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ISSUES • INSIGHT • IMPACT

In a Family's Way

Quality help obstructing entry to
services for homeless parents, kids

By CYDNEY GILLIS
Staff Reporter

In the short term, the struggle to end homelessness is forcing more families to live on the streets of Seattle.

That's what some shelter operators are saying in the wake of a city funding shift from basic "mats on floors" to a system of "enhanced shelter" that includes case managers and help to get financial assistance, jobs, and housing.

Since April 1, when most shelters started the city's new contracts, however, the families that do get shelter are staying months longer, leaving those who've just lost housing to fend for themselves. It's a bureaucratic flaw that some program directors lay directly on the doorstep of the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, which calls for eventually phasing out basic shelter in favor of subsidized housing.

"Our families are staying longer in emergency services because it just takes them longer to move into permanent housing," Katie Warner, director of Family Services' transitional assistance programs, told the members of the Seattle City Council at an August roundtable on the move to enhanced shelter.

Last year, Family Services provided 544 families with shelter or motel vouchers. This year, says Community Relations Director Steve Winter, the organization is on track to serve 400 families — a decline of 26 percent.

As a result, "We have more families living in their cars right now," Warner told city councilmembers. Because of the emphasis on in-depth services, she said, "We can just see fewer families."

Other shelter operators confirm seeing and hearing from more families with nowhere to go, particularly hard-to-place cases where a parent has a criminal record, a history of domestic violence, a problem with



MANY UCH, A CAMBODIAN REFUGEE, LOST HIS STATUS AS A LEGAL RESIDENT ALIEN DUE TO A FELONY CONVICTION IN 1994. HE IS WORKING TO CHANGE IMMIGRATION LAWS THAT WILL HAVE HIM, AND OTHERS LIKE HIM, DEPORTED TO CAMBODIA. PHOTO BY ROSETTE ROYALE

Back Home, Against His Will

Film relates the saga of Cambodian refugee facing deportation

By ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Reporter

For a brief moment, it appears as if Many Uch is in two places at once.

First, there is Uch, 30, walking across the floor to head out the front door of his White Center home, his two-month-old daughter, Chandhrea, cradled in the crook of his arms. Seconds later, as the first Uch stands outside and says goodbye to the newborn and his fiancée, another Uch materializes, this one on a television screen.

This TV Uch, free of the beard possessed by his flesh-and-blood double, stares off into the mist that hovers behind a ferry. The live Uch enters the house and walks right in front of his televised self. And, in a flash, the televised Uch disappears.

Of course, only one Uch (pronounced OUCH) exists. But if he were able to divide himself in two, perhaps it might make his current predicament easier. That way, one Uch could remain in Seattle, with his family, while the other Uch could be consigned to Cambodia, the land Uch fled as a child.

As it stands now, Uch, a Cambodian refugee, is caught in a snare even Houdini couldn't escape: Due to a decades-old felony conviction, Uch is to

be deported, at an undetermined date, back to his homeland by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Once he leaves, he can never return to the United States.

"I try not to think about it," says Uch. Uch's story is recounted, along with the tales of two other Cambodian refugees in the Seattle area in similar straits, in the documentary *Sentenced Home*. Well received at film festivals around the country this past year, the documentary — a copy of which Uch was playing on his DVD player at home — takes an unflinching look at the emotional toll immigration laws inflict upon Cambodian families with relatives caught up in the criminal justice system. The film will enjoy free screenings this weekend as part of the Seattle Public Library's September Project, an event meant to shed light on an important national issue in connection with the remembrance of 9/11. This year, the Project sets its sight on immigration.

For Uch, the story conveyed in *Sentenced Home* is not one of an immigrant, but of a refugee, one whose life may ultimately take an unexpected

COME TOGETHER

This fall, voters can say No, to I-933 and, Yes, to protecting the common good and private property.

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DOWN UNDER

When the viaduct goes down, the homeless camped below will likely see a great change in services.

PAGE 3

SKIN FLINCH

After renouncing his ways, a skinhead undergoes laser surgery to remove tattoos that dredge up his past.

PAGE 6

NERD UP

Ever wondered why Dr. Wes knows so much about so much stuff. Well, you're not alone. So does he.

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Declaration of Interdependence

I-933 is wrong: Private property rights and the common good must be protected together

By NOEMIE MAXWELL

Institute for Washington's Future

Private rights and the common good are interdependent. They cannot be effectively protected in isolation from each other.

The property rights movement, which has been gaining increasing political power in Washington state, proposes an interesting foundation for human rights: property ownership. Citizens' Alliance for Property Rights, a Washington group that backs I-933, the "property fairness" initiative, tells us that "Property rights are really human rights and the very foundation of a free society."

So, what about the rights of people who don't own property?

Imagine a patch of woods owned by a dozen families. Right in the center flows a stream where salmon swim. These woods and stream connect with wetlands that drain into a public reservoir and a neighborhood lake where children splash and play in the summer. In a basic sense, every member in this community is part owner of these waterways that travel through private and public land. Homeowners, homeless people, and apartment-dwellers alike drink and swim in clean, sparkling water and are legally prohibited from poisoning it or blocking its flow.

In November, Washingtonians will vote on Initiative 933, known variously as the "property fairness" and "developers' loophole" initiative. If I-933 passes and the courts uphold it, a broad range of environmental and zoning restrictions on private property will be redefined as government "damage" to property. Most likely, the owners of that small patch of woods will be permitted under I-933 to build right up to the edge of their stream — or demand financial compensation from the state for the fair market value of that lost commercial

opportunity. Oregon passed a similar but less extreme law, Measure 37, and property owners are filing hundreds of claims demanding many millions of dollars from the state.

Air and water don't obey property boundaries. Transmission fluid running off a quickie mart parking lot into a stream will enter the blood of a nursing mother and baby who never go near that property. I-933 denies this physical reality of our connectedness. It denies as well the social reality that all people share the responsibilities and benefits of livable communities, whether we own land or not.

It is no wonder that over 200 Washington organizations including the Sierra Club, the Washington chapter of Republicans for Environmental Protection, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, and the Washington State Council of Firefighters ask us to vote NO on I-933. Washington State Grange, which has not taken an official position, warns that it finds cause for concern to agricultural lands in I-933. Sightline Institute tells us that it will cost over a billion dollars per year to administer. Washington's Department of Ecology tells us that it will deprive Washington of the ability to regulate its own waterways and air.

And yet there is a good chance that I-933 will pass. Why?

• Special interest support

I-933 gains tremendous power from the funding of developers who will gain financially from the overthrow of Washington's environmental laws. It is also supported by organizations that believe, as Grover Norquist said in 2001, that government should be made small enough "to drown in the bathtub." The biggest financial contributor to I-933, \$200,000 so far, is Americans for Limited Government, an Illinois group

that is funding tax and environmental law rollbacks in 10 states this year.

• Private citizen support

I-933 also has significant support from private citizens.

In both urban and rural areas, laws protecting increasingly vulnerable resources have proliferated, impacting property owners. Property taxes have become increasingly unfair. Poor people, the middle class, and small businesses pay much more than the wealthy and experience more hardship from inadequate public services. Washington farmers are in trouble. Some communities lose several farms per winter. Some wheat growers receive less per bushel of wheat in 2005 than they did in 1948. Too many people in farm country are eligible for food stamps. In such conditions, it is natural that people will assert their private property rights.

But I-933 is not the answer. It has a fatal flaw, proposing to protect private property while ignoring the common good.

The environmental movement has been criticized for the opposite mistake: fighting for ecological protection while ignoring the economic welfare of individuals. In recent years, environmentalism has been learning from this mistake.

Private rights and the common good are interdependent. They cannot be effectively protected in isolation from each other. Property values fall in blighted neighborhoods. People suffering from economic injustice are unlikely to support laws that protect the environment. It is time to leave failed ideas behind us and adapt to current realities. Washington faces profound environmental and economic challenges. We can meet them successfully only if we learn to protect people, communities, and the environment together. ■

[Event]

The Institute for Washington's Future is sponsoring "On Common Ground: Innovations in Energy and Agriculture and a New Civic Awakening," a forum with Jim Hightower. It's part of the institute's Back to the Roots program, which facilitates dialog and action on critical questions of sustainable development, environment, and community. Town Hall, 8th and Seneca, Thurs., Sept. 14, at 7 p.m. More information: www.forwashington.org.

Noemie Maxwell is on the board of the Institute for Washington's Future, a nonprofit research and education center dedicated to the renewal of progressive values: community, equity, participation, and a sound environment.



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

Mission Statement:

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

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

On the Web at

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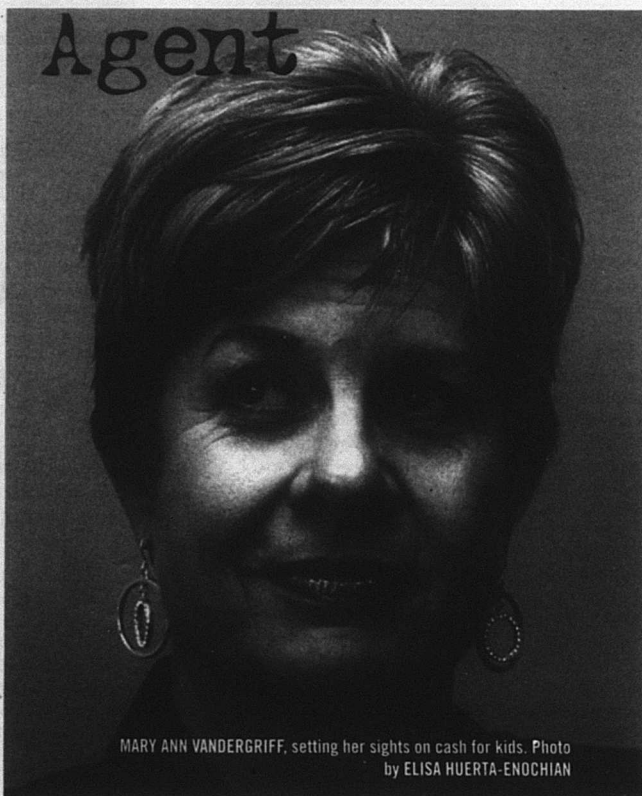
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Change Agent

"Every time I heard a no, I tried to turn it into a yes." That is the fundraising strategy of Mary Ann Vandergriff, who along with Annette Grupido, has raised over \$35,000 for homeless youth. These funds go towards Project Cool, which distributes new backpacks and age-appropriate school supplies to a variety of organizations serving kids and families.

Both Vandergriff and Grupido work for Windemere as real estate agents and Windemere Foundation representatives, and in addition to their career and parenting duties, they have spent countless hours promoting their cause. Vandergriff got involved in part because of her experience as a single mother. She understands that the point of desperation is often only a paycheck away for many families. Grupido adds that many people don't understand how hard school is for kids without permanent housing. "They literally have to carry everything with them," she says. Both women see Project Cool as a way to empower kids to get through the difficult years of middle and high school with their heads held high.

—Rachel Rubinstein



MARY ANN VANDERGRIFF, setting her sights on cash for kids. Photo by ELISA HUERTA-ENOCHIAN

Tumbling Down

Non-profits look at impact on homeless viaduct goes

CYDNEY GILLIS
Staff Reporter

"Work is what many of our clients want most, not more sandwiches."
—Mark Dalton,
Department of
Social and Health
Services

Chris Martin stands outside the Compass Center, a social services agency in the shadow of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. Photo by Justin Mills



One way or another, the Alaskan Way Viaduct is coming down in the next two years. It's just a question of whether construction workers take it down in 2008 or an earthquake gets it first.

