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MAY 31 - JUNE 6, 2006

ISSUES • INSIGHT • IMPACT



AS KRISTIN MITCHELL LOOKS OVER VOTER SIGNATURES, CY BERRYMAN DOES A LITTLE OUTREACH FOR I-937, AN INITIATIVE, IF PASSED IN NOVEMBER, WHICH WOULD REQUIRE UTILITIES TO PROVIDE UP TO 15 PERCENT OF THEIR POWER FROM RENEWABLE SOURCES BY 2020. PHOTO BY KATIA ROBERTS.

Gathering Steam

Renewable energy initiative moves ahead

By LYDIA DePILLIS
Contributing Writer

Backers of Initiative 937 wish they didn't have to ask the people to vote on renewable energy. But after trying for eight years to get similar bills through the legislature, a coalition of environmental groups gave up.

"In a perfect world, the legislature would be responsible to the voters," said Washingtonians for Energy Security outreach coordinator Cy Berryman, sitting in the campaign's Fremont office, crowded with petitions and bright yellow signs. "Legislators who were gatekeepers had the political know-how and experience to keep this out of the House and out of the Senate."

Now, I-937 — which would require utilities to provide 15 percent of their power from renewable sources by 2020, under pain of fines — has built up a war chest of almost \$500,000 (including large checks from wind energy companies) and has gathered about half of the 224,800 signatures it needs by July 6 to qualify for the November ballot.

This time, the initiative is unlikely to face strong opposition from a group that had previously dragged its feet on energy legislation: the utilities. By

engaging the Washington Public Utility District Association in the drafting process, organizers gained the endorsement of one of its former detractors.

"They addressed some of our concerns, which allowed us to come on board," said WPUDA Communications Director Brad Chatfield. Through negotiations with initiative proponents, the PUDs retained a high degree of local control over the transition — which had in early drafts fallen under the supervision of a state agency — and included language that would exempt utilities from requirements if their costs increased by more than four percent as a result of the legislation.

So far, I-937 hasn't encountered any organized opposition, which usually arises after initiatives have secured a spot on the ballot. Still, not everyone has fallen in line: the Washington Rural Energy Consumers Association, a coalition of 14 energy cooperatives, objects that the measure will raise prices and isn't necessary in a state that gets over two-thirds of its energy from hydro power — which is technically renewable.

"There's just not an economic way of putting together enough renewable re-

See I-937, Continued on Page 12

Big Freeze

Wary of fraud, IRS stalls rebates

By CYDNEY GILLIS
JUN Staff Reporter

Lisa and Jonathan Sack filed their taxes in January. But at the rate things are moving, the couple will be lucky to get their refund back in time to buy their four children Christmas gifts.

Oddly enough, it's the children who stand between the couple and about \$4,800 the Internal Revenue Service owes them under the Earned Income Tax Credit program.

The \$4,800 is one third of what the family lived on last year — roughly \$15,000 that Sack made as a crew manager at a Petco store in Bellevue. Though he's never married Easter and files his taxes separately, Sack fathered the couple's three youngest children, ages eleven, eight, and seven, and had no problem getting the credit before.

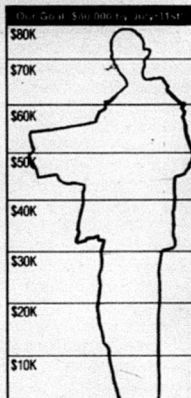
But this year, the couple got very unlucky: The algorithms of an IRS computer program that was set up to detect fraud spit out Sack's return for human review. Given short staffing at the IRS, that's where the refund remains: in limbo, waiting for human eyes, without a word from the IRS as to what's happened to their refund or when they'll ever get it.

Easter and Sack aren't alone. According to a report issued in December by the National Taxpayer Advocate

See IRS, Continued on Page 10

[Donate Now]

The Real Change summer fund drive has begun. Help us build for a more just society while meeting immediate need today. For more information on how you can help, see page 2.



ACTION FIGURES

Listen: another summer fundraiser is getting under way. By acting now, you ensure our future.

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SPEED LIMITS

An upcoming forum looks to address methamphetamine's impact throughout the city.

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HE OBJECTS

Seattleite Stephen Funk, jailed by the Marines as a conscientious objector, rallies against recruitment.

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STICK 'EM UP

Welcome to an era of election banditry, where The Jesse James Principle reigns supreme.

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KEEP THE PEACE

Author Dan Millman finds in his book turned film, *Peaceful Warrior*, a template for self-knowledge.

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A Community in Action

Real Change needs your support to reach our \$80,000 Summer Fund Drive goal

By TIMOTHY HARRIS
Executive Director

Over 2006, *Real Change* will build a plan for action to take us into the next decade. Our base of community allies will help us understand how we can be most effective in building for justice, offering opportunity for our vendors, and bringing people into action.

Twice a year we ask our readers to take a moment to consider what *Real Change* means to them. Your strong support — nearly 1,000 people contributed a total of \$216,941 last year to make *Real Change* happen — has made our extraordinary success possible. We need to raise \$80,000 over June and July this year to keep *Real Change* thriving for the future. This is a lot of money, but we can do it with your support.

Real Change offers a vision and the tools for social change while creating immediate opportunity for those whose need is often desperate. Each month, more than 250 homeless and very low-income vendors earn an income by selling our weekly newspaper in greater Seattle and the Eastside.

We believe that the long, slow, work of movement building goes hand in hand with the more urgent task of helping those who are in need today. Our vision of a just society is meaningless unless we can make a real difference to real people, right now.

Our vendors often tell me what *Real Change* means to them. Sometimes it's about getting off the street and into a room. Sometimes, it's simply the opportunity to work and be valued. *Real Change* brings hope and stability to people's lives by offering a bridge to something better. Our vendors are part of a community in action that unites the poor and the affluent in building a better future.

The relationships between vendors and readers — relationships that get built on the street every day — help to sustain our vendors through hard times

and to know that they are not alone. For many, these relationships give them a reason to keep trying. They represent a community that brings hope and meaning to countless lives.

Help comes in many forms. Time and again, vendors tell me that selling *Real Change* isn't really about the money. It's about the people. Selling *Real Change* is a hedge against the isolation, negativity, and despair that homelessness and poverty often brings.

Over the past five years, our circulation has steadily grown to its present high of 10,000-12,000 papers a week. Every year, we grow to reach more people. We do this by focusing on building vendor success and on publishing the best paper we know how.

Seattle Weekly has named *Real Change* "best grassroots media outlet" in Seattle. This was just reinforced this May with two awards for excellence from the Society of Professional Journalists. The Municipal League of King County recently named *Real Change* "Organization of the Year" for our outstanding efforts in civic engagement.

Real Change takes up issues that matter and gets action. While 2006 is still young, we have already chalked up an impressive win. *Real Change* partnered with the faith and labor community to strengthen a downtown rezoning package and nearly double the bonus that developers must pay to the city's affordable housing fund. *Real Change* generated nearly 500 emails and more than 200 postcards to City Council to build a groundswell of support for a downtown for everyone.

Every week, we bring you the stories that you need to read to understand your community and be a part of the solution. Our ongoing commitment to

anti-racist reporting and organizing means that you read about what's happening in all of our communities. We cover the stories that other media often miss and are an invaluable resource for the broader progressive community.

We believe that social change happens over time, in a long series of events that most of us don't see. By informing and involving a community in action, *Real Change* helps make a strong and inclusive social justice movement possible. Every time we grow our capacity to act, we build for a more just tomorrow.

