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AUG. 30 - SEPT. 5, 2006



RACHEL SMITH, OF TRANSPORTATION CHOICES COALITION, IS KEEPING CLOSE TABS ON A NUMBER OF TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES VOTERS WILL CONFRONT THIS NOVEMBER, INCLUDING I-917, TIM EYMAN'S ATTEMPT TO DROP VEHICLE EXCISE TAXES TO \$30. PHOTO BY MICHAEL DOPPS

Not Going Away

Group weighs in on transportation issues for Nov. ballot

By **ROSETTE ROYALE**
Staff Reporter

Through the glass of a downtown coffee shop, cyclists pedal in the shadow of the cars and buses on Third Avenue. Pedestrians rush by on the sidewalk. A well-lit orange hand halts the people in their path. Lights turn green. The traffic flows once more.

The traffic's ebb and flow: That's what Rachel Smith concerns herself with, in her role as field director of Transportation Choices Coalition. Billed as the only organization whose sole mission is to bring a balanced transportation system to Washington, TCC works within a framework of key principles: accountability and transparency in transportation funding; compact urban centers, a progressive, sustainable regional vision of transportation; and public participation in making decisions. Which means that Smith is watching the transportation initiatives voters will be facing this November. Among those Smith has in her sights is Initiative 917, crafted by Tim Eyman.

I-917, if it makes it on the ballot, will ask voters to curb back vehicle excise taxes to \$30. Currently, says Smith, vehicles that weigh 4,000 and under — which Smith estimates represents 85 percent of vehicles on Washington roads — pay \$40 in annual excise taxes.

While the notion of a \$10 reduction may be enticing to some, she says the collected fees help to fund transportation's everyday minutia, including sidewalks, bike lanes, and safe routes to schools.

But I-917's ballot appearance is no foregone conclusion. The Secretary of State is in the process of verifying the validity of the signatures turned in by Eyman. If that tally, which officials expect to be completed by the end of September, shows the initiative falls short of the necessary legal signatures, then it will be stricken from the ballot. But should I-917 meet the voters' gaze, Smith says its passage would remove transportation funding "that [would] amount to about \$2.5 billion over 16 years."

This year's ballot box holds another multi-billion dollar taxes-and-transportation issue: namely, the city's largest-ever property tax proposal. In early August, the City Council put forth a 20-year, \$1.6 billion tax package to address transportation infrastructure, such as filling potholes, repairing roads and bridges, and adding signage. The package, scaled down from one proposed by Mayor Nickels, boasts three separate parts: first, employers who gross over \$50,000 annually will be forced to pay \$25 for

A Fair Shake

South Korean activists seek "mini-WTO protest" at trade talks

By **CYDNEY GILLIS**
Staff Reporter

The mass protests that took place against the World Trade Organization in 1999 might stop some nations from scheduling a round of free-trade talks in Seattle.

But not South Korea.

Next week, a delegation of 150 South Korean trade and industry officials are scheduled to join their American counterparts in Seattle to negotiate a Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. While they're talking at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center Sept. 6-9, activists from South Korea and across the U.S. plan a mini-WTO protest of downtown marches, rallies, and other events.

It will be the third round of talks on the treaty, which is aimed at lifting tariffs and restrictions to boost trade with South Korea, the United States' seventh-largest trading partner. But protest organizers say the proposals under discussion will only hurt South Korea's factory workers, rice farmers, ranchers, and film industry.

"We call our free trade agreement NAFTA-plus. It's worse than NAFTA," says Aehwa Kim of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Kim is a labor organizer from South Korea who's been working at the Seattle offices of LELCO, the Northwest Law and Employment Office, to turn out labor and other groups for the protests. She is with the Korean Alliance Against KORUS FTA, a coalition of 282 trade, professional, and women's groups that oppose the treaty. The group staged previous protests at treaty talks held in June and July in Washington, D.C., and Seoul.

Like NAFTA, Kim says, the treaty would benefit U.S.-based multinationals at the expense of Korean workers and family farmers. Factory jobs would be outsourced to other Asia countries where labor is cheaper, and rice and other farm products would flood the South Korean market at prices farmers couldn't compete with.

NOW YOU'RE WALKING

This Labor Day, instead of a BBQ, why not come out and join the March for Human Rights and Economic Justice?

PAGE **2**

THE EYES HAVE IT

Looking to halt the "nuisance" of downtown crimes, business advocates set their sights on video surveillance.

PAGE **3**

BERATE BRITAIN

To ensure the British hear the voices of the homeless, Barry Etheridge walks the country, gathering stories.

PAGE **4**

FAIR WEATHER FRIEND

Author Dan Berger contends the Weather Underground were driven by an anti-racist ideology, not violence.

PAGE **6**

Change Agent.....	3
Just Heard.....	3
Short Takes.....	4
Arts.....	8
Dr. Wes.....	9
Poetry.....	9
Street Watch.....	9
Letters.....	10
Calendar.....	11
Director's Corner.....	11
First things First.....	11

See **ROADS**, Continued on Page 12See **PROTEST**, Continued on Page 10

The Fierce Urgency of Now

This Labor Day, stand together for dignity and justice

By TIMOTHY HARRIS

Real Change Executive Director

We cannot hope to end homelessness without attacking poverty itself, and so long as the chasm between rich and poor continues to grow, each small step forward will be matched by two steps back.

One of my enduring political touchstones is Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Beyond Vietnam" speech, given at New York's historic Riverside church on April 4, 1967. One year later, King was assassinated. Many believe that King was killed because the path he publicly chose that day — one that challenged "the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism" — pointed the way toward nonviolent revolution.

Nearly 40 years later, we again find ourselves confronted by "the fierce urgency of now." There is, said King, "such a thing as being too late," and many of us feel that same sense of time not being on our side. As the world more and more resembles a speeding train gone off the rails, we are all — each of us — challenged to bring things back on track.

The list of issues we face could go on for days.

Immigrants seek a more just economy and an end to the raids and deportations that punish the poor for simply working. African Americans organize for opportunity and an end to the racist war on drugs that has made it more likely that a Black man will go to prison than to college. Our civil rights, no matter who we are, have been consistently eroded. Labor activists — long on the defensive — fight to keep jobs and benefits, and even the right to organize. Peace activists oppose a horrific war that has killed more than 40,000 Iraqi civilians and squandered America's credibility abroad.

Yet, in our diversity of concerns, we all stand for similar things. Human dignity. Fairness. The common good. To this end, we need desperately to find a unified voice. This is why *Real Change*

is standing with labor, immigrant, and other community activists to support the Solidarity March for Human Rights and Economic Justice this Labor Day, Sept. 4, beginning at 4 p.m. at Judkins Park.

We're not deluded. We know that one march won't change much of anything. But we, along with others, see this as the beginning of a more unified local grassroots politics, and that is something that deserves our time and energy. The hope is that by coming together in a multi-racial, multi-issue show of support that finds strength in unity, we'll learn, eventually, to put aside our divisions and help each other in our struggles.

When King moved beyond civil rights to challenge poverty and militarism in 1967, he recognized the necessity of a common vision. The war in Vietnam, he said, drew "men and skills and money like some demonic suction tube," and undermined any hope that might exist for the poor. It drew disproportionately from people of color, enlisting them to fight for freedoms and opportunities that they themselves often did not enjoy.

There was, however, a more fundamental problem, and that persists today as well. Our original sin, said King, was in "refusing to give up the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investment."

Global economic policies that favor the U.S. have brought poverty and despair to other parts of the world, and we, the lumbering, violent, idiot American giant, have chosen to live in a state of selective blindness. We are prone, said King, to "adjusting to injustice." The fiction that our cheap produce, inexpensive clothing, and underpriced gasoline don't derive from the suffering of others must be challenged. We must,

King said, "undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society."

