

**Otherworldly:** Alan Lightman's diffident hero wonders if what he's seeing in a family-run funeral home is real...p.8

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**REAL CHANGE**

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# City Plans Park Cams

**Video cameras, like the one to the left, will be placed in four Seattle parks**—though they don't fight crime, say privacy advocates...see page 5

**"If you're a drug dealer or a prostitute, you just move somewhere outside the camera range,"** says the ACLU's Doug Honig.

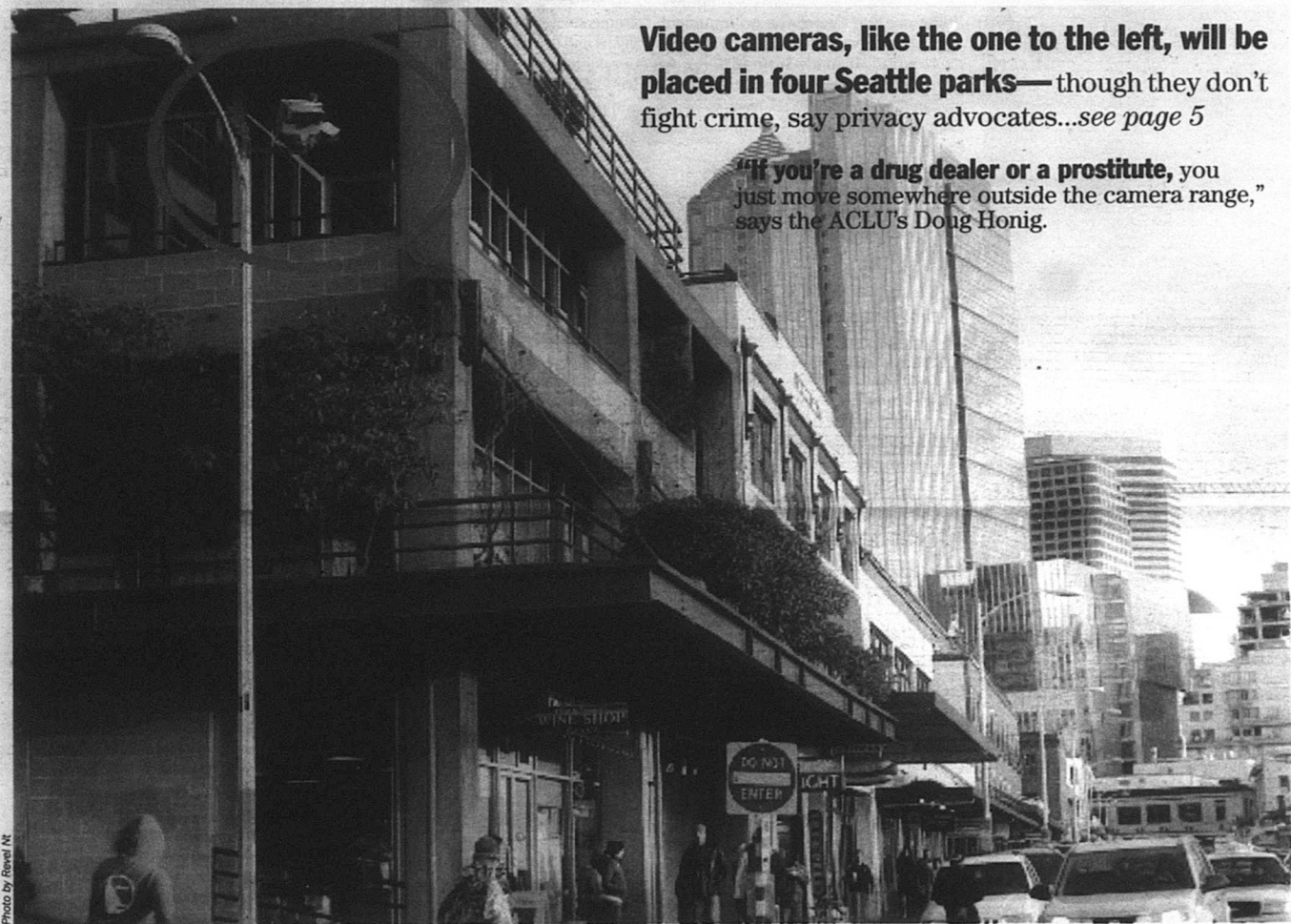


Photo by Ravel NT

## An Open Secret

**Robert Kuttner lays bare the political agenda** that could be fashioned out of most Americans quiet anxieties...see page 7.

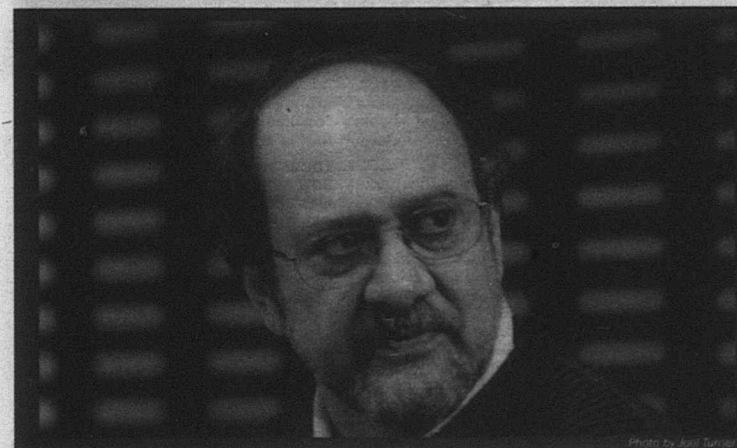


Photo by Axel Turner

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

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

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The word is everywhere. How do we make it happen?

## Change Comes through Action

By GLEN MILNER, Guest Writer

If we have learned anything in the past five years, it should be that all the information and education on an issue has little purpose without a sustainable means for change.

When most citizens in the U.S. learned the war on Iraq was started without justification, that there was no imminent threat to our nation, or weapons of mass destruction, it made little difference. Information alone was not enough to end an illegal war or for citizens to make their political leaders accountable for their actions.

In 2007, Democrats refused to honor a mandate by voters to end the war on Iraq. They instead sought the middle ground of the electorate by continuing to fund the war while speaking against it.

Few bother to question the early allocation of over \$700 billion for the U.S. military. Fewer still question the threat or use of military force as a way to keep the peace.

As another election cycle begins, the noise of partisan politics drowns out our ability for thought or constructive action. Even progressive news sources report on each new tick in the polls, or

**Nonviolent activists precipitate change because people are inspired by their candor, discipline, integrity, courage, and determination, and are thus inclined to identify with them.**

new strategies for candidates, as though any of it matters.

Meanwhile, the anti-war movement in the U.S. is proclaimed irrelevant by many in the mainstream media. Many nonviolent activists involved in anti-corporate, envi-

ronmental, and animal rights movements are portrayed as terrorists.

How do activists work against the tide of media misinformation and political stagnation to create the future they want to live in?

One way is by disconnecting from governmental agencies and organizations that fail us and leave us demoralized. Why give our energies to a political machine when we can work together toward our own common goal?

Why should we, for example, willingly pay taxes to a system that is turned against us and promotes the use of violence in any dispute? Instead, we may join those who openly declare their intentions to withhold payment while redirecting their tax dollars to better use.

Nonviolent direct action modeled by Henry David Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is based upon the principle that government cannot exist without the consent and cooperation of its citizens. Nonviolence tells us that citizens have a moral obligation to act on their conscience, and that dissent without action is consent.

One common misconception of nonviolent direct action is that when used, the opponent will also refrain from violence. Although casualties and destruction are comparatively much lower with nonviolent struggle, the real power of nonviolent direct action is that it brings the inherent violence and injustice of systems in power to the surface for all to see.

Central to the thinking of Martin Luther King was the concept of an inclusive society, referred to as "the Beloved Community." In one of his first published articles he stated that the purpose of the Montgomery bus boycott "is reconciliation, ... redemption, the creation of the beloved community." For Dr. King, it followed that the liberation of Black people would also mean the emancipation of white people. To end our nation's wars abroad would also serve to uplift ourselves from our own economic and moral demise.

"In a real sense," Dr. King wrote, "all life is interrelated. ... Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."

Nonviolent direct action is not merely a stagnant belief system, but a force to be continually explored. Mahatma Gandhi so named his autobiography *My Experiments with Truth*.

