

Photo by JP Gritton



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REAL CHANGE

Preparing for Gridlock



Photo by Joel Turner

When I-5 is half-shuttered this week, transit riders may pay as big a price as car commuters and truckers. Funny thing that some bus riders still don't know about it....see page 5.



Photo by Peggy Wolf

The People Hijack Police Review

Frustrated by the city's plans to re-examine police misconduct, the NAACP and citizens like Belinda Sandige have started their own review. They say they mean business....see page 5.

The Day After: Journalist Alan Weisman wonders: How would the earth make out if humanity went adios? ... p. 7

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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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Complacency won't lead to action. But civil disobedience will

The Seattle Call to Action

*Rev. Rich Lang,
Contributing Writer*

You can feel it in the air: Many of us are living in the fear that we are one bad event away from this administration seizing power over the people in such a way that we will find ourselves swept up in a nightmare of tyranny such as we've never seen before.

Our nation has fallen into a trance that has caused us to question our sanity, our understanding of events and of basic human qualities like honesty, forthrightness, integrity, and cooperation. This trance has caused us to become silent in the face of great evils. We have learned how to live in denial of the obvious. Indeed, we now know the answer to that old question, "How could good German citizens allow the Nazi Party to rise to power?" We need somehow to awaken from this trance, break through the denial, find our voice, and reclaim our roots as a democracy.

Our trance has largely been induced through the propaganda of the corporate run media. So I say we should take our public assembly straight to the media outlets, where once there was life, but now only deception, distortion and disinformation. I call upon the citizenry

Imagine surrounding the media buildings with pots and pans, dressed in orange, circling the building seven times and each time mounting a thunderous roar of "IMPEACH THEM ALL."

to gather in groups of tens, of hundreds, of thousands, and on Tues., September 11, the sixth anniversary of 9/11, I call upon us to engage in several direct actions at each of the major media outlets in this city.

Imagine surrounding the media buildings with pots and pans, dressed in orange, circling the building seven times and each time mounting a thunderous



Last week, I attended a large community meeting at Trinity United Methodist Church where the Rev. Rich Lang, who has this week's community op-ed, issued a call to action on Sept. 11, 2007.

There has been a systematic expansion of state powers through legislation like the PATRIOT Act and through various Executive Orders

roar of "IMPEACH THEM ALL." Imagine thousands of people with tape on their mouth, muzzled and doing a die-in outside a TV station to demonstrate the logical consequence of a nuclear attack on Iran. Imagine the nude bicyclists of the Fremont Festival streaking throughout the city as a living reminder that this administration is stripping us of our civil rights. Imagine every kid from every high school walking out of class to surround military recruiter sites with the all day chant, "NO MORE LIES!" Imagine a jazz band parading outside a radio station playing dirges, followed by silent mourners carrying our Constitution draped in black. All on the same day, all in groups of tens, of hundreds, of thousands — and all without getting permits or permission from the authorities that are increasingly unworthy of our respect. Imagine rocking this entire city with direct actions to cast out the tyranny of fear, the smog of deception, and the chains of silence. Imagine a citizenry that dares to act as if they are, in fact, a free people! Imagine a celebration of democracy.

This call to action is a summons to our citizenry because we can't simply stay asleep watching a treasonous band of lawbreakers bully our nation into tyranny. We must stand up to them. We must create a free space for our citizenry to take heart and as an example for other cities to do the same. This public act is a liturgy to inspire and motivate those who are already hard at work in the trenches for electoral integrity, for impeachment, for stopping the war, for the re-prioritizing of the political agendas of our representatives.

Imagine that on 9/11 everyone called in "sick" so as to assemble with groups of tens, hundreds, thousands, and perform acts of a free people. Imagine the entire police department calling in with the "blue flu" so that they could participate as citizens with us in a celebration of democracy. Imagine reclaiming our courage, our moral vision, and our national idealism that strives for liberty and justice for all! Imagine shutting down this city for one day to make our voice heard, ending the shame of our

silence, and the guilt of our cowardice in the face of those who would bully

Imagine rocking this entire city with direct actions to cast out the tyranny of fear, the smog of deception, and the chains of silence. Imagine a citizenry that dares to act as if they are, in fact, a free people! Imagine a celebration of democracy.

us. Imagine reestablishing our national self respect.

As free citizens our greatest strength is the gift of each other. We are bound together through a sacred narrative, a declaration of independence from the tyranny of empire. We are bound together through a code of conduct called the Constitution that tells in no uncertain terms that "we the people" are the rulers and those we elect are in service to us. We have forgotten this and need to reclaim the birthright of our heritage: our democracy. We need to compel those who dare to steal this birthright to respect our basic human rights. This is what it means to be a free people. ■

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

This op-ed reprints a talk that was delivered by Rev. Rich Lang at a community meeting held at Trinity United Methodist Church in Ballard on Aug. 1. The full speech can be viewed Thurs., Aug. 9, 10 p.m., on SCAN-TV (Millennium, channel 29; Comcast, channel 77).

Director's Corner

that have received little attention in the media. These lay the groundwork for declaration of martial law and the substantial curtailment of civil liberties in the event of a terrorist incident. The most recent of these was aimed directly at the anti-war movement, and gives the State broad powers to seize the property of those judged to have impeded the war effort.

The boiling water metaphor — in which a frog will jump to safety, but will become drowsy and die in a slowly heated pot — may have become trite through overuse but that doesn't make it any less apt.

More than 60 years ago, theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote that the fatal flaw in

democratic theory is that we almost always underestimate the extent to which self-interest and class dominate human affairs and the terrible lengths to which power is willing to go.

Rev. Lang, with his call to action, has offered a prophetic call in every sense of the word. Whether we respond with denial or action is up to each of us. There is a point at which silence becomes collaboration. Those of us who are influential in our various communities need to seriously consider where we stand.

Read weekly posts by Tim Harris at apesmaslament.blogspot.com

Just Heard...

Port sued again

Seattle's Association to Defend Affordable Housing said Aug. 7 that it, too, has filed a lawsuit to stop the Port of Seattle from demolishing 162 units of affordable housing at the Lora Lake Apartments in Burien.

It's the second lawsuit the Port has been hit with over the apartment complex, which it bought in 1998 and allowed the King County Housing Authority to operate until July 1, when its last tenants left. On July 20, after the Port refused to let the housing agency buy the property, KCHA filed a lawsuit to seize the property using eminent domain.

The Port had planned to demolish the complex to create a buffer zone for its new third runway, which opens next year. The 162 units that the two lawsuits aim to save are outside that safety zone.

MoneyTree bucks

City Council candidate Tim Burgess took a swipe at incumbent City Councilmember David Della on Aug. 2 at a candidates forum where he stated he's not taking any money from predatory lenders.

The remark follows news on the web that Della, who champions the cause of minorities and the poor, has taken \$800 in campaign contributions from executives at MoneyTree, which is reviled in social-justice circles for predatory lending practices that target minorities and the poor.

The website of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission confirms the donations - \$500 from David Gandara, MoneyTree's director of community development, and \$300 from company President Dennis Bassford.

Della, however, sees no conflict of ideology. The donations represent "money I got from individuals that work there," Della said after the forum. "I get donations from a lot of people who work at different places."

—Cydney Gillis

Bicycle master plan mashup

Earlier this year, Mayor Greg Nickels announced the city's new Bicycle Master Plan (BMP), promising 385 miles of new bicycle lanes and marked paths to make Seattle the "best city in the nation to bicycle." The new bike lanes and paths are funded by last year's Bridging the Gap levy. Now that the BMP is materializing bike advocate Eric de Place of the Sightline Institute says the city "doesn't take [the BMP] seriously — it's telegraphed that quite clearly."

Six blocks of Stone Way in Fremont were not given bike lanes, deviating from the master plan. Similar lanes on California Avenue in West Seattle will be delayed until 2008.

De Place notes that this is the first problem with the BMP - and that it doesn't bode well for the future. Recently, area cyclists responded by holding a protest on Stone Way.

The Mayor's office will review the Stone Way lane in six months.

