did not attend the game, we proudly represented Seattle at the associated festivities.

One of the best things about Detroit is its people. Negative stereotypes aside, I have not met friendlier folk anywhere on the planet. Detroit is a place where you can have conversations with strangers — not the kind where you mumble something like, "Nice weather" and then pretend to be checking a missed call on your cell phone, but real exchanges that leave you feeling like you've made a new friend.

One of the worst things about Detroit is its public transportation. Despite the fact that a third of the city's residents do not have access to a car, automobiles reign supreme (they don't call it the Motor City for nothing), and the bus system is virtually unusable. Bus stops do not have schedules or maps or benches, or even signs that list the routes that stop there. If you manage to find a schedule, don't count on your bus showing up at the stated time, and don't count on it stopping unless you stand on the curb and flag it down like a taxi.

Luckily, the friendliness of Detroit's people provides an often overlooked amenity: frequent

bus-wide discussions. Regular bus riders know of what I speak. It usually starts with someone holding court near the front of the bus, talking to a few people seated nearby. Soon, someone a few seats back chimes in with an opinion, and before you know it, even the bus driver is involved.

Though there was a lot of talk about football on this visit, my favorite bus-wide discussion was on the route we took from downtown to my future father-in-law's house. We got on mid-conversation, when a few men seated behind the driver were debating the merits of California as a place to live. (I'd been explaining for several days where, exactly, Seattle was, and so was heartened when one man mentioned Oregon and Washington as lovely alternatives.)

A few stops down Grand River, a middle-aged woman climbed aboard, full of opinions about Saddam Hussein's trial. The conversation shifted to politics, and Adam, never one to shy away from a friendly debate, eventually offered his two cents. I remained silent, preferring, as always, my role as the Invisible Bus Chick.

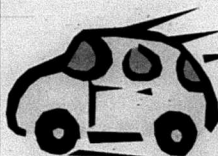
Though I rarely participate in bus-wide discussions, they are a large part of the reason I prefer public transportation. I am always moved by the ease of conversation, the knowledge that is exchanged, and most of all, by the spontaneous sense of community that develops among strangers with perhaps nothing more in common than the shared ride. I could never trade that for easier access to the mall. ■

Despite the fact that a third of Detroit's residents do not have access to a car, automobiles reign supreme.

Got a question or comment about public transportation in Seattle? E-mail Bus Chick at buschick@gmail.com.

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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?

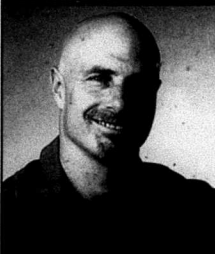
"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit."

Matthew 7:15-19

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Letters

editor@realchange.org

The Councilman Mystique

Dear Real Change,

Yolanda Sindé's recent letter to *Real Change* offered a range of speculation about why the Seattle City Council appointed a white woman to fill Jim Compton's seat when five of the six finalists for the position were women of color. She suggested that the Council feared "radical change," selected a white woman because she is a lesbian, or was defending itself against potential claims of "reverse discrimination."

But Sindé is missing a crucial piece of information. Had David Della voted for Stella Chao, or had Richard McIver supported Chao or Sharon Maeda, Seattle's newest councilmember would have been a

person of color. Sindre may be right that the Council sent a "clear message to women of color" when it appointed Sally Clark. But that message, though issued by a "predominantly white organization," was delivered by the votes of men of color.

Trevor Griffey

Following the Money

Dear Real Change,

I'm writing to correct one item in your 2005 Annual Report. The donor list attributes a contribution in the \$10,000+ category to Laura Wells and Reid Yamamoto. That contribution actually came from the Estate of Margaret A. Wells, my mother. The decision to make this very well-deserved contribution to *RC* was mine; however, the gift came directly from my mom's estate.

Thanks for running this clarification... and keep up the terrific work!

Laura Wells

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.

