



A community-based newspaper serving the Puget Sound area since 1981



The Voice

March
2008
Articles translated
into six languages

The newspaper of Neighborhood House

SHA to hold a lottery to create a new Section 8 waiting list

By SHA STAFF

This month, as it did in 2006, Seattle Housing Authority will create a new waiting list for its Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) by means of a mail-only lottery.

The 2006 lottery produced a waiting list of 4,000 households chosen at random by a computer program.

All households on that list have been contacted, and so a new list is needed.

Asked why the agency is again conducting a lottery to create a waiting list for the popular program, Barbara Strayer, Section 8 program manager, said, "We feel it's the fairest way. Nobody has to rush down to get first-come, first-served forms; everybody who mails in the form will have an equal chance."

She pointed out that the actual "drawing" of names is done by a computer using a random selection procedure.

Printed lottery sign-up forms will be available beginning Tuesday, March 25 at these SHA offices and facilities:

- PorchLight, 907 NW Ballard Way, Suite 200 (open Tuesday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.; closed Mondays)
- The Central Office, 120 Sixth Avenue N (open from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday)
- All Low Income Public Housing apartment buildings across the city
- Management offices at Yesler Terrace (open 7 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday), NewHolly (9 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday) Rainier Vista (8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday) and High Point (8 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday)
- The Operations Center at 1300 N 130th Street (open from 7 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Starting on Tuesday, March 25, the lottery sign-up form will also be available for downloading and printing from

Please see "Section 8" on Page 3



PHOTO BY TYLER ROUSH

Candidates vie for support in Washington

Illinois senator and Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama speaks to a capacity crowd at Key Arena Friday, Feb. 8. Obama and New York senator Hillary Clinton visited Seattle in advance of the state's caucus on Feb. 9, which Obama won by a 2-to-1 margin. For special coverage of the state caucus, turn to Page 4.

You may qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit

By VOICE STAFF

Low-income working individuals and their families may be eligible to receive a tax refund between \$428 and \$4,716 if they apply for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit.

Congress originally approved the tax credit in 1975 as a way to offset the burden of social security taxes on low-income people and to provide an incentive to work.

When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes a person owes, it results in a tax refund to those who claim and qualify for the credit.

To qualify, taxpayers must meet certain requirements and file a tax return, even if they did not earn enough money to be obligated to file a tax return.

United Way of King County and the

Please see "EITC" on Page 2

Hundreds rally in Olympia for affordable housing

By SHA STAFF

On Feb. 14, Scattered Sites resident Gina Owens, SHA Executive Director Tom Tierney, Deputy Director Andrew Lofton, Director of Housing Advocacy Lisa Cipollone-Wolters, KCHA Director of Policy Megan Hyla and some 500 other supporters of affordable housing journeyed to Olympia from all corners of the state to rally in support of affordable housing.

In her greeting to the group, Gov. Christine Gregoire pointed out that she and House Speaker Frank Chopp and Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown had publicly declared housing to be the top priority of the state government during the current legislative session.

"Thank you to each of you for being here to say that you will not stand by while the richest nation in the world allows homelessness to happen," she said.

The first two bills the governor signed into law in 2008 were SB 6335, which allocates \$6 million for the Washington Families Fund to create service-enriched housing for homeless families, and SB 6272, which provides \$1.5 million toward financial literacy and counseling meant to help Washingtonians keep their homes.

Speakers reminded the rally participants that there is much to be done in the fight to ensure that affordable housing is available to everyone who needs it. They argued for a \$100 million



PHOTO COURTESY WASHINGTON LOW INCOME HOUSING ALLIANCE

Advocates from all over Washington State head for the Capitol in Olympia to urge legislators to fund affordable housing measures.

increase in the Housing Trust Fund — the House has since approved \$90 million — and for a \$10 million increase in the State's Transitional Housing, Operating and Rent (THOR) program for homeless families.

About 10 residents from Wonderland Estates, which KCHA purchased last year, spoke with 5th District legislators about working to increase the Housing Trust Fund. They have a stake in the fund because it can help pay for preserving and maintaining

Please see "Housing" on Page 5

In this issue

Health Notes	Page 2
HELP SOMEONE WITH CANCER	
Poet of light	Page 3
MICHAEL LEWIS EXPLORES THE COSMOS	
Dalai Lama to visit	Page 5
RESIDENTS INVITED TO ATTEND SEEDS OF COMPASSION EVENT	
Translations	Page 8
EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT	

Quotable

"The rules that govern the Washington state caucuses and primaries ... prohibit independent voters from participating."
— Harry Ohman, on why he chose not to participate in the Washington caucus and primary. To read a collection of personal essays about the Washington caucus, turn to Page 4.

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Health Notes

A column devoted to your well-being

How to lend support when someone you know has cancer

By PAM MCGAFFIN
Special to The Voice

Support from family and friends is critical to cancer patients going through treatment, but what should that support look like? Many of us worry we won't know what to say or do, or worse, that we'll do the wrong thing.

