



WORKS IN PROGRESS

Volume 23, No. 3 Serving the social justice community of Olympia since 1990. July 2012

A local group ‘comes out of the closet’ in support of LGBTQ youth

Nigel Weiss

A group for supporting LGBTQ youth in Olympia, after nearly five years of doing its work quietly, finally revealed itself to the whole community this year. Pizza Klatch – a diverse coalition of mental health professionals and queer rights activists

– provides support and education space to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning high school students at several schools in Thurston County.

“We felt early on, when we started, especially with what happened to the two kids who were sent away with our first group, that we’d get such a backlash that we wouldn’t be able to do it, that the schools would be afraid to stand up [for us],” said Pizza Klatch coordinator Lynn Grotsky.

When the group began, Grotsky said, it was an after-school program, but it quickly became apparent that there would be problems with this approach.

“It started out with three or four kids, there were maybe six by the end, and then two parents from two different families found out their kids were attending, and sent them away to straighten them out ... So at that point we all got together ... and we put out an announcement to all the groups – to Stonewall [Youth], to PFLAG, to maybe PiPE – saying what do we do as a community to help these kids? ... And they all came forward, including St. Benedict’s Episcopal Church ... and said let’s do something at lunch where the parents can’t know, and we’ll all work together. And that’s how it was started.”

Now, after years of work, Pizza Klatch has groups in a half-dozen schools in the county. At each of these schools, a group of students sits down every week to chat over hot pizza about everything from internalized oppression to how their weeks have been. The groups mostly focus on what Grotsky calls ‘supportive education,’ providing a safe space and a resource for dealing with the hardships many queer kids face.

LGBTQ youth, as a group, are particularly at-risk when it comes to the possibility of homelessness, suicide, and substance abuse. Second to Native American youth, LGBTQ youth have

the highest rates of suicide, with about one-third attempting suicide at least once. And, according to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 20-40% of homeless youth living on the street are LGBTQ kids.

These facts demonstrate the connectedness among social problems in our society – homophobia, mental ill-

ness, and homelessness – but they should also remind us that our own communities

Living in Olympia, where I think it’s one of the safest places in the world to come out as [gay or] trans, it’s still not safe, it takes so much courage.

are not exempt from the same sorts of oppression that exist elsewhere in the country.

According to Youth Suicide Prevention Program (YSPP), Washington is among twenty states with laws that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, but in many instances these laws are still not able to protect students. “[W]e’re finding that schools aren’t following a uniform process to address bullying and harassment in the schools,”

said Heather Carter, Director of Training for YSPP.

The organization published a 2008 report on bullying, which concludes that “LGBTQ students are more than five times as likely as their straight-identified peers to miss school due to feeling unsafe; 31.7% of LGBTQ students missed a class and 32.7% missed a day of school in the past month because of feeling unsafe, compared to only 5.5% and 4.5% of their peers; and LGBTQ youth from rejecting families are up to nine times more likely to attempt suicide.”

“I mean, living in Olympia, where I think it’s one of the safest places in the world to come out as [gay or] trans, it’s still not safe, it takes so much courage,” Grotsky said.

Violence and bullying are commonplace for LGBTQ youth, and suicides are sadly not unknown in many of our high schools. Grotsky says she was motivated to form Pizza Klatch after a rash of teen suicides in the Olympia area during the mid-2000s. And many still remember the shock when seventeen-year-old Bill Clayton, a student at Olympia High

School, committed suicide in 1995 after being brutally assaulted by four other teenagers for being bisexual.

By working with trained facilitators and counselors, the Pizza Klatch groups build both confidence and empowerment for its students through education. Grotsky says that the main thing the organization needs is money – the groups all give out free pizza every week. There’s more about Pizza Klatch and how to donate online at Pizzaklatch.org.

“I think the best thing that’s happened is how many people are coming out as trans or as gay or lesbian, because it’s really easy to be transphobic or homophobic if you don’t know anyone who is gay, right?” Grotsky said. “So as people find out that people they love are trans or gay or lesbian or bi, it starts changing those biases.”

Nigel Weiss is an Olympia activist who graduated from Evergreen this spring with a degree in Political Economy. He can be reached at jlnweiss@gmail.com.

Works In Progress is in the process of replacing the page one masthead graphic. The temporary photo is by Robert Whitlock.

The so-called science of the pro-life movement

Marco Rossi

The American Atheist Conference this past March was joined by some surprising guests. In between the usual secular suspects selling literature and soliciting memberships was a table representing the organization Secular Pro-Life, a non-theist anti-abortion group that is—in its own words—“pro-life for a reason.” According to the organization’s website, the mission of Secular Pro-Life is to expand the pro-life movement “beyond the cathedral walls” mobilizing “like-minded atheists, theists, and agnostics who are eager to save lives and fight the media portrayal of pro-lifers as ‘religious extremists’” by focusing on the science of abortion. Could it be true? Is there really such thing as a pro-life atheist? What’s next: intelligent design agnostics? How about

secularists for Sharia law?

It is difficult to take an organization like Secular Pro-Life seriously. Their table at the American Atheist Conference was staffed by only two people, and their website is far from professional; most of its links connect to opinion pieces on blogs. But, it would be dangerous to write them off completely. It

It is difficult to take an organization like Secular Pro-Life seriously. . . but, it would be dangerous to write them off completely.

is quite possible that organizations like Secular Pro-life may actually reflect the thinking of the average American than most people realize. A recent Gallup poll showed that the number of Americans who identify as “pro-choice” has dropped to its lowest point (41%) in recorded history, while those who iden-

tify as “pro-life” have continued with their decade long increase. In 1995, the amount of Americans who considered themselves pro-life was only at 33%. Today, that number has climbed to 50%--with a remarkable 9% jump in the last five years. Pro-choice advocates on the other hand have experienced the opposite phenomenon. In the mid-1990s, the pro-choice population had a noticeable but delicate majority in America. Today they are battling for their political lives to just maintain a relatively even split among the population. With such a large portion of Americans now identifying

as pro-life it is only natural that a significant segment of them are nonreligious—especially if we consider how the pro-life movement has been able to make such dramatic leaps in such a short period of time.

Part of the reason for this shift in the
► **MOVEMENT**, continued on page 10

WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

Works In Progress is a free, all volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of Works In Progress and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions

Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

Works In Progress is committed to stories misrepresented or ignored by the mainstream media. We value local, well-researched news stories, accounts of personal experience and reflections by local authors. Opinion pieces, also valued, are often best supported by facts, examples, and sources, and we encourage writers to include these elements to submissions. We're also looking for graphics, poetry, cartoons, and articles that push the boundaries of conventional journalism.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number. Articles may be reprinted. Please cite sources.

If your issue isn't being covered in Works In Progress, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or haven't found someone else to cover it!)

Send submissions to olywip@gmail or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

Governing Tool

The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.

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"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. Works In Progress is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause

We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

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Lawsuit filed against second Explosives Handling Wharf at Trident nuclear submarine base

Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action

Today, two groups took action to halt construction of a second Explosives Handling Wharf at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor until the public is fully informed about the serious environmental risks of the \$715 million project. The groups filed a lawsuit in US District Court in Tacoma alleging that Navy secrecy surrounding the project is a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act.

The new wharf would be built close to the existing wharf where submarines dock for loading and unloading of Trident missiles. Plaintiffs are concerned about harm to birds, salmon, seals, whales and other marine life from drilling up to 1,250 pilings and covering an area of water the size of six football fields in ecologically sensitive Hood Canal.

According to Kathy George, Seattle environmental attorney for the plaintiffs, "Before the Navy spends hundreds of millions of tax dollars on this project, Congress and the public are entitled to a complete and open discussion of the risks and less harmful alternatives."

Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action member Glen Milner stated, "The Navy's environmental analysis essentially says 'Don't worry, trust us.' But the National Environmental Policy Act was enacted to ensure all significant environmental impacts are disclosed."

The Navy's expressed purpose for its \$715 million second Explosives Handling Wharf is to support the "Life Extension Program" for the Trident D-5 missiles and Trident strategic weapons on the submarines at Bangor. The Life Extension Program involves the upgrade of guidance systems, rocket motors in the missiles and other components, which requires additional missile handling operations in Hood Canal. The Navy announced its decision to proceed with the wharf project on May 18. The wharf will take four years to build.

Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility member Steven Gilbert stated, "As major disasters such as Fu-

kushima become more common, our nation must decrease the potential risk to our environment instead of increasing it, as with the second Explosives Handling Wharf in Hood Canal."

The operation of the second Explosives Handling Wharf will double the amount of explosives handled at one time in Hood Canal. The net explosive weight of the two wharves is equal to

The Olympian needs to serve the public rather than the official story

Democritus Blantayre

The following is a letter sent to The Olympian Editorial Board on June 21.

Years ago I submitted a letter to the editor that espouses my opinion regarding how 9/11 was orchestrated by criminal elements of the US government, what the evidence was for this claim, and what the apparent reasons were for this criminal archconspiracy. My submission was quickly rejected and soon I received a phone call consisting of a mere denunciation of my entire opinion and effort to contribute it. Recently, I have tried again to submit my thoughts on this important subject, and would like to know if once again a simple difference of opinion on this subject between myself and those who decide what will and will not be printed shall result in a silencing of this dissent.

It is acceptable to me if people disagree with me. What I find objectionable is how there is a single story put forward by political officialdom, and how this story is blasted through the echo chamber of mainstream media outlets such as The Olympian with an extreme poverty of critical inquiry which is the duty, or should be the duty of journalists... and then when an occasional whimper of criticism and questioning of official big lies and sacred myths comes from the lay public such as myself (who isn't supposed to be professionally trained or paid for this service), it is totally silenced

7.4 million pounds of TNT in the form of rocket propellant in the missiles. The propellant is classified as an HC/D 1.1 explosive, more volatile than TNT, and is capable of detonating upon impact.

Plaintiffs listed include: Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, and individual, Glen Milner.

Ground Zero, established in 1977, holds three annual actions at the Bangor Trident base: Martin Luther King, Jr Day; Mothers' Day; and Hiroshima/Nagasaki Never Again in August.

and prejudicially dismissed by those who are supposed to be professional skeptics and inquirers.

