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OCTOBER 18 - 24, 2006

REAL CHANGE

ISSUES • INSIGHT • IMPACT

Full House

Yesler Terrace future debated

By **CYDNEY GILLIS**
Staff Reporter

Susan Bossert thumbs through a three-ring binder on the dining room table of her apartment, stopping to point out the things she misses about the former Rainier Vista.

The duplex she once rented in the old garden-style public housing complex is gone. It's been replaced by a cluster of new, three-story apartments where she now lives with her 14-year-old granddaughter Miranda, whom she's raising.

She says she's grateful for their nice, new two-bedroom, but things are a little cramped: Instead of a kitchen, she now has a walk-in where the refrigerator and dishwasher doors hit each other. Instead of a yard, where she had built a small deck under her cherry and maple trees, she now has balconies she can't sit out on — they're too small.

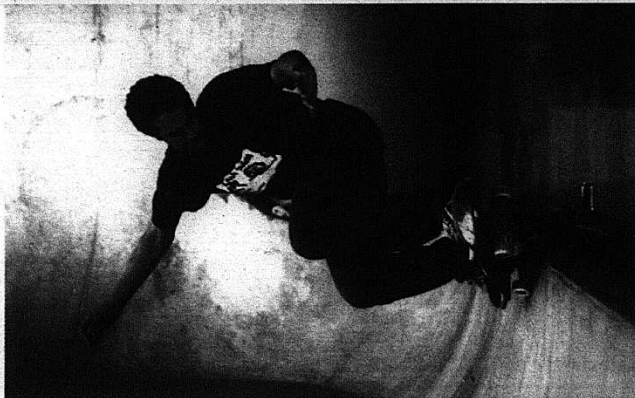
"I think the quality of life has gone down," says Bossert, 63.

As a new citizens advisory group prepares for its first meeting to discuss redeveloping Yesler Terrace — the Seattle Housing Authority's last "garden community" of duplexes and yards — it's an idea that worries residents. But, even before it meets next Wednesday, the Yesler Terrace Citizens Review Committee is already standing on shaky ground.

With only three Yesler Terrace residents on the 19-member committee, which will be chaired by former Mayor Norm Rice, critics say they'll be far outnumbered by 16 others the Seattle Housing Authority selected, with only one outside neighborhood represented.

The participants' names came off lists submitted to SHA by various nonprofits, but it's not clear, they say, why SHA did not contact some nominees and, most important, whether the committee will have a real voice or rubber-stamp turning Yesler Terrace into a more dense, partially private development like Rainier Vista, NewHolly, and High Point before it.

In an era of constant federal cutbacks for public housing, SHA says it has to do something to generate revenue in order to maintain the property. Started in 1939, Yesler Terrace, which sits on a choice 30 acres of First Hill overlooking down-



GREG PERRY, 15, SKATEBOARDS AT THE MARGINAL WAY SKATEPARK. THE PARKS DEPARTMENT IS CONSIDERING OPENING AN ADDITIONAL 30 SPOTS FOR SKATEBOARDING. PHOTO BY JOEL TURNER.

Shredding

Plan for new, smaller skateparks gets resistance

By **KEVIN HIMEDA**
Contributing Writer

The planned construction of as many as 30 new skate parks throughout Seattle may have skateboarders cheering, but it's drawing heavy criticism in public meetings.

In response to Resolution 30843 being passed by the Seattle City Council last February, recognizing skateboarding as a "healthy and popular recreational activity," a skatepark advisory task force was established to develop a comprehensive citywide plan to install a network of skateparks.

"There are 1,800 skateparks worldwide," said Laura Weigel, a planner with Seattle consulting firm Aria Jackson Ellison Murakami. "It's a growing sport that promotes athletics and self-esteem, and brings together all kinds of people who wouldn't otherwise interact."

Resolution 30843 stated that skateboarding is one of the fastest growing sports in North America, that it's safer than baseball or soccer, and that city-maintained skate parks are a good way to get skateboarders off the streets.

Using input from three public meetings and an open house held this past spring, the task force has, over the last several months, drafted site selection criteria that emphasize safety, security, and accessibility. Decisions were made on the size and type of the skateparks,

ranging from "skate dots," small skateable elements along paths as part of streetscapes or in parks, to the regional skate parks that are similar in size to a football field.

Earlier this month, speakers at a Northgate meeting about the plan expressed displeasure at the task force's decisions, saying skatepark development would worsen traffic and noise.

One woman expressed concern the skateparks would come to dominate the areas they were built in, replacing other recreational activity. A man asked why a Lake City playground was still among the sites for a "skatespot," a tennis court-sized skateboarders' playground. "Most of the people did not want a skatepark there," he added, "but it's still on the list and

"We're just citizens who have volunteered to assist in this process," said Skatepark Advisory Task Force member George Blomberg, expressing the difficulty in trying to please all those involved. "Everyone's comments hold some weight, but we've got to make a decision in the end."

After several more comments from defenders and opponents to many of the skatepark choices, task force members ended the meeting while expressing the desire for more feedback in the form of emails and phone calls.

See **SKATEPARK**, Continued on Page 12

SPARE CHANGIN'

Dear Senate-hopeful Mike McGavick: Glad to hear you're thinkin' like a *Real Change* fan. Signed...

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WHACK IO

Activists seeing red over EPA's call to "dismantle" Region 10 enviro justice office that aids whole Northwest.

PAGE 3

BUDGET JEERING

Feed the hungry. Keep us safe. Protect the parks. The people tell the mayor how SS should be spent.

PAGE 4

MONDO CONDO

The news informing tenants their apartments are going condo is just the continuation of a long trend.

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STATIC ZING

Radio host Amy Goodman turns up the volume on media misdeeds while on cross-country tour.

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Talkin' Real Change

An open letter to Mike McGavick

"I'd love to continue this conversation over breakfast. We're having our annual event Oct. 25 and you should come. We could eat Freedom toast and talk more about Real Change, and how when we all work together there's nuthin' we can't do."

Dear Mike, We can't tell you how excited we are to have one of our own running for the United States Senate. Just from the practiced way you sometimes drop your g's, we could tell you were a man of the people. "I'm Mike McGavick, and I'm runnin' for Senate." You are so the real thing!

Right from the start, you hit the big issues head on. "These are challenging times," you said. "We're a nation at war... We have a growing federal deficit, which will burden our children. We have a healthcare system so expensive we can't afford to even insure all the children."

It's all about the children, isn't it Mike? But, you know, it's like you say, when we listen to the people, "there's nuthin' we can't do." That's why you're runnin' for Senate.

"Change is coming," you said. "We've got to have a change, but the only way we can change it is to change the people back there." And then there's my personal favorite: "We're talkin' real change, right?"

We knew all along that you were a Real Change fan.

You probably know our star vendor, Ed McClain, over at the 50th and Brooklyn Safeway. During your SAFECO days, I'm sure you two had lots of nice chats when you stopped in for milk and bread on the way home to Gaylynn and the kids and your yellow Labrador named Frosty.

I'll tell Ed you said hi.

But when Real Change started showin' up in all your recent TV ads, we knew it had to be true. I mean, there it was, in black and white. Real Change. Real change. Real Change. No matter

how you choose to spell it, Mike, you're talkin' our language. You are one of us. A Real Changer.

But Mike, we need to talk.

We're a little concerned that maybe you're not reading the paper quite as closely as you could.

Like that thing about mandatory drug testing for welfare moms. I mean, when we're handing out princely sums like \$543 a month to support a family of three, we don't really need to treat them like criminals too, do we?

That just seemed sort of unkind.

And then there was that ad where you said that "we spend tens of billions in public aid to illegals, even as Social Security goes broke."

First off, Mike, Social Security ain't goin' broke anytime soon. That's just somethin' George says to scare us. But aside from that, do you really think it's a good idea to pit immigrants and the elderly against each other?

Think about it Mike.

And then you're against the estate tax. Or the "death tax," as you call it. All Republicans call it that.

I didn't even know you were a Republican until you said "death tax." You don't mention that in your ads. I thought you were runnin' on the Real Change party.

I don't see how you can be so appalled at our \$8.5 trillion deficit and still be opposed to keeping a tax that mostly affects just the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans.

