

REAL CHANGE

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ISSUES • INSIGHT • IMPACT

JULY 5 - 11, 2006

NINE MORE YEARS

Year One's done. But a viable 10-Year Plan demands one essential component: grassroots activism.

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TOP POT SHOT

Local doughnut shop bars woman because, she says, she brought up an unpleasant topic: race.

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NOT SO SWEET 16

With 16 homeless deaths so far this year, the Women in Black ask mayor to help turn the tide.

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RANK CALLER

Dr. Robert Fuller finds society's "isms" — racism, sexism, etc. — stem from one central ism: rankism.

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THE MOCKINGBIRD TIMES

CENTERFOLD
SPREAD



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IOANA MIRON, A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF LAW, WANTS THE UNIVERSITY TO REINSTITUTE ITS IMMIGRATION CLINIC, A PROGRAM THAT CONCENTRATED ON DEPORTATION AND ASYLUM CASES. THE CLINIC WAS CLOSED IN 2004. PHOTO BY MARK SULLO.

Return to Reform

Students work for return of UW's Immigration Clinic

By CYDNEY GILLIS
Staff Reporter

Bringing back the Immigration Clinic isn't going to be easy. But Ioana Miron and another third-year law student at the University of Washington are determined.

In 2004, the University of Washington School of Law cut the clinic to save money — a move that Seattle immigration attorneys and some professors called a mistake at the time. Now Miron, a Romanian who plans to practice immigration law, is fighting to bring back a program that past participants say helps save lives.

That's because the clinic, which was hosted by and operated out of the offices of Seattle's Northwest Immigration Rights Project for nine years, focused largely on asylum and deportation cases. Led by attorney Amy Kratz, whose salary was paid by the law school, eight law students spent two quarters representing real clients who were facing deportation or had fled torture or persecution in their own countries.

Miguel Bocanegra, who is now an immigration attorney with the Seattle law firm Rios Cantor, says the two cases he worked on in the clinic two years

ago changed his entire perspective on the law. One involved an Eritrean woman who'd been detained by authorities, Bocanegra says, because her husband belonged to a guerilla group fighting the government.

"She had been beaten and tortured," Bocanegra says. "All of a sudden, things became real. It wasn't about legal technicalities; it was about human suffering."

Working with another law student, Bocanegra succeeded in getting the woman asylum. The two were also able to prevent a life-long resident of the United States from being deported to Mexico.

That's why Miron, 31, is making calls, licking stamps, and applying for grants to raise money for restoring the clinic: because it provides hands-on case experience for future lawyers who plan to practice immigration law. And some students chose the UW School of Law, says Magdalena Rose-Avila, director of the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, specifically because of the clinic.

"If I want to do immigration law," Miron says, "I need to get all the training I can, all the hands-on case management."

She stresses it's also critical preparation for any lawyer who plans to stay in

Breathing Room

Housing, fed cuts inflame asthma in Yakima Valley farm families

By JULIE CHINITZ
Contributing Writer

On a sunny afternoon, as cherry season gets underway in the Yakima Valley, Maribel González drives up to a house in Wapato and walks inside with a small plastic bin filled with medical supplies. Sitting down at the kitchen table, she asks in Spanish, "So, how has Carlos been?"

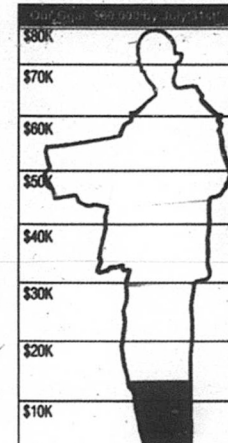
Carlos Ramírez, who spent his first three weeks in the hospital and was so small he had to be dressed in doll clothing, has asthma. Now walking at a year and four months, Carlos — his name has been changed to protect his privacy — carries a supersoaker water pistol while his mother and father, Dulce

See ASTHMA, Continued on Page 12

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See UW, Continued on Page 12

Necessary But Not Sufficient

What's wrong with the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness?

By TIMOTHY HARRIS
Executive Director

Search as you might, history is devoid of examples of successful anti-poverty initiatives that did not begin with extensive grassroots mobilization.

According to the 2000 census, incomes in Seattle rose over the '90s by 56 percent for the wealthiest fifth, while incomes for the bottom fifth fell by 7.4 percent. Fifty-two-and-a-half percent of Seattle residents reported paying more than a third of their income in rent, a proportion exceeded only by Boston. Despite the heroic efforts of many, Seattle's affordable housing is still a scarce commodity.

This is why, while we support the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and applaud the stunning successes of the coalition's first year, we remain skeptical that homelessness can be ended without a serious organizing campaign aimed at ending poverty and income disparity itself.

The Committee to End Homelessness in King County just released their year-one progress report, and it's a good-news document. Five hundred sixty-three new units of housing were created for homeless people. Funding is committed for the construction of 391 new units and to convert 387 units of existing housing into housing for formerly homeless individuals and families. While much of that was in the pipeline prior to the creation of the plan, it's still a great success for year one.

Other successes include the expansion of the State Housing Trust Fund, new state funding for homelessness prevention, and expanded city and county resources, including the passage of King County's Veterans and Human Services Levy. The United Way and other philanthropic sources have come to the table as well.

The plan has concentrated resources, focused political will, and offered a vision for a regional approach to ending homelessness for everyone. By focusing on prevention, looking for efficiencies, adopting the "Housing First" model, and documenting what works, human service providers, government, and philanthropy are working harder and smarter to end homelessness.

It's a great beginning. But there are nine more years to go, and more than a few clouds on the horizon.

For one thing, the Federal government has been conspicuously absent as a partner. A few hundred Section 8 vouchers were contributed by city and county housing authorities. That's all. It's hard for the feds to truly end homelessness when they're so busy shoveling money to the rich.

Seattle is contemplating adding \$680,000 in critical services. This would fill a hole left by the feds when they slashed Community Development Block Grant funds to extend more tax cuts to the wealthy. This longstanding pattern of local government stepping into the vacuum left by the feds has its limits.

Our state legislature is another case in point. While the Democrat-controlled legislature has been receptive to funding 10-Year Plan priorities, the broader picture is less rosy. Statewide Poverty Action Network's campaign to regulate the bottom-feeding payday lending industry, to name one example, faces a tough uphill battle this year.

Additionally, Washington state has the most regressive tax structure in the nation. While there is wide agreement that meaningfully addressing poverty must begin with a more just tax policy, prospects for that are at

present dismal. When the interests of the wealthy come in conflict with those of the poor, we almost always lose. This year's fight against the Estate Tax repeal initiative is a good beginning, but remains a defensive battle against deep-pocketed backers.

We're a broken record, but we'll say it again. You can't end homelessness without reducing poverty, and you can't reduce poverty without organizing for social justice. We can all agree to fund some units of housing and to put aside more resources for homelessness prevention. That's easy. But if you want to change the fact that people of color are represented among the homeless at nearly twice their numbers in the general population, the work gets a lot harder.

Search as you might, history is devoid of examples of successful anti-poverty initiatives that did not begin with extensive grassroots mobilization. The conditions for that work exist, and good organizing is happening. Immigrants are mobilized, as are other communities of color, the elderly, women, labor, and other constituencies that have been under attack for decades.

Homeless advocacy has for too long existed within a single-issue silo that concentrates on personal dysfunction to the exclusion of multi-issue, cross-class organizing to address systemic sources of poverty.

One of the 10-Year Plan's key strategies for success is a campaign to "build the political will" to end homelessness. So far as we can tell, this strategy amounts to getting potential partners to endorse the plan and commit resources toward its completion. As a first step this is, in our view, necessary but not sufficient. ■

[More]
You may download the 10-Year Plan first-year progress report, and the Plan itself, at www.cehkc.org.



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

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Change

Laura Pritchard has been providing support services to homeless youth for close to a decade. Her experience runs the gamut from coordinating medical care to working as the program director for a homeless shelter for clients between the ages of 18 and 25. Her tenure has demonstrated the multiple needs of this population. "No one organization can effectively manage them all," says Pritchard.

As the executive director of the University District Service Providers Alliance (UDSPA), Pritchard coordinates the efforts of area agencies so that they can share material assets, collaborate programmatically, and create more holistic action and treatment plans for clients through joint case management and social resources. Alliance members provide education and employment opportunities, health and hygiene services, and temporary and long-term housing options, and foster self-sufficiency, self-awareness, hope, and healing.

"Our combined voices and shared vision allow us to be more effective advocates for the youth and young adults we serve," Pritchard explains. "Through working together, our organizations are able to offer a full spectrum of compassionate, quality care to Seattle's homeless youth."

—Amy Besunder



LAURA PRITCHARD, coordinating local agencies to support the needs of homeless youth. Photo by ELLIOT STOLLER.

Many Happy Returns

Property-tax exemption saves developers millions

BY LYDIA DePILLIS
Contributing Writer

The tax exemption is worth two to four times what the developers lose in keeping the rents low. And the "affordable" rates in the new buildings still exceed average rents in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Seattle real estate is red hot, says conventional wisdom: cranes dot the landscape, and construction projects snarl traffic from Everett to Tukwila. Nonetheless, the City of Seattle has decided that the building industry still needs a little help.

In exchange for offering a certain percentage of their building at affordable rates — 543 total units to date — seven apartment builders have been granted tax breaks worth an estimated \$12 million over 10 years. While housing advocates have derided the Multifamily Property Tax Exemption program as a massive giveaway to developers, the beneficiaries praise it as an essential incentive.

And it's a hefty carrot. In exchange for setting aside some of their units for people making less money, apartment developers get exempted from the state's property tax. For each unit kept at a lower rent, they sacrifice rental income. But it's a small price to pay for big savings on the state's property tax bill.

For instance, the Cambridge Apartments in Bitter Lake gets back in savings approximately twice the amount they're giving up in rent money. Vulcan's 420 Yale complex in South Lake Union gets a similar return. The 40-unit Weller project in the International District saves four times in taxes what it gave up in rent.

Also, while more affordable than new construction, the reduced rates in the new projects (set for renters making 30-70 percent of median income) still exceed average rents for their surrounding neighborhoods. In another project,

Rainier Court, one-bedroom units are priced at 25 percent above average rents for its Rainier Valley neighborhood (determined by a Spring 2006 report by Dupre+Scott Apartment advisors) and two-bedroom units are at 14 percent above average rents.

The tax exemption wasn't expressly intended to house the poor. In the sluggish economy of the late 1980s, the Washington legislature allowed cities to tear up property tax bills for those developers who would build at all in depressed areas. Tacoma first took advantage of the legislation to revitalize its Hilltop neighborhood. Seattle hopped on board in 1998, targeting a few neighborhoods with little to no new housing construction. In 2004, while the city deepened the subsidy somewhat, the program was expanded to cover 17 geographic zones, including the University District and quickly-developing South Lake Union.

Maria Barrientos, the developer of the Weller project, says that she could not have built an apartment building in an "economically fragile" area like the International District without the tax exemption. Demanding more affordable housing from projects that receive the exemption, she says, would make an already risky proposition not worth the trouble.

