



**Fighting
the U.S.
Drug War**
p.3



This holiday season ...

Keep the Turkey!

Fund opportunity and organizing in Seattle.
See the video. Support the fund drive (see page 3).

\$1 **REALCHANGE**

VOL. 14, NO. 47
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Throwaway: Women?

Silja Talvi on the new wave
of incarceration drowning
an unprecedented number of
America's females.

"They're no longer viewed as
members of our society...in many
cases they're really not." ...page 7



Photo by Joshua Huston



Photo by Joshua Huston

No Affordable Housing at the INS Building

**Historic structure in International
District goes on auction block...**
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Oh, Beloved: Women's poetry anthology celebrates community of
homeless writers...p.8

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

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

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North
American
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Newspaper
Assoc.

The state's three-strikes law ends the lives of even low-level offenders. Trust me, I know

Struck Out the First Time

By *JAMES C. MOODY*,
Guest Writer

When the three-strikes law was being first considered back in 1993, there was a lot of debate about just how this law would be used. For what kinds of crime and on what kinds of criminals? One of the concerns people raised about this law was its potential for abuse, that over time the bar could be lowered, striking out those with less and less serious offenses: Drug addicts and alcoholics who commit crimes due to their addictions, for example, but generally not the worst of career criminals.

One of this law's biggest supporters was no surprise: rightwing radio talk show host John Carlson, Seattle's own answer to Rush Limbaugh. Carlson, along with the NRA, helped to lobby for three-strikes legislation. Responding to concerns about prosecutorial abuse and misuse of this law if it was enacted,

I was shocked to discover that even though I had no prior strike level offenses and no prior prison record, they were nonetheless going to strike me out, sending me to prison for life without parole!

Carlson shot back both on his radio show and in *The Seattle Times* with feigned incredulousness: "Oh, that would never happen! The three-strikes law will be reserved only for those with the most serious of offenses focusing on the most severe of repeated offenders." In other words, only the worst would be locked up for life.

In June 2003, I graduated from High-line Community College in Des Moines with a degree in Human Services and Chemical Dependency. After a decade in recovery from alcoholism, my hope was to help others find their way back from

addiction. During my years of active alcoholism, mostly back in the 1980's, I had a number of arrests, two of which were third-degree assault, the lowest-level felony in the criminal justice system. These were basic bar fights common with the disease of alcoholism. Crimes which only merited relatively short county jail sentences. In my 40 years I had never once been to prison.

Then I relapsed, and the unthinkable happened: after a night of heavy drinking in a blackout I assaulted another man. The next morning, wanting to take responsibility for the harm I had caused, I turned myself in to the police.

I was shocked to discover that even though I had no prior strike level offenses and no prior prison record, they were nonetheless going to strike me out, sending me to prison for life without parole! They would accomplish this through a convoluted process they call "Adjusting for Foreign Jurisdiction." My life was over.

In Tacoma, a woman with a long history of drug addiction and many arrests for theft walked into a 7-11 store and attempted to steal some Hostess fruit pies. Homeless and high on drugs, when confronted she threatened the store clerk with a women's hair curling iron that she'd pulled from her coat. The prosecutor said this made the shoplifting a second-degree robbery, which is a strike.

Now while her conduct is without a doubt criminal, and she certainly deserves to be incarcerated (hopefully during which time she would be given treatment for her addiction, the source of all her troubles) one has to pose this question: Is this really the worst criminal conduct deserving of the most severe sentences short of death? Her case was deemed so outrageous that in 2004 it was cited in a legislative bill designed to amend three-strikes. The bill failed to pass the State Senate.

Here is an interesting comparison to add some prospective: In 2006 the United States sentenced the 9/11 terrorist Zac-

arias Mussoui to life without parole for his part in the terrorist attacks. This is a man who laughed with maniacal glee as those who lost loved ones testified to the horrors of that day. Now is the terrorist attack of 9/11 really the same as a girl stealing fruit pies from a 7-11? Because the three-strikes law seems to be implying that it is. And if it's not the same crime, then why the same sentence?

When we as a society can condemn these two very different people, with two very different motives, to the same life sentences, then we have lost all perspective. Nearly 150 years ago Henry David

The three-strikes law is an unjust law. It is a law that does not address the underlying problem of addiction, nor provide for any future rehabilitation. It is not only inhuman but ineffective, only warehousing the problem at enormous expense.

Thoreau wrote, in a very important essay called "Civil Disobedience," words which were famously quoted by Dr. Martin Luther King during the Civil Rights Movement: "Unjust laws exist; shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them?"

The three-strikes law is an unjust law. It is a law that does not address the underlying problem of addiction, nor provide for any future rehabilitation. It is not only inhuman but ineffective, only warehousing the problem at enormous expense. We are now living in the 21st century and this is the United States of America, which I know we would all like to believe is the most enlightened nation on earth. Then why can't our laws fight crime effectively and do this belwief some justice? ■

James C. Moody is an inmate at the Monroe Correctional Center.



You might be a little mystified by the "This Holiday Season, Skip the Turkey" theme of our winter fund drive. Here's the deal. Union Gospel is a great organization. From

what I've seen, UGM's brand of emergency services, esteem building, and Jesus seems to work for those it attracts.

But their holiday fundraising, and that of others like them, reinforces everything that's

wrong with the way we see homelessness. "This Thanksgiving, help us ensure that everyone gets a delicious turkey dinner." The pitch always comes with a photo of some bearded white guy who looks like someone's charmingly alcoholic granddad.

It's cloyingly sentimental. It's misleading. It's manipulative. And, it has nothing to do with solving homelessness or addressing the deepening poverty and widening inequality that lies behind the issue.

It's about tapping into guilt and offering easy relief.

And it works. Maybe I hate it so much because I'm just jealous. I see the big institutions with

Director's Corner

their huge direct mail campaigns and the bus and newspaper ads and I think, "The big charities are totally milking this thing. What if all that money, for once, supported organizing instead?"

Which brings me to our fund drive. We're off to a slow start toward our \$90,000 goal. A... very... slow... start. *Real Change* builds from the relationships between our vendors and readers to inform and engage people across class in the work of changing the world. What we do matter a lot, and we need your help.

Believe me. The turkey dinners this holiday season are taken care of. This year, support something substantial. Please see our giving coupon on Page 3.

Just Heard...

Judge turns down SHA

"Thwack": In Superior Court Judge Marsha Pechman's ruling against the Seattle Housing Authority over how it treats subsidized Section 8 tenants, you can almost hear the judge slapping SHA lead attorney James Fearn.

On Nov. 9, the judge ruled that a lawsuit brought by Section 8 tenant Tina Hendrix has merit: She refused to dismiss the case, as SHA sought, saying Hendrix can indeed make a case that the "informal hearings" the agency uses to terminate people from the voucher program do not provide tenants due process — specifically, hearing examiners that can actually judge matters of law.

SHA has argued it's only required to provide examiners versed in Section 8 regulation. But, the judge writes, "This logic hardly constitutes a substantive defense against a constitutional due process argument." Ouch.

The decision allows the case to go to trial in July.

—Cydney Gillis

Tenants: Zip, Landlords: One

A push by City Council President Nick Licata to obtain \$75,000 to fund a pilot program to identify substandard housing and bring it into compliance didn't get the support needed to find its way into the city's '08 budget. In a Nov. 5 posting of his Urban Politics newsletter, Licata had written that the program was important not only to protect tenants in subpar housing but to quell neighbors' concerns about fire hazards. He wrote that both the University of Washington and its student government supported his proposal.

Opposing the plan? The Rental Housing Association of Puget Sound, an advocacy group for landlords, whose members testified before the council against the proposal. In the end, their side won out, with Councilmembers Sally Clark and Jean Godden siding with Licata.

Licata's office says he's continuing to look at other options to give the program another chance.