A survey by Cancer Treatment Centers of America found that friends and family offer primary support for people diagnosed with cancer. According to the 2003 survey, only 1 percent of male and 4 percent of female cancer patients turned to organized support groups as their main source of support.

"When people are diagnosed with cancer, support from friends and family is often the key to helping them endure the rigorous medical treatments and emotional stress that may accompany their diagnosis," says Robin Adler, director of mind-body medicine at Seattle Cancer Treatment and Wellness Center. "Most people want to offer that support, but they're at a loss for exactly what to do or where to begin."

At the clinic, Adler counsels patients and their families, leads support and relaxation groups, provides community-education workshops and links patients to needed resources in the community. She says friends and family can help by keeping lines of communication open and being a stable and reliable source of support in the midst of change.

Here are her tips for friends and family who want to help but aren't sure how:

- Be yourself. Don't try too hard to do or say "the right" things, just be sincere in your desire to lend a hand.
- Listen. Sometimes it's better to be patient and listen than to start a conversation. Remember to talk about all the things you used to talk about before cancer.
- Honestly share your feelings of fear, anger or sadness, but try not to overburden your friend or loved one. If you need to, take time for yourself.
- Provide stability. Help your friend with cancer adjust to new routines while

continuing as many regular activities as possible to maintain a sense of normalcy. Assure your friend that he or she can depend on you.

- Adapt to changing roles. While it's important for a person with cancer to keep a routine, understand that family dynamics might change. For example, one parent might have to take on more childcare duty. Respond with practical solutions, like organizing help from friends.

- If a friend has cancer, ask him or her for suggestions on how to help. If your friend is getting many such requests, offer to coordinate efforts. Be alert to your friend's needs – be it childcare or house cleaning – and remember that some people have a hard time asking for help.

- Be prepared to communicate with health care professionals. Dealing with the health care system can be confusing, intimidating and time-consuming. Your loved one may appreciate your stepping up. Begin by educating yourself about the patient's condition. When you meet with health practitioners, bring a list of questions, ask for clarification and be appropriately assertive.

- Help a cancer patient feel in control. Let them decide for themselves if they're too weak to clean the house, cook dinner or go out.

- Spend time with your friend. Just having you there can be comfort enough.

- Remember to take care of yourself. Get enough sleep, eat well, exercise and take part in enjoyable activities. Find your own emotional support from friends, co-workers, your church, support groups or a professional counselor.

Seattle Cancer Treatment and Wellness Center is the only place in the Pacific Northwest where medical oncologists work side by side with natural medicine practitioners.

This integrated approach to cancer care combines innovative medical treatment with naturopathy, mind-body medicine, acupuncture, Chinese medicine and other complementary therapies. For more information, visit the web site at www.seattlecancerwellness.com.

Housecleaning that helps the earth

Simple products work best, are better for the environment

By VIRGINIA FELTON
Seattle Housing Authority

There are several commonplace natural substances that work really well for housecleaning. As an added bonus, these materials are very inexpensive.

Baking soda and vinegar work extremely well for many household uses, are better for the environment than many commercial cleaning products, and are much less expensive than most commercial products.

Baking soda is, chemically speaking, a weak alkaline. As such, it acts to neutralize acids and break down proteins. This quality accounts for its usefulness in cutting grease and dissolving dirt and stains.

Vinegar, the other superstar of natural cleaning products, is slightly acidic. This chemical property also helps vinegar to dissolve grease and clean dirt off windows and other surfaces.

Here are some simple recipes for cleaning products that you can make yourself using these ingredients:

Bathroom cleanser — What you need: baking soda, soap, sponge

Use baking soda in place of scouring powder. Sprinkle it on sinks or other porcelain fixtures and rub with a wet sponge. Add a little soap to the sponge for more cleaning power. Rinse well to avoid leaving a hazy film.

Window cleaner — What you need: vinegar, liquid soap, water

Mix a half cup of vinegar with a few drops of ingredients in a spray bottle and use on glass surfaces. Rub with a lint-free cloth or newspaper to prevent streaks.

Oven Cleaner — What you need: baking soda, water, copper scouring pad

Make a thick paste of baking soda and water, apply it to oven surfaces, then let it stand a little while. Scrub with the copper scouring pad. A single-edged razor blade can be useful to get under large food deposits.

All-purpose spray cleaner — What you need: baking soda, vinegar, water, spray

To learn more

Here are some Web sites that provide more information about inexpensive and natural cleaning products:

www.bakingsodabook.co.uk/
www.familyshoppingbag.com/natural_cleaning.htm
www.versatilevinegar.org/us-esandtips.html
www.vinegartips.com/cleaning/
www.epa.gov/kidshometour/

bottle

To a quart (four cups) of water, add four teaspoons of baking soda and a half cup of vinegar. Put this into a spray bottle and use it to clean counter tops, floors, etc. (This is also a great way to recycle spray bottles purchased originally for those more expensive cleaning products.)