Along Seattle's waterfront, non-profit agencies that serve the poor, elderly, and homeless are hoping it's not the latter. But whether it's a tunnel or an elevated arterial that replaces the downtown stretch of State Route 99, human service providers are beginning to take a look at the project's disruption — and possible benefit — once a 24-hour construction site is on their doorstep.

When the viaduct is gone, many homeless people will lose a sheltered spot to sleep, pushing them south into the stadium district or north into Belltown. For 78 men who sleep in short-term housing at Pioneer Square's Compass Center, which stands four feet from the viaduct, the noise will never end. And dust and diesel fumes won't make breathing any easier for 60 elderly residents of the Pike Place Market's Heritage House, which overlooks the highway.

Those are a few of the concerns that service providers raised last week at a meeting the Washington State Department of Transportation held at Compass Center. WSDOT is seeking input on how to reduce the impact of the project, which could last up to 12 years (for an elevated structure), involve

2,000 construction workers a day, and reroute traffic through downtown Seattle.

Among the ideas, participants suggested WSDOT form street teams to spread information to the homeless, post notices in low-income buildings, and provide their agencies with advance notice when bus routes will change or the power will be out. (The project will start with 30 months of relocating utility lines that are currently housed in the right-of-way below the viaduct.)

One idea that came up again and again is to provide an opportunity for downtown's poor and homeless to get jobs working on the viaduct, possibly by developing an apprenticeship program.

"That would be a pretty amazing win-win," said Erin Healy, a planner with the city's homelessness intervention program.

"Work is what many of our clients want most, not more sandwiches," Mark Dalton, director of the Department of Social and Health Services Belltown office, wrote in an email after the meeting. "This would be a very good way of demonstrating the project's commitment to the surrounding residential neighborhood."

Another participant said the project will increase tension between the haves and have-nots as the homeless move to other parts of the city.

"All the folks sleeping in and around the viaduct will be displaced," the Compass Center's M.J. Kiser said after the meeting, "but the viaduct falling on top of them is not a good alternative." ■

[Public Hearings]

Through Sept. 22, WSDOT is taking public comment on the supplemental draft of its SR 99 environmental impact statement, which is online at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/viaduct. Four public hearings are scheduled Sept. 7, 4-7 p.m., at downtown's Plymouth Congregational Church, 1217 Sixth Ave.; Sept. 12, 5-8 p.m., at West Seattle's Madison Middle School, 3429 45th Ave. S.W.; Sept. 13, 5-8 p.m., at the Ballard Community Center, 6020 28th Ave. N.W.; and Sept. 14, 4-7 p.m., again at Plymouth Congregational Church.

Just Heard...

Lag time

The number of allegations that Seattle police officers used excessive force or broke rules jumped in 2005. So did the time it takes for the Investigation Section of the Office of Professional Accountability to review the complaints. Now, City Councilmember Nick Licata is sponsoring a resolution asking the OPA and Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske to set a standard for timeliness. Licata says the volume of complaints is "hindering thorough and timely investigations," and most are taking about four months to close.

OPA director Sam Pailco is backing the resolution; she agrees that the department could stand to make the investigations more efficient. "We recognize more than anyone else the importance of a timely reply," she says. The City Council's Public Safety committee votes on the resolution this Friday.

—Adam Hyla

Um, I work

The Seattle Housing Authority has scheduled the first meeting of the Yesler Terrace Citizens Review Committee, a body that will provide input on redeveloping the city's last garden community, Oct. 12.

But Kristin O'Donnell, president of the Yesler Terrace Community Council, is hopping mad about the time: 2 p.m., a choice that all but ensures people with jobs won't be able to attend.

"Of the residents on the committee, all but one have day jobs," O'Donnell says. "Somehow it seems to be part of [SHA's] equation, not to mention the residents of the community."

Though every other public agency seems to schedule public meetings in the evening, at times the public can attend. "They didn't think about people having day jobs," O'Donnell says.

Stay tuned for efforts to get the meeting time changed.

Rubber Stamped

It's hardly a democracy when a person who rewrites an organization's rules behind closed doors is considered a good candidate for a public commission.

That was City Council President Nick Licata's sentiment Tuesday at a council meeting where he raised serious questions about Sybil Bailey, the mayor's choice to fill one of two tenant seats on the governing board of the Seattle Housing Authority.

On Aug. 1 and 15, a number of SHA tenants and two members of its Resident Action Council, which Bailey served on, testified against her appointment to the board. Among the issues they raised: Bailey rewrote the RAC's bylaws to cut out representation of Yesler Terrace residents. Licata pointed this out Tuesday, along with the fact that the bylaws were never ratified by a vote of SHA residents. "It's just not a track record you can support," Licata said.

All the same, the council approved Bailey's appointment to the SHA board. Only Licata and Peter Steinbrueck voted against it.

—Cydney Gillis

UCH, Continued from Page 1

— and what he considers an unwarranted — circular journey.

The circle begins in 1979, when a three-year-old Uch, cradled in cloth that hung from his mother's shoulders, fled the Khmer Rouge, the Maoist-extremist organization responsible for the death of an estimated 1.7 million people. Along with his two brothers, Uch and his mother hid in the forest for over a year, living on what she could forage. "My mother," says Uch, "she's a survivor."

Survival brought the family to a Thai refugee camp. After being shuttled from camp to camp for four years, Uch and his relatives were accepted by the U.S. government as refugees.

First stop in his adopted country, a housing project in Richmond, Va. After a year in the mid-Atlantic, the Uch family boarded a Greyhound, bound for the northwest. Second stop, another housing project, this time in Des Moines, south of Seattle. There, unable to speak English, Uch found himself isolated in this new multicultural community — a "minority within a minority," as he describes it.

Hanging with other male Cambodian refugees, Uch says he found a circle of friends who stood together to face down the ridicule directed at them

due to their nationality. "It was about sticking together," he says.

But these companions were tapping into a growing dissent felt by young urban males in the late '80s, a dissent that manifested in a dangerous form: gangs. Uch says that he first got pulled into the gang orbit around the time he was in the eighth grade. "We didn't know any better," says Uch.

Uch says that he joined the Local Asian Boyz, and that, at its zenith, its membership stood at 100 strong. He concedes the Local Asian Boyz, as a whole, was involved in some "crazy shit": burglary, car theft, drug dealing, violence against other gangs. For Uch, these actions culminated in a home invasion, an act suggested by a fellow gang member. Uch drove the getaway car, in which were stashed two handguns, a shotgun, and a rifle. He was arrested and charged with first-degree robbery with a deadly weapon. It was 1994. Uch was 18. After pleading guilty, he was sentenced to 55 months. "Do I regret it?" Uch asks. "I regret what I did, but I'm not regretting who I am."

After nearly a year in jail, Uch says he was notified by the then-INS that he was to be deported back to Cambodia upon his release. Admitting that being locked up didn't put him in "the right state of mind," he says he never sought to obtain a waiver of his deportation.

But he knew Cambodia, at the time, didn't repatriate deportees. Uch imagined that after his incarceration was over, he'd spend, at most, a few months being detained by immigration before being released.

The moment he was released in 1997, after having served 40 months in state custody, he was immediately picked up by Immigration. Uch was detained, without the prospect of a trial, for another 28 months.

"All in all, I can't say prison was good," claims Uch, "but it really changed my life."

To begin with, he lost his resident alien status. Another change was that he found himself homeless. Through his mother, he secured a place to stay for a short while. Next he landed a job working in a travel agency, turning the floor into his bed at night. It was during this time that he met the woman who would become his fiancée. It was also during this time he avoided any interaction that could have endangered his parole. "I did a good job of staying away from trouble," says Uch.

But in 2002, Cambodia and the United States entered into an agreement wherein Cambodia agreed to repatriate those on U.S.-deportation lists. Uch's name was among that number.

See UCH, Continued Next Page

Short Takes

Outdoor meals sited

It took five years for the city to find a spot for the Outdoor Meals Program last time around. This time, it took all of four months.

Al Poole, director of the city's homelessness intervention program, says he's reached an agreement with the Meals Partnership Coalition and the Seattle Department of Transportation to permanently site the meals on a city carpool lot at Columbia Street and Sixth Avenue, a location behind the Seattle Municipal Building under Interstate 5.

Poole says Operation Sack Lunch, one of three organizations that serves meals at the current site, First Presbyterian Church on First Hill, has agreed to manage the new site under a one-year city contract of roughly \$80,000 to \$90,000. It will use the money, in part, to schedule other meal servers and provide security and clean-up.

To make the site usable, Poole says the city will provide \$25,000 to \$30,000 for a restroom, seating, planters, and an extra-large canopy. Poole expects the site to accommodate seven to eight meal providers, the number that operated at the plaza of the Public Safety Building prior to its demolition and the search that led to First Presbyterian.

The only fly in the ointment, Poole says, is that the Washington State Department of Transportation has yet to sign a final contract. It owns the carpool lot and, early next year, plans to fit the freeway stanchions at the site with "ecology blocks," which he says the Department of Homeland Security requires to protect the columns in a bomb blast.

If WSDOT doesn't agree to complete the work before Dec. 31, when the Outdoor Meals Program contract expires at First Presbyterian, meal service could be interrupted, Poole says.

The carpool lot was on a list of sites that Poole's office drew up in the search that led to First Presbyterian, but

meal providers ruled it out because it lacked amenities — something the mayor's backing and city funding have addressed, Poole says, along with the meal providers' recent demand to use the plaza at City Hall.

"It will probably be a more dignified place for people to eat than being stared at at City Hall," Poole says. "That was a political statement."

—Cydney Gillis

Investment plan

State-wide advocacy group Washington Citizen Action (WCA) and its national partner USAction Education and Research Fund kicked off the Invest in Washington's Future plan on Thurs., Aug. 31, by releasing a report that identified areas needing to be addressed on the state and national level. The report evaluates education, health care, and energy issues Washingtonians face and encourages citizens to take action to address these challenges.

According to the report, the cost of health care increased 73 percent between 2000 and 2005 and the average family pays 25 percent of its income to health care. The plan calls for "broad cooperation from businesses, individuals, lawmakers, and providers" in order for all Americans to have access to effective and affordable health care.

The report argues for universal early childhood care, affordable higher education, and a commitment from citizens and government to low-performing schools and districts. It says the state spends 42.1 percent of its operating budget on K-12 education, whereas 25 years ago it spent 50.4 percent.

"If we still spent 50.4 percent," said Will Pitz, the Executive Director of WCA in an email to *Real Change*, "we would have an additional \$2 billion for education."

The plan defines clean energy standards and goals for the U.S. to measure up to by the year 2020. It states

that Washingtonians would save \$961 million by 2020 if 20 percent of the nation's energy came from renewable resources. It also says 355,000 American jobs in the field of renewable energy could be created by that year. The report suggests a 40-mile-per-gallon standard on automobiles could create more than 40,000 jobs nationwide in the automobile sector, and says if the standard is achieved in 2016, it would save Washingtonians \$1.3 billion in gas in 2020.

Congressman Jim McDermott, Eastlake High School teacher Jill Van Glubt, retired nurse Jeanette Wenzel, and small business owner Maribel Perez explained the report in an Aug. 31st conference call. Rep. McDermott expressed his frustration with Congress during the call,

saying, "I put forward proposals, but they never get heard."

Acknowledging the power that constituents of Congress have to petition and influence the opinion of their representatives, he added, "The grassroots have a good chance."

Accompanying the release of the Invest in Washington's Future plan, WCA has launched a postcard campaign to raise awareness on the problems the health care system faces. WCA is also organizing forums for citizens to dialogue with candidates and current legislators, while simultaneously releasing issue-specific policy reports in the hopes of enriching the discussions citizens have with officials.

