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ISSUES • INSIGHT • IMPACT

Questioning Corporate Subsidies

New report on tax breaks raises
issue of public benefit

By CYDNEY GILLIS
Staff Reporter

If a struggling mother on welfare doesn't get a job, Washington state cuts off her assistance. If the tax benefits given to billionaire Paul Allen, Microsoft, or the Seattle Sonics don't pay off in promised jobs or tax revenue, the state does nothing.

Fair?

For corporations in their own state, some Minnesotans didn't think so. So, back in 1994, when the nation was debating welfare reform, they argued companies should be held to account just like welfare recipients.

The result was a first-of-a-kind Economic Development Accountability Law that, in part, requires companies receiving tax subsidies to guarantee a certain number of living-wage jobs or other public benefits. If they don't, they're subject to "clawback" — paying back the subsidy.

It's a model that Seattle's League of Women Voters holds up for Washington state in a new report it has released on corporate tax subsidies. The report questions the public benefit of tax giveaways to Allen, Boeing, Microsoft, and others — a hot topic in Seattle at a time when the Sonics are demanding \$220 million in taxes to remodel KeyArena again.

"This is one big mess," Seattle Chamber of Commerce president Steve Leahy said of the Sonics at a forum the league held last week on tax breaks. But, "It's nobody's fault. It's the macroeconomics of major-league sports."

Those economics, Leahy explained, involve expanding KeyArena to add eating areas, stores, and lounges that will encourage fans to stay longer and buy more in the facility — sales the Sonics would get a cut of to subsidize basketball player salaries, which now average \$4 million a year in the NBA, said City Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck.

Paying for a KeyArena remodel, Steinbrueck said, would be an enor-



MEMBERS OF CAPITOL HILL'S SIX-BUILDING COOPERATIVE HAVE SPENT TWO DECADES PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING WHERE TENANTS ARE EXPECTED TO MANAGE THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. PHOTO BY SHERRY

Community Transit

After review and effort at revival, co-op to end on Capitol Hill

By ADAM HYLIA
Editor

Edie Welch and her daughter had moved seven times by her little girl's fifth birthday. It was hard to find a cheap place to rent that wasn't substandard. So Welch was especially relieved to find a Mercer Street apartment building that was safe, well-maintained, and populated with friendly neighbors.

Twenty years later, her daughter has flown the coop and is now an Urban Planning student at MIT. Welch is still living in a building owned by the Capitol Hill Housing Improvement Program and managed, as it was back then, by the tenants themselves.

For Welch and several other single moms and hundreds of others, CHHIP's buildings have been an affordable and inviting place to live — where tenants weren't called tenants, but members who collected the rent, selected new neighbors, did the upkeep, and worked

out their finances through group meetings. The co-op, Welch says, has provided "not only cheap rent but a sense of community."

The cooperative management system that the non-profit housing provider CHHIP has used since it first became a landlord in the early 1980s will come to an end. Two buildings in the Rainier Valley and one in northeast Seattle ended their cooperative management last year, merging into the non-profit's conventional property-management operations. Capitol Hill's co-op will follow suit July 1. Co-op members will hand over their responsibilities of budgeting, selecting new members, collecting rent, and maintaining the buildings — and to pay for staff doing this work, their rents are likely to go up by \$30 in January 2007.

It's a group decision of residents and CHHIP management. The Mutual Housing Council — Capitol Hill, which

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The City and SHARE/WHEEL are near a welcome agreement on privacy

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Colman Dock remodel could turn waterfront into haven for salmon

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Kent military wife Stacy Ban-norman supports the troops — and stands for peace

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Anya Kamientz offers a new manifesto to the young and in hock

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Vital Service, Vital Talks

For SHARE and city, there's light at the end of the tunnel

By ADAM HYLIA
Editor

Cross your fingers. The four-month dispute between the city and its largest and cheapest shelter provider may soon have a happy ending.

The city's Human Services Department (HSD) and SHARE/WHEEL made good progress in discussing their differences over the Safe Harbors data collection system Monday. The parties drafted a mutual agreement that they have refused to disclose to the press — not until their constituencies sign off.

The final agreement may look something like what City Councilmember Nick Licata proposed about a month ago: that SHARE, the city's largest and most cost-efficient provider of shelters, collect demographic information on those who sleep in them on a quarterly basis, with no personal identifiers (name, date of birth, gender, Social Security number) needed.

That the parties are still talking is a victory in itself. The Very Rev. Robert Taylor, Dean of St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, gets lots of credit for using the gravitas of his position to convene Monday's meeting. Our respect also goes to City Councilmembers Nick Licata and Jan Drago, who have succeeded in keeping the issue alive in the face of a slow-moving bureaucracy. Drago worked with the Mayor's Office, and Licata originated the proposal for the manual survey that SHARE/WHEEL and Seattle's Human Services Department (HSD) discussed for four sessions before talks finally broke down. The talks mediated by Taylor picked up where these left off.

SHARE/WHEEL has objected to the personal data system on grounds that

are both logistical — that residents at self-managed shelters won't interview each other about their personal backgrounds, or enter information into computers that they don't have — and moral. People shouldn't have to release their personal information to receive a necessity of life.

But perhaps the most compelling argument for SHARE/WHEEL is that data collection shouldn't trump the direct services that keep people alive tonight.

The 13 congregations that host SHARE/WHEEL shelters, their leaders, and other sympathizers in the religious community have never lost sight of this fact. In a public break much touted by HSD officials, the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness urged the homeless group to drop its opposition to Safe Harbors. A letter stating that there was "no more time, nor need, for oppositional tactics" became public.

The city seized on this as a sign that resistance was cracking. They were wrong. When SHARE threatened to encamp 300 homeless people in three downtown parks, the community — the 13 churches, their members, and others — made it clear that they would support homeless people squatting in a city park to protest the loss of shelter.

A solution that avoids creating Tent Cities V, VI, and VII will save face for the city. Mayor Nickels' office will try to recast this as something other than the concession that it is. That may take some doing. But what the city gets out of it — besides unoccupied parks — is mended relations with its partners on the Committee to End Homelessness.

The committee recently began to discuss a sort of protocol for member agencies to use before they rob Peter to

pay Paul, as the city planned to do last December when it deep-sixed SHARE and cut other emergency shelters by as much as 20 percent.

There is a bigger picture here that anyone sincerely interested in ending homelessness needs to understand. SHARE/WHEEL's peripatetic Tent City strategy, which has caused neighborhood after neighborhood to first confront homelessness personally and then come to a new understanding of the poor, has done more to build the political will to end homelessness than all the Task Force meetings of the past three years combined. They have kept homelessness in the press and in people's faces. SHARE/WHEEL has not allowed us to be complacent.

But there is another argument. Dignity isn't something that is can be measured and entered into a computer as a "metric." And while few would argue that SHARE/WHEEL's self-managed shelter is perfect, they provide a peer-managed alternative that most guests find far less stigmatizing than the alternative. There's something deeply wrong with any response to homelessness that doesn't have room for organizations like SHARE/WHEEL.

If the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness is about fulfilling a bureaucratic requirement to get federal grants, then fine. Let's just stop kidding ourselves and admit that it's about pushing bits of paper around. But if we're serious, we need to work together and allow conflict to move us to higher ground. Ending homelessness is a huge, audacious, visionary goal that is going to take all of us, including homeless people themselves. We need SHARE/WHEEL. Now more than ever. ■

If the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness is about fulfilling a bureaucratic requirement to get federal grants, then fine. Let's just stop kidding ourselves and admit that it's about pushing bits of paper around. But if we're serious, we need to work together and allow conflict to move us to higher ground.

