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ISSUES • INSIGHT • IMPACT

DECEMBER 13 - 19, 2006

Bend the Ruling

State high court changes definition of "able-bodied"

By ADAM HYLIA
Editor

It's a long road back from contracting Hepatitis C. Dan Calkin is walking that road, slowly and unsteadily, trying to maneuver past several roadblocks in his way.

First, there are the treatments of interferon that have sapped Calkin's energy. But, regardless of the effects, he had only two months off work at the Lowe's home store in Rainier Valley before he was back on the floor, fatigue and all, doing what he calls "grunt labor."

"Up and down the airplane ladders all day, trying to help customers, trying to roll carpet," he recounts. "I had to walk in front of the forklift guy" to ward pedestrians off, and he walked so slowly "that the driver would get furious with me."

Along with this, he was diagnosed with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder — a distracting condition



CHARLES SIPOS, HARRY SCHNEIDER, DAVID EAST, AND JOE MCMILLAN SUCCESSFULLY REPRESENTED YEMENI CITIZEN SALIM HAMDAN IN A SUPREME COURT CASE THAT REASSERTED THE JUDICIARY'S ROLE IN RESTRAINING EXECUTIVE POWER. PHOTO BY JOEL TURNER

Defending the Powerless

Seattle lawyers win fight for constitutional rights in War on Terror

By ROBIN LINDLEY
Contributing Writer

Four Seattle attorneys from Seattle's largest law firm, Perkins Coie, helped make legal history this summer in their defense of an alleged enemy combatant, Salim Hamdan, the Yemeni driver for al Qaeda mastermind Osama bin Laden.

In a 5-3 vote, the United States Supreme Court ruled on June 29, that President Bush overstepped his authority in ordering military tribunals for Hamdan and other detainees at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. The Court ruled that the tribunals — created in secret without Congressional approval — violated the U.S. Constitution, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and the Geneva Conventions. The Court's message to the Bush administration was blunt: "The Executive is bound to comply with the Rule of Law...."

Legal scholars hailed the *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* decision as the most important ruling ever on presidential power. Under the ruling, even in wartime, assertions of military necessity may not preclude judicial review of a president's actions.

Perkins Coie, a venerable corporate law firm that represents defense contractor Boeing, agreed to defend sus-

pected terrorist Hamdan two years ago. Hamdan's lead civilian attorney, Prof. Neal Katyal of Georgetown University Law School, mentioned the case to his former student, Perkins Coie associate David East (now with the McNaull Ebel firm). East alerted firm partner Harry Schneider, who presented the case to the firm's pro bono board.

The board accepted the case because "it's critical to assure access to justice for all, including a foreign national seen as an enemy," East says.

The firm was impressed by the legal positions of Prof. Katyal and Hamdan's military counsel, Lt. Cmdr. Charlie Swift, who were challenging the actions of the President and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld for denying to Hamdan, among other things, Geneva Convention protections, the right to be present at his own trial, and the right to examine evidence against him.

East and Schneider, with fellow Perkins Coie attorneys Charles Sipos and Joe McMillan, worked thousands of hours to defend Hamdan.

An overreaching executive branch created veritable "law-free zones,"

See HAMDAN, Continued on Page 12

BINGE AND SCOURGE

The criminal justice system gorges on poor women of color. Their families suffer because of it.

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HUD IN YOUR EYE

An SHA tenant says if he's to be evicted, he deserves more notice. A lawyer suggests he's right.

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REBEL REBEL

Nat Turner, John Brown. One was a slave, the other an abolitionist. A panel discusses both of their legacies.

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ROOT FLAWS

Plans to end homelessness too often assume the homeless are to blame. Actually, it's the feds.

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CHILDREN'S STORIES

Author Edward P. Jones writes about race, class, and being "well-off." But he has a hard time talking about it.

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[Make a Holiday Gift to Real Change Today]
Last week, *Real Change* readers sent in a solid \$7,226, bringing us to \$36,151 raised since Nov. 1. **With just 3 weeks left to our fund drive, we are still less than halfway to our \$80,000 goal. We get there one gift at a time, and are counting on you to help.**

You may make a tax-deductible contribution at our website at realchange-news.org, or use the coupon on Page 12 to make your gift now. Thank you for supporting *Real Change*.

Our Goal: \$80K over the Holidays
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Incarceration's Impact

Women, children lose out in America's prison binge

Should people be incarcerated? Of course — but should the majority of those people be poor women of color committing low-level, nonviolent offenses?

By Dr. W. EDWARD REED
and STEPHANIE KNIGHT
Guest Writers

In a Nov. 30 *Associated Press* article, author Kasie Hunt gave us the statistics on the current numbers of individuals suffering in the criminal justice system — some seven million. Hunt quotes Marc Mauer of The Sentencing Project stating, "Today's figures fail to capture incarceration's impact on the thousands of children left behind by mothers in prison." As the experts know, the next generation will pay the price for the current imprisonment binge we're experiencing. But why should this matter to us — why should we care about what's going on with the impoverished and the imprisoned?

Misguided thinking, profit motive, stereotypes of criminals, and ignorance of the larger impact of over-incarceration all lead to the ever-rising prison population. Who is being locked up? Today, the rates of incarceration for women are 400 times that of just a decade ago. As a direct result of the war on drugs and mandatory minimums, thousands of women are locked up for low-level, nonviolent offenses. As a result, hundreds of thousands of children are put in foster care. The dire predictions for these children will continue to hold true for their children after them.

And that's why we should care. As parents, citizens, and members of a larger society, it is our responsibility to hold all people accountable for their actions — not just a chosen few. We want to hold the homeless population accountable for making bad choices that led them to the streets; we want to hold criminals accountable for their crimes by locking them up. But are

we willing to hold the politicians and lawmakers accountable for instituting draconian policies? And are we willing to hold ourselves accountable for allowing them to do so?

Who are the stakeholders in the criminal justice system? We all are: the taxpayers charged with coming up with the money to build more prisons; the people living in poverty who resort to desperate measures; the police, foot soldiers in the war on drugs; the social workers spending blood, sweat, and tears to impact the lives of the homeless and incarcerated; the politicians who get elected by being "tough on crime."

And the winners in this war? Shareholders in one of the fastest growing profit sectors in the U.S., the private prison industry, whose only objective is to make a profit — profit that requires that high numbers of people be incarcerated. Investors in private prisons are living the American dream, while people in poverty are experiencing the American nightmare. And it is the children of the next generation who will also be paying the cost. The fastest growing sector among the homeless is women with children, the fastest growing sector among the incarcerated is women — whatever happened to "women and children first?"

Should people be incarcerated? Of course — but should the majority of those people be poor women of color committing low-level, nonviolent offenses? The war on drugs was designed to catch drug kingpins, but the people caught in the widening net of social control are women playing subordinate roles to these untouchable bosses. These women are marginalized, impacted severely by the 1996 welfare reform law, and struggling to be part of the American dream.

Do you know how much of the King County budget is spent on criminal justice? According to Councilmember Larry Gossett, an estimated 70 percent of the general revenue budget goes to support criminal justice agencies. If it were not for alternatives to incarceration created by the county in the last four years, that number would be much higher. With current policy, jailing people is on track to suck up all of the county's criminal-justice funding by 2009. Are you aware of where your tax dollars are going and how they can be utilized to impact the greatest change?

How do we change the current system? Become aware of our own biases. Can we look at the people in the street and see a woman making desperate choices to survive a harsh reality? Can we tap into our stereotypical thinking about who criminals are and who's locked up? Because chivalry is over — it's no longer women and children first except in the food bank lines, booking cells, and foster care rolls. ■

[Further reading]

Remy Goldman interviews the casualties of the crackdown on drugs in *War on the Family: Mothers in Prison and the Families They Leave Behind* (Routledge, 2005). Nell Bernstein's *All Alone in the World: Children of the Incarcerated* (New Press, 2005) describes the trauma of being orphaned by the criminal justice system.

Look up data on who's touched by crime in the U.S. at the Bureau of Justice Statistics Web site: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/

For King County Budget information: www.metrokc.gov/budget.

W. Edward Reed is an assistant professor in Seattle University's Matteo Ricci College, where he teaches humanities, criminal justice, and a class on poverty. Stephanie Knight is executive director of Hospitality House women's shelter in Burien.



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.

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Change

A staggering 2.7 million or 11.4 percent of all African Americans aged 20 years or older have diabetes. Eudora Carter, community liaison for Seattle's Center for MultiCultural Health, coordinates culturally relevant educational sessions and diabetes support for African Americans affected by the disease.

