

Coming soon

# How will Olympians view a memorial to nuclear sub USS Olympia?

Helen Wheatley

On March 15, Commissioners at the Port of Olympia heard from Olympia officials about what the City hopes will be a shared initiative to memorialize the “maritime history” of Olympia. Councilmember Jim Cooper and Deputy City Manager Keith Stahley asked if the Port would help with handling and storing the anchor and 38,000-lb rudder of the nuclear attack submarine USS Olympia.

Olympia Mayor Cheryl Selby had requested the artifacts on behalf of the City, with the idea of placing the parts as monuments on the shoreline. The submarine’s tall conning tower may be included after it has time, in the words of Cooper, to “sit in dock and cool off.”

Reflecting a familiar “decide, announce, defend” approach to planning, Stahley asserted that bringing the objects to Olympia to await disposition would lead to creation of a community advisory committee over the next few years.

Commissioner McGregor linked the City’s request to ongoing debates over the potential role of the Port in handling military cargo. He suggested a quid pro quo: if the Port took the nuclear items, could the City support military cargo at the Marine Terminal? Stahley responded by stating, “This is a good opportunity for the City and the Port to engage in conversations about what the Port means in our community,” including “types and amounts of shipment.”

The City expects the rudder and anchor to come to Olympia in less than a month. Port Commissioner Zita pointed out that an Interlocal Agreement would require sufficient notice for the public to weigh in. Cooper observed that the City may go ahead without the Port, if Commissioners don’t fast-track an Interlocal Agreement.

**It’s more than a timing question**  
Commissioner Zita pointed out that the conning tower strongly resembles an image that was the lowest-rated aesthetic option in the public waterfront survey conducted by the Port and Thomas Architecture Studio.

She also raised the issue of cultural sensitivity and suggested talking to the Squaxin Island Tribe: “We are giving lip service to diversity, equity and inclusion, but do we take it seriously when we’re thinking about bringing pieces of a military vessel and displaying it on land that was historically native homeland?”

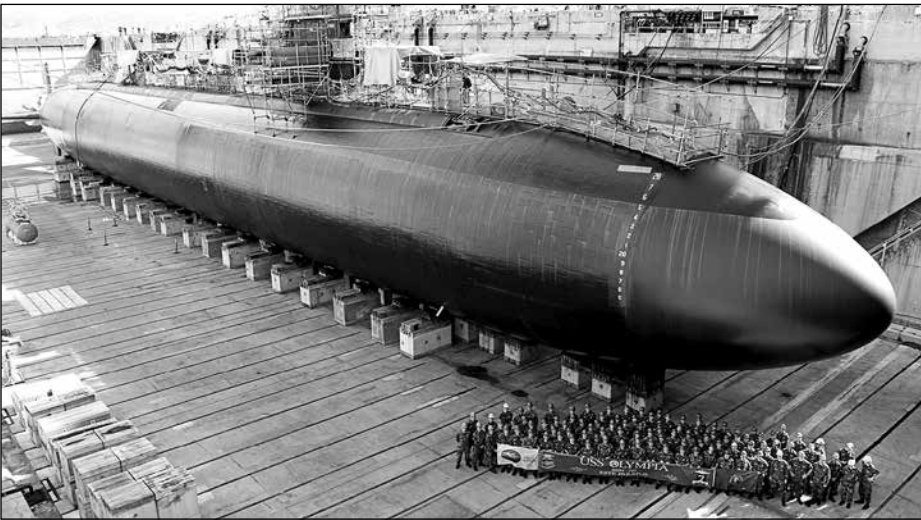


Photo of USS Olympia by Thomas Shugart

**Is the USS Olympia part of our “maritime history?”**  
America’s Great White Fleet sailed to the Philippines to usurp Spain’s place in the Pacific in 1898. The USS Olympia’s main claim to historic significance was spearheading the vicious Philippine-American war. Admiral Dewey stood on the bridge of the ship to command the fleet against Spain in Manila Bay.

President McKinley announced America’s God-given mission to the Philippines: “There was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them.” Elected president Emilio Aguinaldo, who continued to lead the struggle for freedom, called it “government by consent in America, government by force in the Philippine Islands.”

Washingtonians collected funds to purchase a silver service for the officers of that ship, a tradition recognizing the naming of a ship after a city. The silver set, which celebrates the Battle of Manila, is now displayed in the dining room of the Governor’s Mansion. There is no reflection of the war it started—a war that carried American racism across the Pacific, cost hundreds of thousands of lives and fatefully shaped Filipino history.

**What’s in a name**  
In 1977, the US Navy commissioned a “Los Angeles class” nuclear attack submarine and gave it the historic name, USS Olympia. This nuclear warhead-capable class of submarine carries the Tomahawk cruise missile. The USS Olympia was deployed to the Iraq war. Much of the submarine’s work during the Cold War was “silent service” unknown to the public. This made it an apt prop for the film, *The Hunt for Red October*.

Local promoters saw an opportunity to revive the city’s namesake connection with the ship and liven up local tourism. The Chamber of Commerce had brought the silver service to Olympia when the original Great White Fleet cruiser was decommissioned. In 1984 it established the “USS Olympia Committee” and laid out the welcome mat for the submarine. Secretary of State Ralph Munro boasted that “there were

► Submarine, continued on page 12

What happened during...and after?

# The incident at the Red Lion Inn

Daniel Mootz and Miguel Louis

In December 2020, a group named Oly Housing Now (OHN) formed to organize an action at the Red Lion at the end of January. Days before, President Biden had signed an executive order extending FEMA’s Public Assistance Reimbursement policy to states that provide safe housing for people struggling as a result of the pandemic.

**That night and the next morning**  
On the night of Saturday, January 30, 33 homeless people, along with some community organizers, went to the Red Lion Inn and Suites on Capitol Way. They had booked 17 rooms online a few days before. The next day, Sunday, approximately 40 activists returned to the hotel just before noon checkout time. They issued a statement insisting the homeless guests be allowed to stay in the Inn while the city searched for a more tenable solution.

