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DEC. 27, 2006 - JAN. 2, 2007

Trial and Error

*Funding cuts may thwart AIDS
clinical studies locally, nationally*

By ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Reporter

On the second floor of Harborview Medical Center's west wing, at Desk B, a male receptionist welcomes clients of the University of Washington AIDS Clinical Trials Unit (ACTU). This year alone, nearly 180 people have stopped by this desk to participate in clinical research that seeks to gain information on how HIV works within the body and affects the immune system, as well as develop new treatments for those living with HIV/AIDS.

With some trials lasting a few weeks, and others stretching on for years, the clients — men, women, white, Black, Latino, gay, straight, bi, IV drug users, and those of low economic means — make repeated visits to the ACTU, receiving a small stipend and free access to medical professionals.

But the health care opportunities available to the patients of the local ACTU — along with the thousands of clients who visit the 33 sister sites scattered across the country — could be severely threatened, if a rash of predicted drastic funding cuts comes to pass.

See ACTU, Continued on Page 12



CHILDREN, RECENTLY CAUGHT BY U.S. BORDER PATROL AND REPATRIATED, EAT LUNCH AT CAMINO A CASA (THE PATH HOME) IN NOGALES, SONORA STATE. MEXICAN AUTHORITIES SAY SOME 6,800 YOUNGSTERS HAVE BEEN REPATRIATED TO NORTHERN SONORA AFTER CROSSING INTO SOUTHERN ARIZONA IN 2006, A RISE OF 20 PERCENT OVER THE SAME PERIOD IN 2005. PHOTO COURTESY OF REUTERS.

Rough Crossings

More children seeking parents caught by Border Patrol

By TIM GAYNOR
Street News Service

Slipping into the United States, 8-year-old Adrian Ramirez began a three-day trek across the cactus-studded wastes with just a small bag of tortillas and one large hope keeping him going.

"I wanted to spend Christmas with my father in New York, but they caught us," he said, perching on a chair at a center for child migrants in Nogales, Sonora, a bustling city across the border from Arizona.

Picked up and swiftly repatriated by the U.S. Border Patrol, the Triqui Indian from Mexico's poor Oaxaca state is one of a growing number of children trying to cross the border into the United States without their parents.

Since January, Mexican authorities say some 6,800 youngsters have been repatriated to northern Sonora state after crossing into southern Arizona, a rise of 20 percent over the same period last year.

They say most are seeking to join moms and dads who already live state-side, but who are increasingly reluctant to head back to Mexico to pick up their children because of tighter security along the 2,000-mile line.

"The parents know that they can't come back because of increased security," said Humberto Valdes, of Mexico's family welfare agency in the northern

See CHILDREN, Continued on Page 12

BUM WRAP

A program to direct people away from panhandlers and to charities presents tough moral choices.

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STORM BLAST

Labor activists give Puget Sound Energy heat for paying some workers less than a living wage.

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EXTRA EXTRA

With issues set for Liberia, Cameroon, and Kenya, street newspapers are poised to become an African force.

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FLOOD STATES

A local woman who fell in love with New Orleans on a honeymoon, returns to the city post-Katrina.

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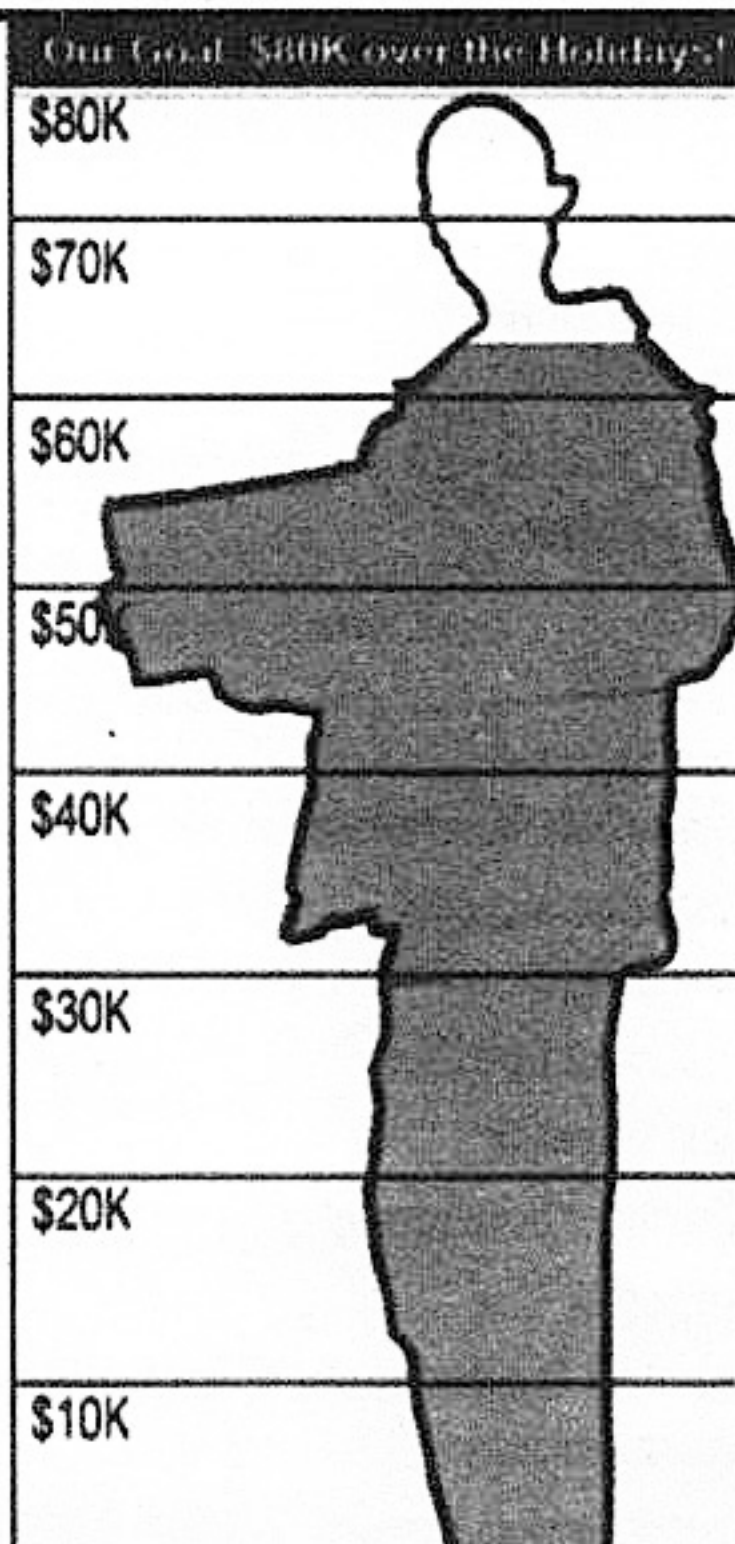
HEARING VOICES

Writer Julia Phillips interviews public radio personalities, recording the stories that have shaped their lives.

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[Please Help Us Reach Our Critical End-of-Year Goal!]

Counting down to the end of *Real Change's* holiday fund drive, we still need to raise more than \$16,000 to enter 2007 on solid ground. If you value the opportunity we offer to more than 250 vendors each month, quality advocacy journalism, and effective advocacy on poverty and homelessness, we need your help now. Last week, our amazing readers delivered another \$18,223, bringing us to \$63,601 raised since Nov. 1. \$80,000 is still a very big number, but we're closer than ever. We know we can reach our goal if everyone who values our work does what they can. You may make a tax-deductible contribution at our website at realchangenews.org, or use the coupon on page 12 to make your gift now. Thank you for supporting *Real Change*.



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The Panhandling Dilemma

The answer to the question is that there is no easy answer

It's way too easy to decide that the misery that surrounds us is somehow deserved. This, I think, is a form of moral cowardice

By **TIMOTHY HARRIS**
Real Change Executive Director

Next month, the Downtown Seattle Association's orange-vested downtown ambassadors will begin leafleting pedestrians to discourage contributions to panhandlers. The brochures are just one piece of a panhandling education campaign being launched under the "Have a Heart, Give Smart" brand.

Like anything that exists over time, panhandling in Seattle has grown into an institution. Over the past few years, Seattle's on-ramps each seem to have sprouted a rotating band of regulars. In some locations, a rough form of etiquette has evolved that includes recognized shifts that change on the half-hour.

If people give to charity rather than panhandlers, says the DSA, they reduce their risk of enabling self-destructive behavior while supporting real solutions to poverty. The brochures offer a list of recommended charities, including the support of *Real Change* vendors.

Seattle's panhandlers are blamed for driving away tourists, Convention Center bookings, and potential shoppers. Business leaders say the campaign will make our city less attractive to career panhandlers, whom they hope will move on to other, more receptive, locales.

For as long as I can remember, street slang for on-ramp begging has been to "fly a sign," and there are several standard styles. The down-on-his-luck willing worker. The disabled vet. The family without food. The jokester that just needs a beer. Some take the downcast and pathetic route. Others smile. Many opt for direct eye contact.

It's hard to assess what's really going on with any of these.

I know one guy who claims to have invented the "anything helps" sign. He feels a flush of pride when others adopt his slogan. "I even saw a guy in Bellingham using it," he told me, "but his stance was all wrong."

It's easy to retreat into cynicism. And, as the DSA's campaign points out, it's OK to say no.