But, then, we're talking about you there, aren't we?

As a former insurance industry CEO who left SAFECO last year with a \$28 million golden parachute, you've got to look out for number one. I get that. For a guy with just a BA from UW, you've

done pretty well for yourself. Those D.C. connections you built up working for Slade sure came in handy.

Well, anyway, I'm sure you mean well.

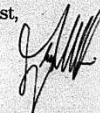
I'd love to continue this conversation over breakfast. We're having our annual event Oct. 25 and you should come. We could eat Freedom toast and talk more about Real Change, and how when we all work together there's nuthin' we can't do.

I've heard Jim McDermott's coming. Maybe we could seat you near him. By the way your numbers are lookin', that might be the closest you'll get to Congress for a while.

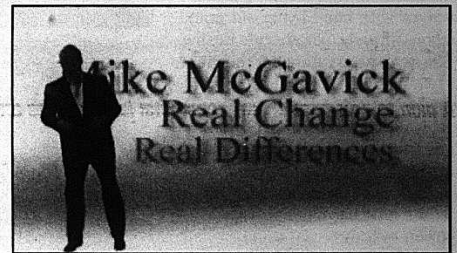
And hey, as long as you're dropping our name all over the place, why don't you drop us a check while you're at it?

Make it out to "Real Change."

Best,



Timothy Harris,
Exec. Dir., Real Change



REAL CHANGE

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

Mission Statement:

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

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

On the Web at

<http://www.realchangenews.org>
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ISSN 1085-729X

Real Change is a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association, the International Network of Street Papers, and the Greater Seattle Business Association.



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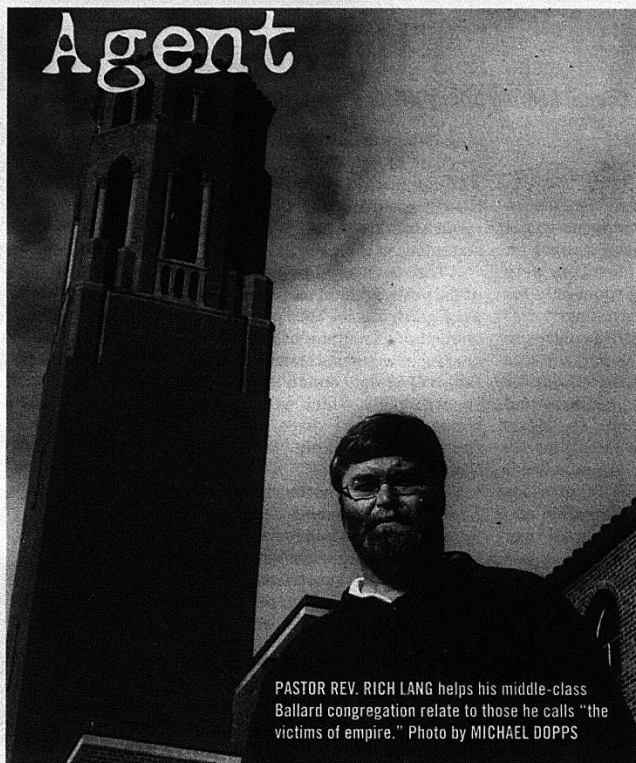
It was a real David vs. Goliath when Trinity United Methodist Church started a 2001 staredown with Seattle zoning officials over hosting Tent City. Pastor Rich Lang says his then-tiny congregation was undeterred by the steep odds. Neighbors picketed; city officials threatened outlandish fines. The church had been through stressful times recently, and the healing wasn't complete when the blue tarps moved in. But providing hospitality was a shot in the arm, not a sock in the gut.

"It ripped our focus off ourselves," Lang says. "It gave us a reason to swim instead of just treading water."

Lang's April 2002 indictment of President Bush is one of the most widely linked articles on *Real Change's* web site. Its Old Testament fervor ("You sit atop the nations like the biblical Whore of Babylon.... The Spirit of Death rises, and nations tremble") is the kind of rhetoric Lang isn't shy to speak on Sundays.

"I don't have to nuance a lot here." Worshipers get "the message that 'This system that you're living under sucks.'"

—Adam Hyla



PASTOR REV. RICH LANG helps his middle-class Ballard congregation relate to those he calls "the victims of empire." Photo by MICHAEL DOPPS

Insult to Injury

EPA plan to "dismantle" environmental justice office draws ire

By ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Reporter

"You gain a little power, and you can have a whole new administration come in and wipe it all out."

—Jeri Sundvall-Williams, Environmental Justice Action Group, Portland, OR

Entrification in minority and low-income communities. Substandard air quality caused by diesel fumes in South Seattle. The Duwamish Waterway, named a Superfund site in 2001.

These issues and more are at the heart of calls for greater attention to be paid to environmental justice in the Seattle area. But, with the announcement that the Environmental Protection Agency is planning to disband its Office of Civil Rights and Environmental Justice that covers the entire northwest, activists in the affected states are concerned that environmental justice, in local communities, may soon be given short shrift.

"To not even have an office dedicated to environmental justice is a complete insult," says Yalonda Sindé, executive director of Community Coalition for Environmental Justice.

The imminent dismantling of the office — which covers Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska, known collectively as Region 10 — comes at a critical time, says Sindé. In the past year, she says, relations with local EPA officials have been on the upswing. She cites their attendance at community meetings and their dedication to environmental justice. "There's been a resuscitation in the office," she says. But knowing the region may not have local staff representation, she says, does not bode well for the people her organization serves. "How can the EPA tell us there's not going to be an impact?" she asks.

BJ Cummings of the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition, which serves as an advisory group to the EPA, also feels the impact will be larger than the EPA believes. "The way to improve [the office] is not to diminish it," says Cummings. "They're going in the opposite direction."

Tony Brown, who handles public affairs for Region 10, says the EPA is not planning to do away

with the office. The EPA, he says, is looking at the organization as a whole, to find where else the office may be more ideally situated. Brown says he doesn't know where that might be, as the process hasn't been completed. "Instead of a person in this building [in Seattle,] they may be located elsewhere in Region 10," Brown. "Same job, different place."

"I guess I'm missing something," declares Sindé. "I don't see how that's not dismantling the office."

Offices dedicated to environmental justice got their genesis in the Clinton era, when, in 1994, he signed Executive Order 12898, which mandated that federal agencies review the effects of their programs on low-income and minority communities. A report put out by the EPA's Office of the Inspector General last month determined that "EPA senior management has not sufficiently directed program and regional offices to conduct environmental justice reviews" that meet the executive order guidelines.

Jeri Sundvall-Williams, executive director of Environmental Justice Action Group in Portland, OR, says that beyond this particular agency decision, of high concern is the employment history of the incoming Region 10 administrator, Elin D. Miller. The EPA's decision to hire Miller — who, according to an EPA press release, recently served as president and CEO of Arysta LifeScience North America and Australasia, an agricultural chemical company, and held various high-level executive positions at Dow Chemical from 1996-2004 — is a hot topic for those seeking environmental justice for communities throughout the Northwest. "You gain a little power," says Sundvall-Williams, "and you can have a whole new administration come in and wipe it all out."

The presence of a local agency, says Sindé, provides access for her organization, and others, to advocate for themselves. Doing away with that opportunity, she says, has led 11 different groups to ask for a meeting with EPA officials. Noting that the agency is mandated to address environmental justice, she says the groups are planning a response to make their feelings known about how crucial the office really is: "We're not going to stand silent on this." ■

Just Heard...

Not new

Last month, Adrienne Quinn, director of Seattle's Office of Housing, told an audience at a Real Change housing forum that public subsidies had produced a surprising gain of 854 new, low-income apartments in the city in the past three years.

The surprise, says John Fox of the Seattle Displacement Coalition, is what got counted: renovations, including 200 existing units redone at the Morrison Hotel.

"He's right. There are rehabs in our list," says Quinn. Minus the remodels, she says, the gain is 118 new units. But she defends counting the rehabs: "Those units would have been lost," she says, "had we not funded them."

SHA: board again

Don't look now, but another tenant seat is coming up on the Seattle Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners, the group that oversees Seattle's public housing and millions of dollars in projects.

