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VOL. 13 NO. 19

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MAY 3 - 9, 2006



THOSE IN SUPPORT OF IMMIGRANT RIGHTS FILLED SEATTLE'S STREETS AS PART OF A MAY DAY MARCH. WHILE LOCAL ESTIMATES FOR MARCH PARTICIPANTS WERE SET AT 60,000, AN ESTIMATED MILLION PEOPLE STOPPED FROM COAST TO COAST. PHOTO BY KEN DEAN.

IN THE OPEN

The May Day March proves the Latino/Mexicano presence in Washington is a sight to see

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FENCED IN

Park Department approves a ordinance that prohibits certain behavior

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RAISING EIRE

Seattle's Irish community leads a parade that draws thousands of Americans

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ON THEIR BACKS

Seattle's Latino community leads a parade that draws thousands of Americans

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THE MOCKINGBIRD TIMES

CENTERFOLD
SPREAD



Unknown

Future uncertain for
Ryan White CARE Act

By ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Reporter

Tony Radovich just doesn't know. That's not to say Radovich, 45, isn't knowledgeable on a number of topics. He knows, for instance, that since being diagnosed with AIDS in 1997, his free access to a case manager has aligned him with necessary health care. He's cognizant that a food-and-meals program has fed him without charge. Pro bono legal assistance, he's well aware, recently allowed him to update his will.

Radovich will also tell you that each of these services he's accessed in the past — every one of them available, for free, to people living with HIV/AIDS — have been made possible because of the Ryan White CARE Act (RWCA.) But when it comes to saying just how these programs will look in the future, his knowledge stops short. He'll be up to speed when Congress renews the RWCA.

That was supposed to happen in September 2005. It didn't. Congress is now slated to renew the Act in.... No one really knows.

See UNKNOWN, Continued on Page 10

The Ultimate Goal

Naturalization Day aids legal residents' journey to citizenship

By ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Reporter

Naturalization Day was set to begin on Apr. 28 at 10 a.m. Amy Duncan was ready and waiting by 8:30.

Though it's just as accurate to say that Duncan, 28, has been ready and waiting for such an event her whole life. So as the ground floor doors to Consejo Counseling and Referral Services opened onto an overcast morning, Duncan, a lawful permanent resident of the United States who was born in Colombia, walked inside the Columbia City building. They were steps she hoped would represent the final stretch on the path to her ultimate goal: citizenship.

"It does make things easier," Duncan mused of potentially becoming a U.S. citizen.

And Naturalization Day, an event sponsored by the Washington chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA,) was an attempt to make the process of naturalization easier as well.

It can be, for those seeking to keep a dream from being deferred, an intimidating undertaking. Integral to

the process is the completion of Form N-400. Known less officially as the Application for Naturalization, the form runs 10 pages long. Contained upon those pages are more than 100 questions, including "Have you ever been a member of or in any way associated (either directly or indirectly) with a terrorist organization?" and "Have you ever committed a crime or offense for which you were not arrested?" Section D attempts to assess an applicant's "good moral character." All questions are written in English.

In the doors walked a man who looked to be in his mid-50s, saying, "Buenos días." While twisting his hat in his hand, he asked, in broken English, for assistance. A Spanish-speaking volunteer sat with him to assess his readiness for naturalization. For others who may not have enjoyed complete facility with the English language, Naturalization Day interpreters were on hand at all nine AILA-monitored sites throughout the state, including Mount Vernon, Spokane, and Yakima.

Duncan, who was adopted when she was a month old in 1977 by a single

See CITIZEN, Continued on Page 12

Being Seen

Brown, bold, and beautiful: even the marchers were left marveling at how different the Emerald City's hue had become

By SILJA J.A. TALVI
Advisory Board

Downtown Seattle had never quite looked this brown before. Brown, as in "Brown Is Beautiful," one of the many hand-lettered signs being carried by an estimated 25,000 marchers who took part in Seattle's own May 1 immigration rally.

Judging by the make-up of the protest, which wound through downtown Seattle for hours before coming to a peaceable end, 80-90 percent of the assembled protesters were of Mexican, Cuban, and/or Latino origin. Families filled the streets with strollers; immigrants wrapped their bodies in American flags (as well as a smaller number of flags from Mexico, Honduras, Cuba, and El Salvador); and thousands carried handmade signs with impassioned pleas for recognition and respect: "We are immigrants, not criminals," one small sign read, held by a man whose attire suggested the occupation of the day laborers who gather in small, furtive Belltown clusters to seek out work, rain or shine. "We don't want to hide anymore."

Another similarly attired man had his own version of the message: "I'm not a terrorist, I'm a hard-working Mexican."

Although far smaller in number, the march also attracted the presence of a smattering of Euro-Americans and far more Asian Pacific Islanders, Somali Muslims, and Arab Americans, the latter two groups having borne the brunt of the greater Seattle area's post-9/11 spasms of violence and the beginning of government intrusion into people's homes or places of employment.

Pramila Jayapal, executive director of the Hate Free Zone, spoke at the concluding downtown rally. Jayapal has

been a leading figure in the city's burgeoning, grassroots immigrant rights movement, including groups like HFZ and the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project. In Washington state, this has become a diverse movement that has included everything from voting registration drives for East African political refugees to advocating for better health care and housing for Latino migrant workers and their families.

The movement has also sparked a recent wave of protests by previously insular, media-shy groups of devout Muslim immigrants related to the recent arrests of immigrants, including Somali-born Abu Abraham Sheikh Mohammed ("Nothing to Fear," Feb. 23) and Majid al-Massari, a young, Saudi Arabian-born computer whiz employed by the University of Washington ("Under Lock and Sea-Tac," Feb. 22 2005).

Both men are currently being held in solitary confinement in Puget Sound. To date, officials have touted their links to terrorism without providing any hard evidence.

Jayapal and other speakers encouraged the assembled masses to be willing to stick out the struggle for immigration reform and to see each other as allies, no matter what their cultural, religious, or linguistic differences.

Most of the podium talk was understandably about the potential and promise of multicultural, multi-ethnic collaboration, but it was still mostly a day for Latinos to revel in each others' presence — and to welcome a heretofore unseen sense of Latino solidarity on Seattle's streets.

That was certainly the sentiment being echoed by the large numbers of "brown power" teenagers and young adults who had taken public transpor-

tation from Tacoma to Monroe, to be a part of it all.

Berenice Hernandez, 23, had come from South Seattle with her two 14-year-old sisters; all three said that they had never participated in a demonstration until this one. The march, they said, had left them feeling "proud."

"We have to stand up for our people, to protect our families," said Hernandez, who was born in Mexico and is now an American citizen.

The most recent U.S. Census data indicates that at least one in three Seattleites is a person of color, but the official count for "Hispanics" in the city stands at only 5.3 percent (and 7.5 percent statewide), compared with a national average of 12.5 percent.

While those figures are likely to have undercounted the vast migrant population that has become the backbone of Central and Eastern Washington's heavily agricultural economy, they do reflect the fact that other ethnic groups — most notably, Asian Pacific Islanders, African Americans, and Native Americans — have not only been more visible but have also gained a certain limited measure of political clout in Seattle, King County, and beyond.

While the numbers in Washington state are unlikely to ever reach the critical mass of Latinos now seen in California, Arizona, or Texas, they are far from insignificant and will become even less so in the future. According to analysis from the state's Office of Financial Management, Latinos are the fastest-growing ethnic minority group in Washington. By 2030, the Latino population is expected to top one million, representing a population increase of 150 percent from the present day.

See MARCH, Continued on Page 5



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.

On the Web at

<http://www.realchange.org>
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ISSN 1085-729X

Real Change is a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association, the International Network of Street Papers, and the Greater Seattle Business Association.



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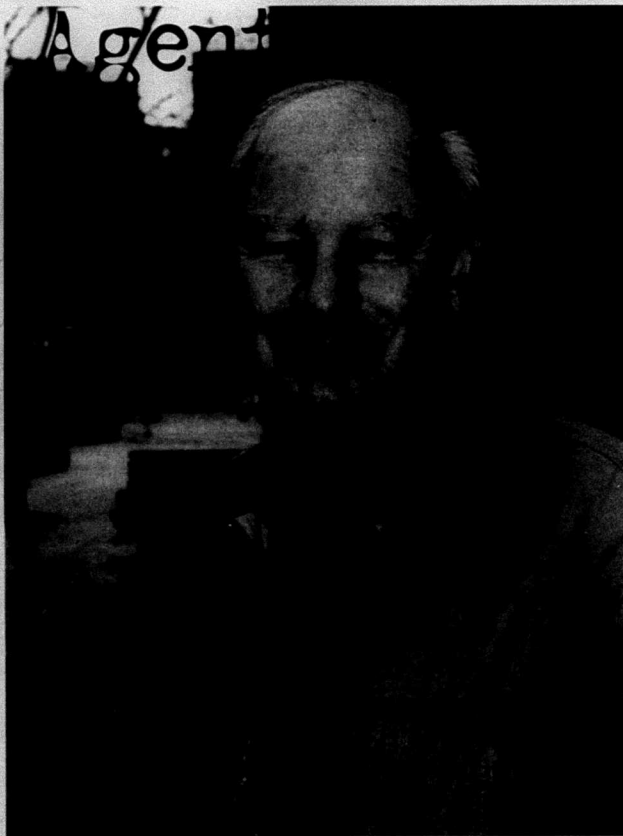
Rev. Dr. Craig Rennebohm, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, first encountered Sterling Hayden camped on the doorstep of his church, where evening after evening he'd build a fort of trash to ward off "evil forces." Rennebohm befriended Hayden and made an unsuccessful attempt to get him treatment for his mental illness. Feeling isolated and hopeless, Hayden fled the church. A few weeks later, he was found frozen to death on the streets of Seattle.

The experience was the impetus for Rennebohm's Mental Health Chaplaincy, a grassroots effort to forge one-on-one relationships with homeless individuals affected by mental illness and connect them with health care, housing, and jobs.

Rennebohm recently launched Neighbors Acting to End Homelessness, an ongoing program geared at making connections with the homeless. Graduates are matched with volunteer assignments at neighborhood agencies. "Out of the experience of an individual relationship comes a greater understanding of what homelessness results from," says Rennebohm. "We uncover the common human ground we share."

To learn more about the program please contact Jackie Leksens, (425) 672-7362, or jleksen@hotmail.com.

— Amy Besunder



Changing Face "Parks Renaissance" plan approved

By MARIA ANTONOVA
Contributing Writer

[Resource]
Get the downtown parks renaissance plan online at www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/downtown/Report.pdf

Backs to the park: Victor Steinbrueck is part of the downtown "renaissance" plan. Photo by Matthew Sumi.