Here in Seattle, we are justly proud of the high standard we have set for meeting the needs of the poor. City budget priorities have, for years, placed people first. Our sophisticated non-profit housing development sector is the envy of the nation. We have committed to ending homelessness by 2015, and government, human services organizations, the faith community, and others are pulling together toward that audacious goal.

But unless we challenge the fundamental premises that accrue privilege to the powerful at the expense of progress for the poor, our best efforts will not be enough. We cannot hope to end homelessness without attacking poverty itself, and so long as the chasm between rich and poor continues to grow, each small step forward will be matched by two steps back.

We must, as Dr. King said, "go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism." This Labor Day, we have the opportunity to stand together in the name of love and justice. You can make a difference. Be there Sept. 4. ■

[March & Rally]

Gather on Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 4, at 4 p.m., Judkins Square Park, near the intersection of S. Norman and 23rd Ave S. March begins at 5 p.m. and heads toward MLK Memorial.

[Podcast]

You may find the full text of Dr. King's Riverside speech, along with an mp3 of the historic address, at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlk-atimetobreaksilence.htm>.



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

Mission Statement:

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

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Change

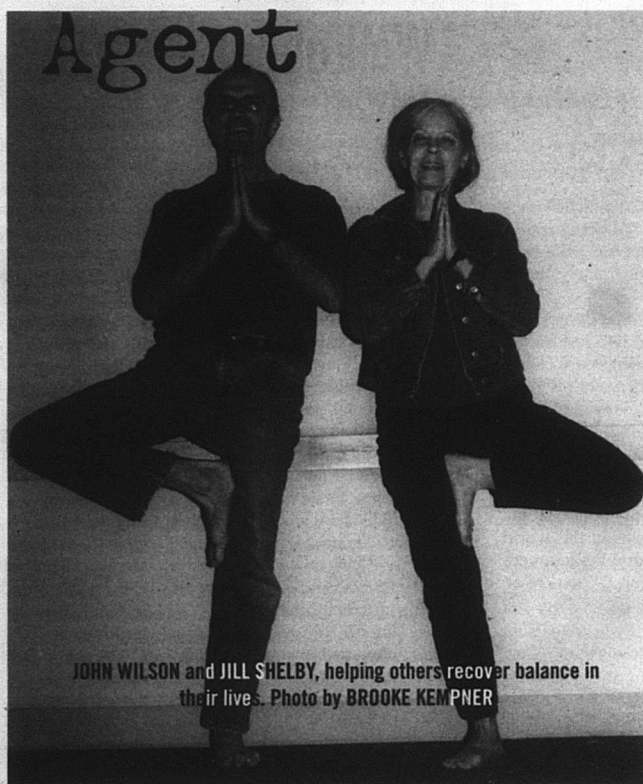
For more than two years, Jill Shelby and John Wilson have been teaching free, adaptive yoga classes at the Recovery Café, a safe haven for individuals struggling with homelessness, addiction, and mental health issues.

Shelby and Wilson focus on strengthening their student's bodies through exercise, but both are quick to point out that yoga is much more than simple physical activity. "It's about discipline and self-control," explains Shelby. "It unifies the body, mind, and soul so you experience yourself as a whole person."

The class has been designed to be completely accessible to all skill levels. "We get a wide variety of students in our class," says Wilson. "The great thing about yoga is that it is intended to be adapted to an individual's needs, whatever they may be."

Shelby and Wilson open up their classes to both café clients as well as people living in the neighborhood in an effort to develop social connections. Says Shelby: "We want to emphasize the importance of creating strong bonds not just in class but in the larger community as well."

—Amy Besunder



JOHN WILSON and JILL SHELBY, helping others recover balance in their lives. Photo by BROOKE KEMPNER

Pan Opticon

Video cameras, anti-begging campaign in store downtown

By ADAM HYLIA
Editor

Seeing more frequent incidents of "nuisance" crimes, downtown business boosters want to post videocameras to catch people using drugs or relieving themselves in public. And they're gearing up for a campaign to dissuade passersby from giving to anyone who holds a sign or a cup — pointing them toward worthy charities instead.

The Safe and Health Streets task force's agenda, still in formation, arises from "issues our boardmembers identified as areas of concern or programs to support," says Anita Woo of the Downtown Seattle Association, the member-based civic group supporting downtown commerce. It could include providing brochures to hotel guests asking them to donate to local charities instead of panhandlers, or handing out a list of resources to people who appear to need food or shelter.

This past winter, representatives of the DSA met with similar organizations around the country to see how they had dealt with homelessness's more visible signs in their respective cities. Some of the most interesting efforts, says Woo, are taking place in Baltimore, MD, and Jacksonville, Fla.

In Jacksonville, pith-helmeted "Downtown Ambassadors" similar to the Seattle DSA's yellow-clad Safety Ambassadors inform panhandlers of the city ban on begging in the Business Improvement District. They have also closed down campsites and other sleeping areas, according to the business association's web site. The Downtown Partnership of Baltimore has set up 80 cameras in that city's center; it's also established collection boxes for people's spare change. Baltimore also has a foot patrol which guards against public begging between dusk and dawn.

Buttressed by the panhandling rule and a local version of the city ordinance that prevents sitting

or lying down on public streets, Baltimore's workers have been known to take a move-them-along approach, says Kevin Lindamood of Baltimore's Health Care for the Homeless, Inc. That's changing, says now, "It's a more overt attempt to get people services," he says.

Two problems persist, though. One is the fact that shelter and treatment programs are "woefully underfunded," he says. The other is that, once the police haul you in on a charge of panhandling or trespassing (read: trying to sleep someplace you're not supposed to), you're that much further from getting help.

"The resources we can call upon are diminished by the presence of a criminal record," says Lindamood. "Landlords and employers discriminate based on that record."

And rap sheets have been written up based only on a videotape, he says. Cameras are being posted in "hot spots" to deter crime — much of it being public urination, intoxication, or public consumption. Lindamood says his agency's clients have said that police have walked up to them and said, "We have you on camera doing such and so, and we're giving you a citation," or, frequently, "We're arresting you."

Both cities have begun efforts to divert spare change from panhandlers by appealing to those who give. In Jacksonville, it's called "We don't give a handout, we give a helping hand," and its benefactor is the Emergency Services and Homeless Coalition, an umbrella organization for other area social-service agencies. Wanda Lanier, the group's director, doesn't think the campaign will generate an appreciable amount of donations. Instead, the campaign is "an opportunity to talk about who the homeless really are" (that they're sometimes distinct from the "professional panhandlers" working the streets) "and what services are available for them."

Lindamood saw a somewhat different opportunity in Baltimore. As downtown boosters propose new measures to control homeless people's behavior, he says, point out how ineffective they're likely to be without some money for basic needs: such measures "don't work because they don't get to the root of the problem." ■

Just Heard...

Jilted

Grooms get left at the altar, but the First United Methodist Church got left with the altar, now that developer Martin Selig has pulled out of an offer that would have razed the chapel to build a skyscraper.

For years, the church, located at Fifth and Marion, has been facing multimillion-dollar repairs and maintenance costs. Selling the property would have allowed the congregation to move to newly constructed digs somewhere else downtown. Now the church is in limbo, waiting on word of other possibilities.

What might those be? At present, the church is in negotiations with developer Nitze-Stogen to exchange its sanctuary's current property with another in Beltsville, says Rev. Kathryn James.

"We're praying and working hard to make it happen," says Rev. James.

—Rosette Royale

The bug shrugged

West Nile Virus, the mosquito-borne microbe that brings on flu symptoms and encephalitis, is present just over the mountains in Yakima County. It hasn't hit King County yet — not that local public health authorities are aware of. Labs will be testing dead birds from now until early October, says Public Health — Seattle & King County spokesperson Hilary Korasz. Since first appearing on the East Coast in 1999, the virus has spread steadily west; in 2004, Oregon and Washington were the only states in the contiguous U.S. without any cases.