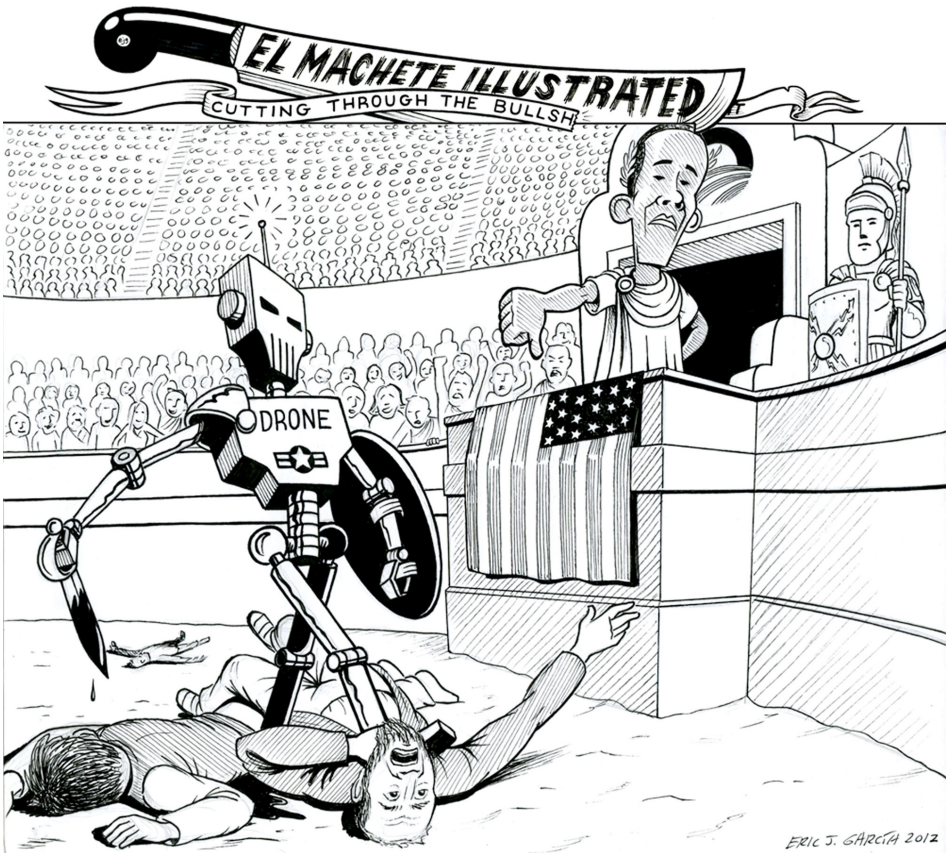
I object to agreement with the editor being the prerequisite of my views being allowed the tiniest amount of space on which to contribute to this important public forum, which is virtually the only one of consequence that a non-millionaire such as myself (hypothetically) has access. The easy excuse is to deride myself and what I say as insanity or a product thereof, but that is poor journalism and even poor judgement. For indeed, the evidence that I present to bolster my perspective is sound: what system of defining truth may be more reliable than forensic scientific evidence that passes the peer review process? (<http://www.benthamscience.com/open/tocpj/articles/V002/7TOCPJ.htm>)

Even if I did not present such evidence, which I did, my voice should be allowed entrance into this aspect of the public forum, for the following two reasons; 1. philosophically, humanity's collective search for truth is enhanced through the inclusion to open discourse of every idea and perspective, even if it is for the sake of argument a pure falsity, because through rational discussion and debate the falsity will evaporate under this sunlight of human reason, and 2. this opinion of mine is hardly unique or even rare even amongst Americans, for a quarter of us do indeed believe as I do that 9/11 was an inside job, and a simple majority of Americans believe that the official stories regarding this subject are fundamentally flawed and want a new and fully independent investigation into the circumstances of those terror attacks, according to a 2007 Zogby poll (and these numbers are no doubt higher today).

What most Americans therefore desire is not what The Olympian has thus far offered on this subject, so far as I can see: Americans want real discussion and real inquiry into 9/11, because it still serves as the central justification for imperial, illegal wars of aggression and for the annihilation of basic freedoms, even those originating from the middle ages. If we are to so radically transform our society and values, let us be certain that we are doing so based off on a correct understanding of underlying historic events that are the ostensible justifications for these changes (which is most likely through open discussion), and what's more, following such a correct appraisal of historical events, to make such radical changes only when it's determined that such are necessary and prudent (again, most likely determinable through open discussion).

In conclusion, this paper or any other may choose to serve either the public or the powers that be. It serves the former by skeptical and open discussion and inquiry, the latter by parroting and religiously believing everything claimed from officialdom. Americans want and need real openness in discussion and research. Perhaps the tendency of mainstream press outlets to be "responsible" and not allow questioning of the big lies like this one is what lies behind the recent supplanting of those news sources for others that are judged more relevant by the public."

Democritus Blantayre was a candidate opposing Olympia City Council member Steve Langer last fall.



Inside Works In Progress

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The Westside wants to know

Where does the Olympia City Council stand on the City’s Comprehensive Plan?

Dan Leahy

To the Mayor and Council members:

In our successful effort to stop the 7-Eleven at Harrison and Division, we argued from the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) public comment period, through the two hearings before Thomas Bjorgen, through the numerous hearings in front of Superior Court Judge Lisa Sutton that the City staff was not enforcing provisions of the Comprehensive Plan, the Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) and the Engineering Design and Development Standards (EDDS).

Judge Sutton agreed with us.

However, in all of the quasi-judicial and judicial venues, the City Attorney argued against our position.

At the final hearing before Judge Sutton on May 24, 2012, the City Attorney argued that the City’s Comprehensive Plan is not a development regulation. That is, the City argued its Comprehensive Plan may not be considered when land-use proposals are reviewed, let alone be used to limit or deny a proposed development.

Is this the position of the City Coun-

cil? I would greatly appreciate an answer.

I think the 200 plus Westside citizens who have spent their time and money over the last year and a half to enforce the Comprehensive Plan would also appreciate an answer.

We think the City Attorney’s position is contrary to state statute, case law, and contrary to the direction given by the Olympia City Council in at least six sections of the Olympia Municipal Code-- which we will be glad to share with you if you wish. I’ve pasted an excerpt below from a portion of the hearing [with the] City’s Attorney’s argument so you can make your own judgments. [see below]

The City Attorney also mentions his “clients” in this testimony. I would love to know who his clients, either de jure or de facto, are. If the Council is his client, then this must be your position with regard to the Comprehensive Plan.

Perhaps you can ask the City Attorney to explain his position on the Comprehensive Plan before the Council so you could decide whether you agree with his position or not.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. I look forward to your answer.

We think the City Attorney’s position is contrary to state statute, case law, and contrary to the direction given by the Olympia City Council in at least six sections of the Olympia Municipal Code.

Transcript excerpt of statement by Mr. Nienaber, Assistant City Attorney

“The capital facilities plan as an element of the comprehensive plan is just that; it is a plan. And under the Growth Management Act (GMA), the comprehensive plan by definition, by state law, is under the definitions section of the GMA, definition for Comprehensive Plan, a generalized coordinated land use policy stated by the city, adopted pursuant to the GMA. It is a general land use policy. That’s not a development regulation. A development regulation under the Growth Management Act means the control placed on development of land, including zoning ordinances, critical area ordinances, shoreline master programs. The capital facilities plan is not a development regulation; it is an aspiration of the city.

Now, the petitioner points to a certain section of the code and says, look, the Comprehensive Plan becomes converted to a development regulation because there’s this specific municipal code provision that refers to it. But the way the hearings examiner has interpreted that, and I believe it’s the most reasonable one, is where there are zoning regulations, that applies, and if there’s an ambiguity in the zoning regulations, then you can use the Comprehensive Plan as a tool for interpreting those regulations. That structure, Comprehensive Plan as a general outline of land use policy, development regulations are specific, they’re binding on a developer, that construction is consistent and in fact represents the definitions in the Growth Management Act. A different interpretation, an interpretation that says, look, this OMC converts the whole Comprehensive Plan to a development regulation, is not consistent with the definition of comprehensive plan in the Growth Management Act. It’s not consistent with the definition of development regulation in the Growth Management Act.

Moreover, although frankly that would be a planner’s dream -- my clients would love having the Comprehensive Plan being directly controlling -- it is a developer’s worst nightmare because you do not know which standards apply. There are some standards that say protect the environment, some standards that say do what you can reasonably for the economy. A developer is left completely guessing as to how they can submit a vested application under the law. They don’t know how to comply with just a broad reference to the Comprehensive Plan.”

Carlos Montes' court case ends in victory

Los Angeles Committee to Stop FBI Repression

Los Angeles - On June 5, Carlos Montes' criminal court prosecution ended in a victory for Carlos and the movement.

Carlos Montes' home was raided on May 17, 2011, by the combined forces of the LA County Sheriff's Swat Team and the FBI, by crashing his door down at 5:00 a.m., with automatic assault rifles drawn, almost killing him. He was charged with six serious felonies with a possible jail time of up to 18 years.

With local and national support, via solidarity protests, call-in campaigns to President Obama and US Attorney General Holder, local rallies and protests, and an offensive legal strategy, two felonies were dropped; this was a first partial victory. However the District Attorney still stated that they wanted Montes to do at least five years in state prison for the four felony charges remaining.

The local and national Committees Against FBI Repression launched a petition drive and a “Call the D.A.” campaign, with phone banking and a robo call by Carlos to over 4 000 supporters, urging folks to call District Attorney Steve Cooley. The District Attorney's office was flooded with calls and letters.

Montes' attorney made several motions to get charges dropped on various grounds, but the Los Angeles Superior Court judge rejected them. Preparations were made for a trial, knowing well the state judicial system is not ‘fair and impartial.’ Montes and

his attorney Jorge Gonzalez got widespread support and media coverage including in the *Democracy Now* TV show, *La Opinion*, and *The Guardian UK newspaper*.

The local district attorney on the case then sought for a resolution and proposed to drop three additional felonies, if Carlos pled to one count of perjury. This proposal included no jail time, three years of probation and community service. Under advice from supporters, friends and his attorney Montes moved forward with this proposal.

This is a victory for Carlos Montes and the movement against police political repression. A trial had the danger of him being convicted of four felonies with jail time and the additional old felony - a total of five felonies. At this point Carlos is out of jail, will continue to organize against repression, for public education, against US-led wars and for immigrant rights. He is already planning to attend the protest at the Republican National Convention on August 27, 2012 in Tampa, Florida.

Carlos wants to thank all the people, organizations, unions and community people who worked and supported him in this struggle against police/political repression.

The struggle continues to defend the 23 other anti-war and international solidarity activists who are *still* under an FBI investigation for showing solidarity with the oppressed people of the world, especially the Palestinian and Colombian people.

Stay updated via: www.stopfbi.net!

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Mural of Chavez in Caracas

Peter Bohmer

I spent 10 weeks in Venezuela in early 2012, two months with a group of 30 students from the Evergreen State College and then two weeks continuing my travels with a good friend. I had a similar 10 week experience in early 2009 and also spent three weeks in Venezuela in 2011. Based on my 2009 study and travel in Venezuela, I wrote an article that can be found at <http://www.zcommunications.org/venezuela-socialism-for-the-21st-century-by-peter-bohmer>.

