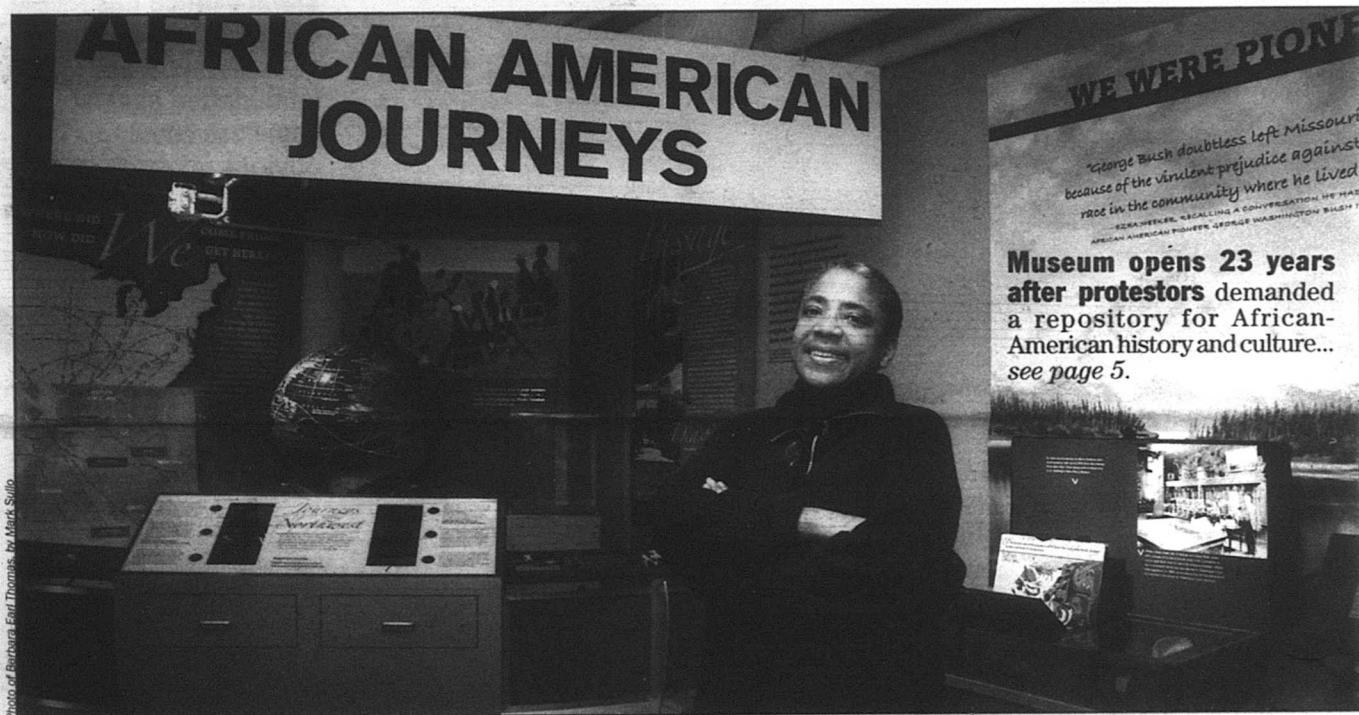


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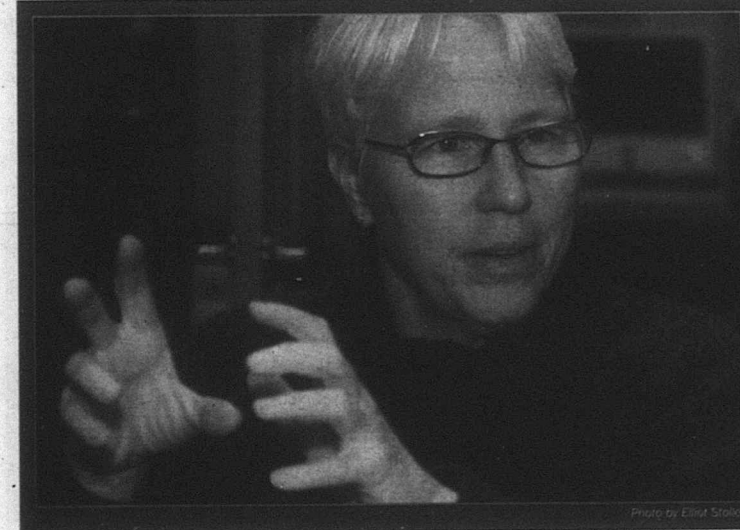
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REAL CHANGE

A Northwest Legacy



Museum opens 23 years after protestors demanded a repository for African-American history and culture... see page 5.



Risking Death to Give Women a Choice

Dr. Susan Wicklund knows the moral hazards of her practice and the perils of being targeted by the anti-choice movement...see page 7.

Bus Chick: Same bus, different reasons for riding: Bus Chick and Bus Nerd compare notes...p.8

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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.

Real Change
2129 Second Ave.
Seattle, WA, 98121
(206) 441-3247

www.realchangenews.org
Email: rchange@speakeasy.org

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On March 13, concerned citizens have the opportunity to send a clear message to the mayor and his staff: Help, don't harass

Where are they supposed to go?

By TIMOTHY HARRIS,
Executive Director

On Thurs., March 13, the Real Change Organizing Project and friends will stand with those who struggle to survive in Seattle's public spaces. Your support is vital. If you have a few hours during the day, we need you. If you can spend the night at City Hall Plaza, we need you. Come stand for human dignity, compassion, and public accountability.

Since last spring, the mayor's office has coordinated a campaign of harassment and intimidation against homeless campers. The obvious question has been asked a thousand times: *Where are these people supposed to go?*

The city has yet to offer an honest answer. While this year's one night homeless count found more than 2,600 people surviving outside of a maxed-out emergency shelter system, the systematic destruction of homeless campsites has continued unabated. Survival gear is destroyed. No-trespass citations are issued against "unauthorized camping."

The city has criminalized both the act of sleeping and the storage of survival gear on all public land. All

The mayor's public relations team has vilified homeless campers as lazy and irresponsible, diseased and dangerous. They have offered smooth assurances that the concerns of homeless advocates have been met. Simply put, they lie.

camping is "unauthorized."

This is an inhumane waste of resources that places the blame for extreme misery and poverty squarely upon the victim.

And to what end? Campers find other places to go. They replace the survival gear that the city destroys. Eventually, they return to sites that have been cleared. They have little choice. Since this new policy of targeting homeless campers seems to have regional coordination with the Department of Transportation, even those who leave town are likely to face similar harassment.

The mayor's public relations team has vilified homeless campers as lazy and irresponsible, diseased and dangerous. They have offered smooth assurances that the concerns of homeless advo-

cates have been met, and that services and shelter are available to displaced homeless campers. They have couched their assault in the language of compassion.

Simply put, they lie. Here's what they say, and what they really mean.

Shelter will be made available to those displaced from encampments: This, so far as we can tell, means that individuals will be offered a mat on the floor of a city overflow shelter for a limited period of time that has yet to be defined. Nobody is talking about opening new shelter. Last January 24, on a night when all the shelters were filled and the severe weather overflow shelters were 40 people past capacity, more than 2,600 individuals were found surviving outside in the pre-dawn hours. Where are they supposed to go? The question remains unanswered.

Personal property will be stored for up to 60 days: The city's draft policy defines all tents, sleeping bags, blankets, tarps, and other survival gear as immediately disposable. When they say "personal property," they mean identification, military papers, prescriptions, perhaps photos, and eyeglasses. In other words, when people return to their camps on a cold night to find that everything they own is gone, the gear that they need to survive outside will almost surely have been thrown away.

Campers will receive a minimum of 48 hours notice: The notices the city posts are pre-printed with a 48-hour warning for disposal of belongings. While city departments will have 10 business days to respond to reports of camping with removal, this does not translate into the nearly two week's warning that is often implied.

Outreach workers will offer campers shelter and services: Seattle's Crisis Clinic refused to have its number listed on the notices of removal because staff there understand that little to nothing is available to callers. Providing effective referrals to those who have little reason to trust means having the capacity to build relationships over time and offering actual resources. Without this, talk of "outreach" is mostly a sham.

By the end of March, the mayor's office will finalize their rules and procedures for homeless campsite removal. Minutes of last January's public hearing are available on the city's Human Services Department website. In over three hours of testimony, not one person spoke in favor of the draft policy.

On March 13, concerned citizens have the opportunity to send a clear message to the mayor and his staff.

Our message is simple: Help, Don't Harass. End the sweeps of homeless encampments. Work with advocates to provide alternatives. Provide real outreach, sufficient emergency shelter alternatives, and expand services to

Since last spring, the mayor's office has coordinated a campaign of harassment and intimidation against homeless campers. The obvious question has been asked a thousand times: Where are these people supposed to go?

those in need.

Visibility teams will stand throughout downtown with banners, leaflets, and petitions to raise awareness of the city's actions. Dinner, provided by Operation Sack Lunch, will be served at 5:30 p.m. on City Hall Plaza by leaders of Seattle's faith community. We will camp overnight on City Hall Plaza to highlight Seattle's critical need for housing and shelter. There will be a final visibility push before the tents come down on Friday morning.

Please go to www.realchangenews.org and click on the Take Action logo up top. This will take you to our advocacy page where you can pledge your participation in the Day of Action. Sign up for a visibility shift. Commit to staying overnight. Download a petition to distribute, or simply add your name to the many who have already signed.

Silence is complicity. Your action matters. Please pledge your support and help make March 13 the strong showing of community concern that homeless people need and deserve. ■

[Get Involved]

A pre-meeting for our day of action will be held on Sun., March 9, at 5 p.m., at Trinity United Methodist Church at the corner of 23rd Ave. NW and 65th St. in Ballard. We encourage you to attend. For more information, email natalien@realchangenews.org or call (206) 441-3247, x213.

Just Heard...

Yesler Terrace; up and out

The project manager in charge of redevelopment at Seattle's Yesler Terrace, a 581-unit public housing complex that is the nation's second oldest in operation, told the City Council this week that the Seattle Housing Authority may request a rezone of the 30-acre site for greater heights. The news that follows a planning process last year in which SHA got a citizen advisory board to OK expanding the complex's boundaries for the purpose of replacing its low-income housing units.

It's a preview of coming attractions as SHA gears up for its next phase of actual design planning at the First Hill site, which the housing agency wants to turn into a denser, mixed-income complex with private homes and condos similar to its redevelopments at NewHolly, High Point, and Rainier Vista.

Project manager Judith Gilgore told councilmembers March 3 that all of last year's advisory board participants have been invited to serve on a soon-to-be-formed Phase 2 citizen board, which, like Yesler Terrace itself, is being expanded (or diluted?) to include what Gilgore called representatives of a "broader community."

Also, the city has named SHA the lead planning agency for turning the Army's old Fort Lawton site at Discovery Park into homeless and affordable housing.

—Cydny Gillis

McCain, Obama, Clinton, Nader?

That's the fourth name some locals are hoping will ping, for a fourth time, on the radar screens of those watching the race for the White House. Ralph Nader, says Rami Khalil, is the candidate best positioned to bring the troops home, end homelessness, and support living-wage jobs.