—Rosette Royale

Scrapping the carts

A new Washington law requires recyclers to guard against buying scrap metal from thieves ("Scrapped for Cash," Feb. 14) by requiring an ID and paying for big loads by check. Onerous as that law is, the SODO recycler Pacific Iron and Metal has added a new twist: no scrap, including aluminum cans, may come into their yard in grocery carts.

The problem? Theft — not of the metal per se, but of the cart, says Pacific Iron manager Jay Sternoff.

"It just became a time and material inconvenience for us," says Sternoff. "Even if the metal wasn't stolen, the vehicle it was brought in was."

Sternoff describes the policy as "a courtesy" toward neighboring business, most saliently Home Depot, from which carts often disappear.

Without the rule, "We would have to send a truck every week back with 8 to 10 carts from Home Depot," he says.

—Adam Hyla

The next step

One hundred Seattleites who were participating in an international AIDS vaccine trial had been hoping they were doing something that would help others. Instead, they've found out they may have inadvertently put themselves at risk: that's because the test vaccine they've been given may make them *more*, not less, susceptible to HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Those locals represent some of the 3,000 participants worldwide who were participating in a study to determine the efficacy of a hopeful AIDS vaccine called Step. Trials of the vaccine, created by Merck & Co., were halted in September when the vaccine proved to be ineffective. By Sept. 21 researchers had determined that of the two groups of trial participants — one that received the vaccine, the other a placebo — HIV infection rates were higher in those who had received the vaccine: 24 HIV infections among 741 men with at least one vaccine dose, compared to 21 HIV within 761 who received the placebo. In all, participants receive three inoculations.

For weeks, news of the findings has been percolating around the globe, arising first in South Africa in late October. There, researchers informed the vast majority of the 801 participants of the vaccine's failure through text messages left on cell phones. Here, the news spread through local newspapers, in a reprint of a *Washington Post* article in the *Seattle Times* on Oct. 25, a front-page story in the following day's *Seattle Gay News*.

Along with news reports, local participants were informed of the vaccine's inability to combat HIV on Oct. 25 (the same day as the *Post* article), in a letter from trial researchers. By Nov. 1, participants had begun receiving phone calls informing them of higher susceptibility for those having received the vaccine. With participants, who had already finished their round of dosages, unaware of whether they had received the vaccine or the placebo — a practice referred to as a "double-blind" study — they were given the option to "unblind" themselves or allow researchers to continue gathering data.

—Rosette Royale

CASA Latina gets to yes

After five months of negotiations, CASA Latina has struck a deal with community groups concerned about the organization and its day labor program's planned move from downtown Seattle to the Central District.

One of the top stipulations of the "good neighbor agreement" approved last week by eight neighborhood groups is that CASA will use no temporary structures, such as trailers or portable toilets, during the construction of a new labor hall that the nonprofit plans at 17th Ave. and Jackson St. CASA won't even move until late 2008, after the hall is built next to a small office building the nonprofit bought in March and plans to renovate.



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I can help, here's what I can do.

Unlike the current location on Western Ave. at Bell St., workers will remain inside the labor hall — employers won't be allowed to pick up laborers from the street. To see that non-affiliated workers don't try to thumb a job or create trouble, the agency has also agreed to hire an "ambassador" to patrol nearby streets. It will also form a neighborhood advisory committee to resolve any problems and monitor traffic and crime data.

If that weren't enough, the agreement also stipulates that CASA will set aside a reserve of \$50,000 — roughly a third of its annual funding from the city — to make sure the requirements of the agreement are met. If they aren't, the city could pull its funding.

CASA Latina Executive Director Hilary Stern said a few community members remain unsatisfied, but they are definitely in the minority. "We got overwhelming support" for the agreement, Stern says. "I was really pleased that the neighbors stuck with it."

A tax for mental health

An ordinance that would create a "mental health sales tax" — and pave the way for county-funded treatment providers to be unionized — is

on its way for a final vote by the King County Council.

On Nov. 8, the council's Operating Budget Committee passed a measure that would increase sales tax in King County one-tenth of 1 percent starting as early as April 1 and ending Jan. 1, 2017 — a new caveat. The money generated, now estimated at \$54 million, would fund a Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Action Plan that the council passed Oct. 8.

The plan includes \$11 million for treatment of those not covered by Medicaid, \$6 million for a new adult crisis center, and \$4 million to hire more mental health case workers.

The council can raise the tax only for treatment under a state bill passed in 2005. But the ordinance is controversial for operators of county-funded mental health services because, to get the extra funds, they must sign a "partnership agreement" allowing their workers to be organized by the Service Employees International Union ("Mental health providers resist union campaign," RC, Oct. 17-23).

—Cydney Gillis

Derived from a West African root, Ibogaine may be a pain-free drug detox — but in the U.S. it's highly illegal

Powerful Psychedelic Said to Fight Drug Addiction

By JP GRITTON,
Contributing Writer

They've given you the pills and now they're checking your heart rate — it's skyrocketing — when you see it in the corner of your eye. It could be a caterpillar, a cat, your first bicycle. It's growing, and then there's another — a lion? A tiger? A bear? — and soon that's all you can see. It begins: a kind of "movie" of your life, things you didn't know you remembered, drawn out from your mind like barbed wire. A comedy, maybe; a tragedy, definitely; and yours alone. It will stay this way for a good, long while.

But when it's over — how long has it been? — things seem to fit a little better. The ache in your joints isn't there. The migraine, the fever, all gone. And, grasping at the whatness of whatever it was that you saw, you realize that you never want to use again.



This is your brain on Ibogaine: A white powdery substance derived from the West African *Iboga* plant. Photo by Joshua Huston

Ibogaine is the rumored "wonder drug" of addiction treatment. More effective than methadone at combating withdrawal symptoms, more potent than peyote. And very illegal.

Howard Lotsof, a lifelong advocate for Ibogaine legalization, says that the

The medical establishment remains either ignorant or suspicious of Ibogaine.

western world discovered the pharmacological properties of *Tabernanthe iboga* in the 19th century, though the root had probably been used in initiation ceremonies in West Africa for generations. The drug went ignored until 1962, when a group of heroin addicts discovered, following a nearly two-day Ibogaine "trip," that they weren't exhibiting withdrawal symptoms.

According to the Mexican Ibogaine Association, though molecularly most similar to anti-cancer drugs the drug works by remaining active in the body's opiate receptors. These

receptors, "stoked" during drug use, can cause a lot of pain for someone who quits an addictive drug cold turkey. Ibogaine effectively "distracts" opiate receptors until whatever healing — psychological and physical — can take place.

The medical establishment remains either ignorant or suspicious of Ibogaine. Those who have experienced the drug firsthand, facing the bull's horns of criminal implication and social ostracism, don't want to go on record. It takes me almost two weeks to make contact with a former Oxycontin addict now living in Port Angeles, who chose to speak to me as just Ryan.

By age 20, Ryan was spending nearly \$200 a week on Oxycontin. After deciding to get clean, withdrawal gave him everything from pain in his joints to diarrhea to insomnia. Like every addict, he wanted to use again.

When a friend told him about Ibogaine, available in Mexico and Canada as an "experimental medication," he decided he didn't have much to lose.

"I don't know how to describe it... it kind of hit a 'reset' button in my brain," says Ryan, who received treatment near Tijuana. "When I got back to my old environment I just had less desire to use ... and I wanted to stay sober." He's been Oxy-free since.

There are hundreds of accounts like Ryan's out there — people who decide to get clean and escape through the window Ibogaine opens.

There are even a few in the medical field who have researched the drug. Though hesitant to call it a cure-all, clinical social worker Barbara Judd claimed at a meeting of the Interna-

tional Conference on Drug-Related Harm that her after-care group "did not appear to need self-help type assistance to reduce their drug urges," also noting the drug's ability to mitigate withdrawal.

