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APRIL 19 - 25, 2006

Eighty-Six This

Local initiative hopes to nix
recruiters' presence on campuses

By ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Reporter

Here's the text of a recently declassified communiqué from Seattle voters to military recruiters: keep your war-mongering claws off our kids.

Okay, perhaps that's hyperbole. But that sentiment — of keeping our city's youth out of the grasp of the armed services — is the underlying message behind a potential November ballot initiative opposing military recruiters' access to public schools, colleges, universities, and parks. The initiative, named, fortuitously enough, I-86, enjoyed an official kick-off on April 13 in a classroom of Seattle Central Community College filled with anti-recruitment activists.

"This is a new city-wide initiative that will put Seattle on the map," said Kate Johnson, steering committee member of the College Not Combat Coalition, lead sponsor of I-86.

Johnson spoke these words, not in front of a map, but a screen bearing the ever-escalating price tag of the war in Iraq. As the April 13 total nudged up to \$272.9 billion, she put those costs in perspective. That same amount, said Johnson, would pay for four million additional public school teachers to receive a union salary of \$50,000, or send 13 million students to a four-year state university for a year. Such military expenditures represent an assault on education, noted Johnson, demanding that voters take action. "Ordinary people can do something," she said, "by joining College Not Combat."

But joining the group won't put the initiative on the ballot: only the signatures of 17,000 legal voters will. The deadline for signatures to be collected is August 1.

Those who agree to support the initiative, however, would be asking for more than just having recruiters expelled from the city's campuses. They would be telling the city to investigate and advocate ways in which high school graduates could pursue secondary education without relying upon financial assistance from the military. The initiative explicitly states such advocacy would include "the possibility of extending



KATHY YASI, HERE WITH HER DAUGHTER ALICIA, RUNS A DAYCARE FROM HER CENTRAL DISTRICT HOME. YASI SAYS THE STATE'S CHILD-CARE ASSISTANCE TO WORKING PARENTS HAS FAILED TO KEEP UP WITH THE COST OF LIVING: "PEOPLE SPEND MORE MONEY TO HAVE THEIR DOG IN DAY CARE THAN THE STATE PAYS TO HAVE SUBSIDIZED DAY CARE." PHOTO BY MARK SULLO

Renegade Rendezvous

Isolated in-home child care providers organize for better pay

By AMY ROE
Contributing Writer

When a labor organizer came knocking on the front door of Shawn Harris's Tacoma home late last year, she was skeptical. Harris, a former Head Start teacher who runs a licensed home-based child-care center, had no experience with unions. It was only because she knew the canvasser from high school that she even bothered to open the door.

"She talked to me about the union and I was like, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, blah, blah, blah,'" Harris says.

Harris went to a meeting anyway and was shocked to learn that many as 10,000 others were also offering licensed home-based child care in Washington state.

"I had no idea," she says.

For years the state's family child-care providers, many of them women working out of their own homes, have been an invisible industry.

Although home-based child care represents 80 percent of the licensed child-care market in Washington

state, providers have no collective bargaining unit and only a few small child-care associations.

"We had no way of gathering together, no forum," says Harris. "Everybody, each day care, is to themselves."

That's about to change.

Last month Governor Christine Gregoire signed into law a bill that allows the state's family child-care workers to unionize. House Bill 2353 makes Washington the second state, after Illinois, to permit such unions. The law covers all child care providers who take subsidies for working-poor parents. Eligibility for the subsidy is determined by household income, family size, and county of residence and is priced on a sliding-scale fee.

Family child care providers are in the process of electing representatives to a bargaining committee in anticipation of a vote to be held next month by the state's Public Employees Relations Commission.

A "yes" vote in that election would make it official, but family child care workers have already turned out in

CABLE SPAR

Before the city pens a deal with Comcast, voters still have a chance to speak their minds.

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POISON CLOAK

A researcher, returning from Iraq, finds that war has left the country riddled with toxins.

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A potential Columbia City housing facility for the mentally ill raises huckies of some residents

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Pike Place Market seniors find their life stories transformed into theater

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CRYSTAL MALICE

Illustrator Harvey Pekar in a biography of Michael Malice draws a fine line between *Ego* & *Hubris*.

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People Power, Channeled

There's still time for public input on the city's deal with cable giant Comcast

By JONATHAN LAWSON
Guest Writer

Two years ago, the city's cable office conducted mail, phone, and Internet surveys to assess the public's cable needs. The survey results showed strong support for community television. But these priorities are hardly reflected in the deal city negotiators cut with Comcast.

As Seattle draws closer to inking a new 10-year cable contract with Comcast, community advocates are looking to the City Council to help make the deal more responsive to public priorities. In a welcome move, the council appears interested in making some changes to the proposed franchise agreement that the mayor's Office of Cable Communications negotiated with the cable company last year.

As is too often the case in this city, the details of the proposed franchise and side agreements were presented to the public as a *fait accompli* at the end of long, non-public negotiations. The mayor's agreement would have cut the community TV channel SCAN's budget by 24 percent; it would also have expanded prime-time arts programming on the Seattle Channel with a \$5 million donation from the cable giant. Even with the council showing willingness to discuss and alter the mayor's proposals, public input is still needed to remind it that citizens have strong opinions on Comcast, local cable service, and especially the local, noncommercial cable channels whose well-being is affected by these talks.

Two years ago, the city's cable office conducted mail, phone, and Internet surveys to assess the public's cable needs. The survey results showed strong support — about 75 percent — for community television and showed substantial interest in increasing channel capacity for public purposes, including local community-interest programming.

But these priorities are hardly reflected in the deal city negotiators cut with Comcast. Instead, the Mayor's recommended funding plan would have

slashed SCAN's budget by \$160,000. The mayor's office is also strongly resistant to the idea of providing SCAN with another channel, as the public clearly wants.

The arguments for adding channel capacity to SCAN are fairly straightforward. Already, demand for programs on SCAN (both from producers who want to create shows and from audiences who want to see their favorite shows continue) far exceeds the number of programming slots available. Thus, SCAN is forced to assign slots through a ruthless lottery system. As programs cycle on and off the air in the span of months, producers are unable to build an audience, refine their on-air style, or develop funding strategies to support higher-quality programming. A second channel would alleviate this scarcity problem. It would also allow SCAN management to bundle together the channel's best arts and public affairs programming, raising the station's profile.

While most of us can agree that \$5 million in funding for local arts TV programming is a great offer no matter what its source, the Seattle Channel's "Arts Zone" side agreement has several deep flaws in how it is structured, and the City Council should address these with great care before accepting it. As numerous observers have pointed out, 12 hours of (Comcast-branded) new arts programming would necessarily displace 12 hours of other programming on the channel whose primary purpose is to enhance government accountability by showing public officials at work.

Some proponents of the Arts Zone agreement claim that they are representing a community desire to extend the Seattle Channel's arts offerings; however, the survey results reported by the cable office demonstrate no such desire. On the contrary, survey respondents asked for more, not less,

government programming: footage from public hearings and board and neighborhood meetings.

The Seattle Community Council Federation has proposed an amendment which would sensibly require the Seattle Channel to devote a certain number of hours per week to government accountability programming. The amendment would also allow ArtsZone programming to be aired on any channel rather than restricted to the Seattle Channel. Perhaps the city should institute a digital "Seattle Arts Channel." Another possibility would be to add a single analog channel, which could carry both the new ArtsZone programming and serve as a "curated" second channel for SCAN. Such a hybrid channel would respond meaningfully to the public's desire for more local government and community access programming and would provide strong encouragement, even competition, among SCAN's independent producers to create professional-quality programs.

The time is right for local individuals and community groups to share concerns with their elected representatives. The City Council's Energy and Technology Committee is expected to vote on franchise amendments on April 26; and the complete franchise will come before the full council in May. Tell councilmembers that Seattle cable viewers need SCAN to have an additional analog channel as well as a budget increase; and that new arts programming must not divert the Seattle Channel from its core mission of government accountability. Call councilmember Jean Godden, chair of the Energy and Technology Committee, at (206)684-8807. Other councilmembers' contact information can be found online at www.ci.seattle.wa.us/council. ■

Jonathan Lawson is executive director of Reclaim the Media (www.reclaimthemedialawson.org), which advocates for the public interest in local and national media policy issues.