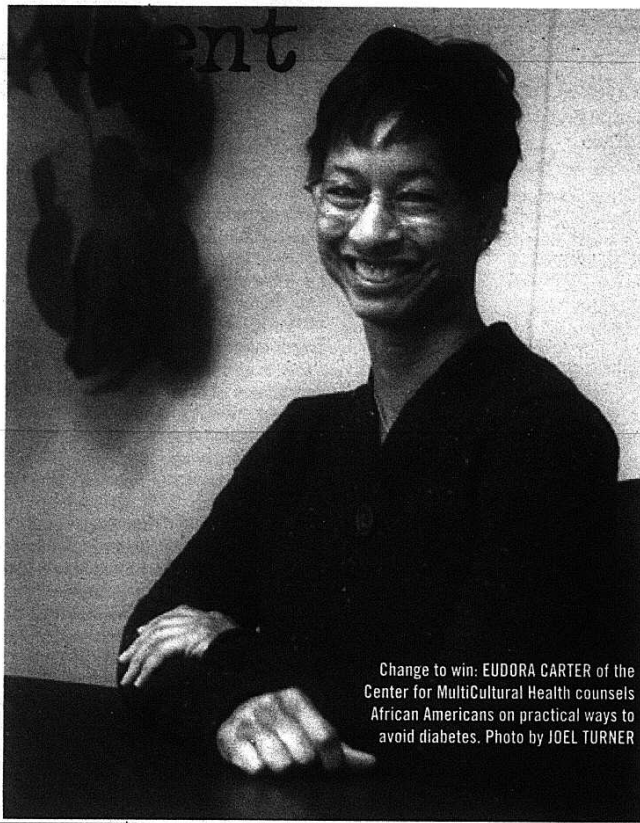
Traditional diagnosis and treatment of diabetes advocates for an all-or-nothing approach that sets those affected up for failure, says Carter. And medical providers don't have the time to provide personalized planning for every patient.

"Our approach is more gradual," she says. "It involves being considerate of the culture and understanding the role life-style and food play within that culture."

The sessions, which begin four times per year and reach between 100 and 150 people, emphasize the importance of knowing the impact of the disease. They also provide advice on how to alter traditional ingredients and cooking methods to create healthier food options and focus on the important role physical activity can have in controlling the disease.

"Our goal is to help people become good self-managers so that they may live long, healthy and fulfilling lives," says Carter.

—Amy Besunder



Change to win: EUDORA CARTER of the Center for MultiCultural Health counsels African Americans on practical ways to avoid diabetes. Photo by JOEL TURNER

By the Book

HUD regs on eviction open to interpretation, says SHA

By **CYDNEY GILLIS**
Staff Reporter

After seven years as a tenant at the TriCourt apartments, Anthony Cameron was a little surprised back in September when his landlord gave him a three-day notice to pay his rent or get out.

He quickly discovered that he'd bounced his rent check. Then came a bigger shock: Six days after getting the "pay or vacate" notice, a man came to Cameron's door in North Seattle and served him with a summons and complaint for eviction.

Any private landlord can start eviction after giving a three-day notice to pay or vacate. But Cameron's landlord is the Seattle Housing Authority, which is bound by federal public housing codes that the retired printer says SHA and its automated Non-Pay Eviction System simply ignore.

Cameron, 66, is president of TriCourt's elected resident council. In situations of non-payment, he cites federal code 24 CFR 966, which says that a housing authority has to give tenants a 14-day lease termination notice, not a three-day one. The same code allows tenants to file grievances, or formal complaints, that must be resolved by the property manager or at an informal hearing. But Cameron says the grievance he filed Oct. 11 with TriCourt's manager went nowhere.

Manager Frankie Johnson did send Cameron a letter on Oct. 30 telling him that it is SHA's practice to inform tenants of returned checks before it moves to eviction and that she had removed \$51 in eviction charges from his account. (She also removed a \$17 charge for the check that Cameron bounced in what he calls a "senior moment" of forgetting to subtract some bank fees from his checking account.)

But he's never gotten a meeting or a hearing to address why SHA serves eviction papers on tenants without waiting 14 days. It's typical of SHA's management style, says Cameron.

"They are Johnny-on-the-spot when they want to ram the regulations down our throats," Cameron says, "but when it comes to theft, they just overlook them."

Not so, says James Fearn, the housing authority's top staff attorney. Fearn says the rental statements tenants get between the 25th and 30th of each month include a notice telling them that if they fail to pay rent in 14 days, they will be evicted.

Fearn acknowledges that's not the same as giving a tenant a 14-day notice that his or her lease is actually being terminated. But he says the regulation's phrase "lease termination notice" is a matter of interpretation. Under state law, he adds, SHA is required to use a three-day notice. Otherwise, it can't start the eviction process.

"At the end of the three-day period, if the rent is not paid, then the summons and complaint is prepared," Fearn says. Three-day notice or no, the regulation still gives a tenant 14 days before the eviction process can begin, says Eric Dunn, an attorney who often represents SHA tenants for the Northwest Justice Project.

A computer system automatically files 300 to 400 eviction lawsuits with the court each month, Fearn says, then SHA calls a process server to take them to tenants. Because most have paid by the time the papers arrive, he says, there's nothing for them to worry about.

Dunn says there is. While nothing stops the housing authority from using a three-day notice, he says, they aren't allowed to serve eviction papers until 14 days after the three-day notice is issued. That's not what happened with Cameron.

In non-payment situations, "The regulation is pretty clear," Dunn says. Regardless of any language in the rental statements, "They still have to wait 14 days." ■

North Seattle tenant Anthony Cameron was served with eviction before his time, he says.

Photo by Andrea Lee



Just Heard...

Build it, they will come

So much for the city holding out on Little Saigon's behalf.

The Seattle City Council passed amendments to the city's Comprehensive Plan this week that set the stage for a developer to build a 10-acre mall at the site of the Seattle Goodwill store on South Dearborn Street.

The site is just south of the Vietnamese-owned businesses that make up Little Saigon, which a community group called the Dearborn Street Coalition for a Livable Neighborhood fears will be wiped out by the mall. To mitigate the impact, the coalition is trying to negotiate a community agreement with the developer and had asked the City Council to put off its vote on the Goodwill site until the details were in writing.

The council must still approve rezoning the site from industrial commercial to mixed-use residential, a vote expected early next year. The developer is also seeking street vacations that require approval from the Seattle Department of Transportation.

—Cydney Gillis

Heart of downtown

The Downtown Seattle Association's new public education campaign on panhandling, entitled "Have a Heart, Give Smart," is rolling out right after Christmas. Hotels and businesses will display a brochure encouraging visitors and shoppers to find other ways of giving rather than to people asking for money on downtown streets. The Metropolitan Improvement District's yellow-jacketed "safety ambassadors" will also hand out the brochure, which also lists meals, shelters, and other services available when you're down and out, on downtown streets. Merchants will also be able to display a "Have a Heart" poster.

Association spokesperson Anita Woo says the campaign's supporters include downtown social-service organizations as well as commercial interests, though the list of endorsers won't be finalized until later this week. "We didn't want it to be just the Metropolitan Improvement District" behind this effort, says Woo.

—Adam Hyla

Jail checkup

In response to last month's memorandum from the King County Ombudsman to Ron Sims and the County Council regarding conditions at Jail Health Services, councilmembers Bob Ferguson and Julia Patterson last week called for an "immediate audit" of JHS, citing the report's concern with the jail's "narcotics security, the adequacy of the medication tracking system, and the need for quality control measures," the council said in a Dec. 7 press release.

James Apa, communications manager for Public Health, said, "We welcome the audit into our pharmacy and medication department. We don't believe the recent reports have provided an accurate picture of the high standard of care we provide and we'll be fully cooperating."

Public Health's rebuttal of the Ombudsman's report can be found at www.metrokc.gov/health/news/06120101.htm.

—Chris LaRoche

Dare to Revolt

Panel explores the legitimacy of violence by looking at famous American rebels

"Patriotism is historically linked to terrorism: ...the Nazi bombardment of Great Britain, the Soviet gulag, death squads in Latin America, and shock and awe by the United States in Iraq."
—Nikhil Singh, UW associate professor of history

By **BILLY JOYCE**
Contributing Writer

People in Southampton, Va. knew Nat Turner, the slave in Joseph Travis' house, as a smart, literate man of great religious conviction. He could interpret signs in nature, like solar eclipses, and he had beatific visions. He led a slave revolt in 1831 that killed 55 white men, women, and children and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of slaves in retribution killings all over the South.

John Brown was the son of a strict Calvinist father who abhorred slavery. He married two women, fathered 20 children, and failed in all 15 of his business ventures. He organized a network of white folks, free Blacks, and ex-slaves to take up arms against white slave owners. After an unsuccessful attempt to seize weapons from a federal armory in Harpers Ferry, Va., in 1859, during which he and his men killed seven people, he was convicted of treason and hanged.

On Thurs., Dec. 7, an intergenerational, multicultural audience of more than 50 gathered at the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center for a forum called "Patriot or Terrorist?"

