



Photo by Brooke Kempner

Vendor of the week

p.6

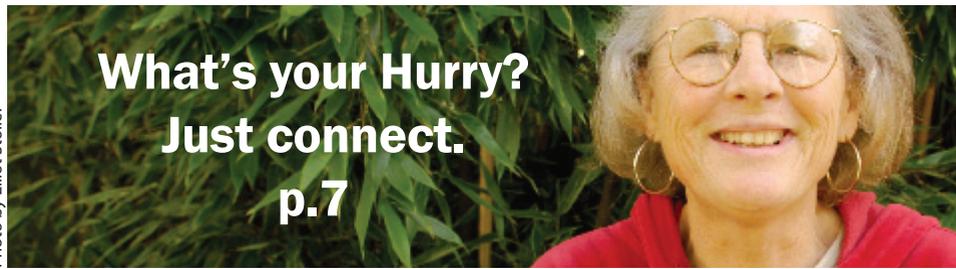


Photo by Elliot Stoller

What's your Hurry?
Just connect.
p.7



\$1 REAL CHANGE

VOL. 14, NO. 24
JUNE 6 - 12, 2007



Photo by Elliot Stoller

Local Indians tackle cuts to Health Care

A local event to raise money to support programs that improve the health of urban Indians and Alaskan Natives drew 200 to Seattle Center. But with Bush pushing to axe the nation's Indian health programs, groups look to Congress for more help. ..see page 5.

Beating the high cost of death

A Seattle co-op tackles pricey funerals by going non-profit. ...see page 5.



Photo by Katia Roberts

Eat Up: In *Chicken with Plums*, graphic novelist Marjane Satrapi shows how delicious black and white can be

Your vendor buys this paper for 35¢ and keeps all the proceeds. Please purchase from badged vendors only.

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.

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Erica Wiley

Vice President Faith Wilder

Secretary Katherine Jakielski

Board Wes Browning, Ariana Cantu, John Denooyer, Stephan Fjelstad, Margaret Kae, JoJo Tran

ADVISORY BOARD

Affiliations listed for identification purposes only:
Sherman Alexie, Poet, Writer, Filmmaker
Nancy Amidei, UW School of Social Work
Kenan Block, Media Consultant
David Bloom, Rauschenbusch Center for Spirit & Action
Kari Connor, Wongdoody
Darnell Dent, Community Health Plan of Washington
Jim Diers, Author
Lynne Dodson, Jobs with Justice
John Fox, Seattle Displacement Coalition
Larry Gossett, King County Councilmember, Dist. 10
Jon Gould, Children's Alliance
Andy Himes, Voices in Wartime
Bill Hobson, Downtown Emergency Service Center
Naomi Ishisaka, Colors NW
Sally Kinney, Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness
Sharon Lee, Low Income Housing Institute
Paul Loeb, Writer
Sarah Luthens, SEAMEC/Allyship.org
Roberto Maestas, El Centro de la Raza
Paola Maranan, Children's Alliance
Joe Martin, Pike Market Medical Clinic
Vince Matulionis, United Way of King County
Carlos Marentes, Comm. for General Amnesty & Social Justice
Al Poole, City of Seattle Survival Services
Wilson Edward Reed, PhD, Seattle University
Trisha Ready, Richard Hugo House
Aiko Schaefer, Statewide Poverty Action Network
Peter Schnurman, Retired
K.L. Shannon, Racial Disparity Project
Bob Siegal, National Lawyers Guild/Center for Social Justice
Rick Simonson, Elliott Bay Book Co.
Pat Simpson, Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness
Hilary Stern, CASA Latina
Robby Stern, WA State Labor Council
Peter Steinbrueck, Seattle City Council
Silja Talvi, journalist/essayist
Jim Theofelis, Mockingbird Society
Marilyn Watkins, Economic Opportunity Institute
Bruce Wirth, KSER, and
Alice Woldt

STAFF

Executive Director Timothy Harris

Director of Advocacy & Organizing Rachael Myers

Acting Editor Philip Dawdy

Staff Reporters Cydney Gillis, Rosette Royale

Production Manager Rosette Royale

Director of Operations Craig Kirkpatrick

Director of Development Joe Bushek

Volunteer & Office Manager Brooke Kempner

Advertising Sales Rep Candi Wilwang

Intern Danina Garcia

Editorial Committee Artis, Mary Andrews, Wes Browning, Stan Burriss, Morrie Condit, Anitra Freeman, José Ornelas, August Mallory, F. Roberts, Ruanda

Contributing Writers Amy Besunder, Dena Burke, Julie Chinitz, J. Jacob Edel, Jess Grant, Lester Gray, Robin Lindley, Chris Miller, Laura Peach, Emma Quinn, Paul Rice, Rachel Rubinstein, ronni tartlet, Kristi Thorne, Austin Walters, Diana Wurm

Photographers & Graphic Artists Ginny Banks, Rob Casey, Ken Dean, Terry Divyak, Suzanna Finley, Elisa Huerta-Enochian, Brendan Lattin, Sherry Loeser, Justin Mills, Katia Roberts, Elliot Stoller, Mark Sullo, Joel Turner

Volunteers This Issue Artis, Sara Dooling, Sandra Enger, Jeanette Fassbind, Susanne Forham, Rick Garrett, Valerie Garvida, Mara Grunbaum, Ana Haberman, Armando Levia, Brianna Morgan, Dan Otto, Loretta Pirozzi, Beth Roberts, Rachel Smith, Sara Sprigg, Amoshaun Toft, Carrie Wicks

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.



Sometimes, Institution Building Is A Good Thing

Help this story continue. Please support the Summer Fund Drive. Visit realchangenews.org for details



1994
10,000 copies of the first issue of Real Change is published on August 20. Wes Browning's painting of the Hawaiian deity Pele graces the cover. **\$3,200 in start-up funding** is raised through endorsement ad sales from community organizations and individuals. Monthly publication begins with the October issue, and we have 50 regular vendors by year-end.

1995

We buy a used Mac SE for \$600 to use as the vendor database to supplement the LCI we're using for production. A new column is launched. *Adventures in Poetry* drives circulation to a new high of 15,000 copies per month.



1996

A second staff is hired. A volunteer builds us a desk to share. Sid Vicious, the office cat, arrives. We host the organizing conference of the **North American Street Newspaper Association**.



1997

We become a 501(c)3 non-profit of our own. Our budget exceeds \$100,000.



1998
We run a picket on Nordstroms over the holidays for using HUD colors to build the parking garage. Monthly circulation reaches 20K.

1999

Real Change protog George Hickey gets tear gassed at WTO, sues, and wins. We launch the **First things First** advocacy arm of Real Change to put a "roof over every bed." **Twice-monthly publication** begins, and we serve 125 vendors a month. Budget hits \$200K.



2000

Real Change hires David Bloom as Faith Community Organizer and he founds what will become the **Interfaith Task-force on Homelessness**. We publish our 100th issue. Judy N Castro describes our organizing as "relentless."



2001

The **Initiative 71** campaign qualifies for the ballot and a settlement is reached with the city that increases homeless shelter and services. **150 vendors a month** are selling about 30,000 copies. We begin carrying *Mockingbird Times*.

2002

Real Change gets the 2129 office space and **rebuilt from floor to ceiling** to accommodate our growing staff. The design and most of the construction is donated. Circulation reaches 35,000 a month. Our budget exceeds \$400K. We help pass a housing levy that is focused on the most needy.



2003

We survey our community partners to see what they value most about our work and write a strategic plan that sets a goal of **weekly publication**. A partnership begins with Wongdoody to help market the paper. We narrow our focus to the newspaper and the activism.

2004



We prepare for weekly publication by holding focus groups and reinvent ourselves as an activist newspaper that supports the progressive community. The newspaper is redesigned. More than 300 attend our 10th anniversary breakfast. ED Tim Harris wins the **Society of Professional Journalists Susan Hutchinson Bosch award for special achievement**.

2005

Real Change hires two part-time journalists and goes weekly. **Circulation climbs to 10,000 per week**. We win the Municipal League's organization of the year award and are named Best Grassroots Media Outlet by the *Seattle Weekly*. Our budget exceeds \$500K.

2006

Real Change's **Downtown for All** campaign nearly doubles the affordable housing surcharge for condo developers. We receive two Society of Professional Journalists awards and an award from the State Housing Finance Commission for effective activism. A new strategic plan commits to **regional distribution, a neighborhood organizing strategy** to build political will to end homelessness, and **work placement assistance**.