When another seat came up earlier this year, the mayor's nominee, Sybil Bailey, ran into strong opposition from SHA tenants who told the City Council Bailey didn't represent their interests. As a result of that fiasco, SHA's Resident Action Council wrote a letter Sept. 26 asking the mayor to appoint two tenants from SHA and senior housing to the interview panel that nominates a replacement for SHA Board member Al Winston.

Three weeks later, the mayor has not responded. But Rebecca Hansen, administrator for the city's boards and commissions, says she has asked officers of RAC and the Advocates, a senior housing group, to submit names of potential candidates. SHA is taking applications for the position until Oct. 31.

—Cydney Gillis

Bestin' the Westin

The protracted negotiations between union workers and Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, Inc., over pay, benefits, and working conditions at the downtown marquee The Westin are over four months old. Workers and community supporters are stepping up the pressure on the hotel chain with a demonstration next week outside the filled-to-capacity hotel, asking for better pay, some relief from the backstraining triple-sheeting routine, and recognition of the rights of transgendered individuals.

There's been a few small victories in recent weeks, says UNITE HERE spokesperson Jessica Lawson — some prompted by late September's week of community action, called Walk and Work. Managers were made to understand that a 10-cent pay raise was "awful," says Lawson, especially in light of a \$50-a-month hike in health care costs. The Westin retracted that offer.

The demonstration takes place Tues., Oct. 24 at 4 p.m. at Fifth and Stewart downtown.

—Adam Hyla

Live Aid

Council hearing brings citizens out for cops, parks, social services

"The parks [are] not functioning. The Parks Department is turning purely into a recreation department."
— Jeanette Williams, former Councilmember

By BILLY JOYCE
Contributing Writer

More than 100 people signed up to testify for amendments to the mayor's proposed budget on Oct. 11. And council chambers were crammed to standing-room-only for the better part of the evening.

Nickels' budget carries controversial cuts to essential support services and sets aside millions to build for converted recreation facilities and to renovate the monorail. The Meals Partnership Coalition (MPC) stands to lose \$55,000, the organization's whole budget, in 2007. MPC provides meals to hungry people safely and connections to food banks all over King County.

The mayor's proposal also slashes 38 percent of the annual budget of SOAR, a program that works to improve the quality of early childhood education and school support.

The Seattle Human Services Coalition prepared a plan to address these immediate issues and also problems that may become relevant in the future due to imminent federal cuts to human services.

Alison Eisinger, the executive director of the Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness, summed up the SHSC request by telling members of the City Council to "Commit to the 10-Year Plan" by increasing funding to end homelessness, from \$3.5 million to \$5 million.

A number of individuals spoke in favor of the plan throughout the eve-

ning, punctuated by Steve Daschle, co-chair of SHSC, asking everyone who supported the plan to stand. Nearly a third of the people in the room stood, sending a loud visual statement to the council.

Citizens angered by management of the parks greeted early guests with a D.J. and balloons. They presented the council with a litany of protests, including: reassessing Magnuson Park's Building 27 conversion to an indoor soccer facility, which would erase a community event space, and nixing the proposed parking garage at the Woodland Zoo.

"The parks [are] not functioning," said former Councilmember Jeanette Williams in an address to the current council. "The Parks Department is turning purely into a recreation department."

"It's time something proper happens, not for ballfields, believe me, but for the community."

Citizens from all sides of the city cited the need for more police officers.

"Citizens deserve a safe place," said Rich O'Neill, president of the Seattle Police Officers Guild. Peter Rogerson said he wanted more cops because "deteriorating response" to urgent calls is affecting the "quality of life" in the city.

Michele Thomas, from the Washington Tenant's Union, proposed funding full-time community service officer (CSO) positions — two officers in each jurisdiction. CSOs would allow police a quicker response to emergency calls by handling non-emergency cases. She added that

CSOs would do "things that the police are generally not good at," like making informed responses to landlord-tenant disputes.

"For example," Thomas said, "if their utilities were shut off by their landlord or if their landlord locks them out of their house illegally."

Suggestions are still being taken. Another hearing will occur on Mon., Oct. 30, at 5:30 p.m. The council won't make their final revisions to the mayor's proposal until the end of November. ■

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Short Takes

WASL: Why?

With Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) test scores revealing that local African-American students are scoring far lower than their white counterparts, community leaders and educators have one question: Why is there such inequality?

It was the search for an answer that led nearly 100 people to attend an Oct. 12 panel discussion entitled *Inequality in Public Education*. Put on by the Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas, the event brought together five panelists — administrators, a researcher, a parent, a student — who sought to get to the heart of the matter.

Moderator Dr. Donald Felder said that he was hoping the panelists would discuss "those issues that everybody wants to be silent about."

Alliance for Education Manager of Community and Government Relations Stephan Blanford made it plain from the get-go the situation at hand. An orange sheet of paper, disseminated to attendees, showed that while 76 percent of fourth-grade white students met or exceeded WASL standards in math, the number plummeted to 31 percent for Blacks. By seventh grade, the percentages were 68 and 18, respectively; in 10th grade, 71 and 21. Reading proficiency, while better, still saw racial disparities ranging between 30 and 45 points. "[These statis-

tics] helped me realize the urgency of the issue," said Blanchard.

Director of Equity and Race Relations for Seattle schools Caprice Hollins, who noted the history of oppression has impacted the African-American community greatly, said that resources are not allocated equally in school districts.

A research analyst at the Center for Reinventing Public Education, Kacey Guin, said that schools with large African-American populations tend to have newer teachers, and that those teachers are often less likely to hold higher degrees. Teachers in these schools tend to experience high turnover rates. Noting that these teachers — many of whom work in south Seattle schools — earn less than their counterparts in northeast Seattle schools (which have larger white student populations), Guin said, "We need transparency in the system."

When asked for solutions to closing the gap, panelists hit upon such issues as high-quality preschool and providing models for young African-American youth.

Hollins, while not disagreeing, said that institutional racism was at the issue's core. Until that was addressed, she said, nothing would be resolved: "The real conversation is not happening."

—Rosette Royale

Justice For All?

It may come last in the Pledge of Allegiance, but "justice for all" was far from least at the Equal Justice Open House Day held Wed., Oct. 11.

In receptions hosted throughout Washington state, the Alliance for Equal Justice sought to bring attention to the one million civil legal cases faced by low-income individuals and families, 80 percent of whom go without legal assistance.

"They are victims of domestic violence," said Paula Boggs, general counsel for Starbucks. "They are children and elderly who are swindled out of their homes and finances and denied some of the most essential services."

Though hundreds of lawyers volunteer to assist individuals without payment, they cannot use government resources and must devote their own time to do so.

"I was involved in an amazing juxtaposition," Brian Meenaghan said, a volunteer at the Housing Justice Project. He described his work as one of 18 attorneys representing a client in a trial lasting 12 weeks.

"Millions of dollars were spent in that time, while in another case I was the only lawyer representing five low-income clients with only a half-hour to present their cases to the court. That's not equal justice."

Boggs and Meenaghan spoke at the open house's Seattle reception, citing homelessness, abuse, hunger, and unemployment as some of the consequences of such injustices, and warned against a spiraling effect in communities as they become increasingly dependent on social services.

"Thankfully, we've got the structure and resources available now to fix the problem," Meenaghan said, citing the contributions in time and money of local firms and organizations such as the Northwest Justice Project, the King County Bar Association, and the Legal Action Center.

"I'm very excited about where we are in Seattle," Boggs added. "Yes, people are still in need, but we are leaders here. The reputation of Washington in being innovative in providing legal support is well-known."

The Alliance for Equal Justice is Washington state's network of organizations providing civil legal aid in the form of information, advice, and representation for more than 20,000 people each year. Nevertheless, many others go without legal aid.

"What can we do?" Boggs asked. "A lot. Lawyers can volunteer to take cases and help raise money. If you're not a lawyer, there are still many ways to volunteer your time and effort in this critical cause."