Last year we successfully moved to weekly publication, added a dedicated organizing staff, and hired a fundraiser to help us grow for the long haul. This year we have added two national service interns to strengthen our vendor support team and build our organizing capacity. Over 2006, *Real Change* will build a plan for action to take us into the next decade. Our base of community allies will help us understand how we can be most effective in building for justice, offering opportunity for our vendors, and bringing people into action.

Your support makes our work possible. Like most grassroots community organizations, we do a lot with very little. Last year we offered opportunity to more than 700 vendors, published a weekly community newspaper, and ran an effective organizing project on just \$511,215. Nearly half of that came from people like you. Please make the thermometer on page 1 move as much as you can by making a donation to *Real Change* today. You can do so via our secure online system at www.realchange-news.org, or by sending a check to 2129 2nd Ave., Seattle WA 98121. ■



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-news.org>
Email rchange@speakeasy.org
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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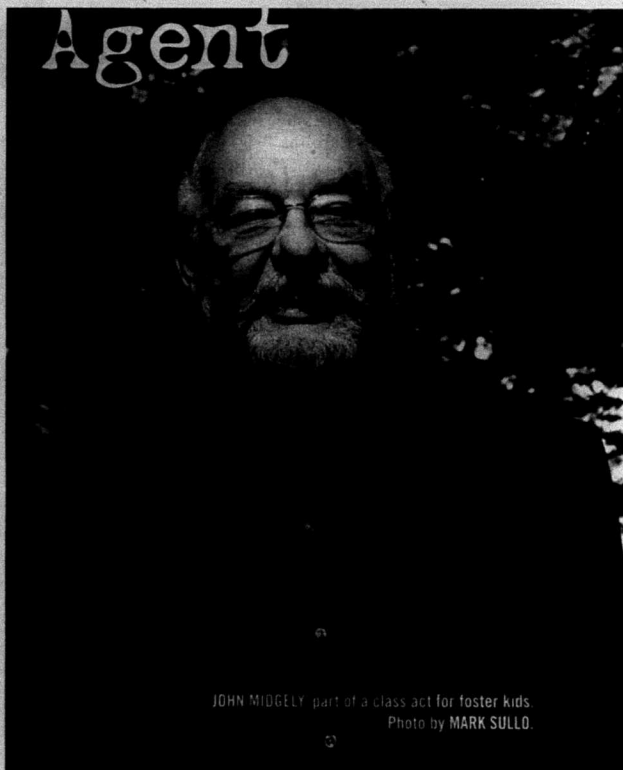
Change Agent

Some of the state's most vulnerable children have a constitutional right to reasonable safety and health from their caretaker, the Department of Social and Health Services. So ruled the state Supreme Court in 2003 in a class-action suit on behalf of the thousands of foster children — a case prosecuted by a team of lawyers, including John Midgely of Columbia Legal Services.

Midgely and other youth law advocates involved with *Braam vs. State of Washington* will be honored at the Children's Alliance's annual Voices for Children luncheon June 1 for the landmark settlement they reached — a settlement "nationally lauded for setting an example," says Midgely.

Not that Washington has finished the job. Fellow Braam prosecutor Casey Trupin says that the administration charged with fulfilling the terms of the settlement has been timid about asking legislators for money to do it with. DSHS has hired more caseworkers, he says, but among the many things they need more money for is recruitment and retention of foster parents.

—Adam Hyla



JOHN MIDGELY part of a class act for foster kids.
Photo by MARK SULLO.

Crank Calling

Meth forum to brainstorm solutions, foster communication

By LYDIA DePILLIS
Contributing Writer

[Event]
"Deconstructing
Tina: Why Are We
Dying for Crystal
Meth?" Tuesday,
June 13, 7:30 to
9 p.m. Lifelong
AIDS Alliance
Conference Room,
1002 E. Seneca
St. Hosted by AC-
TION Northwest
(www.actionnw.
net). Donations
will be accepted
at the door for
Seattle Counseling
Services, Project
NION and AC-
TION Northwest,
but no one will be
turned away.

For being such a huge problem in Seattle, people don't talk about methamphetamine abuse that much. ACTION Northwest, in an upcoming forum pulling together speakers from all sides of the issue, is trying to change that.

According to members of ACTION NW, a multi-state group that seeks to support and coordinate social justice efforts, organizations working to address meth use are not communicating as much as they should. At the June 13 event, they hope to create an environment focused on solutions, not finger-pointing.

"I like to look to the common ground, and I think there is one," said ACTION NW director Paul Torres, acknowledging some of the differences of opinion among treatment agencies and law enforcement over how to approach the problem. "I thought they'd be fearful to come together, afraid to step on each others' feet," he noted.

Meth abuse has become one of the biggest public health crises in the Pacific Northwest, claiming 257 lives last year in Washington, and one of the most difficult to deal with. Since city and state governments began keeping track of people who buy the drug's ingredients — which can all be found in local pharmacies — more cooks have resorted to identity theft in order to slip by unnoticed. Although the number of small meth labs in rural areas has decreased in recent years, more and of the white powder is pouring in from Mexico, which now provides 75 percent of the state's supply.

Torres credits the Seattle Police with doing a good job addressing the problem. The SPD employs a detective just to deal with meth issues, who Torres says is very sensitive to the nature of the individuals involved. Recently, law

enforcement personnel and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender advocacy groups started meeting monthly in the ACTION NW offices to strategize and share information about a range of issues, although Torres says that meth usually dominates the conversation.

Outreach Director Meighan Doherty came up with the idea for a forum about a year ago — and for her, the issue is personal. Doherty, who is lesbian, had one friend die from a meth overdose, and has seen the negative effect of the drug on many others.

"I saw him take line after line after line," she says, shuddering as she describes first seeing a friend on meth, which has largely replaced Ecstasy as Seattle's club drug of choice. "It was the most frightening thing I've ever seen in my life."

Doherty says that too many people don't know where to go for help, and she hopes that people will walk away with a better idea of what services are available, as well as the knowledge that recovery is possible.

Although meth abuse has been associated with gay communities, Doherty emphasizes that it should not be seen as a "gay problem." Although little data exists regarding its use, she says that meth crosses social boundaries, and that the addiction rate of straight women of color is growing faster than that of any other demographic group.

Torres explains that LGBT organizations themselves may unwittingly perpetuate the stereotype of the gay meth user, simply by being the most proactive in addressing the problem. A Latino organization, he observed, might be less likely to publicly engage with the issue.

"The gay community is taking the most action because we're active already," Torres said. "We see a lot at stake here. We're kind of always active... we kind of have to be, in life." ■

Just Heard...

Cascadian comes clean with janitors

Last week, janitors employed by Cascadian Building Maintenance received a little extra something in their paychecks: a notice telling them that Cascadian had violated their rights to organize.

Issued by the National Labor Relations Board, the notice let janitors know that the NLRB, after more than six months' investigation, found that Cascadian had violated workers' basic rights with regard to organizing more than a dozen times.

The remedy? Cascadian, through a settlement agreement, had to hand-deliver to employees documentation reaffirming that workers could unionize, choose a bargain rep, and act with other employees for their own protection and benefit. Cascadian also had to offer 16 statements on what they will no longer do. Included in that can't-do list: suggesting that workers will be taken to court for complaining about workplace issues.

Representatives from Local 6 SEIU, which has been assisting janitors in their fight for rights, say they will be monitoring Cascadian, to ensure the company stays compliant with the settlement agreement.

—Rosette Royale

Council: unfair to cops?

The Seattle City Council passed council president Nick Licata's police accountability measure on Tuesday with the congratulatory talk that accompanies most unanimous votes. Talk of a different sort was coming from the offices of the Seattle Police Officers' Guild, where guild president Sgt. Rich O'Neill says staff are preparing an unfair-labor practices claim against the city for tweaking working conditions away from the bargaining table.

