Housing Agency sues Port

It’s government versus government in a fight to save low-income housing. Here, faith leaders hold a service to keep Lora Lake Apartments open. ... see page 5

Council candidates sweat it out over affordable housing

During a brown bag lunch, City Councilmember David Della feels the heat. ... see page 5

The grassy knoll: Author Vincent Bugliosi is sure Oswald did it ... p. 7

Fiction, from the depths of the soul p. 8

Author Vincent Bugliosi is sure Oswald did it ... p. 7
Homeless advocates need to stop talking about what’s wrong with homeless people and start talking about what’s wrong with a system that supports the rich at the expense of the poor

A Pathetic Absence of Vision

By TIMOTHY HARRIS, Real Change Executive Director

O n July 24, I went to a press conference at the Lona Lake Apartments in Burien, where, for once, the news was good. Representatives from King County’s Committee to End Homelessness and the Church Council of Greater Seattle stood behind Port Commissioner Bob Edwards and offered a united front on the question of preserving affordable housing.

If Edwards can bring the other Port commissioners and the City of Burien around, there will be 162 less units of affordable family housing lost to market forces this year.

This region now has less rental housing available than two years ago. Over that time, 4,000 rental units were lost to condo conversion. Add another 3,000 for this year, and you have a market where vacancy rates are at a 20-year low, and rents are up by 10 percent or more.

One may visualize the housing market as a huge ladder, where more and more people are struggling to hold onto fewer rungs. When housing gets more expensive, those who have more resources don’t have to afford to move higher, but can’t afford to move higher begin to occupy the lower rungs. Those with the weakest grip fall off. Some landings are too far apart to accommodate. We must instead look more to the structural realities of poverty and the broader issue of poverty, we all instinctively know that extreme poverty and ridiculous excess do not mix.

Homelessness in America is a sweeping indictment of the federal priorities that placed our focus on the chronic homeless: the mentally ill, addicted, and alcoholic homeless who, in less enlightened times, were known as “bums.” In other words, it’s not the system that’s seen as screwed up. It’s the people.

Advocates need to stop playing into the federally-driven strategy of divide and conquer. We must instead look more to our natural allies: kids, single parents, the elderly, the uninsured, and the disabled.

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regard is nearly unforgivable.

While, family homelessness is growing faster than ever. The answer to this is already starting to emerge from Washington. That would be, of course, the Ten Year Plan to address family homelessness.

I wish that was a joke.

Phil Mangano, President Bush’s point man on homelessness, likes to defend the narrowly focused 10-year plan strategies to end homelessness by saying the definition of insanity is to keep doing the same thing year after year when we know it doesn’t work.

That’s rich.

Federal policy on homelessness is designed to distract, stigmatize, and divide. McKinney-Vento, in the absence of a broader federal anti-poverty and anti-housing strategy just sets us up to fail, and 10-year plans that narrowly focus on chronic homelessness while ignoring the structural realities of poverty and inequality are cut from the same cloth.

It would be “No” or “Hell, no” depending upon your interpretation. Today, that response became much more ambiguous.

While this is good news, we are still some distance from declaring victory. On July 24, Port Commissioner Bob Edwards will introduce a resolution to his four fellow commissioner parts that opens the possibility for compromise. Should a majority agree, a proposal will be drafted for broader approval that “directs the Port to explore compromise.” This is exactly the win we need, but it’s a great start.

Edwards has shown admirable moral courage in taking this first step. The Port Authority has “come into the family,” as King County Executive Ron Sims so graciously put it, due to immense pressure from the County and the broader community.

This has included an occupation of the property by the brave members of SHARE/HEEL and a recent “Lamentation Service” at the site that was the moral authority of the faith community against the narrow economic interest of the Port Authority and the City of Burien.

Like all development that happens at the expense of the poor and powerless, this is about money, opportunity, and power. We need to keep our guard up and the pressure on.


director's corner

Director's Corner

for daily posts by Tim Harris see apesmaslament.blogspot.com
**Change Agent**

**Federal immigration reform may be on hold for the next few years but immigration battles rage on in state and local governments across the country. Since 2005, for example, George Cheung, co-founder of Lopez & Cheung, Inc., a public affairs consulting firm, has protested ballot measures that would restrict immigrants’ rights in Washington State. Most recently he successfully challenged I-966, a measure that would have required residents to prove their legal status before accessing certain public benefits. Besides limiting immigrants’ access to important services, Cheung believes the measure would have harmful unintended consequences—creating a climate of fear and hurting many citizens who may have difficulty providing necessary identification. It would also turn doctors, nurses and others into immigration enforcement officials. Cheung says healthcare providers “are on the frontlines of taking care of us. As a taxpayer, that’s what I want them to do—focus on keeping people safe and healthy.” Cheung sees I-966 as symptomatic of widespread anti-immigrant sentiment. He remains committed to building a strong coalition that can respond quickly to threats to immigrant and human rights.” —Rachel Rubinstein

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**Learning from a tragedy**

In death, sometimes people leave behind a legacy. For Isaac Palmer, who was killed last month by a Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) tractor while sleeping below an overpass, that legacy will lead to the agency making a greater outreach to the homeless community and its population.

The policy will prove crucial as WSDOT prepares to shut down a portion of I-5’s five northbound lanes, between S. Spokane St. and I-90. (Two or three lanes will be closed, depending upon time of day.) Construction is set to commence Aug. 10 and continue until Aug. 29.

It was while preparing for this project, the largest-ever highway closure in city history, that Palmer died.

During the daylight hours of June 2, Palmer, 62, was sleeping in a blackberry bamble underneath the S. Massachusetts St. overpass. But a WSDOT construction crew hadn’t seen him. As a contractor’s tractor sought to clear out the brambles to make way for the placement of necessary scaffolding, blades on the machine’s 18-foot arm fractured Palmer’s skull. He tore into his brain. Palmer died instantly.

