

# \$1 REAL CHANGE

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## Port of Seattle to Raze Homes

**Nikole Dispenza appreciates** her old apartment for the backyard where her 2-year-old romped.

**The Port of** Seattle plans to tear down its 234-unit apartment building in Burien...see page 5.



## A cop framed my son

**Claudette Williams says** James Pulliam didn't do what landed him a felony conviction. Seattle officer Greg Neubert says he did...see page 5.

## School of Hard Knocks:

Bay Area writer redefines scholarship...pg. 4

**Double Word Score:** Scrabble Hotshots epitomize E-C-C-E-N-T-R-I-C, 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.

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The *Real Change* Homeless Empowerment Project is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Programs include the *Real Change* newspaper, the Street-Writes 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.

*Real Change* is a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association, the International Network of Street Papers, and the Greater Seattle Business Association.



**Real Change** is one of the key supports for the very big tent that is Seattle's progressive community. We very much need to broaden our base of support and readership to bring ourselves up to speed.

## We're Counting on Our Friends. That Means You

By **TIMOTHY HARRIS**, Executive Director

This summer, *Real Change* needs to get ahead. Over the years, this newspaper has built an amazing base of support in our readership. Last year, more than 1,000 people contributed more than \$245,000. About 45 percent of our budget comes directly from reader support, and every bit of it matters.

Our content is driven by readers, not advertisers. If you want entertainment journalism about things to eat, watch, and buy, there are several other local papers who have that niche covered. If you want to know about your community and how you can be part of the quiet revolution that is taking place everyday, you read *Real Change*.

Your support allowed us to expand to

**Last year, our budget of \$535,000 paid for weekly publication of a quality progressive newspaper, support staff for more than 800 homeless and low-income vendors, and organizing staff that, among other things, raised the bar for downtown developers' support of affordable housing.**

weekly publication two years ago. Since then, our circulation has grown by 30 percent. We've broadened our readership and created more success for our vendors.

Without reader support, our work of building an activist base to fight poverty would be impossible. *Real Change* has a remarkable track record of taking on issues, engaging our activist base, and winning.



**Last weekend Bush's homelessness czar Philip Mangano** was on NPR talking about how "business focused, results oriented" 10-Year-Plan strategies have already

reduced homelessness by up to 70 percent.

No one who works in homelessness believes this.

This community needs *Real Change*. And we need this community to support our work.

This is a time of remarkable change; enormous things are at stake.

**On the one hand**, right-wing over-reach has led to the election of progressive majorities, both locally and nationally. The environmental movement and concern with global warming has turned a corner, and is now a mainstream concern. Poverty is rising on the national agenda. Here in Seattle, homelessness has been identified as our number three issue, behind transportation and education.

At the same time, Seattle is becoming increasingly unaffordable as higher-income professionals and those who have wealth flood our housing market. Inequality is at its greatest since the Roaring Twenties. The wealthiest 1 percent in the U.S. earned the same in 2005 as the bottom 50 percent of the population. That's an unbelievable one to five-hundred income ratio.

These are not the conditions that foster democracy.

Our major media is corporate-owned and increasingly trivial. Our politics are dominated by the power of wealth. A culture of fear divides and intimidates us.

The one thing that can reverse these trends is a vibrant culture of grassroots organizing and community building. *Real Change* is one of the key supports for the very big tent that is Seattle's progressive community. We need your help now to bring ourselves up to speed.

Last year, our budget of \$535,000 paid for weekly publication of a quality progressive newspaper, support staff for more than 800 homeless and low-income vendors, and organizing staff that, among other things, raised the bar for downtown developers' support of affordable housing.

Our work is bigger than our budget. We ended the year in the red.

**This year, we need** to expand our organizing staff, consolidate our newspaper staff, and shore up our administrative capacity.

We have set a very big fundraising goal of \$140,000 for our summer campaign.

Our first week brought in, \$7,311. Last week nearly doubled that to bring in another \$13,971. We hope to step things up over the next few weeks to be at least halfway to our goal by the end of May.

Here's what will make the difference. We need those of you who know how important *Real Change* is to this community to take the 20/20 Challenge. By asking 20

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**We're Counting On Our Friends**



See [www.realchangenews.org](http://www.realchangenews.org) for your 20/20 fundraising kit.

of your friends to donate \$20 to our work, you help us meet our immediate goal of raising \$140,000 while you broaden our circle of friends for the long haul.

At our Web site, [www.realchangenews.org](http://www.realchangenews.org), you will find the tools you need to make this easier. There are cards to download and print. There is an email postcard form to send your friends. There is a secure on-line donation service that makes giving easy.

By clicking on the 20/20 card on our Web site's front page, you will be taken to more information about our goals and how you can help. Thanks for your help. *Real Change* needs every single friend we can get. ■

## Director's Corner

Complexities of definitions and methods aside, I don't find Mangano's premature declaration of victory the least bit helpful.

Here's the thing. When Mangano says "homeless" what he means is "chronically homeless." He's talking about, at most, 10 percent of the homeless population.

By focusing national attention on the most dysfunctional minority of the 2 million or more who are without housing, he feeds the victim-blaming ideology that undermines support for a broad anti-poverty agenda.

When people ask why they should first help those who, in some cases, take the

least responsibility for their lives, his answer is, "Because it's cost-effective."

The logical response to that is, "That may be, but I don't want them in my neighborhood." To which he replies, "Then they will wind up costing you even more."

Call me crazy, but that response doesn't exactly inspire love for the poor. Pretending for a moment that I'm normal, I'd be more likely to resent the chronically homeless for burdening the taxpayer than to invite them in next door.

As a long-term strategy for ending homelessness and poverty, it leaves a lot to be desired.

For daily posts by Tim Harris, see [www.apesmaslamment.blogspot.com](http://www.apesmaslamment.blogspot.com)



## Just Heard...

### "Ich bin ein Berliner"

Well, not exactly. But at least activist Thomas Hays will be able to say he can go to Germany, now that he's received his passport. In early February, Hays applied for the blue billfold to travel on two college-accredited trips: one, to the G8 Summit in Heilindamm in early June; the second, a trip to the Yucatán to study how G8 policies affect the region's poor.

Hays had expected no trouble with his application, but the State Department, citing concerns of identity theft, asked for more extensive documentation, including his elementary school transcript. Hays wondered, instead, if it was his Replacements Needed poster campaign that caused the delay.

While receiving the passport represents a victory, it may be bittersweet: The costs to meet federally ordered demands have tapped his wallet. Hays is hoping he'll be able to raise enough funds to travel by month's end.

Want to help? Visit [www.replacementsneeded.com](http://www.replacementsneeded.com)

—Rosette Royale

### Clinic reprieve

You say you don't have health insurance? You've got lots of company. So finding an extra \$5 million in the county budget to fund two Public Health clinics that provide primary care in Northgate and Bothell is good news. At least for 2008.

Bob Ferguson, chair of the King County Council's budget adoption committee, said earlier this month that he worked with County Executive Ron Sims to come up with the extra funding, which will keep the clinics open through next year. The executive also said he had set aside another \$1.5 million that could be used for Public Health or jail health services in 2007.

It's the second reprieve for the two clinics, which had been slated for closure this year. The bad news is that a task force appointed as part of the health department's long-range planning is currently weighing whether the county can afford to run any primary-care clinics going forward.

—Cydney Gillis

### Streetcars named

"Welcome to the Evergreen Bank streetcar. Next stop: the Discover South Lake Union station."

Something like that is what passengers aboard the neighborhood's new ride will hear when it opens at year's end. The city last week announced that it has garnered "sponsorships" — private funding that buys naming rights and ad placement — for all three of the line's trains and six of the 11 stations.

Sponsorships are supposed to pay for two-thirds of the line's operating costs until 2009, when Metro will begin picking up the tab.

One additional offer to the trains' sponsors, says city streetcar partnership program manager Kim Nunes: they'll be able to occasionally close their car to the public and host hour-long, rolling private functions.

