

# Washington Free Press

**№ 91**  
2008 Mar/Apr & beyond



WA FREE PRESS  
PMB #178,  
1463 E. REPUBLICAN ST  
SEATTLE WA 98112

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



ALTERNATIVE JOURNALISM  
NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!  
If you are not a current subscriber,  
please sign up on page 3.

since 1993 • a progressive journal of news, ideas & culture • [www.WAfreepress.org](http://www.WAfreepress.org)



**Cartoonist John Jonik looks back at the W years.  
We hope they'll be over soon. Page 9**

## inside

### ELECTIONS 3, 7

- When Corporations Count Your Vote
- Narrow Miss for Minor Parties
- A Way Out of the Spoiler Dilemma

### TAXES 4

- Income Tax, Do We Have To?
- Grandma Funds Sonics

### ECONOMY 5

- Gentrification 101
- Foreclosure, A Personal Experience

### LAW 6

- My First Jury Trial
- Rick Steves on Marijuana Reform

### POLITICS 8-9

- Republican Wants Impeachment
- Obama or Clinton?
- Why the Tiers?

### WAR 10

- Satellite Shoot
- Stop-Loss Congress
- Stats
- The War Election

### ACTIVISM 11, 13

- Vision Probem
- Che Today

### RIGHT BRAIN 14-15

- Pickup Trucks
- Funny & Serious
- Poetry

### INCARCERATION 16

- Prison Profiteers
- Guantanamo

Send your letters to the WA Free Press, PMB #178, 1463 E Republican St, Seattle 98112, or [WAfreepress@gmail.com](mailto:WAfreepress@gmail.com). Please include your full name and phone number for verification. Keep them short. Letters may be edited for length, spelling and grammar. Letters printed do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the WA Free Press. Letters which respond to WA Free Press articles will be given precedence.

## READER MAIL

### Acting Like We Own the World

I recently noted an article in *The Nation* (November 19, 2007) stating in part "With little scrutiny from Democrats in Congress and barely a whimper from the liberal establishment, the United States will soon establish permanent military bases in sub-Saharan Africa."

The writer seemed surprised that the Democrats and Liberals would go along. (Please note that there has been no discussion concerning the bloated military budget during this campaign. Most discussion concerns who has raised the most money or who is leading in the polls.)

But I'm not surprised, given that Africa now supplies 15% of U.S. oil which will rise to 25% by 2015. Oil is necessary in order for us to continue our immoral and consumptive life style and the construction of permanent military bases is necessary for that protection.

Yes, it's pretty clear to me that both the Democratic and the Republican parties support the military industrial complex and the policy of "resource wars" and American "empire" consistent with the view that America "owns" the world. Owning the world, we can do whatever it takes to achieve our purposes.

Why do we need the world's largest military budget? Why do we need to control the world? And why do we need to control space? To continue the resource wars already begun under the guise of spreading freedom and democracy throughout the world.

But, you may say, aren't we world leaders in human rights? The world's leading purveyor of Democracy? How about freedoms?

Look at our record.

Howard Pellett

### McCain: Rattling a Short Saber

In World War II, the USA concentrated on Europe with the result that the war with Japan ended months later than the war in Europe. We recognized our limitations and did not just say that we were so mighty that we could do everything all at once.

When we were in Korea, our military leaders warned against a war on the mainland of Asia, then we lost the Vietnam War, and again the military experts said, "Stay out of Asia."

There is not a day I do not read of serious economic problems, warnings that foreigners are accumulating so much money that they are buying up big chunks of the USA.

Don't know if you have followed controversy over a Chinese company which wants to buy an American company which provides computer security to the Pentagon, and it may be approved, so that China would be supplying our military their security software!

Remember the bridge which collapsed in Minnesota? A government study says we must spend \$250 billion yearly on infrastructure. Another study says Iraq and Afghanistan will eventually cost \$3 trillion. The Wall Street Journal recently predicted that next year one-third of mortgages will exceed the value of the home.

There are many experts who argue that we just do not have the economic power to support the sort of war on the mainland of Asia which McCain advocates. It is just foolish to think that we can continue to borrow trillions from Asia to finance a war against an enemy which the head of our own intelligence service says is about third or fourth in terms of threat to us.

Fortunately, in my humble opinion, the average person here dimly realizes that this just can't go on and therefore is not going to put McCain in the White House. Don't imagine that I see the alternatives as all that wonderful. It's just that we have a choice and I

think McCain has not thought out what this country is today capable of doing successfully.

Some scoff at the threats to the USA. Not me. I am saying let's use our head in opposing them.

Tangential issue: some say Obama is a stealth candidate, really a Muslim etc. McCain was five and a half years in a Communist prison. Have you seen either of the two film versions of *The Manchurian Candidate*? Don't misunderstand – all I am saying is that I am kind of surprised this silly possibility has not been raised.

Tom Oleson

### Get Rid of the President, Not the Penny

In one recent issue, the Seattle Times talked about getting rid of the penny. The day before, it was about getting rid of the current Sound Transit Board.

So why is no one in the press talking about getting rid of the people who committed massive, deliberate fraud to start up the Middle East wars? Why is a discussion of impeachment being suppressed by the old press? I think impeachment would save a lot more money than getting rid of the penny.

Congressman Robert Wexler is one brave Democrat who supports accountability in government, unlike our Washington politicians such as Patty Murray, Maria Cantwell and Dave Reichert.

Richard Borkowski

### Plant, Don't Cut, on Christmas

Let me begin by saying thank you for the papers you have been sending. I am a Washington State prisoner who was pursuing a lawsuit that would entitle prisoners the right to reserve security video tapes. Unfortunately the US District Court dismissed the case.

[The WA Free Press printed an article on this topic a couple issues ago: prisoners who have been wrongly treated by guards are unable to access prison videotapes as evidence at hearings, during which guards' testimony is generally taken as the truth.]

The reason I write now is a plan I have had for some time. I am looking to meet people who would be interested in assisting. It is very basic, but very important. I want to start a new tradition of planting a tree every year at Christmas time. This is an attempt to counter millions of trees being cut down every year for the sole purpose of decorating for Christmas.

I plan on starting in the Northwest and hope it will spread nationally. It does not require money to do this because I believe word of mouth will work fine. I get out April 2, 2009. If you can get my idea out and help people get in touch with me for the Christmas of 2009, I would be very grateful.

P. Drum

*Editor's note: If readers would like to get in contact with Mr. Drum on this topic, please write or email with your contacts, and I'll forward it to him.*

## help get the word out

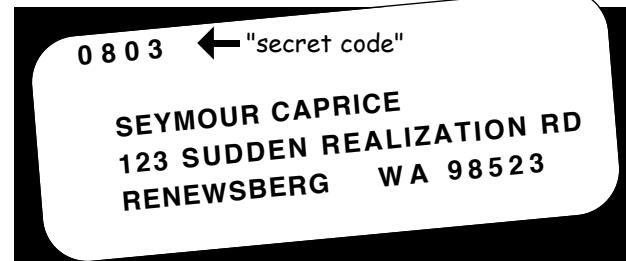
Would you like to spread the seeds of progressive news in your part of Washington State? Volunteer to be an occasional *Free Press* distributor. Leave small stacks at coffeeshops, bakeries, bookstores, laundromats, latte stands, libraries, etc. We ask that distributors also be subscribers. If you already subscribe, email us at [WAfreepress@gmail.com](mailto:WAfreepress@gmail.com) or include a note with the subscription form on page 3.

Cover art again graces the front of our paper! For many years, the WA Free Press had cover art each issue. But the past few years, we've been running text covers.

The problem with text covers has been that each issue looks pretty similar. In actual fact, our content is very different each issue. So perhaps cover art gives a better idea of the liveliness between the covers, which is the main aspect that I hope you enjoy.

Doug Collins

### Seymour, I think it's time to renew!



Dear Subscribers,

Please notice the "secret code" number on the top of your mailing label. That indicates the year and month you'll receive the last issue of your current subscription.

For example, the numbers "0803" would mean that your last issue will be received in 2008 (the "08") in March (the "03"), which means that you're due for a renewal. If your label says "0803" then you're—ahem—going to be missing out on some pretty interesting news and ideas, unless of course you renew soon.

We do send renewal letters to subscribers a few times a year, but if you can, please help save the paper, postage, and limited volunteer time by renewing in advance of your expiration. You can use the cut-out form on page 3. We really appreciate it!

Thanks for supporting volunteer-produced, non-profit news.

free  
press

[www.WAfreepress.org](http://www.WAfreepress.org)

Coordinating Editor: Doug Collins

Directors: Rodger Herbst, o'Kelly McCluskey, Doug Collins

Other Volunteer Assistance: Len Stephan, Joel Hanson, Eddie Tews, Conan Parks, Pam Shea, Hannah Lee, Michael Gross, Kathleen Murphy, Sidney Collins, and many wonderful distributors around the state!

Columnists: Sharlyn Cobaugh, Norman Solomon, WA Toxics Coalition, Vincent Spada

Frequently Contributing Writers: David Bacon, Domenico Maceri, Glen Milner, Styx Mundstock, Steven Hill, John Merriam, ACLU of WA, Robert Pavlik, Hannah Lee, Todd Huffman MD, David Swanson, Don Monkerud, Jesse Lancaster, Joel Hanson, Dr. John Ruhland

Frequently Contributing Artists & Photographers: John Ambrosavage, Dick Lande, David Logan, Andrew Wahl, John Jonik, George Jartos, Ham Khan

Webmaster: Matt Conroy

Layout: Doug Collins

Contents copyright © The Washington Free Press (dated the year appearing at foot of the page) unless otherwise indicated. The WA Free Press retains only one-time print and one-time electronic rights for original articles and images. Copyright thereafter reverts to writer or artist. Other nonprofit publications are encouraged to reprint articles or images from the WA Free Press, but must first gain permission of the writer or artist. Opinions and letters to the editor herein do not necessarily represent the opinions of anyone working with the paper. The WA Free Press is not affiliated with any political party. The WA Free Press is printed on 40-percent recycled paper, the maximum practical content for newsprint.

Contacts:

Post: WFP, pmb #178, 1463 E Republican St, Seattle WA 98112

E-mail: [WAfreepress@gmail.com](mailto:WAfreepress@gmail.com)

Web: [www.WAfreepress.org](http://www.WAfreepress.org)

Submissions: We like to get your queries and submissions. The WA Free Press is a volunteer newspaper. Deadlines for submission are the 15th of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Email submissions to [WAfreepress@gmail.com](mailto:WAfreepress@gmail.com) and put "Submission" in the subject heading. Submissions are hopefully aimed at making improvements in environment, workplace, or society, and should not repeat information that is commonly available in larger mainstream publications. Submissions preferably have an in-state or Northwest element, and should not be longer than 800 words unless you are otherwise given the go-ahead for longer writing. News reportage will be given preference over opinion submissions. Be aware that your submission, if printed, will likely be somewhat edited and possibly very much shortened. If you are not comfortable with this, please do not submit articles to us.

Advertisements: Publicize your progressive product or service. Deadlines for reserving space for an advertisement are the 15th of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Ad images should be received with payment by the 25th of the same months. There are discounts for multi-issue ads and non-profit ads. The standard single-issue ad rates are as follows: Full page \$360, half page \$200, quarter page \$110, eighth page \$60, sixteenth page \$35, business card \$25. Back page text ad is 25 cents per word, minimum \$30 for six issues (one year).

# When Corporations Count Your Votes

It's naive to assume what you cannot verify

BY RICHARD BORKOWSKI

I was taught by my mentor when I worked for a European consulting firm to never assume anything when working on a project. He said to verify every possible assumption, even if it seems reasonable. After attending an elections conference several years ago in Portland, I questioned my assumption that my vote was being counted correctly.

I discovered there was no way I could see how votes were counted because they are counted on computerized machines with secret software. Secret vote counting must end and it's up to an outraged public to stop it.

A piece of Federal legislation, HR811 was created to try to fix some of the problems in the 2002 Help America Vote Act, which ushered the way for the voting machines being used today. HR811 would make things worse by reaffirming the notion that corporate vote counting is acceptable. Let's check that assumption. Should we trust corporations with our vote counting?

One doesn't have to look very far to see instances of corporations putting profits over public good. A 2006 article in USA Today describes a report that says the chromium industry manipulated data about the health hazards of hexavalent chromium. Some workers who assumed they could trust their employers became sick and died. This story was the basis for the docu-drama movie *Erin Brockovich*.

The Enron Corporation clearly showed that when public officials trust corporations, they will take advantage of the public with wild abandon. Public officials trusted Enron and thousands of utility workers lost their pensions and ratepayers footed the bill to the tune of billions of dollars.

A 2001 article published by the Free Lance-Star (Virginia) explained how gas dealers were able to fool inspectors because they knew how the audits of their gas pumps were conducted. The inspectors tested the pumps at 1, 5 and 10 gallon marks. However, the gas pumps were rigged by the gas station owners to beat this audit by dispensing accurately at the 1, 5 and 10 gallon amounts but not at other amounts. Inspectors eventually tested at different amounts like 6 and 9 gallon marks and found that the pumps shortchanged consumers by as much as 30%.

Once again, trusting that a company will put public interest before profit is a very bad assumption. Even trusting audits is a bad assumption because, as the gas inspectors found, audits can be easily foiled if you know how they're conducted.

Why do public officials assume they can trust corporations when there is no evidence to support such an assumption?

There are two cases that illustrate what a precarious predicament our elections are in. In a 2006 Republican primary in Pottawattamie county, Iowa, the county's elected auditor Marilyn Jo Drake noticed that the longtime county Recorder, John Sciortino was being beaten by Oscar Duran, a student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The county was using new computers to count the absentee ballots. Drake announced that she suspected problems in the absentee vote counting.

Eventually the county's board of supervisors voted on an emergency approval for a hand count of the entire election. The incumbent Sciortino won in a landslide in the hand recount. The only thing that prevented a fraudulent result was an observant auditor and a trustworthy board of supervisors. What if an unknown UW student ran for King County Executive and got more votes than Ron Sims. Would that be viewed as victory for the underdog or questioned as suspicious?

The second case is a legal battle in Snohomish county that has been fought since 2004 over voting machines made by Sequoia. The facts of the legal matter state that the vote was not a razor thin win in the

Governor's race but rather a more comfortable 8,000 vote margin for Gregoire that was erased by computer vote shifting.

The same problem that happened in Iowa may have happened in Snohomish county. Sequoia lawyers have argued their software is "absolutely protected." In other words, the source code will never be disclosed. Concerned citizens need to accept this fact and push for the elimination of secret software from our elections.

Next time you go to vote, remember that gas dealers were able to successfully fool state regulators because they wanted to make a few extra bucks. The only way to eliminate the problems with secret vote counting is to eliminate secret vote counting entirely. Assuming we can ever write legislation to have transparent elections with secret vote counting is a poor assumption indeed.

*Richard Borkowski of Seattle is a computer professional and blogs about voting issues at [strongdemocracy.blogspot.com/](http://strongdemocracy.blogspot.com/)*

## References:

"Accuracy at the Pump," by Kelby Hartson Carr, Free Lance-Star 5/31/2001,  
[www.fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2001/052001/05312001/296679](http://www.fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2001/052001/05312001/296679)

**more election coverage on p9**

**Donation checks benefiting the WA Free Press of \$100 or larger are tax-deductible if made separately to Earth on the Air Independent Media, a 501(c)3 alternative media umbrella group. See page 11 for details.**

THE PEOPLE'S COMIC

BY DAVID LOGAN



[www.thepoolestcomic.com](http://www.thepoolestcomic.com)

## Don't Miss The Political Cartoon Art Show

featuring at least a few stalwart WA Free Press cartoon contributors, such as George Jartos, Andrew Wahl, John Ambrosavage, and perhaps even a couple others!

at the ART INSTITUTE OF SEATTLE

2323 Elliott Ave, Seattle 98121  
(near the waterfront, just north of Downtown)

**SHOWING NOW THROUGH  
MARCH 31, 2008**

gallery hours are M-Th 7a-8p, F 7a-5p, Sa 9a-2p

## The Free Press needs your support...

# Subscribe

### NO JUNKMAIL FEAR

The *Free Press* will not sell your mailing address to others. We hate junkmail too!