WSDOT spokesman Chris Palmer says the incident sent a shockwave through the agency. “It deeply affected people [here],” says Suchan.

As a result, he says the organization has been looking at ways to get the word out about the upcoming project to people sleeping or living in the area. This has led the agency to step up its face-to-face communication with people it encounters in the work zone. Along with the Seattle Police Department, which is maintaining a 24/7 presence in the area, Suchan says they are meeting and talking to at least five people a day. And from now on, he says every tractor operator will be paired with a person on the ground—a spotter—who will look out for anyone in the area. “That way,” he says, “there’ll be two sets of eyes instead of one.”

Last week, Suchan says he and another regional spokesperson attended a meeting of the Seattle-King County Coalition to End Homelessness, as a step out for anyone in the area. “That way,” he says, “there’ll be two sets of eyes instead of one.”

“Isaac Palmer,” says Suchan, “will have a lasting affect on our agency.” —Rosette Royale

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**Working to end “crimmigration”**

A July 18 panel discussion organized by the University of Washington Department of Women’s Studies refuted the purported connection between immigrants and crime. The panel, “Crimmigration: People, Security and Resistance,” met at Columbia University’s New Freeway Hall for a conversation about media-promulgated images of immigrants as criminals, and how those images impact immigrants.

Serena Maurer, a UW Women Studies lecturer and one of the panel’s main organizers, discussed her recent research into the widespread perception by residents of Yakima Valley that immigrant equals criminal—a perception contradicted by statistics. Maurer and the other four panelists—Hate Free Zone Policy Director Shankar Narayan, Washington Community Action Network Community Organizer Maru Villalpando, immigrant activist Maria Rivera and Refugee Justice Project Coordinator Many Uch—discussed Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids, historical and contemporary injustices of immigration law, and Minutemen-backed politicians. The issue of immigration was reframed from one of a brown peril threatening America’s borders, economy and national identity to one of our families, the denial of due process and other human rights, and the effects of neoliberal globalization on economic security and national identity.

Narayan stressed the importance for people who believe in due process and the Constitution to speak out to elected officials, asking the audience, “What values do we want to see our government embody?” For some of the approximately 60 people who gathered, there were expressions of frustration that more newcomers weren’t joining the conversation. But Maurer and Narayan maintained that panels and rallies aren’t the only important places to change minds about what’s really at stake in the current immigration controversy. If the media relentlessly puts a negative spin on immigrants, they said, our daily interactions with the people around us—friends, families, neighbors, coworkers, people in the grocery store—are opportunities to spin back. —Nell Abercrombie
July’s record heat may have only been a warm-up for the homeless

Homeless in the heat

BY R.V. MURPHY, Contributing Writer

I t’s no secret that many people move to the Pacific Northwest to get away from the heat and humidity that plagues the rest of the country this time of year. Seattleites don’t live in air conditioning so many were caught unprepared when record temperatures hit the area July 10 and July 11, when temperatures officially hit 97 degrees at SeaTac International Airport.

According to Joe Martin, case manager at the Pike Market Medical Clinic, the heat and the humidity can lead to more problems for the homeless and low-income people. For those living on the street, the heat can be a foe as much as cold, rain and wind. The Centers for Disease Control says that air conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness or death. Unfortunately for those living in a small one-room apartment a cheap table-fan from the local drugstore doesn’t always do the trick.

Martin doesn’t think the Clinic had any more clients in our July heat wave record heat, but says that it was “a stressful day.”

“Over the 30 years I’ve been here, and with respect to the rain and the cold, hot weather seems to exacerbate problems,” says Martin. “It’s not scientific, but those who have mental problems get disoriented.”

“We had 163 people on [July 11]. That’s a high for this time of year.”

— Rev. Rick Reynolds, Operation Night Watch

According to the CDC, those at greatest risk during the heat include the mentally ill and those with chronic diseases. Those on prescription drugs and heavy alcohol users can also be affected. Extreme heat causes more deaths in the course of the year than hurricanes, lightning, tornadoes and earthquakes combined.

Extreme heat is defined as when temperatures hover 10 degrees or more over historic averages. People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate for the heat.

Fortunately, the homeless did have some options. City and King County libraries are air conditioned and the Center House in Seattle Center expanded hours for anyone who wanted to go inside and out of the heat. Pike Place Market also gave out water last week. Water is more beneficial in dealing with the heat than alcoholic and sugary beverages.

Traditionally, many homeless people will sleep outside this time of year eschewing a hot, sweaty shelter for the great outdoors. But that wasn’t the case earlier in July as Operation Night Watch, the organization that assigns the homeless to various shelters each night, had record numbers of clients.

For some homeless, it was too hot to stay outside.

“We had 163 people on [July 11],” says the Rev. Rick Reynolds, Night Watch’s director. “That’s a high for this time of year. Some of it (not sleeping inside) might be for safety reasons. People adapt different survival strategies.”

“We didn’t have a great influx of patients (July 10 and July 11),” says Susan Gregg-Hanson, a spokeswoman for Harborview Medical Center. “There were no heat-related or dehydration cases but there were two toddlers who fell out of windows and unfortunately one died.”

“The heat seems to intensity people’s problems,” says Martin. “They aren’t used to this weather like they would be in Arizona and Nevada. People get disoriented. One of our nurses said it was a tough day” on July 11.

“Some people (in the shelters) do get cranky,” says Reynolds. “There’s more of an edge. More people are frazzled.”

