

REAL CHANGE

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FEBRUARY 21 - 27, 2007



VICTORIA KILL, LEFT, WORKS NEAR THE NURSING HOME IN WHICH HER FATHER, LOUIS, RESIDES. "PEOPLE GIVE UP THEIR SECURITY AND THEIR POSSESSIONS" EXPECTING THIS "TO BE THEIR FINAL MOVE," SHE SAYS. BESSIE BURTON'S 400 PATIENTS HAVE TO MOVE AGAIN; THE HOME IS SCHEDULED TO CLOSE MARCH 15. PHOTO BY BROOKE KEMPNER.

Closing Time

"Broken hearts" as elderly leave Seattle University's nursing home

By LAURA PEACH
Contributing Writer

On an unassuming weekday, a small group of residents at the Bessie Burton Sullivan Skilled Nursing Facility gather around a table and begin to sing with tremulous voices. The nursing home's Fruit of the Month Club opens with the notes "Happy Tuesday" sung to the tune of "Happy Birthday."

A large cardboard box containing five plump Royal Riviera pears is opened, and a knife is put to the fruit. Four of the pears have gone bad, and a few residents wrinkle their noses at the mushy brown interiors. The salvageable pear is sliced into slivers and a student volunteer tenderly places paper plates in front of residents.

The soft, sweet flesh of the pear nearly dissolves in each person's mouth. One woman in a paisley shirt with painted nails and dark gray hair says she has never tasted a pear so sweet and delicious in her whole life.

Though the elderly residents of Bessie Burton are encouraged to experience something new every day, attendance at activities like the Fruit of the Month club is steadily dwindling. On Jan. 8, Seattle University announced that it would be closing Bessie Burton in order to use the space for student

housing, classrooms, and faculty offices.

The nursing home has a special relationship with the university: Students learn from residents, listening to their stories and sage advice. Residents learn from students, attending lectures and art shows on campus. The facility has been a trial ground for aspiring nurses, engineers, counselors, and financial advisors. Several faculty members have had relatives spend their last days a five-minute walk from their offices.

"In college, you learn a lot about job skills, but not a lot about life skills. Volunteering at Bessie Burton is about learning how to grow old with dignity," says Matt Salazar, a sophomore at SU. "We're losing a piece of our family. We've created this deep relationship, and it will be hard to bounce back from that."

The current residents of Bessie Burton are in the process of being relocated to other nursing homes. Individuals on Medicaid will have the most difficulty finding beds, according to Louise Ryan, the long-term care ombudsman for Washington state. Two other First Hill nursing homes have also closed recently, pushing relocated residents as far away as Issaquah. With

See NURSING, Continued on Page 12

Answering Immigration

After Auburn raids, groups promise to create a refuge

By ROSETTE ROYALE
Staff Reporter

What's the most appropriate response to raids targeting suspected undocumented workers, including 51 arrested in Auburn last week? A moratorium on such incursions until immigration reform is enacted nationwide.

What if the call for cessation falls on deaf ears? Then resurrect the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s.

This was the two-pronged message voiced by labor, community, and religious leaders at a Feb. 15 press conference at St. Mary's Church. Seated beneath a stained-glass window illuminated by the mid-afternoon sun, the 10 representatives spoke spiritedly of the need to end government-sanctioned raids that link immigration with terrorism, and of a planned community response to protect potential victims who may be ensnared through such actions.

"Our communities are under attack," proclaimed Jorge Quiroga, president of El Comité Pro-Amnistía General y Justicia Social (The Committee for General Amnesty and Social Justice) at the meeting's outset.

The most recent assault on the local immigrant community occurred Valentine's Day, when Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) showed up in Auburn at a pair of UPS Supply Chain Solutions warehouses, two "customs bonded" facilities that handle security-sensitive materials. ICE netted 51 workers — foreign nationals from Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala — some of whom, the federal agency alleged, had counterfeited documents in order to secure employment or enter the country.

Most of those detained were employed by the temp agency Spherion, which had, in turn, hired them out to the UPS warehouses. With the exception of up to 10 workers who've been

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LEGAL? PLEASE.

Congress, after voting for the Iraq War, is the last group who can debate the war's illegality.

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EMPIRE STATE

In Manhattan, a group examines what impeaching Bush would look like to rest of world.

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COURTROOM DRAMA

A documentary, following two death row inmates, reveals how race factors into capital punishment.

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SHOW AND TELLER

A painter's work, hanging in a downtown bank, turns the stories of poor and homeless into art.

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EMERALD, GREEN

Steve Nicolas, head of the city's enviro office, seeks ways to keep Seattleites breathing easier.

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A Poisoned Chalice

Congress is the wrong place to debate the central question on Iraq: Is the war legal?

By **BERT SACKS**
Guest Writer

In 1945, Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, acting as U.S. chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg War Tribunal, warned, "We must never forget that the record on which we judge these defendants today is the record on which history will judge us tomorrow. To pass these defendants a poisoned chalice is to put it to our own lips as well."

Last week, the House of Representatives passed its non-binding resolution opposing the troop surge, 246-182. Senate Republicans having twice succeeded in stifling the same measure, the House may be as far as that bill gets. But with bills for military funding still to consider, both legislative bodies will soon return to the issue of Iraq: when to get out, and how.

With all the discussion, something exceptional has not been happening. There has been virtually no serious debate about whether the Iraq war is legal. Or even how to determine if it is legal.

This disregard for the rule of law is exceptional!

At Nuremberg in 1945, the U.S. led the world in declaring that a war of aggression was the "supreme international crime" — a crime against the peace. The United States accepted that any war is a war of aggression unless approved by the UN or in self-defense, and then only until the UN can be convened.

This is international law as ratified by the United States. Moreover, international law is incorporated in our military law. U.S. Army Field Manual 27-10, Section 498, says: "Any person ... who commits an act which constitutes a crime under international law is... liable to punishment. Such offenses in connection with war comprise: (a.) Crimes against peace. (b.) Crimes against humanity. (c.) War crimes."

Lt. Ehren Watada is the first commissioned officer to have refused deployment to Iraq because he believes the war is illegal. If the war is illegal,

he is legally obligated—under both military and Constitutional law—not to fight in it. Yet the military judge in his court martial refused to permit discussion of the legality of the war.

Richard Falk, Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University, said that if Lt. Watada "has no chance to even raise that issue before this military tribunal [court martial], then it's such a blatant denial of justice as to itself constitute a kind of crime because he's being criminally disallowed from obeying the law. Franz Kafka didn't have such a macabre imagination."

What did *The Seattle Times* have to say on the issue? In an editorial titled "The case against Lt. Ehren Watada," the word "legal" does not appear once. The paper notes, "Lt. Watada opposes this war." That is true, but the paper doesn't address the central question of why he opposes the war: Lt. Watada says it's illegal. Well, *Seattle Times*, is this war legal or illegal? It's as if the *Times* finds it impossible to even consider that the U.S. started an illegal war.

Take the ill-informed position of Sen. Maria Cantwell. About 10 months ago, I joined a group of activists who met with her. We each got to ask one question. Mine was this: Since the U.S. was not under attack by Iraq and the UN had not authorized our war, isn't the war you voted for illegal? (And aren't we at risk of doing the same with Iran?)

Sen. Cantwell surprised us. She said she believed UN authorization came from Security Council Resolution 687, which formalized the Gulf War ceasefire back in 1991. Because Iraq had violated its commitments, she said, we had the right to go back to war in 2003.

But Sen. Cantwell either hadn't read or understood the resolution: The last sentence is unequivocal that the UN Security Council holds sole authority to determine any future actions.

On a Jan. 25 broadcast of the NPR program "Fresh Air," Terry Gross interviewed a military law expert, attorney Eugene Fidell. She asked, "In what court would you decide whether a war was legal or not?" He answered, "In no court at all!"

Attorney Fidell goes on to say that only Congress can decide whether a war is illegal. But it is Congress that authorized the war. Would one sensibly ask Lt. William Calley to decide if he had committed a war crime at My Lai? How can one sensibly ask Congress to decide the legality of a war it itself authorized?

In 1945, Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, acting as U.S. chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg War Tribunal, warned, "We must never forget that the record on which we judge these defendants today is the record on which history will judge us tomorrow. To pass these defendants a poisoned chalice is to put it to our own lips as well."

We have largely forgotten Justice Jackson's warning about the rule of international law. And the poisoned chalice is passing to our lips, in Iraq and beyond. ■

Bert Sacks (BertOnIraq.blogspot.com) has a petition before the Supreme Court challenging the legality of 12 years of U.S. sanctions on Iraq, believing that because they led to the deaths of 500,000 Iraqi children, the sanctions became acts of terrorism.