But Judd's study is one of very few, and the FDA, writes the Schaffer Library of Drug Policy, is hesitant to invest money into researching a "controlled substance." Unsurprisingly, more than a few are skeptical. As Ron Jackson

Though hesitant to call it a cure-all, clinical social worker Barbara Judd claimed at a meeting of the International Conference on Drug-Related Harm that her after-care group "did not appear to need self-help type assistance to reduce their drug urges," also noting the drug's ability to mitigate withdrawal. But Judd's study is one of very few.

of Evergreen Treatment Services put it, "There is not one shred of credible scientific evidence that [Ibogaine] is an effective intervention for any kind of drug addiction."

The fact remains that Ibogaine is a potent psychedelic and has been linked to at least one death. Were the drug to become available to the public, people on both sides of the debate agree, it would need to be well regulated. Still, what's clear is that Ibogaine has worked for some — and that it has gone almost completely unstudied by the medical community which speaks to the strange ironies of the drug problem itself.

"I don't know if it's for everyone," says Ryan, "I just know it worked for me." ■

Instead of housing, south downtown INS building headed to auction City's Deal with Developer Rejected

By CYDNEY GILLIS,
Staff Reporter

Aretired federal building that the City of Seattle could have gotten for free to create affordable housing is slated to be auctioned on the Internet instead — with city and federal officials each pointing a finger at the other as to why.

The old Immigration and Naturalization Service building on Airport Way South is headed to auction in the wake of a decision by the General Services Administration — the federal division that disposes of surplus property — to turn down a proposal by Mayor Greg Nickels in which the city would buy and then resell the building to developer Greg Smith.

Smith originally planned to pay \$2.1 million for the four-story neoclassical structure, which served from 1932 to 2004 as an immigrant holding facility, and turn it into a "green" design center of architectural and other offices. The proposal included a first-floor museum that would trace the building's history from the days of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Another proposal from a public development agency, the Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority, also called for a first-floor museum, but would have turned the cells into

75 units of mid-range apartments with rents from \$865 to \$1,175.

Both plans were submitted in March to the city's Office of Housing in response to a call for proposals for what to do with the INS building, which is a National Register landmark in need of costly renovation and seismic upgrades. At the department's prompting, the proposals were later combined, with Smith agreeing to pay roughly \$1 million for the building and \$1 million to SCIPDA so it could develop housing elsewhere.

INS, Continued on Page 10

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Burien, Port relent to pressure

Settlement Saves Affordable Housing

By CYDNEY GILLIS,
Staff Reporter

Members of the Burien City Council still aren't happy about it, but, in a vote taken Nov. 5, they agreed to a settlement that saves 162 affordable rentals at Burien's Lora Lake Apartments.

The deal paves the way for the King County Housing Authority to buy Lora Lake — a victory for housing advocates, who argued that the Port of Seattle's plan to demolish the entire 234-unit complex for a big-box store or other commercial use was at odds with the county's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

"This preserves 162 units of afford-

The deal paves the way for the King County Housing Authority to buy Lora Lake — a victory for housing advocates, who argued that the Port of Seattle's plan to demolish the entire 234-unit complex for a big-box store or other commercial use was at odds with the county's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

able housing as an asset to the community, so we're very pleased," says Rev. Sandy Brown, executive director of the Greater Church Council of Greater Seattle, which lobbied Burien and the Port. "The right pressure was put in the right place for this decision."

The pressure came in part from King County Executive Ron Sims and a July 20 lawsuit filed by the King County Housing Authority to take Lora Lake away from the Port using the power of eminent domain. The housing authority had operated the once-private complex as low- and moderate-income rentals through June under an agreement with the Port, which bought Lora Lake in 1998 to create a buffer zone for a new runway opening soon at Sea-Tac Airport.

Negotiations to settle the lawsuit have produced a complex and not yet final agreement pushed in part by State Rep. Dave Upthegrove (D-Des Moines). It involves four jurisdictions besides Burien, which had long ago rezoned the Lora Lake area adjacent to Highway 518 and the new runway for airport-focused light industry.

Under the terms of the agreement, the housing authority will pay the Port a fair-market price for Lora Lake's remaining 162 units, which were closed in June and turned over to the Port in July (72 of the units in the runway's buffer zone have already been torn down).

Housing authority spokesperson Rhonda Rosenberg says the price is still to be determined, and some rehabilitation will have to be done on the now-empty apartments, but she expects the housing authority will start renting again in April to tenants at or below 60 percent of the area's median income, or \$42,100 for a family of three.

In exchange, Burien gets:

- **New development.** King County will buy two vacant parcels of land next door to Lora Lake — one owned by the Port and one by Seattle City Light — and develop them the way Burien wants, for light industry. In the memorandum of understanding among the parties, which must still finalize the deal, the county says it might build a data or records facility or an evidence storage center for the County Sheriff.

- **\$1 million.** The county and housing authority will each give Burien \$500,000 for senior and affordable housing that the city wants to build at a transit-oriented development it plans.

- **Legislative help.** A letter of intent signed by Upthegrove and House Speaker Frank Chopp promises they will go to bat for Burien to create a pilot program that would provide subsidized housing for Highline School District teachers at the city's transit-related development. The two also agreed to seek \$1.5 million to move West Seattle Mental Health out of the new runway area and \$500,000 to pay for development planning in the rezoned area of Lora Lake.

"It's not just about money to build our streets or capital projects," Burien City Manager Mike Martin says of the agreement. "We're really looking to find a tide that lifts all boats in our community."



Public pressure from religious leaders like Rev. Pat Simpson, at podium, drove the city of Burien, King County, and the county housing authority to make a deal to preserve 162 rental units near the Sea-Tac Airport. Photo by Tim Harris

In their Nov. 5 meeting, Burien councilmembers voted 4-2 to accept the deal, but "they bitched mightily about it," says Sally Kinney, a co-chair of the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness. "They complained it wasn't a fit place for people to live" — an issue the council has raised before about the new runway's potential health effects on Lora Lake residents.

"This was not posturing," Martin says. "The City of Burien remains convinced it's a very bad place to put people, particularly the most poor and vulnerable," he adds. "At some point, folks may realize how bad it is to live that close to a runway and they may want to sue someone."

To see that Burien doesn't get sued, Martin says he won't sign the deal

until the housing authority agrees to indemnify the city against any future lawsuits — one of many details still to be worked out.

Given all the obstacles, however, the housing authority's Rhonda Rosenberg says coming to an understanding was a major success.

"A group of jurisdictions within some cases disparate agendas got together and solved a problem that serves the public interest and each of their own particular priorities," she says. "The advocacy community created pressure, some local electeds created pressure, and everyone had to stay at the table and keeping talking until a solution could be found." ■

Lawyer, probation officer call for end to criminal penalties

Spirited talk on drug reform

By DAVID CUTLER,
Contributing Writer

Voices boomed and passions flared at Keystone Church last Friday night, but God had little to do with this spirited debate. It was drugs that drew over 100 people to the Wallingford church, or rather, the failure of America's war against drugs and a chance to discuss the next step forward for narcotics policy in this country.

The event, orchestrated by Wallingford Neighbors for Peace and Justice, included the showing of a film and a panel discussion that featured several prominent drug policy reform advocates.

American Drug War: The Last White Hope is a scathing documentary

chronicling the United States' ill-fated battle against illegal drugs over the past 30 years. The audience made its presence known from the start of the film, with hisses at the mention of George Bush or Richard Nixon and applause for those who advocated complete legalization. Temperatures rose further after the movie ended and a conversation with five featured panelists began.

King County Councilmember Larry Gossett headlined the group, which also featured a criminal defense attorney who works medical marijuana cases and a former correctional officer turned legalization advocate.

Gossett spoke primarily of "the horrific impact that the race to incarcerate has had on African Americans." Citing a local study showing that Blacks are 10 times more likely to be detained on drug-related charges than are whites, Gossett called for an end to the "irrational and insane" War on Drugs. The councilman also argued against assigning prisoners to manual labor, equating the modern-day chain gangs to slavery 200 years ago.

Matthew McCally offered a more radical solution to the drug problem. A

DRUGS, Continued on Page 6

Vendor of the Week



When people tell you to watch out for identity theft, man, they really mean it.