The dog days of summer: A man and his pet try to stay cool during this month’s heatwave, which sent temperatures soaring to 97. Many people were caught off guard by the weather and homeless shelters did their best to cope with those seeking relief. Photo by Katia Roberts
King County goes to court to stop the Port of Seattle from demolishing low-income housing

By CYDNEY GILLIS, Staff Reporter

R

on Sims isn’t going to let the Port of Seattle tear down Burien’s Lora Lake Apartments without a fight. Last week, the King County Executive started court action that aims to take the Port’s property using the power of eminent domain—a highly unusual tactic for one branch of government to use against another.

On July 20, at Sims’s request, the King County Housing Authority filed a petition in Superior Court to condemn the apartment complex, which the agency has operated for the Port as moderately-priced rentals since 2005. In the short term, the lawsuit could stop demolition of 162 of Lora Lake’s now vacant 234 units, which the Port was preparing to tear down to create a buffer zone for its third runway.

Port Commissioner Bob Edwards responded this week by putting a motion before the five-member commission calling on Port management to halt demolition and negotiate with the county, which has made an offer to buy the property for $18 million. But the commission won’t vote on the measure before Aug. 7.

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Both moves follow the July 19 arrest of nine homeless people who barricaded themselves into two units of the complex, which has turned into a bureaucratic battleground over the issue of affordable housing. With rental prices soaring in the Seattle area as a spate of older apartments are torn down or turned into condos, homeless advocates and Sims—who chair of the county’s Committee to End Homelessness—are hoping to knock some social and financial sense into the Port.

“As uncomfortable as it is to be in the position of a legal dispute,” says Kurt Triplett, Sims’s chief of staff, of the condemnation action, “when you weigh that against the tens of millions it would cost to replace the housing, there are times you need to stand up.”

The Port bought the Lora Lake complex in 1998 as part of plans for a new runway that’s set to open next year. But only 72 of the units are in a federally required flight safety zone that must be cleared for the new runway. The City of Burien, however, has rezoned the area along state Route 518 for commercial use in hopes of attracting light industry or a big-box store to the same property.

For six months, housing advocates have lobbied Burien and the Port not to tear down the 162 units that aren’t in the buffer zone. Earlier this month, Sims and the housing authority offered $18 million for the property, but the Port declined, citing the city’s plans for commercial redevelopment.

Triplett says the offer is a good deal. “It’s based on high-value residential use, he says, and would give the Port roughly $11 million more than it could get from a commercial developer. Instead of tearing the 162 apartments, he says, the Port could leave them and use part of its $11 million windfall to build needed infrastructure that would attract the type of light industry or retail Burien is seeking.

The city, which wants to see the complex go, proposed moving some of the 22 buildings to a new site, but the county executive rejected the idea as far more costly than simply leaving the $8 million complex in place, Triplett says. In a July 16 letter to Port CEO Tay Yoshitani, Sims requested that the $18 million purchase offer be brought to the Port Commission for a vote—one that Sims promised to abide by after the public got a say.

Yoshitani failed to do that, Triplett says, so he’s log the county little choice but to sue, even if it doesn’t work in the long run.

“It’s not clear who would prevail in a final court decision,” Triplett says. “There are arguments on both sides, but it gives us the opportunity to stop the bulldozing and keep talking.”

That’s what Port Commissioner Bob Edwards is calling for in his resolution, which is supported by fellow Commissioner Alec Piskin. A Port spokesperson did not return calls regarding the condemnation action.

Carol Knudsen was released on her own recognizance from the Regional Justice Center in Kent on July 20, after she and eight others were arrested the day before for taking up residence in Lora Lake Apartments. One of the “Lora Lake 9,” Knudsen and her partners were protesting the Port of Seattle’s anticipated demolition of the facility that has been used for rentals since 2005.

“It is a dramatic step,” Triplett says, but that “that’s exactly what we’ve learned we need to end homelessness. If you have to build 1,000 units a year for 10 years,” he says of goals set in the county’s 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, “you don’t get there if you start by bulldozing 162 units.”

Some city council candidates have a brown bag to gnaw on a big issue: Affordable housing

By CYDNEY GILLIS, Staff Reporter

In an attempt to address the city’s growing shortage of affordable housing, some members of the Seattle City Council have become students of the law of supply and demand.

Build more units, they say, echoing the words of real estate developers, and prices will become affordable to people who earn $43,600 to $65,400 a year, or 80 percent to 120 percent of the area’s median income.

It’s a range of so-called workforce renters and buyers. Incumbents are worried about them in an election year where skyrocketing high-rises and rents are forcing lower-income workers out of the city and driving neighborhood activists nuts with box-like developments that they say have no character.

In the past two years alone, according to data presented to incumbent candidates, City Council members Sally Clark, David Della, Jean Godden, and Tom Basmussen at a July 20 housing forum with developers, rents in the Seattle area have jumped 14 percent— and are expected to do so again over the next two years, which will increase the monthly rent of a one-bedroom in a brand new building from roughly $1,500 today to $1,700 in 2009.

A candidates’ forum planned for Aug. 2 on growth and development will look at what, if anything, Seattle can do to keep the city growing and affordable. But other than tinkering with a tax break for developers who build median-priced affordable housing units, the incumbents aren’t endorsing any specific tactics or developer incentives. City Councilmember Jean Golden is facing sharp criticism that she’s a tool of developers.

At a July 17 meeting where the 43rd District Democrats voted on their endorsements for the Aug. 21 primary, a flier co-authored by John Fox of the Seattle Displacement Coalition stated that Golden has “consistently voted against the interests of neighborhoods, low-income and working people while routinely catering to the likes of Paul Allen, downtown, and the corporate establishment.”

Godden says Fox has it wrong “I’ll have to recall which claims I’ve turned down,” says Godden, who is campaigning for a second term. “It seems to me when [developers] wanted to put a hotel into the Alaska Building, I said no.”