I want to be a *Free Press* Sustaining Contributor. Here's  \$200  \$100  \$60  \$30  \$15  \$5. This includes a basic one-year subscription. Donations sent with this form are not tax-deductible. (Donations of \$100 or larger are tax-deductible if made separately to our 501(c)3 media umbrella group. See notice on page 4 for details).

I only wish to give a donation. Do not send me a subscription.

Here's \$16 for a basic one-year domestic subscription (6 issues)  \$12 low-income

\$23 institutional or international  Free to prisoners (include institution name)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ If this is a renewal, please check here:

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you pick up the *Free Press*? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to volunteer? (if so, please include phone # and email) \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: Washington Free Press  
Send to WFP, PMB #178, 1463 E Republican St, Seattle WA 98112.  
For more info, email [WAfreepress@gmail.com](mailto:WAfreepress@gmail.com)

Please also send my friend or relative a \$10 gift subscription

(offer valid for new and current subscribers,  
attach any extra addresses)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Spread  
the news  
Send a  
Gift Subscription!

## Subscribers

Please send us your address change if you move. Contacts are on page 2.

# taxation

## GRANDMA'S GROCERY MONEY TO FUND SONICS' FAT-CAT SKY BOXES

Seattleites said no, but Oklahomans say yes

### OPINION BY WANDA JO STAPLETON

At least South Oklahoma City voters were not misled by a recent sales tax election aimed at bringing the Seattle Super Sonics to Oklahoma City. As a result, the 40 predominantly blue-collar precincts in South Oklahoma City soundly defeated the extra sales tax by 56-to-44 percent, though the election passed city-wide.

The mayor mounted a disinformation campaign, funded by several hundred thousand dollars, which said "your sales tax won't go up" and blackmailed us by declaring "if we don't fund it, they (the Seattle Sonics) won't come."

Now the many will fund the few through a new sales tax for 18 months, which will raise about \$150 per average Oklahoma City resident.

What we have is a massive transfer of money from the poor and middle classes to the super rich owners of the Seattle Super Sonics. These owners want to fancy up a practically new city stadium building with luxury sky-boxes, rooftop gardens and more.

Funding the "fancying" will be those least able to bear it – poor people who will be forced to pay more for groceries, utilities, and other necessities. The immorality of this funding is shameless, especially in Oklahoma: one of the five worst states in America for hunger, a state where one in five of our children is at risk of going to bed hungry. (Oklahoma Task Force on Hunger, December, 2007 Report)

*Wanda Jo Stapleton resides in Oklahoma City and is an educator and author.*

## What is the Washington Free Press?

This paper is an effort—by many individual writers, artists, and editors—to bring to you information that often goes unreported in the corporate media (to see examples, just read this issue!). In a sense, this paper is a sort of childhood dream-come-true of what journalism *should* be: news in the public interest and opinion from the heart. This paper is a volunteer operation in which no one is making a profit or bowing to commercial pressures. It is not distributed in newsstands, but is instead distributed by volunteers who want to get underreported news out to their neighborhoods. This paper is not aligned with any political party or other specific interest, and you'll probably find articles written by middle-of-the-road muckrakers, by Chomskyites, by traditionalists, and by generally unclassifiable individuals, as long as they write accessibly and with a spirit of public and planetary betterment. This paper is almost entirely dependent on you—the appreciative reader—for its existence, as there are always bills to pay for printing, mailing, and supplies. We thank those who continue to help over the years, and we ask that others please also help us get the news out by subscribing and donating to the paper, in order to help spread commitment to and best wishes for a better world.

*Doug Collins, coordinating editor*

# The Income Tax: Do We Have to Pay It?

BY KATHLEEN MURPHY

*Editor's note: although many people may associate anti-tax sentiment with Republican political platforms, it's good to keep in mind that some progressives, especially war resisters, also have a long history of criticism of taxes. Although I personally like the feeling of knowing that the tax I pay goes to roads, libraries, education and social programs, the fact is that much of our federal spending - perhaps half - goes to military, wars, and empire. And, as the below article points out, our current taxes are sucked up immediately by national debt due to a spendthrift and largely misguided political system. In this light, I think it's very necessary - regardless of ideology - to be open-minded about criticisms of our current modes of taxation, and about ideas for revamping the way we fund our government. On the other hand, it's still true that if you don't pay your taxes, you'd better be prepared to spend a lot of time in court, and possibly in jail.*

*"People say we need the income tax to fund government. Well if that's true then how did we fund government from 1776 to 1913?" – Peter Gibbons, tax attorney*

**T**his time of year, we constantly hear about the income tax. So much so that it's no wonder we believe that it's "obviously against the law" not to pay. How is it possible to believe otherwise?

Well, consider these facts from the fascinating 2006 documentary America: Freedom to Fascism, by Aaron Russo.

In 1894 Congress tried to enact an income tax and the Supreme Court called it unconstitutional.

In 1913 the income tax was attempted again through the 16th Amendment (which is what the IRS uses to justify their existence today) but the Supreme Court said "the provisions of the 16th Amendment conferred no new power of taxation." Even the New York Times (25 Jan 1916) admits, "In substance, the [Supreme] Court holds that the 16th Amendment did not empower the Federal Government to levy a new tax." And, as recently as 2003, the U.S. District Court Judge, James C. Fox, states "If you... examined [the 16th Amendment] carefully, you would find that a sufficient number of states never ratified that amendment." (For further info on income tax and Supreme Court decisions, see <nontaxpayer.org>, <GiveMeLiberty.org>, and <AmericanFreePress.net>.)

In short, many sources assert that there is no law requiring citizens to pay tax on their labor earnings, and "income" is not defined anywhere in the Internal Revenue Code. Also, according to Constitutional Law professor Edwin Viera, "Income' means corporate profit, not wages or labor." And some say there is no valid law requiring a person to file a 1040 (because title 26 of the IRS code is not in compliance with the Supreme Court).

It is also assumed that all our income taxes go to government. But, as tax attorney Peter Gibbons points out in Russo's film, "100% of what is collected is absorbed solely by interest on the federal debt. All individual income tax revenues are gone before one nickel is spent on services tax payers expect from government."

Now, the U.S. Constitution states "a direct tax must be apportioned," which means "to divide equally among the people." Obviously that is not what is happening if it's just being used to pay the interest on the federal debt.

To understand more about the federal debt, just look to the Federal Reserve Act, also passed in 1913.

The Federal Reserve Act was passed during Christmas 1913 when most of the Senators were on vacation. Despite its name, the Federal Reserve is a private bank, and does not even disclose the names of its owners to anyone. Through the Federal Reserve Act, the American government has been borrowing money and paying fees on it ever since. Although the American government has the authority to make such lending interest-free, it has not done so since 1913.

Abraham Lincoln preferred interest-free and he said, "The government should create, issue, and circulate all the currency. Creating and issuing money is the supreme prerogative of government and its greatest creative opportunity. Adopting these principles will save the taxpayers immense sums of interest and money will cease to be the master and become the servant of humanity."

Only the "Republocrats" and the "Demoblicans" who make up the majority of the members of Congress know why they continue to let the Federal Reserve exist.

### So how did a dollar come to be worth four gold pennies?

In the past people were able to take their receipts, the paper money, to the bank and get the real money, gold, in exchange. This limited the amount of money that could be printed, thereby protecting the purchasing power of your savings. As Alan Greenspan said, before he went to work for the Federal Reserve System, "In the absence of the gold standard, there is no way to protect savings from confiscation through inflation. There is no safe store of value... [Gold] stands as a protector of property rights." (Alan Greenspan from Gold and Economic Freedom)

Today, as Congressman Ron Paul (R - Texas) points out in Russo's film, "Nobody knows what happened to the gold at Fort Knox. Congress ignores their own responsibility of oversight over the Federal Reserve's control over the nation's gold."

Thomas Jefferson prophetically warned, "Paper is poverty... it is only the ghost of money and not money itself... I sincerely believe the banking institutions having the issuing power of money are more dangerous to liberty than standing armies.... If the American people ever allow the banks to control the issuance of their currency... the banks and corporations that will grow up around them will deprive the people of all property, until their children wake up homeless...."

So if you are ever a juror on an income tax case please be sure to ask the judge to show the statute that allows the government to tax the wages of the American people. As documented by Aaron Russo's IRS/Federal Reserve film, the IRS has been losing many of their cases against people who don't pay income tax due to the jury's realization that there are no income tax laws that anyone can point to. The IRS did win one case largely due to the judge telling the defendant, Irwin Schiff, "I will not allow the law in my court room" when Schiff tried to inform the jury about the Supreme Court's decisions against the income tax. The jury never knew there were no income tax laws and Irwin Schiff was sent to jail.

Unfortunately these days, with George Bush's unconstitutional removal of habeas corpus, the government can jail you for life without charges, without a trial, and without a lawyer. With this in mind, I wonder how sports fans can go to games and listen to the national anthem, especially the part about "land of the free, home of the brave," without wincing a little. What kind of "free" and "brave" people would allow habeas corpus to be removed? And without this, what "freedoms" are there left to brag about? How is our proud American flagwaving any different from Nazis proudly waving their swastika flags?

Noam Chomsky put it well when he said, "Our role, as citizens of a free society, is not to give grades for performances, but to change and improve what we think is wrong. There will always be plenty of people to sing praises to themselves and I don't see a lot of point in joining them" (26 Nov 2003 Washington Post Newsweek Interactive). Yes, neither do I. Problems do not go away when we ignore them, they just get worse. We must keep in mind that freedom to do evil is not the same as freedom from evil. We are perfectly capable of ending this nightmare of false democracy and turning it into a real democracy right now, once and forever! Shame on us for not doing so yet and allowing things to get this bad.

*Kathleen Murphy is from Seattle. Two of her favorite books are Burning All Illusions by David Edwards and Exposing the Constitution and Other Illusions by Jerry Fresia, both published by South End Press. She also recommends The Money Masters, a documentary film on the entire history of the banking industry. For more info, see <themoneymasters.com>.*

## LEFT BANK BOOKS



92 Pike St in the  
Pike Place Market  
206-622-0195  
M-Sat 10-7  
Sun 11-6  
Used and New

[www.leftbankbooks.com](http://www.leftbankbooks.com) [leftbank@leftbankbooks.com](mailto:leftbank@leftbankbooks.com)  
Worker Owned and Operated Collective Since 1973

# Gentrification 101

BY BARBARA MOREY

O rnametal grasses line the anticipated light rail path. New condos and costly apartment buildings in designer earth tones replace the rundown houses that lined the street just last year. Tall wooden fences surround the few recently renovated houses that remain in the old neighborhood. The new 65-million-dollar school facility is proudly under construction, even though two other public school buildings stand vacant within a few blocks.

The small family businesses, ethnic groceries, check cashing centers, and Dollar Stores appear less frequently along the modern-feeling, curving drive. Young middle-class couples and well-off singles frequent the boutique shops and fitness centers. Starbucks pops up every other block. The parks are still there, but they sport well manicured gardens and lawns: no more sand lots or vacant properties with kids playing marbles and congregating on a hot summer day. Those old Volvos have disappeared and been replaced by SUVs. Some call it "urban renewal", but those who were displaced to create all of this development have another name for the changes: "gentrification."

So what is gentrification anyway? It can best be described as the displacement of low-income and working-class communities – often Black, Native American, or Latino families – as housing, retail, and recreation are revamped for new middle- and upper-middle-class residents.

Here's how it works.

Public sector policies are developed to encourage revitalization of deteriorating neighborhoods. To increase the tax base and attract business investors, incentives are created that provide tax abatements, below-market financing and other inducements.

New economic interest in the region drives up property values and real estate taxes. Equity sky-rockets, doubling or tripling. The land on which the declining buildings stand – near public transportation, the expressway, and the water – is an enormously valuable commodity.

In most urban areas, only about one-quarter of the residents in these targeted neighborhoods are homeowners, and many are elderly or low-income. Approximately three quarters of the population are renters. Most of the businesses are small, family-owned operations, check cashing centers or high-priced gas stations.

Tenants of previously affordable rental housing are evicted and required to move so that the buildings can be razed or renovated into up-scale, market-rate rental units or converted to condominiums. The lowest income renters are forced to compete for an ever-decreasing supply of affordable rental housing.

Low-income families and communities of color must relocate in order to find housing that they can afford; and they swell the ranks of the fundamentally invisible victims of gentrification.

Existing homeowners, particularly the elderly and others living on fixed incomes, begin to lose their homes because of sub-prime mortgage re-financing, increased real estate taxes and assessments for "improvements" that are being completed to serve the anticipated gentrification of the area. Their houses are quickly snapped up by real estate investors and developers. Some families which have lived in their home for over twenty years, even their whole lifetime, become the next victims.

Gentrification may bring some early benefits. Tax revenues increase and land owners enjoy growing equity. Local businesses may initially profit from a higher-income customer base; but over time, the Mom and Pop stores cannot compete with the designer label and boutique stores that materialize in small elegant strip malls. Starbucks, Whole Foods and other non-union, gentrified chain stores move into the area.

With increasing rents for their commercial properties, small local store owners also succumb to gentrification and go out of business at alarming rates.

Is the city better off? Is the neighborhood improved by these developments? What happens to those who have been disenfranchised? What is the cost to society?

When families move from their gentrifying community to a more affordable neighborhood, they frequently must leave the schools where they have formed relationships and a support network with other parents and students. The neighborhood schools in the poorer community to which the families re-locate, are frequently sub-standard. These low-performing schools are already over loaded with a disproportionate number of students receiving free or reduced lunches, the indicator of poverty.

Both parents in most households have to work, and often have two or more McJobs. Children become latch-key kids. Transportation to places of employment is more difficult and may result in unemployment.

Overcrowding occurs as the demand for affordable housing creates competition for the available units. Homelessness becomes a reality for previously stable families. Crime increases. The neighborhood is no longer a community, but becomes a ghetto distinguished by both race and class.

And the wealthy elite sit sipping their lattes unaware that they enjoy their privilege at the expense of the powerless members of society.

*Barbara Morey is an education advocate and semi-retired educator living in Seattle with her multi-cultural family, including a mutt dog, Sunny.*

## The Junk Stops Here

Are you tired of giving out your personal address, and getting entered on ceaseless junkmail lists? We are too.

That's why we at the *Free Press* have never sold or transferred our subscriber list to any other organization.

Help us keep junk-stopping progressive local journalism alive and well in Washington by subscribing on page 3.

economy

## AS PULP GOES, SO GO SUBSCRIPTIONS

**A**t the WA Free Press, our standard subscription rate has been \$16 for many years. But print costs are increasing now due to the price of wood pulp. Also, our postage costs have considerably increased over the past few years. As a result, the price of a subscription will probably soon have to rise a couple bucks.

Subscriptions are only about half the money we receive. The other half comes from donations, from subscribers who kick in extra with their subscriptions. Since there is no "price" for these, we can't raise it, but only say, "Thanks for making this paper possible."

By the way, we sell a few ads. We're happy to run ads that have a progressive orientation, but we do not actively pursue selling them. They are a minor part of the paper's income, which is almost all from readers like you.

And speaking of pulp, just want to mention that we use 40% recycled newsprint, the maximum practical recycled content for such paper.

Doug Collins

## FORECLOSURE: A VERY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

BY BARBARA E. MOREY

**O**n Friday, Feb. 1, my daughter and I stood on the steps of the Jefferson County Courthouse and waited for the auction of our home. There were no bidders and my house was remanded to a major lender which contracted with a real estate agency to sell it. We were given 20 days to vacate.

I am one of the many families who were enticed into an interest only sub-prime loan with this lender. My house has been in foreclosure, but I have never been given the opportunity to negotiate terms that would save my home. Still, I just can't give up hope.