They then occupied the lobby and attempted to speak with staff members about working with the City to house the folks already legally there. They were first assaulted and then completely ignored. The manage-

ment called police, and later collaborated with the Olympia Police Department (OPD) on spinning a story that people were held hostage by the housing activists.

**At 6:15 pm, as the rain poured and the temperatures dropped, two Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) teams, Washington State Police, Thurston County Sheriff’s Office, and OPD arrived.**

**A ferocious response, arrests and charges**  
At 6:15 pm, as the rain poured and the temperatures dropped, two Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) teams, Washington State Police, Thurston County Sheriff’s Office, and OPD arrived. These forces, numbering over 100, stormed the hotel, deploying flashbangs and pepper balls inside rooms. They forced everyone outside into the freezing rain, including one person without a jacket or

shoes which she’d left under her bed. Seven people were arrested.

Five of those involved were charged with burglary in the first degree, including two unhoused people. A black homeless veteran with PTSD was tasered twice, entered into a seizure, and was severely injured for allegedly obstructing the raid. His bail was set at \$40,000 and he spent over a month in jail, largely in solitary confinement, confined to a wheelchair. He has since been released but is left with restricted movement that requires him to use a cane.

One of the homeless people involved, Tiger, had bail set at \$50,000, based on prior charges and the court system’s criminalization of houselessness. After being labeled “ANTIFA” by Corrections Officers, he was forced to go into administrative segregation with Chris Guenzler, an “anti-fascist”, the first Trump supporter who fired into a crowd of Leftists in December.

The three OHN activist supporters were jailed but with their bail set at \$10,000 or less, they were soon released to await trial.

► Red Lion, continued on page 11



**Works in Progress (WIP)**, is a community newspaper based in Olympia, WA, that has been published monthly since 1990.

WIP's mission is to contribute to the struggle for justice across economic, social, environmental and political realms, and to expand participatory democracy across classes, races, and genders.

**Editorial policy**

Our priority is to focus on stories that are ignored or misrepresented in the corporate media, especially those that relate directly to our mission. We seek well-researched news stories, serious analyses of issues confronting our communities and account of personal experiences or reflections by local writers. We encourage articles that relate to the monthly theme, but material on other topics is also welcome.

Informed opinion pieces are accepted when accompanied by facts, examples, and sources. We discourage writing where a key point is stated as fact when it's unproven or in serious dispute. Writing that stereotypes groups or categories of people won't be accepted.

Once we receive a submission, we may choose to publish it or not. While the views expressed in the material we print are those of the author alone, WIP aims to print material that is consistent with our mission. WIP reserves the right to edit all submissions for accuracy, length, and clarity of expression. We will work with authors if there is a need for editing that extends beyond those areas.

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# Why we can't have a \$15 minimum wage or a lot of other nice things

*A warrior Republican President, Dwight Eisenhower spoke clearly about the link between our military spending (see the back page pie chart for details) and the reasons we choose to impoverish so many working people:*

"To amass military power without regard to our economic capacity would be to defend ourselves against one kind of disaster by inviting another." "Making one heavy bomber meant sacrificing 30 modern schools or two fully equipped hospitals, or two electric power plants. We pay for a single destroyer with new homes that could have housed 8,000 people. This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense."

## THINKING OUT LOUD

**\$1.9 trillion to keep life going is too much. \$6.4 trillion in the cause of war is never enough**

*Here is a more recent observation of the same phenomenon. This is Tom Engelhardt's introduction to an essay by Mandy Smithberger in the March 2 edition of Tom Dispatch.*

Strange, isn't it, what doesn't sink in. Take this number: \$6.4 trillion. There's a figure you might think should cause a genuine stir (especially since each of those was a taxpayer dollar). In fact, that was what, in November 2019, Neta Crawford of Brown University's invaluable Costs of War Project calculated that this country had spent on or committed to its post-9/11 wars across significant parts of the planet (and future care for US military personnel damaged by them). By all rights, that number should have stunned this country. It should have caused an uproar. It should have resulted in major policy changes in Washington.

Just imagine that, in the years before Covid-19 hit, when American infrastructure was already going down — "infrastructure week" would become a (bad) joke of the Trump era — the American taxpayer was "investing" \$6.4 trillion (a figure you can't repeat too often) in a series of disastrous wars. They would be responsible for the deaths of thousands of American military personnel and hundreds of thousands of civilians in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. They would uproot millions more and help unsettle the planet. Yet, explain it as you will, they simply couldn't be (and still can't be) ended. If that isn't the record from hell, what is?

Today, Crawford's figure would, of course, have to be updated as we await Joe Biden's decisions on future American war-making from Afghanistan to Iraq and beyond. And yet, strangely enough, as *TomDispatch* regular and Pentagon expert Mandy Smithberger reports, Washington, in a remarkably bipartisan fashion, continues to fund the Pentagon at levels that should astound us all. This at a moment when questions remain about whether the Biden administration can pass a \$1.9 trillion bill to offer relief to Americans overwhelmed by the disaster of Covid-19. Imag-

ine what those \$6.4 trillion dollars could have done, if invested in this country, in us, instead of in those disastrous wars.

**\$2 extra in three paychecks — just right**

This was the fleeting amount that cashiers in an Olympia grocery store got as a result of the highly publicized action by stores in the first, frightening days of the pandemic. Though less celebrated than nurses and paramedics, grocery workers were then recognized as essential frontline workers.

It didn't last long. Since May of last year, the minimal "hazard pay" stopped and treatment by grocery retailers generally reverted to business as usual, except workers were still exposed to continuous risk of infection, sickness and death. Unlike many who can work from home, grocery workers constantly interact with customers, suppliers and co-workers. Every day they leave work wondering whether they this is the day they will bring the virus to their families.

Grocery workers locally are taking matters into their own hands. With the help of their union, United Food and Commercial Workers, local workers presented their case for renewed hazard pay to the Olympia City Council on March 23.

Speakers named several grocery stores in the area where the commitment to safety measures has faded, leaving workers vulnerable. They named lack of adequate PPE supplies, inadequate disclosure of

fellow employees testing positive for the COVID-19 virus, tight and poorly-ventilated working areas and customers who refused to wear masks while shopping — at times berating cashiers when requested to mask.