2007

We redesign the paper to better attract readers with our award-winning content. Circulation for the first half of the year increases 18% over 2006. In **May, 276 vendors** sell 53,780 copies of the paper. **With your help, we meet the very large goal we set for our summer fund drive**. Real Change continues to grow as an essential resource for Seattle progressives while we make an immediate difference in the lives of the poor.



Rachael, our Director of Advocacy and Organizing, had a dream this week. I was in it.

In her dream, the staff and the board are all bobbing around in these weird

bouncy chairs. Every once in a while, without warning, someone would be hurled into oblivion. Rachael, who is sitting on a

phone book, says, "Hey, can we get some normal chairs?"

I start screaming at her that she's being unreasonable. We're a non-profit, I say. We can't afford chairs.

When Rachael first came to work here five years ago, she had a choice between two chairs. One smelled like cat pee, and the other was broken and uncomfortable. I bought her a nice office chair. I said that no one should have to choose between cat pee and torture.

That was the moment Rachael decided she might be able to stay.

Director's Corner

You don't need to be Freud to get this. It's about life in an under-resourced nonprofit. Eventually, you want to stop being jerked around, and to just do your job in a reasonable way.

That's not a lot to ask. We have one more month to our summer fund drive. We've raised \$45,443 toward our huge \$140K goal. We won't get there without your help. Please mail your gift to 2129 Second Ave., Seattle, 98121, or make a secure online gift at www.realchangenews.org.

Just Heard...

A PDA for the people

State Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos (D-Seattle) isn't waiting to find out what more development will do in her district. So earlier this year, she sponsored a bill—signed by the governor May 15—to create a Pioneer Square-International District Community Preservation and Development Authority that will be the first of its kind in the state.

Unlike existing PDAs that manage properties in Chinatown and the Pike Place Market, the new and larger CPDA is designed to help stop the effects of publicly funded projects, be it light rail construction or stadium traffic, from pushing out longtime residents and businesses. The agency will start with \$350,000 from the Legislature.

"Without this legislation, these neighborhood communities could eventually disappear," Santos says, "as we have seen in so many other cities where Chinatowns, Japantowns, Manilatowns, and Little Saigons are little more than tourist attractions."

Wild Sky on the way

The five-year push to protect 106,000 acres of wilderness in Washington state has outlasted Richard Pombo.

Pombo was the Republican representative from California who, for years, blocked a bill sponsored by Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Lake Stevens) and Sen. Patty Murray (D-Washington) to create a Wild Sky Wilderness Area in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. But in last fall's Democratic rout, Pombo lost his seat, setting the stage for the House's passage of the bill in April.

In a unanimous vote last week, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee sent the bill to the Senate floor, where it's expected to pass shortly.

—Cydney Gillis

Hugging Saint's Organization embraced in Hilton LAX Snafu

Over the past 36 years, Amma, the Hugging Saint of India, has hugged more than 26 million people. When asked why she hugs, she replied, "This is like asking a river, 'Why do you flow?'"

Each year, she channels millions of dollars to house the poor, educate children, provide medicine, and for tsunami relief.

Her yearly American tour will stop at the Hilton at Los Angeles International Airport. The hotel faces possible sanctions by National Labor Relations Board for allegedly aggressive — twice violent — anti-union tactics.

Hilton workers and organizers from Unite Here! Local 11 have been contacting Amma's organization since last summer to help boycott the Hilton, to no avail. Los Angeles organizers told Local 11's Lisa Maldonado that the decision was up to Amma, as any action would be taking a side. "Just staying at this hotel is taking the management's side," says Maldonado.

Rob Sidon, Amma's stateside spokesman, says Amma feels uncomfortable getting involved in a labor dispute while a guest in the US.

—Christopher Miller



Change Agent

Subtle changes: Brad Inserra, a warm neighborhood host.

Photo by Andrea Lee

This is not about Brad Inserra. It's about us, people.

Inserra is a quintessential example of a person in service, by virtue of what he does every day. Since 1992, at Brad's Swingside Cafe in upper Fremont, Brad has supported, hired, fed, and presented some of Seattle's finest and novice musicians.

While raising two children — Aaron, now grown and in college, and Lydia, 4 — Brad has supported local youngsters, not only as a participating parent, but also being a street-wise confidant, providing a respite and a place for snacks and safe feeling in public.

Over the years, Inserra has kept many people fed who would otherwise

go hungry. His inner self sometimes tugs conservatively at him, whispering, "Can you really afford it?" But is there truly such a thing as generosity to a fault?

Inserra is a commonly unsung and subtle Agent of Change. That's OK, so long as we recognize him and his cohorts some way, some time, just as subtly. Look around.

—Artis

Getting Dirty

Local officials say saving Puget Sound is a necessity. Apparently, it ought to be fun, too. Hence the mascot costumed in brown fleece.

That's the product of MudUp!, a new public-awareness effort by the Nature Conservancy, People for Puget Sound, and the Trust for Public Land. The three organizations have embarked on a three-year, \$80 million campaign for the region's ecosystem; it also involves a get-out-the-help campaign with a web site and the Mud Monster, dressed in brown and green seagrass. At mudup.org, Puget Sound residents can look for upcoming Sound-related cleanup parties, low-tide nature walks, or other ways to know and love the 2,500-mile shoreline.

"This is primarily about web presence," says Jeff Compton, outreach manager of the Nature Conservancy's Washington chapter. "We've made a one-stop shop for folks to get involved in cleaning up and restoring Puget Sound's shorelines."

MudUp! is not aimed primarily at the average enviro who's already plugged into a given restoration effort, says Compton. "For folks who are already involved or aware, the difference they'll notice is there's kind of a muddy community," he says. "They can find more people doing good work and can share their stories."

The campaign started with \$3 million in seed money from the Russell Family Foundation, which has tied future grants to seeing results, says Comp-

ton, particularly in MudUp! directing volunteer muscle to dozens of small, volunteer-run cleanup efforts around the region.

The three groups are one year into a decade-long campaign to restore fragile habitat by forming 10 new waterfront parks and natural areas, restoring 100 miles of shoreline, and protecting, through regulations or landowners' incentives, another 1,000 miles. More info is at www.shorelinealliance.org.

—Adam Hyla

UW Goes SLAP Happy

The University of Washington recently signed on to the Designated Suppliers Program (DSP) under which UW apparel will be sweatshop free. The UW President Mark Emmert, along with the University of Washington Sweat Free Coalition and the Student Labor Action Project (SLAP), announced that UW apparel will be produced only in pre-approved factories that pay a living wage, allow freedom of association, and prohibit sexual harassment (a widespread problem in the garment industry).

"The program hasn't been implemented yet, but UW issued an adoption statement," explains Rod Palmquist of SLAP which has sponsored a year-long educational campaign. "The statement wasn't everything we wanted, but the school has made the commitment. As long as groups like SLAP are around, I think they'll honor the commitment."

Currently, the manufacturing of UW apparel takes place in 8,000 different factories, many in Latin America, under sub-standard sweatshop condi-

Currently, the manufacturing of UW apparel takes place in 8,000 different factories, many in Latin America, under sub-standard sweatshop conditions.

tions. In these sweatshops, workers put in 12-hour to 13-hour days for less than \$5 a day. The UW is one of three dozen schools to make a commitment to the DSP. Palmquist feels the DSP could be implemented in the next couple of years once major university sports programs like Michigan, Texas, Notre Dame and Southern California sign on. Syracuse, Duke, Indiana and the University of California at Berkeley are among major universities that have already made a commitment to the program.

Leading up to the UW's decision, SLAP held informational protests at the university including one where its members hand-delivered flyers to the president's office wearing nothing but trashbags.

—R.V. Murphy

Pricey rents back East threaten to push low-income seniors to the streets

Housing Crisis Looms For Elderly

By BRANDON LICHTINGER

It's 9:30 a.m. on the Friday before Memorial Day, and John Monte is busy ladling homemade mushroom soup for diners at the Dinner Program for Homeless Women, or as the servers casually call it, "The 9:30 Club."

Monte, 68, has worked as a cook for most of his adult life and has worked in this kitchen for eight months. He is also homeless, and is staying with one of his sons until he can find affordable housing in the Washington, D.C. area.

"It's difficult," Monte said. "We can't pay [D.C. rent], especially on a fixed income. The rent is too high."

Monte's younger brother, George

"If you're not a professional, with a professional career and a job, you can't make it."
—George Eskridge

Eskridge, volunteers at the Lutheran Church when he is needed there. Eskridge, 58, has worked in construction, retail, and the food industry in the past. He is also homeless. He takes temporary work when he can get it, and mostly works construction and janitorial jobs.

