

# REAL

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ISSUES • INSIGHT • IMPACT

## Drift Catchers

Study probes pesticide exposure on agricultural workers

By JULIE CHINITZ  
Contributing Writer

In central Washington, agricultural workers are trying their hand at science. On a Friday evening in March, a group gathers in a Yakima union hall to learn how to operate the "Drift Catcher," equipment that captures samples of airborne pesticides that can then be sent to a California laboratory for analysis.

Before opening plastic bins filled with test tubes, compasses, and air flow meters, the students discuss their plans for the equipment, compiling a list of friends and family who live near orchards or fields and could gather samples.

"We're at the start of something very important," says Carol Dansereau, executive director of the Farm Worker Pesticide Project, a nonprofit advocacy organization that has sponsored the training. A group of farm workers in Mattawa, already trained by Dansereau, is scheduled to hold its third practice run the next day.

Concern over pesticides runs deep among agricultural workers in Yakima. More than three quarters of farm-laborers participating in a 2004 Washington Department of Health study said they had been exposed to pesticides at work and sickened as a result, whether in the form of a rash, nausea and vomiting, coughing, or other symptoms.

At the Drift Catcher training, student Ana Guzman, who once worked in orchards, comments that sometimes farm workers even take babies to the fields because, she explains, "We don't have anyone to watch them." Guzman attributes her family's allergies to pesticides.

Yet, because these chemicals do not always stay in one place, exposure can occur away from work. Soon after being sprayed, droplets may be carried by wind. Applied as a liquid or oil, some pesticides evaporate, travel through the air, and condense once again on a cool surface.

At times the chemicals may enter homes on the clothing and shoes of farm workers and linger inside. As part of a study on the "take-home pathway" of pesticide exposure, researchers from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research



BETH SANDERS IS BEHIND A VOTER INITIATIVE TO RAISE THE PROPERTY TAX AND GET THE SEATTLE SCHOOL DISTRICT, IN WHICH HER DAUGHTERS ARE ENROLLED, OUT OF ITS \$22 MILLION DEFICIT. PHOTO BY SHERRY LOESER.

## Out of the Hole

Unheralded school tax levy proves popular

By CYDNEY GILLIS  
Staff Reporter

A lot of parents support it. A majority of teachers are on board. And a poll taken in April shows that, if Seattle voters were forced to choose between raising taxes for a new viaduct or better schools, the viaduct would lose.

All the same, Beth Sanders is facing an uphill battle with city leaders and opinion makers to pass two initiatives that would raise property taxes within Seattle to improve public education.

Mayor Greg Nickels and *The Seattle Times* have already slammed the Great Schools campaign — Initiatives 87 and 88 — as a ridiculous idea, saying it's up to the state, not the city, to fund public education.

In a school district that's facing a \$22 million deficit next year and looking at closing 11 schools, Sanders, a Montlake mother with two daughters in public school, counters that, by the time the state comes up with any money, it will be too late.

Public education, she says, will become the exclusive domain of the poor.

The two initiatives are modeled on the existing Families and Education Levy, which funds non-classroom services through city property taxes. If both of the Great Schools initiatives make it to this fall's ballot and pass, they would lift the current lid on property tax increases and raise the tax 39 cents for each \$1,000 of a home's assessed value for six years.

That's about \$150 extra a year on a \$400,000 house or "about a capucino a week," Sanders says. The \$40 million raised each year would go directly to reducing class size, boosting achievement, providing all-day kindergarten and reinstating creative "whole-child" programs such as band and drama.

"There's a tremendous amount of research that shows that kids getting art and music and PE learn better,"

MAY 10 - 16, 2006

## BOTTOM DOLLAR

Congress yet again makes it hard for people of color to obtain economic security.

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## VOICE OF REASON

Military mom Cindy Sheehan says an immediate withdrawal from Iraq is far more humane than ongoing occupation.

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## SIT DOWN

Sen. Cantwell talks about Iraq with peaceniks. Peaceniks talk about disaffected.

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## BE HAPPY

Harvard psychologist Daniel Gilbert has a few ideas on what money can and can't buy.

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## DEAD END

Author Kevin Brockmeier keeps it simple in fantastical novel *The Brief History of the Dead*.

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# The Color of Money

The widening wealth gap adversely affects — surprise! — people of color

By **BETSY LEONARD-WRIGHT**  
United for a Fair Economy

The Bush tax cuts have been much more generous for people with substantial income from investments (disproportionately white) than to working people; and IRS audits have tended to befall low-wage workers taking the Earned Income Tax Credit (disproportionately people of color).

It's happening again.

The recent vote in Congress to criminalize undocumented immigrants was just the latest in a centuries-long series of government actions that have blocked people of color from gaining economic security. Employers are getting away with murder, underpaying and overworking people who are too vulnerable to complain. Our elected officials are not just letting them get away with it — they're actually aiding and abetting them.

Why does the typical family of color have 18 cents for every white dollar? In researching our book *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide*, we found literally hundreds of ways that government actions and inactions have affected the amount of money that families have today — most of them not widely known.

Everyone knows that the U.S. government took land from Native Americans and gave it to white people. And it's widely known that the federal government allowed some states to enable white people to profit from slave labor.

But most people don't know that land ownership was restricted to citizens and citizenship was limited to whites in many areas throughout the 1800s. The last racial barriers to naturalized citizenship were not lifted until 1952. Almost no-one realizes that one in four white Americans have an ancestor who was given Indian or Mexican land under the Homestead Act. And most people don't know that a Foreign Miner's Tax made it harder for Asians to participate in the Gold Rush.

Most people don't know that the New Deal excluded many people of color from Social Security because until the 1950s, those laws excluded domestic and agricultural workers, the occupations of most workers of color. Others earned too little to qualify. The parents and grandparents of some African Americans and Latinos in the labor market today missed out on Social Security benefits. As a result, many in the younger generations are supporting their elders instead of saving for their own retirement.

And few realize that almost all veterans of color were unable to access the GI Bill's educational and mortgage benefits, which boosted five million white veterans into the middle class after WWII. Not only did discrimination by realtors and colleges make the benefits difficult for vets of color to use, but VA and FHA lending rules actually blocked mortgages in mixed-race and urban neighborhoods.

The racial income gap has narrowed, thanks to affirmative action and the energetic striving of people of color. But the racial wealth gap still looms large, because assets tend to be passed down within families. In *The Hidden Cost of Being African American*, Thomas Shapiro compared the finances of pairs of white and Black families with the same income. He found that while they all attributed their assets to their own hard work and savings, in fact the white families were far more likely to have gotten money from their families, whether in the form of inheritance, a down payment, or college tuition. Even low-income white people are more likely to have some modest family safety net, such as a homeowner relative with a guest room, than most people of color.

Outright discrimination is illegal now, but racial bias in government policies continues. Think of the longer jail sentences for users of crack (mostly Black) than users of cocaine (mostly white). And since welfare reform went into effect in 1997, childcare and transportation assistance have been much more likely to go to white welfare leavers; unpaid "workfare" has been far more common for welfare leavers of color. The Bush tax cuts have been much more generous for people with substantial income from investments (disproportionately white) than to working people; and IRS audits have tended to befall low-wage workers taking the Earned Income Tax Credit (disproportionately people of color).

The up escalator that whites have climbed towards prosperity has been a down escalator for African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and some Asian Americans. However, white Americans also lose out from this two-tier economy as well, since racial divide-and-conquer techniques in the U.S. explain how we have lower wages and a weaker safety net here than in most industrialized countries.

The lowest wage in the economy is the floor that all of us stand on. That's why, in today's immigration debate, not just human compassion but also enlightened self-interest should lead native-born working people to support legalization and labor rights for undocumented immigrants. The positive lesson from this country's grim history is that when the government decides to invest in building a middle class, it works. What worked for white men for the first 200 years of the United States could work for people of every race and nationality now. ■

## [Event]

Workshop: The Color of Wealth Join Betsy Leonard-Wright for a free workshop on the roots of the racial wealth divide on Tuesday, May 16 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm (pizza dinner at 6 pm) at the Washington Association of Churches, 419 Occidental Avenue S., Suite 201, Seattle. Sponsored by the King County Labor Council.