Sometimes, though, it can also be OK to say yes. Everyone who panhandles isn't a scam artist looking for their next fix. Nor are they all card-carrying members of the noble poor.

The world is a complicated place, filled with shades of gray. Deal with it.

Given that I do what I do, it's not unusual for people to ask what I think about this. They want a rule. When faced with an uncomfortable situation, it's always easier to resort to autopilot than to think things through.

The thing about panhandlers is this: They make us uncomfortable.

Most days I get onto Aurora near the Pink Elephant car wash, and there's usually someone working the light. The feeling's always the same.

The guy with the sign slowly walks down the row of cars making eye contact. I look back, most days, and slightly shake my head no. I'm glad the window is rolled up. I feel guilty. In fact, I feel terrible. Every time.

I know a junkie when I see one, but the guy can look like the second coming of William S. Burroughs and it won't make a bit of difference. I'll still feel bad.

My life has been about ending poverty. Maybe, given my career choice, I should get a perpetual free pass. But apparently I don't.

I have lots of rational reasons to say no, but still feel guilty. Why?

Here's what I came up with. There isn't anything remotely fair about our economy, our class system, or the opportunities we do or don't have. Some of us get lives of meaning and relative comfort, and some of us barely survive on the margins.

There's nothing to bring that home quite like facing down some wretch as I sit full-bellied in the comfort of my car. To me, that panhandler is a reminder that we live in a society of winners and losers, and where we fall on the spectrum is as much about our place at the starting gate as it is about our own choices.

It's way too easy to decide that the misery that surrounds us is somehow deserved. This, I think, is a form of moral cowardice

Giving money, sometimes, can be the right thing to do. There are no absolutes on this. Desperate people on drugs always get my sympathy, but not my dollar. I'm a sucker for the mentally ill. We all make our own choices. It's always a judgment call.

A dollar doesn't make much difference. The problems go much deeper than that. But sometimes, it helps.

Ultimately, this issue isn't about giving or not. It's about whether to let ourselves feel some of the world's pain. That's where the hard work toward justice always begins. ■



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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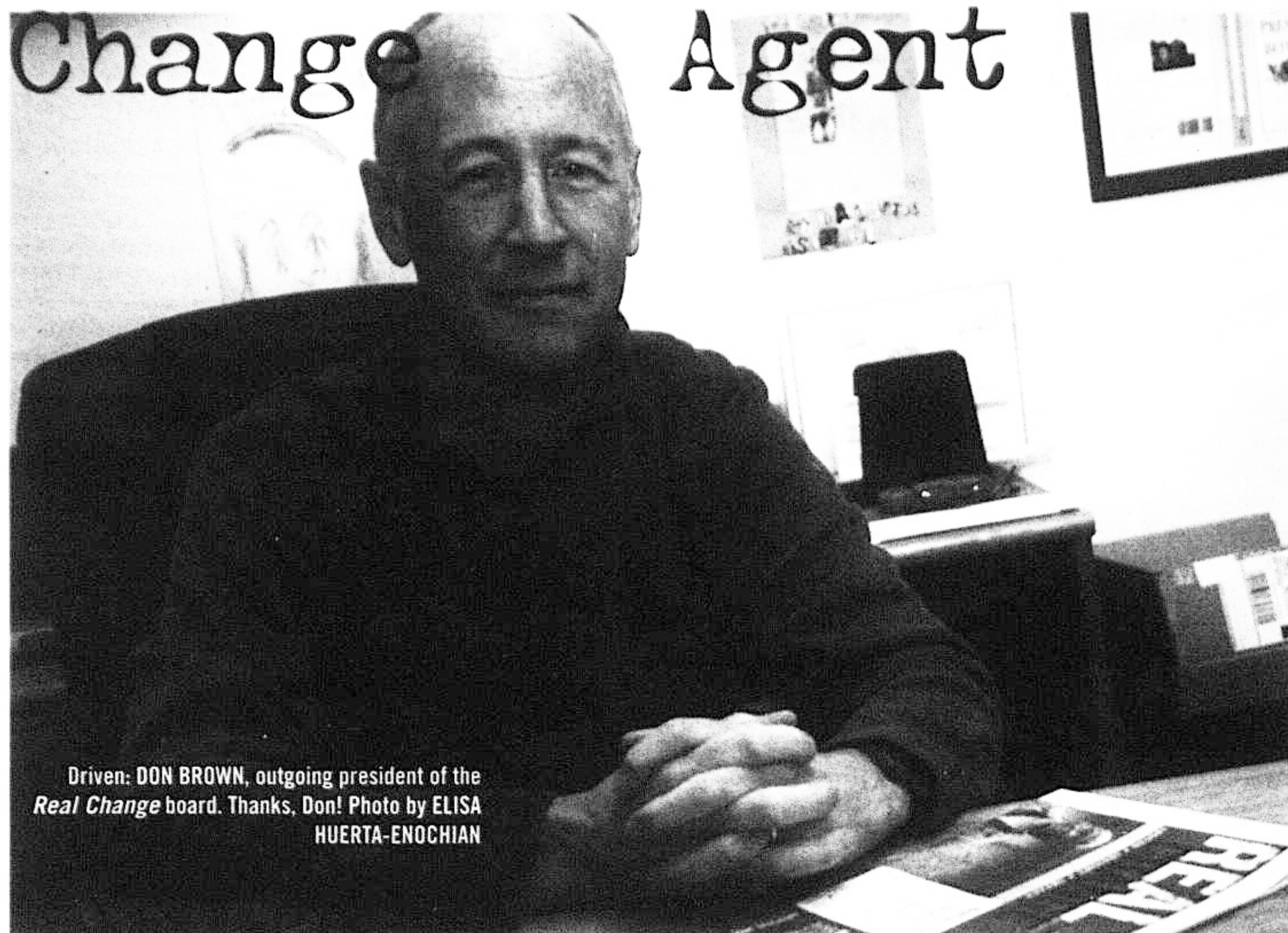
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Driven: DON BROWN, outgoing president of the *Real Change* board. Thanks, Don! Photo by ELISA HUERTA-ENOCHIAN

Don Brown's passion for community organizing has presented him with lots of opportunities, some sought and others entirely unforeseen.

Brown was among the first readers of *Real Change* in 1995. He purchased it regularly and valued the opportunity to develop friendships with vendors. Upon first entering the organization's headquarters in March 2003, he was prepared to run errands, lick envelopes, or serve any other way he could. *Real Change* was quick to recognize Brown's strengths as a naturopathic physician, business consultant,

and long-time activist and steered him to the fundraising committee. He went to work immediately on donor development, soon joined the Board of Directors, and within months became *Real Change*'s new board president.

Three busy years later, Brown is moving on to focus on other goals. He is credited with helping to steer *Real Change* through a period of significant growth and is most proud of increased support from the community. "The sky's the limit for the paper," said Brown. "I think we've got it on the right track."

—Angie Jones

Lights Out for PSE

Labor accuses private utility of supporting poverty-level wages

By ADAM HYLA
Editor

The lights were still out in more than 100,000 Western Washington homes when a giant rat and a repulsive fat cat appeared in front of the corporate headquarters of one of the utilities responsible for restoring the power. And while the assembled crowd was classic labor — boots, sweatshirts, union-labelled baseball caps, leaflets — and the cause was poorly paid workers, there had to be among the honks of support from passing Bellevue drivers at least a few people who were still angry about having to sit home in the dark.

The inflatable rat and the diamond ring-wearing cat were outside the Bellevue headquarters of Puget Sound Energy, the state's largest private utility, and they were accompanied by union supporters from the bricklayers and laborers unions. Participants weren't talking about the power outage on this gray Dec. 20; they were there to voice concern over the poorly paid flaggers and pavement workers in the employ of PSE's subcontractors.

While some non-union concrete and pavement workers are making \$13 to \$15 an hour with benefits, Ben Freitag of Washington State Jobs with Justice says others are hired on at \$8.25 hourly.

Even if benefits are offered, he says, the workers can ill afford them. These workers often act as flaggers at job sites, run by by K and D Services or Comforce, two local businesses who frequently work for PSE and telecommunications companies like Qwest.

Comforce and K and D refused to comment.

Puget Sound Energy could make their subcontractors pay better, says Freitag, especially since the utility's stock dividends increased by eight cents a share in the past year.

"We want some of that [profit] for low-wage, poverty-level workers," said Freitag.

The utility's natural gas rates have climbed in each of the last four years, with them spiking by 33 percent in 2003, notes a JwJ flier. Rates most recently increased by 8.8 percent on Nov. 1. The utility, the largest natural-gas provider in the state, has 638,000 customers in King, Snohomish, Pierce, Thurston, Lewis, and Kittitas counties, according to the state's Utilities and Transportation Commission, which approved the rate hikes.

Jobs with Justice hasn't made an attempt to contact PSE staff to talk over their subcontracting, says Freitag. This was the group's first public action against the company, but it wasn't put together as a result of the storm, he said. "We got this started in late November," he said.

Still, the context incurred some interesting interactions. A passerby pointed to the generators pumping air into the inflatables and castigated the protesters. "They should give these to the people who don't have power, instead of doing something that doesn't make any sense," he said.

Puget Sound Energy officials were likewise distracted. "We're up to our eyeballs in storm stuff, so we can't comment on this at all," said spokesperson Dennis Smedsrud. "Our attention's been focused on getting our customers' power back on." ■

Just Heard...

Dude, where's my partridge?