—Chris Miller

Change Agent

There's one school in Oak Grove, Louisiana, where this week's Change Agent, Shakoe English, grew up. It's the kind of school where kindergarteners share a cafeteria with their older brothers and sisters in high school. If you're a teacher there, chances are you know the parents and grandparents of most of the students you teach. In Oak Grove, the lines between community and school don't exist—the Oak Grove community is the school and the school is the Oak Grove community.

"I guess I do what I do ultimately because I like the idea of schools that are more community and family-oriented... I want schools to look different for my son," said English.

After receiving her MA in speech and theater from Grambling State University, English came to Seattle and began working with Solid Ground (formerly known as the Fremont Public Association) as a Washington Reading Corps (WRC) VISTA. The WRC was created in 1998 by Gov. Gary Locke when WASL tests found that close to half of Washington's fourth graders weren't reading at grade level. The WRC matches AmeriCorps and VISTA volunteers with Washington schools as full-time literacy tutors and liaisons with Washington communities more broadly. Since her time as a VISTA volunteer, English has become the Washington Reading Corps' South King County program supervisor.

"I like the idea of bringing communities and schools together," said English.

—Text and photo by JP Gritton



Condo conundrum

A funny thing happened Aug. 3 when four developers were telling state legislators not to regulate Seattle's booming business of converting apartments to condos. One of them said that it was builders who caused the current condo rush to begin with.

Thanks to all the poorly built condos whose owners filed lawsuits in the 1990s,

many developers stopped building condos. At the same time, interest was so low, a developer told state representatives who met in Seattle, that apartments emptied as renters bought homes.

So, between 2000 and 2005, few condos and apartments were built - resulting in the pent-up demand that's driving today's condo conversion rush, which Seattle developer Joe McCarthy and Adrienne Quinn, director of the Seattle

Office of Housing, denied is driving low-income renters out of the city.

That was some of the amazing testimony given to the House Housing Committee, which held a hearing at Seattle's City Hall on condo conversion and whether the Legislature should do anything about it. Last year, City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen, chair of City Council's Housing Committee, championed a state bill that would have allowed cities to cap the annual number of conversions, stop developers from starting construction until the last tenant was out, and force them to pay tenants more in moving assistance.

Developers gutted the bill, but later denied it anyway. The Aug. 3 hearing was the first swing at getting lawmakers' attention for next year, but they face confusing claims - one of which is whether the conversion craze has peaked or not.

Data presented from rental market consultants Dupre & Scott indicate condo conversions peaked in 2005 and 2006 and continue to slow. John Fox of the Seattle Displacement Coalition disagreed, saying the conversions, which the city reports have turned 5,263 Seattle units into condos since January 2004 - including 930 in the first half of this year - are continuing unabated.

Whatever the numbers, said Bill Kirlin-Hackett with the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness, "One economic class of tenants and residents is being replaced by another."

—Cydney Gillis



Walk the plank: Nikita and Shea Washburn tell Regence BlueShield to stop the piracy of its members, by charging huge deductibles. The two participated in a Pirates of the Health Care-ibbean march on Aug. 4. Photo by Dan Hawkins

At a recent candidates' forum, City Council candidates took on the high cost of Seattle's housing market

Council hopefuls support affordable housing

By *CYDNEY GILLIS, Staff Reporter*

Joe Szwaja has a smart idea for how an ever-pricier Seattle can remain affordable to average working people. When the city sells a piece of public property to a developer with the understanding he or she will turn it into workforce housing, the City Council ought to get the promise in writing.

It was a comment on the city's sale of the Alaska Building that Szwaja, a schoolteacher and Green Party candidate for City Council, couldn't resist making Aug. 2 at a candidates' forum on growth and development at the Yesler Community Center.

Szwaja, who is challenging incumbent City Councilmember Jean Godden for Position 1, was one of seven council candidates who fielded questions on Seattle's rapidly changing landscape, including whether the city and school district should sell off public properties to developers, how gentrification can be mitigated and affordable housing maintained, and where the candidates stood on the anticipated redevelopment of public housing at Yesler Terrace.

Szwaja said the Alaska Building's buyer, who later decided to turn the corner property at Second Ave. and Cherry St. into a hotel (or an office building), reneged on the good-faith agreement

he had made with the city – something Szwaja (pronounced "SWI-a") wants to see nailed down in the future.

Public property, he said, should be for public benefit – an idea many of the candidates endorsed in principle, with City Councilmember David Della suggesting that the city help community organizations buy surplus properties.

But even as Seattle works to fund low-income housing, affordable rentals of \$700 to \$800 a month are being torn down, Szwaja said, as City Hall encourages denser housing developments as a way to curb sprawl and traffic.

Della's Position 7 opponent, Tim Burgess, a former cop and reporter, said he'd look at affordable housing proposals for any properties the council were to consider selling.

Burgess also stressed preserving the historic character of Seattle's neighborhoods, which he said should remain in charge of planning at the grassroots level and resist the mayor's attempt to consolidate planning efforts at City Hall.

Al Runte, a candidate for Position 3 who ran for mayor in 2005 and is cur-

rently gathering signatures for a city measure to make developers pay for open spaces and parks, was alone in insisting that Seattle's public schools shouldn't be sold off to fix the district's financial problems. "I can see the time when we will need the property for what it was intended for – schools," he said.

But even as Seattle works to fund low-income housing, affordable rentals of \$700 to \$800 a month are being torn down, Szwaja said, as City Hall encourages denser housing developments as a way to curb sprawl and traffic.

In the meantime, he said, the Seattle Housing Authority's mixed-income redevelopments of its Holly Park, High Point and Rainier Vista public housing complexes have resulted in the loss of roughly 1,000 units of low-income housing.

"There's a lot of affordable housing," said Szwaja. "The problem is average people can't pay for it. ... A lot of people are getting ridden on a red carpet of density right out of town."

Venus Velazquez, a former staffer in the Department of Neighborhoods seeking the Position 3 council seat being vacated by Peter Steinbrueck, was more direct. "We need to take a growth timeout," Velazquez said.

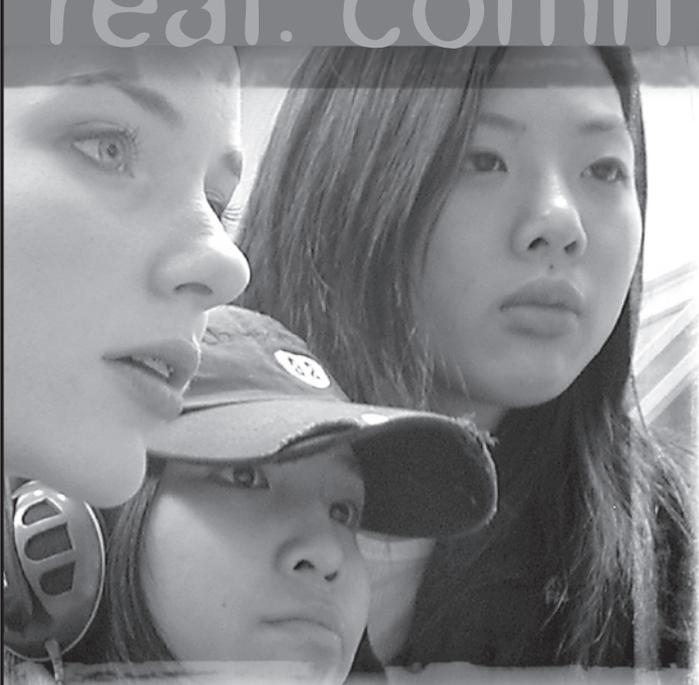
Among other questions addressed by the panel:

CANDIDATES, Continued on Page 6



City Councilmember Sally Clark speaks about affordable housing at a Aug. 2 candidates' forum on development and growth at the Yesler Terrace Community Center, while council candidate Tim Burgess looks on. Clark and Burgess were joined by seven others running for council seats. *Photo by David West*

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Facing I-5 lane closures, some bus commuters are caught unawares and King County scrambles to prevent a transit meltdown

Avoiding the highway to hell

By PATRICK REIS,
Contributing Writer

To get to her maintenance job at Homewood Suites, Rosa Oseguera rides the #152 Bus for two hours a day, commuting from Auburn to Lower Queen Anne. It's a journey that requires the bus to travel along part of I-5.