On Apr. 27, the Park Board of Commissioners met to discuss and make recommendations about "Parks Renaissance," Greg Nickels' proposed vision to "revitalize and activate" Seattle's downtown parks in the next few years. For most people this sounds like an obscure link in a bureaucratic chain of events that moves city projects along, but people at sparsely attended meetings like these change the face of Seattle.

The main goal of the project, developed by the Downtown Parks and Public Spaces Task Force, is to make the parks more open, accessible, and used by the public. Yet oral and written public testimony submitted to the board before the hearing casts doubt on the plan's claims to democracy and inclusion. One of the changes the task force advocates for is wrought iron fencing enclosing the perimeter of some parks — a change that critics of the plan note will help keep people out.

Sixteen different comments from the public specifically criticized the fence idea as something that will send the wrong message and make the parks "less inviting."

The Task Force assures us that "this is not an anti-homeless program; in fact

it, is supportive." Yet, it's pushing for extending an anti-panhandling and anti-camping ordinance to the Park Code, to be enforced by Park Rangers, another new proposition. Two uniformed unarmed park officials roving the 24 downtown parks around the clock will communicate with the SPD in case park rules are not respected.

Other proposed measures to make the parks more engaging are changing noise ordinances to make it easier to host events and increasing retail activity by encouraging vendors. For example, a portion of Steinbrueck Park is likely to be cleared for outdoor seating of the adjacent Cutters Restaurant.

The implementation of these and many other project features will forever change the parks as Seattle knows them. One obvious question is: what's the price tag? According to Dewey Potter, the Parks' Communication Manager, the Ranger Program alone, which would include a contract with the SPD, is going to cost half a million dollars per year. Other improvements, like new bathrooms, signage, and landscaping, are harder to estimate.

Where would the money come from, if not the city budget, which will not absorb all costs? The report cites "multiple sources, including a new parks levy, open space impact fees, neighborhood matching funds, Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET), and a public/private partnership."

The Report will next be presented to the City Council in late May or early June, but approval from the council is not required. Parks have already begun implementing some administrative recommendations that impact the internal functions of the department. The main hurdle will come in July, during budget committee meetings in which the Renaissance plan must compete with other projects for funding. ■

Just Heard... Lead-painted Sunset

The EPA has filed a complaint against former Renton landlords for allegedly not informing tenants that an apartment contained lead paint.

Landlords Stanley Xu and Longwell Company are alleged to have committed 60 violations in the management of Sunset Vista Apartments. Among the violations are failure to alert tenants of either the presence of lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards, failure to provide any records or reports to the tenants, and failure to provide tenants with EPA-approved lead information pamphlets. Each violation carries a maximum penalty of \$11,000.

Sunset Vista is considered "target housing" by the EPA, since it was built prior to a 1978 Consumer Products Safety Commission ban on the manufacture and sale of lead-based paint. Federal law mandates landlords inform tenants, before they sign a lease, of the presence of lead paint.

Exposure to lead, a highly toxic metal, can cause learning disabilities, seizures, and even death in children. Pregnant women and parents with children lived at the Sunset.

— Rosette Royale

Rules? What rules?

UW scientists bypassed safety and procedural regulations at a South Lake Union bio research lab last year. And the UW didn't even investigate the matter.

That's what Mike McCormick says he discovered through a Freedom of Information Act request for the audio recording of a January meeting of the university's Institutional Biosafety Committee, which oversees research at UW's labs and whose chair, at that meeting, described scientists working "without having the appropriate biosafety cabinets, the appropriate rooms, the appropriate education, the appropriate paperwork on file, and without the appropriate waste stream."

Upon discovering the violations, no oversight agency moved to stop the work or check for contamination, says McCormick, who founded Labwatch Seattle (labwatch.org) last year.

"This indicates a logistical problem across UW," which has 30 local labs approved to work on infectious pathogens, "to not know which [scientists] and how many were working on this."

— Adam Hyla

Power Pique

In what Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck describes as "an act of bad faith," Mayor Greg Nickels declined to sign the Downtown Livability Resolution that the Seattle City Council unanimously passed last month along with a sweeping zoning change package. The resolution addressed a range of downtown issues, from livable wages to open space, public safety, and transportation, and offered critical framing for a vision of "a downtown for all." While a refusal to sign isn't a veto, it indicates an absence of support that will be read by department heads as "not a priority." Council pushback will come through budget authority. "When we don't get cooperation," says Steinbrueck, "we'll simply park funds until that changes."

— Timothy Harris

Ten of Heart

Irish Americans remember 25th anniversary of 10 hunger strikers' deaths

By LAURA PEACH
Contributing Writer

Shawn O'Rawe's cousin took part in the 1981 hunger strike among political prisoners from Northern Ireland. Though 10 prisoners starved to death, he says the strike "let the Republican movement know that there was support." Photo by Sherry Loeser.

Peaceful protest can cause positive change. Ten men who sacrificed their lives for Irish independence are evidence of this. The hunger strike they participated in 25 years ago brought attention to the injustices and abuses that were plaguing Catholics in Northern Ireland. The men will be commemorated during a special evening of tribute and remembrance on Tuesday, May 9. A current Irish Parliament member will give a memorial address and several musicians will be performing.

"I want people to come away from this with an awareness of the transitional effect that the hunger strikes had on the struggle for peace and justice in Ireland," says Jenna Stephens, who is organizing the commemoration.

The prolonged conflict between Ireland and Great Britain continued after Northern Ireland became a separate autonomous region in 1920. After 50 years of Catholic repression, the 1960s generation began to demand equal rights and were met with violent reactions from the mainly Protestant police force. A piece of legislation called the Special Powers Act allowed Catholics to be arrested and held without trial.

In 1976 the British government stripped Republican prisoners of their political status, recategorizing them as criminals in order to condemn their actions as illicit crimes instead of civil protest. The prisoners demanded the rights such as the ability to freely associate and wear civilian clothes. Their first demonstration of rebellion was going "on the blanket" — growing their hair long and exchanging prison garb for a blanket in defiance of prison authorities.

When no changes were made, several men who were held in the Long Kesh prison in Belfast decided to go on a hunger strike in 1980. Due to miscommunication with the British government, it was called off after a few weeks when the demands were thought to have been addressed. In March of 1981, another hunger strike was initiated. A prisoner named Bobby Sands died in May, after 66 days without food. His death was followed by nine others. The strike was called off in August.

"The Irish have a long history of hunger strikers in political protest," says Joe Martin, of the Seattle Irish Hunger Strike Commemoration Com-

mittee. "From Terence McSweeney, a mayor of Cork who died in the 1920s, to the prisoners at Long Kesh, it's a part of the political culture."

Shawn O'Rawe, an active member of the Irish American community in Seattle, pinpoints the impact that the prisoners had: "The hunger strikes began to politicize everything, they let the Republican movement know that there was support, and that it was growing." O'Rawe had a cousin, Brendan Kews, who was on the hunger strike, and his brother was the communications coordinator between the strikers and the government.

"It's always with you," he says. "I hope that nobody forgets that these men gave their lives so that we could live a better life."

Kay McKenna, an Irish American who will be speaking Tuesday night, lived in Belfast as the struggle was building and says she was deeply affected by what was going on at the time. "The campaign wasn't about violence, it was to allow people to live the way that they wanted to live," McKenna says. She had two brothers who were in Long Kesh at the time, and lived across the street from the wife of one of the hunger strikers. "It's not an easy decision to go on a hunger strike — you'll hope that it'll be over, but when you start you know that you could be on it till your death."

She also described how difficult it was for the families. "These men had to weigh everything up, you know, morally: How were their wives to go on raising the kids while their husbands were languishing away in jail?"

"I just want people to remember the men who went on the hunger strike and gave their lives, not as just a line in a newspaper, but as a real part of history." ■

[Event]

The 10 men who died in the 1981 strike at Northern Ireland's Long Kesh prison will be commemorated Tuesday, May 9, in Piggott Auditorium at Seattle University, 901 - 12th Ave. Sean Crowe, a community activist and Parliament member from Dublin, will address what the hunger strike meant to his generation; locals Clay Pipe, Jim Page, and the Raybourne Experience will perform Irish music.



Short Takes

Out of the shadows, part II

Another immigrant community wants to be seen in the light of day: that's people from Asia and islands of the Pacific and their descendants, who are smashing the "model minority" myth to pieces.

A new study by the D.C.-based Asian American Justice Center took a close-up look at Asian American and Pacific Islander immigrants in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties and found low wages, limited English proficiency, and unfinished schooling.

More than one in five Pacific Islanders, and 16 percent of Asian Americans, live in overcrowded housing, compared to just 5 percent of all residents. 31 percent of Vietnamese residents live in overcrowded conditions. Twice as many Korean American residents of King County are in poverty than the general population, and an even higher number of Vietnamese, Samoan, Cambodian, and Indonesian immigrants are poor.

Many of the poorest Asians and Pacific Islanders are recent immigrants who need the scarce linguistically

appropriate health and human services, says Carina Del Rosario of Asian Counseling and Referral Services.

"For people who are recently arrived, language barriers make it difficult to advocate for their needs," she says. "Some of them don't know about the resources that are out there."

Employment opportunities for someone who speaks little English is also limited — mainly to manufacturing or low-wage service work. And without English, there's little chance of promotion. While some exemplary employers offer on-the-job English classes, most recent immigrants have to find the time, and money, to go to school.

Even immigrants advanced in their fields find a glass ceiling keeping them at a certain station, says Rosario: mostly, it's a cultural barrier. "We have many great examples of local Asian Pacific Americans moving into leadership roles, but we still hear cases of people who experience barriers within their field."

One positive indicator: despite less money overall, Asian immigrants experience more

economic well-being than whites as they age — perhaps because, bereft of savings, they're working long past age 65, or perhaps because a cultural norm encourages children to care for their elders, says Rosario.

Rosario and allies are working to convince state and federal negotiators to provide materials in immigrants' first languages as well as English as a Second Language courses, more culturally competent health care, and spurs to getting naturalized immigrants to vote.

—Adam Hyla

I-946 moves forward

An initiative intent on stopping undocumented immigrants from receiving public assistance was ordered by Thurston County Superior Court on Friday to highlight the fact that it requires everyone, not just immigrants, to prove their citizenship in order to receive public assistance.

The rewording of Initiative 946's title and summary came as a result of an April 12 challenge by the Washington Association of Churches that the broad effects of the initiative were not explicitly stated.