This article is a continuation of that one. It focuses primarily on the changes in Venezuela since 2009. Most of my time on this trip was spent in Caracas, Mérida, and Barquisimeto.

In the last few years, 2009-2011, the social programs have continued to grow slowly—increasing access to free and quality health care through the Barrio Adentro and larger, more comprehensive health clinics, growing access to higher education and other social programs such as job training, soup kitchens, and the building of affordable new housing. This is impressive as national output (GDP) fell in 2009 and 2010 and grew slowly for most of 2011.

Popular Power

The number of communal councils has continued to grow. They continue to be sites for popular control, self-government and substantive discussion and decision making by large numbers of its members in a considerable number of neighborhoods and communities. In most communities, they are mainly vehicles to distribute some of the government budget. In a few places, members of communal councils told us there needed to be more popular education and discussion of participatory democracy and vision in them rather than just being institutions to get money from, for local projects. Based on my observations and discussion, active participation in communal councils is more common in rural than urban areas; and in relation to population numbers, functioning communal councils are also more frequent in rural than urban communities.

Overall, active participation within communal councils has not increased and may have declined from a few years ago. Still, as in my earlier visit in 2009, it was inspiring to see people from the popular classes, men and even more frequently women, involved in self-government. Both at the communal council level, which is 200-400 families in cities, and a much smaller number of families in the countryside, and in government behavior at the municipal, state and national level, so much depends on whether key people and officials are honest, competent and committed to furthering grass roots participation and economic and social justice or are mainly self-interested.

Comunas (communes) which are aggregation of communal councils were just beginning in 2009 during my last long visit. The comunas have grown more slowly than I expected and are

mainly in rural areas, e.g., in Lara, outside of its urban center, Barquisimeto. They often have a production aspect, e.g., production of milk, of clothing, etc., where wages are equal in the enterprise and some of the revenue goes to the broader community. One measure of the future deepening of the Venezuelan revolution is whether these comunas continue to grow in number and active

A new and major labor law was announced on May Day. It has many good aspects: social security for all including the informal sector, for housewives, and for self-employed artisans; and three weeks paid vacation for all workers.

participation.

There has been an increase in nationalization of private enterprises in Venezuela and the formation of new state enterprises, e.g., chocolate, but worker control or co-management between workers and management, or between workers and the state, is still the exception. The private sector dominates the production and distribution of goods and services although its share of GDP is declining.

A new and major labor law was announced on May Day. It has many good aspects: social security for all including the informal sector, for housewives, and for self-employed artisans; and three weeks paid vacation for all workers. It is strong on gender equality and against the discrimination of women in the work place. The process of writing it should have been more participatory and there is little in it about worker control. Workers and unions were asked to comment on the original proposal but not in a continual process of amendment and change. This was a critique we heard while we were there.

The State and the PSUV

We heard a lot of criticisms of local and State governments and of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), headed by Hugo Chávez, of rampant bureaucracy.

The word, bureaucracy, has a much broader meaning than in the United States. Bureaucracy in Venezuela includes corruption, favoritism, clientalism, nepotism, incompetence, indifference, and needless red tape, etc. This situation does not seem to have improved in Venezuela since 2009 and perhaps has gotten worse. I think Chávez is very aware of this but most of his criticisms of corruption are aimed at the opposition and not enough is aimed at those PSUV leaders who have power in local, State government, in the National Assembly, and as ministers and who, in addition, do not further democracy and economic equality.

The judicial system is universally criticized by the population for its inability to solve crimes, corruption, taking of bribes and lack of fairness.

From the people we met, mainly groups who supported Hugo Chávez but were somewhat autonomous, there were major criticisms of the PSUV leadership even if they were members of it. For example in Barquisimeto, there is an exciting and large movement of primarily urban land-takeovers who have seized

urban land and unoccupied dwellings in order to meet the large unmet need for adequate and affordable housing. The mayor of Barquisimeto, Amalia Saéz, a PSUV member, ordered the eviction and repression of the residents of some of these land-takeovers. Yet the families occupying the land and the leaders of groups involved in organizing many of these occupations loved Hugo

Chávez and felt if he had more power and knowledge of what was going on, the occupiers would have more economic and political support and would be given title to the land and resources to build and improve housing.

The very strong love and respect the majority of Venezuelans from the popular classes have for Hugo Chávez is very powerful and apparent. This love and belief in Chávez continues although it translates less than previously into support and respect for other leaders of his party.

The PSUV, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela, is primarily a political party organized to win elections with not enough focus on furthering social movements and popular power. There are many, many outstanding individu-



This building, abandoned for 9 years, was transferred under an Organic Law allowing land or buildings left unused to be transferred to a community in need. It now houses multiple families. (Photos with this article taken by Evergreen students.)

als in it who are honest and committed to furthering and building “Socialism for the 21st Century.” The PSUV is more connected to the population with more egalitarian policies than for example the Democratic Party in the United States or the Socialist Party in France. Yet there is insufficient political and popular education of its membership, insufficient discussion of direction, and little accountability of its leaders to its base. The PSUV is a party where a significant part of the leadership does not share a participatory democratic vision and/or is primarily concerned with their own advancement. Major changes in the PSUV are necessary.

Modifications in my Analysis

My perspective on Venezuela has changed in two ways from 2009 to the present.

1) In 2009, my viewpoint was what was

most important in understanding the ongoing revolution in Venezuela was the dialectic between change from the top and from below. I wrote in “Venezuela: Socialism for the 21st Century” cited on page one that:

“In the last 10 years, social change from above has caused social change from below which has further moved the government of Chávez to the left which has furthered popular power at the grass roots level. What is exciting about Venezuela is the mutually reinforcing process where the Chávez led government is committed to meeting people’s needs and supports activities by the popular classes in transforming their communities, local governance and workplaces. This spurs the government to continue to further support popular power. The popular classes are becoming subjects of their history, protagonists. This process is more profound than just progressive economic and social programs.

It is equally a mistake to only focus on building power from below as some people do who believe the state always supports the capitalist class or is inherently oppressive... What is also exciting and positive and hopeful is this slowly radicalizing dynamic where President Chávez supports people’s power but does not control it. This growing power from below makes it possible for him to initiate more socialist-oriented policies and structural change to further challenge the power and privileges of capital, e.g., land-takeovers from wealthy landowners where the resulting farm is then run as a collective or a cooperative by the occupants of the land.”

This dynamic of change from above and below reinforcing each other describes the process in some localities, e.g., Carora and the surrounding county, Torres, in the State of Lara. Here the PSUV led government and the PSUV, led by its representative in the National Assembly, Julio Chávez, are playing a very important and positive role in furthering popular power. There is a large increase of communal councils and comunas who are controlling the allocation of most of the budget for the county. There

is also growing worker self-management and public ownership of the production of goods and services.

Hugo Chávez’s reelection as president in October, 2012 is necessary and very important for the people of Venezuela. However, more than in my earlier trips to Venezuela, I now see the main focus and hope for liberatory change coming from below and the interrelated growth of alternative and counter institutions in all spheres—the workplace, the economy, community, indigenous communities, politics, women, education, health, media, and culture. The government is an important contributor to this revolutionary change by increasing social spending and social programs, by nationalizations, by building and funding alternate education and health systems, and by preventing a counterrevolution, but it is not the major contributor to the

► VENEZUELA, continued on page 5

► **Venezuela**, cont. from page 4
transformation of Venezuelan society. In other words, I now see the state as an enabler of this ongoing transformation but not the major actor and agent.

2) There is some hope among Venezuelans I spoke to that if Chávez is reelected he will become more critical of the corruption and politics of some of the PSUV leadership but so far there is little evidence of this. I have to conclude that Chávez's values and vision are not totally opposed to the clientalist, top down and only mildly redistributive politics of much of the PSUV and the governments they control at various levels—local, State, national. Although I continue to believe that Hugo Chávez is committed to a more equal and participatory and socialist Venezuela, we cannot totally separate him from the actions of the PSUV and its leadership.

The 2012 Election

It is very important that Hugo Chávez is re-elected President in the upcoming October, 2012 election [in order] for the revolution to move forward. I am quite certain that Chávez will be re-elected as he continues to be very popular and deservedly so with the large majority of Venezuelans from the popular classes. (The popular classes comprise as much as 80% of the people of Venezuela.) President Chávez has dealt with two serious bouts of cancer in the last year, yet he continues to be an active and involved president. If at some time during his next term in office because of health reasons, Chávez cannot continue as president, there does not seem to be another person that has both the vision of Chávez and also the strong support of the people.

I found it revealing that the opposition candidate for president, Henrique Capriles Radonski, is running on a platform that supports the social programs but with the claim that he will run them better and without the Cubans who are most of the medical staff in the Barrio Adentros (community health clinics) and community health centers. This shows the popularity of these programs and is very different from the 2006 election where the opposition ran on a more open neoliberal platform. Of course, the right-wing totally supports Capriles.

There is a coalition of social movements, community groups, the PSUV and the Communist Party of Venezuela called the Gran Polo Patriótico (Great Patriotic Pole, GPP) that is working on Chávez's re-election. There is some hope this bloc will continue past the 2012 elections and become more than just an electoral vehicle, but this is not that likely as the GPP has been organized with one objective--to win this important election. What is perhaps more hopeful for the future is that there are many individuals and groups organizing in Venezuela who are anti-capitalist with a belief and practice in popular education, building grass-roots organizations and popular power. One important site for this is community media, which is growing in numbers and audience.

The Economy

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Venezuela has been growing again for a year although at a slower rate than from 2003 through 2008. Output fell from the second quarter of 2009 through 2010 and only has begun to grow rapidly in 2012 (data from Central Bank of Venezuela, www.bcv.org.ve).

After rapid improvement from 2003 to 2008, there was little or no improvement but no decline in the major social indicators—life expectancy, infant mortality, poverty, access to sanitation, and clean water from 2009 to 2011 (www.ine.gob.ve). Measures of income equality, which also greatly improved from 2003 through 2008, have not improved since. During the recent recession, the real wage (purchasing power of wages)



One of the many communal councils, or “consejo comunal” in Venezuela.

fell by a few per cent a year although the social wage continued to grow. The real wage has begun to grow again in 2012. The minimum wage is being increased by 32% this year, 2012.

From what I read and observed, production of goods is again growing but seems to be primarily in public construction and the related private and state industries. It is difficult to spur production in Venezuela as the currency is still significantly overvalued as prices are continuing to grow at about 25%-30% a year although less so far this year, 2012. Price controls are increasingly being used. The official rate for the currency is 4.3 bolivars to the dollar but we were consistently offered 8 Bolivars or more for our dollars. Using the official rate of 4.3 Bolivars to the dollar, prices of most goods and services are very high.

The attempt to diversify production and be less dependent on oil has not yet been very successful and food production is not growing enough to reduce the 70% of food consumption that is imported. Yet, Venezuela is very close to achieving food security, the right for all to have enough food not to be hungry. However, food sovereignty, producing most of one's food locally and nationally, also a goal, has a long way to go.