"The cost of living keeps going up, while our salary is not," Eskridge said. "If you're not a professional, with a professional career and a job, you can't make it."

Eskridge says being homeless and facing his 60s in the District is terrifying. And Eskridge is not alone in his fears.

With the cost of housing increasing

much faster than the minimum wage and Social Security income, and with two of the District's largest elder-care facilities slated to close, many senior citizens are worried about future housing. One diner, who wished to remain anonymous, said getting housing in D.C. as an elderly homeless person is extremely difficult.

"A majority of people directly associated with certain programs like Section 8 have problems," he said. "The list is either backed up or the housing is unaffordable."

Section 8 is one of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's housing assistance voucher programs for low-income families and individuals. Under Section 8, tenants pay a portion of their rent, typically around 30 per cent of their income, and the local housing authority covers the remainder. HUD determines a cap on housing costs, called the "Free Market Rate" or FMR.

For D.C., the FMR for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,134. In order to afford this rent, a D.C. resident would have to make an annual income of \$45,360. At D.C.'s minimum wage of \$7 an hour, a full-time employee would only make \$14,560 yearly.

"I'm just trying to get a boost any way that I can," Eskridge said. "I'm just working for minimum wage, and if you don't have a professional career, you can't do it."

Monte receives Supplemental Security Income of \$603 each month.

"An affordable one-bedroom apartment for me would be \$400 [per month]," Monte said. "At least that way there's some leeway so I can feed myself. If I get a place to stay, I can maintain it. In a

way, the older population can take care of themselves, at least the ones that [are physically able]. But those that can't take care of themselves, they should be taken care of."

Washington, D.C.'s full-care facilities are currently running at 98 percent capacity, and some seniors have been forced to move to nursing homes in Maryland and Virginia.

However, D.C.'s assisted living population faces increasing difficulty in getting that care. For many of the area's elderly who can't take care of themselves, a potential housing crisis looms on the horizon, as two of the area's 20 assisted living homes are scheduled to close in the near future.

Few replacements exist in the D.C. area. The city's full-care facilities are currently running at 98 percent capacity, and some seniors have been forced to move to nursing homes in Maryland and Virginia. Available spaces in those states are also filling up.

"It's a logistical nightmare," said Gerald Kasunic, an ombudsman for the Office of D.C. Long Term Care Program. "My worst fear would be that places start closing their doors and leave no place for patients to go."

Kasunic said that if places closed their doors, many of the city's elderly

would be in need of full-time care on the streets.

For Monte and Eskridge, the need for cheaper housing in the D.C. area remains.

"I'm just trying to make it to Social Security and retirement, living day by day," Eskridge said. "Housing is my biggest worry. That's it. Don't ever get to my age and think you're going to make it without some kind of help." n

Courtesy: Street News Service

Not, tightest

Next

to mine
yours
has,
less
to say. Made! while the
first
hands,
disappear . . .
are
lost.
Beneath yours.

—Stan Burriss

real.

On KBCS hear the 'B' sides and genres found nowhere else on the dial, programmed by volunteers driven by their passion for the music. From jazz to reggae, folk to modern global, hip-hop to blues to electronica, you'll hear it on KBCS.

community.

We air social justice-focused programs like *Democracy Now!*, along with locally produced public affairs shows *Voices of Diversity* and *One World Report*. KBCS covers issues, places, and people who don't always make it to the front page of the mainstream media. It's radio that's handcrafted here at home, by hundreds of volunteers tuned into what's local and what's relevant.

radio.

Our purpose is to entertain, educate, and involve. KBCS is the only station in the greater Seattle area offering ongoing training opportunities. Become the media at KBCS.

kbcs 91.3 fm
a world of music & ideas

Listener-supported,
Non-commercial
Community Radio

www.kbcs.fm

The CoHo Team
of Windermere Agents

**3 Socially
Responsible Realtors**
Over \$330,000 Donated
Now, Carbon Neutral

<http://www.cohorealty.com>

Windermere
Washington Real Estate and Services, Inc.
Windermere Real Estate Services, Inc.

HOME ALIVE

SELF DEFENSE FOR EVERYONE

For lives free from
violence and hate

www.homealive.org
206-323-HOME

As Bush seeks to cut the nation's urban Indian health programs, a local organization tries to keep the faith

Working to keep urban Indians and Alaska Natives healthy

By ROSETTE ROYALE, Staff Reporter

Dressed in her finest regalia, the young fancy dancer twirled. Her feet, clad in pumpkin orange moccasins kept time, as her beadwork glistened in the sun, as her fringed shawl pom-pommed about her.

Her performance came toward the end of SpiritWalk 2007, a June 2 event that drew over 200 participants to Seattle Center in an effort to raise funds to support healthy lifestyles for Alaska Natives and American Indians. Sponsored by the Seattle Indian Health Board (SIHB), the cultural event, in its 13th year, was designed to spotlight Indians and Natives living in urban environs.

SIHB Associate Director Rebecca Corpuz says that it's easy for most urban dwellers to lose sight of why the services the organization's divisions provide — encompassing medical and dental, mental health, and chemical

In King County, the infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births was 5.1. For American Indians and Alaska Natives, the rate was 14.9 deaths per 1,000 live births.

dependency services such as the Thunderbird Treatment Center — are so vital. "A lot of time," Corpuz says, "people don't understand what the need is for the program in a city."

The Seattle-based Urban Indian Health Institute reports that urban Indians experience higher death rates from accidents (38 percent higher) and diabetes (54 percent higher than the rates for all races combined).

Locally, the situation is just as troubling. A 2003 report from the state's Center for Health Statistics found that, for all races in King County, the infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births was 5.1. For American Indians and Alaska Natives, the rate was 14.9 deaths per 1,000 live births.

But if actions are any guide, one person who fails to comprehend the dire need is President Bush. In his budget for 2008, he proposed cutting all federal funding—some \$33 million—for the nation's Urban Indian Health Program, which provides SIHB with about half of its operating budget.

Corpuz contends that Native and Indian people don't usually visit non-Indian health centers, due to concerns about discrimination, perceived or real. Seeing another Native face offering you assistance, she says, can make the critical difference in health care, which she views as broad and expansive. "It's not just your medical care,"

says Corpuz. "It's your home life, your economic life."

Last year, Bush also tried to take a hatchet to the Urban Indian Health Program. But in February, the Democratic-controlled Congress restored funding that provides care to an estimated 150,000 urban Indians each year. Corpuz says she hopes Congress will offer a repeat performance for the upcoming fiscal budget.

"Nobody knows what's happening," says Corpuz, "but we're cautiously optimistic."

Her optimism for the future, on at least one level, is being borne out. On May 23, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior voted to give the program \$34 million — a million dollars more — than Bush is seeking to cut for 2008. Chaired by Congressman Norm Dicks (D-Bremerton), the subcommittee's approval is the first of numerous steps to be taken by the House, steps that will have to be mirrored in the Senate with passage of its own bill.

But trying to eradicate funding for urban Indian health is merely symptomatic of a larger issue, says Geoffrey Roth, executive director of the National Council of Urban Indian Health. "I think there's a broad distrust towards Indian people [in the administration]," he says.

Roth sees the administration's distrust epitomized by cuts proposed to



A young fancy dancer performs as part of SpiritWalk 2007. Sponsored by the Seattle Indian Health Board, the event raised \$25,000 to promote health within urban Indian and Native Alaskan communities. Photo by Elliot Stoller

other programs that directly affect Native populations, including funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Johnson-O'Malley Act, which provides money for the educational needs of Native youth.

SpiritWalk 2007 raised over \$25,000 for programs not covered by federal funds. Even still, Corpuz says there's much more to be done to bolster the health of urban Natives and Indians. Hav-

ing the federal government value Indians and Alaska Natives, and support them financially, she believes, is the cure-all that will ultimately make a difference.

"How do you take [Native health] up a notch without focusing on it?" Corpuz asks. "You can't." n

More information about the Seattle Indian Health Board can be found at www.sihb.org, or by calling (206) 324-9360.

A local funeral co-op aims to kill the high cost of death

Taking the profit out of death

By CYDNEY GILLIS, Staff Reporter

Char Barrett watched her father die of cancer when she was 25-years-old. It was fortunate, she says, that she was with him at the end. He was in a hospital, under harsh lights in a starched bed.

Five years later, after an even longer struggle, Barrett lost a childhood friend to Hodgkins lymphoma. But the friend died at home, in the care of hospice providers surrounded by loved ones.