REAL CHANGE

Real Change is published weekly and is sold by the poor and homeless of Seattle. Vendors receive 65¢ of the \$1.00 paid for this paper.

Mission Statement:

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

The Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Programs include the Real Change newspaper, the StreetWrites peer support group for homeless writers, the Homeless Speakers Bureau, and the First things First organizing project. All donations support these programs and are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

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Change Agent

With masks and a garage full of activist materials, local playwright Ed Mast is raising social and political awareness through street theater, both for those who participate and those who stumble upon his artistic demonstrations. "My goal is to be a presence that is beautiful and intriguing, drawing people to become engaged," Mast says.

He encouraged actors to stand on street corners reading anti-war poetry when the Iraq War began. Passersby might not hear the entire poem, but "it alerts them to the fight against war," says Mast.

His most recent event, a reading of Rachel Corrie's e-mails describing the tumultuous Gaza Strip and West Bank, took place in Westlake Park on the anniversary of her death during a nonviolent protest over the illegal demolition of a Palestinian home. Participants from Theatersquad and the Palestinian Solidarity Committee wore masks with red tears and held photographs of Corrie. Says Mast: "The event was not just about one person's death, it was about the occupation, the other deaths, and equal rights for Palestinians and Israelis."

—Dena Burke



ED MAST mixing theater and protest in the streets.

Photo by DENA BURKE.

Talkback Time

Thousands march for immigrant justice

By ADAM HYLIA
Editor

For the tens of thousands of people who gathered in Seattle and their hundreds of thousands of fellow marchers in communities across the U.S., Monday, April 10 was an effort to turn the tide against the anti-immigrant rhetoric coming from vigilante border enforcers, right-wing radio provocateurs, and the U.S. House of Representatives. It was a chance to set the record straight.

Covering the street in front of the Federal Building, framed by the rows of high-rises lining Second Avenue, a cry went up from 25,000 mouths for a full measure of human dignity.

That was what Eduardo Ramirez, with his wife, Socorro Bravo, and their son, 4, were after: to counter the scapegoating of undocumented workers for crime, unemployment, and stagnant wages.

Flags of the U.S., Mexico, and Guatemala (below) were among those displayed at the April 10 rally for immigrant justice. Photo by KEN DEAN.



"It's not that we're here to start trouble," said Ramirez, holding his son. He said he favors a guest worker program — which some in Congress have labeled as a blanket amnesty. "I'm certainly not looking for amnesty for all — not if you have a felony. If you're caught dealing drugs, you shouldn't be here."

A law-enforcement approach to illegal immigration would only deepen the racism that Latinos experience in their daily lives, said Bravo. And if every undocumented worker was a felon, how would U.S. businesses get their work done? "You're not going to see white kids out there picking carrots," said Bravo.

A good immigration bill would not legislate that citizens-to-be must learn English. "English is not required to live in the U.S.," said Bravo.

"We don't use English to work. We use our hands and our hearts," said Jovany Barba, standing among three friends who all wore workboots flaked with drywall dust. Barba held a cardboard sign scrawled with "Si se puede."

Spanish was the language of choice for the evening's most impassioned speeches — also its moments of humor. Energizing members of the crowd as the marchers streamed in, speakers chanted "El que no brinca es migra" ("those who aren't jumping are border agents"), most of the crowd bounced up and down, and non-Spanish speakers stood uncomprehendingly immobile. When the speeches did start, elected officials delivered some short and sparkingly affirmative speeches. Mayor Greg Nickels noted how 95,000 King County residents were born outside the U.S. "That's 95,000 people who get up every morning and work hard and pay taxes, and some of whom are going to be the next American citizens," he said to rising cheers. "We say: do not build that wall. Build a pathway for hope."

Rally speakers exulted over the large turnout and promised more: a general strike on Monday May 1, when, organizers hope, immigrants will make their importance felt by their absence. ■

Just Heard...

Party on hold

Organizers of the Working Families Party have decided to call it quits in Washington state, at least for this year.

The drive to create a new party modeled on New York's Working Families, which backs living wages, health care, and other labor issues, relied on passing an initiative this year to legalize cross-nomination or "fusion voting" in Washington state.

Rather than run candidates per se, the WFP, which is active in Connecticut and forming in Oregon, typically nominates the Democrats' chosen candidate, whose name then appears on two lines on a ballot — one for each party.

Voting on the WF line, organizers say, is a way to hold Democrats' feet to the fire on working-class issues. But a recent poll showed low support for the open-ballot initiative because people don't get it, according to Rick Bender, president of the Washington State Labor Council.

"Once you explain, [support] jumps up to 65 percent," Bender says. "We need to do more education" to try again next year.

It rhymes with hypocrisy

U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott coined a new phrase last week for what's ailing the country: It's called "Repocracy."

Last Wednesday on the floor of the House, the Seattle Democrat used the phrase in a speech in which he wroled on Republicans for setting a two-minute limit on taking votes in the House — a move McDermott sees as another blow to democracy.

"Repocracy is government where open debate is replaced by lockstep discipline, and where the rewards for the few become the burden carried on the backs of the many," McDermott said. "Repocracy puts a price on American values and deals only in hard currency" while putting a stop-watch on legislative decisions that affect the lives of every American.

"The two-minute drill forces blind allegiance and stiff-arms Democracy," McDermott added, "but that is the intent of Repocracy."

—Cydne Gillis

Where's the Big Rock Candy Mountain?

Special Agent Larry Carr, who investigates bank robberies from the FBI's regional office, has a unique theory on why Washington state is seventh among the 50 states in terms of per-capita bank heists committed by Butch Cassidy wannabes.

According to Carr, Washington's mild climate, its benevolent charities, and its liberal and drug-tolerant populace makes for a hospitable place for criminals who live outside, then commit crimes to feed their addictions. He told a reporter with the *King County Journal*: "We have a utopian society for the homeless," he said.

Gee, then where is the lemonade springs where the bluebird sings?

—Adam Hylia

More Light, Less Meat

Young salmon could evade predators in waterfront plan

"Overwater coverage is creating environmental problems because you're shading out habitat."

By JENNIFER GORE
Contributing Writer

For the 25,000 commuters who ride the Seattle ferry daily, the \$225 million remodel of the Colman Dock slated to begin this spring means an increase in safety and comfort during their travel. And they're not the only ones with a potential to benefit from the project.

According to Heather Trim, urban bays coordinator for the People for Puget Sound, between two and 12 million juvenile salmon migrate through the corridor near Terminal 48 every year. With environmentally sound planning incorporated into their remodel, the Washington State Department of Transportation could enhance the marine habitat along the waterfront.

"The central waterfront is the most suitable area to create a habitat because the water is shallowest there," says Trim, adding that the biggest threat to juvenile salmon is large predators that hide in darkened water. By creating what she terms a "fish swimway," wherein the pier is pushed back and connected to the dock by a grated roadway, the increase in sunlight would provide a better opportunity for salmon survival.

"Overwater coverage is creating environmental problems because

you're shading out habitat," says Trim. According to her, salmon steer clear of shadowed areas because it takes their eyes nine to 15 minutes to adapt to the dark. Her hope is that the current overwater coverage of the pier would be modified, not expanded.