To me, a socialist economy in Venezuela would require the continued growth of the state and social economy at the expense of the private sector. By the social economy I mean cooperatives, and firms that are jointly run and owned by the workers and the state, and production organized by communal councils and comunas. The state sector and social economy would merge to become one sector where there is self-management by workers, increasingly equal incomes and an orientation towards living in harmony with the environment. The objective of production would be to meet human needs not maximizing revenues or profits. There would be limited differences in income and alternatives to market determined prices and wages. This merged sector would eventually grow to be the entire Venezuelan political economy. As indicated throughout this paper, there has not been much progress in this direction in the last three years. (See my 2009 article, cited in the introduction to this article for further elaboration.)

Democracy and Human Rights

In terms of the more general issue of democracy in Venezuela, the US and right wing-charges of Venezuela as a dictatorship are ridiculous and hypocritical. We saw demonstrations and protests against specific government policies, and against local or national leaders, almost every day we were there. Some could be called from the left, others from the right; others could not be identified ideologically but were protesting in various ways such as hunger strikes, camping out near government buildings for reasons like not getting paid their salary as public employees for six months or more. For the most part, there was little or no repression of these protests. There continues to be a thriving oppositional private media—television,

It was inspiring to see so many Venezuelans whose lives have improved so substantially over the last 13 years, who believe that the lives of their children and communities will continue to improve in major ways.

newspaper and radio with occasional but not common harassment. There are communal councils that are primarily oppositional and get public funds; there are others where funding follows loyalty. It is hard to generalize about Venezuela.

One slightly troubling sign—the word, “escualido” is used more commonly than three years ago against those who criticize Chávez and the PSUV. Escualido means squalid one and is sometimes used to stigmatize honest critics. However, Venezuela does not have the feeling of a repressive state. For the most part, people are not afraid to criticize Chávez, the PSUV, the economic and political system, etc.

Violent crime continues to be a very serious problem and certainly the police and a dysfunctional criminal justice system contribute to it. A government estimate of violent crimes committed by the police is that it is 20% of the total violent crimes; some community groups estimate even a higher proportion are committed by the police. Few murders or other serious crimes are solved. The Chávez led government now realizes that crime and insecurity are serious problems that decrease public participation and support, and need to be addressed as a priority. We visited a new national police university (UNES) that has a significant number of human rights activists as faculty and leaders and are committed to popular education pedagogy. This is hopeful.

It is not clear why poverty has declined significantly over the last nine years but violence has increased. There are still millions of marginalized male youth. They make up most of the victims and also most of the perpetrators. In some barrios where there are high levels of popular power and participation and

strong community organizations with activities for youth, violent crime has decreased. In most urban communities this is lacking. There is a growing commitment to reduce the number of guns in Venezuela but they are everywhere. It is essential that violent crime decrease substantially in the next few years for popular power to grow and the government to continue to have legitimacy and support by the majority.

Internationally, Chávez and the Venezuelan government and that part of the media that is pro-Chávez have been very outspoken against US and NATO intervention in Libya, and against covert intervention and threats against Syria and Iran. This is commendable. However, this has sometimes led to verbal support for the politics of Kaddafi, Assad, or the rulers in Iran. This is troubling but the Venezuela emphasis has been and continues to be on a strong anti-interventionist stance. Venezuela's leadership in challenging U.S. global domination in Latin America and beyond continues. For example in December, 2011, Venezuela hosted the formation of CELAC, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Its purpose is to be a regional bloc that is a strong voice for its members, that furthers more cooperation amongst them and actively challenges U.S. domination of the region. Unlike the Organization of American States (OAS), CELAC excludes the United States and Canada.

Conclusion

Hugo Chávez and the construction in Venezuela of “Socialism for the 21st Century,” the ongoing although uneven transformation there, deserve critical support. There are some real problems and violations of individual rights but the criticisms by many human rights

organizations are overly harsh and also hypocritical as a stricter standard is often applied to Venezuela than other places, e.g., Honduras. So while the limited

progress towards a participatory democracy and democratic socialism since my 2009 visit is somewhat worrisome, Venezuela has not moved backwards.

It was inspiring to see so many Venezuelans whose lives have improved so substantially over the last 13 years, who believe that the lives of their children and communities will continue to improve in major ways. There are concrete and real reasons for this hope and optimism about the future in Venezuela.

I remember stopping in Quibor in the State of Lara on March 11th, 2012 where a communal council was just concluding its election and beginning to count the votes. I was with a group of students from the Evergreen State College program that I am co-teaching, which was concluding two months of study and travel in Venezuela. A few residents who had just voted pulled me aside. These women told me that before 1998 and Hugo Chávez's election, their lives had no value whatsoever to the people who ruled Venezuela, economically and politically, nor did their rural community and that Venezuela had been insignificant in the eyes of the world. These residents of Quibor said they now had a voice in Venezuela, that their lives had improved and changed significantly, and that they mattered to a government that valued poor and rural people. They were proud that Venezuela was a model and experiment that people all over the world were interested in. They felt they were no longer second class citizens of Venezuela and that Venezuela was no longer a second class citizen of the world. It made them feel valued, proud and important that a class from the Evergreen State College had come all the way to Quibor to visit and observe these profound changes. Venezuela is a hopeful place and its people are very inspiring.

Peter Bohmer, a member of The Evergreen State College faculty since 1987, teaches political economy.



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The right to self-govern

A citizens coalition's long struggle to implement a "community bill of rights" in Spokane

Kai Huschke

Editorial note: The following article was originally published in Readthedirt.org, an alternative online newspaper headquartered in Bellingham, WA. Readthedirt specializes in articles on environmental issues written by Northwest professionals and community activists. WIP is pleased to collaborate with this new publication.

It's election night 2011, 8:45 in the evening in a small neighborhood situated along the Spokane River near downtown Spokane. An excited roar erupts from around the kitchen table. Fifteen seconds later an even larger explosion of cheers booms from the basement. Delayed as it was (the difference between website and television election results), what each group saw was that local Proposition 1--a community bill of rights--was deadlocked at 50:50 against corporate rights. Quite stunning, considering at that in the same house, on virtually the same date two years earlier, many of those same people watched a similar measure to elevate community rights over corporate rights torched by the influence of corporate powerbrokers three to one.

The citizen-led coalition that is Envision Spokane has been in a seven-year battle. That effort continues on with the very narrow defeat of Proposition 1 in 2011. You see, for the last 100 years in Spokane corporate developers have had more rights than neighborhood residents, corporate polluters have had more rights than the Spokane River, and corporate employers have had more rights than workers. The sum total of that reality is corporations have more rights than the City of Spokane and its residents. And guess what, Spokane is not alone. Step into any community and you will see this same scenario playing out.

So what's at the crux of why the residents of Spokane are being trumped by corporate interests? It is because our system of government legally disem-

powers local communities from making the decisions that affect them the most. Attorney General of Pennsylvania Tom Corbett (now Governor) stated it this way in January 2008, "There is no inalienable right to local self-government." His words were part of the state's legal response to small, rural communities who had exercised their right of self-government by passing local laws against the expansive, localized harms of corporate factory farming.

Outraged? Shocked? Stunned? Pissed? Confused? You *should* be, because his comment shatters what we have been lead to believe our democracy is about, whether you live in Pennsylvania, Washington state, or any other state.

You see, we have a system of govern-

"There is no inalienable right to local self-government." His words were part of the state's legal response to small, rural communities who had exercised their right of self-government by passing local laws against the expansive, localized harms of corporate factory farming.

ment today, both through constitutional structure and legal doctrines adopted over time, that favors commerce and property over community health, safety, and welfare. This means our communities (Spokane included) are prohibited from deciding what is best for our communities when it comes to the things that matter the most. We don't have the ability to exercise local self-government, no matter if we are talking about the environment, neighborhoods, or the workplace.

Plainly speaking, the state preempts the local, and in fact the relationship of the state to the local is one of a parent to a child. This means what the state says the local must follow, and that any powers the state gives to the local it can take away. This is why Attorney General Corbett was able to say what he did.

Now let us bring in the world of environmental regulations. When it comes to the environment, regulations are a system in which the state (based on



Photo: "Spokane Falls" by Tracy Hunter

powers granted by the federal government) decides what is a legal activity (i.e. factory farms, land application of sewage sludge, oil drilling, etc.) and then issues a permit. Within that permit are rules and regulations (most often written by the corporations seeking to conduct the activity in question), which contains language on how much they can pollute.

What this process of state control achieves is a couple of things. One is that it validates a corporate activity as being "safe" because it makes polluting a legal practice, and secondly it restricts or in many cases prohibits local communities from adopting more stringent environmental protections. You see, the state is more interested, in fact makes it a priority, to advocate for the corporate pursuits over the protection of the environment and community health.

How many of you would welcome with open arms a 15,000-head hog factory farm into your town, toxic waste being applied to your farm fields, or trains bringing thousands of tons of coal through your town on a daily basis? Guess what, like it or not, that is exactly where Spokane and other communities are situated today, in that they are unable to exercise their right to local self-government -- whether they want to say no to a corporate harm or advocate for greater sustainability.

Highlighting Spokane and the Spokane River specifically, what happens today is that the state allows corporations (i.e. they issue a permit) to pollute the Spokane River. The state also negotiates with a single corporate entity -- Avista; Spokane's main utility company -- every 50 years on their operation of dams along the Spokane River. We the people can make comments during the permitting process, but don't worry, we have no power to advocate on behalf of the river. Keep in mind that it wasn't all that long ago that year after year millions of salmon used to spawn beneath Spokane Falls.

So, what have been the results of this practice of placing commerce over the existence of the river? The Spokane River is one of the most endangered rivers in the country. A legacy of mining pollution, continued pollution through state issued permits, restriction of flow, decimation and toxic trespass of fish populations/species, and excessive water withdrawal are choking off an ecosystem that is already on life support.

Envision Spokane's effort to adopt a Community

Bill of Rights in Spokane represents a fundamental shift in how government should operate. It is about democratizing the key values of the community and making sure residents decide on whether they want significant developments in their neighborhoods, that residents can protect the health of the Spokane River and aquifer, and that workers rights are not trampled upon.

It is about elevating community rights over corporate rights. It is about corporations working for the good of the community and the environment not the other way around.

It is up to residents to push for the adoption of local self-government laws in places like Spokane, Bellingham, Seattle, Yakima, Ellensburg, Pullman, Olympia, Kettle Falls, and small and big towns in between, as the first major strides towards establishing something that many say has never existed in this country before -- a true democracy.

Kai Huschke is a Washington organizer for the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund and Campaign and the Director of Envision Spokane, which is working to pass a community bill of rights that recognize the rights of neighborhoods, the environment, and workers as superior to corporate rights in the City of Spokane.