Barrett never forgot the difference — one passing in sterility, the other in warmth. So, a few years ago, she gave up a career in real estate and went back to school to study mortuary science. Today, she is one of a handful of licensed funeral directors who will prepare a body for viewing and farewells the way families once did: at home, without embalming, fancy caskets, or funeral halls that cost a fortune.

She will bathe and dress the deceased in a final suit or gown, lay the body in a simple coffin of wood and cloth, then place dry ice under the torso to cool and preserve the remains. "The beauty of it is that the person

is natural," she says — and can even maintain a glow to their complexion for two days.

It's a service Barrett provides not only to aid families emotionally, but

At \$1,500, Barrett's home funeral is a deal—one of many she and a Seattle nonprofit consumer group will start offering next week at a new, parlor-less funeral company.

financially. After a decade of corporate takeovers of family-owned funeral homes, one national chain in the Seattle area charges from \$4,000 to \$7,000 for similar services. At \$1,500, Barrett's home funeral is a deal—one of many she and a Seattle nonprofit consumer group will start offering next week at a new, parlor-less funeral company that plans to take the profit out of people's suffering.

Barrett is the managing director of the People's Memorial Funeral Co-op, the state's first-ever mortuary cooperative, which opens June 11 on Capitol Hill. For a one-time fee of \$25, family members can choose from eight low-cost funeral plans, including a simple cremation with boxed ashes at \$650, a cremation and funeral at \$1,200, and full services with embalming, a basic casket, memorial and cemetery transport at \$2,200.

Since 1939, the nonprofit People's Memorial Association has offered its members six of the low-cost packages (the funerals at home are new) through contracts it's had across the state with various local funeral parlors. But last fall, Service Corporation International of Houston, the nation's largest funeral chain, paid \$1.2 billion to buy out its main competitor, Alderwoods.

The deal doubled SCI's holdings in the Puget Sound area from 13 to 26 funeral homes, setting PMA and its 100,000 members on a final collision course with profit. In 2005, the

Vendor of the Week

Were it not for the Patriot Act, Craig Skewes might never have come to Seattle.

Several years ago, Craig and his wife were on their way to Canada from their home in San Francisco. Unaware of new rules that required a passport, they found themselves turned back at the border, and chose Seattle as a temporary home.

When their initial housing fell through, they lived in their car until they could rent weekly from a Shoreline hotel, the only one that would allow them to keep their cat.

Craig shopped at Shoreline Central Market, and jumped at the opportunity, exactly one year ago, to sell Real Change there. Selling the paper, he says, "put a roof over our heads. We have no support from the state, so it all comes from Real Change and the customers' generosity."

But more than the money, working as a Real Change vendor introduced him to the people of Seattle.

"Next to my wife, having a roof over my head is the most important thing to me."

"I spend most of my free time with my cat and my wife," says Craig, who met his disabled wife while working as an at-home caregiver. "This helps me get out and meet people. I really came to like Shoreline;



Craig Skewes and his wife landed in Seattle because of passport issues at the Canadian border; he sells the paper at the Shoreline Central Market. Photo by Brooke Kempner

you get a small-town feel but you have the advantages of a metropolis."

What started out as a temporary visit has become a permanent move, and Craig hopes for a permanent home soon.

"When you lose something that you take for granted, it becomes so important. Next to my wife, having a roof over my head is the most important thing to me."

Frequently one of the paper's top 10 sellers, Craig is on the lookout for a Shoreline apartment he can afford.

"The hotel is more a vagabond lifestyle," he says, shaking his head. "I'd like to lay down roots in Seattle."

—Danina Garcia

Who's the special person who offers you Real Change? Nominate them for Vendor of the Week: editor@realchangenews.org

**Speak out against
Discrimination**

Seattle Office
for Civil Rights

We've got your back.

206-684-4600 TTY 206-684-4603 www.seattle.gov/civilrights



Soldiers of Conscience documents eight soldiers wrestling inner demons wrought by their military duty to kill. Four of the soldiers respond to a "call of conscience," refusing their responsibilities. Tickets \$10. Thurs., June 7 at 7 p.m. and Sat., June 9 at 1:30 p.m. Nesholm Family Lecture Hall at McCaw Hall 321 Mercer St., Seattle Center. Info: www.seattlefilm.org or www.socfilm.com. Photo courtesy of www.socfilm.com.

Calendar

This Week's Top Picks

Thursday 6/7

Journalist, pundit and professional provocateur Christopher Hitchens discusses his latest book, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. Patently denouncing religion as "violent, irrational, intolerant, allied to racism, tribalism, and bigotry, invested in ignorance and hostile to free inquiry, contemptuous of women and coercive toward children," Hitchens' contentious criticisms guarantee to spark lively debate. Tickets: \$5. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 8th Ave. Info: www.ubookstore.com, www.townhallseattle.org or 206-634-3400.

Friday 6/8

Forty Years Too Long: a Weekend of Events to End the Israeli Occupation. The films *In the Spider's Web* and *Dying to Live* portray the personal narratives of occupation in Palestine. 7:30 p.m., Seattle Central Community College, Room 1110, 1701 Broadway. Info: <http://www.palestineinformation.org>, inf@palestineinformation.org or 206-633-1086.

What do "Gaybian Flu," Dolly Parton, and George W. Bush all have in common? The answer is the spectacular production of **Stonewall Youth Drag Cabaret**, now showing in Seattle. Stonewall Youth "battle the corporate media for their right to be free and fabulous" with drag performances of talk-show hosts Flip Fabulous of HOMO4 News and Ronald Straighthand of BOX News; Burt Reynolds and Dolly Parton; and George W. Bush. Tickets: \$5 Youth - \$15 Adults. 6 p.m., Broadway Performance Hall, 1625 Broadway. Info: 360-705-2738.

Saturday 6/9

Net Loss: the Storm over Salmon Farming, a documentary on the global and local impact caused by new farm-fishing technologies. The film depicts the disparate cases for supporting salmon farming and the warnings against farm-fishing due to reasons of environmental, health, and cultural dangers. Presented by Queen Anne Movie Guild, Melissa Young and Mark Dworkin, co-directors, partake in dialogue following film. 7 p.m., Queen Anne Manor, 100 Crockett Street. Info: <http://www.queenannemovieguild.org>.

Sunday 6/10

A secret genocide is oppressing an ethnic minority group, the Karen people, in Thailand, unbeknownst to the world. To raise awareness of the atrocity, director Alexandre Dereims

filmed *A Secret Genocide to document the Karen people's struggle for autonomy*. Tickets: \$7. 11 a.m., Harvard Exit, 807 East Roy. Info: <http://www.seattlefilm.org>.

Monday 6/11

Afghan-American author of the bestselling novel, *The Kite Runner*, **Khaled Hosseini reads** from his acclaimed second narrative, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The story illustrates the fates of two young women married to an abusive older man set against the chaotic backdrop of the Afghan Civil War, anti-soviet jihad and Taliban dominion. Elliott Bay Book Company. Tickets: \$5. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall, 1119 8th Ave. Info: <http://www.elliottbaybook.com>.

Thursday 6/14

At the apex of the Seattle Film Festival's musical curriculum is the much anticipated **Face the Music Rock Party 2007**. Celebrating the sounds featured in *Face the Music* films, the party will treat music lovers with a rocking Northwest program starring Viva Voce, Jesse Sykes and the Sweet Hereafter, and Siberian. Tickets: \$18 at door. 8:00 p.m., Neumos (21+), 925 East Pike Street. Info: <http://www.seattlefilm.org>.

Friday 6/15

The Gage Academy of Art is Seattle's furtive wealth of artist virtuosity. But today, the academy will throw open its doors for the **15th Annual Student Show**, a reception showcasing the stunning compositions of Gage students. 6:00p.m., Rosen Gallery, Third floor, 1501 10th Ave. E. Info: www.gageacademy.org or 206-526-2787.

Saturday 6/16- Sunday 6/17

Hippies unite! Unearth the tie-dye, Birkenstocks and patchouli and mosey down to the Fremont Street Fair. Benefiting the Fremont Public Association, the Fremont Street Fair is a Seattle tradition that summons the free-spirited inner child from within any reformed earth mamma or papa. Begins at noon. Info: <http://fremontfair.org>.

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

Building a Culture of Connection

Local Author Cecile Andrews says Slow is Beautiful

Interview by TIMOTHY HARRIS,
Staff Writer

Phinney Ridge resident Cecile Andrews is best known as an advocate for voluntary simplicity, the notion that our consumerist culture leads to distorted priorities and a loss of meaning, and that we can regain control by redefining what is meant by the word "necessary." Her 1998 Circle of Simplicity is a classic of that movement that resonated strongly within the professional middle-class, drawing thousands of people into "talk circles" to reevaluate the meaning of affluence.