Nonviolence is the unshakable belief, as Gandhi said, that everyone has a piece of the truth. We must maintain this belief at all times. When we act with truth and

**Citizens have a moral obligation to act on their conscience; dissent without action is consent.**

conviction, ordinary people can make extraordinary sacrifices and sometimes reach their goals.

Nonviolent action works because of its capacity to create a favorable political atmosphere by building trust through honesty, creating a non-threatening physical environment, and altering the psychological conditions that make people resist new ideas. Nonviolent activists precipitate change because people are inspired by their candor, discipline, integrity, courage, and determination, and are thus inclined to identify with them. Moreover, as an extension of this, they are inclined to act in solidarity.

In the end, our ability to inspire one another is what will save us. Our ability to persevere and to sacrifice serves as an inspiration to one another. In doing so, we support one another in our efforts to build a sustainable means for change. ■

Glen Milner, lives in Seattle and is a member of Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action in Poulsbo, Washington. The next nonviolent direct action at the Trident submarine base at Bangor will be on Jan. 19, 2008, in honor of Dr. King. For more information, please visit [www.gzcenter.org](http://www.gzcenter.org).



**The Mayor's new policy on homeless clearances has been released, and there's only one way to say this. It's an atrocity, pure**

and simple.

From the moment the Mayor's office was called on their secret campsite clearance policy last October, their response has been characterized by contempt for process, continued secrecy, and commitment to aggressive clearances. Meanwhile, they fed a mostly willing media scare stories about homeless criminality to stigmatize and smear this city's most vulnerable.

## Director's Corner

Existing laws are sufficient to identify and prosecute criminal behavior that truly poses a public threat. This policy isn't about that. This is about eliminating visible poverty through a systematic campaign of harassment and criminalization.

The Mayor's policy extends the parks exclusion ordinance — which was designed as a tool to ensure that public parks remain family-friendly — to all public property throughout the city, no matter how urban or remote. Groundwork is laid to deputize any city department or their delegated authority with the power to issue progressively onerous citations based on no more than suspicion of illegal activity, which is defined to include sleeping.

Homeless advocates were promised inclusion in the drafting of a "consistent

and compassionate" city policy toward homeless campers. Instead, we were stonewalled and offered two weeks' "comment period" on a draft document that is anything but compassionate.

There was no legislative process or any other chance for the public deliberation that a policy this sweeping properly deserves.

A public hearing has been scheduled for Jan. 28, 6-7:30 p.m., at the Seattle Center's Rainier Room. While it is critical to pack this hearing, nobody should be under the illusion that this alone is going to stop this mayor. We need to aggressively and creatively fight back. Call 441-3247 ext. 202 or email [organizer@realchangenews.org](mailto:organizer@realchangenews.org) for more information.

## Just Heard...

### "Housing First" works

It turns out that it costs taxpayers less to help people than to leave them on the street, particularly if they're alcoholics or have mental or physical disabilities.

That's the upshot of statistics released last week by the mayor's office. They show that, in a year's time, two Seattle-funded buildings with "housing first" programs saved taxpayers \$3.2 million in visits that their residents had made to the emergency room, jail and sobering center in the year before moving in.

Housing First is a model that puts social services on site with housing for the chronically homeless. The 75 residents at 1811 Eastlake, a building that opened to controversy in 2005 for allowing people to drink, cut their visits to Harborview Medical Center by a third and their jail bookings by half, saving \$1.7 million in services.

At Plymouth on Stewart, 20 residents who get services through the building's "Begin at Home" program cut their stays at Harborview 80 percent and their jail bookings by half, saving \$1.5 million. And residents at both buildings saw their days at the sobering center drop to nearly zero.

### Getting the lead out

If at first you bungle communicating, try, try again.

That's what the Seattle Housing Authority will be doing Jan. 17 during a resident meeting at NewHolly to discuss a report of lead in tenants' and homeowners' water at the mixed-income community built by SHA.

SHA spokesperson Virginia Felton says it's a misunderstanding that started in 2006, when the housing authority got a report from an engineer who was hired to investigate why NewHolly's water heating system was leaking. The engineer did some water testing, she says, and wrote a report noting he'd discovered lead in one unit.

Subsequent testing of 19 units came up clean, Felton says. But when members of the NewHolly Homeowners Association finally got the engineer's original report in November, six months after asking for it, they went to the media, creating a scare.

"It's fair to say that we haven't done a good job of communicating with them and we understand that," says Felton, who hopes the meeting will help remedy the situation. It's set for Jan. 17, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at NewHolly Hall, 7054 32nd Ave. S., Seattle.

—Cydney Gillis

what are you doing for Martin Luther King Jr. Day?

## THE PEOPLE'S SUMMIT & MARCH

January 21st  
march & rally  
at 11 am  
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meet at:  
St. John's Episcopal Church  
114 20th Ave SE  
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ready to march

to register for  
the full day

visit the Real Change website  
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Join Real Change for a march on the state capitol and a day of lobbying our law makers to end poverty and provide housing for everyone

### DAY'S EVENTS

8:45 am: Summit Registration at St. John's Episcopal Church

9:00-11:00 am: Issue Briefing and advocacy training

11:00 am: March from St. John's to the Capitol

12:15 pm: lunch / town hall

12:30-3:30 pm: Legislative visits and skill building workshops



for more information or to register contact Rachael: [organizer@realchangenews.org](mailto:organizer@realchangenews.org) / 206-441-3247 x 201

As city releases broad rules to justify the removal of people and belongings, records reveal that sweeps have continued unchecked

## City "responding as usual" to complaints against homeless

By ADAM HYLIA, Editor

When *Real Change* first reported in October that the city had embarked on a campaign of "proactive" sweeps to remove homeless people and their belongings from underpasses and greenbelts, the city publicly backtracked, saying it would proceed with clearing encampments only on a "case by case" basis.

Public records obtained last week show that, behind the scenes, the encampment clearances went on as usual.

Nine days after Human Services Department director Patricia McInturf publicly told councilmembers that city staff were backing off on their "proactive" policy, which included posting warning notices that featured a disconnected phone number ["Swept but still dirty," Oct. 31] mayor's staff distributed a new, updated clearance notice with an up-to-date number.

Explaining the new notice to fellow staff in an email Dec. 11, the mayor's human services manager Marilyn Littlejohn wrote that "We are in interim mode with respect to cleaning encampments.... [E]ach situation will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Whether we do a cleanup will depend on the urgency of the problem and the location of the encampment." Littlejohn and her cohort in the mayor's office, Julien Loh, were to do the evaluating.

Deputy mayor Tim Ceis, however, had other ideas. In an emailed reply the same day, Customer Service Bureau manager Darby DuComb set the record straight.

"TC [Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis] wants us to respond to all cleanups requested by anyone from within the city or from external customers. We are NOT reviewing them on a case-by-case basis, we are responding as usual."

The Customer Service Bureau typically receives complaints about homeless people over the phone at 206-684-CITY.

DuComb told *Real Change* that it "wasn't workable" to have Loh and Littlejohn screening each new complaint. "If we were getting complaints, we were supposed to respond to them," she says.

And while the city's notices — printed in bold "NOTICE AND ORDER TO REMOVE" — are newly printed and being

distributed whenever the city sweeps an area, they feature a number that connects to the Citizens Service Bureau — not the city- and state-subsidized social service resources line, 2-1-1.

"If you need assistance in relocation call the Customer Service Bureau for assistance," the notice says in capital letters.

Kathleen Southwick, director of the Crisis Clinic, asked the city not to include 2-1-1 on the notices. "If you put our number on the sign, [homeless people] will just be mad at us and we won't be able to help find their stuff and most likely won't be able to help find them shelter," she wrote in a Nov. 13 email to DuComb, who was soliciting her input on a draft protocol. "They probably know there isn't shelter available, which is why they are camping out!"

Southwick says printing signs listing her agency's 2-1-1 phone number is helpful neither to her volunteer call staff nor the homeless people who are being uprooted from an area.

"The reason people are camping is because there is no shelter, not because they don't know about shelter," she says.

DuComb says there's no reason her bureau can't respond to calls from those subject to the city's sweeps. "We help homeless people all the time get connected to services," she says. "It depends on the nature of the call."

City officials publicly released a draft rule guiding the city's sweeps of homeless people from urban campsites Jan. 10. The new rule would sanction the removal of homeless people and their possessions from public property — not just in parks or under bridges, but on any city-owned or -managed land, including sidewalks or alleys.