Now, the state with the most acute West Nile problem is on our eastern border: Idaho, with more than 100 instances of flu documented last year. Spurred by a warm summer prime for mosquito transmission, the disease "is coming," says Korasz. "We just don't know when."

—Adam Hylia

Occidental Park: an open question

Here's an irony-in-waiting: The Parks Department is throwing a party Sept. 7 for the reopening of Occidental Park, which just got a remodel. But, the same day as the ribbon-cutting (set for 5:20 p.m.), a judge could order the city to put the old park back together again, cobblestone by cobblestone.

It's unlikely but possible, as Pioneer Square activists continue to wait for a ruling on a land-use petition they filed against the city over the remodel, which involved cutting down 17 of the park's 60 trees, replacing its cobblestones with wheelchair-accessible pavers, and removing a pergola often used by the homeless for shelter.

The main issue for the activists is the pavers, which they argue will starve the remaining trees of water — something they say the Parks Department should have examined in a full environmental review that, in theory, the judge could still order.

The Sept. 7 ribbon-cutting is part of a public celebration from 5:30 p.m., followed at 8 p.m. by a screening of "Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark."

—Cydney Gillis

Walkabout

Barry Etheridge is on the trail of real improvements for Britain's homeless

By CLARE HARRIS
The Big Issue in Scotland

Homeless in Scotland for three years, Barry Etheridge realized that no one in power listens to what homeless people need. Fixed on shaking up the system, he is gathering homeless people's stories. Photo by Clare Harris

They're trying to mend the merry go-round as it's going round, but they don't have the balls to stop it and say 'Look, sorry, this is going to take awhile.'

You couldn't argue that Barry Etheridge doesn't have balls. He's just walked all the way from Inverness to Edinburgh, and he's about to set off (with friend James House) to Newcastle, then finally all the way down the country to Bournemouth. But

he's not doing it for fun. Etheridge's aim is to get the "merry go-round" of homeless support services fixed, properly, by doing one simple but unique thing — making sure homeless people's voices are heard.

Etheridge was homeless for three years, years he spent sleeping on Bournemouth beachfront. He'd

ended up in the seaside town after his mother died and he'd turned to the bottle.

"I was too busy drowning my sorrows to see the problems coming," he says, talking in the busy recreation room at Edinburgh's Cowgate Centre. It was a time that opened his eyes, he says. "I hit rock bottom. Now, ironically, I'm kind of glad I've been there, because it took me on a journey."

Faced with frustration at being without a home, becoming invisible in the eyes of society, and being part of a "problem" that wasn't confronted by the local authorities, Etheridge and a friend decided to do something. "While we were sleeping rough, we didn't have any serious issues that affected our day-to-day survival. One night we were lying on the prom and we came up with this idea: Why don't we set something up to help others?"

They set up SPAAG, the Street People's Action and Awareness Group. The aim was to create a place where homeless people could make their views known — to someone they could trust.

"No matter what good practice goes on in the homeless sector, there's still this 'them and us' attitude. Some people don't want to go and sit in a room at 2:30 p.m. on a Tuesday for the 'service users group,'

but they'll still have something to say," says Etheridge.

The group has taken off well in Bournemouth, thanks in part to an enlightened council — the town was awarded regional champion status for homelessness last spring. "We need to engage with those that make the rules," says Etheridge. "We're trying to bring the two groups together."

The idea to walk around the country stemmed from what Etheridge saw as a lack of information on what homeless and ex-homeless people really needed. When Labour came to power in 1997, they pledged to deal with Britain's homelessness by 2004. Later, that deadline was shifted to 2012 — the same year that the Scottish Executive has pledged to provide a home for all. "Do you really think they'll sort things out by then?" It's plain to see that Etheridge isn't hopeful. Without real information about what homeless people want and need, the problems will never be solved, he says.

"If all you get every time a minister speaks at some homeless launch is some service user who's been wrapped in cot-

"No matter what good practice goes on in the homeless sector, there's still this 'them and us' attitude."

— Barry Etheridge



Continued on Next Page

Short Takes

Working wounded

Making beds doesn't sound like hard work, until you have to do it dozens of times a day, in triplicate.

With today's triple sheeting weighing more than 35 pounds, luxury beds topping 100 pounds, and housekeeping carts approaching 500, hotel workers suffer the highest rate of injury of all service workers — something that community leaders called attention to Tuesday in a rally to support employees of Seattle's Westin Hotel.

The Rev. Paul Benz and Pramila Jayapal, director of Hate Free Zone Washington, joined union organizers from Unite HERE to point out that 11 percent of the hotel's housekeepers are currently on leave or working "light duty" due to injuries. To make matters worse, some workers say that managers mistreat them after their injuries or misfile their compensation claims.

That's what housekeeper Sadia Argo says happened to her. On April 5, while leaning over to make a bed, she slipped a disk in her back. But, "My injury claim was denied twice," Argo says. "This injury is because of my work. We are always rushing."

Unite HERE, which is currently in contract negotiations with The Westin's owners, says management's response is simply to increase the workload.

Nickels appointment to SHA draws flack

The Sybil Bailey Saga, Chapter 3: When housing activist John Fox appears before the City

Council again, he'll be armed with a letter signed by 17 other community leaders opposing Bailey's nomination to the Seattle Housing Authority's board of commissioners.

Bailey, 65, is the mayor's pick for one of two tenant seats on the SHA board — a nomination that some public housing tenants have been fighting after working with her on the Resident Action Council, a group that represents SHA tenants.

Among the objections, which were voiced this month at two meetings of the City Council's Housing Committee, Bailey put the Resident Action Council on hiatus for three years while she was president. When she reconvened it, RAC had a new set of bylaws that ended the council's representation of Yesler Terrace, a housing complex that SHA plans to redevelop. RAC Secretary Jim Bush says that he, Bailey, and SHA staff member Marcia Johnson rewrote the bylaws and that SHA residents never voted on them.

"The changes were SHA mandates and not in any way arbitrarily made by me," Bailey later acknowledged in a letter she wrote to her fellow tenants.

But the changes didn't interest members of the Housing Committee. On Aug. 15, they voted 3-0 in Bailey's favor, claiming that Fox, of the Seattle Displacement Coalition, had given them false information about Bailey's position on a 1998 state bill.

The City Council is scheduled to vote on Bailey's appointment Sept. 5. Prior to the vote, Fox plans to recap the tenants' objections in a letter signed by Paul Benz of the Lutheran Public Policy Office, Elana Dix of the Seattle Alliance for Good Jobs and

Housing for Everyone, and Will Parry of the Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans, and others.

— Cydney Gillis

Dishing the tax breaks

More than \$145 million. That's the savings to businesses participating in just four of several hundred of the state's tax-incentive programs, according to the Washington Department of Revenue, the agency that's newly tasked with measuring how much money businesses save — or, viewed another way, how much state government spends — each time they take advantage of the tax breaks.

Seventy-six high-tech operations saved a total of \$66 million in 2005 by utilizing the most

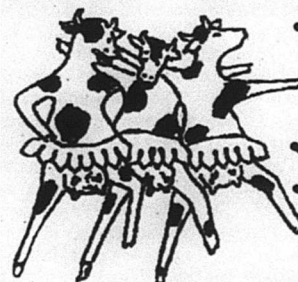
prevalent tax break, the research and development exemption, according to the study. The employers surveyed reported employing more than 87,000 workers. Second to the R&D exemption is a tax break for creating manufacturing jobs in rural counties; companies that did so saved nearly \$57 million last year and retained approximately 30,000 workers.