—Billy Joyce



Walking for Labor

HUNDREDS OF MARCHERS MARKED LABOR DAY MONDAY, SEPT. 4, WITH A RALLY AND MARCH THROUGH THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF SEATTLE. MARCH ORGANIZERS CALLED FOR SOLIDARITY ACROSS RACIAL, GENDER, AND CLASS LINES, AND ASSERTED THE DIGNITY AND RIGHTS OF ALL WORKERS. PHOTO BY ELLIOT STOLLER

UCH, Continued from Page 4

Since then, Uch has had to check in monthly with immigration officials, to determine whether or not his time for deportation has arrived. In the more than four years since the agreement has been signed, 151 Cambodians have been removed from the United States.

Uch says he still must call ICE on the fifth of every month, informing officials of his job status and current address, along with detailing any new entanglements with law enforcement. (He has none.)

While the reality that he will one day be deported remains, Uch says he and his family don't talk about it, choosing to concentrate on other things important to their lives. "We're not going to let this deportation thing hang over our heads."

For Uch, that involves not only doing outreach for the film but also working to get the ears of legislators who may be able to amend laws that deport refugees and immigrants back to their native countries, long after they've paid their dues to the U.S. criminal justice system and society.

"My job is to try and change the law," says Uch. "And then my worries will go away." ■

[Resource]

The Seattle Public Library will feature two showings of *Sentenced Home*, along with other documentaries on immigrants and refugees, as part of the September Project on Sat., Sept. 9, and Sun., Sept. 10. Visit www.spl.org/default.asp?pagelD=audience_current_septproject for library locations and times.

To learn more about ways to stop deportation of Cambodian refugees, check out www.deportableguy.org.

His legacy

We couldn't grow vegetables because
people who grew vegetables
in his mind
did so from necessity
We couldn't use the dryer
for the same reason we couldn't turn on the heat
He strung up clothes on a line inside the house
because if it hung outside
people might think that we had no dryer
or worse
that we were poor
I couldn't shower over two minutes
soak, soap, then rinse
I couldn't open the refrigerator without knowing precisely what
it was
i was after
He had weathered depressionary times
overseas in his plundering naval sinecure
He grew up poor and died technically rich
but he was always poor
far as i was concerned

He was my grandfather
and i hated him then
and i hate him still
He taught me this
This was all he taught me
as well as to turn the light off
whenever i exit a room
which quite often
i let burn
whether i'm in there
or not

-LARRY CRIST

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More than Skin Deep

Jason Mitchell goes under the laser to erase a difficult past

By JOANNE ZUHL
street roots

"I basically want to get my outside to where my inside is at. Inside, I don't agree with anything that's on my skin."

The guns of Jason Mitchell's youth didn't go bang. They buzzed and hummed, discharging a stinging arsenal of ink. They were homemade weapons perfectly suited to carving out a misspent youth, made from the innards of Sony Walkman cassette players, a button, a needle, and the ink shaft of a Bic pen. That's how Jason learned to make his first tattoo gun. In working class Niagara Falls, New York, a lot of guys made their own guns the same way, and Jason eagerly offered his body for target practice.

He got his first one, a cross on his right arm, when he was 14, skipping school with a friend to meet a guy named Chuck. It's still visible through the inky tapestry. He accumulated tattoos until he was almost 20 and today sports a patchwork skin of green and black, illustrating his life as it was: his rebellious youth, his crippling social anxieties, and his preemptive sabotage to seize control of his own identity as an outcast. With "anarchy" tattooed across his neck and "keep away" on his knuckles, what part of "Don't mess with me" would people not get? And if they didn't mess with him, he wouldn't have to deal with them.

But there's a lot more to Jason than meets the eye.

"Don't worry about my noises," Jason, grimacing, tells Dr. Robert Bentley as he applies what Jason describes as a cigarette burn over one of the SS symbols on his arm. "Just keep going. Just keep going," he repeats in earnest. Only a layer of plastic wrap separates Jason's skin from the laser gun, preventing evaporating skin cells from gumming up the wand that presses against the skin. There are groans, squirms, and wiggling feet like a patient deflecting the pain of a dentist's drill. But overall, Jason says, it wasn't as bad as before. The infrared rays from the laser are absorbed by the dark pigment of the tattoos, and as the



ink fades with each application, the pain from treatment is lessened. In this session, he went for his face. The laser's burn inflames the skin under the tattoo, giving a three-dimensional effect to the devil horns over his eyes.

"You know how when you're frying something and grease splatters and burns you? This is like someone taking a needle and poking you really hard and at the same time squirting in burning grease. A lot of people say it's like burning grease and a snapping rubber band, but a rubber band is way more easy."

"It definitely helps people," says Dr. Bentley, an ophthalmologist in Portland who volunteers his time with Project Erase, Outside In's program to remove tattoos, at no charge, from people who have experienced gang involvement or homelessness. Using a highly specialized laser, volunteer doctors such as Bentley remove tattoos that are barriers to going back to school, getting a job and reintegrating into society. It can also be a matter of survival. Young men have been murdered for their gang-related markings, even as they waited on a list to have them removed.

Many people are very happy with their tattoos, Bentley says, but having administered the treatment to many men and women, seeing their pain, he knows the determination it takes for those who want to shed their old skin.

"You've got to be ready to be done with your tattoos to do this," he says, gesturing to the table where Jason just endured his latest dose.

Results are not immediate. It takes

weeks for the broken down ink to be absorbed into the immune system, which works to rid the body of the unwelcome element. After several weeks, the tattoo fades, and what remains of the ink is simply pissed out.

"It removes that barrier, so it gives people the opportunity to go into an interview without the first thing people noticing is their visible tattoos," said Stacy Hall, clinic manager for Outside In. "And consequently it increases their self-esteem and lets them move in their lives in a different way than before."

The program is widely popular, and has served 400 people since it was launched in 2000 and has more than 50 on a waiting list for treatments. But funding has come and gone, and the program is currently unfunded. Even with volunteer doctors and assistants, the service costs Outside In about \$70,000 a year to operate, placing it in peril of being canceled, Hall said. The same service costs hundreds of dollars per treatment at hospitals, Hall said, putting it out of reach for people experiencing homelessness or poverty who can't get a job because of their tattoos. "We're the only game in town for people with no money," Hall said.

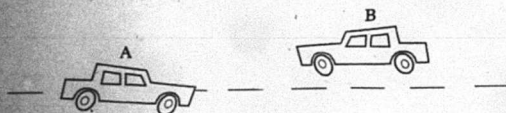
Back in Niagara Falls, a world where time flowed like water and ink was cheap, tattoos became Jason's first addiction. "There's nothing to do in that town," he says of Niagara Falls. "There's nothing there."

He went into full gear at age 16, after he served a year and a half in a boys' home for delinquency. His ticket there was skipping school, smoking pot, and joy riding in stolen cars. "Just being

With the help of Dr. Robert Bentley, Jason undergoes removal of his tattoos. Both wear visors to protect their eyes from the high-intensity laser. Photo courtesy of street roots.

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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Continued from Page 6

a bad kid," he says, looking off to nowhere at the past.

"Every time I would get a tattoo, I would always say I'm just going to get one more tattoo. But for some reason, I wasn't satisfied with the tattoo I got. It was a crappy tattoo, or a crappy job, or it was messed up. I had to get something more over it, or something somewhere else that looks good. I never really got tattooed what I wanted tattooed. There would always be someone willing to tattoo me or with a tattoo gun and it would be something really quick, made up on the spot."

The impulsiveness is well documented — random swastikas, macabre designs, freestyle spider webs along his scalp, and stars stitches around his eyes. He has "skin head" tattooed across his chest and "Aryan Pride" on his arm, but he says he was never a racist. "I just wanted to belong to something, to be a part of something," Jason says. "I just chose the wrong something."

"I thought that I was going to have my whole body covered in ink, and so I thought it didn't matter what I got because it would all be blended in some day," he says. "The reason why I did the face, though, is because no one in my town, Niagara Falls, New York, has facial tattoos, not even tattoos on the neck. So I really felt that I was an outcast from everyone else that lived in my hometown. I felt completely different from them. I definitely wasn't Mr. Popular. I felt alienated, so I wanted to give myself a reason to be alienated. I felt that I didn't fit in so I figured I might as well really not fit in and tattoo my face. I knew if I did people would say he's crazy, he's a devil worshiper, he's a drug addict, he's this and that. I didn't find it that serious. At that time in my life I didn't think it would affect me. I thought I was going to be an outcast forever."

The tattoos also brought about the death of employment options — a mercy killing in Jason's mind. Before he got the tattoos, going to work — in the fast-food options available to teen-agers just out of a boy's home — was terrifying for him.

"I tried working a couple of jobs, and I never felt comfortable in the job setting. I always felt weird around people, really nervous. My heart would start beating really fast, almost like anxiety, panic attacks," Jason says. "I felt like the only reason why I was going to work was to please other people: to make my mother happy, because she wanted me to go to work, or to make the girlfriend at the time happy because she wanted me to work. Or I was going to work to pay my landlord, or I would go to work that day because my boss was depending on me to go to work to make the sandwiches for the people. I just felt like I was doing all this for other people and I just really didn't want to do it. And every morning it was like going to some kind of torture chamber. I would build up my anxiety. I would make my anxiety worse, with all the people I'm worrying about. What was going to happen? People are going to be looking at me. I might have to work the cash register this day... By

the time I got to work I was just so filled with this anxiety. I would be all nervous and stuttering, my heart's all pounding fast. I'd be sweating. It was really a job in itself to get me to go out into the world and function. So I felt like an abnormal person. In a way, I wanted to be an abnormal person. And I felt being covered in tattoos is definitely not normal. I didn't feel like everyone else."



JASON, JOINED BY WIFE, ANNIE, AND THEIR DAUGHTER. PHOTO COURTESY OF STREET ROOTS

The spoils of labor — the apartment, the car, the phony image of success or of merely "getting by," — didn't interest Jason.

"I wanted to put myself in a position where I wouldn't have to work, where they wouldn't hire me. There would be a reason. It's hard to explain. In other words, if I go try to find a job with all the tattoos, I thought people would say, 'We don't want to hire you. We don't want you working for us.' And I would say, 'Well good, because I don't want to work for you anyway.'"

In 1999, he was diagnosed with severe anxiety disorder and borderline personality disorder. He tried the prescribed medications for a short period but didn't like the way they made him feel. By the time he was 20, he had already decided his life was better suited for the streets where he could be homeless rather than homebound. For this, the tattoos served another purpose: to exile him from Niagara Falls and force him go out into the world. He was 21 when he left New York and headed to Portland, where the winters were mild and the streets were open to anything.

"When you're on your death bed, what are you going to say? I want to be like Frank Sinatra and say I did it my way. I don't want to be on my deathbed and say, um, I wish I would have done all that, and not be able to. I didn't want to live my life going to work for everyone except myself. At the time that's what I thought."

At the time, however, he hadn't fallen in love with Annie, his wife, or had a beautiful daughter, or lived to the ripe old age of 26. Today, ask him if he died tomorrow whether he would regret his tattoos, and he'll direct a look at you like you're daft. "Yeah. Hell yeah!"

Jason gave his mom her first tattoo with one of his homemade guns. A butterfly inside a three-dimensional

ice cube, dripping water down her ankle. He still speaks proudly of it.

"It's a really nice tattoo," he says. "She just got another one a couple of weeks ago. So as I'm getting them off, she's getting them put on."