This being the third day of Christmastide, three French hens might be more appropriate, but instead we have just a selection of what *Real Change* presented you with in 2006:

- At least 1,162 apartments going condo
 - Five hundred top U.S. companies who now pay their CEOs more than 430 times the pay of the average worker
 - A long list of suspected toxins found in deodorant, hair straightener, and other types of cosmetics
 - Eighty people blocking the 950-foot *Pomero* from departing the Port of Olympia for Iraq laden with war gear
 - Sixty-plus residents of a downtown apartment building fighting off bedbugs
 - Forty Immigration and Customs Enforcement stormtroopers arresting undocumented workers in Bellingham
 - Twenty-five kinds of pesticides flowing in the surface waters of Washington's Yakima River basin
 - Seventeen disappeared Occidental Park trees
 - Thirteen minority employees experiencing racism in the city's Legislative Department
 - Eleven South Lake Union streetcar stations seeking ad-friendly sponsorship
 - Ten carbon-neutral, zero-energy Issaquah townhomes
 - Five high-tech toilets in the gunsights of a downtown business group
 - Two homeless people beat up for giving the cops a little lip
 - One Lebanese American witnessing the Israeli incursion into his homeland
 - One county jail that pledged to treat transgendered individuals with respect
 - One Cambodian refugee father facing imminent deportation
 - One former UN weapons inspector saying the invasion of Iran is close at hand
 - One money-losing basketball team seeking greener pastures
 - One Somali American Muslim woman who refuses to be afraid in post-9/11 America
 - One lieutenant who defied orders to ship for Iraq
- Look for lots more in 2007.

The Grinch loans money

Dennis Bassford, president, founder, and CEO of MoneyTree was selected as Washington State Jobs with Justice's Grinch of the Year this year, in a nod to the Renton-based financial company's exorbitant payday loans.

Short-term payday loans, which are illegal in 11 states, can come with \$75 fees and annual percentage rates as high as 391 percent, according to a fact sheet by the Statewide Poverty Action Network. Because nine out of 10 customers come back frequently, and many can't afford to pay off the entire loan when it's due, they often take out another loan to pay off the first. And lenders site themselves near military bases and in African American neighborhoods, where they're twice as common as elsewhere.

The Grinch award, a paper certificate, was presented to Bassford in person at his Renton office Dec. 21.

—Adam Hyla

Taking aim at Washington's largest electric and gas utility outside its Bellevue offices. Photo by Adam Hyla



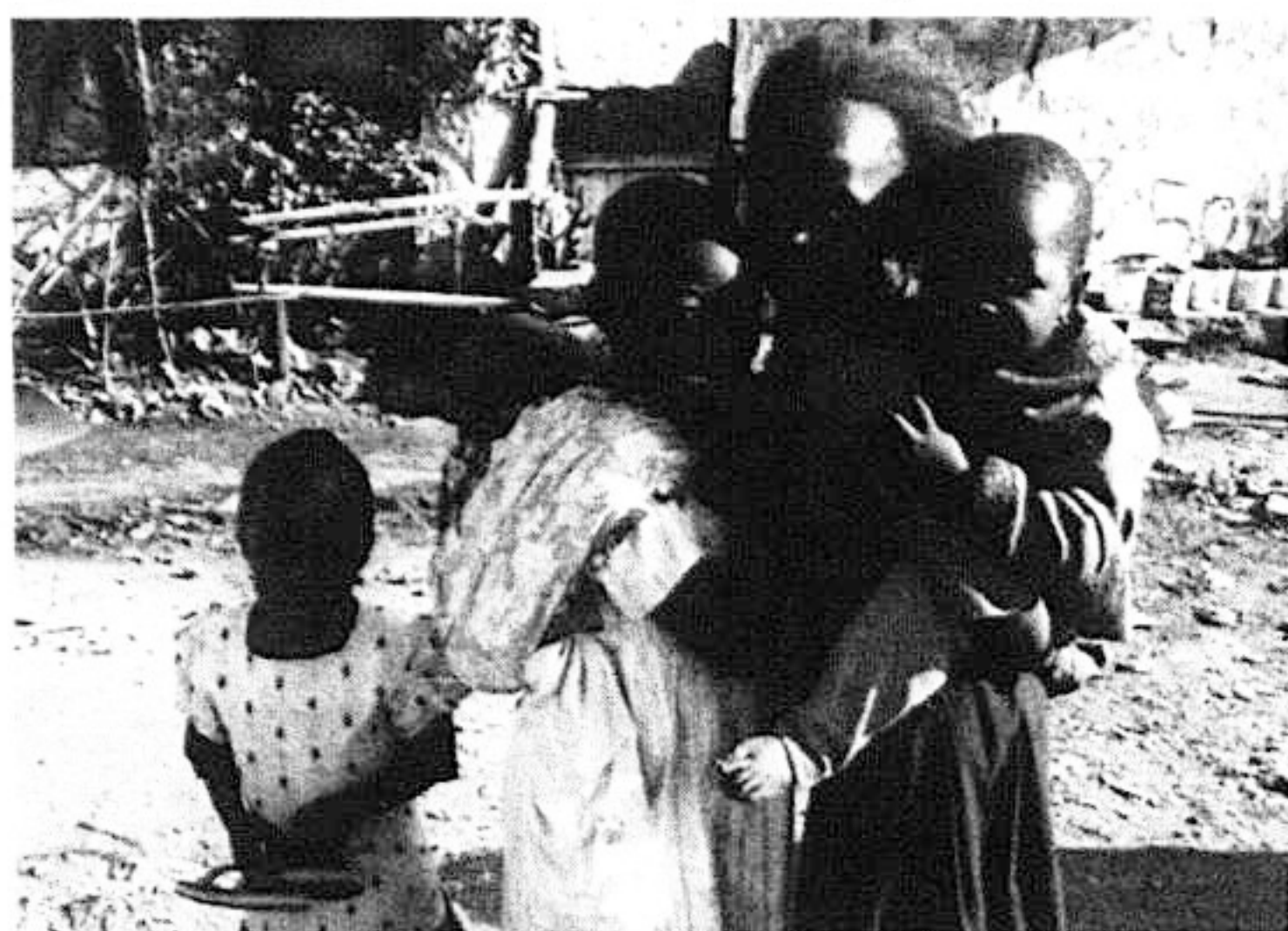
Dateline Africa

Street newspapers are starting up on the world's most troubled continent

By JOANNE ZUHL
Street News Service

Seven thousand miles from here, from a desk in Monrovia, young Geeza Williams surveys the toll a decade and a half of civil war has taken on his Liberian homeland, an impoverished country emerging from years of slaughter with virtually no health care or economic structure to build upon. An estimated 200,000 Liberians were killed in the civil war, which started in 1989 and created nearly half a million refugees around the world, including Williams.

Young people in Kenya's Kibera slum, where a newspaper sold by the poor is starting. Photo by Lisa Maclean



With over 90 percent unemployment, and those working making less than \$30 U.S. a month, many Liberians rely on money from relatives in the United States. The health system has collapsed, people stream in from the countryside and overwhelm the cities, and the scars of civil war remain on both the battered infrastructure and damaged psyches.

A journalist by trade, Williams wants his vocation to tangibly improve the lives of people living on the streets of Liberia. This January, he hopes to begin publishing a street newspaper there, joining a movement of emerging African publications mentored by the International Network of Street Papers.

"A street newspaper will firstly help vendors, who are homeless and unemployed, to at least make something from the paper for a daily meal, keep them out of crimes, problems," Williams said. "Secondly, it will inform people about social and health issues such as AIDS, malaria, typhoid fever."

"I envision a paper that will be circulated throughout Liberia, setting the stage to help change lives, exposing social and health issues, partnering with

other organizations in nation building, reconciliation, [and] reconstruction."

With financial assistance from the International Network of Street Newspapers, Williams has established a foothold on the project. Across Africa, the INSP and its members are building a new framework of street newspapers, including partnerships in Kenya, Zambia, Cameroon, and Malawi.

From her desk in Glasgow, Scotland, INSP Network Director Lisa Maclean traces a direct line to all of the street papers in the network on a global map. There are currently two lines to Africa, one to *The Big Issue Namibia* and another to South Africa, which boasts *The Big Issue South Africa* in Cape Town and *Homeless Talk* in Johannesburg.

The INSP board has set a directive to establish at least five new papers in Africa, as funds become available, and foster a network of existing and new papers on the continent. The organization has secured funding through large institutions, including The Scottish Executive International Development Fund and The Lloyds TSB Foundation

See AFRICA, Continued on Page 10

Short Takes

Braam budget battle

The governor's proposed budget for the next two years has wedged the Department of Social and Health Services between a rock and a hard place called the Braam foster care settlement.

The 2004 agreement between the state and attorneys for Jessica Braam, a young woman who sued the state after being shuffled through 34 foster homes, stipulates a list of things the state must do to improve care for children in its custody. But Braam attorney Casey Trupin issued a press release last week saying Gov. Chris Gregoire's budget falls far short of what DSHS had asked the governor for in order to meet its Braam obligations.

The budget that Gregoire released Dec. 19 includes \$22.5 million for a number of Braam mandates, including \$11 million to hire about 85 caseworkers. But Trupin says the governor fails to explain if this will cover two of the settlement's top mandates: reducing caseloads and making monthly visits to each child.

Trupin says the governor shorted DSHS's funding requests in the areas of foster child health care, kinship support, and mental health services, and failed to fund some requests altogether, including \$10 million for visits between siblings, \$5.8 million for foster parent recruitment and retention, and \$3 million for new staff to track outcomes.