They asked for an ordinance mandating hazard pay through the end of the pandemic. Councilmembers responded with the information that they have begun to work with elected officials in Tumwater and Lacey to pursue the possibility.

They pointed to the verified record profits gained by grocery companies due to the pandemic — profits not reinvested in the workers essential to producing those profits.

A December 2020 report by the Brookings Institute found that

*"While top retail companies' profits soared during the pandemic, pay for their frontline workers—in most cases—has not. In total, the top retail companies in our analysis earned on average an extra \$16.7 billion in profit this year compared to last—a stunning 40% increase—while stock prices are up an average of 33%. With few exceptions, frontline retail workers have seen little of this windfall. The 13 companies we studied raised pay for their frontline workers by an average of just \$1.11 per hour since the pandemic began—a 10% increase on top of wages that are often too low to meet a family's basic needs."*

Seattle and neighboring cities have already adopted a mandate requiring grocery stores and large retailers with food business who have at least 500 employees globally to pay \$4 per hour hazard pay for grocery workers.

Even so, as we know from reports of the pandemic profits of Amazon, another behemoth, the gap between the struggles and sacrifices of low-wage workers and the wealth they create for their employers and shareholders is wider than ever.

—BW



## Upcoming themes

**May—Finding common ground .**  
Deadline April 15

**June—The big lie**  
deadline May 15

**July—Ballot or Bullet?**  
deadline June 15



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BOOK REVIEW

# Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents

by Isabel Wilkerson

Denis Langhans

The phenomenon of Trumpism has perplexed many. How did a grifter billionaire attract over 70 million voters, a large percentage being whites of lower economic status? Did Trump possess a personal charisma that created this group, or did he possess an intuitive cunning that identified and exploited a latency in this sector of the white population?

Reading Isabel Wilkerson's *Caste* provides a foundational perspective to address the questions about Trumpism. As indicated by the subtitle, *The Origins of Our Discontents*, her work is an etiology, a search for origins and causes. We live in a time of deep social discontent.

To understand the origins of our discontents, Isabel Wilkerson's *Caste* should be required reading.

A tale of two dates

The year 1619 AD was a seminal point of origin with the introduction of enslaved Africans at Jamestown. These enslaved people did not see themselves as “black”, but as humans of various tribes and territories. Turning them “black” was the necessary step of converting human beings into currency. This conversion laid the economic foundation of the United States.

Another year, 2042 AD, looms large in the political power equation for

the US. In that year it is projected that our long-standing white majority will become a minority. This development together with the election of an African-American president in 2008, has created a seismic force in the American electorate. Is this seismic upheaval simply a matter of racial bias, or is there a deeper cultural element at work? Isabel Wilkerson asserts that the operative force is the extant caste system in the US.

Caste or racism?

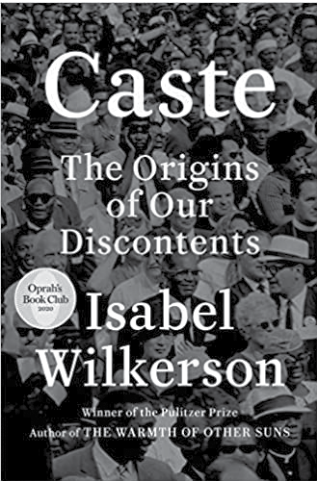
It is easy, but inaccurate, to conflate caste with racism. Wilkerson points out that the two are neither synonymous nor mutually exclusive. Rather, race is the visible agent of the unseen force of caste. Caste is more than rank; it is a state of mind that holds everyone captive. It is structural in nature whereas racism, per se, is more attitudinal. In short, caste is the operating system for the economic, political and social interaction in the US since its gestation.

The mudsill of caste

Wilkerson lays out eight pillars upon which caste rests. The American form shares these eight commonalities with the other caste

systems that she examines, i.e. the very old system in India, and the relatively brief one in Nazi Germany. I found it most disturbing that the Nazis borrowed our eugenics and Jim Crow laws as the basis for their Nuremberg Laws. Even the Nazis blanched at the extremism of the American caste system.

In Pillar Number Five, Wilkerson uses the metaphor of the mudsill which in a house is a sill plate



upon which all the construction rests. She notes: “In a caste system, the mudsill is the bottom caste that everything else rests upon.”

In the early 20th century, a racial creed of the South articulated by Thomas Pearce Bailey contained the central tenets of the caste system. Its most essential tenet is

inscribed clearly: “Let the lowest white man count for more than the highest negro.”

Trumpism viewed through the lens of Caste

For several years, many pundits have pondered an apparent enigma—Why do so many lower

economic whites go against their own economic interests to support Trump?

The problem with this question is that it is too abstract in form and thus misses the deeper underpinnings of the group's foundational interests. Unquestionably, over the past several decades, the economic condition of lower economic whites has deteriorated due to the skewing of wealth distribution. The perpetration of this decline has been mostly due to Republican policies.

Nevertheless, many in this group have been blinded by zero-sum thinking. Here, it is held that if there is any improvement for a minority, it must come at a direct loss to the lower economic white group. This distorted thinking is a basis for the deeply-visceral discontents exhibited at Trump rallies, and at the recent insurrection at the Capitol.

The perceived superior position of whites in our caste system functions as a piece of driftwood to which some cling to avoid social oblivion. Trump understands this anxiety and plays to their deeply inscribed caste status: “Let the lowest white man count for more ...”

Denis Langhans is a white man—a long-time privileged beneficiary of the American caste system.

## Then this happened...

...Mike Kreidler dealt the insurance lobbyists a slap by issuing an emergency rule prohibiting insurers from using credit scoring to set personal property (particularly auto) rates. With new scrutiny of practices that have racist results, studies found that using credit scores were just an excuse to charge low income and black drivers higher rates unrelated to driving records. The prohibition will last three years after the current coronavirus pandemic is declared over.

...our legislators think that cities and towns shouldn't be allowed to make their own zoning rules. Two bills SB5235 and HB 1220 prohibit a city from requiring that someone with an ADU live on the property—more options for absentee investors to pull money out of your neighborhood.