Under it, people seeking state and city services, including food stamps, public housing, and child care, would need to have a birth certificate or passport. A driver's license wouldn't work. Employers would be subject to a misdemeanor charge for not reporting workers they discover to be violating immigration law.

The petition for I-946 needs 225,000 signatures by July 5 to go to voters.

I-946 sponsor Bob Baker started printing petitions immediately and said his group, Protect Washington Now, planned to solicit signatures at an auto show and boat show that weekend.

As of Sunday, 10,000 petitions have been printed thus far, according to the group's blog.

—Jason Siegel

MARCH, Continued from Page 2

The Latino population in Washington has not been a highly politicized group until this point or, for that matter, a group at the receiving end of the kind of overtly racist violence and segregation experienced by early Chinese American immigrants and African Americans, among other groups.

Without that necessarily self-protective, oppositional history, Washington's Latinos are freer, in a sense, to take more time to cultivate a political presence and message, and the style of Monday's protest seemed to reflect that. In sharp contrast to many other protests across the nation, the people who filled at least 20 blocks of downtown Seattle's streets walked in relative silence — save for the occasional "Si, se puede!" — and smiled toward onlookers and police alike with what seemed like a palpable combination of pride and astonishment simply being seen in a city and state that has yet to truly come to terms with its Latino population.

There were certainly far more humorous moments than very serious ones, including a contingent of openly gay Latinos shouting "Diversity, baby, diversity"; a sign reading "Immigrant Rights: That's Hot"; and one man whisking through the crowd wearing dark sunglasses and a Superman costume, with his own sign: "I am also an illegal alien." (The march did get off to a disconcerting start, however, when a driver rammed into several protesters. Although no one was seriously hurt, the motorist was arrested by police after protesters began banging and kicking at the car.)

"We are a part of King's dream," as one protester put it on her sign. One could fairly argue that this powerful Seattle march appears to have been a tremendously strong start toward the realization of that dream. ■



Photo by Mark Sullo.

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THE COMEDY UNDERGROUND

Growth Engines

Teacher and lawyer Martha Schmidt on how women's inequality keeps the global economy roaring

By ROBIN LINDLEY
Contributing Writer

The greatest threat to peace in the world is poverty. And 70 percent of the world's poor are women. The poor — including women and girls — have been unable to effectively demand redistribution of wealth as the affluent ignore social and economic rights required for a peaceful world, according to Seattle attorney Martha Schmidt.

Schmidt spoke about "International Women's Rights and the Global Economy" at a Feb. 28 meeting of the World Peace through Law Section of the Washington State Bar Association in Seattle. To achieve peace, she stressed, nations must create social and economic conditions for collective security, as mentioned in the U.N. charter, which states that, "to create conditions... necessary for peaceful and friendly relations," the U.N. shall

promote "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development."

Schmidt added that neo-liberal globalization jeopardizes women's rights by cheapening labor and reducing the role of the state with privatization, deregulation, and erosion of social safety nets. And, she said, the U.S. often fails to observe international agreements because of unilateralism and a sense of American exceptionalism.

Schmidt has taught human rights, political economy, labor law, and democracy courses at several local colleges and presently teaches in the Master of Public Administration Program at Evergreen State College. She also has practiced labor and equal employment law and worked as a juvenile public defender.

She became interested in work after meeting union organizers from the

1930s, and she tackled human rights issues as an intern with the Amnesty International Secretariat in the 1970s. After earning a master's degree in international administration, she worked as a community organizer in a poor, African-American neighborhood on the west side of Chicago. Seeing "the devastation of joblessness" changed her life, sparking her work for full employment.

Schmidt spoke recently with *Real Change* about the rights of women, poverty, and globalization.

Real Change: You stress that poverty is a crushing global problem for women now.

Schmidt: Now there are more than a billion people who are unemployed and underemployed. But that's only people in the labor force. Many women are not counted because they're not part of the formal economy. Their subsistence activities don't count in statistics.

The division of wealth, the production of wealth [are] important factors. Some people have more than they need, and others don't have enough. And we look at the United States because we have disproportionate global power as a state and in international financial institutions: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank and others. We must do what we can so that each person has a life worthy of dignity and respect.

Seventy percent of people who are poor are women. At minimum, we must come up with direct foreign policy that is within the U.N. Millennium Development Goals. The United States participated in setting these goals, such as reducing pregnancy mortality by 75 percent by 2015. But it's now 2006, and the U.S. hasn't paid its share to the fund.

RC: And we've been spending for military missions and other priorities.

Schmidt: The U.S. has been involved in these conferences, but [then] finds it's not in our political interest to participate. We need to change our policy. It's not enough to have private entities like the Gates Foundation address global health. Some assume private entities are more efficient, but when you turn over this process to the private sector, you deprive the public of decisionmaking. It's undemocratic. A foundation may [decide to] go with a new medication for malaria, but the public might decide that's too dangerous and instead provide mosquito nets for every family, and employ lots of people in this operation including women, [because] it works and makes a difference in people's mortality. We don't want the private sector making all these decisions about the international economy.

The private sector is perceived as more efficient, but there's no necessary relationship between efficiency and

"The majority of employees and consumers in the global economy are women.

Wal-Mart takes advantage of women in poverty by providing low-cost products. I talk with students about whether they could convince a low-wage woman not to shop there because she's subsidizing the exploitation of women there and in China. It's a difficult challenge for activists."

Illustration by
Mike Raney



Continued from Previous Page

public or private ownership. In fact, the state absorbs the cost as the private sector reaps the benefits. Larger and larger business entities thrive at the expense of smaller entities. The best example is Wal-Mart. The economy is restructured for the largest entities to take advantage. The whole legal system is distorted [and] used to the advantage of those who have power. The impact is to subsidize low-wage labor, from the women working in China to the women working in Wal-Mart here. Wherever they're working, they're working for low wages, and the profits are huge.

RC: And globalization has a disproportionate effect on women?

Schmidt: The majority of employees and consumers in the global economy are women. Wal-Mart takes advantage of women in poverty by providing low-cost products. I talk with students about whether they could convince a low-wage woman not to shop there because she's subsidizing the exploitation of women there and in China. It's a difficult challenge for activists.

RC: You critique our regressive tax system and the subsidies for corporations.

Schmidt: The corporate tax rate has dramatically declined. In the '50s, it was about 35 percent, and now it's below 16 percent. When the corporate tax rate goes down, the tax burden shifts to individual taxpayers. Taxes [have been] cut for the top 20 percent of earners, without similar attention to the lower 80 percent. It's a terrible distortion.

RC: And you suggest a progressive tax structure to advance the redistribution of wealth.

Schmidt: Progressive taxation means income taxation rather than flat taxes like Washington state's sales tax, an estate tax on the transmission of wealth, and redistribution of taxes through the budgeting process to those who most need [the money].

Other countries use family allowances and other methods to equalize taxes, and offer government-funded

health care. In the U.S., poor people spend a greater portion of their income on health care and housing.

RC: Education seems key to helping women out of poverty.

Schmidt: Women's education rates have gone up. In the U.S., more women are in college. But higher education rates aren't translating into job security or higher individual income.

RC: There's still a significant wage gap?

Schmidt: Yes. The gap is not as great in some other countries as the U.S. We lag in many ways behind some countries. A 15-year U.S. study [revealed] that women's wages were 38 percent of men's over the period of prime earnings, ages 26 to 59. Shocking.

That's one piece of women's equality, but another is women's roles as mothers and child caretakers, and absences from the work force. When comparing women to men who left the work force and then returned, men regained past pay but women didn't. We need family leave and childcare programs to make the workplace friendly for women and men.

RC: You stress that the U.S. has not ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Schmidt: The U.S. hasn't ratified many treaties that it has signed, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, one of the three documents that make up the International Bill of Rights.

The U.S. attitude [is called] American exceptionalism. We sign treaties but don't ratify them because [we believe] our domestic law is superior. There's a great lack of support for a system of international law.

RC: You also noted U.S. unilateralism and undermining of treaties we have signed.

Schmidt: Yes. After signing treaties, the U.S. has done things that undermine the principles of the treaties. That's true of the Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights Covenant, because it

requires education to be progressively more accessible with free higher education, and we're going the opposite direction. The same can be said of health care. We're moving further away from assuring a right to health care by removing public support for [things] like community clinics.

There's a Vienna Convention on Treaties that requires a signatory not to take action that would reduce its obligations, even if the nation has not ratified a treaty. The U.S. has not ratified this Convention, and it's a lawless attitude.

Another piece of exceptionalism is the notion that we don't have to ratify or live up to a treaty, such as the Convention on Torture. It's appalling. Treaties have been violated repeatedly, such as the U.N. Charter that precludes aggressive war. The U.S. signed CEDAW under [President] Carter. But the U.S. has not been committed to get [the treaties] ratified, so it's a weak approach. And there's been Republican opposition in Congress to the treaties. The senators who opposed laws ending racial discrimination are the same ones who opposed ratifying the Genocide Convention — it took decades to ratify. With CEDAW, we have U.S. reluctance to recognize economic and social rights as human rights [as well as] the far

right's denial of reproductive rights. Even women in the Senate have not [pushed] for ratification.

RC: How do you get women more involved in these issues?

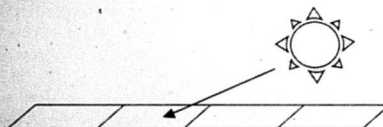
Schmidt: It has to [begin] with a broader women's movement across class and racial lines [that] finds a common meeting ground. A successful social movement must bring together the proponents of civil and political rights with people who focus on social and economic rights, and see these integrated as part of the whole.

RC: What do you see as the role of men in advancing the rights of women?

Schmidt: Part of the role of men is to learn and to listen to women. It's to support structures that equalize men's and women's positions. And there is payback. The stereotype as breadwinners is not liberating for men. The other side is the role of the family, equalizing responsibilities in the household for the care of children. If I were talking to men in a law firm, I would say you can address the conditions of women workers and address issues of fairness and equality in the workplace. I think all women and men in the U.S. should be supportive economically. ■

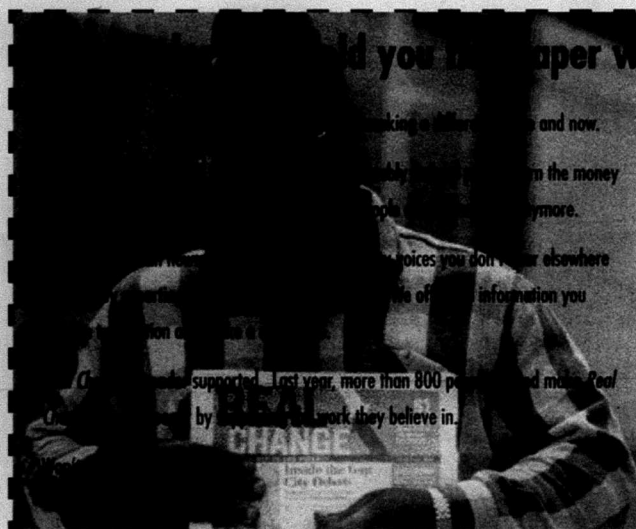
Story Problem 8

Assume sunlight travels to Earth at a rate of 186,000 miles per second and concrete possesses a thermal mass of .15 degrees Fahrenheit per hour (in direct sunlight). If the temperature drops to 27 degrees Fahrenheit, how much perseverance do you need to fend off hypothermia?