The bill clarifies an issue of legal liability that's prevented the OPA's citizen review board from issuing biannual reports about internal investigations since 2004 ("Hold-Up," June 15 2005). And it states that, since they're sworn to secrecy, members of the civilian review board may view case files unclouded by the black pen of a department censor. The bill returns the police-accountability system "to what it was originally envisioned as by the [City Council members] who passed it in 1999," says Licata legislative aide Lisa Herbold.

O'Neill calls the council's legislation "an effort in futility."

"We're about ready to enter bargaining" for a new contract, he says, "so why not skip this legality?"

O'Neill predicts it will end up there anyway, after the guild wins a court case or gets a favorable hearing before the Public Employment Relations Commission, which administers collective-bargaining law for public employees. Either way, "We're confident that it will be returned to the bargaining table. We're not losing sleep over this."

—Adam Hyla

Free and Clear

Marine objector and former Seattleite Stephen Funk continues anti-recruitment in Bay Area

By LYDIA DePILLIS
Contributing Writer

Stephen Funk's hair has grown out, and now he wears bright yellow sneakers instead of combat boots. But memories of his six-month stay in military prison stay with him, and Funk has been carrying the message across the country: going to jail beats having to kill people.

"It was better than being in the military, where you have to pretend you're someone you're not," said Funk at an event hosted by the American Friends Service Committee last week. While in the brig, Funk was assigned to painting rocking horses. "It's like summer camp," he said of his experience.

Funk made national headlines in 2003 for being the first in the current conflict to file for conscientious objector status. A Marine reservist who joined after graduating from Seattle's alternative NOVA high school, Funk refused to deploy with his unit to Iraq, and faced a battery of bureaucratic hurdles to rejoin civilian life.

In the two years since his release from a North Carolina brig, where he was sent for an "unauthorized absence," Funk has toured the West Coast with other conscientious objectors, telling his story to whoever will listen. Doing most of his "anti-recruitment" in the San Francisco Bay Area, where he is now a junior at

Stanford studying international relations, Funk hasn't been able to find many who disagree with him.

"Unfortunately, or fortunately, that hasn't happened that much," said the soft-spoken 25-year old through his braces. "I think a lot of people are ashamed — shamed into being quiet."

Funk would also like to reach GIs still in the service who may not know about the option of filing for CO status, which many believe doesn't exist in the all-volunteer military. He advises those having trouble getting out to pretend mental instability, for which he says officers would rather release soldiers than for being COs.

Funk, who is gay, says he would like to continue with the antiwar movement after college. Ironically, however, his time with the military isn't over yet: he had just learned that he had not yet been officially discharged, and had in fact been automatically promoted to Private First Class. ■



Stephen Funk at a recent Seattle appearance.
Photo by Elliot Stoller.

Short Takes

Cross at the cross-check

Several local organizations have filed suit to challenge a four-month-old Washington law implemented as a part of the federal Help America Vote Act.

The organizations have joined forces with the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University and Project Vote, a national non-profit organization working to enfranchise voters. The law being challenged (RCW 29A.08.107) is, according to a Project Vote press release, one that "improperly implements" the 2002 act, known as HAVA.

All states must comply with the act; the lawsuit is targeting the registration database system that requires the office of the Secretary of State to

double-check information identifying potential voters using two sources — the voter registration form and the corresponding government database. Unless a match is made or the applicant corrects the information within 45 days, registration will not occur.

The Brennan Center for Justice issued a Mar. 24 report which reviewed states' compliance with HAVA, listing the state of Washington as one with a very high likelihood of erroneously discarding people's registrations. According to the Center, this is because of Washington's "rigid" implementation of a hybrid model, used by 15 states in different ways.

Washington is using a model similar to that of Iowa, which seeks an exact match of identification number,

last name, and date of birth, but will accept variations of an applicant's first name. Applications could be thrown out if first and last names are transposed, or if names have multiple English spellings, as occurs frequently among Asian Americans, American Indians, and Alaskan natives, according to Project Vote's May 24 press release. The organization also cites human and computer error and inconsistent updating of records as potential causes of a mismatch in the system.

This method is the reason the Washington Association of Churches joined the list of plaintiffs. WAC public policy director Alice Woldt says, "In this lawsuit, if there isn't a match between your voter registration and the motor vehicle, your driver's license — well, you may have moved and don't even have a car anymore — but because it doesn't match, your vote would be thrown out."

Woldt also says "it is usually the poor and the most vulnerable people in society that are disenfranchised."

The list of plaintiffs isn't complete yet, but it includes the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), WCA, the Service Employees International Union, Local 775 (SEIU), Washington Citizen Action, the Organization of Chinese Americans (Greater Seattle Chapter), Chinese Information and Service Center, and Filipino American Political Action Group of Washington.

— Liz Miller



No Walk in the Park

ALAN LOTT and DIANE GRACE STROLL BESIDE GREEN LAKE ON THE MAY 20 WALK FOR PEACE AND HEALING, A FUNDRAISER TO BRING A CONFLICT-INJURED IRAQI CHILD TO A LOCAL HOSPITAL FOR REHABILITATIVE TREATMENT. THE SATURDAY WALK COINCIDED WITH A LAWN DISPLAY OF CROSSES AND HEADSTONES REPRESENTING THE MORE THAN 2,400 SERVICEMEMBERS KILLED IN IRAQ CALLED ARLINGTON NW, ORGANIZED BY THE LOCAL CHAPTER OF VETERANS FOR PEACE. ARLINGTON NW GOES UP AT ROXHILL PARK IN WEST SEATTLE ON SUNDAY, JUNE 18. FOR MORE ON THE HOSPITAL PROJECT, SEE WALKFORPEACEANDHEALING.COM. PHOTO BY JUSTIN MILLS

RACE AND PLACE

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206-720-0285 extension #1 or yalondas@ccej.org.

The Jesse James Principle

Verifiable ballot counts would stop freefall of public confidence in elections

By PAUL R. LEHTO
Contributing Writer

When Jesse James robbed a bank, he didn't get to be bank president or set future vault security policy. But when someone steals an election, they get to preside over the next election and change election security.

Jesse James was reportedly asked why he robbed banks and he replied, "Because that's where the money is." Some things are so blindingly obvious, it's funny to be reminded.

Another obvious association would be elections and political power. Try asking your least favorite politician why he steals elections and, like Jesse James, he'll say, "Because that's where the power is." Right?

When Jesse James robbed a bank, he didn't get to be bank president or set future vault security policy. But when someone steals an election, they get to preside over the next election and change election security.

The Peter Principle, which says that competent employees are promoted until they're incompetent, changes in elections to the Jesse James Principle: the most competent election criminals get "promoted," and then set or influence the rules for the next elections.

Some say that to protect elections, you really have to watch those voters — they might steal a single lousy vote. Yet similar negative attention is rarely lavished on the candidates or the fat-cat political players and the long history of stealing office. Such misplaced scrutiny continues to occur, even while American elections feature huge incentives, like control of the world's most powerful military and the world's largest economy, not to mention billions in contracts and millions in political races.

We've all heard about people who try to stuff ballot boxes by alerting their friends during informal or online polls. Does this mean that when stakes are much higher people will be much more honest? To protect our elections, everything should be open and above board and no one should enforce a Pollyanna view of human nature.