I am a 60-year-old widow and have owned my home in Port Townsend, WA since 1988. I became medically disabled several years ago, but until last January I was still able to work part time and be a licensed foster parent.

This house has been a home to over 100 people over the past 20 years. My sister, her four children and my daughter and I shared the space when we first moved to town and again when I became seriously disabled and needed care from my family. At one point, my house sheltered domestic violence victims, women with as many as five children. For a long time, portions of the five-bedroom house have been rented to young families and individuals. Ten years ago I became a licensed foster parent and this house became the center of an extended family of teenaged girls.

This is the surrogate home for many of my previous foster children – I have had 37 of them, up to four at a time. And it has remained the permanent residence for my 21-year-old daughter and myself for most of her life.

During the past year, I had a major sewage backup into the lower level of the dwelling, making it uninhabitable for seven months. I also had an unethical contractor who took the insurance money without completing the work on the house. My friends and family have helped me to restore my residence.

I put my home up for sale in August, but we all know how soft the market is right now, and I had no offers.

Starting in early October I tried to negotiate with the lender, but I could never get past the electronic system and the first level debt collector who had no authority to negotiate. I was told in November that my records had been sent to a named person, but there was absolutely no way I could contact her. Even the "underling" could only reach her by email. I called and faxed and called some more, but no negotiator ever called or emailed me. I have a business plan that would use my house as an owner-occupied vacation rental for a long term, stable income. I met with the Economic Development Commission and had them critique it. I sent it to the lender. Still no word.

Finally, in desperation, I contacted my legislators. They discovered that the appointed negotiator was "no

longer with" the lender. Friday, January 25th, I was finally contacted by a negotiator five days after my redemption date. I faxed her 18 pages of the business plan and my financial information and had no response until she called on the day of the auction. At her request, I obtained non-binding signatures from five potential roomers at \$500 per month and faxed it to the lender. No word.

The legislative aide called the supervisor and requested that I at least be given the courtesy of a review. Not a word. My legislator was just informed that the negotiator was on vacation for two weeks, the time left for me to vacate.

I want all mortgage lenders to know that there is a face and a family, not just a building, that has been effected by their lack of action. I want them to at least review my business plan and make a good faith effort to negotiate with me to save my home. I have paid them over \$42,000 in the past three years in interest only. Don't I deserve the courtesy of negotiation as a return on my investment in them?

I listed my ethnicity in my mortgage application as Native American, which is how I identify. My biological daughter is an enrolled Crow Creek Sioux. I am so little percent that I cannot be enrolled, but her father and one set of grandparents are Sioux. I have identified as Native American most of my adult life, working and participating in the Native American community for many years as an educator and advocate.

Above all, I wonder if there are any other indicators that my lender may be discriminating against people of color in their establishing loans or failure to negotiate with customers.

### Act before it is too late

There are many resources now available to others who are facing foreclosure. A few of them are listed below:

Homeownership Preservation Foundation  
(888)995-4673

HUD-Approved Counseling Agencies in Washington (800)569-4287

NeighborWorks America's National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling (202)220-6313

Washington ACORN, (206)723-5845

Solid Ground's Mortgage Counseling Hotline (206)694-6766 or (866)297-4300.

*Barbara Morey, at age 60, will wear purple and rant at injustice as long as she has a computer and a phone.*

*Editor's note: at last contact, Ms. Morey wrote me that her lender had rescinded - at least temporarily - the sale of her house and was reviewing her business plan. She feels that contacting her legislators may have had some effect in this.*

# MY FIRST JURY TRIAL

BY JOHN MERRIAM

I was sick of law school by 1982. In lieu of attending my last semester, I got credit for working full-time as a (Admission to Practice) Rule 9 Intern at the Seattle-King County Public Defender Association. The PDA was understaffed and, as soon as they figured out I wasn't a whiner, heaps of misdemeanor cases were dumped on me. I was assigned countless shoplifters, drunk drivers and wife-beaters. To add insult to injury, I had to pay full law school tuition for the privilege of working for free at the PDA, if I wanted to get credit and graduate.

After a month or two, it was time for my first jury trial, to be convened in Seattle Municipal Court. My client, "Keith", was charged with misdemeanor Property Damage for kicking a toilet off the wall at the old Seattle city jail on the sixth floor of the Public Safety Building at 3rd & James. Keith had an impressive criminal record and would be incarcerated for some time, with or without a conviction for Property Damage. The PDA was on 2nd & Cherry at the time, so I only had to walk two blocks to the Public Safety Building. I took the elevator to the sixth floor to meet with my new client.

"Why'd you kick the toilet off the wall?" I spoke to Keith on a telephone through thick glass that appeared bulletproof.

Keith was over six feet in height and had wild eyes. Long blond hair and a shaggy beard made him look like Jesus Christ. "I was mad because they took away my TV privileges."

"Wow! You'd better plead guilty. Let me see what kind of deal I can get you."

"No way, man, I know my rights. I want a trial!"

"Trial! What's our defense?"

"I don't know. You're the lawyer. That's your job."

My mind started racing through all the chapters I could remember in my criminal law textbook, but I came up with nothing. "We'll have to use the insanity defense. Kicking a toilet off the wall in front of jailers is insane."

"Huh?" Keith shifted the receiver to his left ear.

"How mad were you that your TV privileges got cut off?" I didn't know much about the insanity defense but I did know there was no money for a psychiatrist and that I would have to wing it.

"I was real mad!"

"Were you so mad that you didn't know right from wrong? Were you treated so unfairly that you couldn't think rationally?"

"Yeah, yeah, that's it!"

"Did a curtain of red lower in front of your eyes and blind you to reality? Were you so angry that you no longer knew what you were doing?"

"Yes! Yes!"

"OK, we'll go with the insanity defense. When I ask you these questions at trial, I want you to give me the same answers—that when you kicked the toilet off the wall you didn't know what you were doing."

"You're the lawyer . . ."

I left the Public Safety Building to return to the 35 other clients whose cases demanded immediate attention. Most of them were or would soon become Keith's cellmates.

The next time I saw Keith was in Courtroom #4 of the Seattle Municipal Court, on the fourth floor of the Public Safety Building, just before a *venire* panel of citizens was herded in.

I hadn't read any books on *voir dire* and had to improvise a technique for jury selection. I came up with a method that was crude and simple: I accepted all jurors who were minorities or who had voted for Jimmy Carter. I didn't have enough peremptory challenges to dispatch all the Ronald Reagan fans, so I reserved my strikes for those *veniremen* who admitted to being Reagan delegates following the Republican caucuses of 1980.

The prosecution was short, to the point, and easy: a turnkey from the Seattle jail told the jury that he saw my client kick the toilet off the wall after being informed that his TV privileges were being cut off. The cub prosecutor rested her case.

"Hah!" I thought. "She doesn't realize that I can negate intent because my client was insane!" I stood up and confidently called Keith to the witness stand.

In jail overalls, Keith ambled up to the bailiff to be sworn in.

"Keith," I asked with what I thought was a leading question, "why did you kick the toilet off the wall?"

"Because they cut off my TV privileges."

That wasn't the answer I was expecting. "How did that make you feel?" I prompted. "Did you know what you were doing when you kicked the toilet?"

"I was pissed! Yeah, I knew what I was doing. I was teaching them a lesson for messing with me!"

"No further questions," I stammered, horrified that my case was starting to resemble a partial birth abortion. "Defense rests, your Honor."

During closing argument I stuck to the insanity defense and came to the uncomfortable realization that some of the jurors were actually laughing at me.

After about 20 minutes of deliberation, the jury came back with a verdict: Guilty.

I looked around for my supervisor, in desperation and despair. She was gone, to deal with her own unmanageable caseload. The PDA had thrown me into the deep end of the pool and I was learning to swim.

law

## TRAVEL WRITER RICK STEVES HOSTS TV SHOW ON MARIJUANA REFORM

FROM THE ACLU OF WA

The American Civil Liberties Union of Washington has launched a multimedia public education campaign on federal and state marijuana laws, their history and effectiveness. Called "Marijuana: It's Time for a Conversation," the campaign includes a fact-filled website, an informational booklet and an innovative 30-minute video hosted by travel writer Rick Steves.

"We spend billions every year and arrest hundreds of thousands of Americans simply for possessing marijuana. We need to ask whether our laws are really working. Are they doing more harm than good?" said Kathleen Taylor, Executive Director of the ACLU of Washington.

"I've traveled throughout Europe and seen how they handle marijuana use and enforcement. I've learned that more thoughtful approaches can work," said Steves. "We need the understanding to go beyond 'hard' or 'soft' on drugs and find a policy that is smart on drugs."

It is estimated that nationally, roughly \$7.5 billion is spent annually for marijuana law enforcement and close to 830,000 Americans are arrested. Ninety percent of these arrests are simply for possession of marijuana. Some 98 million Americans have used marijuana.

"Enforcement clogs our courts and criminal justice system, diverting resources from more serious crimes against people and property," said Taylor. "At the same time, an arrest for just possessing marijuana has a life-changing impact on people. We heard of people losing jobs and financial aid for college, and of patients fearing that they may be unable to get medical marijuana even when their doctors recommend it."

"We think this is one of those times and issues where the public knows things aren't working, people have talked about it privately, but there is little or no public discussion," said the ACLU's Kathleen Taylor. "We intend to engage the public in a discussion. We're excited to see where it goes."

"As a parent of two teens I care deeply about this issue," noted Steves. "I have seen how Europe has approached drug use as a public health issue instead of building more jails. I find it interesting that marijuana use in Europe among both teens and adults is actually less than it is here."

The multi-media campaign features an in-depth website, [www.MarijuanaConversation.org](http://www.MarijuanaConversation.org), and a booklet available free from the ACLU. In addition, Comcast will begin immediately to offer the 30-minute informational program free to subscribers through its On Demand service. Comcast subscribers can see the program by entering 888 on their cable remote, going to Community, and looking for the pro-

Hmm...  
what  
should  
I get  
him?



## Thoughtful Gift Idea



for people who like to think

FROM MARTHA SKEWART

1. Cut out the subscription form on page 3 and fill out the gift section for your friend or family member (this costs only \$10 if you also subscribe).
2. Take this paper and roll it up into a neat cylinder.
3. Put a decorative ribbon around it.
4. Tell the recipient "Happy Birthday" or "Happy Holidays," etc.
5. **We'll send the lucky person a card telling them when their first mailed issue will arrive.**
6. Rest assured you've supported a good cause!

gram in the Community center under "Marijuana: Let's Talk." The program can also be ordered as a DVD through the website.

Efforts are underway to secure time to broadcast the program over local stations.

The program was shot around the United States with leading experts on marijuana laws, their history and effectiveness. Noted New York physician and pharmacologist John Morgan said, "The most dangerous thing about marijuana is to be arrested for its possession or use."

The program was produced by nationally award-winning producer Michael Cuddy with help from Seattle public affairs consultant Blair Butterworth.

## We Need Fishmongers

The WA Free Press is a volunteer publication. We need help from fishmongers, dogcatchers, manicurists and practical jokers to keep the paper alive and out there.

Really! We ask that all volunteers also be current subscribers and help with distribution three times a year. There is also great need for proofreading and mailing help, if you live in the Seattle vicinity.

If you already subscribe, please email or write us at the contacts on page 2. If you are not yet a subscriber, contact us via the subscription form on page 3.

# A WAY OUT OF THE SPOILER DILEMMA

BY STEVEN HILL

With Ralph Nader announcing his candidacy for president, Democrats are fuming and no doubt preparing to use the same legal tricks they used in 2004 to keep Nader off the ballot in many states. Meanwhile, Republicans are cackling with glee.

But Republicans shouldn't cackle too loudly. They also have been hurt by the spoiler dilemma. In fact, the GOP lost control of the U.S. Senate due to Libertarian Party candidates in the states of Montana, Washington, Missouri, Nevada and South Dakota. Many observers believe that Bill Clinton beat George H.W. Bush in 1992 only because Ross Perot drained away enough votes from Bush.

The problem is that the winners of our highest offices are not required to win a majority of the vote, either nationwide or in each state. Without a majority requirement, we can't be certain in a multi-candidate field that the winner will be the one preferred by the most voters. How ridiculous: we can map the human genome, and send an astronaut to the moon, but we can't figure out a way to hold elections that guarantee the winner has a majority of the vote?

Naturally people are having flashbacks to the 2000 election, when George Bush beat Al Gore in Florida by only 538 votes, even though Bush lacked a majority of Florida's popular vote and Ralph Nader won 97,000 votes. A lot is at stake to make sure that the winner this November can legitimately claim the presidency and try and heal a polarized nation. Yet despite the spoiler problem playing out in the 2000 presidential election and in various Senate races, neither Democratic nor Republican Party leaders have done anything to fix this defect of our electoral system.

Fortunately, it's not too late to address this problem. Since the U.S. Constitution delegates to states the method of choosing its Electoral College electors, each state legislature could pass into law — right now — a majority requirement for their state to ensure that whichever candidate wins, she or he will command support from a majority of that state's voters.

We don't even need to do it in every state, since the race will boil down to a half dozen battleground states, including the perennials Ohio and Florida. Rather than asking Nader or any candidate to forego his democratic right to run for political office, the Democratic and Republican leaders could legislate this right now. What are they waiting for? Time is growing short, but it's in the public interest to protect majority rule.

One approach would be to adopt a two-round runoff system similar to that used in most presidential elections around the world and many Southern primaries and local elections in the U.S. A first round with all candidates would take place in mid-October. The top two finishers would face off in November, with the winner certain to have a majority.

But two elections would be expensive and time-consuming, both for taxpayers and candidates. So a better way would be for each state to adopt instant runoff voting (IRV), which accomplishes the goal of electing a winner with majority support, but getting it over in a single election. IRV allows voters to pick not only their first choice but also to rank a second and third choice at the same time: 1, 2, 3. If your first choice can't win in the first count, your vote goes to your second choice, then to the third. The runoff rankings are used to determine a majority winner without any need to hold a second runoff election.

Voters inclined toward Nader or Perot are liberated to vote for their favorite candidate without helping to elect their least favorite.

IRV is used in Ireland and Australia for national elections, in San Francisco, Cary, North Carolina and elsewhere for local elections, and in South Carolina, Arkansas and Louisiana for overseas voters. Interestingly, IRV is supported by John McCain, Barack Obama and Ralph Nader.

Many people are criticizing Ralph Nader for risking a repeat of 2000, but only Democrats and Republicans have the power to change the rules of the game. We've seen this movie before and don't like how it might turn out. It's time for the Democrats and Republicans to produce a new ending by fashioning a fair, majoritarian system for electing our nation's highest offices.

Steven Hill is director of the Political Reform Program at the New America Foundation and author of "10 Steps to Repair American Democracy" ([www.10steps.net](http://www.10steps.net)).

# Narrow Miss for Minor Parties

Bill to expand state ballot access almost succeeds

BY LINDE KNIGHTON, WASHINGTON ALTERNATIVE

A bill that passed the state House and was poised to pass in the Senate would have eased ballot access for minor party candidates in Washington. Originally sponsored by Representative Sam Hunt (Olympia) and Senator Moeller (Vancouver), this bill would have removed the restrictions that currently force minor-party candidates to gather as many as 2,000 signatures at a so-called "nominating convention," restricted to a single address and single day in some cases.

The House version of the bill, HB 1534, passed unanimously, and was in queue to be considered by the Senate, but failed to be heard on the floor due to time limits.

The problems with current law create a situation where few candidates can qualify for the ballot.

The bill was promoted by a coalition of smaller political parties across the political spectrum, including the Progressive Party, the Green Party, the Freedom Socialist Party, the Libertarian Party, the Constitution Party, and the American Heritage Party.

Minor parties worked together to draft the bill, which provided for a slate of candidates on a single petition, the ability for parties to bar non-party members from using a party's name when running for office, a lower number of required signatures for candidates running in rural races, and half-price filing fee on the grounds that independent and minor party candidates are not allowed in the primary race, and so only cost the public half the tax-money other party candidates do.