1964 Civil Rights Act and Beyond

American business moguls are falling behind in printing the new caste system certificates for the poor (all colors) and ahead on issuing invisible classroom instruction that closes the collective mind of youth like a box of cranial bone screws w/ complimentary metal plates, as shared sacrifice shaves her legs in the jacuzzi of social injustice and cares about none of this:

—DAVID S. POINTER

CLASSIFIED

Employment

Housing Support Specialist — Great YWCA position working w/ disabled clients in King Co. Requires exp. w/ housing systems. See details www.ywcaworks.org. FT, \$14-\$16hr DOE+bens. Respond to #6-0203, hr@ywcaworks.org or M. Tschurwald, 1118 Fifth Ave, Seattle, WA 98101. 2/24 DOE

Services

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

Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Wednesday 2/15

Delivered by Dr. Frederick vom Saal, the lecture "Plastic Promises: Better Living or Bodily Harm," focuses on groundbreaking research about the health effects of bisphenol A, a chemical found in common household plastics. Tickets \$10 and up. 7 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Thursday, 2/16

The situation in Iraq is deteriorating: Iraqis wait in line for basic necessities, and the number of soldiers and civilians killed continues to escalate. In a war that appears dismal, award-winning journalist Pratap Chatterjee exposes the private contractors as the only winners in *Iraq, Inc.: A Profitable Occupation*. 7:30 p.m. Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

Refugee Women's Alliance screens the premiere of *I Just Keep Quiet*, a film on human trafficking. Following the film is a presentation on how to help local survivors. Suggested donation \$10. 6:30 p.m., Harvard Exit Theater, 907 E Roy. Info: www.rewa.org.

Thursday 2/16 - Saturday 2/18

Portland dance provocateurs Monster Squad pop the corporate bubble by transforming an office desk into an abstract island, drawing on notions of isolation, desertion, solitude, and vacation. Island Desk combines choreography, installation, and video projections for an existential version of The Office. Tickets \$18. On The Boards, 100 West Roy St., www.ontheboards.org.

Saturday, 2/18

Combining art and activism, Vishavjit Singh created Sikh Toons in the hopes of raising awareness and provoking reflection. His comics focus on the social, political, economic, and religious aspects of life as it pertains to the Sikh community. Singh will also lead a short lesson in comic design. Pre-registration: (206) 623-5124, events@wingluke.org. 10 a.m., Wing Luke Asian Museum, 407 Seventh Ave S. Info: www.sikhtoons.com.

The Health and Healing of the Marketplace is a rich cultural journey through the eyes of the marketplace, featuring African dance, drum, and literary works and special guest Dawud H. Mateen. Tickets \$5. 6 p.m., Richard Hugo House, 1634 11th Ave., www.hugohouse.org.

Saturday 2/18 - Monday 2/20

Festival Sundiata showcases the art, culture, and history of Africans and African Americans featuring food, art, clothing and craft vendors, stage performances, art and photography exhibits, films, workshops, historical lectures, children's activities, and more. Sat.-Sun. noon-8, Mon. noon-5, Seattle Center.

Through Sunday 2/19

Remembering the Japanese American Internment honors the courage of those who were incarcerated, those who served in the military while their families were interned, and those who resisted. Featured speakers include Karen Korematsu, whose father Fred challenged the internment before the U.S. Supreme Court and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and Professor Lorraine Bannani, author of an article on internment court battles and the lessons for post-9/11. 5 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 15, Seattle University School of Law, Second Floor, 901 12th Avenue. Info: sjsj@seattleu.edu, (206) 398-4988.

Weaving together the Seattle trial of the Northwest-based white supremacist group called The Other and the assassination of Jewish radio rock host Allan Berg, *God's Country* shows that radical right hate groups are more serious than a simple TV sound bite. Commissioned by ACT in 1988, the play has

been produced hundreds of times across the globe. Tickets \$18. 7:30 p.m., Capitol Hill Arts Center, 1621 21st Ave., www.capitolhillarts.com.

Tuesday 2/21

After studying capitalism for 40 years, Raymond Baker believes that dirty money, poverty, and inequality are intertwined. Small illicit transactions spiral into massive illegal acts, which are compounded by global income disparities and the corruption that permeates international capitalism. His book, *Capitalism's Achilles Heel: Dirty Money and How to Renew the Free-Market System*, exposes secret bank transactions and the negative effects on countries and people. 7 p.m., University Book Store, 4326 University Way NE.

Director's Corner

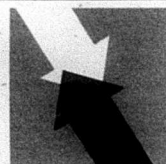


On Valentine's day, Women in Black and several others held a "die-in" at City Hall to protest cuts to shelter in the face of 56 deaths on the street last year. At the same time, the Mayor's office says there will be no cutbacks, and that they will spend whatever it takes to see there is no net loss of beds. Go figure.