What kinds of jobs were created by these

beneficiaries of Washington's tax breaks? About 58 percent of the jobs credited to companies that took a tax credit for canning, preserving, freezing, processing, or dehydrating fruits and vegetables paid less than \$30,000 a year. Forty-three percent of the workers making that wage did not get employer-paid medical benefits. High-tech companies taking the R&D break employed more than 5,000 people who made less than \$30,000 a year; 36 percent of those workers did not get health benefits. Half the manufacturing jobs in rural counties paid less than \$30,000 a year; 25 percent did not get health benefits.

— Adam Hyla

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Continued from Previous Page

"I'd love to get half an hour with Tony Blair — I'd give him the hardest half-hour of his life. No matter who you speak to in the system they give you the same parrot-fashion bullshit answer. They seem to forget if you're homeless or ex-homeless that you have an intellect."

ton wool and wheeled out for a photo opportunity, nothing will ever change.

"You very seldom see a failure being interviewed — it's always a success story. You know, 'Little Johnny came in as an alcoholic and look at him now.' That's all very well and good, but those stories are not going to be the ones that effect change for the people who need the help."

The stories that Etheridge hears as he walks the length of the country will, he hopes, form the basis of a nationwide research project that will ultimately create real change.

Back in his home town of Bournemouth, homelessness is being driven underground since new laws were brought in, says Etheridge. The "local connection" regulation — which says that only those with a tie to the area can access long-term support services — has left many fending for themselves.

"The last returned statistic for rough sleepers was nine, but I know for a fact there were at least 40 people living on the streets at that time. They come up with these wonderful statistics and announcements, but they're not honest."

"Then people think all the homeless people they see on the streets are scumbags, because the council is saying there's no homeless problem." That's where the information that SPAAG hopes to collect comes in, he adds. "If you're going to deal with homelessness you have to send out a true image. At the moment they're sending out a message that everything's tickety-boo. They keep putting figures out, but when are they going to start working on it? We've started. I'll meet anybody head on, and if they can convince me how they're going to solve all these problems by 2012, fine. But I'm not hopeful, when they said they would have dealt with it by now."

For Etheridge, tackling homelessness is about more than providing a home. That's the point that the policymakers don't seem to have grasped, he says. "When a lot of people have hit the low point, they need to feel some love in their life — you don't get that from just a roof over your head. For more of us, it's the love of the people and the family that gives you the desire to carry on. I seriously believe that the support networks that are there don't see it from that perspective — and that's where the frustration comes."

Frustration also comes from the way our culture has been taught to treat homeless people, says Etheridge. "One woman told me that when she became homeless, the biggest thing that hurt her was she felt her dignity was being taken away. There's no chance to explain — it's 'This is your situation, you do this, you do that.' Because we're on the low end of the scale they think they can dictate."

It's a long road to Bournemouth from Inverness — fitting, really, as it's an even longer road that Etheridge and his companions face if they really want to change our way of thinking and get the ranks of public-sector middle management to shift homeless services up a gear. Etheridge's first-hand experience of life at the sharp end, coupled with his "big gob," will stand him in good stead, however.

"I'd love to get half an hour with Tony Blair — I'd give him the hardest half-hour of his life. No matter who you speak to in the system they give you the same parrot-fashion bullshit answer. They seem to forget if you're homeless or ex-homeless that you have an intellect." Is there anyone at a national level of power who is thinking the right way about homelessness? "No..." says Etheridge, pausing to try to think of someone. "No, no one."

"I'm often frustrated that the government is giving people a philosophy around homelessness which isn't based on what's actually going on. But if you're willing to listen to us, you might have more understanding," he adds, strapping on his rucksack and striding out to the A1. "That's our driving force." ■

[Resource]

For more information and regular updates on the trip, go to www.spaag.org.uk.

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An Empire and its Outlaws

The Weather Underground deployed for a revolution in the making with solidarity, not violence, in their hearts

By ADAM HYLIA
Editor

"Weather [Underground] and others in its milieu underscored the need and urgency for white people's participation in movements against racism. That's been a change in the 35 years since their formation: that there's a broader consciousness that white people have a role to play in opposing and dismantling systematic racism."

Historian Todd Gitlin bifurcates the social movements of the 1960s into good and bad: the successful idealism of the Civil Rights movement, for example, succeeded by the fractious radicalism of the Black Panthers.

In his first book, Daniel Berger disproves Gitlin's taxonomy with a thorough look at the poster children of the "bad" '60s, the Weather Underground.

Growing out of the antiwar Students for a Democratic Society, Weathermen engaged in a form of military-industrial sabotage: bombing police stations, university research offices, and government buildings that were part of the government's repressive operations, foreign and domestic. Weathermen's reason for being was to serve as a white auxiliary to the campaigns for national liberation and self-determination by people of color. From their formation in 1969 until dissolving in 1977, Weathermen took up arms to, in their words, "take the heat off" the Panthers, the National Liberation Front of Vietnam, and the Puerto Rican independence movement — groups that millions saw as vanguards of an imminent revolution. Solidarity, not self-destructive separatism, was their organizing principle.

While in college, Berger struck up an epistolary conversation with ex-Weatherman David Gilbert, in prison for life for his participation in an armed robbery that went horribly wrong. That led the author to do a series of interviews with former members of the group. The result is a look at the Weathermen that avoids getting distracted by the group's inflammatory tactics and traces its intellectual, anti-racist underpinnings. It's also a powerful testament to the opportunities and lessons of radical movements. It's a look at being a political prisoner in a country without any officially designated political prisoners. And it's about what happens when a group of white, mostly middle-class young people recognizes that they're the heirs apparent of American empire



and must therefore be accountable to the harm it wreaks.

Berger is a Ph.D candidate at the University of Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh. He was in Seattle Aug. 16 to read from his book, *Outlaws of America: the Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity* (AK Press, 2006) at Elliott Bay Book Co. and meet with the Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites (www.carw.org), a contemporary organization supporting the struggles of people of color for economic justice — and therefore an intellectual heir of the Weather Underground.

Real Change: Your friend, ex-Weatherman David Gilbert, will spend the rest of his life in prison, though he never fired a gun in the 1981 armed robbery he did with the Black Liberation Army. Why such a harsh sentence?

Daniel Berger: David allied himself with militant movements against racism, and so got the maximum sentence. He was following other folks on trial who were trying to point out the political nature of [the crime].

RC: What does his sentence say about how we treat political prisoners in the U.S.?

Berger: The severity of the charges clearly shows that any talk of rehabilitation or paying your debt to society is not what's going on, because people have been model prisoners and were never a threat to society beforehand — their actions were against the government and systemic injustice, not individuals.

That doesn't mean that people didn't make big mistakes, because some people did and have to face the consequences. But they were made in the context of a fairly intense war on dissent by the government for which no one on that side has ever paid any price.

In these cases, political contexts and political motivations and political histories aren't taken into consideration; the prosecutors will say, "It doesn't matter, a crime is just a crime," but will equally consistently bring in people's political involvement with radical groups as a way of saying they are dangerous.

JJ, center, the principal author of the "Weatherman" statement, marches with other Weathermen at the Days of Rage demonstration, held in Chicago, October 1969. Photo by David Fenton

RC: Do you think that racial privilege mitigated the sentences of some of the Weathermen?

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Continued from Previous Page

Berger: When the group fell apart in '76 and '77 and people turned themselves in, they felt they were facing years. The majority of them were released on probation. Now, part of that is certainly class privilege: the wealthiest folks could negotiate with attorneys. But Marilyn Buck, another political prisoner who's also white, says it's kind of like, "Welcome back into the fold" — if you're willing to apologize to the system, you can be welcomed back as its wayward children.

RC: Seems like the Weather Underground was so potent in part because it put a white cast on the face of anti-imperialist militancy. What were the effects at the time, and what do they continue to be?