The draft rule says that the city will post notices in any area that it plans to clear out at least 48 hours beforehand. Possessions found there by work crews will be stored for later retrieval — if they are marked with "identifying information and... not contaminated, illegal, or hazardous." City or state

## Educators' summit in Des Moines

## White House stumps for more student drug testing

By CYDNEY GILLIS,  
Staff Reporter

**B**efore they're called into the office, before they're handed a cup to urinate in, most high school students in Lake Stevens, Washington, first have to get a bar code assigned to them like the ones used on boxes of cereal or other products.

That way, when the school draws lots for who to test for drugs — a small group of students who take part in sports, band, or any other activity at the town's two high schools is chosen three times a year — the identity of those selected is protected.

The testing, which started in 2006, is private, deters drug use, and is part

of a larger program that refers kids to treatment, says superintendent David Burgess, who explains that the district felt it had to do something to combat its drug problem in north Snohomish County.

It's a decision that a growing number of schools are making, many with aid from the Bush Administration and drug-testing grants like the one Lake Stevens got. The grants, along with how to start a program, will be the focus of a summit on random student drug testing being held Jan. 17 in Des Moines and Jan. 18 in Pasco for school district officials from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

The president's Office of National Drug Control Policy has put on the event across the nation since 2002, when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld drug testing for students involved in extracurricular school activities — the rationale being that sports, band, or drama are privileges that a student can choose to give up

**The test currently screens for marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine, barbiturates and amphetamines, along with steroids — a new addition this year.**

rather than submit to a test.

Bertha Madras, ONDCP's deputy director for demand reduction, says her office was invited to put on the event by the two large educational service districts that include schools in Seattle, Tacoma, and Olympia. But a representative from the Puget Sound Educational Service District says that's not the case.

"The summits were initiated by ONDCP," says Michele Haymond, coordinator for the Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities program in the Puget Sound district. "Three of us

Traces of drugs found in students' urine are grounds for suspension at high schools in Lake Stevens. The ACLU is fighting drug screening at two other Washington schools. Photo by Joshua Huston

were asked by ONDCP to assist in the endeavor of helping with the summit."

Haymond says the daylong event, which is expected to draw about 100 participants, is an informational session where participants can learn about drug testing programs and how to pursue drug-testing grants from the Department of Education. The three-year grants run roughly \$150,000 a year, she says.

Since the granting started in 2003, Madras says, schools have received about \$35 million to fund drug tests. To get the money, they take part in a student assistance program that provides referral to treatment. More than 1,000 schools nationwide have adopted drug-testing, she says, with about half getting the federal funding.

That includes the two high schools and one alternative school in the Lake Stevens district, which Burgess says got \$100,000 a year to start its program. The money pays for 600 tests a year at \$30 each (or \$18,000), plus the cost of an assessment and referral program.

After being called to an office, he says, a student gets a cup from a contracted lab technician, goes to the restroom and then returns the cup to the technician. The test currently screens for marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine, barbiturates and amphetamines, along with steroids — a new addition this year.

Out of Lake Stevens' 2,200 high schoolers (not all of whom participate in activities), Burgess says about five students have come up positive and temporarily been kicked out of an activity. But, generally, he says, students see it as a positive that the school is trying to chase drugs off campus.

The test results aren't shared with parents, Burgess says — and, back in 2006, few parents objected to the program.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Washington, however, is fighting blanket drug testing, arguing in two lawsuits that the state constitution requires individual



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See DRUGS, Continued on Page 6

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Keeping an eye on crime — or citizens?

## City to install surveillance cameras at Capitol Hill, downtown parks

By CYDNEY GILLIS,  
Staff Reporter

**F**irst came the automated snapshots at traffic lights. Now the City of Seattle is moving to install surveillance cameras in four of its public parks.

The city plans to install one stationary camera as soon as possible at Cal Anderson Park, the site of the Capitol Hill reservoir, because of an emergent problem with drug dealing and prostitution, says Marty McOmber, a spokesperson for Mayor Greg Nickels.

One to three rotating cameras per park are also slated for Hing Hay Park in the International District, Occidental Park in Pioneer Square, and the Pike Place Market's Victor Steinbrueck Park as part of a one-year pilot program for which the

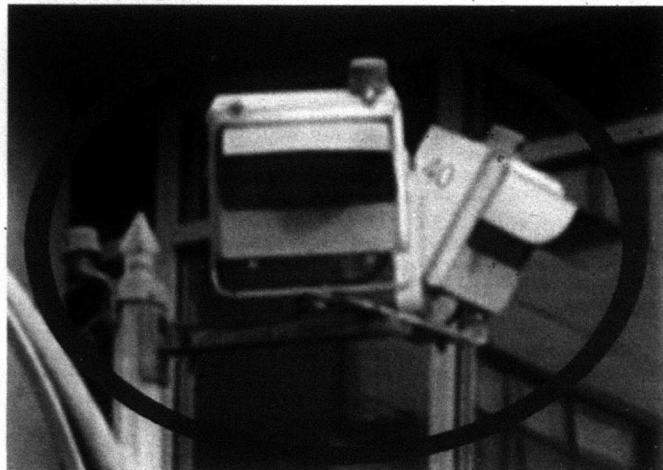
parks, which originally included Freeway Park, located behind the Washington State Convention & Trade Center.

The convention center operates three cameras adjacent to Freeway Park. Besides two pole-mounted cameras at the Volunteer Park Conservatory, the cameras would be the Parks Department's first. Six of the city's community centers already have outside cameras, which, like the one intended for Yesler, are monitored from inside the center.

The pilot cameras "will operate 24 hours a day in passive mode, capturing and recording video, without anyone monitoring the images in real time," the policy document states. "However, when warranted by a 'triggering event,' such as a 911 call for service, an officer witnessing a crime in progress, or a Parks Department or... [another agency's] report of possible criminal activity, the City may actively monitor in real time the images being captured by the cameras."

"The City may also monitor in real time during periods of heightened alert, such as an act of terrorism or serious public disturbances," the document states — but in no case will the system's operators engage in racial or other profiling or target anyone for the exercise of free speech.

The policy paper indicates the cameras — which will not record audio — will



Video cameras already watch the north end of Pike Place Market; the Parks Department is planning to install video monitors across the street in Victor Steinbrueck Park and in three other parks downtown and on Capitol Hill. Photo by Revel Nt

**"We're concerned by the proliferation of government surveillance cameras in public areas," says the ACLU's Doug Honig. "Overwhelmingly, they capture innocent conduct by law-abiding citizens..."**

City Council approved \$600,000 last fall.

That's on top of the \$482,000 the council approved for six new park rangers that the Parks Department will hire shortly to patrol the city's downtown parks.

The cameras won't go in, however, until Parks gives the council a full briefing on the operating protocols that the city plans to use. During the budget process in November, councilmembers passed a proviso prohibiting Parks from spending any of its 2008 allocation for the cameras until the council approves the protocols and passes a separate ordinance allowing the installation.

The cameras intended for Hing Hay, Occidental, and Steinbrueck are part of a one-year pilot program created by an interdepartmental surveillance camera team established by Mayor Nickels. Kathy Sugiyama, public information officer at the city's Department of Finance, the lead agency for the team, says she's not sure when Parks staff will return to brief the council. Council staff expect the briefing in the next few months.

Sugiyama says the Cal Anderson camera is not part of the \$600,000 pilot program that the council put on hold. Nor is another camera to be installed shortly at the playground behind Yesler Community Center.

According to a draft policies and procedures document obtained from the Parks Department, the pilot was to include up to 12 cameras in four downtown

have feeds to the Parks Department and the Police Department's Communications Center and its West Precinct, with tape kept for 90 days — longer if it becomes evidence in the prosecution of a crime.

Prior to expanding the system, the documents state, the city will seek public comment. Doug Honig of the American Civil Liberties Union finds that cold comfort.

"We're concerned by the proliferation of government surveillance cameras in public areas," Honig says. "Overwhelmingly, they capture innocent conduct by law-abiding

citizens and, despite the claims of their advocates, they don't reduce crime."

"If you're a drug dealer or a prostitute, you just move someplace outside the camera range," he says.

"I'm not 100 percent in favor of them and I'm not 100 percent against them," says Tim Burgess, a new councilmember and head of the Public Safety Committee that's likely to review the protocols. "I think [cameras] have an appropriate role to play, but what's important are the circumstances and how they're going to be used." ■

**In a rally marking Guantánamo's sixth anniversary, a crowd of over 100 watches "real, live waterboarding"**

## This is Torture

By ROSETTE ROYALE,  
Staff Reporter

**S**triding near the intersection of Pine St. and Fourth Ave., Emma Kaplan, clad in an orange jumpsuit, urged passersby to come witness something they'd probably never seen before: human torture.