Jason's relationship with his mom is one of best friends. He tells her everything, all the details most rebellious teen-agers would keep close to the vest. (A portrait

do what I can for them, and I just feel like I'm a changed person. And anyone can see that I'm a lot better than where I was a few years back. And a lot of people know me out on the streets. They know, so I'm not worried about people saying, 'Well, you did all that...' It's what I'm doing now that matters."

But however far Jason has come in his life, however much he's grown and changed, his tattoos remain ground zero. They dictate how he dresses (black), how he wears his hair (long and black), how he carries himself walking down the streets.

"If I didn't have these tattoos, I would totally dress nice. I wouldn't have this long hair. I would dress nice and sharp, have a nice clean-cut haircut. I play the role of what I look like. Picture me dressed up in a suit, but with all these tattoos. It wouldn't make sense."

Getting a job has been difficult, to say the least, and Jason keeps searching for independent employment where his tattoos won't matter. Now off the streets, Jason and Annie have their own apartment, and Jason sells street root-sand works odd jobs to pay the rent and make ends meet. They both volunteer at the street roots office, and Jason recently joined its board of directors. He's not the same person who tattooed "skin head" across his chest. He's disguised the swastikas by tattooing them into window frames. He wears a hat, always, so people don't notice his face.

"I don't even like looking in the mirror because I hate them that much. I just forget that they're there, and then I walk by my reflection in a mirror and it's like, geez," he says. "I basically want to get my outside to where my inside is at. Inside, I don't agree with anything that's on my skin."

In shoulder-length black hair, punk gear, and a pinstriped fedora, Jason casts a striking image as he and Annie push a stroller with baby Zaphen down Main Street, Portland. Zaphen doesn't seem to notice Jason's tattoos as anything unusual or strange. He's just dad, and her parents just a typical young couple. They make each other laugh at silly things. They beam as their daughter waves from her carriage like a queen to adoring subjects. They are infatuated with their girl, who at one year old is conversational, virtually potty trained, and at peace with teething. It ain't Ozzie and Harriet, but it's good.

"The day I get them removed, I really feel like my life will be so much easier, so much better," Jason says. "I will just have so much confidence in myself. I probably won't even have so much anxiety around people anymore."

Jason says that when his skin is clean he'd like to go back to boys homes and speak to youths about his experience and lessons — to tell them to think before they put something on their body that's permanent.

And if his daughter Zaphen ever wanted a tattoo?

"I'd do all I could to talk her out of it." ■

Reprinted with permission from street roots, Portland's street newspaper: www.streetroots.org.

Jason recently drew of his mother and him, arms around each other, appeared in the June issue of *street roots*. He drew himself without the tattoos.

He was close to his father too, up until he died of a heroin overdose about two years ago. By then, Jason had already been dealing with his own addiction to heroin. He came to Portland because it was portrayed in a 1994 documentary as a homeless youth's utopia, at least in his eyes. It was also known as the heroin capital of the United States. Still is, according to Jason, who fell in stride when he arrived, fulfilling a curiosity about a drug and a lifestyle patterned after his idol, Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain.

While on the streets he met Annie; kind, street-savvy, and sharp enough to see past the warnings posted across Jason's arms and face. They married three months later in May 2004. The couple vowed to get sober if Annie became pregnant, which happened in the summer of 2005.

"I heard her all the way down the street, 'I'm pregnant! I'm pregnant!' She was so happy. We didn't even do a send off. That's what it took for me to get clean. I still can't believe I quit heroin," he says, shaking his head.

Jason is unflinching in describing his drug use. He knows that like his father, he is prone to addiction, and he has come to terms with it. To keep heroin at bay, he's in a prescribed program for methadone, an equally addictive opiate that users say is more difficult to kick than heroin. He wants to get off the methadone, but admits he's just not ready yet. He's been told by doctors that he can't take some common drugs, such as Xanax, for his anxiety because of his past addictions.

"I'm fine now. It's all about how you are now," he says. "I know lots of people who have done lots of horrible stuff, but it's what you're doing now. Look, I figure I'm a good husband, I'm a good dad, I've got a nice family, and I

Evenings Unadorned

Roberto Bolaño's writing style in *Last Evenings on Earth* is very stark and unadorned, but poetic in its simplicity and powerful in its scope.

Last Evenings on Earth
By Roberto Bolaño; translated by Chris Andrews
New Directions, 2006
Hardcover, 256 pages, \$23.95
By AUSTIN WALTERS
Contributing Writer

Roberto Bolaño is one of the most beloved and well-respected writers to emerge from Latin America in the last decade; some may even say ever. A poet and novelist, Bolaño published 10 novels, two collections of short stories, and five books of poetry before his death at age 50 in 2003.

Last Evenings on Earth is a new collection of 14 stories, exquisitely translated into English by the talented Chris Andrews. However unlike the other masters of Latin American literature, *Last Evenings* does not contain a trace of magical realism or even a strong sense of place or culture. Instead, the stories are set in various locations and are mostly told from the perspective of disconnected and isolated young people (mostly men) trying to cope with the loneliness of exile, while often grappling with art as a meaningful and worthy livelihood.

Born in Chile, Bolaño moved around a great deal during his childhood and lived in Mexico and Europe for long stretches of time. He returned to Chile to "help build socialism" in the early

'70s but was quickly overcome and imprisoned during Pinochet's uprising — charged as a "Mexican terrorist." Upon his release, he was never able to return to his native country and lived the rest of his life as an outsider and exile.

The disastrous experience of his return to Chile is loosely told in the story "Dance Card," where the narrator sarcastically concludes that someday all poets will be made to live in artistic communities, called "jails and asylums."

Bolaño's writing style is very stark and unadorned, but poetic in its simplicity and powerful in its scope. The straightforward prose brings together common themes of love, loss, and loneliness yet always implies a much deeper darkness just below the surface — one of terror and violence. Many of the stories trail off ominously in the end, leaving the reader with a palpable sense of defeat, but also a strange feeling of hope and joy in being able to read something so sad and so beautiful.

In "Days of 1978," the narrator recounts the tragic mental unraveling of a fellow Chilean exile in Spain as he slowly bows under the pressures of his own life and former success. Toward the conclusion the narrator says, "This is where the story should end, but life is not as kind as literature," suggesting a deeper, ironic tragedy that questions the limits of fiction as art, and even art as a meaningful part of life. Was writing

a worthy enough cause in the face of the ever-worsening Chilean tragedy?

In the beautifully crafted title story, "Last Evenings on Earth," a son struggles unsuccessfully to resurrect his failed relationship with his father while coming to terms with his own inadequacies and demons. Set in Acapulco, the contrast between the sun-drunk paradise and the unrest between family members is especially severe and extremely unsettling.

Another story, "Annie Moore's Life," is told from the perspective of a man who falls in love with a charismatic and deeply troubled woman. Unable to ever truly let herself love or be loved, Annie instead allows the narrator to read her meticulously written journals, where he is transported into her world of sadness and failure. Her writing conveys such a terrifying and powerful sense of loneliness that the narrator wishes he could stop reading as much as he knows that he must learn the entire story.

The stories in *Last Evenings on Earth* are haunting and beautiful, and while not every reader will like the uneasiness Bolaño creates, many will return to re-read and ponder his subtle darkness. It comes as no surprise that Roberto Bolaño is one of the beloved and admired novelists of his generation in the Spanish-speaking world, and now, thankfully, in the English-speaking world as well. ■

High-Strung Drama

The Wire
Season 4 on HBO (starts Sept. 10)
Season 1-3 on DVD
Review by LESTER GRAY
Arts Editor

Whether it will be remembered as such, HBO's *The Wire* is a landmark program. No other crime drama has brought more depth and complexity to its players.

The license and ability to do so, attributable to the creative breathing room that comes with cable channel production, also gives rise to such highly touted hits as the *Sopranos* and *Deadwood*. But *The Wire* uses the opportunity to mine something deeper, more rarified, more dynamic.

Back in 1981, Stephen Bochco, sensing the baby boomer generation's disillusionment with Eagle Scout police department portrayals, bought us the then cutting-edge *Hill Street Blues*. But the genre it introduced predictably reverted to a mean of commercially viable realism: conflicted and overwhelmed police, a bit more sex, a bit more violence. The perpetrators, often African-American males, were seldom developed beyond caricatures. The lack of dimension in these characters — absent of sophisticated cognitive processes — at times harkened back to Joseph Conrad's descriptions of African natives. *The Wire* has served notice on such unimaginative, incurious, and worst of all stigmatizing portrayals.

Now in its fourth season, the HBO production tells a tale of urban Baltimore, one of the most crime-challenged cities in the country. The story line lends sweeping character arcs to police and criminals alike, the malefactors endowed with a full range of intellect and emotion. That they are capable of Machiavellian schemes, however, does not necessarily render them more endearing. As with the *Sopranos*, we get to see these people in the larger context of families and domiciles. Unlike the protagonist mob boss of that award-

winning series, they are not ensconced in the suburbs, but continue to live in the virtual squalor of the slums.

In the show's perspective, the most tenacious criminal element may be the constant machinations of city hall. Downtown, nothing is sacred — investigations, quality of officers, and hard-to-come-by evidence — all subject to be sacrificed without notice or apology for short-term political gains and petty rivalries.

The Wire is a frighteningly honest and gritty production, bolder than anything to be found in theatres or on television. The cast of relatively unknown actors, not yet widely celebrated, consistently turns in those priceless performances most common to thespians unspoiled by the limelight.

Despite all this the program, now written and produced by Ed Burns, a former Baltimore cop and teacher, almost disappeared. After three seasons, *The Wire* suffered the fate of many high-quality shows in the annals of television history. In spite of critical acclaim, the show was cancelled. Unlike most of those predecessors, it was revived. Apparently, email wailings from a devoted and faithful following occasioned a rise from the dead. Now, after a forced hiatus, *The Wire* returns with a vengeance.

This year, several young teenagers become central to the narrative, much of it occurring at a middle school, with behaviors far beyond the pale. At times there's a dark coming-of-age humor (perhaps unintentional) that feels like the Hardy Boys stumbled into the wrong neighborhood.

The Wire's first three years are on DVD. They're not essential backstory to this upcoming season, but you're going to want to see them sooner or later and they do enrich the current narrative. Advice to viewers, both new and returning: give the new season an episode or two to get up to speed. Then sit back and realize that the real crime here is that this show doesn't have a pile of Emmys. ■

The Wire is a frighteningly honest and gritty production, bolder than anything to be found in theatres or on television.

Adventures
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning



Revenge of the Nerd

Recently I was in a van with a bunch of folks from my building, coming back from the food bank, when a man with a shopping cart pushed it off the curb across an intersection right in front of us, while we had the green light. I reacted first and said, "Smart!" Then the

others all said, "Stupid!" That got me thinking. Why am I so unrelentingly ironic?

I've also thought about how a lot of people say things to me like, "Dr. Wes, you must be the smartest person who ever lived. Where do you get your amazing understanding and knowledge of everything, especially things you've never experienced, like racecar driving, or stellar nuclear fusion, or significant work, or humility?"

The answer, of course, is that I utilize my enormous gift of imagination (making stuff up in my head), combined with my equally enormous gift of association (making the made-up stuff line up with other stuff that's not so made up).

Let me illustrate. I have never actually tied one end of a long elastic cord to the railing of a bridge and the other end to my ankles and then took a flying leap off the bridge into an enormous gorge over jagged rocks. So how could I ever speak knowledgeably about bungee jumping? It's easy! I just *imagine* stepping in front of a #1 bus on its way past Yesler and *imagine* showing the driver my middle finger. When the driver slams on his brakes and stops the bus an inch from my nose, in my *imagination*, I've understood the essence of bungee jumping. And aren't the essences of things all we ever need of them?