Born in Torrance, California, and raised in Redmond, Susan Kelley is this week's vendor of the week. These days she sells at the Walgreen's on 15th.

Susan Kelley taught kindergarten for 20 years. And, though you wouldn't know it to talk to her (her smile is the kind of smile that hums), during that time Kelley became pretty well acquainted with hardship: her mother's stroke came on the heels of the death of her 15-year-old son, Dallas.

When she retired from teaching to take care of her mother, Kelley rented her house out to a seemingly innocuous brother and sister — little did Kelley know, the two had rented under false names. When her tenants gained access to Kelley's personal information, which Kelley kept in her attic, they transferred the house's title to a deceased grandfather. Within three days, the pair had sold the house for

\$300,000, packed up their belongings, and disappeared.

What that must have felt like, most of us can only imagine. No doubt it doesn't help that the perpetrators are still at large.

But where there's hardship there tends to be hope. Kelley's daughter, who was offered full-ride scholarships to Brown and U C Berkeley, now has a daughter of her own. Of her granddaughter's December 26th birthday, says Kelley, "I don't put up a Christmas tree anymore — I put up a birthday tree!"

Buying presents should be a little easier now that Kelley can supplement her income by selling papers. Since she started selling *Real Change* three years ago, Kelley's become one of the paper's most successful vendors. If you ask her, though, that's not what she likes best about the job.

"I love my customers... selling the paper is a reason to get up in the morning," she says.

—Article and photo by JP Gritton

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

DRUGS, Continued from Page 5

former probation officer, McCally grew disillusioned with the way the criminal justice system was chewing up offenders and spitting them back onto the streets to repeat their past mistakes.

After six years with the Justice Department McCally quit his job and founded a local chapter of Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP),

"We need to take control from the gangsters and give it back to the government."

— Matthew McCally, former probation officer, now with Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

an organization of police officers who advocate legalization of all drugs. Safety and reality form the basis of LEAP's argu-

ment. "We have to deal with the fact that people smoke too much, do too much. We need to take control from the gangsters and give it back to the government," McCally said.

Explaining that most drug-related deaths are caused by an overdose or a drug laced with a toxic additive, McCally promised that if the government provided small prescriptions, ensured drug safety, and offered education and treatment options, most fatalities would be avoided.

Defense lawyer Douglas Hiatt spoke next, quietly but with words that betrayed his outrage at the current situation. "It is an absolute abomination," Hiatt said of the drug war. "We could change the country overnight with the \$100 billion that we spend on this thing each year."

Working "one person at a time," Hiatt also had experience with the devastation that many of these laws guarantee. The lawyer spoke of his worst moment in court, defending a woman "who was literally dying in the seat next to me" who eased her pain with doctor-prescribed cannabis. "It's inhumanity," Hiatt said. ■



Mightier than the sword. But what about the people?

In town on Nov. 10, former Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney took the podium at New Hope Baptist Church to give a fiery talk entitled "Free the Jena Six." With a pen as prop, she made reference to a comment made by Louisiana District attorney, Reed Walters, who said of the Jena Six, "With a stroke of my pen, I can make your lives disappear." McKinney, who is considered a potential Green Party presidential candidate for 2008, implored the crowd of close to 100 to create a national movement to confront racism and other forms of division that undermine democracy: "We know that Jena Six is just the tip of the iceberg of what is happening in our country." Photo by Elliot Stoller

Seattle journalist Silja Talvi reveals the living nightmares of the female inmates who are filling U.S. prisons in ever greater numbers

Throwaway Women

By **TIMOTHY HARRIS**,
Contributing Writer

Journalist Silja Talvi has written extensively on race, gender, and poverty for more than a decade, with a focus on the War on Drugs and the growth of the U.S. prison system. Her first book, *Women Behind Bars: The Crisis of Women in the U.S. Prison System*, documents the sharp increase in the number of women in prison and how the penal system has dismally failed to adapt to their needs.

She will be reading from her book at the Elliott Bay Book Company on Sat., Nov. 17, at 2 p.m.

The United States leads the world as jailer of its citizens. Help us understand what that means.

We have 2.24 million people in prison. That's the size of a small country. What tends to help people picture it more clearly is that we have 732 people per 100,000 in prison, which actually works out to 1 in 42, and these are people just doing time. We have 6.5 million under some form of correctional supervision, which is tremendous. And again this does not include people who are cycling through the jail system. Somebody, say, who's been picked up on drunk driving charges. So if you're on a bus, and say there are sixty people on it, three would be under correctional supervision.

What is the logic of incarceration and who benefits?

That's a tough question to answer. It differs from state to state and sometimes county to county. Sometimes it's that if we arrest these people and lock them up, we're guaranteed more funding. In the case of New Mexico, it's private, for-profit prisons. They have the highest percentage of private prisons of any state in the nation, I lived there for awhile and couldn't believe how they were all in bed with each other. The politicians sometimes even come through as wardens and administrators of these prisons. Governor [Bill] Richardson himself, who is now a presidential candidate, has very strong ties to private prisons.

The argument was that violent crime will go down, and drug use will go down. Well, drug use keeps going up, and we certainly have some of the highest rates

of drug use in the world. And now violent crime is ticking up again as we have the highest number of people in prison we've ever had. So it's not working.

I've heard that in California the prison guards' union is larger than the teachers' union.

Yeah, the CCPOA [California Cor-

The women's incarceration rate has grown 757 percent since 1977. Women are only about 8 percent of the people in prison, and in jails they're about 13 percent. But they used to be a tiny percentage.

rectional Peace Officers Association] is larger than the teachers' union, and they are also one of the most powerful unions in the country at this point. And they very, very much, even though they say they don't, influence legislation and the politicians too. [Former Governor Pete] Wilson, despite being a Democrat, had the closest ties. If the CCPOA said something, he did it, without exception.

If rehabilitation isn't the goal anymore, what is?

Well, there are different theories. Bruce Western at Harvard says we have a whole class of disposable people. They're unemployed. They're poor. They're out in our communities and they're too visible, and that it's an easy way to manipulate our unemployment rate. Once we throw them in prison, they're no longer unemployed or underemployed. So I think that has a lot to do with it.

Edwards and Obama are talking about poverty, but I'd be willing to bet that they haven't said anything about the incarceration issue.

No, they're not talking about it. [Democratic U.S. Rep.] Chuck Rangel [of New York] and [California Senator] Maxine Waters have always talked about incarceration, but they are a very small minority. Most politicians who talk about law and order are trying to be the tough-on-crime candidates and they'll ride on that in many states. People think this has nothing to do with them. In that sense, we are all to blame.

Is this a third rail issue?



Silja Talvi spent years documenting the lack of privacy and accountability that harms women trapped in our nation's expanding prison system for *Women Behind Bars*. Photo by Joshua Huston

It's even worse than that. Civil rights organizations, with the exception of the Urban League, which has now begun to address it, do not consider it their issue. So, the NAACP — and there are a bunch of folks that are not afraid to say it anymore — isn't talking about the mass incarceration of African Americans. I think that the perception is, again, that "those people" make us look bad. It's way too controversial. It's easier to talk about, say, poverty.

When I teach my class on homelessness, I show graphs of the growth of the prison industry and of homeless sheltering, and the line is almost identical.

Bernard Harcourt at the University of Chicago just did this piece that got some *New York Times* coverage showing the direct correlation in the release of people from mental institutions and from community mental health organizations to the number of people who are in prison. A direct correlation, almost to the hundredth, you know. And of course, the

prison environment exacerbates even the mildest of mental illnesses.

What is driving the disproportional increase in women's incarceration?

What's driving it mostly has to do with the drug war. So women are being locked up for long periods of time on even minor possessions. The women's incarceration rate has grown 757 percent since 1977. Women are only about 8 percent of the people in prison, and in jails they're about 13 percent. But they used to be a tiny percentage.

They're being hit with charges that were originally designed for high-level drug traffickers and gangsters. And these are the federal conspiracy charges and they are being applied very broadly. Unfortunately, a conspiracy charge can send you to prison for 20 to 50 years.