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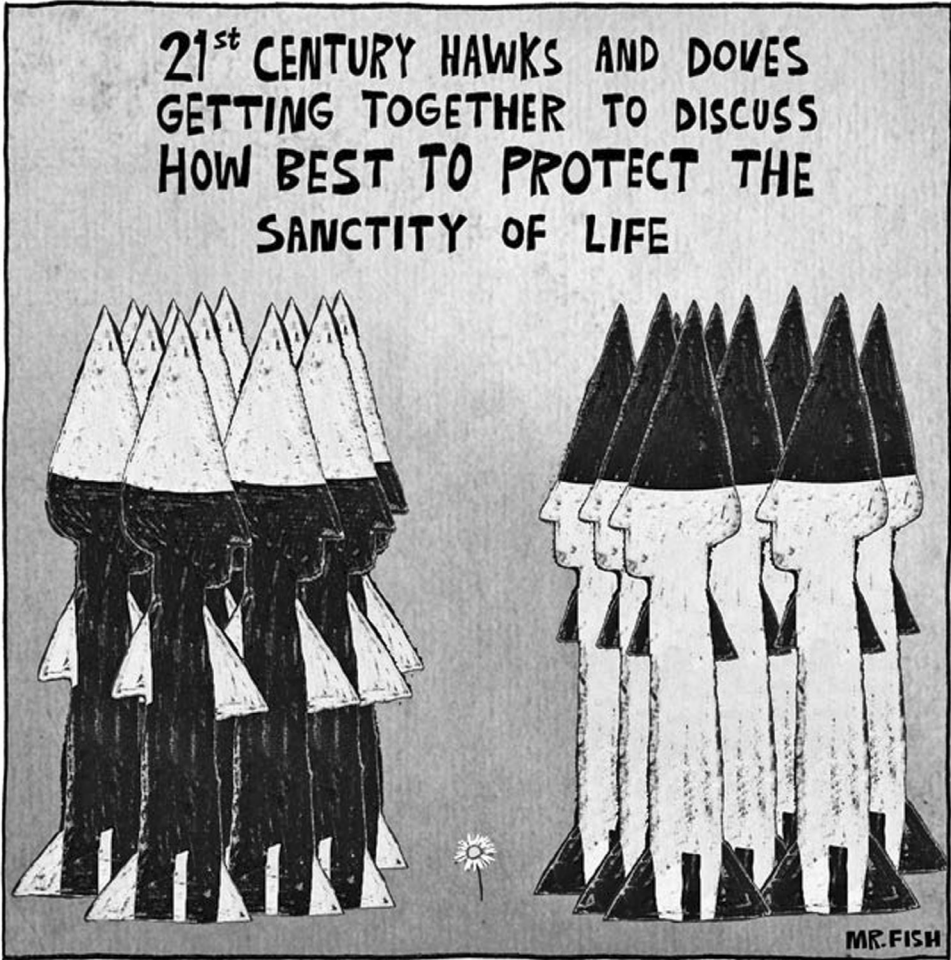
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State evicts Occupy Olympia again but few take note

Marissa Luck

For a flicker of time, the Occupation returned in the form a 24-hour public restroom and free street clinic. The dearth of accessible health care became a focal point for many activists during the fall Occupation as they attempted to provide basic first-aid services at Heritage Park. A small group of Occupiers have continued to work on issues of accessible health care and homelessness in Olympia, and the Olympia Med Shed was the latest effort in that struggle.

On June 1, Occupiers set up a port-a-potty, mobile kitchen bus, and large tent offering first aid services in the parking lot of a vacant state building. The old Department of Personnel building was vacated last year in process of a state consolidation that made it “a surplus to the needs of the state.” In a letter to Governor Gregoire, Occupiers wrote that the building was “not a surplus to the needs of this community.” By including the port-a-potty in the setup, activists also wished to address the lack of 24-hour bathroom in Olympia. Although the old DOP building is vacant, the parking lot is being leased by individual employees of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Department of Enterprise Services is attempting to sell the building.

Having a group of protesters

camping outside a building doesn’t make it very marketable, pointed out Steve Valandra of DES. His department also received complaints from office workers who couldn’t access their parking spaces. After discovering they were on individuals’ leased property, Occupiers moved their Med Shed tent to a small non-leased square of parking lot. Still, DES said the Med Shed was an “unauthorized use of state property” and moved to evict protesters on June 4, just three days after the street clinic started.

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During the eviction, a group of 25 activists watched somberly from the sidewalk as DES employees disassembled the Med Shed. I asked some of the protesters why they were there to witness the eviction. Activist Jeff Berryhill pointed towards the Med Shed, “I think being here we can recognize and further analyze what kind of system permits this kind of thing to take place – why using an empty building here or a tent in a park is threatening.”

For a full report on Occupy Olympia Med Shed and its eviction, read my articles at www.olympiapowerandlight.com.

Marissa Luck is a freelance journalist and regular contributor to Works in Progress. When not reporting on local issues, she works as a content director at a web-design firm. Marissa graduated from Evergreen with an emphasis in political economy and international studies. Contact her via Twitter@marissaluck7 or email marissaluck7@gmail.com.



An activist helps set up the Med Shed on June 1. Photo: Marissa Luck

WIP workers move on



In recent months, Wendy Tanowitz, Wally Cuddeford, and Sandia Slaby have each decided to move on from *WORKS IN PROGRESS*. All of us at WIP wish of them the very best.



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Madonna sings for apartheid; yet campaign to boycott Israel grows stronger

Alexander Billet

Madonna kicked off her “MDNA” tour on 1 June with all the spectacle one has come to expect from her. First-rate choreography, costume changes galore and, of course, all the hits trotted out for a crowd of 30,000 at Ramat Gan Stadium on the outskirts of Tel Aviv. There was even a little controversy mixed in to remind us of the days when the “Queen of Pop” used to be truly shocking.

Now, the hired pens are frothing over her depiction of French far-right leader Marine Le Pen with a swastika on her forehead.

Predictably, the responses range from the obtuse (“how can she show the swastika in the land of the Jews?”) to

the supportive (“she was right to bring attention to the rise of the right in Europe”) to outrage from Le Pen herself (who is threatening to sue “if she tries that in France”).

All of this commentary misses that which is both most obvious and most hidden: that in order to play in Israel in the first place, Madonna had to cross what must be world’s largest picket line.

“I chose to start my world tour in Israel for a very specific and important reason,” said Madonna from the stage of the stadium. “As you know, the Middle East and all the conflicts that occur here and that have been occurring for thousands of years, they have to stop. You can’t be a fan of mine and not want peace in the world.”

That same day, two Palestinian brothers, both in possession of tickets to Madonna’s “peace” concert, filmed their attempt to get to the show (“Anarchists Against the Wall and Sheikh Jarrah movement reject Madonna’s invitation to whitewash Israeli apartheid and occupation,” Live from Occupied Palestine, 31 May 2012).

That attempt was thwarted by Israel’s wall in the West Bank. Madonna said nothing about them or the other innumerable Palestinians who were similarly unable to attend. For all her rhetoric about world peace, she said nothing of the very segregated crowd for whom she was performing.

Silent on Palestinian suffering

She said nothing of the Palestinian political prisoners on continued hunger strike. Nor did she say anything about the members of Israel’s parliament, the Knesset, calling for African refugees to be summarily deported. In fact, her “thousands of years” line, parroted from the same old Orientalist schlock fed to the West every day, reveals that Madonna knows absolutely nothing about the daily conditions of Palestinians.

Even the debate over the image of Marine Le Pen ignores a massive part of the issue — specifically that even while the fascist menace seems to be gaining traction in European elections, the far-right is on the rise in Israel too. Ultra-orthodox gangs are allowed to beat up Arabs on Israel’s streets with impunity. Cities like Haifa are warning businesses that they’ll lose their licenses to operate if they hire African refugees. Avigdor Lieberman, the same foreign minister who routinely promises “transfer” of Palestinians, has enthusiastically met with Geert Wilders, the hard right, anti-immigrant leader of the Dutch Freedom Party.

One simple, shocking image of Marine Le Pen won’t even scratch the surface of this, and as you may have guessed,

Madonna didn’t mention any of Israel’s home-grown proto-fascists. As for the Palestinian call for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel, the Queen of Pop wouldn’t touch it with a ten-foot pole.

This, in essence, is where the victory lay for Israel’s occupation of Palestine: the brutal reality of a colonial settler state relying on a policy of racism and apartheid, repainted as a clash between a peace-loving bastion of culture and a civilization bent on war.

It’s no wonder, then, that such fanfare has surrounded Madonna’s Israel tour-launch. Ever since she announced it at

this year’s Super-bowl, the concert has been touted loud and clear — perhaps by nobody more than Israel’s

She said nothing of the Palestinian political prisoners on continued hunger strike. Nor did she say anything about the members of Israel’s parliament, the Knesset, calling for African refugees to be summarily deported.

politicians and officials. In the days leading up to the concert, the Israeli embassy in London took time to smear the BDS campaign as “an anti-Israeli movement.” The Board of Deputies of British Jews called comparisons to apartheid South Africa “a specious and desperate effort by a failing boycott campaign” (“Israel is new South Africa as boycott calls increase,” *The Independent*, 3 June 2012).

PR gimmick

But if the push for cultural boycott is failing, then why go out of the way to denounce it so vociferously? Why is the Knesset passing laws that allow for boycott advocates to be sued in court? Why is the Israeli government discussing stepping in to insure promoters against the financial effects of “politically motivated cancellations”?

So scared of BDS are some in the music industry that last year saw a consortium of American and Israeli entertainment executives to set up the “Creative Community for Peace,” whose expressed intention is to counter the movement for a cultural boycott of Israel.

Truthfully, the Israeli government and concert industry have plenty of reason to be nervous. Though the launch of the “MDNA” tour did indeed take place in Israel, the BDS campaign surrounding it was one of the most high-profile in some time.

It was so public that Madonna’s public relations team stepped in to announce that 600 tickets to her show would be given to members of left-leaning organizations (“Madonna invites Israeli, Palestinian activists to Tel Aviv concert,” *Haaretz*, 31 May 2012).

This too backfired. Some groups declined the invitation on the grounds that those living in the occupied West Bank and Gaza wouldn’t be able to attend. And given the amount of publicity surrounding the controversy, they were afforded a larger platform to make the case for BDS.

Among these were Anarchists Against the Wall and the Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement, the latter of whom released a statement making clear that: “Madonna has never criticized the Israeli occupation, its separation policies, or its regime of privileges. Therefore, we believe that the reason she sought the presence of Israeli peace activists was to further a public image of an artist who

promotes peace in the Middle East. We refuse to be a public relations gimmick for Madonna at the expense of the Palestinians. This is not our way” (“Madonna invites leftist groups to concert, anarchists refuse,” +972 Magazine, 31 May 2012).