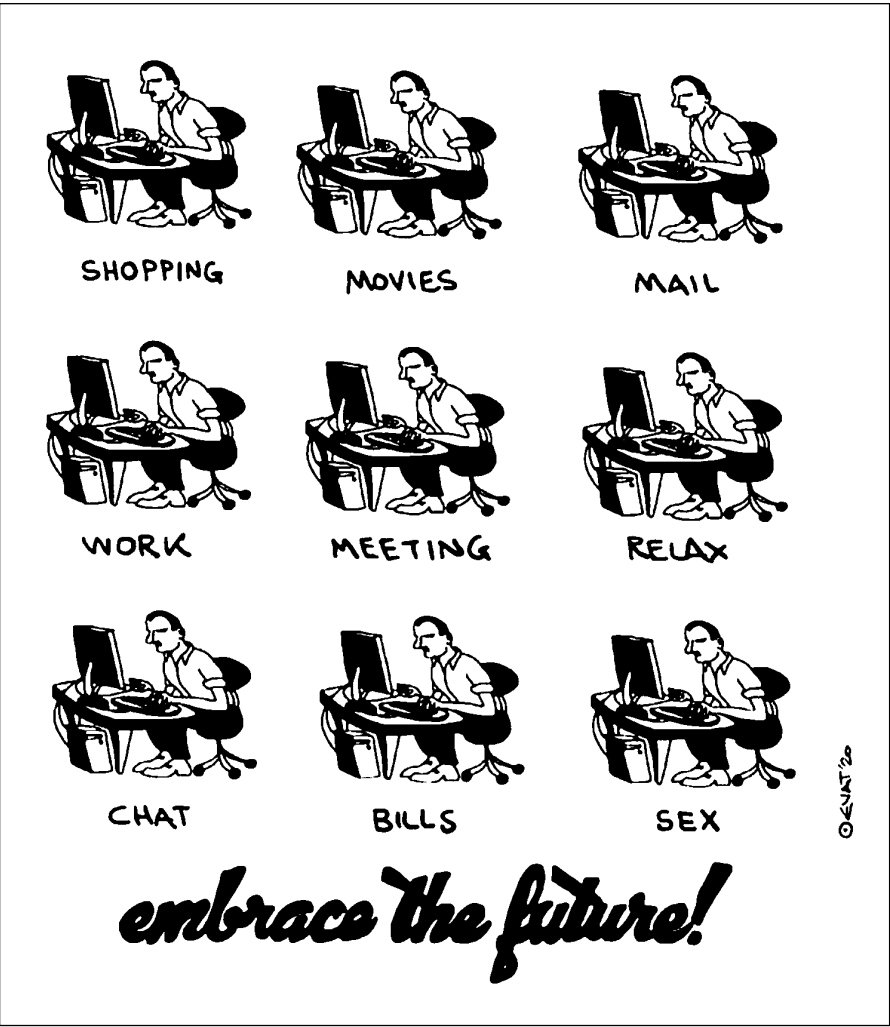
...When Oklahoma tribes won a US Supreme Court case that said their Muskogee (Creek) reservation was never disestablished, it was a shock. Everyone had pretty much forgotten about the treaties that they'd signed a while back but now they had to face some serious questions. The governor had a fix though. He appointed a commissioner without a single tribe member. Instead there are two oil fracking executives, a pipeline CEO, and two oil industry lobbyists. *No prob-lemo.*

...Ecuador defied the trend to autocrats and gave the most votes

in the first round of its presidential election to a leftist economist running on the Union for Hope line. But, no surprise, the other candidate was a right-wing banker. The US came in third with the “eco-socialist” candidate they backed. The economist and the banker will meet in a run-off on April 11. Check out the November 2019 article in *Works in Progress* for the grim background of Ecuador's recent governments.

...it's old news, but really. So far during the pandemic, America's 660 billionaires—major beneficiaries of the Trump tax cut—became \$1.3 trillion wealthier, enough to give every American a \$3,900 check and still be as rich as they were before the pandemic.

...speaking of bi-partisanship? Did anyone notice that the 10-year cost of Trump's 2018 tax cost was \$1.9 trillion—the same number as the Biden tax expenditures? Under the Covid Relief plan, more than 93% of kids receive benefits. Americans in the lowest quintile increase their incomes by 20 percent; those in the second-lowest, 9 percent; those in the middle, 6 percent. The Trump tax cut benefits went overwhelmingly to the top 20 percent. Despite promises of higher wages for everyone else, nothing trickled down. Do you remember the vote on the Trump tax cut? Not a single Democrat in the House or Senate voted for it.



## Alert to readers!

WIP has received a grant to print book reviews in 2021. How will it work? Each month we'll publish a list of books (see right column). If you'd like to be considered to review one of them, contact us at [olywip@gmail.com](mailto:olywip@gmail.com) and put BOOK REVIEW in the subject line. We will buy the book (or reimburse you if you buy it) and pay \$50 if the review is accepted. See the review of *Caste* on this page.

We will run issues monthly with a maximum length of 750 words. We currently have reviews scheduled through June, so there's plenty of time to read a big book!

*The Cigarette: A Political History*—Sarah Milov (choice, agency, desire)

*Union Made*—Eric Lotke (novel about the romance of organizing to win)

*Bring the War Home*—Kathleen Belew (white power movement & militias)

*Who Will Pay Reparations on My Soul*—Jesse McCarthy (essays)

*Forever Prisoners*—Elliott Young (immigration)



REFLECTION

A maximum wage: prelude to economic equality

Adora River Rose

The federal minimum wage in the United States, signed into law by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1938, has been a topic of debate ever since. Its purpose was to protect workers from being paid a wage lower than what is necessary for survival. Roosevelt has been quoted as saying, “no business which depends for existence on paying less than living wages to its workers has any right to continue in this country.”

Prove that you need the money

Today, the argument is less about whether the minimum wage should exist and more about how much to increase it -- if at all. The consistency in the debate is that most of the argument focuses on those in poverty, recognizing that their survival is at stake. At the same time, resources for these groups are always means-based, allocated to those who can provide proof of need.