This is not a partisan issue: if anything, it is an Up/Down issue. The people "down here" have a strong interest in monitoring elections that affect their lives. The people "up there" — the fat cats in power and the media elites who bank millions in ad revenue from those fat cats and use them as "confidential" sources — have a shared interest in covering up the seamier sides of how governance happens. They'll say anything to maintain "public confidence" in elections, which is to say that they will do anything to maintain public confidence in their personal power.

The only confidence that should be "maintained" is the one that results from proving, through open and public counting of the vote, that the correct result has been achieved. Without this, there's no basis for confidence in election results that are unverifiable and irreproducible.

We're now in an age of vote counting done by corporate trade secret software. This makes elections the secret, private property of the corporation chosen by the government officials who "won" the last election. With this secret vote counting, nobody can prove the totals correct, and the public can't even peek.

Open-source computer code is sometimes offered as protection against corporate manipulations. But Finnish computer expert Harri Hursti's demonstrations on Diebold voting machines earlier this year indicate that all classes of electronic voting can be hacked without detection. Knowing this, most election watchdogs have concluded that open-source code on touchscreens can't restore "public confidence" because they will still feature invisible ballots filled out for the voter by a computer. Optical scans, while also easily rigged, can work, but only with enough checks and balances — like publicly posted results at each polling place checked against final countywide reports.

Only the public can check and balance elections, because for government, "That's where the power is." We need at least the honesty of Jesse James in our elections coverage. Here's a simple formula for a start: Private Ballots + Public Vote Counting = Verifiable Democracy.

We the People, the rank and file of all political parties, should ask ourselves if we believe that any past generations have sacrificed for a real representative democracy or if any future generations would like one. If so, does the living generation today have the right to let verifiable democracy slip away? ■

Everett attorney Paul Lehto (lehto-lawyer@hotmail.com) is an e-voting activist who filed suit against Sequoia Voting Systems, Inc., over Sequoia's secret vote counting in Snohomish County in the 2004 election.

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Leverage

Spiritual self-help jock Dan Millman on being right within and doing good without

By LESTER GRAY
Arts Editor

"Henry David Thoreau put it well when he said, 'Most men live lives of quiet desperation.' We're trying to do the right thing; we're living the best we know how, and we wonder why we have the regrets, the anxieties, and the suffering, and the resistance to life as it unfolds."

Dan Millman's bestselling book, *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior*, tells the story of a college gymnast — handsome, intelligent, and at the top of his game — who wants for nothing; or so he thinks. One day the Olympic hopeful encounters a grizzled old service station attendant, Socrates, who begins to challenge the young man's sense of the world. The book, first published in 1980, has now been made into a movie starring Scott Mechlowicz and Nick Nolte.

Millman's story, part allegory, part spiritual guide, is an amalgam of philosophies and teachings with roots as varied as the *Tao Te Ching* and Russian martial arts. It's unique in that it brings the proverbial story of the mystical teacher and the student to urban America. That the prospective acolyte is a college jock makes it even more unusual.

Based in part on Millman's own experiences, *Peaceful Warrior* is not without some precedence in contemporary spiritualism. *The Teachings of Don Juan* was published in the '60s and ended up as a sacred text for some counter-culturalists disillusioned by the Judeo-Christian canons. The central figure in these writings by Carlos Castaneda was the titular Yaqui Indian. Castaneda, a UCLA doctoral candidate, encountered this shaman while conducting anthropological research in the desert of northern Mexico.

Like Castaneda, Millman has come under scrutiny for the authenticity of his story. Unlike Castaneda, Millman has always conceded that his tale is part fact and part fiction. As a consequence his writings, which now extend through 12 books, are a bit hard to classify. They (and, by extension, the works of Millman) are viewed alternately as self-help, inspirational, and sometimes spiritual.

In town to promote the upcoming movie release of his book, with the shortened title *Peaceful Warrior*, Mill-

man sat down for an interview with *Real Change*.

Real Change: When I read *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior*, the first thing that occurred to me was the writings of Carlos Castaneda. I can't imagine you haven't heard this a million times before.

Dan Millman: I had read Carlos Castaneda's first two, or maybe three books back in the '60s and enjoyed them. He was an evocative writer, but something about his books — you know, out in the desert — I felt very strongly that people need to understand it's right here and now in our everyday life. You don't need to go to the desert and work with someone from a different culture necessarily, so that's why I felt it was important to share what I'd learned from this old guy at a gas station in California.

And fortunately, he wasn't Asian. The reason I say fortunately is because most of us assume all spiritual wisdom, all wisdom about life has to come from India or China or Japan. There is great wisdom in those cultures, but it was important he was just sort of a brand-x, generic gas station attendant.

RC: The term "peaceful warrior" is going to seem to some people like an oxymoron.

Millman: Simply put, it's about having a peaceful heart and a warrior spirit. And that has nothing to do with martial arts specifically; it's about living our lives with courage and love. It takes courage to let ourselves love in the world because we're going to lose

everyone we love: our parents, our friends, and our loved ones. That's what life's about, that bittersweet quality of life.

RC: Why was it so important to make this movie?

Millman: To send a wave across not only the United States, but potentially other areas of the world to remind people of what they already know on deep levels, but tend to forget. To offer a perspective that there is more to life than news, weather, and sports. That

*Dan Millman brings his best-selling *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior* to the silver screen.*

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Continued from Previous Page

there are ways of living that make life work better, that make us flow with life, that make us understand what we're here to do.

RC: With all of the political conflict, domestic, or international, what can a peaceful warrior bring to that mix, either individually, or to affect a community?

Millman: [There's a scene where] Dan turns to Socrates and he says, "You know Soc, I feel kind of guilty or selfish doing all of this work on myself, this inner work, when there's so many people in need out there in society. Shouldn't I be more politically active in the world to change things?"

That's when Socrates says to take a swing at him. He finally stands to take a swing at him, and Dan finds himself on the ground after a painful wrist lock. Socrates says, "You notice a little leverage can be very effective." And Dan shakes his wrist out and says "Yeah." Socrates asks, "You want to help people, you want to make a difference in the world? Then develop the wisdom to know how to exert the right leverage at the right place at the right time."

RC: If someone were to see the movie and say, "I would like to follow a

similar path," what would their next step be?

Millman: People aren't here to follow a similar path to me, they're here to follow their own path. I have profound respect for the integrity, and the wisdom in the heart of each individual.

Henry David Thoreau put it well when he said, "Most men live lives of quiet desperation." We're trying to do the right thing; we're living the best we know how, and we wonder why we have the regrets, the anxieties, and the suffering, and the resistance to life as it unfolds. So part of my work is to remind people that every adversity we face is absolutely essential to our growth.

RC: Even you needed someone to give you the spark.

Millman: Alan Watts once said, "Beware of teachers who pick your pocket and sell you your own wallet." Because that's all any teacher can do, [help find] the treasures inside each person. ■

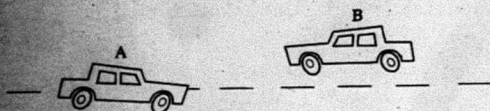
Peaceful Warrior opens June 2 at the Harvard Exit.



IN *PEACEFUL WARRIOR*, DAN (SCOTT MECHLOWICZ) RECEIVES A GUIDING HAND FROM SOCRATES (NICK NOLTE.)

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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Stabilize

There was a gathering of world leaders
Someone said women have been raped and killed
Fathers and sons, grandparents slaughtered
Chairman then said things now are stabilized
Next annual meeting this will be considered

Deals were made by these internationals
August men without a word looked away
They must not disturb the arms business
The chairman said, things are stabilized

It's good business to stabilize
Say these leaders in fine palaces
Execs in air-conditioned offices
Count the dollars that stability brings
While their wives attend concerts and plays

Out in the hills a fighter says
Let's go set their ass down on hot stoves
Eventually the fuel will burn out
Things will stabilize and all be well
Come let us go stoke some fires my friends

—GLENN EVANS



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Informed Dissent

The Design of Dissent shows how people, across this vast Earth, throughout the past century, have used images to shake free from the weight of oppression that has fettered their lives, all the while helping others to achieve the same goal.