CANDIDATES, Continued on Page 10
John Dillinger lives

unlike Elvis
unlike J. Edgar
unlike little Melvin Purvis
who watched that night
outside the Biograph
where Manhattan Melodrama with Clark Gable played
waiting for J.D. to exit arm in arm with the lady in red
Anna Sage
who was supposed to set him up
but maybe she was setting up the FBI
maybe J. Edgar was setting up the American people
Gee man, it wouldn’t have been the first time
would it?

Whomever they shot outside that theatre
and photographed on the slab
had brown eyes
Dillinger’s were blue
The FBI explained the altered physiognomy
had occurred through plastic surgery
but none of J.D.’s documented scars were on the cadaver
who was shorter and heavier and had a rheumatic heart condition
which would have prevented him from being in the navy
or playing minor league baseball
or leaping over bank counters
Only the prints
as provided by the FBI
lined up

Only four months before this staged execution
J.D. had escaped maximum security using a bar of soap
carved to look like a pistol
J. Edgar’s lace panties were in a wad

Do you suppose just maybe
crime did pay
and that J.D.
the most successful bank robber of all time
got away just like he said he would
captured with Butch & Sundance
leaving D.B. Cooper somewhere to follow
and if so
whose massive member is that anyways
in that jar of formaldehyde
that lives in the basement of the Smithsonian
that J. Edgar liked to dress up for
wearing stockings and heels and a modest veil
so he wouldn’t look like a common whore
and that he’d spend the evenings with
those nights Clyde was out of town
or the 6 or 7 presidents who employed him
who, as time went by
were less apt to ask
J. Edgar
what have you done for us lately?

—Larry Crist

To the beat of the drum: Overcast skies and sudden bursts of rain did nothing to deter the hundreds of people who ventured to Discovery Park July 20 - 22 for the 22nd Annual Seafair Indian Days Powwow. The Powwow also marked the 30th anniversary of the Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center. Here, two young men, done up in their finest regalia, participated in the Intertribal Dance that occurred July 21, prior to the day’s dance competitions. Photo by Rosetta Royale

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By ROBIN LINDLEY, Contributing Writer

Dallas, Texas, Fri., Nov. 22, 1963. President John F. Kennedy died after a sniper attack on his motorcade. For many, the assassination remains a mystery. A 2003 poll revealed that 75 percent of Americans believe there was a conspiracy behind the killing of President Kennedy.

In his massive new book on the murder, Reclaiming History: The Assassination of President John F. Kennedy (W.W. Norton), former Los Angeles prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi concludes that an unstable Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing Kennedy, and incisively dispatches every conspiracy theory; the CIA, the FBI, the KGB, Castro, the mob, LBJ, etc. This weighty, 1,600-plus page book — with a CD ROM of more than one thousand pages of endnotes — has been praised for its comprehensive narrative and its presentation of conspiracy theories, exposing selective use of evidence and flawed logic.

This most recent tome grew from his successful prosecution of Charles Manson for murder. He also wrote a critique of the O.J. Simpson acquittal, Outrage, and condemned the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the 2001 presidential election in The Betrayal of America: How the Supreme Court Undermined the Constitution and Chose our President.

Most recent tome grew from his prosecution of Lee Harvey Oswald for a BBC docudrama in 1986. He presented actual witnesses and evidence as noted attorney Gerry Spence defended Oswald. A jury of real Texans then voted to convict Oswald. In preparing for this trial, Bugliosi found that the “conspiracy theorists were guilty of the precise things they accused the Warren Commission of: distorting the evidence, and suppressing the truth.”

Bugliosi worked from 80 to 100 hours a week for the past few years, drafting Reclaiming History by hand on legal pads. He concluded that Oswald acted alone, and said, “All of the conspiracy theories and beliefs turned out to be ‘moonshine.’ ” Bugliosi, 72, recently discussed the JFK case from his Pasadena home.

Where were you on Nov. 22, 1963? I was at UCLA Law School. Someone told me the President had been shot. I was the president of the senior class, so I took it upon myself to go inside classrooms and announce that the President had been shot.

Were you a Kennedy supporter then? I voted for Kennedy, but I didn’t know this was an extremely unusual human being. As I got into this book, I realized how special he was. More people mourned him than any other human in world history. He used his father’s influence to get into the war, and became a war hero. Kennedy’s commander said he was “the only guy in the Navy who [was] faking good health.” He was ill, but never complained. My feelings for Kennedy have increased immeasurably.

Did you agree with the Warren Commission report in 1964? I was so immersed in trying one murder case after another that I had no opinion. [I assumed] they were decent, honorable men, and they certainly were.

I am convinced beyond all doubt that Oswald killed Kennedy, [and] that there was no conspiracy. There’s no credible evidence that the mob or the CIA, the KGB, the military-industrial complex, [or others] were behind the assassination.

You conclude that Oswald shot JFK and acted alone.

Everything pointed toward Oswald’s guilt. All the physical evidence, all the scientific evidence. Everything he said, everything he did. Fifty-three separate pieces of evidence point toward his guilt. It would not be humanly possible for him to be innocent. Quickly, five pieces: Oswald’s Mannlicher-Carcano rifle was the murder weapon. Oswald was the only employee at the Book Depository Building who fled the building after the assassination. Forty-five minutes later, he shot and killed [Dallas Police] Officer J. D. Tippit—the signature of a man in desperate flight. Thirty minutes later at a Texas theatre he resisted arrest, [and] pulled a gun on the arresting officer. During his interrogation, he told one provable lie after another. [showing] a consciousness of guilt.

And you find that Oswald was not part of a conspiracy to kill JFK.