Her newest book, *Slow is Beautiful: Visions of Community, Leisure, and Joie de Vivre* (New Society Publishers, \$16.95), is her most extensive analysis yet of the various political and cultural forces that support an American lifestyle that values status and wealth over community and caring for one another. Andrews argues that our materialist culture undermines our capacity for joy, and that the renewal of a "culture of connection" is an essential step toward building an effective movement for social and economic justice.

When I think about cultural icons that typify a passionate and engaged life, I think about Dean Moriarty of Kerouac's *On the Road*, and his thing was, you know, burn, burn, burn. Live like you're on fire. But your ideal is Vonnegut, who said "the purpose of life is to fart around." I'm struck by the contrast.

There's a psychiatrist at UCLA, Peter Whybrow, who did the book *American Mania*. He feels that Americans are wired a certain way because so many of us are descended from immigrants. I think most of us have a really, really hard time not being busy.

Caring is a basic human skill that needs to be developed. We have developed our ability to compete, but we have not developed our caring ability.

But what has it gotten us, in terms of personal happiness and in terms of what we're doing, the environment, and achieving social justice? I quote someone in the book who says, "The cultures who die are the ones who keep doing the things that work, and they don't stop and ask 'is it still working?'" It's not our habit to stop and think. A passionate and engaged life. That's what most people want. But we need to look again at this thing called the American Dream. What has it been?

We seem to have eroded the space that people have in their lives for reflection, and along with that comes the erosion of our capacity for critical thinking.

When I started going around doing this book thing, I started thinking of, you know, sound bites. So one of my sound bites is "stop and think." Eric Fromm talks about how it's not the case that people are either basically good or basically selfish, but that we're capable of going either way, and the reason we choose one or the other has to do with the structure of our culture. So my goal is how do we create the structures that gets us to slow down and think. To have a culture of connection.

In *Escape from Freedom*, Fromm talks about how life can be viewed as an existential challenge, or as a sort of quest for security. It seems like this idea of life as a creative act is something that is beyond many of us.

Essentially, as an educator that's always been my goal. How do you get people to live this other life, but to do that we have to give them basic experience. If you look at the happiness literature, one of the foundations is being able to feel safe. I think that people's natural instinct, like plants, is to want to flower, but if the plant doesn't get its fertilizer, its going to be a shriveled up thing. And so we have this culture that doesn't give people the basic security, their not going to want to really live. They just pass their life.

Daniel Gilbert at Harvard talks about whether money buys happiness, and says that up to a certain baseline the answer is yeah. But after that, not so much.

There are three facts I want people to know, and that's one of them because it's so clearly opposite our American psyche. We have to put money in its place in this culture. The other is that 30 percent of people think they can be in the top 2 percent. Eighty percent of people in this country think that if they work hard enough, they'll be rich. And the third is that the biggest predictor of the health of a nation is the gap between the rich and the poor. Inequality correlates to decreased average longevity. And you'd think it's the poor people who bring down the average, but it's not just that. Rich people in this country don't have the same longevity and expectations as the average person in, say, Holland. It also has to do with the status thing. When you're in a society where people are better than you, your feelings are being hurt all the time because of the way people treat you. People treat you with disdain or they don't pay any attention to you, you become invisible, and that affects your basic health. People are happiest and healthiest when they're equal. So those are the three things I want people to know, that these are



Slow down, you move to fast: That's the advice of local resident Cecile Andrews. In her recent release, *Slow is Beautiful*, Andrews argues that materialism keeps people from experiencing connection, an important component of creating social and economic justice. Photo by Elliott Stoller.

false belief systems. These are at the core of everything.

When you're in a society where people are better than you, your feelings are being hurt all the time because of the way people treat you. People treat you with disdain or they don't pay any attention to you, you become invisible, and that affects your basic health.

Your book characterizes our culture as sterile, shallow, and lifeless, and it strikes me that what we're talking about there is white culture.

You're absolutely right. When I went to work with the American Friends Service Committee in the South, essentially we lived and worked with the poor Black community, and it was like, "Ah, I didn't know I was so repressed and sterile." But I mean it's white culture, but is it white because we have a culture going back to England and class? I don't know rich African-Americans, but I know richer African-Americans, and they're often pretty white. Right? It's wealth that does it to us.

You talk about happiness being subversive and the need for convivial community as a foundation for social change.

Caring is a basic human skill that needs to be developed. We have developed our ability to compete, but we have not developed our caring ability. Caring

Satrapi's Gorgeous Black Ink

Chicken with Plums

By Marjane Satrapi, Pantheon, 2006, Hardcover, 96 pages, \$16.95

By ROSETTE ROYALE, Staff Reporter

Unrealistic expectations can tank a relationship just as easily as they can a book. And, to some extent, that's what you're doing when you pull back a front cover: You're entering into a relationship — one that, depending upon the number of works an author has to her name, can run the gamut from a two-hour tryst to a long-term affair.

For a while now, a growing legion of readers have been experiencing very loving relations with Marjane Satrapi. Not that any bibliophile could be faulted. After all, there was her 2003 valentine to book lovers, *Persepolis*, a visually striking, emotionally complex graphic memoir of her life growing up in Iran during the overthrow of

Even though you know what's coming, Marjane Satrapi just about tears your heart out.

the Shah. Close on its heels was *Persepolis 2*, which more than fulfilled the promise of its predecessor, somehow blending pathos and humor into a delicious mix. Then came *Embroideries*, which chronicled an afternoon tea wherein a parlor full of women reveal their souls. All of these books were so well executed, Satrapi inadvertently set the well-loved author's trap for herself with *Chicken with Plums*: How in the world do you keep it exciting, after so many years?

Clown Girl; a novel

by Monica Drake, Hawthorne Books & Literary Arts, 2007, Paperback, 297 pages, \$15.95

Any time a novel opens with a phrase like "balloon tying for Christ," you know you're in store for something out of the ordinary. Monica Drake created Nita (aka Sniffles), her very own clown girl, from a string of one-liners and puns that demonstrate the author's artful ability to make the ridiculous sexy and the acceptable repulsive. However, after pages and pages of juggling bad jokes, bad choices, and bad luck, Nita's woebegone personality makes it easier to sympathize with the secondary characters accused of "clown bashing lite." Despite this shortcoming, Drake exposes blind prejudice for the absurdity it is by directing it at a clown suit.

Like any good clown, Drake's novel is entertaining (if repetitious), but it's by removing the face paint and costumes that she delivers the final punch line: In this harsh world, everyone, even down on their luck clowns, can stand a chance. n

—Kristi Thorne

The truth of the matter is: Satrapi does keep the reader's ardor bubbling with *Chickens*, even though it takes a third of the book for the stove to really get cooking.

The story, as it unfolds, relates the fate of Iranian musician Nasser Ali Khan, who just happens to be Satrapi's great uncle. Ali Khan, a musician of the highest order, wants to replace his broken tar — a Persian lute that's considered the forerunner of both the sitar and guitar. After traveling overnight on a bus with his motor-mouthed son, Mozaffar, to purchase a new tar, he returns home to discover that the instrument — Dammit!! — is no good; its six strings lack the sweet tones he craves. The news being too much bear, Ali Khan decides to stay in bed until he dies, which occurs in eight days' time.

Where's the excitement in that? Other than the panel where Ali Khan lets his son take up on opium in order to shut his yapper, the thrill is surely lacking.

But you'd be well advised to stick with *Chicken*, because that setup is merely the appetizer in an eight-course meal. What puts the meat on the tale's seemingly slight bones is the backstory: in short, lost love. For love, as anyone whose heart has felt as if it were bursting out of his chest knows, is a subject worthy of the best literature. So, too, lost love, with its pains that seep so deep into the fibers, it seems there's no way the heart will ever find its rhythms again. Thus we discover Ali Khan's problem: He's lost the love of his life, a woman.

Or is it his tar? For a while, it's unclear. There's certainly another person in his life besides his wife, a woman he simply cannot shake. And yet, there's the passion for his music. They're connected, of course, the music and the other woman, but it's

Satrapi's depiction of that bond that makes this tale so sublime. Partly this is due to the beautifully constructed imagery. How black ink can look so good on a page is a mystery, but it's one Satrapi has solved. Some of her panels are downright gorgeous.