Berger: I think several effects. The really crucial piece of it for me was [that] here's a group of white folks who are trying to grapple with these crucial questions around war, around racism, around class and capitalism — that were put on the agenda by groups like the Panthers and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the National Liberation Front in Vietnam. Here's a group of white folks, most of them middle-class; how do they respond to that? I think Weather was part of a broader movement dealing with these questions; the ways in which they led some parts and followed others was really interesting.

Weather and others in its milieu underscored the need and urgency for white people's participation in movements against racism. That's been a change in the 35 years since their formation: that there's a broader consciousness that white people have a role to play in opposing and dismantling systematic racism. I think Weather's not the only group that did that, but it was part of the shift. I think that's the greatest contribution their legacy has to offer.

RC: What came out of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the late 60s was that the movement needed to atomize. At the same time, the Panthers came along. Why do you think this broad multiracial coalition atomized like that?

Berger: Black Power and Chicano Power movements offered a means of empowerment that white people's participation, often inadvertently, undercut. I think that it was a very important and strategic moment where people realized they needed to set the terms of their own liberation process. That's an enduring part of the legacy. How can white people be involved in that — set their own kind of program and agenda that responds to the overarching program and agenda of these movements?

You see this around immigrant struggles and in New Orleans: you have lots of multiracial organizations and a lot of Black, Latino groups. It's like: We can build a power base in the Black community, and you can build an anti-racist power base in the white community. Once we do that organiz-

ing, we can relate to each other in a different way.

That was a weakness of Weather: its inability to pay sufficient attention and support to the ways white people can organize around their own oppression, with white women responding to patriarchy, working-class people responding to the exploitation of their labor — and it didn't mean abandoning anti-racism. That's really the main difference I see: How can an organization assert a radical anti-racist politics and also build coalition with people in the women's movement [for example]? If I could turn back time and have it my way, I'd want to see those relationships fostered. There was a general inability of people in that time period to get, in a practical way, that all these issues are interrelated.

RC: There was a lot of disparate treatment on the part of law enforcement.

Berger: There was an enormous amount of repression concentrated against the Panthers and other movements by people of color. It proved [Weather's] point, certainly. The murder of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark and other Panther leaders and the fact that there wasn't a significant response from most on the white left proved that the government had kind of an open-door policy to engage in such repression.

Precisely because there wasn't massive outrage in response to repression in the Black movement was one of the reasons why Weather decided to pursue this underground strategy. There's a criticism there — that they didn't have mass support in engaging in these tactics. That's true, but it seems tautological. There isn't mass support for solidarity with the Black movement in white communities, but that doesn't mean such solidarity isn't required. Whether this alienates people or not, when the government is murdering people in their sleep we have an obligation to respond. One former Weather person I talked to called this "raising the cost of living in empire" — that the empire couldn't continue doing these things without at least facing some consequences.

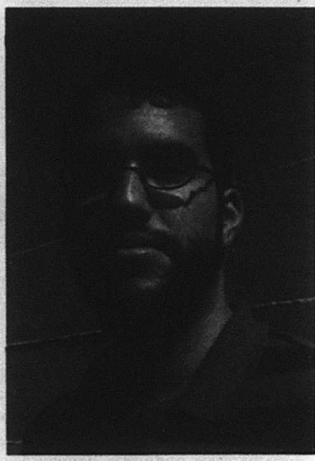
But it isn't synonymous with violence. David Dellinger, a lifelong pacifist, was the only person in court to try and stop police from binding and gagging Bobby Seale when he wanted to serve as his own attorney in court. [Dellinger and Seale were on trial as part of the Chicago Eight, the disparate group of activists charged with inciting a riot at the 1968 Democratic conven-

tion.] The other defendants were much more publicly militant; Dillinger, older, a graduate of divinity school, had a much more staid persona. So it's not simply or primarily about violence; it's about how white people respond.

RC: Do you see contemporary corellatives to Weather? Where?

Berger: Jews working in solidarity with Palestine and against the war in Lebanon is a particularly profound example of that. It's an important question to break from the question of violence. This is about solidarity, which expresses itself differently at different moments. I think you see that today with a range of white anti-racist groups,

like the Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites here in Seattle, that are trying to engage in some concrete form of solidarity with struggles for racial justice while also working with other whites to confront and challenge racism.



DAN BERGER'S BOOK, *OUTLAWS OF AMERICA*, SEES THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND AS A MILITANT ANTI-RACIST FIGHTING FORCE. PHOTO BY ADAM HYLA

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Armed to the Truth

Armed Madhouse reads almost like an intelligent spy novel. Based out of London, Palast is one of the few American journalists that seem free to expose the demise of U.S. democracy: "I think of myself as a war correspondent in the class conflict."

Armed Madhouse: Who's Afraid of Osama Wolf?, China Floats, Bush Sinks, the Scheme to Steal '08, No Child's Behind Left, and Other Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Class War

by Greg Palast

Dutton Books, 2006

Hardcover, 360 pages, \$25.95

Review by BONNIE OLSON

Contributing Writer

If you are one of the millions of Americans who respond to Iraq war discussions with "It's the oil, stupid," then this is the book for you. Greg Palast's *Armed Madhouse* will take you from stupid to stupefied: war profiteering on the grandest scale ever, the economic remaking of Iraq, stealing the 2004 U.S. election, the setup to take '08, and other topics we ignore at our own peril.

Palast presents fantastic schemes, names names, and quotes sources like a man who has nothing to prove. You will not find here thick notations or copious footnotes, but a writing style that is witty and blunt. He is a recipient of the George Orwell Courage in Journalism award, given to him for his groundbreaking BBC exposé of the 2004 voting-theft schemes. Palast's connections, built over 30 years of cutting-edge investigative journalism, result in an

amazing array of secret documents, hidden plans, and candid disclosures from high-powered people. He tracks the shady flow of incestuous global financial relations with sharp analysis grounded in his economics background. The book reads almost like an intelligent spy novel. Based out of London, Palast is one of the few American journalists who seem free to expose the demise of U.S. democracy: "I think of myself as a war correspondent in the class conflict."

Palast changes the frames of reference and redefines the agenda behind the scenes, turning the media-fed worldview upside down. For example, Bin Laden has already gotten what he wants (U.S. forces out of Saudi Arabia). He blasts you with dug-up details that boggle the mind in their audacity: Venezuela's computer voting machines that can print out paper ballots were made, astonishingly, in Florida; New York's standardized test for "No Child Left Behind" asks fourth graders to interpret tennis terms and define "country club." After the 2004 election, the National Association of Secretaries of State, instead of investigating the charges of vote irregularities, were off on a cruise ship for their national convention — courtesy of Diebold Corporation, which gave us

the voting machines that can't tally, and ES&S Corp., expert in creatively crafted voter purge lists.

The heavy weight of Palast's damning evidence is lightened by his comic cutting phrases: a colloquial global shorthand that is at once ironic, blunt, and funny: "the madrasa of neocon fundamentalism," "power outage traced to dim lightbulb in the White House," and "lynching by laptop: Instead of doing the deed in white sheets, they did it in spreadsheets."

Even more important than these audacious facts, Palast exposes the duplicity of the conventional line and unveils hidden agendas. Nothing is as it seems. This is a war about the oil, but what about the oil? The goal is not to secure the vast Iraqi resources for us, but to limit production to keep prices high: "This decline in output has resulted in tripling the profits of the five U.S. oil majors to \$89 billion for a single year, 2003, compared to pre-invasion 2002."