[The War on Trial]

Bert Sacks was also involved in the Citizens' Hearing on the Legality of U.S. Actions in Iraq, a counterpoint to Lt. Watada's court martial. Hear testimony from the Hearing at www.WarTribunal.org.



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

Mission Statement:

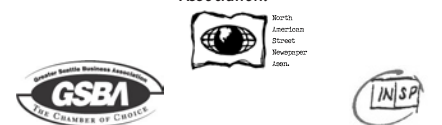
Real Change exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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

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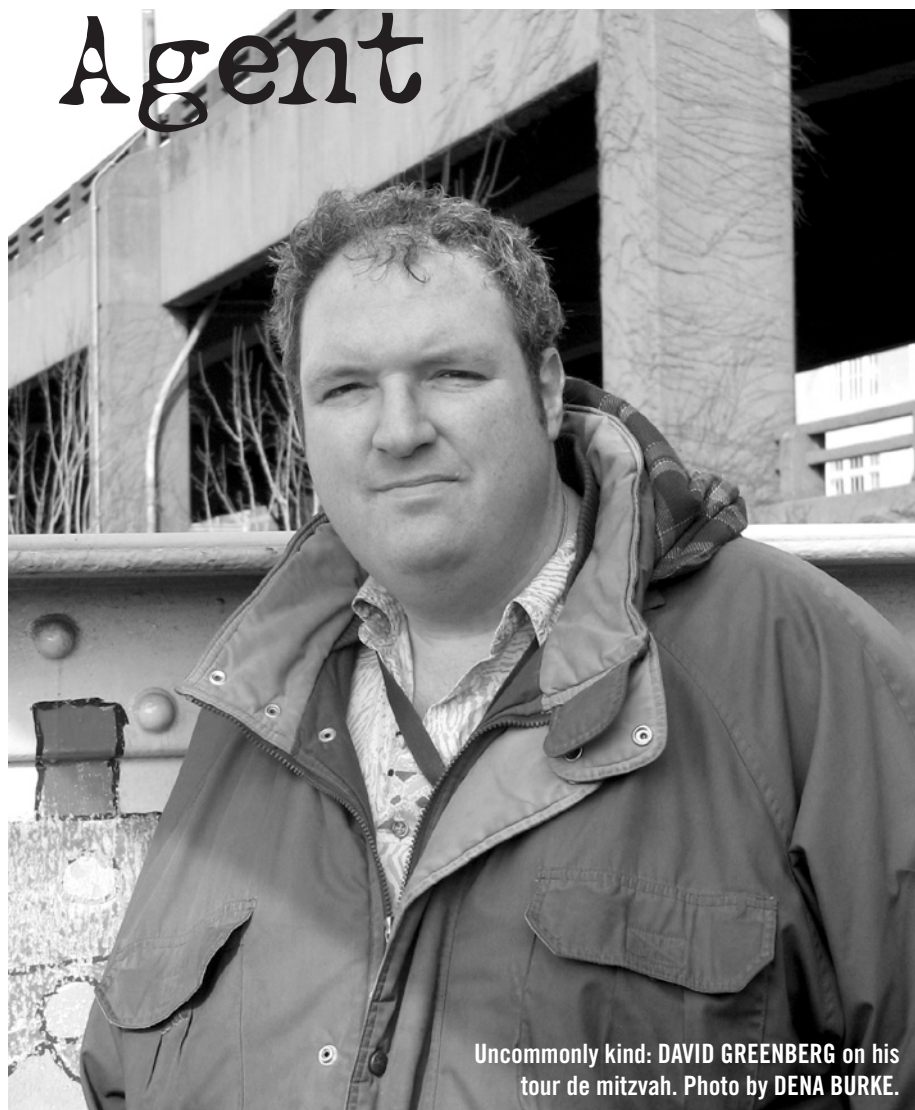
Change Agent

When he started his new job and commute, David Greenberg found himself passing many homeless people along his walk to work. Chatting with a guy named Barry, who had all of his worldly possessions in a shopping cart, touched Greenberg. "His entire life is in that cart," realized Greenberg, and his gentle, giving nature drove him to share all that he could.

For five years, Greenberg has developed a friendship with the homeless people he passes. He watches out for their needs and health and listens to their life stories. During his morning stroll, he hands out fruit, vegetables, and granola bars. He also goes to thrift stores to buy them warm winter jackets, socks, and books. "I try to do a mitzvah every day," he explains — a mitzvah, in Jewish tradition, being an act of human kindness.

Despite the limited income he has to support his wife and two children, Greenberg plans to continue his generosity, as he says, "I call myself a common man philanthropist."

—Dena Burke



Uncommonly kind: DAVID GREENBERG on his tour de mitzvah. Photo by DENA BURKE.

Wait No Longer

Anti-Bush group takes new tack on impeachment effort

By CYDNEY GILLIS
Staff Reporter

[Event]
Writer SunSara Taylor will speak in Seattle as part of the lecture tour *Mission of a Generation: Stop the War, Drive Out the Bush Regime* on Wed., Mar. 5, 6:30 p.m., at the University of Washington's Kane Hall. For details, email speaking-tour@worldcantwait.org.

The bricks were so old and brown that Manhattan's West Park Presbyterian Church looked about to crumble. Inside, a hand-lettered war protest sign hanging over a balcony was already yellow with age.

"Not By Might, Nor By Power," read the sign, quoting a Bible verse, "But By My Spirit, Says The Lord."

Next to the sign hung a huge banner that announced the day's intent. It read: "Drive Out the Bush Regime!"

That was the call last weekend at a conference organized by 30 groups, from the Green Party to World Can't Wait, that want to impeach George W. Bush for war crimes. Though the 75 people who showed up at Saturday's opening session hardly filled the church's pews, they came from as far away as Seattle to kick off a grassroots campaign to recall the president.

Days before, on Feb. 14, a state senator introduced a petition in Washington's Legislature calling for an impeachment investigation — a measure that the conference participants in New York pointed out as an important effort.

"A war where there is no valid plea for self-defense is a war crime," Liam Madden, a 22-year-old former Marine and veteran of Iraq, told conference attendees. But, "If [the president] says he won't end the war on his watch, then we have little choice but to end his watch."

Impeachment may not actually remove Bush from office, but that's OK, Madden and others said. The point is to start an investigation that will show the world Americans don't support the war in Iraq and won't accept other White House policies that allow torture and wiretapping, restrict abortion and scientific research, and deny funding to feed and house children.

"People are starting to understand it's a war on everybody," said Brianna Herrera, 22, a Seattle attendee with New York-based World Can't Wait, a group that advocates impeachment. "Being silent is being complicit," she said. "We have to pressure [members of Congress] to let them know we're still awake and we give a shit."

When the Democrats took control of Congress last fall, however, new House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said impeachment was off the table. Jonathan Tasini with Progressive Democrats for America said that means people will have to take to the streets (a march on the Pentagon is planned March 17 to mark the Iraq War's fourth anniversary) or get state lawmakers to take up the issue.

Tasini said legislatures in other states — including California, New Mexico, and Vermont — are currently considering bills similar to Washington's. In SJM 8016, Sen. Eric Oemig (D-Kirkland) cites findings of a bipartisan Senate investigation led by Sen. John Rockefeller (D-West Virginia).

In the lead-up to the war, the bill quotes Rockefeller as saying, "The [Bush] Administration pursued a deceptive strategy of using intelligence reporting that... was uncorroborated, unreliable, and in critical instances, fabricated."

That's just the beginning of the case, conference participants said. But if it isn't made now, Bush's policies could survive his presidency — something Maggie Lawless, another Seattle attendee, doesn't want to see.

"Everything about the Bush regime is absolutely intolerable," Lawless said. But, "It's really going to be up to the people to create the conditions for Bush to be driven from power." ■

Just Heard...

Billions in oil profit

Valentine's Day is over. But if a tax fairness group gets its way, oil companies won't get any more valentines in Washington state.

On Feb. 15, members of the Washington Coalition for Tax Fairness delivered boxes of candy hearts to state legislators to call attention to a new bill introduced in the House by Rep. Steve Conway (D-Tacoma). The bill, HB 2128, would tax oil company profits when gas prices get above \$1.75 a gallon. The coalition says the tax would recoup some of the windfall profits that oil companies have enjoyed for years at the public's expense.