We have no way of quantifying it, but part of what's happening is that women



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Dearly Beloved

■ Beloved Community: The Sisterhood of Homeless Women in Poetry

Whit Press, Paperback, 2007, 247 pages, \$17.95

Review by TIMOTHY HARRIS,
Contributing Writer

Anitra Freeman, the annual WHEEL homeless women's forum, and poetry chapbooks all sort of run together on my mind. Each year around this time, I expect to see Anitra camped out at a *Real Change* computer, getting crumbs all over the keyboard, freaking out because the women's lunch is in three days and the chapbook was due at the printer four hours ago.

This year, she's been looking unusually relaxed and happy. That's because Whit Press, a non-profit Seattle publishing company, has lovingly produced an anthology of WHEEL chapbooks entitled *Beloved Community: The Sisterhood of Homeless Women in Poetry*. Proceeds support the work of WHEEL, and it's good.

And it's gorgeous. So buy one. Read it.

Then send another check to WHEEL, because they do great work and they suck at fund raising. They've been doing their annual lunch for thirteen years, and it's free. Wed., Nov. 14, noon - 1:30 p.m., at First United Methodist Church, 5th and Columbia, Seattle.

The material here spans more than a dozen years, and, the world of grassroots homeless activism being small to the point of claustrophobia, these are women whose names and faces trigger a flood of memory and, in some cases, sadness.

Catherine Condeff's "Did You Hear That," for instance — first published in *Real Change* a dozen years ago — gave me chills then and it still does. And Catherine's still around, sometimes doing sort of OK, and sometimes not. Lately not.

A dozen years later, things are worse. Lots worse.

We talk a hell of a lot more about ending homelessness though. If words and reports and data were housing we'd have luxury skyscrapers for the homeless all up and down the waterfront, and the desperation of Catherine's poem would just be a literary artifact to remind us of a more unfortunate time.

But she's still here. And so are we all.

Cynthia Ozimek, on the other hand, isn't. She died a few years ago at 45 of pneumonia just after getting into housing. It's surprising how often that happens. Do a *Real Change* site search and you'll find her oeuvre. She was a felon. A drug user who tried and sometimes failed to get clean. And, she was a beautiful, loving, amazing, working-class intellectual and one of the most natural writers I've ever encountered.

It still feels like I should be able to look over to the *Real Change* open computers and see her sitting there some day. But I won't. She died because she was poor. The middle-class seldom die alone in their rooms of curable diseases.

Ordinary Day

And then on one perfectly ordinary day
We walked out of the house which had been
As solid beneath our feet as stone
And as silent
We never came back
We learned that on one perfectly ordinary day
Life can change forever

—Elizabeth Romero [1982]

The usual suspects of Seattle's homeless literary circles — Marion Sue Fischer, Elizabeth Romero, Anitra Freeman, Liz Smith, Reneene Robertson — are all well represented. Half of these have books of their own, and the others should. Marion Sue's "Recourse for Women" deserves to be much more widely anthologized. As does Anitra's Words, or Romero's "Ordinary Day."

Truth be told, not all of this is great poetry, although some of it certainly is. Chrysta Casey's work, which opens the anthology, could have been published in one of those little magazines that only academics and other writers read. Others, however, are heartfelt doggerel, the sort of stuff that the words "homeless poetry"

might typically bring to mind. But most, if not all, offer a window on a reality that, in a better world, wouldn't exist.

But because it does, we owe these women a hearing. All of them.

There's something very bittersweet about celebrating a "community of homeless women." Some of these women are no longer homeless. There's a small sprinkling of unknowns, but for the most part, the women in this anthology are the activists and writers who've been around for a decade or more. A few have dropped away, some for better, some for worse.

The Beloved Community is, for me, a reminder of how far we have left to go, and of the people I've met along the way who've deserved far more in their lives. ■

Lies

For Rachel Corrie

It was an accident
You are over-reacting
There are no secret prisons
No screams of torture
We are not murdering people
You are a liar
They like it
They are like children
They are not children
They need to be taught a lesson
You are unrealistic
Whole villages are not being massacred
You are lying
You are a communist
You are a bleeding heart
You are with the terrorists
You are a traitor
We are not murderers
Our leader is not a screaming monkey
We are not the enemies of decency
You are crazy
We do not control the machinery of death
You are not going to die

—Elizabeth Romero

■ The Opposite House

By Helen Oyeyemi, Nan A. Talese, Hardcover, 288 pages, \$23.95.

Sometimes I wear a comandante Marcos tee shirt. He's not down with Globalism.

So naturally, when a book, any kind of book, circles around the topics of cultural assimilation, cultural hybridization, or cultural displacement, I am tempted to read it as some kind of indictment. This book review could easily become a rant about, say, capitalism or colonialism or, like, the IMF.

Who defines "normal"? Is it evil to have McDonald's in Rio de Janeiro? And of course, Why invade Iraq?

There's some of that in Helen Oyeyemi's new novel, *The Opposite House*. But I'm not sure that kind of an analysis would lend itself to the novel—Oyeyemi's story, as good art tends to, resists truism.

And anyway it's not even really one book; it's more like four.

One story takes place in the "somewhere house" of Yemaya Saramagua, a *santa* in the tradition of *Santeria*, a brand of Catholicism infused with Yoruban deities. How would I describe this world? Lyrical and strange and beautiful and puzzling wouldn't quite cut it. It reads like a litany. It reads like

The Wasteland. One of its doors opens to London, England, the other to Lagos, Nigeria. Nothing but everything happens in the somewhere house.

The other world is the London of Maja, an Afro-Cuban-born though English- and German-raised young woman. Maja's world is split, still again, between London and Cuba. Her father looks back on Cuba — its Castro, its superstitions, its African deities — with contempt; and Maja finds herself pregnant with the child of a white (though Ghana-born) Londoner. But the world of her mother — a world of *Santeria* — still beckons, and as the book's final page draws nearer, Maja's desire to see "her Cuba" is increasingly at odds with her London upbringing and her father's dark memories of a place "ripped up from under him."

The relationship between Maja and Yemaya is never explicitly revealed—their tales echo, shadow, or mirror one another, but there is no point of intersection. Is Yemaya Maja's doppelganger? Her guardian? Her goad?

The truth is, I never really found out, and I doubt you will, either. But what I can promise you is that you'll think about it months after you turn the last page. ■

—JP Gritton

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



Adventures in Irony

©Dr. Wes Browning

I want everyone to learn how to be a genius like me.

I was in the *Real Change* office yesterday afternoon admitting that I suck because I was already at that moment six hours past the deadline to write this, and hadn't started yet. (And at 18 hours later I hadn't started yet still! I suck more!) A trick I've learned in life is to always announce that you suck before anyone tells you. It's better if you say it first.

It's one of many techniques I have accumulated over the years, and may soon make available in a self-help audio-tape series for just \$79.99 in one easy installment, to help you and you and you be a genius, too. In the same conversation the editorial staff and I discussed what is certainly the most important technique of all, which is Master the Obvious.

Actually, I don't know if being a Master of the Obvious makes you a genius, but I can pretend it does and encourage others to go along with it until they believe me! And 99 percent of being a genius is being declared one, because it isn't an objective condition!

See how it works? I just Mastered the Obvious!

Let's try it with the news of the day. I read this morning that Democratic Senator Birch Bayh, who voted to confirm Michael Mukasey for Attorney General, thought Mukasey to be "an improvement over Bush's previous attorneys general," being neither

©Dr. Wes: Behold My Brainpower

"excessively ideological" like Ashcroft nor "incompetent" like Gonzales.

Isn't that just all you can ask for in an attorney general? I mean, we can't ask for an exceptionally competent attorney general of surpassing wisdom. This is 2007. Those guys were all chewed up by the Peloponnesian War, right?

If only we had a president who was as well qualified as Mukasey. Neither bat-spit insane, nor braindead.