And if you're going to the UALE conference at the Hilton Seattle, Betsy will be leading a Color of Wealth workshop there on May 17.

Betsy Leonard-Wright, Communications Director at United for a Fair Economy, co-authored UFE's new book, *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the US Racial Wealth Divide* (New Press, 2006).

## REAL CHANGE

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

### Mission Statement:

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

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

### On the Web at

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# Change

When Duane Wright first heard about the Ride of Silence, "I thought that someone should do it, and then that if I wanted it to happen I'd probably have to do it myself."

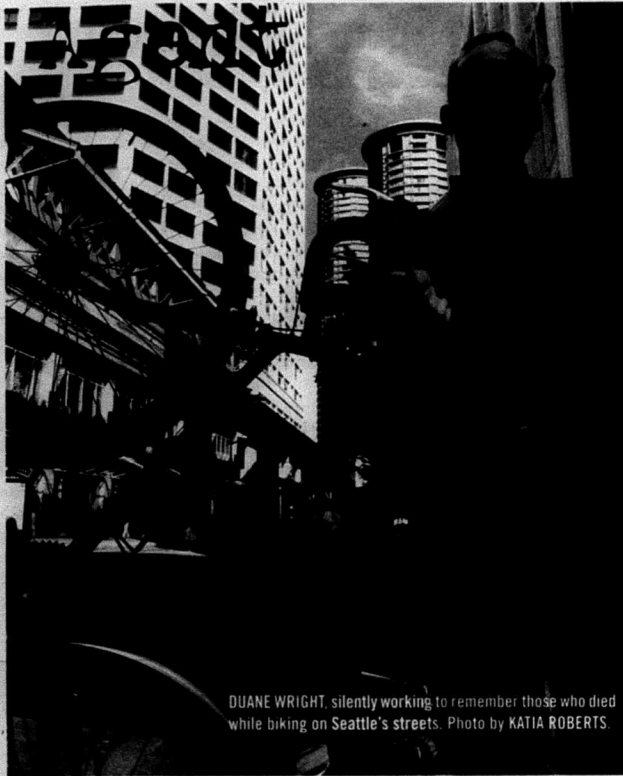
Because of weather, Wright says turnout was terrible for the first ride, which he organized last year. But this Wednesday, May 17, a street-cramming crowd will flow forth from Gas Works Park and through downtown — as silently as they can — in recognition of people who have died while biking.

While some accidents are the fault of riders, many others are caused by drivers' failure to yield. The bulk of deaths statewide are suffered by those age 10-15.

Wright, 54, is thankful that Seattle is more bike-friendly than other communities — but then there's the deaths of two cyclists on the Eastside last year, and one more in South Seattle in March. Going in silence is a "constant reminder that we are trying to remember people who had been killed" and an affirmation of the cheapest, most humane form of human transport invented yet.

For more info: [www.rideofsilence.org](http://www.rideofsilence.org). ■

—Adam Hyla



DUANE WRIGHT, silently working to remember those who died while biking on Seattle's streets. Photo by KATIA ROBERTS.

# Mother of Intention

Cindy Sheehan wants an immediate withdrawal from Iraq

By CYDNEY GILLIS  
Staff Reporter

"We are the problem. When we leave, the problem solves."

—Cindy Sheehan

Right-wingers try to bait her at lectures. Other people tell her to shut up and go home. But peace activist Cindy Sheehan says she's not giving up until all the killing stops.

"When our troops came home, we forgot the lessons of Vietnam," Sheehan told an audience gathered Monday at Seattle's Town Hall. "I'm never going to let anyone forget the lessons of Iraq."

Among the lessons that Sheehan and fellow speaker Anthony Arnove (author of *Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal*) hammered home: Occupations never work and always go hand in hand with racism and reduced civil rights at home and abroad — a topic one audience member called a side issue during an emotional question-and-answer period filled largely with accolades and gifts for Sheehan.

That included a framed photograph presented by Tammy Silicio, who lost her job for taking a picture in April 2004 of flag-draped coffins on a cargo plane. Sheehan told the audience that she later realized one of the coffins in Silicio's photo had borne her son, Spc. Casey Sheehan.

Last August, Sheehan camped out in Crawford, Texas, near President Bush's vacation home, demanding he meet with her to explain why we went to war in Iraq and why Casey had to die.

Nearly a year later, Sheehan, founder of Gold Star Families for Peace, said the anti-war movement has come a long way: Bush's approval rating has fallen from 49 percent then to 30 percent today, putting the so-called "lunatics" squarely in the mainstream.

But Sheehan, whose folksy one-liners kept the evening light ("I like to call it a coalition of the wilting," she quipped at one point), said even her progressive friends are buying the recycled Iraq propaganda that the White House is now using to justify bombing Iran.

And the protesters who showed up with "Support Our Troops" signs outside Town Hall were the largest contingent Sheehan said she'd seen in months — in progressive Seattle.

In a country where the U.S. presence is the reason for the fighting, Sheehan said, calling for immediate withdrawal is far more humane than the conditions she said soldiers face today in Iraq. Among them:

- Marines are going door to door in Iraq begging for food, Sheehan said, because they don't have enough to eat.
- Remote-controlled roadside bombs, or IEDs, could be stopped by equipping every Humvee with an IED jammer for \$45,000 — a cost Sheehan said the Defense Department has decided is too much.
- For those issued body armor, 80 percent would live, Sheehan said, if the armor wasn't defective. For those who buy their own body armor and are killed, the military denies family members the life insurance owed.

"So this is us not supporting the troops?" Sheehan asked. "Those people [outside] should have signs that say 'Shame on Me for Supporting George Bush and his Murder.'"

"We are advocating 14 permanent bases be closed immediately. We are advocating all civilian contractors get out," and "we advocate giving the jobs to the Iraqi people," she said.

"We are the problem," Sheehan said. "When we leave, the problem solves." ■

[Event] Peace activist Cindy Sheehan, author of the newly released *Dear President Bush*, will speak at the Sacred Activism conference set for May 11-13 at the Lynwood Conference Center. [www.wisdomuniversity.org/sacred-activism-conference.html](http://www.wisdomuniversity.org/sacred-activism-conference.html).

## Just Heard...

### The Nordstrom campaign

Initiative 920, which would abolish the state's estate tax on the wealthy, has had a smattering of hundred- and thousand-dollar contributions — and two huge cash injections totalling \$50,000 from John N. Nordstrom, the former president of the board of the eponymous corporation.

I-920 would end a tax that applies to those worth more than \$2 million at the time of their deaths; proceeds go to the Education Legacy Trust Fund, which expands students' access to the state's universities and raises teacher salaries in accord with a 2000 voter initiative.

"It's disappointing to see the Nordstrom family supporting something that hurts education," says George Scarola, legislative director of the League of Education Voters.

### Sonics: Let's make a deal

There's a rising popular assent to the Sonics' ultimatum about remodeling KeyArena (check out [finethenleave.com](http://finethenleave.com) for proof).

And then there's another idea: let the team stay and charge it a reasonable rate so that they pay taxes instead of living off them.

Service Employees International Union Local 775 spokesperson Adam Glickman says an initiative his union expects to drop early next week "would essentially prevent any taxpayer subsidies of professional sports." The union is also looking into running the initiative in Bellevue and Renton. It's no empty promise, says Glickman: "We have every expectation right now of going out and collecting the signatures."

### At the table

The Seattle Police Officers' Guild sits down with the city to negotiate a new labor contract for the city's 1,100 officers later this month. Guild president Sgt. Rich O'Neill wants everything on the table — including a bill coming through City Council that, sponsor Nick Licata says, would improve civilian oversight of the Office of Police Accountability.

Licata's bill would give members of the OPA's civilian review board a clear view into the internal investigations process. Unredacted files allow them to better observe the police's follow-up to allegations of police misconduct, say members of the board. And if they accidentally divulge the accused officers' identities, the bill promises that the city will defend them in court.