—Adam Hyla

# Change

Defending the interests of the city's 20,000 young skateboarders, Matthew Johnston is four years into a public fight to get the Parks Department to build a citywide network of safe, centrally located, well-designed skate facilities. He's helped put together a plan for the construction of a network of skate spots around the city. And he's published a citizen's guide to the tedious, time-sucking public process at [www.seattleskateparks.org](http://www.seattleskateparks.org)

All the effort, he acknowledges, has met with precious little progress. There are fewer skateparks now than when he got involved four years ago. The Seattle Center tore down the city's largest park in January, and the only remaining park, in Ballard, is the size of a basketball court. The citywide skateparks plan is long on ideas and short on money.

Too bad, because the city's parks accommodate the sports more people played two decades ago. While the number of kids in organized athletics dropped by 10 percent between 1995 and 2003, the number of skateboarders doubled.

"I drive all the way to Ballard to find [the skatepark] is full," says Johnston, "and I pass all these tennis and basketball courts along the way."

—Adam Hyla



Matthew Johnston would like to see a skatepark built at the base of the Space Needle to replace the one Seattle Center tore down in January.

Photo by Brooke Kempner.

## Supporters say proposal would hurt the music scene

# Regulating Seattle's Nightlife

By CHRIS MILLER, Contributing Writer

Nirvana played its first show in Seattle at the Central Tavern in Pioneer Square. The Shins and Death Cab for Cutie started off as just a couple of local bands doing time in Belltown.

At midnight on April 19, what the Nightlife and Music Association dubbed "The Night the Music Died," clubs, bars, venues, and taverns corked their booze and pulled the plug on their performers for five minutes as a statement against Mayor Greg Nickels' Nightlife Ordinance.

**"Our fear is that the new legislation could discourage small clubs from opening," says the Nightlife and Music Association's Tim Hatley. "Fifty- to seventy-five-person venues are essential for the ecology of home-grown bands."**

The controversial proposal — pitting neighborhood residents against watering holes, venues, and dance clubs — would give ample authority to the Mayor's office to deal with what are seen as "problem

clubs" by forcing nightclubs to apply for a nightclub licence.

This, in probably "the most regulated industry in the city," says Tim Hatley of Seattle NMA. "If we already have existing laws on the books to regulate this, do it."

Nickels made the proposal in response to three violent crimes associated with nightlife, said aide Regina LaBelle at a City Council Economic Development and Neighborhoods Committee (EDNC) meeting.

City Councilmembers Sally Clark and Richard McIver, who sit on the overseeing committee, question whether Nickels' proposal is overly burdensome.

Club-owners will be responsible now for all litter within 50 ft. of their establishment, something arbitrary in assessment. Clark says, if passed, councilors will need to "make sure the threshold is high enough that it's not a cigarette butt in the wrong place."

"The nightlife ordinance gives an awful lot of leeway to the police department in determining who they might enforce and how they might enforce," says McIver.

But the bass-saturated, neon-blooming nightlife is forcing the police department to reallocate resources. Clark notes the clubbing zones drain so many cops from the city (at times blockading clubs to encourage after-hours rowdies to disperse) that 9-11 calls from other parts of the city are going unanswered.

According to one officer involved in the Nightlife Assessment Task Force, this is because SPD has no means of "ensur-

ing follow-through and accountability" from the nightclub owners.

Washington state recently passed HB 2113, allowing cities to write the State Liquor Board requesting they not renew an establishment's liquor license.

"I'm not convinced that the issues will be solved by licensing and compliance," says City Councilmember Jan Drago, who also sits on the EDNC. "The current noise and nuisance ordinances are not workable and not enforceable."

Everyone on the EDNC agrees that SPD has higher priorities than noise and litter, and admits that few noise complaints actually result in a citation.

Under the Mayor's plan, citation and license revocation authority would be vested in a position within the mayor's office; these violations would be passed there from SPD. Five noise complaints or three fights over two years could shut a club down.

Drago is at work on a counter-proposal, to be offered later in May, that would empower citizens to act on noise violations.

"Our fear is that the new legislation could discourage small clubs from opening," says Hatley. "Fifty- to seventy-five-person venues are essential for the ecology of home-grown bands."

The NMA does support the creation of a Nightlife Advisory Board (NAB), one element of the mayor's proposal, but wants to see separation of power from the mayor's office and SPD.

"Business owners have a liquor license, health department license, zoning permit, conditional-use permit, and on and on," says Hatley, "and how easily this new licence could be revoked is our biggest concern." ■

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**Writer Lisa Gray-Garcia** — Tiny, to you — knows firsthand how oppressed people can find their voice

## Bay Area Scholar Schooled by Hard Knocks

By PAUL RICE, Contributing Writer

**T**iny's voice lives up to her name, a soft purr that occasionally defies itself, exploding into hysterical laughter as her words carry her from thought to thought, unfolding her stories and the soul of her work. Her work could also be called her life: As someone who's lived through weighty situations most would fold under, she's been learning how to survive and help others survive since she was 11, when her mother Dee lost her job and Tiny became the backbone of her family unit.

Tiny, a.k.a. Lisa Gray-Garcia, is the "co-mama" of *POOR Magazine*, a glossy lit mag with a twist: It is by and about poor people and their struggles. The other co-mama was Dee, her mother, who passed away last year. Working

**Everyone who has lived through poverty and come out alive is a scholar, or an expert, according to Tiny.**

out of the Bay Area as an activist-artist-author-publisher, Tiny is wearing many hats these days.

She also swears like a sailor, which puts me instantly at ease, remembering my own father's liberal use of the f-word provided my mother wasn't around. Some things need expletives; her stories practically mandate them. "In San Fran[cisco], 40 percent of the people in homeless shelters are 60-70 years old," she says, before responding to her own

data with a scream: "What the fuck are they doing in homeless shelters?"

"If you educate people on this shit, things would change, but people don't think about it because they've been mindfucked."

In her first book, *Criminal of Poverty: Growing Up Homeless in America* (City Lights, 2007), Tiny explores the potential causes of said fuckery while interweaving the tales of three generations of poor women: herself, her mother, and her grandmother. Whereas grandmother Helen Jo and mother Dee (nee Mary Jo) were both fostered in practically parentless situations with no family cohesion, Tiny grew up by her mother's side, and they became a pair rarely separated. Tiny never stepped out on supporting her mother, even though it meant missing high school, a bittersweet reality for her. She writes about being 12 and hearing children playing after the last school bell:

"Each shrill, excited thread of their voices shattered the blank stillness with a momentary drop of life in a sea of empty air. Oh how I longed to be them for even a second, to have friends, to worry about my clothes, homework, boys."

School or not, she's still a scholar. Everyone who has lived through poverty and come out alive is a scholar, or an expert, according to Tiny. "What even is a scholar, and who defines that?" she wonders. "Usually people with a formal education from a formal institution of learning who have had very little if any direct experience with some of the issues that they're actually studying." Referring to people who live through diabolical circumstances in their everyday lives as scholars as opposed to just homeless or low-income people is a way to buck the

language of oppression. "It's a political statement — we have solutions but nobody listens to us."

The "Don Quixote-style" scholarship in her book is a headlong tackling of North American cultural windmills — specifically what she sees as the myth of independence that's been perpetrated on us. You know: Go to school, get a job, get a house, start a new family from scratch, or else. "All of these notions, like if you don't leave the house you're a bum! And who benefits from this shit but furniture companies and landlords?"

The causes of poverty run deeper than lack of money. For her, it's the loss of indigenous family structures that are built to support, not alienate.

She sees the need to teach poor people to use their knowledge to become scholars and speak their stories, as well as look at the outside world for context. "Poor people get caught up in our notions of what we deserve," she says. "For instance, we don't know that in Canada and most of Western Europe, they *give* people child care."

Tiny's trying to put together a new issue of *POOR Magazine* for 2008, but they're still short 5 grand. Almost all of her income is going to keep the magazine and website, *Poor News Network* (a web clearinghouse for poverty-related news), alive.



Activist-artist-author-publisher Lisa Gray-Garcia, a.k.a. Tiny, with her son. At age 11, Tiny held her family together after her mother lost her job.

"I'm so over it right now, I don't think I can handle this crazy-ass life." She might complain, but I can tell she's going to keep going. When you've walked out of hell, you don't stop walking. ■

### [Resource]

*POOR Magazine* and the Poor News Network can be found on the web at [www.poormagazine.org](http://www.poormagazine.org)

### [Event]

Tiny joins writers from Portland's Sisters of the Road non-profit café and community space at a reading Sat., May 26 at 2 p.m. at the Elliott Bay Book Co., 101 S. Main Street, Pioneer Square.