"Who in their right mind would fork out a half million dollars of their own money, their equity, if they couldn't get it back?" asks Barrientos, who has served on a city design review board since 2004. "I think most developers care a lot about affordability in housing. But they have investors, and they have to make it work."

In fact, many developers have opted to forgo the exemption, betting that continued growth will allow them to fill their units at higher prices. The number of apartments on the market in Seattle has actually declined in recent years, losing about 1,500 per year to condominium conversion.

The Multifamily Property Tax Exemption program will come up for review again in 2008. ■

Just Heard...

Uncorked

An alleged altercation between cyclists and King County cops on June 30 has led to one cyclist being investigated for a third-degree felony assault.

The confrontation went down during a Critical Mass gathering, a regular end-of-month event where bikers gather en masse at Westlake Center. Witnesses report a cyclist blocking an unmarked van from entering an intersection occupied by other cyclists — a strategy known as "corking" — was knocked flat to the asphalt by a man who jumped out of the vehicle. A second cyclist, not involved in the corking, pulled the man off the first cyclist. As other cyclists joined in, another man from the van entered the scuffle. Shortly thereafter, the men — both of whom were out of uniform — identified themselves as police officers. Cyclists one and two were arrested, the first being charged with obstructing justice.

Attorney David Speikers, who is representing the second cyclist, Jake Triesman, says his client could face a \$10,000 fine and a five-year prison term on the felony assault charge. Triesman has to appear in King County Superior Court on July 6 to determine if formal charges will be filed.

Say Speikers of the officers' alleged actions: "They reacted with unlawful force."

—Rosette Royale

New party in Oregon

The labor-backed Working Families Party is on its way in Oregon.

After receiving more than 19,000 valid voter signatures, the Oregon Secretary of State announced last week that the new party, which started in New York and champions working-class issues of wages and health care, has qualified to have its own candidate line on Oregon's November ballot.

From there, according to Madelyn Edler, chief petitioner for the WFP in Oregon, the party will nominate its own candidates but focus on a more important goal: getting the 2007 Oregon Legislature to pass a bill to legalize cross-nomination. That would allow Working Families to name a major-party candidate on its own ballot line — if the candidate lives up to working-class needs.

By "branding" major party candidates with the WFP nomination, the party seeks to pull elections back in a working-class direction. "We're not interested in being a spoiler party," Edler says of third parties.

Earlier this year, WFP organizers in Washington state tried it the opposite way ("Flex Line," March 29): They filed a state initiative to legalize cross-nomination, or "fusion" voting, but decided to hold off on changing the law, and forming the party, until next year.

—Cydney Gillis

Served Cold

Banned from Capitol Hill donut shop, neighbor launches protest

By ADAM HYLIA
Editor

Most restaurants reserve the right to refuse service to anyone. But Laurie Wilson says she's banned from Capitol Hill's Top Pot Doughnuts for bringing up an uncomfortable issue.

Top Pot co-founder Mark Klebeck says he's willing to meet with Wilson about the issue that resulted in her banishment. But he's mystified as to why the disgruntled customer would disregard his invitation to talk before launching a Saturday-morning protest outside his store.

Wilson was at the Capitol Hill donut shop on Monday, June 5, when her Native American friend asked the barista for some water for her dog. By Wilson's

account, the barista curtly informed her, "Sorry, we don't have anything like that."

Wilson says she took a paper cup from the counter, handed it to her buddy, and told the barista, "I do not appreciate how you are treating my friend" — treatment that was very different, she told her, from what white customers experience.

Wilson — who is Black, lives and works as an architect nearby, and used to order espressos from the shop one to three times a day — says the barista, who is white, responded with "I do not appreciate how you are treating me."

The worker's "immediate response was to feel attacked," says Wilson. "If someone doesn't like what you say, sometimes it becomes interpreted as not treated well. I felt like it was a way to deflect what I was saying: that as a white person, you should be conscientious to how you appear to Native Americans in this country."

Wilson returned two days later and was informed by the store manager that, since she had "yelled at" the worker, she would no longer be served there. She filed a complaint with the city's Office of Civil Rights, which investigates allegations of discrimination on

the basis of race, disability, belief, or other protected classes. But she also decided to stage an event: the July 1 protest organized by Wilson and attended by approximately 30 people.

Wilson charged in a press release before the event that "Top Pot has a past history of discrimination toward people of color by some workers." For instance, she says that on more than one occasion the store manager moved the tip jar away from her as she approached the counter. Such behavior is by no means universal: how she's treated, she says, "depends who's working there. Some folks there are incredible people."

Klebeck, Top Pot's co-founder and owner, has looked into the incident and won't corroborate Wilson's version of events. He confirms that he invited Wilson to speak with him prior to the protest. He doesn't understand why she declined. But he says the dispute reinforces the need to ensure that all workers "are reminded that these are our policies: that we treat everyone equally and serve people with kindness and dignity."

Wilson says that since Top Pot representatives have apologized for banning her without reversing their decision, she'll continue to prefer protest to a sit-down with the owner — hoping instead that the Office of Civil Rights might offer to officiate a meeting between both parties. ■

Seattle resident Laurie Wilson says that since Top Pot representatives have apologized for banning her without reversing their decision, she'll continue to prefer protest to a sit-down with the owner.

Laurie Wilson, left, with Annette Gobin and Marla S. Nonken take a break from a protest of Top Pot on Capitol Hill. Photo by Elliot Stoller.



Short Takes

Watchdog days of summer

South Park residents can begin breathing a sigh of relief now that the port has decided to reduce PCB levels at Terminal 117 to concentrations dramatically lower than those proposed by the EPA. If all goes according to plan, that is.

Currently, Terminal 117 — former home of the Malarkey Asphalt Co. — contains PCB concentrations that hover near 9,200 parts per million (ppm). In an effort to diminish the amount of carcinogens on site, the EPA proposed in early June that a scheduled autumn cleanup reduce PCBs to 10 ppm in the upper two feet of soil, the safe level for industrial areas. That cleanup — which would have seen the excavation, disposal of, backfilling, and subsequent capping with asphalt of roughly 16,000 tons of soil — was estimated to cost \$6 million.

But on June 27, the port heard from residents who voiced concerns that the EPA's proposal didn't go far enough, especially if the South Park site might potentially see future residential or recreational use. Prompted by community input, the Port voted shortly thereafter that PCB levels needed to be brought down to 1 ppm, the state-determined safe level in a residential area.

According to Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition coordinator BJ Cummings, the vote means that port

staff now have one month to amend the EPA's original plan, to bring it into compliance with the commission's recommendations. The EPA, for its part, has said that it's willing to work with the port to attain the lower levels, Cummings says. And, in turn, the port has approved the initial \$6 million dollar estimate to put the design phase into motion, she adds.

But a new plan means a new budget, and while port staff work out a more stringent clean-up process, they'll also be crunching numbers, to determine a ballpark figure of the new plan's cost. Estimates that had been floated around before the recent port decision suggested the reduction of PCBs to 1 ppm could set the port back as much as \$12 million.

Cummings says that even though the vote can be viewed as a victory, it's crucial to keep an eye on the port and EPA, to make sure the new proposal sees the light of day.

"We do need to watchdog this over the next month," says Cummings. "I wouldn't say we're 100 percent there, but we're 90 percent."

—Rosette Royale

More trees to go

At the rate the Parks Department is going, Seattle's downtown parks will be ablaze with

light in the next two years — a concept that will be discussed, in part, this Friday at a public meeting set in Freeway Park, where the department has cut down 20 trees since December.

That's on top of 17 trees the Parks Department cut down in March at Occidental Park in Pioneer Square. Next year, if it gets the money, the department also plans to fell 11 of the 15 giant oaks that stand in City Hall Park next to the King County Courthouse.

At Freeway Park, parks planner Ted Holden says 40 more trees have been identified for removal. It's part of an effort, he says, to open up the canopy and bring more light and people into the park — the same reason given for the other cuttings and remodels, which are part of Mayor Nickels' upscale Center City plan.

The trees at 30-year-old Freeway Park — a unique urban woodland built over Interstate 5 — have become overgrown and crowded, Holden says, creating a denser, darker environment than originally envisioned by landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. To correct the problem, the department plans to remove about 10 trees a year.

In place of each tree cut, the department will plant two more, thanks to an ordinance that City Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck was instrumental

in passing in response to losses at Occidental Park. At Freeway Park, Holden says, large maples and Douglas firs will be replaced with smaller Japanese maples or dogwoods.

"In taking these trees out, it has opened up the park so much that there was a guy sunbathing on the East Plaza. That hasn't been done in years," Holden says. "People are out using the park again."

In January, the Parks Department also contracted with Angela Danadjieva, the park's primary designer in Halprin's office, to create a landscape renovation plan. Holden says the plan will look at new understory plantings of small trees, shrubs, and groundcover to restore the park's color and textural diversity.

Danadjieva will present the plan to the public for comment at a meeting to be held Friday, July 7, at 11:30 a.m. below the Eighth Street overpass at Freeway Park. To find the meeting, enter the park from Sixth Avenue and Seneca Street and head up the stairs.

—Cydney Gillis

Standing Out

Women mark deaths of King County homeless, ages 0 to 57

"I can't imagine any other motive than that the man was homeless."

—Deanna Davis, member of Church of Mary Magdalene, speaking of the burning death of a wheelchair-bound Spokane man

By LIZ MILLER
Contributing Writer

Deaths of more than 16 homeless people from King County were remembered in a downtown vigil last Wednesday afternoon.

Approximately 15 women stood across from Seattle's City Hall on Fifth Avenue between James and Cherry Streets from noon to 1 p.m. in an attempt to raise awareness about these deaths. The participants, members of Women in Black, then delivered an informational flier to the office of Mayor Greg Nickels, requesting a meeting to discuss ways to prevent such deaths in the future.

Deanna Davis is a member of the Church of Mary Magdalene and participates in WHEEL (Women's Housing, Equity, and Enhancement League) who currently lives in Hammond House, a local shelter. Both WHEEL and the Church sponsor the Women in Black movement in Seattle.

The organizations' concerns center "particularly in the homeless women's community, but also in the community as a whole," Davis said.

She pointed to the April 1 closing of all of the wintertime shelters as one concern of Women in Black, as many of Seattle's homeless community have been turned away from shelter since then.

"Women are being turned away from the Women's Referral Center and being referred to [Operation] Nightwatch," a late-night shelter resource, said Davis. "And they're being turned away."

The ages of the dead remembered in the vigil range from zero to 57.

The youngest, a newborn baby boy, is far from the mean age at which homeless people die (47 years), according to information from the county Public Health Department's 2004 Homeless Death Review, cited in the Women in Black flier.

The eldest this year is Frank Duvall, age 57, who died of unknown causes in Renton on May 16.

Joining the women in their awareness-raising vigil were several men, who handed out the informational fliers. One of them, Edward Balderama, 27, originally of Palm Springs, Calif., is a member of SHARE, the organization with which WHEEL is affiliated.

He said that many of the passersby on Wednesday didn't know what was going on until they spoke to him. Balderama, who has been homeless most recently for one year, said some people did take time to consider the message behind the vigil.