The inequities of Israeli society have



even been inadvertently illustrated from within Madonna’s own camp. Headlines were made when Ali Ramadani, one of Madonna’s backup dancers of Palestinian heritage, tweeted from al-Aqsa mosque while visiting. “At the amazing al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem,” wrote Ramadani. “I don’t want to say it’s in Israel, but Palestine, strength and honor.” Israeli newspapers called his tweet a controversy (“Keeping up with Kabbalah’s Queen of Pop,” *Times of Israel*, 29 May 2012).

It seems, then, that even as the Israeli concert industry has stepped up its game, so has the BDS movement. The campaign surrounding Madonna’s me-

Israel’s political class — from its far-right to its dwindling liberal camp — continue to demand that Palestinians put down their arms, even as Israeli settlers and the Israeli military barrel through towns in the West Bank. . .

g a - s h o w has arguably been the most high-profile since 2010, when the Gaza Freedom Flotilla massacre provoked several well-known acts to cancel performances in protest.

Since then, there have been several other cancellations Israeli concerts (Tuba Skinny, Natacha Atlas and Cat Power) after consistent campaigning from BDS activists. Still others (The Yardbirds, Zdob si Zdub), while not officially joining the BDS campaign, have quietly canceled their gigs in Israel without rescheduling. Far from failing, the cultural boycott movement is doing exactly what it’s meant to do: shine a light on the fierce injustice of Israeli apartheid and shame those who cross the picket line.

If the stakes have indeed been raised on both ends, then the need for sharp critique and hard arguments can’t be understated. Madonna’s endless prattle about world peace may have been hollow, but it’s also effective in the hands

of colonizers. Just as in South Africa, Israeli officials have long sought to paint the Arab-Israeli conflict as “equal-sided.” Famous images of young Palestinians slinging rocks at massive tanks provided to Israel by the world’s biggest military superpower have gone a long way toward poking holes in this myth over the past twenty years.

Obscuring a double standard

Nonetheless, Israel’s political class — from its far-right to its dwindling liberal camp — continue to demand that Palestinians put down their arms, even as

Israeli settlers and the Israeli military barrel through towns in the West Bank, and Gaza is locked from the rest of the world. The double standard is palpable, but the role of culture — at least in the hands of the occupiers’ government — has been to obscure it.

Speaking of those activists that did attend the concert, Madonna told the crowd, “There are several very brave and important NGOs [non-governmental organizations] that are representing both Palestine and Israel together.” Again, note the wording. And note the implication: that it’s two equal sides at war here.

Nevermind the Nakba (the systematic ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948), never mind the decades of displacement, the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees scattered by Israeli land grabs or the thousands locked up in its prisons. Nevermind that Israel is armed to the teeth by the west and is one of the world’s top military spenders as a proportion of national income. With that simple turn of phrase, all of this history and reality is swept aside for words that let the colonizers off the hook and place at least some of the blame on the colonized who dare to resist.

There is another crime, more esoteric in nature, at play here. Whether Madonna is aware of it or not (and there’s a good chance she is), her music and art are willfully being lent to the cause of crude state propaganda. This is no conspiracy theory. Israeli politicians are frequently over the moon to have high-profile artists play in Israel. Benjamin Netanyahu himself was so publicly chuffed to have Justin Bieber perform in Tel Aviv that he attempted to force a meeting with the teen pop star (“Justin Bieber’s meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu ‘cancelled,’” *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 April 2011).

When fake punkers Simple Plan announced their own show in Israel earlier in the spring, it made it onto the State of Israel’s Twitter account. Nissim Ben-

► MADONNA, continued on page 9

Race issues: the hushed-up heart of US politics

Freedom Socialist vice-presidential candidate Christina López on race and the two main political parties

Christina López

A century ago, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote that “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.” Today, that line is still the key problem for U.S. workers, as bitter race divisions remain. Joblessness and lack of economic opportunity consistently trap communities of color into poverty. Increasingly, the same realities are engulfing many whites as well.

A big motivation of my running for vice-president as a Freedom Socialist candidate is because the Democrats and Republicans are failing people of color — and all working people. Neither party seriously addresses either institutionalized racism or economic inequality. But this does not stop them from grasping for our votes.

Candidates, for example, want Latino votes, but where are the moves to stop ICE raids or end deportations? These honchos talk about immigration reform while they pass racial profiling laws and promote private detention centers.

Two party racial opportunism.

Republicans use race to appeal to the extreme core of angry whites, though this demographic is dwindling. The GOP calls for deporting Latinos. It crafts bills designed to roll back the gains of the civil rights era and push for stand-your-ground laws that encourage modern-day lynching.

This party bestows tax breaks on corporations and then turns around and blames Blacks, Latinos, and public employees for taking away other people’s money (meaning white Americans’ tax dollars). In response to the prospect of people of color becoming the majority, this overwhelmingly white party restricts voting rights and passes discriminatory redistricting schemes to reduce the Black and Latino vote. So it is easy for people of color to view the Republican agenda as hostile to our interests.

But, Democrats are not our friends either. They give nothing but lip service to people of color. They count on us to vote for them no matter what. Forget about the “party of change” ever opposing the

conservative agenda. They actually mirror the same trickle-down economic policies that float wealth to the top and spread poverty in the barrios, ghettos, and working class neighborhoods.

Whatever Republicans do, Democrats can do better. While the GOP only dreamed about getting rid of welfare and passing NAFTA, Clinton the Democrat got it done. While Bush spearheaded a full throttle crackdown on undocumented immigrants, the current administration stepped up border militarization and deported a record number of people. Obama is also eager

Neither party seriously addresses either institutionalized racism or economic inequality. But this does not stop them from grasping for our votes.

to go along with the Republican drive to cut social services, with Social Security and Medicare topping the list.

The Democrat and Republican agendas are so alike that debates between the two degenerate into who can wage a better war, be tougher on crime, or detain more immigrants. The needs of laboring people, of all races, are totally “off the table.”

Bipartisan politics are no answer. Why does racial injustice continue to infest this country year after year? It began with the genocide of Native Americans and enslavement of Blacks to make U.S. capitalists and slaveholders rich. In the West, Asians and Mexicans were viciously exploited for the same purpose. This racist legacy remains because free-market titans continue to benefit from undervaluing the descendants of all these groups.

Democrats and Republicans together run a system that profits from things like the racist prison industrial complex. Both parties enact laws that criminalize immigrants, people of color, and the poor. As the prison population mushrooms with hordes of poor, Black and Latino men and women, profits explode for America’s correctional industry.

Both parties also promote constant wars so that profiteers like Halliburton, Bechtel, and Lockheed Martin can get

on Madonna’s camp, resulting in some surprising chances to speak truth to power. Case in point: the ongoing campaign to get the Red Hot Chili Peppers to cancel a forthcoming Tel Aviv show has gained a welcome shot in the arm.

There’s no substitute for that experience. The opportunity to shine a light on Israel’s crimes is arguably bigger than it’s ever been. Madonna’s glitzy, glaring flash might blind and confuse for a little while, but in the end, it’s really no match for the collective effort of all those pushing that light in the right direction.

Alexander Billet is a music journalist and solidarity activist living in Chicago, and runs the website Rebel Frequencies (www.rebelfrequencies.net). His first book, *Sounds of Liberation: Music In the Age of Crisis and Resistance*, will be available in the fall. He can be reached at [rebel-frequencies \[AT\] gmail {DOT} com](mailto:rebel-frequencies@atgmail.com).

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rich destroying the lives of people of color worldwide. The parties also prop up these corporations’ profits by bestowing fat contracts for massive border fences, and allowing the banks to get away with predatory loans like those that led to the housing crisis.

Though people of color bear the brunt of these policies, socially-constructed race divisions are weakening as economic hardships fast encroach upon the white working class. But establishment politicians have a plan to restoke the fires of bigotry.

The divisive purpose of racism.

The vital role of race prejudice is to divide the ranks of labor. Black and white workers overcame it briefly during the post-civil war era, when they organized side by side in the quest for better wages and conditions in the South. But Jim Crow laws were put in place to divide and conquer them when their unity threatened the Southern elite.

Even though segregation is out the door due to the mighty ’60s civil rights movement, the rich continue to promote educational, hiring and wage discrimination to safeguard their power.

So even while the majority do not support far-right visions of an ideal white supremacist America, officials keep racist policies alive. Bigoted bills are molded by billionaire-powered foundations like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which crafted

tough-on-crime laws and Arizona’s anti-immigrant SB 1070.

The program you deserve.

Some say that voting for an alternative party is throwing away your vote. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are worthy of much better than what the Republican/Democrat agenda has in store. Rather, casting a vote for anti-capitalist candidates is a potent way to protest rigged elections that ensure one of the parties responsible for upholding this bigoted system will stay in office.

The platform Stephen Durham and I are running on meets the needs of the working-class majority, especially those on the bottom. Unlike the Democrats and Republicans, we mean what we say (check out the FSP platform). Our multi-racial campaign bridges the color line in word and deed. That’s why voting for us is the way to make your vote really count.

Of course we need a united mass movement demanding economic justice, queer rights, and race and gender equality in order to change class relations and permanently empower the multi-hued class that creates society’s wealth. And elections are part of how we reach out and build that upsurge.

Join us and help make it happen!
Chicana Christina López, born and raised in Arizona, describes herself as a fierce defender of immigrant and reproductive rights. She is president of Seattle Radical Women (RW) and a leader in grass-roots organizing to halt budget cuts in Washington state. Her passion for racial justice helps her guide the Comrades of Color Caucus, a joint body of RW and the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP).



Permeable paving surfaces have been demonstrated as effective in managing runoff from paved surfaces. The photo above is of a parking lot at Percival Landing made with pervious pavers that allow rain to pass through the pavement into the ground. Photo: Robert Whitlock

Centralia Square Antique Mall

3 floors to explore ▪ Restaurant ▪ Bookstore

Directions from Olympia
South on Interstate 5
Off at Exit 82 (Factory Outlets)
East on Harrison
Right on Pearl
201 S Pearl & Locust

Open 7 days
10 to 5



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BOTANICAL HAIR CARE PRODUCTS

► **Movement**, cont. from page 1

American zeitgeist has to do with tactical innovations within the pro-life movement. For years the arguments against abortion had been deeply imbedded in religious—mostly Christian—rhetoric and doctrine. However, these overly religious aspects of the movement have not meshed well with an increasingly secularized America. Despite the religious right's best efforts, people continue to leave their churches in droves. The fastest growing 'belief group' in America is of people who claim no religion at all. How then has the pro-life movement remained politically relevant in the United States? The answer: follow the lead of creationists and develop your own "science" to mask the faith-based nature of your beliefs. As conservative author and radio producer Dustin Siggins explained in the online Catholic magazine *Crisis*, the pro-life movement needs to "stop using Biblical arguments to debate abortion... using religious arguments will (not) persuade either self-described Christians who agree with abortion or non-Christians who agree with abortion. The science of life is in our favor, and we should emphasize this." Indeed, the "science of life" can be persuasive stuff. It is enough to attract some of the pro-life movement's traditional opposition—atheist and other secular humanists—into their ranks.