That goes too far for O'Neill, who notes that the redacting of investigative files is stipulated in the current bargaining agreement — and therefore can't be changed legislatively. Passing this law is "an [exercise] in futility, since it would get shot down shortly by a judge."

The bill was heard May 2 in Licata's Public Safety committee but is not yet scheduled for the full council.

—Adam Hyla

Cindy Sheehan, before the Capitol building. Photo credit unknown.



## From Sit-In to Sit-Down

Aggrieved dad, antiwar activists get time with Cantwell

By ROSETTE ROYALE  
Staff Reporter

A coalition of activists who staged an April 25 sit-in at the offices of Sen. Maria Cantwell to obtain her position on the war in Iraq got what they wanted. Well, kind of. The senator agreed to meet with them, but the resultant sit-down, according to one attendee, turned out to be less than productive.

The senator chose May 6 to get together with the group of 10 constituents, representing such organizations as Sound Nonviolent Opponents of War and Military Families Speak Out. According to Joseph Colgan, who attended the near two-hour meeting in a law office downtown, the senator was asked for clear statements on the war and whether or not she would be willing to hold public forums to discuss her position. Colgan, whose son,

Benjamin, was killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad in Nov. 2003, says nothing approaching clarity came out of the meeting.

"There was really no change," he says, comparing comments made by Sen. Cantwell last week and those at a previous sit-down he attended with the senator in Dec. 2005. "She needs to clarify her answers."

Sen. Cantwell has attempted to do just that, in a May 4 op-ed printed in *The Seattle Times*. In it, she wrote that troops should start coming home this year, and asked the United States to ensure the new Iraqi government succeeds. Sharla Neuman, press representative for Sen. Cantwell, says the senator feels that hasty removal of troops "wouldn't be a responsible [action] for the success of democracy in Iraq."

As for the notion of public forums, Neuman says Sen. Cantwell has spo-

ken to the public on numerous occasions. The sit-down group, she adds, didn't suggest any potential formats of venues for future events. If the group was looking for clarification on this and other issues related to the war, Neuman says, "I hope they got that."

Colgan says he still doesn't feel the senator has been clear. And there's something else he was hoping the senator would provide last week, but didn't: moral leadership. There was a time in the past, he suggests, when congressional reps offered that to the public. But these days?

Says Colgan: "Hell no." ■



## Short Takes

### Tanked in Wallingford

Another public space. Another citizen effort to save it.

On May 17, the Capital Budget Committee of the King County Council will hear what are likely to be impassioned pleas not to sell an old Metro Transit site in South Wallingford to TouchStone Development for \$3.3 million. The company plans to construct a biotech-ready office building at the site, which takes up a block between North 34th Street and North Northlake Way across from Gas Works Park.

Residents say the idea runs counter to years of work they've done on the North Lake Union Master Plan and the South Wallingford neighborhood plan it spawned. Both plans call for turning the old tank farm into a park or community center — something a citizens advisory group that worked on the North Lake master plan voted for 13 to 1. The lone vote against public use was cast by landowner Suzie Burke, whose developments have cut off canal views in Fremont.

"There's one regional park [Gas Works]; otherwise, there is nothing south of 40th Street that can be used by the public," says Genevieve Vayda, a South Wallingford resident who advocates a community center at the site. She's hoping residents pack the hearing, which is set for next Wednesday, 9:30 a.m., on the 10th floor of the King County Courthouse.

### No way, NSA

If Attorney General Alberto Gonzales can't be bothered to walk upstairs at the Justice Department and get a warrant to wiretap a U.S. citizen, says Lisa Graves, he and President Bush can't be doing anything legal.

Graves is a top lawyer at the American Civil Liberties Union. She was at Seattle's Town Hall last week with John Dean, the whistleblower on President Nixon's illegal Watergate activities, to

talk about the domestic spying that Bush insists he had the right to order after Sept. 11, 2001.

Graves and Dean say he has no such right and that Americans are quickly losing the rule of law that protects them. After learning that Nixon and other presidents had engaged in widespread spying on political enemies, Congress passed the Foreign Intelligence Service Act in 1978. Graves says it specifically outlaws domestic spying without getting a warrant from a secret, 11-member FISA court, which is right upstairs at the Justice Department.

Despite White House claims, "No president after FISA is allowed to unilaterally decide who to wiretap," Graves said. Regardless of 9/11, "Due process is not 'the president says so.'"

The ACLU is fighting back with a lawsuit it has filed in Michigan and another lawsuit it has joined in New York. In January, another civil rights group, the Electronic Freedom Foundation, sued AT&T for allowing the National Security Agency to search databases of customer communications, including web addresses they had visited.

"Step by step, presidential powers are being expanded," said Dean, author of *Worse Than Watergate: The Secret Presidency of George W. Bush*. But, "This is the first president we've ever had to admit to an impeachable offense."

—Cydney Gillis

### An accurate count

The King County Council is about to institutionalize some of the emergency measures it took after the disputed tabulation of the November 2004 elections.

By May 31, the council must decide on whether to conduct all-mail elections and consolidate the vote-counting into a single facility. Councilmembers will also ask Elections director Dean Logan to report to the council every three

months on improvements he's made to the vote-counting process.

Lead by councilmembers Julia Patterson and Bob Ferguson, both Democrats, the council has also mandated that the Elections department hire a management consulting firm and contract with a company with elections expertise to oversee the implementation of recommendations from citizen groups and experts.

Councilmember Ferguson states that he is not aware of opposition on these measures from any Council members. "What I have sponsored are high-priority actions that the best experts in the field have recommended to us. I expect support, not opposition. The overall goal of our legislation is to restore voter confidence in elections. We recognize we must earn it by making these key improvements to facilities and processes and maintain consistent, high-quality

performance over the long run. I am confident we will reach our goal."

Last year a team of noted experts was hired after both Ferguson and Patterson proposed an in-depth independent audit of King County Elections. They noted some steps had already been taken, like better poll workers' training.

After the State Legislature authorized all-mail balloting as a local option last year, all but seven of Washington's 39 counties moved to all-mail voting systems. King County would be the largest government in the nation to conduct all elections by mail.

Nathaniel Kiehn of South Seattle says he would welcome the all-mail system. "Since I have a hectic work schedule it would be a lot easier to just be able to mail in my ballot. In the past I didn't have time to get out to my designated voting location."

—Toni Sutton



### Whose door is it, anyway?

LAST FALL, THE SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY TRIED TO IMPOSE A RULE FORBIDDING POSTERS ON THE FRONT OF TENANT DOORS. RESIDENTS SUED SHA AND, ON APRIL 28, WON THEIR CASE. FOR NOW, THE AGENCY, WHICH MAY APPEAL THE RULING, WILL HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE CLUTTER OF FREE SPEECH. PHOTO BY JUSTIN MILLS.

## Mister Hat Man Guitar

So Mike, you'd always say,  
Put another joint in the jukebox.  
Get me high and I'll play all night.  
And I always knew you meant it.  
Seems you couldn't live  
Without a guitar.

I learned of your death from John.  
They say bad teeth, cirrhosis of the liver,  
And living on the streets just don't mix.  
John had been reading the papers...  
The Women in Black held vigil.  
Vigil for the Homeless Dead.  
Your name had appeared, Michael Bichy,  
"Bitchy, without the T."

Damn it Mike!  
I have chanted with you the holy words.  
Ann Lara Shanti; Shalom Lal Om.  
Ann Lara Shanti; Shalom Lal Om.  
Truth Love Peace Peace Love Truth.  
Truth Love Peace Peace Love Truth.  
I have chanted love with you.  
And I will miss you for a very long time.

Your guitar, stolen from your camp  
Months before you died. Perhaps  
You were too broken hearted to live  
Without your axe.

We are searching out a possible  
Mother recording of your recent CD.  
I clearly hope to hear your songs again  
So, Michael Bichy,  
Chanting brother sacred tramp  
Mister Hat Man Guitar,  
I do now commend your dear soul  
Unto Heavenly chaos.