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Kiss and Tell

Cinnamon Kiss
By **Walter Mosley**
Little, Brown and Company, 2005
Hardcover, 312 pages, \$24.95

By **LESTER GRAY**
Arts Editor

In a late '60s movie, Sammy Davis Jr. plays a Los Angeles private eye. Stretching credulity, the Black Rat Packer moves through segregated L.A. with the ease of a Ballanchine ballerina. Writer Walter Mosley grants no such license to his Black gumshoe protagonist, working the same smoggy city at a proximate time period. In fact, such impediments as racist cops and citizens who tremble at a Negro making inquiries outside of his assigned geographical enclave are part and parcel of the Easy Rollins private detective sagas.

Easy is far more of a hybrid than a scion of the Phillip Marlowe family tree. He is cynical, but not nihilistically so; Raymond Chandler's character has given up hope, Mosley's is trying to find some. The former is a loner, Rollins wants family and community.

Cinnamon Kiss, the 10th book in a chronologically progressing series, unfolds against the cultural revolution

of free love, LSD, and antiwar protests. In assistance stands his once killed off and now brought back friend Mouse. A loyal and loving sidekick, the rodent man stands more than willing to vent his pent-up oppression-fueled rage through the barrel of a pistol; there's a hair trigger on his temper as well as his weapon. Even Easy can be uneasy around him.

In this latest adventure, Rollins has been hired by a white man named Robert E. Lee to track down a woman who may have drifted into the colored section of L.A. The story is populated with the usual props: morally compromised suspects, clues leading back to Nazi Germany, and dangerous, alluring women obscuring the path to the truth. But the plot is both subordinate to and driven by the perspectives of a Black man negotiating a sometimes hostile, always suspicious world.

As Easy tracks his quarry through San Francisco's storied Haight-Ashbury district, ground zero for the hippie movement, Mosley exhibits some of his less frayed insights in a story where the cultural stereotyping, even when warranted, gets tedious. Here the detective meets Dream Dog and a couple of other

white flower children who confound his expectations. "The Haight... was a stunning surge of intuition that broke down all the ways you thought life had to be." Initially dismissive of their Pollyanna philosophies, he eventually succumbs to the constancy of their egalitarianism. "I knew if I had been 20 years younger, I would have been a hippie too."

The narratives of Walter Mosley through Easy Rollins carry a heavy burden. They constitute mysteries, social arguments, and historical treatises. The author takes pains to show that his protagonist, an erstwhile head janitor, is a complex, intelligent man who reads Thomas Mann, finds inconsistencies in *Das Kapital*, and reflects on the plight of Black people in the context of Hindu philosophy — all of this affecting a contrast to the common image of a Black man.

Even with all of Mosley's self-imposed requisites, *Cinnamon Kiss* maintains the genre's indispensable parodic tone. Despite Mosley's clunky reminders of America's racial history, the book, as a mystery, remains a decent read. ■

In this latest Walter Mosley adventure, private eye Easy Rollins has been hired by a white man named Robert E. Lee to track down a woman who may have drifted into the colored section of L.A.

Drivers ed.

He'd pace the aisle like Ahab
without the patch or wooden leg
but plenty of scars
inside his psyche

Danny sat there.
And Allison over there.
And Chuck, he was a wild one
he sat where you sit.

Old man Walton had taught generations
of dead and maimed drivers
all forever young

He'd introduce the ones
who had preceded us

Terry sat over there
didn't wear his seatbelt
his friend who was driving was drunk
been on a ventilator for the past 3 years.
Dean drove a motorcycle—sat there
he still has two wheels
only now it's a chair.
He has a special device to get it in the van.
And you know what?

None of us spoke, knowing he would tell us

He's a good driver now.

Walton was an old cuss with a hard bald head
lean and clean with slate blue eyes
taut skin and pressed clothes
dark slacks and that blood red cardigan
buttoned up like he always had a chill

I don't recall him ever sitting
he'd just pace and reminisce
reciting his running obituary
of lacerated horror and wreckage
tales of twisted metal and broken glass
paying lip service to the jaws of life

We made fun of other teachers
but not Walton
He was too serious, too damn scary
He had some kind of weird tracking device or antenna
a kind of psychic doom monitoring system
he planted in each of our young numb malleable
minds
as we raced away toward our own creative carnage
near scrapes, second acts, grand finales

His success was measured by the ones
you never heard of
buckled up and bearing down
driving like old ladies
maybe some of them were old ladies

As for me
i couldn't wait to get in a car
slam some beers
and drive as fast as i could
away from him

—LARRY CRIST

Adventures
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning



Compare it to
the problem of
illegal drinking
in Saudi Arabia
and the impact
that has on the
price of gasoline
in Omaha, Neb.:
zip.

Immigration: my un-final answer

Occasionally people say to me, "Dr. Wes, how do you feel about all these illegal immigrants coming to America, taking American jobs away, and making so many of us real American citizens unemployed and causing us to be homeless?"

At times like that I like to always begin with a DISCLAIMER: None of the opinions expressed by me, Dr. Wes Browning, ever reflect the views of *Real Change*, the views of homeless people in general, or those of any other actual person, living or dead. In fact the views expressed by Dr. Wes Browning may not even be his own, owing to the fact that this is Adventures in Irony (look it up), not Adventures in Wes' Final Answers Dished Out Clear and Easy for the Sake of the Irony-Impaired.

That said, the premise of the question is a crock. Illegal immigration can't be blamed for the current high rate of homelessness. In fact illegal immigration is not a problem at all. Ask me how I know that! Go ahead; ask me!

I'll pretend you just did ask me. The ultimate consideration is what's the effect of all immigration, illegal or otherwise. And what matters there is the total percentage of foreign-born residents in the U.S. resident population as a whole. That measures the potential social impact of immigration.

"So what's the per capita of foreigners among us, and what are we going to do about it, because it's getting to be way too much, isn't it, Wes?"

No it's not! The Census Bureau works out the per capita foreign-born rate, and it's NOT too much! The current rate is near 10 percent, which is high compared to its all-time low of 5 percent in 1970, but less than what it has been almost every year this country was in existence prior to WWII.

In fact, from 1860 to 1930, the foreign-born rate was generally in the vicinity of 13 percent.

And those were the Good Old Days, when we had family values and no hippies!

The only time in history when the American rate of foreign-borns was high enough to have a serious impact was before we became a country. True, around about 1607 and continuing for some years after, a huge surge in illegal immigration resulted in our languages being replaced by a foreign language (English), but nothing that serious is happening now.

I think it helps to understand the problem of illegal immigration and its impact on homelessness if you compare it to the problem of illegal drinking in Saudi Arabia and the impact that has on the price of gasoline in Omaha, Neb.: zip.

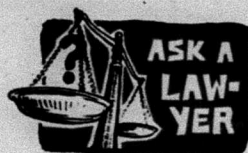
Or compare it to the Drug War.

In 1873 there was no heroin addiction in this country, even though heroin was completely legal. That's because it didn't exist yet. In 1874, it was made in a lab and called diacetylmorphine, but it still wasn't a big problem. Heroin addiction started to be a social problem after the Bayer Company came out with what they called Bayer Heroin Cough Syrup in 1898, giving us the name. Twenty-five years later it was estimated that 0.2 percent of all Americans were heroin addicts, and heroin use became illegal. So today your heroin addiction isn't just a health problem, it's illegal, just like a lot of immigration. It became illegal because legislators made it illegal.

So you could ask, what role do today's illegal heroin addictions play in creating our country's increasing homelessness problem? And the answer would be, FORGET ILLEGALITY, look at the overall rate of heroin addiction. After eight decades of laws against it, it's still only around 0.2 or 0.3 percent. So that can't explain the homelessness, can it?

Consider those opinions as fodder for further discussions.

One last note, for you history buffs out there: George Bush has decreed that the "Star-Spangled Banner" should be in English. He obviously didn't know that in 1919 our very own U.S. government issued its own Spanish translation, for educational purposes. Isn't history fun? ■



REAL-LIFE ANSWERS TO YOUR LEGAL HASSLES

Last month, we covered what to do when your credit or bank card is stolen. This article discusses how to deal with the credit problems created by identity theft.

According to Courtney Anderson of Foster Pepper PLLC, fraud can have an effect on your credit rating, but it will not be permanent. There are three main credit-reporting agencies in the United States: Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion. To lessen the impact on your credit rating, it is important that you call all three companies and ask to speak with the fraud unit right away. Ask that they flag your file for fraud alert and add the following victim's statement to your report: "I am the victim of identity theft; contact me at [phone number] to verify all transactions." Each credit bureau may ask you to send an affidavit and a copy of the police report to them. Once the three consumer-reporting agencies receive the police report and a request from you, they are required to block any adverse credit reports resulting from the crime.

If you are a victim of identity theft, denied credit, receiving welfare benefits, or unemployed, you are entitled to a free copy of your credit report. Also, federal law permits everyone to receive one free credit report per year (www.annualcreditreport.com).

Otherwise, the reports cost an average of \$8.50.

Request a copy of your report from each credit bureau and carefully review it to make sure no new accounts were opened in your name. If there were, ask the bureau for the names and phone numbers of all new creditors and contact them immediately.

If collection agencies continue to call you after you have sent affidavits to the credit agencies, explain that you have been the victim of identity theft and send them an affidavit and a copy of the police report. Once the collection agency has been notified that the debt is a result of identity theft, they are prohibited from continuing to call you.

However, you may still be subject to legal action by credit agencies. If this happens, contact the Attorney General's consumer line listed below. There are limits on what a collection agency can do to try to collect a debt from you.

Because identity theft does not always stop with a single bank or credit card, you should pay careful attention to your accounts by checking your credit report every three months. Review all of your account statements and credit reports and report any new fraud immediately.