The Design of Dissent: Socially and Politically Driven Graphics
By Milton Glaser & Mirko Ilic
Rockport Publishers, \$50
By ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Reporter

The day stands etched in my mind. There I was walking, on a humid afternoon in July, along one of the side streets of Dupont Circle, an openly queer section of Washington, D.C., when I spied it: a rectangular sheet of black glossy paper bearing a vivid pink triangle — the cutout-shape resembling a miniature pyramid floating in a fathomless sky — while sprawled at the bottom of the page there appeared, in thin, towering white text, these words: SILENCE=DEATH. I stopped. I stared. What in the hell did it mean?

I only wondered that for a second. I knew exactly what the poster was saying: stop being silent about AIDS, our fear of talking about it aloud — between lovers, among politicians — is killing people. The year was 1987; nearly four million people worldwide were living with HIV/AIDS; I was 20 years old. Within seconds, a portion of my youthful arrogance plummeted away as I grasped that art directed toward the masses — the sort stapled to a telephone pole, plastered to a wall — can transmute the fear, the angst, the rage a community experiences into action.

Reading Milton Glaser's and Mirko Ilic's *The Design of Dissent*, examples of art's transmutative power revealed themselves time and again. For within this catalogue of community activism — displayed through mostly color reproductions of posters, billboards, photographs, and collages — there are clues on how the simplest of images can change the world.

Sound naïve? It's not. Of course, it's true the world is an incomprehensible hodgepodge of ideas and beliefs, and changing this world, on the macro level, would best be described as Sisyphean. Yet it's the individual change, that occurring on the micro, personal level, that ripples out and leads to a tremor, a quake in the global landscape. *Dissent* shows how people, across this vast Earth, throughout the past century, have used images

to shake free from the weight of oppression that has fettered their lives, all the while helping others to achieve the same goal. Delving into the book allows us to bear witness to the slow, yet steady change of the world through the

altering of individual consciousness. We behold dissent in action, becoming caught up in its slow, steady rumble.

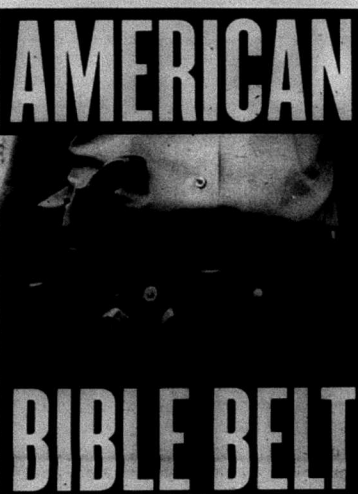
Want to learn how people addressed the seismic shifts that engulfed the ex-Yugoslavia? In Chapter 3, a poster bears the image of a hand saw, three finger holes in its handle, the word BOSNIA stenciled upon the blade, its serrated edge tinged red with blood. Near the handle resides the phrase: Brotherhood and Unity. What does the struggle for women's equality entail for those in Southeast Asia? There, in Chapter

addressed to show up at Milosevic's home and activists were arrested for the attempt. But the words. What are they trying to tell us?

Explanations, thankfully, aren't always needed, and here's where the searing force of *Dissent* truly can be felt. Take, for example, a simple poster from the United States. Upon a red background sits a highly stylized letter W. Beneath it, the words I'm bombin' it. So, you know the W refers to George W. Bush, you know the bombing refers to Iraq. And Afghanistan. (And maybe, eventually, disastrously, Iran?) As for the W, it's an inverted M, from McDonald's "I'm lovin' it" ad campaign. There, in one super-sized swoop, the poster hammers numerous nails with one multi-layered image: Iraq, Afghanistan, W., warfare, McDonald's, fast food, corporate greed, and globalization.

Over and over, such images succeed. But the words in *Dissent*, too often they fail. A foreword by Tony Kushner at the end of the book (which, I'm pretty sure, makes it an "afterword") gets thrown off track early on by an overlong reference to a book written by Stendahl. Just when you're ready to give up reading, Kushner grabs you, waxing lyrical about dissident art, even praising the SILENCE=DEATH poster. But then there's an interview of co-author Glaser by an art director of *The New York Times Book Review*, which largely presents two people who, in a desire to justify the book, get all high-falutin' about why images are so powerful.

But an image doesn't have to be up to reveal its power. Neither does *Dissent*. The images speak, not only for themselves, but for multitudes. Just turn the page and feel your senses ignite with fire. Turn the page and witness the world change, right in your very hands. ■

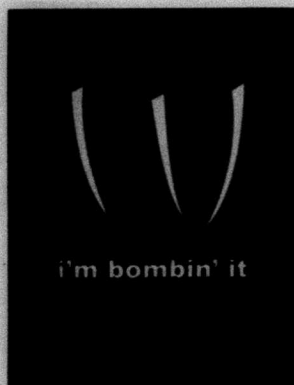


8, sits a Malaysian poster of a pair of black lips. Peer closer and the lips reveal themselves not to be formed by a human mouth, but of fists, painted black, placed side by side as a comment on violence against women. How is gun control (or lack thereof) addressed? Check out Chapter 11, and gaze at a photo of a man's waist adorned with handgun and bullets, sandwiched between the words "American Bible Belt."

Images such as these abound, commenting upon, well, you name it: genetically modified foods, animal rights, Palestine and Israel, birth control, corporate greed, religion, and, yes, the Iraq War. The majority of these nearly 250 reproductions are coupled with brief descriptions, which is a great boon. Except for when it isn't.

Roughly two-thirds of the time, the sidebars are concise, illuminating. The Bosnian poster mentioned earlier takes on greater weight when it's explained that the bloody saw's handle bears three finger holes for a reason: they represent the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims, all of whom suffered during Bosnia's devastation.

But those remaining verbal descriptions, oh, how they frustrate. Just pages after the depiction of the blood-encrusted saw, there's a picture postcard of Madeline Albright shaking hands with the recently deceased Slobodan Milosevic. Superimposed upon Milosevic are the words: *Vodi ga Kući*, which means... Your guess is as good as mine. All we're told is the postcard was pre-



Adventures
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning



Holy Hole-y

My original idea for this column was to report to you from the 93rd Annual Convention of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions in the manner of Hunter S. Thompson.

Since we are not, in fact, the Duke, it would never

The best part of the 93rd Annual Convention of the Association of Gospel Missions was the Total Experience Gospel Choir. Too bad there were too many missionaries in the way, or we could have danced until we ripped a hole in the floor.

occur to me or to Anita "Mistress Gonzo" Freeman (I'm not prejudiced against Christians, I live with one!) to wade into Grand Ballroom 2 at the SeaTac Doubletree Inn among up to 1,000 missionaries without prior consent. Our editorial manager Adam Hyla called ahead. He got a nice PR woman who said something like, "Oh yes, we know about *Real Change*, and I read that column by Wes Browning on us a few weeks back, and ha, ha, he sure doesn't like Christians, does he?" And then we got permission anyway; so I thought, time to pack our drugs.

But then I thought, Good God, is even their press agent 90 percent satire-impaired? The column mentioned was NOT anti-Christian. All I did was satirize the AGRM's website. I wanted to show how their own talk about homeless people might feel to the homeless people themselves by turning it around and applying the same language to missions. If the missionaries were offended by it, they were supposed to understand that they themselves had provided the template.