—Kevin Himeda

New Converts

Workers' rental housing to go condo

By **CYDNEY GILLIS**
Staff Reporter

Between June of 2005 and June of 2006, about 2,400 apartments were converted to condos in the city, according to John Fox of the Seattle Displacement Coalition

It's not the same as a new Wal-Mart employee getting a packet with an application in it for state-run medical care. But tenants of Seattle's Empress apartments will be getting folders shortly with information on how to get down payment assistance from the city of Seattle.

Developer Jeff Wysong, who just bought the Empress and plans to turn its 88 units into condominiums, says he understands that entry-level housing is needed in Seattle, so he wants to do what he can to help his renters buy their units, which will range between \$190,000 and \$300,000.

If they can't buy, some will have to start moving out early next year, with Wysong's project manager planning to issue 90-day notices in sets of 25 starting this month.

The Empress's tenants aren't alone. Between June of 2005 and June of 2006, about 2,400 apartments were converted to condos in the city, according to John Fox of the Seattle Displacement Coalition. Virtually all of the buildings, he says, were low-income — a claim that Adrienne Quinn, director of Seattle's Office of Housing, disputes.

At a recent forum organized by *Real Change* on the loss of affordable housing, Quinn presented preliminary data from a rental market study the city is having done by Dupre + Scott Apartment Advisors. Only 14 percent of the units lost to condo conversion in the past three years, she said, had rents affordable to people making 50 percent of the area's median income, about \$27,000 in King County.

But, for those who lose an apartment to conversion, "It's sure a big deal to that 14 percent of the people," Quinn told the audience, because units in the affordable range — about \$750 for a one-bedroom — are hard to find.

Built in 2000, the Empress, which is located on Fifth Avenue South between the International District and Pioneer Square, is considered moderately priced workforce housing, with studios priced between \$600 and \$700, and one-bedrooms starting at \$900.

Wysong, who specializes in condo conversion (including First Hill's Decatur Apartments), says he chose the Empress because it's a newer building. All that's needed, says project manager Gary Blakeslee, are cosmetic upgrades to each unit's counters, cabinets, carpets, and fixtures.

In the meantime, Blakeslee plans to call a meeting where tenants can learn what their options are, including how to get low-interest down payment loans from housing levy funds.

The loans are made through non-profit partners such as HomeSight and the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. But Mark Ellerbrook, manager of the homeownership program in the city's Office of Housing, says the programs all require a buyer to have 2 percent of the purchase price in cash. On a \$200,000 condo, he says, that's about \$4,000.

Under the Tenant Relocation Assistance Ordinance, Wysong owes those who move out \$500.

None of that matters much to resident Arun Kanakarj, 29, a software programmer who says he doesn't plan to buy because he may not stay in the Seattle area. Kanakarj lived four years near his job in Bothell, but says he moved downtown for the lifestyle, including art galleries, cafes, and nightclubs.

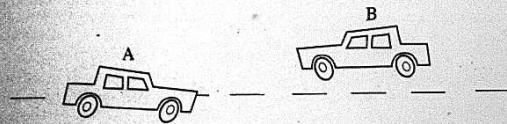
Kanakarj shares a two-bedroom with a fellow programmer for \$1,225 and says it was the cheapest he could find after scouring downtown and First Hill. But he says everyone in the building knew for months that the Empress was being sold, so the six-month notices they got last week were no surprise.

"I see it as a disappointment," he says, but "it was a bad commute anyway." ■

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Story Problem 13

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A Fearless Voice in an Age of Anxiety

Journalist Amy Goodman on Government Lies, a Somnolent Press, and Voices of Hope

By **ROBIN LINDLEY**
Contributing Writer

That is the responsibility of a journalist: giving a voice to those who have been forgotten, forsaken, and beaten down by the powerful.

—Amy Goodman in *The Exception to the Rulers*

"The problem with the media is that it's ahistoric. It doesn't bring you historical context; it brings you eight- or nine-second sound bites and is really a politically censoring forum. Whether we're talking about Iraq or health care in this country, we have to know the history, [but] the movements that created static and history are often left out in the coverage."

Often at great personal risk, *Democracy Now!* host and journalist Amy Goodman goes to where the silence is to report the stories ignored by the mainstream media. She was brutally beaten by Indonesian soldiers in East Timor in 1991 when covering the massacre of at least 270 Timorese civilians. She was threatened by secret police on the Chevron oil fields of Nigeria, where she documented the killing of civilian protesters in 1995. She continued reporting from a New York City firehouse studio blocks from Ground Zero on Sept. 11, 2001, after surrounding buildings were evacuated. She's been pilloried as a nuisance, a threat, and worse as she speaks out about corporate greed, government corruption, the reality of war, and a mainstream media that has failed to inform the public and speak truth to power.

Goodman visited Seattle in September as part of her 80-city tour to celebrate *Democracy Now!* A standing-room-only throng at the Seattle Town Hall enthusiastically welcomed her and her brother, *Mother Jones* investigative reporter David Goodman — a welcome eclipsed only by thunderous applause for war resister Lt. Ehren Watada, the first Army officer to refuse to deploy to Iraq. Goodman blasted the mainstream media as "a megaphone for the powerful," in her keynote address to recognize the founding of the Northwest Community Radio Network. She also praised independent media outlets, including KBCS 91.3 FM, the Bellevue Community College station, and KPCN, a community station recently established in rural Oregon.

In 2004 Goodman published *The*

New York Times bestseller *The Exception to the Rulers: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media That Love Them*, co-written with her brother David. Last month saw the release of their second book, *Static: Government Liars, Media Cheerleaders, and the People Who Fight Back*, an unflinching indictment of corporate media cheerleaders for the Bush administration and a tribute to those who have spoken out. Goodman has received dozens of awards for her reporting, including the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Journalism Award, the Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia Award, and the George Polk Award. For over a decade, she has hosted Pacifica Radio Network's *Democracy Now!*, which is broadcast on 500 community and public access radio and television stations.

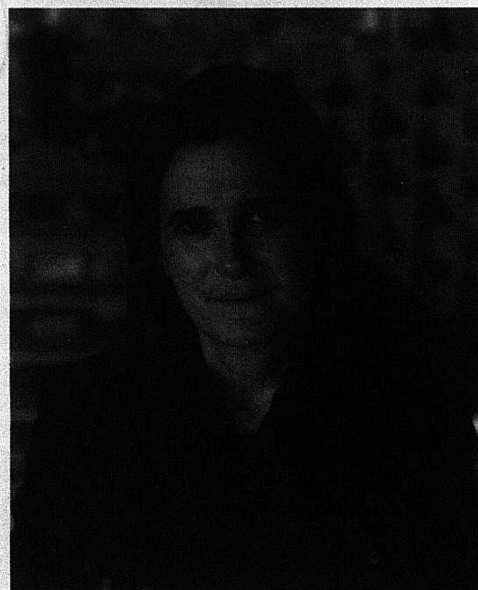
Goodman recently discussed the "all-time low" of the corporate media and her alternative reporting, from a car somewhere between Detroit, Mich., and Dayton, Ohio, in the course of her 80-city tour.

Real Change: Can you talk about the role of the press, and how you believe it's failing the public now?

Amy Goodman: We call our book *Static* precisely because of the state of the media today. We live in this high-tech, digital age, with high-definition television and digital radio to do away with static, but instead we only get more static: a veil of distortion, lies, misrepresentation, half-truths, obfuscation. We need a media that meets the dictionary definition of "static": criticism, opposition, unwanted interference. We need a media that doesn't cover-up for power, but covers power. I hear over and over from friends how it's very difficult for them to cover the stories they want to [with the] icing out of dissent from above. But it's our job. We're not trying to win a popularity contest. We're not entertainers. We're reporters. We go to where the silence is.

RC: You've observed that when reporters were finally unembedded after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans — unlike the coverage of the Iraq war — they described what was actually happening. Is reporting getting better in terms of the mainstream media?

Goodman: The reason [Katrina] had the effect it did is not because the media was doing better, [but because] the Administration was not there with troops



Amy Goodman, host of *Democracy Now!* Photo by Michael Keel

for the reporters to embed with. Also, in this election year, there's the illusion that the media's opening up because media... bring you opinions between the Republicans and Democrats, so it looks like the media is a forum for debate. But essentially it's not changing, and in fact, it's dangerous because the media is consolidating even more. The silver lining is that people are beginning to realize how dangerous it is to have one media mogul in a town owning radio, TV, and the newspaper. People are fighting back [as] telecom and cable companies write legislation that would privatize the Internet. And community radio stations like KPCN are going up all over the country... to bring out the voices of the grassroots.