Odor remover — What you need: baking soda

By itself, baking soda is a great odor remover. Sprinkle it on carpets, and rub it in with a broom, then sweep or vacuum. Sprinkle it on pet bedding. Keep an open box in your refrigerator to absorb odors there. Put it in the bottom of your dresser drawers, put a paper liner over it, and it will absorb clothing odors.

Drain cleaner — What you need: baking soda, vinegar, kettle of boiling water

This combination will free minor clogs and is a great preventative measure. Pour a half cup of baking soda into the drain first. Then add a half cup of vinegar. Let it bubble for a few minutes, then carefully pour down a kettle full of boiling water. (Be careful carrying the water!)

A large box of baking soda can be purchased for less than \$2. A gallon of vinegar (simple white vinegar is best) sells for about \$3.

Another inexpensive product that is also useful is chlorine bleach (also known as Clorox). It can make a great disinfectant when mixed with water and put in a spray bottle. (About a half cup to a quart or more of water is plenty.)

Chlorine bleach is not as safe as either vinegar or baking soda, but it is a powerful germ killer and is good to use to keep away mold and mildew. Just be careful to store it away from children.

EITC

Continued from front page

King County EITC Campaign will help people claim the credit by providing free tax preparation services at sites across King County until April 15.

Taxes will be prepared by IRS-trained and certified volunteers and electronically filed for a rapid refund.

Multilingual tax preparers will be avail-

able at several sites to serve customers who do not speak English.

For more information on the free tax preparation sites, see last month's issue of *The Voice* or go to www.uwkc.org/ourcommunity/endinghomelessness/eitc/where.asp.

The EITC has no effect on certain welfare benefits.

In most cases, EITC payments will not be used to determine eligibility for Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI),

food stamps, low-income housing or most Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) payments.

You may be eligible for the EITC if you earned income in 2007, if you have children and earned less than \$37,783 (or \$39,783 if married and filing a joint return) in 2007, if you do not have children and earned less than \$12,590 (or \$14,590 if married and filing a joint return) in 2007, if you get less than \$2,900 a year from interest and investments and if you have a valid social security number for the purposes of work.

If you are filing a joint return, your spouse must also have a valid social security number and all qualifying children you use to claim the EITC must also have a valid social security number.

In order to qualify, you cannot file your taxes under the "married filing separately" status.

MS Walk to take place in April

The MS LifeLines Walk MS, presented by Oh Boy! Oberto Beef Jerky, takes place Sunday, April 13, in Seattle and Saturday, April 12, in Tacoma, Snohomish County, Olympia, Bellingham, Bainbridge Island, Kennewick and Silverdale.

Proceeds support local services and programs for people living with MS and their families, as well as research into new treatments and a cure.

For more information, call the National MS Society, Greater Washington Chapter, at 1-800-344-4867, or visit www.MSwashington.org and click on the Walk MS logo.

The Voice

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The Voice, the newspaper of Neighborhood House, is published monthly with the support of Seattle Housing Authority resident participation funds and the King County Housing Authority. Neighborhood House helps diverse communities of people with limited resources attain their goals for self-sufficiency, financial independence and community building. The Voice contributes to that mission by providing low-income people, immigrants, refugees and other concerned parties with timely, relevant news. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, Neighborhood House, SHA or KCHA. We welcome articles and tips from the community and reserve the right to edit all submissions.

Something to say? Write for The Voice!
Contact Tyler Roush at tylerr@nhwa.org or 206-461-8430, ext. 227 for details.

A very far view from Beacon Tower

By SCOTT FREUTEL
Seattle Housing Authority

Michael Lewis has lived in Beacon Tower for 14 years. His tidy one-bedroom apartment on the third floor is well stocked with books. He has a personal computer and an 8-inch telescope.

The windows in his living room bring in territorial views to the north and west. But on one recent day, Lewis had his eye on both much larger and much smaller views: He uses equations and formulas and theory to focus on the universe itself, on galaxies and stars, on the one hand; and on tiny subatomic particles on the other.

Lewis is a physicist, and something of a poet.

Lewis was born in Seattle and moved as a child with his family to Arkansas, then Alaska, then back to Seattle, and finally to Richland, where his father worked as an electrical contractor at the nearby Hanford Nuclear Site.

He graduated from Columbia High School, where he studied physics, chemistry, mathematics and Russian, among other subjects, and where he was a member of the Sputnik-inspired rocket club. He joined the Navy while still in high school.

The Navy sent him to Treasure Island, in San Francisco Bay, and trained him to be an electronics technician and radar operator.

Lewis was in the Navy three years, two of them aboard the USS Kearsage, the aircraft carrier that recovered two early Project Mercury astronauts, Walter Schirra and Gordon Cooper, and their space capsules, from the Pacific Ocean.

Together with about 20 other crew members, Lewis maintained the ship's radars and radios. A skill he learned as a radar operator was to distinguish information from noise in electromagnetic fields — a skill that helped him when, much later in his life, he turned his attention to light from galaxies and star formations.