"This lady came in here from this building [City Hall] and asked for like, five more copies for employees," he said.

The Women in Black are also planning a July 5 vigil for Doug Dawson, 50, of Spokane. Dawson died at Harborview Medical Center last weekend after sustaining burns he received when his wheelchair was set on fire in downtown Spokane.

"We will be standing for this man, and we're just heartbroken that this has happened," said Davis. "I can't imagine any other motive than that the man was homeless."

Two men, Sean Knold, 23, of Seattle, and Matt Trammel, 22, of Portland, may face murder charges in connection with Dawson's death.

A woman, Davinia Garrison, 42, originally of New Mexico, was beaten and set ablaze last Thanksgiving Day near a waterfront warehouse in Seattle. Dawson's death also sparked

a memorial vigil by the Women in Black. Her assailant has yet to be found. A media representative from the Seattle Police Department was not able to speak to whether they suspected Knold and Trammel in Garrison's death, as the case is still open.

The vigil for Dawson will happen on July 5 at noon in downtown Seattle, directly across from City Hall. ■

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To have an application mailed to you, call PorchLight at 206-239-1500.

Women at a June 28 vigil outside the Seattle Justice Center, June 28. The vigil marked the deaths of five King County homeless people outside or by violence this spring. Photo by Liz Miller.



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Nobody Knows

Robert Fuller on how the abuse of rank damages community

Interview by SHARA CHOI
Contributing Writer

"People are tuned to detect the slightest hint of indignity when it comes their way. The reason for that is our ancestors many generations back who missed the signals of indignity were soon eaten for lunch. You have to pick up on the fact when someone is trying to maneuver you into a role of servitude where they can prey on you. It's human nature."

Dr. Robert W. Fuller invented a new word 10 years ago in hopes of opening society's eyes to the evils of all of the typical isms, including but not limited to racism, sexism, and ageism. He defines "rankism" as abuse, discrimination, or exploitation based on rank and abusive, discriminatory, or exploitative behavior towards people who have less power because of their lower rank in a particular hierarchy. Rankism gives society a term to use when they feel that the inequality of rank in social class makes one person feel like a "nobody." The goal, he says, is for every person to be treated with dignity regardless of social standing.

Fuller was always drawn to situations where he felt that one group was disadvantaged compared to another. A former professor of physics who rose to be dean of his alma mater, Oberlin College, Fuller has had several moments over his lifetime where he was either a "somebody" or a "nobody." He's coming to Seattle to read from his second book on rankism — this one focused on building a "dignitarian" society — on Thurs., June 11. He spoke with *Real Change* last month on recognizing rankism and demanding dignity.

Real Change: What is rankism?

Robert Fuller: Rank itself is not a problem. It's the abuse of rank that is the problem. We don't mind movie stars who have high ranks, unless they go around acting like divas. It's power that controls it.

All the isms are rankism. Everybody can identify with the idea of somebodies and nobodies because almost all of us have been both, in one context or another. Rankism is always visited upon the weak. Their weakness derives from poorness, color, gender, or disability, and in every case, they are just excuses for preying on the weak. And I don't think it's any more legitimate than

preying on people of color or people with disabilities, and I want to disallow it: make it unacceptable, make it uncool. That's the goal.

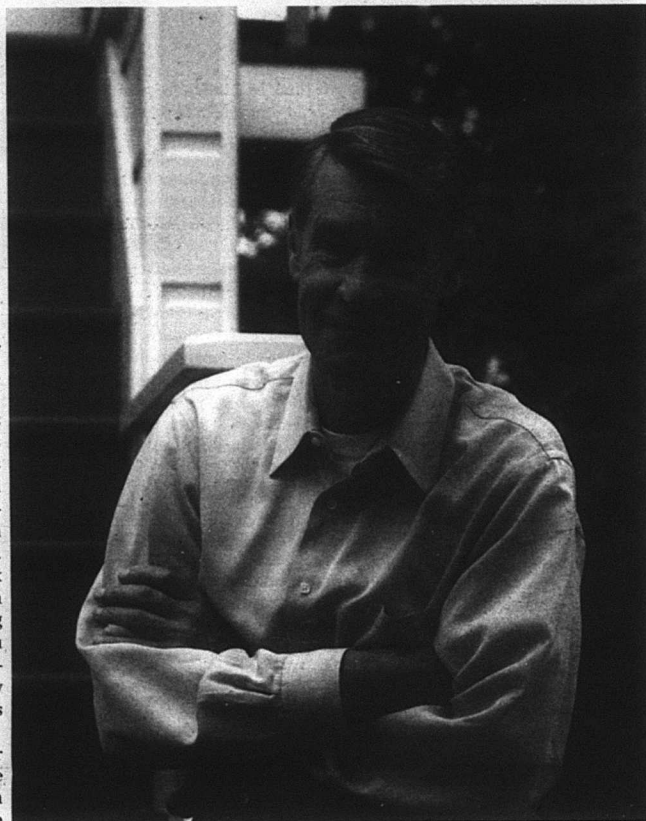
So how do we know when rank is being abused? What constitutes the abuse of rank?

People are tuned to detect the slightest hint of indignity when it comes their way. The reason for that is our ancestors many generations back who missed the signals of indignity were soon eaten for lunch. You have to pick up on the fact when someone is trying to maneuver you into a role of servitude where they can prey on you. It's human nature.

On the other hand, all of us hate it completely with every molecule we have in our bodies.

We hate being bullied and indignified; therefore we detect it quickly. We gradually learn, over years and centuries sometimes, how to organize with other people to prevent it. A tremendous step forward was when we learned how to limit the power of kings. That was the birth of democracy. Now, in the schools of America, we're going through a heightened awareness about bullying and its dangers.

Even girls turn out to be bullies in a subtler way — the film *Mean Girls* shows that. Rosalind Wiseman wrote a terrific book called *Queen Bees and Wannabes*, which the film was based on. She pointed



out that bullying and rankism is not something that just males do — females do it too, but in somewhat subtler ways. Now, everywhere in the country people are getting more alert to this. It won't be long before bullying is very rare in American schools, I'm sure of it. We can learn how to overcome a king, a schoolyard bully, a corporate executive who is embezzling the company's

money, or an abusive priest. We can organize against it, but it sometimes takes us centuries, usually at least decades, but we do figure out how to do it and then we stop it, and then it becomes rare instead of commonplace.

RC: Was there a significant moment in your life that turned you onto this term, rankism?

Fuller: I suppose that grew out of my involvement in the '60s and '70s with the other isms. I was battling all of them in the role of college president. The students were my allies in this battle, the opponents were other administrators and entrenched faculty, who were against opening the gates of higher education to people of color and others.

Then, after I left my position of pretty high status, I noticed I was treated like a nobody. I realized how much I had been protected from that kind of abuse by my title. I also felt the profound similarity of abusing people because of their weakness and abusing them because they were Black, female, gay or something else — there was really no difference. None of it is pardonable. If we're going to disallow racism, we should disallow the more general

Robert Fuller thinks that "rankism" — his term for the human tendency to create social hierarchies — is the cause of discrimination. Photo courtesy of Robert Fuller.

Story Problem 7

Suppose the average street puddle is comprised of 17 different hazardous materials - including 3% motor oil, 1.5% radiator fluid and seven strains of bacteria. After stepping in one, how painful is the foot infection you get when you're unable to bathe for days?



SEA helps young adults who survived life on the street and now want to earn a college degree. Once accepted, students must maintain a 3.0 GPA. Please visit seattleeducationaccess.org to support our scholarship program. **SEA** seattleeducationaccess.org

Continued from Page 6

thing that causes it, which is rankism. So I invented this word so we'd have a name for all of the different kinds of abuse and discrimination. Every one of the isms is based on a power difference, as expressed usually in our difference of rank.

When I was a kid, whites enjoyed social ranks over Blacks. It is a tremendous change we've made for the better in America and in a lot of other countries. It turns out that America is not so bad at overcoming things like racism and sexism. It looks bad in the short run within our country, but when you get out in the world, you see how much worse it is everywhere else. We, as a country, are leaders in that, and I have hope that we can take on rankism and do to it like we did to racism and sexism. I think we can do this because I find that young people instantly get this because they are all chronically nobodied, and they know exactly what I'm talking about.

RC: So, has racism gone away in our society?

Fuller: No. [Racism and other isms] don't go away overnight, they attenuate; they get weaker. The best way to see this is to look into your own family history. When I go back to my great grandparents, I see overt, out-and-out proud racists. When I look at my grandparents, I see them being a little coy about it. My own parents did not use racial slurs, at least not around me and my two brothers, and accordingly, we didn't even think of using them. My children date interracially, and my grandchildren won't even know what this fuss was all about. That's six generations; it takes time. But over six generations, there has been a tremendous shift in consciousness. It's just when we look in a single generation, we say that we haven't made any progress.

Or we say that people haven't really changed, they're just repressing all their nasty thoughts. Exactly! That's just what they're doing; that's what anyone my age has to do. I was brought up in a totally racist America, and if I didn't repress the things that I learned when I was 7 and 10, then I would be as bad as they were! But you learn to repress

these things and the good thing is that your kids don't pick them up. Political correctness, although it is a pain in the neck, serves a very valuable function: It trains the next generation.

RC: What sort of role does economic inequality play in rankism?

Fuller: A tremendous role. By keeping people locked in poverty, we can exploit them because they have to conform to our wishes or they'll lose their paycheck. Then they would starve because they don't have any savings. Therefore, poverty is the modern form of slavery. Jim Wallis, author of *God's Politics*, came up with the phrase "poverty is the new slavery," and I think he's absolutely right. It locks you into a subordination where you can be exploited.

I'm not saying that everybody should be paid the same amount, either. There are people who have trained for decades to get certain skills, but I don't think that the gaps should be as wide as they are. If you look at the rest of the developed world, the gap between the CEO's salary and the janitor's salary is rarely more than a factor of 10. In this country, it's 500. Anything more than 10 times is rankism. It's rank serving its own purposes, instead of serving shareholders, employees, and customers.

Among the homeless, you have people of every stripe. You can't say that homelessness is due to racism because there's plenty of rich Blacks and homeless whites. It's just like Katrina. People were trying to say that it was racism when it was really rankism. People who weren't evacuated in Katrina weren't chosen based on race, but on rank: They were chosen according to their power in society. Everyone who had money got out, and in good time. ■

[Reading]

Robert W. Fuller reads from *All Rise: Somebodies, Nobodies, and the Politics of Dignity* on Tues., July 11, at 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave. Tickets are \$5.

[For more]

Fuller lists ways to combat rankism on his blog at www.breakingranks.net.