"It was a surprise to us to have the governor leave out tens of millions of dollars from her budget for Braam when [DSHS] was requesting it," Trupin says. "We'd really like to see a bigger commitment from the governor."

DSHS spokesperson Steve Williams says the department is currently analyzing the governor's budget, but stresses that it reflects a strong commitment to funding additional social workers,

supervisors, and support staff. "We are happy with what the governor has proposed," he says.

The budget is now headed for the Legislature, which opens Jan. 8.

—Cydney Gillis

Ballard neighbors want more for car campers

Ballard offers no homeless shelter or designated safe spot for those living in their vehicles to park overnight, and on Dec. 10, neighborhood residents met at Trinity United Methodist Church to discuss these issues.

Anne Riley of Ballard Northwest Senior Activity Center presented the results of the recently completed "Ballard for Ballard Needs Assessment" survey, in which the community's human-resource providers answered questions about what services they think Ballard is lacking. This assessment had three phases. First, Ballard-area human service agencies were asked to complete a survey about what they offer, which amenities Ballard is lacking, and how else they would suggest helping the homeless.

The second phase had five focus groups discussing health and medicine, seniors, hunger, housing, and children and families. The responses were analyzed by a professional consultant. The results of the assessment showed that Ballard has a lack of overnight shelters and hygiene facilities. A group called Ballard Peace Activists, which organized the meeting, wants to change this.

In addition to discussing the assessment's results, those at Sunday's meeting watched the 1985 documentary *Streetwise* about homeless teenagers in Seattle. Although the film was intended as a tool to promote awareness, not everyone appreciated its value. One homeless man at the meeting asked, "How is seeing this film going to help us homeless?"

The meeting did generate several ideas, however, including starting a shelter in the Ballard area aimed toward the working homeless. The problem is finding a location and funding to begin such a project. The group also expressed interest in creating a hygiene station somewhere in Ballard, as most businesses don't allow homeless people to use their bathrooms. It was also brought to the group's attention that many people in Ballard are living in cars and due to parking restrictions have no place to safely park their vehicles at night without fear of being towed.

Riley wants to focus on creating a directory of services so that people can easily find locations for a meal, shelter, or counseling.

No conclusions were reached at the meeting; however, small groups of people committed to working on each idea, and overwhelmingly people seemed to agree that the number-one priority is to get Ballard an emergency shelter. For more information, contact the Ballard Peace Activists at ballard@snowcoalition.org.

—Andrea Sherrodd

Sherrodd is a student in the University of Washington News Laboratory.



Longest Night

DEANNA DAVIS, ANITRA FREEMAN, RAVADEE JANJAI, MARCIA MCLAUGHLIN, AND LEAH HEASLY STAND AT WESTLAKE PARK FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE'S MEMORIAL DAY DEC. 21, THE LONGEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR, TO MARK THE DEATHS OF 52 HOMELESS PEOPLE IN KING COUNTY OVER 2006. IN A PROCLAMATION MARKING THE DAY, GOV. CHRISTINE GREGOIRE ENCOURAGED THE STATE'S CITIZENS "TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO PROMOTING COMPASSION AND CONCERN FOR ALL."

PHOTO BY KATIA ROBERTS

Walkin' in New Orleans

A Seattleite returns to the city she loves, post-Katrina

By MELISSA RIESLAND
Contributing Writer

[Good reading online]
The New Yorker's Katrina archive, which includes a chillingly prescient 1987 article by John McPhee about New Orleans' levees: www.newyorker.com/archive/previous/articles/katrinaArchive. Also: GQ's "One Block, One Year, 13 Houses" (men.style.com/gq/features/landing?id=content_5136), about a group of neighbors and their emotional and physical recovery.

[Give]
Recommended organizations for donations include Rebuilding Together (www.rebuildingtogether.org) then scroll down and click on "Responding to Hurricane Disaster", which focuses specifically on housing rehabilitation, and Common Ground (www.commongroundrelief.org), whose core mission is to help in Gulf Coast recovery.

A "Hurricane Free Zone" sign hangs on a street pole in New Orleans.
Photo by Melissa Riesland.



In 1996, my husband and I honeymooned in New Orleans and fell in love with the city. We promised each other we would return every five years, to re-experience the beauty, the people, and the amazing food.

New Orleans' nicknames — The Big Easy and The City that Care Forgot — are pure irony. Author and native New Orleansian Poppy Z. Brite wrote in her post-Katrina blog that only visitors call New Orleans The Big Easy. There ain't no easy when you live in New Orleans — before and even more so now.

The first thing we did on our most recent trip was take the Katrina "disaster" tour. We'd been told it would help us put the rest of our visit in perspective. Surprisingly, the place looked pretty good. Houses, at least from the outside, looked normal — normal except for the spray-painted cryptograms indicating lives and deaths and fates of beloved pets. Most disturbing was how long it took for some houses to be checked for survivors — some as much as two months later.

In spite of the apparent normalcy, the streets were empty. Block upon block of closely packed shotgun houses and not a person in sight. At this time, only one-third of the residents have returned.

By far, the most moving part of our trip was those residents.

There was a bartender at the Napoleon House who told us that they were open only until 6 p.m. because the chef had moved away. His wife couldn't take the stress of being in New Orleans. She just couldn't make the fear go away.

Our young waiter at the Upperline restaurant said he had to cancel his summer trip because he panicked, afraid that if he left something would happen or that the city wouldn't be here when he returned.

The woman who led our ghost tour had evacuated to Seattle. She seemed to be coping well, but told us, "Everyone seems OK on the outside, but scratch the surface and they're just barely holding it together."

The chef at the Delachaise restaurant said he'd lost his house. He said that he didn't vote to re-elect Mayor Ray Nagin, but didn't hold anything against him: "He did the best he could in a terrible situation."

When we asked him how business was, he said it was pretty good outside of the Quarter, but many of the old-time businesses in the Quarter were shut down, on limited hours, or in trouble because of the drop in tourism.

On one special day, we volunteered for Habitat for Humanity at their ReStore salvaged goods outlet. It was messy work, and by the end of the day we were coated with gray-brown flood dust. Afterwards, we stopped at a bar to clear our gritty throats. We were so dirty and obviously not on a pleasure trip that people assumed we were locals and brought us into their conversations. For me, it was one of the most satisfying parts of the trip. It felt just plain good to be sharing their lives, no matter how superficially.

New Orleans is a difficult place to live, but prior to the hurricanes, New Orleansians were happy. A Gallup poll taken prior to Katrina showed that more than half of New Orleansians were "extremely satisfied" with their lives. This was the highest percentage of the 21 cities in the survey.

Additionally, the U.S. Census reports, contrary to the negative images of the mostly Black Lower Ninth Ward (which actually was *not* the most flood-damaged part of town), 59 percent of homes were owner-occupied, which was a rate higher than the entire city. Contrast that with Seattle, where 51 percent of whites and 36 percent of Blacks own their own homes.

Finally, remember New Orleans and other Gulf Coast residents this holiday season. The outpouring of support, both governmental and private, has dwindled since 2005. The greatest need right now is to get people back into their homes. In that vein, a bit of happy holiday news is that the courts have ruled that FEMA's withdrawal of housing assistance was unconstitutional. FEMA will begin restoring aid as soon as this week. ■

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Now Hear This!

Writer Lisa A. Phillips on the Voices Behind Public Radio

By Robin Lindley
Contributing Writer

Public radio listeners twiddle the dial beyond the formulaic monotony of commercial radio. They tune in "for stories, for music, for community, for insight, for laughter, the kinds of things that brought families around the Philco in the days before television took center stage in the living room," writes Lisa A. Phillips in *Public Radio: Behind the Voices*, a collection of profiles of more than 40 of the most listened-to public radio hosts.

Phillips's book is a treasure trove for public radio fans, with insight on the careers and personal stories of news luminaries from Cokie Roberts, Nina Totenberg, and Linda Wertheimer, to Daniel Schorr, Bob Edwards, Susan Stamberg, and Noah Adams, and the stalwarts of talk and music such as Terry Gross, Ira Glass, Marian McPartland, and Bill McGlaughlin.

Phillips worked in campus radio during college, and after graduation, she was News Director for KTPR, a public station in rural Fort Dodge, Iowa. Her day began at 4:30 a.m. with Bob Edwards on "Morning Edition." Over a decade later, she was still curious about the people who delivered the news, conversation and diverse programs that millions listen to daily. *Public Radio* is the product of more than two years of interviewing and research.

Journalist Judy Woodruff wrote that Phillips "answers our questions about the people we love to listen to. Just as we've gotten to know them by the stories they tell, she tells their stories — giving us a personal connection to this vital, daily source of news and information."

Phillips has worked at six public radio stations in five states. She now teaches journalism at the State University of New York at New Paltz and freelances for *The New York Times*, National Public Radio [NPR], and "Marketplace," among others. Her reporting has earned four regional Edward R. Murrow awards, a New York Festival award, and honors from the Associated Press. She lives in Woodstock, New York, with her husband and daughter.

Lisa Phillips recently spoke from her home about her book and the state of public radio today.

Real Change: What sparked your book of public radio profiles?

Lisa Phillips: It was a daunting exercise. I describe in the introduction the connection people have beyond just the person who brings news every day. I long wanted to explore that, to pull back the curtain and give listeners a chance to know these voices. Who would be included wasn't final until the last month I worked on the book.