These are just a sprinkling from a book packed with 332 pages of outrageous swindles, bodacious lies, and dark plots. *Armed Madhouse* is a must-read for those who want to be informed of what is really going on, and especially for those of us who think we already know. ■

Sex and Race in a Day's Work

The Motel

Directed by Michael Kang

Opens Sept. 1 at the Seattle Film Forum

Review by LESTER GRAY

Arts Editor

The chassis upon which various coming-of-age tales are set are for the most part identical. Standard fare includes, but is not limited to, unrequited love interests, unscheduled visits from the tumescence fairy, and an insufferable bully who must, for our mutual gratification, receive his comeuppance. *The Motel* does all this, and by setting its tale in the midst of a contemporary Sodom, inundates its young protagonist with the mysteries his predecessors were usually forced to seek out.

Ernest Chin (Jeffrey Chyau) matriculates into puberty with little to recommend it. His immediate environs, a single-story motel run by his mother, caters to Philistines and philanderers seeking low-rent seclusions for quickies, nooners, and other such spontaneous occasions of lust. With thin walls and expressive inhabitants, the passion-lodge provides a graphic sexual primer for the young Ernest. The facility also houses his sister and grandfather, but it is he who

reotypically cast as the Asian taskmaster parent, cruelly attempts to taunt her son into perfection; "Honorable Mention means you lost." She stalks the walkways and parking lot of her enterprise with a baseball bat, kicking in doors and enforcing check-out times, lending a new twist to *coitus interruptus*.

Pro forma, the archetypal mentor appears in Ernest's journey—a harlequin-like male figure, whose over-the-top portrayal pushes the envelope even in *The Motel*'s Lynchian atmosphere. Sam Kim (Sun Kang), a young Korean dandy with a late-model BMW, a maxed-out credit-card, and an insatiable appetite for makeup-heavy prostitutes, affects an Asian hipster patois (think 1960s)—the kind one learns overseas, watching American movies before toming to the states. Conservative and cowed himself, Ernest is enamored with Sam's swagger and overt disregard for authority.

The moment of truth comes when Ernest, in guarded and measured rebellion, decides to put Sam's philosophy to the test. Borrowing his mom's car and taking his sort-of-friend-girlfriend (Samantha Futerman) out for a drive, Ernest busts a move or two that even he doesn't really want to succeed.

The Motel has the time-tested gags and yuks that always work. It's a guy thing. That pretty much sums up its alpha and omega. But it's a mystery why Korean director Michael Kang would make his debut with such stereotypical Asian-American characters. The very successful Black filmmaker Tyler Perry generates similar head-scratching with his African-American comedies, long popular with inner-city audiences.

The rule seems to be that minority characters with qualities generally held to be demeaning can be employed by a moviemaker of that particular race. And the resulting product, as Roger Ebert learned last year when reviewing *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, may not be considered fair game for rigorous critique. Progress, as it relates to issues of ethnicity, is a very curious thing. ■

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Jeffrey Chyau and Samantha Futerman in *The Motel*.



Adventures
in Irony

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The Public Interest

Let's talk about something important! I have right here in front of me a 44-page decision by Judge Anna Diggs that says that Bush's unwarranted wiretapping of Americans' calls out of the country violates the Administrative Procedures Act, the Separation of Powers

Doctrine, the First Amendment to the Constitution, the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, and "the statutory law." I need to read this thing and do all the other important analysis that an analyzer guy like me needs to do in order to talk about this judge's momentous decision to grant a permanent injunction against this violation of your and my civil rights.

But first, how about that John Mark Karr freak? Did you hear how he got prawns and champagne on his flight from Bangkok to the U.S., even though all he deserves is dog food? He is a reprehensible pedophile who may or may not have killed a 6-year-old beauty queen, but regardless, he is a sick reprehensible pedophile who only deserves dog food. Did I just write the words "6-year-old beauty queen"? Well, be that as it may, it could not possibly be that the public's interest in this case has anything to do with the fact that JonBenet Ramsey is the only 6-year-old girl most of us have ever seen competently wearing bright red lipstick, eye makeup, earrings, rouge, and high-heels, while showing off her thighs. We're not the pedophiles, John Mark Karr is. And he only deserves dog food until proven guilty, at which point we'll think of something worse to feed him.

So, where was I? Oh yeah, violation of civil rights, separation of powers, statutory something something....

"This just in: Ernesto has been downgraded from a hurricane to a tropical storm! More details at the top of the hour!" The downgrading of Ernesto Saturday threatened to destroy the entire hurricane reporting industry. Fortunately for the public interest, several experts were quickly

found to remind us that the weakened hurricane could re-strengthen and become news again, if we get lucky.

By the way, I've been wondering what we should call the movie version of Ernesto's potential devastation of one or more as-yet-undetermined Southern or East Coast U.S. cities. Ernesto Blows Again? Ernesto Goes to Cuba? Ernesto Saves Bush from Bad Press? Ernesto Scares Us Stupid?

Back to Judge Diggs. She's a federal district judge, whatever that means. I guess I'll have to do some work and look that up. She says that the public interest in compelling the Bush Administration's unwarranted wiretapping to end is clear. She says the public interest is....

Stop the presses! Tom Cruise and Paramount have ended their relationship! They won't be making truckloads of money hand-in-hand any more! They'll be blocks away from each other, making completely separate mountains of change!

Fortunately for the public interest, Tom Cruise is not retiring. It's not that we care about his acting, but we need him, like I say, for the public interest. If it weren't for Tom Cruise, what public figure would we have to criticize or condemn? I'm sure I couldn't think of one.

So let's see. Judge Diggs spends about 12 pages discussing and ruling upon the Attorney General's claim of a state secrets privilege, then about nine pages discussing and ruling upon the standing of the plaintiffs that had sued the government. I'm sure those discussions are extremely important, for the public interest, so that's why I should be reading them carefully and discussing those discussions here.

But first, I'll talk about whether Pluto is a planet or not. It is of the utmost importance to find out whether scientists in some dumb conference somewhere want to call a big rock six billion kilometers away a planet or not. It's even more important to find out that the scientists don't all agree in the matter, so their "agreement" to agree to say Pluto is not a planet isn't worth anything.

We have a public interest in knowing that! ■

Fortunately for the public interest, Tom Cruise is not retiring. It's not that we care about his acting, but we need him, like I say, for the public interest. If it weren't for Tom Cruise, what public figure would we have to criticize or condemn? I'm sure I couldn't think of one.

(Now and Then)

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eternity
Out there someone is
in love.

—ELIAS PADILLA

When I Awake, Daughter, What Matters

Not the dream I'd been dreaming
but the marrow of my life like cold snap leaves
—runes, really, salmon pink
I raked into gunny sack with bamboo
before the water broke, before you were born.

—DENISE CALVETTI MICHAELS



Fri., Aug. 11, 2:40 p.m., Lenora St.

Officers were flagged down by an anonymous male who pointed out the subject, a transient white male aged 35, and said he was acting aggressively, and had his pants open. They approached the man and noticed that his jeans were open, but he was wearing another pair of jeans underneath. Subject was aggressive when spoken to, but answered all the officer's questions. Subject stated he had not exposed himself, and was just minding his own business. He then turned and went on with whatever he was doing before the officers arrived.

Another complainant flagged down the officers about 50 feet north of where the subject was and stated she had been standing in front of Patagonia selling *Real Change* when she noticed the subject acting aggressively. She said he was yelling at passers-by and trying to start a fight. He had then opened his pants and started masturbating. Complainant said she definitely saw skin, not a second pair of jeans. After a short time he zipped up, but stayed in the area. Complainant feared for her safety and began to walk northbound on First Ave. to get away. When she saw the police arriving, she came back to tell her story. Officers returned to the man and told him they were arresting him for indecent exposure. They secured him in handcuffs and placed him in the back of their car. While being transported to the precinct subject alternated between laughing and crying. He was taken to King County Jail and booked for indecent exposure.