The el train south

From the window in my room in Chicago
i could reach out and almost
touch them
as it passed

Having grown up in California
I woke each morning
thinking earth quake
till remembering
it was only the el

And lest i forgot
another would pass 5 minutes later
I'd drink coffee and smoke cigarettes and kneel at this
window and watch
as thousands of speeding blurs shot by
4 to 6 cars in as many seconds

I could almost see their faces
black and white
standing or seated
reading newspapers or
staring out the window
wondering what they saw
as they sped away to important and unimportant places
places they did not want to go
fighting the little fight
winning and losing a multitude of battles
feeling the greater war
rumble loud
drawing them past
my open window
leaving this quiet
they were already too far gone
to hear

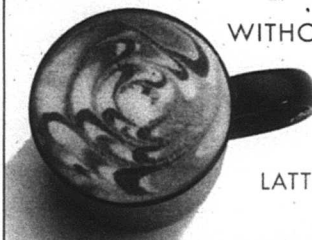
—LARRY CRIST

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One Nation, Under One God

If you want to know what drives America in the 21st century, *American Theocracy* is a must-read book.

American Theocracy
The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century

By Kevin Phillips
Viking, 2006

Hardcover, 480 pages, \$26.95

Review by TIMOTHY HARRIS
Contributing Writer

Kevin Phillips, as one of America's most clear-eyed critics of the contemporary conservative movement, is hard to dismiss. His landmark 1966 book, *The Emerging Republican Majority*, was an instant classic of the Right. This former Nixon speechwriter and Republican strategist, however, has come around.

American Theocracy completes the series of books that started in 2002 with *Wealth and Democracy* and continued two years later with *American Dynasty*, his critical history of the Bush family. Together, the trilogy represents a searing indictment of a Republican Party whose base has become untenably narrow and whose politics have grown increasingly dangerous.

He assembles a broad array of evidence that America is a decaying empire. Our infrastructure of oil — which doesn't seem to recognize

that fossil fuels are a non-renewable resource — is well past its peak and utterly unsustainable. Half the political base of the ruling party seriously believes that the world will soon end. And we are spending, consuming, and racking up crippling debt as though the rest of us pretty much agree.

Phillips foresees a combination of crises that are, if not inevitable, at least somewhat probable. And he marshals a strong historical argument that America is not the first empire to be extinguished in a puddle of dumb energy policy, millennial fervor, and rentier excess. In examining the histories of Rome, Spain, the Dutch Republic, and Britain, the writing on the wall for an America in decline looks eerily familiar.

Perhaps most disturbing is the fact that the Republican Party, by dint of its overwhelmingly fundamentalist political base — led by the powerful Southern Baptist Convention but supported also by the Mormons, Pentecostals, and a coalition of right-leaning denominations of Lutherans, conservative Catholics, and other fundamentalist sects — has left the world of reason for the world of faith.

American politics, Phillips reveals, has always been driven in large part by religion. In the early '80s, however, the Reagan administration was the first to harness what was clearly a politics of a resurgent South, based in large part on race, resentment, and radical religion. As the evangelical movement spread like wildfire to form significant political blocs beyond the traditional south, the electoral math of courting this movement became irresistible to a party whose other base, the upper-middle class and the rich, is simply too small to prevail in a democracy.

This has led to a politics based in theological correctness, or TC, as Phillips puts it. The TC worldview is one of diametrically opposed good and evil, in which women are caretakers, life begins at conception, and homosexuality is a sin. In this world, God created the world in six days and still runs the environment.

The Republican Party, in pandering to its politically indispensable fundamentalist base, has internalized those values, and in doing so has placed

See BOOK, Continued on Page 10

From Drawn to Dark

A Scanner Darkly
Directed by Richard Linklater
Opens Friday, July 7

Review by LESTER GRAY
Arts Editor

In a film purist's mind, form follows function. Whatever technique is employed — a special effect, pratfall, or car chase — should further the storyline, rather than drawing attention to itself. Movies, especially in the U.S., have always flouted this dictum, finding acclaim and financial success in spectacle. *A Scanner Darkly* is a refreshing instance where cutting-edge image manipulation, dialogue, and other production elements are successfully woven into one narrative fabric.

The relatively new visual technique employed here is rotoscoping, which takes live footage and gives it an animated overlay. Maturing coincidentally with the proliferation of graphic novels, rotoscoping has a look similar to a photograph traced with a colored pencil. It preserves a good deal of the mannerisms and physical characteristics of the actors and scenery and adds an extra dimension of drama.

In *A Scanner Darkly*, set in the near future, the war on drugs has grown desperate due to substance "D," a new street intoxicant. Based on a soft science-fiction novel by Phillip K. Dick, the story follows undercover drug agent Bob Arctor (Keanu Reeves). Arctor has reluctantly accepted an assignment spying on his friends: roommates and others who regularly party at his home. His contingent

of suspects includes several oddball males and a stop-in girlfriend, Donna (Winona Ryder). Her relationship with the detective can best be described as a curious blend of detached and intimate.

Foremost among the masculine inhabitants is the in-your-face, obstreperous James Barris (Robert Downey, Jr.). A master of nonstop circumlocution, the high-strung, wild-eyed, perpetually-under-the-influence know-it-all epitomizes sleaze. Downey's portrayal of this unctuous reprobate is so effective, just seeing him makes you want to take a shower.

Luckman (Woody Harrelson), James Barris' complement in the ether-sphere, serves as the tribe's go-with-the-flow element. The least purposeful of a generally aimless group, he provides a direct anthropological link back to the hippies who at one time California produced more prolifically than oranges.

Detective Arctor feels his effectiveness and credibility require a measured personal use of substance "D," the cumulative effects of which are insidious: imperceptively shifting the user's perception of reality; often towards paranoia. Self-evaluation of this pathology, once it begins to advance, is next to impossible, i.e., "Am I paranoid or is there someone really after me?" — a precarious mindset in his work environment.

At the drug enforcement agency everyone wears full-body, continually morphing (effected in the film by rotoscoping) electronic disguises: protection against organized crime's infiltration into every facet of government. The identity of one's supposed colleagues — the enforcement team with whom Arctor works — and each person's true agenda is left to the imagination and higher-ups, whom no one sees. The reality is elusive and unsettling even for the sane and sober, let alone a substance "D" user.

The film's title draws upon "through a glass darkly," a biblical allusion to our limited ability to see God. And indeed, Arctor is looking for a light, but his is mainly a secular quest, a struggle for reality through drug-induced obfuscation.

A Scanner Darkly is simultaneously dark and funny: cognitive slapstick driven by drug-fueled psychosis and shoot-from-the-hip witticisms. The dramatic tension eventually loses in a race against time; the script is a tad long. But all in all it works. Anticipate director Linklater going to this well again in the near future. ■

A Scanner Darkly is simultaneously dark and funny: cognitive slapstick driven by drug-fueled psychosis and shoot-from-the-hip witticisms.



James Barris
(Robert Downey, Jr.) in *A Scanner Darkly*.

Adventures
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning



Shooting an Elephant

Let's ask weighty questions about philanthropy!

What a negative bastard I am, that I don't think the world of Bill & Melinda & Warren E.'s highly noble goal of donating \$3 billion a year of their hoardings. I don't

care about all the fabulous good they will accomplish thereby. I don't see any of the promised solutions to the world's problems as being nearly such glorious goods as to justify the processes that led to this situation, meaning the processes that gave these jackasses so much power in the first place.

It's all about the power. That's all I see. Who elected these twits? Who really believes that these people actually deserve all the money (= power) they have to throw at us?

Don't get me wrong. At heart I'm a screaming conservative. Watch me rant and rave on behalf of the rights of people to live the way they did during the Stone Age. I'm for Detached Accessory Dwelling Units, because I want Big Government to stay the hell out of my garage. I was vehemently opposed to the Supreme Court decision on eminent domain, because I didn't think our Founding Fathers thought replacing George's fighting bantam farm with a Wal-Mart constituted "public use." I'm so opposed to Big Government, I think we should all be allowed to run naked and drunk in the streets, and all of us enjoy public cockfights and bear baiting, if you know what I mean.

But there's such a thing as Big Money, too. It shouldn't exist in the first place: No one, in the history of the world, nor any group of three people, has ever truly earned \$60 billion. Bill & Melinda & Warren E. didn't just recently sit themselves down on a log and wipe the collective sweat from their brows and say "Whew-wee, that was a whole lot of work

hoarding all that money the last 30 years, now let's rest up a spell and pass some of it out." But back to the power. It occurs to me that we all might benefit from a little Gedanken experiment. Or in this case a Gedungen experiment. Because when I think of elephants in the house, I think of elephants.

Let's imagine that they weren't about to give away \$3 billion a year in money, but \$3 billion a year in elephants. What would that look like?

Let's see. One elephant costs 1,000,000 rupees or less. That's around \$20,000. Figure in the \$500 per year to feed one at wholesale prices, plus costs of keepers and temporary housing, 2.26 cents per ton-mile for railroad freight, 78 cents per ton-mile for air-freight, at about five tons per animal, and out comes the rough answer: The cost of obtaining, maintaining, and shipping elephants to anywhere whatsoever averages less than \$100,000 per elephant. So Bill & Melinda & Warren E. have the equivalent of at least 30,000 elephants per year to give away around the world. That's one pachyderm to give to every 200,000 people, per year.

So if the elephants are distributed equally, and dropped in by helicopter, it should be virtually raining elephants everywhere on the planet. "Mbuzi! A present from the Gateses and the Buffetts is about to land on your Mother's hut!"

Or, say, they give them to cities and towns rather than small collectives. What would it do for Seattle to have an influx of 2.5 elephants per year? "Thank you Bill et. al., our Mounted Police have never looked so Hannibalish! How retro!"

People are such suck-ups; you know they're going to fall all over themselves thanking their donors not only for the elephants but also for everything that comes with the elephants.

I guess that's what I'm really talking about. Thank you Bill & Melinda & Warren E. for your \$3 billion a year, but you'd better not send any poop with it. ■

Let's imagine that Bill & Melinda & Warren E. weren't about to give away \$3 billion a year in money, but \$3 billion a year in elephants. What would that look like?



Thurs., June 22, 8:37 p.m., Sixth Ave.

S. A transient white female aged 46 was observed by police officers enjoying a can of Rainier beer. A Department of Corrections check revealed an outstanding warrant. Suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Thurs., June 22, 9:28 p.m., S. King Street.

Suspect, a transient white female aged 22, was observed drinking a beer in public. Officer ran a name check and found an outstanding warrant, which was verified. Suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Thurs., June 22, 10:34 p.m., Second Ave.

Ext. S. Officers observed suspect, a transient Black male aged 44, trespassing in a doorway at the above address. A detainer was placed on him for parole violations, and he was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Fri., June 23, 12:15 a.m., Third Ave.,

Prefontaine Park. An officer working uniformed patrol observed five suspects in Prefontaine Park after the park closed at 11:30 p.m. The park is clearly posted with the hours that it is open to the public. Officer contacted suspects and ran a name check. He found one suspect, a transient Black female aged 48, had been trespassed from all Zone 4 parks — which included Prefontaine Park — until January 2007. She was arrested and booked into King County Jail for criminal trespass.

Fri., June 23, 12:43 p.m., Alaska Way, Ye Olde Curiosity Shop.

An officer responded to a report of theft and upon arrival met with complainant, an employee of the store, who stated that the suspect, a transient Native-American male aged 42, had left the store and set off the sensor by the door. Complainant stated that he stopped the suspect and recovered a plastic Indian Chief head worth \$13.50 and a plastic totem pole worth \$15.50 from the suspect. Suspect was interviewed, trespassed from the store, and released.