For more information, please contact the Washington State Attorney General's Consumer Resource hotline at 1-800-551-4636 or contact the following credit bureaus to report fraud: Equifax.com or 1-888-766-0008; Experian.com or 1-888-397-3742; and TransUnion.com or 1-800-680-7289. ■



Wed., Apr. 12, 4:30 p.m., Second Ave.

— **Shorty's Bar.** An officer was dispatched to investigate a report of an intoxicated transient who had been camping out in front of Shorty's for the past 2 days. Upon arrival the officer contacted subject, a white female aged 39, and observed she was drinking beer from a 16 oz. can of Bud Ice. He also observed that she was drooling heavily. He asked subject if she had been working with a mental health caseworker. She stated that she had, but they turned out to be the devil and had cast spells on her. She also tried to introduce the officer to God as she pointed into thin air and told him that God was standing there in the form of a person, right next to him. As they spoke the officer observed the subject urinate standing up, soiling her shorts, legs, and the sidewalk. He asked her if she was all right, and she calmly said that everything was ok, as she continued to urinate in front of him. Based on the information that she had not moved from her "spot" in two days, coupled with her apparent inability to care for her own basic needs, the officer called the American Medical Response (AMR) ambulance to transport subject to Harborview Medical Center for an involuntary mental hold. Once AMR arrived subject became cooperative, and stated that it was a good thing she was going to talk to someone.

Fri., Apr. 21, 7:30 a.m., Third Ave. and Pike St.

The victim, a transient white male aged 19, contacted officers at the West Precinct to report the theft of his bicycle. He stated he had left the bicycle unsecured outside a business on Third and Pike. He went inside for "just a minute" and when he returned for his bike it was gone. The stolen bike is a Schwinn mountain bike, which had cost victim \$52.49 to purchase. An area search was negative.

Fri., Apr. 21, Third Ave., Downtown Emergency Service Center.

Officers responded to the above address to assist the Seattle Fire Department (SFD). SFD stated that the suspect, a transient Black male aged 56, had been barred from the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) but was refusing to leave. They said he had been holding them up for 30 minutes, and that they had checked his health and he was clear medically. Staff at the DESC confirmed that the man was banned from the premises — according to them he had snuck into the building, walked up a flight of stairs, and then fallen asleep in front of the checkout counter. They had called SFD to make sure the suspect was okay, as he was unresponsive to staff. Police contacted the man, and he again refused to get up. They offered him one more chance to leave, and he denied the request. He was arrested, taken into custody, and then booked into King County Jail for trespass.

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.

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



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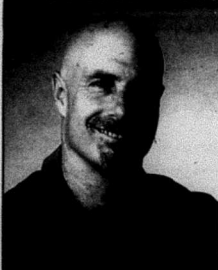
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UNKNOWN, Continued from Page 1

"And that could be good thing," says Radovich. "Or it could be a bad thing."

Standing in the gray zone between the hopefully good (where services remain similar to their present state) and potentially bad (where services could suffer major cuts and reorganizations) are those, such as Radovich, living with HIV/AIDS who have benefited from the RWCA. King County is home to an estimated 3,000 beneficiaries, says Jeff Natter, RWCA Title 1 program manager for Public Health Seattle/King County.

But over the past year, those 3,000 people have seen some services get trimmed. In 2005, Natter says the federal government offered \$5.63 million in RWCA Title 1 funds. For 2006, the feds handed over \$5.44 million. The reduction, says Natter, was the first in his recollection as Title 1 Program manager. (Title 1 funds provide money to cover clients in an area referred to as an eligible metropolitan region. Locally, that region encompasses King, Snohomish, and Island counties.)

While dollars were not stripped from case management, primary care, or housing, Natter says a small amount of funding was shaved from the food-and-meals program and alternative

See UNKNOWN, Continued on Page 12

Letters

Hello from La-La Land!

Dear Real Change,

Please stop running that inane Bus Chick column. Her saccharine-coated drivel seems to get more removed from reality every week. Now she's issuing behavioral edits? [Bus Fools, April 19-25, 2006] Don't get me wrong — I'm all for Metro's Code of Conduct. However, Bus Chick seems to be living in a reality all of her own. She instructs people without access to computer or cell phone to "ask someone else who's at your stop." I guess she must ride the Pleasantville Local. At the stops where I wait, people are more likely to cuss you out than to willingly share their cell phone. And as for beauty rituals, some of us have schedules that don't allow us to get up earlier without losing sleep at the other end. People who can't handle this fact need to QUIT STARING AT US. Bus riding requires ALL OF US to show some consideration. This means the folks who live in Pleasantville need to consider that those of who live in Reality might do things just a tad differently.

Shelly K.

Ed. replies: Whether they're coming from Pleasantville or Palookaville, lots of readers tell us they love Bus Chick. She stays.

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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Opportunity

No Pretzel Positions! Free Yoga Classes. On-Going Mondays 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. Wednesdays 10:45 a.m. - noon @ The Recovery Café, Second and Bell. All ages and abilities.

The Korean Ambassador to the U.S. and the U.S. Ambassador the Korea discuss security and trade. Luncheon, \$35 and up, Friday, May 5 at noon. Info: www.world-affairs.org.

People of Iraq and the Interfaith Network of Concern for the People of Iraq meeting. Every first Saturday. 3 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. Info: www.concernforiraq.org.

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

SNOW Coalition

**A Walk
for Peace
and Healing**

Saturday May 20 1-4 p.m. at Green Lake

Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Wednesday 5/3

Off the Pavement is a gallery exhibit by the Camera Club, a group that shares stories and photographs captured by disposable cameras. It is part of the REACH program, which serves those with a history of chronic homelessness and chemical dependency. 3 - 6 p.m., Gallery 1216, 1216 First Ave. Info: (206)359-5599.

Founder of School of the Americas Watch Father Roy Bourgeois has returned from visiting South America, urging their governments to refrain from sending soldiers to the School of Americas. He delivers a talk, *The Truth About U.S. Policy in Latin America*, which includes updates on the struggles for peace. 7 p.m., St. Patrick's Church, 2702 Broadway Ave. E. Info: (206)632-1523, www.soaw.org.

Thursday 5/4

Is the National Security Agency engaging in unwarranted spying on Americans? "Spying, Secrecy, and Presidential Power" is a panel discussion on the nationwide controversy and the effect on civil liberties featuring former Legal Counsel to President Nixon John W. Dean and ACLU Senior Counsel for Legislative Strategy Lisa Graves. 7 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave. Info: www.aclu-wa.org.

Jim Murray's talk and slideshow presentation, *Spineless Wonders of Puget Sound*, focuses on the giant orange slugs that live in underwater forests of coral, the ecological role of currents in nutrition and reproduction, and the importance of marine invertebrates in biomedical research. Tickets \$8 advance, \$10 door, \$2 students. 7 p.m., REI Flagship Store, 222 Yale Ave. N. Info: (206)382-7007.

Friday 5/5

The documentary *Conscience and the Constitution* delves into the injustices suffered by Japanese Americans during World War II, highlighting a handful of young Americans who refused to be drafted from the internment camps.

They would fight for their country only once their rights as U.S. citizens were restored and their families were released. The government persecuted these young leaders as criminals and ostracized them as traitors. 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. Info: wfnfp@bridgins.org.

Friday 5/5 - Sunday 5/7

National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee presents the Ways We Resist Conference. The three-day event includes panel discussions, inspirational speakers, workshops, opportunities to share ideas, and information on neighborhood groups. Tickets \$15 or sliding scale. Friday, 7 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m., University Friends Meeting, 4001 Ninth Ave. N.E. Info: www.nwtrec.org.

Saturday 5/6

The Seattle Peace Chorus and the Persian classical and folk music ensemble Kamand remember and honor fallen civilians and soldiers from both sides of the Iraq War with a performance of Mozart's *Requiem*. Tickets \$13 and up. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Longtime peace activist Stacy Bannerman is married to a National Guard reservist who was called up to Iraq in 2004. Bannerman writes about her personal struggle to support the troops and oppose the occupation in *When the War Came Home: the Inside Story of Reservists and the Families They Leave Behind*. She signs copies of her book at 2 p.m. at the Black Cat Café, 5000 - 30th Ave. N.E.

Sunday 5/7

Clinical psychotherapist Edward Tick discusses his latest book, *War and the Soul*, which draws on soldiers' stories from World War I to the Iraq War, affirms the damage of post-traumatic stress syndrome, and teaches how to heal veterans. 2 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



Beginning at around 16th and Jackson, where you could look up and down the hill and see people and banners forever, the whistles and cheers started to wash through the march like a cool soothing breeze. You'd hear it coming from a few blocks up and float on by to the marchers behind. There would be a few rounds of "Sí, se puede" and then a few more minutes until it happened again. The march was only sort of silent.

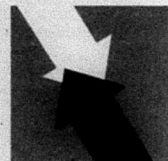
The river of people on Fourth Ave. rounded the corner at Pine to come back up toward the Federal Building on Second, but it wasn't until Seneca that I thought to look down the hill. There it was — the same march I was in — moving in the other direction: a close-packed, 20-block long tribute to opportunity and dignity.

Never, I am sure, in the history of Seattle, have so many brown-skinned people looked so happy at the same time.

Peaceful, powerful, pointed protest. To update a slogan from a different march in Seattle, "This is what democracy looks like."

"Why," asked one banner, "does the U.S. give us a number to pay taxes but not to work?"

We're used to having it both ways, having labor that is both cheap and driven underground. The May Day march said, "Here we are, and we are not afraid." This, we can only hope, is the beginning of a new, more just, America.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Let the Rich Pay Taxes, Too

Issue: The U.S. Senate is expected to vote on a proposal to repeal the estate tax sometime in May. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tennessee) has pledged to bring permanent repeal of the estate tax up for a vote, which may occur as early as the week of May 8. Full repeal will likely fall short of the 60 votes needed to pass.

Senator Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) is reportedly pushing for a vote on a "compromise" that would exempt \$3 million to \$6 million per spouse and lower the tax rate by two-thirds. Kyl's proposal amounts to a "virtual repeal." It is estimated to cost the federal treasury 75 to 90 percent of the cost of full repeal, at least \$53 billion per year.

Nearly half of all estate taxes are paid by the wealthiest 0.1 percent of the American population — a few thousand families each year. Repealing the estate tax would result in multimillion dollar tax cuts to this tiny sliver of Americans. The estate tax is our most progressive tax, an important source of revenue paid exclusively by the richest 2 percent — those with a net worth of at least \$1.5 million per person.

Background: The federal estate tax is a tax on the transfer of assets at death. When someone dies, his or her assets are distributed to heirs. If the total value of the estate is large enough, an estate tax is imposed before the remaining assets are distributed.