Oseguera, who hails from Honduras, says she speaks little English, but is able to read and write it. Sitting on the #152, she says she was largely unaware of the transit changes caused by the upcoming I-5 construction, which will close down several lanes and reduce the size of open lanes between S. Spokane St. and I-90 from Aug. 10 to Aug. 29. "I hadn't heard anything," she says in Spanish. "I saw a few signs [posted on the buses] but nobody said anything to me about it."

As she doesn't have a driver's license, Oseguera says it's entirely possible that she will arrive late to work because of the bus delays, but hopes her employer will understand. It's a concern shared by many other bus commuters in the Seattle area.

Across the aisle and up the economic ladder from Rosa sits an employee of the downtown HomeStreet Bank. The employee, who didn't want her name used, says she's well aware of the changes. "The [King County] Department of Transportation came to work and did a presentation. I didn't go to the meeting, but emails were circulated around the office," she says. "I'm thinking about taking the train for two extra dollars round trip."

With I-5's imminent construction reducing traffic capacity by as much as 60 percent, many residents are being forced

"I hadn't heard anything. I saw a few signs [posted on the buses] but nobody said anything to me about it."

—Rosa Oseguera,
Metro Transit commuter on I-5 lane closures

to find alternative routes to work. The expected traffic snarls are of particular consequence to those who depend on public transportation to make their commutes, like Oseguera. All 22 of the bus lines that travel through the construction zone will be rerouted and, according to the King County Department of Transportation, are likely to experience service disruptions and delays. According to King County Transit Spokesperson Linda Thielke, those lines carry approximately 11,000 people each day.

The rerouted lines will continue to serve all stops they currently do, allowing commuters to access the bus in their usual locations.

According to Linda Thielke, the transportation department's visit to HomeStreet Bank was a result of a state law that requires all workplaces with more than 100 employees on site to take steps to reduce the number of single-car commuters. Such employers have an ongoing dialogue with the Metro Transit Service, and as such were most accessible for briefing on the I-5 interruptions. "We're constantly working with [big employers], but with the construction they have even more of an incentive to find transit solutions," Thielke says.

The transportation department is also offering special deals on its VanPool program. Normally, VanPool rents vans to a group of no less than five riders for a total fee of between \$300 and \$400 a month. According to Cathy Blumenthal, King County Ride Share Coordinator, the department has lowered the August price to a flat fee of \$45 per rider and temporarily waived some of the restrictions, such as requiring riders to own a personal automobile and be able to provide off-street parking for their vehicle, which might be prohibitive to low-income users. Additionally, Blumenthal notes, grants are available for low-income or disabled riders that would cover most to all of the cost of a membership.

"We know that people need solutions to get to work during the I-5 construction process," says Blumenthal. "We're trying to provide transit by providing people with vans at a low cost."

But even so, some, like the managers at Homewood Suites, Oseguera's employers, were caught by surprise. "We didn't have any contact from the Department of Transportation. We heard about it through the news," says Chris Shelton, general manager at Homewood. "We always try to help our workers to work around something like this. A lot of our employees do not have Internet access, but hopefully we can use ours to update them on bus schedules."

Still, Shelton says he is disappointed that his employees were not informed of the August service disruptions while the bank employees were. "It seems like



During the I-5 northbound lane closures, scheduled from Aug. 10 to 29, getting around on Metro may take a little time. Some riders didn't know about the possible delays until Metro started playing audio alerts on affected buses. Photo by Joel Turner

the [commuters] who should be the least concerned about the changes are the ones who are getting the most information."

For those who work in smaller offices or do not speak English, help may be on the way. On Aug. 6, all bus lines affected by the construction began running audio announcements explaining the construction situation to their passengers and announcing transit alternatives. Addition-

ally, according to Thielke, the King County Department of Transportation has plans to use new software that will translate all official communications into Spanish and other languages spoken in the area. ■

Parties interested in vanpools can find out more here <http://transit.metrokc.gov/>, or call VanPhone at (206) 625-4500.

Fed up with mayor, activists start own review of alleged police misconduct

New police review panel comes to life

By CYDNEY GILLIS,
Staff Reporter

Belinda Sandidge was at the Bite of Seattle last month when she says she got a real sense of just how terrified her 23-year-old son is of the police.

The two Kent residents were waiting in line for food when a Seattle police officer stepped up behind them. Suddenly, Carl Sandidge, a 23-year-old African American who towers over his tiny mother, darted under her umbrella and snugged in close. He was trying to get away from the officer, she says — and the memory of the police beating and using a

Taser on him in downtown Seattle.

The incident is what led Belinda Sandidge to sit on a newly formed People's Panel on Police Accountability announced Aug. 3 by Seattle's Minority Executive Directors Coalition and the Seattle chapter of the NAACP. The five-member panel plans to take and track reports of police misconduct — and, if need be, prosecute cases on its own.

Since January, when a man arrested downtown says police planted drugs on him, the NAACP has publicized a number of alleged misconduct cases against African Americans, leading Mayor Greg

Nickels to appoint a task force to review the police force's citizen complaint system at its Office of Professional Accountability. According to Seattle police, the same man was recently arrested by officers for drug possession.

In a press conference last week, NAACP chief James Bible said the mayor's task force will only conduct a survey of police oversight systems nationwide, providing "nothing more than an illusion of fairness," he said. By contrast, the People's Panel will analyze police mis-

MISCONDUCT, Continued on Page 10



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CANDIDATES, Continued from Page 4

Yesler Terrace: Szwaja stated that he supported one-for-one replacement of all low-income units within the current boundaries of the 30-acre Yesler Terrace public housing site, which a citizens advisory committee is currently looking at expanding as part of plans to rebuild Yesler Terrace as a mixed-income community similar to NewHolly and High Point.

Godden, who did not attend the forum, said later that she, too, supports one-for-one replacement. "It's a little early in the planning process to make any broad remarks about it," she said.

Rainier Valley: With light rail bringing gentrification to Seattle's lower-cost southern neighborhoods, Councilmember David Della said the city needs to look at the area's neighborhood plans (which many residents argue Mayor Nickels has run roughshod over). The developments envisioned around the stations "should not be determined by the city," he said. "They should be determined by the people who live there."

City Councilmember Sally Clark, whose three challengers were not invited to the forum, noted that the arrival of light rail is helping push people further south. She would deal with this through tax breaks on "affordable" new rentals starting at \$1,227 for a one-bedroom and by reducing the city's parking requirements. Both items are advocated for by developers.

Mitigation: Forum organizers from Puget Sound SAGE, a nonprofit advocacy group that has been fighting Goodwill's plan to put a big-box mall on the border of Seattle's Little Saigon, included two questions regarding "community benefits agreements," or CBAs, and "economic impact statements."

All the candidates gave a qualified "Yes" to economic impact statements, saying they'd like to see the details. Like state-required environmental impact statements, the city could require developers to assess and report on the economic affect of a project on a neighborhood prior to the council approving it. ■

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How would the planet fare if the 6.6 billion people in the world simply vanished?

The Day After

Interview by ROSETTE ROYALE,
Staff Reporter

What if tonight, say, at 11:59 p.m., the human race — *poof!* — just up and disappeared? What would the world look like with our mass extinction?

These are the sorts of questions known to fuel the realm of science fiction. But in *The World Without Us* (Thomas Dunne Books, \$24.95), award-winning journalist Alan Weisman turns the notion of humanity going bye-bye into a compelling, well-researched thought experiment. Bouncing between pristine forests in Poland to the bulldozed mountaintops of Appalachia, and all manner of points in between, Weisman details the impact that humans have wrought on the world: with plastics, with farming, with nuclear waste. He reveals that cockroaches, those seemingly invincible critters, would be toast once the heated homes we provide them with turned cold in our absence. Rats would fare no better, what with their food source — our trash — nowhere to be found. And Manhattan? It'd be a waterlogged shell of its past, once the water being pumped out of the subway system returned to fill the once porous ground.

But if this all seems too pessimistic to imagine, somehow, in Weisman's hands, the disappearance of *Homo sapiens* allows for a beautifully penned treatise asking people to find ways to reconnect with the natural world. And readers seem to be responding to the call. Released last month, the book is already a *New York Times* bestseller. Speaking by phone from a hotel in San Francisco, Weisman talked of the birth of the book, along with engaging in a conversation that encompassed Intelligent Design, the deadly housecat, and coyotes in our front yards.