"In talking with the staff so far, we have definitely felt that they are willing to

be environmentally active," says Trim.

Hadley Green, customer and community relations director for Washington State Ferries, confirms that the WSDOT is indeed working to create an environmentally friendly facility that not only protects the marine life but is also constructed to "green building standards."

See SALMON, Continued next page

Docks of the future: what an environmentally active central waterfront could look like. Illustration courtesy People for Puget Sound.



Short Takes

Bad news on Braam

So much for the five-year plan: It's already off to a bad start in the state's Braam foster care settlement.

In March, an oversight panel released its first monitoring report on the foster-care reforms required by the settlement, noting that the state has failed to take 32 of the 45 action steps that were required by Dec. 31, 2005, under the implementation plan.

Plaintiff lawyers also cite the state's failure to request funding in the 2005-07 state budget for required items such as respite care for foster parents, who often leave the program due to burnout.

The reforms are the result of a class-action lawsuit brought on behalf of foster children who had been bumped from home to home for years on end without a plan or adequate services.

"The Braam plan is not optional," said attorney Casey Trupin with Columbia Legal Services, which has helped launch a new website for foster youth and parents at www.braamkids.org. "We will not allow it to be treated as yet another set of task force recommendations which can be disregarded."

—Cydney Gillis

government's removal of Napoleon Gomez as head of the National Union of Mine and Metallurgical Workers, or Los Mineros.

Following an explosion that killed 65 miners at Mexico's Pasta de Concha mine on Feb. 19, Gomez criticized the mine's owner, Grupo Mexico, for negligence and called for an investigation.

Mexican President Vicente Fox then "removed [Gomez] from office and replaced him with a hand-chosen puppet of Grupo Mexico," said Gaylan Prescott, an organizer with District 12 of the United Steelworkers.

Senior Gomez, Prescott said with a Spanish interpreter, is a good friend, one who supported the Steelworkers 2005 strike against Asarco by organizing pickets there against Asarco's owner, which is Grupo Mexico.

"I saw the news in the TV," said Rosa Aguilar, a Mexican grandmother who is currently living with her son's family in Tukwila. "Napoleon Gomez — he supports the workers. Vicente Fox did a big mistake."

—Cydney Gillis

Reviewing review

The City of Seattle and its police officers' labor representatives sit down to renegotiate the cops' contract later this year. Now's the time for citizens to speak up about citizen oversight of police conduct.

That's the purpose of an April 18 public hearing on the subject of police accountability in front of the City Council's Public Safety, Governmental Relations,

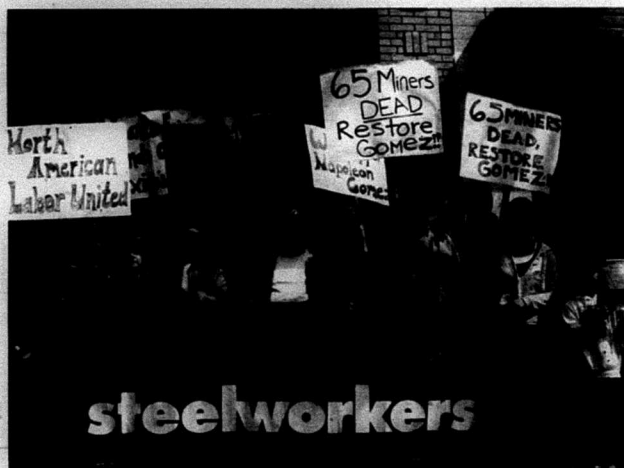
and Arts Committee.

The meeting is not an opportunity to talk about general safety issues, says staffers at City Council member Nick Licata's office. Instead, the committee is soliciting input about the Office of Professional Accountability, which provides a kind of citizen oversight of the police's internal investigations into allegations of misconduct or undue use of force. Community activists see shortcomings in the OPA's process — most recently, in how legal liabilities prevent citizen reviewers of the process from publicly

releasing their findings. How the SPD deals with such allegations is a bargaining chip in labor-management relations.

The public hearing starts at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 18 at City Hall.

—Adam Hyla



STEELWORKERS OUTSIDE THE MEXICAN CONSULATE.
PHOTO BY JUSTIN MILLS.

Hands off, Vicente

Is it the start of true solidarity? While Mexican immigrants take to the streets for their civil rights in America, members of the United Steelworkers union stood up last week for miners in Mexico.

In a small rally outside Seattle's Mexican Consulate, the Steelworkers protested the Mexican

[Feedback]

Public open houses on the Colman Dock plan are scheduled for 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 20 on Pier 50 and 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 25, at the Puget Sound Regional Council. Contact Hadley Green at (206) 515-3913 or SeattleFerryTerminalProject@wsdot.wa.gov or visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/projects/SeattleColmanDock for more information.

SALMON, Cont. from prev. page

Part of their environmental endeavors includes replacing over 2,000 creosote-treated timber pilings under the north trestle with concrete and steel structures, which will reduce contamination of marine life.

However, according to Green, the \$225 million only covers a basic upgrade of the terminal. In order to incorporate additional eco-friendly amenities to the project, WSDOT must generate further funds.

The creation of a commercial multi-use facility along with the remodel of the dock may provide the answer. According to Green, associated development will allow WSDOT to stabilize fares for passengers and to generate revenue for an eco-friendly facility. While there are no specific plans on the drawing board, Green states that all money generated from any commercial development would be put back into the ferry terminal.

"Our business is ferries and creating safe, reliable transportation, but if we could do more down there, then we will," she says.

Trim agrees with the creation of a multi-use facility so long as it does not include further overwater coverage along the shoreline. A large multi-story building at the edge of the waterfront might increase shadowing, says Trim, adding that there is also a concern with the non-marine use of a building that close to the waterfront.

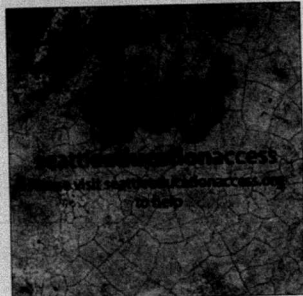
WSDOT is aware of some of these potential problems with development along the pier. Concerns over building use and the legality of collecting revenue from commercial facilities will be addressed as the initial scoping period begins.

"Right now we don't have any specific layout; we're looking at all different possibilities," says Green. WSDOT is working on generating a dialogue among community members about their goals for the ferry terminal, she says.

"This is the time for public and state agencies to comment and give us ideas, alternatives, and strategies for the project," says Green, stating that a community advisory group will be created to oversee the process.

Green urges community members to attend the public open houses. "We have had a discussion with public groups like the People for Puget Sound, the Bay, and the Sound, and hear from the commuters."

"We do see the redevelopment as an opportunity to create environmentally sustainable practices," says Trim. "We are optimistic that they are going to do a great job that will reinvestigate the rest of the waterfront." ■



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When The War Came Home

A Military Wife Speaks Out in Support of America's Citizen Soldiers

Interview by TIMOTHY HARRIS
Staff Writer

I am making sure that when my soldier, and our soldiers, are sent to combat, that this government is going to send them based on the truth. That they send them because it's absolutely necessary; that they don't send them based on lies, and that they don't send them without proper equipment and training, and they don't bring them home and forget them.

Stacy Bannerman is a member of Military Families Speak Out and the wife of a National Guard Reservist serving in Washington State's 81st Battalion. His 2004 active duty mobilization to Iraq created conflicting emotions for Bannerman—a long-time peace activist—that still have not settled. Her new book, *When the War Came Home: The Inside Story of Reservists and the Families They Leave Behind* (Continuum, 2006) describes Bannerman's efforts to support her troops while opposing the war, and explores the many issues raised by the largest wartime mobilization of the National Guard in American history.