A permanent repeal of the estate tax would be bad for our democracy, our economy, and our society. A constructive part of our tax structure for 85 years, its repeal would leave an unfortunate legacy for America's future generations.

Only the richest 0.27 percent of our nation's families currently pay any estate tax at all. Repealing the estate tax would enrich the heirs of America's millionaires and billionaires while hurting families who struggle to make ends meet.

The billions of dollars in state and federal revenues lost will inevitably be made up either by increasing taxes on those less able to pay or by cutting Social Security, Medicare, environmental protection, and many other government programs so important to our nation's continued well-being.

The National Priorities Project has developed an online calculator to demonstrate what the estate tax could buy if it is preserved.

If the estate tax is repealed, in the year 2013, federal revenues will be reduced by \$63 billion. If that money were used instead to support state and local programs, it could provide any one of the following:

- 9,452,363 housing vouchers
- 11,267,323 people receiving health care
- 1,194,426 elementary school teachers
- 280,000 fire trucks
- 8,793,258 Head Start places for children
- 3,828,592 children receiving health care

Action: Join more than 5,500 others in calling to preserve the estate tax. Sign the call by visiting United for a Fair Economy at www.faireconomy.org. Click on the yellow link in the center of the page: "Estate Tax: Act Now to Mend It, Not to End It."

UNKNOWN, Continued from Page 10

therapies. "But right now," he maintains, "I don't see us having earth-shattering implications locally."

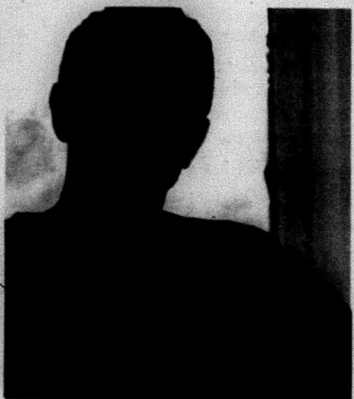
Still, Natter says he has no way to predict what services clients can expect

in the future, with the current administration proposing changes — such as dictating a majority of Title 1 funds go to specific treatments — that could radically alter the RWCA. Such proposed changes, he adds, might take effect in 2007. Or 2008. "So we're trying to plan services not knowing all the changes that could happen," explains Natter.

Its nebulous aura notwithstanding, the RWCA has a more delineated past, one that begins with the eponymous Ryan White. Back in the mid-'80s, as a teenaged boy from the Midwest, White garnered massive media attention with his desire to keep attending his local school after community members found out he'd contracted HIV through a blood transfusion. With the backing of the courts and television shows like *Nightline*, he became a *cause célèbre* in the fight against AIDS.

When he died in April 1990 at age 18, Congress, months later, chose White as a namesake for an emergency act to address the health needs of the growing number of people living with HIV in the country. A long list of services — among them primary health care, pharmaceutical treatments, dental care, counseling — were to be covered, with a particular focus on serving those of low economic means.

But, as with any emergency act, RWCA has to be continually renewed. Reauthorizations and amendments have thus far occurred twice, in 1996 and 2000. When the recent September 2005 deadline came and went, it was almost easy to overlook: after all, there was Hurricane Katrina and that pesky Iraq War.



TONY RADOVICH WONERS HOW THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION WILL CHANGE FUNDING FOR HIV-POSITIVE PEOPLE. PHOTO BY TERRY DIVYAK.

In his State of the Union address, however, President Bush called on Congress to reauthorize the Act. He even gave Congress a little push, in the guise of 13 proposed Reauthorization Principles. Read closely, his little push could result in a major jolt. Take, for example, a principle asking for the maintenance of a federal drug formulary, or list of meds, to be covered by RWCA dollars.

In Washington, says Natter, the state formulary currently covers 160 drugs. In Georgia, he notes, funding covers only 20 drugs. Standardizing a federal formulary could mean, says Natter, that only 100 drugs might see coverage nationwide. Or maybe 60. Or

20. Accepting that one Presidential principle, he suggests, could disrupt the service landscape for local RWCA clients.

"We're trying to plan services not knowing all the changes that could happen."

*Jeff Natter, Public Health
Seattle — King County*

Rewriting the proposed principles is hard, he says, because that involves getting the ear of Congress. Lots of people are already giving them advice about services, he admits. "This issue is, whom do they listen to," he says.

For Radovich, he says he wouldn't be able to choose one RWCA service as more important than

another, as it's their combination that helps maintain his health. So, like the rest of the men and women who rely on any number of services to stay healthy, he has to wait.

"Unfortunately," says Radovich, "we're in a situation where we just don't know." ■

CITIZEN, Continued from Page 1

mother from Seattle, had no trouble with the application. Once her form was given a glance-over by a volunteer, Duncan paid \$20 to have the form examined more closely by an AILA legal representative. Paying what she considered a comparatively low cost, she admitted, was also a draw to the one-day event.

"A lawyer can charge from \$500 to \$800," said Duncan, who works part time as a fiscal analyst for King County. Legal fees represent an added expense to the standard N-400 application charges, which currently amount to \$400. "It can be hard on individuals on a limited income."

Upstairs, in a room peopled with hopeful U.S. citizens meeting with legal representatives, Duncan was paired with Shannon Underwood, an attorney with a Belltown firm specializing in immigration law. Having worked on border rights in Arizona nearly six years ago, Underwood wondered whether Duncan, due to the circumstances of her birth, was already naturalized. "It would be a shame to have you go through this process," Underwood told her while glancing at Duncan's green card, "if you're already a citizen."

Underwood pored over a copy of *Kurzban's Immigration Law Source Book* — "It's sort of the Bible on immigration," she said — looking for rules relating to adoption and naturalization.

Not content with the information found therein, she suggested to Duncan that more research would be needed.

At a nearby table, another lawyer specializing in criminal law assisted an applicant in a blue shirt and baseball cap. With a troubled expression, the applicant stared at his hands.

Flipping the pages of Duncan's application, Underwood quizzed her about Part 7, questions relating to Time Outside the United States. Duncan, admitting she was a little fuzzy, filled in dates the best she could. Underwood asked Duncan her feelings about citizenship requirements for taking an oath. Duncan said she was a Jehovah's Witness and, as such, wouldn't bear arms on behalf of the country. Underwood informed her the application would require supplemental documentation, detailing those religious beliefs. "It's going to make it," conceded Underwood, "a little harder."

Which meant, before Form N-400 could be popped in the mail, signed and dated, Duncan had more work to do to complete the application. Even so, she acknowledged she was far from discouraged about what Naturalization Day had offered.

"I thought it was a very positive experience," said Duncan. "It was actually easier than I thought it was going to be."

And, bearing a smile about the road ahead, she walked out into the chill of an early afternoon. ■



AMY DUNCAN, A LAWFUL PERMANENT U.S. RESIDENT BORN IN COLOMBIA, GETS HELP ON THE ROAD TO BECOMING A CITIZEN ON NATURALIZATION DAY. PHOTO BY SHERRY LOESER.

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Mockingbird Times



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Vol. 10 No. 1

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak Out Across the Nation

Volume VI Issue 5

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National Foster Care Month

GUEST ARTICLE:

REPRESENTATIVE
JIM McDERMOTT
7TH CONGRESSIONAL
DISTRICT



May is Foster Care Appreciation Month. It is a time to recognize and thank the countless unsung American heroes among you who advocate and sacrifice every day on behalf of children. It is also a time to rededicate ourselves to improving what we can do as a nation. Recently, I was honored to deliver the keynote address at the Child Welfare League of America meeting in Washington, D.C. Let me share some of that address because it touches what we are trying to achieve together.

"Good morning and welcome to Washington, D.C.

"As I look around the room I see a small army of advocates, and let me just say that I'm here to enlist!

"The sound of silence is the toughest challenge we face in improving the child welfare system.

"A few weeks ago, the President delivered his State of the Union address, but vulnerable children and vulnerable families didn't warrant a mention. The sound of silence.

Mainstream media will spend more time on a wardrobe malfunction than on the rise in child poverty. The sound of silence.

"Another half-a-million American kids have fallen into poverty, but you'd be hard pressed to find that in the daily newspaper, and it would be harder still to find the outrage

on an editorial page.

"Congress, quite frankly, doesn't fare any better.

"What Congress has done, does not measure up to its rousing claims of self-congratulatory success.

"But this is not about assigning blame. Children don't need to hear what's not being done.

"They do need to know that someone cares about them.

"So here you are, a small army of caring, dedicated Americans, hopelessly outnumbered, without enough money, time and resources.

"What are the odds that you can make a difference? Better than you might think.

"As Margaret Mead, one of my heroes, said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

"Adversity, setbacks and uncertainty are what we make of them. I choose to make them instruments of change.

"If we had listened to all the people who said we shouldn't protect one another, we wouldn't have Social Security protecting our distinguished citizens.

"And today, if we listen to all the people who will say that the problems of welfare families, foster children, neglected children, the poor, disadvantaged and disabled are the unfortunate by-products of bad personal choices, we must fall silent.

"We must choose either to follow the path of least resistance- or to change the course of history.

"One way is easy; the other way is ours to inspire.

"Together, we've got to break through the sound of silence if we are to rescue millions of

American children living in poverty, living in foster homes, living in broken homes, living in the richest nation in history.

"We can make a difference. You already have.

"Over the past several years, the rate of child victimization has declined significantly from its peak in the early and mid 1990s.

"But we know that you are stretched way too thin. There are not enough hours in the day, not enough people in the field, and not nearly enough resources in the agencies.

"Despite heroic efforts, reality catches up.

"Congress can — and should — do something about it.

"I strongly oppose the President's proposed budget cuts to the Social Services Block Grant.

"States should not be punished for making progress in containing our foster care rolls.

"We know that too many foster children are bouncing from one foster home to another.

"We know that many child welfare agencies can't provide sufficient services to prevent foster placement disruptions.

"And we also know that most communities do not have a pool of foster parents large enough to meet the demand.

"Besides more families, we need more opportunities for older youth.

"Now is a time to acknowledge the needs, to learn from our success and move forward, together.

"I think we need to make subsidized guardianship an option in all states for relatives who are willing and able to make

McDERMOTT CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

New Clinic for Youth in Foster Care Now Open

JAMICA
HENDERSON



May is National Foster Care Month and around this time of year we at Mockingbird Society would like to acknowledge this month by updating you on happenings with foster care. I had an interview with a woman named Miryah Hibbard who is the program coordinator for a clinic specifically for foster youth. The name of the clinic is **Care for Foster Children**. I wanted to interview her so more people in our community can know what they have offered to them especially foster care youth.

Jamica Henderson: How long has this clinic been open?