Exploring the Legacy of Nat Turner and John Brown," part of the Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas American Heritage Series.

The terms "patriot" and "terrorist" probably were not in the minds of Turner, Brown, or anyone of their time period, said panelist and UW associate professor of history Stephanie Camp.

"I would suggest that these men thought of themselves as something more important," she said: They thought of themselves as "instruments of God and men."

Camp said the term "terrorist" was not in common usage in Turner or Brown's time and that their "mental stability" was what people questioned.

"They were both characterized as insane," she said.

Panelist Erwin Thomas, an educator in the New York Public Schools, has written, produced, and performed "The Quiet Violence of Dreams," a one-person show based on Turner's life and Thomas' own experience as a young Black man in America. He said he doesn't buy the insanity theory.

"I felt like I was treated insane for having thoughts that challenged the status quo," said Thomas.

One woman in the audience said she thinks that entertainers and teachers need to portray people who organized slave revolts in a positive light.

"My family was from the South, where there were many slave insurrections. I taught my children that these people were heroes, not crazy," she said.

Panelist Nikhil Singh, also a UW associate professor of history, confronted "terrorist" and "patriot" when he said, "The legitimacy of violence is determined by if we think a cause is just."

"Patriotism is historically linked to terrorism," he said, listing examples of violence against civilians by states: "the Nazi bombardment of Great Britain, the Soviet gulag, death squads in Latin America, and shock and awe by the United States in Iraq."

Camp and Singh cautioned people from making Turner and Brown into myths, and they stressed the importance of carefully contextualizing their actions.

"The fact that they resisted violently makes them controversial," Singh said. But, "I think when weighed against the criminality of slavery, Nat Turner and John Brown didn't look bad at all." ■

Short Takes

No traction for voting reform, says State Sec'y Reed

One month after a smoothly run election, Secretary of State Sam Reed discussed some of his proposed voting reforms before the Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce last week.

On Dec. 7, Reed spoke of the state's distaste for the two-party primary, the move toward all-mail elections, implementing a statewide registration system, and the hijacking of the initiative process.

In regard to the recent approval of Charter Amendment Three in Pierce County, Reed said legislators tend to get confused by instant runoff voting, so it will be difficult to get legislation in support of it. In regard to Pierce County, he said it's great they're trying it out and he wants to see what happens.

However, there is a court issue that may hinder statewide implementation, he says: The state Constitution only allows one vote per person, and it has been argued that IRV requires voters to cast more than one vote. Proponents of IRV argue that only one vote is ultimately counted, so it complies with the Constitution.

Reed's office is waiting to see if a judge will ever rule on that clarification. In addition, the state Attorney General has appealed the current ruling on the "top two" primary. The state's Supreme Court may hear the case.

In regard to the initiative process, Reed spoke of the twist of fate it has taken in recent years, specifically mentioning the paid signature gatherers and prime-time TV ads.

"The initiative process began to protect the people's right to control government instead of special interests," Reed said. "But now it's no longer a grassroots effort. It has transformed into a method for special interests to gain influence."

He also talked about his desire to implement a statewide registration system that will "clean up the rolls" by using the Social Security Administration and Department of Corrections databases to keep track of valid votes. He was also pleased with the success of 34 of the state's 39 counties voting by mail this year.

— J. Jacob Edel

Janitors strike

Cascadian Building Maintenance workers are refusing to clean office buildings in downtown Bellevue and elsewhere — until Cascadian cleans up its labor record.

The National Labor Relations Board slapped Cascadian with 13 counts of unfair labor practices in May, in response to workers' allegations of intimidation and interrogation — tactics aimed at stymying the right to organize, says Service Employees International Union Local 6 president Sergio Salinas.

One janitor, who wishes to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation from Cascadian, says she was told by her supervisor that unionizing would jeopardize Cascadian's contracts and lead to layoffs. Others were menaced about the same issue and were interrogated over who was organizing the workers, says Salinas.

Cascadian appeared to soften after the NLRB settlement, says Salinas. In November, when Cascadian stepped up anti-union pressure again, janitors called SEIU Local 6.

"We would rather clean buildings than strike, but we must fight for our right to organize," said another Cascadian janitor under the condition of anonymity.

SEIU Local 6 is helping coordinate the strike, which entered its second week on Monday. To gain the eyes and ears of building owners and tenants, the strikers have been distributing

rolls of toilet paper tagged with information about their struggle. This week, says Salinas, their persistence got one of Cascadian's clients to start pushing Cascadian to begin negotiations with the strikers.

With nearly 90 percent of downtown Seattle janitors unionized, the goal for these suburban janitors, many of whom are Latina single mothers, is to get Cascadian to deliver full family health benefits and a slightly higher wage. Salinas notes that these conditions could be met over the course of a year, to

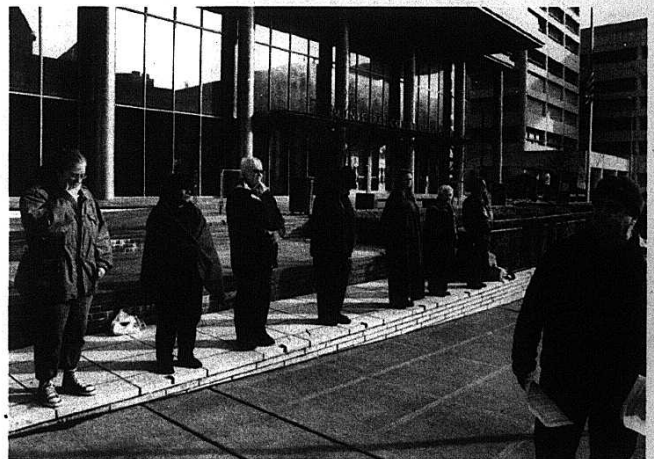
allow enough time for Cascadian to redraw contracts with its clients.

Strikers consider evening flashlight vigils at Cascadian-cleaned buildings and a hunger strike to be their next steps.

Salinas says the strikers deserve a deal where they can leave the table with heads held high: "We don't want dirty deals, we just want respect."

Cascadian could not be reached before press time.

— Chris Miller



Marking deaths

MICHELE MARCHAND, DORLI RAINEY, AMANDA O'NEIL, DEANNA DAVIS, JEAN DARSIE, BRIGID HAGAN, AND JANICE CONNELLY STAND SILENTLY DURING A DEC. 6 VIGIL OUTSIDE THE SEATTLE JUSTICE CENTER TO MARK THE DEATHS OF 12 KING COUNTY PEOPLE WHO DIED WHILE HOMELESS THIS FALL. DEC. 21 IS HOMELESS PEOPLE'S MEMORIAL DAY. FOR MORE INFORMATION, TURN TO FIRST THINGS FIRST ON PAGE 11. PHOTO BY KATIA ROBERTS

Abandonment Issues

Federal officials need to own up to 25 years of relinquishing public housing.

By PAUL BODEN
Guest Writer

[Online] "Without Housing: Decades of Federal Housing Cutbacks, Massive Homelessness, and Policy Failures" is a thoroughly documented report that presents the data with passion and vitality, and uses artwork to express the pain and frustration experienced by real human beings abandoned by a federal government more concerned with corporate profit than the well-being of the poor. The report can be downloaded at www.wraphome.org. For free color poster-sized copies of the artwork, contact organizer@realchangenews.org, or call (206) 441-3247 x201.

Painting the wall to hide a leak doesn't repair the plumbing. In the same way, writing local plans to end homelessness without adequate funding for affordable housing will never provide people who need housing with homes.

Federal Emergency Management Agency emergency shelter plans, Housing and Urban Development five-year Continuum of Care plans, and Interagency Council on Homelessness 10-Year Plans to End Chronic Homelessness: They have all been based on the assumption that homelessness reemerged in America in the early 1980s because something was wrong with the people who were becoming homeless. Communities were asked to submit competitive applications for federal largesse, showing how they would effectively address the "problem of homelessness." And they did just that: They formed committees, created task forces, hired "experts" and consultants (I should know, I was one), and wrote grant after grant and plan after plan.

The myriad plans that were deemed groundbreaking and effective shifted over the years as the policy flavor of the month shifted — from the mentally ill to chronic alcoholics to veterans to families with children. But one thing was always constant: All of these plans assumed that the root of the "homeless problem" lay with the homeless people themselves.

This was, and is, a false assumption. The root of the problem is the lack of affordable housing. The primary cause of homelessness in America is the federal government's systematic dismantling of HUD and Department of Agriculture affordable housing programs, beginning in the early '80s and continuing to today.

Between 1980 and 1983, the federal government slashed more than \$40 billion from HUD's annual budget, precipitating the nationwide opening of emergency homeless shelters in 1983. While people struggling with disabilities and economic insecurity had always been among us, we rarely had men, women, and children living in our streets, because a safety net had been in place since the Great Depression.