Before this book, had you ever wondered what the world would be like if people weren't around?

Well, the genesis of this book came from a piece that I did for *Harper's* in the mid-90s on Chernobyl, discussing the aftermath of the reactor fire about seven years later. I noted that the abandoned villages around the reactor were being overtaken by foliage. Nature was rushing in where humans no longer dared to live. In 2003, an editor from *Discover Magazine* called me and asked me if I would be interested doing a piece about the world without people in it. We kind of chatted a little about occurrences that could make that happen, such as a Rapture or a *Homo sapiens*-specific virus. She had gotten that idea from my Chernobyl article and when she'd first read it, she thought it was very depressing. Then over the years, it sort of flipped for her. It became one of the most hopeful stories in her memory, because it showed that no

matter what awful things we do, nature will just come back in and keep trying.

Did you think the article about Chernobyl was depressing?

Back then I did. That area [Belarus] was the breadbasket of the former Soviet Union. A lot of people who are still living outside of the areas that were most contaminated are still dealing with a lot of radioactivity. So my article had an awful lot to do with the impact on human beings once we let that radioactive genie out of the bottle. But I was certainly struck by the wildlife. I remember standing with this computer systems analyst on a bridge over a river — it's virtually right next to the plant — looking straight upstream. We had binoculars — both of us being sort of amateur birders — just checking off the list everything that we were seeing. It had turned into a wildlife sanctuary. Did these birds know they were soaring into radioactivity? Of course not. Would their life spans be shortened? Quite possibly. But I see how, even in very inhospitable situations, life comes in. There is something very comforting about that, because life is so resilient. And if you take a really long-term view of what we are doing to the planet right now, it's very serious.

But the planet has been through worse before, hasn't it?

It's had intense sudden episodes of global warming, when we have had huge

I think that we are a beautiful part of nature.

We do magnificent things sometimes. Our artwork, our music—I'm really amazed by some of what my fellow humans do. The problem is that we overreach.

volcanic eruptions. Two hundred and fifty million years ago, which we now call the Permian extinction, was the most dramatic loss of life in the history of the planet. Over 90 percent of everything that was alive died. And after the Permian, we ended up getting the age of the dinosaurs, which was pretty impressive. So the long view shows me that the planet is probably just fine. It takes blows and it rolls with the punches and it just tries something else. I guess one way of looking at it is that nature is clearly *The Creative Force*. The selection and the variety of stuff that has happened on this planet, and oftentimes in response to some great environmental change, is just fabulous and breathtaking. If there were such a thing as Intelligent Design — and nobody really knows if there is or

not; there is no way to prove that stuff — we are talking about a pretty creative mind out there.

Do you think we humans are a part of nature?

Of course. Absolutely. We're mammals. We evolved to this point and, for virtually everything we do, there are some analogues out there. We build things like buildings. Well, beavers build dams, birds build nests, bees build hives. Sometimes we can be really brutal and turn on each other, get very territorial. Chimpanzees do that same thing.

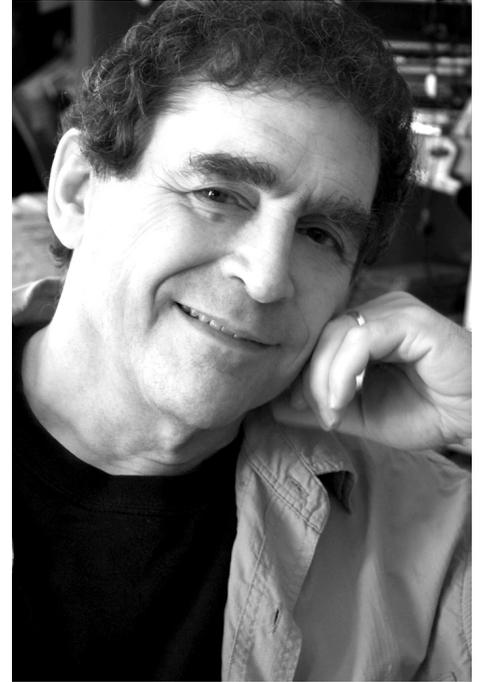
I have a chapter in the book where I talk about birds, because they're one of the most recognized kinds of wildlife, and I show all different examples of how human presence has impacted them. One is the housecat that we brought from Europe, which is related to a wild species in Europe, Asia, and Africa. This is a creature that has never really been domesticated and kind of takes advantage of every situation, including getting you to feed and shelter it. But when you let a cat go outside, the cat does not have to revert to a wild state. There's no transition. It starts to hunt immediately. I'm sure you've seen cats stalking birds—

Well, I have a cat that just killed a bird two days ago.

There you go. I mean, the numbers are astronomical. Two Wisconsin wildlife biologists estimate that in their state alone 100 million birds a year are killed by cats. Cats hunt for the sheer pleasure of it. Which we do, too. That's why there's all these hunting licenses getting sold. So, yeah, we're part of nature.

And not only that: I think that we are a beautiful part of nature. We do magnificent things sometimes. Our artwork, our music—I'm really amazed by some of what my fellow humans do. The problem is that we overreach. We're now able to jet-propel ourselves because, rather than tapping into the amount of energy that nature is constantly circulating in its natural system, we've dug into the earth and found all these ancient fossil concentrations of energy. That concentrated energy lets us do things on a much faster scale than everything else in nature. So we can zip around the planet faster, we can absorb resources faster, we can grow food faster. [Originally, growing] food faster was going to solve hunger on the planet. But this created a much bigger population and we have many more hungry people than we've ever had before. So, this excess of humanity and human reach—it's sort of too much of a good thing.

There's one chapter in the book, called "Polymers are Forever," that's about too much of a bad thing, where you talk about the North Pacific Gyre (a vortex of ocean water with vast



Ever wonder what would happen and if you and everyone else just, well, disappeared? Journalist Alan Weisman gives you an idea, in the recent release *The World Without Us*. Photo courtesy of St. Martin's Press

amounts of plastic waste captured in its swirl).

This is sort of an unintended consequence. We came up with this wonderful material at the beginning of the 20th Century that was cheap and lightweight

In the long-term view, just like the microbes that eventually evolved to break down ligament and cellulose, someday they'll eventually learn to eat plastic. It won't happen in our lifetime, but one day they'll find pieces of our telephones and our computers and Barbie dolls embedded in stone.

and indestructible, virtually. We took awhile to gradually introduce it into use: telephones were made out of it, and some radios and in the 30s, nylon stockings. Then, after World War II, suddenly it explodes on society, because the stuff is easy to make and it has a gazillion uses, food packaging being the most prominent one. Nobody realized the fact that it being so durable was going to backfire on us.

One thing we know is that everything goes to the sea eventually. Entire mountain ranges get washed to the sea. It's

Found, in Translation

■ **The Translation of Dr. Apelles**
By David Treuer, Graywolf Press 2006,
Hardcover, 315 pages, \$23

Review by Elliott Bronstein,
Contributing Writer

David Treuer knows what he's doing. I say that up front because I fear readers will not stick with Treuer's latest novel long enough to savor its unusual structure, thoughtful character portraits, hypnotic prose and tricky endgame.

That's because he's not flashy, just good. Treuer is an Ojibwe from the Leech Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota, and according to his website, he's also written a book of critical essays on recent Native American literature. In other words, as a novelist he has run the risk of putting his money where his mouth is.

He begins *Dr. Apelles* with a 20-page description of a bitter winter on the northern plains in the early days of white encroachment, when whole bands die of cold and starvation. Miraculously, two babies – a girl and a boy – survive.

We follow this breathless tale of how Bimaadiz and Eta grow up to be friends and eventually to fall in love in chapters that alternate with the length-

ier, more ponderous narrative of Dr. Apelles himself, a present-day Native from the north country who translates obscure Indian documents.

While Bimaadiz and Eta race through their woods on mythical moccasined feet, Dr. Apelles drifts in the here-and-now from home to work to the library,

David Treuer begins *Dr. Apelles* with a 20-page description of a bitter winter on the northern plains in the early days of white encroachment, when whole bands die of cold and starvation.

and leaving practically no trace of his passage. (He works in a weird book storage facility where books by the

thousands are catalogued, boxed, hoisted onto distant stacks, and never retrieved again.) He is a lonely middle-aged man. You know he is Native but you don't ponder it much because he, Dr. Apelles, does not ponder it much. Slowly, however, Treuer slips you inside Dr. Apelles' thoughts, and it is a testament to his artistry that he holds you in a sort of suspense as he bares his character's soul.