For the rich - no questions asked

Interestingly, people with the highest accumulation of wealth are never held to a means test when it comes to how they acquired their wealth. It's unlikely that the top 1 % of Americans gained over 30% of the nation's wealth in the same way those paid the minimum wage earned their money. That 30% share is increasing alarmingly while causing undeniable economic difficulties for the low and middle classes.

To address inequality, redesign economic incentives

Without a change in economic policy the rich are likely to gain more control over the lives of the poor. If we want to decrease inequality, we need to broaden the discussion to include a maximum wage -- a de facto maximum wage, or a cap on wealth and assets-- concurrently with the minimum wage.

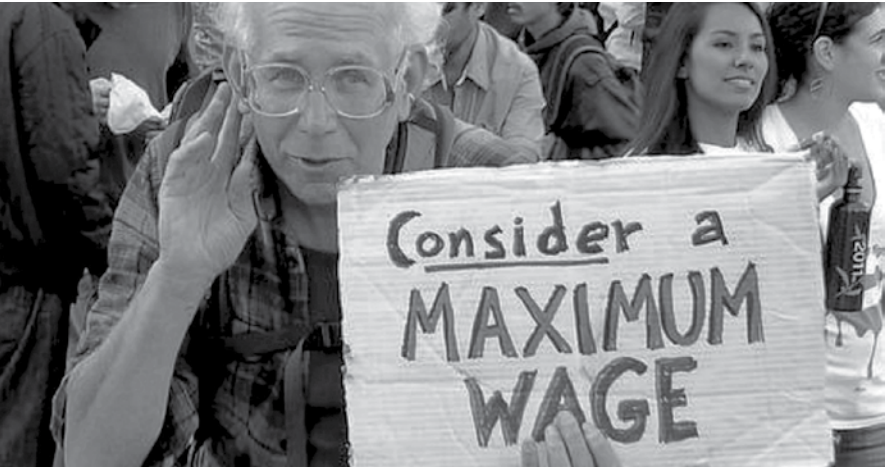
To decrease income inequality, the first task is to create economic incentive for corporations to distribute more of their revenue to those earning overall lower wages rather than those with high salaries.

Historically, tax rates on high incomes functioned as a de facto maximum wage which provided such an incentive. Writer for Vox, Matthew Yglesias reasons,

“During the 90% top income tax rate, for a firm to put an extra \$100 in the pocket of a top executive required them to pay another \$1,000 in salary. Rather than send \$900 to Uncle Sam to pay a CFO an extra \$100, it makes more sense to give modest raises to five separate middle managers — putting more money in the pockets of your workforce and less in the pockets of the federal government.”

When the rich find ways to pay income tax at a lower rate than even the lowest wage earner, it could provide the corporation with an incentive to increase top executive pay rather than increase the pay of the lowest paid employees and those in the middle. A maximum wage that is in some way tied to a minimum wage would allow more

people to share in the prosperity; without it, the disparity in income could continue to increase expo-



nentially. Regulation that ties top executive pay, by a designated multiple, to the lowest-paid employee in the corporation would likely result in higher wages for the lowest paid workers first, and less of the corporation's revenue would be lost to taxation.

Would high-income earners work less hard if tax rates were higher?

It is often argued that a higher income tax rate (or maximum wage) will reduce the incentive for high-income earners to continue to perform at the same level, resulting in a reduction of gross domestic product (GDP).

This argument is not supported by history. The US has historically had income tax rates that effectively acted as a de facto maximum wage. The highest individual income tax bracket in US history was 94% in 1944 and 1945.

High top-bracket taxes in the 1950s correlate with high GDP growth

In the 109 years since the income tax was instituted, forty-nine of those years have had a tax rate of over 70%. Thirteen of the fifteen years that the tax rate was over 90% were consecutive years. From 1951 through 1963, the highest-taxed individuals were taxed at either 91 or 92%.

As of 1951, four of the prior six years showed a decline in gross domestic product, correlating with a reduction of over 11 % in the highest income tax bracket at its largest difference. Yet when the tax rate returned to over 90%, the nation saw nearly twenty years of consistent growth in GDP.

This indicates that a higher tax rate would have little to no probability of reducing production within corporations in the US. A maximum wage, or a return to a tax bracket over 90%, could pave the way to return a more economically equal society.

Government money supports vast salaries for contractors

It may seem difficult to imagine regulations such as a maximum wage imposed on the rich, especially since large corporations with highly paid executives often benefit from government contracts. In 2018, government contracts made up nearly 70% of Lockheed Martin's revenue but the Executive Chairman of the Board was compensated nearly thirty-one million dollars (Marillyn).

It may seem that efforts to regulate the income of the super-rich are a lost cause, but there is precedent

for such regulation. Currently, there are laws in the US that prevent companies that discriminate against women and minorities from gaining government contracts.

Setting a standard for companies that rely on the government

Sam Pizzigati, an Associate Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, responded to these laws by asking, “why should we let our tax dollars subsidize companies that increase economic inequality - by compensating top executives at levels that dwarf the pay that goes to average workers?” Restricting government contracts to companies that pay upper executives a rate that is no greater than a determined multiple of the rate of their lowest-paid workers is one way to begin increasing economic equality.

An inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness

It is not beneficial to value only those who can thrive financially in a capitalist society. For some people, happiness is not about financial gain, but without finan-

cial stability, the pursuit of happiness in other forms becomes more difficult. Yet financial stability is becoming less attainable for much of the working class.

A maximum wage tied by ratio to the minimum wage is a step toward greater income equality by recognizing that the super-rich do not deserve all the wealth they control, just as the working poor do not deserve the poverty they are subjected to.

A tax system that favors the wealthy has failed us

Our poverty rate today hovers around 10%. A tax system that favors the wealthy has not proven to eradicate poverty. Focusing only on the poor and those with less ability to stand on their own has not solved income inequality. A refusal to acknowledge the importance of regulating the top as well as the bottom will continue to delay any solution.

Through implementing a maximum wage, the people of the US will continue to achieve economic growth, expand incentives to increase the pay to lower-wage workers, and move towards the type of income equality that ensures that a minority of wealthy individuals won't have financial control over our leaders and representatives. A de facto maximum wage through a return to higher taxes will pave the way for more income equality and allow more Americans to pursue their own versions of happiness.