Khalil organized a Feb. 27 press conference welcoming Nader's announcement that he would run, for President on an independent ticket. As secretary of Socialist Alternative, a 45-member Seattle-Tacoma organization that also worked for Nader in 2000 and 2004, Khalil is convening two forums this week at Seattle college campuses that will examine the voting records of Obama and Clinton. Obama is a particular target, says Khalil, for having "repeatedly voted to fund the war."

"The overwhelming sense from people is that we can't have another eight years of Republicans, and I sympathize," he says, "but what good is it to elect Democrats if they're going to continue Republicans' policies?"

—Adam Hyla

Change

Have baby, will travel: to the doctor, the grocery store, or, at last resort, just down the freeway until the vehicular thrum lulls the little one to sleep. And the seat they travel in? Getting it affixed correctly to the car can be just as perplexing as the newborn. If so, call Sue Emery.

Emery is a certified child passenger safety technician, and in her off hours she makes house calls, delivering hands-on guidance with a comic deadpan in the driveways and garages of safety-conscious strangers.

"I decided years ago that with my knowledge and ability I wanted to be at the disposal of every parent, that my service would be free of charge" — though she accepts tips — "and that I would always go to the parent."

Always? "I'll travel comfortably within 100 miles of the Space Needle. But I've been known to go farther."

"Everyone deserves the option of having good quality education when they're keeping their little ones safe."

Her basic safety tip: "Get help. Even if a parent has done everything 100 percent wrong, if they ask for help they've done everything right."

To ask for help, call Emery's employer at 1-800-BUCK-L-UP or visit www.seatcheck.org.

—Adam Hyla



Secure: Sue Emery is the only certified car seat expert who regularly makes house calls.

Photo by Adam Hyla

Lora Lake hits snag

The 162 affordable units that King County worked so hard to save at Burien's Lora Lake Apartments won't be re-rented to low-income families in April as planned: The King County Housing Authority said last week that environmental tests show contamination at the site from when it was an auto wrecking yard in the 1950s, forcing the property's current owner, the Port of Seattle, to conduct more testing and a voluntary clean-up that will be overseen by the state Department of Ecology.

The Port conducted the tests last July when it started demolition on 72 of Lora Lake's 234 units to clear a buffer zone for its new third runway at Sea Tac Airport. The Port bought the property in 1998, but, in the wake of lawsuits and delays with the third runway project, it struck a deal in 1999 allowing the housing authority to manage the complex.

Prior to the deal's expiration last July, the housing agency lobbied the Port and the City of Burien, which had rezoned the area to light industrial and hoped to attract a big-box store, to allow it to buy and keep the 162 units that weren't in the buffer zone; arguing it made no sense for the Port to destroy the units in an area that's rapidly losing affordable housing. When that didn't work, the housing authority sued to take the property by eminent domain, leading to a court injunction and an eventual settlement in which the Port agreed to sell the 162 units to the housing agency — but

not before the Port retook possession of the site and, in September, demolished the 72 uncontested units.

In such situations it's standard practice to conduct environmental and other site tests, says Rhonda Rosenberg, a spokesperson for the housing authority. The results, which only recently came in, show hazardous chemicals — dioxin and petroleum hydrocarbons — in samples taken at seven and 14 feet. She says the housing authority does not believe its previous tenants, who were evicted in June, would have been exposed, as the contaminants are believed to be sealed under Lora Lake's concrete-on-slab construction.

The housing agency had planned to re-rent the remaining units in April, but that's now on hold for an unspecified period pending what additional tests show. "We don't know what we don't know," Rosenberg says. "Right now it appears that the contaminants are isolated underground, but we need to verify they're not mobile."

—Cydny Gillis

Subprime loans go to OR minorities

Black and Hispanic Oregonians at all income levels were more likely than whites to have received subprime loans in 2006, according to a study released in January by the Oregon Center for Public Policy, an economic research group.

Consumer advocates contend that many homeowners have been pushed into subprime mortgages they can't afford or persuaded to refinance unnecessarily by predatory mortgage brokers, who have financial incentives to sign people to expensive loans. In many cases, recipients of the high-risk loans actually qualified for better terms.

"We have seen a common practice where someone with a prime rate credit score sits down with their broker and ends up being sold a high-interest subprime loan," said Angela Martin, director of the Economic Fairness Coalition at the progressive advocacy group Our Oregon.

The Center for Responsible Lending projects that 8,372 homes in Oregon ultimately will be lost to foreclosure on subprime loans made in 2005 and 2006.

Those foreclosures will have a disproportionate impact on minority homeowners, according to the OCCP.

In 2006, their study found, about half of middle-income black and Hispanic borrowers in Oregon received subprime loans, compared with 25 percent of white borrowers making the same amount of money. The disparity appeared at every income level. The study does not account for borrowers' credit ratings, which could explain some of the difference, but according to Michael Leachman, an

Stop the Sweeps

Real Change

cordially invites you
to act up and dine out

at CITY
HALL

Thursday,
March 13

DAYTIME PROTEST
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
AND 4 - 5:30 PM

DINNER
5:30 - 6:30 PM

CAMP OUT
6 PM - 9 AM

Come for Dinner & Stay the Night

The 2008 One Night Count found more than 1,800 people surviving outside on a night when emergency shelters were full. Meanwhile, the Mayor's Office continues to pursue a policy of demolishing homeless people's encampments and throwing away their property without providing alternative shelter.

Camp Out with Real Change to demand Mayor Nickels stop all non-emergency homeless sweeps.

we need your help...

volunteer for the
downtown
daytime protest

OR just come for
dinner and the
camp out

HELP coordinate -
attend the next
community meeting:

March 9, 5 - 7 PM
Trinity United Church
6512 23rd Ave. NW

RSVP or find out more: contact Natalie
Natalien@realchangenews.org / 206.441.3247 X 213
or visit www.realchangenews.org & click *Stop the Sweeps*

Museum at former Central District school opens this week

African-American history on display

By CYDNEY GILLIS,
Staff Reporter

It's been 23 years since three activists broke into Seattle's old Colman School to demand it be turned into a museum of Black heritage. But in some ways, as the Northwest African American Museum finally prepares to open its doors on March 8, the mood is nearly as desperate.

Outside the renovated 1909 building, a young woman and her friends are unloading boxes of belongings for one of 36 new low-income units that she's moving into upstairs. Inside, the scene is much the same, and museum curator Barbara Earl Thomas is a bit wide-eyed: With just a week to the opening, cases of unpacked exhibit items line the walls, suppliers and technicians come and go, and staff members load in sculpture by James Washington Jr. and photographs of Jacob Lawrence — one of America's pre-eminent Black artists of the 20th Century.

The Harlem Renaissance painter died in Seattle in 2000 after a long career teaching at the University of Washington. The chair in which he painted — a modest high-back of plaid wool, adorned with two wash cloths to keep paint off the arms — stands in a nearly empty gallery that will showcase his work and that of Washington, a self-taught artist associated with the Northwest School of the 1940s.

The paintings and sculpture are going into a main gallery that will have rotating exhibits. An adjacent hall displays a permanent collection on who's who and where it's at in northwestern Black history, from a wagon wheel display for pioneer George Washington Bush, who settled near Olympia in 1846, to an interactive storefront representing Seattle's Jackson Street jazz clubs — one of which was the site of 17-year-old Ray Charles' first gig in 1948.

But the museum isn't an archive of big names — far from it. While the artifacts of the famous or historic are here — Lawrence's chair, a hat and scarf of Jimi Hendrix's, a trumpet of Seattle jazz great Floyd Standifer's — the museum's focus, Thomas says, is on ordinary people and the fabric of relationships by which they prospered.

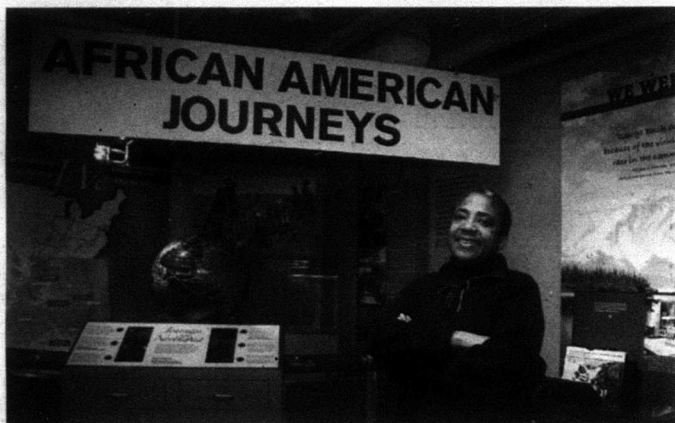
In the permanent exhibit, entitled "African American Journeys," the handsome face in a photograph labeled simply "unidentified porter circa 1951" is a case in point. Part of the exhibit explains that many Blacks came to Seattle and Portland during World War II to get jobs in plane factories or shipyards, but families moved around the Northwest quite a bit, says museum director Carver Gayton, because most were connected to the railroads that had brought them from the South and Midwest.

"The train was not only a means of transportation but employment," Gayton says. "There aren't too many families here who didn't have someone who worked for the railroads" — including his maternal grandfather, who worked as a waiter.

Museum visitors can trace these travels in a general way or very specifically: A globe in the "Journeys" collection displays the trade routes by which slaves were brought into the U.S. from the Congo, Guinea, or many other points in Africa. There's also a state-of-the-art genealogy center with

Museum visitors can trace the travels of their ancestors in a general way or very specifically: A globe in the "Journeys" collection displays the trade routes by which slaves were brought into the U.S. from the Congo, Guinea, or many other points in Africa.

computers that visitors can use to research their family tree — in part using software donated by the Mormons, who "have the most extensive genealogical research base of any organization in the world," Gayton says.



Barbara Earl Thomas stands before the Northwest African-American Museum's gallery, "Journeys," which traces the routes by which Blacks were taken to North America and migrated to the Pacific Northwest. Photo by Mark Sullio

Back in the "Journeys" gallery, he's stopped for an introduction to a contractor who'll be supplying the museum with its paper towels and toilet paper — a great relief to Gayton, who says he didn't know who was going to do that. Down the hall, within earshot of a video in which people are singing "We Shall Overcome," the museum's designer, Donald King, points out to Gayton that lights shining through the "Journeys" sign make it difficult to see where the sign's arrow is pointing.

"I'm feeling really frantic, but everything is here now," Thomas says of

the scene. "This is the point where everything comes together. It's the point of chaos — but that's what the creative process is about." ■

[Events]

The Northwest African American Museum opens March 8, 11 a.m., at 2300 S. Massachusetts St., Seattle. Admission is free through March 15, when NAAM hosts a grand-opening event, 8 p.m., at the Paramount Theater with guests Quincy Jones and Ernestine Anderson. Tickets: \$25 and up. For information, call (206)267-1823 or visit www.naamnw.org.