Many of these policies were actually the law until the "pick-a-party primary" came into effect a few years ago. Minor parties are really just trying to get back to the status they had in 2000.

Minor party heads also discussed adding a new category of political party which would qualify for the ballot by petition if they had several candidates running for statewide office. This is done in several states, so that any party able to gather 2,000 signatures in a single year will become a ballot-qualified party and retain this status as long as any of their candidates get 1% of the vote statewide.

After more than a year of work, Independent parties presented their own version of the bill. Objections from the Secretary of State's office resulted in a much weaker bill.

Historically, all parties had equal access to the ballot in Washington. The People's Party, The Progressive Party and the Farm-Labor Party held many seats from the beginning of the state legislature until the late 1920s. In 1913 the Progressive Party was shy a single vote of being the majority in the state House.

In more recent decades, the blanket primary provided at least a chance for minor party candidates to garner support, even after gathering signatures, but the current pick-a-party primary has resulted in exclusivity, shutting out minor party candidates from primaries and quadrupling the number of signatures required to get on the general ballot. This has made for an extremely hostile environment for minor party and independent candidates.

Coupled with those problems, major news media have refused to cover minor party candidates, thus insuring they haven't got a chance to get the currently required five percent of the vote to become major parties.

Next session in Olympia, minor party heads

elections

Richard Gage, founder of Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth ([www.ae911truth.org](http://www.ae911truth.org)), will present

## 9/11: Re-examining the 3 World Trade Center Highrise "Collapses"

(also known as 9/11 Blueprint for Truth)

IN SEATTLE ON SATURDAY MARCH 22, 2008, 7-10PM  
AT THE MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND INDUSTRY (MOHAI)

Mr. Gage is a degreed and licensed architect from the San Francisco Bay Area and a long standing member of American Institute of Architects (AIA). He questions the official story of the collapse of the three WTC structures; WTC1, WTC2, and WTC7.

Venue Location:

MOHAI, MCCURDY PARK, 2700 24TH AVE EAST, SEATTLE WA 98112-1126 (JUST SOUTH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON)  
FREE PARKING

phone: 206-324-1126, [www.seattlehistory.org](http://www.seattlehistory.org)

Advance tickets \$10 through Brown Paper Tickets, \$15 at door, except \$5 for students with proof of enrollment in a four year college or university.

BUYING OR  
SELLING A  
HOME  
IN SEATTLE?

Tell Michael  
you read this  
ad in the  
Washington  
Free Press

Use Michael Gross as your  
real estate agent. He'll donate  
50% of his commission to  
Washington Free Press!

Michael Gross is an experienced realtor with a social conscience. In the last 15 years he has donated more than \$500,000 to a variety of organizations including:

Nature Conservancy • New Beginnings Shelter • Naral  
Chicken Soup Brigade • Kadima • John Bastyr College  
Women's Funding Alliance • Happy Medium School

He's also a great real estate agent.  
206-323-6960 office 206-999-9969 access

Michael Gross

Lake and company

hope to revive a similar bill, with all the needed changes, and find open-minded members of the House and Senate to introduce it.

For more info or to get involved, email Linde Knighton at <[waprog2@yahoo.com](mailto:waprog2@yahoo.com)>.

# Obama or Clinton

## Who's more likely to confront global warming and other major problems?

BY PAUL ROGAT LOEB

If we ignore global warming much longer, we'll face a world of perpetual disaster, so there's no larger question for presidential candidates than who is more likely to tackle it successfully. Although Obama's and Clinton's positions are similar, he seems far more likely to. The key difference is their ability to mobilize a grassroots base to demand that the necessary changes get passed.

If you look only at the candidate platforms, both Obama's and Clinton's are excellent. John Edwards was the first to come up with a comprehensive plan, but Obama soon did too, followed by Clinton. Both Obama and Clinton focus on renewable energy in their speeches and ads, pledging major incentives and R&D programs for renewables, increased portfolio standards for utilities, and cap-and-trade systems with decreasing limits where permits would be auctioned off, not just given away. Both support green jobs programs to benefit communities. Both talk of continuing to tighten efficiency standards for buildings, vehicles, and businesses.

I wish both Clinton and Obama took firmer stands against nuclear power and liquid coal, but either would offer a strong alternative to our current inaction. Their programs are also both considerably better than those John McCain suggests. While McCain talks a decent line, especially compared to his numerous climate-change-denying Republican colleagues, he equivocates far more on the critical details, supports considerably more modest carbon reduction standards, and this past December abdicated the chance to cast the critical cloture vote and end a Republican filibuster that blocked the recent energy bill's most important provisions. Both Obama and Clinton get the urgency of the issue as much as any mainline American politician who isn't named Al Gore.

But I think Obama is far more likely to pass anything close to the legislation we need, because of his ability to mobilize ordinary citizens. Clinton emphasizes her insider knowledge, her familiarity with process. But in a period when Republicans first prevented Democratic bills from coming to the floor, and then filibustered them if they did, she's mostly been unable to coalesce participants across the admittedly entrenched political divides, unless you count crossing the aisle to support a flag-burning bill or backing the Iraq war. Her track record's no worse than other Democratic Senators, and she did successfully co-sponsor bi-partisan legislation to protect bonuses for wounded veterans and extend family medical leave for wounded soldiers, while introducing a still-in-process bill to improve mental health services for seniors.

But it's a record certainly matched by Obama. In his four-year-briefer tenure, he's secured major Republican support to pass a major transparency bill that publicly lists all organizations receiving Federal funds, how much they've received, and the purpose of their grant or contract. He's passed another that provides resources to seek out and destroy surplus and unguarded stocks of conventional arms – like land mines and shoulder fired missiles – in Asia, Europe, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. And together with Russ Feingold, he played a key role in developing and passing a law that eliminated gifts of travel on corporate jets from lobbyists to members of Congress and required disclosure of bundled campaign contributions.

Even if you ignore his major achievements in the Illinois legislature – like bringing police chiefs and civil liberties advocates together to craft and support a bill providing clear monitoring of police interrogations, and passing a bill extending health care to 150,000 state residents – I'd say evidence of insider ability is a wash.

The critical difference between Obama and Clinton is their potential to encourage ordinary citizens to speak out on the changes that we need. And that will be essential. If you strip away the racial connotations, that's actually the core of the debate over Clinton's claim that LBJ was more critical to the passage of the Civil Rights Act than Martin Luther King. For all that I loathe Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam War, he did stake his entire political capital and massive skill to navigate the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts through Congress – even though he knew it would lose the Democrats the South for a long time to come.

But without the massive citizen movement that put civil rights onto the nation's conscience and at the top of its political agenda, he'd never have taken these stands. When you read books like Taylor Branch's wonderful history of America in the King years, it's clear how much both LBJ and Kennedy viewed the civil rights movement as a politically loaded intrusion on their other agendas. Kennedy did all he could to pressure King and other civil rights leaders not to hold the 1963 March on Washington.

But as the pressure kept building, they finally answered

the movement's call and lent their moral support to it, just as Franklin Roosevelt played a critical role by lending his support to America's resurgent union movement. We'll need a similarly powerful massive movement now – and ideally a president willing to nurture it – to overcome the massive dollars and entrenched political clout of companies like Exxon/Mobil, Peabody Coal, and General Motors.

In that context, there's no comparison between the candidates. Obama evokes the power of citizen movements in every speech he gives. He explicitly challenges ordinary citizens to see themselves as part of a lineage of change, with their own political participation following in the footsteps of America's most fundamental movements for justice. Obama evokes those roots when he talks of slaves and abolitionists who "blazed a trail toward freedom through the darkest of nights," and of "workers who organized; women who reached for the ballot...and a King who took us to the mountaintop and pointed the way to the Promised Land."

Obama explicitly calls for citizens to act beyond the confines of electing him to office. His campaign echoes this call by relying on volunteers to organize themselves, take their own initiative, and find common strength in connecting with each other. The campaign provides materials, talking points, and video images, and is extraordinarily organized in ensuring that every critical precinct gets walked and every key household gets called.

They learned the rules of the Texas caucus and Pennsylvania delegate systems, for instance, while the Clinton camp was reduced in the case of Texas to complaining and threatening lawsuits. It even failed to file a full slate of Pennsylvania delegates.

Yet Obama's campaign has also sacrificed a significant amount of control over precisely how their volunteers reach out once they're engaged. In my home state of Washington, operations were run for months by an entirely volunteer group that included several former Bush and Ross Perot supporters in key roles, people who'd been disillusioned by disasters like Iraq, and then inspired by Obama's words. Their Ohio volunteer phone script, for instance, offers a standard summary of issues to raise, but also explicitly encourages volunteers to talk about their specific reasons for participating. The campaign has also continually helped connect ordinary citizens with each other, consistent with Obama's years as a community organizer and then as a lawyer representing these same grassroots organizations. Because these new connections are created in a way that's likely to last past the election, they'll make these new participants part of an independent base for change that can both help Obama pass key legislation on issues like climate change, and press him to act more strongly when he compromises unduly.

Clinton's campaign, by contrast, has been top-down and controlled from the start, giving local campaigners far less latitude. Initially, she was praised for keeping everyone on message and on a short leash. As her seemingly inevitable lead began to shrink, she's switched to attacking Obama's rhetoric and experience, dismissing his waves of new supporters, and in her most recent ad, evoking Cheney-style fear tactics about who will be in the White House when the phone rings at 3am.

As an entrenched symbol of loathing to the political right (in a recent Mike Huckabee speech, his lines attacking Hillary got more applause than anything else he said), and whom down-ticket Democrats are terrified of seeing head the ticket in conservative states, she's unlikely to build the overwhelming majority we need to help shift our economy's entire energy base.

I'd love to see America's climate change politics approach Europe's, where conservatives like East Germany's Angela Merkel have taken the lead on many efforts and even Nicolas Sarkozy just posed proudly with Al Gore after passing a major French climate initiative. When I met the environmental minister from the conservative party that runs Denmark, she described taking visiting Republican Senators together with climate scientists to see the melting Greenland ice caps. "You're a conservative. I'm a conservative," she said. "I don't understand why the US isn't participating and leading on this issue."

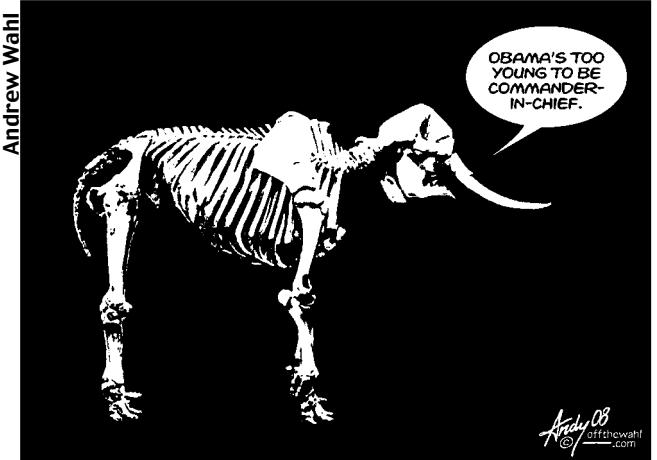
But we haven't. We couldn't get even a handful of Senate votes for the Kyoto Treaty. American oil and coal companies like Exxon/Mobil and Peabody have spearheaded the international funding of climate change deniers. Our level of popular denial remains greater than citizens of countries like France, Great Britain, and even Brazil and China, with the latter also passing more stringent automobile fuel standards.

Whoever wins the Presidency, we'll need to mobilize more, not less, to see the changes we need. But on an issue this overwhelming and potentially terrifying, we'll need leaders who can help inspire people to take the leap of faith of acting whether or not they know their actions will suc-

ceed. Because as Jim Wallis of the religious social justice magazine Sojourners has said, "Hope is believing in spite of the evidence, and then watching the evidence change."

If I look at both Obama's record and his campaign, I see someone who understands the critical role of citizen movements and works to build them as a force capable of creating major change. That's what we've needed to address the major challenges of the past. It's what we'll need to address this ultimate crisis we've created through the combination of technological inventiveness and short-focus blindness. We need a movement-building approach for global climate change—and for all the other crises America's next president will inherit from Bush's disastrous reign.

*Paul Rogat Loeb is the author of *The Impossible Will Take a Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear*, named the #3 political book of 2004 by the History Channel and the American Book Association. His previous books include *Soul of a Citizen: Living With Conviction in a Cynical Time*. See [www.paulloeb.org](http://www.paulloeb.org) To receive his articles directly email [sympa@lists.onenew.org](mailto:sympa@lists.onenew.org) with the subject line: subscribe paulloeb-articles*



## WHY THE TIERS?

BY JIM SULLIVAN

Why are some U.S. presidential primary candidates referred to as being "top tier"? Who in the electoral process under the U.S. Constitution gets the right to decide and/or designate that a qualified candidate should be tiered, or put at one level or another? The fact is, no one has the constitutional right to send any candidate to the second tier, in other words, to the back of the bus! Only an American citizen can make that decision with his or her primary vote.

We all know, however, that the print and broadcast media have taken it upon themselves to designate a particular candidate to one tier or another. And we're not talking here about minority party candidates. They, by the way, don't need to be denigrated as second tier candidates, either.

Media must think it has the right to dismiss lesser-known major party candidates. But anyone that the media designates as a second tier candidate is immediately handicapped in the presidential race. That's because the voting public, being sports-minded, will think that this candidate is, in so many words, a second-stringer or bench warmer. So the voter no longer considers such a person as a viable first-rate candidate. Thus, even without a fair fight, this second tier candidate has already lost his or her primary campaign for the U. S. presidency. This is patently unfair and, what's more, downright un-American!

Every major, and minor, party candidate who meets the U.S. Constitution requirement for the presidency (minimum age and U.S. birthplace, for example) should be so designated and called a viable candidate. No one should be put on a tier.

Complicit with the media in this rush to give tier-level designations is, not surprisingly, the better known two or three candidates themselves. Being first tier gives them more cachet with the voters. The fact is, these candidates, like celebrities everywhere, are known merely for being known and for little, if anything, else. It does not indicate that they are more capable, intelligent, honest, or possess better ideas.

There's nothing inherently wrong with the media acknowledging that a person is better known. But certainly that should be small potatoes to voters when deciding on a worthy candidate. Who has the best ideas, plans to implement, and integrity ought to count much more with the public. Those attributes will show through in the crucible of political debate, from public pronouncements and speeches, and from the transparency of their records in political, public, or other responsible office. Reporting accurately is truly where the media can be most helpful.

So, all remaining announced Republican seekers of the presidency should be first tier candidates, and the same goes for the Democrats.

# Republican New Hampshire Legislator Wants Bush and Cheney Impeached and Prosecuted

BY DAN DEWALT

In a packed hearing room on Feb 19th, under a carved wooden sign reading "Live Free or Die", the New Hampshire House committee of State-Federal Relations and Veterans' Affairs heard testimony on Representative Betty Hall's HR 24, which calls on the U.S. Congress to begin impeachment hearings for George W. Bush and Dick Cheney.

What was most notable about the four straight hours of testimony was not that opponents of the resolution could only muster two people willing to testify against it, both Republican stalwarts using selected excerpts from Jefferson's parliamentary manual or from the bill itself, whose arguments were embarrassingly empty.

It was not that Kris Roberts, the committee chair, had taken this hearing seriously enough to have researched the law, history and nuances of the subject, and that he used this to inform the proceedings in a reasonably fair manner.

It was not the fact that after the hearing ended, several pro-impeachment witnesses were approached by committee members and thanked for their clarity and useful testimony.

It was not even the novelty of the interjections by one committee member that would periodically steer the conversation abruptly into Rockefeller/Trilateral Commission territory.

The most remarkable moment came late in the afternoon when Republican House member Steve Vaillancourt strode into the room to testify. After passing out copies of the second chapter of Patrick Buchanan's "Day of Reckoning" as supporting evidence, Vaillancourt opened his remarks quoting "fools rush in where wise men fear to tread", and it sounded like a set up to condemn a rush to impeach. But instead he said that Betty Hall is neither fool nor wise man, but is a model of courage and that her impeachment resolution should be supported.