And he learned about transistors and solid state physics, then new subjects for study.

After his discharge from the Navy, Lewis attended Reed College, in Portland, where his main focus of study was physics and where he became interested in spectroscopy. After graduating Reed in 1967 with a degree in physics, Lewis went to work for the Xerox Corporation near Rochester, New York, as an associate physicist.

At Xerox, Lewis was introduced to computers and computer programming; he pursued his interest in computer science during a year of graduate work at the University of Washington.

For various reasons, Lewis didn't complete the work he'd have needed to do to get a Ph.D., but he never lost his interest in mathematics and physics.

Now he's an independent scholar and



PHOTO BY SCOTT FREUTEL

Beacon Tower resident Michael Lewis, student and poet of light.

the author of a number of papers that seek to pursue solutions to nettlesome problems in mathematics and physics.

One of his papers challenges the received wisdom about the nature of the universe — the Expanding Universe theory, which states that the galaxies are moving apart and that the more distant they are, the more rapidly they're moving.

Lewis instead suggests that light waves slowly decay as they travel great distances; he finds evidence of this in shifts in the patterns of lines observed in a spectroscopy trained on a faraway light source. He calls this the Photon Decay theory. (Read about it at www.eskimo.com/~mikell137/index.htm#home.)

Lewis says, "I took up the problem in 1957, when Sputnik was put in orbit and the problem was described in physics class. It wasn't until 1980 that I realized I had the time and liberty to work on it and so bought a small telescope and other things. One night, looking for a long time at Sirius, the brightest star in the sky, I said to myself, in a voice I did not know I had, 'I can do it!'"

"The following week was spent in some rapture working it out, and since then I've slowly developed the Web page. It was the security of good housing here that made it possible to complete the document, which exists only on the Internet, and obtain copyrights on it."

Can a mathematician and physicist be a poet? To meet Lewis is to know the answer.

In writing about his interest in light and what it may reveal about the origins of the universe, and of ourselves, Lewis wrote, "Light as quanta is very soft, gentle, and does not discriminate since every single wavelet, no matter what the color, consists of the same amount of action. That shows up in faint light, such as at night, particularly in rain or snow, which...average out the colors. Properly interpreted, white light has and should have about the same effect as the quality of mercy."

Patrons who access the database from non-Library computers will need to enter their Library card numbers and personal identification numbers (PINs).

ChiltonLibrary.com offers auto repair information geared toward home mechanics. It can help patrons with questions about car maintenance, specifications, troubleshooting, costs of maintenance and parts, and manufacturer recalls. It has photographs, illustrations and step-by-step repair procedures. The database is updated regularly.

For more information, call the Central Library at 206-386-4636.



One to grow on

Garden tips for community gardeners

Springtime, growing season on the horizon

By ANZA MUENCHOW
Special to The Voice

The days are dramatically lengthening now and the plants are putting out new growth. Ah, springtime.

We all know that plants get their energy from sunlight through photosynthesis and they also have all the water they need with our spring rains. However, they won't get the warm temperatures yet. So let us consider the plants that enjoy longer days and cooler temperatures.

Starting in mid-March we can transplant out into the garden many cold-tolerant crops. These starter plants can be purchased at reliable nurseries or started from seeds at home under grow lights. We especially enjoy broccoli, spinach, bok choy, romaine, kohlrabi and onions.

Remember to harden off the transplants before you actually plant them in the garden by leaving them in the pots outside during the day and bringing in at night for several days, then leaving outside full time for several days before finally planting them in the garden.

Begin direct seeding into your garden the radishes, lettuces, carrots, turnips, mustard and cilantro later this month, depending on soil temperatures. You may have a microclimate that can get these germinated and growing as the equinox approaches.

There are several ways to warm your soil for earlier planting: use raised beds; build a plastic or glass tent over the bed, making a mini-greenhouse (also called a cloche); use a row cover (like Remay) and anchor it down with rocks, boards, or soil pins.

The row cover will also act as a pest barrier for the root maggots that attack carrots, radishes, turnips and broccoli.

If you are starting a new garden or haven't limed in the past couple of years, add some dolomite (horticultural) lime to the soil. Mix well and be generous. It breaks down very slowly, so it won't "burn" your plants.

Lime raises the pH of soil and allows the plants to more readily take up nutrients. I now have a pH meter, because I had so much trouble with our acidic soil. Our plants were struggling, and I thought they needed more nutrients. Lo and behold, it was the pH not the N-P-K. These are the primary nutritional needs of plants: nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potas-

sium (K).

All the springtime leafy green vegetables do appreciate a good source of nitrogen. Besides adding compost, you may use an organic fertilizer that lists a larger percentage of the first listed number, such as 5-1-1 in fish fertilizer or 12-2-1 in blood meal. Do not over apply the nitrogen sources of fertilizer because they are so water soluble and will just be washed away through the rain and irrigation.