Real Change: Tell me a little bit about the history of the National Guard and why the deployment to Iraq has been so unusual?

Stacy Bannerman: The National Guard is this country's oldest militia force and they are the only one who is cast with a dual mission. Their primary focus is serving their state and communities under the command of the state governor and typically that is what they do. However, they can be federalized and then deployed by the President. At this point over 400,000 of them have been deployed in the war on terror. It is absolutely unprecedented.

RC: What are some of the strains that long-term deployment creates for families?

Bannerman: When the mobilization began in 2003, the National Guard was nowhere near prepared on multiple levels. They were not prepared at all to deal with and meet the needs of the families who are left. The military medical care that is offered to soldiers and families once our national guard is federalized is really a broken system. And there are all manner of discrepancies in pay, benefits, training, and provisions between regular active duty soldiers and their families and what happens for the National Guard soldiers and their families.

Once these guys are federalized, even though theoretically and by law, our Guard soldiers and families have got the same exact pay across the board, the reality is that they do not. At least 20% of the National Guard Reserve families took a significant pay cut with the mobilization. There are a number of citizen soldiers that come back from their year in Iraq to find they no longer have a job, or that their business is out of business.

The other reality is that the unemployment rate of young Iraq War veterans—guys in their early 20's—is 3 times that of the national average.

RC: You've said that the government has grossly underestimated the needs of returning soldiers. What are you talking about there?

Bannerman: Actually, just last year, the Veterans Administration turned down over a quarter of a million of veteran's requests for services. Right now, the demand from returning vets is approximately four times what had been anticipated.

RC: What sort of services?

Bannerman: Anything from mental health screening and counseling, assistance in post-traumatic stress disorders, to job placement assistance, to some of the physical challenges in injuries and recuperation. The reality is once the National Guard soldiers are back in the states, they get 30 days paid

leave, and then they're dropped from the active duty payroll. 30 days after that their dental expires. 180 days after being dropped from active duty, the medical benefits expire, so for these guys with lingering injuries and things, the veterans' hospitals, or VA, is really their only avenue. Another reality is that National Guard Reserve soldiers who are wounded in action are coming back and getting significantly lower disability award benefits than their active duty counterparts with similar injuries.

RC: I've heard that, in comparison to past wars, the casualties coming out of this war tend to be more serious.

Bannerman: Soldiers that would have bled out before are getting into intensive care more quickly and technology has advanced. People that would have unquestionably died in earlier wars now often live. And also one of the things the Iraq war has contributed to the arsenal of weapons is the IED, improvised explosive device, and that is creating a different type of injury than we have seen before.

RC: What about the Gulf War syndrome issue? With the first Gulf War you heard a lot about people coming back

with radiation poisoning. I know that this is still an issue for the people of Iraq, but is it still an issue for U.S. soldiers? Is there sort of a Gulf War syndrome waiting to happen?

Bannerman: Unquestionably. The use of white phosphorous and depleted uranium is still an issue. We've got boys who have come back from Iraq, and in less than a year they've got cancer. We have opened up a Pandora's box of medical challenges and illnesses in this war that our soldiers are bringing back home, the likes of which we have never seen.

RC: You described how you and your husband's family, with your own resources, worked to equip your husband with things like body armor and a GPS system and other sorts of gear. Is that still typically going on?

Bannerman: Yes, in fact there's a website, bakesalesforbodyarmor.org. And they get requests from soldiers currently in Iraq, in fact, I don't know if it was a captain, lieutenant, or sergeant, but a leader of one unit actually con-

See BANNERMAN, Continued next page



Local author Stacy Bannerman relaxes at her home in Kent. Photo by Sherry Loeser.

Real Change
April 12 - 18, 2006

INTERVIEW

7

Continued from Previous Page

tacted them and said that all of the men in my unit need side armor plates, can you please send them.

RC: In your book you cite one study that says 50-80 percent of Guard marriages ultimately don't survive the experience and elsewhere you say that 56,000 of army marriages have ended since the war on terror began. Is this domestic fall-out true of all wars or is this one somehow different?

Bannerman: One of the reasons specific to this war is that, comparatively speaking, very few soldiers are fighting it. These guys are serving two, then three and four years of duty, back to back. A few months home in between and they're sent back to the sand box.

RC: I think one of the interesting things about this book is your dual perspective as somebody who is married to a guard member and also very much involved with the peace movement. I'm just curious, would most military families today see you as an ally or a threat? How welcome would you be at a National Guard picnic?

Bannerman: It depends on which family you're talking about. One of the problems is that there's a tendency to not look at or be aware of all of the work that I have done and that Military Families

Speak Out has done in drawing attention to and demanding for support for our troops. I know for a fact that I am the only wife of a soldier in the 81st brigade who has gone to Congress, met with Senators, written letters, and who has continuously made requests for properly outfitting our troops.

RC: Why aren't people putting more pressure on their elected officials?

Bannerman: I don't know because I'm not that person, I don't understand that either. What I'm doing is making sure that our soldiers have got everything they need, that the promises that this government had made to them are being kept. I am making sure that when my soldier, and our soldiers, are sent to combat, that this government is going to send them based on the truth. That they send them because it's absolutely necessary; that they don't send them based on lies, and that they don't send them without proper equipment and training, and they don't bring them home and forget them.

RC: Military Families Speak Out says that there are now 2,900 military families that are members, and there are other veteran's organizations as well that are speaking out against the war. My impression is that it was well into the Vietnam War before this sort of thing started happening. How has this affected the debate on the war?

Bannerman: I think that by having the military families and the veterans at the front lines of this anti-war movement, we bring to it a level of credibility and dignity that could not be found elsewhere or otherwise. We speak the truth because we have lived it. Just like in the sixties in the civil rights movement, it was critical and compelling because the people at the front of it were the people that were most directly paying the price for this nation's failure to guarantee equality and human rights for all. We are the ones that are paying the price for this war, and, we also, I think, in standing up and speaking out, have made it safe for other people to do so. We've also demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt, and this is something that didn't happen during the Vietnam War protests, we have demonstrated and shown the way that it's possible to oppose a policy and support the troops.

RC: Your book ends on a note of ambiguity over whether your husband was going to

reenlist, and whether your marriage was even going to survive. Is there good news there?


Bannerman: The book is authentic. I didn't hide anything. Lorin just signed a new contract with the National Guard just two weeks ago. So, that's where that's at, and so for me and my husband, and hundreds of thousands of other military families, that dance continues. How is it that we find a way to support our loved one and speak out against this war, and break this code of silence in the military? There are no easy answers or easy solutions. ■

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January is 34.7 degrees Fahrenheit. Supposing cardboard boxes have a temperature, how desperate do you have to be to sleep in one?



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I Owe, I Know

Generation Debt: Why Now Is a Terrible Time to Be Young

By Anya Kamenetz
Riverhead Books, 2006

By AUSTIN WALTERS
Contributing Writer

Twenty-four year old Anya Kamenetz opens her first book, *Generation Debt: Why Now is a Terrible Time to Be Young* with an extremely interesting question: "What would you do if you grew up and realized that everything America has always promised its children no longer holds true for you?" Kamenetz, as one of today's young adults aged 18 through 34, feels that her generation has been wrongly labeled as slackers when they are actually victims of an increasingly hostile economic environment who have been cheated out of their inheritance. Hoping to stir things up, *Generation Debt* strives to be part edgy advice book and part socio-political manifesto.