I am convinced beyond all doubt that Oswald killed Kennedy, [and] that there was no conspiracy. There’s no credible evidence that the mob or the CIA, the KGB, the military-industrial complex, [or others] were behind the assassination. All we have is naked speculation.

There’s no evidence that Oswald had any connection with any of these groups. Even [assassination researcher Harold] Weisberg conceded that the FBI checked out every breath [Oswald] breathed from the moment he arrived back to the States from the Soviet Union on June 13, 1962 to the day of the assassination. They found no evidence after 25,000 interviews [of a] connection with any of these groups.

Assuming one of these groups wanted to kill the President, Oswald would have been one of the last people they would have gone to. He was a good shot, but not an expert. He owned only a .22, mail-order rifle. And he was notoriously unreliable, extremely unstable. He defect[ed] to the Soviet Union, tried to become a Soviet citizen, [was] turned down, [then] tried to commit suicide. Just the type of guy—I’m being sarcastic now—the CIA or mob would rely on to commit the biggest murder in American history.

What motivated Oswald to kill President Kennedy? No one will ever know for sure why Oswald killed Kennedy. But there are pieces of circumstantial evidence from which we can draw inferences.

Oswald had delusions of grandeur. A squad mate of his in the Marines said that Oswald wanted to be something that 10,000 years from now people would be talking about. His wife, Marina, said he compared himself to the great figures of history.

Getting more specific, Oswald revered Fidel Castro [and] was an ardent supporter of the Cuban Revolution. In late September of 1963, [he] tried to get to Havana to help Castro, and was rejected at the Cuban consulate in Mexico City. He got very, very angry. I agree with the Warren Commission and the House Select Committee on Assassinations that Oswald’s love for Castro played a part in the motivation to kill Kennedy, thinking that by killing an enemy of Castro he somehow was furthering the Cuban cause.

Oswald wrote that he had lived under capitalism and communism, and that, “I despise representatives of both systems.” My background in the Manson case definitely played a part in the words meaning more to me than perhaps the average person. Manson did not know the people whom he had killed, but he knew they were members of the establishment, and he hated the establishment. These were representative murders. Oswald did not hate Kennedy. He hated the United States.
Love so honest, it hurts

By Tao Lin, Melville House, 2007, $14.95, 278 pages

Tao Lin’s short story collection, Bed, in the middle of the story, “Cull the Steel Heart…”:

“Donnie’s birthday extravaganza. No clowns, no presents, no singing, fuck no, no cake, no nothing.

Sure to be a depressing time for everyone involved.

You shouldn’t even come, please.”

I’ve never read anything like Tao Lin’s short story collection, or his novel Eeee Eee Eee — but I’d say reading these books is probably a lot like going to Donnie’s birthday extravaganza. It’d be just you and Donnie, and at first you guys wouldn’t have that much to say to each other. Nonetheless, you’d drive home with a smile on your face. Getting out of your car, you’d pee on your lawn.

Perhaps instinctively, we avoid life’s miseries, we speak in unimportance, we take pills. In boredom, we play computer games. In these moments, though, I think Lin — a recent graduate of New York University, a blogger (reader-of-depressing-books.blogspot.com), and an organic vegan — finds inspiration. Lin writes the moments you’re not supposed to write.

E.E.E. is about a recent college graduate who works at Domino’s. Unlike most recent college graduates, though, he meets bears and dolphins that offer him free laptop computers, friendship, and maybe a poker game or two. If you’re wondering why Eeee Eee Eee is called Eeee Eee Eee, think of the sound a dolphin makes.

Bed and Eeee Eee Eeee touch on all the dreams you never realized.

Bed is about a lot of people — a depressed Denny’s waitress, a ska-punk front man, Chinese immigrants and their sons who take “too many creative writing courses.” Stuff happens, too. Giant squid wash ashore. People check their email and vandalize houses. These aren’t stories about those events — rather, these are long looks at the spaces between events. Bed and E.E.E., for that matter, are probably closer to portraiture than narrative.

He writes about love so honestly that it hurts. His characters fall a little bit in love with Dana, who is engaged to someone else. They settle down into loving dysfunctional relationships. They scream about the venereal diseases they’ve gotten from one another. They transfer into their girlfriends’ creative writing workshops “to surprise her or something.” This is love that’s confused, ashamed, fearful, and degenerate. And it’s pretty close to the mark.

Lin’s first story, “Love is a Thing on Sale for More Money than There Exists,” situates itself in the twilight of Garret and Kristy’s relationship, which also happens to be the month that people thought terrorists might “re-place your dog with something that resembled your dog but was actually a bomb.” As Garret and Kristy’s love wanes, it becomes more and more analogous to regime change. Garret finds himself shouting to Kristy about terrorists (“If a terrorist said to you that if you were late he’d kill you and your family, would you be one minute early?” “You wouldn’t! you’d be half the fucking day early.”). He gets into arguments in order to “pre-empt” heartache.

While I’d argue that there’s more to Lin’s work — a lot more — than these themes, I’d also say it’s true: there’s plenty of boredom, depression, loneliness, and maybe a poker game or two. If you’re wondering why Eeee Eee Eee is called Eeee Eee Eee, think of the sound a dolphin makes.

Bed and Eeee Eee Eeee touch on all the dreams you never realized.

E.E.E. is about a lot of people — a depressed Denny’s waitress, a ska-punk front man, Chinese immigrants and their sons who take “too many creative writing courses.” Stuff happens, too. Giant squid wash ashore. People check their email and vandalize houses. These aren’t stories about those events — rather, these are long looks at the spaces between events. Bed and E.E.E., for that matter, are probably closer to portraiture than narrative.

He writes about love so honestly that it hurts. His characters fall a little bit in love with Dana, who is engaged to someone else. They settle down into loving dysfunctional relationships. They scream about the venereal diseases they’ve gotten from one another. They transfer into their girlfriends’ creative writing workshops “to surprise her or something.” This is love that’s confused, ashamed, fearful, and degenerate. And it’s pretty close to the mark.