Fri., June 23, 1:37 p.m., First Ave., Taco del Mar.

Officers responded to a report of people hanging out behind an address on First and Blanchard, and the caller requested they be dispersed. Officers arrived and found only the suspect, a transient white male aged 47, sitting on an empty milk crate, property belonging to Taco del Mar. A name check revealed he had been trespassed from Taco del Mar, and also the adjacent parking lot, in May. He was arrested for violating the admonishment. He was read his rights, and he stated he understood but would waive his rights to make a statement. Suspect then denied he was on the property. An officer photographed the scene, and the suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Sat., June 24, 3:11 p.m., S. Main Street.

Subject, a transient Black male aged 20, complained to Seattle Police Department that he wanted to kill himself or somebody else. He requested that he be transported to Harborview Medical Center for a mental health evaluation. Subject was turned over to AMR ambulance and transported to Harborview.

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.



REAL-LIFE ANSWERS TO YOUR LEGAL HASSLES

I have a felony conviction, and I was told that now I will not be able to receive public benefits. Is that true, and is there anything I can do about it?

According to attorney Kelly Angell at Foster Pepper PLLC, a felony record rarely prevents a person from receiving state benefits. However, if you are a "fleeing felon," or if you have been convicted of a drug-related felony (either as an adult or in juvenile court), you will not qualify for some benefits.

"Fleeing felons," either adults or minors, are barred from receiving benefits from DSHS. You are a fleeing felon if there is an outstanding warrant for your arrest or you are currently judged in violation of parole or probation conditions and you are aware of this and acting with intent to avoid prosecution, confinement, or custody. The warrant can be for any felony, including attempted crimes.

If a DSHS employee finds that you have an outstanding warrant, he or she should notify you and give you the opportunity to show that you satisfied the warrant. If you cannot show that, DSHS will deny you benefits. If DSHS finds out that there is a warrant for your arrest, it may contact the appropriate law enforcement agency.

If you were convicted of a drug-related felony committed after Aug. 21, 1996, you are not eligible for cash benefits like Temporary

Assistance for Needy Families and State Family Assistance. However, recent changes in the law may allow you to qualify for other benefits (food stamps, General Assistance Unemployment, disability, or any medical program). If you were told before July 2004 that you did not qualify for these benefits because of a drug-related felony, you should contact DSHS again to see if you are now eligible.

There are two exceptions that would make you eligible for cash benefits even if you are a drug-related felon. First, if you are pregnant, you can get State Family Assistance benefits if you meet all other conditions for eligibility. Second, you may qualify for cash benefits if you meet all four of the following requirements:

1. You were convicted only of possession or use of a controlled substance;
2. You were not convicted of a felony involving a controlled substance within the three-year period before your most recent conviction;
3. You were assessed as chemically dependent by a program certified by the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse;
4. You are taking part in or have completed a DASA-certified program's rehabilitation plan consisting of chemical dependency treatment and job services.

For more information and assistance on public benefits, you can call the Fremont Public Association/Family Assistance Project at (206) 694-6743 or the Northwest Justice Project at (206) 464-1519.

Answers are intended for general information only and are not intended to take the place of advice from your own attorney. Ask a lawyer is in partnership with the Access to Justice-Institute at Seattle University and Foster Pepper. Got questions? E-mail afji@seattleu.edu.

BOOK, Continued from Page 8

itself in opposition to science and other "reality-based" ways of thinking. No longer content with rolling back the New Deal, born-again Republicans now attack the Enlightenment itself.

The overreach that has characterized the Right, however, might be our best basis for hope. Phillips thinks that the fundamentalist movement has probably peaked and that the more moderate are deserting the party. Adam Smith's invisible hand, as Warren Buffet once said, has transformed into a boot, and the plainly visible hands of energy and financial sector lobbyists have turned America into a giant fire sale for the rich.

If you want to know what drives America in the 21st century, *American Theocracy* is a must-read book. Oil politics, religious extremism, and unsustainable debt are the signposts to our future as a declining empire. Phillips is a careful historian, a thoughtful analyst, and a political moderate who has dished up a hefty serving of harsh reality for a nation in denial. ■



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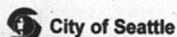
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Letters

editor@realchangenews.org

As the church goes, so goes downtown

Dear Real Change,

I am writing to contend the point of view expressed in Micki Kent's essay on the future of First United Methodist Church, one of the few architectural gems remaining in an ever-expanding urban mélange of tasteless, oversized, and aesthetically sterile edifices ["Here's the Church, Here's the Steeple: downtown church says it's the people who matter most," June 28].

Surely the diminished congregation of this church has a right to sell a building that is fiscally beyond their reach to sustain. And there is no gain-saying the decency and generosity of the First United Methodist community when it comes to manifesting the New Testament Gospel's call to witness social justice and extend charity and kindness to the poor and marginalized. However, Kent is wrong to dismiss the implications for our municipality's history as well as the importance to our city of the genuine architectural beauty that pervades this house of worship.

As things now stand, developer Martin Selig is proposing yet one more monstrosity to be built on the property now occupied by the church. Let us recall that Selig and other developers are responsible for transforming what was once a humanly scaled downtown community — a community comprised of tens of thousands of people of extremely modest economic means — into an abysmal collage of ugly, overgrown, steel

and glass commercial buildings. The ongoing proliferation of these very structures has contributed directly to the spiral of homelessness and marginalization that has become the lot of increasing numbers of citizens. This vertiginous transmogrification of downtown Seattle is likely a significant factor in the church's own dwindling base of membership. And let us also not forget that Selig himself is in the forefront of the right-wing effort to repeal the estate tax, which if successful would substantially reduce vital revenue for public education and other crucial social needs.

There is an alternative offer that the church's members should consider that would provide them with over \$23 million for their building and which would simultaneously allow for the preservation of this irreplaceable and exquisite structure. Our city government should then invest time and expertise in helping these conscientious Methodist congregants to relocate to an affordable and manageable space where they can worship, bear witness to the social call of the Gospel, and continue with their critical works of charity.

Joe Martin
Seattle

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

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Opportunity

Chaya Summer volunteer training welcomes those interested in ending violence against women in South Asian communities. Sat., July 8, 10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Redmond Library, 15990 NE 85th St. Info: www.chayaseattle.org.

Seattle Now Young Women's Task Force planning meeting. Fri., July 7, 7 p.m., Café Vita, 1005 E Pike St. Info: (206) 632-8547.

Employment

Domestic Violence Legal Advocate #6-0616. Great opportunity at YWCA to provide services to survivors of domestic violence. See <http://ywcaworks.org> for details and req. exp. Apply to hrr@ywcaworks.org or attn: J. Hardy, 2820 E. Cherry, Seattle, WA, 98122. EOE

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

Thursday 7/6

Chef and food activist Jessica Prentice decries our modern diets, championing locally grown, humanely raised, and nutrient-rich practices. Her latest book, *Full Moon Feast: Food and the Hunger Connection*, follows the 13 lunar cycles of an agrarian year from spring's Sap Moon to the midwinter Hunger Moon. Each chapter presents different recipes, displaying the variety of flavors available in each season. 7:30 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

Love for the oppressed people of Sri Lanka led Dr. Rajani Thiranagama to join the struggle for equality and justice for all. Using rare archival footage and intimate correspondences, the documentary *No More Tears, Sister* beautifully portrays the dangerous life of Thiranagama's human rights advocacy, which eventually led to her exile and murder. 10 p.m., KCTS, Check local listings. Info: www.pbs.org/pov.

Friday 7/7

The Meaningful Movies screens a triple feature on shaking loose the bounds of colonial history. *Black Panther* traces the development of the organization. *San Francisco State: On Strike* remembers the students who shut down their school for five months by marching and demanding ethnic study courses. *Abajo los COLONialismo... Pachamama Libre* shows activists, impatient with the pace and substance of the Bolivarian Revolution, toppling the statue of Christopher Columbus (Cristóbal Colón) in Caracas, Venezuela. Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. 7 p.m. Info: www.meaningfulmovies.org.

Saturday 7/8

Composer and jazz vocalist Fathia Atallah has a repertoire of well-loved jazz standards in English and French, original compositions, and traditional French songs for children. She is accompanied by guitarist Julian Catford and master violinist Bill Boyd. 2 p.m., Seattle Public Library, 1000 Fourth Ave.

Rocky Mountain ecopsychologist and poet Chris Hoffman reads from his

latest collection of poetry, *Cairns*, which was inspired by glacial fjords, kittiwakes, pine forests, and eagles. 2 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

Sunday 7/9

Part of a small group of eager Peace Corps volunteers working in Afghanistan during the late '70s, John Robert Sumser witnessed the communist coup of 1979. *A Land Without Time* is the story of his arrest and imprisonment as a wrongfully accused American spy, which sheds light on Afghan history and the rewards and hazards of life in the Peace Corps. He discusses his harrowing ordeal and asks us to re-humanize Afghanistan. 2 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

Jazz in the Park features the music of Brazilian guitarist Marco de Carvalho, six piece Latin ensemble Tumbao, and Afro-Latin rhythms of Lief Totusek and

Phil Sparks. 1 p.m., Seward Park, 5898 Lake Washington Blvd.

Tuesday 7/11

Dr. Robin Meyers became a celebrity to progressives with his spot-on, goose-bump-raising speech at a 2004 Oklahoma University peace rally. He comes to Seattle with his new book, *Why the Christian Right Is Wrong*, a proposal for Christian liberals who feel invisible in a country where the terms Christian and conservative have become interchangeable. Suggested donation \$5. 7 p.m., 1415 NE 43rd St.

Nalo Hopkinson writes powerful speculative fiction from the perspective of her Caribbean-Canadian backgrounds, using speech-patterns and folk-archetypes to infuse non-white cultures into futuristic visions. She discusses her vivid worlds, which include alternative sexuality, grassroots political movements, and feminist thought. 7:30 p.m., Science Fiction Museum, 325 Fifth Ave. N.

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

Director's Corner

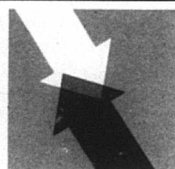


If you've noted the progress of our front page thermometer over June, *Real Change's* summer fund drive has been a bit slower than we'd hope. Readers donated \$13,629 over June, all of which is essential to our continued success as Seattle's activist community paper that builds opportunity for the poor and homeless. Our big audacious goal is to raise \$80,000 by the end of July. We're a bit behind, but one of our supporters just made reaching our goal a lot easier. Beginning this month, all gifts will be matched dollar for dollar up to a total of \$15,000.

We rely on a broad base of reader support for nearly half of our total funding. While a check for \$10 or \$20 may not seem like a huge dent in the summer goal, when that gift is multiplied by several hundred more with everyone doing what they can, big numbers suddenly become very achievable.

Please take a moment today to support the critical work of *Real Change*. If you love what we do, but have thus far limited your support to buying the paper, consider taking that next step in supporting our work. Many hands make the load lighter. Our success depends on you.