Adora River Rose is studying at SPSCC to become a teacher. She is an Eagle Scout, a performance artist, and an advocate for transgender rights and equality. adora.river.rose@gmail.com

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Every mother  
is a working  
mother!



# Can't get a break

## Working single moms in the pandemic

Ilana Smith

One thing has become clear over the past year: the pandemic didn't affect everyone equally. There is the person joked about on social media, out of work but getting unemployment; without their typical income but still able to cover the rent; with time to worry about what to binge watch or when they could get their hair done. And others out of work and without unemployment, struggling to make ends meet—but finding themselves with some free time.

And then there are the ones who didn't get a break. The ones who made the shift to the digital work world without missing a beat. Even when their workload grew to accommodate the masses newly in need of services, the pay did not.

### Confined to home with two jobs

Compared to two-parent households where at least one parent was able to focus on childcare while the other worked, single parent households were hit hard by the pandemic. Isolation and excessive workloads have caused negative impacts on mental health for all members of our nation. However, the effects of such isolation on top of a full-time job for income and the full-time job of being a single parent can increase pandemic stress levels exponentially.

Negotiating child-care with work responsibilities takes a toll.

Taking on the role of full-time caregiver for one's children, full-time housekeeper with the added challenge of cooking and cleaning for little people making messes without supervision during the workday, full-time teacher's aide filling in the gaps of instruction between the few hours of interaction with teachers, and full-time worker stuck in Zoom after never-ending Zoom, has left many single moms at a mental breaking point.

Single moms in general have less pay, less resources and less space. They have been overworked, under-supported, and overstressed for a long time. This has led many to put their own well-being, mentally, emotionally and physically, on the back burner. The unequal demands of home and work placed on single mothers during the pandemic has increased levels of emotional distress and burnout. Cases are even higher among black, Asian and Latina mothers.

When I asked three single working mothers in our community what they needed just to feel sane again, their wishes hit home.

### Time to be present for the kids

One local single mom spent the past year converting her face-to-face consulting business into a virtual, digital-based experience for her clients. Long days and nights have been dedicated to trying to grow a business against almost insurmountable odds. Added to the



isolation and many aggravations associated with pandemic living, she had to start washing all dishes by hand when her dishwasher broke and repair was way too expensive.

Working, schooling and wearing the many hats needed to get through the day leaves no time for being a parent. This mom said, "I need time to be present in my kids' lives." So her greatest wish was to have someone to cook meals that are actually healthy; someone to clean the house; a handyman on call for that dishwasher -- and everything else that seemed to be breaking.

### A longing for emotional support

A second single working mom reported the irony of being told by her employer to make space for self-care, and then promptly being advised that her caseload at work was doubled. Another irony was her feeling of jealousy towards those who ended up unemployed because of the pandemic. Perhaps reading social media posts of others' excessive boredom at being at home with nothing to do but make sarcastic videos and watch TV exacerbated her despair.

Her hopes of finding someone to share her life with seemed to slip farther out of reach as isolation, stress weight-gain, and a longing for human contact with someone other than her children strained her resili-

ence. Too many free moments were spent handwashing dishes (wishing her children were old enough to wash their own), she echoed the wish for help with housework and time to connect with her children outside of schoolwork.

Working as her kids' caretaker and teacher, and as a full-time worker and manager.

It's even a challenge for single moms who are primary care-givers to get support from former partners—and lifelong co-parents—to ensure that their kids are fully supported in their studies and their lives. Having a fully functioning school and an equal partner in parenting was this mom's wish, along with a chance to see friends for the regenerative effect of a sisterhood bonding over a Scrabble board. On top of all that, her dishwasher broke... a third single mom spending many hours washing dishes by hand.

### Underlying the burnout—economic discrimination

The Brookings Institute reported in their "2018 American Community Survey data, before COVID-19, nearly half of all working women—46% or 28 million—worked in jobs paying low wages, with median earnings of only \$10.93 per hour. The share of workers earning low wages is higher among black women (54%) and Hispanic or Latina women (64%) than among white women (40%), reflecting the structural racism that has limited options in education, housing, and employment for people of color."

Some expenses are especially burdensome to working moms. Lack of affordable and available childcare for example. Childcare itself is very expensive yet the childcare providers, who are mostly women, are grossly underpaid leaving a working mother with little left of her paycheck if care is not subsidized. Unlike men, women face other not-so-hidden expenses associated with their gender, such as expensive undergarments and the monthly costs of feminine hygiene products that tap into the lower paycheck that women earn.

Gentrification of neighborhoods that were once affordable to many lower income single parents, has made it harder to rent, and next to impossible to buy a home to accumulate generational wealth. As neighborhoods become gentrified, services important to low-income households, like free clinics and food pantries, move away and become less accessible.

### Does it have to be this way?

Cities like Vienna created housing specifically designed for moms who work. Developments that are close to public transit and have on-site healthcare and childcare facilities are making it possible for single parents and moms, who are traditionally childrens' primary caregivers, to have opportunities to reduce the heavy burdens associated with the role.

Along with stresses and demands tied to the pandemic, worries about what the future holds abound. What happens when the moratorium on evictions ends? Where can women with small children go to have access to the affordable childcare necessary to find full-time work and pay for the ever-increasing costs of housing? How can we gain equity in the workforce? And why can't dishwashers stand-up to pandemic level living?

*Ilana Smith is an avid reader, wishful traveler, and a lover of Scrabble who has laid down roots in Lacey.*

Source consulted for this article: Bateman, Nichole and Ross, Martha (2020). [//www.brookings.edu/essay/why-has-covid-19-been-especially-harmful-for-working-women/](https://www.brookings.edu/essay/why-has-covid-19-been-especially-harmful-for-working-women/)

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# Nonprofits of Thurston County call for racial justice

***Dear Thurston County Commissioners;*** Thurston County Mayors, City Councils and City Administrators; Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney; Thurston County Sheriff; Thurston County School Superintendents; and Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Director:

In response to the movement and demand for justice for Black Lives, and because these times are calling on us to have a wise and courageous response, we, Thurston County nonprofit communities, have signed onto this collective letter indicating our intention to align with racial justice and a local racial equity-focused policy agenda.