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Nikole Dispenza appreciates her Lora Lake apartment for the backyard where her 2-year-old romped. "I've been depressed on and off for three months because I don't want to move," Dispenza says. She and the majority of tenants have already left, as the Port of Seattle, which owns the 234-unit complex, plans to tear it down entirely, even though only 72 of the units are within a buffer zone. *Photo by Mark Sullo*

**Ending homelessness gets harder, activists and officials contend, when public agencies tear down affordable housing needlessly**

## Port of Seattle to Raze Housing Near Runway

By CYDNEY GILLIS, Staff Reporter

It may only be a matter of time now before a wrecking ball comes calling at the Lora Lake Apartments. But, by then, Nikole Dispenza will have already made a move that makes her mad just to think about.

She moved into the Burien apartment complex last September, renting a one-bedroom on the ground floor for \$760. It has a washer and dryer in the unit and a back porch that opens to an outdoor area where her two-year-old son, Devin,

**"Just to the south of Lora Lake is a large vacant lot where there used to be a grocery store," says Burien resident Cherisse Luxa. "If this is such a hot commercial area, why has no one sited there?"**

can ride his tricycle. But by May 31, she has to be out.

Dispenza rents from the King County Housing Authority, whose director, Stephen Norman, is also mad. Since March, he's been leading a heated fight to get the City of Burien and the Port of Seattle to save some of Lora Lake's 22 buildings, which the Port owns in an area near SeaTac Airport and leases to the hous-

ing authority. But, so far, the port isn't budging on a plan to redevelop the site, potentially as a big-box store.

Under federal aviation rules, 72 of the complex's units stand in a noise and safety "protection zone" that the port must clear before it can open a third runway at SeaTac in 2008. But if it tears down all 234 units, Norman and other housing advocates argue, it will only contribute to a regional crisis in affordable housing that, at the bot-

tom end, forces the poorest tenants out of the market and onto the streets.

The port says that won't happen with Lora Lake's tenants: Like Dispenza, who works full-time for a cargo carrier in Tukwila and has already leased another apartment, most of Lora Lake's renters have jobs. While that's true, Norman says, port officials don't know what they're talking about: Of the complex's households, he says, 29 have no income and 29 are below 30 percent of area median income, with 13 struggling below 17 percent.

At a time when every other city and county agency is working to end homelessness by 2015, Norman says, it's ridiculous for the port to remove the 162 units that aren't in the noise zone. In a Port Commission meeting last week, Rev. Sandy Brown of the Church Council of Greater Seattle called it immoral and demanded the port replace the units one for one.

"They've argued that the units will not be inhabitable, but sound engineers say it will be fine when the third runway opens," Brown says. And if they aren't, it's up to the port to do something about it, he says: "They're building the runway. It's their responsibility to mitigate the impacts."

Except for Port Commissioner Alec Fiskien, who expressed support, Brown got nowhere. Appeals to the Burien City Council have also failed: Last Monday, the council voted 5-1 to stick with its long-standing plan to turn the area into a commercial zone that they hope will draw business and jobs. The vote allows the Port to proceed with demolition, which is expected some time this summer.

The port bought Lora Lake from a private owner in 1998, paying to relocate hundreds of tenants from a complex that includes a big gym, two pools, and a playground. But, in the wake of a lawsuit to stop the third runway, the city and Port agreed in 2000 to let the housing authority lease the complex for five years. In 2005, they extended the lease through June of this year, with the port declining the housing authority's recent offers to buy the property at market rate, Norman says.

"At this point, it's time to vacate the apartments," says port spokesperson

Terri-Ann Betancourt. "The port has always had plans to work with the city of Burien to develop that property into something non-residential."

The problem, Norman and others say, is that nothing specific is planned for the site at this time, raising the possibility that Lora Lake will end up a vacant lot — something Councilmember Gordon Shaw says is necessary to attract developers. But, "Just to the south of Lora Lake is a large vacant lot where there used to be a grocery store," says Burien resident Cherisse Luxa. "If this is such a hot commercial

**At a time when every other city and county agency is working to end homelessness by 2015, King County Housing Authority Director Stephen Norman says, it's ridiculous for the port to remove the 162 units that aren't in the noise zone.**

area, why has no one sited there?"

To Dispenza and the majority of tenants who have already left Lora Lake, the debate is academic. On May 19, she's moving into a second-floor apartment in SeaTac that, thanks to a move-in special she has spread across her new lease, won't cost any more this year. But she says life won't be the same: There's no playground, and the unit sits behind an ocean of airport parking lots that she finds scary.

The stress and cost of the move have also been enormous. This time around, the port provided Lora Lake's tenants with no moving assistance.

"I've been depressed on and off for three months because I don't want to move," Dispenza says. "There's so much here I can't find anywhere else." ■

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**Mother of convicted man seeks others arrested by SPD officer**

## More Question Veracity of Police Testimony

By CYDNEY GILLIS, Staff Reporter

More "crumbs" of crack cocaine found at the scene. Another Black man busted. The police had arrested her son for crack possession once before, but Claudette Thomas says what happened to him in 2003 with Seattle Officer Gregory Neubert wasn't right.

Last week, Thomas stood with members of the Seattle-King County NAACP as they called for the badges of Neubert and another downtown Seattle police officer, Michael Tietjen, whose facts have been called into question in the Jan. 2 drug arrest of Troy Patterson ["Officers, video tell different stories," May 9].

Like Patterson, James Pulliam, 33, has insisted that Neubert planted the

drugs he was charged with possessing — one reason, Thomas says, that her son demanded to go to trial. Despite a prior drug conviction and two incidents of bail jumping, she says, he believed he could prove his innocence and refused to take a plea.

But it was his word against the officer's, and the jury sided with Neubert. For three-tenths of a gram of crack cocaine, Thomas says, her son got three years and is now serving six. The lighter sentence was revoked, she says, after he complained about conditions in his prison rehab class and was pulled from the program.

Neubert arrested Pulliam in Belltown late in the evening of Nov. 18, 2003. In his incident report, the officer says he had observed him dealing

drugs on Third Ave., then followed him down the street, where he says he saw Pulliam drop the three-tenths of a gram on the ground.

Neubert says he collected the crack and ordered Pulliam to stop. When he didn't, the officer got in his squad car and went after him, reporting that, when apprehended, Pulliam stated, "Do me for obstruction, just don't put nothing on me."

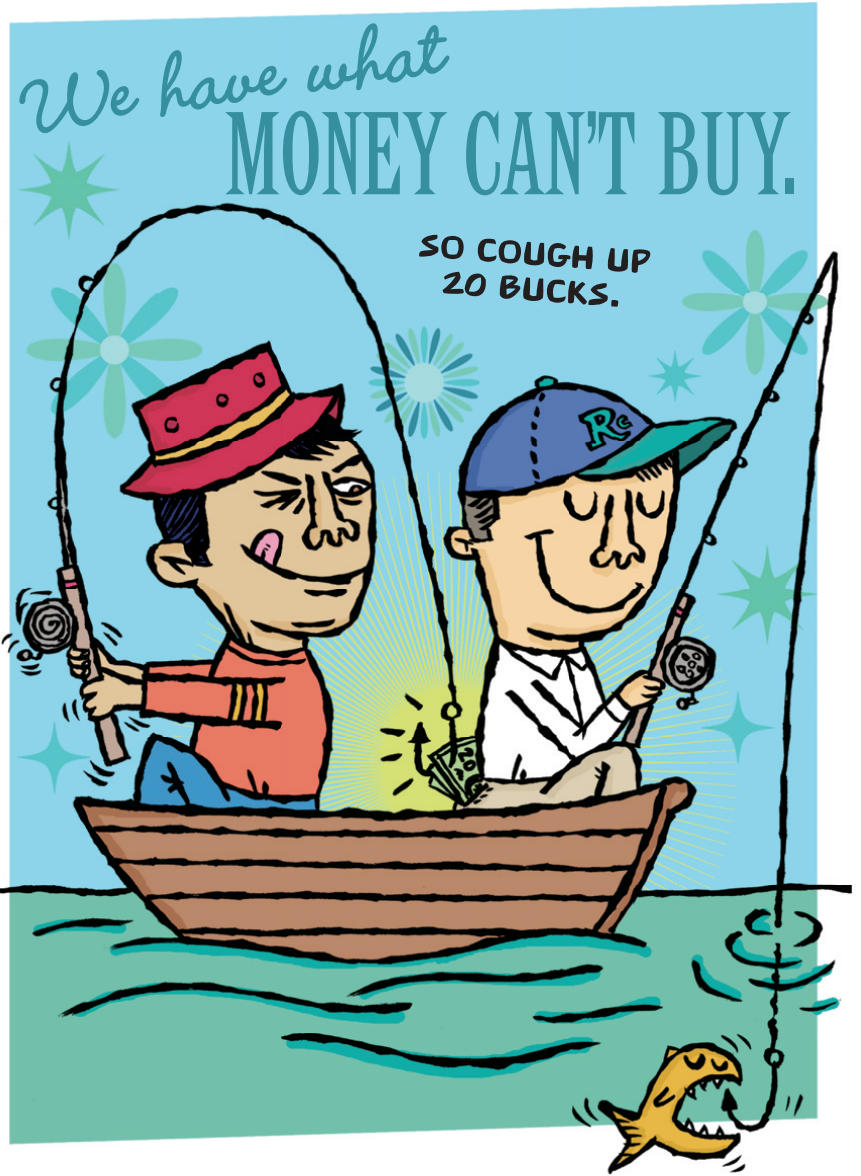
The remark and one other — "don't do me for dope" — would later serve as a basis for the prosecutor to argue that Pulliam had admitted guilt at the scene prior to being arrested. But Thomas