Seattle artists explore the difficulties of returning home from prison

Life After Exile

By STEPHEN PERRY,
Contributing Writer

In Holly Eckert's ambitious new musical *The Exile Project*, Marcus returns home from prison craving the simple comforts of a soft bed and fresh vegetables. He has been deprived of these amenities for the last 20 years along with fair pay, a sense of safety, and basic dignity. Marcus, played by Gary Reed, is so damaged from his incarceration that he retreats in fear as his mother rushes to hug him when he enters her house. Even the most basic tasks of making a phone call or crossing a street are challenging; the free world includes more bustle and choice than he can cope with. "Maybe I should just go back," Marcus angrily laments. "At least I knew the rules."

This is a common sentiment of those recently released from prison, many of whom have great difficulty finding employment. On the other hand, work in prison is plentiful — and extremely low-paying. Eckert,

the director, choreographer, and co-writer of *The Exile Project*, says she was inspired to write the play after volunteering in a public defenders' office and visiting the state correctional complex at Monroe.

What does Eckert believe to be the cause of the nation's still-growing prison population? Greed. "As soon as you introduce the idea that the prison system is a private industry to make a profit...then what do you need? You need criminals," she says. And it's not just companies like the Corrections Corporation of America, who own more prisons than any other company in the U.S., that are profiting: "It's IBM, Microsoft, Intel. These are huge companies that are going into prisons and that are exploiting prison labor at 20 cents an hour."

The Exile Project's protagonist takes a dig at the CCA, cursing his tiny wages that only dent the mass of debt

he rings up while in prison. However, the play is not about his time physically incarcerated; rather, it explores the mental incarceration that lingers long after the sentence is served. Marcus' greatest challenge is forgiving his cousin, who has become the focal point for his rage. Marcus' anger is ever-present in his body and his voice; furrowed and frowning, he speaks in a whispery, defeated fury between violent outbursts. The only language he is fluent in is that of intimidation.

The grit of these themes is tempered by the play's elements of humor, dance, and song. It seems that Marcus dreams in musical numbers; while he slumbers, paintings of his ancestors come to life and flit around his subconscious mind. One of the more successful of these vignettes involves a reanimated jazz singer sauntering off the canvas and singing a maternal,

See EXILE, Continued on Page 10

Vendor of the Week



Paridon Williams

It's hard to say exactly what it was about Lessie Smith's southern kitchen in Tacoma. Maybe it was fried catfish or it could have been cornbread or it could have been the buzz of conversation over sweet tea. But Paridon Williams, Lessie's son, thinks it was Lessie herself.

"Because of my mom's spirit, she brought that home feeling to everybody," says Williams, this week's Vendor of the Week. That warmth, says Williams, continues to inspire him.

Lessie watched as Williams grew from a baby to a kid and from a kid into an adult. And, man, did he grow: when high school graduation and then college rolled around, Williams topped out at 6'10", made for a basketball court (talking to him kind of hurts my neck). After college, Williams became a professional photographer, capturing everything worth remembering: weddings, banquets, graduations, parties. And between a

job, a girlfriend, and a mother, things were going grand.

But then came disaster.

"I was just not even existing," remembers Williams of the time after his mother's death. "I was just there."

Rock bottom. The blues. Despair. Depression. A funeral in your head. There's a million ways to put it, but none of them really do. His relationship to his girlfriend — and, well, the world — suffered.

But on his way to a psychiatrist appointment Williams saw someone selling *Real Change*.

"First couple days after selling the paper," says Williams. "I just knew it was something I could do." These days you can find him at the Trader Joe's in Burien and the Redmond PCC on Avondale. The paper, he says, "brings out a likeness" to his mom.

"Selling *Real Change* made me realize how much I was missing out on," says Williams. "Keep on smiling." ■

—Story and photo by JP Gritton

Have a vendor you'd like to see profiled as Vendor of the Week? Share your nominee with us, by contacting editor@realchangenews.org.

Old Wounds

If the sheen reflected in cab windows could speak would it not be halting voices of broken partnership stumbling blindly like the blues to exhibit the custard of old wounds?

Pain is always considered to be the midwife of sentiment but the mass is left critically deformed hawking an evening's romantic longing to find their voice in another's song of love stillborn. Yes. Poetry is the most pitiless sweatshop of all.

The crucibles that leave their streaked mascara among the brooding of the heaving and forgotten human race are rummage bins where the cracked vanities of frustrated blush leave scars behind as victorious armies smear the prison society of our tears.

Each midlife crisis is a revolution crushed like the hopes of children in the hands of cynical teachers. What made me believe? Was it this song I heard like an heirloom lullaby? What made me throw my fortune to unknown comrades? What made me carry the weight of a fool's nightstand? I dream of an empathic gesture hurling a book across the room, but what is the point of dramatizing old wounds?

The wound keeps ripping like a muslim prayer housing in my stomach like a smite twisting a sword into my quest for rest and meaning. I believe it stands a chance of ripping my being off the coat hanger of my existence offering the only cloak available to the nakedness of death. If only I could stretch the injury into a garment to keep me warm like the bourbon in a glass of ice and pull it on like smoky lights playing charades with the ghosts of Trumptown.

—Mac Crary

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Sunday

...but Brigitte!

I'm sorry, Henry,
but no one comes between
me and my cow.

Don't cry
because
I've
gone
because
I've
gone!

Pike Place Market:
Seattle's
own since
1907

A doctor who's risked death to give women a choice

35 years since Roe v. Wade

By **CYDNEY GILLIS**,
Staff Reporter

It's a good thing Susan Wicklund is rock solid about the work she does. Otherwise, she'd have never put up with a career in which she's been harassed, stalked, had her driveway blockaded, her home broken into, her life threatened, and had to send her daughter to school in a police car.

Those are just a few of the things that the good doctor has lived through in 20 years of providing abortions — an odyssey that Wicklund shares in *This Common Secret: My Journey as an Abortion Doctor* (Public Affairs, \$25), a riveting new memoir that traverses the moral dilemma of abortion and the hypocrisy of its foes through the eyes of a doctor who's been there, in more ways than one.

At the age of 22, while still single and juggling three jobs in Portland, Ore., Wicklund became pregnant and made a decision she would never forget — not out of regret, but because of how she was treated. During the abortion, she asked the doctor about the pain she was feeling. He not only barked at her to shut up, but called nurses to hold her down.

Wicklund chose to enter medical school and train in obstetrics and abortion so that other women wouldn't have to go through what she did. For years, she worked a day here and a day there at clinics that she flew or drove between in the Midwest — sometimes wearing disguises to fool right-to-lifers waiting for her at airports and clinic entrances — then opened her own clinic in Bozeman, Montana. But, from the get-go, she faced a resistance that her book makes grievous in the many facets of its irony.

As a resident, for instance, Wicklund argued with her hospital board to perform abortions, but was told that the community didn't need them — by men with wives or daughters whom she knew had had abortions. There are also stories of the staunch pro-lifer who came in and demanded an abortion, the fake patient who tried to infiltrate a clinic where Wicklund worked, and the anti-abortion doctor she had to browbeat into giving prenatal care to a woman who didn't actually want to terminate, but had no money for a doctor.

Through it all, Wicklund has never lost sight of why she provides abortion,

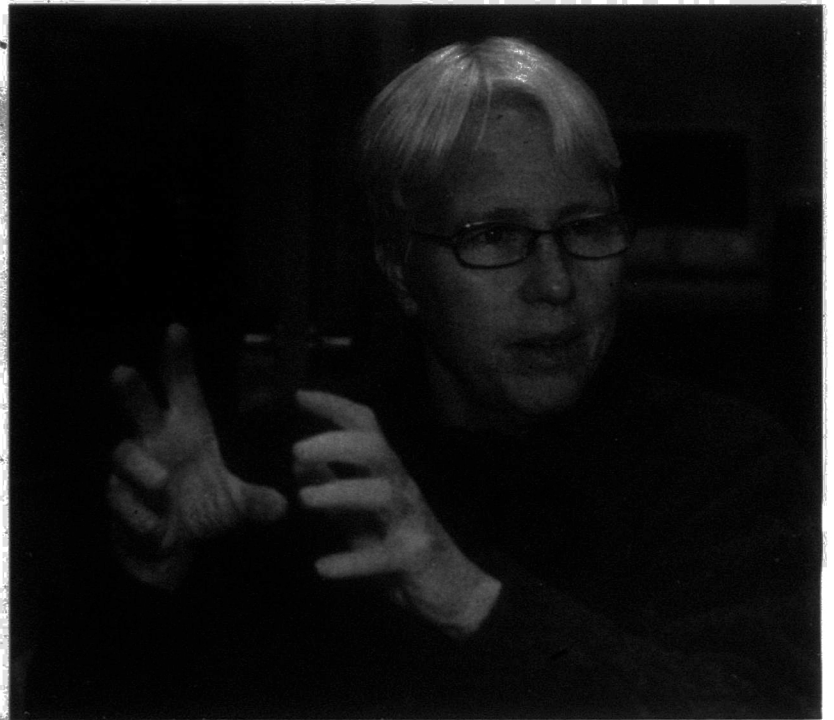
something that was only reinforced in 1992, the year she finally told her grandmother what she does for a living. Wicklund was about to appear on "60 Minutes," a TV program her grandmother never missed, but when she sat her grandmother down to break the news, the old woman had some news for her.

At the age of 16, her grandmother and a girlfriend had gone into the bedroom of a friend who was pregnant and used something sharp to start her bleeding. The girls stuffed rags inside her to no avail: she died right in front of them on the bed — an incident she'd keep secret for 72 years.

"I know exactly what kind of work you do," Wicklund's grandmother told her, "and it is a good thing. People like you do it safely so that people like me don't murder their best friends."

After reading the book, I was shocked by all you'd been through. What do you consider the worst incident with the right-to-life protesters?

The most frightening for me personally, because it was the first time that I came face to face with them, was in a parking garage in the St. Paul/Minneapolis airport. I was alone, it was at night, I walked to an upper floor where my car was parked and was walking towards it and people got out of a van and approached me and started yelling and screaming at me to stop providing abortions and to stop killing babies. It was the first time I'd been directly confronted when I was alone. There was nobody around to help me.... Just like a cornered cat, you know, you kind of come unglued, and I came unglued, out of fear, out of absolute pure fear — and



Susan Wicklund's decades as an abortion doctor have shown her more than enough of the moral hazards of her profession and the ugly tactics of abortion's foes *Photo by Elizabeth*

anger, knowing that they'd also been to my home, they'd been to my daughter's school. It's like they had violated every part of my life that they could. I felt this

It was the first time I'd been directly confronted when I was alone. There was nobody around to help me.... I came unglued, out of fear, out of absolute pure fear.

just intense anger and intense fear [so] strongly, and just started yelling [and] screaming at them how dare they do all this to us. And then they got to their van — I'd backed them right up back to where they'd come out of, and I went into my car and got my camera and then went back to them and I was like, "Show your face!" because this guy was trying to hide his face, and I was like, "If you're so damn proud, put your face up!" I was pretty much out of control, quite frankly, as far as just being angry, and then got back in my car and got out of the parking lot, and got out to a safe place away from the airport and pulled the car over and got out and just vomited and cried.

Where did you gather the strength to put up with all of this?

From the patients. I had been providing abortions for almost two years before

the severe protestant was directed at me, so I understood what it was like for the patients to have someone who was treating them with respect and helping them leave the clinic feeling empowered instead of beat up.