The problem with the media is that it's ahistoric. It doesn't bring you historical context; it brings you eight- or nine-second sound bites and is really a politically censoring forum. Whether we're talking about Iraq or health care in this country, we have to know the history, [but] the movements that created static and history are often left out in the coverage.

RC: Peter Bacho, a local novelist, said that the Vietnam War may as well have been the Peloponnesian War as far as Americans are concerned. Unlike mainstream news shows, you air the unsanitized reality of the war: the

carnage of war for soldiers and civilians alike.

Goodman: Yes. We also provide a forum for international media in a time of globalization when large corporations transfer capital easily from country to country,

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Continued from Previous Page

[but] the borders are very firm when it comes to information. It's amazing how isolated we are. We'll broadcast a documentary by RAI, the Italian Public Broadcaster, or a documentary by John Pilger, a renowned filmmaker [whose] work is almost never shown in the U.S. We need a media that matches the level of globalization that is going on today, that doesn't just benefit corporations but benefits the grassroots.

RC: The mainstream television news-casts — at the behest of the Administration — don't show coffins of our slain soldiers, let alone images of dead or wounded Americans, but they did in Somalia in 1993 when the networks ran pictures of a mob dragging a dead U.S. Marine through the streets of Mogadishu. It seems there's a media double standard when covering the Bush administration.

Goodman: Yes. The Administration put on pressure, and the media caved. We call it the Access of Evil: You're trading truth for access. The whole idea that you're either with us or against us [is] the dichotomy the media have internalized... and it's unacceptable.

RC: You feature doctors and other experts who comment on how war affects people, such as Dr. J. Robert Lifton, a psychiatrist, on atrocity-producing situations.

Goodman: With Iraq we rarely see the images [that are] absolutely critical to see so that people can make up their own minds. Information is a kind of power that makes a democracy healthy. It's critical that we hear these voices, [and] what people are doing in this time of war. Dr. Robert Lifton was with me the first night of the tour, talking about situations like Iraq — atrocity-producing situations — where the soldiers are exhausted and not trained well. Some [soldiers have] moral character waivers, like [Army PFC] Steven Green, because the military's so desperate to get bodies into Iraq. And it's very frightening. In Mouhmodiyya, Private Green and other soldiers went to this 14-year-old girl's home, killed her mother, father, and five-year-old sister, [and] then raped and murdered her and burned her body to cover up the crime. It's our job to cover these stories. We [must] challenge the whole embedding process that the Pentagon perfected.

RC: You write about massive Pentagon spending for propaganda to recruit soldiers and to promote the war.

Goodman: We're talking about tens of millions of dollars to control the media

in Iraq. The Lincoln Group, a company that is brand new with no experience, ended up getting tens of millions of dollars to plant stories in the Iraqi media to pay off publishers, newspapers, editors, and reporters to run articles secretly written by the U.S. military — and that undermines democracy. In Iraq, people read the papers and realize [they] don't match the reality on the ground, and they lose faith in their press, which is very dangerous. A free press builds an independent, free democratic society. But [we're] undermining democracy there, and the intent of the Administration is that these planted stories flow back into the United States. In fact, some might argue that [we are] the target audience in a world of globalized media.

See INTERVIEW, Continued on Page 8

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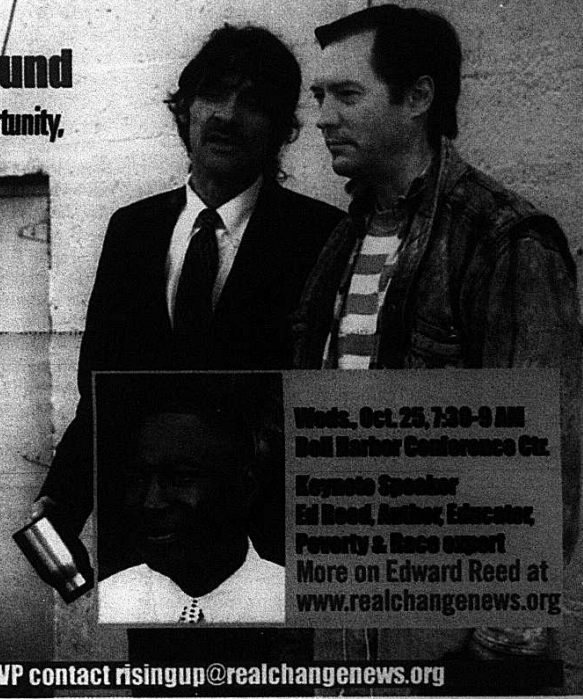
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SEVEN SIMPLE MACHINES

Primed for Greatness, Lacking Sense

With her newest novel, *The Emperor's Children*, a well-crafted story about the intersecting lives of three thirtysomethings in modern-day New York, Claire Messud seems likely to become a household name.

The Emperor's Children
By Claire Messud
Knopf, 2006
Hardcover, 431 pages, \$25
By AUSTIN WALTERS
Contributing Writer

Claire Messud has been said to possess "a literary intelligence far surpassing most other writers of her generation" (*The San Francisco Chronicle*) as well as a voice that is "virtuosic" and "masterly" (*The New York Times*). Her first two books and a set of novellas were nominated for important literary prizes and listed on the yearly Notable lists in many prominent review sections. Yet even with all the stellar praise, Messud has remained something of a writer's writer for most of her career, failing to appeal to a wider mainstream audience.

With her newest novel, *The Emperor's Children*, a well-crafted story about the intersecting lives of three thirtysomethings in modern-day New York, Messud seems much more likely to become a household name. Messud's wicked observations and sizzling cultural commentary will cause readers to simultaneously cringe and laugh as the exquisitely drawn characters flounder toward personal disaster.

Danielle, Julius, and Marina have been friends since their undergraduate years at Brown and are now living in New York on the cusp of their 30s. Once emboldened by the strong sense of agency that can surround the intellectual elite, each of the friends has begun to realize the limitations and flaws inherent in their individual senses of entitlement.

They've spent the last 10 years looking for meaningful ways to make their voices heard without understanding that they don't actually have anything worthwhile to say. Marina, a true New York It girl, can't seem to finish the promising book she started years ago about the cultural significance of children's clothing (aptly titled *The Emperor's Children Have No Clothes*), although she long since spent her advance. And a job, she tells her journalist father, might "make me ordinary, like everyone else."

Also trained for greatness but lacking in sense, Julius stops checking in with his editor at the *Village Voice* and can't afford to eat or pay the rent for his filthy studio. In desperation, Julius slogs through menial tasks at a temp agency and sees the days of being New York's favorite "charming wastrel" quickly diminishing. Instead, at 30, he's dangerously close to becoming a "needy and boring failure."

Danielle too remembers a time when her optimism and her prestigious degree made New York seem like a dazzling place of unlimited opportunity. As a television producer for a documentary show, she thought it would be easy to showcase the brilliant talents of her generation — so much better equipped to make significant changes in the world with their fancy educations and infinite charm. Instead she researches a growing number of botched liposuction operations and wonders why she hasn't met the man of her dreams.

Their intellectual guide, Marina's "emperor" father, Murray, embodies all the young trio think that they want

in life, from fame to wealth and good looks. Marina idolizes her father, while Julius covets the grandeur of Murray's homes and lifestyle. And Danielle begins to wrestle with the idea that her innocent crush on Murray has become a much more complicated mix of adoration and sexual desire.

As other important characters like Marina's flabby cousin Bootie and a mysteriously sexy Australian named Ludovic (Ludo) Seeley enter the fray to decidedly delicious effect and controversy, the kingdom begins to further unravel. Bootie threatens to expose Murray as a fraud, while Ludo attempts to start a revolution through the pages of his new cultural magazine. Easily swept up in new ideas, Marina falls quickly in love with Ludo and his grand scheme and gives him easy access to her father's vast empire.