Between 1993 and 2003, 1.2 million unsubsidized affordable rental units disappeared from the open market, but annual construction of new affordable housing units subsidized by HUD dropped from 129,490 in 1980 to only 7,635 in 2002. And the private sector has been no help: It's lost more than 200,000 rental units annually in recent years.

What has the federal government's response been? HUD funding for new public housing units — the safety net for the poorest among us — has been ZERO since 1996. Over 100,000 existing units of public housing have been lost in that same period. And between 1996 and 2005, average annual production of rural affordable housing funded by USDA was less than 6 percent of average production from 1976 to 1985.

While policymakers focus on minor statistical indicators about one or another homeless target population, and while social workers on the front line launch valiant downstream rescues of specific families and individuals who have been forced into the streets, the upstream cause of homelessness remains.

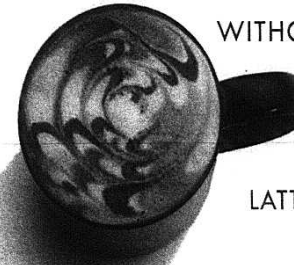
Had the focus been to address what created "the homeless problem," the ridiculous attempt to fill a \$52 billion per year affordable housing hole with no more than \$1.37 billion a year in homeless assistance — money earmarked to address the deficiencies of those without housing, rather than the lack of housing — would have been obvious long ago.

One might ask: why has government at every level chosen not to heed the evidence that homelessness is primarily a result of insufficient affordable housing? Why have systemic policies not been enacted to redress the problem?

The answers might start with the recession of 1979, might directly connect to "trickle-down" economic theories of the 1980s, and might follow through to the "reinvention of government" in the 1990s. But an honest examination of the correlation between cuts to affordable housing and the advent of contemporary homelessness demands that we finally stop blaming homeless people for being without

Paul Boden is executive director of the Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP), a San Francisco-based coalition of six anti-homelessness organizations, including Real Change.


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Knowing the Children of the World

Pulitzer-winning author Edward P. Jones writes about the interconnectivity of all people

By ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Reporter

"I'm rather interested in the fact that people take people at the first glance and make judgments, and they don't see, so often, the grand things people are capable of."

Edward P. Jones isn't expecting to be interviewed in person. So, when he finds me calling up to his room from the hotel lobby, you can hear over the phone he's none too pleased.

Downstairs, just outside of the elevator, he confesses that he's not feeling so good: His throat hurts and he may be coming down with something. A cold, perhaps, or a bad cough. But he's in town to read from his recent story collection, *All Aunt Hagar's Children* (HarperCollins) at the Seattle Public Library, and knowing he's at the end of a long book tour, he hopes his voice doesn't go out on him.

With concerns about the volubility of his speaking voice, naturally, in the fore of his mind, it is his written voice that has created a near-deafening roar of praise. His first collection of tales, *Lost in the City*, was nominated for the National Book Award. Jones' second offering, the novel *The Known World* — which tells of the deterioration of a plantation once its Black slave-owning master dies — was awarded the Pulitzer and National Book Critics Award for fiction. His latest was just named one of the year's Best Books by *The Atlantic*. Throughout his fiction, he displays an ability to orchestrate dense tales populated with people of differing races and classes, their individual tales rising and falling in a narrative chorus that pays little heed to notions of linear storytelling.

So it is, situated in a chair in the lobby of his hotel, that he tries to stave off whatever bug it is that clings to him. Yet still he attempts to answer a bevy of questions that touch upon class, imagination, and his mother, offering replies that, undoubtedly affected by his health, range from cursory to defensive, but taken together, shed light on our collective humanity.

Real Change: What is it about class that you think can be displayed or explored in fiction?

Edward P. Jones: Well, I'm not really into exploring issues or the gender thing and everything. I just deal with current fiction, and if things fall out of that, then I leave that to someone else to say, "Yes, I see that in the work." But that was never my pull when I started writing.

RC: Are there any people that really spoke to you as a child?

Jones: Well, probably my mother. If it weren't for her, with her struggle and everything, I wouldn't be here now: you know, it can't be easy to wash dishes at a restaurant, to live at a hotel! I know that she was having a hard time. And I tried to make life as easy as I could, so I was always a good student. Being a bad student, that was just one more thing for her to worry about.

RC: Did you make up stories to pass the time when you were younger?

Jones: No, I didn't. I can't remember writing anything, really, until I was in high school. There was a program we went into and you did creative writing. And then I did a creative writing course in college.

RC: I grew up around Washington, D.C., where you're from. How do you feel about the place?

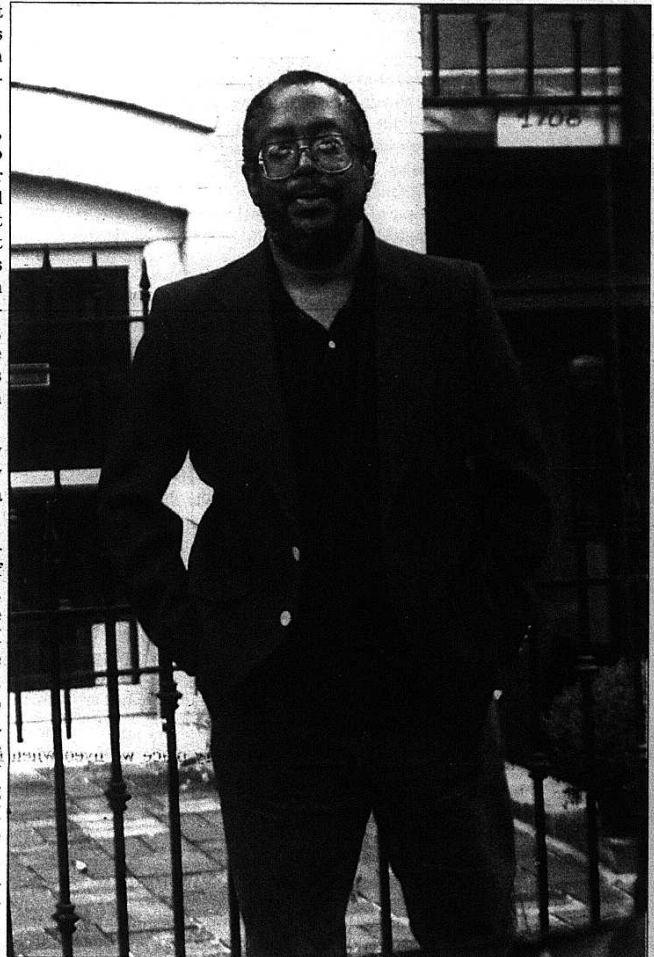
Jones: I like it: I was born and raised there. I moved back two, two-and-a-half years ago, I'm not sure what else I can say....

RC: Where do you live in relation to where you grew up?

Jones: Miles and miles, in many, many ways.

RC: How do you see class or poverty move through Washington, D.C.?

Jones: I can't give any sort of assessment. I do know the mayor [Anthony Williams, elected in 1999, whose term will end January 2007] is using all his years in office to get a baseball team. So, he just squandered his time: Schools



are falling apart, medical facilities are full of poor people.

RC: Do you think the needs of the poor people in Washington, D.C., are ever going to be addressed?

Jones: No, man. That's not the way it works. They don't have any power. No one cares about them. Not going to happen.

RC: Like the people who suffered during [Hurricane] Katrina.

Jones: There were people down there with problems, before that even happened. People get happy about Mardi Gras, get happy about tourists, but were in nowhere jobs. Most of the people have been suffering.

RC: Have you ever heard of a term, poverty mentality?

Jones: What does this have to do with the stories? You see, I'm an authority on only one thing: what's between the covers of my books. That's about it.


RC: Okay, then. How do your stories come to you?

Jones: Imagination. They're all born in my imagination. Of course, some of us are probably to the point that — those people who are educated,

Edward P. Jones' fiction crosses the lines of race and class and disregards the conventions of narrative storytelling. Photo by Bettina Strauss

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Continued from Previous Page

they probably don't use [their imagination] anymore.

RC: What do you mean?

Jones: You get to the point where you are educated and you forget that other people have it not so good. And you get to the point where you don't think about anyone else, but yourself. And now and again, I've written about these people in some of the stories, especially the people who are pretty well off.

RC: Do you think that you're well off now?

Jones: I think compared to where I came from, and compared to a lot of people, yes.

RC: You keep talking about imagination, and I guess one of the things that fascinates me about your imagination that I see displayed on the page is: How does it get from here [pointing to my head] to there [pointing to a book]?

Jones: You get up, you do it, and that's it. The world unfolds, and the only thing you can do is record what's there in your head. How it gets there and all the other stuff, I don't know.