Please use the coupon on page 12 to make your tax-deductible gift, or see our website at www.realchangenews.org to make a secure on-line donation today.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Don't Close the 'Net

Issue: Network Neutrality is the guiding principle that preserves the free and open Internet. It ensures that the public can view the smallest blog just as easily as the largest corporate web site by preventing Internet companies like AT&T from rigging the playing field for only the highest-paying sites.

Background: Internet providers like AT&T, Verizon, and Comcast are spending millions of dollars lobbying Congress to gut Net Neutrality. If Congress doesn't take action now to implement meaningful Net Neutrality provisions, the future of the Internet is at risk.

Net Neutrality ensures that all users can access the content or run the applications and devices of their choice. With Net Neutrality, the network's only job is to move data, not choose which data to privilege with higher quality service. Net Neutrality prevents the companies that control the wires from discriminating against content based on its source or ownership.

The nation's largest telephone and cable companies want to be Internet gatekeepers, deciding which web sites go fast or slow and which won't load at all. They want to tax content providers to guarantee speedy delivery of their data. They want to discriminate in favor of their own search engines, Internet phone services, and streaming video, while slowing down or blocking their competitors.

Decisions being made now will shape the future of the Internet for a generation. Before long, all media — TV, phone, and the Web — will come to your home via the same broadband connection. The dispute over Net Neutrality is about who'll control access to new and emerging technologies.

On the Internet, consumers are in ultimate control — deciding between content, applications, and services available anywhere, no matter who owns the network. There's no middleman. But without Net Neutrality, the Internet will look more like cable TV. Network owners will decide which channels, content, and applications are available; consumers will have to choose from their menu.

Independent voices and political groups are especially vulnerable. Costs will skyrocket to post and share video and audio clips, silencing bloggers and amplifying the big media companies. Political organizing could be slowed by the handful of dominant Internet providers who ask advocacy groups or candidates to pay a fee to join the "fast lane."

Congress is now considering a major overhaul of the Telecommunications Act. The telephone and cable companies are filling up congressional campaign coffers and hiring high-priced lobbyists. They've set up groups like "Hands Off the Internet" to confuse the issue and give the appearance of grassroots support.

On June 8, the House of Representatives passed the "Communications Opportunity, Promotion, and Enhancement Act of 2006," or COPE Act (H.R. 5252): a bill that offers no meaningful protections for Net Neutrality. An amendment offered by Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), which would have instituted real Net Neutrality requirements, was defeated by intense industry lobbying.

It now falls to the Senate to save the free and open Internet.

Action: Contact Washington's senators today. You can send an email, or sign a petition, and learn more at www.savetheinternet.com.

ASTHMA, Continued from Page 1

and José Luis, talk with González about his condition.

González is a Home Educator with the Childhood Asthma Project, a program of the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic. She teaches people how to monitor and manage the condition, including reducing "triggers" in their homes, with the idea they'll be able to avoid emergency trips to the hospital and be healthier in general.

Asthma is not just an inconvenience. It's a serious and growing health problem that, like many diseases, reflects economic stratification: The likelihood of having the condition increases as income goes down.

Over the years, asthma can wreak havoc with a person's respiratory system. Children with asthma miss class time — the more severe the symptoms, the more school days lost — and the condition puts people under real financial strain.

The Ramírezes review Carlos' symptoms with González. "When the asthma's about to hit him," says José Luis, "it seems like he gets an itch inside his ear." González explains that this sensation is common in children with asthma.

She asks how often they clean Carlos' nebulizer, which they remove from a small gray backpack featuring a portrait of Winnie the Pooh and hand to her. Holding the nebulizer, a "breathing machine" that delivers asthma medication, González demonstrates how to clean its attachments with vinegar and water.

But there's more to managing asthma than just medications. Where a family lives has a lot to do with the severity of the disease, and people of limited means wind up in the worst housing.

"You don't have carpeting, and that's good," González tells the Ramírezes. Dust mites hide in rugs. Mold grows and pests thrive in old structures with poor ventilation, leaks, and water damage. Inadequate heating systems leave occupants breathing cold air — or resorting to wood-burning stoves.

On the sixth or seventh visit, González will bring along a small pail filled with cleaning products like vinegar, oil soap, and baking soda — replacements for commercial, fragranced products that can provoke an attack. She also will give the Ramírezes a form for requesting a dust-mite-proof mattress cover from the American Lung Association of Washington.

"Doctors do not have time these days to educate people, and they certainly don't do home visits, so they don't see the actual environment people are living in."

— John Thayer, Childhood Asthma Project

Plenty of problems faced by families with asthma are outside the reach of the Childhood Asthma Project. Before today's visit, González sent letters asking an insurer to reduce the copayment for a client's prescription for Advair, for which the client has been substituting a less effective and less expensive drug.

And only so much can be done to make substandard housing safe. As project director John Thayer points out, "There's not enough subsidized housing for the people that really need it."

He mentions one family living in a home with holes in the floor, a frozen well, and such an inferior electrical system that only one appliance can run at a time. They're now on a housing waiting list, but Thayer says, "I don't want them to go through another winter."

On top of these challenges, the clinic must use limited resources to keep the asthma project going. When clinic staff reviewed the project in 2004, they saw that it was achieving results and keeping people out of the ER. But while it was originally funded through the federal Department of Health and Human Services, the project now subsists on AmeriCorps volunteers and clinic funds.

Although home educators' time costs much less than doctors' time, this is the kind of health education effort that usually isn't included in an insurance package.

"Doctors do not have time these days to educate people, and they certainly don't do home visits, so they don't see the actual environment people are living in," says Thayer. He and others want public and private insurers to pay for home educators' time, rather than have patients overuse emergency rooms and doctors' offices, unaware of how to contend with a complex condition.

"It's just so unnecessary," he says. "If you can [detect] asthma early and manage it, you can have a long and healthy life." ■

UW, Continued from Page 1

Seattle. The city ranks fifth in the nation for refugee arrivals (2,847) and seventh for the number of immigrants granted asylum (216), according to the federal Office of Immigration Statistics.

As a result, W.H. "Joe" Knight, dean of the UW School of Law, notes that some 30 to 40 percent of the cases heard before the federal Ninth Circuit Court in Seattle involve immigration issues.

But Knight, who cut the clinic two years ago, says it's a question of priorities. The \$25,000 a year that the law school had provided the non-profit immigrant rights group to run the clinic was more than double the salary of the one part-time faculty member needed to run it.

Compared to a regular lecture course of 40 to 50 students, Knight says, "that's a substantial outlay of funds" for eight students. Since taking over the law school in 2001, he has added 16 full-time and six part-time instructors, and has offered about \$10,000 to pay for an adjunct faculty member to run the program.

But the students, Knight says, are trying to raise only enough for one year of the program, and the Immigrant Rights Project is now asking \$40,000 — the real price, Rose-Avila says, of what it costs to run the clinic and follow-up on cases the students leave behind.

So far, Miron says the fundraising effort has netted about \$10,000, mostly in small, individual contributions. But, even if the students meet their goal, Knight points out that the clinic would only have to close down again.

To avoid that, Knight says, he plans to sit down with the new dean of the law school at Seattle University to discuss a possible joint venture

with their Immigration Clinic — an idea UW law students formulated.

In the meantime, Knight says cutting the UW clinic was the right decision — and that students always have the opportunity to try their hand at asylum cases by getting a faculty member to oversee them.

The "challenge is what happens when you grow an institution but can't do everything you did before," Knight says. "Making those difficult choices is something most people don't have to talk about and, unfortunately, as dean I have to look at."

Rose-Avila says he's hoping to pressure the dean to take another look.

"It's not a lot of money," he says. "This is an important clinic for the University of Washington to have, and we hope some of the alumni will embarrass the university into making the Immigration Clinic a priority in its programs and budgets." ■

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July 2006

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak Out Across the Nation

Volume VI, Issue 7

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Becca Hedman was a Tacoma-based runaway murdered in Seattle in 1993, at the tender age of 13, by a man who had given her money to have sex with him (1).

"The 1995 Becca Bill, named after Hedman ... requires schools to take repeated truants to court and allows authorities to lock up runaways." (2) A truant is defined as "One who is absent without permission, especially from school." (3). The cause of Rebecca Hedman's death was attributed to her being a runaway, and legislation (state law) was created to try and prevent such a horrible tragedy from ever happening again. The 1995 Becca Bill is the legislative bill that Washington State law created in response to Becca's premature death, a little over 10 years ago. Although the Becca Bill was initially created in the hopes of protecting WA State's most vulnerable youth, specifically, runaway and homeless youth, it is highly controversial because this bill gives the youth's power and voice to government institutions and potentially abusive parents/

The Becca Bill

guardians. Juvenile court systems and parents, through the Becca Bill, have the ability to jail a young person who misses too many days of school, and, once identified as a "youth at risk" (through a disturbingly easy process), the young person could be jailed for the slightest offense. According to the Seattle Bar Association, "In one case, the commissioner ordered a child to be in his room and in bed by 9 p.m. or risk incarceration." (4) Are we giving too much power to state institutions and the parents that some of these runaway youth are trying to desperately escape, by any means necessary? What other sensible legislation can be created? These are the central questions I will try my best to answer, in hopes of protecting this Nation's at-risk youth.

One of my main problems with the Becca Bill is that it inadequately and ineffectively addresses the needs of children who really need comprehensive services. According to the King County website, 50 percent of the homeless youth and runaways in Seattle are between the ages of 12 and 15 years old (5). If we really care about these young people, if we really want to keep them from self-destructing and becoming another painful statistic, then we need to address the real issues and find the roots of a societal problem. What are the roots of this problem and what are the solutions to the

heart-breaking problems of youth homelessness, suicide and drug abuse??? We need to keep digging deeper, even when it hurts, and find some sort of legislation that will protect our youth and disadvantaged young people. The Becca Bill doesn't take into account family conflict, sociology, geographies, demographics and how class, race and gender play into this struggle to keep our youth protected and safe. The Becca Bill makes it mandatory for King County's runaway and homeless youth drop-in centers and shelters to report any young runaways to the police or to the parents that they are running away from. How is this protecting our youth? Issues such as child prostitution, youth homelessness and the health, safety and well-being of youth runaways are incredibly difficult and important topics. We cannot be afraid to look into the deepest, darkest, coldest corners of our society, because only then can we bring truth to light and let the vulnerable youth know that there is hope in life.

In my utopian (ideal) world, there wouldn't be global homelessness, hunger, runaways, tough streets or any of these horrible wars, in and out of this Nation. However, I live in reality, and these things exist.

BECCA CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Self Mutilation

up this theory. When the emotions are so overwhelming that you literally want to scream until your mind levels out, simply to feel the sting of a blade against the skin, or see the blood coming down is like instant gratification. I'm not condoning self inflicted abuse, but on the other hand, when you're depressed it's a better than going all the way with suicide. Most people are disgusted with this ritual, but for the "cutter" it is such a relief.

Another reason why people harm themselves is because they don't have any other means to cope. Perhaps as a child they were punished for expressing their feelings of sadness and anger. Over time as these feelings build without any release, they may develop unhealthy amounts of stress that cannot be dealt with rationally.