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

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Change

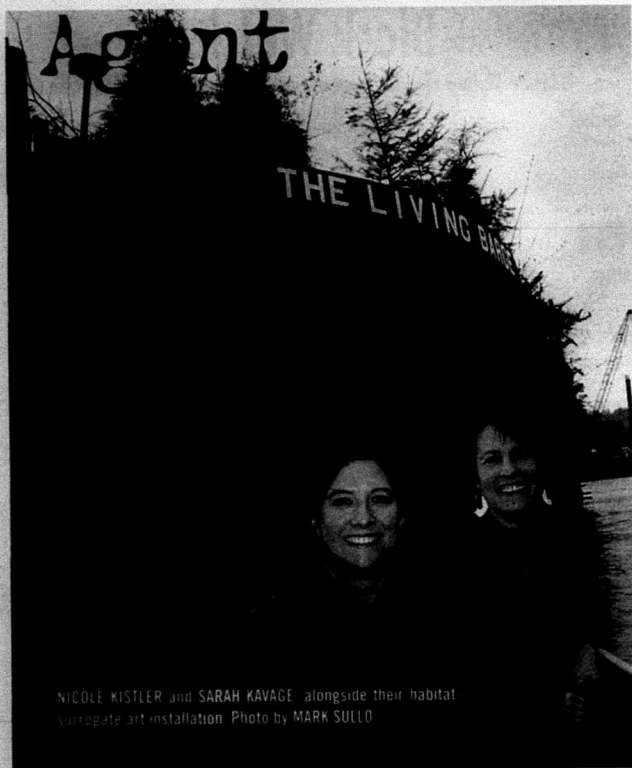
On the east side of the Duwamish River, where silver ribbons of oil unfurl in the shallows, for one month nature sits enthroned on steel instead of the other way around.

It's the Living Barge, an art-and-landscape installation that heralds a ruffle of habitat restoration in the river basin.

On loan from a nearby shipyard, the barge is topped with native plants: ferns, Sitka spruce, and red flowering currant rooted in burlap instead of dirt. Since April 1 the plants have been a suggestive reminder of what used to be at a place where the river's been dredged, straightened, channeled, and ripped. On the 29th, volunteers will give the greenery safe harbor at a public space along Highway 99.

The barge (www.livingbarge.com) was created to "make a statement about the area's past, its present and its future, and get people talking about the coexistence of industry and ecology there," says co-designer Sarah Kavage. Not the Hobson's choice between supporting one and saving the other, she says: "The industrial areas are fighting for their lives too."

—Adam Hyla



NICOLE KISTLER and SARAH KAVAGE alongside their habitat surrogate art installation. Photo by MARK SULLO

Iraq's Silent Spring

Wartime pollution threatens public health, says researcher

By ELLIOTT WILSON
UW News Lab

"Violence and war injuries" are the No. 1 cause of death these days, while dismal air quality has caused many more to suffer from bronchitis, pneumonia, and asthma, says Dr. Wajdy Hailoo, an Iraqi-American researcher.

Mortality rates in Iraq have increased dramatically due to the effects of war on the environment and public health, according to one prominent environmental-health specialist.

Dr. Wajdy Hailoo, an Iraqi-American researcher, spoke April 12 at Keystone Church in Wallingford. He said Iraq's infant, child, and maternal mortality rates are rising, and the only number shrinking is the country's life expectancy.

For decades Iraq has been ravaged by war and suffered through sanctions, said Hailoo, who described how violence has scarred both the country's land and its people.

Hailoo heads the division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at the State University of New York in Stony Brook. His visit to Seattle was sponsored by the University of Washington Environmental Health Department, and the event was organized by the Interfaith Network of Concern for the People of Iraq.

During the war with neighboring Iran, Iraq's lush palm trees were scorched into barren stumps. Verdant marshes were drained, turning green waterways into a parched wasteland.

Then came the 1991 invasion of Kuwait, said Hailoo. Deaths rose 8.1 percent from the 1987 total after the war with Iran, as many died from traumatic respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. The air was bad, the land was polluted, and people were sick.

An audience member who formerly lived in Iraq chimed in, "In those days you would walk on the street with a white shirt, and by the time you got home it was black."

"We thought the liberation of Iraq, or whatever you want to call it, would improve it, but it did not," Hailoo told his audience of about 30 scholars, Iraqi-Americans, and neighborhood residents.

Now there are "oil spills everywhere," and the food markets are "all garbage and contamination," added Hailoo, who recently traveled to Iraq.

This war environment has killed many and sickened even more. "Violence and war injuries" are the No. 1 cause of death these days, while dismal air quality has caused many more to suffer from bronchitis, pneumonia, and asthma, he said.

Hailoo cited a 2004 study that recorded a 250 percent fold increase in deaths following the invasion. Even more heartbreakingly, he added, the study found that "women and children were affected the most."

The problem, said Hailoo, is that as more get sick, doctors get scarcer. "The manpower doesn't exist," he reiterated.

"Two thousand general practitioners graduate each year, and yet there are only 3,000 practitioners in Iraq," said Hailoo, who received his medical degree there, at the University of Mosul. "They all just left the country."

The doctor hopes to turn this trend around. As program director for the Stony Brook Environmental Health Program, Hailoo and his team have set up five Environmental Health Education and Resources Centers in Iraq.

The centers are part of an environmental-health program developed by doctors at Stony Brook and in Iraq. Its goal is to train Iraqis to identify and correct environmental-health hazards.

The American team selected deans for the centers, which are located in Baghdad, Mosul, Basrah, Babylon, and Erbil, and then trained the Iraqi doctors at Stony Brook.

In September 2005, doctors, scientists, and researchers from the United States and Iraq came together for a larger conference and training session in Jordan. "I am so happy that they take the effort to do this," Hailoo remarked about his Iraqi colleagues.

Even "among violence, killings, atrocities," he added.

"Now the goal is for these Iraqi environmental-health experts to train and educate the rest of the country," said Hailoo. ■

Just Heard...

Bug out

No one knows when, or even if, an outbreak of pandemic flu may occur in Washington, but state officials aren't waiting for the flu bug to take hold. They're taking precautions now.

That's why Gov. Christine Gregoire, during the recent state Summit on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness, signed an agreement to work with the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services to coordinate state and federal efforts to respond to any outbreaks. The agreement calls on the state to conduct drills, along with pinpointing ways to strengthen and improve public health emergency response times.

More information on the state's response to pandemic flu can be found on the Web: www.doh.wa.gov/pandflu/planningsummary.htm.

—Rosette Royale

Inking it

City officials and shelter providers are nearly ready to ink the 2006 agreements for the provision of homeless emergency shelter. And there's significant relief not only for SHARE/WHEEL — which will be spared the axe in return for collecting demographic information about shelter guests — and perhaps other shelters that would have suffered 10-20 percent cuts as the city shifted more than \$430,000 into transitional housing.

Human Services Department director Patricia McInturf confirms that SHARE will be funded at 2005 levels to continue its shelter program. The group had pledged to take its church-based refugees into public parks if not.

McInturf says that shelter programs run by the Downtown Emergency Services Center, Archdiocesan Housing Authority, and the Salvation Army may also have their funding restored as a result.

If the agreement goes forward at the end of the week, the Human Services Department gets its cake and eats it too: having expanded housing for the homeless by \$430,000, the city will also maintain emergency shelters with an injection of perhaps \$400,000. Although it's not yet clear exactly what the price tag will be, says McInturf, "The mayor's committed that there will be no reduction in facility-based shelter beds funded by the city. You can take that to the bank."

People's progress

The People's Lodge is slated for some upgrades, says the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation, which runs the Native American cultural center on the north end of Discovery Park. The 30-year-old Daybreak Star facility is in need of repair; other parts of the site, including a teepee area and a native plants garden, are slated for improvement.

The three state legislators who represent the Ballard-to-downtown 36th District have pledged about \$500,000 in state assistance; in a statement, State Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles called the center "a treasure for families throughout the region and beyond."

—Adam Hyla

Block Watch

Rainier Valley residents question housing for mentally ill

By CYDNEY GILLIS
Staff Reporter

"A person in Rainier Valley is far more likely to be assaulted by [a resident] in Rainier Valley than someone who lives with a mental disorder."
—Bill Hobson, executive director of DESC

A new battle is brewing in Rainier Valley over whether its economic recovery can stand another social service agency.

Last fall, CASA Latina, a nonprofit day-worker agency, cancelled its plans to move to the valley in the wake of a community uproar. Now a Rainier Valley real estate agent is organizing opposition to Seattle's Downtown Emergency Service Center and its plan to build a 75-unit apartment building just south of Columbia City for formerly homeless people who are mentally ill.

"Living down here doesn't mean we should be continually challenged and put upon," says Ray Akers of the concentration of social services in the area's 98118 zip code. "At some point, you want your community to improve and get to a certain level."