We believe it is important to be engaged in this conversation because we are service providers, ultimately responding to the inequities that have come from systemic oppression. In recognition of the intersectional nature of oppression, we are actively considering how all forms of oppression compound the negative impacts of racism. That is; ableism, ageism, religious oppression, classism, heterosexism and homophobia, anti-indigenous oppression/colonization, anti-immigrant oppression, sexism, and transphobia are all implicated in systemic racism.

Our nonprofits hold collective power in this community and have a responsibility to use that power wisely and for justice. We know that until we dismantle systemic white supremacy none of us can meet our missions for the well-being of people and our planet.

We want to stand in solidarity with the changes that Black Leaders and Communities of Color are calling for. Because Communities of Color are most impacted by systemic oppression, we believe that Communities of Color know best the solutions that are needed. We see it as our responsibility to amplify these solutions and to step into allyship in whatever ways we can. This is one, among many, of those ways.

With advisement from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Communities, we have outlined several policy priorities that our nonprofit community is asking our elected and appointed leaders to research and to swiftly put into action. We recognize that one list of policy priorities will not be representative of all BIPOC Communities and perspectives, and we've tried to do our best to be responsive and also demonstrate allyship/accompliceship.

It is clear that there have been good intentions and that several of your jurisdictions have taken important steps to address issues of inequality and yet, these efforts have fallen short of what is needed. The caliber and direction of our work together must be amplified to address the significant harm, stress, fear and pain BIPOC communities are facing every day. This set of policy priorities acknowledges the gravity and pace of change that is needed to address these harms. We look forward to working with you on this journey in the coming months.

**We are asking Thurston County and Thurston County cities to:**

- ▶ Declare racism as a public health emergency
- ▶ Install community-led public safety accountability bodies to direct a fundamental shift in how our local criminal justice system operates, and to significantly reduce the scope and power of this system
- ▶ Reallocate funds from criminal justice system to community based services; install sanctioned (with decision making

power) community-led, participatory budgeting processes to determine where the reallocated funds are invested

- ▶ Redesign and reinvest current school resource officer contracts into student supports and school counselors
- ▶ Adopt and align with the federal Justice in Policing Act of 2020 and Washington State Initiative 940
- ▶ Denounce white supremacist hate groups and armed vigilante groups and take tangible steps to prevent them from inciting violence
- ▶ Ensure Human Rights Commissions are led by BIPOC and those whose rights are impacted, and fund their work
- ▶ Prohibit all collusion with ICE and eliminate system practices that include sharing information with ICE.
- ▶ Extend eviction moratorium with a rental relief fund for households financially impacted by COVID-19, which has been proven to disproportionately impact BIPOC
- ▶ Create and adopt Good Cause Eviction and non-possessionary policies
- ▶ Create accountability metrics and systems of transparency with regards to the above-named priorities; make progress on demands transparent and up-to-date based on priorities of impacted communities

We know that some of these demands can happen right away and understand that some of them will take more time and will require different types of community processes to determine the best way forward. However, we know that

now is the time to align our actions with our stated values and we are calling our local leaders to do the same.

We can't create the changes that we want to see in this community, which are desperately needed, if we continue to go about business as usual. Business as usual upholds racism and upholds oppression. It is time for us to show courage and to show that we value Black Lives. When we stand in solidarity together we will see true systemic change in our communities.

***Signed,***

Family Support Center of South Sound

Community Youth Services

Enterprise for Equity

Sidewalk

Interfaith Works

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Pizza Klatch Support for LGBTQ+ Youth

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Thurston Asset Building Coalition

Homes First

POWER

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Olympia Film Society

Tambra Donohue, Director, Monarch Children's Justice and Advocacy Center

HAKI Farmer Collective

CIELO

Bridge Music Project

## The Commons: Reclaiming what is ours

*A documentary film directed by Kevin Hansen*

*The Commons* is a documentary film about communities re-asserting sustainable futures using consensus, equity, and shared resources—ancient Commons principles. The film offers many examples of how it is possible to take the inspired path toward a communal future so many are drawn towards. The film is intended to be what Gandhi hoped we would speak, *Satyagraha*, a new Truth Force, and what Dr. Andreas Weber calls *Enlivenment*.

For this film, we asked why new forms of self-organizing were emerging—and got very similar answers. Everyone is restless—especially young people. Something inside us is calling for a better, healthier future. People are unwilling to settle for the bleak future many fear. They understand deeply that the shared resources of the world are a human right, owned by all, not just a few—and that these resources are in peril.

Nine years went into making this film: we listened as 49 communities across the Americas, Europe, and South Asia told us what has made their Commons work over the centuries. In the face of commodification and privatization,

when everything seems to have a dollar value, Commoners are now saying, “we’re taking a new path forward.”

**Creating “open source” communities**

Making the film, we found a re-awakening in progress. Tired of waiting for governments or corporations to ‘get it right,’ many Commoners are already taking action as a community to push back the tide of unjust privatization or destruction of shared resources.

Often inspired by Occupy movements, many Commoners are forming new communities, re-imagining the concept of money, starting new schools, creating open-source computer code and launching cooperatives everywhere. Many—most—of these projects have the idea of ‘open source’ deeply embedded in their planning. People are asking for sustainability, not destruction, sharing not privatization, and justice—not brutality.

**Reclaiming sovereignty over the Commons**

We made this film because people need to know that actions are already under way; that it is possible to reclaim sovereignty over the Commons: the shared spaces

and places, the wealth of the land, oceans and atmosphere, the internet, their genetics, and the ideas that are the heritage of life itself.

We found there are already laws protecting the rights of Commoners. Many of these laws are the underpinnings of our legal system itself. People need to know that it is both possible and successful to have a new kind of ‘Commons’ democracy, a self-governance based on consensus, justice, sharing, sustainability and goodwill.

**Labor and natural resources—the origin of our common wealth**

We have lost many rights to resources that were once a shared heritage. In the process we lost part of our humanity. Rights to many Commons resources were usurped centuries ago, starting with the indigenous peoples—but many don't know it. We are dissociated from the living resources and energy that sustains us; dissociated from the understanding that labor and natural resources are the origin of the wealth of our Commons.