A message on the candy boxes, which were ostensibly from ExxonMobil, Chevron, Conoco, Shell, and BP, asked legislators, "How do we love thee? Let us count the ways (\$101 BILLION in profit)" — the total of 2006 profits that the companies had in yet another record-setting year.

A pink card that came with the boxes urged action on Conway's bill, proclaiming, "Valentine's Day is Over." Coalition director Barb Flye calls the candy delivery and its message "a lighthearted way of making a serious point."

—Cydney Gillis

The color of money

If the dream of economic independence is what draws immigrants to this country, then those with lighter skin tones have a better chance of ensuring their dream isn't deferred.

That's the finding of a January report released by a Vanderbilt University professor. After crunching newly available data provided by the New Immigrant Survey 2003, the researcher found that, controlling for such factors as education, proficiency in English, and birth country, those with the lightest skin color earned, on average, 8 to 15 percent more than comparable immigrants with the darkest skin tones. Another genetic trait that brings in higher pay? Height. Every extra inch of height produced a 1 percent wage jump.

To read the document, visit law.vanderbilt.edu/faculty/faculty-personal-sites/joni-hersch/joni-hersch/download.aspx?id=1286.

—Rosette Royale

Heads will roll

The Seattle City Council gained new powers to confirm and reconfirm the heads of city departments last fall, and it came at an auspicious time. There's turnover at the top of notable departments such as Parks, Neighborhoods, Personnel, Seattle Center, the jointly run city-county Public Health, and the Office of Economic Development.

This Friday, the council's Public Safety, Intergovernmental Relations, and Arts Committee will look at updating the standards by which councilmembers judge the mayor's nominees.

New and of note is a stipulation that the mayor's office provide the council with some standard material: a résumé, a memo noting that a background check has been conducted, and a letter describing the terms of the appointment. Council staffer Martha Lester says the mayor had been diligently providing these materials; "We thought, 'Let's put what he submits in the resolution,'" she says.

—Adam Hyla

Maggie Lawless went to NYC last week to strategize impeachment proceedings against President Bush. Photo by Elliot Stoller.



A Skewed System

Documentary, discussion show the racial cast of capital punishment

By **ANGIE JONES**
Contributing Writer

"National statistics show that the majority of drug users in the U.S. are white, yet the majority convicted of such crimes are Black. Something else is going on here."
—John Page of the Monroe Correctional Complex

A rising chorus of voices has raised questions on the link between race and capital punishment in America. The answers are unveiling a pervasive problem with our criminal justice system.

The upcoming documentary *Race to Execution* reveals that when five or more white males sit on a capital trial jury, there is a 70 percent chance of a death penalty outcome. If there are four or fewer white males, the chance of a death sentence is only 30 percent. Racial differences again crop up on death row: Once sentenced to execution, felons of color are much less likely to gain a stay than are whites.

Directed by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Rachel Lyon, the program traces the fates of two death row inmates — one white and one Black — and exposes factors that influence who lives and who dies at the hands of the state. It is being screened at Seattle's Northwest Film Forum on Feb. 24.

The film neither defends nor condemns the death penalty, but it does

assert that the race of both the victim and the accused deeply influences the legal process, ranging from how a crime is investigated, to the use of police resources, to the interrogation and arrest of suspects, to how media portray the crime, to jury selection and sentencing.

John Page, who will be one of four speakers following the screening, says race is a huge factor in determining not only who gets the death penalty, but who goes to prison. Page works in the Monroe Correctional Complex to integrate prisoners back into society, and continually sees the racial imbalance of the Western Washington state prison's inmates.

"National statistics show that the majority of drug users in the U.S. are white, yet the majority convicted of such crimes are Black," he says, "Something else is going on here."

While African Americans make up less than 13 percent of the U.S. population, according to the Census Bureau, they make up at least 43 percent of death row, and those who murder whites are more likely to be sentenced to death than those who murder Blacks, says Andrea Crabtree, vice chair of the Washington Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (WCADP). She will

speak from her stance that capital punishment is racist and punishes the poor.

While current Washington state capital punishment law is spelled out (RCW Chapter 10.95), investigative journalist and senior editor of *In These Times Magazine*, Silja Talvi, questions if there is a concrete formula followed within our justice system, as deals are struck and some of the worst offenders, such as Green River murderer Gary Ridgway, one of the most prolific serial killers in American history, continue to live.

Talvi is impressed with the balanced view presented in the documentary, but she will address issues the film doesn't cover, such as how comfortable courts are sentencing offenders to life without parole, which she says is essentially the death penalty. She will also speak to the dire impact of the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which sharply curtailed the right of inmates to challenge their convictions and sentences, thus speeding up the process.

Local media activist Karen Toering, who is heading up the event, believes the film will spark much-needed public dialogue on what being "locked up" really means for prisoners of color. ■

[Watch the film]
Race to Execution
Screening Feb. 24 at 4 p.m. at Northwest Film Forum, 1515 - 12th Ave, Seattle. More information: www.nwfilmforum.org. Free with RSVP to: rsvp@communitycinema-seattle.org or call 1(800)930-6060.

Broadcast premiere March 27 at 10 p.m. on PBS: www.pbs.org/independentlens/racetoexecution.

Short Takes

Challenging the anti-gay rights initiative

Last year's step forward in combating discrimination based on sexual orientation is in danger of becoming a step back. Initiative 963 is attempting to remove the term "sexual orientation" from the Washington state anti-discrimination laws. A hearing Thursday will determine if the measure will be silenced in the courts.

The ballot language is under legal challenge by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Northwest Women's Law Center, which say it's misleading and politically biased. The language that is used in the ballot description for I-963 contains the phrases that do not occur in the legislation itself.

The ballot description requests a removal of any reference to "sexual preference" in the laws against discrimination, although the term "sexual orientation" is used throughout the statute. "Preference," say the plaintiff groups, implies freedom of choice, and therefore blurs the meaning of the anti-bias law.

There is also a debate over the use of the phrase "extending privileges," which the groups believe signifies an expansion of activity. The bill that the initiative is trying to alter is designed to protect rights, they say, not afford greater privileges.

I-963 would essentially invalidate last year's House Bill 2661, which added sexual orientation to the list of protected classes such as race, gender, age, and nationality that are ensured against discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodation. The bill passed by just two votes in the Senate in 2006.

Ballot descriptions are the basic information voters read before signing a petition, so there is a danger of misinformed voting if the ballot language is unclear or biased.

The initiative was proposed by Rev. Ken Hutcherson, a vocal gay-rights opponent.

—Laura Peach

DESC downsizes project

An apartment building for homeless people who are mentally ill is moving forward in Seattle's Rainier Valley, minus a few units.

Earlier this month, the Downtown Emergency Service Center wrote valley residents that it plans to downsize its housing project just south of Columbia City from 60 studio units to 50 in order to have a better shot at getting tax-credit funding.

Each year, the state allocates a limited number of federal tax credits to low-income housing developers such as DESC, which sell them to for-profit companies that want to reduce their taxes. The proceeds are then used to fund low-income projects such as DESC's building at Rainier Avenue and 42nd Ave. South, which was originally slated to have 75 units.

DESC Director Bill Hobson says the organization got advice that a smaller project would stand a better chance of getting tax credits, which he's counting on to provide about half of the project's \$14 million cost. The project is slated to open in 2008, but some residents continue to fight what they call a "mega-project" on the grounds that it's merely a warehouse for the homeless.

Hobson has already participated in a series of meetings called by the Seattle Office of Housing with six neighborhood groups, which are currently reviewing a final draft of a community relations plan (or good neighborhood agreement) for Hobson's signature.

Among DESC's concessions, Hobson says the facility, which includes staffing around the clock, will provide a 24-hour telephone line for neighbors to call with questions or concerns. DESC also agreed to put commercial spaces in the building and help form an ongoing community advisory board that would, among other duties, help select commercial tenants.

—Cydne Gillis

Hotel workers hold victory celebration

Last Thursday a victory party was held in honor of the negotiation between the Seattle Westin and its unionized employees.

The agreement, which increases workers' pay as well as health and pension benefits, was announced earlier in the day.

"We're proving that with a little extra money, we can do the job," said Chuck Cruise, Westin bell captain and 34-year shop steward.

The event, held on the top floor of the Seattle Hilton, offered food, drinks, and congratulatory support for workers, union labor advocates, City Council members, and others who worked with the agreement.

"We put this together because workers wanted to celebrate," said Rick Sawyer, Unite Here union leader.

Some took the podium and expressed gratitude to the workers.