The motivation for the book came from a series in *The Village Voice*, for which Kamenetz was one of the youngest contributing writers, looking at the effect of "New Economics" on "Genera-

tion Debt." While not really presenting any new data, each chapter contains real-life accounts from the trenches of Gen Debt, as Kamenetz showcases a wide range of stories from the people she met during her research. To add validity, the book is full of interesting statistics and extensive research from the country's trusted financial experts.

Kamenetz argues that "the United States' greatest resource for future prosperity and growth is its human capital, also known as educated young people." Notably, according to a 2002 study, of 68 million young people aged 18 to 34, only a quarter have bachelor's degrees and the nationwide high school graduation rate has dropped at an alarming rate from its peak in the 1970s. Add that to the fact that two thirds of four-year college students are graduating with an average of \$23,000 of tuition and credit card debt, and the alarm bells begin to ring true.

How can young people be expected to grow up, get good high paying jobs, raise families, and save for retirement when they start off so drastically far behind? The answer, unfortunately, remains to be seen. Some critics suggest that today's youth are obsessed with a lavish

consumer lifestyle and content to drag their heels to avoid reaching adulthood.

Kamenetz also suggests that the issues are not just economic but political — even "spiritual." Gen Debt is restless about its future, feeling far more impermanence than past generations, in a world wracked by global warming and seemingly endless global war. Why not do whatever makes us happy now, since the future seems cloudy and grim anyway?

Kamenetz makes some compelling arguments and presents some thought-provoking theories, but it's unlikely that she will be sparking an economic revolution with her debut book. In the end, she offers commonsensical yet boring solutions to her fellow Gen Debt-ers, along the lines of having "adult conversations with parents about money, security and success", and "lobbying state governments for a one-cent sales tax for education and a cap on tuition hikes." While not bad suggestions, her advice lacks an inspirational quality; it is missing the pizzazz, or sexiness, or novelty that motivates individuals to spend precious time and money not only on this book, but also on this conversation about debt. ■

Spies and Searches

Triple Agent (2004)
Directed by Eric Rohmer
Chan is Missing (1982)
Directed by Wayne Wang
Now available on DVD

By LESTER GRAY
Arts Editor

Sagas of espionage, from the heady offerings of Le Carré to the melodramatic glamorizations of Ian Fleming, have never understated the profession's inherent perniciousness. *Triple Agent*, based on a true story, gives the genre a deeper twist: one that goes to the real heart of the cloak and dagger.

It's 1936 and Fyodor (Serge Renko), a White Russian Army general and spy, lives in Paris with his Greek wife Arsinoe (Katerina Didaskalou). She is a painter and for the most part steers clear of politics. He is one of a group of Soviet expatriates who stand in opposition to Stalin and the Red (leftist) Russians. But his true allegiances are unclear. As Europe speeds inexorably toward World War II, the roster of opposing players is larger than popular history would suggest, ranging from anti-Hitler Nazis and Trotskyites to moderate Communists and Franco supporters. With political winds swirling and unthinkable alliances forming, who an emissary pretends to be is as dangerous as who they really are.

While Arsinoe does not question Fyodor about his job, there comes a time when even she must seriously ponder which side her spouse, a professional

chameleon, is on. What she doesn't know is that he is asking the same question.

Triple Agent is a rich and patient film that lays bare and to some degree mocks the fragility of our political affiliations. Supported by a superb cast, director Eric Rohmer (*My Night at Maud's*) delivers an unequivocal message: when conflicts get down to the quick, survival trumps ideology.

The most elusive Chan does not want to be found. Director Wayne Wang does not want him found, since, as long as the source of his metaphor remains undiscovered, his cabbies-cum-detectives can continue their whimsical pursuit in and around San Francisco's Chinatown. Wang's 1982 film, now on DVD, sparkles with the insight of fresh eyes and the lightness of a director who does not take himself too seriously.

Asian cabdrivers Jo (Wood Moy) and Steve (Marc Hayashi), in an effort to procure their own taxi license, give Chan (whom we do not meet) \$4,000 to make an under-the-table procurement. When Chan does not return, the hunt is on.

The humor on which the film travels is quirky and at times the jokes are inside, with references such as ABCs (American born Chinese). But there's plenty that needs no interpretation. Winding through narrow streets and hotel hallways, Jo's mock private-eye voiceover introduces us to a smorgasbord of characters. There's the Chinese restaurant chef who is fed up with cooking sweet-and-sour pork; Chan's

wife who can't understand why he can't make more money; and Steve himself, who plays the hipster.

The reason Chan is so hard to find is because he represents Chinese identity in America. You can only find it in shades and insinuations. But while director Wang continues to look, stay with him, 'cause the fun is in the hunt. ■

Restraint II

Once I was tempting the powers of a captain in the Marine Corps, when he smacked me black and blue with curses, threatening to send me away on an ocean liner of insanity, letting loose a flood of memories. The dikes were wide open, sending me tumbling backward through my whole biography where trembling I was interrogated and the doctors watched me. I heard an invisible fleet talking to me of sail boats and cribs where I curled afraid at night. It's probably futile to explain, but you may understand the blaze I went up in when the earth seemed a long way from my feet and I met a lot of angels also tumbling to free themselves from the restraints on is put in from birth: Five Point, like a star (waist, ankles and wrists), Three Point (waist, one ankle, one wrist) — they can tie you down.

—Crysta Casey

Adventures
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning



The Lonely Weird

I have always been obsessed with a certain something or class of things for which I have never found a suitable name. Depending on my mood I call it, or them, the Exceptions, or the Weird, or the Fey. "They" are everywhere, they're Strange, and I like them.

I've found out the hard way many times in my life that being a weirdnessophile can actually get you classed as evil in some circles.

You'd think that a simple taste for the occasional Peculiar would just get me deemed Peculiar myself, but I've found out the hard way many times in my life that being a weirdnessophile can actually get you classed as evil in some circles.

It's a fundamental principle of stupidity, which is to say the science of human stupidity. Humans are SO stupid, these scientists have learned, that when they don't know what a thing is, they often reflexively assign negative qualities to it, partly out of fear of the object and partly out of fear of what the object may reveal about themselves. "Don't listen to the stranger, he lies about me."

Let's say, for example, that you are an aficionado of the works of Pee Wee Herman. Be careful who you mention your fascination to, or they may be making the sign of the cross and trying to round up a posse to help drag you behind a donkey to the county line and leave you to Fife. You will be most in danger from burly churchgoing men who claim to never touch themselves.

I mention Pee Wee Herman only for the sake of definiteness. Really, definiteness is alien to my subject. It's the ignorance you have about the truly Weird which makes it so. It has to be not just any ignorance but a special kind of ignorance.

Think of the movie *Alien*. It simply wouldn't have been so scary if they'd trotted the monster out for you to get a good look at her in a bright light in the first scene. She'd have still been a magnificent threat, but she wouldn't have inspired terror.

"So Wes, what does all this have to do with all the usual stuff you dribble on about weekly?" Well, consider another example. The example that inspired me to write today is the example of a man known as Malua, the Wild Man of Samoa.