An actual story does emerge, and eventually love, betrayal, and twists of fate all make their appearances. But I'll tell you, when the plot – such as it is – finally did kick in, I experienced a wee twinge of disappointment, as though Treuer had yielded to his own doubts concerning his ability to sustain the mood.

Of course, that's not what happened. He has tricks up his sleeve, a post-modern turn or two, and how they sit with you depends perhaps as

much on your taste for the "meta" as on Treuer's considerable skills.

Because by then his voice is inside you – such as this description in passing of Dr. Apelles as he sits in a restaurant across from Campaspe, an attractive co-worker from the book storage facility: "He grew nervous, and he had never thought of himself as a nervous man. And like all nervous men he was anxious to please, and the desire to please her made him feel trapped."

Or this razor-sharp portrait a few pages later of Ms. Manger, the storage facility's manager: "She seemed to want to form a club that included only him, with her as acting president."

With *The Translation of Dr. Apelles*, David Treuer has written a swooner for grown-ups. It never sung to me, but then a love story that works the same on everyone belongs in the Romance section, not in Literature. ■

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

WORTH SEEING

NOW AVAILABLE ON DVD:

Reviews by LESTER GRAY, Contributing Writer

■ **The Lost Boys of Sudan**

By Megan Mylan and Jon Shenk

The Lost Boys of Sudan, now on DVD, recounts the story of thousands of boys whose villages in Sudan were destroyed in a civil war while they were away at "cattle camp." In this conflict, claiming over 2 million lives in two decades, only providence spared their lives. Fleeing into the bush, some 20,000 of these children from Dinka tribes formed into a makeshift group, wandering the desert north to Ethiopia and then south to a UN refugee camp in Kenya. The distance covered by their route approached one thousand miles by some estimates.

They accomplished this amazing feat by banding together, forming makeshift families, the patriarchs as young as 11-years-old. According to the filmmakers, approximately half of this original group survived. During their crucible, they faced starvation, hostile fire and attacks by lions and others animals. Particularly painful was the ongoing task of burying those who died in this catastrophe-driven pilgrimage.

Their perseverance drew media attention and 4,000 members of the refugee camp were relocated to various parts of the United States. Grateful to gain shelter and nourishment, they nonetheless struggled to adjust to a culture of which they possessed little to no understanding. Unlike many immigrants, the material bounty of America did not necessarily seduce them. They found their new neighbors closed and distant—lacking in warmth, affability, and concern for the welfare of others. One who had witnessed a woman crying in public, asks why no one goes to help her.

Until their malevolent uprooting, these young men lived in surroundings they described as idyllic, suggesting a well-ordered culture in hospitable surroundings. From the River Nile in which they swam, to the variety of foods and the animals, a fondness for their former home, families, and way of life repeats itself as a theme in their conversations.

Relocated in towns from Syracuse, N.Y. to Santa Fe, N.M., these North Africans received US government support for three months, after which they were on their own. Their introduction to electricity, toilets, and showers and as well as a trip through a grocery store, provides a light and amusing aspect of their initiation to American culture.

As critical as this relocation was to their survival, they were for the first time in their lives without the support of their community. Concern remained for those they left behind, both in the refugee camp, and their immediate families, from most of whom they had heard little or no word since the original attack 16 years prior.

The Lost Boys, a tight and engaging documentary, provides testament to the riches in African culture. These Dinka tribesmen, capable and industrious, long for their home, a land devoid of I-pods, SUVs, and widescreen televisions — a place that most of us would regard as primitive. It's food for thought. ■



Photo courtesy of www.lostboysfilm.com

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Adventures in Irony

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In July, President George W. Bush issued an order that basically said, "If you so much as sell a candy bar to anyone who happens to obstruct the illegal Iraq War in any manner, the government can block your property from use without warning." The order doesn't say you have to know who you are dealing with. The Bush Administration claims the right to overrule your Constitutional right to property on the basis of guilt by accidental association. An order was later issued that extended the provisions of the first to acts that impede the current government of Lebanon.

Both orders have a provision, labeled section 1(b) in each, which states in effect that if any one person's property is blocked for any reason as a result of that order, then anyone having any dealings with that person, shall also be subject to having their property blocked without a warning.

It isn't necessary to sell the candy bar to be dragged into the net. You can just give the candy bar to someone who has had their property blocked (you don't need to have known that their property has been blocked) or they can give you a candy bar! They can pick your address out at random and mail you a 3 Musketeers, or an Almond Joy, or a Butterfinger, or a Baby Ruth, or a Big Hunk, or a Bit-O-Honey a Bit-O-Honey! You could lose the use of all your property just by get-

©Dr. Wes: Protest and candy

ting a Bit-O-Honey bar in the mail from somebody's Uncle Tonoose! How rude!

What if you *want* your property blocked? According to some people most homeless people are that way because they wanted to be on the street and destitute. Let's say you're one of those thousands of wanna-be homeless people who isn't homeless now, but can't wait. Maybe you're a CEO pulling in seven figures annually and you think, "Hey, why am I busting my butt every day slaving for the Man, paying rent and taxes from my hard-earned money, when I could be living out of a cardboard box and shar-

According to some people most homeless people are that way because they wanted to be on the street and destitute. Let's say you're one of those thousands of wanna-be homeless people who isn't homeless now, but can't wait.

ing refried dumpster-beans with my new friend Chucky the Alley Rat?" How can you achieve the destitution you so achingly yearn for without someone pointing you at your house and kicking you in?

In the New George Bush Post-Constitutional America it's easy! Commit

any act of nonviolent civil disobedience that in any way, no matter how trivially, interferes with the government's war-making routine, and the Administration can block all your property. They can lock you out of your own house! You'll be in homeless heaven!

For example, you can jaywalk in front of a convoy rolling out of Fort Lewis. If you hold them up for one second, your property can be confiscated. Or you can block military recruiters from entering your kid's high school for five minutes while you read them the Declaration of Independence. That's five minutes the war effort was obstructed. Your ass belongs to George! It's that easy!

Well, it's just too easy, say a lot of liberal activists. Rev. Rich Lang for one. Rich Lang is the minister of Trinity United Methodist in Ballard and he clearly thinks George Bush is making it too easy for rich people to become poor and live on our "easy streets" off the backs of hard-working Americans.

Rich says let's obstruct the obstructors and put an end to this unfair option. He wants every hard-working American to call in sick from work on Tuesday, September 11, 2007, and go out and perform nonviolent "acts of democracy."

I think that's a great idea. Let's not let Bush make it too easy for people to impoverish themselves! People should have to *work* for poverty, not have it handed to them on a silver platter! ■

Sound off and read more:
drwesb.blogspot.com



Fri., July 27. 8:53 p.m.. N. 125th St. at Ashworth Ave. N. Officers were dispatched to do an area check for a male who stated he had cut his wrists. His friend called 911 and reported that the subject, a transient white male aged 35, had told him that he had cut his wrists. Both the subject and his friend are residents of Tent City. The witness said that the subject liked to hang out at Bitter Lake and officers conducted a check of the area but were unable to locate the man. Officers then contacted the subject via his cell phone. He stated he wanted to be left alone and said, "I'm dying." He refused to tell officers where he was, and said he did not want anyone to help him. At 8:49 p.m. officers were advised that the subject had been observed on N. 125th St., east of Aurora Ave, sitting on a park bench. The witness had located the subject, and called 911 to advise. Officers contacted the subject, and noticed superficial cuts to his left wrist. He stated that he had wanted to kill himself earlier, but was OK now. He refused to say where the incident had taken place, and told officers he deserved to die because he "was a piece of shit," and he just wanted to get away. His friend arrived on the scene and explained to officers that the subject was bipolar and was currently on Lithium. He said the subject was going through a hard time because of issues with a girl he was dating, but had never threatened suicide before. An AMR ambulance arrived on the scene, and the subject walked with officers toward the gurney. He became hesitant and resistive when they tried to get him onto the gurney, stating he was fine now, and not crazy. He was transported by ambulance to Harborview Medical Center for medical attention.