Lin’s first story, “Love is a Thing on Sale for More Money than There Exists,” situates itself in the twilight of Garret and Kristy’s relationship, which also happens to be the month that people thought terrorists might “re-place your dog with something that resembled your dog but was actually a bomb.” As Garret and Kristy’s love wanes, it becomes more and more analogous to regime change. Garret finds himself shouting to Kristy about terrorists (“If a terrorist said to you that if you were late he’d kill you and your family, would you be one minute early?” “You wouldn’t! you’d be half the fucking day early.”). He gets into arguments in order to “pre-empt” heartache.

While I’d argue that there’s more to Lin’s work — a lot more — than these themes, I’d also say it’s true: there’s plenty of boredom, depression, loneliness, and maybe a poker game or two. If you’re wondering why Eeee Eee Eee is called Eeee Eee Eee, think of the sound a dolphin makes.

There is a redeeming aspect in the ongoing spectacle of wrongly convicted Black men (there are also many whites unjustly incarcerated), who have been freed through forensics and the efforts of such organizations as the Innocence Project. It lies in the souls of these men who have endured the worst type of suffering. Darryl Hunt, from the time of his arrest maintained his innocence, and expressed no bitterness or resentment toward those who contributed to the process of his unjust incarceration.

Such transcendence is not rare among the wrongly accused. It’s as though being held prisoner by a process over which they have no control, these particular prisoners submit to a higher power or philosophy — releasing them from life’s inevitable vicissitudes of expectations and disappointments, opening them to a more enlightened perspective. The Trials of Darryl Hunt is a dark pool of irony, imparted through a concise and dramatic narrative. It’s worth the price of admission, just to experience and wonder on the Darryl’s Dalai Lama smile that evolves during the film.
Two officers were buttock each, in a room with walls painted tiny little chairs made for people with one condition. There's 30-minute seating in take into account all that McDonald's franchise some where. How do you choose where to start up a McDonald's franchise some where. How do you choose where to put it? What I would do is ask myself, "Where would people get the most benefit from my placement of my McDonald's?" I would take into account all that McDonald's franchise have to offer. There's greasy, over salted burgers. There's tastes-like-chicken sandwiches. There's parking. There's air conditioning. There's 30-minute seating in tiny little chairs made for people with one buttock each, in a room with walls painted in scientifically calibrated "move-along" colors. And there's bathrooms. I should site my new franchise someplace where one or two of these items of attraction will be a big draw. That means a place in a warm climate with a severe shortage of public bathrooms. Sounds like Fresno to me!

So I can totally sympathize with the management of that Fresno McDonald's. That wheel chair bound homeless woman was trying to use her full bladder, or whatnot, as an excuse to steal one of the only two good things their store has to offer. If they didn't draw the line with her Out of any 10 people, statistics show that two of them will be saints, and another two of them bastards, whether the 10 are homeless or not.

Combining that with statistics which show that the average age at death of homeless people is under 50 years old, we can now predict that old age, murder, and suicide, will assuredly solve the homeless problem in 10 years after all, in spite of all our recent hand waving and holier in the direction of the opposite conclusion. We are most sorry for having been so wrong. The most interesting news this week is NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) news from the online Iceland Review, which says that the shelter that was planned for homeless men at Njálsgata 74 in downtown Reykjavik will open in October, as previously scheduled, over the objections of neighbors, but, by way of compromise, would house only eight men rather than the 10 that were to originally have been sheltered.

My concern is: What are the odds that the two guys who are excluded are going to be just exactly the two bastards that the NIMBYs were trying to keep out?

Out of any 10 people, statistics show that two of them will be saints, and another two of them bastards, whether the 10 are homeless or not. Studies have repeatedly shown that two out of 10 of all human beings are worthless scum. But, if you pick two people out of 10 at random, the odds that the two you picked will be the two bastards of the bunch is only one in 45. That's just simple math!

Choose wisely, Reykjavik!

Rev. Rich Lang: Emergency Meeting Called

We are in a grave constitutional crisis with a President who seemingly wants to be a king, and a Congress unable and unwilling to oppose him. This administration is building, plank by plank, the framework for military dictatorship. Already in place is a global governing philosophy that sees the military as muscle for invading other nations for the purpose of social engineering and massive corporate profits. The Defense Authorization Act of 2006 empowers the President to impose martial law in the event of a terrorist incident. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2007 permits the President to command National Guard troops without the consent of state governors. The National Security and Homeland Security Presidential Directive gives the President dictatorial powers in the event of a "catastrophic incident." The Military Commissions Act suspends the writ of habeas corpus. This short list doesn't include widespread wiretapping of citizens, construction of concentration camps, private armies, an ever-expanding military budget, increased government secrecy, non-cooperation with Congress, and the inevitable bankrupting of domestic budgets. And now, the latest grab for power has the Executive announcing that "our property" can be seized for dissent against the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

We are in a very grave constitutional crisis, folks. I encourage everyone one of you to make a noise in the offices of Sena. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, and your congressional representatives. Silence is the death of democracy.

But I think we also need to begin the process of organizing some form of resistance, protest, and/or strategy for impeachment. Our politicians are fiddling while democracy burns. Feeding from common corporate money sources, they are no longer worthy of our trust. Indeed, they have betrayed us.