"We're going to do a real, live waterboarding of a human being," she screamed into the cold afternoon of Jan. 11. "And people need to come decide if you're for it or against it."

Behind her, on a stage facing the open plaza of Westlake Center, an iconic figure of new millennial torture — a person with a black peaked hood obscuring the face, a black oversized smock hanging from the shoulders, taped fingertips giving way to electrical wires — stood on a box in total silence.

"Come and witness," Kaplan belted at shoppers who clutched bags tighter.

Slowly, almost haphazardly, a crowd of more than 100 onlookers, some decked out in orange clothing, began to gather. They huddled before the stage.

The local demonstration was part of a national action marking the sixth anniversary of the opening of Guantánamo, a military facility based in Cuba, where the United States continues to hold alleged terrorists with supposed links to al Qaeda and/or the Taliban. Set upon land the U.S. government leases from the island nation, some sources estimate that as many as 800 people have been detained at Guantánamo at one time or another since 2002. (The *New York Times* suggests the current number of detainees to be 277.) Images of those held there nearly always depict them wearing orange jumpsuits.

"Orange is becoming a sign of resistance, what the peace sign was in the 60s," said Kaplan, 22 and a mem-

ber of World Can't Wait: Drive out the Bush Regime. The government, she said, has been torturing detainees and concealing that information from the public. "There's possible waterboarding on those CIA tapes," she said, alluding to the recent admission by the CIA that it destroyed, in 2005, video footage of interrogations conducted of alleged al Qaeda operatives in 2002.

Before the stage, a massage table was set up, a series of straps attached to the legs. From the wings, two men — one wearing a black leather jacket, the other a black suit jacket — pulled a person in an orange jumpsuit and black hood to the massage table. He sat on the foot end. Both the foot and head ends collapsed under his weight. With the table reassembled, they unhooded the would-be operative, a young, curly haired man. Then, the demonstration, described as "street theater," began.

See TORTURE, Continued on Page 10

## Vendor of the Week



**W**hen Donald Baca left his native San Jose ("or, Saint Josie, como quieries..."), he was 25 and ready for a change. And though he wasn't short on youth and optimism, he was a little short on luck: the first driver to pick him up was just kind of... creepy.

"He showed absolutely no emotion, just a blank look," remembers Baca with a leery shake of the head. "He was just bizarre. Very cold. At the first stop I practically jumped out of the car!"

Then at the Oregon border, after a relatively normal ride with a truck driver, Baca was picked up by a mortician — it seemed his strange trip wasn't going to end anytime soon.

"He turned out to be a nice guy, though. He took me home and fed me. Then as we were watching the nightly

news, the news lady walked through the front door." As it turned out, the mortician was married to an anchorwoman who happened to come home while one of her taped newscasts was being aired.

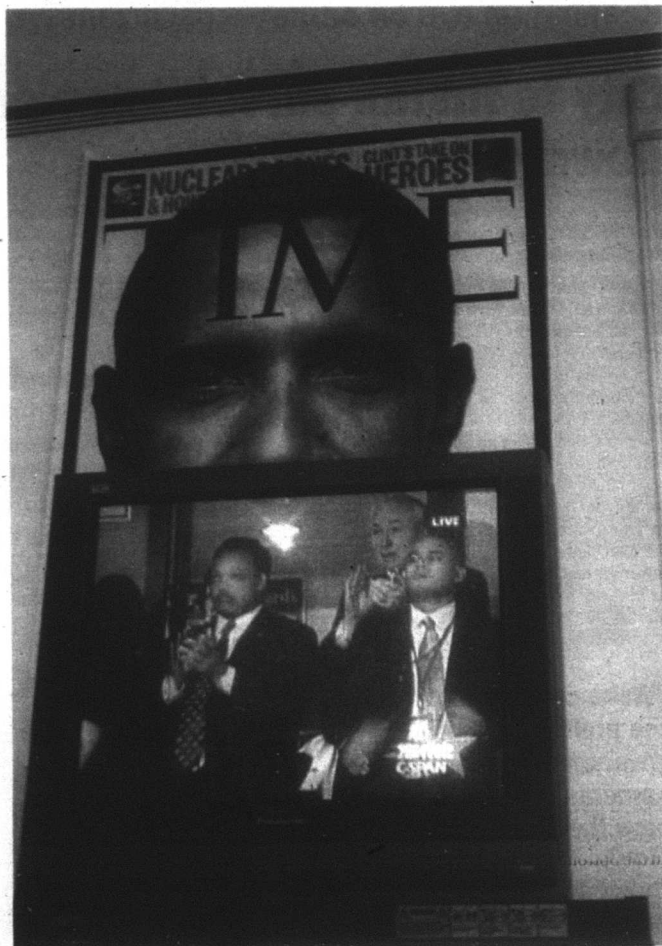
The next morning, Baca got a ride to the freeway and from there caught a ride to Olympia, where he had a two-dollar breakfast he remembers to this day. Finally, Baca made it to Seattle, where he's been for the past twenty or so years.

"I'm not worldly rich, but I'm spiritually rich," says Baca, who became homeless five years ago. He's been selling *Real Change* for about four and a half of those years, and these days he sells at Fourth and Olive.

"Thank you so much for being so kind to me," he says to his customers. ■

—Story and photo by JP Gritton

**Who's the special person who offers you Real Change?**  
**Nominate them for Vendor of the Week:**  
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### Watching his own success

To mark the opening of Barack Obama's official Washington State Campaign Headquarters in Pioneer Square on Sat., Jan. 12, a TV displayed video of his past electoral successes. Here, a poster of Obama seems to peer down on Jesse Jackson, himself a presidential candidate in 1984 and 1988. Photo by Revel Nt

As the middle class slides fearfully into financial insecurity, economist Robert Kuttner looks for political leadership and bottom-up organizing

## Prelude to a Disaster

By TIM HARRIS,  
Contributing Writer

**P**rogressive economist Robert Kuttner is founder and co-editor of *The American Prospect* magazine, and a regular columnist for the *Boston Globe*. His new book, *The Squandering of America* (Knopf, 2007), is subtitled "How the failure of our politics undermines our prosperity." Kuttner argues that the corporate capture of the democratic process has resulted in windfall profits for the wealthy at the great expense of average Americans. Our choices, he warns, are to build a citizen's movement that curbs the power of wealthy elites, or face continued decline and inevitable economic disaster. We spoke in December when Kuttner was in Seattle for a reading at Town Hall.

**More and more people are feeling economically squeezed, particularly the middle class, and yet the inflation rate has been fairly modest. What's going on there?**

If we go back 30 years, the average American has had no increase in earnings and the bottom 40 or 50 percent has had a real decrease in earnings during a period when the economy as a whole has almost doubled in size. So, almost all the gains have gone to the top 10 percent, with the biggest gains in the top 1 percent and the biggest gains of all to the very rich.

If you are in your 30s, don't have

**A lot of people know — in a passive, semi-conscious kind of way — that they're getting screwed. But in the absence of organizing and political leadership, it doesn't get politicized.**

wealthy parents, and are hoping to make it into the middle class, the price is much higher than a generation ago. Housing costs have outstripped incomes. You either don't have health insurance, are paying too much for your health insurance, or you're in a job that maybe you'd

rather not be in so you can have health insurance. Tuition has vastly outstripped income, so you've got college loans to pay off. On top of that, you have the family squeeze, where it takes two incomes to do what used to take one, and no offsetting changes in policy to make the work and family straddle any easier. So the fact that inflation is moderate is of small comfort.

We have a kind of a gadget economy where you may have scant prospects of joining the middle class but you've got your latte and you've got your iPod. A young colleague of mine said to me, "When you're in your 20s, you feel rich, you've got all this nifty techie stuff, but then when you're 30 and you want to start a family and buy a home, you realize that you're poor."

The challenge for politicians is to help people connect those dots. My colleague at the *Boston Globe*, Ellen Goodman, has just a marvelous line that I wish I had thought of. Social change occurs when people learn what they already know. And I think a lot of people know — in a passive, semi-conscious kind of way — that they're getting screwed. But in the absence of organizing and political leadership, it doesn't get politicized.