Then there are the characters: Ali Khan's talkative son, whose single silent act provides the book with one of its high points; his spurned wife, who tries to enliven her husband with his favorite dish, the titular chicken with plums; Sophia Loren, who is so evocatively drawn at least a few pages could warrant an NC-17 rating; and the Angel of Death, who's both thorny and cute. Each pays Ali Khan a visit as he slips toward the grave.

Even though you know what's coming, Satrapi just about tears your heart out in the last panel. Only the coldest soul will find it hard not to think, much less speak: Don't leave me, Marjane Satrapi, please, don't leave.



NOVEMBER 15, 1958

And so with *Chickens*, Satrapi ensures that the love affair with her readers lingers on. n

Your book purchases can benefit Real Change. For more information, go to www.realchangenews.org, click on the Powell's button, and browse a list of books recently featured in our pages.

WORTH SEEING

NOW AVAILABLE ON DVD:

Reviews by LESTER GRAY, Contributing Writer

A Trio of Anniversary Concert Films:

Sign O' the Times, ABBA: The Movie, Don't Look Back

On June 8, the Northwest Film Forum begins screening a trio of rock movies on their respective anniversaries— *Sign O' the Times*, directed by and starring Prince; *ABBA: the Movie*; and *D.A. Pennebaker's* legendary cinema verite, *Don't Look Back*. This last work captures the trials and tribulations of a young Bob Dylan on his 1965 tour of England.

A rare treat for both film and music aficionados, *Don't Look Back* follows the folksinger into situations unseen by folk fans. Through confrontations, spontaneous music, hotel rooms and concert halls, the voyeuristic camera keeps rolling. In low light situations the film is pushed, which has the effect of revealing its granular structure. The grainy look, the swish pan, and the unedited refocus imply a journalistic integrity, techniques soon employed by other producers to suggest authenticity.

Dylan arrives in Europe as a new and curious cultural phenomenon. The press doesn't know what to make of him. He doesn't seem to know what to make of them. As a consequence, his press interviews are invariably contentious and entertaining. It's the same aloof Dylan we know today, weary of inane queries seeking to define him in a context he finds wanting, if not repulsive. This is not to say he didn't use the media, he just didn't let the media use him.

In a business where the word classic is applied to movies that haven't even been screened, *Don't Look Back* is the real deal. Dylan's songs were fresh and a young Joan Baez, who accompanied him to Europe, sounds as good in a motel room as in a recording studio. Both add priceless complements to Pennebaker's groundbreaking film.

Sign O' the Times, directed by Prince, was released before he dropped his name (and took it back), and after his impressive film, *Purple Rain*. Basically a concert movie, it effectively captures a great

performer in his element, for the most part absent the interwoven dramatic themes of his past efforts. However, the most memorable performance comes from drummer and singer, Sheila E. It's difficult to remember anyone who plays the drums with more vibrancy. When she trades places with Prince, fronting the group, she steals the show. Complete with backup singers, exceptional choreography, all supported by impeccably tight horn and rhythm sections, *Sign O' the Times* wants for neither talent nor energy, especially on the big screen with a theater sound system.

ABBA: The Movie, which I did not preview, includes a subplot concerning a disk jockey who is trying to catch the group for an interview. There's footage of backstage shenanigans, adoring fans and of course the band in concert. Songs include "Take a Chance on Me," "Fernando," "Dancing Queen," and "Mamma Mia" among others. n

Sign O' the Times plays June 8 to June 10. *ABBA: The Movie* plays June 11 to June 14. *Don't Look Back* plays June 15 - 21. Showtimes are 7 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. Tickets are \$8.50 (\$5 for NFF members). Northwest Film Forum is located at 1515 12th Ave. on Capitol Hill.



Adventures
in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning

Last week for all of 10 minutes you could have thought Real Change was a cult. Almost all us "staff" showed up around the big table for the monthly staff meeting. We're collectively reading Class Matters, a book about class and class-activism by Betsy Leondar-Wright, and working through the discussion questions. That's like number five among the top 10 signs you are in a cult.

We were pretty much in agreement about everything, talking about identity politics, when the illusion that we were a cult was shattered by an exchange that condenses to: "White People don't have a culture," "Nuh-uh. Do so," "Like what?" "Give me time, I'll think of some." I won't say who any of these people were, because it would only distract me from my goal, which is to (figuratively) dance around the question raised, gesticulate at it, and run away laughing insanely.

I wasn't going to do it, but then Saturday I saw the AP story about the 5 high school students in Galesburg, Ill., who were denied keepsake diplomas at graduation because their friends and family cheered them too much. And I read that the 5 consisted of 4 Blacks and 1 Hispanic

Now, there's no evidence that Galesburg is unusually racist. Within two years of being settled, the first Illinois anti-slavery society began there, and it became a stop on the underground railroad. Also, Carl Sandburg was born

©Dr. Wes: Whites Got Soul?

there, who never owned a slave, unlike George Washington, who had 364.

Still, it makes you pause. You've got a population that's roughly 84% White and yet it's 5 non-White students that get denied diplomas. The odds of that happening at random is around 1/100th of 1%. What up?

The first thing everybody did was ask themselves if the problem was that the White People of Galesburg weren't taking the cultures of Black People and

So, yes, Virginia,
wherever there are quiet
boring ceremonies that
drag on forever and
put you to sleep, White
People Culture lives, in
our hearts, in our souls.

Hispanics fully into account. Here's where I do my weird dance, where I fling my hips out, fly off the ground and land on my head (figuratively) and say, no, they aren't taking White People's culture fully into account. I say it's White People culture that says everybody should be quiet and respectful while the names of the graduates are read off.

Think about it. They say it's a matter of not being able to hear the names read out. But why should the ceremony be set up so you have to be able to hear? Why couldn't they have some clowns or mascots or whatever run around the stage holding up big cardboard signs

letting people know who's who? Then they could play music through the whole thing, people could cheer and shout all they wanted and dance in their seats and in the aisles, and you'd have something to remember.

They can't do that because they're too White, that's why. So, yes, Virginia, wherever there are quiet boring ceremonies that drag on forever and put you to sleep, White People Culture lives, in our hearts, in our souls.

Now for the running away laughing insanely part. I can't resist pointing out that racism is a cultural artifact. So to the extent White People are overtly racist, that's culture. Conversely, take that overt racism away, as has genuinely happened in the 57 years of my lifetime, and you create a big void. So the fact that Whites are seen as cultureless can be a good thing.

Oppressed People's Cultures always seem richer. This is usually explained by saying that being oppressed makes your people more interesting somehow. So, Christians got interesting by being martyred. Blacks got made slaves, so now even I listen to Hip-Hop, it's so interesting.

I say, rubbish. The truth is, Christianity took hold because Rome had become mind-numbingly boring as soon as it was politically-incorrect to throw Christians to hungry lions.

If your culture is largely about social domination, then as that piece falls away, it leaves a vacuum. Anything looks better than a vacuum!

Sound off and read more:
drwesb.blogspot.com



Faith,
Culture,
Politics

Rev. Rich Lang

Rev. Rich Lang: Cindy Sheehan's
Needed Time-Out

Cindy Sheehan is tired, wounded, and worn out—and recently stepped away from her role as a leader of anti-war protests. She has labored mightily, wrestling with the chaos and the troubled waters that have flooded our lives with permanent war. Yet, this war cannot be resolved, nor can it end, on the basis of one or two role models, heroines, or superstars. This war can only become peace when we as a nation, as a collective person named America, rise up in resistance to the chaotic forces that have produced this horror.

To right the wrong of this national sin requires more than words, protests, the street theater of marches, and certainly more than merely "voting the bums out." It requires from us the practice of spiritual resistance. Such resistance is birthed first in reflection, contemplation, and solitude. From the womb of such resistance, new creation is possible.

Our entire nation needs to refocus its attention so that we can once again

see inward shame, outward depravity, inward hypocrisy, outward cruelty, inward sorrow, and outward despair. We the people need a time of silent reflection to ponder what we have done, and what we have left undone. We need a time to grieve so that from out of that grief may come the backbone of courage, the steeled determination to seek justice, the cold, calm, clear anger that is necessary to right the wrongs, and to remove the "responsible" from their thrones of privilege and status.

From such spiritual resistance can come a new connection with community and a clear vision for a better world. It is from within ourselves that we gain perspective to see through the cultural trance imposed upon us by political and consumer propaganda, and draw strength to break through the chains of conformity that have held us in such pathetic and pitiful powerlessness. It is from within that we discover the voice of hope that discerns a new way forward.