Archaeologist Joseph Kennedy (not JFK's dad) discovered the grave of a man named Malua in an old cemetery near Pago Pago, Western Samoa. Because the name looks like it might be Samoan, and because Samoans didn't usually bury their own people in cemeteries, Kennedy researched archives to find out who the grave's occupant had been.

What he discovered was that Malua had been born in the 1800s in the Solomon Islands. He was Melanesian, not Samoan. He somehow ended up as a laborer, possibly against his will, in Eastern Samoa. He and a few fellow "employees" escaped Eastern Samoa by raft to Western Samoa, where they fled to the hills and lived off the land sometime around 1880.

Eventually Malua's companions were captured or died, leaving Malua to a solitary existence in the hills of the island of Tutuila. He was rarely seen by the Samoan natives, except in fleeting glimpses. From one captive, the Samoans learned Malua was a Solomon Islander, but beyond that they knew nothing about him or how he survived.

So it became possible to hang all sorts of fictions on Malua about how Malua lived. If a pig or chicken went missing, Malua ate them, probably alive. When some people disappeared, it was assumed they too were eaten by Malua. He became known as the fearful Wild Man of Samoa. Protect your children!

Eventually, in 1923, Malua was captured. Once the Samoans could see him as a harmless, white-haired, bearded old man they took him in as a friend, and he lived happily ever after, until he died three months later of pneumonia, given to him by his new buddies.

The moral: You have less reason to be afraid of homeless people than they have of you. ■



Tues., March 21, 1:53 p.m., Queen Anne Ave., Mirabeaux Room.

Officers observed the suspect, a transient white male aged 36, sleeping in the doorway on the premises of the Mirabeaux Room. They knew the suspect had been previously trespassed from that location, and verified through dispatch that he had been admonished on 6/13/05. He was placed under arrest for trespassing, and transported to the West Precinct. He was then booked into King County Jail, booked with criminal trespass.

Thurs., March 23, 6:41 p.m., Third Ave.

The suspect, a transient Black male aged 56, was observed standing on the sidewalk with his shirt off, screaming loudly and attempting to remove an advertisement banner from the construction site on Third Ave. Officers' computer showed that there had been a call regarding a Black male with no shirt yelling at buildings and appearing to be high on drugs. They contacted the suspect, who was immediately confrontational. He was ordered several times to get down on the ground, but he refused. He stated he had a gun, and officers attempted to check him for weapons. He ranted the entire time about popcorn, apples, and movies, and officers observed some serious mental health issues. Suspect appeared to be operating at a diminished mental capacity. One officer called for a taser back-up, and the suspect at once became more compliant. An ambulance was called, and officers managed to check the suspect for weapons — none were found. They observed that the suspect was suicidal and unable to care for himself. They further felt he was a danger to himself and the public, and he was transported by ambulance to Harborview Medical Center for an involuntary mental health commitment.

Wed., March 29, 5:29 p.m., S. Jackson St./Maynard Ave. S.

Witness called 911 to report a Black female wearing an off-white shirt was being punched in the face. He reported that the female had been knocked to the ground and was being kicked by the suspect, an unidentified Black male in his 40s. Upon arrival officers contacted the victim, a transient Black female aged 25, where the witness had reported seeing her last. She was crying and had redness all over her face, consistent with receiving blows to the face. Officer asked her what happened, and she replied, "He punched me in the nose!" She immediately recounted that story and stated she had fallen over and hit her nose. She continued to deny any assault or physical disturbance had occurred. The officer attempted to contact the witness, but he was not answering his phone. The victim refused any police assistance and would not take the case number with her. Officer told her he would write the report anyway, and if she changed her mind she might be able to access it by date, time, and location. The victim broke down in heavy sobs and walked away.

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



We bus chicks aren't always the most style-conscious of people.

layer clothing; and to never, ever leave home without her bus chick bag.

The bus chick bag usually contains the necessities that most women carry in a purse (wallet, lotion, cell phone), but it also contains many bus-chick-specific items (more on these later). Bus chick bags are not a particular style — they range from backpack to woven satchel to soft-sided briefcase. The most common is the backpack, for its durability and ease of use. It's not the most style-conscious choice, but we bus chicks aren't always the most style-conscious of people. I carried a backpack until last year, when I decided that cute was more important than practical and bought a soft-sided briefcase that I can strap across my chest. Except under the most extreme of circumstances, I don't leave home without it.

Along with the standards (laptop, bus pass, cell phone, book, umbrella), my bus chick bag contains many items that can come in handy in a pinch: snacks, dollar bills for *Real Change* purchases (seriously), and an empty plastic bag for weather-related hair emergencies that are beyond the capabilities of the average umbrella. And the bus chick bag doesn't stop there. Once, my in-

Bus Chick Preparedness

Any bus chick who has been riding for more than a week knows to wear shoes that are both cute and comfortable (alas, usually not quite as cute as comfortable); to

tended needed to make an ATM deposit, but the envelope the bank provided wouldn't stay closed. Luckily, there was a glue stick in the outside pocket of the bus chick bag. Problem solved.

Recently, I had to go to the local Red Cross office to conduct an interview. The office is several blocks away from the nearest bus stop, so I had to wander a bit to find it. When I was a minute away from being late, I spotted the big, warehouse-looking building.


Folks, the building wasn't the only thing that got spotted that afternoon.

As I hurried down the sidewalk, I felt something drip onto the lapel on my coat. Despite the cloudless sky and the weighty feel of the substance in question, I convinced myself it was a raindrop. Then I looked down. There it was: the disaster I had been dreading since my friend Rachel was victimized during afternoon recess in first grade: a big, rapidly hardening, brown-in-the-center, white-at-the-outside splotch of bird doo.

Thank goodness for the bus chick bag. On that particular day, it fortunately contained a large wad of tissue (allergy season) and some handy antibacterial gel. Mess removed, hands disinfected, I was able to conduct the interview without anyone from the King County disaster response team being the wiser.

Shoot, I could probably teach those people a thing or two. ■

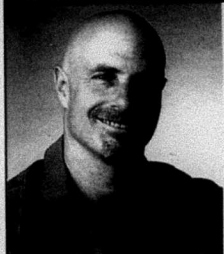
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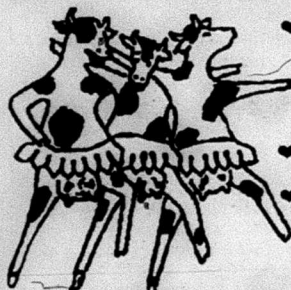
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Letters

editor@realchange.org

Nickels and numbers

Dear Real Change,

The mayor wrote you folks recently trying to justify his housing efforts in downtown Seattle and suggesting that most of the growth in downtown housing has been on the more affordable side (Letters, April 5). Not true.

Drawing from the draft environmental impact statement for the new downtown density plan and other city sources, low income units in downtown priced at or below 50 percent of median income have declined since 1980 from approximately 10,000 to about 5,800 units. That's a 42 percent drop despite the fact that we've spent more than \$100 million in the last 20 years producing subsidized units in downtown. While there are 4,800 subsidized low income units there now, only 1,000 "unsubsidized" units remain. That's because over and over the last 25 years, several thousand privately owned low-income units in downtown were gentrified out of existence — lost to demolition, abandonment, condo conversions, speculative sale, and high rents.