Miryah Hibbard: The clinic has been open since April 2005, so it's been a little over a year.

Jamica: How is the clinic funded?

Miryah: The funding for our clinic comes from Mckinlay Trust which is a part of

Seattle Foundation and Northwest Children's Fund.

Jamica: What encouraged you to become the program coordinator of a clinic for foster care youth?

Miryah: I have worked in the medical field for twelve years. I decided I wanted a change and in that change I wanted it to be challenging, rewarding, and exciting.

Jamica: Had you worked with foster youth before working at this clinic?

Miryah: I worked at a pediatric care center that had some foster care youth involved but not to this degree.

Jamica: What have you learned about youth in foster care since working at this clinic?

Miryah: I have learned a lot. The main thing I've learned is how to look for resources out there in our community for the foster youth and sometimes it can be hard to find them but when I find them I know it's a way to help our youth and that's what I am here for.

Jamica: How many youth come to receive health care and do they and their caretakers seem to appreciate having a special clinic that meets their needs?

Miryah: Yes the caretakers appreciate them a lot. All together we serve 40 kids. Our

biggest compliment is the time we spend with the youth.

Jamica: What are some of the clinic's differences when compared to others?

Miryah: The difference is the time we spend with the patients. We have been able to make connections with resources in our community that deal with foster youth.

Jamica: While working at this clinic have you learned anything new that you didn't know about foster care youth?

Miryah: Oh Yeah; the biggest thing that I have learned is that once a foster child is put in a stable and loving home their behavior and development reflects that.

Jamica: What do you love most about working at the clinic?

Miryah: I love the families and the kids. I like to see the children when they are reunited with their family or when a new family is being created.

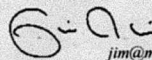
If you want to learn more about this clinic or if you want to join, you can visit them at Harborview Medical 325 9th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104. Their new director is Naomi Sugar and you can reach them at 206-744-9514.

Letter from the Editor

JIM
THEOFELIS

May is National Foster Care Month and the Mockingbird Society is proud to be working with the thousands of organizations and individuals committed to improving the foster care system in Washington and across the USA. Each and every day, a state case worker goes beyond the call of duty to ensure a child gets the services s/he needs, every evening a Grandparent helps their Grandchild with homework and the bedtime routine, and every night a foster parent answers the phone and opens their home to a child or teen needing an "emergency placement". Everyday and every night children and adolescents cope with the reality that, for whatever reason, they are unable to live with their biological parents. National Foster Care month is an opportunity to remind each of us that we all have something to contribute toward strengthening foster care, whether that is being a foster parent, volunteering at an organization that provides foster care services, mentoring or any number of other ideas and activities. National Foster Care

month is also a great opportunity to give appreciation to those foster parents that opened their hearts and their homes to the half-a-million children and adolescents in foster care across the United States. While most Americans clearly see the benefit of having a quality educational and health care system, too few recognize how vital it is for this nation to have a foster care system that has the capacity, competency and resources to ensure that children and adolescents in need are able to thrive and not just survive. The current situation is one that will certainly go down in modern history as the shame of our time, allowed to continue only because of the politics of class and race. For example, although there is no evidence that demonstrates that race is a factor in the prevalence of abuse or neglect, there is a great deal of evidence that children of color are more likely to be placed into foster care, experience a higher number of placements and remain in foster care longer than their Caucasian peers. National Foster Care Month is not about forgetting about the shortcomings of the current child welfare system; rather, each of us should invest in ways to strengthen that system as if one of our own children's lives depended on it.

 Jim Theofelis
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

Mockingbird Society: The Story Behind the Name

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

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

Thank You's

Thomas and Gina Rembises; Paola Maranan and Paul Wirsing; Dr. Eric Trupin; Justice Bobbe Bridge and Jon Bridge; Michael Oliver and Janet Osborn; Brenda and Bob Oliver; James and Mary Theofelis; Denise Toal; Mark Marshall; Judy and Joseph Conforti; Virginia Blayney; Christine Stoll and Adam Jundt; Jean Roberts; Kathryn Brooks; Stella L. Pitts and Associates; Anne Fortuin; Kim Ambrose; Steve and Judi Finney; Dorothy Armstrong; Chris Marsh, Attorney; Mark Wittow at Preston, Gates, & Ellis; Christine Jackson; Jana Heyd and the Children's Justice Interdisciplinary Task Force; and Spectrum Dance Theatre.

A special thanks to: Linda Breneman and Casey Family Programs

McDERMOTT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a permanent commitment to children in foster care.

"We need to recognize that our support for vulnerable children doesn't end when they leave foster care. We need to ensure that children thrive in a permanent arrangement.

"That means we need strong, effective child welfare agencies, and we need the very best people on the front lines.

"You prove the best can be attracted; we've got to make sure we keep you.

"I want to see manageable caseloads, professional development opportunities, and family wages as your base, not your dream.

"I have sponsored legislation that would provide grants to states to implement loan forgiveness programs for child welfare workers.

"We can have innovation and accountability.

"When the Congress passes a budget bill that takes federal dollars for

kinship care, Medicaid and child support enforcement in order to give a tax holiday for the affluent, it means our attitudes and our values are upside down.

"Vulnerable children need the American dream, and that's neither Democrat nor Republican. Party labels won't solve this, but party leaders can.

"There are at least 12 and a half million vulnerable children in America.

"If we could hear the children who don't have enough to eat, who don't have a bed or even a home, who need love and protection, we'd know the sound of silence is the sound of children who need our help, but don't have a voice.

"We're that voice. This is no time to be timid or quiet.

"Never doubt that a small group of committed individuals can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

"It's your Capitol Hill Day. Don't take No for an answer. The children are counting on us.

"Thank you."

Look Who's Flying

Jim Theofelis, Executive Director and Founder of the Mockingbird Society, has recently received recognition for his dedication and commitment to improving the lives of children, youth and families involved in the child welfare system through advocacy and system reform. The Children's Alliance will present him with the 2006 *Voices for Children Award* at their Annual Luncheon on June 1 at 11 a.m., at Qwest Field. Jim is also the recent recipient of the *Lee Ann Miller Award by the Children's Justice Interdisciplinary Task Force* for making a profound impact in promoting the safety, protection and well being of children.

Jim has organized, led and allied with Washington State's strongest supporters of children's issues as well as provided the forum and training for

youth and families to become involved in policy reform. "Through our advocacy efforts, training and partnerships with other organizations, Mockingbird Society has become a source for individuals and communities from across Washington State to connect and share resources to improve the programs and policies that affect our most vulnerable children and families. I am proud of the accomplishments we have made together, and am convinced that our efforts, commitment and concern for policy reform will help give those involved in the child welfare system an opportunity to thrive," said Jim Theofelis.

To register to attend the Voices for Children Luncheon, please visit www.childrensalliance.org.

All Incoming Letters to the Editor should be addressed to Mockingbird Editorial Staff and will be opened by Editorial Staff. All incoming correspondence to reporting staff under 18 years of age will be opened first by Mockingbird Editorial Staff.

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Two-Spirit History: Building Cultural Bridges

MISTY
LOU COOK

I sat in a Seattle café with Raven HeavyRunner, the founder and leader of the Northwest Two-Spirit Society. As we sat and drank our overpriced urban Morning Glory Chais, we began to speak about ancient traditions, legends, myths that weren't myths after all. Raven described a spiritual world to me, and explained to me what it meant to be Two-Spirit, in his personal experience. In the most basic European terminology, to be "Two-Spirit" is to be both indigenous to North America and LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer). Raven said that to be Two-Spirit is also "A responsibility to people and the community, and to understand that we are a part of them as a whole."

Raven began to unfold the hidden history and traditions of the misunderstood Two-Spirit people, and I began taking notes.

Raven, a Blackfoot Two-Spirit who is highly regarded for his academic articles about Two-Spirit issues, told me that, historically, Two-Spirits were respected healers, peace-keepers, story-tellers, leaders and prophets. Depending on the tribe, female-bodied Two-Spirits regularly took on traditionally "male" or "masculine" roles, such as being a hunter, vision quest guide, trader, council member, prophet, medicine person or chief. They were also known to lead peace missions. According to Raven (and many other sources), "Two-Spirit" is the English translation for the Ojibwa words "niizh manitoag", meaning "two-spirits." Nearly every tribe in North America had a name for the members of their community that were Two-Spirit. There were thousands of terms used to describe the LGBTQ Native American, or "Two-

spirit." Raven is A'kiihka'si / Aki Skassi, Blackfeet for "woman-like." Male-bodied Two-Spirits, along with their roles as healers, medicine people and prophets, were also known for being orators and keepers of sacred songs, and tribal historians. They were commonly sought out to arrange marriages and give sacred names to newborns, something particularly interesting, since in present-day colonial America, same-sex marriage and adoption is illegal.

Most Two-Spirit history has been lost, overlooked or forgotten, even in tribes that used to revere Two-Spirits as holy people with a sacred spirituality. It seems that most people have forgotten who Two-Spirits are and how important, even vital, their roles are in society. "There was a young Lakota Two-Spirit", Raven began, "and he was sad and embarrassed because his peers kept teasing him". The young Two-Spirit told this to an elder, "They tease me and call me 'Winkte, winkte, winkte!!!'. I am sick of it...". They were calling him "winkte" in a mean way, as if being winkte were a bad thing, something to be ashamed of and hidden. The elder asked the young Two-Spirit, "Do you know what winkte means?". "No," replied the frustrated young man. "Winkte means, 'They who connect us to the spiritual world'. It is a sacred word, and a sacred life, and it is not something to be laughed at about". Raven HeavyRunner went on, and told me that after the young Two-Spirit learned what it meant to be a "winkte", he was proud and happy to be a winkte. "That was now 4 or 5 years ago ...", recalled Raven.

The word Two-Spirit is meant to describe individuals who are "often viewed as having two spirits occupying one body." (1) Two-Spirits historically had the gift and the ability to see life objectively, with no gender bias or prejudice. In other words, they were able to see the world through the eyes of both a male and a female spirit, simultaneously! Raven told me that "To be Two-Spirit is having and knowing your place in society." Nearly

every tribe in pre-colonial North America had distinct gender and social roles in their tribes for Two-Spirit people. Tribes that were indigenous to North America often viewed a Two-Spirit person as a leader, a spiritual being who could heal, see the future and connect with the Great Spirit/Universe.