Clearly, these people need training wheels on their satire. Setting an impression of Hunter S. Thompson before them without any exegesis would be like renting your 12-year-old nephew an expensive hooker and not telling him which end is up. It just results in waste. I was going to have to explain in excruciating detail that I don't actually pop pills or do hookers or drink until noon-o'clock in the morning.

Then the day came, and we were in the ballroom. The head honcho at the dais was saying how great it was that George Bush had appeared

on closed circuit TV earlier to say a few words to the gathering. Ah heck, we thought, we missed it because we were too busy scoring acid. NO, WE WERENT: we were across the street, downing Sourdough Jacks and jalapeño poppers because we couldn't afford \$32 for the conference meal.

The best part of the evening was the Total Experience Gospel Choir. Too bad there were too many missionaries in the way, or we could have danced until we ripped a hole in the floor.

Speaking of ripping holes, it was time then for Dr. Kenneth "Hutch" Hutcherson to talk. This was what we really came for. What would the famous Hutch want to say to the AGRM, besides that gays shouldn't be allowed to marry, etc.? Surely he would have a special message. We were right! He came to talk about ripping holes!

Specifically, he discussed Mark, Chapter 2, wherein Jesus heals a paralytic who had been lowered through a hole in the ceiling. From this he arrived at the idea that when people come to missions for shelter and food (which he calls "coming for the wrong reasons," as if the missions don't deliberately set that bait!) it is up to the missions to "rip parts of their lives out of them" (like the hole in the roof, get it?) to reach hollows in their hearts to shove Jesus into! You couldn't ask for a less disingenuous description of what I referred to previously as the spiritual violence of proselytism. Hutch is for it! Treat the existing spirituality of the homeless people who come to you like so much roofing! And the audience cheered!

Here's the satire part, for the missionaries reading this: My final recommendation to the rest of the world is we all do to you what Hutch says to do to homeless people. We lure you into coming to us for the wrong reasons, by letting you believe we care what you think about gay marriage. Then without your permission, we rip your bad-ass violent hearts a new one, and shove tolerance into the hole.

Mahalo. ■

The Paving of America

Last week I wrote about "carism," the ways in which the infrastructure and attitudes prevalent in American cities (ours included) force the use of cars as the primary mode of transportation. Perhaps the single biggest influence in cre-

ating our current carist infrastructure has been the powerful Highway Lobby, a coalition of auto, tire, and cement industries, and the force behind the interstate highway system we know today.

Earlier this year, I watched *Taken for a Ride*, a 10-year-old documentary about how General Motors, through the holding company National City Lines, purchased streetcar and trolley systems in 40 American cities. The film shows National City Lines purposefully altering operations to make the streetcar system less efficient and useful, then destroying tracks and streetcar lanes, clearing the way for auto traffic. It wasn't simply about GM buses replacing streetcars; it was about making sure cars would be dominant, even the places most hospitable to mass transit.

When freeways began to appear in U.S. cities in the late 1950s and early 1960s, they were met with a great deal of resistance from the residents of those cities. Many Seattleites were strongly opposed to the construction of I-5 and accurately predicted its negative effects on quality of life. Says Dorothea Norstrand, in

her History Link essay about I-5's effects on her Greenlake neighborhood:

"I-5 took the life out of that neighborhood business core.... One by one, most of the shops disappeared, and most of us who had been able to find what we wanted within walking distance, found it necessary to go farther afield."

In the face of this resistance, GM and the Highway Lobby leveraged their considerable economic and political influence and then set about convincing the American people that a carist world actually served their interests. *Taken for a Ride* shows several examples of the Highway Lobby's television ads. In one, 1950s "all American" families and businessmen sit in their cars, frustrated by noisy, gridlocked traffic. "It's your country," a voice-over insists. "Ask for better highways and more parking space." Another shows a luxury car zooming down a beautiful, coastal highway, while this text flashes across the screen: Mobility: the Fifth Freedom.

Ironically, elements from both ads could promote public transportation. A scene showing people stuck in traffic seems, after all, the perfect argument against more highways—especially when juxtaposed against a scene that shows these same people resting, reading, and conversing on a fast, efficient train. And though mobility is certainly a form of freedom, Americans would be much more "free" if it were equally available to all citizens, regardless of their ability to afford an expensive, dangerous, polluting (not to mention rapidly depreciating) piece of equipment. ■



Wed., May 5, evening. Boren Ave

— **Sobering Unit.** Victim, a transient male in his 50s reported that his black wallet had been taken from him while he was sleeping at the sobering center. The next day he went to St Francis to get assistance, and the clerk stated that his Washington ID had already been used to get assistance. Victim thinks the suspect may be another homeless person who is now using his personal information.

Wed., May 17, 8:06 p.m., 200 block Alaskan Way — Under Viaduct.

Officers were dispatched to a 911 hang-up call from an address on First Ave. S. Upon arrival they were flagged down by the victim, a transient white male aged 38, who told officers he was under the Alaskan Way viaduct, smoking "doobage" (marijuana), when two men walked up to him and asked if they could have a hit. The victim refused, and was hit on the right side of the forehead and was kicked in his right knee. He states he fell to the ground and was knocked out for a moment. When he awoke the men were gone, and he was in pain. He declined medical assistance despite his loss of consciousness. He stated he had never seen the suspects — one white, one black — before, and he was also missing \$5. An area check for the suspects was negative.

Wed., May 5, 11:50 p.m., Pike St.

Seattle Fire Dept (SFD) reported a stabbing in the 100 block of the Pike Street area, and requested Seattle Police assistance. When police arrived SFD already had the victim, a transient white male aged 41, in the aid vehicle, and were about to transport him to Harborview Medical Center. A witness approached the police and stated she saw what had happened — she was coming out of the store when she noticed the victim and suspect — a black male aged 20-26 — standing on the sidewalk arguing. They started to get into a pushing match, and all of a sudden the suspect pulled out what the witness thought was a fixed-blade knife from his pants pocket and proceeded to stab the victim in the back. He then fled eastbound on Pike St. towards Third Ave., and unknown from there. Witness stated she had seen the suspect hanging around the Pike/Pine area on a nightly basis. An area check for the suspect was negative.

Thurs., May 18, 7:15 p.m., 1400

block 16th Ave. Suspect, a transient Black female aged 22, was arrested after offering and/or agreeing to an act of sex for a fee with an undercover detective. She was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Compiled from incident reports of the Seattle Police Department by Emma Quinn. Got your own experience to relate? Call us at (206)441-3247 ext. 207 and we'll get the scoop.

Bus Chick,
Transit
Authority

Carla Saulter



"I-5 took the life out of that neighborhood business core..."

— Dorothea Norstrand, speaking of Greenlake on HistoryLink.org

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

IRS, Continued from Page 1

Service, an arm of the IRS that acts as an ombudsman for people with tax problems, tens of thousands of low-income tax credit filers had their refunds "frozen" last year for months on end with no notification — and no finding of fraud.

The taxpayer advocate studied 500 cases referred to it by the IRS' criminal investigation unit. Of those, 75 percent were EITC filers. With 66 percent of the resolved cases, no fraud had been committed, with more than 80 percent of the filers receiving a partial refund, usually after making some mistake on what tax preparers say are difficult and confusing forms.

But Sack filed the same way as last year, Easter says, with the same preparer, H&R Block. And "no one else claims our kids," she says.

Despite this, "they said we were randomly picked by the computer for an information review," she says of what the couple has learned by calling the IRS. "They're supposed to send us a paper verifying that everything that is true and correct and send that back."