And then the fun began.

Member Vaillancourt then gave a short history lesson, telling the committee that until Bush/Cheney, America had never engaged in an offensive war [sic.], and pointing out that the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Reagan "doctrines" had all been based on defense and had not been offensive in nature. Warming to the subject, he delved into the ramifications of Bush/Cheney's actions, saying that their reckless foreign policy has been anti-American, unconstitutional, and ruinously costly to the nation.

He was fairly thundering by the time that he pronounced that not only should Bush and Cheney be impeached, but also they should be tried as war criminals in a Nuremberg style trial for crimes against humanity. He flatly stated that the war in Iraq has provided grounds for war crimes charges against the President and Vice President. And there was not one word of protest from a single committee member. They may or may not support this resolution to impeach, but there seems to be no one left with a credible argument to defend Bush/Cheney.

Vaillancourt said that he spoke not as a Republican, a New Hampshire citizen or an American, but as a member of humanity. His remarks made a common sense plea for an honest appraisal of our current political situation, for the acknowledgement that we have a duty to act as a decent and responsible people, and that principle be the governing factor of our government's actions. These are all values that should, and once did, cut across party lines. If the current political parties have forgotten this, and become so degraded as to allow the lawlessness and criminality of this administration to go unchecked, the people have not.

And at that hearing the people had their chance to speak. One member of the committee remarked that she had never before seen such a wide range of viewpoints as represented by the witnesses, to be so united on one issue.

After deliberation the next day, loyalty to party leadership proved a stronger pull than reasoned argument, for five committee members voted to recommend the bill, with eleven voting against. Now facing an uphill battle to get it passed in a full House vote in March, Betty Hall was still encouraged by the committee hearing and vote. She has received much more support for this resolution than she did with a similar effort last year, and is already working to get grass roots supporters out between now and the vote to get their legislators' attention.

If the grass roots continue to pour out as they did on Tuesday, and if there were a few more politicians like Steve Vaillancourt and Betty Hall, we might see things

politics

## John Jonik's Baby Bush Retrospective

Here is a collection of cartoons on the reign of George II, by cartoonist John Jonik. Jonik hopes that they become stale and outdated after this November's election. Let's cross our fingers! More on page 15.



begin to change. It's instructive to remember that some politicians who are now leading the charge for impeachment did not want to talk about it only a few short months ago. The spotlight is now on the New Hampshire House, the third largest deliberative body on the planet, and arguably one of the more democratic representative systems anywhere as well. These representatives may listen to an outsider's viewpoint on what to do about the Constitution, but they will be influenced most by the neighbors whom they represent.

The question is, is New Hampshire angry enough and organized enough to convince the legislature to call for impeachment? For those outside of New Hampshire the question is, how can we raise the temperature everywhere else, making it all the more plausible that the Granite State will reach the boiling point.

*This article was originally published at <http://afterdowningstreet.org/node/31214>.*

more Baby Bush cartoons on page 15

# SATELLITE SHOOT-DOWN: NOTHING BUT A STAR-WARS TEST

FROM GLOBAL NETWORK

The Pentagon shoot-down in February of a wayward U.S. military satellite was nothing more than an opportunity to test new Star Wars anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) technology says the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space.

"The Bush administration magnified the risk to justify the testing of new dangerous and provocative offensive space warfare technologies," says Bruce Gagnon, Coordinator of the Global Network, which is based in Maine.

"At the time when we need to be constraining space debris-creating ASAT testing, this test throws open the door to a new arms race in space."

The Strategic Command's (StratCom) high-tech Global Operations Center, buried beneath Offutt AFB in Omaha, Nebraska, played the lead role in coordinating the ASAT test. StratCom now heads all military space operations since merging with the U.S. Space Command in 2002.

"The decision to destroy the American satellite does not look harmless as they try to claim, especially at a time when the U.S. has been evading negotiations on the limitation of an arms race in outer space," a Russian Defense Ministry statement has concluded.

For many years Russia and China have gone to the United Nations General Assembly with a resolution calling for a treaty to ban all weapons in space. The U.S. and Israel have annually voted against the treaty while every other nation in the world supports such a new legal ban on space weapons. The U.S. aerospace industry says that Star Wars will be the largest industrial project in the history of the planet Earth.

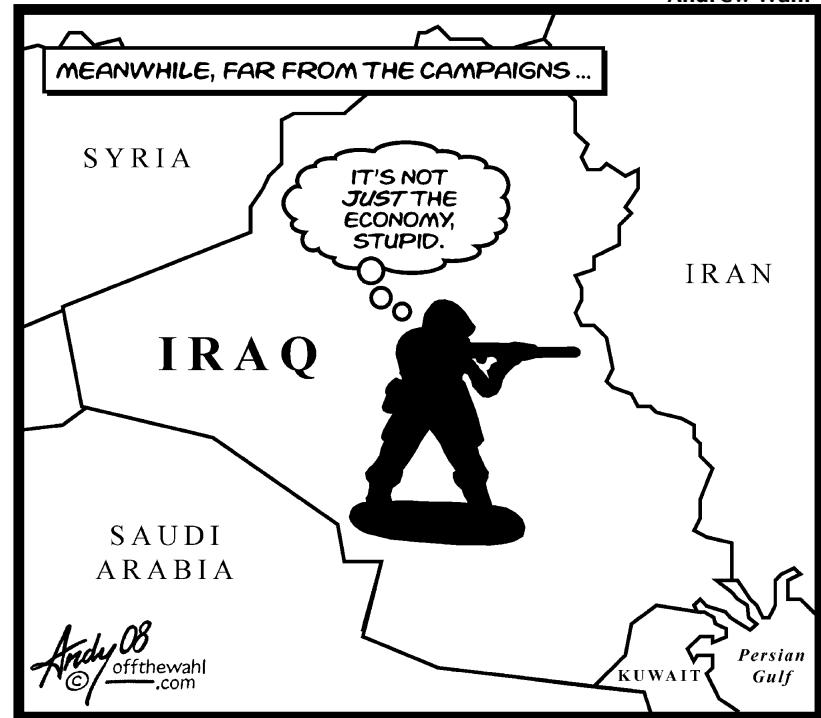
Global Network board member Stacey Fritz, Coordinator of No Nukes North in Alaska, where so-called missile defense interceptors have been deployed, says, "A culmination of events this month reveals the true direction of space weapons technology. China and Russia have formally proposed a new ban on space weapons on the heels of polls showing widespread public support for such a treaty in both the U.S. and Russia. Not only does the U.S. refuse to consider the ban, but also after denying for years that these systems have offensive capabilities, the rogue Bush

administration proposes to demonstrate missile defense's anti-satellite technology. The doors of the Trojan horse are spilling open and the new arms race is on."

Three U.S. Navy Aegis destroyers, outfitted with missile interceptors, fired at the satellite as it fell back to Earth from positions just off Hawaii. These same Aegis ships are now being home ported by the Navy throughout the Asian-Pacific region, giving the U.S. the ability to encircle China's coast. These Aegis ships could give the U.S. the ability to intercept China's twenty nuclear missiles that today are capable of reaching the west coast of the continental U.S. The Pentagon has been war-gaming a U.S. first-strike attack on China, set in 2016, for the past several years. In that attack the Aegis ships would negate China's nuclear retaliatory force by intercepting their missiles in the boost phase.

*The Global Network is made up of more than 140-affiliated peace groups around the world working to halt the nuclearization and weaponization of space. For more information see <[www.space4peace.org](http://www.space4peace.org)>.*

Andrew Wahl



**Do you like your town or neighborhood? Help distribute the WA Free Press there! See notice on p2**

## WAR STATISTICS IN WA AND BEYOND

### FROM WORLD CAN'T WAIT

- Over 250 soldiers with ties to WA State have died in Iraq.
- Taxpayers in Pierce County (Tacoma), Washington paid \$1.2 billion for the cost of the Iraq War through 2007.
- For the same amount of money, the following could have been provided: 182,967 people with health care, 1,083,326 homes with renewable electricity, 6,719 affordable house units, 21,126 music and art teachers, 216, 772 scholarships for university students, 128 new elementary schools, 465,177 children with health care, 134,883 head start places for children.
- Recruiters promise our youth plenty of college money. But the Montgomery GI Bill covers only half the cost of public college and a fifth of the cost of private college.
- 28% of women report being raped while in the service. This is only the reported rapes.
- 75% of Blacks and 67% of Latinos report experiencing racial prejudice in the service.
- Veterans aged 20 to 24 are unemployed at almost twice the rate of their peers who did not enlist.
- US war veterans are twice as likely to commit suicide as ordinary citizens.
- Only 12% of male and 6% of female vets made use of the skills learned in the military.
- Vets are 3 to 5 times more likely to be homeless than non-veteran peers.
- In WA state we have over 6000 homeless vets living on the streets.

## LINK THE OCCUPATION AND THE RECESSION!

Please use the below internet toolkit, Bring the Money Home Now, to get a resolution passed in your city council that calls for an end to funding the Iraq Occupation and a redirection to funding communities and human needs instead! Find it at <<http://afterdowningstreet.org/node/30960>>.

For more info, see <[www.citiesforprogress.org](http://www.citiesforprogress.org)>.

The below order was drafted to imitate similar orders served on military members in Iraq, who are required to serve indefinitely regardless of the duration they signed up for.

## STOP-LOSS ORDER

BY ORDER OF  
THE PEOPLE OF  
THE UNITED STATES

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

FROM: THE PEOPLE YOU SERVE

\* \* \* \* \*

YOU ARE OFFICIALLY INFORMED THAT EFFECTIVE MARCH 12, 2008, ALL LEAVE, VACATION, PASSES AND FAMILY VISITS ARE HEREBY

C A N C E L L E D .

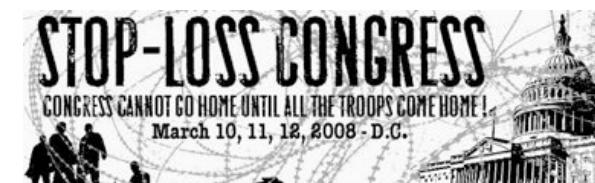
YOU ARE ORDERED TO REMAIN AT YOUR POSTS UNTIL ALL U.S. TROOPS AND "PRIVATE CONTRACTORS" ARE REMOVED FROM IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN, AND ALL THE WARS ARE ENDED.

YOU MAY NOT GO HOME UNTIL ALL THE TROOPS ARE HOME.

WARNING : ANY VIOLATION OF THESE ORDERS WILL BE PROSECUTED TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

# # # # # # # # # # #

For further information, see <[www.stoplosscongress.org](http://www.stoplosscongress.org)> and <[www.youtube.com/stoplosscongress](http://www.youtube.com/stoplosscongress)>. Find your Congressperson or Senator at <<http://capwiz.com/fconl/dbq/officials>> and tell them to stop the war.



# The War Election Media Beat

BY NORMAN SOLOMON

Maybe it sounded good when politicians, pundits and online fundraisers talked about American deaths as though they were the deaths that mattered most.

Maybe it sounded good to taunt the Bush administration as a bunch of screw-ups who didn't know how to run a proper occupation.

And maybe it sounded good to condemn Donald Rumsfeld and George Bush for ignoring predictions that several hundred thousand troops would be needed to effectively occupy Iraq after an invasion.

But when a war based on lies is opposed because too many Americans are dying, the implication is that it can be made right by reducing the American death toll.

When a war that flagrantly violated international law is opposed because it was badly managed, the implication is that better management could make for an acceptable war.

When the number of occupying troops is condemned as insufficient for the occupying task at hand, the White House and Pentagon may figure out how to make shrewder use of U.S. air power – in combination with private mercenaries and Iraqis who are desperate enough for jobs that they're willing to point guns at the occupiers' enemies.

And there's also the grisly and unanswerable reality that Iraqis who've been inclined to violently resist the occupation can no longer resist it after the U.S. military has killed them.

If the ultimate argument against the war is that it isn't being won, the advocates for more war will have extra incentive to show that it can be won after all.

If a steady argument against the war maintains that it was and is wrong – that it is fundamentally immoral – that's a tougher sell to the savants of Capitol Hill and an array of corporate-paid journalists.

But by taking the political path of least resistance – by condemning the Iraq war as unwinnable instead of inherently wrong – more restrained foes of the war helped to prolong the occupation that has inflicted and catalyzed so much carnage. The antiwar movement is now paying a price for political shortcuts often taken in the past several years.

During a long war, condemned by some as a quagmire, that kind of dynamic has played out before. "It is time to stand back and look at where we are going," independent journalist I. F. Stone wrote in mid-February 1968, after several years of the full-throttle war on Vietnam, "And to take a good look at ourselves. A first observation is that we can easily overestimate our national conscience. A major part of the protest against the war springs simply from the fact that we are losing it. If it were not for the heavy cost, politicians like the Kennedys [Robert and Edward] and organizations like the ADA [the liberal Americans for Democratic Action] would still be as complacent about the war as they were a few years ago."

With all the recent media spin about progress in Iraq, many commentators say that the war has faded as a top-level "issue" in the presidential race. Claims of success by the U.S. military have undercut precisely the antiwar arguments that were supposed to be the most effective in political terms – harping on the American death toll and the inability of the occupying troops to make demonstrable progress at subduing Iraqi resistance and bending the country's parliament to Washington's will.

These days, Hillary Clinton speaks of withdrawing U.S. troops, but she's in no position to challenge basic rationales for war that have been in place for more than five years. At least Barack Obama can cite his opposition to the war since before it began. He talks about changing the mentality that led to the invasion in the first place. And he insists that the president should hold direct talks with foreign adversaries.

The best way to avoid becoming disillusioned is to not have illusions in the first place. There's little reason to believe that Obama is inclined to break away from the routine militarism of U.S. foreign policy. But it's plausible that grassroots pressure could pull him in a better direction on a range of issues. He seems to be appreciably less stuck in cement than the other candidates who still have a chance to become president on January 20, 2009.

*The documentary film "War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death," based on Norman Solomon's book of the same name, will be released on video March 25.*

# THE VISION PROBLEM

BY JOEL HANSON

*"I don't need an alternative to capitalism to know that I am an anti-capitalist, and I am going to get rid of it, and I am going to fight against it. I said that in 1969 and I was technically, logically correct. I was morally correct. But I was strategically completely incorrect. And regrettably that is the reaction of the left ever since. And now, when people ask the vision question they are mostly not trying to shut us up. They are instead asking the question because they sincerely want to know what we want. I claim that the absence of a vision is a very big part of why the left is so small." – Michael Albert*

*"I'm not one of those leftists who believe our problems would be solved if only we followed a proscribed set of answers." – Slavoj Zizek*

As the American occupation of Iraq approaches its fifth year, the leftist/anti-war/progressive movement is mired in a strategic crisis. Anti-war sentiment has reached record highs while the number of activists protesting and engaging in acts of civil disobedience is actually declining. Writers Tom Engelhardt, Bill Moyers and others have testified to a collective feeling of hopelessness spreading through American society as the Bush Administration chronically ignores the messages of the disgruntled populace (made via anti-war political demonstrations) and Congressional representatives reluctantly, ineffectually attempt to cut the military's losses in Iraq and elsewhere. However, the principal culprit may be the progressive movement's inability to outline a simple, inclusive political alternative to the status quo.

Indeed, a lack of political vision was immediately evident in Slavoj Zizek's lecture at Bilgi University in Istanbul last November but was compellingly countered in a separate talk given to the Istanbul METU Alumni Association by political activist/columnist Michael Albert a month later. Placed alongside one another, the two lectures depict two different retorts to political injustice. Zizek, who would bristle at being labeled a leftist, unintentionally documents the precise reasons for the Left's fragmentation and subsequent struggle to shape mainstream political discourse. Albert, on the other hand, counters with the outlines of a vision, a political roadmap of solutions to build a movement and affect meaningful change.