"We're not at that level," Akers says. "We're still a community at risk."

DESC has signed a purchase and sale agreement for a property at 42nd Avenue and Rainier Avenue South, where it plans to build a \$14 million facility with 24-hour staff. The site is near the Columbia City and Hillman City retail cores.

Akers says the site is too far from medical and other services, such as

grocery stores, that the facility's residents will need — and too close to four schools in the area. In calls he's made to city councilmembers, Akers has also raised questions about whom the facility will house and how often the building's tenants will turn over.

"A lot of these people have other challenges, such as substance abuse," Akers says. "Mental illness is one big catch-all for antisocial behaviors and criminal behaviors."

In an area with one aid unit and a large elderly population, "What if I need 911? What if Medic One is always transporting these people to Harborview?" he asks.

Bill Hobson, executive director of DESC, which operates a shelter at the Morrison Hotel and permanent housing, says Akers has confused the Rainier Valley proposal with a controversial new facility DESC runs at 1811 Eastlake Ave. E. The Eastlake facility houses chronically homeless alcoholics who are allowed to drink in their rooms.

Since it opened in mid-December, the project has had 39 emergency aid calls to the building, according to a March 23 report in *The Seattle Times*.

"Mr. Akers is not able to distinguish the [Rainier Valley] project from our 1811 project," Hobson says. At 1811 Eastlake, people are in very grave health, which he says will not

be the case in Rainier Valley. DESC is a licensed mental health provider, and its staff ensure that no one goes off medications — the main reason people start hearing voices again or slip into psychosis.

If a resident does "decompensate" or relapse, Hobson says, a county mental health professional will drive out in an ordinary car to visit the person and authorize hospitalization, minus sirens and lights.

Turnover, he adds, is only 9 percent a year in DESC's existing 600 units versus 20 to 25 percent on the open market. The risk of violence is also very low, Hobson says, because people with major mental illnesses generally keep to themselves and are "less prone to physical violence than the rest of us."

"A person in Rainier Valley is far more likely to be assaulted by [a resident] in Rainier Valley than someone who lives with a mental disorder," he says.

Hobson is currently meeting with community groups to explain the project and notes that the agency is acting on the input — namely, by looking into the cost to add ground-level storefronts to the building.

"I applaud DESC for what they're trying to do," Akers says. But, "if I were a betting man, I would say they're going to have tremendous resistance." ■

Short Takes

Coffee at the cottage?

Here's an irony of density: Despite the rows of new condos that have gone up along Western Avenue in the past decade, no one seems to be keeping an eye on the Belltown P-Patch, where gardeners say that the homeless sleep on top of the plantings and that drug dealing, prostitution, and vandalism are common.

So members of the Friends of the Belltown P-Patch came up with an idea: Put a coffee shop in one of the site's three historic workers' cottages — the unoccupied one designated as a community cottage for public and P-Patch gardener meetings.

The group came up with the idea after the city's P-Patch program manager, Rich McDonald, commissioned a group of graduate business students from the University of Washington to do a commercial feasibility study for the cottage. But the students determined a coffee shop wouldn't work at the site, in part because the cottage is hard to see from Western Avenue.

The other restored cottages at the site are occupied by writers-in-residence chosen by Richard Hugo House, a Seattle literary nonprofit. But the writers tend to keep to themselves, says McDonald. If the Parks Department creates the "park ranger" program recently recommended by the Downtown Parks Task Force, McDonald says another idea is to turn the cottage into a ranger dispatch center.

Or a caretaker could live at the site, perhaps paying the same \$500 a month that the writers do. The feasibility study includes a budget showing an extra tenant would more than cover the cottage's

operating costs. But, eventually, it could be up to Historic Seattle, which is negotiating with the city to manage all three cottages — a move that would leave the Hugo House writers in place, if they can pay what are likely to be higher rents.

—Cydney Gillis

Latino marchers reinstated

The 17 Latino painters fired for leaving work to march for immigrant rights last week were given their jobs back.

"I believe it's all chalked up to a misunderstanding," said Steve Bloom of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades at a press conference on Monday.

"The workers were all extremely happy. All they wanted to do was go back to work," said Bloom.

The workers were fired by the home-painting contractor Lailata Enterprises in Monroe for leaving work two hours early to attend the April 10 march in Seattle.

Washington State Jobs with Justice brought various community, religious and labor groups together to meet with owner Terry Lailata last Friday.

"At first he was stuck on his position that he was treating workers the same by not giving breaks to some workers he didn't give to others," said Mauricio Martinez, an aide to King County Executive Ron Sims.

"These workers were out there for their families so that they can have a chance at the American Dream," said Martinez.

The workers notified the owner two weeks in advance, working for eight hours, and charging for only

six, and left two hours early to march, according to Jorge Quiroga of The Committee for General Amnesty and Social Justice, which co-organized the march.

Community leaders at the press conference said they were pleased that all 17 workers were reinstated and are hopeful no future violations occur in what's expected to be a larger national May Day March.

The focus is still on whether a Latino at a rally has papers or not, said Quiroga — not if they have a right to march. "If these people were going to a baseball game instead of a march, I believe it would've been different."

While no other workers were fired for marching, Bob Barnes of Jobs with Justice says the reinstatement provides a good example.

"It was only through making it clear that the community was on our side," says Barnes, "that this was able to happen."

—Jason Siegel

Blessings on your journey

Nyer Urness went out of his way to meet as many of Seattle's homeless people as he could. He was gifted in his interactions and was quick to wish people "blessings on your journey."

Urness died of leukemia on April 7. He will be remembered in Seattle, say friends and colleagues, for his hard work and for the lives he changed.

As a minister, Urness started a homeless shelter inside Immanuel Lutheran Church at a time when few churches were opening their doors to people besides their own members.

"He offered an evening meal, a place to sleep, and a little breakfast when they left in the morning," says Compass Center director Rick Friedhoff. "He made each person he talked to feel very special."

Urness retired from Immanuel Lutheran but decided to return to ministry. He joined the staff of the Compass Center in 1989 out of his affection for the poor and disadvantaged.

Compass Center worker Cindy Jackson says Urness was very much a friend to his clients. The homeless and business communities admired him and appreciated him for what he did in Pioneer Square. He would walk around the neighborhoods talking to homeless people and giving them change.

"He saved my life," said Steve Rhoades, a former Urness client who now trains competitive bicyclists. Rhoades, a recovering alcoholic and drug addict, said he had hit rock bottom when he got on a bus and asked a man with a white beard wearing a minister's collar for help. The man, Urness, told Rhoades to go to the Compass Center 10 days in a row.

"I'd go in and talk to Nyer all the time," Rhoades said. "We'd talk. Just talk."

Friedhoff said Urness was a great listener but more importantly was a great encourager.

Urness would tell Rhoades, "Steve, I'd rather you be on the bike thinking about the Lord than in church thinking about the bike."

"The people that know me know that Nyer changed my life," said Rhoades. "He did such a great job on his journey here for over 80 years."

—Joseph Gamm

Market Weaving

Passionate storytellers inform improv theater celebrating Pike's elders

By LAURA PEACH
Contributing Writer

"When you take a single moment of anyone's life and magnify it, it becomes truly beautiful."

—Zoë Freeman, activities coordinator, Senior Center

This upcoming Friday and Saturday night a special set of seniors will put a real twist on classic improv at the Pike Place Market Theatre. Actors will interview members of the Pike Market Senior Center and turn ordinary life into an extraordinary production called *Market Shares*. The two-night special will raise money to support the Senior Center and will be the first in a series of stories about Pike Market voices that Unexpected Productions is showcasing throughout the year to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Pike Place Market.

Last year the Senior Center set up a storytelling booth at the Market Festival. Zoë Freeman, the activities coordinator at the Senior Center, was struck by how many interesting stories the seniors were telling. Unexpected Productions had a nearby booth at the festival, so the two organizations joined forces and came up with the interview-improv idea.

"When you take a single moment of anyone's life and magnify it, it becomes truly beautiful," says Freeman. These simple stories of life will weave a narrative of the people who make the Market area such a unique spot.

The Pike Market Senior Center is a meeting place for men and women over 55 looking to take art lessons or exercise classes. Every afternoon, the center serves almost 100 hot lunches to seniors who would otherwise have little or nothing to eat. A job referral program and social services station are also available to help meet other needs of seniors.

"This is just like any other senior center, except it is more focused on those with low incomes," says Freeman.

The center is hoping to raise \$4,000 to \$5,000 with this weekend's production to help with operating costs and their upcoming move to a new location, nearer to the market, in June.