"Thank you," said King County Executive Ron Sims. "You're going to have the respect deserved of hardworking people."

Others used the opportunity to point out positive aspects of the contract.

"When it came to things like negotiating immigrant language and LGBT language, we had representatives from those groups," Sawyer said. "That was from them, not us."

The contract provides immigrant-rights protection by stating the Westin will pay for interpreters to resolve arguments with non English-speaking workers and ensure these employees will not be fired unfairly. Prevention of unjust treatment of transgender workers is also included in the agreement.

The negotiation increases salary by 26 percent and pension benefits by 50 percent.

"There's big money in these hotels, and they're having a hard time realizing they need to share the wealth," Cruise said.

As the largest hotel in the state and with its contract up for negotiation, the union saw the Seattle Westin as a good opportunity to initiate what they hope becomes a state-wide change.

"The victory here is a launching pad for negotiations we have with Edgewater, the Seattle Hilton, the SeaTac Doubletree and the SeaTac Hilton," said Erik Van Rossum, chief negotiator and union vice president.

To continue increasing hotel workers' wages, the union hopes to strengthen its force.

"There's a definite correlation between union identity in a city and the wages workers get," VanRossum said.

In San Francisco, 70 to 80 percent of hotel workers are union members, making employee wages up to \$16 per hour, while New York's hotels have 90 percent union workers who make over \$20 per hour. Seattle's hotels currently employ 20 percent union employees, VanRossum said.

Leaders see this accomplishment as a breakthrough for an ongoing process.

"This isn't the finish, it's just the start," Sawyer said. "We won't stop until every hotel worker has the same rights and the same dignity as Westin Hotel workers."

—Meghan Peters

Meghan Peters is a student in the University of Washington Department of Communication News Laboratory.

Art for a Cause

Painter puts words, images of homelessness on bank walls

By CHRIS LaROCHE
Contributing Writer

“I shouldn’t have tried putting her cancer treatment on credit cards.” The message isn’t what one would expect to find in an art exhibition in the lobby of a downtown bank, but Holly Cannell’s show at the U.S. Bank on First Ave. and Columbia is doing just that.

Cannell is an artist who recently created a series of work based on her experiences volunteering with the homeless, both here and in her native Houston. She is promoting her work as a benefit for homeless groups, offering \$100 off any piece for a donation of at least \$50 to a nonprofit organization that helps the poor. The branch regularly displays local artists and also works with the Union Gospel Mission and other homeless organizations.

The two forces came together in January. “We were really drawn to Holly’s work because of its message and because it’s a benefit,” says Rebecca Garrett, bank customer service manager.

Each painting is an abstract illustration accompanying prose painted onto the canvas. Though Cannell uses a variety of styles and the tones match the theme of the prose, she is fond of thick, textured oils, some vivid and colorful, others subdued and subtle.

The prose — which ranges from thoughts on poverty to accounts of being homeless — sound authentic but was actually written by Cannell. “I’ve never been homeless myself,” she clarifies, “but each piece is real and based on a story or conversation I’ve had.”

The stories read like first-person testimonies: “The Value of a Dollar” is a child’s point of view on money, food, and lunch in the school cafeteria, which, when read closely, is filled with poignancy: “(Mommy) buys noodles for dinner. My little sister and I eat noodles every day for dinner. I get tired of them. I like to eat lunch at school because we get different stuff every day.” The words are surrounded by impressions of leaves in bright coloring that mimics crayons.

In “Brown Bag Lunch,” Cannell relates the experience of a homeless person borrowing a suit for an interview: “The guy asked me a lot of questions about what I’ve been spending my time on. I thought it was best not to mention my food-fishing hobby.”

“Soap and Tears” is subtle: small print on hues of cream and peach overrun by runs of liquid, it hangs next to the tellers. The story tells of one family’s descent into poverty: “I did everything right. Never showed up late to work, never took drugs, never stole. But I never counted on my little girl getting sick.”

“It’s strange that we live in a world where people are so genuine to do what’s right, but yet so often get left out,” says Cannell of the painting.

Cannell is unabashed about her objectives: “I wanted to try to get people to shift their thinking about homelessness.” Her paintings strive to change perceptions of homeless people and, as illustrated in “Your Kindness Means Everything to Me,” how the smallest acts can make a difference. It reads, in part: “Thank you for holding the door. You restored my faith not only in others, but also myself.”

Cannell’s work will be on display through the end of February. ■

“It’s strange that we live in a world where people are so genuine to do what’s right, but yet so often get left out.”
—Holly Cannell

Holly Cannell uses conceptual art to capture the experiences of homeless people she’s met while volunteering.
Photo by Mark Sullo.



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Weighed In an Even Balance

Sustainability tsar Steve Nicholas on people, the economy, and the environment

By DENA BURKE
Contributing Writer

"I'd argue that our diverse array of single-family neighborhoods is part of a sustainable Seattle, not something that undermines it. Much of our cultural and ethnic heritage, architectural history, and ethos of community engagement and activism lives in our single-family neighborhoods."

Sustainable design is the art of delicately balancing the needs and health of the economy, community, and environment. And it's the concern of Steve Nicholas, the director of the city's Office of Sustainability and Environment.

The goals of the organization are broad: increasing the urban tree canopy, strengthening communities, leading Seattle and other cities in meeting the Kyoto Protocol target of reducing climate pollution by 7 percent by 2012, and encouraging building practices that sustain the health of the occupant and the environment.

And since an environmentally friendly city where no one can afford to live is just as bad as a city that trashes its nature, Seattle has a number of challenges before it.

Over the past ten years, the price of housing has more than doubled, leaving many with decent-paying jobs struggling to buy a house. Only nine areas in King County and one area in Seattle remain affordable for median income buyers. The once affordable rental market is disappearing, with 3,900 apartments converted to condos in the past two years. As Seattle and neighboring areas become too expensive, many are living further away, with ever-stretching commutes. Growth has exacted a price on the urban tree canopy, which has declined by half since 1972. The city and the country witnessed extreme, record breaking weather this winter, with November Seattle's wettest month in history — a possible sign of our impact on the environment, and the dire need for our city to enable residents to enjoy livable, walkable, affordable surroundings.

Nicholas agreed to speak with *Real Change* recently about meeting the challenges and creating a sustainable community.

Real Change: Can you give me an example of what you've recently promoted?

Steve Nicholas: In 2000, we made the decision that we're going to model sustainable behavior as it relates to the design, construction, and operation of our buildings. As a result, we have the largest portfolio of green buildings of any city in the country. We also made a commitment in 2002 to make our own vehicle fleet more sustainable. We have reduced the city's fleet use of fossil fuels by 12 percent.

RC: Isn't there a higher upfront cost?

Nicholas: When we first started doing green buildings, it did appear that there was an additional incremental cost up front. It was usually 2 to 5 percent of the total project cost. We've now seen that dwindle to zero, especially when you look over time. Even if you look just at the ones you can measure, such as lower electricity and water bills, you usually get your money back in a short period of time. That doesn't even count things like people getting sick less because there is better ventilation, or people are happier because there is more natural light.

RC: What has your work been with transportation?

Nicholas: Transportation is one of the top sustainability challenges for a lot of reasons. Motor vehicles are the number one source of toxic air pollution in Seattle and they're the number one source of climate and global warming pollution in Seattle. We are aggressively promoting more environment-, climate-, and commuter-friendly transportation alternatives. That includes light rail, street cars, additional bus services, walking, biking, and increasing the number of bike lanes.

RC: What have you pushed recently to the Department of Transportation?

Nicholas: We're taking a hard look at ways to use price signals to encourage more climate friendly transportation, and ways to discourage less climate-friendly transportation. One example of that is the new commercial parking tax that the mayor proposed and that City Council recently adopted.

It tweaks the cost of driving, [and] it can raise some money that we can

then dedicate to promoting more climate-friendly transportation alternatives. We're also looking at what is known as road pricing: finding ways to charge an additional fee of the use of certain roads that are congested at certain times.

RC: Such as a toll?

Nicholas: Yes, tolls are one type of road pricing. A lot of people think it has potential in terms of sending the right price signal and adjusting the economics of different transportation options so that you're encouraging more climate-friendly alternatives. Everyone recognizes Seattle has a transportation problem. We don't have the kind of robust public transportation that a lot of other cities have.

RC: Is there an example of a major city with a transportation system that reduced pollution?