RC: You're really good at being able to —

Jones: I don't know how good I am. I just rely on my imagination as much as I can. I've eaten an apple, so you know what it's all about, you know what it's like. In a lot of ways, there are things you can't write about unless you yourself experience it, like eating an apple. I mean, if you hadn't eaten one perhaps, and if you wrote that you bit into the dryness of the inside, the reader would know right away there's no truth, because there is all that juice inside.

RC: But the thing that happens in your stories, it seems like so much —

Jones: One thing that's true, I try with most of the stories to make it seem as if you're reading a novel when it's all done. 'Cause there are a lot of [characters].

RC: When did you first hear about Black slave owners?

Jones: When I was in college. It was in a book: It was just one line, one simple line.

RC: Did you have any sort of thought, revelation at that moment?

Jones: Shock, that was it.

RC: In *The Known World* there is the character — I believe her name is Celeste — she has a limp. There's a scene where she remembers how men told her that she'd never be

loved because of it. How did you feel when you wrote that scene?

Jones: I'd thought about it for many, many years. In a journal I always had the line, "Why you always trying to treat me bad when I'm always trying to treat you good?" So when Elias [a slave who eventually marries Celeste] asks her that, when she thought he was making fun of her, but he gets to feel for her, she still ignores him. So that was one of the few times I had an exact line of dialogue, and when I got to it in the writing, it was actually good to let it go, 'cause I had spent all of those years memorizing it. [Pauses.]

I think in the interviews I've been having, one of my problems is that I'm not very good at my themes. I'm rather interested in the fact that people take people at the first glance and make judgments, and they don't see, so often, the grand things people are capable of. That probably comes from knowing that my mother suffered a lot of things, 'cause she couldn't read and write. But I know what an amazing person she was, and the fact that people dismissed her at first glance, that's too bad.

RC: When you were young, did you ever have any dreams of how your life would be when you were grown?

Jones: No, I never thought about that. Didn't have any desire, for example, to own a car. I hoped that maybe one day I would live in a nice place, where you don't have to worry about— [Pauses.] Almost every place we lived when I was a kid, there was no heat, and in the summer there wasn't any air conditioning. So, there was the thought that maybe I would get a good enough job as a postman or something, where I could be able to afford a nice place, but beyond that, no.

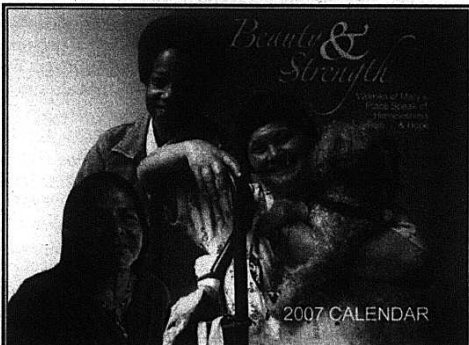
RC: So every day to you is a brand new one?

Jones: It is, it is. I'm watching my color television sometimes — it's not a big one, it's only 13 inches — and I say, "You're watching a color TV." If I'm in D.C. and I talk to a friend in California, I say, "You're talking to someone across the country." So it's all amazing to me: It's all like it's the first day. ■

Homeless

My heart was in my shadow.
Heartbeats moved away from me
in the dark, silence beyond of midnight.
Aimlessly I paced the cell of time.
Why is a man possessed
by this jail of memories? Once
the moon covered my haggard
face with a tender touch
of light. But, frightened
by my sobbing agony, I turned
away. Oh! The dreadful science
of hiding without a place to be....
My heart was at a distance
street, where the wind turned up, beside
the river of soul committed
to recurring extinction. Sometimes
in the late seasons of
loneliness, a shudder like a cold
footed spider moves over me. Men
worry with the argument of torture. But the
world is so honestly blind. One dreams
perhaps of the soft
flesh of frogs. The dreadful science
of suffering's evolution! And
those who have swam in the river of bruises
might sing roughly and forlorn
of what it is like to die
and linger in the skin of blemished changes.
My heart was somewhere
over the rainbow, trying to recollect
the polyphone of colors. A treasure gold
or simply home. Often
I do not sleep.

-DAVID SPARENBERG



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Listening to the Voices

Author Svetlana Alexievich is a wonderful guide through this contaminated landscape, playing equal parts Virgil and Studs Turkel, using the interviews of Belarussians as both entrée and egress into a netherworld of governmental ineptitude and human suffering.

Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster

By Svetlana Alexievich

Translation and Preface by Keith Gessen
Dalkey Archive Press (Translation) 2003
Hardcover, 240 pages. \$22.95

By ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Reporter

In the early hours of April 26, 1986, while the people of the western part of the former Soviet Union slept, the crew of Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station's Energy Block 4 prepared to conduct a safety test. Uninformed of instability within the reactor, the crew went ahead with the procedure as planned. Less than 45 seconds after the crew began, a steam explosion blew part of Reactor 4's roof sky high. Oxygen, rushing in through the now-open roof, increased the already soaring temperatures of the reactor's fuel. A fire began, spreading a plume of radioactive material to surrounding areas. Additional explosions followed. A nuclear meltdown occurred. And, in an instant, the world's worst nuclear accident was born.

But to say something is born suggests, in ways metaphorical as well as literal, it has life. Chernobyl, as we speak of it some 20 years after the fact, is indeed living, even thriving. Perhaps not in the sense of having a heartbeat, but in the ways in which the disaster continues to wreak havoc on humans and animals, not to mention the soil, the plants, and water. You can point to sta-

tics to shore up this viewpoint — in parts of Belarus, death rates exceed birth rates by 20 percent; nearly 6,000 Belarussian acres have been taken out of the agricultural economy — and shake your head in dismay.

Or, for the truly enterprising — though some might say suicidal — you can follow in the footsteps of journalist Svetlana Alexievich and go to Belarus yourself to search out Chernobyl's very being. Once you're there, you can ask the people to describe what life used to be versus what life is now, recording stories filled with pathos and gallows humor, with utter confusion and dismay. You could compile these recollections, calling them *Voices from Chernobyl*, and know that you've done a major service to the world's consciousness. Or you can be like me and simply read the book Alexievich put together, all the while trying not to break into tears on a crowded city bus.

The causes for such a reaction are the more than 100 monologues she's culled from folks from all stripes of life. Here, for example, a mother talks about her daughter: "The medical card says: 'Girl, born with multiple complex pathologies: aplasia of the anus, aplasia of the vagina, aplasia of the left kidney.' That's how it sounds in medical talk, but more simply: no pee-pee, no butt, one kidney."

A chemical engineer on his work decontaminating the land: "Our protective gear consisted of respirators and gas masks, but no one used them because it was 30 degrees Celsius outside, if you put those on it would kill you."

Alexievich is a wonderful guide through this contaminated landscape, playing equal parts Virgil and Studs Turkel, using the interviews of Belarussians as both entrée and egress into a netherworld of governmental ineptitude and human suffering. She comments on this role, in a quasi-epilogue, by saying: "I felt like I was recording the future." Such future work has come with a present-day price: After spending three years in Belarus, Alexievich now suffers from an immune deficiency.

In this way, author and subject converge, Alexievich becoming a part of the story as much as the storytellers are themselves. Yet she barely delves into her own fate. She's more interested in the altered lives of others. Nowhere is this put to more effect than in the book's prologue, the chilling 18-page recollection of a woman whose firefighter husband was one of the first to battle the blaze. After recalling days where his stools were "blood and mucous," remembering the "clump[s] of hair left on a pillow," she says this: "No one's asked what we've been through. What we saw. No one wants to hear about death. About what scares them. But I was telling you about love," she says to Alexievich. "About my love."

Love? How, you wonder, can love survive in this contaminated landscape? Maybe it's because, as *Voices* reminds us, love is the one thing that can never be extirpated. Even in a people, a country blighted by a radioactive midnight explosion, love endures. ■

Put on a Happy Face

The Pursuit of Happiness
Directed by Gabriele Muccino

By LESTER GRAY
Arts Editor

The title, even with its playful misspelling, suggests at least a nominal meditation on what lightens the heart. Alas, there's little introspection, no quotes from the Dalai Lama; just an occasional muse on the Declaration of Independence, which endorses our entitlement to such a pursuit. This latter document underpins the specific inspiration that calls our hapless protagonist to his path of enlightenment: a lust for a sleek red Italian sports car pulling into a parking spot.

Chris Gardner (Will Smith) inquires of its owner, "How did you get that?" The man points to the financial center in which he works as a stockbroker. Recognizing his true calling, Gardner throws Maslow's hierarchy of needs on its head, and with the focus of Siddhartha, begins his journey.

That Gardner's wife (Thandie Newton), and mother to their preschool-age son (Jaden Christopher Syre Smith), does not share his enthusiasm for a non-paid internship at a top investment firm should come as no surprise. Pulling grueling daily double shifts at a commercial laundry in the wake of Chris' previous business brainstorm, she would gladly exchange this latest epiphany for the rent, currently two months in arrears. Disgusted — her hope even more exhausted than her pocketbook — she flies the coup, leaving the father and son to fend for themselves.