Freeman looked for members of the Senior Center who were particularly passionate and animated about their lives. She recruited six seniors: Mary Brady, Estella Wallace, Ray Jiles, Doris Nelson, Ron Honsinger, and Ann Hope. Each person will draw from their own distinct life experiences during onstage interviews to provide the actors with scenes to improvise.

Although there truly is no telling exactly what the production will be like, it is sure to address serious social issues and encompass moments of humor. Hope may talk about the obstacles she faced when trying to register to vote in Arkansas during the 1960s. Brady, a folk dancer and artist, might mention the comedy that transpired when her group of girlfriends went out to dinner.

"Most older people have lived interesting lives, and people are interested in what they have done, and I want to let people know what we contribute," says Nelson.

Honsinger has been coming to the center for 15 years. He grew up during the Great Depression and says he remembers when people used to exchange services instead of money. He used to love coming to the market in the summer, because there were so many great things to eat. "I think that this production will build closer relationships so that the members [of the Senior Center] can better become a family," he said with a smile.

Ray Jiles, who traveled the globe before returning to Seattle, says that he's not worried about the actors taking the seniors' stories too far. "Life changes, always. As long as the production expresses the thought, it's worth it."

The actors, who are all donating their time and skills, will not interview the seniors in advance. Production director Randy Dixon says that it's best to make discoveries in front of the audience.

"The goal of the show, in general, is to celebrate everyone's life experiences," says Dixon. "We're hoping for a nice, big crowd." ■

[Improv]

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WAITING LIST OPENING For the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)

On May 15, 2006, the Seattle Housing Authority will begin accepting names for a new waiting list for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8). The waiting list will be created by means of a random lottery. Every eligible household that mails in a completed Lottery Sign-Up Form by the deadline, May 26, 2006, will be placed in a pool of names from which the waiting list of 4,000 households will be drawn at random.

The Lottery Sign-Up Form will be made available beginning on May 15, 2006, at the Seattle Housing Authority's PorchLight office (907 N.W. Ballard Way, Suite 200, Seattle); at the SHA Central Office (120 Sixth Ave. N., Seattle); at Seattle Housing Authority community management offices; at all branches of the Seattle Public Library; at City of Seattle Neighborhood Service Centers and Community Centers; and at some DSHS Community Service offices. It will also be available for downloading and printing on our Web site, www.seattlehousing.org

The Lottery Sign-Up Form must be mailed to PorchLight, P.O. Box C-70708, Seattle WA 98107 and must be postmarked no later than May 26, 2006. There is no need to be one of the first to submit your form, since your position on the list will be determined by lottery, and all Sign-Up Forms postmarked on or before May 26 will be treated equally.

By July 26, SHA will contact all households that mailed in a completed Lottery Sign-Up Form to let them know whether their household was selected at random to be on the list of 4,000 applicants,

and, if so, what position on the list their household occupies.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) provides housing subsidies to low-income residents through distribution of vouchers. Participants identify rental housing on the open market, and pay 30% (thirty percent) of their income for rent and utilities. The voucher provides the balance to the landlord.

Every person who signs up for the lottery must be at least 18 years of age, and only one person per household may sign up. Residents of SHA's Low-Income Public Housing Program may sign up for the lottery. Of the 4,000 households on the waiting list that will be created by this lottery, preference will be given to those whose income is 30% (thirty percent) of the Area Median Income or below (or was at that level in the 12 months previous to eligibility determination), and to households that are currently homeless or have been homeless in the 12 months previous to eligibility determination.

Current information on the lottery is on the SHA Web site, and we've created a Waiting List Hot Line to explain the lottery and answer questions frequently asked about it. The Waiting List Hot Line telephone number is (206) 239-1674.

Seattle Housing Authority

PorchLight



www.seattlehousing.org

True Stories

Underground comics writer Harvey Pekar on *Malice* and living a charmed life

"I don't use tape recorders; I'm kind of a Luddite. Actually, I don't know where Luddite ends and mechanical incompetent begins, but I'm both."

By ADAM HYLA
Editor

Harvey Pekar labored in the trenches of obscurity for three decades, and now that fame has visited — in the form of the 2003 movie about his work in underground comics, *American Splendor* — he's found that things are pretty much the same. Still the same Cleveland home, still the same scramble to make a living. "Either I'm not much of a celebrity," he says, "or, for a celebrity, I get surprisingly little play."

Though he's only recently gained notoriety, the subject of Pekar's new biography has always thought of himself as a person of great import. The creator of the popular website *OverheardIn-NewYork.com*, Michael Malice provided the recollections for Pekar's book while still in his late 20's. He's a man apart: an Ayn Rand fan who refuses to bend to others. Quitting a terrible temp job, he turns most of his neckties into arm-bands as a reminder "that things should never reach that point again." As Malice has an incompetent co-worker fired, or steadfastly refuses to speak to his relatives, he may seem like a royal prick. To which he'd say — not unfairly — "Who cares what you think?"

There's no redemptive ending to *Ego & Hubris* (Ballantine Books, \$19.95), but neither is it needed, since Pekar has truthfully profiled a man who's been gentle and mean, vicious and sweet, in the vein of his autobiographical comic book series *American Splendor*.

RC: I'm turning on my tape recorder now, and that brings me to my first question because I read somewhere that you don't use a tape when you're talking to someone like Michael Malice, who your new book is about. Is that true?

Harvey Pekar: I don't use tape recorders; I'm kind of a Luddite. Actually, I don't know where Luddite ends and mechanical incompetent begins, but I'm both. Probably if I was better with, you know, gadgets and stuff, I wouldn't mind it so much.

RC: You get such wonderful and exact testimony from people. How did you get Michael's story without a tape recorder?

Pekar: Well, first of all I've got a pretty good memory; I write things down soon after they happen. That's how I do most of the stories that don't involve the amount of dialog that Michael's did. With Michael, we communicated through the mail and he gave me a couple big chunks of autobiographical material which I was able to use. I got some stuff from conversations initially, which he later verified when he wrote me. I don't think I got much material dialog from him just by listening to him talk. What I did do was call him and ask him about the text.

RC: Did he ever question, why me? Why am I important enough to be the subject of a biography?

Pekar: No.

RC: Why not?

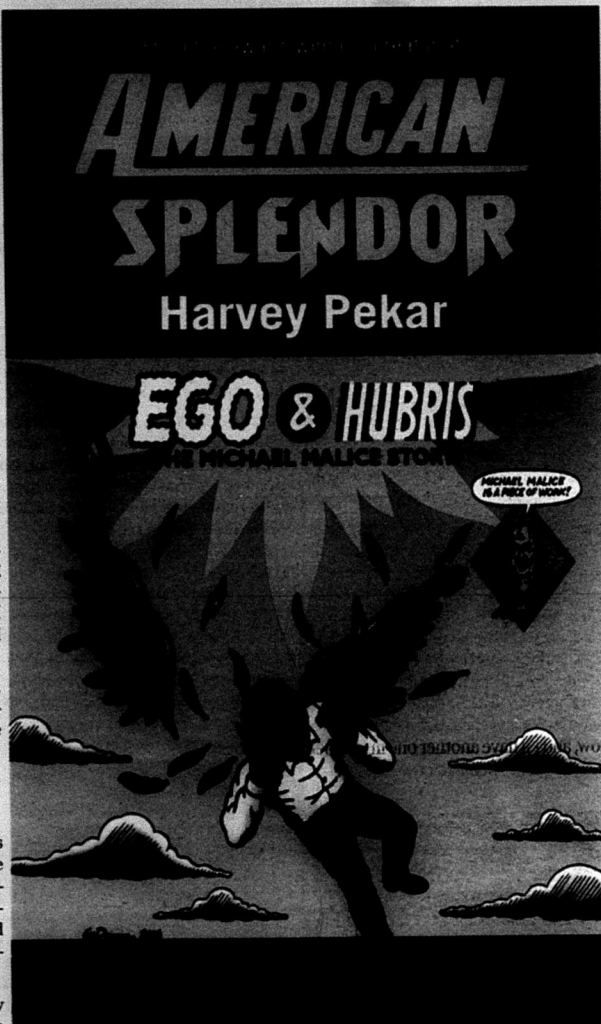
Pekar: Well, Michael's got a lot of confidence in himself and he probably thinks it's self-evident why he should have a biography written about him.

RC: Can you tell me how you and Michael are alike? Are there things that are similar about you?