Nicholas: We're looking a lot at London. Their downtown central business district became a complete mess. So they drew a line around the central business district, and to drive a single-occupant vehicle across that line during the most congested times of the day, they pay a fee. It was initially a very politically contentious idea. The business community felt it was going to hurt. People didn't want to pay that fee, so they

started taking the bus. The \$10 a day was the nudge they needed to start taking the bus or carpooling. It dramatically raised money, and the business community loves it because it's easier for people to get in and out. We recognize that if we're



Steve Nicholas, here in City Hall, heads Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Environment, which encourages, among other things, greener building practices. Photo by Sherry Loeser.

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Continued from Previous Page

going to do something like that, it can't be just Seattle. If you dramatically increase the cost of driving in Seattle, then people are just going to end up going to Bellevue.

RC: What's the sustainable future of the central waterfront? Does it include a highway — buried, elevated, or on the surface?

Nicholas: A sustainable central waterfront is one that protects and improves the environmental, community, and economic health of our city. It's a waterfront with less noise and dust pollution than we have down there now. It has more and better places for people to bike, walk, wander, and relax. It has more trees and greenery to absorb air, water, and climate pollution. And it has more opportunities for people to access and enjoy those inspiring views of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains — and to actually reach down and touch the water, as we can do now at the new Olympic Sculpture Park.

Economic vitality is part of sustainability, too. Some people tend to forget that part of the equation. We need to factor in the well-being of the Port of Seattle and the industrial areas north and south of the central waterfront, which produce a lot of good, living-wage jobs and help to keep our economy diverse and resilient.

So, how do we handle motor vehicles on the waterfront? For me, the key is what's going to be best for the overall, long-term livability of downtown Seattle. That's absolutely critical. Studies show pretty clearly that compact, efficient urban development produces less air and climate pollution than sprawl-type development. So downtown Seattle needs to be a place where large numbers of people want to live, work, and play. Right now, about 110,000 vehicles a day use the Alaskan Way Viaduct, because it's one of only two north-south transportation corridors in our very narrow, hourglass-shaped city. If that corridor goes away, and we end up with a quagmire of cars in and around downtown Seattle, that's not a sustainable solution, because it would significantly increase traffic congestion and therefore air and climate pollution, undermine the overall livability of downtown, and discourage people and businesses from locating here.

As for the debate over a new elevated highway, a tunnel, or a surface street — I really can't comment. Since that issue is on the ballot for March 13, as a City official I'm not allowed to state a preference or advocate for one alternative over another.

RC: Can you tell me about your work on urban reforestation?

Nicholas: We got very concerned when we learned through some analysis that we were at risk of becoming the city formerly known as Emerald. The urban forest has declined from about 40 percent of the city's total land mass to just 18 percent. The Urban Forest Management Plan was released by the mayor in early September of last year. It calls

for the planting of 650,000 new trees over the course of the next three years. It's a very ambitious goal, but we know that we can do it if we rally together as a community. It also calls for significant improvements in the way we protect existing trees. It's a very difficult, complex, and controversial issue in the city because you get into private property rights. We're going to put together the Emerald City Task Force; it'll be a high-level task force of developers, urban design people, landscape design people, and tree advocates. We'll take a look at what other cities are doing — this is not a challenge that is unique to Seattle.

RC: I know you don't work on affordable housing directly, but many people who are first-time home buyers are forced into outer-areas such as Everett or Marysville because that's the only area they can afford.

Nicholas: Affordable housing or lack thereof is one of the top sustainability challenges for Seattle. One thing I'm really proud of is that I think we take that challenge seriously. A large part of it is outside the city's control because it's driven by basic economics.

RC: Seattle has large swaths of single-family areas where dense, compact urban development like townhomes or apartments aren't allowed. Why can't that aspect of land-use planning and design be more sustainable?

Nicholas: I'd argue that our diverse array of single-family neighborhoods is part of a sustainable Seattle, not something that undermines it. Much of our cultural and ethnic heritage, architectural history, and ethos of community engagement and activism lives in our single-family neighborhoods.

For sure we need to absorb a significant portion of the projected growth in people and jobs into our city, to curb sprawl and the very high environmental, health and financial costs that go along with that. And we're doing that. But we can do this mostly through "infill" development in our already established urban centers and urban villages, which allows us to deliver services most efficiently and cost-effectively. In fact, we have enough development capacity outside of single-family areas to accommodate projected residential and employment growth for at least the next 30 years.

We are experimenting with ways of thoughtfully increasing density in single-family neighborhoods, as well. For example, by allowing homeowners to add accessory dwelling units to their houses, we can accommodate density while retaining existing structures and neighborhood character.

RC: Where do you see Seattle 10 years from now?

Nicholas: I'm really excited about Seattle. I'm optimistic about all that we see happening in terms of increasing environment-friendly transportation choices. We're getting a light rail line that will hopefully expand beyond this initial length. Bus service and biking is becoming more popular. More people are living closer to where they work. I love what we have underway. ■

Mirror 2

The three of us stood
shoulder to shoulder
street corner, waiting for the light
each in uniform, different.

On my left, a woman who reeked
of wealth, the kind of plenty
that lives in fear
rigid, bronzed exterior,
coated by an elegant patina
she slipped through space
as if fully greased
so anointed was her demeanor.

On my right, the woman held a sign
requesting help or a dollar
or just a smile,
bent from a weight
I could not discern
her clothes, a patchwork of poverty.

And I was in full gardener regalia
rain boots and rain pants and
bright yellow slicker
basted in mud and leaf debris
the rain had glued on like batter,
garbage bag full of collected litter,
bent a little from the weight of the load
but trying to keep my humor.

I turned to my fellows, waiting
for the light, the one on my left,
the one on my right,
and on the left I was greeted by
pride so severe
she could not acknowledge me
standing there, inches away
with warmth to share,
to her I appeared invisible.

So I turned to my right and smiled
and was greeted by a gift of grace,
a warmth of heart, acknowledgement
of the journey shared,
this living in a human form
in such varied aspects
we become confused
forgetting we mirror each other.

—KRISTEN SPEXARTH

For the Price of a Cup of Coffee, a Classic

Review by JOHN SISCOE
Contributing Writer

Meditations
By Marcus Aurelius
Dover Publications,
99 pages, \$2.00

John Siscoe owns
and operates
Globe Books in
Pioneer Square.

Of all the Roman emperors, Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE) comes closest to Plato's impossible ideal of a philosopher-king. A reflective, bookish man and a lifelong student of philosophy, Aurelius was also an effective administrator and a determined and able military commander. This last aspect of his character was to prove useful, since much of his 19-year reign was spent fighting Germanic invaders along the Danube.

It was during these campaigns that Aurelius wrote his *Meditations*. While Julius Caesar had written his *Gallic Wars* as a public celebration of his military prowess, Aurelius had no audience in mind but himself, and his aim was his own moral guidance and self-improvement. *Meditations* is not the work of a professional philosopher and presents no organized system of thought. At first glance it seems little more than a random collection of stoic maxims and commonplace remarks, and the casual reader is likely to won-

der why such a patently ordinary book should have been so highly thought of and so frequently imitated for nearly two millennia.

But first impressions can frequently be deceptive. *Meditations* is a more complex and powerful book than it first seems, and for a variety of reasons. First, since Aurelius wrote it for his own private use, there is no one to impress. As a result, no other surviving literary work of antiquity is as free of ostentation and rhetoric. Secondly, while it gives us no philosophical system, *Meditations* deals directly with the questions that assail anyone who has wondered about the purpose of life. In that practical and important sense, *Meditations* is a true philosophical work, deeply personal in intent yet universal in application.

For all its universality, *Meditations* will not appeal in equal measure to everyone. What was once the concern of practical philosophy has now largely been transmuted into the business of self-help manuals, with their promise of personal happiness, social success, and financial well-be-

ing. Aurelius was deeply influenced by the stoic philosophers, especially Epictetus, who preferred virtue above pleasure and tranquility above happiness. Epictetus reflected the intellectual fashion of his time. To many today, his emphasis on self-denial would seem merely quaint.

Nevertheless, *Meditations* still retains its ability to move and persuade. This is in large part because it is not a parroting of Epictetus or any other philosopher. Aurelius took the precepts of the thinkers he admired and tested them against the evidence of his life. What stood that test he reshaped in his own words; what did not he let go. That is a considerable achievement. If each one of us did likewise with the ideas we admire, the results might not last two millennia, but they would prove useful.

Meditations has never been out of print and is available in many versions, priced from the affordable to the outrageous. But for value nothing beats the Dover Thrift Edition, which offers you a living classic for the price of a cup of coffee. ■

Meditations deals directly with the questions that assail anyone who has wondered about the purpose of life.