Smart people don't just go and pretend to die because they've got nothing better to do. The problem revolves around what is turning into a downright lawyerly approach to counting beds. There have been cuts to shelter. St. Martin de Parre's, for example, has had their budget slashed by 30 percent and is threatening to close two days a week to make up the difference. SHARE, as almost everyone knows, will be defunded in April, but as yet no one really knows exactly what that means.

Meanwhile, some have argued that if only existing shelters would fill each of their beds nightly, the gap would close. This overlooks a number of logistical issues that are clear to providers but apparently lost on the City.

And while this somewhat arcane argument about how many homeless people can sleep on the head of a pin proceeds, everyone agrees we are still roughly 2,000 shelter beds short of meeting demand, the occasional unused cot notwithstanding. And that's why people are dying.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Three Percent for Housing

Issue: House Bill 2418, the Home Security Fund, just cleared a major legislative hurdle last week by passing the Washington State House of Representatives with a 72-24 vote. Now it begins its process in the Senate before it can go to the Governor for her signature. Clearing a long backlog of affordable housing projects waiting to be built, the bill provides \$25 million a year for low-income housing across the state and could provide 2,300 units of affordable housing.

Background: Washington state provides funding for low-income housing through the Housing Trust Fund (HTF), which is part of the state's Capital Budget. The current rapid increase in housing values has increased the revenue generated from the real estate excise tax, which is imposed upon the sale of property. House Bill 2418 would use some of that increase to develop more affordable housing. Counties around the state have housing projects waiting for increased Housing Trust Funds. In King County, there are 12 projects representing 341 units of housing ready to go if the funding were there.

The hot housing market that is increasing the state revenue also drives up housing prices, making even rent unaffordable for many people in Washington. In King County, a worker has to earn \$13.42 an hour just to afford a one-bedroom apartment and over \$16 an hour for a two-bedroom at market value. The 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness states that there is a need for more than 9,000 units of affordable housing in the county to serve homeless people. Increasing state funding for low-income housing is an important part of the effort to end homelessness.

- HB 2418 would allow a little more than 3 percent of the proceeds of the REET revenues to be moved from the General Fund to the Housing Trust Fund.
- HB 2418 would generate \$100 million dollars over the next four years to fund affordable housing and services for the homeless or disabled, as well as for farm workers, domestic violence survivors, families, and more.
- HB 2418 would make a strong program even better. Housing Trust Fund dollars leverage private resources for affordable housing and stimulate economic growth by creating new jobs.

Action: Please ask your State Senator to support House Bill 2418, which could provide 2,300 affordable housing units for low-income people. Basic human dignity requires that safe and affordable housing be available to all people. HB 2418 is a step in the right direction.

You can find your State Senator and her/his email address by visiting www.leg.wa.gov or you can call the Legislative Hotline at 1(800)562-6000 and the operators will deliver your message.

For more information or to take action online, contact the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance at www.wliha.org.

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

WORDS, Continued from Page 1

a methodology, says Tracy, one that allowed interviews to be conducted with immigrants in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

In all, 230 individuals and/or families divulged their stories to interviewers in a nine-month period that spanned 2005 and 2006. Interviewees emigrated from 19 countries. Of those interviewed, 75 percent did not have legal documentation; as such, many of the interviewees in the report are given fictitious names.

Aided by a standardized form, interviewers asked closed- and open-ended questions, designed to elicit detailed testimonials about the immigration experience in the region addressing, but not limited to: reasons for migration; method of travel; family structure; conditions in the workplace; contact with immigration/ law enforcement officials; and access to health care.

Emil Jada, policy intern at NWFCO and daughter of parents who hail from Somalia, conducted nearly 30 interviews with immigrants from Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan. Spending up to an hour with her subjects, she says she had no problems in finding people to speak with. "Many of them stepped up and said, 'I could give you a story,'" recalls Jada.

One story she says that struck her, and is recounted in the report, is of a Somali neighbor's detainment by immigration officials at Sea-Tac Airport:

"My wife and children were waiting for me at the airport but I had no way of letting them know I was there being questioned," recounts Abdi. "They assumed I was not on the flight and went to their relatives' house. When they let me go I called the house and got no answer. I did not know anyone else." Befriended by a Somali airport worker, Abdi was eventually reunited with his family.