Pekar: Yeah, well, we're both kind of — well, o.k., we're both Jewish. Our parents both came from Eastern Europe, though mine came from a Yiddish-speaking culture and his came from a Russian-speaking culture, from the USSR. We read a lot — we have read a lot; I don't read much these days but I used to read like a monster; we have a respect for scholarship; we're pretty antsy about details, we want to get the details right —

RC: Tell me more about that. What does that mean to you?

Pekar: Well, I want to get the dialog right. If you're one word off, you can make a really telling statement an innocuous one. It's about timing the narrative and placing a certain amount of words in a panel: not too many and not too few, and sometimes using dialog-less panels. Timing is important to me in the same way as timing is important to storytellers and stand-up comedians. You want to highlight the right word at



the right time, place it in the best place it can be.

RC: OK, yeah. Did you have anything more to say about how you two are alike?

Pekar: Well, yeah — I mean, we're both kind of nervous and a little bit excitable. He doesn't just accept stuff, like from teachers and stuff, and think that it's right.

I'll give you one example from the book that I had thought. A girl in his class once said that it's better to give than receive, and he almost laughed out loud. I thought that too, especially when I was a kid: that it was better to receive than give. People were nuts if they thought otherwise. But you know when a teacher asked me whether it was better to receive or give I'd say give, you know — keep her happy.

RC: What seems to be going on in the movie is a guy who's struggling with his own sense of consequence, of making an impact. You're having conversations with cartoonist R. Crumb about leaving a legacy and stuff. And Michael never has

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Continued from Previous Page

those questions; he assumes he's really important. Do you think that's accurate?

Pekar: Well, he says in the book that he used to read these children's authors, like the Oz stories. And he says that most people might think they're escapist, and kids like escapist literature. But he goes on to say that that's not the case: the real reason is that "I've always felt there's something magical in my life, I believe in this magic and I think I'm going to benefit from it." That's what he said.

Having said that, he is working to make a name for himself, to make a mark. He's not waiting around for someone to touch him with a wand. He's got one of the more popular web sites in New York City. It's where people hear other people say nutty things in the street and they send these snatches of conversation in to him, and he posts them on the web. That's been working out real well for him.

RC: I saw in another interview that you're pretty concerned with making ends meet at home. How is that going?

Pekar: Well, the movie was a big shot in the arm for me. I never thought any power on earth, including the movie, would ever make my books sell, because it used to be that they didn't sell very well at all, very badly as a matter of fact, like most underground cartoonists. But what I'm just hoping is I'm putting out a lot of work lately. I had a graphic novel that came out a half year ago and I got this one now, and I'll have another one in another half year, if the publisher lives up to their

commitment. I'm working on another one, a history of SDS in collaboration with a guy; I'm going to be working on a history of the Beat Generation. You know, the work comes in and....

I used to get these real plum jobs: HBO would call and say "We're having an *American Splendor* party, can you and [Cleveland artist] Gary Drumm get us up some invitations to the party? We'll give you \$500 apiece." That doesn't go on forever.

My stuff has been selling at a decent level, from what I can tell: well enough to give me extra income. I'd like to be able to maintain that, and without it all I have is my pension and Social Security and that's not very much.

RC: How many other working-class intellectuals are out there? Do you tend to work with other people who don't have a whole lot of formal education but have really educated themselves?

Pekar: I don't think people like that are that common. I mean I don't know, I can't give you a numerical count, but I don't run across a lot of people like me who really enjoy learning and spend a lot of their time doing it. ■

[Reading]

Harvey Pekar reads and signs books at Town Hall Seattle, Eighth and Seneca St., on Wed., April 19, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 and available at Elliott Bay Book Co., First and Main in Pioneer Square, or call (206) 624-6600.



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Slaying Them in the Isles

Confessions of an Economic Hit Man

By John Perkins
Plume, 2006

Paperback, 303 pages, \$15

Review by TIMOTHY HARRIS
Staff Writer

"I had been an heir to those slavers who marched into African jungles and hauled men and women off to waiting ships. Mine had been a more modern approach, subtler... but every bit as sinister."

—John Perkins, from *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*

Since 9/11, Americans have, in that clueless, bewildered way of ours that others find so maddening, asked the question "Why do people hate us so much?" If you still don't know the answer, read *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*.

While others have better addressed similar issues (David Korten's *When Corporations Rule the World* or William Greider's *Secrets of the Temple* come to mind), John Perkins takes his history as a foot soldier in the service of empire and makes it read like a John Grisham novel. Books about globalization and economics aren't for everyone, but Perkins' is. You can buy his book at Costco.

After almost joining the National Security Agency, Perkins is improbably recruited out of a Peace Corps stint in Ecuador to work for a major economic consulting and engineering firm. Just as improbably, this 20-something kid with an undergraduate business degree is put in charge of projecting economic growth in Indonesia.

He meets a mysterious woman at the Boston Public Library who becomes his mentor. She trains him out of her Beacon Hill apartment, informing him that, if anyone asks, she doesn't exist. His company has no record of her employment. She tells him he is to be an

Economic Hit Man. "We're a rare breed in a dirty business," she says. "Once you're in, you're in for life."

The game goes something like this: Developing country gets enormous loan from the World Bank to develop major infrastructure (dams, electric grids, roads, ports, etc.). Bogus economic studies project ridiculous rates of growth, thus justifying said loan. Bundles of money pass from the World Bank through a few sticky hands to land, for the most part, with U.S. firms like Haliburton or Bechtel. Developing nation defaults, as expected, leading to insurmountable debt and surrender of natural resources. Grinding poverty becomes the rule for most while a handful of local elites prevail. Repeat as necessary to achieve empire while generally avoiding war.

Meanwhile, foot soldiers like Perkins globetrot in first class, staying at five-star hotels, running up lavish expense accounts, and drawing comfy executive salaries. Perkins cozies up to elites in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Central and South America, and knows how to keep the money flowing.

He even invents an econometric model, borrowing from an obscure turn of the century Russian mathematician, that involves the assignment of random probabilities. He hires a technician to pad out a theory, vets it through the appropriate conferences and journals, and arrives at a suitably opaque method to project figures few will question.

Perkins knows he's a sellout but loves being a rich big shot. He enjoys

a series of moral awakenings, but always falls a bit short. The bennies are just too good. Perkins forms his own power company during the Wild West of Reagan-era deregulation and, with a little help from his friends, is fabulously successful. His conscience eventually resurfaces and he sells his interest to get serious about *The Book*. But just as he's about to spill the beans, global engineering giant Stone & Webster provides a fat sinecure to keep his mouth shut.

With their blessing, Perkins builds a nonprofit to lead New Age tours through the Amazon rain forest on company time. This, he amusingly writes of Stone & Webster, was "consistent with their own commitment to the United Way." The timeline at the end of his book summarizes this period: "Tries to assuage conscience by writing books about indigenous peoples, supporting nonprofit organizations, teaching at New Age forums, traveling to the Amazon and Himalayas, meeting with the Dalai Lama, etc." Nice work if you can get it.

After 9/11, he finally breaks with his corporate overlords to publish the confession. Perkins knows firsthand why the world hates us. "I had been an heir," he says, "to those slavers who marched into African jungles and hauled men and women off to waiting ships. Mine had been a more modern approach, subtler... but every bit as sinister."

This is the well-laid foundation upon which first-world privilege is built. We all get paid to look the other way. Just not quite so well. ■

In the Zion's Den

The Protocols of Zion
Directed by Mark Levin

Opens April 21 at the Northwest Film Forum

By LESTER GRAY
Arts Editor

Soon after 9/11 a vicious rumor took hold. It claimed that all Jews employed at the Trade Center, warned beforehand of the impending attacks, stayed home on that catastrophic day. As a result, the fable continues, none were killed in the terrorist strike. Film director Marc Levin, hearing this story repeated by an Egyptian taxi driver with whom he was riding, challenged the cabby on the tale's authenticity. The driver replied, "It's all contained in the book," referring to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

This Machiavellian-toned manifesto from which Levin's documentary draws its title was composed in late 19th Century Russia by an unknown author. This apocrypha purportedly emanates from a secret meeting of Jews plotting to take over the world. Contained within are such strategies as, "It must be remembered that people with base instincts are more numerous than those with noble ones. Therefore the best results in governing are achieved through violence and intimidation."

Inspired by the conversation in the taxi, Levin's *Protocols* is a meditation on contemporary anti-Semitism and the director's own Jewish upbringing. Levin interviews white supremacists and debates street-corner Jew bashers. He solicits the opinions of ministers and rabbis. The director even takes his crew into a prison and lets the inmates opine.

In essence, Levin conducts on-camera focus groups on how Jews are perceived.