**OFFICER, Continued on Page 12**



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## Four winters in war-ravaged Afghanistan showed journalist Ann Jones the daunting task of national recovery — and how the United States' millions don't help

### Phantom Aid

By MARTHA BASKIN,  
Contributing Writer

Immediately after 9/11, Afghanistan became the first target of U.S. military retaliation in the so-called War on Terror. After the bombs stopped falling on Kabul, award-winning journalist and women's rights activist Ann Jones set out for the shattered city. There she spent the next four winters working in humanitarian aid, determined to bring help where her country had brought destruction. Her recent book *Kabul in Winter: Life Without Peace in Afghanistan* (Picador, 2007), is a trenchant report.

Often called the crossroads of Central Asia, Afghanistan is a livestock- and agriculturally-based country. Devastated by decades of war, poverty, and oppressive political rule, the country's economic, political and social structures have been characterized by instability and turbulence. Jones brings a firsthand look of a nation trying to rise from the ruins of decades of proxy wars fought by both the U.S. and the former Soviet Union. She goes into the streets, the prisons, and the schools to meet everyday men and women and recount their harrowing stories.

I interviewed Jones, a clear-thinking journalist who's not afraid to advocate for the oppressed, on a recent visit she made to the Puget Sound. Jones remains outraged not just by the predicament of Afghanistan's people, but by privatization scams tied to U.S. humanitarian aid — most of which goes into the pockets of private American contractors for work, she says, "that is often done very unsatisfactorily, very inappropriately, or not at all."

In a recent article, you describe the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan and a resurgence of the Taliban. You blame George Bush and the U.S. military. Why?

After the U.S. invaded Afghanistan in 2001, international agreements were reached that held that international peacekeeping forces would be confined to Kabul. The U.S. would be responsible for security in all the rest of the country. But within a matter of weeks we withdrew most of our forces from Afghanistan. We never had extensive forces on the ground. We mostly attacked them with high-altitude bombing. So we withdrew all of those forces and sent them off to muster for Iraq. Because we weren't there providing security, the

Taliban and Al Qaeda were able to pick off humanitarian workers who came to the provinces to try to initiate development and help the people. The NGOs [non-governmental organizations] had to withdraw to the relative safety of the capital, and that left most of Afghanistan with very little, if any, development.

You recount a recent incident in which President Karzai began to weep over thousands of dead women and children trapped between U.S. bombers and NATO troops on the one hand, and Taliban forces backed unofficially by Pakistan on the other. Could you describe the geopolitical realities that are fostering this situation?

Last summer, because things were beginning to fall apart in Afghanistan, the U.S. arranged for NATO to take control of security. NATO peacekeeping forces, led by the British went into southern Afghanistan thinking they were going to continue peacekeeping that the U.S. had been doing. Instead, they walked right into some very heavy battles and took a lot of casualties. They called for reinforcements. The U.S. response was to support with them with bombing. More Taliban are coming across the Pakistan border to join the fray. So you have civilians caught in the crossfire of what is once again a very hot war,

**"There aren't any easy answers to these very complex situations, which is perhaps something our government should think about before it goes messing with other countries."**

spreading throughout southern Afghanistan. Approximately 4,000 Afghans died last year in that conflict. It's estimated officially that 1,000 of those were innocent civilians, many of them women and children. President Karzai, who has been trying to bring about some kind of peace and reconciliation in the country, has been unsupported in these efforts by the United States. When he tried to speak publicly about the issue he did just break down and weep about what's happening to his country.

But it's all insidious and circular, because if I understand it, the CIA continues to fund Pakistan's secret intelligence service, who in turn are supporting the Taliban. Is that right?

That's a good question, because we don't really know. I don't know if the CIA is still



Over the course of four winters in Afghanistan, journalist Ann Jones saw that millions of dollars donated to help the people instead found its way into the pockets of American contractors. Jones details what she witnessed in *Kabul in Winter*.

funding Pakistan intelligence. They did, of course, all the way through the Soviet occupation, but certainly the U.S. is giving massive amounts of aid to the Pakistan government. And our relationship with Pakistan is really not clear because everyone in the area knows that Taliban are coming across the border all the time.

From 2002 to 2006, you spent considerable time as a volunteer for a small nonprofit dedicated to assisting the country's thousands of war widows: *Madar*, or "mother." *Madar* was based in Kabul. The work of *Madar* seems nothing less than life-affirming for many Afghan women. Could you talk about its history and its work?

It was founded by an American woman who had lived in Kabul since the 1960s. She knows the country very well. Everyone else who works with *Madar* is Afghan. It's very small. But it conducts localized programs that offer life saving aid to a lot of women by helping them gain ways of supporting themselves after

they've lost the men in their families. Because of course, especially during the Taliban time, women were not allowed to leave their homes to work. So this organization really saved some lives.

I'm critical of some of the bigger organizations and particularly of America's official funding, administered by the Agency for International Development (USAID), because for the most part it's a scam. Most of the aid that we citizens think is going to people in Afghanistan is actually going into the pockets of private American contractors who are paid big time to do work that is often done very unsatisfactorily, very inappropriately, or not at all. Some of the names are familiar to us, of course, because the same thing has been going on with even more of our money in Iraq. I think it's a means of transferring money from the Federal Treasury to the pockets of Americans who are already doing well enough, thank you.

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## True North

### ■ Let the Northern Lights Erase Your Name

by Vendela Vida, Ecco/HarperCollins 2007, Hardcover, 226 pages, \$23.95

By AUSTIN WALTERS,  
Contributing Writer

Vendela Vida's sweeping new novel is a multilayered page-turner about a young woman who suddenly finds she is

### The story's setting adds dimension and complexity.

not who she thinks she is and nothing is as it seems. The author's talent as a storyteller shines through in unexpected ways as her remarkable protagonist confronts the demons of her past and future.

Vida's haunting and unadorned prose frees the reader from the standard cliché of a woman lost in her own life. The plot, set mostly above the Arctic Circle in northern Scandinavia, twists and curls effortlessly around themes of loneliness and despair and finally centers on what it means to break a familial pattern not unlike a cycle of addiction or abuse and become free again.

After her father's sudden death, Clarissa learns that the man who raised and loved her was not, in fact, her biological kin. Turning to her mother for answers is not possible, as she disappeared from a shopping mall when Clarissa was 14. Confused and alone, the only clue Clarissa has about her identity is the name of a priest who lives above the Arctic Circle.

Clarissa travels to Lapland, home to the indigenous Sami people. She hopes to

find answers among them, and in the surrounding bleak landscape — who was her father? What caused her mother to flee from here, and is it possible that she's returned? And ultimately, where does she belong?