I dearly wish we'll meet again  
Upon the Celtic Spiral.  
I hope we meet again  
Upon the old French spiral.  
I hope we'll meet again  
Upon the Irish spiral.  
I hope we meet again  
Upon the Kansas spiral.  
I know we'll meet again  
Upon the Mystic spiral.

I know we'll meet again  
Where we will be spiraling  
Towards together.  
I know we will meet again  
When everything slips  
As we must spiral  
Out of control.

-PATRICK McCABE

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## Waiting list to open

From **May 15 through May 26** you can enter  
SHA's lottery to try for a spot on the new  
waiting list we are creating for Section 8 housing  
To learn more, call **206 239-1674** or visit  
our Web site, [www.seattlehousing.org](http://www.seattlehousing.org)



## Democracy Now!

**Airing twice a day at 6:00 a.m and 5:00 p.m.**

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## Hedonic States

Harvard happiness researcher Daniel Gilbert says money isn't everything, but it helps

By TIMOTHY HARRIS  
Staff Writer

"It is not the case that each dollar you earn buys you another unit of happiness. What does seem to be the case is that money makes a big difference when it moves people out of abject poverty and into the middle class. When you go from earning \$2,000 a year to \$50,000 a year, your happiness increases enormously. Why? Well, hello..."

Will a new 52-inch plasma screen TV make you happy? For a little while, yeah, says Harvard psychology professor Daniel Gilbert, but then you'll get used to it and it'll be on to the next thing. Gilbert, along with several other researchers, including a Nobel laureate from Princeton, has attacked the problem of happiness and found it an elusive and fleeting state. His new book, *Stumbling on Happiness* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), describes our pursuit of happiness and why we tend to be so bad at it.

**Real Change:** How do you measure happiness?

**Daniel Gilbert:** There are many things human beings cannot tell you about themselves. They can't tell you how they got to be the way they are. They can't tell you what they want most in life. They can't tell you whether their children are a source of joy or displeasure, but what they can tell you is how happy they are at any particular moment in time when you ask them.

If I were to look at blood flow in your brain, for example, and see that particular regions were active, most scientists would say, "Ah — this person's probably experiencing happiness; we know that these regions tend to be activated when people are happy." How do we know that? There's only one way: people who had those regions activated in the past told us they were happy. So the brain measurement is only a measurement of happiness because it tells us the same thing that the person does.

The nature of subjective experience is that it is private. In the end, if what you want to do is study subjective experience, you are stuck permanently with the fact that there is only one person stationed at the proper point of view to tell you what it's like to be them, and that's that person.

**RC:** I was struck by your characteriza-



On the sunny side: Harvard psychologist Daniel Gilbert says people tend to overestimate the effect of having material things on their temperament. Photo by Mary Oliphant.

tion of what most people think of as the path to happiness, which goes something like, "I want stuff, I'll get stuff. That will make me happy." When that doesn't work out, is the issue that people are bad predictors of what will make them happy, or is it just that stuff isn't really what does it for us?

**Gilbert:** Let's use the word stuff liberally to not just include things like new cars and designer shoes. Stuff can be things like promotions, children, the respect of a community.... But whether the stuff is the sublime or the base and material, we find in our studies that people tend to make mistakes when predicting how it will affect their happiness and how long those effects will last. People overestimate both the positive and negative consequences of stuff.

**RC:** And that is what you've termed the impact bias.

**Gilbert:** Exactly. It's a tendency to think that stuff, defined quite liberally, will have a bigger impact than it actually does. Every person seems to have an emotional baseline that is a happiness point that they tend to return to after being made extremely happy or extremely unhappy.

**RC:** The idea of a happiness baseline is really interesting. Is it like a thermostat? Are some people just naturally happy and some people naturally grumpy?

**Gilbert:** There's no doubt about it, and a thermostat is a nice

example of a homeostatic system that tends to vary around a point and then return to it. And one of the other things that we know about thermostats is yours isn't set at the same temperature mine is. We have different set points. But our thermostats do the same thing. They keep moving us; as we move too high or too low, they bring us back to that point.

**RC:** Can you raise the baseline itself? Like, maybe if I want to be happier I should just focus on my health, instead of on specific events?

**Gilbert:** Certainly one way to have more happiness is to change your baseline. So, no matter what's happening, you're always returning to a higher state of happiness. On the other hand, the data suggests that the baseline, the happiness set point, has a very large genetic component, which has to mean that it has a very large biological component.

If you are really pretty much stuck with that as your set point, what you can do is vary from it as often and as far as possible. And that's really what most human lives are about. They're attempts to get higher than our set point, and then when we return to it to get higher again. That's the game of living.

**RC:** I've always thought that money probably does buy happiness.

**Gilbert:** You're right.

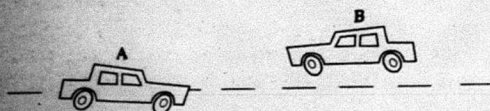
**RC:** Do the happiness levels of wealthy people tend to be higher than those of poor people?

**Gilbert:** Well, there is lots of data on this, so both psychologists and economists have been very concerned with this question for quite a long time. The question of whether money buys happiness isn't easily answered because the answer is obviously not yes, and it is obviously not no. If you said money doesn't buy happiness, I'd say go ask a homeless guy. If you said money

## Story Problem 13



Car A leaves work traveling eastbound on the freeway at 60 mph. Car B leaves work traveling westbound on the freeway at 58 mph. If both cars travel at constant speeds, how hopeless do you have to feel to sleep under that freeway?



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does buy happiness, I'd say go ask a billionaire. Why does it seem that both answers are wrong?

The answer is: it doesn't have a linear relationship. It is not the case that each dollar you earn buys you another unit of happiness. What does seem to be the case is that money makes a big difference when it moves people out of abject poverty and into the middle class. When you go from earning \$2,000 a year to \$50,000 a year, your happiness increases enormously. Why? Well, hello — you have a place to sleep, nobody is going to kill you while you're sleeping, you can actually count on being able to eat, your children aren't in danger of being murdered. I mean, these are real human concerns. People are not happy when they're in those situations.

What is surprising is that it doesn't keep working. Once you've reached something like middle class, there's a phenomenon that's a lot like the satiety of hunger. With pancakes, you eat one, you eat two, you eat three and each one makes you feel better and better. And then there comes a point where happiness starts to level off, and another pancake doesn't make you feel any better. And, in fact, if you eat too many of them they make you feel bad. It's the same thing with money.

When you earn \$200,000 a year, you already have all the happiness money can buy you. So, more money can't do anything for you.

RC: You talk about how rationalizing and coping are really two sides of the same coin, and how our emotional state tends to follow more from our point of view about it than anything else. That reminded me of Victor Frankl's insight that we can't always control our environment, but we can control our reaction to our environment.

Gilbert: Yes and no. We can't always control our environment, and we can't always control our reaction to it. Well, maybe I know a Buddhist monk who might be capable of this amazing feat of mental control, but I don't know any other human beings who could watch their family be murdered in front of them and find a nice spin. So, you really don't have total control over your point of view, but you have a lot. More than you suspect, and that's the important thing.

What we find in study after study is a basic premise that people's emotions respond to their view of the situation, and not to the objective parameters of the situation. That's why when your wife says take your umbrella, if you hear that as nagging, you get pissed off. If you hear that as caring, you're really grateful and thankful. It's the same utterance, you can respond in two ways depending on how you see it.

Your brain is in the business of finding the best possible way to view almost any situation. So when a complex thing happens to you — a promotion or a demotion, a divorce or a marriage — there are lots of different spins, lots of different takes, lots of different ways to think about it, and what your brain is doing is trying them all out, and when it finds one that seems both accurate and positive, it stops.

RC: It seems like there's a dark side to this, in that we can get used to the suffering around us and become complacent. What about the other side? Does altruism lead to happiness?

Gilbert: We see suffering around us, we see it enough that it doesn't seem to bother us, and we adapt and we go on. It is a sort of dark side that other people's suffering doesn't phase us as much as it might. We have some new data, though, showing that people vastly underestimate how happy acts of altruism will make them, compared to other kinds of acts.