For example, almost daily some media figure or political operative drives the hint that our country might be hit again by the terrorists. Ask yourself: In the event of another catastrophic occurrence, can you trust this government to stay true to the idealism of democracy, and the laws of limited checks and balances of power encoded in the Constitution? Can you trust Congress to represent the people? I certainly cannot. We are, I repeat, in a grave, surreal even, constitutional crisis. We are dealing with a spirituality of tyranny, an unleashing of ruthless, arrogant power that corrupts all it touches. It's time to get angry and cast out this uncivil spirit from our land. Such a statement can now get me arrested, disappear, and stripped of all assets. Is this America? Is this the country in which we have been raised? And how long, friend, until you yourself awaken only to discover that there is now a knob on your door?

I call upon all who care to assemble at Trinity United Methodist Church, on Aug. 8, at 7 p.m. There we will begin to strategize how to reclaim the power of the people, the birthright we share. Knock. Knock.

Rev. 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 odtrv@yahoo.com.

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.
Letters
editor@realchangenews.org

Big difference
Dear Real Change,

I'm a mediator in the King County Courts, and I saw the “Ask a Lawyer” column about Small Claims Court in your July 4 issue. Contrary to what Mr. de Bakker says, mediators do NOT make decisions for the parties. The process he describes is arbitration, not mediation.

Mediators are neutral third parties who are trained to help people work through conflicts and come to a resolution themselves. We don’t take sides and we don’t issue judgments, binding or otherwise. Some of us are attorneys and some of us aren’t, and all of us want to help people make their own best decisions in times of dispute.

You don’t have to wait to go to court to try mediation. Mediation services are available to anyone who lives or works in King County from the King County Dispute Resolution Center (DRC). Most of their services are free. For others there is a small fee. The number for the DRC is 206-443-9603.

Louise Penberthy
Seattle

Corrections
In the July 18 issue, Real Change reported that the Washington State Patrol busted two medical marijuana patients on July 10. The bust took place on July 11. In the same issue, Real Change reported that Jon Gould is the director of the Children’s Alliance. Gould is the deputy director. Paola Maranan is the agency’s executive director.

Real Change regrets the errors.

Louise Penberthy
Seattle

CANDIDATES, Continued from Page 5

All the same, the statement helped sink her with Democrats in the University District, resulting in a no endorsement vote—a shutout that Green Party candidate Joe Szwaja says will bolster his chances against Godden. According to Seattle Ethics and Elections reports, Godden had raised $167,720 as of July 16, in part from real-estate interests including Al Clise, Frank Stagen, John Teutsch, Greg Smith, Jon Runstad and Paul Allen’s Vulcan Inc. Szwaja had raised $38,000.

On July 10, Democrats in Ballard’s 36th District also gave Godden a no endorsement after several stood and gave speeches for Szwaja, who said at the meeting that he wants to see more city money spent on people not developers.

At last week’s City Council housing forum, however, seven developers said they make little profit on median-priced units and that the tax break the city provides for including more affordable units in a project—the Multifamily Tax Exemption, or MFTE—is seldom of financial benefit to them in high-density, high-cost areas such as Capitol Hill where the tax break is allowed.

Godden and City Councilmember David Della—the only other incumbent with a serious challenger this year—both say they’re interested in reworking or expanding the tax break so more developers will use it. Both also broadly endorse the concept of inclusionary zoning, in which the city grants developers more height in exchange for including some affordable units, or incentive zoning, in which developers get extra height in exchange for a fee that goes toward affordable housing.

Last year, the council passed a downtown incentive in which developers who pay about $18 a square foot for affordable housing are allowed to build higher than 190 feet. With upzoning planned south of downtown and in the South Lake Union area, Godden and Della both said they would consider a similar fee.

“We tend to give away our zoning,” Godden says, so “I think that was an important thing to do.”

But both were shy on the topic of going back to the Legislature to get the authority to halt or cap the current rush of apartments being converted to condominiums—a crisis that led City Councilmember Tom Rasmus sen, chair of the council’s Housing and Human Services Committee, to champion a condo conversion bill that failed in this year’s Legislature.

That hesitation, says challenger Tim Burgess, is one reason he’s running against Della, who he says has shown poor leadership on the council. Burgess, who spent 21 years as a marketing consultant for nonprofits, says he wants to increase developer incentives, but that, in the short term, the city has to rein in condo conversions.

“I agree with Tom,” Burgess says. “I think we are in such an emergency that we need to take at least some temporary measures like a limit on conversions until the supply of housing catches up.”

The Retiree Advocate

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Why did Ruby kill Oswald?
Ruby literally idolized John F. Kennedy. His psychiatrist said Ruby loved this man. He took Kennedy's death very, very hard. And he hated Oswald. But another reason [was that] Ruby thought that he was going to become a hero, [and] there was going to be a big book and a movie about him. He thought he would just get a slap on the wrist, and in a short time he would be back at the Carousel Club greeting people wanting to shake the hand of the man who killed the man who killed the President.

How did the single “Magic Bullet” kill JFK and wound Gov. Connolly?
In their sketches, [conspiracy theorists] place Gov. John Connally (directly) in front of President Kennedy in the presidential limousine, and then argue that a bullet coming from the right rear, passing through Kennedy, would have to make a right turn in midair and then a left turn to hit Connally. That is wrong.

The Warren Commission and the FBI found no evidence that Ruby was ever a member of organized crime, or had any association with them.

He would have been, like Oswald, an extremely unlikely and bad hit man. Ruby was extremely close to Dallas law enforcement. He also was a blabbermouth, [and] a snitch to the Dallas Police Department. He was not the type of guy you would [use] to commit a crime and be silent. Also, Ruby was very mentally unbalanced. He had a violent temper, fighting all the time with customers. He had organic brain damage.

People say he silenced Oswald for the mob [but] who was supposed to silence Ruby? He lived a normal life. He died in custody, but died a normal death three years later.