Arriving on the priest's doorstep, Clarissa lets herself imagine growing up in his warm home; trudging to school in the cold, eating reindeer meat and Wasa crackers, and gathering with the family around the fire. Instead, what the priest reveals about her personal history is "a nasty fairy tale with no moral."

The journeys of the primary characters, if they were to be peeled away from the landscape, would be a less special experience for the reader. The story's setting adds dimension and complexity, and this additional layer is what pushes it beyond an ordinary tale of broken families and lost identities.

The natural wonders of the far north, like the neverending darkness, the never ending light, and the Arctic cold, become allegories for the emotions and experiences of the characters. The Northern Lights are believed to be the ancestors of the

Sami people, protecting and guiding them through their lives. Clarissa sits alone on a train and watches the sky brighten and pulse "as though hiding a beating heart."

It's difficult to put this book down because Vida, author of *Girls on the Verge* and *And Now You Can Go*, so expertly allows the glimmers of lightness and hope to shine through Clarissa's undoing and despair. Together with artful plot twists, Vida has written another unforgettable work of fiction. ■

## WORTH SEEING

NOW AVAILABLE ON DVD:

Reviews by LESTER GRAY, Contributing Writer

■ **Plagues and Pleasures on the Salton Sea** (2004); Directed by Chris Metzler and Jeff Springer

**P**lagues and Pleasures on the Salton Sea recounts the twisted tale of the accidental forming of a large body of salt water in the southern California desert. The film's primary focus is on the subsequent and occasionally stumblebum efforts to capitalize on this phenomenon.

By the 1950s the lake had become the working-class counterpart of Palm Springs, home to fishing, waterskiing, and bird-watching. Seizing on the potential for resorts and retirement communities, developers and speculators began to build hotels and an infrastructure for a large community. Celebrities came — Frank Sinatra, Sonny Bono, the Beach Boys, and the Marx Bros. But providence, which brought this miracle, just as unexpectedly revisited the sea, this time with less favorable results.

In a series of calamities from hurricanes to real estate miscalculations, the visions for a Mecca in the desert evaporated as though they were mirages. First the lake overflowed due to freak rain storms, swamping homes and hope. Then it receded, considerably reducing the original shoreline and leaving a concentric border of detritus and dissolution. The residual stew, in the minds of some, includes the remaining inhabitants, a curious blend of those who couldn't or wouldn't leave, more recently joined by families fleeing the inner city.

Although most of the people we meet in *Plagues and Pleasures* would be judged to have their full wits about them (there are exceptions), the backdrop of decay against which they are framed prejudices their portrayals. This all makes for a fun, sad, and intoxicating offering.

Playing at the Grand Illusion May 18-24.

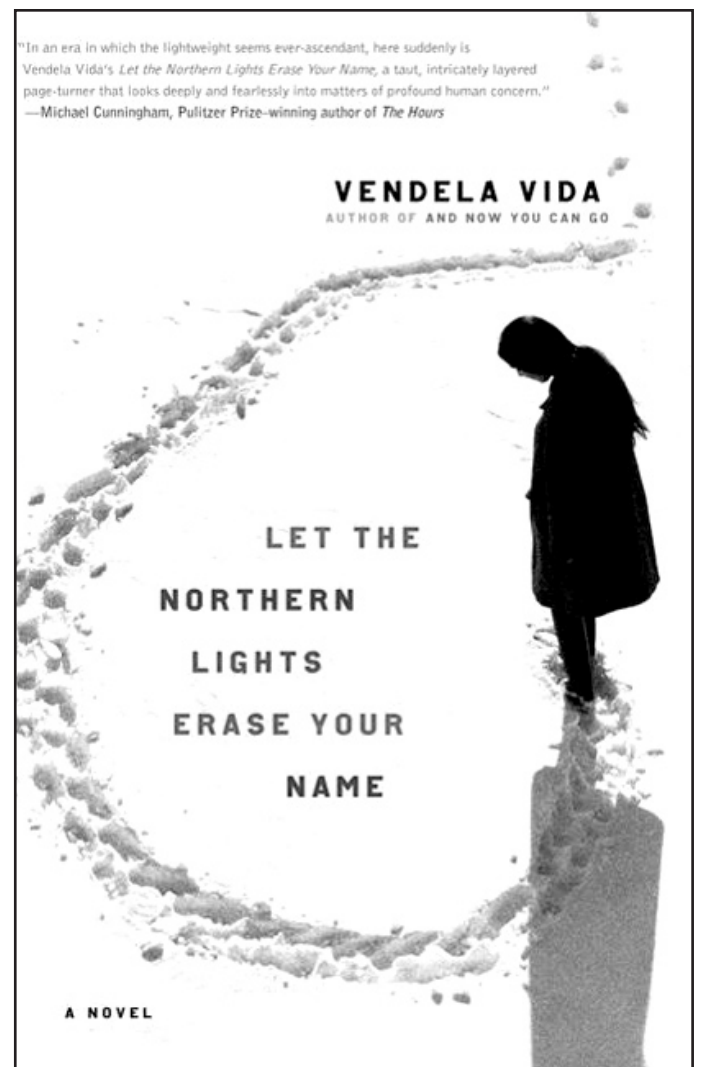
■ **Word Wars: Tiles and Tribulations on the Scrabble Game Circuit** (2003); Directed by Julian Petrillo

**"S**ticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." This proverbial admonishment against verbal abuse, while well intended, falls short in accuracy. Words can hurt. In fact, words can be addictive to the point that people — bright, intelligent men and women, — forgo employment, dating, and standard social protocol to memorize every two- to eight-letter word in American English.

In *Word Wars*, an exciting voyeuristic journey into the eclectic world of the country's top scrabble players, we meet what might be called the "professionals," a word that belies the nominal prize money at stake. These devotees have taken a family board game and developed sophisticated strategies, applying such everyday words as A-E (one), E-A-U (transparent liquid), A-S-P-H-Y-X-Y (plural of asphyxia), and B-E-Z-I-Q-U-E (a card game).

The real fun in *Word Wars* is in observing the lives of these perennially penniless and colorful competitors, ranging from the Black and somewhat militant Marlon Hill to Joel Sherman, constantly beset by gastrointestinal issues, to Joe Edley, who actually has a family and a job. Unlike the recent crossword documentary *Wordplay*, which focused mostly on crossword competitions, *Word Wars* looks at lives gone slightly dysfunctional due to an obsession that can only be indulged by minds obviously capable of more productive activity.

Enhanced by some deft *cinema verité*, this is a film you may want to buy and keep around the I-S-B-A (the hut). ■



■ **The Omnivore's Dilemma**

by Michael Pollan. Penguin Press, 2006, Hardcover, 464 pages, \$26.95

**"W**e eat by the grace of nature, not industry, and what we're eating is never anything more or less than the body of the world." So concludes *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, author Michael Pollan's epic journey into the varied American food systems making up our country's diet. Along the way he takes a cleaver to your perspectives on just what it is we're eating for dinner, leaving you open to new ruminations and maybe even, gasp, lifestyle changes.

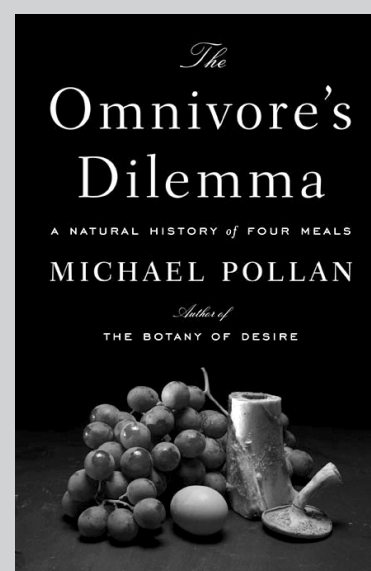
These changes aren't simple or specific, though — Pollan cuts into all deeply

held beliefs about food. If you're a meat eater, you may find your complicity in cruelty and public health hazards too much to bear. But vegetarians and vegans aren't safe either — they will be confronted with logical arguments that hurl their leafy and supposedly nonviolent habits into moral peril.

This is a testament to the book's strength; while Pollan is not advocating for any specific agenda (he's an avid carnivore himself), he says we must begin to pay more attention to where our daily bread comes from, else we get poisoned by our food ignorance.