The attacks of Sept. 11 and the sobering aftermath bring the book to a thundering climax. Danielle, Julius, and Marina must grapple with their fears and failures and face adulthood, or be forever remembered as entitled, foolish children.

Messud's overall message, delivered in her superbly biting humor, seems to be embodied in a comment that Danielle makes about growing up being "a process of growing away from mirth, as if, like an amphibian, one ceased to breathe in the same way: laughter, once vital sustenance, protean relief and all that made isolation and struggle and fear bearable, was replaced by the stolid matter of stability: ...Where there had been laughter, there came a cold breeze." ■

INTERVIEW, Continued from Page 7

RC: A \$20 million program was just approved for the Pentagon to promote the war in Iraq and how well it's going.

Goodman: Yes, it's very serious because that program here at home is to monitor the tone of coverage. That's very dangerous. When the Corporation for Public Broadcasting did that under Kenneth Tomlinson, he was investigated for corruption [for] monitoring the political content of PBS programs. That was decried, but the Administration doesn't stop. They put out [this] \$20 million contract to monitor the overall tone of the U.S. media. This is not acceptable. We are supposed to be the fourth estate, not "for the state." We're supposed to be separate.

RC: As you raise important questions about the actions of the government, the powerful, it seems that network news like the new Katie Couric CBS Evening News is filled with so much fluff — entertainment news and a few featured homicides.

Goodman: We have to take media seriously. The airwaves are precious, and every minute of airtime matters. These people at the networks are using the

public airwaves too, and they have the responsibility to bring out the full diversity of opinion and the full gamut of information, and if they don't, they should have their licenses revoked.

RC: What can average citizens do to improve news coverage?

Goodman: People should be involved in the media. People should pay attention. People can protect public access and community radio by supporting it financially and by getting involved — by answering phones or making their own programs. These are invaluable tools in a democracy. The media are... more powerful than any bomb or missile. Anything people can do now, whatever they enjoy, they should be involved in because this country has a huge impact on the world, and what we do matters, individually and also as a group or country.

RC: You've always been outspoken despite threats and assaults. How do you continue your work at great risk to yourself?

Goodman: Our greatest protection is people who are listening and watching. The more people care about independent media, the more protected we are. I hope that opens up the media landscape for many, because it's abso-

lutely critical. The media's one of the most powerful institutions on earth and should be a sanctuary of dissent. That's what keeps it healthy. ■

[Readings]

Amy Goodman speaks in Mt. Vernon and Bellingham on Sat., Oct. 28. For more information, see tour.democracynow.org.

[Online]

Check out the Prometheus Radio Project, which fosters media democracy by supporting grassroots efforts to start non-commercial community radio stations: www.prometheusradio.org.

Robin Lindley (robilindley@yahoo.com) is a Seattle attorney and writer who covers human rights, international affairs, law, medicine, politics, journalism, and culture.

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Insolence Abroad

Let's talk about unmitigated effrontery or impudence!

Whether you call it gall, balls, chutzpah, or just plain bad manners, you have to admit unmitigated effrontery or impudence is continually entertaining. That's why people watch sitcoms and

John Waters say it on TV and I liked the way it sounded. Also, I don't want strange nubile women to undulate their naked bodies in front of me and aim their private parts at my face.

How was that for ironic?

My next example is Ken Bounds. Ken Bounds is the chief of the Seattle Parks Department. That's Seattle, as in City of. That means he works for the City of Seattle. But he doesn't think his continued employment should be subject to review by the Seattle City Council. You might think that's why I am going to cite him for unmitigated effrontery or impudence, but it's not. I don't care whether the City Council can fire him or not, if they're just going to keep on endorsing his policies regardless.

No, it's this quote from Bounds that caught my attention: "I grew up in the segregated South, and the Parks and Recreation system was my avenue to befriending people of other races."

There you have it, folks. We can't ever fire Mr. Emancipation!

Now I understand why Ken Bounds thinks it would be great to put fences around City Hall Park to keep the homeless from sleeping there. Homeless people don't belong to races, don't you know?

The biggest and smoothest example of big-city *cojones* belongs to the Seattle City Council itself, in connection with its decision a few weeks ago to do without a public referendum and endorse the tunnel option to replace the Alaskan Way viaduct.

What makes this decision such a monumental case of effrontery is the fact that all involved justified it by the fact that the estimates for the cost of the tunnel option were rising precipitously.

The view was encapsulated by City Council member Richard Conlin who said the issue would present "a moving target" to voters because the replacement design isn't complete.

To rephrase and expand upon those few words: "Dear fool voters! We on the City Council don't know what the final costs will be, or what the tunnel plan really entails! You can't hit a moving target and we ourselves can't hit the side of a stationary barn! So we'll decide on the tunnel for you!" ■

For the record, I do not have any personal interest in seeing strip clubs overcome the 4-foot rule in November. I'm a do-it-yourselfer: I do all my own stripping and lap dancing, at home.

The Today Show.

But we don't have to leave Seattle to be entertained; we amuse ourselves!

A beautiful set of *cojones* was exhibited by convicted local lawyer A. Mark Vanderveen, who cut off his court-ordered ankle bracelet six hours ahead of schedule "to go on a bike ride." In admiration of his "flagrant, notorious, in-your-face attitude" toward the court, the judge gave Vanderveen another 30 days of home confinement. Question: Why was I not surprised to read that this tool was once an Assistant Seattle City Attorney? Answer: He had to learn it somewhere.

The other day, a bunch of Seattle strip clubs revealed a survey they had commissioned that purported to show that strip clubs are not the magnets for crime that the city claims they are. The city then turned right around and showed they know what T-bagging is all about by saying 1) They had not studied the survey and 2) The survey is biased.

"It kind of reminds me of the tobacco industry hiring consultants to say tobacco was good for you," said Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis.

"It would remind me of that too, Deputy Mayor, if I thought you had ever done any research of your own on the subject, and weren't just repeating the prejudices of the least informed of the electorate in order to store up political points," said me, just now.

For the record, I do not have any personal interest in seeing strip clubs overcome the 4-foot rule in November. I'm a do-it-yourselfer: I do all my own stripping and lap dancing, at home. I also don't really know what T-bagging is, I just heard

Bus Chick,
Transit
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Carla Saulter



All in the Family

If you are a frequent bus rider, you probably have a bus family. I don't mean the random people you come across on one-off trips. I'm talking about the folks you see on your regular routes,

day in and day out, over the months and years you ride. Even though you've likely never spoken to them, you know them quite well. You've committed their faces to memory and are familiar with their outfit rotations—including laundry day and casual Friday attire. You know what they are reading and the sound of their cell phone ring tones—and you've probably overheard at least one personal conversation. You know if they prefer coffee or tea, how long it takes them to read a novel, and if they can fall asleep sitting up. Sometimes, you know where they live, where they work, or both.

If you ride with your bus family members long enough, you will even witness their major life changes: new relationships (identified by: a spring in the step, a kiss goodbye at the bus stop, a sudden increase in whispered cell-phone conversations), marriages (identified by: the telltale band on "that finger"), household moves (identified by: a new embarking or disembarking location), break-ups (identified

by: a new embarking or disembarking location, a sudden cessation of bus-stop goodbye kisses), religious conversions (identified by: study material, sudden changes in attire), pregnancies (I think y'all know how to identify that one), drastic haircuts, and tattoos.

Most of us prefer to keep a stranger's distance from our bus family members. Bus time, after all, is precious and not to be relinquished lightly. While occasional bus conversations with true strangers can be fun, initiating one with a bus family member will permanently change that person's status, thereby obligating us to conversations on future rides.

Still, we can't exactly think of these people as strangers; they are part of our daily lives. If they aren't on the bus on a particular day, we notice and wonder where they are. If we see one of them in a non-bus context—at a restaurant or concert or festival—we recognize them. We might even claim to the people we're with that we know them. After all, you can't call someone a stranger if you've memorized his grocery list and seen the latest picture of his twin boys. ■

If you ride with your bus family members long enough, you will even witness their major life changes

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



Fri., Sept. 29, 7:39 a.m., Third Avenue and Pike Street.