During this same period, however, in downtown housing for the wealthy increased by 264 percent. But it was "workforce" housing for low-middle to middle-income workers in the 50-80 percent of median category that grew the fastest since 1980: up a whopping 377 percent. That's because all the new housing going up in downtown for the wealthy also has had the effect of pushing up rents on surrounding older, formerly low-income apartment buildings — at least those not torn down for parking lots or office buildings. In fact, a survey we did of downtown housing showed that from 1999 through 2001, rents on more than 1,000 older low-income rentals were pushed up to the 50-80 percent income category during that period. This development-induced gentrification is happening all over town to varying degrees, and it raises a very important question: why should we be subsidizing at all — with our bonus program or tax credits — the production of housing in the 50-80 percent income category? The myth that we need to subsidize housing for this income group is just that, a myth.

The other myth, that we don't need to continue to subsidize preserva-

tion and production of downtown's very low-income housing (below 50 percent of median), is also just that. By the year 2005, according to projections made and contained in the 1985 downtown plan, we were supposed to have a minimum of 10,000 low-income units in downtown today. Yeah, sure. The mayor's plan just means more of the same despite the housing bonus program and its extension to Belltown. In fact, with the added allowable densities in that neighborhood (where there remain about 700-800 unsubsidized low-income apartments) included in the new downtown plan, it places all of these units at greater risk to demolition, speculative sale, conversion, etc.

John Fox

Seattle Displacement Coalition

Bull Moose and money

Dear Real Change,

In the words of Teddy Roosevelt, I am "Deelighted" that you published articles on both clean money campaigns and the ex-felon poll tax ("House Flush" and "Debtors' Prison," April 5). Both issues are important parts of my campaign for State Representative, Position 1, 43rd District.

I am running a voluntary clean money campaign: each supporter who lives in the district may give me no more than \$5 for my campaign. I just need 200 people to do this, and we will prove that if money talks, everyone can have an equal voice. Friends or family may give up to \$100. I am also pledged not to spend more than \$10,000 in my entire campaign.

Former felons still waiting for their vote can volunteer for my campaign. There is no law barring you from sign waving, etc., and I would be happy to have you. I also support paper ballots, tax reform, fair ballot access for independent and third-party candidates, and a living wage. You can see my whole platform at www.voteknight.org and see what I have to say about the WASL test, basing the living wage on the average housing cost, and all sorts of nice things.

I am pleased to carry the banner of the Progressive Party in Washington once again, and I thank Real Change for getting these issues out in the open.

Linde Knighton

**Progressive Party,
43rd District Candidate
Seattle**

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Information

Nine-week study group. From the Ashes of the Old: American Labor and America's Future. Mondays, (206) 276-9088, www.socialism.com.

Nonviolent Action Community of Cascadia and others will leaflet area post offices with flyers and pie-charts showing where your income tax really goes. Monday, April 17. Info: (206) 547-0952, www.seanocc.org.

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

Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Thursday 4/13

Twice as many sub-Saharan Africans have migrated to the United States in the last 30 years as during the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The shifting demographics of the Black population have prompted the question: Who is African-American? Some believe the term includes Black immigrants, while others think it only identifies descendants of slaves. Join in a discussion on identity, labels, and the unspoken differences and similarities between people. Tickets \$7. 7 p.m., Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, 104 17th Ave. S.

Tim Flannery, author of *The Weather Makers*, the book that caused Australia's government to change its stance on global warming, argues for the urgent need to address the implications of global climate change. Tickets \$5. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

The recent documentary *Bolqueo* shows the fight against the illegal and immoral embargo against Cuba. Featuring the voices of real Cubans and dedicated activists, the film highlights the hardships ordinary citizens have suffered and the amazing advances the country has made in medicine, agriculture, and energy. 7 p.m., Central Lutheran Church, Parish House, 1710 11th Ave.

Friday 4/14

When Jonathan Silin declared his homosexuality, his father took it as personal injury. Years later, during his father's final moments of suffering from cancer, Silin cares for his father, and the two reach a better understanding of life and love. *My Father's Keeper* uses Silin's raw experience to explore parenting, old age, death, and forgiveness. 7 p.m., University Book Store, 4326 University Way NE

The documentary *Venezuela Bolivarian: People and Struggle of the Fourth World War* traces the history and struggle for social justice in Venezuela. The film analyzes the pros and cons of the revolutionary process and ends by

showing the next steps the Venezuelan people are taking. 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl.

An orchestra of 18 musicians, storytellers, dancers, and artists weaves compositions of the ancient music of India into a story about the mythical lovers Radha and Krishna. *Nayika: The Feminine Ethos in Indian Classical Arts* delves into ancient art and presents gender issues that are still relevant today. Tickets \$12 and up. 7:30 p.m., East Shore Unitarian Church, 12700 SE 32nd St.

Until Saturday 4/15

Writer and performer Heather Raffo spent 11 years conducting interviews with Iraqi women. *Nine Parts of Desire*, the results of her research, is a theatrical mosaic, weaving together these women's stories and depicting

the effects of Iraqi life under Saddam Hussein and war. Tickets adults \$27 or \$36, under 25 \$10. Tues.-Sat. 7:30 p.m., Wed. and Sat. 2 p.m., The Rep, 155 Mercer St.

Monday 4/17

One of the largest acts of genocide in history occurred during World War I when Ottoman Turks murdered over one million Armenians. The documentary *Armenian Genocide* explores the tragedy of the event and why, to this day, the Turkish government denies it ever took place. 10 p.m., KCTS, check local listing.

Tuesday 4/18

Censorship is not simply a bureaucrat exercising prudish control over "offensive" art, it takes many faces and forms, including self-censorship and economic censorship. Robert Atkins, author of *Censoring Culture*, an anthology of eye-opening essays, discusses how to be more aware of censorship and how to fight it. 6 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S Main St.

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

Director's Corner

Yesterday was a Pastor Niemoller moment. You'll remember him as the German theologian who died in a Nazi prison and is best remembered for this: "First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me."

So when a piece of legislation passes the House that makes felons of several million immigrants, along with anyone that helps them, it's time to march on the Federal Building. While it was great to see 25,000 people show up downtown, it was a little disappointing to see a sea of almost all brown faces. There should have been 100,000. The rest of us needed to be there.

Since 1980, the U.S. prison population has quadrupled, largely due to racist drug laws that disproportionately target African-Americans. According to MSNBC, one in 31 Americans now lives under the supervision of the penal system.

Looks like they're going for one in 20.

The time to act for just immigration policies that recognizes immigrants' contribution to our economy and culture is now. Don't wait until they come for you.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Tell Pharmacists to Obey the Law

Issue: The Washington State Board of Pharmacy is considering adopting a formal policy that would allow pharmacists in our state to refuse to fill prescriptions because of their personal beliefs. This is likely to result in pharmacists in our state refusing to fill women's legal prescriptions for birth control, especially emergency contraception. Pharmacists should not be permitted to establish barriers that would prevent individuals from getting their lawfully prescribed drugs and treatment.

Background: This decision impacts all of us. While issue is being raised specifically in response to emergency contraception, it could allow pharmacists to refuse to fill prescriptions for men and women based on perceived sexual orientation, HIV status, marital status or for any other reason.

Pharmacists should not be allowed to refuse to fill prescriptions for any FDA-approved medication because of their beliefs. Denying any form of health care to individuals because of a personal or religious belief should not be tolerated. Individuals should be able to receive health care without discrimination or delay. The Pharmacy Board should do what pharmacy boards have done in all of the other states where this issue has come before them and reject the imposition of a pharmacist's personal belief on the health care decisions made between doctors and their patients.