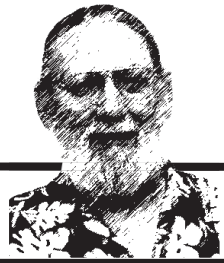
Now put that in your salad bowl and toss it.

—Paul Rice



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## ©Dr. Wes: Someone Somewhere Deserves Pizza

Adventures  
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning

**D**ear America,  
I really hate putting you down. I know how vain, selfish, and arrogant you are, and how, because of that, if I ever put you down, you will never listen to me again. You only listen to flatterers like George Bush, who lie and tell you every day how great you are.

I've tried to be your best friend, America. I really have. When you got into that illegal war four years ago, I

**America, you are SO SCREWED UP that your petty officials don't even THINK of asking your citizens to help them do anything.**

tried to hold you back. That's what best friends do. When they're making a stupid mistake, you try to hold them back, to save them from being stupid. But you didn't appreciate it. You cursed me. You screamed, "I'm NOT making illegal war! I'm killing terrorists! Give me my keys or I'll send you to Guantánamo and I'll non-torture you, you LIBERAL!" or words to that effect.

And then you went off and "killed terrorists" who weren't there and now the world hates you and you're in the back

of the bar pounding the wall, screaming, "They don't ANY of them have ANY business hating ME. Tell me I'm great or I'll cut you, you LIBERALS!"

That's how you curse me. I can complain all day about a liberal Supreme Court that OKs violating protections of private property owners, or a Congress that ignores long-established conservative fiscal principles or passes ex post facto laws as if the Constitution doesn't matter any more. But let me tell you, America, just once, that you are going to hell in a handbasket if you don't clean up your act, and all of the sudden I'm a LIBERAL.

OK, America, have it your way. I'm a poor drip-coffee-drinking, beer-guzzling, bus-riding-'cause-I-can't-afford-a-moped-much-less-a-Smart-Car, Constitution-loving, PC-hating LIBERAL, because you say so.

Meanwhile, for years me and all my LIBERAL buddies have been telling you that capital punishment doesn't work. We did study after LIBERAL study (all study is liberal to you) to find out that capital punishment has no deterrent effect. Also, the only places where execution costs less than life imprisonment are Third World countries that are overrun with murderers. You didn't care. Fine.

But last week something just drove me over the edge. A guy, Philip Workman, on death row in Tennessee, asked that his last meal be pizza served to some homeless person. The Tennessee authorities refused, BECAUSE IT WOULD COST MORE THAN \$20.

Philip Workman is a creep. He probably didn't commit the murder he was

sentenced for, because the Medical Examiner who testified against him is a pathological histrionic liar. But Workman's still a creep. Besides, you already know I'm LIBERAL, so I'm pro-death, having no respect for the sanctity of life. So I say kill Workman, make him hurt, and bring that Third World on.

But the refusal to honor Workman's last meal request is more than sad, and I'll tell you why, America, and you're not going to want to hear me tell you why, and you'll cover your ears, America, and shout "La la la, I'm not listening to you, LIBERAL!" But here I go.

All the Tennessee authorities had to do to get a homeless person fed for free WAS TO GO PUBLIC AND ASK PEOPLE TO HELP BY DOING IT FOR THEM.

This is what American Civilization has devolved to. America, you are SO SCREWED UP that your petty officials don't even THINK of asking your citizens to help them do anything. You are that full of hatred for common people, that stuck up with authority and bound up with petty bureaucracy channeling hatred of the lower classes, that it doesn't even occur to the people running your prisons that the people outside the prison walls could be asked to do what they couldn't.

A civilization so degenerate that it treats its own people as useless, space-filling trash can't last a generation. ■

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

Bus Chick,  
Transit  
Authority

Carla Saulter

**Part I: Great Expectations**  
Just as we were settling into car-free married life, Bus Nerd and I got a surprise: We're (rather unexpectedly) "expecting." That's right, folks. This October, Seattle will count another bus baby among its natives.

Since we've started telling people our news, the most common question we've been asked (aside from, "Are you going to find out the sex?") has been, "Are you guys going to get a car now?"

No, we're not — and not just because we both believe in adhering to our convictions, even when they are challenged. At the core, our decision is based on the fact that we both sincerely believe raising our child without a car will be good for the child. A few of the reasons why:

- It will be raised by financially secure parents. (College fund? Check!)
- It will learn to be self-sufficient (at least transportation-wise) at an early age. After I learned to ride the bus by myself, I was able to get to my favorite haunts

## Bus Chick: Riding with a Little Bundle of Joy

— Pike Place Market, Seattle Center, and Grandma's apartment — without waiting for an available adult to drive me.

- It will have exciting adventures. What's more exciting for a five-year-old than pulling the bell or sitting in the bendy part of an articulated bus?

- It will learn how to interact with people of different ages, cultures, and levels of income and education.

- If we're very lucky, it will develop compassion for its fellow human beings.

If only answering all the other new-parent questions were so easy. We're still trying to decide if we should find out the sex.

### Part II: Not-So-Great Expectations

The joys of busing while pregnant:

- All bus riders have experienced the odiferous unpleasantness known as the funky bus. Unfortunately, when you have the nose of a bloodhound, every bus is a funky bus. Perfume, lotion, hair products, food smells — to say nothing of the less pleasant scents associated with humans — all can cause an olfactory nightmare at least as offensive as a crowded 4 on a summer afternoon.

- Walking? OK. Sitting? *Very* OK. Standing in one place for more than a minute? Not OK. Hence, benchless stops and crowded buses are not a pregnant bus chick's friend.

- New, important addition to the bus chick bag: A sturdy, leak-proof plastic bag, to be used in cases of extreme nausea emergencies when exiting the bus is not possible. (Fortunately, I have yet to use mine.)

- Jeans are no longer a wise fashion choice, as opening a top button (or two) of one's fly when seated is generally frowned upon by other riders.

- There is no event or destination (with the exception, perhaps, of a Prince concert) worth running to catch a bus for. Important meeting? Court date? Swearing-in ceremony? They'll get along alright without you until the next bus arrives. ■

Got something to say about public transportation in Seattle? Email Bus Chick at: [buschick@gmail.com](mailto:buschick@gmail.com) or [blog.seattlepi.nwsourc.com/buschick](http://blog.seattlepi.nwsourc.com/buschick)



**Thurs., May 3, 1:15 p.m., 200 block Stewart St., Alley to N.** A transient Black male aged 51 was contacted for trespassing in an alcove to the back door of an unnamed business on Stewart St. A routine name check found an outstanding warrant, which was verified. Suspect was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

**Thurs., May 3, 3:30 p.m., Third Ave.** Officer was dispatched to an address on Third Ave. to investigate a report of an assault and was informed the suspect had left the scene. When he got to the location he found another officer had detained the suspect, a transient Black male aged 57, and was speaking with him. The reporting officer waited for the complainant/victim to arrive and spoke to them. Complainant arrived and stated that the suspect was trying to lay down his blanket to get ready to sleep in the doorway of his business, and the complainant advised him not to do that. The suspect then got up and punched the complainant in the left shoulder with a closed right fist. Complainant stated that the suspect then raised a can of soda as if to throw it at him and then walked away. The other officer stated that he had spoken to the suspect, who told him that the Seattle Police were following him every day wherever he goes. He also said that an unknown woman injects him with a drug worth \$100,000, which makes a tulip grow out of his back. He said he removed the tulip and it left no mark. He stated that he could climb walls and ceilings. The officers called an AMR ambulance, filled out a mental health evaluation form, and the suspect was transported to Harborview Medical Center.

**Thurs., May 3, 3:30 p.m., 1900 block Pike St.** Subject, a transient white female aged 44, was observed by officers walking on Pike St. She was known to have an outstanding warrant and was contacted, arrested, and booked into King County Jail.

**Thurs., May 3, 4:05 p.m., Western Ave., Victor Steinbrueck Park.**

Suspect, a transient Hispanic male aged 28, was observed by officer in Victor Steinbrueck Park, and was known to him as having been previously trespassed from the location. Officer contacted the suspect, and during a routine name check, found that he was under active Department of Corrections (DOC) supervision. A condition of this supervision was that the suspect "remain within or outside of geographical borders as specified." Before stopping the suspect, the officer contacted his DOC officer and asked about his status. The DOC officer stated that the suspect needed to be arrested because he was supposed to have been deported. The officer stopped the suspect moments later and arrested him. After the arrest the suspect admitted to another parole violation — the consumption of the alcoholic drink Tilt — and was issued a DOC detainer. He was then arrested and booked into King County Jail.