If you give people a choice about doing something for themselves or something for others, they almost always choose to do something for themselves. On the other hand, if they're forced to do something for themselves or something for others, they like what they've done much more if they've done something for others. There's a massive benefit to being altruistic that is hidden from us in prospect. We say things like "I don't want to get up and go work for Habitat for Humanity, I don't want to give away my money," but once that act is accomplished, people are incredibly happy about what they've done. ■

[Event]

Daniel Gilbert will appear at Town Hall on Monday, May 22, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 at the door.

## To Dionysius

O Dionysius,  
give me a paper suit,  
and please make it strong protecting,  
against the slings and arrows  
of outrageous firearms.  
Are not your rituals sacrosanct?  
For goodness' sake,  
I always thought  
Dame Fortune sat on your lap.  
Was I misinformed?

FRANK LANGER

## Glory

The shame of glory is that the medals  
Are not pinned upon the right breasts  
The peasant who toils in the sun  
The wind the rain and sometimes the  
drought  
Where would we be if they produced no food  
Their duties a matter of life or death

Has any world leader gone to the fields  
Pinned a medal on a farmer's chest  
Because of valor and the lives he saved  
How about the teacher who works late hours  
Teaching our children how to survive  
In a world of drugs and knives and guns

How about the nurse maintaining vigil  
Throughout the night, matter of life or death  
Doctors battling germs of fatal diseases  
Waterman plumber and the garbage man  
Firefighter, patrolman, and policeman  
Their duties a matter of life and death

Rarely do we find medals of glory  
Pinned on broad chests of such as they  
Though they often face the hazards of death  
They're invisible to eyes of glory  
But kick a ball, make a-loop, kill men  
The medals of glory are all yours

GLENN EVANS

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## Dead Reckoning

Memories play a central role in *The Brief History of the Dead*. Admirers of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* or *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* may shelve this book in that category of modern novel.

**The Brief History of the Dead**  
by Kevin Brockmeier  
Pantheon Books, 2006  
Hardcover, 272 pages, \$22.95

Book Review by Sally James  
Contributing Writer

From the moment this story opens in a city of the almost-dead, the book rivets us with small details. Forget the big questions, the heaviness of the philosophical, and embrace the list one character tries to make of every person he's ever known.

"Any number of times he imagined he was finished with the list, but he kept uncovering new clusters of acquaintances: his Boy Scout troop, the other guys at his gym, the twenty-some faces he remembered from his one disastrous AA meeting."

Brockmeier weaves two suspenseful stories, one across another. Chapters alternate between visits to a city of people who have died but are not quite gone, and scenes of a lone living woman trying to survive a harrowing physical challenge.

Our guide to the city is an eccentric man, Luka Sims. When he arrives in the city he decides to start a newspaper. He stands outside a coffee shop every morning and hands out his sheets of news. While he writes about the city, he also interviews the newly arrived about the land of the still living.

"HUNDREDS EXPOSED TO VIRUS IN TOKYO," is one of his headlines. "TWENTY-FOUR HOUR BUG CROSSES ATLANTIC," is another. Residents of the city go about their very ordinary lives, vaguely wondering about the world they left, but often concentrating harder on what they will eat for lunch.

Alone in Antarctica is Laura Byrd, a 30-ish career woman, an executive who got stranded in the middle of an expedition. She's careening between panic and resourcefulness. She's spending so many empty hours that she uses her memories as movie reels and re-runs whole sections of her life, over and over.

"Come on sweetie, time for bed," she heard her father saying, and then it was 15 years later, and her college roommate was telling her, "I'm staying with Kyle for the weekend, so you've got the room all to yourself." Next it was 10 years after that, and she listened to her boss as he rapped on the door of her office and said, "I'm going to give you one word, and you tell me what you think: Antarctica."

In the city, people begin to slowly recognize that what they have in common is simply having been this endangered woman's friend, relative, ex-lover, or office mate.

Memories play a central role in this rich novel. Admirers of Kurt Vonnegut's

*Slaughterhouse Five* or *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* may shelve this book in that category of modern novel. All contain fantastic ideas, but aren't fantasy. The novel revolves around coincidence, but uses coincidence as a flashlight that shines into the dark corners of characters.

Brockmeier delights in the ephemeral: what we think about right before we fall asleep, or how a woman holds her chin and why it seems to spark her husband's love. For one character, the smallest memories carry the greatest weight, "as if they were where the true burden of life's meaning lay. He sometimes thought of piecing them together into an autobiography, all the toy-sized memories that had replaced the details of his work and family, and leaving everything else out."

Suspense carries us through the book, as in one chapter Laura stumbles across the slowly melting sea ice. Meanwhile, the residents of the city comment on the background thrumming of a beating heart that waxes and wanes. Brockmeier draws a barely glimmering thread between.

We spend this novel in a rare combination of mundane and fantastic, fascinated by how our heroine spends 10 minutes watching the penguins. The author holds the ordinary up to the light so we can see the multicolored facets of a single grain of sand. ■

## Women Studies

**La Petite Jerusalem**  
Directed by Karin Albou  
Somersault

Directed by Cate Shortland  
Both open Friday, May 12  
Review by LESTER GRAY  
Arts Editor

The fact that two movies that come to the screen this week can be so very different on their face, yet similar at their heart, testifies to the universality of women's issues more deeply than most (males or females) can appreciate. Even a surface reading of the struggles they portray reveal timeless, intractable matters as resistant to solution as ever. One story offers a reflective, pensive narrative, the other a rougher, impetuous hew, both styles reflecting the character of their protagonist.

In *La Petite Jerusalem*, Laura lives in the titular Paris suburb, so named due to its large Jewish population. The 18-year-old student shares close quarters with her widowed mother (Sonia Tahar), sister, Mathilde (Elsa Zylberstein), and brother-in-law, Ariel (Bruno Todeschini). As she comes to know her heart and mind, her life in an Orthodox family, ensconced in an Orthodox community, seems less and less to be her true calling.

A passionate student of philosophy, she applies the arguments of history's more venerable thinkers to the tenets of her own faith and begins to find her heretofore professed beliefs somewhat wanting.

Laura finds little to envy in the agony of her sister, committed to living by Jewish law. A devoted wife and mother,

Mathilde struggles to reconcile the infidelity of her husband and failure as a lover within the laws of a patriarchal and a strictured belief system.

Simultaneously, Laura encounters a young Algerian man whose pious foundations, while based in a different religion, mirror hers. Ironically, it is their common spirituality and rectitude, more than a rejection of propriety, that fuel their mutual attraction. Laura is forced to ask if her emerging sensuality and the greater truths she seeks are served by her current situation.

In Cate Shortland's brave offering *Somersault*, the director dares you to not empathize with her protagonist, Heidi (Abbie Cornish). She leaves the 16-year-old so vulnerable to judgment and Victorian condemnation that the audience is denied a pedestrian response.

A strawberry blonde with a prepubescent smile and a hint of baby fat in the cheeks, Heidi lives with her single, working mother. Cohabiting with the two women on somewhat of a stop-in basis is her mother's beau, who is a bit rough around the edges — certainly not the prototype donor for a liver transplant.

One morning after leaving for work, mom returns unexpectedly and interrupts what otherwise was progressing as a successful seduction of her boyfriend by her daughter. The resulting confrontation finds Heidi hitting the road with a change of clothes and very few dollars. Ending up at a ski resort without any resources to speak of, she again proffers, for the second time in the day, what she considers to be her most valuable asset. Although this behavior eventually stumbles her into a relationship of sorts, redemption proves to be elusive.

Both films are skillfully crafted offerings, the narratives compelling, if painful. *Somersault* is incredibly bold, *La Petite Jerusalem* insightful — diametrical explorations of sexuality, one assiduously studied, the other recklessly incautious. These women pursue something far more basic here: the right to negotiate the terms under which they will live their lives and by extension survive. ■

*La Petite Jerusalem* and *Somersault* are skillfully crafted offerings, the narratives compelling, if painful.