RC: How did your working in public radio inform the book?

Phillips: Those years at member stations intensified my feeling that these people should be written about. The local reporter is almost as distant from the mothership of NPR and other nationally distributed programs as the listener. We know about these folks and hear some things from inside the industry, but we are like fans. These people are our personal heroes and our professional models. The public [believes] you must know these people, they must visit every other week, but it doesn't work like that.

Many listeners don't realize how public radio works. [Local stations] make their decisions independently and have their own staffs. Each station is independent and decides to spend, say, half a million dollars to subscribe to NPR. And to clarify: Public radio is not just NPR, but a constellation of organizations such as NPR, PRI [Public Radio International], and American Public Media. NPR is only programs produced by NPR.

RC: What traits did the people you profiled share?

Phillips: It's a very diverse group, but these individuals are committed in a highly visual age to the invisible. They have various ways of addressing that. Some got into it accidentally, some thought radio was the magic box from the time they were three — but no matter how they got there, this is what they do, and that's remarkable.

RC: Whom did you identify with most?

Phillips: I don't identify too much — that would require a bit of hubris on my part. These people have gone beyond what I could do as a reporter at this point. But I identified with a couple of them in particular. One was Jacki Lyden [NPR foreign correspondent] in terms of her successful efforts to balance her literary writing with a reporter's life. Noah Adams also balances his writing and reporting. I'm very impressed with that.

And I identified with the working mothers of young children. I have a



two-year-old who was zero to one-and-a-half while I wrote the book. Both the female hosts of "All Things Considered," Melissa Block and Michele Norris, are working moms, and their children are fairly young. As Michele Norris told me, "It's sometimes like juggling chainsaws."

RC: Did any of the people surprise you?

Phillips: No moments of profound surprise. Sometimes I talk about Renee Montagne ["Morning Edition" host.] She's very polished on the air, but when you talk to her, she's like your best girlfriend [with] a very uncontrolled, delightful patter — a wonderful friendliness. But the things she says are not light. She talks about her life, how she moved around a lot as a child, her work as a foreign correspondent. She's in Afghanistan now. She mainly covers hard news.

RC: Many of the people you talked with had odd ways into public radio.

Phillips: I think of someone like Kai Ryssdal [host of "Marketplace"] who'd been a Navy pilot — not the expected public radio background. He had a military career, then a state department career [in China], and wasn't sure what to do next, and ended up working at a bookstore before public radio.

RC: You have a special sense of Marian McPartland [host of "Piano Jazz"].

Phillips: She was my first interview. She was brought up in this upper middle-class, nose-in-the-air British family.

Living jazz legend Marian McPartland, host of Piano Jazz on NPR, is one of many on-air personalities interviewed in Julia Phillips' new book Public Radio.

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Continued from Previous Page

She'd had family members who'd been knighted. She studied classical piano eight hours a day, but she found what she really loved [when] a boyfriend introduced her to jazz. At the Guildhall School of Music — England's equivalent to Juilliard — she'd play Art Tatum or other jazz, and a professor would say, "Stop playing that trash." She went on the road with a pop music group, even though her father offered her a large sum of money not to. She played with the USO during World War II. The war deepened her focus on jazz, and she still hosts her jazz program.

RC: Did you have any favorite interviews?

Phillips: My interview with Bill McGlaughlin [host of "St. Paul Sunday"] was very special. It was one of the last for the book, and we had a nice connection. We walked near where he lives, by Riverside Park in New York on a beautiful day. The interview was expansive. I had only an hour with most people, but Bill was very generous with his time and we chatted less formally. I got the message that day: go for it, finish the book, you're on the right path.

RC: I love what you wrote about him: "I felt in the presence of that rarest of beings: a person for whom each day was an opportunity for delight."

Phillips: And that's what it felt like.

RC: Did you have any regrets in putting together the book?

Phillips: Yes. Finding out that Terry Gross [host of "Fresh Air"] didn't want to talk with me was tough. And Ira Glass [host of "This American Life"] didn't want to do an interview.

RC: Your book covers public radio for the past 35 years or so. Can you talk about the changes in that time?

Phillips: A lot of people talked about changes. When "All Things Considered" went on in 1971, it was a quirky place. They would fill the time with skits, contests, and then get the view of Joe Blow running a diner in Nebraska on Watergate. News was part of the program, but not the reason for the program. [The staff] wanted to be more creative, to go deeper. These days, the reason for "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered" is reporting the daily news, [with some] elements in a more creative direction. It's a huge change. You'll find early heroes of public radio like Susan Stamberg say, "I don't like breaking news. I like other stuff like talking to Joan Didion, or talking about the Cold War with a professor in an intellectual way." These days I doubt anyone hired by NPR would say, "I don't like breaking news," because they deal with it so much.

A positive change [is that] the non-fiction narrative form that emerged in the early days and faded out is now enjoying an exciting renaissance. There's a radio diaries project, what Ira Glass does, and even Fresh Air, which is very biographical and narrative.

RC: Public radio seems an oasis for substantive news, while commercial radio often avoids news, or gives it a right-wing spin.

Phillips: I'm uncomfortable with people seeing public radio [as] left-wing. Public radio believes in what news reporting is and will always be at its core — a liberal enterprise in the dictionary-definition sense: as truth seeking, as questioning power, as seeking maximum freedom of expression. Those are liberal ideals, and public radio has them. And it's relentlessly civil.

RC: What are your thoughts for those just getting started as reporters?

Phillips: I teach young people that a journalist has a wonderful permission slip to talk to strangers and ask them all kinds of questions. You want to be appropriate, but you can ask questions about what pertains to your writing. And work from that curious place inside yourself. I sometimes worry if I'll sound knowledgeable or sophisticated enough. In the end, it's not how the interviewer sounds. The most important thing is to be in touch with your curious side. If you really listen, and somebody says something interesting, you'll go, "That's interesting, tell me more about that."

RC: What do you tell students who want to work in public radio?

Phillips: Work for free. You intern. If you want to be on the air, find a way to get on the air. Convince people, practice, and do stories that are delivered professionally so they'll find a place on the air.

RC: And you're also an award-winning fiction writer?

Phillips: Thanks for asking about that. I get pleasure from it. I sometimes shop around short stories, but my time now has to be focused because I'm a mother. I also think non-fiction is more my form. My next book won't be about public radio, but it's too soon to discuss.

RC: Anything else you'd like to say.

Phillips: It was an honor to do the book. A real honor.

Robin Lindley is a Seattle attorney and writer who covers human rights, international affairs, law, medicine, politics, the media, and cultural affairs.

Jean of Interbay

She dreams of a fairy chief blowing smoke in her nostrils who stole away a child with the rumble of a steam-engine's belly. Breathing fire, she would listen to the heart-pounding cars raging in the sideyards, bellowing like mad bulls, the sounds of locking iron would ring like anvils up the hill from Interbay in her room, until her wood-frame house rattled and shook like the bone china. Meanwhile, the switches were being thrown as desperate men gamboled with freight trains in the dark, jumping track before railroad dicks could beat their knuckles raw.

In the morning, dawn would banish all those battles, instead harmless hobos appeared, knocking on the door, asking mama for handouts, or offering to chop firewood and do chores — all for a ready-made bed, with a wash waiting up the stairs. Staying on they'd swap a dinner for painting fences, then mark the spot for others, a little work and loose change came hard. Now her heroes are dead and gone, the burning locomotives retired. Sometimes she stirs in the night, dreaming of that other child.

—MICHAEL MAGEE

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Landscape Architect

The plot of *Girl in Landscape* advances as much through dialogue as description. But every word is positioned perfectly, thematically, often foreshadowing events to come.

Girl in Landscape
by Jonathan Lethem
Vintage Books, 1999
Paperback, 288 pages, \$13

By JILL OWENS
Powellsbooks.com

I've been a fan of Jonathan Lethem since his first book, *Gun, with Occasional Music*, which I read my first year in college. Its bizarre, noir sci-fi sensibility fit right into the context of Vonnegut, Chandler, and Pynchon books I was also devouring at the time. I've read most of what Lethem's written over the years, and I find myself a little surprised to declare that now, over a decade later, my favorite is *Girl in Landscape*. I'm not necessarily calling it his masterpiece, but it is the one I return to with the most pleasure year after year.

That could be in part because it's a quick read; it's a slim book, compared to his more recent work, at only 280 pages. Set during adolescence, *Girl in Landscape* wouldn't be out of place in the young adult section of a bookstore (it shares that similarity with A.M. Homes's *Jack*, another excellent novel with a teenage protagonist). But it's primarily because of its heroine, Pella Marsh, one of the most likable and realistic girls I've ever read about. If I ever have a daughter, I'd seriously consider naming her Pella.

Girl in Landscape might best be described as a surreal coming-of-age western set on another planet. After the sudden and tragic death of her mother, Pella Marsh, along with her two younger brothers and her father, a losing politician, have moved out of Brooklyn, which is quickly becoming almost uninhabitable, to another planet — the planet of the Archbuilders, where a few Earth settlers are going about the business of creating a kind of society in the desolate stretches of a wilderness long abandoned by most of its own kind.