By the way, I just illustrated another technique of being a genius. Always let

Actually, I don't know if being a Master of the Obvious makes you a genius, but I can pretend it does.

your mind free to wander off topic. Last night Anitra "OK on History But If She Gets Started On Worms Run For Your Lives" Freeman was recalling Machiavelli telling his Prince, "And he who becomes master of a city accustomed to freedom and does not destroy it, may expect to be destroyed by it, for in rebellion it has always the watchword of liberty and its ancient privileges as a rallying point, which neither time nor benefits will ever cause it to forget." What the hell was that all about? The Peloponnesian War! Machiavelli knew that Athens was trounced in the Peloponnesian War but they bounced back. They had tasted freedom! I wouldn't have thought of that if I had the mental discipline to stay on

topic! Mental discipline keeps you from being a genius!

Of course that has nothing to do with what I was saying, but I feel better having thought of it.

Another story, which may have been in *The New York Times*, but I read it on *Military.com* of all places, related the views of Malcolm Nance, a counter-terrorism and intelligence consultant for the special operations, Homeland Security and intelligence agencies. Nance called the debate over waterboarding "a crisis of honor," and said that accepting it as a tool of interrogation does the United States no honor.

It turns out Malcolm Nance could speak from experience because he has worked with SERE, the military's own Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape school, as a master instructor and chief of training, instructing our own soldiers and sailors and airmen in how to deal with torture. He has conducted hundreds of waterboardings for his students so they would know what torture is.

Nance says our own guys are teaching waterboarding as a form of torture that the "evil totalitarian enemy" would use "at the slightest whim," so our soldiers have to be prepared for it and ready to give evasive and misleading answers when faced with it.

"Is waterboarding torture?" The not-incompetent says it needs more study. The genius says, "Hell yes." ■

Sound off and read more:
drwesb.blogspot.com



Wed., Oct. 31, 9:44 a.m., Second Ave., Sacred Heart Church Parking Lot. Officers responded to the parking lot of Sacred Heart Church to a report of a known transient sleeping in the parking lot. They arrived to find the subject, a transient Black female aged 50-64 years old, laying face down between two passenger vehicles. She was wrapped in blankets and a sleeping bag and was lying just west of the sidewalk leading to the west side of the church. Subject was lying on an incline with her head lower than her feet and her face against the pavement, and was in a pool of clear liquid that appeared to be her own saliva. The officer approached her, and was able to hear her snoring and saw her moisten her lips once or twice. He attempted to wake her by calling out, and then nudged her and applied pressure to the nail-beds of her right hand — there was no response. He could not see any injuries or contusions on the subject. Officer radioed for Seattle Fire Department (SFD), and they responded to the scene just minutes later. The subject was unresponsive to stimuli administered by SFD, and so they rolled her face-up and began to administer CPR. The officer was able to get some personal information on the subject from some of the parishioners of the church who were on the scene. He found out her name and age, and the subject was transported to Harborview Medical Center by SFD.

The witnesses reconstructed to the best of their knowledge what the victim had been doing for the last three or four days. She arrived at the church on Monday by cab, and had stayed there near the back of the church, only leaving to use the restroom at Seattle Center to clean up. On Tuesday she appeared to be having trouble functioning, and so witnesses called SFD. SFD responded to the scene, but the subject refused any help. On Tuesday evening a sleeping area was made up for her by some of the other transients who the church helps out and allows to sleep near the back door. This morning a parishioner arrived and found the victim in the face-down position observed by the police officer. At that time, the subject had raised her head and looked at the witness, then laid back down as if she wanted to stay there. At 9:40 a.m. the parishioner again attempted to rouse the woman and move her from the parking lot to a safer spot nearer the church, but received no response — he then called Seattle Police.

Wed., Oct. 31, 10:30 a.m., Pine St./Boren Ave. A transient Black male aged 28 was contacted by police in a non-public place under Pine St. at Boren Ave. A name check revealed that suspect was on active supervision with the Department of Corrections. Officers contacted the suspect's DOC officer, who requested that the man be taken into custody. He was arrested and transported to the West Precinct — he was then booked into King County Jail for parole violations.

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.



Real-life answers to your legal hassles

I am a victim of domestic violence and recently had my protection order denied. A friend of mine told me I could file a motion for revision — what is it and how can I get help?

According to Joanna Plichta at Foster Pepper PLLC, if you believe your protection order was wrongfully denied by a commissioner, you may file a motion for revision. In essence, you are asking the judge to take a fresh look at your case and make a new decision. You have 10 days after the commissioner's written order is entered to file and serve the motion for revision. At the same time, you also have the responsibility of scheduling a hearing on a civil calendar by filing a notice of issue. Your motion for revision hearing will be scheduled to take place within 30 days after you file the motion for revision.

At the hearing, a Superior Court Judge will review the record from the protection order hearing, so neither you nor the opposing party may file new briefs or factual material (unless you have permission from the court after showing good cause). This means that you cannot bring in new evidence at the motion for revision. An important piece of information the judge will consider is the taped recording of your live testimony, and you may access the tape through the Superior Court Administration. You must make arrangements for a transcript of the proceedings and you must do so within five calendar days after filing the motion.

If you need help filing a motion for revision, you should visit the domestic violence legal advocates at the King County Superior Court in Seattle or at the Regional Justice Center in Kent, depending where your case is heard. You can contact the King County Protection Order Advocacy Program at (206) 296-9547 or (206) 205-7406.

Staff members are available at this Program from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for legal holidays.

If you would like attorney assistance on your case and are a low-income or indigent woman, you may qualify to receive assistance from the Domestic Violence Revision Squad, whose volunteer attorneys represent victims in filing motions for revision or reconsideration in cases in which a protection order has been wrongly denied or is insufficiently protective of the children. The best way to get placed on the referral list for the Squad is to go to court and speak with the domestic violence legal advocates mentioned above.

Answers are intended for general information only and are not intended to take the place of the advice of your own attorney. Ask a Lawyer is in partnership with the Access to Justice Institute at Seattle University and Foster Pepper PLLC. Got questions? E-mail atji@seattleu.edu.

Letters

editor@realchangenews.org

A good tax

Dear *Real Change*,

I would like to applaud you for the very informative Call To Action in your Oct. 24 issue. I am a junior at The Center School in Seattle, and our class has been focusing on the mental health and substance abuse sales tax since nearly the beginning of school. We've all discussed it, debated it, written papers on it, experienced it via site visits and guest speakers, and we've all come to our own conclusions about it.

Personally, I feel the sales tax is a good idea. Local human service organizations we visited in October made one thing clear: their biggest obstacle is funding. All these organizations have had to turn down people at one point or another, whether it was the lack of beds, people covered by Medicaid, space, or hours of operation. All these deal with their lack of funding and have a chance of being solved with the sales tax.

However, I also think there are some kinks that need to be worked out. It seems as though this tax would affect lower-income citizens the most, thus hurting people we are trying to help in the long

run. People living at or below the poverty level are living paycheck to paycheck, and maybe can't afford the extra \$25 a year this will cost.

Still, these organizations need funding one way or another. The \$50 million raised from this tax will help them all out a great deal, therefore the tax needs to happen. I urge everyone to do what they can in promoting the sales tax, while maybe putting in their ideas on adjustment along the way.

Avalon D. Willows
Seattle

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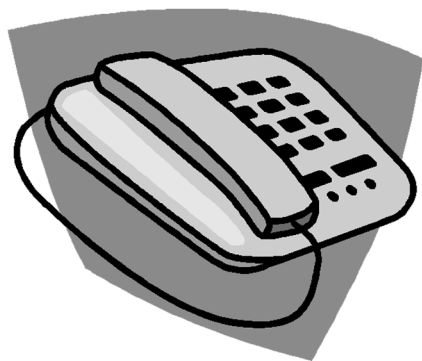
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INS, Continued from Page 4

Though the city doesn't own the INS building, it had planned to act as a transfer agent by acquiring the property from the General Services Administration and then passing it to a developer in one of two ways, either by negotiating the sale for a buyer or by taking permanent ownership and leasing the property for free under what's called a historic monument conveyance — the route that SCIPDA advocated in its \$19.5 million proposal.