Abbie Cornish  
as Heidi in  
*Somersault*.







Adventures  
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning

## Dr. Wes' Missionary Position

Over a year ago I was goosed about a huge discovery. I'd learned most homeless missions everywhere are linked. They're members of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, or the AGRM.

Founded in 1913 as the "International Union of Gospel Missions," the AGRM provides missions with program resources and guides for helping the homeless. It provides courses in starting up missions and ongoing organizational advice. Members are certified by the AGRM. Never sleep at an uncertified mission! Always look for the AGRM Seal of Approval!

None of us at *Real Change* had known about this. Our Editor, Adam Hylá, had never heard of AGRM. So I was thrilled! For once I, Dr. Wes Browning, had an idea at an Editorial Committee meeting, and I was awake! "Hey everybody! Let's write about this! It will constitute news to our readers!"

As I remember, Adam's first reaction was on the order of, "It might have been news in 1913." His second reaction, on hearing that AGRM is based in Missouri, was, "What's the local angle?"

I said something like, "Jeez Louise, Adam, there's not one but THREE member missions right here in Jet City, USA. Plus another 10 of them across the rest of the state. How more local do you need?" "A lot," he said, scoffing at my genius, as so many always do.

Well, scoffers, scoff no more! I've got your local angle right here, Adam! They're bringing their show to town!

Yes! Seattle's Union Gospel Mission will host the 93rd Annual Convention of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions. From May 27 to May 31, a swarm of homeless-mission folk will fan out to hit all our best tourist traps, then reassemble to compare mission shop notes, like how Jesus would create a non-profit governing board, how to use the Bible to get homeless people to behave, or how to stop homeless gays from marrying (Dr. Kenneth Hutcherson will be one of the featured speakers).

AGRM's website, [www.agrm.org](http://www.agrm.org), is a window into the ideals and philosophies of Christian homeless missions, which have a huge impact on the lives of thousands of homeless people.

Inspired by a similar item on the website, and in the spirit of sharing, here's my EIGHT WAYS TO TRULY HELP THE MISSIONS:

1. Never give cash to a mission. Too often well-intended gifts meant for homeless services are used to support the missions' pernicious proselytizing habits. Volunteer your time, or give them food or beds instead.

2. Talk to the ministers with respect. Talking to a poverty pimp respectfully can give him a weapon to fight the social isolation that induces him to treat his clients as moral and spiritual inferiors.

3. Recognize that missions and their ministers are not all the same. Some of them make you go to the service before you can eat, while others let you buy your way out of the chapel, for instance.

4. Share God's love. If Jesus were walking the earth today, He would certainly spend time with the homeless. But, maybe he'd talk to a mission's minister too, on a slow day. So can you.

5. Pray for the missions. THEY like that sort of thing, and actually believe it does them good. Humor them.

6. Take precautions for your own safety. Some workers at missions on the streets are criminals and fugitives running from the law. Watch your wallet at all times, and avoid bending over in front of them.

7. Encourage your local mission to help their homeless clients both physically and spiritually but always within their clients' own spiritual understanding. Too often missions will work to undermine and degrade that existing spirituality, so as to try to supplant it. Proselytizing does spiritual violence.

8. Demand transparency. Do the "converts" really get the best beds? No one knows, because no one talks, including the clients, who fear the consequences of speaking out.

A "convention" is a "coming together." Let's all share our ideas and try to come together! ■

Missionary Position #1.  
Never give cash to a mission. Too often well-intended gifts meant for homeless services are used to support the missions' pernicious proselytizing habits.



Wed., April 26, 8:30 p.m., Third Ave. and Cherry St. Metro Bus Shelter.

Officers working patrol for King County Metro Transit Police were dispatched to a bus shelter on Third and Cherry to check on a man camping in the shelter. When they arrived they contacted the suspect, a transient male aged 56. He was seated on the ground, apparently asleep, with his possessions spread around the shelter. Officers spoke to him and determined he was not waiting for the bus. They noticed he appeared to be intoxicated and asked him if he wanted to go to Detox. He declined. They then asked him if he could leave the bus shelter as he was trespassing and needed to make room for Metro patrons. Suspect became very belligerent and started to yell insults and threats at the two officers. One of the officers continued to speak to the man for about five minutes in an attempt to either get him to go to Detox or leave the shelter. Suspect pulled a small pair of scissors out of his pocket and threatened to kill them. He was ordered to put down the scissors several times but did not comply — instead he started to swing the scissors wildly back and forth, threatening to kill them. As his behavior continued to escalate, officers decided to place him into custody. Suspect suffered a laceration to the forehead, and an American Medical Response ambulance was called to the scene. He was taken to Harborview Medical Center to be treated, and while there the officer ran his name through the computer. He found the man had an outstanding for possession of alcohol on Metro property, and also noticed that the suspect had been previously trespassed from shelters in the same area. The warrant was verified, and suspect was taken from Harborview to King County Jail.

Thurs., April 27, 3:40 p.m., Pine St. Suspect, a transient white male aged 42, was found lying on the floor on the sidewalk at the Metro bus stop outside Talbot's. He looked as if he might be ill, as he was rolling back and forth on the ground. An officer approached him and asked what he was doing. Suspect opened his eyes and said, "Lying here." Officer told him he wasn't allowed to be on the sidewalk, and the suspect immediately became hostile and began yelling. He got to his feet and began flailing his arms, telling the officer that lying on the sidewalk was something all the homeless did. He asked, "Why are you singling me out?" When the officer began to respond, suspect interrupted by pointing and yelling, "Why don't you go arrest the drug dealers? Do something, you moron!" When the officer asked for his ID, the suspect began yelling that the only reason they wanted his ID is because he is white. The officer called for another unit for officer safety, and also to have a witness to the suspect's behaviour. The suspect appeared hostile and paranoid, and stated, "When a uniform talks to you, you look bad." Officers verified that the man was active with the Department of Corrections, and contacted his DOC officer. The DOC officer instructed police to arrest the suspect for failing to report. He was transported to the DOC offices on Virginia St., where they relinquished custody of suspect.

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.

## They say it skips a generation

My grandma Bernice Sautler was a bus chick before bus chicks were in style. (OK, so we're not in style yet, but our day is coming.) When she joined her husband in Seattle after he found

work here in the late '30s, she took the bus out of necessity; they didn't own a car. Years later, when my father was an adult and tried to teach her to drive, she ran off the road, developed a fear of cars, and vowed never to try again. She rode the bus and walked everywhere she needed to go until she died.

When I turned six and needed to have my annual portrait taken, Grandma took me to Sears on the bus. We had both recently celebrated a birthday, and I chose this precious time alone with her to show that I remembered her new age.

"Grandma, are you 69?" I asked as I followed her up the steps of the 55, eagerly anticipating the only possible response: Why, yes I am, you smart girl!

But Grandma slipped her bus ticket into the fare box and took her seat behind the driver (she always insisted on the front, because of Rosa Parks) without a word. I climbed in next to her and tried again, this time tugging her sleeve to get her attention.

"Grandma, are you 69?" Grandma put away her glasses, adjusted her wig, and fiddled with the handkerchief that she always

kept in the pocket of her cardigan sweater, but she didn't answer my question. My other grandmother, my mother's mother, who lived an airplane ride away and visited only occasionally, was hard of hearing, and so were the grandmothers of several of my friends. Grandma Bernice had apparently developed a similar affliction. Luckily, I knew just what to do.

I leaned close to her ear, and in my clearest voice, shouted, "GRANDMA, ARE YOU 69?"

At last, there was a response. This woman I adored, who smelled like Rose Milk and mentholatum, who taught me to make cookies and cornbread and was never too busy to play dress-up, turned to me and twisted her sweet face into an angry grimace.

"Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!" she nearly spat, then turned away again, staring out the bus's front window as if I weren't there.

She continued to ignore me for the remainder of the ride.