What creates that empowerment?

It's reinforcing for women that, first of all, it's their decision and not somebody else's, that nobody can tell them whether they can or can't have this abortion, or whether they can or can't have a full-term pregnancy. Not a husband or a mother or a partner or anybody else can decide that, and I think just letting that sink in, first of all, is so strong for women. Sometimes they will come in and say, well, I have to do this because so-and-so says I have to, and just taking the time to sit down with them and making them really realize they have to own it themselves, this is their decision; and then throughout the process giving them information, as much information as they can possibly absorb about their decision process, what abortion is, how it's done, what to expect afterward, birth control, all of that. Information is power in itself.

If a woman gets the information. If it weren't for your book, I wouldn't have known that the so-called "pregnancy

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Taking the Lord's Name in Vain

■ Foreskin's Lament: A memoir

By Shalom Auslander, Riverhead Books, Hardcover, 2007. 320 pages, \$24.95

Review by AUSTIN WALTERS,
Contributing Writer

Shalom Auslander can sum up his life's struggles in a few short words; "I believe in God. It's been a real problem for me." Although he rebelled against his Jewish Orthodox upbringing, disowning his parents in the process, he has never been able to shake his terrified respect for God. Always overwhelmed by guilt,

Foreskin's Lament is a funny theological rant and a touching rumination on marriage and family, however it may offend more than it delights (how many swear words can one person sling at God anyway?)

Auslander negotiates with God daily, tempering his unorthodox indulgences with acts of devotion.

Continuing his struggle against the rules of religion into adulthood, he is panic stricken when he learns that his wife is pregnant with their first child and he'll be expected to be a role model. *Foreskin's Lament*, an amusing new memoir, chronicles Auslander's frenzied path to fatherhood.

Reflecting back on his youth, Auslander identifies key moments of hypocrisy in his Orthodox upbringing. One summer, his father spent entire days building a new ark for the synagogue and entire nights getting uncontrollably drunk. The father would threaten and hit the boys while drinking, with the same devotion and determination that he used to turn ordinary wood into a magnificent structure and homage to God's glory.

The rules of the Sabbath also seem to interfere with leading a normal life, especially with so many restrictions on food and pleasure. Starting with a Slim Jim at a summer baseball game, Auslander begins to buy or steal any banned item he can get his hands on, vowing that he'll go back to his kosher ways at any time. When he discovers pornography in the house, he justifies his own clandestine masturbation by immediately burning and denouncing the soiled pages.

He attends a reform school in Israel hoping it will make him devout. But when that plan fails, Auslander walks away from his family and his community, leaving everything behind except his guilt-laden fear of God. He worries that his unborn child will pay the price for all the crimes that the father has committed against God, and convinces himself that his child is doomed. The thoughts are unbearable—"a never-ending horror film festival plays in



my mind," he writes, with constant gruesome images of death, anguish and torture.

When an ultrasound reveals that they are having a son, the foreskin debate starts to embody every contradiction in Auslander's life. Removing it feels like giving into a belief system that he has worked so hard to escape; leaving it alone could mark a final symbolic break from the Orthodox system, but it might also cause heartache for a child who is physically different from his peers.

Can one person really suffer all of this pain and torment in the hands of God? Auslander's inner dialogue is utterly ridiculous and hilarious all at the same time. After writing some inflam-

matory essays on the computer, he mutters at God "I'm stopping now okay, You Pain in the Ass? Relax." Sensing her husband's angst, Auslander's wife says, "They really did a number on you" when he returns from checking that their baby is not dead for the fifth time in one night.

Foreskin's Lament is a funny theological rant and a touching rumination on marriage and family, however it may offend more than it delights (how many swear words can one person sling at God anyway?) Auslander's irreverent message should be read as humor and can be enjoyed by any of us who struggle with family, God, or the seemingly arbitrary rules that govern so many facets of our lives. ■

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flights

His hand, ended

it.

It had been
alive...

had been!
made, for his friends.

Close!

Not...
not, half.

Not, here!
Rising

—Stan Burris

■ The End of the World Book

By Alistair McCartney, University of Wisconsin, Hardcover, 2008, 314 pages, \$26.95

A: Alistair McCartney, back when he was a wee little lad in Perth, Australia, fell asleep on Volume A of the *World Book Encyclopedia*. When his mum roused him from his youthful reverie, there was "drool streaming onto the gold A of the book's spine." Or maybe that didn't happen at all, since Alistair, grown now and living in L.A., still believes he's deep in that youthful slumberland, the encyclopedia standing in for a pillow.

B: Because Alistair has yet to exit his dream-world, *The End of the World Book* is written like an encyclopedia. From "Abercrombie and Fitch" to "Zoo, The," the narrator shuttles us along a tour of his life and loves. Along the way, we learn he's sweet on "Kafka, Franz" and, as he describes in the "Heart, The" entry, that his "heart is like Anna Karenina's red handbag."

C: Catalogued one after the other, the entries provide evidence that McCartney writes with grace and ease. Where he encounters trouble, however, is in creating a novel/memoir that gels. Each entry, taken separately, works fine as its own little morsel. But collectively, they add up to a less than satisfying read.

D: Devising a conceit for a book that feels honest can be tricky, and try as he might, McCartney can't quite overcome his encyclopedic device. If instead of focusing on moving us from A to Z, he'd have concentrated on merely moving us, he could have crafted a book that, while not necessarily keeping us in thrall till the the world's end was a night at hand, could have left a feeling of satisfaction we wished would've lingered for eternity. ■

—Rosette Royale



Adventures in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning

As this great Nation prepares to change, it's time for us all to look at the lessons of the past for inspiration and guidance in changing. A particularly important part of history is the economic part.

Usually, when someone proposes to talk about economic history, they mean the history of making and spending money. But to waste space today, I would like to talk about the opposite, namely the history of not making and spending money. I want to talk about the history of poverty.

The poor have always been with us. According to Amos, a minor prophet, the going price for a poor person in Israel ca. 750 BC was a cheap pair of sandals. So you know they had poor people in fairly large supply. In fact, they had so many poor people that they made it a practice to talk of THE poor, as opposed to this poor guy or that poor guy.

In those days, the poor were mainly used to determine who was a good person or not. If you treated the poor justly you were good. But if you showed favoritism, by say, not lashing them when they stole bread, that showed you were in need of correction. The idea that you might favor poor people may sound strange today, but in those times it was the equivalent of Populism.

The poor were so numerous in Biblical times that they became the cool people. Jesus hung with them, and there were

poor-wannabes. To satisfy the people who wanted to be poor but couldn't quite go the extra mile it took, a new category called "the poor in spirit" was invented. Just like today's categories of "middle class" or "Black" or "Zen", anybody in those times could say they were poor in spirit. No one could disprove it. Especially since they had no surveillance cameras.

It was the practical Romans who said

The poor were so numerous in Biblical times that they became the cool people. Jesus hung with them, and there were poor-wannabes.

"let's get real" about this and first defined poverty. They called it paupertas and had ways to measure it. You had to empty your pockets and they'd count your cash and tell you if you qualified. In some cases they would just take your word for it. That has come down to us as the rule of "in forma pauperis" by which you can get some relief by swearing a "pauper's oath." The point was, they had a definition, so they could always check if you were lying.

In the Middle Ages there was a period beginning around the 13th Century when there was some confusion of beggars with the poor. Monks would take vows of poverty and go around begging (the word

"beggar" comes from the name of such an order) and people would get annoyed (especially at fakers among them) and take their annoyance out on all the poor. Things got so far out of hand that by the 16th century the Council of Trent had to get behind the virtues of owning property, to stem the tide of mendicants.

For many centuries the idea of poverty was mainly of concern to churches and courts. It wasn't until the late 1800s that sociologists came up with the term "underprivileged." To understand this term you have to know that the word "privilege" really means "private law." In other words to have privilege is to have laws on your own personal side. So the underprivileged are people who have less of that. In other words, it means, "poor in laws." Recognizing that there could be such a thing was a great leap forward which required the invention of many new college departments and degrees.

When I was growing up in the 1950s, the poor divided neatly into three categories. There was 1) the Salt Of The Earth poor. That was your basic Appalachian poor, your coal miners, your sand farmers, and such. There were 2) the vagabonds and the hobos. And there were 3) minorities.

Then, Ronald Reagan was elected president, and invented homelessness. And here we are. ■

Sound off and read more:
drwesb.blogspot.com



Thurs., Jan. 24, 9:57 p.m., Rainier Ave.

S. An officer off duty was working security at the QFC on the 2700 block on Rainier Ave. S., and was inside the store chatting with the manager. They were standing by a check stand when an employee ran towards the south entrance and uttered something like "He's walking out the store." Officer turned around and saw the witness running through the exit, and followed. He got outside and he saw the witness and the suspect — a transient white male aged 32 — in a struggle. Officer radioed for help, and went to assist, noting that the suspect appeared to be actively resisting. Officer identified himself as Seattle Police, ordered the suspect to the ground, and attempted to get his hands behind his back. Suspect resisted by moving his hand under his chest. Several other officers arrived and helped officer to get suspect handcuffed, scraping his hand on the ground. Arresting officer then verified events with the store employee, who stated that he saw the suspect leaving with a cart full of un-bagged groceries and thought it was odd. He attempted to detain the suspect, who struggled and got away, which is when he ran after him. Suspect gave his name and date of birth, and was read his Miranda rights. He said he understood, but was homeless and needed the food. When asked for ID he stated he had his wallet in his back pocket, but officer was unable to locate it. Suspect stated that he felt someone take his wallet from his pocket when he was on the floor. The officer asked his fellow officers if they had taken the wallet, but they all stated they had not seen a wallet on suspect's person, or on the ground. Suspect was adamant he had a wallet, but an area check was negative.

During the interview the arresting officer noticed fresh blood on the hood of his patrol car, and asked suspect if he was injured. Suspect stated he wasn't sure. Officer looked at his hands and saw that his right fingers/knuckles were cut and bleeding. Another officer noted this, and called for Seattle Fire. SFD responded and treated the suspect's wounds. He was then transported to King County Jail and booked for theft. The stolen groceries were recovered, and valued at \$63.72.

Fri., Feb. 22, 1:53 a.m., Broadway Ave E. Officer working uniformed patrol found two suspects sleeping in the front door area of the Than Brothers pho restaurant on Broadway Ave. he contacted the individuals and ran their names through data. The first suspect ran clear, but the second suspect, a homeless white male aged 31, was found to have an outstanding warrant. This was verified, and he 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.

Bus Chick: Let's call the whole thing off

Bus Chick,
Transit
Authority



Carla Saulter

My husband, known to most of you as Bus Nerd, is my true partner in car-free living. We both thoroughly enjoy riding the bus — both alone and with each other — and we both love living without the hassle and expense of cars. But the similarities end there. Bus Nerd and I have very different riding styles — from why to how to when we get on the bus.