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In my car

i am king tut, Yertle the turtle, the grand poobah
i am in control behind the wheel
i am 5 years old
i am master of my domain and first recipient
of an infinite array of tragic possibility
In my car
i am superstitious and religious
cursing god and praying the next
with one eye in the rearview mirror
driving by faith and guile
and no insurance
looking past St. Christopher
a wind-up silver parking angel
a tiny green rubber duck
and satan dangling in my blind side
All the debris of the world has come to roost
in my car
living testament
that after 4 years
it can get no more filthy than it already is
In my car
radio rightwingers pound it home
pontificating platitudes
daring me to call in
if i only had a phone
not in my car baby
cuz my car is all about getting from points A to B
cuz my car
is all about me
and, man, we both need work
and have accrued a lot of miles
and can still get it up
without Valvoline or Viagra
So let me by
i got places to be
and more than likely
you are in my way

—LARRY CRIST

Adventures
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning



Prognosticating Pioneer Square

By the Adjusted Lunar Calendar that no one around here uses anymore except passively, as when they allow themselves to be told when Easter is, it's one day short of six years since my great triumph of prognostication. If you

missed me gloating about it, it happened the night of Fat Tuesday, 2001. Anitra "She Who Drinks of My Whine" Freeman is my unimpeachable witness that sometime around 11:30 that night I told her we would be tear-gassed before the night was done. And we were! At 2 a.m.! I was never so proud!

Of course it would have been more impressive if I had predicted that before a half day would elapse an earthquake would bounce our bed two feet sideways out from under us. Or that in my quest to confirm the likelihood of our tear-gassing I would witness the beginning of the Mardi Gras brawl that included an infamous murder. But we prognosticators, people like me and my homies Nostradamus, and Jeanne Dixon, and Edgar Cayce, take all the credit we can get.

Now it's almost six years later. I am writing this early in the morning of the Monday before the Tuesday of the Fat of 2007. Why don't I prognosticate about this year's Fat Tuesday and Ash Wednesday? Let's see if I can be right about some of it again. Anitra and I still live in subsidized housing at Third and S. Washington, in the Pioneer Square District, so it's still plausible that we could be tear-gassed. But is that what my crystal ball says?

For one thing, I see horses. The horses have men on the top. The men are wearing silly cap/helmet thingies like polo players wear. I'm looking deeper now, and yes, those are uniformed mounted policemen on those horses. I'm not using my crystal ball, though. I'm using my memory. I saw them out the window Saturday night.

I was awakened at about 2 a.m. by a screaming mob and horseshoes striking pavement. I peeked out the window and saw two mounted police chasing people up and down Washington St. As I kept watching for the next half-hour, I eventually saw that at least six mounted police took part in crowd control, along with maybe six additional police officers who arrived in police cars. Plus a slew of bicycle cops who managed to get there at the tail end of all the excitement, by pedaling their little legs off. Mind you, that's all just what I could see on Washington Street between Third and Fourth. I don't know what was going on elsewhere in the area.

Another thing I saw Saturday night was a man being arrested who was wearing what Anitra referred to as a tank top, and what I always called a sleeveless undershirt. He brought to mind Marlon Brando in *A Street Car Named Desire*, except that he looked like the later, fat Brando.

"No wonder he's being arrested. Who wears sleeveless undershirts in Seattle in February? There's his problem. Does he even know what latitude this is? Does he know how big his belly is? Anyone that clueless is asking to be arrested," I thought.

So here's my Prognostication. This Fat Tuesday, clueless men and women will pretend that Seattle is subtropical. A paunchy man in a tank top, or a sleeveless undershirt, will get into a fight with another man. Kerlikowske, still hurting from his failure to prevent bloodshed in 2001, will send in men on horseback. We will NOT be tear-gassed, because they don't have gas masks for the horses, and we know that the police in this city love their horses in a way they will never love its residents.

I predict that there will NOT be a major earthquake in Seattle on this Ash Wednesday morning. Instead, large numbers of people will wake up to news that Britney Spears got wasted the night before and as a result all the rest of us got our brains pierced. ■



Sat., Jan. 27, 8:10 p.m., Denny Way and Stewart Street, Metro Bus Shelter. Vic-

tim, a transient male, left his backpack on a Metro bus, and an unknown suspect removed it. Victim states that there has been activity on his state-issued Quest benefits card since his property was taken. He is also missing his wallet and ID cards.

Thurs., Feb. 8, 2:10 a.m., Pine St., Westlake Park. Officer reports he has issued suspect, a transient Black male aged 52, over eight Park Exclusion notices about sleeping in Westlake Park after hours, as well as numerous verbal warnings. At 2:10 a.m., officer saw the suspect sleeping on a park bench in Westlake Park. He contacted the man for Trespass in the Parks as he has been issued numerous warnings and notices in the past. The park is closed to the public from 11:30 p.m. - 6 a.m. Officer handcuffed suspect and collected his bag. Suspect stated that when the officer had arrested him three times he would be charged with harassment, and stated that the judge knew what was going on and he wouldn't be in jail long. Suspect was issued a new trespass admonishment, which, as in previous times, he refused to sign. He was then booked into King County Jail.

Thurs., Feb. 8, 2:15 p.m., Sixth Ave., Sheraton Hotel. Suspect, a transient Black male aged 37, was contacted by Sheraton security officers for going inside multiple rooms and helping himself to snack items, such as candy, water, and cookies. Suspect never paid for a room at the hotel or for any of the \$56.75 worth of snack items consumed. He was taken into custody and booked into King County Jail for theft.

Sat., Feb. 10, 10:45 a.m., Third Ave., YMCA Women's Shelter. A transient white female aged 46 was at the YMCA when she told staff she wanted to kill herself. Fire and Police were called to the scene. Officers arrived to find subject sitting down and looking despondent. She stated she hears voices, and that the voices are telling her to kill herself. She also said that she had been to a hospital — possibly Harborview — last night. She would not say how she intended to kill herself, but only that she intended to. She said she came from Denver, CO, and had been attending a mental health clinic called MHCD. Officers called an ambulance, and AMR responded to transport subject to Harborview Medical Center. Due to patient load at HMC, subject was diverted to Providence Hospital and involuntarily committed for a mental health review.

Sat., Feb. 10, 4:30 p.m., Virginia St. Officer stopped the suspects, a transient white male aged 35 and a transient white female aged 45, for trespassing in an alleyway doorway on Virginia St. During a routine name check, officer discovered outstanding warrants for both suspects. The warrants were verified, and both suspects were 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,
Transit
Authority

Carla Saulter



Someday My Bus Will Come

Remember when you were a little kid, and you were waiting for a parent to pick you up from some event, like a skating party or something, and your parent was really late, and you sat and watched

your friends (with responsible parents) leave one by one, until finally it was just you and a (slightly annoyed) chaperone ("Are you sure you told them 8:00, dear?"), and you convinced yourself that your folks had either died or decided they were tired of you and run off to Jamaica with the rest of your siblings?

If so, you know how I felt on a recent Tuesday evening, as I sat at Montlake and waited and waited (and waited) for the #48 to show. I waited over 30 minutes for a bus that (theoretically, at least) comes every 15. While I waited, I watched several buses pass, including a couple of #43s (not unusual: the 43 is one of those buses you always see too many of — unless, that is, you are waiting for one), a #540, two #271s, several coaches headed to East Base, and even the rarely sighted #25, before my bus finally arrived.

Truth be told, I feel that "last one left at the skating party" sense of panic and abandonment every time the bus I am waiting for is more than

five minutes late. I pace. I check the schedule. I pace some more. I squint to see farther down the street. I check the schedule again. Then, I see large headlights in the distance, and my heart soars. It's coming...here it comes...nope! A Brinks truck. Ryerson. A school bus. Yet another #36. I consider calling Metro. Maybe there was a crazed gunman. Or an explosion. Or an 87-car pile-up.

And then, finally, it arrives, packed full of all the people who were waiting at the stops before mine. I am relieved. I am elated. I am indignant. It's all I can do not to storm up the steps, poke my lip out, and demand of the driver, "Where have you been?"

Of course, as during my skating-party days, I know better than to do that. Buses are usually late due to traffic conditions, and the last thing a harried driver needs from me is an attitude. I do, however have a couple of tactics that I employ to avoid this situation altogether. I tend to choose a transfer point with more than one option. For example, a stop where I can catch the #27, #4, #14, or #3, all of which get me within walking distance of home, is better than Montlake, where I can only catch the 48. And I almost always take the first bus that will get me close, even if a preferred route is coming soon.