Interspersed with the stories are recommendations to fix immigration policy on both the state and federal levels. At the recommendations' core resides a fundamental tenet: "citizenship," says Tracy. The report notes that complexities, backlogs, and red tape make the path to citizenship all but impossible to navigate.

Tracy says she hopes the report will offer a fuller dimension to the immigrant experience, one that allows immigrants to be seen as neighbors, not

foreigners. "Immigrants are a really important part of our community," she says. "And we need to start treating them well and with humanity."

Yasmin, from Oregon, echoes the sentiment with her

story of being harassed because of the assumption she hailed from Mexico.

"The whole incident terrified me," says Yasmin. "I was also upset that people who witnessed this incident chose not to intervene, but left me alone, even though I was being harassed because of the color of my skin and the perception of me being an undocumented worker. Incidents like this should not happen to anyone regardless of skin color or immigration status." ■

[Resource]

You can read the stories in *In Our Own Words: Immigrants' Experiences in the Northwest* for yourself, check out the NWFCO website: www.nwfc.org.

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REDESIGN, Continued from Page 1

Others have called for having a playground or an off-leash dog area, while government officials on the team, including Jordan Royer of the mayor's office, King County facilities staffer Bud Parker and Al Poole of the city's Human Services Department, have pressed to remove some grass and trees, pave more of the park, and end meal programs.

The ideas have alarmed team member Tamara Menteer, program director at the low-income Frye Apartments. In a November letter she wrote to Goldberg, Menteer described homelessness as an "elephant in the closet" of the group's discussions.

"The question of 'how to address the scary-looking indigents?' seems to be a consistent subtext of the planning process," Menteer wrote.

Advisory team members say the park is for everyone, but ideas such as getting rid of the grass so people can't take naps, avoiding gardens because they will become toilet areas, and getting rid of feeding programs target the poor and homeless, she added.

"Tearing up the park would be an absolute crime," Menteer says. "There is nothing wrong with that park physically."

Jim Brewer, a lawyer who attended the first public workshop and tour of City Hall Park in September, agrees with Menteer that capital improvements are not the answer. He advocates more operating funds to keep the park clean and hold events — and thinks cutting down trees, paving, and fencing the area are all bad ideas.

Doug Vann, a resident of the Tashiro-Kaplan Artists Lofts, said trees are expendable.

"Trees are moveable furniture in urban spaces," Vann said during the tour. "People here forget they have 1,000 trees if they drive a half-hour out of Seattle."

A man who'd been sitting in the park walked over to voice his disagreement.

"We don't care what you think. The homeless have a right to live," he said. "You're not going to change shit in this park." ■

[Event]

A public workshop on the redesign of City Hall Park, including a first look at schematic designs, takes place Thurs., Feb. 16, from 5 to 6:30 p.m., in the community room of the Tashiro-Kaplan Artists Lofts, 115 Prefontaine Place, Seattle. E-mail or phone comments to cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov or (206) 684-7033.

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Zoned Out:

Who Wins & Who Loses in the New Downtown Plan
A Community Forum

Thursday, Feb. 23, 2006
6 - 8 pm
Gethsemane Lutheran
Church
Fellowship Hall
911 Stewart St., Seattle



Are developers taking away our downtown?
What does the new Downtown Height & Density Plan mean
for **low-and moderate-wage workers**? How can the
zoning changes benefit Seattleites of all incomes?
Come hear about the intersection of:

- low-income housing
- living wage jobs
- transportation
- human services
- parks
- neighborhood amenities

Speakers include Sharon Lee, Low Income Housing Institute; Jim Diers, neighborhood organizer; Linda Weedman, Downtown YWCA; and a Downtown service worker. Time will be left for audience participation.



Sponsored by Real Change newspaper, SAGE-Seattle Alliance for Good Jobs and Housing for Everyone, Seattle Human Services Coalition, Transportation Choices Coalition, and Meals Partnership Coalition

Parking available in parking lot behind church for \$3.
Accessible by bus. Snacks and drinks provided.
Childcare available by RSVP: 206-441-3247 x253.
Questions: edix@seattlegoodjobs.org