See IRS, Continued on Page 12

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Letters

A report from the front lines

To the Toilers in the Back Room [Real Change's editorial staff]:

I am just not believing what a fabulous day today was. You'll not believe it either. This is written Sunday night. I did not want to go to work today. I felt tired, crabby, and discouraged. That's the problem with being your own boss. You give yourself too many days off...the least little excuse will do.

I forced myself to go to work, and got there at the ambitious time of 5:35 p.m., worked until 6:45 p.m., and sold 34 papers in one hour ten minutes. That's one paper every 2.06 minutes. That is a fabulous ratio!!! That's why I love my job so much. It is the best job I have ever had, except for when stupid mean people punch me in the nose. Then it's not fun.

(It only happened once, but still...)

I know how hard writing is. It's so much easier to go smoke a quick cigarette, mail that letter, call your friend, make yourself a snack, get some water — anything but what you're supposed to be doing.

It is due to all of your hard work. People love *Real Change*. I have never seen people love a newspaper before. There is a real emotional attachment there. The paper just keeps getting better and better, and people are responding by buying it more and more.

If *Real Change* were an animal, I picture it as a beautiful roan stallion galloping across the plains as violent storm clouds gather overhead. (That's the Bush Supreme Court just beginning its' decades-long Reign of Terror.) Look at it as job security, I guess.

P.S. When I think about George Bush, my hair stands on end.

Liz Smith

Vendor at U-District Trader Joe's

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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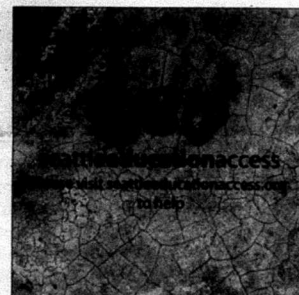
REAL CHANGE JOB OPENING

Director of Development

Real Change offers opportunity and a voice to low-income people while taking action to end poverty and homelessness. Founded in 1994, Real Change now reaches 11,000 readers with each issue of the paper while offering an income to more than 250 homeless and low-income vendors each month. In 2005, Real Change won the Municipal League of King County's "Organization of the Year" award for effective civic engagement, and was named "Best Grassroots Media Outlet" by the Seattle Weekly.


The Director of Development will work with the Executive Director to grow Real Change's \$500,000 budget to increase our capacity as an independent media resource and create new resources for anti-poverty organizing and advocacy. The position will focus on donor development, cultivation of foundation support, and event planning.

\$38,000-\$43,000 starting, depending on experience. Benefits include full health and dental, vacation, sick, and holiday pay. People of color and people who have personally experienced poverty or homelessness encouraged to apply. Send detailed cover letter and resume to HR@realchangenews.org, or mail to Real Change, 2129 2nd Ave., Seattle, WA 98121, attn Tim Harris.
Deadline: 5 pm, June 9, 2006.



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Opportunity

Want to do your part to fight poverty and have fun to boot? Then volunteer to work at the Fremont Fair June 17 and 18. Volunteers are invited to a free beer and pizza kick off event Tuesday, June 13, 6-8 pm at Jonas Jensen Studio, 155 N. 35th St. For more info, contact Elena Semeraro at 694-6825 or find out more by going to the website www.fremontfair.org/volunteer_fair.php.

Attorney Alphonso David directs the workshop "Why Marriage Matters: A Case Study on Tax Discrimination and Same-Sex Couples of Color," Tickets \$25 and up, Friday, June 2, 8:45 a.m., Seattle University. Info: (206) 623-9900.

Share experiences and opinions as the Human Rights Commission examines the state of human rights in Seattle. Tuesday, June 6, 6:30 p.m., High Point Community Center, 6920 34th Ave. SW. Info: (206) 684-4540.

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

Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Wednesday 5/31

At the age of 16, Yazir Henri joined the military to fight against the apartheid government in South Africa. After being imprisoned for terrorism and treason and testifying before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he has redefined himself as a poet, writer, and peace activist. He will discuss his work with combatants, torture victims, and political prisoners, the ethics of armed political struggle, and how to build peace. 7 p.m., University of Washington, Kane Hall Rm. 210. Info: (206) 427-2212

Thursday 6/1

Stephanie Coontz challenges the many false assumptions about families of the past in her latest book *Marriage, A History: How Love Conquered Marriage*. She traces the views of marriage in different cultures and societies of the past, showing that the current view of marriage as a partnership of equals is very new. She also shows that the same arguments used against same-sex marriage were once used against interracial and inter-religious marriage. 7 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

Friday 6/2

The rise of fundamentalism in America's largest Protestant denomination, Southern Baptist, affects not only theologians, but also affects women and their ability to acquire and maintain leadership positions. The documentary *The Battle for the Minds* shows religion and politics colliding, and that this religious crisis is a microcosm of intolerance in America. 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl.

The documentary and Sundance Film Festival hit, *An Inconvenient Truth* is a passionate and inspirational look at one man's crusade to save the world from global warming: former Vice President Al Gore. Interspersed with disturbing scientific facts, the film shows the personal journey Gore undergoes in transforming his life and goals after his brutal defeat in the 2000 election. Guild 45th Theater, 2115 N. 45th Ave. Info: www.climatecrisis.net.

Saturday 6/3 and Sunday 6/4

Written and performed by nine Native American and Alaskan Native youth, *Othello: A Native Youth Re-Telling* places Shakespeare's tragedy in a contemporary Native American boarding school on the west coast. 7:30 p.m., Rainier Valley Cultural Center, 3515 S Alaska St. Info: (206)323-1868.

Saturday 6/3

The Total Experience Gospel Choir hosts *Lean On Me*, a benefit concert of soulful singing for the hurricane victims

of Louisiana and Mississippi, featuring soloist Josephine Howell, the Choir of Light, and the mime dance troupe Standance Dancers. Tickets \$20. 8 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Until Sunday 6/4

Performed by an all-female cast and directed by Rosa Joshi, Shakespeare's *King John* is filled with royal drama: war over the rightful successor to England's throne, political alliances, betrayal, and the destruction of families and nations. Thursday-Saturday 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$5 and up. Capitol Hill Arts Center, 1621 12th Ave. Info: www.capitolhillarts.com.

Sunday 6/4

Elana Dix, community organizer for the Seattle Alliance for Good Jobs and Housing for Everyone, delivers her lecture "Living Wages and the Future of Downtown." Join the growing movement for accountable development, affordable housing, and living wages. 9:30 a.m., University Unitarian Church, 6556 35th Ave. NE

Wednesday 6/7

Seattle Follies: The Old Swicheroo Edition features special guest Rodney Tom, the celebrity Washington State Representative who recently shifted his political allegiance from the Republican to Democratic Party. Tickets \$13 and up. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Director's Corner

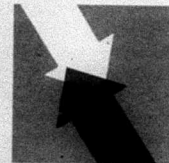


Saturday after next brings what is perhaps the most important event this year for those of us seeking to end homelessness. The Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness and the Church Council of Greater Seattle are teaming up with United Way to sponsor "Making the Ten Year Plan Real," a working conference to put some teeth behind good intention.

We at *Real Change* believe — along with Martin Luther King and other social justice visionaries — that if your idea of social justice organizing is to educate the powers that be and hope they do the right thing, you'll be waiting for a very long time indeed. Ending homelessness is about ending poverty, and ending poverty will always be about building for power. The sad truth about poverty is that one person's misery is another's profit margin. Good will and social programs alone are rarely enough to change that equation.