Lethem's storytelling style here is minimal and sparse, like the landscape. The plot advances as much through dialogue as description. But every word is positioned perfectly, thematically, often foreshadowing events to come. His imagination is bountiful, charming, and symbolic: The Archbuilders themselves, with their impossible joints, fronds, and fur, wander the planet as the aimless remnants of a once-great society. Household deer, tiny creatures like mercurial, pesky dustballs, race the prairies and mate on windowsills. And the Archbuilder food, which the settlers try in good faith to adapt to, consists of different flavored "potatoes," from cake to ice to "fish," which contain "fish" that can be grown much like sea monkeys.

Pella is 13, and suffering the growing pangs of adolescence in radically bi-

zarre circumstances, but her stumbles into adulthood and responsibility and budding and often disturbing sexuality are underlying themes of the book beautifully elaborated and mirrored by the external environment the Marshes find themselves trying to cultivate. The fledgling pioneer society, too, is at a crucial stage of growth, and the power struggles, ostracism, and persecution of adults as well as children as outsiders or deviants hint of themes Lethem explores in later books. There is humor here as well as sorrow, and a playfulness with language that is a joy all its own: The Archbuilders love English and speak their poetic almost-nonsense to any and all who will listen ("Pella Marsh....Your name evokes," muses one; for themselves, they have chosen names like Hiding Kneel and Truth Renowned). Lethem's spare phrases and metaphors take on a resonance of their own, echoing against the past glories of the Archbuilders and past failures of the human race.

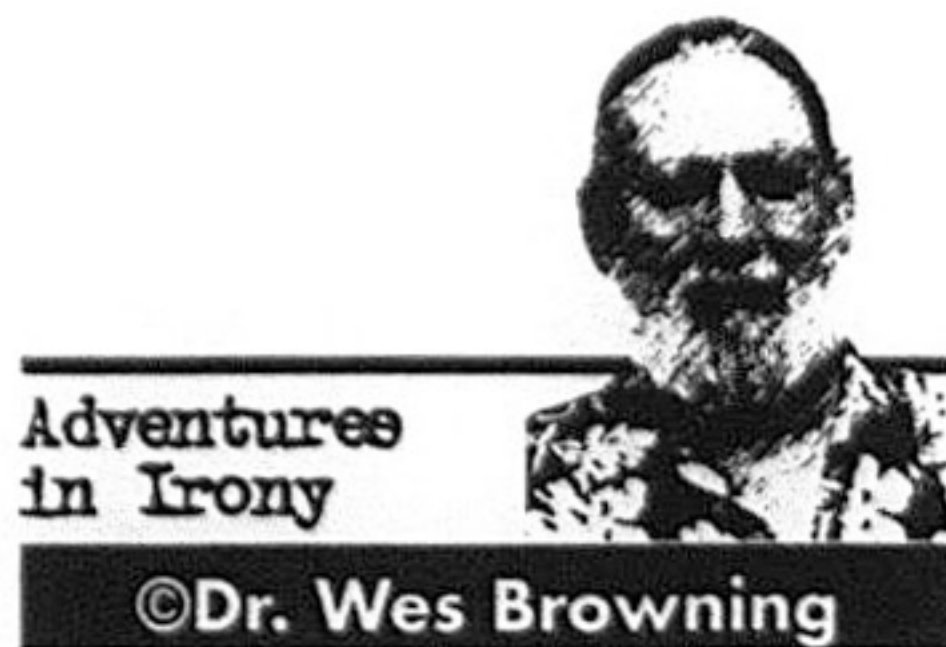
Girl in Landscape is, really, a perfect little book: innovative, intelligent, surprisingly moving (your heart will lurch a bit at passages you never saw coming), and utterly inventive, it also sheds new light on the loss of innocence and other sacrifices that come with becoming an adult. Whether or not you're a fan of Lethem's other work, this book should not be missed. ■

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the website of
Portland's Powell's
City of Books.

Take Time to Whittle

There once was a thinkin' time
When a person would whittle a piece of wood
Didn't make no difference whether
He made anything but a bunch of shavings
It was the whittling and the thinking
About the way things were and the way they should be
It was a time when other people respected us
For our ideals of liberty justice and freedom
Not feared us for what we might do
It's about time we turned our swords
Into pocket whittling knives again
And did a little more thinkin'
About where we're headed

—J. GLENN EVANS



Adventures
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning

Loads of Bon Mots

Welcome to a special non-topical version of these Adventures! Take this one internally and let it work globally!

There are a couple of reasons for going the non-topical route this week. One of them, which also may apply next week, is the little fact that even editors are human (!) and want Christmases and New Years off. So I have to turn this in several days before Christmas so that somebody else can have a Wonderful Life.

The other reason that this column is going to be utterly non-topical is that six days ago I fell off a rolling platform and got a significant "owie" involving pain in multiple places. I don't know about you, but for me, pain induces an impatience for the minutiae of the daily news and turns my thoughts to the universal and timeless. And, where my thoughts go, there I must Adventure also, or my thoughts and I would become separated. (Get it? Advent; advent-ure.)

So what I thought I'd do today is share some little sayings that I either have lived by for years or just made up recently out of crushing boredom.

"The essence of humor is clown squeezings." A lot of people misread this one as saying we should go squeeze a clown for jollies. That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying hurt begets humor. Some of these are metaphoric, damn it!

"A baby is nothing to sneeze at." I think that can't be said often enough.

"When life gives you lemons, pucker up." I know, it doesn't quite work, but the meaning comes across anyway, doesn't it?

"Honesty is the best front." This is one of my all time favorites. Remember, kids, don't waste your lies getting dimes and candies, cigarettes and kisses. Save your fibs for the big stuff, like escaping the death penalty, or truly worthwhile wide-awake debauchery that you'll be able to remember

when you're in the rest home while being "tidied up" by the nurse after your daily business.

"Politics" is never a dirty word." Sometimes politicians will counter critics by saying, "You're just playing politics." They want to make it a dirty word so they can have it all for themselves. They know that all politics is about the exercise of power, that's why they want to alienate you from the very word, so you can't exercise power that you are entitled to. So whenever someone, even be they on your own side, says someone else is just playing politics, you should make vigorous expressions of disapproval.

"If you let a wild pig eat off your ass, it's your fault when he bites it." That was the cleaned-up version. At the moment I'm imagining Karl Rove as the pig, but it could be anybody. "Codependence kills," is another one in the same vein.

"Never do anything you would be ashamed of. First, stop feeling you should be ashamed of it. Then do it." Some of these are just plain obvious.

"When a 250-pound man gives the seat next to me to a 90-pound woman, and the bus slams to a halt, the 250-pound man will collide with my face." I learned this one long before Homelessness Czar Philip Mangano cooked up the whole "house the chronically homeless first" line he's been selling. I still would add to it, though: "Better yet, buy bigger busses, seat everybody."

"Beating your neighbor's spouse doesn't show how much you love your own." These days, what passes for patriotism is really national chauvinism. No one loves any one country who doesn't first love humanity, as a whole.

"Language matters." Sticks and stones may break my bones, but the constant abuse of language, especially by authorities, is making slaves out of us all.

This one's just for me: "My mind is like a Border Collie, it needs to drive sheep." While you think about that, I'll get next week's column ready.

Have a Happy, and may Bono be pleased with the New Year. ■



Mon., Nov. 13, 9 a.m., Second Ave. Ext S., Homeless Shelter.

A case number was generated for the subject, a transient Black male aged 48, for a failure to register case. Further investigation showed that the subject has made reasonable attempts to register — when he was not in jail. Between the dates of March 3, 2003, and present, subject has been returned to jail five times. When he was released subject has signed the weekly homeless register most of the time, missing only three weeks. Officer states that three weeks does not constitute a failure-to-register case, and that no further investigation was necessary.

Fri., Dec. 8, 12:05 p.m., Pioneer Square Park.

Suspect, a transient white female aged 33, was observed sitting on a bench in Pioneer Square Park drinking from a 16-oz. can of Natural Ice beer. Officer contacted the suspect and issued her a one-year Parks Exclusion ban. He was aware that she has prior Parks Exclusions and verified this via radio. Suspect was then arrested and booked into King County Jail for Trespass in the Parks.

Fri., Dec. 8, 3:23 p.m., Fifth Ave. S. and S. Main St.

A transient Black male was contacted on the corner of Fifth and Main. He was known to the officer from previous contacts, and was known to be on Stay Out of Drug Areas (SODA) Zone 2 supervision. Fifth and Main is within Seattle Police SODA Zone 2. The order was verified and found to be current and suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail for violation of SODA order.

Fri., Dec. 8, 4:45 p.m., Third Ave., Angeline's Women's Shelter.

Officers were dispatched to a call of an assault at Angeline's Women's Shelter and arrived and spoke to the victim, a transient Black female aged 42. She stated that the assault had happened earlier that day in front of the shelter. She stated that a woman she knows from the shelter walked up behind her and hit her on the right side of the face with a closed fist. Victim stated she did not know why suspect had hit her but believed she may have mental problems. Suspect had returned to the shelter at 6:45 p.m. and was trying to argue with her again. Suspect had left the area by the time officers arrived. Officer told victim he would document the assault and left her with a case number.