Besides being a waste of money, this pollutes those downstream in our watershed. I prefer to wait and see if the plants need more nitrogen by watching their color. The leaves will show yellow tinge if they are lacking nitrogen. If the new growth is yellowing, that is a more serious nutrient deficiency.

Soil testing is a viable, but costly, option. Accurate sampling is the key. Test kits are messy, less reliable and need to be replaced annually. Soil test labs are very effective if you can understand their results.

UMass soil tests have been highly recommended. For ordering call 413-545-2311 or check the web site at www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest.

With these longer days, you may have more time after work or school to go out and visit your garden. Involve children with gardening activities as much as you can. Many people, young and old, think of their food coming from the store, and don't actually know about growing food.

Use a child's natural curiosity about growing plants to draw him or her to enjoy eating lots of fresh vegetables. I was surprised that my children would graze in the garden when they came home from school, chewing raw broccoli and pea vines, snow peas, sorrel and parsley. Later in life they will continue to eat these healthy greens.

Children are more likely to have a diet of 5-9 servings of vegetables and fruits if they learn to love them early in life. And with your own food garden, you will too!

Everyone knows you can't beat the taste of a freshly picked pea or carrot or bean or tomatoes or anything from the garden. Your whole family will benefit from the easy access of homegrown fresh organic produce to improve their diets.

Anza Muenchow is a farmer and a volunteer with P-Patch. You can reach her by e-mail at anzam@whidbey.net, or online at www.mahafarm.com.

Section 8

Continued from front page

the SHA Web site, www.seattlehousing.org.

Sign-up forms will also be available beginning Tuesday, March 25 at every Seattle Public Library branch, Seattle Neighborhood Service Center, Seattle Community Center, and DSHS Community Service Center located in Seattle city limits, and at other locations to be determined.

SHA will post information on its Web site about other places across Seattle that will stock lottery sign-up forms.

Any person 18 years old or older (or an emancipated minor) may sign up for the lottery no matter where he or she lives. Only one person per household may sign up.

After the mail-in deadline, SHA will send a postcard acknowledging receipt to everybody who has sent in a sign-up form.

Once all forms have been processed, at least 4,000 names will be selected at random. These will form the new Section 8 waiting list.

SHA will send a letter by May 9 telling lottery winners that they won a position on the lottery, and what that position is (1/4,000, 150/4,000, etc.) and how, when, and where to actually apply for housing.

For a household to be entered into the waiting list lottery, its sign-up form must be mailed to the post office box designated on the form; to be entered into the lottery, the envelope containing the sign-up form must be postmarked no later than Tuesday, April 8.

SHA will not accept faxed or e-mailed sign-up forms, and sign-up forms may not be dropped off at SHA offices; they must be mailed. Photocopies of the sign-up form are acceptable.

For updated information on the lottery, call SHA's recorded Waiting List Lottery Hot Line, (206) 239-1674.

Forget the mechanic for car trouble — visit the Seattle Public Library

Having car trouble that you can't figure out?

Try The Seattle Public Library.

The Library now subscribes to ChiltonLibrary.com, a popular automotive repair database that patrons can access from home or Library computers 24-hours a day.

To use ChiltonLibrary.com, visit www.spl.org and select Databases & Web Sites. From there, click on Automotive & Transportation and then ChiltonLibrary.com.

The inside scoop on the Washington caucus

On Feb. 9, people throughout the state of Washington turned out in record numbers to participate in the state's caucus. After all delegates were tallied, Illinois senator and Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama and Arizona senator and Republican presidential candidate John McCain won their respective caucuses. Both candidates later prevailed in Washington's primary election Feb. 19.

The Voice asked a few people to share their experiences about participating in the state's caucuses. Their stories continue below. The opinions expressed are those of the writers alone.

Caucus time in Seattle

By **ROBERT CANAMAR**
SHA Resident

Ever since I came back from Vietnam, I have prided myself on voting in every election. It feels good to go into the polling booth to vote for my candidate of choice. It makes sense.

This year I found out my votes all those years did not mean a thing. Candidates are chosen by caucus in this state, so I went to my precinct caucus and wound up as a primary delegate for my candidate for the next caucus, and then only because I speak well.

With all of the hype about the importance of attending the caucus, I was disappointed that there were not more people there. Then I found out that we had five times more than last time.

We are a caucus state, and that means that the delegates that put our candidate on the ballot are determined at the caucus.

Who we put on the ballot determines what will happen with our country in the future, and yet more people head to the polls than to a caucus. Why can't we have a system like the Republicans, where half of the delegates are chosen from the Primary, and half from the caucus?

As a politically active citizen of this country, I feel that everyone should have a voice, and what we have does not give every one that voice.

At the caucus, I, and others like me were given one minute to speak, and try to convince others why our choice made the best sense. One minute is not enough time to get across any idea, much less the several that are needed.

Yes, I am excited about being a delegate, and going to the next round of caucuses, and this time I am planning what I am going to say and do at the caucus.