Sun., July 29. 12:01 a.m., Cherry St. Officers received a report of an assault, and arrived on the scene to speak with the victim, a transient white male aged 55. He appeared highly intoxicated, and had a freshly swollen left eye. Victim stated he was a couple of miles away, south of 23rd Ave., when an unknown male suspect punched him in the face for no reason. Victim attempted to chase the suspect, but he got away. Seattle Fire responded and treated the man at the scene. He was then transported to Harborview Medical Center by ambulance.

Sun., July 29. 9:34 p.m., parking lot on 22nd Ave. A transient white male aged 44 called 911 to report he wanted to commit suicide. Officers arrived and contacted the man, and advised him that they were recording the conversation on audio and video. Subject stated he called 911 because he is depressed. He said he knew how to use a gun, and was prepared to die by any means necessary. He also said he was not taking any medications. An AMR ambulance responded to the scene, and the officers followed the ambulance to Harborview Medical Center. There they completed an involuntary commitment form, and the subject was admitted for a mental health evaluation.

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

Bus Chick, Transit Authority

Carla Saulter



Eastbound #4, 10:45 p.m.
A twentysomething woman and her kindergarten-age daughter follow a twentysomething man onto the bus. They sit in the forward-facing seats across from his, daughter near the window, mother near the aisle, facing the object of her pursuit.

Twentysomething woman, speaking loudly enough for everyone on the bus to hear: "I just don't understand it. Guys are always trying to talk to me. Pretty much everyone wants to be with me, and I turn them down just to see the looks on their faces. Now I'm giving you the opportunity, and you don't want it."

The twentysomething man sits silently, looking somewhat embarrassed. The woman continues.

Woman: "I told my cousin you turned me down, and she was like, 'Now that's a first.' Really though, all kinds of men want to be with me. Basketball players have tried to holler, rappers try to get at me..."

Bus Chick: Riding with Children

She continues in this vein for several more minutes, until the man mumbles something unintelligible.

Woman: "What? Why can't you tell me?" She gestures toward her daughter. "Is it her?"

Northbound #48, 9:00 a.m.

A young father is taking his preschool-aged son on the bus for the first time. The two of them seem to be having a great time: the son, excited about the bell, the big seats, the beeping of bus passes as they slide through the reader; the father, happy to answer his son's questions about what is what and why, chuckling at the boy's occasional outbursts ("That's a big truck!" "Did a bad guy mess up that building?" "Three blue cars!"). It's beautiful father-son bonding experience — that is, until, about three stops from Montlake, when an average-sized, middle-aged man gets on, and the little boy shouts, in the same excited tone he used to point out the truck, "Ooh! Look at that big fat guy!"

Southbound #48, 6:00 p.m.

Two middle-school aged girls are sitting in the sideways-facing seats in the center of the bus giggling and shrieking incessantly. The young women are

apparently taking part in one of those pregnancy prevention programs they have in sex ed and life skills classes, the kind where you have to pretend to have a baby for a day or a week or a month or whatever. In the old days, they used chicken eggs for these lessons. These days, they have battery-operated dolls that, apparently, act just like real babies. At Jefferson St., the girls' mechanical baby starts wailing. The girls start wailing right along with it.

Middle-school girl 1, amid screams: "Omigod, it's crying on the bus!" (giggle, giggle, giggle)

MSG 2: "I hate this stupid sh*t!" (giggle, giggle)

MSG 2 pulls a bottle out of her book bag and shoves it into the wailing doll's mouth.

MSG 1: "No! You can't just feed the m***erf***er. You gotta move it around and sh*t."

Indeed. ■

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



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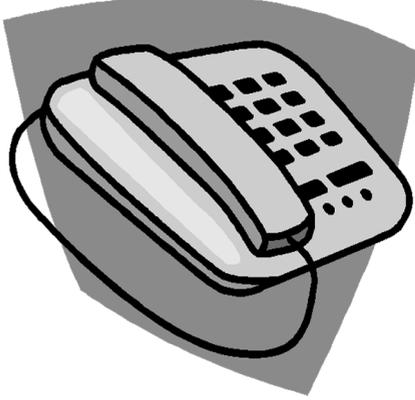
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Letters

editor@realchangenews.org

None too keen

Dear *Real Change*,

I'm sure most constituents are pleased that Rep. Jay Inslee (D-Bainbridge Island) has been so swift in his resolve to begin an investigation for impeachment of Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. [RC, Aug. 1-7]. However, we activists who have individually and collectively conversed, called, emailed, written letters are at the same time exasperated trying to convince him to sign on to Rep. Dennis Kucinich's H.R. 333 to impeach Vice President Dick Cheney.

The majority of Americans favor impeaching Vice President Cheney. It's our only avenue left to end the imperialistic madness of this Bush regime, for which our troops are nothing but pawns. This atrocity of an illegal occupation, which is causing an epic humanitarian crisis, has turned into a billion (actually, trillion?) dollars chess game between President Bush, along with his Republicans, and complicit Democrats for 2008 because of President Bush's persistent vetoes, threats and continued lies. And now the Ds and Rs are on vacation while the blood flows and Iraqi electricity is going out. But that's okay: Bush the Bully got his way. I've never been so mortified by the big-moneyed political process as I am now. I've become so ashamed of being an American and would like Iraqis to know how deeply sorry I am. I didn't vote for this President.

Rep. Inslee's argument for not signing on to H.R. 333 is due to "concentrating on ending the war." But the President long ago indicated "as long as I'm the President we're gonna be in Iraq." So, with all due respect, this is a hollow excuse.

MISCONDUCT, Continued from Page 5

conduct and its impact, along with the causes of racial disproportionality in the criminal justice system.

The panel includes three African Americans who say they have experienced police abuse firsthand, along with two Seattle University sociology professors who will assist in analyzing data from cases such as Carl Sandidge's.

On Aug. 21, 2005, Sandidge had just left the Meridian 16 Cinema and was walking to a bus stop with his friend Derrick Frazier when two men in a small pickup truck began yelling at Frazier to "take your flag out" — a reference to a green-and-white bandana hanging out of Frazier's back pocket.

Sandidge and Frazier kept walking east on Pine St., but near the corner of Third Ave. and Pine St., at the Macy's store, the truck pulled over. The men inside wore plain clothes and never identified themselves as Seattle police, Sandidge says.

Like other police misconduct cases that the NAACP has brought to light, the details given by Sandidge and the officers differ wildly from there.

In their report, the officers say, they "politely asked Frazier to stop flying his gang colors" — something that isn't even constitutional, says one of Sandidge's lawyers. Upon stopping, the report says, Frazier was belligerently drunk and Sandidge menaced them, leading to a scuffle in which Sandidge was tasered.

According to Sandidge, the men in the truck called Frazier over and when he asked what was up, one officer jumped out of the truck, grabbed his friend, and was repeatedly banging Frazier on the hood when Sandidge asked him why.

That, he says, is when Ofc. Dave Blackmer got out of the truck and came at him, grabbing his wrists, backing him against a wall and then tasering him at close range. He fell to the ground, and Blackmer got on top of him, repeatedly shocking him.

Again, I'm grateful to Rep. Inslee for getting after our top attorney but he also needs to get after Vice President Cheney now since he's salivating over Iran. The long-awaited exorcism of the White House must begin. Whereas the U.S. is currently hated globally, impeachment would also begin to restore our integrity and credibility around the world. Then hopefully we'll be on the road to peace.

Kim Loftness
Shoreline

Can't win for losing

Dear *Real Change*,

Please allow me to tell you about my experience with small claims court. Your [Ask a Lawyer] article in the July 4-10 issue suggests that small claims court is a solution. It is not!

I took and paid for all the proper steps, including having the sheriff deliver the summons. I wanted my \$700 deposit back from the landlord after living for 10 years in his West Queen Anne triplex. He chose not to come to court. THE CASE WAS DECIDED IN MY FAVOR. End of story!

He did not pay and the court does not enforce its decisions. The debt collection agency I contacted said that he merely had to refuse to pay. He has chosen to ignore the small claims judgment and I can do nothing to enforce it. I've wasted my time and money.

Please tell Derek de Bakker, the attorney at Foster Pepper PLLC and your readers that small claims court — even if you win — is not an answer.