But being so gifted intellectually isn't all sweetness and sunshine, or pizza and cheese, or pajamas and coeds. There's hardship too. I have long been a target of bigotry, having to endure the taunts and slurs of brainists. Growing up, I

was called vicious names like Egghead, Einstein, Brainiac, College Material, Smarty Pants, Smart, and Poindexter.

The turning point came in the 8th grade when my math teacher called in our homework and I had forgotten to do mine. Supposedly his difficult homework should have taken me an hour to do, but I said, "No problem," and took some paper and did the assignment in front of him, in a minute. The teacher said I was "weird." At first I took that to be a compliment. But then I realized he didn't mean, "You're refreshingly different" or "You're oddly delightful," but rather something dark and mean, like, "You're never going to own a house on Mercer Island," or "You're never going to be a member in good standing of a major fraternal organization such as the Elks or the Rotary Club," or "You're never going to sleep with a cheerleader."

At that, something snapped inside, and, all at once, I became mean-spirited. I began to plot revenge on all the brainists. I used my enormous intellect and inhuman imagination for evil rather than good, as I dreamed up one hideous punishment after another for my many tormentors.

Sadly, most of the punishments I dreamed up were out of my price range. Being 13, I had no credit, and as my parents were cheap bastards my allowance barely paid for my school lunches. So I was unable to realize my plans involving the fighter jet, the remote-controlled giant robot with the heat-ray eyes, and the genetically engineered jock-eating gerbil.

I could complain about that from here to the end of the column, but the truth is that "Necessity is a Mother" and never having a mass-murdering genetically engineered gerbil made me what I am today, and that's something I'm thankful for.

Because there wouldn't be any Adventures in Irony if I hadn't been forced to learn more constructive ways to cope with frustration than bombing and strafing all of my enemies.

If only all of us could be as fortunate as I've been. ■



REAL-LIFE ANSWERS TO YOUR LEGAL HASSLES

I finally got a job, but it barely pays me enough to make ends meet for me and my two kids. I don't have health insurance. What resources are available to me? Can I get my family on Medicaid?

According to Kelly Angell at Foster Pepper PLLC, there are several options available to you, all of which depend on your current financial status. Two of the state programs you may be eligible for are: 1) Medicaid and 2) Basic Health.

Medicaid provides free medical services to those who are eligible. To be eligible, there are a variety of factors to consider including your household income and the number of people in your household. Because there are different programs to consider, the best idea is to go to your local Community Service Office to discuss your options. The downtown Seattle office is located at 2106 Second Avenue in Belltown, or you can call the office at (206)341-7427.

If you do not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid, you may be eligible for Basic Health if you are a Washington state resident. To qualify, you have to meet certain income guidelines. If you meet those guidelines, you pay a reduced-cost premium based on your gross family income. The benefits of Basic Health include doctor and hospital care, emergency services, and prescription drugs. Monthly premiums, providers, and details of coverage vary depending on your age, income, number of people in your family, and choice of health plan.

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

To determine what your premiums would be and whether you qualify for Basic Health, see www.basicehealth.hca.wa.gov/cost.shtml.

Basic Health does not have a walk-in office in Seattle at this time. However, you can download an application and learn more about Basic Health at <http://www.basicehealth.hca.wa.gov/forms.shtml>. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can also request to have an application mailed to you by calling 1(800)660-9840. To apply for Basic Health, you will need to submit a completed and signed application, proof of Washington state residency, a copy of your signed federal income tax return for the most current tax year, proof of your income for the past 30 days (or complete calendar month), and your health plan choice. For more information about Basic Health, call them at 1(800)660-9840 or write P.O. Box 42683, Olympia, WA 98504-2683.

In addition to the above medical programs, you could be eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which is a cash-assistance program. You could also be qualified for cash, food, or medical assistance if you are elderly, blind, disabled, pregnant, medically needy, an alien, or an immigrant. To learn more, call your local Community Services Office.

To learn more about the services available to you, there is a handy tool available online at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ESA/TEC/> that will help you determine your eligibility for different programs. You can also call the general DSHS hotline to obtain more information about DSHS's programs and services: 1-800-737-0617. ■



Tues., Aug. 22, 4:23 p.m., Western Ave./Bell St.

Dispatch broadcast the call of a stab victim who had walked into the Fourth Ave. Fire Station and requested assistance. Officers arrived at the station and found the victim, a homeless Black male aged 59, being attended to by Seattle Fire Department. They noticed a bandage around his rib cage and copious amounts of blood on the floor under his chair. Victim was wearing blue jeans and had no shirt on; he appeared conscious and alert. Victim stated that the stabbing took place on First and Bell. He and a friend were walking downhill towards Western Ave. when they met the suspect, a Hispanic male in his 30s. The victim's friend asked the suspect for something — victim did not know what it was — and then turned and walked away. The victim turned and walked away also, and stated he did not know that he'd been stabbed until a few minutes later when he felt blood running down his back. He had not seen a knife as it happened so fast. Police asked him if this was a drug-related incident, and he stated he did not know. He did not know suspect, but victim thought he could pick him out of a lineup. An area check for the suspect was negative. Victim was taken to Harborview Medical Center for treatment of a single stab wound to his lower left back.

Wed., Aug. 23, 6:09 a.m., 75 blk Blanchard St.

Officer was on routine patrol with an officer from the Department of Corrections (DOC) when they came upon the suspect, a transient Black male aged 41, asleep in a doorway. The police officer contacted the suspect, and after a name check, was instructed by the DOC officer to arrest the man for failure to report to them. A search prior to arrest located a crack pipe in suspect's left jacket pocket. This field-tested positive for cocaine, and the suspect was booked into King County Jail for drug violations and failing to report.

Wed., Aug. 23, 8:23 a.m., 600 block Pine St, Alley to East.

An officer on foot patrol was contacted by an employee of Banana Republic, who reported that there were people sleeping inside their locked and gated area in the alley behind the store. An area check revealed that the people had left — the officer did find large amounts of clothing and several uncapped hypodermic syringes that looked like they may have been used. He also found a bag containing what he suspected was cocaine. He cleared and secured the alley and took custody of the needles and bag of white powder and returned to the precinct. After testing the white powder using several different methods, it was determined that it was not cocaine. The needles and powder were disposed of.

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.

Untitled

Spider Woman
Spinning Lives
Making Mysteries Laying Plans

Spider Woman
Spinning Friends

—DAVID TROTTER

Letters

editor@realchangenews.org

The Man speaks

Dear Real Change,

What's to be said about gas prices?

If I were president of Exxon-Mobil, this is what I would say: "My fellow Americans, I come before you today to be perfectly honest. I want to explain why you are in this situation and justify why I am in my situation."

"Let me first give you some facts about crude oil and gasoline. Presently crude oil costs about \$75 per barrel. A barrel is 42 gallons of crude oil. 19.4 gallons out of 42 gallons are refined into gasoline. The other 22.6 gallons are refined into diesel and other petroleum-based products like asphalt and plastics. Gasoline consumption in the United States is approximately 440 million gallons per day."

"With gas at \$3 per gallon, that means Americans are spending approximately \$1.3 billion per day (\$481 billion per year) for gas. But you have to remember that out of the \$3 per gallon the federal government collects 18 cents per gallon, which means the feds are making approximately \$80 million per day. Even the states are taking their cut out of the \$3 per gallon, to the tune of about 30 cents per gallon (some more and some less), which means the states make about \$132 million per day, divided up among 50 states."

"Can you now understand why no one at the state or federal level does anything when we up the price of gas every Memorial Day and keep it going up until Labor Day? Not only are the oil companies making record profits, mine was to the tune of \$10 billion for the first quarter of 2006, but think of the money the states and feds are collecting. Do you, the American people, think the state and federal governments want to reduce the flow of that money into their General Funds? Besides, my counterparts in other oil companies and I probably take them out to lunch sometime during the year. Additionally, we contribute heavily to their political campaigns. I do have to admit our ex-

tensive lobbying effort does pay off.

"You voters argue about who would be the best President of the United States. I don't care because I have all the candidates in my pocket. Why do you think I can get away with what I do? Oh, I see, you think it is purely coincidental the way things happen. It never dawns on you that what is happening is by design and not by accident. When gas prices go even higher you will complain, but willingly pay the price. As far as I am concerned, the price of gas can continue to go up until it reaches \$4 per gallon, like in Europe. Then watch my profits soar!"

"Some of you think you can boycott me at the gas pumps. I really don't think you could combine your efforts and get everyone to boycott me. I will tell you over and over again that if you did that it would not affect my profits, because my profits actually come out of the 22.6 gallons for other products, not the 19.6 gallons per barrel turned into gasoline. I will tell you that publicly, but my greatest fear is that some day, should you actually follow through with a boycott, you would break my back. A four-month boycott at the gas pumps would put me out of business."

"I am hoping you never get the strength to exercise the power you don't even realize you have. I am certainly not going to help you and tell you how you can effectively hurt me. As long as you keep the status quo in your thinking and actions, I will continue reaping even more record-breaking profits."

Charlie Peters
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.



CLASSIFIED

Employment

Case Manager - Compass Center's Cascade Women's Program. Experienced and dedicated case manager to support residents at transitional shelter facility. Email résumé to ishapiro@compasscenter.org or fax to 206-490-4006.

Overnight Counselor - Compass Center's Pioneer Sq. Men's Program. Experienced and dedicated counselor to support residents at transitional shelter facility. Email résumé to hinfo@compasscenter.org or fax to 206-461-3874.

On-Call, Relief Counselors - Compass Center. Counselors needed for all programs. For details, see www.compasscenter.org. Email résumé to hinfo@compasscenter.org or fax to 206-461-3874.

System Analyst (32 hours/wk) - Compass Center. IT team seeks an experienced, resourceful and dedicated professional to support organization's technology systems. Email résumé to hinfo@compasscenter.org.

SHARE/WHEEL - a democratic grassroots organizing effort of homeless people — has job openings for motivated, dedicated ORGANIZERS! Call (206) 448-7889 for more information and to schedule an interview.

Information

Conference on Race and Pedagogy featuring Dr. Cornel West, Thurs., Sept. 14 – Sat., Sept. 16, University of Puget Sound, 1500 N Warner Info: www.ups.edu.

BreadforLife celebration to benefit Ugandan women. Sun., Sept. 10, 3:20 p.m., Waterfront Seafood Grill, 2801 Alaskan Way Info: www.breadforlife.com.

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Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Saturday 9/9

Rally and march to end the Seattle-hosted Korea-U.S. trade talks. Some of the devastating impacts of the trade agreement include forcing South Korea's small farms into bankruptcy, abolishing regulations that encourage consumers to purchase environmentally friendly cars, and cutting workers' wages and benefits while increasing temporary, low-paid positions. 1 p.m., Federal Building, 915 Second Ave.

What's Cookin' in Wallingford is a late summer food festival celebrating and promoting the character of independently owned and operated restaurants with delicious specialties and live music, \$3 per sample. 2-9 p.m., Wallingford's central district along 45th St. Info: www.wallingford.org.

Sunday 9/10

Social worker Laura Shipler Chico spent 20 months living in Rwanda and working to heal the wounds from the 1994 genocide. With Rwandan Friends Peace House, Chico helped bring the survivors and perpetrators together for intensive dialogue and community reparations projects. In her talk, "Reconciliation Rwanda," she shares her experiences, successes, and hardships. University Friends Meeting, 7 p.m., 4001 Ninth Ave. NE Info: (425)865-9368.