The last and most probable reason is an imbalance of serotonin in the brain. The same chemical that causes depression may predispose some people to abusive behaviors by making them more impulsive than an average person. This tendency combined with guilt, anger, and sadness pushes them over the edge. Once this happens they discover the temporary relief of their distress and the cycle begins.

What Kind Of People Are That Crazy?

Those who inflict violence on themselves come from all different walks of life. Various ages and professions, from 11 year olds to senior citizens; from professionals to teenagers. Self-injury is almost as common as eating disorders, but since it is so highly stigmatized, most people keep their scars to themselves and are prepared with excuses when others ask.

Another thing, people who cut or burn themselves aren't any more psychotic than people who smoke or drown in a bottle to calm

their nerves. It's simply an unconventional coping method used to avoid the direct issue.

What Else Can One Do That's Not Self-Destructive?

Alternatives to cutting behavior are abundant. Instead of burning, try using ice cubes to numb the area. Instead of cutting, wear a rubber band around your wrist and snap it a few times to mimic the sensation. Instead of head banging, one could rub their temples and speak softly to themselves. Other activities include writing or even talking to the mirror about the situation. Think rationally and reason with yourself. If you practice consoling and calming down on your own, pretty soon it will get easier and easier to stay level headed and cope with your dilemmas.

I Still Need Help

If you're still looking for resources for you or someone you know that practices self-mutilation try these links and phone numbers.

Self-Injury Hotline

Toll-free: 1-800-DONT-CUT

American Self-Harm Information

Clearinghouse
<http://selfinjury.org>

Self Injury And Related Issues

www.siari.co.uk

Mental Health Resource Center

Toll-free: 1-800-969-NMHA

¹ <http://www.focusas.com/Selfinjury.html>

Her tears seeped through the corners of her eyelids as she looked down to the slices protruding from her wrists. She exhaled deeply at the relief of the sight of her own blood flowing to her fingertips. She didn't understand why no one loved her. She was hurt that her boyfriend was cheating and disappointed in herself for putting up with it. She was angry at her teachers and peers; she could never seem to get good grades. She was frustrated with her mother who allowed herself to be governed by her step-father. All the stresses of life rushed at her and made her dizzy. The only way she has to cope is a ritual known to most as self-mutilation.

What Is Self-Mutilation?

Self Mutilation is the act of attempting to alter a mood state by inflicting physical harm serious enough to cause tissue damage to one's body.¹ Although it is not commonly used, approximately 1% of Americans utilize it, it is a serious psychological deficiency. Most limit self-injurious behavior to cutting. It can also include burning, head-bashing, pulling skin or hair, as well as carving and branding. It does not qualify as self mutilation if the primary purpose is to induce sexual gratification or spiritual enlightenment.

But Why?

Studies have shown that people who self harm are brought back to reason immediately. I speak from experience when I back

RAQUEL
GRANATH



Letter from the Editor

JIM
THEOFELIS



In this issue of the *Mockingbird Times* you are introduced to some amazing young people—some of whom you have met through previous issues but a number are new to our program. I'm certainly not objective but I must say this is one of our most compelling issues. There is nothing like the insight and honesty of young people to change darkness into light, despair into hope and struggle into achievement. As you read their articles you will undoubtedly be touched by their stories and all that they have endured and survived. I hope you are also see how much passion and compassion these young people have toward their own personal growth as well as their commitment to improving and honoring the lives of other young people. They are young leaders who understand the difference between surviving and thriving—for themselves and their community.

FOSTER YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT ACT (HB 2002): As many of you know the 2006 Washington legislature passed HB 2002 which allows for 50 youth a year for three years (total 150) to voluntarily

remain in foster care if they enroll in college or a vocational-technical program. A workgroup has been meeting to develop the program including selection criteria, intake process and other tasks. It looks like the first 50 youth will not be able to begin until January 2007. However, in an act of good faith Children's Administration has agreed to allow youth to remain in foster care until the details of the program can be worked out. My understanding is that youth interested in remaining in foster care and participating in the HB 2002 program need to contact their state social worker to get their foster care extended. **If you have any further questions please contact Rick Butt (Washington State Independent Living Program Manager) at 206-923-4891.** Finally, I want to express my appreciation to Dietra Clayton who has served at Mockingbird Society for the past year as an Ameri-Corp Volunteer. Dietra has brought great energy and passion to the Youth LEAD program and the overall mission of the Mockingbird Society. Her time at Mockingbird Society concludes at the end of July but we're hoping she continues to visit. **On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and youth at Mockingbird Society we wish Dietra and Astrid (her adorable 18 month old son) the very best.**

Jim Theofelis

Jim Theofelis

jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

Mockingbird Society: The Story Behind the Name

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

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

HB 2002 Reminder

New legislation allows youth to remain in care and receive their medical benefits while pursuing higher education. Talk to your caseworker for details about taking advantage of this legislation or contact Rick Butt at (206) 923-4891 for more information.

ABOUT US: The Mockingbird Society is a private non-profit organization dedicated to building a world class foster care system and improving the other systems that serve children and adolescents involved in homelessness and foster care. The *Mockingbird Times* is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of Mockingbird Society are paid between \$7.63 and \$8.50 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. The *Mockingbird Times* has a monthly circulation of 50,000 copies being distributed across Washington State and the U.S.A. through a private distribution list and as an insert in *Real Change*, a Seattle-based community newspaper. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of The Mockingbird Society and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. Donations to The Mockingbird Society may be tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. No part of the *Mockingbird Times* may be reproduced without the written permission of The Mockingbird Society. All contents copyright 2006 The Mockingbird Society.

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My Graduation

SUMMER KIDD



Summer Kidd (center) with her social worker, Selia Koenig and supervisor Brandon Dutton.

On Monday June 12th DSHS social workers from Everett, Smokey Point, Monroe, and Bellingham gathered at Lombardi's Restaurant to honor the class of 2006 foster children who had graduated from High School or completed their GED. I was one of the graduates.

Social Workers from Everett work all year raising funds for this event in addition to recruiting sponsors. They put a lot of pressure on us to earn the right to attend.

Eighteen graduates were honored at the event and there were three who were unable to attend but will receive everything we did. Over half of the graduates have enrolled in college or tech school. Three have received the Governor's Scholarships.

The restaurant was closed to the public and decorated beautifully. When we entered there was live music playing. Beth and Aaron donated their time to entertain us. On each table was a gift bag full of store gift cards, prepaid phone cards,

certificates for hair cuts at Everett Beauty and Barber College, and Starbucks gift cards. CWS supervisor Brandon Dutton was the master of ceremonies and he told us lots of people are survivors, but we are total survivors.

The guest speaker was Adam Cornell, the Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for Snohomish County and outspoken advocate for foster children. He gave an inspiring presentation about his experience in foster care and how he overcame adversity, completed college and became a successful attorney. He told a wonderful story about his foster mother, who did so much to shape his life. He also told us the best thing we could do for ourselves is to read more.

Each social worker presented their graduates and told about our accomplishments. It was amazing how many people had received scholarships and accomplished so much while in foster care.

Then the really good stuff came out. Kids Dream of Snohomish County provided us each with a huge basket of household items, such as dishes, flatware, pots and pans, coffee maker, bedding, bath sets, and glassware. Sponsors of the event were CWS workers, Lombardi's Restaurant, Kids Dream, Starbucks, Everett Beauty and Barber College, Snohomish Java Inn, First Presbyterian Church in Everett and New Life Center in Everett.

It was a great way to end my high school career as I begin my new journey in life. I have been accepted at Everett Community College and have scholarships to complete my first year.

Get Published — Get Paid!

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

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Meet the Staff

**RENITA
BASKIN**



Hello my name is Renita-Reene Baskin, I am 14 years old. I've been through things not even a prison inmate should be put through; but hey, this is life and things like that happen daily especially to the young. I know you are wondering why you should care what my name is and what I've been through. So let me let me stop and tell you a little about myself then you'll get the moral of my story.

I was born at General Hospital in Riverside California. I spent my childhood years moving from Victorville Ca. to Los Angeles Ca. mainly because those are the places my family lived. Both places that my mother moved us to were bad environments to raise children. Victorville is a more complex environment versus L.A. which is a more urban type. So of course these kind of small towns that are placed right in the middle of the desert have a nice family friendly neighborhood. Sadly all it took was a little negative energy to corrupt to whole town. As for L.A., everybody already knows that east L.A. is very gang related and dangerous.

Right after my 11th birthday, I got hit by a car and had to have surgery in my knee. That's when I finally got to know my real father. I couldn't walk on my feet so I needed constant care and I couldn't get that from my mother since at the time she had 8 other kids to care for. That arrangement worked out just fine until I learned how to maneuver around on my own. That's when he sent me to my grandmother and the next step was C.P.S., right along with my other siblings.

Since then, I have been taken into custody twice. Mainly because of the unorganized Child Protective System. On top of that, I was recently living in one of the Seattle group homes where I received very little help. Due to the very limited amount of space, once my time was up I had no choice but to leave.

So, this brings us to the present. I've always had my own opinions on things and ways to help struggling teens, young adults and also pregnant teens. I want them to be more encouraged to receive help as often as needed so they become more self-reliant. Once I saw what the Mockingbird Society was about and how they work toward paving a straight path for young adults to walk in, I had to be apart of their society.

**SAMUEL
MARTIN**



My Name is Samuel Martin and I am 15 years old. I was born and raised in Seattle, Washington. I attend Rainier Beach High School. I enjoy playing football, participating in my community when I have any free time. I am a student speaker, and I tutor elementary students. I am very enthusiastic and trust-worthy.

My experiences in kinship care have been very difficult, I have dealt with people I have never met in my life. I began living with a family member who was an alcoholic and abusive. After that I moved in with another relative who was very neglectful and I was brought in on top of her other 5 kids. Now I currently stay with an aunt and although there are difficulties, we are working things out.

There are a few issues that are really important in today's society. I think it is the foster-care system and African American community. I think that people tend to overlook people in both groups. Both of these cases involve increased education. I feel that people need to put a lot more focus into working on helping kids get into school instead of letting them stand on Henderson St. I honestly think that a group of people can't do anything for themselves unless they assume responsibility. I also think that if that group has no support that it is twice as hard to make a step forward.

If I could change one thing about the foster-care system, I would change the pay. I think that if some foster care providers didn't get paid as much, they wouldn't be in this trade just for the money. The amount of pay can really weed out the good providers from the bad ones.

I joined Mockingbird Society because this will give me the opportunity to express myself through writing and my opinions about the world today. I really want people to hear my voice. I also would like to meet people and establish a bit of a support system here at Mockingbird.

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

**JESSICA
GARCIA**



My name is Jessica. I recently started working with Mockingbird Times. I'm in a positive frame of mind with mockingbird times, because I'm learning a lot and changing things around in my life. I've been in the system for almost 12 years and I've had my share of ups and downs, but have had to manage what's thrown at me at given moment is what life offers me. I know look at it this way "God wouldn't put me through anything that I couldn't handle."