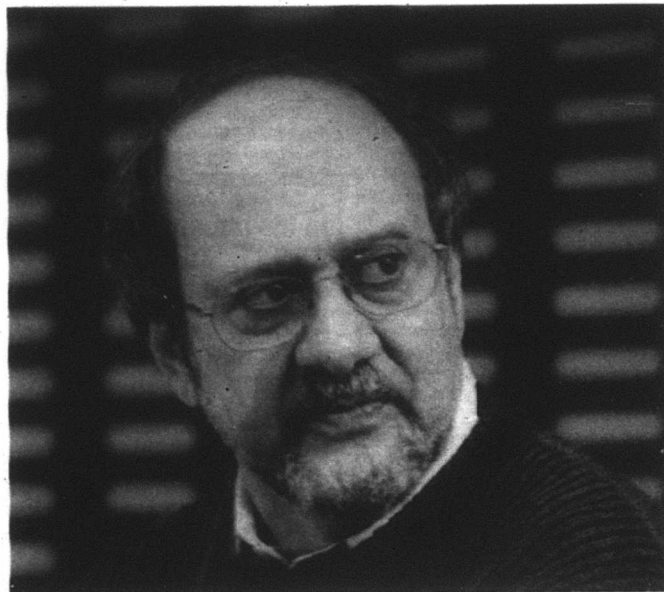
**One of the things that struck me about the *American Prospect* special issue on poverty [May 2007] was that there was no mention of homelessness. How did that happen?**

I don't have a good explanation for it. Maybe we just dropped the ball. We have written about homelessness in other issues.

I can venture a guess. Homelessness seems more manageable when approached as a technocratic social services issue; as opposed to a problem of growing poverty and inequality. Government reframes the issue in a de-politicized way, and homeless advocates generally follow their lead.

I think that's right. It's often said that one of the problems Democrats have is that Republicans can reduce their ideology to a bumper sticker and Democrats can't. So the Republican story is "Markets work, governments don't. Poor people reflect poor values." That's nine words. You can put it all on a bumper sticker.

I think the typical middle-class person who walks by someone who is homeless sees that person as dysfunctional. Either they look strange to the middle



How to stop the corporate takeover of the democratic process and the gadget-heavy economy? Robert Kuttner, who penned *The Squandering of America*, suggests that its high time for the general public to become politicized. Photo by Joel Turner

class, and you conclude that that person is mentally ill, or they look okay and the middle-class person says, "Well, gee, why isn't that person working?"

Instead of seeing this as a failure of capitalism — as a failure of government to provide enough good jobs, to pay a living wage, to have decent housing policies and adequate mental health services — it's seen as a problem of marginality and dysfunction. So, if we did not include homelessness, shame on us.

**Why do you think there is so little discussion of structural unemployment and the people who have, statistically speaking, just dropped off the radar?**

I think it is the fracturing of the coalition that used to exist between the

**We have a kind of a gadget economy where you may have scant prospects of joining the middle class but you've got your latte and you've got your iPod.**

working middle class, the working poor, and the very poor. The periods when that coalition was together is when you had transformative social policies like the New Deal and Great Society. Those were the few periods in America when we actually had progressive politics.

It's too easy for people who have jobs to ignore people who don't have jobs. I have this polite argument with John Ed-

wards that goes, "Look, it's magnificent that you are talking about the bottom 15 percent and you will go to heaven for talking about the bottom 15 percent, but if you want to go to the White House, maybe you want to talk about the bottom 70 percent."


Increasingly, the difference between the bottom 70 percent and the bottom 15 percent is one of degree. The bottom 15 are a lot poorer, but the bottom 70 percent have the same vulnerability. It's less a problem with structural unemployment than of the vulnerability that almost everybody has to losing their jobs, losing their health coverage, losing their retirement coverage, losing the ability to have work that pays a living wage.

The job of political organizing and leadership is to remind somebody who's making \$50,000-\$60,000 a year that they're just as vulnerable. People have those worries privately, but that needs to be politicized.

**Why should ordinary people care about financial regulation?**

Well, Exhibit A right now is the subprime meltdown. Here's where a scam hatched on Wall Street and carried out by local predatory lenders is going to spill over on the whole economy and hurt a lot of innocent people.

People were given these bait and switch mortgages that started out with very low rates and then after two years typically snapped back to 10, 11, and 12



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## Wait...What was that?

### ■ Ghost

By Alan Lightman, Pantheon Books, Hardcover, 2007, 244 pages, \$23

Review by Joe Martin,  
Contributing Writer

**"I**s something true if it only happens once? If it is experienced only by one person at one time? The seconds and years stretch to infinity, but a thing might be felt only at one moment. It might always be there, the world underneath and the miracle, but felt only in brief, fleeting stabs."

These are pensive ruminations at the conclusion of Alan Lightman's intriguing little novel *Ghost*. Lightman is an accomplished scientist who has written notable fiction, essays, and scientific works. In his latest work, he explores myriad social and philosophical dimensions of mortality and death, of the abiding human fascination with the paranormal, and the prospect of spiritual survival beyond the grave.

Having arrived at a bland middle age, David Kurzweil is divorced with no kids. He lives in a rooming house where he has cordial but superficial relationships with a diverse collection of fellow residents. Not a self-assured helmsman of his own life, David floats along, never quite overwhelmed but often perplexed by events. His ambit is minimalist and predictable, uncluttered by either religion or politics, or a plethora of people. He maintains a respectful but constrained filial concern for his aging mother. An avid reader, David finds his most consistent consolation in books. Possessed of acceptable looks, a diffident charm and intelligence, he has managed to win the affections of a younger pretty woman, a librarian, who brings an amorous charge to the otherwise staid and quiescent drift of his ambivalent life.

Abruptly his employment at a bank comes to an end. There is no explanation, and David does not demand one. Although he has no prior experience in the funeral business David applies for a job opening at a local mortuary and is taken on by the kindly and agoraphobic director whose family has been in the profession for three

**In his latest work, Alan Lightman explores myriad social and philosophical dimensions of mortality and death, of the abiding human fascination with the paranormal.**

generations. The elderly director and his wife reside in a section of the building. The quiet and umbracious ambience of the funeral home is on occasion gently suffused with classical music and the redolent aroma of flowers. David takes to his new line of work and he is soon an integral part of the tiny confederation of employees who assist the director with the delicate task of caring for the dead and consoling the families and friends of those recently deceased.

But a sudden preternatural event punctures the tranquility. In the stillness of a mortuary room, David is witness to

a fleeting apparition, a vaporous manifestation that appears, then vanishes only seconds later. Profoundly shocked and unsettled by what he has seen, David is beset by doubts. But he knows that he saw something, something out of the ordinary that seemed to him to have an intelligence and purpose of some kind. In confidence, he shares the few details of his odd encounter with his landlady who happens to be an enthusiast regarding things supernatural. Soon, word of David's strange tale gets out and a tragicomic train of events ensues in which the reticent protagonist finds himself the unwitting cynosure of a raging controversy stoked by sensational news stories.

Grieving relatives — out of love or guilt or simple curiosity — seek out David in order that they might, through him, communicate with the dear departed. An organization dedicated to the investigation of parapsychic phenomena courts him and inveigles David into participating in a test of his supposed psychic abilities. Scientists from a local university who have no time for wraiths or revenants join in a mounting and increasingly vituperative debate with the advocates of the occult netherworld. All the while David is by turns bemused and flustered, embarrassed and irritated by the disconcerting

hubbub he has precipitated. Perhaps he should have simply kept the experience to himself. Yet, he is increasingly certain that the ethereal something he witnessed was not simply a product of his imagination. And that something, whatever it was, is beyond rational explanation, but no less real for that.

Lightman has composed a readable and appealing yarn, a gentle satire that is also a sympathetic portrait of human fragility, yearning, and hope. *Ghost* touches upon those perennial questions that will ever challenge inquiring minds and captivate the human imagination. ■

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## The Devil Went down to Guatemala

### ■ The Art of Political Murder — Who Killed the Bishop?

By Francisco Goldman, Grove Press 2007, Hardcover, 396 pages, \$25

Review by Elliott Bronstein,  
Contributing Writer

**H**ave you ever been to Guatemala? For decades, tourists and gringo travelers have known the place as a peaceful, colorful, natural wonderland. Dig the scene: short, stocky highland farmers in brightly colored hand-woven shirts, overstuffed, careening buses on spaghetti-strand dirt roads, Mayan temple ruins rising out of jungle mists.