The only problem is that the "science of life" is not on their side. If anything the pro-life movement has had to developed its own special type of "science" to justify its policy blitzkrieg on reproductive rights. Currently, five states require doctors to warn women of the link between abortions and breast cancer, and eight states require doctors to warn women about the possible psychological problems that abortions can cause. The published medical research does not back up either of these requirements. The National Cancer Institute (NCI)—a branch of the National Institute of Health—has researched the link between breast cancer and abortion. Their findings are that previous studies which established a correlation between breast cancer and abortion were based on poor methodology and insufficient samples. According to the NCI the most recent research "consistently showed no association between induced and spontaneous abortions and breast cancer risk." Similarly, the most recent research on abortion and psychological stress has shown that the phenomenon of PASS—Post Abortion Stress Syndrome—does not exist. Recently, the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the most prestigious medical journal in the United States (and possibly the world) published a study from Danish researchers which confirmed that the majority of women getting an abortion in the first two trimesters are no more likely to seek out psychological counseling after their abortion than they were before.

Regardless, the "facts" of pro-life movement have continued to permeate the political discourse and are responsible for much of the legislative restrictions on women's health. Take for example the recent law passed in Virginia that requires an ultrasound at least 24 hours prior to all abortions. According to Charmaine Yoest—CEO and President of Americans United for Life—the Virginia bill was necessary because the government needed to protect women from the possibility of death during a medication abortion for women with ectopic pregnancies. Warnings like these are half-truths that only serve to whip-up hysteria around the risks of abortions. An ultrasound before an abortion is a standard practice for most providers, and an essential tool for helping determine gestational age, viability, and yes, the possibility of an ectopic pregnancy. However, doctors determine ultrasounds based on medical necessity—not political or religious ideology. In reality, the risk of giving

a woman with an ectopic pregnancy a medication abortion is phenomenally rare—with the possibility of her dying from it being extraordinary slim. Requiring all women to get ultrasounds at least 24 hours prior to an abortion would do nothing to lessen this already miniscule possibility.

Even more upsetting is the fetal pain legislation passed in several states. These laws effectively outlaw elective abortions for women over 20 weeks based on the idea that the fetus is able to experience suffering during this stage. Despite the appeals to medical evidence, the idea of fetal pain at 20 weeks is highly dubious. There is no clear consensus from doctors or medical researchers as to when a fetus feels pain, but United Kingdom's Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has gone on record that there is no evidence that a fetus is able to feel pain prior to 24 weeks. Fetal responses to stimuli before this stage are the same for fetus with brain development as it is for those without, suggesting that such responses are merely reflexive of the nervous system and not wired to the brain's cortex. This view concurs with the findings from a systematic review published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that indicated that the majority of research suggests that fetuses are not able to perceive pain until after thalamortical system—pathways that reciprocally connected the thalamus to the neocortex in the brain—begins to function. This does not occur until the pregnancy has entered the third trimester around weeks 29 and 30. And even then, experiments done at the College of London using electroencephalography to measure fetal responses suggests that fetal response to pain may not even occur until weeks 35 and 37. In any case, all serious research on the matter indicates that fetal pain is not likely to occur until the third trimester—and not the middle of the second like fetal pain laws claim.

Nevertheless the pseudo-scientific meme on fetal pain at 20 weeks has become one of the pro-life movement's most potent rhetorical tactics, as Arizona's recent "Women's Health and Safety Act" has shown. Much of the attention of the law has been placed on its use of the last menstrual period (LMP)—rather than the date of conception—as the start date for determining the gestational age of a pregnancy. Supporters of the law claim that using the LMP is in line with the practice of OB/GYNs and that older laws in other states which determined gestation through guessing the date of conception are out of line with the prevailing medical practice. This statement from the pro-life camp is true, but as before it is a half-truth which is intended to mask the actual nature of the law. While it is true that practitioners use LMP to determine gestational age—and most laws don't reflect this practice—what is left out of this statement is that the Arizona law also outlaws abortion over 20 weeks, again based on the unsubstantiated claim that fetuses feels pain at this period. The problem is that the 20 week mark in other states is determined by the moment of conception—which usually happens roughly two weeks after the LMP date. What this means is that Arizona's fetal pain law—when compared to other states—actually marks the moment of fetal pain at 18 weeks, not 20 weeks. Pro-life advocates claim that by starting with the LMP they are codifying scientific medical practice, but what they are really doing is make a mockery of the scientific medical practice by using good science for the sole

purpose of bringing a pseudo-scientific belief into law.

As expected, pro-life advocates have been quick to cheer the passage of these policies, and the recent Gallup poll which shows that the political winds have tilted in their favor. In response to the news that the pro-life population now outnumbers the pro-choice population, Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List—an anti-abortion advocacy group named after an early feminist and agnostic—declared that being pro-life is becoming America's "new normal." There is no denying that advocates for reproductive freedom have lost serious ground in recent years, but the idea that groups like the Susan B. Anthony List represent a "new normal" is not supported by the data. As with medical science, the pro-life movement is willing to manipulate social science if it fits its agenda. While it is true that more Americans identify as pro-life, the amount of Americans who believe that abortions should be legal has been relatively consistent over the past decade. The same Gallup poll which showed

that 50% of Americans identify as pro-life, also showed that 77% of Americans believe that abortions should be legal under certain or all circumstances (52% certain circumstances and 25% under all circumstances). Generally speaking, a strong majority of Americans still support the parameters for abortion established under *Roe v. Wade*. What this means is that while many Americans identify as pro-life personally they do not take this stand politically, and think the government should not compel others to adopt this belief.

Unfortunately, this view is not shared by the pro-life movement—whether they claim to be religious or secular—which wants all people to be pro-life (or more appropriately anti-choice) both personally and politically. And, unfortunately for many women, they will continue their campaign of misinformed factoids, pseudo-scientific claims, half-truths, non-truths, and outright lies—along with their co-optation of secular figures and values—until they get their way.

Marco Rosaire Rossi is a graduate of the University for Peace in Costa Rica, a former resident of Olympia, and frequent contributor for Works In Progress.



Olympia Really Really Free Market

2012 • Sundays • 2-5 pm

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
1 # SYLVESTER PARK	5 * ARTESIAN WELL	2 # SYLVESTER PARK
8 * ARTESIAN WELL	12 # SYLVESTER PARK	9 # SYLVESTER PARK
15 * ARTESIAN WELL	19 # SYLVESTER PARK	16 # SYLVESTER PARK
22 * ARTESIAN WELL	26 # SYLVESTER PARK	23 # SYLVESTER PARK
29 # SYLVESTER PARK		30 # SYLVESTER PARK

HOW IT WORKS: Bring things to give away!

(like books, cloths, things, etc). Bring food to share.

If you see something you want, take it!

Bring musical instruments and/or games to play.

We hope to build a self-supporting community, but we need your help. Bring friends!

NO BARTER, NO TRADE, AND OF COURSE, NO MONEY — ALL ARE WELCOME —

Sponsored by Olympia Coalition for a Fair Budget (OCFB) and Food Not Bombs

OCFB meets Sundays 3-5pm. At RRFM location or Media Island 816 S Adams St. 360.352.8526

FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL fair-budget-@googlegroups.com

* Artesian Well—4th & Adams—weather permitting (no cover)

Sylvester Park—Legion & Capitol—gazebo available for cover

You can find Olympia Really Really Free Market on Facebook

WIP Announcements

Send in announcements to
olywip@gmail.com or
Works In Progress
PO Box 295 Olympia WA 98507

Community Special Events

Jacob Kostecka and James O’Keeffe LIVE
Friday, June 29, 7:00pm until 9:00pm.
Traditions Cafe

LIVE acoustic performance with musicians Jacob Kostecka and James O’Keeffe. Jazz, Blues, Folk, Rock. NO COVER. Suggested \$10 donation to benefit Rising Tide School.

With more than 40 years of musical study between them, this promises to be a fantastic show integrating piano, guitar, and vocals. Join us for an intimate evening you won’t forget in support of Rising Tide School, Olympia’s Sudbury School.

www.risingtideschool.org

The Joe Baque Trio with Dennis Hastings
Saturday, June 30 at 9:30pm
The Olympia Ballroom
610 Water Street Olympia, WA

Master pianist Joe Baque and his trio, Osama Afifi bass, Michael Olson percussion with Vocal sensation Dennis Hastings will blend a special night of your favorite Jazz, Latin and Popular tunes with The Waterstreet Cafe’s award winning menu. For reservations or information call 709-9090.

Resident Kings CD fund raiser!!!
HHHHEEE...
Sunday, July 1, 8:00pm
Brotherhood Lounge

In July, we’ll be going into Sound House Studio to record a CD with Mr. Jack Endino. We’re very excited to be making a quality recording. As such, we’re pretty broke and need some monetary support. Won’t you help us? Mosquito Hawk and Survival Knife have jumped on board to lend us their support and to provide a well rounded rock experience for you. We’re making it a \$5 cover, but any extra you can swing would be great, and if you’re really poor but want to help out, we can work with ya! We hope to see a ton of you out to The Broho for this fun event. Thanks!

Scott Yoos’ Next Hearing
Monday, July 2, 9 am
Thurston County Courthouse
(2000 Lakeridge Dr, Olympia)

This “Omnibus Hearing” will mark Scott’s 10th plus trip into a courtroom around this matter in the past year.

The hearing begins at 9 am, but a number of Scott’s many supporters from the community will show-up at 8 am, for a sign-holding support vigil before we head into the “chambers of justice.” (If you’ve never been to the circus, here’s your chance!)

Check out Scott’s new support page at www.scottsupport.blogspot.com.

Water is Life Walk ~ Sacred Journey 2012
Wednesday, July 4, 2012 at 5:45am
Ti’Swaq to Bus-chut-hwud ~ now known as (Mt Rainier to Capital Lake in Olympia, WA)

FOUR MAJOR WATER BLESSING SITES
~ Ti’Swaq at Christine Falls (Mt Rainier)
~ Alder Dam Lake
~ Stehtsasamish (falls of the Deschutes River at Tumwater)
~ Bus-chut-hwud (in Lushootseed) or Stcihwun (in Chehalis) ~ meaning (place of) the Black Bears).