Concealing his homelessness and abject poverty, Garner begins his arduous stockbroking internship with 50 competing fellow hopefuls. At the end of six months of cold calling and

securing valuable leads for the company, only one will be hired.

The single father has few resources of income. Evicted from his apartment, Chris and young Christopher move to a motel, again falling behind in payments. Soon they are forced to the streets and homeless shelters. Sleeping in train station bathrooms and hand washing his shirts in any sink he can find, Garner nonetheless gets his kid to daycare and arrives at his desk daily with a sartorial and emotional shine.

Chris, an African American in the Reagan era, works the good-old-boy network with uncommon ease, his customers and colleagues reward his enthusiasm to a degree that occasionally stretches plausibility. One such example has him showing up unannounced on a Sunday morning, with son in tow, at the home of a local top executive to solicit his company's investment business. This breach of personal and professional etiquette not only escapes reprimand, but Chris is invited by this stranger to join him that afternoon in his luxury box at a 49ers game.

According to an interview in *Entertainment Weekly*, Smith defends the non-acknowledgement (not even a hint) of any racial issues in the story. He finds the true story of Chris Gardner (also African American), on which the movie is based, more indicative of opportunities in America, regardless of color, than the lack of them.

The Pursuit of Happiness is a delightful, uplifting offering with well-executed comedic and sentimental touches. It is not a tale about the homeless, as some of the promos may lead you to believe, but rather a Horatio Alger story, a paean to the "American dream". Indeed, the real Mr. Gardner is now wealthy and somewhat of a celebrity in his own right.

Which brings us back to the implications of the title. I suspect that if asked, "Does money really brings happiness?" Mr. Gardner might answer, like other people of means who have lived in poverty, "It's better than the alternative." ■

According to an interview in *Entertainment Weekly*, Will Smith defends the non-acknowledgement (not even a hint) of any racial issues in the story of *The Pursuit of Happiness*.

Living at the homeless shelter, Christopher (Jaden Christopher Syre Smith) helps dad (Will Smith) get ready for work.





Adventures
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning

It doesn't matter
who you are, if
you are
Goldilocks or if
you are the
Council of Nicea
or if you are
you, or whoever,
threes are going
to get your
attention better
than twos, fours,
or 17s.

Triple Bypass

It seems the story last week was less about the Kim family than "How can you and YOUR family avoid dying if trapped in your car on a back road in Oregon in a blizzard?" TV news teams showed us how to assemble survival kits. On CNN, Anderson Cooper said, "Next hour: the survivalists' Rule of Threes and what it means for you."

That sounded very important so I had to wait for it. I often use a Rule of Threes when writing this column. For example, let's say I wanted to call attention to the fact that the winter solstice is approaching and how that means we can expect colder weather. I might remind you of three fun winter solstice events. There's the (1) Annual Pigs Balanced on Their Noses Gala, the (2) Annual Pigs Squealing and Running Away Festival, and the (3) Annual The Planet's Tilting the Wrong Way Again Observation.

It doesn't matter who you are, if you are Goldilocks or if you are the Council of Nicea or if you are you, or whoever, threes are going to get your attention better than twos, fours, or 17s. Threes are just enough to make you notice but not enough to induce a trance and result in your being possessed and dancing wildly until the god is done with you and leaves you exhausted and near death.

Which reminds me, we were talking about survival. So when Anderson Cooper told us about the survivalists' Rule of Threes, he mentioned the three rules: (1) You can survive only three hours in severe weather without shelter, (2) You can survive only three days without water, and (3) You can survive only three weeks without food.

Therefore, they say, it's essential to get shelter first. Where have we heard that before?

While I'm trying to remember, I'll let you all contemplate (1) the report by the Public Health Department that said they had to deal with 94 deaths

of homeless people in King County last year. Or (2) the fact that we've exceeded that number this year. Or (3) the fact that if the same percentage of all housed people died in King County every year, it would be declared a disaster area.

Oh, I remember. I said it. We need shelter first, because it doesn't take a blizzard to kill you if all the doors in the city are locked to you.

They now say there was a well-stocked lodge within two miles of the Kim's car that they could have reached had they known about it. But in the city there's only enough shelter space to shelter about half the people who are homeless.

Meanwhile, Tom Rasmussen recently told a bunch of activists that the Human Services Department told him, when he asked, that the city's shelters have no capacity problems.

I have three comments concerning that.

(1) The Human Services Department doesn't keep track of shelter turnaways, so their opinion on the subject is baseless. It would have been better if Tom Rasmussen had asked somebody who knew something about it, like the countless homeless people who have been turned away from shelters, who are all just trying their best, every cold night, to do what Anderson Cooper told the vast American TV viewing audience to do, so as not to end up on the Public Health Department's roster of the dead.

(2) Rasmussen probably bases his perception in part on the truth that some homeless people won't apply for shelter. What he chooses to ignore is that those who avoid the shelters cite dangerous overcrowding as their chief reason. So large numbers of non-applicants or zero turn-aways would not be evidence that the shelters are operating at capacity, but that the vote from the street is that the overcrowding has become intolerable.

(3) Because he was aiming for a triple, Anderson Cooper neglected to mention rule four: You can survive only three months without love.

I'm not feeling the love. ■



Sun., Nov. 19, 8:34 p.m., South Jackson St. Officer contacted suspect, a 51-year-old female Native American transient, for a liquor violation at the South Jackson bus shelter. Suspect had odor of intoxication, bloodshot eyes, and slurred speech. Police were also aware she was an active SOAP (Stay Out of Areas of Prostitution) participant. Suspect was in the company of a Black male in his 50s. The SOAP order was verified, and suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail for violation of a court order.

Fri., Nov. 24, 10:33 p.m., location unknown. Victim, a transient Black male aged 56, states he is homeless and living in his car. Sometime between Oct. 15 and Nov. 21, unknown person(s) took his insurance papers and car title from his vehicle.

Fri., Dec. 1, 2:15 p.m., 2300 block Western Ave. A transient Black male aged 32 was observed by officers standing next to a pillar facing southbound on Western Ave. He was observed to be holding a tin crack pipe with plastic tubing in one hand. He was seen smoking from this pipe as officers observed him. He did not see them approach, and when contacted he looked up and showed officers his hands. They could clearly see the crack pipe in his left hand, and found it warm to the touch. The pipe field-tested positive for the presence of cocaine, and suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Fri., Dec. 1, 10:15 a.m., Third Ave., KIRO 7 TV Station. Officer received a report of a dead body at the KIRO TV station — police radio stated a construction worker had found the deceased outside the southwest corner of the building. Seattle Fire Department had already responded to the scene, and the officer contacted them on the east side of the building. He was escorted to the gravel catwalk where the deceased was located. Seattle Fire had located a wallet in victim's pocket, which they handed to the officer — they also stated the deceased may have been dead for at least 2 weeks. Officer checked the wallet and found no ID, but he did find a business card. The officer then spoke to the construction worker/witness. Witness stated he was on a catwalk checking some work and noticed a pair of feet. He went to check, thinking it was a fellow worker, and noticed that the person was dead. He informed KIRO personnel, who in turn contacted 911. The King County Medical Examiner came and took control of the scene, and bagged the victim, a transient Hispanic male in his 50s, and transported him to the county morgue. They also informed the officer that the victim might have been dead for at least two weeks. King County Medical Examiner will conduct further investigation into cause of death.

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

Bus Chick,
Transit
Authority



Carla Saulter

If you've decided
car-free living
isn't for you
because you can't
imagine giving up
your weekends
on the slopes, it
might be time to
reconsider.

Got something
to say about
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in Seattle?
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www.buschick.com.

A Bus to the Pass

I have to admit it: I'm not much of a winter sports fan. My first clue that snow-related activities weren't for me was in 7th grade, when, less than an hour into my first skiing

lesson (bundled from head to foot but still teary-eyed from the cold), I asked the instructor if I could head into the lodge for the remainder of the afternoon. A few years ago, I tried snowboarding. It was fun and all, but after every fall, I thanked the man upstairs that I didn't break, tear, sprain, strain, or hyperextend something. And the thing is: I need my legs to get around.

Many of my fellow Seattleites, on the other hand, take their winter sports seriously. For those who actually like performing death-defying acts in ungodly temperatures: If you've decided car-free living isn't for you because you can't imagine giving up your weekends on the slopes, it might be time to reconsider. After all, you can take the bus to the Pass!

One of the coolest options is Snowbus (snowbus.com), which heads to Snoqualmie Pass every Thursday night during the season. It leaves Seattle (from Pyramid Ajehouse) at 6:30 p.m., stops again in Bellevue at around 6, and arrives at the pass by 7. For \$49, you get a lift ticket, a sandwich and beer courtesy of Pyramid, and a round-trip ride

on a luxury bus (with a bathroom). If you don't need a lift ticket, you can ride the bus only for \$25. Snowbus is reputed to be as much a social event as a form of transportation, but you must be 21 or older to ride. (Hey, they can't be handing out pints of beer to teenagers.)