Levin also challenges some of the more common perceptions relating to Jewish machinations, confronting one of the most active stories relating to 9/11 conspiracies. It concerns several Israeli citizens visiting the U.S. who were spotted celebrating as they watched the burning towers and were arrested. Thought by some to be intelligence agents, the filmmaker is unable to completely discount it.

Later he addresses a specific line from the *Protocols*: "To prevent them from reaching any independent decisions we will divert their minds by amusements, games, pastimes, passions, and cultural centers for the people." Going straight to the source, he calls Norman Lear, Rob Reiner, and others, inviting them on the eve of the release of Mel Gibson's controversial *The Passion of the Christ* to join in a panel discussion to address claims regarding Jewish control of Hollywood. All parties declined to participate.

Protocols' strongest and most darkly humorous moments come during Levin's encounters with right-wingers. Faced with addressing fears of Jewish ubiquity with a conservative radio host, Levin asks him whether he thinks Jews are even in outer space. Matching Levin's lightness, the guy says, "No, I haven't seen any pawn shops on the moon yet."

Levin visits the usual bastions of bigotry, leaving the impression that such narrow-minded sentiments lie mainly with demagogues and the less-educated. We never hear from the well-heeled and erudite, with whom such perspectives also find favor.

Protocols' message is not exactly clear. That's because it's honest. Levin courageously allows a disjointed issue to be so. In the end he seems befuddled, and that may be the most honest response. ■

Inspired by a conversation in a taxi, Mark Levin's *Protocols of Zion* is a meditation on contemporary anti-Semitism and the director's own Jewish upbringing.

Mark Levin debates in *The Protocols of Zion*.





Adventures
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning

Dr. Wes Browning of Seattle, Wash., has learned how to flood the world with press releases at a cost of only a couple hundred dollars or so FOR THE HOMELESS. Please make your checks out to Dr. Wes Browning and put "FOR THE HOMELESS" on the comment line, so he knows how to spend your generous donation of any amount large or small.

More Kittens, Please

I think it's time for another Homeless News You Can't Use Roundup!

In this Eastertide season we have lots of Homeless News relating to Jesus and friends, and I must mention some of them.

In Albuquerque, Rev. Trey Hammond gave a couple of homeless men a camera to photograph scenes from their own lives that reminded them of stories from the last week of Christ's life, because, you know, Jesus was homeless, too. I had to mention that because every time anyone says, "Jesus was homeless, too," a kitten is born, and you all know we need more kittens all the time.

On Good Friday in Honolulu, a group of legislators marched barefoot dodging pebbles and broken glass along a five-mile route as "a small way of acknowledging the suffering" of the poor on a day memorializing the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. They made 14 stops along the way, corresponding to the Stations of the Cross, to pray for and talk to homeless people, and made various donations.

Some of the marchers put duct tape on their feet. When it was suggested that this was cheating because Jesus and his Apostles had no duct tape, State Rep. Michael Kahikina said, "But Jesus gave us wisdom!"

So in 2,000 years Jesus gave us the wisdom to invent duct tape so we can march for the poor and homeless in an approximately barefoot state. There is no limit to what Jesus may give us the wisdom to do in another two thousand years. I want a levitator I can have surgically embedded under my corns, so I can walk on water in an approximately barefoot state. For the poor and homeless. That would be wise.

In a press release circulated for pay on Press Release Network by 55-year old Terry Coleman of Denver, Colo., we learn that 55-year-old Terry Coleman of Denver, Colo., has sung hymns for 40

hours 17 minutes FOR THE HOMELESS, in order to "get into either the Guinness Book of World Records or The Book of Alternative Records."

Depending on how you read the press release by 55-year old Terry Coleman of Denver, Colo., the event of his singing of the hymns was held at Tabitha's Restaurant either on Feb. 12 or next July. In any case Terry was 54 at the time, and he hoped to raise a lot of money for the homeless, including his homeless brother, but he didn't. Also, the Guinness Book of World Records doesn't choose to have an entry for longest hymn singing.

I am just thrilled to learn that I can inundate the world's news outlets with my own press release for only a couple hundred dollars or so in the hopes of raising funds for the poor and the homeless. I'm thinking of announcing my learning of this fact. My press release will say: Dr. Wes Browning of Seattle, Wash., has learned how to flood the world with press releases at a cost of only a couple hundred dollars or so FOR THE HOMELESS. Please make your checks out to Dr. Wes Browning, and put "FOR THE HOMELESS" on the comment line, so he knows how to spend your generous donation of any amount large or small.

Finally, in the non-religious Homeless News You Can't Use category, a 2-1 vote of a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has struck down Los Angeles' no-sitting ordinance because it violates the Eighth Amendment prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment.

You can't use that news because the court explicitly cited Seattle's No-Sitting ordinance as one of many such laws around the country that they consider acceptable because the Seattle law is limited to certain hours of the day and applies only in restricted zones.

Still, it's nice to know that two out of three Ninth Circuit justices think homeless people should be able to sleep somewhere, sometime, without being arrested for it.

Maybe they were really thinking of the kittens. ■



Wed., March 29, 4:19 p.m., Second Ave. Republican Parking Garage.

Officer contacted the suspect, a transient Native American male aged 25, who was sleeping inside the parking garage on Second Ave. Officer counted a total of six notices on the walls of the garage stating "No Loitering, No Trespassing" — all were clearly visible. The suspect's name was run through the police computer, and it was found he had an outstanding warrant. It was confirmed, and he was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Thurs., March 30, 2:00 p.m., 200 block Virginia Ave. — Alley to South.

Police were contacted by Metropolitan Improvement District (MID) staff regarding a mental person in the dumpster in the alley off Virginia. When they arrived they could hear a person inside the closed dumpster. They opened it to find the subject, a transient Black male aged 47, with whom they have had several previous contacts. He appeared delusional, talking to people on the fire escape stairs that were not there. He was found to be in possession of prescription drugs with the label removed. The Department of Corrections (DOC) was contacted, and they ask that he be taken to their offices. From there he was transported to Harborview Medical Center for mental evaluation.

Fri., March 31, 3:02 p.m., Maynard Ave. S., Hing Hay Park.

Suspect, a transient white female aged 26, was observed coming out of the public restrooms located inside Hing Hay Park. Hing Hay is in the Zone 5 park district, and officers were aware that suspect had been trespassing from all Zone 5 parks for one year. She was contacted, arrested, and booked into King County Jail for criminal trespass in the park.

Fri., March 31, 4:12 p.m., Western Ave./Virginia St.

Officers were dispatched to reports of a man walking up and down the east side of Western Ave. with his pants down. When he saw the police approaching, the suspect, a transient white male aged 36, pulled up his pants at once. Officers contacted him, and during the interview noted that he was acting very erratically, rambling incoherently to himself and rarely answering a question. He had several outbursts of rage, when he would yell profanities and wave his arms around. He admitted that he did pull his pants down, and didn't much care who saw. The suspect attempted to assault one of the officers and was involuntarily committed to Harborview Medical Center for a mental health evaluation. Reporting officer states he did not arrest the man for lewd conduct and assault, as — though he appeared to be a danger to himself and others and clearly could not take care of himself — it was obvious he was in need of help from mental health professionals.

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
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Carla Saulter



Bus Fools

In the NBA, a player who commits six personal fouls is ejected from the game. A player who accumulates 16 technical fouls in a season is suspended (without pay) for a game and then suspended for every

other technical foul he commits (the 18th, the 20th, and so on) thereafter. If only Metro would institute similar rules for those who consistently commit bus fouls!

For those who don't know, a bus foul is an action or behavior that negatively impacts other riders. Think of it as the bus equivalent of a party foul.

Here are some examples:

- Not having your fare ready when you get on or off. Ladies and gentlemen, don't wait until you get to the fare box to dig through your pockets for your transfer or ask your fellow passengers for change. Get yourself together before it's time to pay.

- Asking the bus driver for a free ride while carrying any of the following items: a four-dollar Starbucks extravaganza, an iPod, or a handbag that comes with its own registration form. It takes money to buy gas and pay drivers. If you have some, give it up.

- Getting personal with your SO. Let's keep this simple: Hands to yourself.

- Performing beauty rituals. OK, so using a compact to touch up your lipstick ain't exactly a crime against humanity, but since when did it

become acceptable to get ready for work on the bus? If you regularly ride with a head full of hot rollers and a carry-on-sized make-up bag, you need to start getting up earlier.

- Holding personal conversations. For those of you who seem not to mind sharing your personal business with 30 strangers, please trust me on this: The rest of us would prefer not to know about the three women you got pregnant last year or the amount of money you need to borrow from your mother.