The Slovenian philosopher's desultory 90-minute discourse attempted to answer the question "Is it possible to be an anti-capitalist today?" Zizek reviewed Marx's capitalist critique, outlined various activist responses to the capitalist problem, and made a few pithy comments on American culture as he challenged the disturbing assumptions in North American, European, and now Asian society that capitalism and globalization are natural and ideal economic realities. However, his compelling cultural polemic offered no blueprint for initiating political change.

Zizek concluded that one possible avenue to dismantling the current global economic system of exploitation could occur if the slum dwellers in every major metropolis living essentially outside of state control-organized and began a societal transformation that would eventually encompass those millions savagely affected by the inequities of the present one. But pressed to articulate the mechanisms of this process or more specifically how these disparate groups struggling for survival could organize, Zizek admitted, "I don't have the answers... the revolutionary process itself mobilizes people to find their own answers."

Zizek's response immediately generated another vital question: do revolutions just extemporaneously ignite in response to political injustice or do they require the protracted and sometimes painful effort of movement building that Albert advocates? And if it's the former, why hasn't one developed in response to the litany of crimes perpetrated by the Bush Administration over the past seven years?

Zizek's post-lecture question/answer session steered into other domains and I departed early, feeling intellectually energized but spiritually demoralized. The progressive movement, I reminded myself, is really just a coterie of disparate groups with valid political concerns that have failed to unite against common enemies. These organizations are filled with well-read, eloquent individuals who can articulate the precise injustices of the capitalist system. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of activists offering pragmatic approaches to uniting these groups around issues of collective concern and providing the necessary inspiration for these groups to act on their knowledge. More importantly, the people most affected by these economic injustices, the working poor and the shrinking middle class, are fully capable of articulating the problems unequal distribution of wealth, low wages, mind-numbing labor, a

activism

lack of healthcare, restricted access to higher education, insufficient leisure time to nurture creative interests on their own. Do we really need another person to tell us what we already know and then refuse to offer practical solutions? More importantly, don't progressives have to act with a shared vision in mind of the improved society they'd like to live in – even if the vision is achieved via compromise and fraught with ideological limitations? The deficiencies in Zizek's lecture would have been quickly forgotten if Z Magazine co-founder Michael Albert's hadn't inadvertently answered them in a lengthy speech given to the Istanbul METU Alumni Association a month later.

Albert, like Zizek, offered compelling critiques of capitalism but also addressed the most pressing issues affecting activists interested in building movements: 1) "the stickiness problem" – how to attract and keep people working together to bring about meaningful social change, 2) how to counter the pervasive despair in present-day political movements, and 3) what a simple, culturally-inclusive economic vision might look like.

A thoughtful look at American history reveals that moments of great political change were realized when disparate groups of people organized to create sustained political pressure until their leaders on the national, state, and local levels acquiesced to their demands. Think about the year-long Montgomery bus boycott that began in 1955 or the Vietnam War protests of the late 60s to name a couple of contemporary examples. In both cases, the pressure on government became so intense that the benefits of maintaining the existing policy were overshadowed by the political costs of the social disruption caused by the protests. This is precisely the reason why the current war and occupation of Iraq persist.

As Albert explains: "The threat would be if there were growing movements, and if the movements were getting ever more militant, and also ever more diverse in their focus, addressing not just this war policy, but war per se, and moving on to corporations, and to government, and to the structure of society. That trajectory of opposition would be dangerous. Elites would have to stop that threat by stopping the war. So the simple truth is, if the millions of people demonstrating before the war even began had kept demonstrating and most importantly had gotten larger and larger, and more and more militant, and more and more broad in their focus, then the war would have been over a while ago. So the fact that the millions didn't stick with their activism matters. It's why the war persists."

**The principal reason the movement doesn't expand, Albert asserts, is that most activists don't really believe they can change the institutions they're protesting against. And that futility has spread to the general populace.**

Most importantly, many people who are new to the movement don't realize the persistence and patience required to reverse policy on national level. So when a single protest doesn't bring about the end of the war, see **Vision Problem** on page 13

your donation  
can be tax-  
deductible

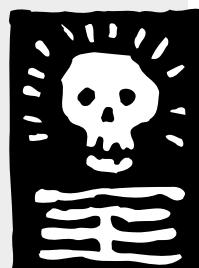
Donate to the Free Press

If you itemize your taxes and you are considering a donation of at least \$100 to benefit the Free Press, it is tax-deductible when you make your check to EOAIM (Earth On the Air Independent Media, a 501(c)3 nonprofit media umbrella group). Your generosity will not only greatly benefit the WA Free Press, but will also assist EOAIM with progressive documentary projects. Mail your donation check to WA Free Press at PMB#178, 1463 E Republican St, Seattle 98112. Thanks for your support!

# DO SOMETHING!

**Get active, not radioactive!**

Use this Do Something! Directory to decide how you'd like to make the world a better place.



## OTHER NW REGIONAL PROGRESSIVE WEB CALENDARS

**SEATTLE** [www.seattleactivism.org/](http://www.seattleactivism.org/) and [www.snowCoalition.org/](http://www.snowCoalition.org/), **TACOMA** [www.tacomajph.org/](http://www.tacomajph.org/), **OLYMPIA** <http://olynetwork.com> and [www.OlyFOR.org](http://www.OlyFOR.org), **PUGET SOUND**, Women in Black Vigils (various cities) [www.scn.org/womeninblack](http://www.scn.org/womeninblack), **BELLINGHAM** [www.bellinghampeace.org](http://www.bellinghampeace.org) or [www.revolutionz.org](http://www.revolutionz.org), **EUGENE** Oregon [www.planeteugene.com/peace-events](http://www.planeteugene.com/peace-events), **MONTANA** [www.montanapeaceseekers.org](http://www.montanapeaceseekers.org), **TRI-CITIES** [www.tcfn.org/wcp](http://www.tcfn.org/wcp), Lots of **NEIGHBORHOOD PEACE GROUPS**, see below and [www.snowCoalition.org/contact.php](http://www.snowCoalition.org/contact.php)

**TUES MARCH 18**, and most subsequent 3rd Tuesdays, please phone or check website to confirm, 6:15 p.m., in the cafe at Elliott Bay bookstore in Pioneer Square, S Main St & 1st Ave S, **Seattle**; monthly board meeting of NICA, Northwest INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES Association, a networking and education organization for intentional communities in the Pacific Northwest; info [www.ic.org/nica](http://www.ic.org/nica) or Fred 425-481-8044 [updated 12/2/06]

**WEDS MARCH 19**, and subsequent Wednesdays, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., at the intersection of 104th Ave (The Benson) and the Kent Kangley Rd, 256th St, **Kent**; Bring a cool sign. . **SOUTH KING COUNTY PEACE VIGIL** info Phil Heft 253-631-5789 [updated 7/8/07]

**WEDS MARCH 19**, 2 pm, at Fisher Plaza, 140 4th Ave N, **Seattle**; March 19th NATIONAL DAY OF NON-VIOLENT MASS RESISTANCE! World Can't Wait - Drive Out the Bush Regime and other groups announce No Business As Usual! info and flyers [seattle@worldcantwait.org](mailto:seattle@worldcantwait.org) or [www.worldcantwait.org](http://www.worldcantwait.org)

**WEDS MARCH 19**, and subsequent Wednesdays, 9 pm, on Channel 77 in Seattle/ **King County** and live on the web [www.scantv.org](http://www.scantv.org); Talking Stick, a LOCALLY PRODUCED INDEPENDENT PROGRAM by Mike McCormick with coverage of progressive events and viewpoints; with program TBA. info [talkingsticktv@yahoo.com](mailto:talkingsticktv@yahoo.com) or [www.talkingsticktv.org](http://www.talkingsticktv.org) [confirmed 11/18/07]

**THURS MARCH 20**, 6 - 7:30 pm, at Greenwood Branch, Seattle Public Library, 8016 **Greenwood** Avenue N., Seattle; Learn HOW TO TALK ABOUT ELECTION ISSUES in an effective way! Democracy Conversations: based on George Lakoff's recent book Thinking Points: Communicating Our American Values and Vision. 206-783-1152, [cecile@cecileandrews.com](mailto:cecile@cecileandrews.com) or [www.phinneyecovillage.net](http://www.phinneyecovillage.net)

**SAT MARCH 22**, and subsequent Saturdays, 10 - 11 am, at Bayview Park and Ride, intersection of HWY 525 and Bayview Road, **Whidbey Island**; **SOUTH WHIDBEY PEACE VIGIL**, info <http://whidbeyprn.org/bayview.php> [web confirmed 11/25/06]

**SAT MARCH 22**, 7 - 10 pm, at the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI), McCurdy Park, 2700 24th Ave East, **Seattle**; Richard Gage, founder of Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth ([www.ae911truth.org](http://www.ae911truth.org)) will present 9/11: RE-EXAMINING THE 3 WORLD TRADE CENTER HIGHRISE 'COLLAPSES' Event flyers at [www.911truthseattle.org](http://www.911truthseattle.org) or [www.seattle911visibilityproject.org](http://www.seattle911visibilityproject.org)

**MON MARCH 24**, 7 - 8:30 pm, at REI **Seattle**, 222 Yale Av N., Seattle; Sierra Club's COOL STATE FORUM. CLIMATE CHANGE is real, it's here, and it is quickly becoming the greatest environmental challenge of our time. TRANSPORTATION IN PUGET SOUND, What solutions should we look at to reduce global warming pollution? Free, info 206-378-0114 Ext 308

**TUES MARCH 25**, and subsequent 4th Tuesdays, 7 pm, at **Phinney Ridge** Center, Blue Bldg, Room 6, Seattle; NW BIODIESEL MEETING. Alternating months between special topic and Biodiesel 101, see website for details. info Aaron Kahn [akahn@windermeres.com](mailto:akahn@windermeres.com) or [www.nwbiodiesel.org](http://www.nwbiodiesel.org) [confirmed 2/23/08]

**THURS MARCH 27**, and subsequent 4th Thursdays, 7 p.m., at Holy Family of Jesus Church, 1427 E 40th St., just off Portland Avenue, **Tacoma**; Citizens for Responsible Justice (C4RJ) - Tacoma Support Group for FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF

## ACTIVIST CALENDAR

The calendar entries below have mostly been chosen from Jean Buskin's email Peace and Justice Calendar. To post activism events on her email/web version, send event notices to Jean Buskin at [bb369@scn.org](mailto:bb369@scn.org). To receive updates of the complete calendar, have Ms Buskin add you to her email list by contacting her at the same address, or view her full calendar anytime at [www.scn.org/activism/calendar](http://www.scn.org/activism/calendar).

INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS and any interested person. Come around to the back. We meet in the basement. Sign over basement entrance reads "Indochina Cultural and Service Center."

**FRI MARCH 28**, and subsequent last Fridays, 5:30 p.m., at Westlake Park, downtown, 4th & Pine, **Seattle**; CRITICAL MASS, an organized coincidence of bicyclists who ride around the streets of Seattle en masse. It happens when a lot of cyclists happen to be in the same place at the same time and decide to cycle the same way together for a while. Come join the fun! info <http://students.washington.edu/spiegel/cmass.html>

**SAT MARCH 29**, 1 - 4 pm, at the University Friends Meeting House, at 4001 9th Ave. NE in the U-District, just north and west of the University Bridge, **Seattle**; WAR TAX RESISTANCE WORKSHOP. Nonviolent Action Community of Cascadia, NACC will be conducting a workshop for those interested in War Tax Resistance. We'll discuss history, philosophy, methods, and likely consequences; info <http://seanacc.org> or [nacc@drizzle.com](mailto:nacc@drizzle.com)

**MON MARCH 31**, 6 - 8 pm, at Yesler Community Center, 917 E. Yesler Way, **Seattle**; National ASIAN PACIFIC WOMEN'S FORUM - HUMAN TRAFFICKING Forum. Did you know that Asian & Pacific Islander women represent the largest group of persons trafficked into the U.S.? info Liezl Tomas Rebugio [irebugio@napawf.org](mailto:irebugio@napawf.org) or 206-685-9900

**TUES APRIL 1**, 7:30 p.m., in Kane Hall Room 210, University of Washington, **Seattle**; Jonathan Overpeck, a University of Arizona professor, will talk about "Climate Change, SEA LEVEL AND WESTERN DROUGHT Free for UW faculty, staff and students and \$5 for the general public.

**WEDS APRIL 2**, and subsequent 1st Wednesdays, 6 pm, at **Whatcom** Peace & Justice Center's offices in the Anything Grows building, 100 E. Maple Street, Bellingham; NONVIOLENT DIRECT DEMOCRACY OPEN DISCUSSION GROUP facilitated by local activist Ellen Murphy. info 360-734-0217

**THURS APRIL 3**, 7 - 9 pm, at University Temple United Methodist Church, 1415 NE 43rd St, **Seattle**; Hans von Sponeck, former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations and once Director of the Humanitarian Mission in Iraq and administrator of the Iraq Oil for Food program, will speak on A EUROPEAN PROPOSAL FOR PEACE IN AND WITH IRAQ. info [director@nowi.us](mailto:director@nowi.us) or [iggydog@aol.com](mailto:iggydog@aol.com)

**APRIL 4 - 6**, at Gonzaga University, **Spokane WA**; NORTHWEST FILIPINO AMERICAN STUDENT ALLIANCE (NWFASA) Conference 2008. More than 10 years ago, students from local Washington universities came up with the idea to create an alliance between all the Filipino student organizations in Washington state which became NWFASA. <http://barney.gonzaga.edu/~fasu/>

**SAT APRIL 5**, and subsequent 1st Saturdays, 11 a.m. - noon, on the east side of Bothell Way at the corner of Ballinger Way, **Lake Forest Park**; Lake Forest Park for Peace MONTHLY VIGIL FOR DARFUR. Join us for our monthly vigil to call attention to the genocide in Darfur. All are welcome. Bring signs and banners. info Hallie Condit 206-365-5053 or [hj\\_3246@hotmail.com](mailto:hj_3246@hotmail.com) [added 6/4/07]

**SAT APRIL 5**, and subsequent 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 11 am to 1 pm, at Westlake Park, 4th & Pine Street, Downtown **Seattle**; Vigil to Support Lt. Ehren Watada first OFFICER TO REFUSE TO GO TO IRAQ. info [www.thankyouit.org](http://www.thankyouit.org) or 206-499-1220 or [soldiersayno@yahoo.com](mailto:soldiersayno@yahoo.com)

**SUN APRIL 6**, and subsequent 1st Sundays, 4 - 5 p.m., at the intersection of Park St. & North Bend Blvd. next to the **Snoqualmie Valley** Historical Museum and the Visitor's Center in North Bend; PEACE VIGIL info [rubin51@comcast.net](mailto:rubin51@comcast.net) [updated 3/21/07]

**TUES APRIL 8**, and subsequent 2nd Tuesdays, 6:30 pm, at Marina Park Pavilion on the **Kirkland** waterfront park, on 255 bus route; KIRKLAND PEACE VIGIL meets monthly. We call ourselves "Citizens Along the Lake". info <http://mysite.verizon.net/resuxn0n/citizensalongthelakeforpeace/> or Donna Schill 425-821-5596

**WEDS APRIL 9**, 7 p.m., at Douglass-Truth Branch Library, 23rd & Yesler, **Seattle**; IMMIGRATION, GENTRIFICATION, AND SMALL BUSINESS: A local per-

spective Panel discussion. info Valerie Wonder Immigrant & Refugee Programs Manager, 206-386-4667 or [valerie.wonder@spl.org](mailto:valerie.wonder@spl.org)

**FRI - SUN APRIL 11 - 13**, in **Vancouver, WA**; DEPARTMENT OF PEACE Campaign, NW Regional Conference: "Embracing Possibility: Partnering For Peaceful Solutions". info [www.peak.org/~innercom/ORSDOC.html](http://www.peak.org/~innercom/ORSDOC.html) or [www.thepeacealliance.org/content/view/483/148/](http://www.thepeacealliance.org/content/view/483/148/)

**FRI APRIL 11**, and subsequent 2nd Fridays, Doors open 6:30 pm; film at 7 pm, at Kitsap Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 4418 Perry Avenue NE, **Bremerton**; Second Friday SOCIAL JUSTICE FILM Series; free admission! To arrange childcare or for info [socialjustice@kuuf.org](mailto:socialjustice@kuuf.org) [confirmed 12/24/06]

**FRI APRIL 11**, and subsequent Fridays, 7 - 9:30 p.m., at Keystone Church, 5019 Keystone Pl., West of I-5, just North of 50th, Metro Bus Routes 16, 26 & 44, **Seattle**; Friday Night At the MEANINGFUL MOVIES. info [www.meaningfulmovies.org](http://www.meaningfulmovies.org)

**SAT APRIL 12**, 11 am - 7 pm, at Washington State Convention and Trade Center, 7th and Pike, **Seattle**; Seattle GREEN FESTIVAL 08. info jenny AT greenfestivals DOT org

**TUES APRIL 15**, **Downtown Seattle** Post Office, noon - 1 pm and 5 - 6 pm. Plus Capitol Hill Post Office, 5 - 6 pm, and possibly other times and locations. TAX-DAY LEAFLETTING. Contact Nonviolent Action Community of Cascadia [nacc@drizzle.com](mailto:nacc@drizzle.com) to help out, <http://seanacc.org>

**APRIL 25 - 27**, at Embassy Suites, Downtown **Portland, Oregon**; The Oregon School Boards Association is joined by the school board associations of Idaho, Nevada and Washington in presenting the 2008 Northwest Conference on Strategies for Success: CELEBRATING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSE STUDENTS Northwest Conference, [gmckenzie@osba.org](mailto:gmckenzie@osba.org) or [www.osba.org/leadrshp/ceo/](http://www.osba.org/leadrshp/ceo/)

**FRI APRIL 25**, 7:30 - 9 p.m., at **Phinney Ridge** Lutheran, 7500 Greenwood Ave., North Seattle; The Peaceseekers at Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church invite you to a viewing of Voices in Wartime, a stunning documentary of poems written and NARRATED BY SOLDIERS AND VICTIMS OF WAR which reflects the effects war has on humanity.