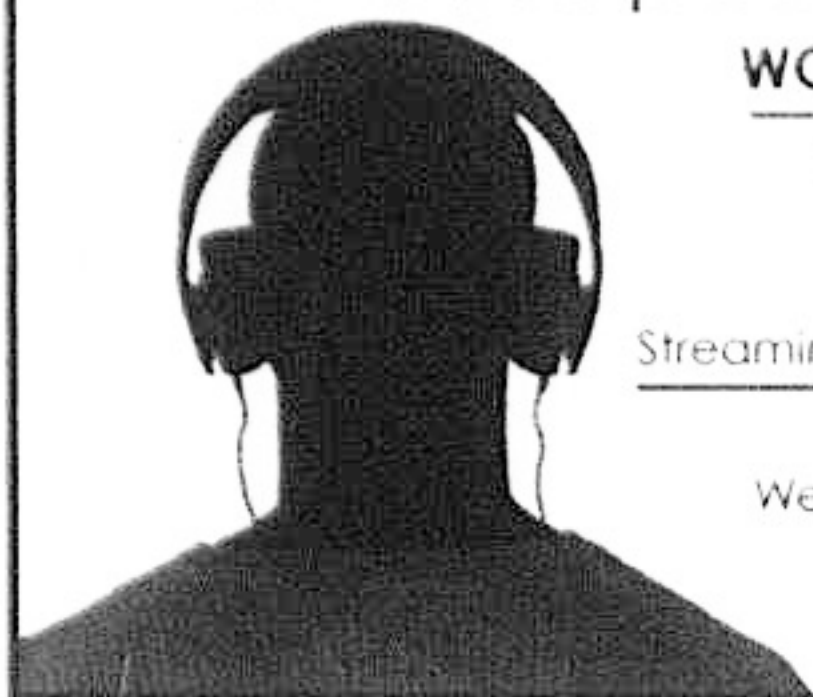
Old Man

In the bathroom
at the Barnes and Noble
an old man
is putting yellow ointment
on his mouthful
of sores. He keeps saying
"fuck-fuck-fuck"
because of the pain.

—CASEY FULLER

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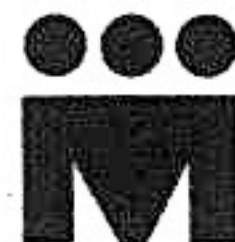
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THE MILLIONAIR CLUB CHARITY

AFRICA, Continued from Page 4

for Scotland. Along with providing
 employment, the INSP is seeking to
 establish a free press in countries that
 lack an independent media.

"I think that INSP has an important
 role to play here in helping to make
 individual street papers as strong and
 effective as possible. For example,
 if we help to start up a street paper
 in Kenya, we will have assisted the
 employment of, say, 100 people within
 one year, which has an indirect impact
 on 500 other people by providing food
 and shelter for families."

Maclean recently visited Kenya's
 Kibera slum, one of the biggest in Af-
 rica with 800,000 people living in mud
 huts with corrugated iron roofs and
 no running water or electricity. There,
 she met Cosmas, a Kibera resident
 who coordinates youth projects and
 works part-time, earning \$22 a month.
 Half of that goes to rent. Cosmas will
 be running the vendor services at the
 new street paper.

"It is young people of Kibera who
 will be the future vendors of the
 street paper," said Maclean. "There is
 obviously dire poverty there and high
 levels of unemployment and crime.
 However, what I noticed was that
 there is also a great eagerness to take
 part in entrepreneurial projects and a
 huge desire to have the opportunity
 to improve their lives and support
 themselves and their families."

The large number of inquiries for start-
 ing new papers and the dire need
 for aid across the continent made
 Africa an obvious focus for the INSP.
 But for Mel Young, one of the found-
 ing organizers of the INSP and its
 honorary president, Africa is not
 a special case in the sense that the
 poorest and home-
 less of all nations
 need a new solu-
 tion.

"I don't like
 the way Africa

is suddenly being singled out by the
 rest of the world as a 'disaster' area,"
 Young says. "The people there are bril-
 liant and have an amazing culture and
 history. Simply, there aren't so many
 street papers in Africa, and if they can
 help provide a solution for homeless
 people, then of course we should help
 them publish them."

Clement Njoroge is a former resident
 of the Kibera slum who today is leading
 a team of 10 people in Nairobi in training
 about 30 vendors from the Kenyan slums
 in basic marketing, public relations and
 other skills needed to run a newspaper.

Njoroge plans to release the innau-
 gural issue of *The Big Issue Kenya* in
 January to coincide with the World
 Social Forum to be held in Nairobi.

Regardless of language or geogra-
 phy, all street newspapers are built on
 the shared concerns of cultures across
 the globe.

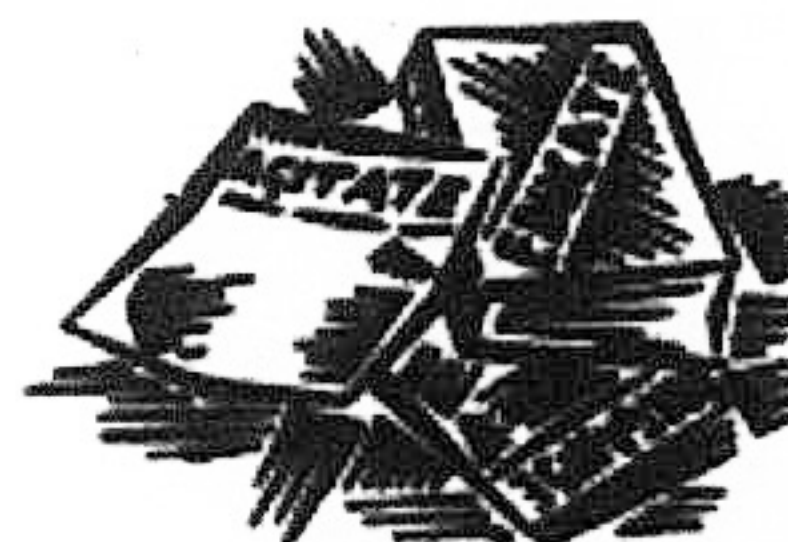
"Some of the issues have been hi-
 jacked by politicians, and the media has
 not been diligent enough to dig deeper
 and get to the root of the matter," Njoroge
 says of Kenya, but could just as easily
 be speaking about the United States or
 elsewhere. "The paper will strive to thor-
 oughly investigate issues and bring them
 to the attention of the general public,
 government, so that everyone can make
 an informed opinion." ■

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 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.

Opportunity

The Cycle of Life: Bald Eagles and the Salmon of
 the Skagit River celebrates the migration of eagles
 from Canada to the San Juan Islands. Sat. Jan. 6,
 Tickets \$75, on the Skagit River. Info: (360)856-
 5700, www.ncascades.org

Meeting for organization, outreach, and
 poster to prepare for the Martin Luther King
 Celebration. Saturday, Jan. 6. 10 a.m., CAMP, 722
 18th Ave. Info: dohr@earthlink.net

My Fat Cat Designs - Native American-Bead
 Designs. Hand Crafted Bracelets and Earrings.
 By artist Faith Ann Trust (vendor #3231). Call
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Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Until Sunday 12/31

The Biographical Landscape: The Photography of Stephen Shore, 1968-1993 presents 120 rarely-exhibited color prints from one of the most influential American photographers. The exhibition shows the evolution of Shore's art, obsessive daily journals, and an in-depth look into his groundbreaking use of large format photography. Tickets \$10. Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Thursday 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Henry Art Gallery, 4100 15th Ave NE.

Sunday 12/31

Supported by a tapestry of ancient and modern tribal music, Gypsie Nation dances are freestyle participatory rituals intended to bring healing and honor ancestral spirits and the Earth. Tickets \$9. 11 a.m., Ravenna-Eckstein Community Center, 6535 Ravenna Ave. NE

Thursday 1/4

Acclaimed musician Arlie Neskahi merges his vocal masterpieces and flute playing with guitar and keyboards for a sound that soars. Neskahi, a storyteller and lecturer on Native American culture and spirituality, has won many music awards and commissions. Noon, Seattle City Hall and Gallery, 600 Fourth Ave., level two.

The Social Security Coalition meets to discuss the current situation of Social Security, the attacks against it, and the plans for action. 9 a.m., Washington Association of Churches, 419 Occidental Ave. S.

Friday 1/5

Renowned author and media critic John Nichols wrote the book *The Genius of Impeachment*, a clear and fervent explanation for the case against Bush and his administration. The Meaningful Movies presents the film *Impeach Bush and Cheney* which discusses Nichols' words and shows him before the November 2006 election urging friends and activists that the real political work must begin on the day of the election. 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. N.

Sure of an imminent nuclear war between the US and the Soviet Union, Anna Johnson moved down under and found herself in a community of other Americans who had escaped as well.

Her book, *Australia Years: The Life of a Nuclear Migrant*, is a courageous and personal account of a neglected period in our history. 7:30 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S Main St.

Both Maine and Arizona have had publicly financed elections, resulting in tighter races with more ethnic minority and women as candidates. Washington Public Campaigns, which was founded to promote the passage of legislation establishing public financing

of political campaigns, presents the Clean Election Forum. David Sirota, author of *Hostile Takeover: How Big Business Bought Our Government and How to Take It Back*, joins legislators from Washington, Maine, and Arizona in a discussion of the benefits and road to implementation. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Saturday 1/6

Marc Singer's multi-award winning film *Dark Days* depicts a

community of homeless people who live in an abandoned train tunnel beneath Manhattan. Singer lived with the community for two years in order to document the inner workings of their lives: they scavenge, build sturdy one-room shacks, have pets, cook, and chat. But during filming, Amtrak delivers a 30-day eviction notice. 7 p.m., Queen Anne United Methodist Church, 1606 Fifth Ave. W.