Bettylou Valentine
Seattle

"Every time the Taser stopped," Sandidge says. "I would say, 'I'm not resisting,' and he would tase me again."

After being handcuffed and lifted to his feet, he was led to a police van that had arrived. On his way to the van, he says, another officer, Ofc. Marcos Ortiz, punched him in the stomach.

Sandidge was released the next morning, but charged with assault, resisting arrest and obstruction of justice. A jury later found him not guilty of the first two charges. The prosecutor's office then dropped the obstruction charge.

The People's Panel on Police Accountability is now demanding the city prosecute officers Blackmer and Ortiz for assault. On July 31, attorneys for the group sent a letter to City Attorney Tom Carr urging him to bring charges in the case.

The NAACP's James Bible said last week that he expects another letter will go to the city attorney shortly requesting that Sgt. Greg Sackman be prosecuted in the alleged 2005 assault of another African American, Maikoio Alley-Barnes, who says he took a beating after he questioned an officer.

Ruth Bowman, a spokesperson for the city attorney, said she would have no comment on the Sandidge case until her office had reviewed the evidence. If the City Attorney doesn't prosecute, Bible said, the People's Panel will file its own citizen complaint, a type of self-prosecution allowed under court rules.

"This was not simply police misconduct," Bible said. "This was assault, and assault is a crime."

Sandidge, who just started a job at an auto parts store and will start school at Highline Community College this fall, said his heart was pounding that day at the Bite of Seattle when the police officer walked up.

"I guess you could say it was shocking," Sandidge says of having Taser prongs fired into his chest two years ago. "When I see the police now, I try to stay as far away from them as I can. I don't want to say 'Hi', 'Bye', or anything." ■

WITHOUT, Continued from Page 7

hard for us to picture that, because it's so slow. But plastic's pretty light — it's not like you have to break down some heavy stone in order to wash it to the sea. And that's where the majority of the stuff is floating. Once in the ocean, it's subjected to the same physical forces that any other material is. The reason we have beaches is because wave action will break down rocks eventually into sand-size particles. Well, plastics don't get destroyed, but they can fragment, break up into smaller and smaller pieces. These pieces then become absorbed by or mistaken for food by a whole lot of creatures that just don't know better. But, again, in the long-term view, just like the microbes that eventually evolved to break down ligament and cellulose, someday they'll eventually learn to eat plastic. It won't happen in our lifetime, but one day they'll find pieces of our telephones and our computers and Barbie dolls embedded in stone.

Here in Seattle, there've been articles recently about black bears coming into the city and people waking up to coyotes in their front yard. So it seems like even though humans aren't gone yet, nature is already coming into the places where *Homo sapiens* dwells.

That's partly because *Homo sapiens* now are dwelling in more places. The population of the world increases by a million every four days. As we sprawl across the countryside, we are occupying spaces where black bears used to live. So it's not like they are coming into our spaces. They are seeking out spaces that they have known for generations. Any time you've got wild creatures that are entering urban areas, they're looking for food. So something's depriving them or depriving their prey of some livelihood and they have to be more adventuresome. Coyotes are very opportunistic and they're pretty fearless. They have now spread into all of the Lower 48 [states]. They can out compete dogs, they can out compete cats. But there's no question that we are being invaded by wildlife because wildlife's habitat is decreasing.

When I look around Seattle, we have a lot of development going on, with structures that seem like they're being built in two or three months. They look permanent, but your book makes it seem they're really not permanent at all.

If we make our buildings out of stone, chances are that they're going to last longer because they're already at their lowest energy level. You know, we started out living in caves and then we started making our own caves with stone walls, and, at this point, we don't do it very often. The effort of going into a stone quarry is not as cost effective for builders as just bringing in a

bunch of sand and cement and making their own stones on the spot. But they're not really great stones, the way nature makes them, so they have to stick a steel reinforcing bar in the middle of them so they don't crumble. But they have inherent weaknesses where the vertical walls and horizontal roof join. Eventually, water will seep in and when water seeps in, it's going to reach that steel reinforcing bar and when the rebar starts to rust, the rust has to take up more space be-

Take a country like Mexico that's only got 20 percent arable land. That means most of it is not good for farming. Yet its fields are, for the most part now, not being dedicated to feeding Mexicans. It's being dedicated to export crops to us, so we can have summer vegetables in the winter.

cause that's its physical nature. As that expands, it starts cracking the concrete. So, these things just have a shorter life span than something that is made out of just a block of stone.

I live in Massachusetts now, which has all these old abandoned granite quarries. Yet you can go down to a [local] materials yard and you can buy stone now that they're quarrying in Poland. This means it's cost-effective to somebody to use cheap Polish labor, to haul those stones to some shipyard, to stock it in a container, and use diesel power to float it across the ocean and deliver it to Massachusetts. Our global economy is a tremendous ecological problem.

Take a country like Mexico that's only got 20 percent arable land. That means most of it is not good for farming. Yet its fields are, for the most part now, not being dedicated to feeding Mexicans. It's being dedicated to export crops to us, so we can have summer vegetables in the winter. So what's a *campesino* [farm worker] to do when he can no longer grow food for his family? He and his family have to go to the city, where everybody's trying for a job. Is it any wonder that we have this incredible immigration issue right now? There are so many people who are being pushed off their land and a lot of it is about consumption.

This great global economy— when it comes to food, when it comes to almost anything, we pay a bad price for ship-

ping stuff around the world. We would be much more sensible, we would be much healthier, we would be much more efficient, if we depended on stuff we produce regionally to the greatest possible extent.

At the beginning of this book, you mention this Polish forest whose name I cannot pronounce—

Bialowieza Puszcza

—and you talk about 500-year-old old-growth trees. That seems so amazing there's still a place like that left.

This forest in Poland, in Belarus, had also been private land, dating back to the 14th Century. It was the domain of royalty. It's like walking into a Grimm's fairy tale. It was just amazing. It seemed right, like my body recognized it and said, "Oh yeah, this is home."

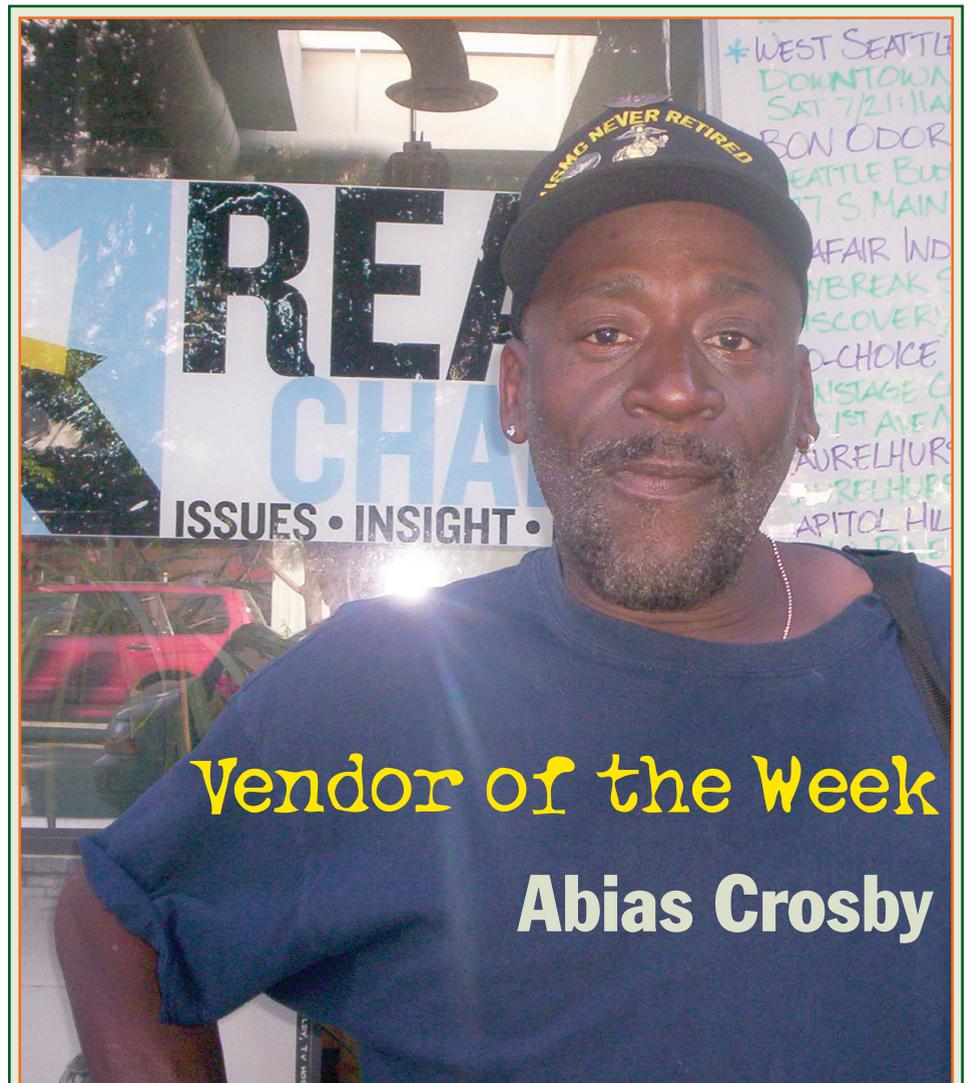
I think one of the reasons why my book is having such an impact is that