**SAT APRIL 26**, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm, at **Phinney Neighborhood Center**, 6532 Phinney Ave. N., Seattle, in the parking lot and lower building; Join your neighbors for a fun and free ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION FAIR, called Green My Ride. volunteer with Jennifer greenmyride@hotmail.com, info [www.greenmyride.info](http://www.greenmyride.info)

**THURS MAY 1**, 6:30 - 8 pm, at Center Park Residence Council, 2121 26th Ave S (entrance on MLK Way), **Seattle**; Meeting of the Michael Randall Ealy Social Justice Foundation, a non-profit organization for the purpose of bringing justice for the death of Michael Randall Ealy, KILLED WHILE IN CUSTODY of the Seattle Police Department, as well as all others who have died while being detained or in police custody; we want to be sure it doesn't happen to anyone else; info [mresjf@yahoo.com](mailto:mresjf@yahoo.com), [www.seattlejustice.org](http://www.seattlejustice.org)

**MAY 2 - 3**, High Country Conference Center, Northern Arizona University, **Flagstaff, Arizona**; 15th Annual STABILIZING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES Symposium "Language is Life: Strategies for Language Revitalization." The National Geographic Society's Enduring Voices Project notes that every two weeks another of the world's languages is no longer being spoken. info <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/SIL9brochure.html>

**SAT MAY 3**, 2 - 4 p.m., at **Wallingford Playfield**, 4219 Wallingford Ave N., Seattle; Spokespeople Ride - Wallingford Playfield to destination to be announced. Help link people through neighborhoods along SECURE BIKE ROUTES! Seattle is one of America's best cities for biking. Spokespeople will make it even better! Starting at Wallingford Playfield, Spokespeople will travel on the first Saturday of every month between neighborhood centers. Spokespeople will gather both NEW AND EXPERIENCED URBAN CYCLISTS in a fun, low carbon activity. All levels of bicyclists are welcome. info [www.spokespeople.us](http://www.spokespeople.us) or [info@spokespeople.us](mailto:info@spokespeople.us) or 206-547-9569

**see Calendar on page 14**

## Vision Problem from p11

the futility grows and they eventually quit.

Suppose, however, that people began to act as if they could win significant political victories. Then, as Albert counters, we would "have to do what is necessary, step by step and methodically over years, to develop a movement that can win." The first step is to create an alternative economic vision that's so compelling that people from all aspects of American society will want to join it and fight for its proposed social/political changes. Before constructing this alternative economy, Albert notes, activists should ask themselves two fundamental questions: What values should the economy promote? And what kind of institutions should we create to foster those values?

As I briefly lay out the mechanics of a "participatory economy," I will be relying on Albert's account sketched out during his talk at the Istanbul METU Alumni Association last December. The transcript is available in its entirety at <[www.zcommunications.org/znet/viewArticle/16017](http://www.zcommunications.org/znet/viewArticle/16017)>.

The ideal economy should build solidarity, collective concern for the society as a whole instead of rewarding those who manage to exploit the system for private gain. It should also promote structural diversity and financial equity—that is, workers should be compensated according to the length, intensity, and what Albert calls the "onerousness of the conditions under which (they) work." In addition, it should promote flexible self-management, allowing people a voice in decisions "proportional to the degree (they) are affected by these decisions."

In Albert's estimation, a "participatory economy" or "parecon" is the ideal economic system to promote the above social values. In a parecon, businesses are owned and managed by the employees that work for them. Companies establish workers' councils so all workers have the right to participate, debate, and vote to protect their rights. This point is critical: traditional forms of socialism failed in the past because they maintained a division of labor in which 20 percent were involved in the dynamic jobs and decision-making and the other 80 percent performed the difficult menial labor. In such a system, the managerial class immediately dominated the working class and subverted the "equitable remuneration and the democracy the workers had adopted."

In response, Albert suggests "balanced job complexes" in which all work is divided throughout the entire company. As Albert explains, "This means each person should have a mix of tasks and responsibilities, a situation in which the elite 20 percent no longer exists because no group does only empowering tasks. There is nobody in the workplace who by virtue of their daily activity is elevated above everybody else."

While some people might question the efficiency of a company with balanced job complexes, which would require additional education/training so workers could share tasks interchangeably, Albert's proposal promotes cultural inclusivity and solidarity, ensures that work is empowering for everyone in the company, and creates the added benefit of access to a more diverse range of knowledge and skills. Any company-like any political movement—that claims to promote democracy but maintains undemocratic management structures won't succeed because it will alienate the very people it was designed to empower.

As Albert explains, "You can't continue to operate with the same kind of sexism and racism that exists outside in the broader society replicated here inside the movement. It's hypocritical, it's immoral, but it's also suicidal. It is suicidal, because the movement will not attract and retain women, blacks, Latinos, and so on. It will be too alienating for them. We won't benefit from their leadership."

Unfortunately, Albert's lecture devoted insufficient time to dealing with some of the most pressing problems of implementing a parecon: 1) how do companies maintain fiscal viability and market competitiveness against companies using traditional models of capitalism to generate high profits via low wages, inadequate benefits, and job insecurity? 2) How precisely do consumer councils organize within communities on a scale large enough to protect their interests as buyers and direct their business to companies that promote these same interests? 3) What is "participatory planning" and how does it determine the value of goods according to factors like environmental impact? What would it take for people to transition to this system instead of traditional "free markets"?

Despite these deficiencies, it's immediately apparent why the parecon is a meaningful response to the vision problem that has chronically plagued the progressive movement. It's appealing to the working class because it functions to promote their interests first. It gains popularity and momentum by winning changes for people on the bottom of society. Those victories then inspire people to fight for larger changes. Albert explains, "When we have a movement that desires a

## Past the Icon

### What Che Means to Activists Today

BY EDUARDO MARTINEZ ZAPATA

*Editor's note: a couple issues ago I ran a Green satire on Che Guevara titled "The Bicycle Diaries." Now, another point of view.*

**I**t's such a turnoff when real people are turned into myth. As a kid, I hated how Doña Marina, Mayan translator, confidante, and lover of the conqueror Cortez, was portrayed either as a conniving betrayer (La Malinche) or a hopeless emotional victim (La Llorona).

And then there is Che Guevara, Argentinean-born hero of the Cuban revolution.

While participating on a tour about Che's life and ideas this past fall, organized by the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP), I was immensely heartened to find that for many of his admirers today, Guevara is much more than an icon of cool on a million T-shirts.

In what seems a whirlwind, I visited five cities across the country to speak and get people talking about "Che Guevara: Irrepressible Revolutionary." Many participants were young people, and their passion and commitment for emulating Che in doing something about the ills of the world were energizing.

A beret-clad Latina college senior in San Francisco argued for carrying on Che's legacy by working together to organize against injustice. In New York City, a group of youthful high school history teachers from the Bronx and Harlem wanted to learn more about Guevara in order to present him to their students in a deeper light than the one reflected from red and black poster images.

And more than one person asked about NAFTA and CAFTA, about the "war on terror," about the contemporary struggle for international socialism: "What would Che do?"

That question in particular allowed me to fess up about being neither a creative writer of fables or science fiction nor the possessor of a magic crystal ball. My predictions about what Guevara would do today were based on the political, economic, and social prescriptions that he put forward and tried to realize in his own life.

**Che advocated many ideas** that were also advanced by Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the Russian Revolution. The historical record isn't completely clear about how familiar Guevara was with Trotsky's political philosophy. But in many key ways, the two were in accord.

Both were adamant about the necessity for a successful socialist revolution to be international. Both



You can buy Che infantwear and Che coffee mugs on the internet. What would Che think about that? Is he just another pretty face?

took pains to highlight the role of radical women leaders. Both were hostile to Stalinist bureaucracy and its distortion of the best ideals and true nature of socialism.

Of course there are points of divergence. Many Trotskyists in Latin America and around the world were and are highly critical of Che's view of guerrilla warfare as the paramount strategy for making revolution, in Latin America or anywhere. With the example of Guevara's own murder in Bolivia to learn from, it is easier to see that isolated guerrillas who are not part of a larger working-class insurgency are headed for tragedy.

**Not everyone who took part** in the Che forums agreed with these conclusions. But everyone was sure that things around the world today aren't much better, and are often worse, than when Che was alive. So the pressure to act now is upon us!

People who spoke at the forums saw themselves as part of the solution. In every city, there was unflinching support for the belief that workers and the oppressed must take on the system themselves. Participants wanted to learn more. They signed up to return for FSP study groups on Guevara, they were inspired to teach about Che themselves, and they generously contributed to funding the tour.

Hopefully, some will also decide that joining a revolutionary organization is the way to go to finally achieve the goals to which Che dedicated his life.

As a feminist dad, an activist and a worker, at times I get praise from people I meet about my involvement in radical politics. The question is often, "How do you do it?" I respond with another question: how could it be otherwise? If I want a better world for my kids, do I leave it up to them? For me, this is the propulsion to fight against capitalism and its nasty anti-human tricks like racism, sexism, anti-youth moralism, homophobia, and war for profit.

This is not a battle that one can wage alone. And, for everyone involved, the Che tour has reaffirmed that we don't have to go solo. There are plenty of us willing to stand beside each other.

In earning his superhero status on those T-shirts and posters, Che was motivated by very similar circumstances as mine and as yours. And his revolutionary heritage is ours to continue until we realize the vision he had for our planet. Adelante!

*Eduardo Martinez Zapata, an educator in Portland, Oregon, can be reached at <[eduwardomz@msn.com](mailto:eduwardomz@msn.com)>. This article was originally published in Freedom Socialist Newspaper, Vol. 29, No. 1, February/March 2008, see <[www.socialism.com](http://www.socialism.com)>.*

participatory society, a society that has a participatory economy and that also has participatory kinship, feminism, participatory culture, communalism, and a participatory political system; when we have a movement that has a shared agreement about what it is for, the vision, then we will have a movement which can have coherent strategy based on that vision. Then we will make progress, rapid progress."

Forming the vision is the easy part. Disseminating it and patiently encouraging others to fight for it is another matter entirely. If Albert's simple economic alternative strikes us as novel, it's precisely because the progressive movement has chronically lacked the proper public forums for prescient individuals to air political grievances and discover like-minded activists who share similar societal goals. And what do activists do to re-attract those individuals who have abandoned the movement altogether?

We need regular face-to-face meetings in every city and a network of organized idea-sharing linked up via the internet. We need to come together every week for idea-sharing, strategic-planning meetings. We need to organize weekly demonstrations in the streets and

congressional office sit-ins. We need to foster long-term planning to create the societal disruption necessary to end the Iraq war as soon as possible. Then, fresh from our victory, we'll have the inspiration and courage to tackle more systemic societal changes.

Our new web address is

**WAfreepress.org**

No need to type "www" anymore!

**WAfreepress.org**

14 years of archived articles, the recent progressive history of Washington

**WAfreepress.org**

## NOTABLE QUOTES

"There is often no greater obstacle to freedom than the assumption that it has already been attained. What prison, after all, could be more secure than that deemed to be 'the world,' where the boundaries of action and thought were assumed to define not the limits of the permissible, but the limits of the possible?"

—David Edwards

Musician Stephen Longfellow Fiske has rewritten the lyrics for the Star Spangled Banner, and entitled it the Earth Anthem. The first verse appears below. Fiske's full (copyrighted) lyrics are online, together with an audio of the song, at [www.fiskemusic.com/earthanthem/index.html](http://www.fiskemusic.com/earthanthem/index.html). Wouldn't it be great if such a song was sung before our sports games, rather than a war-promoting nationalistic song?

"Oh, say can we see  
By the one light in all  
Our Earth to embrace  
At the call of all nations...."

—Stephen Longfellow Fiske

"For a thousand days I would serve as counsel to the President. I soon learned that to make my way upward, into a position of confidence and influence, I had to travel downward through factional power plays, corruption, and finally outright crimes."

—John Dean, on working with President Nixon

Above quotes were forwarded by Kathleen Murphy and Jesse Lancaster.

## Funny and Serious

Ideas out of my mind

BY STYX MUNDSTOCK

What I am about to write is not expressible in words.

I'm so addicted to my cell phone that I have to use it when I want to talk to myself.

I could have been a major league baseball player, but I couldn't spit well enough.

I never was jealous until I looked in a mirror.

I rescue spiders and ants while the government kills people.

I keep forgetting more and more that I never needed to know.

Can you imagine a better way to make more people?

Once I realized that you really liked me, I lost all respect for you.

It was such a violent election that there was nobody left to count the votes.

It is harder to beat the enemy when you are fighting on the wrong side.

If I dug a hole the depth of my love for you, I'd have to learn Chinese.

I'll tell you the story of my life as soon as I have one.

## Pickup Trucks

BY ROBERT PAVLIK

**T**here is nothing like riding in a pickup truck. It is the vehicle of the American working man and woman, a stalwartly practical invention, a hauler of brick, wood, manure, yard waste, old mattresses, pipe, dogs, entire households, and children with ice cream cones from Thrifty Drug.

It is also a billboard, a rolling message machine, an outward symbol of the owner/occupant's ideology and beliefs.

These can run the gamut from tree hugger to John Birch Society member. It seems that no other vehicle allows the owner as much liberty and freedom as a truck for plastering its rear end with bumper stickers, decals, labels and logos.

Sitting in traffic, reading the truck's bumper or tailgate, and looking at the shaggy headed or neatly groomed driver (possibly between gun racks holding everything from rifles to carpenter's levels to walking sticks and fishing poles), one draws certain conclusions about the driver. And what about those men and women who drive HUGE trucks with bench seats that could seat five, and yet are welded together on the seat like one human being with two heads?