"From a community perspective, we needed to take [the INS building] back in order to banish all the ghosts that are there," says Sue Taoka, SCIPDA's executive director. "That's why it was so important to us — it has cultural and historic meaning to the community."

After the agency turned down the proposed sale to Smith, Nickels sent the GSA a testy letter on Oct.

"From a community perspective, we needed to take [the INS building] back in order to banish all the ghosts that are there," says Sue Taoka, SCIPDA's executive director. "For them to say we'll put it out on an Internet auction and come who may... is appalling."

22. In it, the mayor said the agency acted in bad faith by changing the terms of the deal at the last minute in August, when GSA insisted that Smith pay the \$2 million he had originally offered rather than \$1 million — an amount that Adrienne Quinn, director of the Seattle Office of Housing, says the city and GSA had agreed upon as a fair-market price prior to putting out a call for proposals.

But an official in GSA's Auburn office says there would have been no charge for the INS building at all if Nickels hadn't opted for a negotiated sale to a private party. In such cases, says Fred Zderic, a realty specialist in GSA's property disposal division, the agency is required to get full value for the property.

Under a historic monument conveyance, "The city could have gotten the building for free and could have given it to the PDA on a long-term lease

for free," Zderic says. But "they wanted to pass it on to a developer" without the restrictions of the historic monument conveyance, which requires that profits made for the building be reinvested in historic preservation or parks.

Quinn says it's unlikely, however, that the GSA would have accepted a deal that didn't include some cash. In 2005, after GSA put out its own call for proposals for the INS building, she says the agency turned down both of the reuse plans submitted to it. One was from SCIPDA and one was from the Salvation Army, which would have put a food bank, low-income apartments and a women's shelter at the site — a proposal that would have lived up to the federal McKinney Vento Act, which calls for federal surplus buildings to be used for homeless housing.

Both of the earlier proposals called for free leases under the historic monument conveyance. "The read between the lines that we got from GSA was that they wanted money for the building," Quinn says. "That's one of the reasons why we encouraged SCIPDA to work with [Smith] on a joint proposal," which she says the city is still hoping to somehow pull off.

She says that the GSA hasn't been straightforward. But Zderic says neither has the city. Even though the city listed historic monument conveyance as an option in its call for proposals, the mayor's Oct. 22 letter to GSA states that "we clearly indicated the city was not interested in long-term ownership of the building" — something that SCIPDA needed for its proposal to work.

"I've been baffled with how this has gone on," says SCIPDA's Sue Taoka. "When [GSA] talked to us years ago, before the first RFP, they said we want a project the community wants, we want it to fit into the International District."

"For them to say we'll put it out on an Internet auction and come who may," she says, "is appalling." ■



The old Immigration and Naturalization Service detention center will be sold to the highest bidder after the federal government rejected a deal between the city, a private developer, and the Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority. Photo by Adam Hyla

WOMEN, Continued from Page 7

tend to snitch less. They're very worried about their partners or their loved ones. This is something we also see in domestic violence cases — "Yes, he's beating the shit out of me, but I don't want him to get arrested" — to the point where he's dragged off somewhere and the next day it'll be, "No, I don't want to press charges." Any cop will tell you how common that is.

This book must have been emotionally difficult.

It was. As a journalist, these women are my subjects. I am not supposed to be friends with them, but in truth I am. I am friends with women who are survivors. These are women who don't trust anyone on the outside, they have been screwed their whole lives. And to get letters from them and their family members saying you gave us this ray of hope, that someone is actually listening to me, that's a good feeling.

One of the most striking things for me about the book was how completely arbitrary and unaccountable power is within the incarceration system. What is it about that system that lends itself to that?

They have no independent oversight. I visited several prisons outside the U.S. In Finland there are these groups of people who just show up, who are they? They are in civilian clothes. These are the people who can show up unannounced, and check out what's going on. It's Her Majesty's Commission, which operates independently of Her Majesty's appointment, and then there are the civilian monitors. So they can go in any damn time they like, no advance warning or anything like that. Oversight. There are also wardens there, and there will be serious repercussions if there are lots of incidents of, let's say, sexual abuse. They lose their jobs.

Did you feel conflicted about arguing that institutions need to adapt to be better at jailing women?

No, because that's not what I'm arguing. I know that 1.3 million women are under some sort of correctional supervision, more than 200,000 locked up. I'm not going to see an immediate reduction, none of us are. It's going to take a long time. But in the meantime, we can't ignore women's specific needs.

Prisons are really defined by military-style barracks. You're allowed no comfort, no blanket. Sometimes you couldn't even get teddy bears. You can only decorate, depending on the prison, two cards on the wall and a picture of your family or something. And for women, and I'm not saying that men don't want this, but these are the creature comforts that most of us need. I don't think it's an essentialist thing, necessarily, I think this is the way it looks when you grow up.

The other thing is that because of the military style, a lot of the bathrooms don't have any privacy, or if they do, men are allowed to enter there. What they have, they are called modesty curtains or doors. What happens is that when men

walk in they can usually see the women's breasts, and certainly smell and hear what's going on. And for a woman that is tremendously shameful. Women talk about not even going to the bathroom or taking a shit for as long as they can hold out — a month and a half or two. It sounds really gruesome, not being able to take a crap, but that's their reality. There needs to be more bathrooms or more stalls.

Women in jail are given men's clothing, even in San Francisco, which is one of the most progressive cities as far as their incarceration standards. So, you walk in and they're wearing exactly what

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the men are wearing. They aren't given new clothes; they often smell like men's sweat. They get their own underwear, but even those are not new. Every single prisoner talked to me about this, they aren't given more than a few pads or tampons a week so women resort to using socks. I don't think people have any idea, well women would, how utterly disgusting you feel.

Institutions you visited in other countries were operated more humanely. What's the difference?

We see [prisoners] as throwaways. They're no longer viewed as members of our society and for all intents and purposes, in many cases, they're really not. They are behind the gates and we don't have to think about them. Even middle class Black folks, I hear it all the time: "Well, they fucked up." With variations from state to state, they are not allowed to vote. If they committed a drug crime, they are denied possibly state and certainly federal loans or grants for education. In most states you're not eligible for public housing unless you have been free and clear for several years. We are actually one of the few states you can get food stamps as a former felon. And on and on and on. So, when people come out, we are like, "Good luck, we don't care."

What are the institutional openings for reform?

I have been at enough conferences where I've actually heard professional officers and wardens finally talking about the fact that the state is allocating a tremendous amount of money for maintaining the prison system and arresting people. But they don't have enough money to fix up moldy bathrooms. And that they don't approve of a lot of these policies that are set in Olympia. They believe that women should have women's clothes. Some of that also is driven by the mental illness issue. I've heard this so many times. They're scared. They are like, "These people are sick, we don't know what to do. Why the hell are they in our care?" A lot of people who are demanding this change are Republicans that see that this is a fiscal problem that we have.

It's sucking our money out of our states' pockets. Why aren't we seeing results? They're coming from a money standpoint, not a civil rights standpoint.

Is there a point when the institutional logic of prison expansion reaches a tipping point and collapses?

I think we have already seen that in several states where they are now actively talking about releasing nonviolent offenders. I think that tipping point is what we have all been waiting for. It's going to be a partial tipping point, varying from state to state. And it's largely going to be driven by the money issue. It is like the California thing: more prisons filled than schools filled. It will come down to that. I don't think that most people care enough about the wellbeing, the humanity. They regard these people as throwaways. ■

CALL TO ACTION

Earth to Mayor: HOMELESS PEOPLE AREN'T TRASH

Issue: The City of Seattle is engaging in a systematic, proactive process of clearing homeless encampments — demonstrating little regard for the people living in those encampments or the fact that shelters are full, permanent housing programs have long waiting lists, and we're significantly behind on progress on the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. Even though Seattle had a significant surplus for the 2008 budget, neither the Mayor nor the Council did anything to increase access to safe shelter for homeless people or include funding for outreach and engagement services for people living outside.