Though we both appreciate the many environmental, social, physical, and financial benefits of carfreedom, we decided to take the plunge for different reasons. My wise and frugal husband committed himself to car-freedom right out of college, as a way to save money. His employer provided him with a free bus pass, so he saw no reason to waste his salary on a vehicle. My decision to stop driving was motivated by guilt. I wanted to stop being part of the pollution-traffic-sprawl problem.

For me, one of the best things about the bus is the time to be still. While I enjoy reading as much as the next nerdy bus chick, I am just as happy to think, nap, or people-watch. Bus Nerd, on the other

hand, needs to occupy every moment of his rides. If he's not reading the news on his phone, he's answering e-mail or (I kid you not) writing code. For him, one of the great advantages of the bus is the opportunity it affords to get things done. You can't fix bugs behind a wheel.

I prefer to get to a stop at least two minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. My husband, Bus Nerd, on the other hand, banks on the bus being a couple of minutes late.

I prefer to avoid transferring when possible. It interrupts the flow of the ride, prevents me from settling in (to a book, a nap, a conversation), and requires additional exposure to the elements. If I have an option between a single, slow bus and two (or more) that get me there faster, I'll choose the single bus — unless it's August or I'm pressed for time. For Bus Nerd, the most

important factor is how long it takes to get where he's going. If transferring 18 times would get him to his destination five minutes faster than not transferring at all, he'd gladly do it.

Perhaps because — thanks to my father's chronic lateness — I spent far too many a childhood morning running to catch the 55, I prefer to get to a stop at least two minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. That way, I never have to rush or worry about missing it. Nerd, on the other hand, banks on the bus being a couple of minutes late. He'd rather not waste time waiting at a stop, so he rushes out the door at the last minute — often just as the bus is arriving, occasionally after it has already passed. If you added up my daily 2-5 minutes and his occasional 15, we'd probably come out just about even.

He says tomAYto, and I say tomAH-to.... ■

Got something to say about public transportation in Seattle? Email Bus Chick at: buschick@gmail.com or blog.seattlepi.nwsource.com/buschick

Letters

editor@realchangenews.org

Get in here

Dear Real Change,

An open letter to fellow readers:

If you have been reading the paper recently, I am assuming you are aware of the mayor's office's policies of trashing homeless people's camps and throwing away their property. I am assuming you would also be aware of the

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The YWCA is seeking a Family Advocate to provide coordination of support services for large homeless families in the Permanent Housing Stability Program. FT, \$14,42hr+Bens. Details at www.ywcaworks.org. Resp. to Felecia Johnson at fjohnson@ywcaworks.org.

REACH 30,000 LOYAL READERS

Call (206) 441-3247, or email
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upcoming ordinance that would criminalize sleeping outdoors in a city that continues to lack affordable housing or shelter space.

It is time for us to follow *Real Change* as an organization and support the *Real Change* Organizing Project in whatever way we can. What this means right now is simply showing up — for an hour or all night — to the upcoming March 13 Camp Out at City Hall. Clearing homeless people out of the public sight is just one more step in turning Seattle into a "world-class city" (i.e. playground for the wealthy). Fellow middle-class do-gooders, what sort of city do you think Seattle will be in five, 10, or 20 years? What sort of city do you want it to be?

This is just one issue, but RCOP is laying the groundwork toward us organizing for the long haul. I know a lot of us work, have lives, and are very busy, but nonetheless, I know we all have ways we can support RCOP: Where do you work? Can your business donate something or at least put posters for future events in the window? Do you have art or graphic design skills? Can you volunteer some time to make some powerful posters in the future? Are you part of any community, religious or civic group that can lend space or support to later efforts? Can you organize a small fundraiser? Do you have a sleeping bag or tent to donate? Can you forward an email to your friends?

Make a single call to Mayor Nickels? Do you get the picture?

With Respect,

David Cahn

Real Change Organizing Project

Leading the (wannabe) Leaders

Dear Real Change,

Here is my idea for a *Real Change*: I think Mrs. Clinton should put her "money where her mouth is." If these people can raise an amount like \$35 million to travel around the country selling promises and knocking their competition like children who could use a time-out, why not challenge them to take that money and actually do something with it that would make a difference in the quality of life for the people they supposedly want to "serve." Thirty-five million dollars could give housing to how many homeless people across America? I don't know how much it all costs, but how many people could you get off the streets of Seattle if you had that amount of money? It doesn't have to be a two-bedroom house — a room would be great, right?

These politicians and elected people seriously need a reality check as to their purpose in these offices, and remember they work for us; we don't work for them. We are "hiring" them for the job, and we pay their royal salaries.

Get a grip, "leaders."

Donna Stewart

SUBPRIME, Continued from Page 3

OCPP policy analyst, there is more than just credit at issue.

"It strikes us that we've established a kind of two-tier mortgage market that has obvious racial implications," Leachman said. "It's built into the structure of how banks tend to reach minority buyers." While banks wait for customers to come to them, he said, brokers actively seek out potential borrowers and encourage them to refinance their homes. "The mortgage broker represents themselves as somebody who is really acting in [the borrower's] interest," Leachman said, so "it seems like it must be OK."

The researchers looked specifically at the lending practices of Washington Mutual, one of the largest lenders in the country. It found that while most white borrowers received their loans from Washington

Mutual itself, 63 percent of black and 74 percent of Hispanic homebuyers were served by Long Beach Mortgage Co., a subsidiary of Washington Mutual that deals through a network of mortgage brokers and makes mostly subprime loans.

In 1996, three years before Washington Mutual purchased Long Beach, the Department of Justice filed a complaint that accused Long Beach of charging higher loan prices to Black, Hispanic, female and older borrowers than to their white male counterparts. The same day the complaint was filed, Long Beach agreed in a settlement to pay \$3 million in damages to 1,200 clients, though it denied that its practices were discriminatory.

—Mara Grunbaum

Reprinted from Street Roots. ©Street News Service: www.street-papers.org.

EXILE, Continued from Page 5

darkly sexual lullaby as she caresses Marcus' sleeping form. Accompanying the voices of the formidable Selena Whitaker-Paquet and Carissa Meisner Smit is the minimalistic strumming of prolific Seattle musician Amy Denio. *The Exile Project* sounds sometimes like a shanty and sometimes like Soundgarden — even the occasional Casio-tone beat can be heard.

This is the first time writing a musical for both Eckert and Denio. The story that they have crafted is earnest but rather rough hewn; "We have one more step in the process," Eckert tells me. "We have to do a little more editing." The excitement of the cast was clear in the final week of rehearsal as they tightened up and pared down lines and dance numbers in preparation for the play's debut on Friday. Says actress Smit, "That's original theater: it's always evolving." ■



Chloe (Wendy Woolery) is the mother of Marcus (Gary Reed) a troubled ex-con returning home in *The Exile Project*, an original theatrical piece on the correctional system that opens March 7. Photo by Jim Rogers

[Viewing]

The Exile Project runs March 7, 8, 14, and 15, at 8 p.m., and March 9 and 16 at 2 p.m., at West Seattle High School's theater at 3000 California Ave. SW. \$15 general admission, \$12 students and seniors.

ABORTION, Continued from Page 7

crisis centers" run by right-to-life groups have gotten \$30 million in federal funding. I was shocked.

It's atrocious, because these places are not honest. They're not real medical clinics. [But] the way some of them advertise, some people think they can get an abortion at these clinics, and in fact they don't get that at all. They just get very inaccurate information and pressured and coerced and oftentimes harassed after they leave because people have given their phone numbers and their addresses. And there are people from these clinics who will go to the homes of the minor and tell the parents that the minor has been in there talking about abortion [or they're] going to husbands and telling them that their wives have been in there. ... It's very frightening. Basically they'll do anything they can to delay having an abortion until [the woman is] too far along. And some of these groups promise them help with the baby, [but] once they're past the point of not being able to have an abortion, they drop them. It's not their concern anymore.

But you actually browbeat a right-to-life doctor into providing prenatal care. Talk about that.

There was one physician in Bozeman who always wrote these letters to

the editor that were just inflammatory against abortion and against me [saying] anybody who has an abortion is killing a baby. And there was a woman who came in who obviously didn't want an abortion, but she had had some prenatal care before, with another birth she had at a local OB/GYN, but hadn't paid her bill. She didn't have any money; she didn't have insurance, and they would not even see her for a prenatal visit. ... So I said if you really want to have this child, let's try to find you some prenatal care. And she was game, she wanted to do that. So I called

It's reinforcing for women that, first of all, it's their decision.... Not a husband or a mother or a partner or anybody else can decide that, and I think just letting that sink in, first of all, is so strong for women.

this local crisis pregnancy center and, of course, I've been the devil incarnate to them all this time, and the woman who answered said, "Hello," and I said, "Hi, this is Dr. Wicklund," and there was this dead silence on the other end, absolute.

And I said, "Hello? This is Dr. Wicklund."

Still silent. [I said], "This is Dr. Wicklund. I need your help." [And the woman said] "Really?" ... I finally got to talk to [the doctor] and said, "Well, let's put your money where your mouth is. If you think it's so important that women don't have abortions, then do this. Save a life." And he ended up doing it. He did the prenatal care and the birth, but [the patient told us] he complained the whole time [about the free care]. I never turn patients away. I mean, I had more tomatoes, car parts and hay for my horses than anybody in the county because I just never turned anyone away, ever.

In Seattle, Aradia Women's Health Center never turned patients away, either, but now it's gone because the number of non-paying patients grew so high that it overwhelmed the clinic's resources. The right-wing spin, of course, is that clinics have been forced out of business. Which is the bigger issue — the economics or the protests?

Many of the smaller feminist women's health centers have closed because they can't keep going, because of just what you're talking about. I think that is definitely an issue around the country ... There's also a lack of providers. We had 2,200 doctors in the country doing abortions in 1980. It's about 1,800 last I heard.

Are people retiring or why is that number going down?

Retiring is definitely one part of it ... and not enough physicians are being trained and going into it. I mean, it's not an area of medicine where you are going to make a lot of money, number one. It's not

encouraged by anybody in the medical community. Doctors who provide abortions, especially in the outlying areas, are pretty much marginalized. And [doctors] coming right out of medical school and then residency [have] a lot of student loans to pay back ... and are told by the anti-abortion people ahead of time: If you go into this ... we will expose you, we will harass you, we will harass your family, we will make your life miserable.

Are they still making lives miserable? What is the level of intensity today?

It depends on where you live and how exposed the clinic. For instance, in my book tour, I've talked to physicians all over the country. In San Francisco, a lot of the clinics are within the university system or right in the hospital. There's a number of doctors who've never had a protester because they're so insulated within the system. Then you get somebody who works in a little clinic in a small town in Northern California, or an outlying place, and it's just the opposite. They're more exposed; it's a free-standing clinic, anybody who comes in and out of that building is associated with abortion care in some way, and the protesters — it's a ready target for them. And they're still getting harassed.

Is there still violence?