Monday 9/11

Created by Theater Squad and directed by Ed Mast, *Without End* is a performance of visual art, spoken work, poetry, music, and meditation to observe the fifth anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the 100th anniversary of the first nonviolent campaign launched by Mohandas K. Gandhi. Audience members and passersby will be invited to move among a forest of icons representing civilian casualties and other elements of these events' legacies. 11:30 a.m., Westlake Park, 401 Pine St.

Senior correspondent for the PBS NewsHour Ray Suarez discusses immigration in America. His soon-to-be-published book *The Holy Vote*

examines the tightening relationship between religion and politics. 7 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Thursday 9/14

Jim Hightower delivers his talk "On Common Ground" which explores the importance of emerging alternative energy and sustainable agriculture



industries in relation to the efforts to establish a more sustainable Washington. Hightower will also address the growing property-rights movement that has taken form with Initiative 933. Tickets \$10. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Irwin Redlener, founder and director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University and author of *Americans at Risk*, discusses in frank terms the government's track record for cronyism and its disregard for accountability in disaster response and prevention. He will also analyze the roles of NGOs and the effect of the dysfunctional and expensive health care system. Tickets \$5. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Friday 9/15

Earthcorps' World Night is a celebration of the global community with music, performances, activities, and delicious foods from other countries and cultures. Welcome the international participants who have traveled thousands of miles to Seattle. 6 p.m., Magnuson Park, 6344 NE 74th St., Building 406.

Saturday 9/16

Seattle Housing Authority presents an unprecedented tour of West Seattle's High Point neighborhood, which is the largest sustainable, mixed-income urban neighborhood in the country. The Green Living Expo includes tours, exhibits, and seminars about green living, eco-friendly products, and ways to take better care of our communities and the environment. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., 35th Ave. SW and SW Raymond St. Info: (206)615-3433.

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

Director's Corner

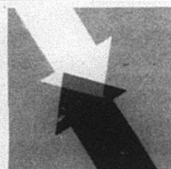


This month we've been talking a lot with our vendors to find out what's working and what's not. It's part of this fall's planning process to think through our next five years. We keep hearing the same thing. *Real Change* offers an opportunity for independence, dignity, and an income that otherwise wouldn't exist for many of our vendors, but it's something else as well. It's a community.

Some of our vendors go so far as to say that the people they meet matter more to them than the money. One talked about the opportunity to "build friendships with professionals." Another said selling *Real Change* is "therapy." "I was in a closet before *RC*, and now it's exposed me to a lot of compassionate people. It's spiritual," said someone else.

Many vendors spoke to the same theme. "It's been huge, it's been inspirational. It's curing to sell *Real Change*. It heals a lot of the pain of the past."

Our survey has once again affirmed that the magic of *Real Change* is in the caring community that has formed between readers and vendors. Our challenge is to help our vendors succeed to the greatest extent possible. This means a quality paper, more support in the field, and helping facilitate access to whatever services they might need. But the biggest thing for our vendors is to know that you, the reader, care. That's worth more than money.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Make Sure the Budget Covers the Basics

Issue: The City of Seattle is beginning the process of writing the budget for 2007-2008. The Mayor will make recommendations to the City Council around Sept. 25, then the Council will hold a public process and pass a final budget by Thanksgiving. Because of a growing economy, the city has the opportunity to pass a budget that moves us closer to ensuring that everyone can meet his or her basic needs.

Background: A large coalition of human services providers and other advocates spent much of the last spring and summer assessing the human service needs of Seattle residents, including food, shelter, domestic violence prevention, health care, and more. They also reviewed the City's budget projections and found that in 2007, the city is expecting a surplus. The coalition has created a set of recommendations for how the city can best use that surplus to help people meet their basic needs.

The recommendations total approximately \$13 million in 2007 and \$10.4 million in 2008 in new investments that are necessary for meeting the needs of Seattle residents. The adopted 2006 General Fund budget is \$768.8 million, and the Human Services budget is \$39 million. The group's recommendations include:

- \$4 million in 2007 and an additional \$1 million in 2008 to implement the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness
- \$350,000 to provide more than 400 additional homeless children with childcare and other services that allow their parents to work on employment goals
- \$200,000 each year to expand bilingual classes to help more immigrants and refugees become citizens
- \$1.2 million in both 2007 and 2008 for 40 new shelter beds, a victims advocate/housing specialist in domestic violence shelters, and additional services for families fleeing domestic abuse
- \$183,000 in 2007 and \$166,000 in 2008 for community health clinics facing serious federal cuts that threaten to leave more people without access to affordable health care

Action: Contact Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels as he develops a budget to recommend to the City Council. Ask him to support the Seattle Human Services Coalition budget package that moves Seattle toward making sure that everyone is able to meet his or her basic human needs. Sample message:

Dear Mayor Nickels: As you prepare your budget, I hope you'll put the needs of people who are struggling first. Our city is prospering, and many Seattle residents are looking toward their future with hope and excitement. Many of us are looking at the future of the city as a whole with similar hope and excitement. But at the same time, many of our city's residents are struggling with poverty, homelessness, or hunger. As the city prospers, everyone should experience increased opportunity. The Seattle Human Services Coalition has developed a thorough set of recommendations for making sure that everyone in Seattle can meet their basic needs. Please put people first by including those recommendations in your budget.

Mayor Greg Nickels; PO Box 94749; Seattle, WA 98124-4749
(206)684-4000; www.seattle.gov/mayor

Mark your calendar for a community forum on the Seattle budget and how you can impact it. Mon., Oct. 2, 5:30-8:30 p.m. More information is available from the Seattle Human Services Coalition at (206)325-7105.

SHELTER, Continued from Page 1

alcohol or substance abuse, or an outstanding debt to a landlord or housing authority.

Shelter units that can accommodate whole families are always in short supply, they say, but demand has definitely jumped compared with last year.

After remodeling last year, Belltown's Family & Adult Service Center increased its family shelter capacity from five to nine families. At the same time, executive director Seth Rosenberg says, the agency reduced how long it takes to get a family into transitional or permanent housing from 37 to 26 days.

But the center is still getting about 50 family referrals a week compared with 40 a week last year.

"We increased our capacity and reduced the length of stay," he says, "and yet we're getting more referrals."

While he's not certain why more families are homeless right now, Rosenberg believes there is a link to the city's new enhanced shelter contracts and their emphasis on outcomes.

"We only get credit for placing people in transitional or permanent housing," he says. "If they come to your door and they have those [tougher] issues, you can't take them in because it's a negative outcome for you."

At First Place, which assists families and offers schooling for up to 35 homeless children, Executive Director Doreen Cato says last year's enrollment didn't fill up until after fall classes started. "This year's already filled, and

people are still knocking on the door," she says. "It makes me wonder what's going on."

Part of what's going on, some service providers say, is that the city cut funding for motel vouchers, which can buy a family a night in a room. In the city's latest shelter contracts, the Central Area Motivation Project and the Seattle Indian Center both lost voucher funding, in part because neither has their own transitional or permanent housing in which to place families.

On Aug. 1, Operation Nightwatch, which serves homeless singles, also

"There is a longer stay for families in all of our units that increases the wait list all the way down the line." Down the road, "What we hope is that placing more people [in housing] will alleviate that."

—Al Poole, director, Seattle homeless intervention program

made a decision to temporarily halt its use of motel vouchers after the agency began seeing a steady uptick in families being left on its doorstep.

"We were seeing a large number of big families arriving in the middle of serving 140 homeless men and women," says Rick Reynolds, Nightwatch's executive director. "We felt it was an unsafe situation," particularly "when a social worker drives up and drops a family off and you have to figure out

how to get them out to North Seattle when they don't speak English."

Reynolds says the program is trying to figure out how to keep the family and single-adult populations separate or use the motel vouchers to support another shelter program.

Since CAMP lost its city funding for motel stays, Annamichelle Justice, coordinator of CAMP's Housing Assistance Program — which primarily served African-American families — no longer puts up 9 to 12 families a month. While Justice calls motel stays a waste of taxpayer money compared to enhanced shelter, "I can get someone in right away without bothering a program that's full — and they're always full," she says.

At the City Council roundtable on enhanced shelter, Katie Warner called the shift to enhanced shelter a dramatic change for the agency — one that Al Poole, director of the city's homelessness intervention program, acknowledges has lengthened waiting times.

"There is a longer stay for families in all of our units that increases the wait list all the way down the line," Poole says. Down the road, "What we hope is that placing more people [in housing] will alleviate that." ■

Community Forum on the Loss of Affordable Housing

Seattle is making gains in developing affordable housing, but the housing we lose through condo conversions, demolitions and rent increases, offsets our efforts to end homelessness. Join Real Change, City Council members, affordable housing advocates, Seattle Office of Housing, low-income renters, and homeless people for a lively discussion about this important issue and how we can address it.

Weds, Sept. 13th 5 to 7 PM
Bertha Knight Landes Room
City Hall, 600-4th Avenue

For more information visit www.realchangenews.org or contact organizer realchangenews.org or call 206-441-3247 ext. 201.

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Belltown Backyard BBQ

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4:30pm

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September 2006

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Volume VI, Issue 9

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JAMICA
HENDERSON



What would you do if you got the chance to become the guardians of your siblings still in foster-care? If you were in my shoes (just graduating from high school, exiting foster-care and living on my own) how would you answer this question? Taking in my siblings is something that I have told myself I would do if my siblings were not out of the system by the time I "aged out." I have been working at Mockingbird for over 2 1/2 years now and I have learned a lot. After being here for a while and becoming good at my work, I have begun to feel that I can do something about fostering my siblings.

I was in foster-care for four years and I still have siblings in care. Working at Mockingbird Society has helped prepare me for the reality of becoming a foster parent to my siblings. I have learned so much about the system and what it would take to get them in my

Welcome Home

custody. I know many of the steps and work it would take for it to happen. I graduated in 2005 from high school and now am in college. I have my own apartment, a good job, and am living a pretty smooth life. Since I have been on my own for a while, I have been researching about ways I could get my siblings. When I think about me taking them in, I get really excited. But I know it will be a challenge. I like challenges and this one I know I can handle. I know that there would be some good and rough times. I know that it's the rough times that will also help our family grow. I feel that being able to be there and supporting each other will be fun as well as important.

While I was in foster-care, I lived in one home. I was really blessed to have the one placement and lucky to get the foster parents that I did. My siblings entered the system at the same time as me and have already been in five or more homes. It is hard to see your family going through all of that when you got to have the "good" foster parents. It hurts, when you lived with them so long before you were in care and then to stand by and watch them get treated in ways you never would imagine. This is what made my vision stronger about getting custody.

Well the day came when I was asked, "Would you like to be the guardian of your brothers?" Of course I would! I could see myself taking them in, taking them to school, getting them involved in extra activities and more. Now that I have the opportunity to, I am going to do it. While I was in foster we would have to visit with each other. In the midst of visiting we would always talk about us becoming a family again. I would always tell them if they were still in care when I got on my own, that I would take care of them. I believe, in some ways, the system has helped us to stay the strong family that we were. I say this because even though my sibs and I have always loved each other, being separated in the foster-care system has made our relationships and love even stronger because of all the ups and downs we have had to see each other through.

So, I come back to my question. Do I get to reunite my family, or pass up this chance? What would you do? Would you take in your brothers and all work together like the family you are? Or would you let them stay in foster care? I will keep you all posted.

Remembering Tupac

and poetry expressing his loneliness and yearning to know his father. As time progressed he started acting. "The reason why I could get into acting was because it takes nothin' to get out of who I am and go into somebody else."¹ He landed his first role as Travis in the world renowned play "A Raisin in the Sun," at the mere age of twelve.