King County's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, among most service providers and anti-poverty activists, evokes more eye-rolling than action. We think this is unfortunate. The plan is a strong beginning to a coalition strategy for united action, and if we can get past a certain institutional reticence to strategies that threaten power, the possibilities are endless.

Join us at Mount Zion Baptist Church on Saturday, June 10. See www.thechurchcouncil.org/making10yearplanreal.html for details. Registration is still open. Be there.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Energize Washington

Issue: A broad-based coalition of businesses, environmental organizations, labor groups and concerned citizens in Washington state has launched a campaign to place an initiative on the November ballot that will benefit the state's economy, environment and rural communities. Volunteer signature gatherers have until July 6 to collect the 224,800 signatures needed to place Initiative 937 on the November 7 ballot.

Background: Initiative 937 requires Washington state's major utilities to gradually increase the amount of new renewable resources they use. Utilities will also be required to pursue all low-cost energy conservation opportunities for their customers. I-937 will guarantee that by 2020, 15 percent of the electricity from Washington's largest utilities comes from plentiful and homegrown renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, and helps homeowners and businesses save on energy bills by assuring that we get all the cost-saving energy efficiency available in this state.

Health and the environment:

Current energy resources cannot keep pace with the growth of Washington's population and businesses. Unfortunately, many of our utilities are looking to coal and other fossil fuels to meet the growing demand. New coal plants are being proposed or built in Washington and across the Northwest.

Fossil fuel-generated energy comes at a great cost: air, land and water pollution; climate-disrupting carbon dioxide emissions; recurrent and often severe price spikes. Power plant pollutants contribute to smog and an increase in the number of cases of asthma and lung disease. Thankfully, we can protect the environment and our health with clean, affordable and abundant energy and renewable resources.

Clean energy at less cost:

Energy efficiency and renewable energy are viable resources already cost-competitive with any other new generation options, including coal and natural gas. With little or no fuel costs, homegrown renewable energy is insulated from the volatile price swings associated with fossil fuels, providing long-term rate stability to electric consumers. Investing in energy efficiency reduces utilities' need for additional energy and puts money directly in the pockets of local businesses and consumers. Both efficiency and renewables provide the energy diversity necessary to protect consumers.

Generating new family-wage jobs and strengthening our economy:

Initiative 937 will create family-wage jobs and provide crucial additional income to rural landowners. Farmers hosting wind projects earn more than \$5,000 a year per wind turbine, helping to keep family farms alive. The energy efficiency and renewable energy industries already provide more than 4,000 jobs in this state. New projects will create thousands of additional jobs in engineering, construction, and building design.

Action: There is only a month to go to collect the necessary signatures to qualify I-937 for the fall ballot. Please be sure you've personally signed the petition. Once you've done that, the YES! on I-937 campaign needs volunteers from across the state to gather signatures from friends, at events, and at their businesses. Call (206)283-3335 to order petitions, sign up to volunteer, or make a donation. For more information, visit www.yeson937.org.

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

I-937, Continued from Page 1

sources to meet the initiative's goal," said WRECA staffer Kent Lopez. "We could easily find ourselves paying the same price as Californians for our energy."

WRECA's member utilities — most of which would not be immediately affected by the initiative, which applies only to utilities serving more than 25,000 customers — get a large proportion of their power from the Bonneville Dam, and fear that they would have to forego that cheap electricity and buy renewables instead.

While technically renewable, Bonneville's hydroelectricity wouldn't count toward utilities' progress because of its effects on salmon. New dams aren't feasible, say the initiative's backers, and the state's energy needs are growing by one percent annually. I-937 does contain language that factors efficiency improvements to hydroelectric plants into the 15 percent renewable energy that utilities must have in place within 14 years. Also, according to Berryman, renewables aren't necessarily more expensive: wind and solar plants require very little maintenance costs after the initial capital investment. Washington currently has two large wind plants, one of which, the Nine Canyon Wind Project near Kennewick, is big enough to power 14,000 homes.

Todd Myers, an environmental policy expert with the free-market Washington Policy Center, raises another objection, saying that different sources of renewable energy work better for solving different problems. Burning wood by-

products, for example, recycles waste and has no negative effect on salmon, but is terrible for air quality.

"When you create a definition of green energy, you take away any choice for individuals about what is the most important priority," Myers says. He endorses the current approach of Puget Sound Energy, which allows customers to buy green power for two dollars more per 100 megawatt hours.

Berryman, however, brushes away this concern, saying power generated from biomass — plant material used as fuel — is cleaner than coal or natural gas.

He also emphasizes the rate stabilizing effect of a diverse energy mix, the estimated 6,000 jobs that the initiative will create in the state's renewable energy industry, and the economic boost to farmers who allow windmills to be installed on their farms.

Environmental groups, in any case, seem to have solidly lined up behind the initiative. "It's very exciting because it's really the first proactive step that the environmental community has taken in quite a few years," says Kurt Fritts of Washington Conservation Voters.

The initiative, which would be the only explicitly environmental measure in November, may receive more concentrated help from the state's environmentalists. However, Fritts says that WCV will also devote resources to defeating I-937, which would require the government to compensate all private property owners for changes in the value of their land caused by governmental actions. ■

IRS, Continued from Page 10

So far, no form has arrived. With Sack now out of work and Easter collecting welfare, Easter says they're checking the mailbox twice a day. According to the taxpayer advocate's report, it could be a long wait: in 2005, the average refund freeze was nine months, with the IRS' criminal investigation unit refusing to allow one out of five filers to seek help from the Taxpayer Advocate Service.

The average income of the EITC filers in the study was \$13,000 and the average credit about \$2,800 — typically a quarter of the filer's income. Ninety percent were single parents, usually mothers.

Instituted in 1978, the Earned Income Tax Credit is the government's largest cash program to help the working poor get out of poverty. In tax year 2004, Washingtonians filed more than 341,000 tax returns claiming \$572 million in earned-income credits. Locally, tax preparers with United Way's Earned Income Credit Campaign helped about 2,600 people get an average of \$1,384 back on their 2005 returns.

Because it's a refundable cash credit, fraud was a problem early on, says Jean Beck, the IRS' taxpayer advocate for Washington state. The computer program was supposed to provide a quick check, she says, but created "a massive number of [frozen] refunds and no one to work it."

As a result, Beck says, the waiting time "got longer and longer."

Earlier this year, the IRS agreed to notify taxpayers if their refund is frozen more than two weeks and release refunds after 12 weeks. Beck notes, however, that the IRS made the changes in the midst of tax-filing season — as it happens, after Sack filed his taxes.

"We've called the IRS. We've called H&R Block," Easter says. "We've driven everyone nuts. This is the most trouble we've ever had with it." ■

[Resource]

If you haven't received your Earned Income Tax Credit, call the local taxpayer advocate, (206)220-6037.

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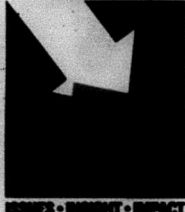
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- Private cruise of The Seven Bells, fully restored 1929 wooden motor yacht
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- Whistler (B.C.) weekend - three nights at Glacier Lodge condo
- Waterford crystal - 24 piece service
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- "Yes Virginia, There is Nightlife in Ballard" package:
\$150 gift certificate for the Bal-Mar and event tickets at The Tractor Tavern
- "Seattle Cul-cha" package: a day at the races (Emerald Downs),
overnight at Renaissance Madison (incl. breakfast) and tix to
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- Seattle Jazz: tix for the Earshot Jazz Fest (Oct-Nov), plus
Bill Frisell CD and signed poster

For More info, call Peter Jabin (206) 441-3247 x208, development@realchangeinc.org