Beeline Tours (beelinetours.com) offers daily trips to Snoqualmie. It leaves the 65th Street Park & Ride at 7:00 a.m. and makes two stops — Colman Dock and the South Bellevue Park & Ride — on the way to the Pass. The ride costs \$35. On weekends, you can buy a ride/lift ticket combo for \$75. Beeline offers the advantage of daylong trips, and children are welcome.

For those who'd rather head farther afield for their winter adventures, Crystal Mountain (www.crystalmt.com) operates weekend shuttles to the Pass from Seattle and Tacoma. Cost for adults is \$70 with a lift ticket and \$35 without.

If you're not into tour buses, Rideshare Online (rideshareonline.com) has a special section for folks looking to carpool to the slopes. For the cost of a few gallons of gas, you can probably find a ride to any pass in the region.

Of course, if you don't know how to ski or snowboard yet, you can always sign up for lessons with a ski school like Fiorini (fiorinisports.com) and travel to the Pass in style: on a yellow school bus. ■



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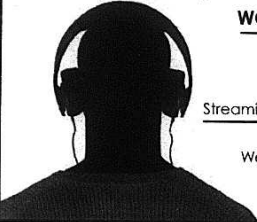
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Letters
editor@realchangenews.org

Glass ceilings and steel doors

Dear Real Change,
I understand Ms. Jones' position in a white environment ("White Wall: Labor's future depends on leaders of color, say organizers," Nov. 29).

On the other hand, I have been a part of King County, state, and city workforce, and can assure you that the same situations apply. However, at the opposite end of the genders, women of all colors are mainstays in 85 percent of the Washington workforce and they have closed the doors of opportunity for males, particularly Black males. Women may have a wall of racism and discrimination to contend with; nev-

ertheless, Blacks, Hispanics, and men of African descent have steel doors with pretty curtains on them to keep us locked out.

Jack Michaela
Seattle

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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.

The sun may be gone for the winter...



But the Real Change vendors are still here!

The vendor who sold you this paper, and all the other men and women of Real Change, are working outside all day, rain or shine, warm or cold. And right now, it's cold out there.

Real Change is now collecting new and gently used winter wear, especially boots and gloves, for our vendors.

Donations may be brought to the office at 2129 2nd Ave Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information, contact Danina Garcia at daninag@realchangenews.org or (206) 441-3247 x211.

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Employment

Seattle Art Museum - Curator. Serves as curator of Asian Art exhibits, including judging the authenticity and artistic value of, and overseeing the care and presentation of Japanese and Korean art collections from the prehistoric age to the 21st century. Requires: Master's degree in Art History with emphasis in Asian Art, plus 2 yrs. exp. judging the authenticity and artistic value of, and overseeing the care and preservation of Asian paintings, calligraphy, sculpture, ceramics, lacquerware, and decorative arts from the 8th to the 19th century; and conceiving, organizing, and producing exhibitions of such art. Compensation includes salary and standard benefits. For details & to apply, go to: www.seattleartmuseum.org/jobs.

Associate Director, Social Justice Initiatives - Great part-time opportunity to drive YWCA's agency-wide efforts to combat socio-economic injustice & discrimination. See www.ywcaworks.org for details and req. exp. Apply hr@ywcaworks.org or P. Hayden, 2820 E. Cherry, Seattle, WA, 98122. EOE.

Project Manager to monitor the YWCA Children Youth & Family services programs, contracts, and grants and coordinate high-level admin. projects. See www.ywcaworks.org for details and req. exp. Apply hr@ywcaworks.org or P. Hayden, 2820 E. Cherry, Seattle, WA, 98122. EOE.

Resident Manager to ensure that quality, safe housing & services are provided to homeless/low-income residents for permanent housing at YWCA Opportunity Place. 12 hr/week & free rent, 1-bed apt. Details: www.ywcaworks.org. Respond to hr@ywcaworks.org or J. Bachhuber, YWCA OP, 2024 Third Ave. Seattle, WA, 98121. EOE 12/5.

Opportunity

Afrikan Konnection Internalized Racism Workshop for People of Color. Monday, December 18th, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Tickets \$75. East Cherry YWCA, 2820 E Cherry Info: (206)200-4452.

College Fair targeting immigrant and refugee children of African decent. Saturday, December 16th, 1 - 4 p.m., Franklin High School, 3013 S Mount Baker Blvd. Info: (206)925-4800.

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.

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

Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Wednesday 12/13

The 13th annual reading of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is the most important fundraiser for the Seattle Displacement Coalition, a 26-year-old low-

income housing organization. Todd Moore, actor and activist, will bring to life the many characters of the Christmas classic. Suggested donation: \$25 or more. 7 p.m., St. Mark's Carriage House, 1551 - 10th Ave. E. Info: (206)632-0668.



Frank Capra's ambitious and disturbing film *Meet John Doe* is possibly more relevant today than when it debuted in 1941. Barbara Stanwyck plays a journalist who prints a fake letter from a man who threatens to commit suicide in protest of the social injustices plaguing the world. The fraudulent letter pushes the newspaper's readership to new heights, and the journalist's fabricated celebrity is soon elevated to the level of a deity and used for political gain. Fri., Dec. 22, 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Place N.

Sunday 12/17

The forum "Unjust Debt Burden on Poor Nations" is led by Michael and Bobby Righi, who met while serving in the Peace Corps and co-founded Jubilee Northwest. Their discussion focuses on policies and actions that force poor nations into debt and the negative effects on health, education, and economic infrastructure. They will analyze media reports of debt forgiveness from last fall and discuss the work that must be done in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. 9:30 a.m., University Unitarian Church, 6556 35th Ave. NE. Info: Jerome, (206)522-9384

Sunday 12/17

Approximately 5,000 evacuees from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are now living in the Puget Sound area. Activists and survivors meet to prepare outreach and plan the Caravan Lagniappe trip to New Orleans. Some homeowners are in danger of losing their property and others are still searching for lost family members and friends. 2 p.m., Wayward Cafe, 901 NE 55th St.

Fellowship of Reconciliation Holiday Party is a festive potluck dinner with music and mingling. GI war resister and Iraq veteran Kyle Snyder is expected to attend. 5 p.m., Woodland Park Presbyterian Church, 225 N 70th Ave.

Kathleen Tolan's play *Memory House* confronts the anguish and guilt of hurting someone you love. Divorced and jobless on New Year's Eve, Maggie faces the prospect of living alone as her adopted daughter Katia prepares to leave. As Katia struggles with her college application and personal state-

ment, anxiety and emotions begin to erupt. Tickets \$10 and up. Tues.-Sat. 7:30 p.m., Sat.-Sun. 2 p.m., Seattle Repertory Theatre, Leo K. Theatre, 155 Mercer St. Info: (206)443-2222.

Wednesday 12/20

The Queer Parents Networking Dinner is an opportunity to exchange stories of love and hope. The event is sponsored by Northwest Network, which supports the safety of the LGBT community by fostering a broad liberation movement dedicated to respect and inclusiveness. 6:30 p.m., Cascade People's Center, 309 Pontius Ave. N. Info: (206)568-7777.

Monday 12/18

The Interfaith Vigil for Peace in the Middle East is an opportunity to pause and reflect on the need for hope in the region. 8 a.m.-8:30 p.m., St. Mark's Cathedral, McCaw Chapel,

1245 10th Ave. E.

Thursday 12/21

A Jewish African-American, Joshua Nelson is an up-and-coming Koshergospel singer whose music embodies cultural harmony. Filmed on location in St. Louis, Stockholm, and Jerusalem, *Keep on Walking* documents Nelson in jazz sessions, concert performances, and religious ceremonies. Suggested donation \$5. 7 p.m., Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, 104 17th Ave. S. Info: www.langstonblackfilmfest.org.

Friday 12/22

The Tortoise and the Hare blends drama, narration, and music to recount the time-honored tales of Aesop's Fables. Lutes, recorders, percussion, and viols accompany a presentation that is enjoyable for all ages. Tickets \$5 and up. 1 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 8th Ave. Info: www.earlymusicguild.org.

Director's Corner



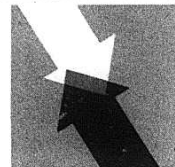
I have to say, I haven't always been a huge fan of the Holiday Season. Having kids has changed that. So has working at *Real Change*.

It seems the holidays can bring out both the best and worst in people. For our vendors, however, it's a very good thing. The holidays are when the relationships our vendors build year-round become most apparent. The *Real Change* community gets tighter, and, for a few weeks anyway, random acts of kindness become the norm.