The theme for the Water is Life Water Walk is the same theme of all the walks, since 2003: “Ni guh Izhi chigay Nibi onji.” (“I will do it for the water.”) Josephine Mandamin decided to walk, and others joined her and others are inspired by her to walk for water. Carole Blodgett is one of those that are inspired and being called to walk the water.

Please join us in this healing prayer for Bus-chut-hwud (in Lushootseed) or Stcihwun (in Chehalis) ~ meaning (place of) the Black Bears). This is a dying estuary now called Capital Lake created by a dam at the mouth of the Deschutes River.

LAWN BOY - Portland’s tribute to PHISH a...
Friday, July 6, 9:00 pm
Olympia Ballroom

The Olympia Ballroom is excited to present LAWN BOY bringing an old school Phish performance complete with a mega-awesome light show. The show is going to blow minds.

Registration deadline July 10 for Natural Resources Youth Camp
July 22st – 28th
UW Center for Sustainability at Pack Forest, Eatonville, WA

Campers, ages 12 – 17, spend your summer with Natural Resources Youth Camp! NRYC offers a up close look at our natural resources through hands-on activities, led by professional instructors! Enjoy a fun-filled week of field trips, hiking, campfires and ropes course! Backcountry Adventure program includes a 4 day backpacking trip!

Registration deadline is July 10, but spaces are limited – register now! For more information and to register, visitwww.nryc.org!

Middle Eastern Dinner and Silent Auction
Thursday, July 12, 5:30pm
Huber’s Gasthaus, 2312 Friendly Grove Road Northeast, Olympia, WA

The Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice invites you to a Middle Eastern Dinner & Silent Auction to benefit Shuruq – Olympia’s first Arab Festival coming in October!

Special Guest Amani Inshasi – visiting teacher from Gaza fostering ties between communities.

Auction opens at 5:30 pm and dinner follows at 6:30 pm.

Tickets – \$30 per person or \$100 for a table of four. To purchase, contact 360.754.3998 or info@rachelcorriefoundation.org by July 6.

Unable to attend? Support Shuruq with a donation to RCF, 203 East 4th Ave., Suite 402, Olympia, WA, 98501

Myth of Democracy - anti-fascist-anti-greed-anti-corporatocracy-gay-positive-pro-human-and-non-human-rights punk rock on an acoustic guitar from New Zealand!
Monday, July 23, 5:00 pm
Last Word Books

Myth of Democracy is anti-fascist-anti-greed-anti-corporatocracy-gay-positive-pro-human-and-non-human-rights punk rock on an acoustic guitar. From New Zealand, on tour, this show at Last Words is a benefit for Bread and Roses, and organisation providing support for the homeless. Donation entry.

Stonewall Youth Presents The Queer Rock Camp Showcase
Saturday, July 28
6:30pm doors/7:00pm show
Olympia Film Society

In one week campers ages 12-21 learn new instruments, form bands and write original songs. Don’t miss yourchance to celebrate their creations at Stonewall Youth’s second annual Queer Rock Camp Showcase. There will be raffle prizes, Queer Rock Camp merchandise, and an inside look at what happens at this unique day camp. Queer Rock Camp empowers youth and builds community through music. We support thefluidity of gender and sexuality and see music as a way to amplify resilience and self-expression. Visit queerrockcamp.org for more details.

\$10.00-15.00 21 and under get in free!
Tickets available at brownpapertickets.com and at the door night of show.

Scott Yoos’ Final Trial
Friday, August 3
Hope to see ya there!

8th Annual Progressive Town Hall Picnic and Candidate Forum

Each summer the Thurston County Progressive Network (TC PRO-NET) holds its very popular annual picnic on the second Sunday in July. “It’s an old-fashioned picnic with delicious food, wonderful people, lots of opportunities for networking, and a unique opportunity to visit with our local politicians.” This year meet candidates for county commissioner, PUD, 22nd LD legislature and senate candidates, judicial candidates, and elected officials. The MC for the event will be Mary Hall.

This year’s picnic will feature keynot speaker, Bill Grace PhD, author of *Sharing the Rock*. “He is a social justice activist, a traveling teacher, and an architect of ideas. Bill speaks and leads seminars around the world, touching audiences deeply with a heartfelt commitment to global justice, peace, and sustainability.”

The menu includes 50 pounds of wild-caught salmon, teriyaki chicken, home-baked beans, beer, wine, and lemonade. In addition, attendees are asked to bring a potluck item. Locally grown foods are encouraged.

- WHAT:** Picnic and Candidate Forum with 150-200 attendees (growing every year). Used to be free, but are unable to afford to do that anymore. There is a \$10 donation. RSVP please: barb@tcpronet.org
- WHY:** The picnic is a public service to the local progressive community—it’s NOT a fundraiser.
- WHEN:** Sunday, July 8 from 3:30-8:00 pm.
- WHERE:** Sherri Goulet and Don Anderson's back yard at 3516 Pifer Road, SE, Olympia

TC PRO-NET is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to increase community self-sufficiency. For more info: www.tcpronet.org or 360-352-8225.

New Direction Fest 2012

The practical application of the radical ideas and values of hardcore punk

August 3 at 4:00pm until August 5 at 11:30pm

Friday at The Midnight Sun (113 N Columbia St, Olympia)
Doors open at 3pm

Saturday/Sunday at Eagles Ballroom (805 Fourth Ave. E, Olympia)
Doors open at 9am, first workshop at 10am

New Direction Fest 2012 will be a space for people of the worldwide hardcore and punk community to share experiences, skills, ideas, and information about community organizing, activism, labor organizing, and other forms of radical action. This convergence will include live bands, workshops, and speakers engaged in the practical application of the radical ideas and values of hardcore punk. Through these, we hope to inspire and to mobilize one another to form a global network of resistance and a movement for radical change within the hardcore and punk community. The goal of this fest is to breathe new life into the hardcore tradition of resistance and to push our networks towards a NEW DIRECTION where we can bridge the gap between hardcore values and the application of these values through radical practice.

- Adjustment to Society (Olympia)

Agatha (Seattle)

Between Earth and Sky (Seattle)

Big Eyes (Seattle)

Brigada Roja (Monterrey, MX)

Crude Thought (Olympia)

Cynarae (Seattle)

Dehumanized (Olympia)

The Detonators (Eugene, OR)

Dick Binge (Olympia)

Disparate (Olympia)

Erode (Tacoma)

Grimace (Seattle)

Hysterics (Olympia)

Iskra (Victoria, BC)

Komatose (Arcata)

La Bella (Los Angeles)
- Latterman (Huntington, NY)

Mary Christ (DC)

Oi Polloi (Scotland)

Outlook (Olympia)

Poison Planet (Chicago)

Rape Revenge (Calgary, Canada)

Reivers (Oakland)

Resist and Exist (LA)

RVIVR (Olympia)

Skarp (Seattle)

Socialized Crucifixion (SoCal)

Sojourner (Tacoma)

Stresscase (LA)

Ugly Parts (New Jersey)

Wretched of the Earth (Portland)

Venganza (Anaheim)

- Workshops:
- Dismantling Capitalism, Dismantling Patriarchy
 - Anarchism and Popular Education Panel
 - Radical Healing
 - A Brief History of Anti-Fascism in Punk
 - Police Reform or Police Abolition?
 - Current Social Problems within Punk (and how to solve them)
 - Worker Co-operatives
 - Urban Guerilla Gardening
 - Consent and Boundary Setting
 - G.I. Resistance and Coffee Strong
 - Labor Struggle in the 21st Century
 - and more to be announced
- Buy your pre-sales at <http://newdirectionfest.net/>
Please check our website and/or facebook or updates/changes!
(<http://www.facebook.com/newdirection.fest>) for updates/changes!

Local hunger strikers protest Congress starving the USPS

The Stand

Three local members of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) staged a hunger strike in Washington state last week in solidarity with their fellow unionists and community activists in Washington, DC and other locations across the nation. The local APWU hunger strikers, Clint Burelson (Olympia), Anthony Foster (Tacoma), and David Yao (Seattle), contend US Postal Service cuts are a result of a 2006 law that pumps more than \$5 billion per year from USPS coffers into the Federal Treasury. They say Congress is responsible for its failure to reverse that law.

Labor and community supporters joined them as they carried out public protests in across the state.

Activists carried a large facsimile check for \$22 billion, representing the amount paid by the USPS to the U.S. Treasury from 2006-2011.

Background

Hunger Strike actions in Washington, DC will be staged on the US Capitol grounds to illustrate that America's postal service is being starved financially by Congress. The hunger strikes occurred after announced cuts of 25-75% in hours for many small offices, and just days before the July 1 slowdown of some first-class mail. They highlight the connection between loss of service to postal customers, and congressional delay in fixing overpayments into federal benefit funds.

“Not the internet, not private competition, not the recession — Congress is responsible for the postal mess,” said Jamie Partridge, a retired letter carrier traveling from Portland, OR, for the hunger strike in DC. “Corporate interests, working through their friends in Congress, want to undermine the USPS, bust the unions then give the work to private, for-profit interests.”

David Yao of Seattle, a 26-year postal employee who traveled throughout the state while on hunger strike, said, “Big cuts in hours at small offices in the state aren't necessary. Delaying first-class mail, starting July 1, isn't necessary. Reducing delivery days and ending door-to-door delivery aren't necessary. But Congress will not stop the needless transfer of \$5.5 billion annually from the postal budget onto the federal budget. They are using the Post Office as a cash cow.”

The activists claim that a 2006 Congressional mandate, which forces the USPS to prefund 75 years worth of retiree health benefits in a ten-year window, accounts

for the bulk of losses that are sending the service into a death spiral.

Not only would the postal service have been profitable from 2007-2010 without the mandate, say strikers, the USPS has also overpaid tens of billions into two pension funds.

US Postmaster General Donahoe announced in May he would begin closure of half the mail sorting plants in the US, which would delay most first-class mail delivery. He also plans to cut hours in half the nation's post offices, mostly rural.

On July 1, next-day delivery of first-class mail will be reduced to mailings within

local distribution areas (there are five in Western Washington, and four east of the Cascades) . As of Feb. 1, 2013, next-day first class mail will be completely eliminated for the mailing public, unless Congress releases sufficient postal funds.

The hunger strikers are calling on Postmaster Donahoe to suspend cuts and closures, and calling on Congress to immediately fix the finances by repealing the prefunding mandate and refunding the pension surplus.

The Stand is the *Washington State Labor Council's online newspaper providing news about and for working people.*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



www.tcpronet.org

Thurston County Progressive Network

**8th Annual
PROGRESSIVE
TOWN HALL
PICNIC
and Candidate Forum**
**Guest Speaker
Bill Grace**

SUNDAY, JULY 8

3:30-8:00 P.M.

\$10 donation appreciated

**Please bring a potluck dish
and RSVP to: barb@tcpronet.org**

**Location: 3516 Pifer Rd. SE
Olympia 98501, 352-8225**

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