A winter blizzard across Montana strands William in a dark and empty hotel in Nick Stroke's *Whiteout: A Play in One Act*. Donation \$5. 7:30 p.m., Richard Hugo House, 1634 11th Ave.

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

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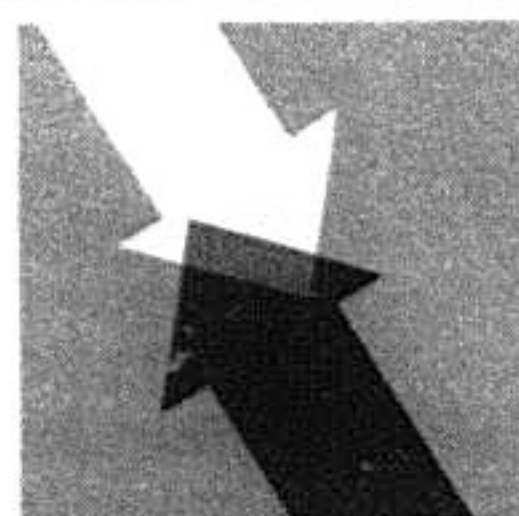
I had a wonderful visit this morning. A couple, I'll call them Dave and Daisy, dropped in to see me with a Christmas gift for my twin girls, who will soon, amazingly, be 4. They gave me two beautifully embroidered jeans jackets that their own daughter had outgrown. Daisy made them herself.

Their stories have been printed here before, in their own words, but it's worth retelling.

When I met Daisy more than 10 years ago, she was stripping in nightclubs, and neither she nor Dave were doing so well. She had moved through dependence on prescription painkillers to heroin addiction, and Dave, not one to be left out, had joined her. Selling *Real Change* got Daisy out of the nightclubs and was an esteem booster for both of them. They tried to kick the heroin time and again but always relapsed. Those of you who have been through this — either first or secondhand — know how heartbreaking this can be.

Then came the right motivation. A beautiful baby. The daughter went to Daisy's out-of-state mom, and the two of them tried yet again to get clean. This time they made it.

The daughter's 6 and has been with mom and dad for more than four years. They're a happy, normal family. Dave and Daisy are a huge inspiration to me and a reminder to never give up on anyone.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Olympia 2007: Get down there

Issue: There are lots of groups hosting days for citizens to meet with their elected officials. Most groups will provide a legislative briefing, training for talking with your legislators, and sometimes even lunch! Your job is to pick an issue you care about and to join in on the fun.

Preliminary Lobby Days in Olympia, 2007

(additional dates will be added throughout the 2007 Session)

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Jan. 15 | Statewide Poverty Action Day (Real Change is a co-sponsor) contact: marcy@povertyaction.org . |
| Jan. 15 | National Alliance on Mental Illness Day; contact director@namigreaterseattle.org . |
| Jan. 19 | League of Women Voters Day; contact gokar1@comcast.net . |
| Jan. 25 | WA State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Lobby Day; contact action@wscadv.org . |
| Jan. 29 | Native American Lobby Day; contact icwourstories@yahoo.com . |
| Jan. 31 | Developmental Disabilities Advocacy Day; http://www.arcwa.org/advocacy_day.htm |
| Feb. 1 | Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day; contact ben@wliha.org . |
| Feb. 5 | Minority Executive Director Coalition's Unity Day; contact delias-garcia@medcofkc.org . |
| Feb. 6 | Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs; contact policy@wscap.org . |
| Feb. 9 | ASK-Y: Youth Advocacy Day; contact Jim@mockingbirdsociety.org . |
| Feb. 12 | Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice Lobby Day; contact: alissahaslami@prochoicewashington.org . |
| Feb. 12 | African American Legislative Day, contact rjenkins@caa.wa.gov . |
| Feb. 13 | Asian/Pacific American Legislative Day; contact dianen@acrs.org . |
| Feb. 13 | American Civil Liberties Union — ACLU — Day; contact aguiar@aclu-wa.org . |
| Feb. 13 | Community Health Network of Washington, and the Washington Association of Community & Migrant Health Centers; contact Rebecca.Kavoussi@chnwa.org and mbebozer@wacmhc.org . |
| Feb. 14 | Earth Ministry; contact LeeAnne@earthministry.org . |
| Feb. 14 | Senior Citizens' Lobby Day; contact Seniorlobby@qwest.net . |
| Feb. 19 | Have A Heart for Children Day; contact jon@childrensalliance.org . |
| Feb. 19 | Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition; contact wrocadvocate@wroc.org . |
| Feb. 21 | LifeLong AIDS Alliance — AIDS Awareness & Action Day; contact aniab@lla.org . |
| Feb. 21 | Hispanic/Latino(a) Legislative Day; contact wastatehld@yahoo.com . |
| Feb. 22 | Catholic Advocacy Day, contact DonnaChris@aol.com . |
| Feb. 26 | Washington Community Action Network; contact maru@washingtoncan.org . |
| Feb. 26 | LGBT Equality Day 2007; contact pvyoby@religiouscoalition-wa.org . |
| 2/27 | Lutheran Advocacy Day; contact paul.benz@lsswi.org . |
| 3/21 | Children's Home Society Day; contact normaw@chs-wa.org . |

From a list prepared by Nancy Amidei (amidei@u.washington.edu) for the Civic Engagement Project.

ACTU, Continued from Page 1

How drastic? That depends on where the site is located. Here in Seattle, where eight studies are currently in progress, close to 30 percent of the site's federal funding could be slashed. The news is no less grim in other places. Twelve national sites stand to lose 100 percent of the dollars that have usually been supplied to them by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the federal organization responsible for funneling dollars into ACTU bank accounts nationwide. The remaining sites could experience funding slashes ranging from 20 to 50 percent.

"But I don't think anyone actually knows for sure," says Illinois resident Eric Lawrence, co-chair of Network Community Advisory Board (NCAB), a volunteer resource group that advises the AIDS Clinical Trials Group, the umbrella organization under which all national ACTU sites sit.

In a normal year, Lawrence estimates that national ACTUs recruit 3,000 people to take part in studies. (That figure does not necessarily represent new clients, since a person may be involved in one study and then join a second.) With budget cuts, he believes all sites might be able to gather 1,000 clients annually. With nearly 60 annual trials going on at sites nationwide, funding cuts could slash the number of newly introduced trials to 10 a year, he says. "It's a giant step backward in clinical research," says Lawrence.

The true size of that backward step is hard to ascertain, as that information

is lodged somewhere in the quagmire of next year's federal budget process. The budget's true dollar figure won't be determined until Congress reconvenes in January, though the full process could take months to hash out. But in order to allow the government to continue on when the last strains of Auld Lang Syne fade, Congress approved a continuing resolution. That resolution allows for funding at the current year's level for most government entities.

Robert Levaro, a Phoenix-based NCAB member, says the continuing resolution forbids those at the ACTG and national ACTUs from speaking out about the potential cuts, as it can be viewed as lobbying for federal dollars. "What we can do as volunteers and citizens is make the broader community aware of the issue," says Levaro. "We're free agents."

Indeed, officials at the local ACTU are keeping mum. Phone calls placed to a number of national sites facing full de-funding went unreturned. An email from the ACTG Operations Center states that, until grant awards announcements are made, "the ACTG is unable to comment on this issue."

Which is why, says Lawrence, the NCAB is speaking up. Believing medical science to be the pathway to conquering HIV, Lawrence sees the proposed cuts as a severe strike to the health and well-being of thousands of people: "It could be a matter of life or death." ■

CHILDREN, Continued from Page 1

state of Sonora. "Now they are sending for their children to come and join them, and they obviously don't know the risks they are exposing them to."

Adrian set out with a 16-year-old cousin on an improvised journey through deserts where security has been increasingly tightened in recent months, after President George W. Bush ordered 6,000 National Guard troops to the border in June.

The majority are taken north by professional guides or "coyotes," in a booming child smuggling trade where parents pay hefty fees of \$3,000 to \$5,000 to be reunited with their children — twice the amount charged for adults — welfare workers say.

"They treat them like merchandise, and it's very profitable," Valdes said.

For the children, many of whom have a limited sense of the world they are moving through, the journey to U.S. cities sometimes thousands of miles away is a frightening and bewildering experience.

"I don't know the name of the city my mother lives in in the United States, and I didn't know the men who came to my grandmother's house to collect me," said Blanca Isela Tejada, a tiny 13-year-old from Sonora.

"The worst thing was the scorpions," she said, shuddering at the memory of a

two-day trek over the desert that ended in repatriation by the Border Patrol.

More than 400 people died crossing over the border last year, most of heat exhaustion or drowning. While no figures were available for children perishing on the journey, Mexican and U.S. officials say the hazards are great.

In California, U.S. Customs and Border Protection inspectors have found youngsters crammed into airless hideaways cut into car gas tanks they call "coffin compartments," and have charged coyotes with endangerment.

In Arizona, where desert temperatures soar to above 120 degrees in summer and dip to below freezing in winter, U.S. Border Patrol agents have found children as young as a few months left out in the wilds by their guides.

Welfare workers in Nogales say youngsters also face other dangers from coyotes, including sexual abuse. One recent case involved a 14-year-old girl told by a smuggler that sex was part of the package for taking her north to join her parents.

But with border security on the rise as ever more technology, fencing, and agents are being deployed, authorities fear the situation is here to stay.

"It's lamentable," said Valdes. "But every indication is that the phenomenon is growing." ■

Story courtesy of Reuters. ©Street News Service: www.street-papers.org.

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