The holiday season is also a time when *Real Change* receives our biggest share of reader support. We count on donations over these few months to get us through leaner times. With just a few weeks left in our November-December drive, we're still less than halfway to reaching that critical goal of \$80,000 in reader support.

2007 could be an amazing year for *Real Change*. We're looking at regional distribution, strengthening vendor employment support, and a pilot organizing project to build the political will to end homelessness neighborhood by neighborhood. There's so much more we could be doing.

Your support is what makes the difference between *Real Change* thriving or just surviving. Reader donations make up more than 40 percent of our support, and most of that comes from people who contribute \$100 or less. Your support matters. Please see www.realchangenews.org or use the coupon on Page 12 to contribute today.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Remember Those who have Passed

Issue: December 21 is Homeless Person's Memorial Day. Join the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless on the capitol steps in Olympia to remember those who have died while homeless this year.

Background: King County recently completed a report on homeless deaths in 2005. The number of deaths increased from 77 in 2003 to 82 in 2004 to 94 in 2005. The people who died on the streets in 2005 averaged 47 years old, while the average life expectancy in the general population is 77 years. Last week, WHEEL's Women in Black stood vigil for the 50th violent or outdoor death among homeless people in King County in 2006. This year's total numbers aren't tallied yet, but no one expects them to drop.

According to the report, compared to the U.S. average, homeless people are about eight times more likely to commit suicide, twice as likely to die in an accident, and have 13 times the chance of being murdered.

Governor Christine Gregoire recently issued a proclamation, designating Dec. 21 to be Homeless People's Memorial Day. And while this is an important symbolic step, it won't prevent more people from dying while homeless. Ending homelessness will do that, but that takes commitment and resources. The governor has stated that her priorities for the 2007 legislative session are education, economic development, and health care. Housing for everyone should be part of that list. By participating on Dec. 21, you will not only be remembering and honoring individuals who have died, you'll also make the tragedy of homelessness more visible and help remind the governor and others that we need a solution and that people's lives depend on a solution every day.

The memorial event is sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless, which has held such events nationally since 1990, on or near the first day of winter and the longest night of the year. The group's goal is to bring attention to the tragedy of homelessness and to remember the homeless people who have paid the ultimate price for our nation's failure to end homelessness. This year, the event is cosponsored by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council.

The Olympia event will include a candlelight vigil and reading the names of everyone in Washington state known to have died homeless or as a result of homelessness in the last year, and a reading of the Governor's proclamation. Ken Kraybill of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and Craig Renneborn, a mental health chaplain, will speak at the service.

Action: Attend the vigil on Thurs., Dec. 21 at 4 p.m. on the capitol steps in Olympia. For more information, contact the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless at www.endhomelessnesswa.org or by phone at (360)357-6990.

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

RULING, Continued from Page 1

that he says the hepatitis meds have made worse. He says that when his medication schedule and his work schedule clashed, and the higher-ups wouldn't respond to requests for help — as state disability law required — he was fired.

Calkin's former employer refused to comment, citing the pending claim with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Looking for legal representation, now Calkin, 50, has another obstacle in his path: the Washington Supreme Court's 5-4 decision in *McClarty v. Totem Electric*, which recategorized people with temporary, fixable medical conditions as able-bodied.

Because of the July 7 *McClarty* ruling — which a host of lawyers for the disabled are asking the court to reconsider — people recovering from cancer or carpal tunnel syndrome, or dealing with asthma, or bipolar disorder, or any number of maladies considered treatable or temporary, have no right to on-the-job protection from discrimination or to special accommodations. That is, they can be refused a job or a promotion, harassed, demoted, or fired — or denied access to a restaurant, theater, or apartment.

Laura Lindstran, a claims investigator for the Washington State Human Right Commission, has seen the on-the-job effects. The decision deep-sixed one case where discrimination had already been found, says Lindstran. She was about to finalize a settlement for a claimant with a knee injury when the man's former employer called and "basically refused to continue settlement negotiations," she says.

In early summer, before *McClarty*'s impact was felt, Lindstran says she found for the claimant — that discrimination had occurred — in five of six cases. By fall, when Lindstran reviewed 10 disability cases in a three-month period, six of those cases were dismissed because the disabilities involved didn't meet the new definition.

Effects like this won't stand, says workplace anti-discrimination lawyer

Richard Reed, who is party to the appeal request. The five justices in the majority "clearly overreached," he says.

The court has a longstanding beef with the 1973 Washington Law Against Discrimination, which predated the Americans with Disabilities Act by 17 years and outlawed discrimination against "handicapped" people. The ruling's author, James Johnson, cited previous court statements saying the law protected people with too many conditions; he also indicated that state authorities can justifiably crib from federal law whenever a statute's intent is the same. "Finally," he wrote, "the proposed definition would ensure that scarce judicial resources are available to those most in need of the WLAD's protections, rather than persons with receding hairlines."

Reed estimates that 40 percent of people protected by the old law are no longer protected. And he believes that, if the court reconsiders the ruling, they'll reverse themselves.

"I think there are some good [Supreme Court] judges, some thoughtful judges, who didn't understand how many categories of disability would not be covered," he says. "They threw the baby out with the bathwater." ■

HAMDAN, Continued from Page 1

explains Sipos, as Hamdan and fellow detainees languished without charge at Guantánamo. "But the judicial system worked," Sipos says, and the Supreme Court decision "reflects the genius of the founders in creating three co-equal branches of government.... But for the courts, an unlawful executive action would have gone unchecked."

McMillan agrees: "The federal court system was the one institution that checked aggressive claims of executive power by the Bush Administration, as Congress provided no checks, and the press and other institutions were silent."

The attorneys continue their work on the case. Hamdan is still detained at Guantánamo, awaiting development of procedures under the Military Commissions Act of 2006, passed by Congress in response to the *Hamdan* ruling. McMillan contends that this new law also violates the Constitution and the Geneva Conventions, and these arguments will be presented as the case works its way through the court system.

Federal District Court Judge Robert Lasnik praised the work of the defense team at an early hearing on the case as "in the highest tradition of the bar," and further commented that "what makes this country so great is not just that we have the most military power or the most

wealth, but we have a system in the federal courts where the most vulnerable and most powerless still can get into a courthouse and have their cases heard."


The attorneys say they saw their obligation to defend an unpopular, powerless client as self-evident.

"As officers of the court, it's our duty to defend and uphold the U.S. Constitution, and when we see the law flouted, it's our duty to call it to the attention of the court," McMillan says. "If lawyers don't do it, who will?" ■

Robin Lindley (roblindley@yahoo.com) is a Seattle attorney and writer on human rights, international affairs, law, medicine, politics, the media, and culture. He is a former chair of the World Peace through Law section of the Washington State Bar Association.

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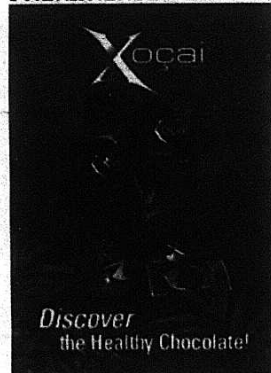
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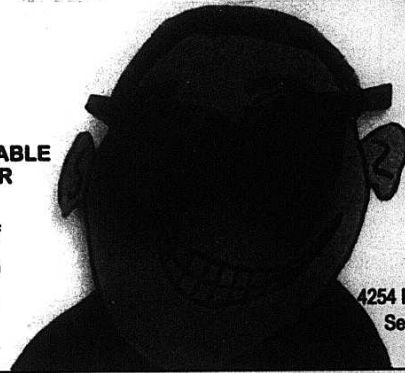
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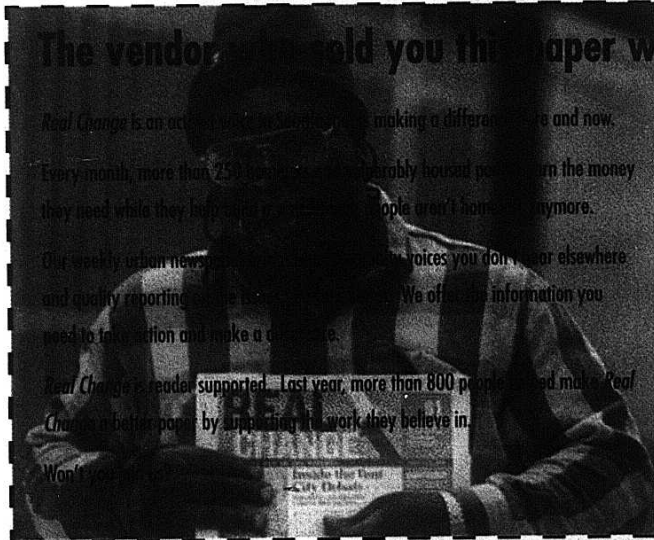
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