But that is not the Guatemala author Francisco Goldman presents.

On April 23, 1998, the Archdiocese's Office of Human Rights (ODHA) released "Guatemala: Never Again," a 1,600-page report documenting the massacres, torture, and state terrorism conducted by the Guatemalan military since the early 1960s. The Church had initiated an accounting, as Goldman explains, "that was crucial for repairing the country's shredded social fabric and for ensuring that human rights abuses would no longer be protected by an official culture of

silence and lies..." Three days later, Guatemalan Bishop Juan Gerardi, ODHA's founding director, was beaten to death in the garage of his parish house in Guatemala City, just blocks from the National Palace.

All of the people who labored over that Human Rights report knew what they were in for. The Guatemalan military had been running the show there ever since the American government helped orchestrate the 1954 coup that overthrew the democratically elected government of Jacobo Arbenz. Something about fruit. United Fruit.

And then the Guatemalan military waged bloodthirsty war in the Mayan highlands for decades, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians, living large on the largesse of, well, not to put too fine a point on it, the U.S.: that is, you'n'me, the taxpayers. Plus drugs, probably, prostitution and other organized crime, all orchestrated by the

Guatemalan Presidential Guards. Imagine the Mafia in uniform, hundreds of them with pretty good weapons, a vast criminal conspiracy with unchecked power from the President's residence to the daily newspapers to the street people paid with free chicken to spy on everything that moved.

*The Art of Political Murder* tells the whole eight-year story: the murder, the investigation, the trial, the post-trial (the "Third Stage," as Goldman calls it) and finally, the likely truth. Francisco Goldman is a terrific writer (*The Long Night of White Chickens*, *The Ordinary Seaman*, and *The Divine Husband*) who has lived for long periods in Guatemala — his mother was born there. To write this book, Goldman interviewed everyone he could reach and charted the stories and the tracks of all the dozens of players. He doesn't just weigh the evidence, he sifts it before our eyes, mixing and remixing until the truth — or shadows of the truth — begin to rise.

They [the investigators and Chex, a mysterious eyewitness] met in a Pollo Campero fried-chicken restaurant in the municipal capital of Chimaltenango, on a corner of the tree-shaded central plaza. Chex's condition was

that they buy him a meal and soda, so that it would look as if they were just meeting for lunch," writes Goldman.

It shouldn't be that fascinating, but somehow this sordid tale captivates, even though Goldman's snaking storyline, long list of characters, and obsessive details are hard to follow. *The Art of Political Murder* chronicles a different sort of war, a gritty struggle between opposing visions of Guatemala — Satan triumphant or the Devil driven down?

"For half a century the military's clandestine world had seemed impregnable. The Gerardi case had opened a path into that darkness," Goldman writes. And the story continues even after the last page. Francisco Goldman appeared in Seattle on Oct. 25, 2007 at Seattle University. A few weeks later, the papers reported the results of Guatemala's presidential election: businessman Alvaro Colom had just defeated retired army general Otto Pérez Molina, who had served as head of the Presidential Guards from 1993-96. In his victory speech, Mr. Colom described the vote as, "A no to Guatemala's tragic history."

If so many heroes battled to make that hopeful statement possible, who are we to doubt? ■



## Adventures in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning

I am totally hacked off.

What really steams my trousers is that I can't tell you why they're steamed, because they're too steamed. If I were to explain why, they'd explode. No one wants to see that.

All I can say is, it has to do with Mayor Nickels, sweeps of homeless encampments, a new draft policy for the city, a definition of what constitutes potentially hazardous articles that could include blankets, bunnies, and daffodils, which definition would be allowed to justify the destruction of such articles at the whim of sweepers without due process, while meanwhile no such outrageous justifications would ever be used to destroy, say, warehouses, without due process, because the city can't get away with that, but denying civil rights to homeless people is a snap.

After talking over the state of my hacked-offness with Farmer Anitra "On Whose Kitchen Floor Compost Worms Have Died" Freeman, we agreed that I should not talk about Mayor Nickels or his administration or their new draft policy that if implemented should be grounds for the federal imprisonment of the whole lot of them. (Not that it'd ever happen — look who's running the Justice Department now.) I should talk about things that make me less angry.

Something that doesn't quite fry my pantaloons: The other day a Boston psychiatrist wrote a story that appeared in the *New York Times* about a homeless

## What steams ©Dr. Wes' trousers?

man who went to an ER for the first time for a sore shoulder and found out that the hospital had records that he had been there before for a drug overdose. But that was impossible, the man said, because he doesn't do drugs. When the doctor looking at the records verified that the ID used in the previous visit matched that of the patient in front of him, the patient said the other guy must have stolen his ID.

Reading the story, I was a little incredulous. It was suggested that his wal-

**Identity thieves have confidentiality rights from the people they steal from? That steams my socks, but my trousers are cool.**

let might have been stolen, the ID copied, and the wallet returned intact, so our guy didn't know anything had happened. But never mind, because the doctor bought the premise. And, having done so, she then refused to let the patient see the previous record in his name, for the sake of the confidentiality of the suspected identity thief! Identity thieves have confidentiality rights from the people they steal from? That steams my socks, but my trousers are cool, because I can convince myself that state and federal lawmakers will have no problem coming up with a cheap and easy fix. Even I won't mind if identity thieves are denied rights under the law.

A story from Morecambe in Lancashire County, England tells of a homeless man sleeping outdoors at 6:30 a.m. Christmas Day, following a righteous Christmas Eve drunk, when a guy delivering presents (I'll call him "Santa's Smartass Helper") in the neighborhood saw him and disturbed him by sarcastically wishing him Merry Christmas. Whereupon the homeless man pulverized Santa's Smartass Helper for five minutes. What makes me angry about this story is that the writer referred to the beating as "unprovoked" and evidently the court that convicted the homeless man of assault agreed with that assessment.

Word to the wise: Anybody — ANYBODY — who wakes me up out of sleep at 6:30 a.m. on Christmas Day, just to wish me a Merry Christmas, better be prepared to hurt. Sarcastic or sincere, it doesn't matter.

There's the judge's decision to grant an injunction allowing pharmacists to deny medication. This whole situation has been cast as a clash of rights — the right of the pharmacists to practice their private morality versus the right of the people they serve to prescribed medicine.

There's no such things as private moralities. The pharmacists who don't want to fill prescriptions don't have to be pharmacists. There's no clash of rights. I am hopeful this decision will be overturned on appeal so that I won't have to soak my trousers in ice. ■

Sound off and read more:  
[drwesb.blogspot.com](http://drwesb.blogspot.com)

## Rev. Lang: Bitter tears over today's Christians

Faith,  
Culture,  
Politics



Rev. Rich Lang

The Christian movement, in the beginning, was characterized through a radical communal commitment of solidarity. The most economically vulnerable, the widows and orphans, were cared for from out of the common purse and contributions of the faithful. Can you imagine such solidarity today? For example, what would happen in your congregation if an elderly single woman were to be evicted from her low-income apartment as it's transformed into a condo? In our time, the congregation might fret and worry, mumble about the awful situation, but then move on because in capitalist America, Christian solidarity is an unknown practice.

In the early Christian movement, many were imprisoned, some because of debt, others because of political dissent. Local congregations would redeem the debts of their members, and would care for the financial needs of the imprisoned and their families. If a member was un-

employed, the congregation would help him find a job, providing for his needs in the meantime. It could not be otherwise. Baptism, a water ritual, signified that the baptized was now a member of Christ's literal body, risen from death. Being a member of a new communal body meant that when one rejoiced, all rejoiced; when one suffered, all suffered. Baptismal solidarity was definitive of the early Christian movement.

When we compare the solidarity of the early Christian movement to the individualism of today's typical Christian, it must cause red-faced, shamed embarrassment in Heaven. Jesus must roll over, face down in the grave, saturated with bitter tears. It has to be hard for a pastor to baptize a child in the midst of a congregation knowing that, in truth, the congregation will not help raise the child, nor care for the child if trouble arises. Indeed, for proof of this one need look no further than the treatment of the homeless.

Many of the homeless were baptized in a church. Many of the homeless are Christian in worldview and affirmation.

It seems to me that the homeless have a claim on the local congregation. As a child of the Church, they have a debt in need of redemption. And the Church, to be true to its baptismal solidarity with the crucified yet risen Christ, has an obligation to offer concrete, practical redemption.