Join Our Winning Team
How can one person make a difference? By joining 2,500 other activists in raising a collective voice for Real Change.
Real Change activists make a difference. By speaking up they’ve held real estate developers accountable to the entire community, ensured that Seattle’s growth benefits everyone, prevented a loss of shelter for the 8,000 homeless people in King County, and helped ensure that government budgets put people first.

We make it easy for you to make a difference in 5 minutes a month, and help activists with more time to give find the most effective ways to put their energy to work for justice.

Join today, realchangefornews.org / Take Action
Real Change is sponsoring the Seattle City Council Candidates Forum on Growth and Development. Ask City Council candidates about their strategies for Seattle’s growth and how they will ensure that people of all income levels share in the city’s prosperity. This forum will discuss gentrification, housing and homelessness, living wage jobs, a voice for immigrants, environmental sustainability, improving the transit system, and preserving small businesses. Thurs., Aug. 2, 6 p.m., Yesler Terrace Community Center, 917 East Yesler Way. Info: organizer@realechangenaews.org or Puget Sound SAGE at 206-568-5000.

Volcano in the Mist

Yesterday my boots clapped against concrete; today my shoes crunched on pine needles and slip in fresh mud. Both are a necessity but only the latter allows me to hear my lonely breath. In there my knees ache; out here only my empty hand aches. Right now the mist clouds a distant volcano, but the emerald water and sheared stumps bear silent witness to the smokey impulses that happen here. Everywhere there is new earth and flowers and creeks; a dangerous but necessary hope that waits from the incomplete peak. I feel the same when I look at you; danger amongst the flowers. Again I look and I see a future too, here by the deer bones, there by the beaver tracks. We could find it together, amongst the blasted tree trunks and brand new lakes. I slip. My breath mingles with the fog that hides the mountain.

—Jose Ornelas

CLASSIFIEDS

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 "v39Friend".

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CALENDAR

Wednesday 7/25
The Save Darfur Coalition, in collaboration with Olympic Dreams for Darfur, is coordinating an Olympic Torch Relay to visit Seattle. The relay serves to call attention to the genocide in Darfur by using the upcoming 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing as the necessary vehicle. Attend the local planning meeting. 6 p.m., Law office of Phil Ginsberg & Brad Axel, 800 Fifth Ave., Suite 4000. Info: www.dreamfordarfur.org or dbrader11@hotmail.com.

Friday 7/27
Meaningful Movies and Wallingford Neighbors for Peace and Justice present: War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death. War Made Easy reveals a pattern of government deception and media spin that has dragged the United States into one war after another from Vietnam to Iraq. 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl. N. Info: www.meaningfulmovies.org.


Sunday 7/28
If you discover yourself bereft of ideas for a weekend adventure, then go out outdoors and join the Washington Trails Association in maintaining the badly damaged trails ruined by this past winter’s weather. Info: www.wta.org.

Wednesday 8/1
Tao Lin, the entertainingly eccentric literary blogger and writer, reads from his two-book story collection, Eeeew Eee and Bed. The equally unconventional Miranda July praises Lin: “Tao Lin writes from moods that less radical writers would let pass — from laziness, from vacancy, from boredom. And it turns out that his report from these places is moving and necessary, not to mention frequently hilarious.” 7 p.m., University Book Store, 4326 University Way N.E. Info: www.bookstore.washington.edu.

This Week’s Top Picks

The Save Darfur Coalition, in collaboration with Olympic Dreams for Darfur, is coordinating an Olympic Torch Relay to visit Seattle. The relay serves to call attention to the genocide in Darfur by using the upcoming 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing as the necessary vehicle. Attend the local planning meeting. 6 p.m., Law office of Phil Ginsberg & Brad Axel, 800 Fifth Ave., Suite 4000. Info: www.dreamfordarfur.org or dbrader11@hotmail.com.

The King County Non-Profit Staff Development Coalition is presenting a new “Special Issues” series focusing on poverty and homelessness. Designed for frontline staff, case managers, program coordinators and supervisory staff. 9 a.m., The 2100 Building, 2100 24th Ave. S. Info: www.learningconnections.org or amccain@highline.edu.

Safeco’s Corporate Art Collection debuts the work of five artists from the Gulf Coast of Mississippi: Randy Hayes, Lori Gordon, Jorge Lovato, Lee Renninger, and Jeff Schmuki. The art created by the ensemble of artists depicts the changing landscapes of their hometowns and the renewal of Mississippi. 4 p.m., Safeco Center, 1191 Second Ave. at Seneca St.

Tired of being terrorized by the tyrannical insurance industry? Join the Pirates of the Health Care-ibbean March and Rally for Healthcare Justice to protest the most odious offender: Regence Blue Shield. One of the wealthiest private insurance companies in Washington, Regence Blue Shield is continuing to increase their rates. It’s time to end insurance piracy. March to Regence Headquarters at Ninth Street and Howell Street. 9 a.m., Seattle University, 10th Ave. and Madison St. Info: http://www.washingtoncan.org/_images/062707flyer.pdf or diana@washingtoncan.org.

Tacoma’s Museum of Glass treats patrons to an intimate experience with prominent artist Marc Swanson. The Visiting Artist Summer Series invites various distinguished artists for a five-day residency to work in the Hot Shop. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Museum of Glass, 1801 Dock St., Tacoma. Info: www.museumofglass.org.

McHello Bar, a fully assembled, well-designed, black 60 gallon rain barrel for only $65 plus tax. Contact Dan Borba at (253) 272-8173 or email at naturalrainwater@yahoo.com or visit www.naturalrainwater.com.

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Leaning 180 degrees and seeing a future, I see danger amongst the flowers. Again I look, and I see a future too, here by the deer bones, there by the beaver tracks. We could find it together, amongst the blasted tree trunks and brand new lakes. I slip. My breath mingles with the fog that hides the mountain.

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