Later, my father explained that, while six-year-olds are eager to share their age with anyone who will listen, 69-year-olds are not always so eager. It was best, he said, not to ask Grandma about her age in public. I never asked her about her age again, in public or otherwise. Fortunately, she forgave my transgression; and we happily continued our bus partnership well into my teen years.

Happy Mother's Day, Original Bus Chick. This week, I'll think of you every time I ride. ■

Bus Chick,  
Transit  
Authority

Carla Sautler

Happy Mother's  
Day, Original Bus  
Chick.

Got something to say about public transportation in Seattle? E-mail Bus Chick at [buschick@gmail.com](mailto:buschick@gmail.com) or visit [blog.seattlepi.nwsources.com/buschick](http://blog.seattlepi.nwsources.com/buschick).

## PESTICIDE, Continued from Page 1

Center and the University of Washington analyzed dust samples from farm workers' homes and vehicles, also collecting urine samples of workers and their young children. The research found an association between parents' job tasks, the likelihood of exposure, and pesticide traces in children's urine.

The chemicals also make their way to bodies of water. In a study conducted in 1999 and 2000, the U.S. Geological Survey detected 25 pesticide compounds flowing in the surface waters of the Yakima River Basin, in some cases exceeding levels regarded as safe for aquatic life.

Of course, pesticides can harm people as well.

Some herbicides can irritate a person's eyes, skin, and throat, while others, such as paraquat, are powerful enough to kill a person. Many insecticides work by attacking bugs' nervous


See PESTICIDE, Continued on Page 12

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## Letters

with a Real Change news story

### Where's the Beef?

Dear *Real Change*,

I just finished the 'Excessive Force' (April 26) article and was very upset over the lack of journalistic integrity I saw there. Only in the last two paragraphs are there any ideas that are fairly treated. I find most of the information *Real Change* puts out helpful and engaging, but the blatant propaganda that creeps in (and I suspect is encouraged) does not do anyone any good. Same thing with the letter by Ben Gitenstein (letters, April 26) wondering why passersby didn't stop to help the bleeding, convulsing 'homeless' person lying on the sidewalk. I suspect there was a very long history of irresponsible and dangerous behavior that finally resulted in the episode on the sidewalk. Much of that probably could have been prevented by the individual himself. So when the culmination of his self-destructive behavior finally manifests itself on the public street, why should the public endanger itself or be unduly concerned. This whole "homeless" characterization I find disingenuous. As if providing the people who are living on the streets a house would solve their problems. We need to look seriously at the problems people are facing and decide how best to address them in a compassionate but also effective way, which might mean looking for a little initiative from the person themselves. This delusional treatment of a growing social problem and in the case of your lead story outright prevarication only confuses the issue and makes finding a solution that much more difficult. Keep the Real in *Real Change* and send Timothy Harris and Cydney Gillis back to Journalism 101!

Dan Vanderkolk

RC replies: It's unclear what, specifically, you found so objectionable, and frankly, your response reeks of

victim-blaming. The "Excessive Force" story involved multiple interviews with subjects and witnesses, extensive quotes from police reports obtained through records requests, and background on the larger issue of police accountability from an attorney who has a great deal of experience on this issue. Neither homeless subject was presented as a blameless victim. The police reports, we think, spoke loudly for themselves.

Your objection to the letter, in particular, leads us to think that your issue is with homeless people in general. Part of *Real Change's* mission is to be a voice of the poor. When two incidents of what looks like excessive police force against homeless people came to our attention within weeks of each other, our job was to investigate and make those incidents public and to do so with compassion and integrity. We think the article succeeded on both counts.

**Correction:** The photos on page 6-7 of the interview with ("Eyewitness to Genocide," April 26) were taken by Capt. Brian Steidle and republished with his permission.

*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](mailto:editor@realchangenews.org).

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### CLASSIFIED

#### Employment

**Women's Shelter Organizer.** Experience with homelessness or the formerly homeless. Understanding of SHARE structure and self management. Adherence to past and present Power Lunch decisions. Compensation \$992/month for 3-month probation period, \$1100/month after 3 months. For more information or to set up an appointment/interview, call the SHARE Office. (206) 448-7889.

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#### Opportunity

**Author Bo Lozoff**, founder of the Human Kindness Foundation and its internationally acclaimed Prison-Ashram Project, will be speaking at the University Friends Center, on May 25th, from 7p.m. to 9 p.m. 4001 9th Ave. Contact info: Call Craig Brooke-Weiss 206-920-7251.

#### Information

**Reduce Fossil Fuel** Conference with workshops on home energy, vehicle energy, and biofuels. Tickets \$30. Saturday, May 13, The Mountaineers Building, 300 Third Ave. W. Info: (206) 284-8484

**NARAL Pro-Choice Washington's** Third Annual Run for Your Rights. Tickets \$15 and up. 10 a.m., Saturday, May 13, Greenlake Bathhouse Theater. Info: (206) 624-1990

*Real Change* classifieds are a way to reach 30,000 loyal readers. Call 441-3247, or email [classified@realchangenews.org](mailto:classified@realchangenews.org).

# Calendar

## This Week's Top Ten

### Thursday 5/11

The Community Forum on Predatory Lending addresses the need to fight the growing cycle of debt, eviction, and foreclosure. Predatory lenders target communities of color and displace people from their housing — and they have invaded neighborhoods, earning \$3 billion last year. Join the movement against the growing crisis. 6 p.m., New Hope Baptist Church, 124 21st Ave. Info: (206)694-6786.

The success of *Brokeback Mountain* brought attention to the perception and portrayal of masculinity and gender roles in Westerns. A film series on queer desire in the Wild West, *Tough Love* presents the epic western *Red River* with a discussion of the homoerotic subtexts, queer imagery, and behind-the-scenes gossip. Tickets \$9. 7 p.m., Northwest Film Forum, 1515 12th Ave.

### Friday 5/12

Shirin Ebadi, Iranian lawyer, human rights activist, founder of the Association for Support of Children's Rights in Iran, and Nobel Peace Prize winner, discusses the struggle for universal human rights and her memoir, *Iran Awakening*. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Brutally honest about the role of American imperialism in Latin America, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz analyzes how the same U.S. aggression is spilling into policies in the Middle East and around the world. She tells the story of her own life and what many Americans remember as only the Iran-Contra "affair" in *Blood on the Border: A Memoir of the Contra War*. 7:30 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

### Saturday 5/13

The Community-Based Solutions for Environmental Health and Justice Conference features lectures, workshops, entertainment, and networking on achieving environmental and economic justice in low income communities and communities of color. Vernice Miller-Travis delivers her talk "After the Storm: The Environmental Justice Implications of Hurricane Katrina." 9

a.m. - 5 p.m., Seattle University's Piggott Auditorium, 901 12th Ave. Tickets \$5 and up. Info: (206)720-0285.

Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner and Joan Blades are reaching millions of women who have been politically inactive, encouraging them to create legislative and workplace policies in support of women and families. Their new book, *The Motherhood Manifesto*, is a blueprint for action with disturbing but true statistics. Tickets \$5. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.



*Original Child Bomb* shows the human cost of nuclear proliferation through the declassified yet seldom-seen footage, photographs, drawings, and testimonies of those affected by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As it examines the past and present of nuclear weapons, the film is a wake-up to action. Friday, May 12, 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl.

unify women and engage everyone in focusing on eradicating poverty and hunger among children, ending war, and encouraging the government to prioritize children's well-being in public policy. 1 p.m., Columbia Park, 4721 Rainier Ave. S

### Tuesday 5/16

Activists report on their work in Palestine, where they spent four months participating in non-violent resistance to Israel's construction of the wall, establishing a sister city within the stranglehold of post-disengagement Gaza, and documenting the repeated human rights abuses from Israeli settlers. Through their actions and experiences, they hope to inspire and emphasize the potential that everyone has to work for change in creating a just world. 7 p.m., The Tribal Space at The Chocolate Factory, 3400 Phinney Ave. N Info: (206)633-1086, [www.palestineinformation.org](http://www.palestineinformation.org).