Or, in other words; although a local congregation cannot do all things, it can do some things, and one thing it can do is to live in solidarity with the homeless: contemporary orphans abandoned by individualistic capitalism. A local congregation could reaffirm its baptism, practicing solidarity, offering the basics of shelter, storage, and networking so that those who want to move from homelessness to housing may do so. Such expression of faith would truly stun the nation, and people would again say of such solidarity, "My, how they love one another." ■

Rev. Rich Lang is pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Ballard, and can be contacted through [www.turnseattle.org](http://www.turnseattle.org).



Tues., Jan. 1, 2:27 a.m., E. Olive St. Officers responded to a report of a trespasser at Sound Mental Health on E. Olive St. They arrived and contacted the security guard that called 911. He reported that he was dispatched by his superior to investigate a report of a trespasser at the location, and arrived to find several cans of liquor, a blue quilt, and a wool blanket inside a fenced area on the east side of the complex. He did not find anyone. The gate to the area is locked with a padlock. Sometime later the security guard returned to find the suspect, a transient white male inside the locked area. He requested that the suspect leave the property, but he refused to depart, and went to sleep. Police arrived to find the suspect sitting inside the fenced area, and they told him to stand up and gather his belongings. Suspect stood up, and officers attempted to assist him in stepping over the fence. Suspect jerked his arm away, and continued to struggle with officers by tensing his arms and refusing orders to stop resisting. Suspect was arrested for trespass, handcuffed and placed into the back of the police car. He spat at one of the officers as he was reading him his Miranda rights, made nonsensical noises and refused to acknowledge he understood his rights. Suspect was transported to the precinct where the officer completed a hazard report due to being spit on. Suspect was then transported to King County Jail.

Tues., Jan. 8, 3:52 p.m., Sixth Ave. S. Suspect, a transient white female aged 30, was contacted in Kobe [Terrace] Park on Sixth Ave. S., along with 2 other individuals. Beer cans were visible, and when questioned suspect admitted to officers that she was drinking alcohol, and that she was on active status with the Department of Corrections. Officers contacted her DOC officer and were advised that a detainer would be issued against her. She was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Tues., Jan. 8, 7:36 p.m., 1700 block Bellevue Ave. Officers on patrol were traveling northbound on Bellevue when they observed the suspect, a transient Native American male, standing with some other men near a payphone. Suspect was holding a partially flattened soda can up to his mouth and was lighting the center of it with a lighter, as though he was smoking drugs. The officers contacted the suspect, and could smell a strong odor of marijuana. They also observed a small amount of marijuana on the ground by the suspect. Suspect identified himself, and gave a false date of birth. Further investigation revealed suspect's correct identity, and found he was active with the DOC. Suspect's DOC officer was contacted, and advised the police to arrest him. Suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

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

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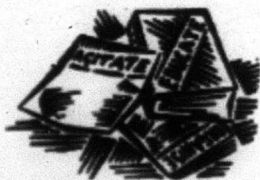
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## TORTURE, Continued from Page 5

"We just want to know the names of the other terrorists," said the man in the leather jacket. "Just tell us what you know."

"I don't have anything to tell you," the young man replied.

After assaulting the reluctant informant with a poor facsimile of a face slap, the men strapped him to the table. Mr. Leather Jacket pulled out a piece of black cloth.

"You've got one last chance," said Mr. Suit Jacket.

The black cloth was placed over the young man's face. Mr. Suit Jacket took close to 30 seconds to pour a gallon of water over the restrained man's covered nose and mouth. The detainee struggled.

When the cloth was yanked free, the man on the table begged, "Just let me go."

Mr. Suit Jacket, shaking his head, told him, "Lights out, dude."

Once again, with the cloth in place, Mr. Suit Jacket trickled another gallon of water over his victim. Halfway into gallon three, people in the crowd, prompted by a rally organizer, began to shout, "Shame, shame, shame."

Released from the straps, the cloth removed from his face, the young man sat up and shook his head. Drops of water flew right and left. His two jacketed interrogators helped him off the table.

Behind the stage, the alleged detainee revealed that his name was Baki Wright. When asked how he was, Wright, his hair dripping, replied, "I'm good."

## "Guantánamo is not justice for the prisoners, not for the victims of 9/11, or the families of those victims."

—former U.S. Army Chaplain  
James Yee

He explained that, during the demo, he never actually experienced the terror of drowning: the black cloth had been attached to the sides of a small soda pop container, causing the water, when poured on him, to be diverted from his mouth and nose. Wright, 18, said he agreed to perform because he felt it important to make people aware of waterboarding. "I really want to raise awareness about how horrible this is."

The horror of torture was given voice, on stage, by former U.S. Army Chaplain James Yee, who told attendees of his own personal experiences at Guantánamo. In his role as chaplain, he said he'd seen detainees being dragged by their captives.

"And I know first hand how terrifying this practice of sleep deprivation is," said Yee.

In his book, *For God and Country*, Yee, a convert to Islam, recounts how, while working at Guantánamo in 2003, he was charged with spying,

espionage, and three other offenses. Held for 76 days, he writes of being deprived of sleep during that time. All charges against him were eventually dropped.

The indefinite tortures at Guantánamo, said Yee, represent kangaroo courts. When, he wondered, would Americans say enough is enough? Removing his jacket, he displayed an orange shirt, saying the base should be shut down.

"Guantánamo is not justice for the prisoners, not for the victims of 9/11, or the families of those victims." The crowd cheered him on as he said, "We should be closing Guantánamo. ■"

## [Impeach Bush and Cheney?]

A public hearing calling for an investigation and trial of the President and Vice President will take place Thurs., Jan. 17, at the State Capitol, Cherberg Bldg., Room 2, 426 - 14th Ave. SW, Olympia. 3:30 p.m.

## ENCAMPMENTS, Continued from Page 3

work crews need not supply the 48-hour warning if they suspect that any illegal activities other than camping are going on in the area. And the new rule says they "shall, when practicable

and safe under the circumstances," post the notices, offer social services help, and retain belongings. It also promises to open extra shelter, if needed. There are no specifics as to who decides when shelter, outreach, and advance warning won't be necessary.

Seattle-King County Coalition on Homelessness director Alison Eisinger is asking the city to expand the 48-hour notice into two weeks, preceded by a two-week outreach period led by a team of social workers. SKCCH has documented instances already of the city removing articles with far less warning; a Dept. of Corrections work crew physically removed one man's blanket while he slept under I-5 Jan. 4.

"People and their belongings should not be removed from public spaces unless we can offer them suitable housing and services," she says. "We're committed to working with people to make sure everyone has a roof over their heads. Protocols and policies should start from that point."

The city is accepting comments on the proposal until the end of January. ■

Hot spot: a sleeping arrangement under I-5 near the corner of Sixth and Cherry, where a city-contracted worker forcibly removed one man's blanket while he was sleeping Jan. 4.

Photo by Adam Hyde



## KUTTNER, Continued from Page 7

percent, so the average rate would be much higher than normal and the wise guys on Wall Street could make a lot of money.

The thing they didn't realize was that a lot of these mortgages were incapable of being paid back unless housing prices continued going through the roof, which is a very risky gamble. So now you're going to have widespread foreclosures, almost all of them in moderate-income and minority neighborhoods, and the neighbors of those being foreclosed upon will also suffer declining home values. This is a real catastrophe.

Instead of doing what we did under Roosevelt, where the government calls a timeout and refinances these mortgages so people don't lose their homes, the treasury secretary, Hank Paulson, is treating this as something to be dealt with behind closed doors by a private cartel, and the Democrats aren't even screaming about it.

**A lot of smart people think the sub-prime crisis will have a cascading effect. That this is just the beginning.**

Well, it already has. It has led to a credit crunch, where people who have good credit have to pay more money for their mortgages; where other kinds of loans, like auto loans and credit card loans, are finding that they don't have enough buyers. It's the most serious credit panic since the Great Depression.

The other problem is that the Federal Reserve is lowering interest rates to prevent another depression. Most would say, "Well that's good. Lower interest rates are good for everybody." But the Fed is lowering rates below where they should just to bail out the big banks. That weakens the dollar, which raises the price of oil and means we pay more for gasoline at the pump and more for home heating. The value of a dollar goes down the drain.

So, these bad policies lead to other bad policies and it's the little guy who gets screwed. I mean, if you're Citibank and you make a bad bet and it costs you \$17 billion, the feds come rushing to your rescue. But if you're out in the neighborhood and three houses around you are foreclosed and your house is suddenly worth 30 percent less, nobody comes to help. So it's the typical double standard that occurs when you let Wall Street run the show.