I always say, "A bus in the hand...." ■

Buses are usually late due to traffic conditions, and the last thing a harried driver needs from me is an attitude.

Got something to say about public transportation in Seattle? Email Bus Chick at buschick@gmail.com, or visit www.buschick.com.

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Politics aren't personal

Dear Real Change,

Regarding your article "Undeliverable: Mayor's staff, activist do battle over mailing list" [Feb. 7]; though I am not politically or personally affiliated with Keith Gormezano, I believe that the Mayor's office mischaracterizes his use of the list when Ms. Craver wrote that he last used the list to send "personal" email. By using the word "personal" in that context, she implied that Gormezano used the list for perhaps frivolous, even kinky, odd, or invasive purposes rather than for political rebuttal as allowed and encouraged by law. By drawing attention to Mr. Gormezano's act of legal civil discourse as anything but that, the Mayor's office implies that it shall malign those who use public resources as intended to critique the Mayoral agenda. Such a response by the Mayor's office goes against the spirit of public disclosure statutes, which I believe are intended for just such purposes as Mr. Gormezano's: to foster public debate and allow for multiple points of view. Furthermore, regarding appropriate behaviors, I believe the Mayor's office is obligated to fully disclose to all subscribers of the Mayor's list the potential legitimate uses of their personal information. Has it done so?

The Mayor's office responded inappropriately; it editorialized and promoted an inelegant, misleading political point in the service of the Mayor's views regarding the Viaduct — views currently unauthorized as of this writing. Since the Mayor has opted to jump the gun and stump for such a solution, we should be applauding Mr. Gormezano's initiative in challenging the Mayor's misuse of a public mailing list.

Rony Wiesel
Seattle

Hidden agenda

Dear Real Change,

In response to your op-ed ["Civil Right: It's still OK for landlords to turn down would-be renters because they get government assistance. Change that now," Jan. 24], and the increase of landlords who reject renters with Section 8 housing vouchers, we would like to publicly agree that this is wrong. This becomes an increasingly pressing problem on March 1, when Governor Gregoire's policy on full-family sanction comes into effect.

Currently, there are problems for those who utilize this voucher system,

but with this new policy, more families will lose their benefits, causing more people to be homeless because they will not have the security of the voucher.

With Washington's seeming hidden agenda of producing a welfare-free state, it is losing sight of the real goal: to support the positive empowerment of the low-income and working poor. The sudden annihilation of benefits (i.e., TANF) means that Washington risks having an explosion of the number of people on or below the poverty line. This in turn will be an economic strain on the taxpayers' already emptying pockets. So, of course, many people are wondering where the money will come from. The following are two options we are posing that will eliminate some of the tax burden many Washingtonians complain about.

First, eliminate select businesses getting tax cuts in the name of job creation, even though studies have proven over and over that higher tax subsidies failed to create more jobs.

Secondly, last year five of the biggest oil companies posted profit increases of 30 to 65 percent over their already enormous earnings in 2005. Putting a surcharge on large oil corporations' excess profits would be another resource for funding. This legislation would add an extra 3 percent business and occupations tax surcharge on the gross receipts of major business that refine or sell petroleum. The state already collects a tax on petroleum and has an oil spill tax.

For more information concerning full-family sanctions, including how to get involved in stopping this process, visit the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition at www.wroc.org. Or come to 1820 E. Pine St., Suite 324, Seattle. To contact your legislators for more information or to take action go to www.leg.wa.gov or call 1(800)562-6000. Both WROC and your representatives are open to hearing your story.

Emily Besançon
Chris Charles
Shaira Gonzales
Elena Sequeira (Gardner)
Danielle Vredenburg

CORRECTION:

David Burke made money taking junk from trash heaps and picking up metal refuse strewn along the rails, not by pulling it out of existing scrap heaps. Last week's story on scrapping ("Scrapped for Cash: Legislator hopes to curb sales of stolen metal," Feb. 14) intimated that he stole the metal, which is not true. Real Change apologizes to David for the error.

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

CLASSIFIED

Opportunity

Learn to translate good intentions into political realities with UW Professors David Domke and Chrispin Thurlow. Sat., Feb. 24, 10 a.m., Suquamish United Church of Christ, 18732 Division Ave. NE.

Dr. William F. Schulz explores the deteriorating reputation of the U.S. in the world. Sun., Feb. 25, 5 p.m., East Shore Unitarian Church, 12700 SE 32nd St.

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

Calendar

This Week's Top Ten

Saturday 2/24

The ACLU Annual Membership Conference welcomes everyone to learn about the ensuing challenges of the 21st century. Speakers will discuss the rise of surveillance and loss of privacy, and ACLU clients will share why they have chosen to fight against drug testing, ethnic profiling, and internet censorship. Suggested donation \$10 general, \$5 students. Noon - 6:30 p.m., University of Washington, Kane Hall. Info: www.aclu-wa.org.

Sunday 2/25

In an area associated with terrorism, Maliha Masood connected with a multi-dimensional Muslim identity that is unseen in the West. Her memoir, *Zaatar Days*, *Henna Nights*, recounts her adventures after she bought a one-way ticket to the Middle East. 2 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

Tuesday 2/27

Byron Schenkman and musical friends share three intimate

recitals of Beethoven's work in context of the 18th- and 19th-century composers. Tickets \$12 and up. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Wednesday 2/28

"The Future of Health: James McManus and Ron Reagan on Stem Cells" addresses the contested topic from a variety of vantages, including international policy, personal choice, and alternative treatments. McManus became interested when he faced his daughter's juvenile diabetes; Reagan spoke in support of federal funding for stem cell research at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. Tickets \$5. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

Until Wednesday 2/28

In 1933, claiming they were cleansing the national character, German students torched 25,000 books. The exhibit *Fighting the Fires of Hate: America and the Nazi Book Burnings* features reproduction of photographs, newspapers, and books, as well as audiovisual programs and interactive computer stations. The displays also reveal contemporary censorship. Mon.-Thurs. 6 a.m. - 10 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., Sun. 1-10 p.m., University of Washington, Odegaard Library.

Thursday 3/1

Seattle food writer Cynthia Nims presents "Discovering the Roots of Northwest Cuisine." She surveys the region's fare to determine if we have a unique menu characterized by ingredients, personalities, and style. Tickets \$8 general, \$6 People for Puget Sound members and students. REI, 222 Yale Ave. N. Info: www.pugetsound.org.

Friday 3/2

On her 24th birthday, Barbara Sonneborn was told that her husband had been killed in Vietnam. Twenty years later, she set out on a trek through the country where he fought and died. The film, *Regret to Inform*, captures her conversations with widows from both sides of the war that changed their lives forever. 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Place N.

Until Saturday 3/3

Seven medical professionals convene to decide the fate of the next organ transplant. With only one heart and

four patients in need, how will they decide? Morality, science, money, and private crises clash in Mark St. Germain's drama *The God Committee*. Tickets \$25 and up. Wed. and Thurs. 7:30 p.m., Fri. 8 p.m., Sat. 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Taproot Theatre Company, 204 N 85th St., www.taproottheatre.org.

Saturday 3/3

Featuring Jan Strout and Cindy Domingo, co-founders of the U.S. Women and Cuba Collaboration, *Peace by Peace: Women on the Frontlines* is a celebration of the worldwide movement for reconciliation and justice. 7 p.m., Queen Anne United Methodist Church, 1606 Fifth Ave. W.

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

Director's Corner



The news from Redmond this week offers a sense of déjà vu to long-time Tent City watchers such as myself. Saint Jude Catholic Church will be fined \$350 to \$500 a day by the City of Redmond for hosting the eastside encampment. The camp's projected stay could draw more than \$37,000 in fines, which will be paid through donations.

It could have been Saint Anthony's, or maybe Saint Stephen's. But, deliciously, it is Saint Jude's. According to Catholic Online, St. Jude Thaddaeus "is invoked in desperate situations because his New Testament letter stresses that the faithful should persevere in the environment of harsh, difficult circumstances, just as their forefathers had done before them. Therefore, he is the patron saint of desperate cases...."

Here's the thing about that "forefathers" part.

Just seven years ago, Seattle similarly took on Trinity United Methodist Church in Ballard and lived to regret it. Pastor Rich Lang wrote in *Real Change* that "We can only conclude that the fine's real purpose is to intimidate congregations so that they will not provide for the needs of the poor. But solidarity with the poor is constitutive of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The church can do nothing less." I recall this episode as the turning point in Seattle's stance toward Tent City.

