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# JUSTICE CALLING

Issue 1, Volume 2, February 2010



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**Features**

## Heart & Soul

A program that inspires our work and touches hundreds of lives in our community reaches a milestone.

This winter marks the fifth anniversary of the Center's Community Advocacy program. Our founder, Jim Sheehan, often speaks of Community Advocacy in terms of the work that keeps us grounded not just in the pavement-level realities of our community but in the basic quest for justice that we're here to pursue. For the most part, these aren't cases that you're ever likely to read about in the newspaper. But just because there are no dramatic courtroom scenes it doesn't mean there's no drama. Trust me, a good day at the Center for Justice is when one of our interns or volunteer lawyers or social workers has been able to fix a complicated problem that allows a deserving person to land or keep a job, or enables a needy family to keep a roof over its heads. You can read a sampling of Community Advocacy success stories [here](#).

One of my favorite CA stories--in part because of the remarkably creative and persistent work that Shannon Bedard displayed--can be read [here](#). Since completing her Social Work practicum at CFJ last year, Shannon has received her Master's Degree and taken a position with the Northwest Fair Housing Alliance, just one floor below us in the Community Building. Shannon's work exemplifies something about the CA program that continues to amaze and inspire me. It's the dauntless devotion and character of the people who do this work beginning, of course, with Suellen Pritchard, whose story can be found [here](#). A few months back, Suellen mentioned to me that a number of her former interns, after their tenures at the Center, had chosen to go abroad on challenging assignments. I've been gathering some these stories

[Kind of Like Beauty](#)

[Eyes on the Water](#)

[Resurrection with a Cause](#)

[EPA Takes the Bullet](#)

[Police Rules](#)

[Singularly Suellen](#)

[Stuck in the Membrane](#)

[Every Breath He Takes](#)

[Remembering Otto Zehm](#)

[Safe at Home](#)

[Holly Cork's Unforgettable Day](#)

[Notes for the Medicine Wheels](#)

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## **Commentary**

[Obama and the Pirates](#)

[Confessions of a Soap Sample Boy](#)

[Kelli's View from the Trenches](#)

[Farewell to N Reactor](#)

[Drea Trauemer, Vindicated](#)

[One World, Bon Appetite](#)

[How the Flecktones Kill the Blues](#)

[Good on Ya Barry](#)

[Who Would Jesus Waterboard?](#)

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and will be bringing them to you shortly both on our website and our annual report/newsletter.

--Tim Connor, CFJ Communications Director

## Escaping Groundhog Day

Speaking of dauntless devotion, the Center continues to work with the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) and several other community groups to bring genuinely independent oversight to the Spokane Police Department. Although Spokane now has a police ombudsman, the position was seriously weakened as the city's administration watered it down in negotiations with Spokane's police unions. A key weakness is the lack of independent investigative authority for the ombudsman and the telling fact that complaints to the ombudsman can only be investigated by the police department internal affairs unit and only if the police agree to do the investigation. Eleven months ago, educator and Native American leader Raymond Reyes voiced an emotional plea to Mayor Verner and other city officials, begging them not to try to dissipate or divert public anger with meaningless process and half measures. Reyes said, [then](#), that in his thirty five years in Spokane he'd grown tired of the city's habit of processing problems to death without actually changing anything.

"I feel like I'm in the movie Groundhog Day sometimes," Reyes told the Mayor, Council President Joe Shogan, and the city's police brass that evening. And so it was that on Groundhog Day this year (to reinforce Reyes's point), PJALS's Liz Moore and other community leaders held a press conference in the Community Building. They released a proposed new ordinance that would make the Ombudsman's office truly independent. The Center's Breean Beggs was on hand to explain why the city could adopt the measure without having to repeat the fruitless negotiations with the police unions. You can read our story [here](#), and a subsequent commentary about the city's uninspiring response [here](#).

## Olympian Rapids

Riverkeeper Rick Eichstaedt and others working to protect Washington lakes and rivers are characteristically busy this time



of year working to try to advance bills in the state legislature that are helpful, and to resist bills that aren't. It's been a little of both this session in Olympia. The good news is that as of this writing, a bill that Rick testified against and which would effectively weaken the federal Clean Water Act [appears](#) to be going nowhere, and a bill that would [limit](#) phosphorus in lawn fertilizer (phosphorous in run-off leads to dissolved oxygen problems in streams) appears to be headed for passage.

In other welcome river news, pressure from citizen organizations has led to a Hagadone Corporation subsidiary being [required](#) to remove contaminated dredging spoils from Blackwell Island. Large volumes of sediments contaminated with heavy metals will be excavated to upgrade the marina on the island. Previously, the proposal had been to leave the contaminated material on the island, raising concerns from conservationists (including the Spokane Riverkeeper) that the material could be inundated and resuspended when flood waters next overflow the island, as has happened previously.

## Fresh from our Kitchen

It's been a busy winter in our [Kitchen Table](#), feature and opinion section where, just for starters, we've got a really tasty story from the multi-talented Jamie Borgan. One of Jamie's many interests is food and you'll want to get her [take](#) on "Food Rules" author Michael Pollan's recent talk before fans and critics at Washington State University. If you're hungry, in a hurry, and on your way to Idaho, you'll want to check out [Mary Harvill's discoveries](#) in Post Falls. We also have Tim's [reflections](#) on what Edward R. Murrow would make of Glenn Beck and today's television news fare, why Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mike Mullen [deserves credit](#) for his recent testimony on "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and how National Public Radio [responded](#) to a lamentable right-wing smear against the late historian Howard Zinn after Zinn died suddenly in late January.

Finally, we've got a couple stirring dispatches from humanitarian Buck Close who was in Haiti during the devastating earthquake that struck near Port Au Prince on January 12th. You can read his January 16 post [here](#), and a followup [here](#). You can connect to Haitian relief organizations through either article but recommendations from Buck and the Community Building are included in the January 16th piece.



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