Cindy Sheehan is taking a time out, a Sabbath rest, a period of reflection. In

this she reveals herself as wise, strong, and brave. There will be another day for her to return, in another way, to live her hope for justice. In the meantime, while she refreshes and rests from her ordeal, it is time for us to step it up and step out, living out our resistance to war through lives reflective of a positive alternative. Cindy Sheehan ran point in the antiwar parade, but the real action is not in the one who sprints ahead, rather, it is in those who step by step refuse to falter and uncompromisingly advance toward the promise of peace. We give thanks for Cindy, but look boldly ahead to the time when joy breaks out into justice and these troubled waters become, once again, a wellspring of hope. We the people shall rise together, and those who have wounded us will hurt us no more. n

Rich Lang is Pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Ballard and the host of Living Faith Now, a progressive Christian radio show at www.livingfaithnow.org. He can be contacted at oddrev@yahoo.com.



Thurs., May 3, 11:50 a.m., Victor Steinbrueck Park, Western Ave. A transient male, 49, was contacted for littering in the park. Suspect lied to officer several times about his name, but his true identity was found. Suspect had an outstanding warrant that was verified via radio. He was arrested and booked into King County Jail.

Sun., May 13, 5:23 p.m., Tent City, E. Cherry St. An officer was dispatched to Tent City 3 for a disturbance. Dispatch reported that there was a subject on 22nd Ave. threatening to harm people. The subject was described as a male approximately 45 years old, wearing a black and white sweater. As officer was responding to the area the suspect was reported as leaving on foot, southbound on 22nd Ave. Officer arrived in the area and observed a man fitting the description of the suspect. He was on foot and appeared to be yelling about something. Officers contacted the man and obtained his ID. He immediately began yelling. One officer remained with the suspect while the other went to Tent City to investigate. Officer contacted the victims who stated they had been working the security shift at Tent City when the suspect entered the property with food, stating he was bringing it to someone. He entered the kitchen tent, where the men heard the sound of raised voices. Suspect was causing a disturbance, and he was asked to leave. Suspect then began yelling and making threats to beat the men up, and punched one of the victims in the chest. All of the victims and witnesses stated no one touched the suspect, and they were afraid he would become assaultive if he left the premises. They positively identified the suspect, and he was arrested and booked into King County Jail for assault and harassment.

Tues., May 27, 8:23 a.m., Boyer Ave. and E. Howe St. Officer was dispatched to respond with Seattle Fire Department to investigate a body found inside Interlaken Park by two Seattle Parks employees. Officer arrived at the park entrance and walked up the steep trail to meet the SFD crew, who were already on the scene. SFD had determined that the subject had been deceased for some time. They pointed out the area the man was located, about 20 yards off the trail in an overgrown area of bush. Officer observed the body and noticed signs of decomposition. He also noted a blue backpack and walking cane next to the body. The officer then returned to question the witnesses. Witness one stated he was working to clear a trail with his co-worker when he needed to go to the bathroom. He walked off the trail into the bushes, and saw the deceased body. He notified his partner, who called 911.

Officer photographed the body and notified the King County Medical Examiners, who responded to the scene. KCME located a wallet on the subject, and found an ID card identifying the man, a transient white male, 40. As they were removing the body, the officer asked if they had found any signs of trauma to the body, and they responded "No." KCME took possession of the body, his backpack and cane.

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.

HAVE YOU BEEN DENIED BENEFITS?SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY, SSI, VETERANS' CLAIMS
& LONG TERM DISABILITY BENEFITSFIGHT FOR THE FINANCIAL & MEDICAL BENEFITS
YOU DESERVE

- HUMB VISES
- NO FEE UNLESS WE WIN
- REFERRALS WELCOME

George Andre Fields • Attorney At Law
206-622-3679**LEFT BANK BOOKS**

Worker Owned and Operated Collective Since 1973

92 Pike St.

Pike Place
MarketMon-Sat 10-7
Sun 11-6Used and
New bookswww.leftbankbooks.comleftbank@leftbankbooks.com

206.622.0195

**Central Physical Therapy
& Fitness**
Celebrating Gay Pride MonthVisit us at the 10th Annual Rainbow Women's
Health Fair on June 8th and the First Pacific NW
LGBT Forum on Aging, June 15th-18th.501 19th Ave E
Seattle, WA 98112
206-680-3748Supporting the health of our local community.
www.centralphysicaltherapy.comWe stand up for
the people who are
getting stepped on.**The Retiree Advocate**Check out our monthly
left-of-center newsletter.For 3 free issues, phone or write
Puget Sound Alliance for
Retired Americans.2800 1st Ave., #262, Seattle, 98121
(206) 448-9646The issue isn't Edwards' haircut, but how to respond to the lies
and exaggerations that now masquerade as politics**The Haircut that Won't Die**

By PAUL ROGAT LOEB, Guest Writer

The John Edwards haircut keeps getting resurrected, like a creature from a bad horror movie. The Republicans unearthed it most recently in their second debate, when former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee said, "We've had a Congress that's spent money like John Edwards at a beauty shop." Republicans have been focusing on symbolic character attacks since Nixon branded George McGovern, who'd flown 35 B-24 bomber missions in World War II, "the candidate of acid, amnesty and abortion." If the attacks aren't adequately answered, too often they work.

Think about John Kerry's refusal to answer the Swift Boaters until far too late. Together with Kerry's more general distancing himself from his Vietnam-era protests (and endless mixed messages on the Iraq War) it made a key difference in the election. The Edwards haircut is trivial, but needs to be dealt with because it speaks to a long-cultivated narrative that anyone with money who tries to make this country more equitable must ultimately be a hypocrite. (Those without money are dismissed as marginal whiners.) "I can't trust anyone who gets a \$400 haircut and then says they're for ordinary Americans," a fellow commercial fisherman told my oldest friend last week, shutting off any discussion before it began.

I heard John Edwards in person a couple weeks after the haircut story broke. After leading with the need for the Senate to force a prompt withdrawal from Iraq, he spoke eloquently about poverty and global warming, health care, disappearing pensions, and how to build a more just economy. He spent an hour carefully listening and responding to questioners from the floor. Over the past few years, none of the major candidates have taken stronger or more passionate stands. I'd already donated to his campaign, but went home and donated some more.

It's going to take strong stands like those of Edwards to overcome the manufactured distractions and distortions—and the media's propensity to make them their lead stories. You can't do it with mealy-mouthed platitudes. But so long as Republicans and

a compliant media keep bringing up the haircut, Edwards also needs to do more to neutralize the incident's power as a symbol to be used against him.

Laughing helps. As Edwards explained in a North Carolina Town Hall meeting, the haircut was scheduled by staff, squeezed in between the nonstop timetables of campaigning. "I knew it would be expensive now, I don't want to mislead—when a haircut guy comes to your hotel to do your hair it's not going to be cheap."

So long as prominent Republicans continue to use the image, Edwards needs both to neutralize the incident as much as possible, both directly and with the help of others willing to speak out. That means continuing to publicly laugh at it, and at himself. It also means talking about how it fits the larger

patterns of Republican character attacks and our more general cultural focus on the politics of personality over discussion of what our prospective leaders might actually stand for. He needs to make clear that those making such issues their focus do so because they have no vision to get this country out of the disasters their policies have helped create. Edwards needs to get that response out in the media, on the web, and in every possible venue.

In a culture that wasn't so distracted to death, and where men like Karl Rove weren't constantly creating smokescreens and lies, incidents like the Edwards haircut would be

irrelevant. But until American voters unequivocally reject such manufactured distractions, candidates can't prevail against these kinds of attacks by simply ignoring them. They need to have an organized team in place to help them respond as clearly, comprehensively, and saliently as possible, while highlighting the bankruptcy of the politics represented by those who would promote them. Only then will they have a chance to address the real issues that we face. n

Paul Rogat Loeb (www.paulloeb.org) is the author of *The Impossible Will Take a Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear*. His previous books include *Soul of a Citizen: Living With Conviction in a Cynical Time*.



Photo courtesy of johmedwards.com

**Need a (tax) break?**
Donate your surplus fleet or
personal vehicles to Working Wheels

Working Wheels is a nonprofit program that assists low-income people with their transportation needs, helping them to keep their jobs, better manage their money, and establish or repair their credit. By donating your used vehicles to Working Wheels, a company or individual can get the maximum allowable tax deduction – hundreds or even thousands of dollars more than donating to other charities or trading in your cars.

Learn more at www.working-wheels.org. Or call 206-860-8000.

Working Wheels is a program of Solid Ground.

www.solid-ground.org

ANDREWS, Continued from Page 7

about the other means you are caring about the greater good, the common good, and how else can we learn to care about the common good than to experience caring and community. It came out recently that Americans are lonelier than they used to be, and a quarter of Americans say they have not one friend they can turn to. If you take out family members, a half of Americans do not have someone they can turn to. So this creates an incredible fear and insecurity. Conviviality is a basic orientation to life. It signals to people that I am safe to approach.