- Turning up your music loud enough to turn your headphones into speakers. Ever think you might be the only one on the bus who's "into" Yanni? Please start.

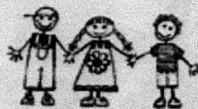
- Opening windows without asking the permission of your fellow riders. Those of us not raised in Siberia would prefer that the bus remain at a comfortable temperature.

- Stopping the bus at a green light to interrogate the driver. Please note: The bus driver has probably not memorized the schedule of every route operated by Metro. He or she might know which bus you take to get to Federal Way, but that's what maps, bus schedules, Web sites (transit.metrokc.gov), and rider information lines (206.553.3000) are for. Don't have access to a computer or a cell phone? Ask someone else who's waiting at your stop.

Too many of my fellow riders are committing bus fouls — sometimes multiple offenses in a single ride. If conditions don't improve soon, I'll be forced to start riding with a striped shirt and a whistle. ■

For those who don't know, a bus foul is an action or behavior that negatively impacts other riders. Think of it as the bus equivalent of a party foul.

Got something to say about public transportation in Seattle? E-mail Bus Chick at buschick@gmail.com or visit blog.seattlepi.com or nwsource.com/buschick.



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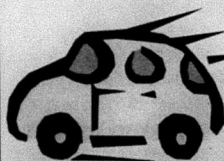
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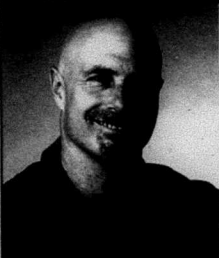
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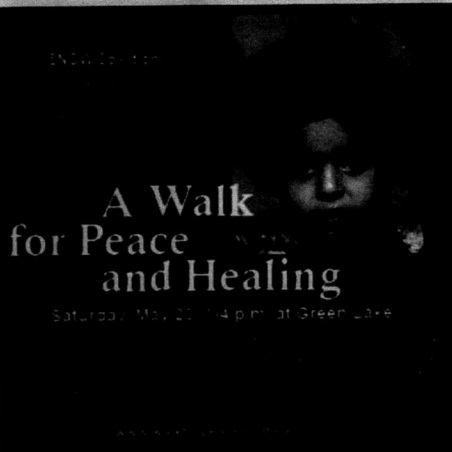
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Letters

Immigrants and Hillary's wastebasket

Dear Real Change,

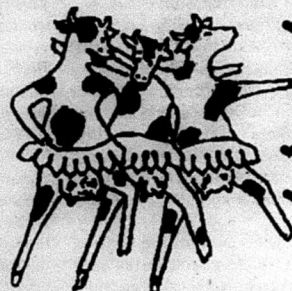
On April 12, I had the total displeasure of reading your article on "immigrant injustice" in *Real Change*. First and foremost, those who enter this country illegally are not immigrants. Those people are illegal aliens. Illegal aliens are not entitled to automatic citizenship for sneaking into this country. Illegal aliens are not entitled to unlimited welfare or food stamps. Free medical care for their entire families and free taxpayer-paid-for lawyers. The current public discourse on matters of illegal aliens is not anti-immigrant rhetoric. Again, illegal aliens are not immigrants, they are illegal aliens. Your statements about "right-wing provocateurs" is the ilk of Hillary Clinton's office wastebasket. The Minutemen are courageous citizens acting on their beliefs, as opposed to members of the House and Senate, who are posturing for the Hispanic vote.

Un fortunately for the United States, much of what you believe in most likely will come to pass due to the members of congress who value their vote-purchasing results above their obligations to the U.S. Constitution. U.S. citizenship should not be for sale for \$2,000. Illegal entry into this country should not be rewarded with a guaranteed retirement for the entire family at taxpayer expense.

Joe Winkler

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

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Join a dynamic team at Seattle's YWCA Opportunity Place as the Housing Manager supporting women, children & men. Knowledge of low-income housing tax credits, section 8, landlord/tenant law. FT+Bens. See www.ywcaworks.org for details. Resp: L. Leber, YWCA, 1118 5th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101 or to hr@ywcaworks.org. EOE

Opportunity

No Pretzel Positions! Free Yoga Classes. On-Going Mondays 11:45am-1:00pm. Wednesdays 10:45am-NOON @ The Recovery Café, Second and Bell. All ages and abilities.

Free Yoga Class. One Time Only. Sunday April 23rd 1:00-2:15pm @ The Seattle Public Library, Capital Hill Branch - 425 Harvard Ave. (behind the old OFC on Broadway) *not sponsored by The Public Library

Dr. Arun Gandhi delivers his talk Building a Culture of Peace in Our Families, Community, and the World. April 20th, 7 p.m., Olympia, 512 Washington St. SE Info: (360) 357-7705

Amnesty International Group 4 meeting on Tibetan prison of conscience and human rights. April 19th, 6:30 p.m., 309 Pontius Ave.

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 4/19

Iraq, Why We Need to Leave Now: A Soldier, a Mother, and a Father Speak presents personal stories of war and its consequences, featuring speakers whose loved ones have died in the war-ravaged country. 7 p.m., Woodland Park Presbyterian Church, 225 N. 70th St. Info: dougfir@speakeasy.net.

A presentation and discussion, "Preparing Underrepresented Minorities for Success in Science and Technology" addresses the concerns students and educators face about the disproportionate demographics in engineering classes and workplaces. What strategies and practices can universities use to support and ensure success of all students in all fields? 7 p.m., University of Washington, Kane Hall 120. Info: (206) 543-9779.

Thursday 4/20

Food justice advocate and author of *Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen*, Anna Lappé shares her recipes and thoughts on food policies and politics. 6 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

A musical celebration of spiritual and ethnic diversity benefiting Multifaith Works, an organization providing support for people living with AIDS and other life-threatening diseases, "Many Voices, One Song" captures artistic energy with the message of support and compassion for those in need. Performers include acclaimed Japanese American drum performance group Seattle Kokon Taiko, men's ensemble Captain Smartypants, and gay/straight alliance chorus Diverse Harmony. Tickets \$15 and up. 7 p.m., Seattle First Baptist Church, 1111 Harvard Ave. Info: www.multifaith.org.

The true but little-known account of Chicano students who staged a compelling 1968 walkout to protest the academic prejudice and terrible conditions of the East Los Angeles school district. Walkout shows that the price for progress is high but ultimately worth paying. 7:30 p.m., New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S. Info: (206) 722-6057.

Friday 4/21 - Sunday 4/23

An immersion into the rich, dynamic Japanese culture, the Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival features taiko drums, ikebana flowers, sushi, tea ceremonies, martial arts demonstrations, kite making, and more. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Seattle Center, 305 Harrison St.

Saturday 4/22

When I Was Elena is Ellen Urbani Hilebrand's memoir of her volunteer experience in the Peace Corps in Guatemala. She weaves her travelogue of an unworldly sorority-girl experiencing the impoverished country with the personal stories and hardships of the native women she befriends. 2 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

Sunday 4/23

Short Stories Live! celebrates the renowned playwright and author Alice Childress, whose work focused on

the African American experience in the American South during the 20th century. Excerpts from *Like One of the Family*, *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But A Sandwich*, and *A Short Walk* will be read by Valerie Curtis-Newton, director of the Hansberry Project. Tickets \$13 and up. 4 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Monday 2/24

Professor of philosophy A. C. Grayling analyzes one of the rarely discussed horrors of WWII: the Allied tactic of "area bombing," wherein German and Japanese cities were decimated, killing and injuring civilians. In his book, *Among the Dead Cities*, Grayling ethically picks apart the arguments for the attacks: the desire to lower morale, the belief that civilians were combatants, and the hope of shortening the conflict by crippling the Axis' economy. 7 p.m., University of Washington Bookstore, 4326 University Way N.

Director's Corner



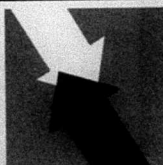
Last week brought the end of a nine-month standoff between the city and SHARE/WHEEL. The group provides 300 shelter beds nightly, in addition to their roving tent cities, with just \$260,000 in city funding.

At issue was whether the homeless-led group would participate in the Safe Harbors data collection program. Both sides had dug in with their own versions of the "nuclear option." The city seemed poised to defund one of Seattle's most venerable homeless empowerment institutions. SHARE/WHEEL threatened to retaliate with new homeless encampments located in city parks. An 11th-hour deal found a compromise both sides could live with. The city also restored funding to several other emergency shelter providers.

While the city talked about a "new paradigm" in which shelter without supportive services isn't enough, in the end, they came up against reality: more services cost more money. More money means fewer beds. Fewer beds means more danger. Increased danger means more dead people. And more dead people wasn't what folks had in mind when they signed on for ending homelessness.