There hasn't been a doctor murdered for quite a few years, thank goodness. There's definitely still violence. We have protesters on a daily basis at some of the clinics that I [work at]. ... There was a clinic burned to the ground in New Mexico in December. There were two other clinics that had arson in December. We just don't hear about it on the news anymore. But it's going on; it's definitely going on. ■

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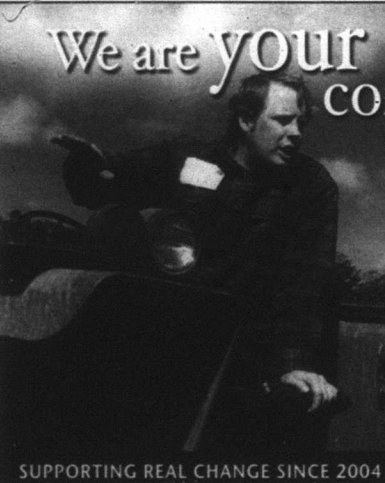


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March 8 marks International Women's Day, a day to recognize the stronger half of our species. Although there should probably be an international day of recognition every week, today's the day to give mad props, praise, and adulation to women. The day recognizes all they have done and to create, inspire, and lead to social justice and greater equality. It's especially important to not only recognize famous women and their achievements, but to thank and celebrate loved ones, friends, and all the women in our neighborhoods who have a positive impact on a daily basis. Info: www.internationalwomensday.com.

Calendar

This Week's Top Picks

Wednesday 3/5

Is global warming a figment of liberal imaginations? Doubtful. Don't listen to me, though, I'm no expert, but **Konrad Steffen** is. The **University of Colorado professor will speak on "Sea Level Rise and Ice Sheets,"** part of the series "Climate Change: a Wake Up Call." The Joint Institute for the Study of the Atmosphere and Ocean will launch the inaugural science lecture. Steffen will show his latest results from his expedition to Greenland as well as discuss the melting of ice sheets and the effect on sea levels. 7:30 p.m., IMAX Theatre, Pacific Science Center. Free for UW faculty and students, \$5 for everyone else.

Thursday 3/6

Susanna Blackwell was murdered by her abusive partner 13 years ago while working through court to get the man out of her life. Join the **Asian and Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety Center** as they hold their annual vigil in her memory. The vigil is to ensure that the criminal justice system does not forget about this painful event. 4-6 p.m., outside the King County Courthouse, Third Ave. and Yesler, downtown Seattle.

Scuba instructor and underwater photographer **Janna Nichols**, presents "So...What Do You See Down There Anyway?" the March installment in the **People for Puget Sound 2007-2008 speaker series Exploring the Puget Sound**. That's a good question, what does one see down there? I dunno, maybe toxic chemicals, garbage, cars, dead bodies... these things come to mind, but this event will probably focus more on breathtaking marine life. REI Flagship Store, 222 Yale Ave. N., Seattle. Info or reservations: (206)382-7007, or khertz@pugetsound.org or www.pugetsound.org. \$6 for Puget Sound members, \$8 non-members.

Friday 3/7

On the eve of International Women's Day, check out **Ladies First**. It's a must-see film that explores women's leadership in peace-making and the rebuilding of Rwanda after

the massive genocide over 10 years ago. Today, Rwanda has more women elected to its parliament than any other nation in the world. Discussion to follow the film will be led by Seattle's International Women's Day organizing committee and will focus on this year's theme, "Domestic Violence: A Violation of Women's Human Rights." Film is free, donations are kindly accepted. 7-9:30 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. Info: www.meaningfulmovies.org www.centrulturalchileno.org or www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle.

Saturday 3/8

For a more organized event to celebrate International Women's Day, you could take in **Enemies of Happiness**. The film is an award-winning documentary about **Malalai Joya**, a 28-year-old parliament member of Afghanistan; this fearless woman risks her life speaking out against the mujahedeen warlords for the rights of women and the poor. It's presented by the Dyke Community Activists as a benefit for Afghan women. 7:30 p.m., Cascade People's Center, 309 Pontius Ave., N., Seattle. \$5-15, no one turned away for lack of dough. Info: www.enemiesofhappiness.com.

Sunday 3/9

The **Northwest Girlchoir** will be celebrating 35 years of musical excellence as they present a family concert of folk songs from **Canada and Latvia** as well as **American show tunes**. Come check out the ultra-talented female leaders of tomorrow performing today: 2 p.m., Town Hall, 1118 Eighth Ave. Advance tickets \$12 or \$14 at the door. Info: www.northwestgirlchoir.org or (206)985-3969.

Calendar compiled by David Uhl.
What are you up to?
Email it to calendar@realchangenews.

the Stranger PRESENTS

The Young Ones

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Dyme Def
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of Death

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Mockingbird Times



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March 2008

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Volume IX, Issue 3

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Youth Advocacy Day by Kenneth Larson-Rettinger



Friday, February 5th, was the fifth annual Youth Advocacy Day. I was part of it this year and had a lot of fun. The bill that we were trying to pass was House Bill 3048. HB 3048, for people who don't know, is to establish a pilot program in a small county for every child in foster care, aged 12 and older, to have an attorney represent them in a court of law. Sponsoring this bill are Representatives Lantz, Goodman, Pettigrew, Roberts, Darneille, Appleton, Hasegawa, and Kenney. Once I read the bill fully, I realized how much this could potentially help foster children state-wide. Even personally, I could see it helping me if I were still in foster care.

The most amazing part of Youth Advocacy Day was, without a doubt, the fact that there were so many people to advocate for foster children. If children in foster care saw how many people there are that are advocating for

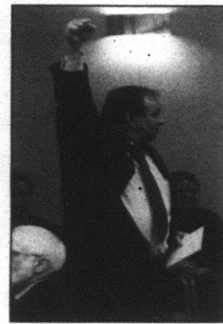
them, they wouldn't feel so alone. There are many people out there that are working on foster care rights. One of the things that was really cool was the fact that I got to speak to the people there and it was so nice to see people listening to me and taking in all of what I was. All I did was tell them my foster care story and just that little bit of information really made people feel determined to advocate for foster children across the state.

Another great thing about Youth Advocacy Day was that we got to meet a whole bunch of people such as representatives and senators. It was so cool because those are people that are really important in Washington; it was sort of like meeting a famous person. I believe that we will get this bill passed eventually, even if not in this legislative session, because there were so many people advocating for it. We had a great turnout and we did a lot of convincing and

even picketed with signs. You could hear the people marching from all around the capital.

Everyone worked really hard to get our voices heard and I think that it really paid off.

The speakers at Youth Advocacy Day were really inspirational such as Samuel Martin and Jim Theofelis. I especially liked Sam's comparison of children in foster care to elephants in a circus. He talked about how the trainers start by restraining the elephants by their legs with heavy chains when they are young and working their way up to just fishing line and the elephants won't even



The Mockingbird Society Executive Director Jim Theofelis speaks at the crowd during the Youth Advocacy Day morning session before meeting with state representatives.

try to get free because they gave up fighting when they had the chains. This really moved me because I thought that it was really true for children in the foster care system. I am happy that people got to hear my story and were really moved by it. I look forward to talking in the future and can't wait to see people from the last Youth Advocacy Day there.



Marchers energetically hold down front steps of Washington State Capitol Building with their message supporting legal representation and better housing for foster and homeless youth.

More Youth Advocacy Day photos on page 3!

The Mockingbird Network by SAMUEL MARTIN



"It is time for us to stand and cheer for the doer, the achiever, the one who recognizes the challenge and does something about it."
- Vince Lombardi

The doer is something that many of us strive to be but so few become successful at being. I bring to all of you great news: The Mockingbird Society's Youth LEAD Program is going state-wide in 2008.

During the summer of 2007, The Mockingbird Society took a trip to California and visited the Stuart Foundation. We went down in hopes of possibly receiving a grant to expand our youth programs, but, at that time, it was only a dream. While down there, we visited California Youth Connection which is California's state-wide youth advocacy group. What was unique about it was they had established chapters state-wide and each chapter picked an issue or something they felt should be changed in their county. I think it was a great idea. We also had an opportunity to visit Youth Offering Unique and Tangible Help (YOUTH). YOUTH consisted of youth being paid to give training to social workers on how to step up in certain situations that may arise in their profession. It was a wonderful experience.

Now, looking back and coming into March of 2008, we are beginning to see our dream of expanding coming to life. We ended up getting the grant from the Stuart Foundation as well as additional funding from the Casey Family Programs of Washington. We are of-

ficially establishing what is being called The Mockingbird Network, which will hopefully consist of 9-15 chapters state-wide, as well as a State Advisory Council consisting of one youth from each chapter serving as a representative. That youth will bring the issue most prevalent to their chapter and push it to get addressed in the legislature and, hopefully, adopted, which is, in essence, where we want to go with our ASK-Y program. Each chapter will be youth driven and adult supported, as well as existing in all six regions of the state. Executive Director Jim Theofelis summed it up as, "The Network is about leadership development and civic engagement for youth [in foster care] and alumni."

This program has impacted me substantially coming up on my second year with The Mockingbird Society. I was here as we took off the ground. It has been one of the best plane rides of my life. I have had a chance to be a young leader and affect change in many ways. Now, to be able to say that we are going state-wide is an honor. I have had the opportunity to emcee two Youth Advocacy Days. We are getting our youth designed Life Advocacy 101 training off the ground and the Speakers Panel is booming. The Mockingbird Society is going to be hitting its non-profit Golden Age soon. I don't want to speak too soon but, the way things are looking, everything is going to be all right.

I would like to answer a few questions many of you may have, like how the chapters will be established, what the time table is, and

how the program will be implemented. First of all, a few of the chapters are already established; there are nine chapters state-wide that were created at the 2007 Foster Youth and Alumni Summit. It is a matter of getting these chapters more structured and giving them the proper resources to function properly and efficiently. The time table is a little uncertain but we hope to have everything up and running by the end of October, in time for the 2008 Foster Youth and Alumni Summit.

Lastly, The Mockingbird Society is going to hire community staff members to support the entire process for each chapter. These people aren't going to run the show, their job will be to support the chapters. For these positions, we hope to get alumni of foster care to really help this come alive. The positions will also be hired from each geographical area. That way, it is convenient for everybody and youth can find this person when they need them.

This is all coming to life and is amazing to see that people at The Mockingbird Society and in this world really care about doing things like this. I really and honestly love being a part of this program. What I really like about The Mockingbird Network is that it gives youth state-wide an opportunity to get support and consistency. Too often, we go to workshops or conferences for two or three days and end up leaving the relationships we have had. I also like the fact that youth are going to have a lot more voice. This is a wonderful opportunity for many people. It will be great to see what happens.



Letter From the Editor BY JIM THEOFELIS

This month's issue of the *Mockingbird Times* is a great metaphor for all that is going on in and around The Mockingbird Society. We are in the final weeks of the 2008 legislative session and recently conducted our annual Youth Advocacy Day. What a great day for all involved! Once again the youth were amazing in so many ways. A special "thank-you" to the all the youth and alumni that participated, the legislators who took time from their busy schedules to meet with our group, the Planning Committee who has been working on this for months and, of course, all of the foster parents, professionals and private citizens who joined us for a truly inspiring day.

Also, in this issue is the announcement that The Mockingbird Society has received funding to expand our youth engagement program state-wide and we are thrilled to announce that Tiffany Washington has been hired for the Director position of our current Youth LEAD program which includes the expansion project which we are calling The Mockingbird Network. Addi-

tionally, we are in the middle of a hiring process for a Development Director which is a new position for us. And, if that is not enough, we are expanding our office space by 1,200 square feet. Gratefully, we will remain in the 2100 Building, although we will have offices on both the second and third floors.