I am out stumping for my candidate, and hope my candidate will win. I do feel that if you want change, you have to work for it, so I will work my tail off and see about realistic change.

Why I did not caucus

By **HARRY OHMAN**
SHA Resident

I heard it often last month: "Harry! Come with me to caucus on Saturday. It is an excellent opportunity for us to express our political views and support our candidates."

I would love to have participated, but I couldn't. I am an independent voter, and as such, the rules do not allow me to caucus. In Washington you must declare a political party in order to caucus. Then, if you want to vote in the primary you must sign an oath not to change from that party.

If you only vote in the primary you still must declare a political party — otherwise your vote will not count! These rules effectively deny independent voters like me an opportunity to participate in this process. I first voted in 1972, and I have voted in every election since. I have voted for candidates from both major political parties, as well as independents. I value my freedom to vote for the candidate that I feel is the most qualified, no matter what his or her political affiliation.

In 1983 I was ordered to report for jury duty. They randomly choose people for this honor from the list of registered voters. I will never forget how enlightened I felt after my service was concluded. I felt that I had fulfilled my duty as a citizen in the most fundamental way possible. The other most fundamental way that a citizen can participate in the political process is to vote. To infringe on the ability of any voter to participate is wrong.

The rules that govern the Washington state caucuses and primaries do just that: they prohibit independent voters from participating.

These rules are archaic and punitive. They should be changed.

Choose to lead, or follow

By **JEN ROSEN BROOK**
Neighborhood House

After a busy morning of rushing through traffic, I arrived at Marshall School down the street to find a crush of people entering to try and make sense of what was going to happen in the next few hours.

It did seem like a bit of confusion, but if you are relatively smart on directions it was actually quite simple: find your precinct, sign in, listen, watch, and wait.

Others would disagree, I am sure.

I heard a number of anxious voices — no one was clear on if they had to stay for the entire caucus or if they could sign in and leave.

Our society has become accustomed to such rushing around — what happened to taking time to smell the roses? Especially when it comes to our future, our country, and our leaders?

The caucus is a strange, chaotic, arcane relic of machine politics — but a fun day to participate in!

Primaries are for the busier, hurried citizen. (Hmm, is that everyone at this point, or just the families with too much to do in one week?)

Where is our sense of community and being the friendly neighbor again? I met more great folks and neighbors than I have in the past three years at my caucus.

It is not only a "caucus" but a sense of coming together for common ground, a cause as a community to share ideas, recipes, and a few good laughs.

I was so beyond excited after my caucus that I started right then to devote my time to the Obama campaign.

Not only is he the hope to heal our nation and the world, but it isn't just cheerleading words he speaks of, he walks the walk, and if you are in tune to anything these days you will feel the passion, too!

And if not...well, be prepared to follow the leaders.

On the campaign trail: New Web site tracks housing-related issues

By **DONNA KIMURA**

The presidential candidates have turned blue talking about how to end the Iraq War, revive a sagging economy, and provide health care, but do they have anything to say about affordable housing?

The issue is coming up more often than in past elections due to the subprime mortgage crisis and slumping housing market. Shining a light on what is being said by the candidates is the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC).

It has launched a new Web site, www.housing2008.org, that tracks the latest housing news from the campaign trail.

It's a nonpartisan forum for discussing housing issues this election year, said Sheila Crowley, NLIHC president.

As the Nov. 4, 2008, election approaches and the field of contenders winnows, the NLIHC plans to gather even more data on the candidates' positions on affordable housing.

Many of the candidates' Web sites fail to say anything specific about housing, but some early highlights from the leading candidates include:

Democrats

Hillary Clinton: Clinton's economic action plan calls for a \$30 billion Emergency Housing Crisis Fund to help states and cities combat foreclosures. States and cities could also use the funds to support efforts like anti-blight programs and help housing authorities buy vacant prop-



PHOTO BY CLAIRE MCDANIEL

Chaos reigns but goals were achieved during the 100th Democratic Caucus at a precinct in Magnolia. People sign in and select their candidate. Another participant holds up a sign identifying the precinct.

A good kind of chaos

By **CLAIRE MCDANIEL**
Seattle Housing Authority

My first Democratic caucus experience can be described in one word — chaos. But in a good way! The lunch room at the Lawton School in Magnolia was packed with people, many of whom were first time "caucusers" like me.

We were all trying to figure out what we were supposed to do. I saw grocery store checkers I recognized from my supermarket, fellow riders from my #24 bus and neighbors from my apartment building.

There were 94 people at my precinct table and once the candidate selections were tallied, the results were six delegates for Obama and two for Clinton.

The six Obama delegates included a 25 year old white woman who recently moved to Seattle from Iowa and participated in caucuses there; a middle-age African American man who resented any suggestions that the Clinton campaign made that race was a reason that supporters back Obama; and a young, white man who spent 19 months in Iraq.