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



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**Supreme Court's ruling patronizes and endangers women****Moving Backward**

By MARCY BLOOM, Contributing Writer

I now work for a reproductive rights organization in Mexico City, where abortion has just been decriminalized. But here in the United States, our judges have barged into our exam rooms and knocked down our physicians.

The U.S. Supreme Court recently turned its back on women and rejected its own long-standing adherence to historical legal precedent. Using

**The ongoing disrespect and disdain for women's lives and reproductive justice we have seen both domestically and internationally under the Bush administration continues to move along.**

patronizing language and showing absolutely no recognition of women as moral agents capable of making our own reproductive health decisions, the Court has tragically bought into anti-choice lies and rhetoric. By banning a specific abortion procedure that trained doctors have determined to be at times the best and safest method of preserving a woman's fertility, the Court is telling us that the foundation of *Roe vs. Wade* is up for grabs. The process of dismantling our federal right to abortion has begun.

This close decision, which bans some abortions after 12 weeks, and could be interpreted to affect earlier procedures as well, was held back by successful legal challenges for more than three years because this new law makes no exception for the health of the woman. In the past, the Court has *always* considered women's health to be paramount — a core foundation of *Roe vs. Wade* — and that physicians were considered to be the best trained persons to decide on the type of procedure safest for a particular woman. This is the first time that the Court has failed to affirm that restrictions on abortion must make exceptions to protect a woman's health. It's a seismic shift in the discussion about abortion and reproductive justice. It truly terrifies me.

Justice Anthony Kennedy, who wrote the decision, stated that the law does not violate the constitutional right to abortion as laid out in *Roe vs. Wade*, which declared abortion to be a part of a woman's constitutional right to privacy. In condescending and sexist terms that show no understanding that women are capable of choosing motherhood, the Court's 5-4 majority have now banned a procedure that the Court found to be disturbing, gruesome, and *never* necessary.

Having worked in abortion care for more than 30 years, I have been honored to witness, and aid in the provision, of safe and compassionate abortion care for many thousands of women. I fully understand that much of the public would be disturbed by many abortion procedures. Of course, many aspects of medical care/operations/procedures are upsetting to the untrained eye. Do we then ban them for this reason? The answer, naturally, is no. Only in the arena of abortion care and women's lives is this even entertained.

We will soon see further attempts to restrict safe abortion care and reproductive health services on a state level. Older women who may experience high-risk pregnancies are especially vulnerable, because prenatal tests such as amniocentesis are often not available until mid-pregnancy. The law also puts younger, and frequently poorer, women and girls at even higher risk because they may be unaware that they are pregnant, and/or have inadequate funds to have abortion procedures earlier in the first trimester, which is when the vast majority of safe abortions occur in the United States.

The ongoing disrespect and disdain for women's lives and reproductive justice we have seen both domestically and internationally under the Bush administration continues to move along. Not being recognized as capable to guide our own pregnancy choices is pure discrimination and is humiliating enough. It is now the law of the land.

How tragic and ironic. We have lost so much already in this country when it comes to freedom, truth, and justice. Now women and their families will lose even more.

The world moves forward, but the U.S. goes backwards for women. ■

editor@realchangenews.org

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## AFGHANISTAN, Continued from Page 7

**You estimate that 86 cents of every dollar administered by the USAID goes into the pockets of private American contractors.**

Yes, or go to waste in one way or another. Often what's counted as aid goes to build fortress[-like] American embassies or serve American interests.

The U.S. doesn't fund the Afghan government directly. We set it up as a government, and yet we fund our own private enterprises over there and require Afghans to buy American goods to fulfill the terms of these contracts. How is the government going to compete with that? So in a way our aid program serves to undermine the very government that we ourselves helped to create. You could blame incompetence or a very ill-informed foreign policy, or you could see this as really serving the ends of this administration — because many Afghans themselves believe that what America really wants out of Afghanistan are permanent military bases.

**You conclude that the underlying purpose of American aid is to make the world safe and open to American business rather than to educate the population so they can be self-sufficient.**

Yes, absolutely. And American aid has now gone under the direct control of the State Department as an instrument of our foreign policy. I think this is a

shame for Americans, because I believe that the average American really would like to do something to help Afghanistan. And I think it's hard for people to understand how this country can be in such terrible shape when we're sending them all this aid.

**The Bush Administration boasts that five million Afghan children now go to school. How many girls are being educated?**

Well it's a good thing that these five million kids went to school — boys and girls. But that's less than half of the school-age children in the country and it's less than a third of girls who are eligible to go to school. And most of the girls who do go back to school drop out after a year or two. Those dropout rates are increasing as security gets worse. One of the chief techniques of the Taliban in the last couple of years has been to burn or bomb schools or murder teachers, sometimes in front of the students.

**I'm leaving out, perhaps deliberately, because it was very hard for me to read, the violence against women that permeates the culture.**

It's a big part of my book because so little has been written about it and because this administration has made claims to having liberated Afghan women and fixed their situation up just fine. That's very far from the truth. Afghan culture separates men and women so effectively that most men who go to

Afghanistan as journalists or to write books about it never even meet an Afghan woman. It's not permitted. So if you think about books that you've read about Afghanistan, you've been reading about Afghan men.

The women's story is a very different one and it has not really been told. So I tell a lot of stories about the work I did with women in the prisons and the hospitals in Kabul, trying to care for female victims of suicide attempts. That tells you much more about the status of women in Afghanistan: that so many young women are trying to kill themselves. There are a number of those very grim stories in my book, but I think it's important that we know about them.

**And what are the solutions then to the whole situation of the international community helping Afghanistan? You're not supposed to be trying to "help people", but assist in providing the tools to help themselves.**

There aren't any easy answers to these very complex situations, which is perhaps something our government should think about before it goes messing with other countries. But I would say that where aid goes awry is in its intention. And for

aid to be effective, efficient, helpful, it has to come out of genuine motivation to give assistance to the people of the country and to make their lives better in very fundamental ways — like providing them with clean water and electricity and sanitation, or helping them find the means to provide those things for themselves. When aid is delivered by countries who are just trying to look out for their own interest, that doesn't help people at all. ■

### [Resource]

**Doctors Without Borders** and **Oxfam** are two aid agencies with reliable records of service in Afghanistan. There's also *Women for Afghan Women.org*, a New York based resource led by Afghan and Afghan-American women that is developing a family guidance center for survivors of domestic violence.



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# CALL TO ACTION

## Haiti Needs a Debt-Free Future Now

**Issue:** In the world's most impoverished nations, most of the people do not have access to clean water, adequate housing, or basic health care. These countries are paying debt service to wealthy nations and institutions at the expense of providing basic services to their citizens. In 2003, the UN estimated that 30,000 children die each day due to preventable diseases. Debt cancellation frees up resources to reverse this devastating reality.

Jubilee USA, an organization committed to relieving the debt of poor nations, is working this week to build support for House Resolution 241, which would immediately cancel Haiti's debt and give its people an opportunity to build a stable democracy and work toward a future free from poverty.

**Background:** Haiti is the most impoverished country in the Americas. Eighty percent of the population lives in abject poverty and one out of nine children dies before reaching the age of five. Life expectancy is 53 years, and nearly half the population cannot read. Haiti's government is forced to divert \$56 million per year from fighting this poverty to reimburse international financial institutions that were established to help countries like Haiti fight poverty. Over half of Haiti's \$1.3 billion debt is for loans granted to Haiti's dictators.

Social spending has risen by 75 percent in countries that have received debt relief, with funds used to abolish school fees, provide free immunizations, fight HIV/AIDS, and improve access to safe drinking water. Canceling Haiti's debt could increase the environmental budget tenfold to reverse the degradation that leaves Haiti vulnerable to tropical

storms and mudslides. Alternatively, the amount could double resources spent on education or triple funds spent on AIDS prevention.