Sat., Aug. 12, 7:50 a.m., Third Ave., Morrison Hotel. Officers were dispatched to a report of a disturbance at the Morrison Hotel on Third Ave. They arrived and found the subject, a transient white male aged 56, wearing only a pair of swimming shorts and an inside-out jacket. They were informed that the man had been removed from the building but kept trying to return. Complainant, a staff member, had found the man inside the elevator, pushing the staff call button. When she went to check on the call she discovered subject inside, masturbating. He had also urinated and defecated inside the elevator. Employees removed him and took him outside, where he continued to expose himself. When officers contacted him he was ranting about conspiracy theories. They then contacted the Crisis Clinic, but were informed that the man was not under the care of a mental health professional. They said he had been involuntarily committed in April 2006 when he was found outside a church wearing only a pair of socks. Officers completed a 72-hour involuntary commitment form and subject was transported by ambulance to Harborview Medical Center.

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.

PROTEST, Continued from Page 1

"The government says if we succeed with the free trade agreement, our exporting will be increased," Kim says. "But even [automaker] Hyundai says that maybe there will be an increase, but the amount will be very small."

Even if exports do go up, that doesn't mean more jobs or higher wages for Koreans, says Cheehyung Kim of Koreans Against War and Neoliberalism, a U.S.-based group that is co-organizing the Seattle protests.

"Hyundai hardly makes its cars in Korea anymore," he says. "It makes parts in various places where wages are cheaper," such as Thailand and the Philippines.

Any jobs that would be created, says Aehwa Kim, will continue to follow the trend of "casualization" — converting full-time jobs to part-time ones with no protections or benefits.

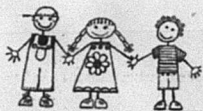
On paper, she says, the WTO and free-trade agreements respect labor rights, "but they don't say anything about casualization. That's a problem."

Bill Center, president the Washington Council on International Trade, which is hosting the talks, was unavailable for comment.

The two Kims (who are not related) also point out that, just to get to the negotiating table, the South Korean government agreed to four U.S. demands without any public process. Among them, the government resumed importing American beef (which had stopped after the mad cow scare), allowed more Hollywood films to be shown in its theaters, and lifted price controls on medications.

If the trade agreement goes through, greater foreign investment could spell the end of Korea's cheap generic drugs and national health insurance, says Cheehyung Kim.

See PROTEST, Continued on Page 12



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Letters

editor@realchangenews.org

No mindless citizens here!

Dear Real Change,

Regarding the Aug. 16 article "Clean Bill of Wealth," I have a serious problem with some of the ideals you are perpetuating in this article. If it is supposed to be unbiased and truthful, then why is there this adherence to the preposterous idea that America is, was, or will be a democracy? [Note: In the article, No on I-920 volunteer Dick Baldwin is quoted saying "There must be some limit on inequality for democracy to function." —ed.]

The United States of America was founded as a republic and never at any point of the founding was the idea of a "democracy" a guiding principle of the founding fathers. Even today, our current standing President also goes along with this idea and perversion of history that America is or was or should be now a democracy. I don't understand it! It's not, won't be, and can never be in any functional way a democracy.

Democracy can and might exist at a local community level, it might even exist in some ways at a city level, but it cannot and will not exist even remotely at a state or federal level — it cannot.

In the future you should keep that in mind and remember that all of your readers aren't mindless citizens but instead proud citizens of an educated stature that understand, know, and realize the implications of the history of the United States.

In the future, please correct your interviewees, educate your reporters, or at least attempt to realize and understand what actually is the historical fact.

As for the estate tax, that's a whole different issue. The dead don't exactly

have representation so it is VERY hard to say that it follows the principles or ideas behind the founding of this great Republic. The ideals of a democracy I wouldn't know about as we don't currently live in a democracy.

Adron Hall

An Educated Historian

Ed. replies: You also don't know about the state's estate tax, which applies to heirs who are gifted an inheritance worth \$2 million or more. It's not a tax on the dead, who don't have (or need) constitutional rights.

God save the readers

Dear Real Change,

I have always purchased *Real Change* everywhere I have encountered people selling it. I want to support those who work to help themselves. I have never actually read the paper until today. I found it presented a well-written point of view not available in other publications. I look forward to reading it in the future.

I was amazed with the editorial of Dr. Wes Browning ("Down with the Lifeless," Aug. 23). I did enjoy his feeling a need to stamp out lifelessness. However, that state is not limited to the homeless. It would be a daunting task.

I presume that this editorial was meant to be humorous. Accuracy is important, even when using humor. People may have once been able to rail at the liberal press. Now it seems people with conservative views own a great many television news stations, radio stations, magazines, and newspapers.

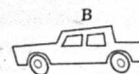
Actually it seems to matter little to Dr. Browning — everyone and everything but he are stupid and mean spirited. Dear God, save us from those who share Dr. Browning's simplistic views.

Joan Rupp
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.

Story Problem 13

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



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Opportunity

Northwest Black Pioneers and Roots family picnic. Sun., Sept. 3, 10 a.m., Gasworks Park, 2101 N Northlake Way. Info: (206) 723-3298.

The group Mostar Sevdah Reunion plays traditional music from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Tickets \$25. Fri., Sept. 8, 8 p.m., Museum of History and Industry, 2700 27th Ave. E. Info: www.kbcs.fm.

Social Services

Social Services - Director, The Homelessness Project. Successful transitional housing program for homeless single parents and their children. Supportive staff and Advisory Board. Committed to diversity. 525-1213 x3333 www.thpinfo.org.

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

Friday 9/1 - Sunday 9/3

FTM 2006: A Gender Odyssey, the Seattle Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, and Three Dollar Bill Cinema have combined forces to create Seattle's first Transgender Film Festival. The three day extravaganza has shorts, documentaries, and feature-length films on coming of age, coming out, the transition, and public restroom policy. Tickets \$3 and up. Various times and locations. Info: www.transconference.org.

Saturday 9/2 - Monday 9/4

North America's largest urban arts festival, **Bumbershoot** draws artists representing the best in music, film, comedy, spoken word, dance, visual, and literary arts, and has events for everyone from DIY: Gad-get Cozies to the music of Kanye West. Tickets \$30. 11 a.m. - 11 p.m., Seattle Center, 305 Harrison St. Info: www.bumbershoot.org.

Tuesday 9/5

Veteran journalist Shelby Scates discusses his new book, *Maurice Rosenblatt and the Fall of Joseph McCarthy*, which analyzes the man who created an ugly era filled with fear and the lobbyist who engineered the downfall of McCarthy's reign. 7:30 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

Thursday 9/7

The panel discussion "Home Heating Alternatives" features experts on solar energy, fireplace inserts, and biodiesel. Find out how to stop your oil addiction, save money, and help the Pacific Northwest breathe more easily. 7 p.m., 650 Orcas St., Suite 220.

Novelist and nature writer Brenda Peterson reads from her writings on the waters, wildlife, and people of the Puget Sound. Peterson has contributed commentary to NPR since 1993 and is the author of 15 books, including *Living By Water*, *Singing to the Sound*, and *Sightings: The Gray Whale's Mysterious Journey*. Her lively storytelling ability involves and inspires audiences. Tickets \$6 and up. 7 p.m., REI Flagship Store, 222 Yale Ave. N.

Friday 9/8 and Saturday 9/9

Dance Split with Tania Isaac and Cynthia Olive is the Northwest premier

of innovative dance with Caribbean, African, and African-American aesthetics. Isaac presents a part personal documentary and part social commentary dance with a blend of movement, words, and images. Oliver, a Bronx-born Virgin Island reader-performer, performs from a variety of her works that confront the intimacies of Black female inner worlds. Tickets \$12 and up.

Broadway Performance Hall, 1625 Broadway.

Saturday 9/9

Celebrate Ch'usok or Harvest Festival Day, one of the great holidays in Korean culture, with food, music, games, and traditional Korean dress. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m., Seattle Center House, 305 Harrison St. Info: www.koamartists.org.