**How does growing inequality undermine democracy?**

It means that political agendas are set at the very top, and that money talks louder than voting. You can call this participatory inequality. If you go to Washington on any day of the week and walk around the hotel rooms, you will find literally thousands of meetings of business interest groups and trade associations. The democracy described by Alexis de Tocqueville is alive and well at the level of the elite. These people are networked. They're organized. They're participating.

But if you look at the bottom 30 to 40 percent, where is that? Maybe it exists in groups like ACORN and the Industrial Areas Foundation. Maybe it exists in the labor movement, but for the most part, economic inequality leads to participatory inequality and the weakening of political democracy.

The second part of that story is this: If you don't offer vulnerable people some reasons to participate in politics — some hope that politics is actually going to do something for them, as it did during the New Deal, as it did, to some extent, during the Great Society — they're just going to say "To heck with it."

There are lots of examples in my book of interviews and focus groups of asking low-income people what they thought government might do for them. And people say, "Cut my taxes." It stunts the political imagination. So people who might vote for progressives end up voting for conservatives because at least the tax cut is something you can touch, that might make a difference in your life, whereas these empty slogans by a lot of liberal politicians don't seem real.

**Many say that campaign finance reform is the place to begin in terms of**

**I think if progressive leadership doesn't rise to the occasion, it's all too easy for reactionary leadership to play a demagogic role and win office. This is one of those moments where it could go either way.**

**fixing the disconnect between capitalism and democracy, but you say that it's where we need to end up.**

The problem is that it's so improbable over the short run. The good news is that you have examples of people who ran campaigns for the House and the Senate, in some cases for governor, where they just said, "I am going over the heads of big money to talk to the voters." A lot of them ran as economic progressives and got elected. So, I think if you motivate people and you speak to their real needs, the power of votes is still greater than the power of money.

One of the things that keep me from just giving up is the fact that you can point to elections, like the 2006 midterms, where people like John Tester in Montana or Jim Webb in Virginia ran as progressives, and not by scuttling to the center. All of a sudden big money ceases to have a veto on the whole political system.

**You describe our current political situation as a race between creating an environment where fundamental change is possible and impending crisis.**

Right. In 1933, we got lucky. We got Franklin Roosevelt rather than Huey Long or some homegrown Hitler. You never know what a crisis is going to produce in the way of a political re-

sponse. I think if progressive leadership doesn't rise to the occasion, it's all too easy for reactionary leadership to play a demagogic role and win office. This is one of those moments where it could go either way.

I find Lou Dobbs very scary, because if ordinary people are hurting, who better to blame than the immigrants? It's this generation's equivalent of racism. It splits the working class. It prevents alliances from occurring that could otherwise create progressive change. If we don't get a handle on this, the right is going to use that issue, and it is going to use fear of economic vulnerability to pursue policies that are the opposite of what working Americans and unemployed Americans need.

**What are the models for the sorts of organizing that we need to be looking at?**

I think great moments in American history have been a combination of bottom-up organizing and political lead-

ership. Lincoln would not have been Lincoln without the abolitionist movement. Teddy Roosevelt would not have been Teddy Roosevelt without the populist movement of farmers and working people. Roosevelt would not have been Roosevelt without the labor movement. LBJ would not have been LBJ — and I am talking about Lyndon Johnson before Vietnam ruined his presidency — without the Civil Rights Movement.

So today you've got some very heartening organizing at the level of community groups, and a resurgent labor movement that's started to do what it should have all along, organizing the lowest-wage workers: homecare workers, janitors, people who clean rooms in hotels, security guards. The question is whether one of these Democratic candidates has the spark of greatness and is willing to jump over the conventional wisdom, seize the moment, and use leadership to help people learn what they already know. ■

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Mon., Jan. 21 is Martin Luther King Jr. Day!, honoring the man who worked so hard and died for the cause of racial equality and peace for everyone — and who gave his name to our county. There's an 11 a.m. rally at Franklin High School, 3013 Mt. Baker Blvd., followed by a march at noon. More info on this and morning workshops available at [www.MLKseattle.org](http://www.MLKseattle.org). At Seattle Center's Center House, there will be a staged reading of the landmark speech "Our-God is Marching On" that is free and open to the public at 2 p.m. Also in honor of Dr. King: forest restoration work followed by a commemoration of Dr. King at Cheasty Green Space; more info at [www.greenseattle.org](http://www.greenseattle.org). Finally, if you're in Olympia there will be a summit and march on the Capitol. More info on the summit and the march available by calling 1(866)789-7726.

# Calendar

## This Week's Top Picks

### Thursday 1/17

Tonight are the opening ceremonies of the Seattle Musica Festival Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Through Hip-Hop. This four-day festival takes place all around the Puget Sound, and begins tonight at the Paragon Restaurant, 2125 Queen Anne Ave N., featuring performances by the Sam Stephens All-Stars and Goodybag. Seeking to keep the legacy of Dr. King alive through positive social movements and the courage to speak out. More info on this festival at [www.musicentertainment.org](http://www.musicentertainment.org). Show starts at 8 p.m.

The Underground Railroad Film Series continues with *Black Israel*. This film documents the experiences of African and African-American Jews living in Israel. The film also examines the diversity of Jewish identity, with discussions of the Jewish community in Harlem and Judaism's spread in sub-Saharan Africa. A revealing portrait of minority within a minority, the showing takes place at 7 p.m. at Cal Anderson Park, 1635 11th Ave, suggested donation of \$5, more info available by calling (206)326-1088, or at [www.langstonblackfilmfest.org](http://www.langstonblackfilmfest.org).

### Friday 1/18

As part of the variety of Martin Luther King Jr. Day events over the next week, Seattle Community Colleges has invited award-winning Essence columnist Susan L. Taylor to be the keynote speaker at their Community Celebration in honor of Dr. King. This event will also feature King County Poet Laureate Dr. Mona Lake Jones emceeing the event and gospel choir music from Black Nativity and Total Experience. Takes place at the Mount Zion Baptist Church, 1634 - 19th Ave, doors open at 11 a.m. For more info (206)903-3233.

This week's showing at Meaningful Movies is the Academy Award-winning *Broken Rainbow*, which is a revealing documentation

of several thousands of Navajos resisting relocation from their homes in Arizona. Always free, takes place at Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Place N, starts at 7 p.m., more info at [www.meaningfulmovies.org](http://www.meaningfulmovies.org).

Founder of the Grameen Bank, champion of microcredit and the sort of microenterprise not unlike *Real Change*, Muhammed Yunus will be speaking tonight at Kane Hall on the UW campus to showcase his new book *Creating a World Without Poverty: How Social Business Can Transform Our Lives*. Yunus' voice is challenging, inspiring, and rich among the cacophony of economic voodoo talk in our modern times. Hosted by UW Bookstore, tickets are \$5 or free with purchase of his new book, reading and signing starts at 7pm, located at Kane Hall Room 130, more info available at [www.bookstore.washington.edu](http://www.bookstore.washington.edu).

### Tuesday 1/22

If you needed one more opinion on what should be done in the world, perhaps you should get an experienced one, and listen to Madeline Albright tonight at Town Hall promoting her new book *Memo to the President Elect: How We Can Restore America's Reputation and Leadership*. Her new book attempts to address the current world conflicts and provide guidance to avoid the troubles of previous presidents — I'm sure she doesn't name names. Takes place at the Great Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave., starts at 7:30 p.m., tickets are \$5 unless you receive a voucher by being one of the first 300 people to purchase her new book from UW Bookstore. More info at [www.townhallseattle.org](http://www.townhallseattle.org).

Calendar compiled by Corey Kahler.  
Got something we should know about?  
Email it to [calendar@realchangenews](mailto:calendar@realchangenews).

## When I Awake, Daughter, What Matters

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

—Denise Calvetti Michaels



### to APPLY:

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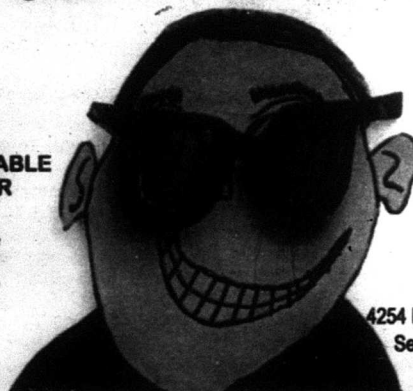
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