He got in touch with his talent as a rapper when he moved to Baltimore at the age of fifteen. Everyone in their small town feared the notorious reputation of the Big Apple so he adopted the name MC New York. He started his school career at the prominent Baltimore School for the Arts, excelling at ballet and acting. It was here that he finally felt in touch with himself and accepted his white classmates. "That was the first time I saw there was white people who you could get along with. Before that, I just believed what everyone else said: They was devils."¹ Tupac had decided that his true passion was the arts and that he would pursue a life as an artist.

Unfortunately, Shakur also had an uncontrollable lust for trouble. By the time he reached his twentieth birthday, he had been arrested eight times and had served eight months in prison for sexual assault. He was also the subject of two wrongful death lawsuits, one including the death of a six year old boy who was caught in the crossfire between Shakur and rival gang members.

As the eighties approached, Tupac was falling further and further in love with hip-hop. In '87 he teamed up with Eddie Humphrey, who went by the name Humpty-Hump, and some other Oakland based rappers to form Digital Underground. In 1990 they released

their debut album Sex Packets, an effervescent testimony to the "boogie power of hip-hop." In 1992, Tupac broke free from Digital Underground and made his solo debut with the album 2Pacalypse Now. He then began the high-speed road to stardom that would later cost him his life.

The following year he starred as Bishop in the film Juice. His superb performance earned him respect in the acting world. Later on that year he released his second album, Strictly 4 My N.I.G.G.A.Z., an album that brought him coverage on the pop charts. He also found himself on police radar when allegations arose of him being involved in a violent attack on an off-duty police officer as well as another sexual assault case. It was around that time that he starred in his second film, Poetic Justice, alongside Janet Jackson.

The first attempt to end his life occurred in November of 1994 when he was shot five times during a robbery in which thieves escaped with \$40,000 worth of jewelry. Incredibly, Pac survived and recovered from his injuries to produce his most impressive artistic accomplishments, including Me Against The World and the double CD All Eyez On Me which sold over five million copies on their own.

Tragically, a little over two years later Tupac was shot and killed following a Mike Tyson fight on September 7, 1996. His death was very painful to his fans but not surprising. Tupac said himself that he expected to die by the sword before he reached thirty. His assassin is still unknown to this day. The only

RAQUEL
GRANATH



What made Tupac Shakur such a remarkable artist? Was it his love for women and money? Was it his "thug life" mentality that had the nation in a frenzy? How did a ghetto child transform into such a talented, brilliant and influential entertainer? As we reach the ten year anniversary of his brutal assassination, the solution to these and many other questions about his life continue to go unanswered.

Tupac was born in 1971 to Alice Williams who called herself Afeni Shakur after joining the African-American nationalist group called the Black Panthers. Following her acquittal for conspiring to set off a racial war, she struggled to raise her son in Bronx, NY while working as a paralegal. Unlike other children, when Tupac misbehaved the consequence often consisted of reading an entire issue of *The New York Times*. When he was two years of age, Afeni gave birth to a second child. A few months prior to her conception, Sekyiwa's father, Mutulu, was sentenced to sixty years in prison for a fatal armored car robbery. With the absence of Mutulu in their household, they experienced extremely hard times. Tupac recalls, "I remember crying all the time. My major thing growing up was I couldn't fit in because I was from everywhere. I didn't have no buddies that I grew up with."¹ As his life continued, the question of his father's identity afflicted his thoughts. Turning inward, he began to write love songs



Tupac Shakur

TUPAC CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Letter from the Editor

JIM
THEOFELIS



The dog days of August are behind us and despite my own reluctance it is indeed time to bid farewell to the summer of 2006. September is the official month that transitions us into the Fall season, which for most kids and families means "back to school." For many children and adolescents and particularly those who have experienced trauma in their lives, transitions can be very difficult. Summer is typically a time that involves fewer expectations for kids, and of course school is just the opposite. For those kids who do well academically, school can be something to look forward to, as it provides a source of positive reinforcement, some predictable structure and an avenue for social relationships and activities. For those children and youth who do not do so well academically, school can be a very stressful place. Of course transitions are a "part of life" that we all need to learn how to deal with. However, parents can be a major source of support to kids as

they face their anxieties and fears about school, grades, peers, teachers, etc. First, I would invite each of us to remember a time when we were scared about facing something and then to reflect on what was helpful and not helpful. All too often we as adults skip that human exercise of reflection and move straight to being the "expert," telling kids "there is nothing to be afraid of." Normalize their anxiety by expressing some compassion for the youngster, e.g. "Of course you're nervous, it's the first week of school-you're supposed to be nervous because it is such a big deal. I bet most of the kids in your class are nervous." To better assist the youngster who is struggling with the transition to school, it might be helpful to "anchor" the youngster. Another way to think of it is what I call "grounding." I let them know that when they return we can make cookies, play catch in the back yard, or do some other activity that the child enjoys and can look forward to. Mostly, remember to thank them for having the courage to do the things they don't want to do and remind them that you are aware of how hard they are trying and you respect that characteristic in them.

 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.



What you need:
Updated 2006 referral from your DCFS caseworker OR have already shopped this year (Four visits per year), and picture ID is required

Hey All You Treehouse Families!

Looking for great last minute Back-to-School clothing? Don't forget to stop by the Treehouse Wearhouse.

Wearhouse Shopping Hours:
Tuesdays: 2:00 - 7:30 PM
Thursdays: 10:00 - 1:30 PM
(NEW! Beginning September 16th)
Third Saturday of each month 10:00 - 2:00 PM

Contact (206) 267-5185 for more information
Treehouse • 2100 - 24th Avenue South, Suite 200 • Seattle, WA 98144
www.treehouseforkids.org

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.

A Mockingbird Inside Your Mailbox

Make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable youth and support the Mockingbird Society!

Donations may be tax deductible and all donors receive the *Mockingbird Times*. Enclosed, please find my check made payable to Mockingbird Society in the amount of: \$ _____

Suggested Donations:

\$1,000+.....Protector \$500-999.....Caretaker \$250-500.....Organizations \$50+.....Supporter \$25.....Foster Parent

NAME _____ EMAIL _____
ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please fill out and mail this form with a check or money order payable to: The Mockingbird Society, 2100 24th Ave South Suite 240, Seattle WA 98144, or donate online at www.mockingbirdsociety.org.

- ☐ Please bill me for the amount indicated.
- ☐ My employer will match my gift; enclosed is my matching gift form.
- ☐ I am interested in receiving information on the advantages of planned giving.
- ☐ Please do not include my name on published donor lists.

Becoming a Senior

LARISICA
ASHER



I am becoming a senior this school year and it seems kind of scary. The only reason that I might be afraid is because it gets a lot harder. When I say harder, I mean that the work and the teachers get strict. You have way more responsibilities put on you. Also, being a senior can be very busy. Starting this year, I will be a part of the Rainier Beach Cheer Team. When we start I look forward to cheering for the guys on the football and basketball team. I also look forward to going on all the trips we take and also trying to go to the finals.

Now, lets talk about the work. I must say, it was very hard getting to where I am now. For instance, the finals and projects you have to complete to get your final, passing grade are hard. In my freshman year, I had to go to summer school because I didn't do too well in one of my classes. That was the only year I had to go to summer school and now I do better with my schoolwork. In my sophomore year I passed all of my classes with a C+ average. It was a time when I was going through some things that affected my work and it was really hard to focus.

Some of the problems that affected me in my sophomore year followed me to my junior year as well. My biggest problem was my living situation. I was in a good foster home, but didn't like how I was being treated. Like sometimes it was ok, then it was like hell. The only reason I say it was like hell is because I was in the foster home for about three years. The foster mother and I had our disagreements from time to time but we got through them. Like in order for me to live in this foster home I

had to make a lot of changes about myself. Now I am willing to make these changes because they have helped me in life now.

Now, in my junior year, I had some other major problems with boys, and different living arrangements. These problems were so bad that I got to a point where I didn't want to go to school anymore. I never dropped out or stopped going, but I started to come to school really late or when I got to school I wouldn't go to class. As it got closer to the end of the year, I had realized that I needed to pass these classes or I would become something that I didn't want to be. I didn't want to become a fifth year senior. So, I got my act together and got back up on my work and attendance. So that by the time finals came around, I knew that I was going to do well and pass so that I wouldn't be left behind.

I am now a senior and I am really looking forward to going back to school. Because I have seen what I have done wrong in the past, I now know what changes to make to be successful. Another reason I am excited to go back to school is because I will be the first one in my family to complete high-school. I think that this year I will have a little struggle, but I know that I will do much better than what I did in the last three years. I really am looking forward to walking across that stage and seeing my mother and family in the audience screaming my name. Letting everyone know how proud they are of me.

In closing, I would like to send a "shout-out" to all of the foster youth who have had some good and some bad experiences and ups and downs in their lifetime. If you are having any problems making it through school, I hope this will help you some. I also shout out all the people I went to school with that helped me get through my hard times. A word from me to the readers; you can make it if you try. This is me speaking now as a new and improved senior at Rainier Beach High School.

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.

Thank You's

Jessica Tufts; Steve and Linda Arai;
Kathy Elias; Lynnea Manahan; Siri
Throm Saxe; Bob and Jan Whitsett

MEET OUR STAFF

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Balancing Work and School

SHERREL
DORSEY



Going to college full time is no piece of cake. It becomes even more difficult when you have to work and study at the same time. I worked five blocks away from my college dorm at the GAP. My hours were inconsistent and I could only work nights and weekends. Needless to say I did not get much studying done my first semester.

Like many of my college friends I acquired a second job as an assistant to a publicist. Desperately, I tried to balance two jobs, school and a tap dancing ensemble that I was in at the time. My grades suffered and so did my bank account. I worked hard to pay for a school that I hardly spent time in all because I did not plan ahead.

There are many things that I wish I would have done differently. Things that may have helped take some of the stress off of my first year in college. Here are some things that you can do to better prepare yourself for your first year in college if you have to maintain a part time job:

- **Save your money** during the summer in preparation for the fall. You will need this stash for unexpected expenses, entertainment and transportation.
- **Shop smart.** Buying supplies for your dorm can get expensive. Find all of the sales. The 99 cents stores are a great way to fill up on small but necessary things like binders, soap, toothbrushes, dishes and Tupperware. Many home décor stores offer great deals during the fall like Target, Bed Bath and Beyond, Kmart and Linens and Things. Buy your necessities in bulk to avoid the end of semester crunch when you've spent all of your money and meal card dollars.
- **Apply for scholarships.** Even small monetary awards save you time and

money. The more money you are awarded the less time you have to spend working. Searching for scholarships is extremely difficult when you have to work and go to school. Spend your summer writing essays and applying because your time will be scarce once school begins!

- **Plan ahead.** Prior to arriving on campus create a resume and have it reviewed and edited by an adult. If you have no prior work experience fill your resume with your achievements, extracurricular activities, skills and interests.
- **Contact your schools career center.** Call a month prior to your departure and find out what types of part time jobs are available in your area. Many businesses and neighborhoods post employment opportunities within the school.
- **If you are offered work study** in your financial aid award letter take the opportunity to find out what types of jobs are available on campus. This can be done simply by calling the individual department offices of your school.
- **Make upper-class friends** who have knowledge of jobs around your school. Majority of the time finding a great job depends on who you know. These people can make recommendation to their employers and inform you on great work study jobs.