Background: On any given night, at least a quarter of the 8,000 people who are homeless in King County are without any shelter. They sleep in cars, camp in greenbelts, ride buses, and try to find warmth and safety in any way that they can. Nobody should have to live outside, but there simply is not enough low-income housing and emergency shelter for everyone who needs assistance.

Current City of Seattle clearance policies (and implementation of those policies) devastate the lives of people who are already marginalized and vulnerable. People's campsites are being systematically destroyed, and their basic survival gear and personal effects are being taken away and discarded. So far, the city has not made its policies public, nor has it permitted human services professionals or homeless advocates to review and comment on those policies.

Extensive protocols for responsible campsite outreach and clearance exist. They include ongoing human services

outreach to homeless campers, assistance in accessing emergency services, and provision of long-term housing. The City of Seattle has done none of these things.

The city should **CEASE ALL CAMP-SITE CLEARANCES IMMEDIATELY**, and take the following actions:

1. Create realistic housing and safe shelter alternatives for homeless campers.

2. Fund Outreach and Engagement workers to seek out homeless people who are not within the shelter system, and work with them to access housing and secure services.

3. Partner in good faith with homeless people and their advocates to create a fair and humane policy regarding homeless campers. This policy should include an outreach and engagement plan and the provision of real housing options.

Only when these actions have been taken will it be reasonable for the city to recommence clearing campsites.

Action: Visit www.realchangenews.org, and click "Take Action" and sign the petition calling for the city to immediately cease campsite clearances and take the steps above.



Soul Night is a new quarterly program celebrating great soul music, where dancing in the aisles is encouraged. The first installment of Soul Night will transport the audience back to the mid-'60s with rare, vintage footage of film and television performances by such greats as Otis Redding, Ike and Tina Turner, Joe Tex, The Bar-Kays, and many others. Co-presented by Northwest Film Forum and the Emerald City Soul Club. Thurs., Nov. 15, 8 p.m., Northwest Film Forum 1515 12th Ave.. Ticket information: www.nwfilmforum.org.

Calendar

This Week's Top Picks

Wednesday 11/14

Concerned with the future of Seattle's next generation? **Community for Youth is holding an orientation for would-be mentors.** The Community for Youth's Mentor Program pairs at-risk high school freshman in the community with adult mentors. 5:30 -9:30 p.m., Treehouse building: 2100 24th Ave. South, Seattle. Info or to register: www.communityforyouth.org.

Thursday 11/15

Daniel Hoffman, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the UW, will discuss his research and teaching through exhibits *An-Mi Lê: Small Wars* and *Kim Jones: A Retrospective*. Professor Hoffman has worked as a photojournalist in Africa and the Balkans. Currently he teaches courses on the anthropology of Africa, violence, visual anthropology and ethnographic methods. 7 p.m., Henry Art Gallery Auditorium, 15th Ave. NE & 41st Street. Free. Info: www.henryart.org.

Friday 11/16

Is health care a global human right? **!Salud!, is a film that poses relevant questions about the forces shaping the debate for global health care today.** Presented by Meaningful Movies and Wallingford Neighbors for Peace and Justice. 7 p.m., Keystone Church, 5019 keystone Pl., Wallingford.

In 2006 **J. Craig Venter decoded his own genome, the first complete gene sequence of any single human being. Venter is now acclaimed as one of the leading scientists of the 21st Century.** Currently Venter's research is aimed at manufacturing a complete set of genes in the laboratory, thus bypassing reproduction. Through this research he believes the industrial production of drugs, chemicals and clean energy will be made possible. He will be lecturing on these topics as well as on his new book, *A Life Decoded*. 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Seattle, 8th Ave. and Secenca St., downstairs, entrance on Seneca Street. Tickets are \$5 at the door. Info: www.townhallseattle.org.

Saturday 11/17

Classical guitar virtuoso Jessica Papkoff will be showcasing her world-class talent at The Frye Art Museum. In 1999 Papkoff

took second place in the Northwest Classical Guitar Festival Competition. In the same year, she was the only American women selected to participate in the Stotsenberg International Classical Guitar Competition at Pepperdine University. Don't miss this opportunity to see the winner of Acoustic Guitar Magazine's 2003 Homegrown CD Award. Not only a highly decorated musician, she is the founder of her own record label, Fretgirl records. 2 p.m., Frye Art Museum, 704 Terry Ave.

You don't have to be Veruca Salt, Violet Beauregarde, or Charlie Bucket to see the insides of Theo Chocolates' chocolate factory on a a benefit tour for Seattle's Community Alliance for Global Justice. But you do need to cough up \$5 to \$20, which builds support for living wages and fair working conditions 'round the world. Theo's 100 percent fair-trade chocolates means a decent wage for farm workers and a guilt-free mouthfeel for consumers. 5 p.m. at Theo Chocolates in Fremont, 3400 Phinney Ave. N. RSVP to (206) 405-4600. \$5 - 20 sliding scale, 100% of proceeds benefit CAGJ! Please RSVP to Sara Sheridan saras7@u.washington.edu or CAGJ 206-405-4600

Sunday 11/18

Strap on those walking shoes and shed some calories to help needy families at Hopelink's annual **Turkey Trot Fun Walk.** The walk **raises funds to provide emergency assistance to 2,300 low-income families in east and north King County during the trying winter months to come.** There will also be donation barrels to collect non-perishable food items for area food banks. 12 p.m., 25 Lakeshore Plaza Kirkland. For more information and registration fees: www.hopelink.org/takeaction/turkeytrot.

Tuesday 11/20

The National Transgender Day of Remembrance is held to honor those murdered due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice as well as those killed transgressing the rigid gender expectations of the society in which they live. For information and lists of events in the area: www.gender.org/remember/day.

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

CLASSIFIEDS

Join an energetic & fast paced organization that is working to improve afterschool opportunities for children & youth in Washington State. School's Out Washington is looking for a Communication Project Specialist to join our team to help inform the community around the benefits of afterschool programs. This position will plan events, manage a statewide project, & help create compelling messages for policy makers & send a cover letter & resume with "Commu-

nication Project Specialist" in the subject line by Dec. 3, at 4 p.m. Email to: info@schoolsoutwashington.org. See details: www.schoolsoutwashington.org.

Crisis Intervention Specialist is needed for YWCA Angeline's Center for Homeless Women. \$12.50/hr. See www.ywcaworks.org. Res: Attn: C. Erlewine, 2024 Third Ave., Seattle 98121 or hr@ywcaworks.org.

REACH 30,000 LOYAL READERS

Call (206) 441-3247, or email classified@realchangenews.org

The Cat

I lay in the sun,
covering my paws,
blink at robins
stretch my tail
licking my fur.

My smile floats
in the air
and I feel
in my throat
an oncoming purr.

So dissolute,
my belly rubs itself
hoping my dear
for more
than a mouse.

—Michael Magee

eyes ON FREMONT

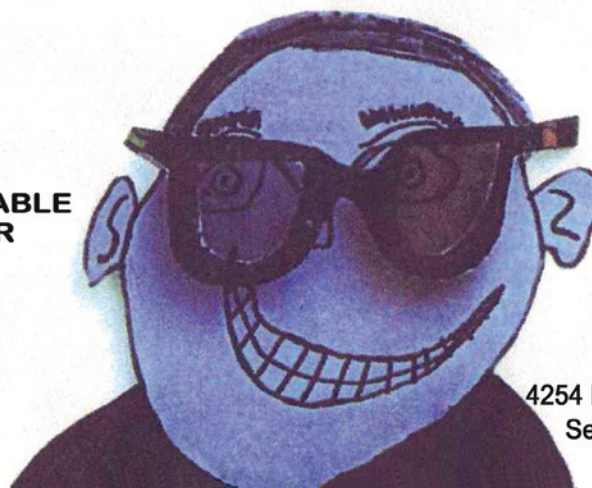
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