people do recognize within themselves something that [they miss] terribly: the world, when it was a much wilder and more natural place, instead of now being so changed by some structures that don't even have a semblance of nature in them. And that's where most of us live now.

I really sense that we do have a genetic memory of the way the world is supposed to be. The reason for writing this book was not because I hate human beings — I love human beings — but because I want human beings to see the world and take us out, and then figure out: How can we add us back in without trampling everything else to death? ■

See for yourself:

To get an idea of what the world might look like without us around, check out this multimedia website: <http://www.worldwithoutus.com/multimedia.html>



Vendor of the Week
Abias Crosby

Photo by Adam Hyla

Like many members of this city's homeless community, Abias Crosby came to Seattle via the armed services. A native of St. Louis, Mo., Crosby was stationed in Seattle with the United States Marine Corps.

His service ran almost two decades, and saw Crosby rise from the rank of Lance Corporal to Gunnery Sergeant. In those 17 years, Crosby saw action in both Vietnam and the First Gulf War.

His career in the Marine Corps ended only eight years ago—but a lot can happen in eight years. The pension Crosby receives from the Marine Corps didn't come close to paying the bills, and Crosby became homeless. That, in spite of the fact that he'd given the country 17

years of his life, two tours of duty, and a son (also a marine, who just returned from his third tour of duty in Iraq).

A vendor, Van Crowder, introduced Crosby to *Real Change*, though, which supplemented his income. He now sells *Real Change* at 15th Ave. and Market St. NW.

Crosby is working to become a paralegal. In addition to an internship, Crosby is only about a year away from an associate's degree which will allow him to pursue paralegal work professionally.

To his many customers, Crosby says of *Real Change*, "It helps. It spreads some pretty good information, too."

I guess you could do worse.

—JP Gitton

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Hempfest has matured far beyond its inception as a "humble little gathering of stoners." The Northwest event has cultivated into a well-respected affair effectively demanding the reformation of cannabis policy and the decriminalization of marijuana use. This celebration has clout, but aside from its impressive history, Hempfest is a surefire way to enjoy some pure, organic fun. **Sat. and Sun., Aug. 18 and 19. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Myrtle Edwards Park.** www.hempfest.org.

Calendar

This Week's Top Picks

Wednesday 8/8

Thomas E. Ricks visits Seattle to discuss **Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq**. An acclaimed author and journalist at the *Washington Post*, Ricks' reporting from Iraq shaped his account of how the U.S. intentionally entangled itself in the "fiasco" that is the Iraq War. 7 p.m., Microsoft Auditorium, Seattle Public Central Library, 1000 Fourth Ave. Info: www.spl.org.

Thursday 8/9

Soul of the City: The Pike Place Public Market is Alice Shorett's book that documents the market's beginnings and survival against development. Join Shorett and others for a panel discussion moderated by Jackson Schmidt of the Market Foundation about the history and future of Pike Place Market. 6:30 p.m., Microsoft Auditorium, Seattle Public Library, 1000 Fourth Ave. Info: www.spl.org.

Get ready to rock for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society with a benefit hosted by 90.3 KEXP's Audioasis. Featuring Skullbot, a band whose deft executions of heavy stoner rock defy their young age (they're still in high school), Optimus Rhyme, a hip-hop group that uses live instruments to produce addictive beats, and The Valley, a gloriously vociferous sound emanating early 90's Seattle rock. Tickets: \$7 (donated toward a good cause!). 8 p.m. Sunset Tavern, 5433 Ballard Ave. Info: www.sunsetavern.com or 206-784-4880.

Friday 8/10

Northwest Film Forum features **Bamako, a moving film about the corruption of African civil society wrought by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)**. Staged in a courtyard trial setting, the plaintiff, African civil society, charges the World Bank and the IMF are responsible for Africa's woes, accusing the defendants of draining Africa's vital resources to pay insatiable debts. 6:30 p.m. and 9:15 p.m., and 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday; Northwest Film Forum, 1515 12th Ave. \$8.50. Info: www.nwfilmforum.org or 206-329-2629.

Saturday 8/11

Rebeca Bollinger's fields are an archive of abstract images compiled to mimic a stream of data that is both orderly and random, much like the nature of the

Internet. Bollinger's work—data arranged by color and days of the week—is mesmerizing. Henry Art Gallery, UW, 15th Ave NE and NE 41st St. \$10. Info: www.henryart.org or 206-543-2280.

Thursday 8/16

Interested in nature and sustainable practices, but have a mind for business? **Seattle REI brings the Bainbridge Graduate Institute to its flagship store for an educational forum about BGI's unique graduate program in Sustainable Business with a Concentration in Outdoor Industry.** 6:30 p.m., Seattle REI Fireplace, 222 Yale Ave. N.. Info: 206-855-9559.

90.3 KEXP hosts **Seattle Presents Summer Concert Series.** Enjoy Hip Hop and Spoken Word Mashup with Gabriel Teodros and DJ WD4D as well as poets Buddy Wakefield, Melissa Noelle Green, and Seattle Poet Populist Jourdan Keith. 5 p.m., Civic Plaza, Seattle City Hall. Info: www.kexp.org.

Saturday 8/18

The **Burke Museum celebrates Native American culture** with carving, drum making, weaving, storytelling, and dancing. 10 a.m. to 5p.m., Burke Museum, UW, 17th Ave. N.E. and 45th St. N.E. Info: 206-543-5590.

An-My Lê's dual exhibit Small Wars and 29 Palms is an indirect visual investigation of the juxtaposition between the two most notorious American wars in the last half-century, the Vietnam War and the Iraq War. Lê documents the union uniquely and unexpectedly by photographing dramatizations of the wars, portraying "where war is psychologically anticipated, processed, and relived." Henry Art Gallery, UW, 15th Ave NE and NE 41st St. \$10. Info: www.henryart.org or 206-543-2280.

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



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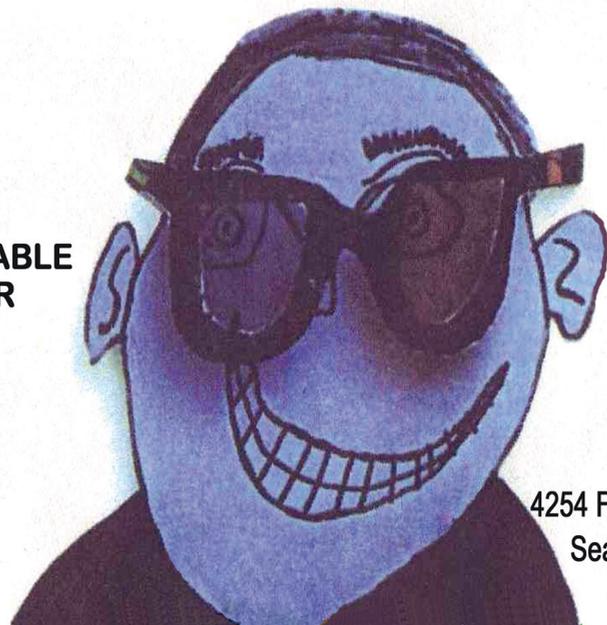
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