And that gives me hope. We'll be watching closely to see where this new collision of church and state leads. My bets are with Jude.



First things First

Get Involved • Take Action

Stop the Great Tax Break Giveaway

Issue: In just the last three years, the Washington State Legislature approved at least 61 new or extended tax break packages that will cost the state nearly half a billion in the 2007-09 biennial budget. Those might be worthy tax exemptions, but currently the state has no process for comparing them with other important priorities during the budgeting process.

Background: Think of the state budget process as a much larger version of your household budget, but still based on the same important variables: **revenue:** what's coming in, and **expenses:** what's going out. But then add another, equally important aspect, **tax exemptions:** what could be coming in, but isn't. If you've set up payroll deductions — to go directly to a charity, for example — you'd figure that into your budget too, right?

The logic behind providing tax breaks to specific industries is that there is public good that is created by these industries being strong and vibrant. Some tax breaks are intended to create new jobs and some are meant to maintain jobs in struggling communities. Other tax breaks are intended to promote environmentally sound practices, improve public safety, or help communities pay for local projects.

Some tax exemptions no doubt do exactly what they're meant to do. But others are outdated and don't have a built-in review process, and some are the result of political pressure from corporate lobbyists and may not provide a benefit for the public at all, just a benefit for their own bottom line. Hundreds of studies across the nation done over the past two decades have failed to prove that higher tax subsidies create more jobs. In fact, the evidence suggests that funding high quality public services like education is a better way to create a vibrant economy.

What's needed in Washington is a clear mechanism for reviewing tax exemptions and determining how much good they do, in comparison with other important priorities like health care, affordable housing, and transportation. For example, the value of half the recently passed tax breaks could provide health insurance to 60,000 more adults and reduce the number of uninsured in our state by over 10 percent. The governor and legislators should have that information when they're writing a budget.

Last year, the legislature made a good start at increasing accountability by creating a citizens' commission to review existing tax exemptions. This year, the Washington Tax Fairness Coalition is urging the governor and legislators to build on that progress toward greater accountability by requiring that the fiscal impact of all tax preferences be reported as part of the budget and judged in context. That would provide the full picture in real time in order to make the best decisions about how to invest public resources.

Action: Contact your legislators today by calling the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000, and ask them to create a more accountable budget process by supporting House Bill 1827 and Senate Bill 6054.

Information for this column comes from the Washington State Tax Fairness Coalition (www.wataxfairness.org) and the Economic Opportunity Institute (www.eoionline.org).

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NURSING, Continued from Page 1

the closing of Bessie Burton, a total of 400 beds between the three homes will be unavailable.

"Families felt a sense of urgency; people are scrambling to find places for their loved ones," says Carmen Steiner, executive administrator for Bessie Burton. "Any relocation for elderly clients causes some level of trauma, but these are people who are pretty resilient, and have gone through many life changes." She says that the families are the ones who leave crying.

Victoria Kill is hoping her father passes away before the doors are scheduled to close on March 15. "People give up their security and their possessions and expect [the transition into a nursing home] to be their final move," says Kill, a professor of English at SU, whose father has been a hospice patient at Bessie Burton since June. "They make family with the people around them, and it's frightening to move from an extended family into an environment of strangers."

The staff nurses are also facing a period of upheaval and turmoil. Nurse Practitioner Cynthia Bracy has worked at Bessie Burton for 15 years. She was originally drawn to the facility because "other nursing homes were old and dirty." Bracy is not sure what she will do once she leaves Bessie Burton, but is certain she will lose all her seniority. Bracy has a daughter starting college this year whom she will no longer be able to help with tuition. Not only is her daughter's education in jeopardy, but also her own: Bracy was taking classes to become an RN, since SU lets nurses take five credits per quarter without cost.

Nursing students from SU and 13 other area schools come to Bessie Burton for their geriatric clinical rotations. "Being there gave me more perspective as to how life-changing the move [from Bessie Burton will be]," says Megan Auvil, a junior nursing student currently on clinical. "It made me more aware of the issues that the elderly are going through. It's a home to them that's being ripped away."

President Fr. Stephen Sundborg

has maintained that the nursing home is not essential to the purposes of the university. But several people see the closure as contrary to Jesuit values. "It's an ironic and hypocritical thing to do to close the nursing home and speak about social justice," says Mike Numrich, SU alum and staff member.

Yet the student housing that will replace the nursing home is a pressing need. Enrollment has been rising at a steady 6 percent over the past four years. Dr. Scott Smith, director of Housing and Residence Life at SU, explains the space crunch this way: More students are choosing to come to SU from a smaller pool of those being admitted.

The cost of housing in the Central District and other nearby neighborhoods has risen, Smith continues, so students have to live farther away, putting strains on parking and making it more difficult for them to be involved in school activities. "Significant research suggests that students who live on campus are more satisfied and more likely to graduate," he says.

The residents and staff at Bessie Burton are now going through a new experience they had not anticipated, one not nearly as sweet and simple as tasting a pear. Activity Director Erika Campbell says, "Every day, one more person goes, every day is a new broken heart." ■

SANCTUARY, Continued from Page 1

freed, the rest remain housed in Tacoma's Northwest Detention Center, as their cases are still being processed.

According to the ICE website, the agency, which sits under the umbrella of the Department of Homeland Security, deported more than 186,600 undocumented foreign nationals from the country during the last fiscal year. An agency record, the figure represents a 10 percent increase over the previous fiscal year.

Finding such actions as occurred in Auburn "absolutely unconscionable," the Very Rev. Robert Taylor, dean of St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, called on the government to place a moratorium on any future raids until immigration reforms are enacted nationally. Rev. Taylor, who admitted to having been an undocumented worker in the United States himself in the '80s — he hails from South Africa — said if no action is taken to end such raids, then those who care about morality will be moved to re-enliven the Sanctuary Movement. "We will see it with a new flowering and a new passion," said Rev. Taylor.

The local arm of that broad, national movement stretched here in 1982, when the University Baptist Church flexed its moral muscles, declaring itself a refuge for those fleeing civil war in El Salvador. After successfully petitioning the city to declare itself a "Sanctuary City," the church went on to send supplies and relief workers to the war-torn Central American country. Those fleeing unrest there who made it to the Puget Sound area were housed by church and community members.

The movement's new incarnation would work upon similar principles, though instead of protecting those solely fleeing political strife, houses of worship and community members would

open doors to families who may be directly affected by raids. The makeup of the coalition has yet to be revealed.

Having himself arrived in the Northwest from El Salvador during the time of the earlier Sanctuary Movement, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 6 President Sergio Salinas said the current immigration system is outdated and broken. "This attack on immigrant families is not the answer," said Salinas, while the room of speakers and a handful of spectators nodded or softly said, "Sí."

Seated two chairs away from Salinas was Araceli Torres, who had brought her infant daughter, Raquel. Asking that the child be placed before her mother, Magdaleno Rose-Avila, executive director of the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, said that as a result of the raid, a number of young children such as Raquel were left in day care after their mothers had been detained. "There should never be a Raquel torn away from her parents," said Rose-Avila.

The mother, in tears, could hardly speak. Through translation provided by Rose-Avila, Torres, who was not a victim of the raid, said that she was imagining what those mothers must have experienced. "Right now," she said, "I really feel the pain of the mothers that have been separated from their children."

A national announcement of a re-enlivened Sanctuary Movement is planned for next month. ■

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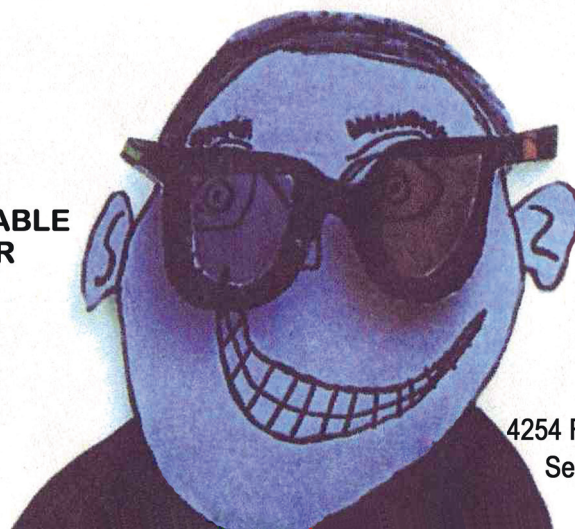


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