Officers on the corner of Fourth and Pike were flogged down by the victim, a transient Black female aged 47, who stated she had been stabbed by the suspect, who was standing nearby. The victim did have a small amount of blood on her clothing. The suspect, a Black male aged 50, was placed in handcuffs. Victim stated she and the suspect are acquaintances, and she was in his apartment to buy crack cocaine. She stated she had \$50 in her hand when the suspect grabbed it from her and headed for the door. They argued about the money, and the victim tried to get it back. She stated that the suspect punched her in the left side of the face as he was going out the door and was holding a pair of scissors in his hand at the time. She tried to block the punch and her finger was cut. The victim stated she then followed the suspect until she found the officer. The suspect stated that he had started arguing with the victim when she tried to stop him from leaving the apartment to go to work, stating she did not want to go back to the shelter where she lived. He tried to leave and she stopped him, and they began to fight. She hit him, and he hit her back. Suspect sustained no injuries during the incident, and was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Fri., Sept. 29, 9:30 a.m., Gilman Way N.

Officer received a 911 call regarding a man pitching a fit in traffic on Gilman Way N. They arrived to find the subject — a transient white male aged 34 — asleep on a patch of grass. The officers gently awoke the man to ascertain his status, only to find the man in a bad mood, which simply grew worse and worse. Within a few moments the subject was in handcuffs and was placed in the back of the police car, where he could gyrate and scream in relative safety. Officers searched the man's backpack and found 5.7 grams of heroin, 1.7 grams of flake cocaine, scales, and other drug paraphernalia. Subject was taken to Harborview Medical Center for hysteria and left with staff there. Security at the hospital stated they knew the suspect well and put him into a four-point constraint immediately. No charges were pending by police when they left him at Harborview. [Ed. Note: Mark, a concerned bystander who called 911, observed that it took police 45 minutes to an hour to get to the scene — a response time that did nothing to safeguard the man or the occupants of nearby vehicles.]

Fri., Sept. 29, 4:16 p.m., Pike St, Pike Place Market.

Officer spotted subject, a transient Black male aged 47, sitting on a bench inside the Pike Place Market outside the market office. He was known to officers to have been previously trespassed from the market on March 30, 2006 for one year. He was taken into custody and questioned in the market office, after which he was released pending trespass charges.

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.



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Letters

editor@realchangenews.org

A tribute to Terry Batterson

Dear Real Change,

This July, we lost our dear friend and fellow activist Terry Batterson. Many of those who did not know Terry personally will remember him videotaping protests or will have seen the beautiful banners he made that were carried through the streets of Seattle. Where there was a need to stand up against injustice and oppression, you would find Terry.

Terry was involved in the battle to save the Pacific Hotel. He regularly maintained a protest spot outside the Federal Building during the first U.S. invasion of Iraq and was one of the organizers of the National Anti-Intervention Conference held in Seattle after the war. He loved political prisoners Mumia Abu Jamal and Leonard Peltier and was dedicated to fighting for their freedom.

Terry made countless videos shown on public access TV to bring the truth to the people, including documenting the WTO protests, remembering the Stolen Lives from police brutality, and supporting Revolution Books.

Terry loved art, music, bohemian adventures, riding in boxcars, and especially nature trips. He spent most of his adult life without a stable place to live. He was a survivor of being beaten by the police on the streets. He bravely videotaped police activity at protests and was arrested at the LEIU protests for videotaping the illegal arrest of a young protestor.

In 1996, Terry was a founding member of the Seattle affiliate of the National October 22 Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, Repression, and the Criminalization of a Gen-

eration. Join us for a tribute to Terry at the 11th Annual National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality on Sun., Oct. 22, at 1:00 p.m. at Pratt Park, 20th Ave. and Yesler in the Central Area. Call (206) 264-5527 for more information.

Our gentle friend is greatly missed. We constantly draw inspiration from his life.

Cynthia Whetsell
Seattle

Ed. Note: Another fond friend of Terry's, who remembers his key role in the occupation of the Pacific Hotel, a housing takeover that led to the preservation of the Pacific for says he "died engaging in his other passion, and that was hiking." He suffered from heat stroke while hiking the Pacific Crest Trail in California; he had already completed the Washington and most of the Oregon portions.

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



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Employment

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CUSTODIAN: Seattle Art Museum seeks custodians to help maintain our newly remodeled downtown art gallery. Positions are full-time & include a generous benefits package. To apply, please visit our website: www.seattleartmuseum.org/jobs. EOE

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

Opportunity

My Fat Cat Designs - Native American-Bead Designs. Hand Crafted Bracelets and Earrings. By artist Faith Ann Trust (vendor #3231). Call (206)322-7438 to view jewelry, place an order, or for general information.

Transgender Health Fair, Sat., Oct. 21, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Miller Community Center, 330 19th Ave. Info: Erik, (206)323-6540, ext. 2.

Former Vice President Al Gore discusses his book and film *An Inconvenient Truth*. Tickets \$45 and up. Mon., Oct. 28, 8 p.m., Key Arena, 305 Harrison St.

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

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Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Saturday 10/21 and Sunday 10/22

The Art of Resistance Conference, a political artists' gathering dedicated to strengthening the support of positive change, is an opportunity to explore how to use art to confront injustice, disarm prejudice, and speak truth to power. Consolidated Works, 500 Boren, Info: Lisa, (206)359-1214.

Sunday 10/22

Mirror Stage Company presents a Feed Your Mind staged reading of Thomas Gibbon's play *Bee-luther-hatchee*. Shelita Burns, an African-American editor, publishes the best-selling memoir of a 72-year-old black woman named Libby Price, whom she has never met. When the book wins a prestigious award, Shelita delivers it in person, but upon meeting the reclusive author, Shelita finds herself grappling with painful questions of race, literary license, honesty, and more. \$5 suggested donation. 2 p.m., Seattle University, Pigott Auditorium, 901 12th Ave.

Tuesday 10/24

Jacob Hacker, a political science professor at Yale University and author of *The Great Risk Shift*, discusses economic insecurity. With retirement plans and pensions disappearing and health care coverage eroding, Hacker shows that many American families are more vulnerable than ever. He will also present a thoughtful and ambitious policy agenda to safeguard economic security while still allowing opportunity for all. 7:30 p.m. Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Wednesday 10/25

"A Just Cause: Bringing Health Care to All" addresses the inadequate conditions resulting in millions of deaths each year from preventable diseases, examines the effects of social, economic, and political issues on global health, and presents options for facilitating change. Dr. King Holmes, chair of the Department of Global Health, will present the lecture "HIV: In Your Global Neighborhood," and will be joined in a panel discussion by other university professors. 7 p.m., University of Washington, 130 Kane Hall.

Michael Meade blends storytelling, poetry, and discussion in "Poetics of Peace: The Water of Life." Starting with global terror and global warming, Meade artistically

weaves the wisdom of ancient tales into useful commentary on today's cultural and political dilemmas. 7 p.m., Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, 104 Seventh Ave. S. Info: (206)935-3665.

My Country, My Country is an intimate portrait of Iraqis living under the U.S. occupation. Filmmaker Laura Poitras lived alone in Iraq and focused her documentary on Dr. Riyadh, an Iraqi medical doctor, father of six, and Sunni political candidate. An outspoken critic of the occupation yet still desiring democracy, Riyadh sees the growing chaos around him as his waiting room fills with those suffering from the physical and mental effects of war. 9 p.m., KCTS Channel 9, check local listings.

Thursday 10/26

University of Washington Professor Roger Simpson, Seattle author Miguel Scherer, and Ever-

ett Herald investigative reporter Scott North discuss the dangers facing journalists from Main Street to Iraq. Their second edition of *Covering Violence* is a guide to being a responsible journalist and elucidates the ethics of interviewing children and photographing victims and witnesses. 7 p.m., Wessel and Liverman Booksellers, 208 First Ave. Info: Jeffrey Cantreel, (206)282-2677.

The Meaningful Movies presents the film *Michael Parenti: The Struggle for History*, which shows him delivering his acclaimed lecture regarding the manipulation of the past to control the present. Parenti asks us all to consider the historical context of what is happening today, showing that what we know about history has been distorted to accomplish a particular class, social, and political agenda. 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. N.