The passion shown by the participants in this caucus was palpable and the participation of young people was exciting.

erties and rent them to working families. Clinton also wants to strengthen the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), including raising existing FHA mortgage limits in high-cost areas like New York and California. She's also discussed creating incentives for lenders to identify troubled mortgages and proposed a 90-day moratorium on subprime foreclosures and an automatic rate freeze on subprime mortgages of at least five years.

Barack Obama: Obama's plan to combat poverty includes increasing the supply of affordable housing by creating an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to develop affordable housing in mixed-income neighborhoods and fully funding the Community Development Block Grant program. He also pledges to create 20 "promise neighborhoods" in areas that have high levels of poverty. These neighborhoods will be provided a full range of services. Obama's plan to stimulate the economy calls for providing \$10 billion to help families avoid foreclosure and working with the FHA, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac "to allow families facing foreclosure to responsibly refinance their mortgages or sell their homes." He also wants to provide \$10 billion in relief for state and local governments facing revenue shortfalls because of the housing crisis.

Republicans

John McCain: McCain's campaign platform calls for tax cuts for middle-class families. He wants to repeal the alternative minimum tax. He has advocated for veterans and attended the opening of a transitional housing development for veterans last year. There were no housing policies posted on his Web site.

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Dalai Lama to visit Seattle — residents invited

By VIRGINIA FELTON
Seattle Housing Authority

In mid-April, Seattle will be the host city for a five-day conference entitled Seeds of Compassion. The conference is being sponsored by local leaders and will be built around the visit to Seattle of his Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso.

The Dalai Lama is a recognized world leader and is known as a man of peace and compassion.

Tickets to the largest public event of the conference will be available at no charge for children and youth who live in Seattle Housing Authority communities, and their families.

The Dalai Lama is both the exiled head of state and the spiritual leader of Tibet. On Oct. 17, 2007 he received the Congressional Gold Medal.

President Bush and the leaders of Congress bestowed the nation's highest civilian honor upon the Dalai Lama, calling the exiled Tibetan religious leader a "warrior for peace." The Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for his non-violent struggle for the liberation of Tibet.

He has consistently advocated for policies of non-violence, even in the face of extreme aggression.

He also became the first Nobel Laureate to be recognized for his concern for global environmental problems.

The five-day Seeds of Compassion workshop will take place April 11 – 15 in Seattle. It offers a rare opportunity for people in Seattle to hear from this peaceful world leader who refers to himself as "a simple Buddhist monk."

The purpose of the event is to "nurture kindness and compassion in the world starting with children and all those who touch their lives."

According to the Dalai Lama, "We should make every effort to make this century the century of dialogue. This must come from a compassionate heart. Infinite or unlimited compassion is in all of us. It is a seed that we all have from birth. I really feel that this conference can plant positive seeds for a happy future, a happy world, particularly for children. They, the younger generation, are the real basis for our hope."

The largest public event to which youth and children are invited will take place at Qwest Field on Saturday afternoon, April 12. It is entitled "Compassion in Action" and will feature a talk by the Dalai Lama on the "heartbeat of humanity."

Tickets will be available soon from many of the community organizations that work with children and youth in SHA's communities. An article in *The Voice* next month will provide more specifics on where and how tickets are available.

The goals of the event include helping adults, teachers and all those who work with children better understand how to develop kinder and more compassionate local communities by building the foundations of learning and compassion in children and youth.

The Dalai Lama has traveled to more than 62 countries spanning six continents. He has met with presidents, prime ministers and crowned rulers of major nations.

He has held dialogues with the heads of different religions and many well-known scientists.

Since 1959 the Dalai Lama has received over 84 awards, honorary doctorates, prizes, etc., in recognition of his message of peace, non-violence, inter-religious understanding, universal responsibility and compassion. He has also authored more than 72 books.

Two training opportunities available to residents this month

Resident Leadership and Facilitation Training on March 22

The Nonprofit Assistance Center and Seattle Housing Authority will be holding a Resident Leadership and Facilitation Training on Saturday, March 22. The training is geared toward SHA residents who wish to develop their leadership skills. Important topics of focus will be the role of the facilitator, appreciative listening, dealing effectively with disagreements, and the three R's — results, relationships, and resources.

The trainers, Jesus Ybarra Rodriguez and Vicki Asakura, themselves represent the diversity of Seattle's residents and leaders.

Rodriguez was born in Mexico and currently manages the Leadership Development Program at the Nonprofit Assistance Center. In addition to coordinating leadership programs at NAC, he is one of the founders of Sea Mar Community Health Centers.

Asakura is a Japanese American from Seattle with extensive experience community building in low-income areas. She is currently the Executive Director of the Nonprofit Assistance Center.

The training will take place at Rainier Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

For more information, residents should contact their SHA community builder: Joy Bryngelson, NewHolly, 206-723-1725; Nao-

mi Chang, Rainier Vista, 206-722-4010, ext. 2; Samantha Gotkin, High Point, 206-937-3292, ext. 306; Brett Houghton, Yesler Terrace, 206-343-7484; Marcia Johnson, LIPH, 206-239-1530; Ellen Ziontz, LIPH, 206-239-1625.