In 2006, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund added Haiti to its heavily indebted poor countries debt cancellation program. That won't cancel Haiti's debt for several years, though, and it comes with strings attached that will make Haiti's poverty worse in the short term, and possibly for the long term. Haiti's onerous debt should be canceled immediately without conditions, as a matter of justice and as an essential tool in the global fight to end poverty.


**Action:** You can help by contacting your member of Congress and urging him or her to co-sponsor House Resolution 241 to help cancel Haiti's debt immediately and without strings. Call (202)224-3121 and ask for your Representative's office, or email:

Rep. Jay Inslee — 1st Dist. [jay.inslee@mail.house.gov](mailto:jay.inslee@mail.house.gov)  
Rep. Rick Larsen — 2nd Dist. [rick.larsen@mail.house.gov](mailto:rick.larsen@mail.house.gov)  
Rep. Jim McDermott — 7th Dist. [www.house.gov/mcdermott](http://www.house.gov/mcdermott)  
Rep. Dave Reichert — 8th Dist. [www.house.gov/reichert](http://www.house.gov/reichert)  
Rep. Adam Smith — 9th Dist. [www.house.gov/adamsmith](http://www.house.gov/adamsmith)

For more information on relieving the debts of the poorest countries, visit [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org)

**9/11:  
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the  
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**Dr. David Ray Griffin**  
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When TV journalist **Jack Hamann** was covering the expansion of a sewage-treatment plant at Discovery Park, a ranger told him about an odd headstone. It was from 1944, when the park was known as Fort Lawton. Hamann **investigated and stumbled upon wartime racial dynamics, army incompetence, and the unsolved murder of Italian POW Guglielmo Olivotto**. In his book, *On American Soil: How Justice Became a Casualty of World War II*, Hamann reveals that three African American soldiers were accused of the murder despite no evidence linking them to the crime. Sat., May 19, 2 p.m., Seattle Public Library, Ballard Branch, 5614 22nd Ave. NW.

## Calendar

### This Week's Top Picks

#### Saturday 5/19

The Black Child Development Institute and Praxis Institute host the conference **Eliminating the Pipeline: From School to Prison**. Councilmember **Larry Gossett** and *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* author **Dr. Joy DeGruy-Leary** will give keynote speeches. 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., African American Academy, 8311 Beacon Ave. S.

University of Washington professor and translator of **Walter G. Andrews** reads from his newest project — **a translation of the highly praised contemporary Turkish poet Hilmi Yavuz**. *Seasons of the World* is 87 pages on our natural surroundings, difficulties expressing ourselves in language and culture, and love of the earth and each other. 4:30 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

**Sofia Smallstorm** screens her film **9/11 Mysteries Part 1: Demolition**, which examines the destruction of the Twin Towers and the purported explanations. 1-5 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. N. Info: [www.911mysteries.com](http://www.911mysteries.com).

#### Sunday 5/20

Associate Editor of the Black Commentator and **founder of the Haiti Information Project Kevin Pina** screens and discusses his recent film **Haiti: We Must Kill the Bandits**. Pina's writings and documentaries reveal the human rights abuses and suppression of democracy following the overthrow of elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide. Noon, Bethany United Church of Christ, 6230 Beacon Ave. S. Info: (206)725-7535.

#### Tuesday 5/22

As the classic American musical **West Side Story** marks its **50th anniversary**, the continuing relevance of gang violence and youth alienation have catalyzed a series of community conversations for all ages. Join **Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske**, child behaviorist **Eric Trupin**, and child welfare advocate **Bobbe Bridge** for **The West Side Story Project**. Tickets \$5. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 Eighth Ave.

How severe is the threat of a nuclear Iran? **Christopher Preble, director of Foreign Policy Studies at the Cato Institute**, delivers his lecture **Iran: The Grand Bargain**. He argues that the danger is immediate, and instead of remedying the situation, the U.S. has painted itself into a dangerous corner. Preble will shed light on how **methods such as economic sanctions and "preventative" strikes are futile**, and will present an alternative route for clearing this frightening impasse. Tickets \$10 World Affairs Council Members, \$15 general. 7 p.m., Broadway Performance Hall, 1625 Broadway.

#### Wednesday 5/23

**Andrew Lam's** writing picks at his double-ness: he grew up as both an American and a Vietnamese soldier's son. He will read from his book **Perfume Dreams**, which **focuses on the significance of the Vietnam War to the people who once lived there**. 7 p.m., Seattle Library, Central Branch, Microsoft Auditorium, 1000 Fourth Ave.

#### Thursday 5/24

**William Langewiesche** takes on the **proliferation of nuclear weapons** in his sixth book, **The Atomic Bazaar**. He examines the chances and consequences of nuclear terrorism and why we must avoid another Hiroshima and Nagasaki. 5:30 p.m., Elliott Bay Book Company, 101 S. Main St.

**Lindsay Palmer** of the King County Sexual Assault Resource Center and **Merrill Cousin** of the King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence **engage in a frank talk about sexual assault and domestic violence in Seattle**. 6:30 p.m., Asian Art Museum, 1400 E. Prospect St.

Calendar compiled by Dena Burke.  
Have a suggestion for an event?  
Email it to [calendar@realchangenews.org](mailto:calendar@realchangenews.org).

#### OFFICER, Continued from Page 5

says her son is adamant he dropped no drugs and that, when the officer confronted him with crack, he essentially pleaded for mercy.

**"We're trying to get not only [Pulliam's] case reopened, but anybody that [SPD officer] Neubert came into contact with," says Thomas.**

"Certain things [Neubert] said on the stand didn't make sense," she says. For example, "It was dark where he said he dropped the drugs. But how can you see in the dark?"

Before her son was arrested, Thomas says, she had become active with the October 22 Coalition, a group that fights police brutality and had already singled out Neubert for his behavior. In 1995, the officer shot a suspected drug dealer downtown, nearly killing him, and in 2001 he was involved in a Central District traffic stop that led to the shooting death of Aaron Roberts.

Neubert was cleared in both incidents. But Thomas and the NAACP have little faith in the police's internal findings. With the discrepancies that public defenders have unearthed in Neubert's arrest of Troy Patterson, Thomas is hoping to connect with others he has arrested.

"We're trying to get not only [Pulliam's] case reopened, but anybody that Neubert came into contact with," she says. "We need to get together and find out who Neubert has put in jail over the years." ■

## eyes ON FREMONT

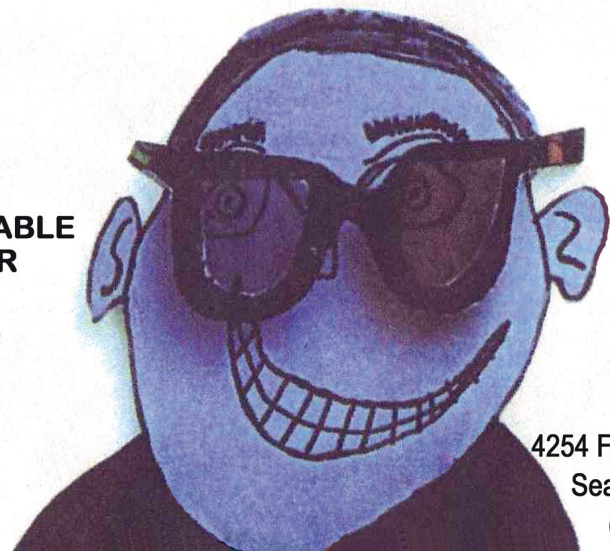
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**Employment & Training Specialist** - assist clients with workplace readiness & provide job placement. Knowledge of employment. See [www.ywcaworks.org](http://www.ywcaworks.org). FT, \$15.50/hr+ bens. Apply: D. Broach - CJI, 2024 Third Ave., Seattle, WA, 98121, or [hr@ywcaworks.org](mailto:hr@ywcaworks.org)

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Dr. David Ray Griffin, **Debunking 9/11 Lecture** at Town Hall, 1119 8th Ave. Fri., May 18, 7:30 p.m. Tickets, for \$10, at [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com). \$15 at the door.

**Ballard Health Walk** features yoga, tai chi, midwives, massage, and more. Sat., May

19. Downtown Ballard, 15th Ave. NW & NW 75th St.

**Seattle Human Rights Commission** Meeting. 6 p.m., Thursday, May 24th. City Hall, Boards & Commission Conference Room, 601 Fifth Ave.

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