Rebecca Goldstein, novelist, philosopher, biographer, and recipient of a MacArthur "genius grant," shares from her new book *Betraying Spinoza: The Renegade Jew Who Gave Us Modernity*. She will also discuss Spinoza in terms of Jewish history, showing how Sephardic heritage shaped his work. 7:30 p.m., Benaroya Hall, Nordstrom Recital Hall, 200 University St.

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

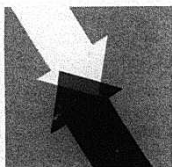
Director's Corner



This year, our 2006 Vendor of the Year award goes to Isaac Chapiro, a longtime Ballard vendor who has testified numerous times at City Hall and the State House on legislation that affects poor and homeless people. Each year, *Real Change* offers a cash award to a vendor who we feel most personifies the best of what we have to offer.

"I don't give up," said Isaac. "I really don't. The name *Real Change* became real to me because that's what it gave me. The ability to become a better person, to become who I am." Isaac says he enjoys advocacy work because he gets to "understand how legislation works. It's like a school for me. There's so much work to do it's unbelievable. I've gone to trainings and testified in Olympia. It gets easier the longer I do this and the more I learn."

Isaac's connections as a vendor paid off three years ago when one of his Ballard customers let him live in his RV for \$10 a day. After nearly a year of collecting rent, the RV owner moved out of state and gifted the vehicle to Isaac. He has made Ballard his home ever since. This is *Real Change* magic at its best. People connecting as people, reaching beyond themselves, creating random acts of kindness. Help us celebrate Isaac Chapiro at our Annual Event on Oct. 25th. Details on page 7.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Prevent Homelessness through City Budget

Issue: The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development has just announced a substantial cut in housing counseling funding for vital services that help low-income people avoid foreclosure, eviction, and predatory lending practices. In particular, funding for housing counseling services in King County for 2007 has been cut by more than 32 percent, and since 2003, these funds have been cut by nearly 50 percent. That means the Fremont Public Association will lose more than half its federal funding for this program — nearly \$80,000.

Background: Affected services give more than 1,700 vulnerable, low-income families and individuals aid in maintaining their housing despite financial problems that could otherwise force them to become homeless.

The FPA's Housing Counseling Program has seen a 413 percent increase in client demand over the past three years. The program provides:

- **Mortgage default counseling** for more than 600 people facing foreclosure. Counselors provide information on this foreclosure process, and offer one-on-one assistance to secure community resources, develop a household budget, and negotiate with lenders for repayment strategies.
- **Predatory lending prevention** to address the abusive lending practices that take advantage of borrowers through higher fees and hidden costs. Every borrower is at risk; however, predatory lenders target communities of color, the elderly, and those with less than perfect credit. Mortgage counselors offer information and referrals to people who need to educate and protect themselves from predatory lenders.
- **Reverse equity mortgage counseling** for elderly homeowners who are struggling financially. They provide free counseling to seniors who want to know more about this option.

• **Landlord/Tenant Counseling for renters at risk of eviction.** More than 75 percent of those who are assisted through the Housing Counseling Program's Mortgage and Tenant Hotline are able to maintain their housing and avoid foreclosure or eviction. Housing counseling services are frequently the last chance for extremely vulnerable community members to avoid homelessness due to eviction or foreclosure.

Housing prices in Seattle and King County are among the highest and most rapidly increasing in the entire Northwest. The Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County cites the high cost of housing as a major factor that creates and sustains homelessness in our community. Programs like FPA's Housing Counseling Program that help prevent homelessness are critical to the plan's success.

Thousands of people rely upon these housing counseling and predatory lending services and funding for these programs must be restored.

Action: Contact the following members of the Seattle City Council and ask them to allocate \$79,000 in funding to continue these essential housing counseling and predatory lending services at the current level in 2007.

David Della (206) 684-8806 or david.della@seattle.gov and Tom Rasmussen (206) 684-8808 or tom.rasmussen@seattle.gov

Information for this column comes from the Fremont Public Association. For more details on this issue, please contact the FPA at (206)694-6803.

YESLER, Continued from Page 1

town, includes some units that were built as temporary war housing. Infrastructure is now failing, says SHA spokeswoman Virginia Felton, and the complex has a massive problem with mice.

Committee member John Fox of the Seattle Displacement Coalition notes that SHA has not promised to replace all of Yesler Terrace's 561 low-income units onsite. But, over the next year, the committee will work only on a guiding set of principles for redevelopment, Felton says, not any specific plans. Public input, she adds, will be taken at future forums.

SHA wanted to keep the committee small, Felton says, but include key stakeholders. Among its members are James Kelly from the Urban League of Metropolitan, Michael Ramos from the Church Council of Greater Seattle and Sue Taoka from China International District Preservation and Development Authority.

Still, "One [neighborhood] representative from Squire Park doesn't cut it," says Sonja Richter.

Richter is the Seattle Police Department's crime prevention coordinator at Yesler Terrace, where she's worked for 15 years. She attends Yesler Terrace council meetings and says that Judith Kilgore, SHA's senior development manager for the complex, repeatedly promised to tell people how to apply for the committee.

Hearing nothing, Richter contacted Kilgore about joining the committee to represent Cherry Hill, an area within Squire Park where she lives. She says Kilgore rejected her because there was already one representative from Squire Park, which Richter points out is not part of the East District neighborhood council that represents Yesler Terrace. Richter says several surrounding neighborhoods ought to be involved.

"This process should be the most open, participatory process it can be, and it is not starting out in a good way," Richter says. "The housing authority wants people who will rubber-stamp, not look at what to do to have the best solution."

Richter hopes the area's P-Patch can be saved and that development is folded around Yesler Terrace's new community center. But Kristin O'Donnell, a committee member with the Yesler Terrace Community Council, believes the days of yards and trees are numbered, along with the breathing room they provide: Most of Yesler Terrace's problems, she says, occur at its three-story apartment buildings. ■

The first public meeting of the Yesler Terrace Citizen Review Committee is set for Wed., Oct. 25, 5-7 p.m., at Gatzert Elem. School, 1301 E. Yesler Way, Seattle. For more information, call (206) 615-3506 or email vfelton@seattlehousing.org

SKATEPARK, Continued from Page 1

"I was under the impression they wanted feedback at this event, but they didn't," said Kris Fuller, member of the Seattle Neighborhood Coalition. "There has been a tremendous amount of negative comments, but the Parks Department has ignored them."

Fuller cited population figures from a 2000 census report that placed skateboarders in Seattle at less than 8,000, indicating an overestimation in the popularity of skateboarding.

"They think there's 20,000 skaters out there, but that's not true," Fuller said.

Fuller also pointed out problems with existing skateparks. "The Ballard skatepark has graffiti all over it, Covington's is vandalized, and they don't have the money to keep repairing it."

If skateboarding is not as popular nor as safe as officials have stated, Fuller sees no reason why she should be in favor of many of the proposed skateparks, particularly when they convert "green space to concrete."

"I'm not against skateparks," Fuller explained, "but with so many people needing green space, I have serious problems with skateparks in places like Delridge Playfield and Northgate."

According to a 2006 Parks survey of more than 800 people, skateboarding came in last at 4 percent among the

typical activities performed in Seattle parks. Nature walks and hiking came in first, with passive enjoyment and picnics a close second.

"People are under the impression this will all happen overnight, but it's actually going to be a 20-year plan, so we've got some time," says Weigel.

The proposed plan will be provided to the Board of Park Commissioners and to the City Council by mid-December, and a final plan will be presented to the City Council by Jan. 31, which may adopt it by resolution. ■

[More information]

Get more information about the skateparks process at www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/Skatepark.htm.

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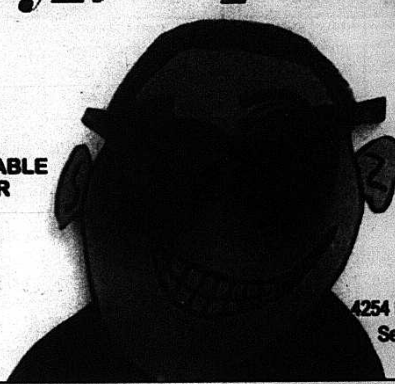
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