Contraceptive use is a private and personal matter. Women seeking emergency contraception may already be feeling apprehensive, scared, and intimidated when they visit a pharmacist. A woman who is asking for emergency contraception may have been sexually assaulted. A pharmacist's refusal to fill the prescription can further traumatize an already vulnerable patient and create a significant barrier to accessing the medication in the time frame necessary especially if the woman is from a rural community with only one pharmacy and/or has limited access to transportation.

Emergency contraception is not abortion, it is birth control. The FDA states that emergency contraception is not effective if a woman is already pregnant. It prevents a pregnancy — it does not terminate a pregnancy. It acts principally by delaying or inhibiting ovulation and fertilization. Experts estimate that wider access to emergency contraception could prevent up to 1.7 million unintended pregnancies — and 800,000 abortions a year.

Action: Write the Washington State Pharmacy Board by April 18th urging them not to adopt a policy allowing pharmacists to refuse to fill legal prescriptions because of personal or religious beliefs.

Contact the Pharmacy Board at:

Washington State Board of Pharmacy, PO Box 47863, Olympia WA 98504-7863 or via email to WSBOP@doh.wa.gov.

You can also attend and speak out at one of two public stakeholder meetings where participants will have two minutes each to speak:

Wednesday, April 19, 2006,
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Labor & Industries Auditorium
7273 Linderson Way SW
Turnwater WA 98501

Thursday, April 20, 2006
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Red Lion Hotel - Yakima Center
607 E. Yakima Avenue
Yakima WA 98901

TAXES, Continued from Page 1

mous tax subsidy, with most of the money going out to players who have little stake in this region.

Among other questionable tax breaks, he cited \$19 million the city spent to build a flyover access road for a new Immunex campus that never opened, and benefits that Safeco Insurance got to stay in the University District before it decided to move downtown.

In its report, the league also raises questions about the \$3.2 billion in tax breaks the state gave Boeing in 2003 to build its 787 jetliner here, the \$37.7 million in tax credits that Microsoft and other high-tech companies get for research and development, and the \$420 million to \$1 billion the city may pay for infrastructure to benefit biotech and real estate interests in the South Lake Union area, including Paul Allen's.

Despite projections of 16,000 biotech jobs coming to South Lake Union, the report notes the number is likely to be much lower, as biotech firms that get a drug approved generally don't do their own manufacturing — they contract it

out to larger companies.

"Most biotechs," the report states, "would be lucky to add as much as 100 employees in a single year."

Kriss Sjoblom, an economist with the Washington Research Council, objected to calling tax breaks "subsidies" and said it's not fair to suggest increasing company taxes in a state where the business share of all taxes paid is the ninth highest in the nation at 51 percent.

"Even with exemptions, businesses pay an extra high share of taxes in this state," Sjoblom said. "A jihad against tax exemptions will only make matters worse."

Steinbrueck agreed that everyone benefits from a healthy economy and jobs, but "what does it take [to create] a healthy business climate and a healthy economy?" he asked. "Some of the states with the least

taxes have the worst economies."

While the legislature did pass a law this year to start auditing tax exemptions, Steinbrueck said there's still no public policy for when tax breaks are justified and what they should accomplish. Nancy Eitrem, president of the Seattle League of Women Voters, said the league has yet to decide whether it will push in 2007 for a tax accountability law like Minnesota's.

In the meantime, "I do think it's really critical that we establish some kind of equation for public cost versus public benefit," Steinbrueck said. "There's something not quite right about corporate handouts when people are dying on the streets." ■

"There's something not quite right about corporate handouts when people are dying on the streets."

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CO-OP, Continued from Page 1

represents the 37 households at the neighborhood's six co-ops in dealings with CHHIP, voted in late December to end the co-op system immediately. Staff asked the co-op to give CHHIP managers six months' transition time. The change arises from an 18-month-long series of conversations between staff and tenants, says CHHIP director Chuck Weinstock — the first one in about a decade.

"We were saying 'How does everyone think this is working?'" he says. "We reviewed some frustrations each party had about how the model worked or didn't. Did [members] want to continue as is, continue in some modified way, or convert to rental?"

What worked, say members and CHHIP management, was the sense of camaraderie and community most co-op members felt upon moving in. Residents treasured the task of interviewing applicants and selecting new members themselves. What didn't work was lax member governance — which meant that the job of dealing with members who didn't pay rent on time or do their chores fell to CHHIP's management.

In May 2005, while neighborhood Mutual Housing Councils — CHHIP's term for the bodies that represented each cluster of buildings — in northeast Seattle and Rainier Valley voted to relinquish their cooperative duties, the Mutual Housing Council on Capitol Hill asked for a year's time to get back on track. CHHIP granted them a six-month period of what Weinstock calls "test and demonstration," with another vote on the issue in December.

Regarding the lapsed enforcement, "Our part was, 'Folks, if we're going to do this, we need to do this,'" he says. "Members have to hold members accountable for their actions; we're not going to be the cop here."

Boardmember Eden Bossom says

everyone kicked into gear. "For about two or three months there was a high amount of participation, and we were all cracking down, but pretty soon the co-op went into its old patterns."

Then came the December vote. "The question I finally brought back to my neighbors was, 'Are you prepared to maintain this amount of time investment?'" says Bossom. The answer was no; a majority of the council voted to end the co-op.

The referendum came too soon for Dana McCusker; she says six months "was not enough time to change the culture." McCusker, who lives in the Fredonia Apartments on 15th Avenue, resigned her position as the council's president soon after. Members continued to talk with staff about the possibility of retaining their power to select new tenants in what's been termed a "hybrid" arrangement — a discussion that "felt like a waste of my time," she says. "If you want a co-op, make one."

McCusker says she blames neither tenants nor staff for the loss of cooperative management. "The larger issue is that we're losing community everywhere in our culture, and community is really important." Running well cooperatively was "dependent on peer pressure and participation: some people carry most of the load and others don't do the work" — the kind of environment that leads the best members to burnout.

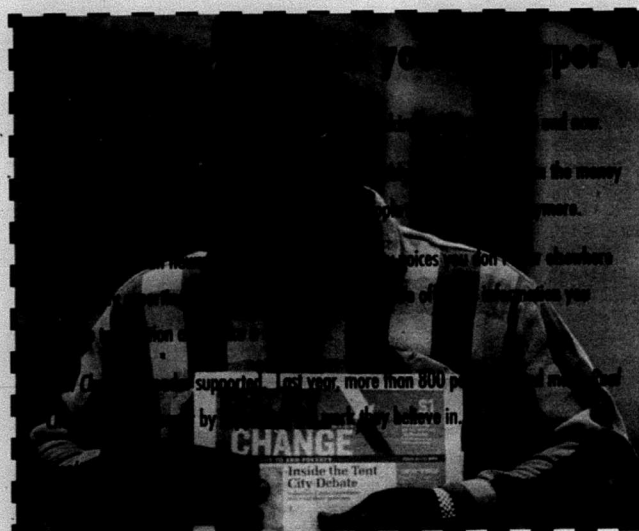
Bossom and other co-op members say that perhaps relinquishing their duties will free them up to build even stronger relationships.

What is at the core of the co-op is "cultivating a strong sense of community and trust. We don't need a document to maintain that," says Bossom.

"If you have a forced situation where people are required to do things, and people are chronically not doing them, there's some animosity. Once that expectation is removed, people can focus on being neighbors." ■

"The larger issue is that we're losing community everywhere in our culture, and community is really important."

— Dana McCusker



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