Calendar compiled by Dena Burke. Have a suggestion for an event? Email it to [calendar@realchangenews.org](mailto:calendar@realchangenews.org).

## Director's Corner



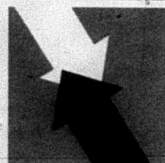
There are many economic questions that are very much up for debate, but the issue of whether public subsidies for sports teams benefits local economies isn't one of them. The answer is a resounding no.

There are at least three good reasons to send Howard Schultz and his Seattle Sonics packing. The first is that the local economic benefit from stadium spending is vastly exaggerated. When a potential Sonics fan doesn't drop their hard-earned dough on, say, some tickets and family dinner in a local restaurant, they'd most likely spend that money on something else. It's generally a wash.

The employment impact is also vastly overblown. Most stadium jobs are seasonal, part-time, and low wage, and contribute little social benefit. The vast majority goes to big salaries for players and managers who don't live in town and don't spend money in the local economy.

But the biggest reason is that one doesn't make a lot of money by owning a sports team. One makes a lot of money by selling a sports team, and when that team is sold, it's considered an investment. This means that recent cuts in capital gains taxes will bring big profits at the end of the Sonics rainbow with, once again, little public benefit.

We're being asked to increase that investment's value. Socialize the risk, privatize the profit: it's a great business model, but a lousy way to spend public dollars.



## First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

### So long, Sonics

**Issue:** Last month, the Seattle Sonics sent a letter to city officials demanding a \$220 million remodeling of Key Arena and saying they'd be willing to pay \$18.3 million of that price. Their letter stated that if they didn't get the deal they were after, they might leave town.

**Background:** Only 10 years ago, elected officials in Seattle gave the Sonics more than \$75 million for Key Arena improvements. At that time, we were told that the deal would ensure an economic return for both the Sonics and the taxpayers well into the future. Now the Sonics are back telling us they're going broke and the problem is Key Arena. No matter that they've failed to produce a winning team and raised player salaries to astronomical levels. No matter that most of their paper losses can be "written off" and concealed as much as a doubling or tripling in the team's value in 10 years. And no matter that the team now charges fans too much for the price of admission. The Sonics once again are arrogantly demanding that we the taxpayers bail them out or they'll leave town.

The Sonics (whose owners have a collective worth in the billions) are more than able to cover the full cost of such an upgrade, which would be a far less expensive option than building their own new arena elsewhere. While they're deciding, the City Council should consider other options for Key Arena that could help that facility move forward without the Sonics. They should also consider how Key Arena improvements fit into larger priorities for the Seattle Center. The needs of the Center must be reviewed and prioritized from the standpoint of enhancing open public access to that entire campus, not simply for purposes of serving a professional sports franchise.

Most importantly we must weigh any future plans for the Seattle Center and Key Arena first against the pressing needs of our communities. Thousands go homeless each night. Waiting lists for subsidized housing in Seattle are years long. And there is a backlog of more than a half billion dollars of street, bridge, and sidewalk needs going unmet in our neighborhoods. To top it off, there are numerous economic development projects going unfunded or underfunded in Southeast and Central Seattle, plans that if implemented could provide more jobs for the city, especially in communities of color, and generate far more in tax revenues than any Sonics basketball team.

**Action:** Add your name to hundreds of others saying no to one more Sonics giveaway. Let's put our city's real needs first ahead of special interests and act responsibly for the benefit of all our citizens.

And, come to the Sonics going-away party Thursday, May 11, noon to 1 at City Hall plaza (600-4th Avenue). We'll toast the team, wish them well in their journeys, and say thanks for the memories.

Visit [www.finethenleave.com](http://www.finethenleave.com) to sign the petition or for more information about the going-away party.

PESTICIDE, Continued from Page 10

systems, and they can do the same to humans, causing headache, dizziness, and sweating. Victims of an exposure may vomit and have a hard time breathing. Their vision may become blurry, their speech slurred, and their muscles twitchy. In extreme cases, a person can die.

Nobody knows exactly how many become sick due to acute pesticide exposures each year in Washington. The state has a mandatory system for reporting pesticide incidents, but the system has many gaps.

Even when farm workers feel sick, they may not seek care — deterred by cost, inability to take time off, or fear of retaliation. Others who are exposed may not realize the cause of their illness, leading them to either dismiss the symptoms or go the doctor with incomplete information. And physicians, who may not be aware of an exposure or know of the surveillance system, do not report all pesticide illnesses. Even less is known about the extent of long-term exposures.

"Anything that's delayed, like a birth defect or cancer," says Dansereau, "or chronic ongoing exposures causing long-term neurological impairment — that's not even caught at all in the tracking."

With more than 800 active pesticide ingredients registered with the Environmental Protection Agency, scientists must scramble to assess the full range of possible health consequences. Pesticides have been linked to cancerous tumors, leukemia, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Scientists are also uncovering an association with Parkinson's disease. Mental and emotional health may also suffer due to chronic exposure, and some pesticides may cause birth

defects, potentially impairing children throughout their lifetimes.

Given the dangers and unknowns, organizations like the Farm Worker Pesticide Project want the state to take stronger measures against potential exposures. From their perspective, the state has been in a holding pattern when it comes to improving regulation of pesticide use.

Last year, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) proposed a rule that would have required notice to nearby schools, day care centers, nursing homes, and hospitals before the application of certain pesticides. Yet the agency dropped the proposal in December, citing lack of consensus as well as concern that notice could create potential liability

for facilities that did not adequately pass the information along. Instead, the agency is now considering a pilot program. The Farm Worker Pesticide Project hopes that the state will adopt a notice rule and also begin to conduct ambient air monitoring, as in California. There, the state posts equipment in communities where pesticides are applied to measure chemical concentrations in the air. (In some cases, monitoring in California has found that children and adults were being exposed at levels considered unsafe.) WSDA is considering such a program, according to Ann Wick, Agricultural Chemical Program Manager with the agency. However, she says that it "doesn't give you much useful information from an enforcement standpoint," unless it is part of a scientific study. While the agency considers its next steps, the Farm Worker Pesticide Project is handing out the Drift Catcher to agricultural workers, helping them evaluate the quality of the air they breathe. ■



MANUEL PEREZ SET UP "DRIFT CATCHER" AIR-MONITORING EQUIPMENT IN THE YAKIMA COUNTY ORCHARD HE OWNS TO MONITOR AIRBORNE PESTICIDES. PHOTO COURTESY OF MANUEL PEREZ.

LEVY, Continued from Page 1

says Steve Pulkkinen, director of the teachers union, the Seattle Education Association, which came up with the idea.

"This money would be raised under city authority," Pulkkinen says. "It's the only place where any money is available" to raise Seattle's low funding. Among the 50 states, he says, Washington schools rank 42nd in per-pupil funding and 46th in class size. Seattle schools also suffer from overcrowding, averaging 32 to 34 students at the high-school level.

The money, Pulkkinen adds, would go directly to classroom instruction, not teachers' salaries, and SEA supports the school consolidation called for last year by a citizens' task force.

Mayor Nickels, on the other hand, wants to see the task force's recommendations put in place before raising any taxes for the schools.

"The [Seattle] school district spends the most per student of any district in the state," says Marianne Bichsel, a mayoral spokesperson. "Before the school district asks for more money, they've got to implement the recommendations of the citizens task force to make the school district run more efficiently."

While the teachers union agrees the district's shortfall must be addressed, even if "we meet every expectation of [Superintendent] Raj Manhas's committee, we're still short — all that does is get us to even," Pulkkinen says.

Sanders adds that a state equalization law keeps rich, urban districts such as Seattle's from getting more school money per pupil than poor, rural ones. "Districts like ours are in a stranglehold because of this law," she says.

"I can't stand the idea that the only option I have right now [to improve classroom instruction] is to privately fundraise," Sanders says, calling private fundraising the "dirty secret" between Seattle's have and have-not schools.

"I'm defending public education," she says, "so that every child will benefit." ■

[Resource]

More information on Initiatives 87 and 88 is at [www.greatschoolsforseattle.org](http://www.greatschoolsforseattle.org).

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