What I've experienced while being in the system, is not a whole help. Being dependent, moving, from place to place, Learning ways to survive being obedient. I had to grow up quick and what mean by quick I had to take care of my two little brothers and look out for my brothers and myself. When I was split up from my brothers I was so used to worrying about them that I started to worry about the other kids that I was placed with.

There are some positive's that I've done for myself while being in the system is I got into barista training BTEP, going to school to receive my High School Diploma. I also have been clean and sober; I also participate in the ILP program through the YMCA. I plan on attending college to become a cosmetologist. I have high goals for myself, that doesn't mean that I can't reach my goals.

I'm always asked by people who am I. Most the time I don't know the answer to the question, but I do have a lot of determination in what I would like to do with my life.

ZEB WILLIS

My name is Zeb Willis I am 17 years old I love to cook and read and I also love to play basketball. Other than that, I pretty much a laid back person. There is another part to my story; like being in foster-care. Although I really don't want to get in to the details, I have had bad experiences with foster and group homes but that's not stopping from me from doing my thing. Right now I live in a group home in Auburn. It's ok for a start, but there's no place like home.

Right now my focus is to be a good person and stay out of trouble. That means keeping a job and staying in school. Recently, I was put in Crisis Residential Clinic (CRC) (which is a place for runaways) which is where I met Dietra who came there to talk about jobs and help us with writing and stuff. Then I had ask her to tell me more about Mockingbird Society; she had told me a lot about this place and she gave me her number.

As soon as I got out of CRC, I called and she told me to come in and give it a try. Everything worked out fine so I began working and now I'm on payroll. I'm set I guess. You can say my life has changed a lot, because now I'm working and on the right track.

Summer Is Here

Please remember:

- Keep hydrated;
- Keep the sunscreen on;
- Wear a lifejacket;
- Have fun!

Returning to School

**SURRI
EVANS**



I dropped out of school at the age of 16 and was in foster care at the time. Now, I'm 18 with a ten-month-old daughter (Sa'maiah) and am having a hard time making the decision on whether or not to return to school. For some of us, it's a hard decision to make because we have either aged out of the system, having a rough time in our lives right now, or both. As a young adult, it is especially hard with no family support. As of right now, I just completed the Barista Training through Youthcare, and I have quite a busy schedule here at Mockingbird Society.

The decision to go back to school is the number one thing on my mind, but being the only provider for my family it's hard, so I came up with a plan for myself. Since I only have one test to pass for my GED, I decided to look into tutoring through Treehouse so that I can get help on the subject needed for me to accomplish my goal. I figure since I'm always here in the 2100 building it

shouldn't be hard for me to do. There is also good motivation for me being with the YMCA Independent Living Program. There is a grant called an ETV (education training voucher) which entitles you to up to five thousand a year for education and living expenses, when you complete a GED or high school diploma and hold one class at a community college. With that said, things should go a little easier for me from this point on.

The two things that scare me about my decision is that, 1) My whole schedule will change. Instead of me working full time to support my daughter, I will have to split my focus and adjust to not only working but learning as well. 2) Will I still make enough money to cover my bills and survive? Once again, I've thought about the issue, and I know that if I put my mind to it, along with the right support I am capable of reaching my goals.

In closing, I'm still making up my mind but am getting closer to the decision to go back to school. I know that in the end I will have success and a better education for myself and for my child. And when she gets older, she can always look back and see that I made the decision to finish, and I did it not only for myself but for her.

Summer Arrives at Mockingbird Society!



Americorp member Dietra Clayton with the newest member of the Mockingbird Family, Cinnamon.



Youth Representatives Jamica and Renita enjoying post-deadline games in the sun.

BECCA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

so all we can really do is unite and work toward common goals, founded on common ground. I recently discussed these global and local issues with Valerie Douglas, who just happened to be working as an outreach worker at a Seattle homeless youth drop-in center when the Becca Bill was first passed into law. Reflecting, she said, "There used to be an emergency shelter for youth ages 16 - 21 in the University District called *Roots* and we'd see a lot of young people accessing this shelter and these (social and human) services". "However," she said, "after the Becca Bill was passed, we didn't see that many young people utilizing (homeless youth) resources". Let me put it this way: if you were a typical runaway youth, between the ages of 12 and 15, and you were running away from a seriously abusive "home", would YOU go to a drop-in center that would report you for accessing basic services like shelter, food and clothing??? I have seen countless youth in Seattle experience serious conflict with needing to go to a drop-in center or shelter, but then ending up sleeping under a bridge or with a shady drug dealer because of the Becca Bill's mandatory reporting laws for shelters and drop-in centers. This bill is NOT helping Seattle's homeless youth, and in my personal opinion, it creates more problems and barriers for homeless youth and only makes the struggle for life free from suffering all the more difficult to achieve.

It's Not Always Happily Ever After

JAMICA
HENDERSON



I am currently reading *Its Not Always Happily Ever After*. This book was written by students at John Marshall and American Indian Heritage Schools. This book was put together with the help from this organization called 826 Seattle. In this book they all share stories of important events in their lives. Many of them spoke about pieces of childhood that they feel they missed out on. They also reflect about "heading down the wrong road" at a young age.

In "Devonte's Untold Story" he talks about his bad temper and activities he did while in middle school. I like how he shared that as he got older he knew that he needed to change his ways: this was what encouraged him to do so: "to this day when I have a slip-up I try to think of my grandparents and how they would feel about what I am doing".

So then, what are we to do at this crossroads? We know that the Becca Bill is creating more problems for homeless youth than it is solving, but what are the next steps, the next laws, the next bold moves for us to make?? My dream is a COMPREHENSIVE Federal Law that protects our most vulnerable children, called something like, "The Vulnerable Children Protection Act of 2007". Valerie Douglas suggested optional supportive family reconciliation groups, extending the mandatory time period for reporting a youth (in regards to drop-in centers and runaway shelters) to at least 72 hours, a policy enforced by the majority of the Nation. In any case, we must ask ourselves, "What do we have to offer young people under the age of 18?". What alternatives are we going to create for them??

For more info about the Becca Bill go to <http://www.wsba.org/media/publications/barnews/archives/1999/apr-99-becca.htm>. If you know anyone creating a Federal Child Runaway Protection Act/Bill/Law, please have them contact me at: misty_lou_cook@yahoo.com

(1,2) <http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/194800.becca12.html>

(3) <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/truant>

(4) <http://www.wsba.org/media/publications/barnews/archives/1999/apr-99-becca.htm>

(5) <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/humanservices/fys/HomelessYouth/HomelessYDemo-graphicData.htm>

What I like about this book is everyone has a different story about their life. I also like how they realized and admitted that what they were doing was wrong and would hurt them in the long run. I personally feel that this is a good skill to have. If you know what you are doing is wrong and keep on doing those things, then the only person who can stop you is you. Once they saw the damage that they were doing to themselves and others that love them, that's what made them stop and get it together. What I have also learned while reviewing this book is that most teenagers have a rebellious stage in their life. How can you stop that? You can't; it is apart of life, but what we can do is still believe in them and give them a chance. Once you give someone a chance to fall down and get back up, they have the opportunity to realize their own mistake and realize that they don't want to experience that again.

If you are interested on learning more about the book and the organization involved you can visit the website at www.826seattle.org.

My WASL Experience

SAM MARTIN

I am 15 years old and I recently took the WASL and I don't think this test should be hated as much as it is. Do I believe it should be a graduation requirement? No, but I do believe that it should have some significance and value. If you want to have an assessment with accurate scores, it has to put something on the line. This test is only hard for people who don't take it seriously. I don't think that it is impossible to pass. I was fortunate enough to pass all three parts and to have a teaching staff who worked a lot harder than what they had to.

My school was almost centered on the WASL for a large time. We even had an extra period added once a week. Even with all the studying, I don't think that there is ever really a way to prepare for a test like the WASL. You never really know when a student is ready until he or she takes the test. I even asked a few teachers in my school if they think that they could pass the WASL and most of them said yes, but they also said they wouldn't be able to do it without seeing what is on the test first.

A huge problem was the math which over 46 percent failed. It was suggested that all students should be in the same math class for that grade, which is Algebra 2. The biggest question is, are the scores improving? They are when you compare

them to the test taken in 7th grade but you can't compare them from year to year. A teacher referred to it as "comparing apples to oranges."

The states goal is that at least 70% of students pass. 83% passed the writing and 85% passed reading. This seems to be a significant increase, but it still seems like people look at it as "ok" to be unsuccessful at math when Algebra 2 is somewhat the standard math level to be functional in society. It just doesn't really make sense that people frequently say "I can't do this, I haven't done math in years." Most people don't understand that math can be just as valuable as reading and writing. When you consider that some of their parents/guardians act like they don't care about

math, how do you think the student will have a positive attitude?

It honestly comes down to the fact of studying hard for this test. Unfortunately, the biggest conflict is that teachers also have to teach the regular curriculum that is required before the students graduate. I think that it is doable with practice, because when I took the test I really was afraid. The test is hard without a doubt. It isn't as hard as everyone makes it seem. I think over the course of time, the scores will be where the state would like them to be. This year was a trial and there is room for improvement which will happen eventually.

Creative Corner

Death

KELLY LOVELACE

Your words hurt me
So do your fists
Your voice in my head
Makes me want to slit my wrists
You gave me the razor
And held out my arm
Your eyes glanced over
To see my blood so warm
I look up into your eyes
And I dint see a man
Why didn't I realize ?!
The devils holding my hand



There is a Plan for Me

STARCIA AGUE

- Sometimes I wonder why my parents had me when they were so young,
- And why couldn't they wait until they were older and mature before they had fun,
- How come when I was born they didn't do everything they could to love me
- If I was climbing a tree, they didn't care and went there to see,
- Why did you and dad fight so much? And then blame it all on me?
- That's probably had something to do with my insecurity,
- I wish I could remember more about when I was younger, besides sex, violence and drugs,
- All I ever wanted from my mom and dad was a hug,
- I grew up thinking my family was normal,
- That was up until I went to school and everyone around me was way formal,
- How come when I had lice all the times you didn't take care of it right?
- Instead you wanted to argue bicker and fight,
- I was the fat, ugly, red head growing up,
- Nobody even wanted to look at me or say "whats up?"
- You can only be rejected by so many people
- Before you start to treat everyone you met unequal
- My mom kicked me out when I was 11 and said I was a burden
- I didn't know where to go or what to do I was so uncertain
- I soon fell into the vicious cycle of sex violence and drugs
- It wasn't long after that I started kickin it with thugs
- I used to being a bully to cover up my emotions: fear, guilt and pain
- I literally didn't know what to do in my life anymore and thought I was going insane
- You can only follow that life style for so long
- Before you get booked like me and five and a half years of your life are gone
- Getting locked up was the best thing that ever happened to me
- Its taken me a long time to turn my life around tremendously
- And when I am finally free
- Ill tell everyone Jesus Christ is my savior, and he will forgive you for your sins just as my gracious father in my heaven has forgiven me

It's Seafair Time!

Don't forget, Seafair is here! For event details, visit www.seafair.com