Because of the standard social education/conditioning in America's public schools, we're taught to be more comfortable with time schedules, bottled water and money than with nature, our own lives and bodies. We're definitely not taught about Two-Spirits, working class struggle or International Cultural History. We're taught to ignore our innermost desires and spirituality, in order to "fit in" with (homogenized) social groups. So many important roots, ancestral histories and legacies have been forgotten, or not taught (about) in schools. As a Two-Spirit person, I feel it is essential that I provide some resources for any Two-Spirits out there that need them. Raven recommended the following books for re-connecting and learning about Two-Spirit people: "Spirit In the Flesh" by Walter Williams and "Two-Spirit People." Stories about houses created specifically for Two-Spirit activities, workshops and story-telling flooded out of Raven's mouth and into my eager ears and mind. Did you know that, in some indigenous tribes, there were

3, 8, 16 or even more different genders and gender identities? Neither did I, until I met Raven HeavyRunner.

May is foster care month, and I believe this article is very relevant because when you lose your culture, heritage and history, you lose your cultural identity and therefore may feel like a "cultural orphan" with no roots to ground you. The devastation of losing your cultural community can be confusing, painful and hard. While researching this article, I was re-connected to a spiritual and cultural identity that I never knew existed, or had perhaps temporarily forgotten about. Finding my cultural roots helped me grow and realize that anybody could be Two-Spirit, just like anybody could be Buddhist, Christian, Rastafarian or any other kind of spirituality. Spirituality and cultural identity are personal, you are what you are. Whether you are Black, White, Asian, Mexican or Tibetan, you could be Two-Spirit ... it doesn't matter how you look on the outside, it's how you feel within your heart and soul that matters the most. Being Two-Spirit is acknowledging the inherent spirituality that comes with being LGBTQ. Being Two-Spirit is realizing, through your gender neutral eyes, that love is the bridge to all relationships, partnerships and romances.

(1) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-spirit>

Mental Health Promotion for Children

You can help prevent mental illness...

Although many kids in the foster care system have serious mental health problems, there are ways to promote their mental health to prevent those problems from occurring. "Bright Futures in Practice: Mental Health" is a reference guide that we can all use to help kids in the child welfare system.

Training Location and Date

Seattle 2100 24th Ave S. Suite 240
Seattle, WA 98144

Friday July 7, 2006
9 a.m.—4 p.m.

For More Information

<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/BFFC%20Flyer%20General.pdf>

National Foster Care Month Events

Saturday, May 6

Noon-5pm

At the base of the Space Needle

Join Casey Family Programs in celebrating 40 years of fostering families and fostering change.

Saturday, May 13

Noon-5pm

At the base of the Space Needle

For youth transitioning out of foster care: Come and learn how to fulfill your dreams. Find out about education and employment opportunities. Get pointers on preparing to age out of the system and hear from alumni of foster care.

Tuesday, May 15

10 AM - 12 PM

Columbia Room at the Capitol Building in Olympia

Official State Foster Care Celebration — Come join as we recognize and celebrate foster parents and foster care.

Saturday, May 20

Noon-5pm

At the base of the Space Needle

Learn what you can do to make a difference in the lives of children in foster care. There are many ways to help. Hear from motivational speakers and participate in fun activities for children.

For more information, visit www.fostercaremonth.org.

Celebrate Family! Free total experience day!

A special King County event for children living in foster/kinship care due to substance use by family members.

Hosted Brunch & Program For Youth & Their Families

Saturday, May 20, 2006
10 a.m.—12 p.m.

Science Fiction Museum & Hall of Fame
325 5th Avenue North (Level 3)
Seattle, WA 98109

Learn about the disease of alcoholism & other drug addiction. Find out how adults can support children & youth to be healthy and drug-free.

SPACE IS LIMITED! R.S.V.P. for this event by May 10, 2006, call 206-296-5250!

Savings Accounts for Foster Youth

Treehouse, the YMCA and United Way of King County will offer Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) for foster and former foster youth ages 15-20. Youth can save money for the purchase of a computer, car, health care, tuition or rent. The IDA program doubles what youth save (for example, a youth saving \$500 will receive an additional \$1,000). Financial incentives will be provided for youth working toward independent living goals. Eligibility criteria and applications will be available May 15 and completed applications will be due June 16. For more information, contact Seán Walsh at the YMCA Independent Living Program at (206) 749-7540 or slp@cs.seattleymca.org.

My Prom

JAMICA HENDERSON

My experience in foster care has had its good times and its bad times. I went in foster-care at the age of 14 and I am now 19 years old. I ended up in foster-care because my mother had a nervous break down and could not care for us at the time. I lived with the same foster parents the whole time I was in care. The biggest hardship of being in state care for me was being separated from my family. Sometimes I would be ashamed because I never thought that I would be in foster-care. My family never faced a problem where CPS had to get involved, so when I was put in the system I didn't know what it was.

Once I entered the foster care system, it was not so bad at first. That was until I discovered that if I wanted to see my family, there would be rules and I did not like that. There would be times I would want to see my siblings and if I did not call and talk to my case worker to set an appointment there was no visit. We could not be alone with each other; we had to have someone there watching us and that made me feel uncomfortable.

After three years of being in foster-care, I knew that I was not going back home to my mother. So, my next focus was my prom. I realized that just because I was in foster-care, I could still have the prom of my dreams. For my prom, I wanted my mom to be there physically and emotionally.

I was a little scared as time came closer and closer to my prom and graduation. I felt that since I did not get a chance to go back home with my mother, that we could look forward and not back; starting with her coming to my prom and graduation. She took me to get my nails, toes and eyebrows done and to me that was the most important thing ever. This was a special occasion to my mother, so she wanted my nails to be different. I normally just get the tips done, but my mother wanted the whole nail filled. My dress was hunter

green with thin spaghetti straps to hold it up and the bottom came out in a puff. My nails were so pretty: they did a design with hunter green, gold and white. Once I finished getting my nails done, it was time to get my hair done. My sister went with me to get my hair done and she was taking pictures from every angle. When I finished, it was time to go home and get ready for my evening. When I went home and got dressed that put the icing on the cake. My dress made everything look so beautiful; from my nails to my hair. I felt like a pretty Barbie and everyone said I looked ready to walk the runway.

To have my mother be there most of my life and be taken away from her right as I was entering high-school, had me confused, scared and wondering "will she be there in the end". As time went on, my mother had always told me that she was going to be there for my prom and what do you know, she was. My mother didn't know how much it meant to me, but when I told her all I wanted was for her to be there for my prom and graduation, she did her part. To this day, she is still there and continues to be a really big part of my life.

When I graduated from high-school, I had three scholarships. One of my scholarships is the Gates Achievers Foundation and I have that for four years. Then I have the Mt. Baker Scholarship and the African American Dollar for Scholars. My goal in life is to become a registered trauma nurse. I have always had the passion to help others and this would give me the perfect opportunity to do that. Being in foster-care has helped to keep me focused on what I want in my life. It has shown me that I can do and be anything I want to be if I put my mind to it. It has also made me a stronger person both inside and out. Surviving the system has also shown me that no matter what you go through in life, you make it through any situation you face if you believe in yourself.

Get Published — Get Paid!

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

Truthfully Speaking: A Message to the Departing High School Senior

SHERRELL DORSEY

I traveled all the way to New York City to recreate myself. My plans to attend college outside of Seattle were part of a dream that I had since the beginning of my freshman year in high school. While the notion of independence, growth and experience were all very enticing, in truth, my desire to leave my home-town was a means to run away from a cloudy past, mundane and predictable community and the feeling of being torn between my adoptive and biological families. My thoughts were that in New York no one would know anything about the adopted, baggage-carrying, me. I would be a fresh face with no past and plenty of future. After graduating, configuring college tuition packages and planning travel arrangements, I would be on my way to the new me. Next stop: New York City to pursue the new and illustrious college-life of Sherrell 2005.

Being in a big city has been great thus far. I am completely in charge of myself and enjoy the luxury of defining my own curfew, activities, meals and spending. Truly the city that never sleeps, I can

order food right to my door at any time of the night, and bargain with street vendors on handle bags and tax-free sunglasses. The city bows at my feet where college students are able to buy \$20 tickets to Broadway shows and get into museums for free with a flash of a campus ID.

Despite the glamour of it all college is really one huge bill that constantly reminds you of how broke you are going to be over the next four years. Dollar menu's (which are hard to find in ritzy mid-town Manhattan) become your new best friend and bargaining with street vendors will become your favorite past time. But there is a lonely side. You don't have the same friends, you don't know the city and your family is so far away. What I thought was going to be great turned out to be the start of a very lonely road.

There are also many other things that come hand in hand in going out of state for school. Independence comes with many responsibilities. Not only have my time management skills had to kick in but juggling a full-time school schedule, a part

time job, a significant role in a school theatre group and keeping up with grades is exhausting. Getting 8 hours of sleep in a night is a luxury. As if New York weren't adventurous enough! But hey, who's complaining?

There are things that a college view book will not tell you about being away at school. College can be a stepping stone to a successful future but it is also a pathway to endless sex, drugs, alcohol, and depression. There are the never ending parties in "sketchy" neighborhoods and there is always an executive or producer wanting to put you in their latest "video." It's hard not to fall into the hype when your peers are just as naïve as you.

Over a week ago a close friend text messaged me a suicide note explaining to me that she could no longer take the pressure of being in school, trying to finance out of state tuition and deal with the inner issues she had been running from back home. My feelings were and still are very similar. So what was it that kept me balanced instead of cracking? My desire to

Secret Hideout

EMMA M. CUMMINGS

I found a place within my soul
Somewhere only I can go
Whenever I feel the need arise
I spread my wings
And I'll fly....
Sometimes I feel this is all a test
Pass or fail
I'll try my best
I've always believed in tomorrow
Will be a brighter day
With the rising sun all that I fear
Will float away....
Then I am brought back down to earth
With broken wings and thrown in the dirt...
All my dreams scattered
In the winds
Left to pick everything back up again

The last time i was me

ANTISTROPHE VERSE

The last time i was me was when i stared out the window and wishing with all my heart that dreams were real
the last time i was me was when i watched the water trying to move my being flowing through and crashing like the waves
the last time i was me was when i imagined i saw large blue eyes reflecting the color of my heart
that last time i was me was when i danced and i danced and i didnt care what you or others thought
the last time i was me was yesterday today and tomorrow i will be..... me.

Inspiration

PHYLLIS DAVIS

I could be all the characteristics of a rainbow
Stand tall, no lean, with a frown
Instead, I'm skinned black; thick coily hair and eyebrows
I could lie constantly; looking to be unique but never looking inside me
Until I dwelled on it....
My hair showing strength like Samson when beauty Delilah was possessed demon mean
The only non-cultured pearl in the natural sea
Making sure people see: I'm rare, delicate and fragile
Why take advantage of me?
A talent I searched deep for
It took time but I found it in me!!!!!!