SHARE, with their self-managed model, will always be the most cost-effective shelter in town, and that's not something to be tossed aside.

The city's shift in priorities was unilateral, precipitous, and premature and threatened to undermine the coalition strategy to end homelessness that is still forming. In the end, the need for unity prevailed, and we all won.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Keep our Promise to Abuse Survivors

Issue: Congress' unanimous reauthorization of the expanded Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) this past December was cause for celebration. However, without adequate funding, the legislation won't do much to protect victims from family violence. For the fifth year in a row, President Bush has not requested full funding for VAWA programs in his budget. What's more, because the bill wasn't passed until late last year, no funding at all has been proposed for new VAWA programs.

Background: Congress authorized spending \$1 billion per year so that VAWA's effective programs, like the national domestic violence hotline, training for law enforcement, and legal assistance for victims could continue and expand. The President's budget requests only \$546 million in funding for continuing and new programs — just over half of what he could have requested. Full funding is needed to continue VAWA's lifesaving programs plus funding for the new programs that will help ensure an integrated approach to ending domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence. These new remedies address gaps in prevention services, housing, health care, and employment issues related to domestic and sexual violence. And they bring VAWA's effective services to new populations such as youth, Native women, and victims of sexual violence through funding for rape crisis centers and other service providers not included in previous legislation.

The following are some of the programs that have not received full funding in the President's 2007 budget request:

Services for children who witness abuse; sexual assault services; privacy protections for victims of violence; programs for communities of color and Indian women; prevention: encouraging men's and boys' roles in ending violence against women; National Domestic Violence Hotline; Family Violence Prevention and Services Act shelter and services; rape prevention and education; services for older and disabled victims of violence; legal assistance for victims of violence; and transitional housing.

Congress will begin the appropriations process very soon, and they have the ability to decide how much money to dedicate to VAWA programs.

Action: Contact your U.S. Senators and Representatives and urge them to provide full funding for all existing and new Violence Against Women Act programs. Survivors of domestic violence and service providers or those who work with victims are especially urged to share their personal stories.

To take action online, visit www.stopfamilyviolence.org and click Take Action. Or contact your U.S. Congressional delegation directly:

Representative Jay Inslee (D - 1st Dist.), 1-800-422-5521. joy.inslee@mail.house.gov
Representative Rick Larsen (D - 2nd Dist.), 1-800-562-1385. rick.larsen@mail.house.gov
Representative Jim McDermott (D - 7th Dist.), 206-553-7170. www.house.gov/mcdermott
Representative Dave Reichert (R - 8th Dist.), 206-275-3438. www.house.gov/reichert
Representative Adam Smith (D - 9th Dist.), 1-800-764-8409. www.house.gov/adamsmith
Senator Patty Murray (D), 206-553-5545. www.murray.senate.gov/email
Senator Maria Cantwell (D), 206-220-6400. maria_cantwell@cantwell.senate.gov

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

I-86, Continued from Page 1

free, public education for two years beyond high school." How those funds are to be procured is not specified.

What has become specific, however, is a judicial ruling on the presence of military recruiters on campuses. In mid-March, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a unanimous decision that forces colleges and universities who receive federal assistance to permit recruiters access to students on campus. (The federal government, for example, supplies Seattle Central with close to \$6 million a year.) A consortium of law schools had challenged the federal law, known as the Solomon Amendment, on the grounds that granting the military an open door compelled the hosting colleges and universities to support the military's ban on openly gay and lesbian service members.

Speaking shortly after Johnson was Ragina Johnson (no relation), campaign manager of San Francisco's "College Not Combat" Proposition I, which told recruiters there they weren't welcome in public schools. Ragina said that San Franciscoans sent a clear message to recruiters in 2005, when 60 percent of voters passed the initiative. Anti-recruitment efforts, she said, were a strategic maneuver to exploit the weakness of the current U.S. administration, as well as to keep students' hands and consciences clean. "We say [students] deserve access to education and jobs without killing people in war," Ragina said, to much applause.

Applause greeted Green Party senatorial candidate Aaron Dixon as well. Dixon recalled for the audience discussions he'd had in the past with his son, who, after high school, joined the Navy. Shortly after his son's enlisting, the Gulf War began. Luckily, Dixon said, his son was discharged before seeing action. But the recent sight of a man standing alongside an interstate exit with a sign announcing he was a "Gulf War Veteran," reminded Dixon of the after-effects of war faced by veterans, oftentimes without assistance from the government they served. Instances like these, he said, led Dixon to frown upon the military's pursuit of students.

"The military doesn't care about young people," said Dixon. "They're cannon-fodder to them."

Amy Hagopian, president of the Garfield High School Parent/Teacher/Student Association, said that voter support of initiatives such as I-86 was more than mere symbolism. Tiny acts of civil disobedience are important, Hagopian said, referring to those who staged sit-ins during the Civil Rights Movement. "Was that toothless?" she asked.

Students throughout the city, she said, were voluntarily opting out of being solicited by recruiters, with 40 percent of Garfield students falling in that camp. The mission of the PTSA and the reason she was on hand to support I-86, she continued, was to work to keep young people safe. Such actions, she knew, went against the general perception of the PTSA.

"The mission of the PTSA," Hagopian said, smiling, "is not to have bake sales." ■



CHRIS MOBLEY, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR FOR COLLEGE NOT COMBAT COALITION'S DRIVE TO GET ANTI-RECRUITING INITIATIVE ON THE BALLOT. PHOTO BY KEN DEAN.

CHILD CARE, Continued from Page 1

favor of unions. In a November 2005 election conducted by the American Arbitration Association, 92 percent of the child-care providers voted to join the collective bargaining unit.

Among the first issues child-care workers hope to address is the subsidy the state pays for child care to the working poor, which ranges between \$16 and \$30 for a full day of care, depending on the age of the child.

Almost half of all state-subsidized child care is provided by family-based child-care providers, and in rural areas, where fewer child-care options exist, that number is even higher. In Washington state, 43 percent of all children in licensed child care in rural areas are in home-based care, compared to 24 percent of children in metropolitan areas.

Of the 12 families that Shawn Harris serves, just two pay the full fee for day care. The other 10 receive state subsidies. It can take six weeks to receive the payments from the state, and when you factor in overhead, the rate she receives — \$22.73 per day for an infant — doesn't cover the real cost of child care, Harris says.

The state subsidy varies from county to county, but Harris believes that's not fair, since many costs, such as food and supplies, are the same price in Pierce and King County.

Even in King County, where the rate is the highest, the subsidy had failed to keep up with the cost of living, says Kathy Yasi, who runs a licensed day care out of her Central District home.

"People spend more money to have their dog in day care than the state pays to have subsidized day care," she says.

In King County, the state pays \$25.55 per day for a school-age child in family home care. A full day at a Seattle doggy daycare costs about \$25.

The state should do more to help home-based child care workers navigate the paperwork needed to receive the subsidy, Harris adds.

"There's 52 pages of dos and don'ts," she says, but for the most part providers learn how to get reimbursed by trial and error. "You kind of learn as you go."

Whether or not they take the state's subsidy, family child-care providers are seeking a way to secure their own health insurance.

Most don't have any, and earn too little to purchase their own. According to a May 2004 report by the state's Department of Social and Health Services, the median hourly wage of a child care worker is \$8.06. The state's minimum wage is \$7.63.

Unless you're married to a spouse whose employer carries insurance, "a lot of us are just without," Harris says.

The push to unionize home-based child-care workers echoes previous efforts to organize another sector of the work force, home health-care workers, many of whom are paid in part by the state for taking care of elderly or disabled clients.

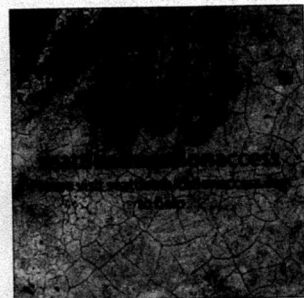
In both cases workers are indirectly employed by the state, noted SEIU 925 spokeswoman Gretchen Donart, and their compensation should reflect the true value of the services they provide, not just to families, but to society.

That hasn't happened, Yasi believes, because many home-based child-care centers are invisible businesses, out of sight and out of mind.

"I think the problem is that we're perceived to be a little bit renegade," she says, "because we're off on our own somewhere."

With a union to bring them together, both women are confident that in-home child-care workers' voices will be heard.

As Harris puts it, "When you have 10,000 people saying the same message, they tend to take notice." ■



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