Additionally, Dr. Wanda and Marie have been working across the state and beyond helping organizations develop their plans to replicate the Mockingbird Family Model (MFM). We remain committed to our belief that the MFM is a practical, viable, service delivery model that will keep kids safe, reduce multiple placements, ensure siblings can remain together or in close proximity and serve as a retention and recruitment tool for caregivers.

On top of all this we are conducting the work necessary to prepare for our annual luncheon in October. What better way to welcome in the magical season of Spring!

 Jim Theofelis
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

Living Inside Your Head BY RYAN CASTELLANO

At a weird time in my life, I ran into this dude who was a real character. When I met him, he introduced himself as Ryan. He was a cool, calm, normal, guy and, at the same time, very outspoken. He loved to be in the spotlight if not the spotlight itself. We would talk and laugh. He was a huge fan of music and loved every genre, even country and classical so he got along with almost everyone.

When he hung out, he would take me to places I always knew about but never appreciated the way he did. He had an eye for finding the beautiful pieces in something or someone that others thought was ugly. He loved to take pictures of the sky, the sunset and sunrise, and had a weird love for the water. I honestly thought he was weird myself.

But even weirder than that, I started noticing there were like two to three days a week he would disappear. The more I noticed this happening, I started realizing he was around, but just with other people and being a totally different person. He would act like he never saw me or knew who I was until the next day when he would not even acknowledge the others he knew.

I didn't bother asking him about it at first until one day I finally did. He said to me "Oh yeah, those guys. That's Peter Rico, Kory and Twist." Puzzled, I asked, "What do you mean?" He said, "Those are all the people living inside of me, you know alter egos, split personalities."

He explained to me that it all started with Ryan. Ryan was left alone and felt abandoned a lot when he was younger. He was raised by a woman who also left him alone a lot and was often left heartbroken by girlfriends who played with his feelings; that's where Peter Rico came from. He made up that person in himself to be a ladies man or a Mac of all things and used

a lot of what his godfather (a former pimp) taught him. Peter Rico would always be talking to multiple females so that way he had many girlfriends around doing a lot for him and he would never feel alone again.

He said Kory came about because, when Ryan was younger, he didn't like who he was or the color of his skin. All of his brothers were white and he was dark and thought his dad hated him for it. He would notice most of the white kids he went to school with had a better life then he did and had two parents to pick them up after school and come to all the school events. So, he made up Kory, a guy to live inside of him that could lie and be anyone or anything he wanted to be, around anybody he felt uncomfortable in front of.

Twist was just a name given by his b-dogs. He said, "Twist is still Ryan but that's the part of Ryan that always wanted to feel like he was a part of something, feel power and have a family behind him in whatever he did. A family of thugs, blood-brothers." He said, "Twist only comes out every once in a while, when the dogs call him out to play," and gave me a weird smile. I told him, "That's really crazy," and asked him why he came up with the idea to be all these people. To this day, he has never really answered me and every time I ask him he says, "Learn to live inside your head and nobody or anything will ever be able to keep you down."

Interesting in Volunteering With Us?

Please join us on Thursday, April 3rd for our Volunteer Orientation. Learn about upcoming opportunities and meet The Mockingbird Society Board of Directors and staff.

Our success depends on individuals like you that so generously give your time!

Date: Thursday, April 3, 2008
Time: 4:30-6:00 PM

Location: 2100 24th Ave. S, Community Room A, Seattle, WA 98144

Please RSVP to Darcie Gray, darcie@mockingbirdsociety.org, or (206) 323-KIDS (5437).

The Mockingbird Society: The Story Behind the Name

The 1962 American classic *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee is the inspiration for our name, **The Mockingbird Society**. Atticus, the widowed father of Jem and Scout, joins Miss Maudie in teaching his kids that it's a sin to kill a mockingbird because "...Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't do one thing but sing their hearts out

for us." What if we created an organization, a community, indeed a world, in which our most vulnerable children and youth were protected and valued with the same commitment that Atticus had for mockingbirds? Join The Mockingbird Society today and help us give young people a safe place to nest and sing.

THANK YOU!

ANONYMOUS; JULIE BILL; ANNIETTE BLAYNEY; PATSY AND MICHAEL BONINCONTI; CELESTE Y. CAREY, MSW; KAREN COWGILL; MICHAEL DAVIDSON; TAFUTA FUNDISHA-BEY, POSITIVE ENERGY; CONSTANCE GOLD; KRISTA GOODMAN; MARGARET-ANN AND MARK LEROY; PATRICIA McDONALD; NORTHWEST CHILDREN'S FUND; SUZANNE SHAWGER; CYNTHIA STROUM; MERYL THULEAN; SUSAN WILLIS, M.D.

Become a Member of The Mockingbird Society

We welcome you to join us in making a difference in the lives of our nation's most vulnerable children, youth, and families. As a supporter, you'll receive a monthly edition of the *Mockingbird Times*. Thank you for your contribution.

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Enclosed, please find my check made payable to **The Mockingbird Society** in the amount of (please note amount on appropriate line):

\$1,000 +	Protector	\$
\$500 - \$900	Champion	\$
\$250 - \$500	Advocate	\$
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\$25	Contributor	\$

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

Please mail this completed form and your check to: The Mockingbird Society, 2100 24th Ave South, Suite 240, Seattle, WA 98144. For questions or more information, call (206) 323-KIDS (5437) or visit www.mockingbirdsociety.org.

ABOUT US: *The Mockingbird Society* is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation developing innovative models for improving the outcomes of foster care, while advocating with decision makers for system reform. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please consult your tax advisor regarding your specific tax situation. *The Mockingbird Times* is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of *The Mockingbird Society* are paid between \$9.50 and \$12 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, and poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. *The Mockingbird Times* has a monthly circulation of 50,000 copies being distributed across Washington State and the USA, through a private distribution list and as an insert in *Real Change*, a Seattle-based community newspaper. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of *The Mockingbird Society* and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. Donations to *The Mockingbird Society* may be tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. No part of *The Mockingbird Times* may be reproduced without the written permission of *The Mockingbird Society*. All contents copyright ©2008, *The Mockingbird Society*.

MEET OUR STAFF

Executive Director
Jim Theofelis

Operations Manager
Ros Ghan

Director of Mockingbird Family Programs
Dr. Wanda Hackett

Youth LEAD Director
Tiffany Washington

Executive Assistant
Lauren Frederick

Public Relations/Fund Development
Darcie Gray

Youth LEAD Coordinator
Najja Morris

Mockingbird Family Model Coordinator
Marie Goines

Administrative Assistant
Juan Ramirez

Senior Youth Representative
Samuel Martin

Youth Representatives
Leona Bill,
Jessica Garcia,
Kenneth Larson-Rettinger,
Rhonda Smith

Contributing Writers
T. S. Berry, Emma Cummings,
John Hemmingway

Volunteers
Claire Ghan, Chrissie Jackson,
Jami Smith

Layout
Kelly Hawkins

Welcome, Tiffany Washington, New Youth LEAD Director MOCKINGBIRD TIMES STAFF

The Mockingbird Society is pleased to announce that, after an extensive search, Tiffany Washington, M.S., has accepted the position of Youth LEAD Director. This position will provide supervision and guidance to The Mockingbird Society's award winning programs, including the *Mockingbird Times*, the Youth Speaker's Panel and our youth-driven advocacy coalition Advocates for System Kids and Youth (ASK-Y).

Additionally, Ms. Washington will provide the leadership and direction for the development of our newest program, The Mockingbird Network. A network of local youth-driven chapters in communities across the state, The Mockingbird Network will provide leadership development and civic engagement opportunities to youth in foster care while ensuring their voices are heard in the reform of public policy and practice. Receiving support and mentoring from The Mockingbird Society staff, local chapters will drive a State Advisory Council comprised of youth, alumni and allies.

Tiffany Washington has worked as an advocate for children and families for more than a decade. Most recently with the Casey Family Programs, Ms. Washington was responsible for supporting their strategic consulting work in local and state jurisdictions by engaging alumni, foster

parents, birth parents, and relative caregivers as leaders whose participation and expertise was critical to the improvement of foster care policy and practice.

Ms. Washington is a strong and active advocate ensuring that youth in foster care and other macro-systems (mental health, juvenile justice, and education) receive the support necessary to be successful, self-sufficient adults. As an alumna of foster care, Ms. Washington comes with a unique insight and expertise into the needs of children as well as system reforms and improvements. Ms. Washington has earned a Master's of Science in Human Services from Capella University.

MBT: Why did you choose The Mockingbird Society (MBS) as the place you wanted to continue your work with and on behalf of youth in foster care?

TW: I chose MBS because of its dedication to elevating the voice of youth in care. I believe that doing this is a critical piece of systems change and, when done authentically, can result in great change. MBS has demonstrated its commitment to constituent involvement in various ways such as Youth Advocacy Day, the *Mockingbird Times*, etc. I also chose MBS because it is committed to collaboration and community engagement. The Mockingbird Family Model is one way

in which the organization shows its commitment to involving the community in solving the problem rather than having the "professionals" do so. MBS demonstrates the beauty of what can happen when staff, constituents, and allies come together for systems change.

MBT: What are your goals for your first year as the Youth LEAD Director?

TW: My main goal for year one is to connect with the regional groups, hear from them, and work with them to derive a plan. I think that it is very important for folks to get to know one another and develop a bond and some common goals before stepping out to impact systems. With that said, I am excited to see the

groups connect with one another this year and think big about how they want to see the system changed for their brothers and sisters in care.

MBT: What most excites you about The Mockingbird Network?

TW: What excites me most is giving youth and alumni the opportunity to connect with one another and transform the system. Powerful things happen when youth and alumni get together, bond with one another, and discuss what things work well and what things need to be changed. Coming together gives them the confidence that they are not alone and the power to speak up with a collective voice and message.

Photo Gallery: Youth Advocacy Day 2008



Senior Youth Representative Samuel Martin addresses Youth Advocacy Day attendees during the morning session.



Youth Advocacy Day marchers head towards the Washington State Capitol Building to advocate for foster and homeless youth.



Youth Advocacy Day participants pass out buttons supporting HB 3048 regarding adequate legal representation for youth in foster care.



The Mockingbird Society members participate in a meeting.



Away at Job Corps BY JESSICA MARTIN

I came to Job Corps to accelerate progress in my life. I was tired of dead-end jobs and felt like I was going nowhere fast after becoming clean off drugs and getting out of the streets of Seattle. I was working two jobs seven days a week and was burning myself out quickly. I filled out the pre-application for the Tongue Point Job Corps Center in Astoria, OR in May of 2007. After many months of filling out forms and waiting for the paperwork to go through, I arrived at the center on January 8th, 2008.