I've always felt that one of the challenges of our culture is to be able to distance yourself and be able to experience its unreality for what it is. Vaclav Havel talks about how we've succumbed to a "profound trivialization of our humanity."

Advertising has taken over. Advertising is trivialization. You can't escape. And, then, this is where it comes to the long work hours, the country that watches the most television is the country with the longest work hours, that we watch television more than any other culture. It used to be Japan, but now they're number two. We come home, and all we can do is turn on the television because we're exhausted, and then you're bombarded. And the constant message is that you're not acceptable, that this thing will make you happier. And this is the other thing—and I never wanted to portray simplicity as without comfort—but essentially we're too comfortable. I think, it's kind of like when you go camping. Sometimes you have to make do and it's not comfortable, but somehow we feel more alive. When you care so much about stuff you don't care as much about people. To me, its how all these things are connected and that everything has trivialized us until this is the way normal looks. n

call to action

Radio Should Benefit People, not Corporations

Issue: The federal government is on the verge of turning over a huge portion of our public airwaves to companies like AT&T, Verizon, and Comcast—who will use them for private enrichment instead of the public good.

Background: The issue being considered is who should control access to the radio spectrum. As part of the digital television transition, a prized portion of the public airwaves is being returned to the government. Implementing the right policies could mean more competition, faster service and lower price for consumers.

The FCC is about to auction the exclusive "license" to this spectrum, called the 700 MHz band, to the highest bidder among the big telecommunications companies. But a coalition of public interest groups has filed comments urging the FCC to use this auction to create a much-needed "third pipe" competitor to broadband services offered by phone and cable companies.

At the same time, Congress is considering what to do with "white spaces"—the unused parts of the public airwaves between TV channels that could expand broadband service to underserved

areas. Bills pending in the House and Senate would set aside this spectrum for "unlicensed" wireless Internet.

These newly available airwaves are a once in a lifetime opportunity to revolutionize Internet access—beaming high speed signals to every park bench, coffee shop, workplace, and home in America at more affordable prices than current Internet service. Phone and cable companies don't want this competition to their Internet service—they'd rather purchase the airwaves at auction and sit on them.

In June, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will make a major decision: Use the public airwaves for the public good, or turn them over to big companies who will stifle competition, innovation, and the wireless Internet revolution. Urge the FCC to mandate that whoever wins the auction cannot stifle competition and innovation.

Action: Visit www.savetheinternet.com/airwaves to send a personalized version of the following letter to the FCC.

The government must protect our airwaves from the same corporate gatekeepers that have stifled innovation and competition in Internet markets.

To restore America's leadership in high-speed Internet services, the FCC must ensure that the upcoming auction sets aside at least 30 MHz of spectrum for open and non-discriminatory Internet access. This will guarantee that new entrants have the opportunity to enter the market in competition with incumbent providers.

It would be a big mistake to hand over these airwaves to the very same phone and cable companies that dominate the wireline market. We need more competition and innovation, not more of the same. This new wireless spectrum must be open and neutral so that America can build a better Internet for everyone.

CLASSIFIEDS

Development Coordinator wanted to manage all aspects of individual, corporate and congregational giving. Engages staff/boards to identify new prospects and cultivate, steward, solicit, upgrade and retain current donors at all levels. Develops/implements successful strategies for major gifts, direct mail, online giving, & donor appreciation. Full description and application at <http://www.thechurchcouncil.org>. First review on 6/11; open till filled. EO.

Real Change Readers Get \$35 in Free **Flexcar** Credit! (\$35 annual membership fee still applies.) And Real Change receives \$20 in usage credit on our organizational membership for each new member. Join Flexcar online at www.flexcar.com, enter "v35Friend" in

the promo code field, and enter "Real Change" in the referring organization field. Offer valid only when you drive Flexcar once in your first 60 days of membership.

Rain Barrels - Fully assembled, well-designed, black 60 gallon rain barrels for only \$65 plus tax. Contact Dan Borba at (253) 272-8173 or email at naturalrainwater@yahoo.com or visit www.naturalrainwater.com. Harvesting the rain locally since 1999. Mention Real Change and receive free delivery.

BicycleDoctor.com - **Mobile repair service** since 1990. On-site repairs at your home or office. Full service tune-ups/overhauls/parts, and accessories. Group discounts available, satisfaction guaranteed! Owner Mechanic Kenny (206) 789-7336.

Reach 30,000 loyal readers
Call (206) 441-3247, or email
classified@realchangenews.org

REAL CHANGE 20x20 FUND DRIVE

1. DOWNLOAD AND PRINT CARD (realchangenews.org)

2. FOLD

3. FOLD AGAIN

4. GIVE

5. ENJOY KARMA

WHO I'M PRETTY SURE GOT PAID TODAY.

We're looking for a few EXCELLENT New Board Members

REAL CHANGE

If you have:

- a passion for our mission
- at least 10 hours a month
- a history of involvement
- vision, brains, and charm

It might be you.

Contact Ariana Cantu
arianacantu@yahoo.com 206.228.8418

ISSUES • INSIGHT • IMPACT

LIHI owns and/or manages more than 1,600 affordable housing units in King, Kitsap, Island, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston Counties.

We strive to help residents achieve long-term Stability and self-sufficiency. We aid in resource coordination, case management, financial literacy and asset building, youth programs and activities, and technology access and training.

Visit us at:
Low Income Housing Institute
2407 First Avenue, Suite 200
Seattle, WA 98121
206.443.9935
www.lihi.org

LOW INCOME HOUSING INSTITUTE

FUNERAL, Continued from Page 5

corporation had already cancelled eight contracts at funeral homes that served the nonprofit's members. Then, in April, after PMA refused to go along with price hikes at three other funeral homes the corporation had just acquired, SCI sent it a 90-day notice cancelling those contracts as well—including one at the group's only Seattle provider, Acacia Funeral Home.

The nonprofit still had 11 funeral homes on contract. But left with some 40,000 Seattle members who would have no PMA services nearby if they dropped dead after the contracts expired on June 12, Board President Ruth Bennett said the organization made a crucial decision: It would not only start its own funeral service, but have it up and running within 90 days.

"Since the corporate death-care companies have taken over, they don't want to handle people who want simple, dignified services" because there's no profit in it, Bennett says. "We just thought that opening our own funeral service was what we needed to do in order to continue as an organization."

The nonprofit hired Char Barrett and has already moved a location at Northgate to new and larger headquarters on Capitol Hill.

Unlike distant chain operators that are concerned with profit and loss, "small, independent funeral homes have a much better opportunity to really serve families that are in grief," Barrett says. "That's a huge part of our philosophy—creating a cradling environment."

[Resources]

The People's Memorial Funeral Co-op is located at 1801 12th Ave., Suite A, Seattle. Starting June 11, its phone number will be (206) 529-3800. For details on funeral plans, go to www.peoplesmemorial.org.

PLANET EARTH
YOGA CENTER

Peace
on Earth

418 N 35 Street • Fremont
206.365.1997 planetearthyo.com

Want to help create **positive** social change?
You can always volunteer at Real Change.
A few hours a week can make a big difference.
To learn more, visit our website:
www.realchangenews.org/volunteer.html.

eyes ON FREMONT

UNIQUE AFFORDABLE EYEWEAR

Friendly, Skilled Staff
On Site Lab
Eye Exams
Student Discounts

4254 Fremont Ave. N.
Seattle, WA 98103
(206) 634-3375

dfi We're here to help. WWW.DFI.WA.GOV

Who is DFI?

The Washington State Department of Financial Institutions licenses and examines a variety of state chartered financial services.

DFI provides consumer information about mortgage fraud, payday lending, investment fraud, home loans, and personal money management skills.

If you have a consumer question, or need to file a complaint, DFI is here to help.

How to contact DFI:

www.DFI.WA.GOV
1-877-746-4334

Thinking of a payday loan?

Before you get a payday loan, ask yourself:

- Can I get by without a loan right now?
- Will I be able to pay off my loan on time and still cover my other bills?
- Are there social service programs that I can turn to for help instead?

Payday loans are not an answer to long-term cash needs. Make sure you understand the costs and fees involved. Avoid getting loans from more than one lender at a time. Instead, if you fall behind, ask about a payment plan before the loan is due.

To make sure you are dealing with a licensed payday lender and learn more about payday loans, visit DFI online or call to request a free brochure.