Using the above tools will help to eliminate some of the stress you will face during your first year of college. Even though I was able to secure around \$12,000 in scholarships, I passed up opportunities to win a few hundred dollars that could have saved me more money and time. I waited until a month into school to find a job and struggled in my quest while competing with the thousands of other students looking for jobs. College is already difficult enough as you learn to adjust to a new environment, friends and workload. Make it easier on yourself by planning ahead.

Finding My Way

SURRI
EVANS



After coming home one night, I noticed a piece of mail posted to the outside of my door. After I went inside and settled my daughter down, I opened it. It read: NOTICE TO TERMINATE LEASE. YOU HAVE TO BE OUT BY MAY 31 2006 OR AN EVICTION WILL BE PROCESSED. I was shocked and hurt at the same time because I thought that I had done everything possible to make sure me and my daughter had a safe and stable place to live.

The next day, I went to meet with Independent Living Case Manager and told her my situation. I needed help finding a new apartment, so we got on the computer and found some places. I called them, but had no luck. No one would rent to me because I owed my last property management company money. So what was I to do? I had to be out by the 31st and it was the 25th of the month. I had no choice but to move in with a friend of mine.

During that time, I knew I had to do something and fast so that my daughter and I wouldn't end up completely homeless. I kept looking at some potential renters that would rent to me even with the glitch on my rental history. Then, I realized that I didn't even have a stable income to pay rent or even any bills. So, what was I to do now? Things just kept getting harder. I was stuck staying with my sister and she was in the process of moving herself so that situation was very temporary. I was so worried that I could barely sleep or concentrate.

One day, when I was at work at Mockingbird, I attended a meeting for the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. That's when I ran into a woman from a program called Friends of Youth. I spoke with her and let her know my situation and she gave me the number to the Harmony House which is a transitional living home at Sandpoint for mothers and their children. My next step was to call and set up an interview and apply. I knew all I could do now was just wait, but I did feel like things were looking brighter for me!

In the meantime, I was also waiting to hear from Starbucks. I had applied with them about three weeks earlier (thanks to the completion of my training with Youth-care's Barista program). One morning I was asleep on my friend's floor and the phone rang. It was Starbucks! I was offered the job and was scheduled to start the following week. I was so ecstatic! Things were really starting to work out for me. The very next afternoon, I was at work (Mockingbird Society) and received a call from the Harmony House. Again, I had great news. I was accepted in the program and had a move in date for the first of August.

Well, I've been at the Harmony House for a month now, and as you can see I am still writing for the *Mockingbird Times* as well as working at the 23rd and Madison Starbucks. These last couple of months have been a pretty stressful but good experience for me. I'm looking forward to starting school on the 25th of September and am hoping things keep working out well. Actually, I am confident that things are going to work out well, because I believe in myself and I know that I'm going to get what I work hard for.

I have learned that by having patience and being determined, positive things can fall into place. Thankfully, they did for me.

HB 2002 is Accepting Applications: Act Now!

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.

Voices of Youth, Voices of Community

JESSICA
GARCIA



This summer I had the opportunity to participate in Voices of Youth, Voices of Community. This was a free youth empowerment project for "at-risk" (which included foster-care) and "homeless" youth. It was put on by a number of organizations which included Mosaic Multicultural Foundation, Northwest Network for Youth, Youthcare and the Richard Hugo House. I am really thankful to all the sponsoring organizations for giving me the chance to speak to the community and express my experiences with being a youth in foster-care in today's world.

The writing workshops for all the youth were held for five days at the Hugo House. The director of the project was Michel Mead who I felt was an excellent teacher. He taught us how important it is to express on paper. He also told us stories of Native ancestors from all over the world. He shared stories of the Native peo-

ple and about their beliefs of how we hold the world together through our stories and voices. This to me means that when we share our stories we can be a strong community, but can also be separated through negative things like violence, hate and drug use. These things can blind us from our true path in life.

On the last day of the project, we had the opportunity to share all that we had written with the public. This event took place at the Richard Hugo House on Capitol Hill. Many people attended the performance and I knew it would be a brilliant night from the moment I walked in. That night I expressed my anger, fears, progress and what it feels like to be in my shoes. While the youth read their poems, the crowd was moved. The evening went really well and I enjoyed it.

What I loved most about the Voices of Youth project was that it gave all of us the opportunity to reach out and take an active role in making a change in our environment by expressing through our voices. We all shared about the hard things our generation faces in today's society. We also let people know that we can move forward and see a better and brighter future for ourselves.

The King County Kinship Collaboration presents:



When: October 21, 2006, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Where: Brighton Elementary School - new location!
6725 45th Ave. S.
Seattle, WA 98118

The 2006 King County Kinship Care Gathering is celebrating its third year with a new location and new opportunities for kinship caregivers, families, services providers, community advocates and policy makers to share information and ideas, find resources and support and celebrate families caring for families. Please plan to attend our gathering and RSVP.

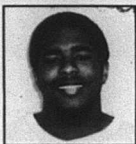
Continental breakfast and lunch provided.

Childcare provided for ages 3 and above.

Please contact Kristie Lund at 206-709-2106 to register.

African-American Stereotypes

SAMUEL
MARTIN



How are Elephants trained? They are hooked to a huge chain on one of their legs at a young age. After several years, the trainers reduce the size of the chain until it's the size of a thin piece of fisherman's string. The reason I tell this story is because the elephant never could break away at a young age, so it doesn't even attempt to later in life. I believe this story closely reflects the mentality of too many African-Americans today.

The civil rights movement began in 1955. Before this time, African-Americans were being killed just for living. African-Americans couldn't even get decent jobs. We were honestly treated unequal. Black people were put in the worst schools and were almost unable to receive any decent education. It was a time when we were not even able to eat in the same restaurants, use the same bathrooms, or even the same hospitals as whites. It was definitely oppression. I would like everybody to imagine not having an option to get a good education, not being "allowed" to sit in the front of the bus, being told that you are less than a whole person, or that you are not as good as someone else. This just goes to show that a lot of people do not appreciate what those before us had to go through for us to live in the way we do now.

It seems to me that after all the oppression we have experienced, we still are not bold enough as a community to take a step forward and "break the string". Many of the barriers to success that have traditionally kept African-Americans from succeeding to their potential have been reduced or removed, yet many people continue to live in ways that perpetuate that cycle of failure. I understand racism and prejudice is widespread, but there comes a point where the "victim" has to step up and stop waiting for a hero to come and rescue them. Most of the African-American Community doesn't understand that most of the stereotypes that are directed to the African-American race as a whole are things that some of us do in our everyday life. Don't get me wrong; there are a lot of exceptions. I also feel that we who don't

reinforce the negative stereotypes, should do more to help change the behavior of those who do. It is true that some of us sag our pants to our ankles, steal, rob, and hang out on corners everyday. No-it's not all of us, but it is enough to call attention to it. If this is all people see in the media and it gets verified by those of us who behave this way, what else do we expect those people (who don't TRULY know us) to think? We can't get rid of the stereotypes until we stop living like we believe them ourselves. We have to act to make a real change happen.

I understand that racism is prevalent but people tend to give racism too much credit. It is also very true that African-Americans are pinpointed far more than other communities as having "negative" behavior. It's true that other races do all the things that you see in the media as behavior of African-Americans. It is also true that if you want better for yourself you have to take it. There are plenty of people in the community who are here to help rather than hurt. I think that if we really want to seek success as a race, we really have to do something about it, and that something begins with education. It doesn't help that a disproportionate number of African-American males dropout of high school. And there are a fair amount of them who end up incarcerated not too long after that.

I have a few ideas about how we can change those statistics; first of all, African-Americans should be involved in extra-curricular activities because statistics show that you have a much higher chance of graduating high school. There should also be more African-American run programs for youth. There should be SAT classes geared for minorities specifically. If all programs are coordinated by Caucasians, African-Americans won't be as interested. There should be more positive and unique programs that lead to more participation to improve the educational achievement of African-Americans.

I asked you how to train an elephant. Now, I'm asking you how to break the chain that holds the elephant down. After reading this, will you continue to leave the chain around you? Are you going to continue watching those around you struggle with a chain on them? Are you letting your child remain chained? Break the chain because everyone is equal and no one deserves less. Be Strong; Be Better.

Creative Corner

That's My Tidal Wave

JONELL MONIQUE GORDON

I am half-tired
I am half black
Half Jamaican
Half Jewish
Part African-American
Curly hair
Straight hair
Different ages
Different Stages-some short, some tall
Family conflict
We do it all
From big, to skinny
From thin, to many
Asalama Lakum to Alakuim Salam
Hallelujah, praise the Lord
Different religions
Different consequences
From sitting in pews to penitentiary time
Locs, folks, gangsters, all kinds
One Gordon, many challenges
That's my tidal wave



Sister, Brother, & Me

KATIE H.

There were but three,
all as little as can be.
Sister, brother, and me,
acting bigger than thee.
They're always together,
even as it happened.
When night started to fall,
just as our trust did.
It fell so quick,
we hardly noticed it.
He seemed so nice,
until he started it.
It was quiet like a dream,
but very much real.
Unlike the way he made us feel,
it was like a cheap deal.
It was as if our father left,
and came back a monster.
He knew it was wrong,
so he got punished for it.
Our own father had sexually abused,
Sister, brother, and me.

Somewhere in the Middle

DOMINIC RUSH

Just a moment in lifetime,
Just a tragedy ahead,
Not knowing where each turn will lead,
Within seconds we might be dead.

Live each moment to the fullest,
Do not stop to wonder why—
In dreams,
Reach for the sky.

With so many people among us,
There are no certainties,
And all it takes is just one person
To reroute history.

Do not waste one moment in life,
How very precious they are,
What seems a long way off
Is really not that far.

TUPAC CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

witness to his demise was Death Row Records president Suge Knight who claims to know the perpetrator but refuses to reveal his identity.

Following his passing, Death Row has released several records under the pseudonym Makaveli, a name that Tupac used even while alive. If you rearrange the letters to one of his albums, "Makaveli The Don Killuminati: The 7 Day Theory", you can make the sentence "Ok on the 7th u think I'm dead yet I'm really alive". Meaning the 7th day after he was shot, he wanted everyone to think that he died but he is really alive.² Because of this and many other suspicious facts surrounding his death, many people believe that Tupac Shakur is alive and well somewhere. In addition, two other films starring Pac were released in 1997, one year after his death, Gridlock'd and Gang Related.

Tupac Shakur lived a life full of pain and misery, money and stardom. Even though he had his controversy, the fact still remains: he was a phenomenal poet and artist, and he will be remembered in reverence for years to come.

¹ <http://www.alleyezonme.com/tupac/bio/>
² <http://www.angelfire.com/md/makaveli/alive.html>



American Friends
Service Committee



The
Safe Schools Coalition

Yo GLBT Youth!!

Do you have any ART, POETRY, RANTS, RAVES, DOODLES, SHORT STORIES, or COLLAGES that you'd like to share with other GLBT youth in Washington State? The Washington GLBT Youth Resource Guide needs some help! We are looking for some art from Washington GLBT youth (22 and under) to make this resource guide useful and fun. PLUS, if your piece is chosen for the zine, you will be awarded with a \$10 gift certificate to local stores and shops!

Please EMAIL your work to:

Hbeck@ucsc.edu

Or MAIL your work to:

Beck C/O AFSC GLBT Program
814 NE 40th Street
Seattle, WA 98105

Washington's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Trans Youth Resource Guide is a project of the American Friends Service Committee, the Safe Schools Coalition, and the LGBT Tobacco Coalition.

School Time is Here!

- Start the school year with a positive attitude;
- Keep up with daily assignments;
- Find study partners;
- Prepare the night before class;
- Eat healthy foods;
- Get plenty of rest;
- Have fun!

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.