I have now been here for seven weeks, and boy, have they been hectic! When I arrived, I was a little nervous but not too much because I went to boarding schools in high school and thought that here would not be too different. In some ways I was right but in others things are very different. The first two weeks here was mostly spent doing paperwork and learning and understanding what is to be expected of me for the rest of my time here. I quickly made some close friends and many acquaintances as well. I got along wonderfully with my two roommates, and, when it was time to change rooms, we requested to still be roommates. We got lucky and did stay together. The three of us still hang out a lot even though our schedules are now different, which is really nice.

Before coming to Job Corps, I planned on going into business and finance as my vocational choices. Before week three, I changed my mind and was thinking more about the "hard trades" like welding or carpentry. I realized that I don't want to sit in front of a computer all day when I could be working with my mind and my hands simultaneously. My overall plan is to either open up my own BMX bike shop or create my own line of BMX bikes. During my third week, I visited three of the trades to test them out and see if I liked them. My first choice was welding, which I visited. I also visited cement/masonry and carpentry.

After my three trade visits, I absolutely loved welding the most. I was aware of my allergies to metal, but thought that it

would be okay because I would practically be covered head to toe in a cow (leather). My fifth week here, I did center support which every student does to give back to our campus. After my fifth week, I went straight into my vocation. I was lucky to get into my first choice because often students' first choices are full and they have to do something else until there is space. I was also lucky to go straight into my job from Career Prep (the first four weeks) because I had TABE'd out of academics, meaning that I got high enough scores on both the reading and math TABE tests.

So I went straight into welding. I was excited to become good enough to learn how to weld BMX bikes. Of course, however, I had to start with the most basic stuff. All was going well at first. But then my allergies to metal started to show drastically. I was coughing up black chunks of metal that I was inhaling. I also quickly learned that I don't have the patience to be a welder. I got frustrated with welding line after line after line after line. Each line I welded got worse and worse looking. It became apparent that welding was not for me.

Bummed, I came back to third week for more trade visits to find something else that I wanted to do. So far, I have visited the Facilities Maintenance and Plastering trades. I really enjoyed Facilities Maintenance, which is now my first choice trade. It is full, though, so I will visit Painting and decide what to go into until I am able to get into Facilities Maintenance.

My plan, from here on out, is to get into Facilities Maintenance and also get my certifications that go with the hard trades. I just got my flagger certification last week, so now I have to get my forklift certification. In order to do that, though, I will first get my driver's license which I am currently working on.

Once I have completed my vocation in Facilities Maintenance, I plan on staying here at Job Corps to do the college program. I want to get a business degree and Job Corps will help me start that by letting me live on campus while I go to Clatsop Community College.

2008 Spirit of Youth Award

The Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (GJJAC) is seeking nominations for the second Annual "Spirit of Youth" award. The intent of the award is to recognize and celebrate a young adult who has made great strides following involvement with the juvenile justice system; has overcome personal obstacles; and is today making significant contributions to society. A \$1,000 scholarship to attend a Washington State College or University is available to the award winner. The award also provides the GJJAC and the public with an important opportunity to learn from a young person's direct experience about the hard work and dedication it takes to build a better life, and how juvenile justice professionals and systems can most effectively be of help.

Criteria

The award recipient must be:

- Under the age of 24,
- A person who was adjudicated delinquent and involved in the Washington State juvenile justice system,
- Must have completed parole and/or probation conditions
- Currently involved, directly or indirectly, in bettering the lives of youth, and
- Has no outstanding court fines or restitution owed to victim(s) OR is demonstrating consistent payments of restitution in accordance with court order.

Nomination and selection process

The members of the GJJAC will promote the Spirit of Youth Award by distributing nomination forms to state and community organizations and media, and will be posted on the GJJAC Web site at www.dahs.wa.gov/oj. The GJJAC will maintain strict confidentiality when handling award nomination forms.

Following is the 2008 nomination and selection process time line

- Nomination process announced and distributed January 2008
- Nominations due to GJJAC April 15, 2008
- GJJAC selects award recipient May
- Award presented by Governor Gregoire Summer

The Washington State award recipient's name and nominations will be submitted to the National Coalition for Juvenile Justice "Spirit of Youth Award."

Beautiful Crane

T. S. BERRY

See all the pain he hides
Keep it on the inside
He doesn't want to let it out
So many things to count
You can see the pain in his eyes
Especially the night when he cries
Not knowing what to do
Not telling me or you
He finally sees a light
Coming out of this darkest night.
He finally has a way out
Of this unrelenting doubt
The skies are becoming clear
As to the light he draws near
He sees the world in a whole new way
Which is something new he can say
Everything is singing a happier song
He starts to sing along
He used to tread on the ground full of pain
Now he soars through the air as a beautiful crane

Why Why Why

JOHN HEMMINGWAY

Why why why.
Why must I do what I do
why must I go out and steal and lie,
why must I lose the one I love most to my own
stupidity.
I just want to know why!!!
Why, am I stuck in jail with nothing to look
forward to except for a court date and a phone
call.....
Why! Why! Why!

Heartbreak

T. S. BERRY

When I saw you
And you saw me
I thought we would be
Together for eternity.
I didn't think in a
moment's delay
Everything would turn
this way
Every time I think of you
My heart and love starts
to ache
So from now and forever
You will always be
A heartbreak

There is Love

EMMA M. CUMMINGS

There is love
For those who seek
Yet are they patient enough
To wait for a receipt?
True love shall never be bought
But given
A gift that can be denied
Yet once taken
Never really returned
For to love truly
To love all
There can never be an end
For true love is never so small.

Letter to My Uncle

DOMINIC

Dear Duwayne,

I just thought you should know what I'm doing now.
I am a good, strong, lovable person
Who spends a lot of time thinking about you.

I just thought you should know how I'm feeling.
I am mad because you should have watched what you were doing.
I am angry because you are not there.

I just thought you should know what I've been through.
Last Easter—that was the last time I got to see you.
Since then I have grown so much.
I am more mature, and I care more about other people.

I just thought you should know what I wish for the future.
I hope that I will see you when I die,
And I wish I could see your spirit while I live.
I want to go to the same college you went to
And become a veterinarian

I just thought you should know what I don't miss about you.
I am glad that you won't do drugs anymore.
I just thought you should know what I miss about you.
I miss the way we used to play together.
On Easter, we went to the park,
Wrote on the ground with chalk,
And you gave us Easter baskets.

If there was one thing I could ask you,
It would be, "Why didn't you come visit me?"

I am real sad that you passed away,
But I will always love you.

The Hero?

JOHN HEMMINGWAY

What is a hero to you?
Someone who is wise?
Someone who is fast?
Or someone who is strong?
No of course not. A hero to you
Is the one who helped you the most
And saved you from a fate worse than death.

Get Published ~ Get Paid!

We pay for articles, poetry, artwork and photography from youth who have experience in the foster care system and/or with homelessness. If you want to be published in the *Mockingbird Times*, contact us at 206-323-5437 or via email at news@mockingbirdsociety.org.

Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb.

~ Sir Winston Churchill



Reconnecting With Family After Foster Care BY RHONDA SMITH

Basically, my whole life I always used to wonder what my birth family was like. I wondered if I looked like them, if they knew I existed or if they were even thinking about me like I was thinking about them. I wondered if I had any siblings, if they were younger or older. I wondered if they were with my mom and dad or if they got taken and were adopted somewhere. I always wished they would just show up one day and come and rescue me from the hurt and pain I was going through, but nothing like that ever happened.

When I was about 16 years old, I started getting on my social worker about finding my biological family. It took awhile but it happened. When I first met my mom it

was at a Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) office with my oldest sister. My mom was not supposed to be there but she came because I planned it out like that. Seeing my mom and my sister in the lobby was just amazing. I wanted so bad to go with them but I could not. I did not know my mom but just from how she looked and stuck up for me, I just knew she was a great mom. I knew she loved me and she never wanted to lose me.

As time went on, that perception of my mom was proved wrong. I would call her every day because she is my mom and I was just so happy to have her in my life. What was happening was she would pick up the phone and say to call her back in a couple hours. So I would hang up and call back later. Each time my sister would

tell me that my mom was asleep and to call back another time.

This went on for months. I was so depressed; I felt like my mom did not want anything to do with me and it hurt my heart. I used to blame myself for her not wanting to talk with me. I thought that maybe me being in her life was just too much to handle. Maybe she did not love me, maybe all those things I heard about her and drugs were true. I just did not know what to do or how to handle what was going on. I could not talk to anybody about it because I was not supposed to have any contact with my mom. So I started acting out by fighting because I could not hold back the pain I was feeling.

What I want people to know is that the grass is not always greener on the other side. I know this from experience. I used to think that when I met my mom she would be perfect and all the bad things I'd heard about her were not true or if they were true, she'd changed. Really, I gave up all the good things I had to find out my mom is not like I expected her to be. I gave away stable placement, schooling, and my friends to be with someone who I thought would love me and be grateful to have me with her because the first 18 years of my life I didn't get to spend with her for whatever reason.

Some things never change and it hurts, but that's life. I have two little sisters we were adopted. They're still with my adopted parents in Louisiana. They're almost the age where they can find their birth parents. I tell them all the time, "Just wait." Not because I don't want them to know, I just don't want them to get hurt like I was. I hear from them all the time that they

can't wait to come back to Washington so they can be with their real parents. I wish they would wait just a little longer. We all got adopted because our parents were into drugs. If our parents wouldn't stop doing drugs for their own flesh and blood then they won't do it for themselves, nothing or anything. I wish I had waited until I had a support system to help me go through it. I went into it too fast. It takes time to get to know someone and trust someone and even love them, even when they are your parents. Now I just keep my distance from my mom because of the things that have happened. I love my mom and always will but I've just learned to do it from a distance.

I'm going through this process again with my dad. I have been taking my time getting to know him. I am not going to rush into a relationship and get hurt again. I'm more mature and able to deal with whatever might happen in the future. Growing up in foster care, I had a lot of trust issues. It was hard for me to trust people but when I got in touch with my family, I trusted them with my life. That was a big mistake, though. I learned that family will stab you in the back faster than your friends will; it's just life. It is hard but it happens.

When kids are taken away from their parents there is always a reason why. I am pretty sure that the state does not just take a family and make up lies just to get a kid. I know they don't like going in and separating families. Just remember, if you are not with your family there is a reason why: it was unsafe at some point and time. Maybe things got better over the years but in my situation, they got worse. Just remember things happen for a reason.

Seeking Innovative, Creative, and Passionate Director of Development!

The Mockingbird Society is seeking a high-energy, seasoned development professional with a proven track record and interest in joining a successful but young organization. This position requires an innovative vision for program development, a passion for dynamic stewardship, and a commitment to giving voice to our community's most marginalized children, youth, and families. The Development Director has a key role in creating a full Development Program that supports and advances The Mockingbird Society mission. The successful candidate will provide the leadership and direction toward strengthening existing and developing new funding streams, stewarding individual giving and major gifts, developing a Strategic Development Plan, leading Special Events, and supervising and leading the staff and volunteers within the Development Program.

This is a full time position with salary DOE and benefits included. The position is open until filled. The Mockingbird Society is an Equal Opportunity Employer. People of color and alumni of foster care encouraged to apply. Resume and cover letter to information@mockingbirdsociety.org. Full job description available at www.mockingbirdsociety.org.

No phone calls or email please.