Arab Arts Gumbo presents the traditional arts of a diverse culture with music performed by the MB Orchestra, a DeBke (Arabic line dancing) workshop, and traditional food prepared by Bil-Hana. The festivities include a screening of *Turtles Can Fly*, a poignant film that takes place in Kurdistan on the eve of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. It shows the brutal effects of war through the eyes of children who are forced to survive in a world of rape, landmines, and arms-dealing. 6 p.m., Rainier Valley Cultural Center, 3515 S. Alaska St.

"Celebrate Lebanon: Relief for the Present, Build for the Future" is a musical fundraiser featuring multicultural music, Arabic dance, a silent auction, and more. All proceeds go to the Lebanese Relief Fund. 6:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

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



Director's Corner



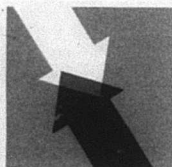
It's more than a little ironic that the federal government has rediscovered housing. This time, it's Housing First, a key concept in Ten Year Plans to End Homelessness everywhere. This is the simple idea — one well-supported by the research — that if you get homeless people into housing it costs less than shelter and, as an added bonus, they're not homeless anymore.

It's one of those, "Well, no shit, Sherlock" sort of ideas. The irony is that I'm one of those "The answer to homelessness is Housing, Housing, Housing" types who used to be derided as simplistic. It's like bell-bottom jeans. If you hang on to anything long enough, it will one day come back in fashion.

The problem is that federal funding hasn't expanded to match their rhetoric. The federal housing budget, at its height in 1978, was \$83 billion. It hit a low of \$18 billion in 1983, and has never been more than \$29 billion since. The eighties, many of you will remember, is when homelessness in most cities tripled and quadrupled. It's been good times ever since.

Meanwhile, our great "victory" was McKinney funding to run homeless shelters, which topped out at \$1.4 billion. Now, thanks to the largesse of the feds, we have homeless assistance funding at a whopping \$1.5 billion in 2007.

Do we have "STUPID" written across our foreheads? Apparently so.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

We Can't Afford to Lose More Housing

Issue: Over 2,000 rental units were converted to condominiums and 681 were demolished in Seattle last year. Displacement of low-income households is reaching record levels. The city doesn't have the ability to fully regulate these occurrences because state law overrides the city's power. However, there are steps the Mayor and City Council can take to slow down or reverse this trend. But will they? What's the effect of the growth and gentrification on our efforts to end homelessness? Do we have to choose between increasing density in our urban centers and preserving affordable housing, or can we do both?

We need to reassess our city's commitment to growth and increased density at all costs. The drive to upzone neighborhoods without attempting to mitigate or even understand the impact on our existing housing stock is one of the most significant causes of homelessness and growing inequality in our city.

Background: Twenty years ago, Seattle had a demolition control law that required developers to replace units they demolished, at a comparable price. It was a significant deterrent to demolition for nearly a decade and guaranteed that the replacement units were provided at developer expense, not taxpayer expense. The courts later ruled that the ordinance violated state law, and, despite promises from previous City Councils and previous Mayors to replace that law with something similar and legally defensible, our current council and Mayor have taken no action.

While we are still waiting for a city report to learn exactly who is affected, there is no question that the people living in these units are having their lives significantly disrupted by the loss of their homes. In the case of condo conversions, historically, this phenomenon has disproportionately displaced senior citizens. Buildings that are demolished tend to be larger, older duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and single-family low-cost rentals serving families with kids. Given that the majority of families in Seattle with kids are renters who depend on a stock of these larger, affordable units, that loss in such high numbers hurts our school system and hampers our ability to deliver good education to the kids of these uprooted homes.

Action: Join us for a forum and discussion on the loss of affordable housing in Seattle: Wed., Sept. 13, 5 to 7 p.m. in the Bertha Knight Landes Room at City Hall (600 4th Ave., between James and Cherry).

Come join in or listen to a discussion on these issues. Guests include John Fox of the Seattle Displacement Coalition, Sharon Lee of the Low Income Housing Institute, Yolanda Sinde of the Community Coalition for Environmental Justice, and Nicole Macri of the Seattle King County Coalition for the Homeless.

For more information, contact Rachael Myers at organizer@realchangenews.org or call (206)441-3247 ext. 201.

ROADS, Continued from Page 1

each employee beginning in July 2007 (though those who subsidize worker bus passes are exempt, says Smith); second, drivers seeking to park in commercial lots will experience a tax that starts at five percent next year, culminating in 10 percent by 2009; and, third, property owners will be taxed 38 cents for every \$1,000 of their property's worth. That means, says Smith, a \$400,000 home would owe \$155 annually.

The first two pieces of the tax package, she says, have already been approved by the council and thus don't require voter approval. It's up to voters, however, to give the property tax the green light. If the property tax doesn't muster support, says Smith, then there will be less money to confront some of the city's transportation woes. "Then it's back to the drawing board."

Also on the boards for voters will be an initiative known as Transit Now. Created by county executive Ron Sims, the proposal hopes to increase bus service along 35 Metro routes with the highest ridership; provide new services for residential areas in East and South King County; create bus rapid transit (BRT) along five key travel corridors; and form public/private partnerships. Sims' plan hopes to achieve this goal by collecting one-tenth of one percent from sales tax revenue. Smith says this represents a \$25 yearly cost for the average household.

While the overall proposal seeks to increase bus service by up to 20 percent system-wide over the next decade, parts of the plan, if the initiative is passed, would offer some changes much sooner: increased services to the heaviest routes would begin in January. The opportunities proffered by Transit

Now are ones Smith says her group can fully endorse. "We love it," says Smith.

And further down the road, for potential ballot measures in 2007, voters could face Sound Transit 2, which will address such transportation issues as light rail to Bellevue and Northgate, along with more Sounder and express buses. This initiative will be linked to a measure known as the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID), which would fund transit during road construction. Vehicle excise taxes and sales taxes, combined with some state and federal dollars, would fill the coffers to fund these initiatives.

But right before us, says Smith, are decisions that could not only open avenues to fix our crumbling infrastructure but also provide the financing to keep up with any problems that may arise.

"The problem," says Smith, "is not going away." ■

[Resources]

For more info on the Transportation Choices Coalition, take a trip here: www.transportationchoices.org.

If you think now is the time for Transit Now, move on over here: www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/transitnow.

PROTEST, Continued from Page 10

"Korean ownership will lose out," he says. "What follows that is privatization of state-owned industry, including the railroads and health insurance."

"The single most important thing," he adds, "is that the government is letting go of responsibility for the welfare of its people and letting the corporations control the welfare of the people."

South Korea and the United States plan to finish their negotiations by March of next year. But Aehwa Kim says it won't be without a fight.

"At the beginning of this year," she says, a poll showed that "75 percent [of South Koreans] said, yes, they were for the free trade agreement. But, at the time, we didn't have any information."

"Now 55 percent of the people say no," she adds. "That was our work." ■

[Events]

South Korea-U.S. trade talks take place

Sept. 6-9 in Seattle. Protests start Wed., Sept. 6, with a rally at Westlake Plaza (12:30 p.m.) and concert (6:30 p.m.)

On Sept. 8, a traditional Korean protest march ("Three Steps Forward, One Bow") starts 1 p.m. at Westlake. On Sept. 9, a Korean funeral march leaves the convention center at 1 p.m. for Victor Steinbrueck Park for a closing rally at 2 p.m.

[Resources]

For information on South Korea-U.S. trade negotiations, go to www.nofia.or.kr/en/.



AEHWA KIM HAS SET UP SHOP IN SEATTLE TO PREPARE FOR THE SEPT. 6-9 TRADE TALKS BETWEEN SOUTH KOREA, HER NATIVE COUNTRY, AND THE U.S. PHOTO BY ELISA HUERTA-ENOCHIAN

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