I first fell in love with Mr. Dorshimer's truck. The Dorshimers lived across the street, and they always had a large pickup truck to carry their camper, and to tow their boat. It was great to clamber over the side or the back, and sit on the large wheel wells in the fading light of summer. It was THE place to be when we went for ice cream cones. Dogs and kids love the feeling of the wind in their faces.

Our first pickup was a 1960 Chevrolet that my dad bought for \$500. He used it to drive back and forth to work, and we occasionally loaded it up with stuff to sell at the swap meet. The next truck was mine, a 1951 Chevy that we bought for \$150 from a retired carpenter. It took six months of work before I could drive it. It had a steel bed, a "desert" waterbag and gun racks to hold my walking stick. It was a dream vehicle. All that, and a top speed of 40 miles per hour.

Other trucks have come and gone, and they all have carried with them important memories and associations with people and places important in my life, past and present.

*Editor's note: A pickup truck owner recently told me that in WA state, it is still legal to have riders in the back of your pickup truck, as long as all the seat belts in the cab are already being used. This surprised me, because I had just assumed it was now completely illegal. I do have a couple fond memories of riding in the back as a kid, and wouldn't mind doing it again. Now, don't quote me on the legality of this, and check your own trusted legal sources, blah, blah, blah....*

Of all the many, many places I have been, this is certainly one of them.

Turn your hatred into ice and wait for the sun.

When the trees wave I think they are waving at me.

When God speaks to me in Bible talk, I think he's just kidding.

Sometimes I wish I was stupid and ugly so that I'd fit in better.

Life's not all bad, since in my last transmigration I was a slug.

When I was born they told me I had a 30-day return guarantee, but after over 80 years I'm still waiting.

If I'd picked the right straw instead of my nose, I might have been Doug Collins.

*Doug Collins replies: and if I'd picked the wrong straw, I wouldn't have been able to finish Styx's root beer.*

## Streaming Thoughts

BY JESSE LANCASTER

### The Four Horsemen

In today's society most will smirk and some will sneer at the suggestion that the Apocalypse is taking place in this decade, this year, and running rampant in our everyday lives. I do not speak of religion nor a great day of Doom. I speak of the great devastation unfolding in front of our very eyes as we have become desensitized to the henchmen currently wreaking havoc on the streets and families, corrupting the building blocks and slowly corroding the structure of what we have come to see as right, wrong, or even normal.

Look at the plague upon today's economy as the middle class slowly get submerged into poverty. Famine leaves hundreds of thousands of children dying of starvation, as the war pulses on, fueled by fury that's all but gone, as our sons, daughters, mothers, and fathers continue to risk, die, and give their lives on a battle ground of sand and stone wet with tears of lost loves and red from the blood of their brothers in arms, wanting, needing, not knowing what will become of their lives once they return home.

And now I ask, can you recognize the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse? Plague, Famine, War, and Death are their names. Will you open your eyes and deny their entry into your life? That is the question, a question too true, a question only answerable by you!

### Nixon and John Dean

With power so too comes corruption, like Adam, Eve, and the serpent they say deceived. The mere presence of power can take on a mind and body of its own, with a cruel and corrupt soul, living only to control.

We depend on **you, the reader**  
to keep progressive journalism alive. Please subscribe to the WA Free Press on page 3.

### Calendar from p12

SUN MAY 4, 6th Annual NW BIODIESEL FORUM, info [www.nwbiodiesel.org/](http://www.nwbiodiesel.org/)

MAY 13 - 20, Compassionate Journey to Berlin with Brian & Lisa Berman. JEWISH-GERMAN RECONCILIATION PROGRAM. The COMPASSIONATE LISTENING PROJECT 3 info [staff@compassionatelistening.org](mailto:staff@compassionatelistening.org) or 360-297-2280 or [www.compassionatelistening.org](http://www.compassionatelistening.org)

MAY 15 - 18, at The Evergreen State College, Olympia; IMMIGRATION & BORDER DIALOGUES CONFERENCE. info [bridgesnotwalls@riseup.net](mailto:bridgesnotwalls@riseup.net)

MAY 20 - 22, at the Hilton Pittsburgh; Creating Healing Environments. Join us for CleanMed 2008 - the Global Conference on ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE HEALTH CARE

MAY 27 - JUNE 9, in Palestine and Israel; CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS Delegation. During the first several days, delegates will meet with representatives of ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS in Jerusalem and Bethlehem to gain perspective on the conflict. info or to apply, 773-277-0253 or [delegations@cpt.org](mailto:delegations@cpt.org) or [www.cpt.org/](http://www.cpt.org/)

MAY 27 - 31, in Orlando, Florida; National CONFERENCE ON RACE AND ETHNICITY (NCORE). Since its inception, NCORE has evolved into a vital national resource for higher education institutions, providing an annual multicultural forum that attracts Black/African Americans, American Indians, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Latino/as, and European Americans representing campuses across the United States. info [www.ncore.ou.edu/](http://www.ncore.ou.edu/)

MAY 29 - 30, at University of Wisconsin, Madison; The Institute for Research on Poverty announces POVERTY CONFERENCE 2008 to discuss a new set of commissioned papers that consider trends and determinants of poverty and inequality, the evolution of poverty-related policy, and the consequences of poverty for families and children. info [www.ipr.wisc.edu/news/events/conferences/poverty2008.htm](http://www.ipr.wisc.edu/news/events/conferences/poverty2008.htm)

# SOME POEMS BY BOB MARKEY

## WAKE UP, AMERICA!

Like the leaves of autumn, my hands  
have grown old and dry.

I searched the shelves of a super  
sized drugstore and bought  
some moisturizing goop that had  
a plunger-pump top,  
far more costly to produce than  
a simple screw cap.  
The device spat out enough gunk  
to slather both hands  
up to my armpits, but would not  
pump lesser amounts!  
Did I need that wasteful pumper?

The container might last a month.  
With a screw-cap it's  
good for six. I poured it into  
an empty plastic  
jar. They didn't "get" me this  
time... they have before.

Unfettered, free-market pirates  
abound in the good  
ol' US of A, preying on  
poor, paranoic  
consumers: guilt-ridden wretches  
feeling abused by  
our evil idols of commerce.

I'm talking lower-mid-income  
Americanos,  
citizen victims of those greed  
headed, bloodsucking  
sons of bitches transforming us  
into the land of  
huge fees and the home of the knave.

America, put aside that  
guilt! The bastards are  
out to "get" you! It's time to re-  
new the mission of  
our forefather's revolution!

## EIGHTY SOMETHINGS

There's a reunion coming up.  
My old high school, class of  
forty five.  
Wow, sixty three years ago!  
And half the gang is still alive!  
We do nap a lot.

Canes and walkers had begun to  
appear at our last meeting...  
Probably  
will see several more this year,  
might even spot new hearing aids  
(and hair pieces too).

All are retired now and some still  
swack at tiny white balls.  
My sport is  
the daily crossword puzzle.  
It's challenging and requires no  
steroid enhancers.

We have the usual tired, old  
arguments: steaks rare or  
well, women's  
role, religion, politics...  
Shared problems are bad hygiene and  
uh... memory loss.

An old warrior's after the  
Commander in Chief's job.  
He's not as  
old as us "Forty Fivers",  
but *will* be in his second term...  
if he beats the odds.

That other "older" Prez was cool,  
(the actor)... wiped drool on  
his shirtsleeves.  
Nan offered a lace hanky...  
he just grinned, but she got cranky.  
"Warrior" would be *older*  
than him, if elected. Hmmm...

## EIGHTY SOMETHINGS II

(for JMCC)

"I'm gonna change my way of livin'  
and if that ain't enough,  
gonna change the way I strut my stuff.  
My walk will be dif'rent  
my talk and my name, da di da di..."

I was singing that song  
driving to the store. It  
drives me crazy not to  
remember song lyrics  
and titles.

But that's the way it is  
John, when you reach Eight O.  
You forget lots of stuff...  
even lose the "mo" to  
turn off the tube and  
*do something!*

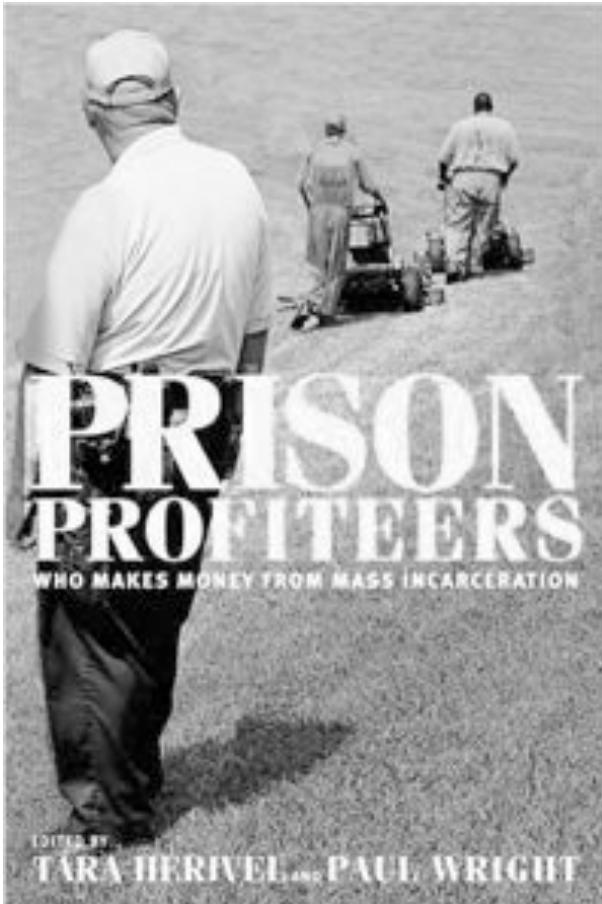
And funny stuff happens...  
When doing the laundry  
you forget the soap... Or,  
failing to replace light  
bulbs, you grope your way  
to the head in the dark  
of night and pee on the  
floor... you mop it up and  
can't go back to sleep... Or,  
you run out of fuel on  
the freeway because your  
cataract-fuzzy eyeballs  
can't read the stupid gauge.

What if FDR was  
eighty at Yalta? And,  
deaf in his dotage, he  
fell asleep from boredom  
after a few days of  
"not hearing" J. Stalin  
and Winnie... they wouldn't have  
been told of his deafness.  
Today would we be (gasp!),  
an Evil Red Empire?

Hey! It just came to me...  
the song... its title is,  
"There'll Be Some Changes Made."



John Jonik's Baby Bush Retrospective (cont.)  
see also page 9



## BOOK NOTICE

### Prison Profiteers: Who makes money from mass incarceration

edited by Tara Herivel and Paul Wright

The New Press

*"Positive: With the baby boomer demographics, we foresee increasing demand for juvenile [incarceration] services. Negative: ...it is often difficult to maintain the occupancy rates required for profitability."* – from a report produced for the private prison industry by investment analysts First Analysis Securities Corporation

#### REVIEW ADAPTED FROM PUBLISHER'S RELEASE

Editors Herivel and Wright (who have both been contributors to the WA Free Press) have brought together a formidable array of writers to provide a unique look at who is benefiting from mass imprisonment. The book takes readers on an investigative journey behind the bars of our nation's prisons to the front lines of its mass incarceration crisis and into the realm of its financially motivated private investors.

The United States, with just five percent of the world's population, is responsible for incarcerating

an astounding twenty five percent of the world's inmates. Thanks to thirty years of mass incarceration, the number of people in state and federal penitentiaries has dramatically increased from an estimated 300,000 to 2.3 million. The numbers are shocking, yet while much research has focused on the social issues that surround incarceration in the US, until now little attention has been given to the individuals and commercial enterprises that profit from prisons and their related services. Prison Profiteers approaches the subject from a unique angle: not who is being harmed by current policies of mass imprisonment but rather who benefits from such policies. From investment banks that issue bonds for prison construction, to the companies that staff and manage prisons, and the organizations that provide medical care, we learn how they benefit and how much they profit.

The contributors to Prison Profiteers take an investigative look at the fiscal consequences of mass incarceration, tracing more than \$186 billion annual US tax dollars intended for the public good to the various private prison companies, churches, investment banks, guard unions, and medical corporations that benefit from the one out of every one hundred thirty-seven Americans who are imprisoned today. It documents one of the biggest transfers of wealth in American history and how it operates in conjunction with mass imprisonment, the biggest and most thoroughly implemented social experiment in American history.

Tara Herivel is a public defender in Portland, OR, and interviewed Paul Wright for the WA Free Press when Wright was still in prison. She has long been active in prison issues, and also co-edited the book Prison Nation with Wright.

Paul Wright is the longtime editor of the magazine Prison Legal News, and the recent recipient of the James Madison Award from the Washington Coalition for Open Government for his public disclosure efforts.

### WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE BOOK? WRITE ABOUT IT!

Is there a book that has just *grabbed* you for years? Do you find yourself frequently talking about a certain book to friends and people you meet? What book do you wish many other people would read?

Please submit a review including (1) a description of such a book, and (2) an explanation of why you like it so much. Some ground rules: please no personal or commercial connection to the publisher or writer of the book, and please make your article not more than about 800 words long.

Submit electronically to [WAFreepress@gmail.com](mailto:WAFreepress@gmail.com) along with your name and phone number (we will not use your contacts for solicitation). Writing in the *Washington Free Press* is volunteer. We also encourage you to subscribe to the paper.

incarceration

## MILITARY SEEKS DEATH PENALTY FOR GUANTANAMO DETAINEES

### FROM THE ACLU

The United States military in February announced its intention to prosecute and seek the death penalty for six detainees held at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, despite a flawed military commissions system there that has yet to try a single case.

The Bush administration's military commissions have been riddled with ethical and legal challenges, including a 2006 Supreme Court decision that struck down the first version of the system as unconstitutional.

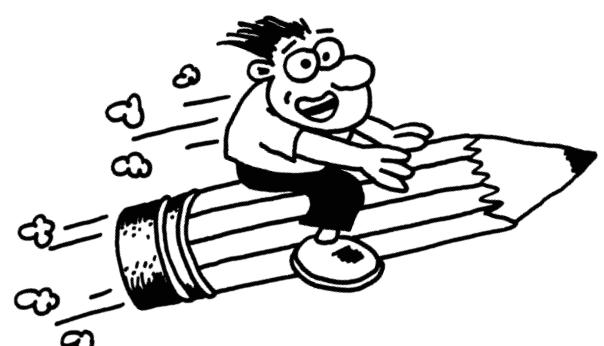
Last week, CIA Director Michael Hayden confirmed that one of the men who will be tried, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, was waterboarded by CIA agents during interrogations.

According to Anthony D. Romero, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, "Those accused of planning the September 11 attacks should be brought to justice, but a credible trial is impossible under a flawed military commissions system lacking in basic due process protections and allowing for the admission of coerced testimony, possibly obtained through practices condemned throughout the world as torture."

Romero continued, "Questions of fairness and due process are always at play in death penalty cases, and this will be doubly true in any capital case involving high value detainees who have been tortured and held for years without access to counsel. The American legal system will be as much on trial in these cases as the actual detainees."

### Writing or revising your will?

Please consider making a charitable bequest to the Washington Free Press. Our contacts are on page 2.



Fascist Bible-Thumpers  
got you down?

[www.Ihatefascism.com](http://www.Ihatefascism.com)

Thump them back!

Just Looking For  
Something Fun To Do On  
Saturday Night?

Well, if that's the case, you're probably looking at the wrong paper. You'll probably be more interested in your local free weekly paper, cram-packed with restaurant and nightclub ads, and articles on the latest fashions and gadgets to buy.

This paper is more for people who, though they might enjoy entertainment as much as anybody, are also interested in ideas, insights, and finding a way to a better world. Not to say we can't enjoy ourselves, too!

You can think of the WA Free Press as a thinking person's six-times-a-year news supplement, which adds an ingredient quite lacking in typical commercial journalism: perspective.

If you appreciate this paper, please subscribe so that you don't miss an issue. Your subscriptions and donations are what keeps alternative news and information flowing.