Registration forms must be returned to community builders by March 14.

NTIC training this month

The National Training and Information Center will be holding a day-long training to familiarize residents with HUD regulations on Thursday, March 27. The aim of this training is to empower residents through knowledge of HUD to organize and negotiate more effectively.

The workshop will begin with an overview of laws and regulations and how to find them. The most important regulations will be identified, with emphasis on regulation 964, the Resident Participation Regulation. After this, residents will learn how to use these regulations to affect decisions.

Sam Finkelstein, Director of Housing Justice Organizing at NTIC, will lead the 7-hour workshop. Finkelstein has worked on housing justice issues for more than 10 years in Seattle and California. He is also head of the National Housing Justice Campaign.

The training will take place at the Community Room of Green Lake Plaza, 505 N.E. 70th St., from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, residents should contact their SHA community builder.

Head Start teacher wins state award



PHOTO BY JON WHALEN

Linda Chugani (center), a Neighborhood House Head Start teacher at Rainier Vista, receives a Staff Excellence award from the Washington State Association for Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program. At left is Early Childhood Education Manager Karol Swenson. Theresa Kwesele, Chugani's assistant teacher at Rainier Vista, is on the right.

Housing Continued from front page

manufactured housing like theirs.

Other legislative priorities of the advocates present at the rally included adding language to the state anti-discrimination laws that would protect renters who use housing vouchers or other financial assistance, protecting the rights of mobile home owners, and ensuring the passage of HB 1115, which would track the performance and outcomes of housing programs and enable housing and service providers to coordinate existing programs and funding sources.

After the rousing speeches and a lesson in effective advocacy, participants donned red plastic ponchos emblazoned with hearts and houses, and set off in the rain to the capitol building to meet with their senators and representatives.

Owens, a tenant of SHA, visited the offices of Jamie Pedersen (D, 43rd Legislative District) and Eric Pettigrew (D, 37th Legislative District) and left off materials supporting both affordable housing and affordable health care. She said that affordable health care advocates she's been working with staged a mock wedding in

the Capitol's rotunda: Small Business, the "bride," was married to Affordable Health Care, the "groom."

"The legislators were in session, but when they heard about the 'wedding' they came out and watched the event from the balcony," Owens said. "I think they were pretty impressed."

SHA's Cipollone-Wolters said, "It was inspiring to be a part of the 500 people who turned out for Housing Advocacy Day. It was an opportunity for many to learn first-hand the importance of educating elected officials on the need for solutions to our affordable housing crisis."

Organizer Ben Gitenstein, executive director of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, said he guessed that this year's was the largest crowd in 14 years of Housing Advocacy Days.

Housing Advocacy Day is sponsored by the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance and the Washington State Coalition for the Homeless. To learn more about these organizations, including the issues addressed by their respective agendas, visit www.wliha.org and www.endhomelessnesswa.org.

King County Housing Authority contributed to this report.

Unemployment rate dropped to near-record low in January

Washington added 5,800 non-agricultural jobs in January, which helped decrease the unemployment rate to 4.5 percent, according to the state Employment Security Department.

The January unemployment rate came in one-tenth of a percentage point lower than the revised December 2007 unemployment rate of 4.6 percent, and one-tenth of a point higher than the record low set last March.

"These positive job numbers are further evidence that Washington's economy is still healthy, despite what's happening in other parts of the country," said Governor Chris Gregoire. "These are historically low unemployment numbers."

Industries with the largest job growth last month were retail trade, with 2,100 new jobs, financial activities, up 1,400,

and education and health services, with 1,300 new jobs. The largest decline was in construction jobs, down 1,900.

Since January 2007, 61,900 net new jobs have been created in Washington. Overall, non-agricultural job growth increased by 2.1 percent, compared to a national rate increase of 0.7 percent.

An estimated 180,700 people (not seasonally adjusted) currently are unemployed and seeking work in Washington.

"Our WorkSource offices are available to help anyone who needs help finding work or needs to improve some job skills," said Employment Security Commissioner Karen Lee.

WorkSource offices are listed in the blue pages of telephone books and online at go2worksource.com.

Assistance also is available by phone at 877-872-5627.

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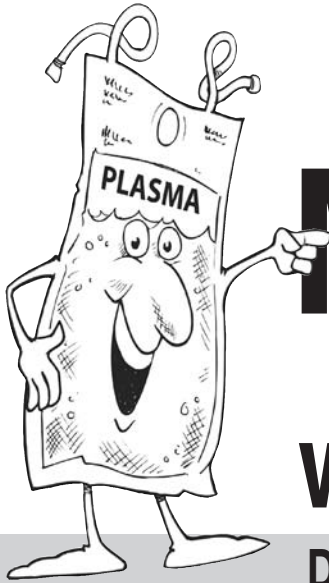
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