Young people feel this acutely, asking: “Why aren’t resources available to all?” For the young, seeing our broken democracy fail has created a crisis of confidence in government. Looking at this unappealing future, our young people may feel lost, so we now have a crisis of political succession: ‘Who wants to do more of that?’ they ask.

In this film, we seek to show how it is possible to move towards “self-organizing democracy” by highlighting the many successful examples of Commoners doing just that. We support a return to the shared decisions, sustainable living and community-based action that Commons offer.

*Details and where to watch the film: featuring David Bollier, Bill McKibben and the commoners. Directed by Kevin Hansen with cinematography by Bunker Seyfert. Produced by Pierre Terre Productions & Survival Media Agency. Released 2019. Runtime: 109 minutes. View link: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/commons>*



# Olympia City Council elections

## Update on the West Bay Yards issue

Dan Leahy

On March 12, I asked all thirteen candidates running for the five positions on the Olympia City Council for their position on the proposed development agreement for the West Bay Yards project. On March 23 the City Council held a public hearing on the agreement. March 30 was the date set for the Council to approve or disapprove the development agreement.

Not all candidates responded

Incumbent Yen Huynh and Robbi Kesler are vying for position two. Both Huynh and Kesler responded. Clark Gilman, the incumbent for position four responded. Incumbent Lisa Parshley, Talauna Reed and Wendy Carlson are running for position five. Taluana Reed responded. Sarah Destasio, Corey Gauny and Dontae Payne are vying for position six. Sarah Destacio responded. Incumbent Jim Cooper, Tyrone Brown and Spence Weigand, Jr. are vying for position seven. Tyrone Brown responded. Candace Mercer responded and stated she will file for position four.

Statements by candidates

**Yen Huynh** (incumbent, running for position 2). I am continuing to study and evaluate all of the excellent input that we received at the public hearing and I welcome more.

**Robbi Kesler** (candidate, running for position 2). I have followed the West Bay Yards development agreement issue reasonably closely, but not as carefully as I would if I were on council and actually voting. I would potentially vote against the development agreement if there is an extraordinary concession being granted to the developer of which I am not currently aware. I pride myself on having great critical thinking and research skills, and am capable of making decisions on my own but I also realize at an executive level a need to delegate and consider input from staff who are experts in their respective fields. I have confidence in the city staff and relevant state agencies to make the right decisions with respect to ensuring the project complies with relevant laws at various stages of the process if it moves forward. I would tend to be on the side of approving development agreements in situations like West Bay Yards because I realize the project will still be required to meet all applicable development regulations.

**Clark Gilman** (Mayor Pro Tem, running for re-election, position 4) I do not support the Development Agreement proposed for the West Bay Yards luxury apartment project on the former Hardel plywood mill site. I do not believe it is appropriate to vest this project to today's land use rules for 15 years. We are at a moment of great change in our thinking and actions around climate change, the environment, and equal justice. These emerging priorities are very likely to shift land use regulations during the course of this 25 year agreement.

**Candace Mercer** (states she is a candidate for position 4). I was unable to respond by the deadline because I am experiencing housing instability and was unable to attend the West Bay Yards public

hearing. I need to learn more before committing to a position. I plan to watch the video and reach out to stakeholders to gather citizen views. My platform is grassroots and I have prioritized citizen concerns when taking a position on controversial issues.

**Talauna Reed** (candidate, running for position 5). The short response is that I do not support this at all. My position is firm and anytime the city gives incentives to private developers, does not consider environmental impacts, excludes the public from discussion before drafting an agreement on these types of issue and or does not prioritize the current needs of our community, i will not be in favor of it and my vote will reflect that. The people in this community need reassurance for this council that this housing crisis we are in has high priority. We do not need market rate housing. We need liveable wages and afford-

able public housing for everyone who needs it. This project serves no one except those who will profit and needs to be taken off of the table.

**Sarah DeStasio** (candidate, running for position 6). There should be a thorough environmental impact review before the City commits to the West Bay Yards development agreement. While there is limited buildable land in our area, I do not think that a market-rate shoreline development is likely to benefit most Olympians or our ecosystems. If built, the project is not eligible for the Multi-Family tax exemption or reduced impact fees. I would like the City to use those taxes and fees to help increase our affordable housing stock.

**Tyrone Brown** (candidate, running for position 7). We are currently in the midst of a syndemic: A health pandemic and a housing pandemic. Before this syndemic, the houseless population was already growing at a rapid rate. If the city were to sign this 15-year agreement for 7

## Citizens: An environmental review should precede a binding contract for West Bay Yards

Bethany Weidner

*[Dozens of people who filed comments or called into a public hearing March 23 argued forcefully that an environmental review should occur before the City makes any more commitments to the West Bay Yards developers. Business owners and development advocates disagreed. By the time this paper is printed, Council members will have made a decision of some kind. Here's a summary of the public input. Read full comments on the City's website at [www.olympiawa.gov/west-bay-yards](http://www.olympiawa.gov/west-bay-yards)]*

What

Members of the public had an opportunity to talk to the City Council about the viability and desirability of facilitating the introduction of an “urban village”—a 470-unit apartment/town-house-retail-commercial complex—between West Bay Drive and the edge of Budd Inlet at the site of a former plywood plant.

At issue was a Development Agreement—a voluntary contract that ensures West Bay Yards LLC that the project will be isolated from changes in Olympia's land use regulations (last revised in 2016) between now and 2036. (Development project do get protection from changes in regulations—but at a later point in the review process.)

Why

A Development Agreement is the product of a “behind the counter” negotiation between the developer and staff. In Olympia, the Planning and Development staff has complete discretionary authority over individual projects—except for Development Agreements. They come to the City Council because they're binding contracts. The role of the City Council is to

represent the interest of the public as a party to the contract.



When

Ten months after West Bay Yards LLC presented their project at a “presubmission conference” in May and one week before the City Council was to make a decision.

Who

**Arguing against approval of the WBY Agreement:** at least six environmental steward organizations including DERT, Olympia Coalition for Ecosystem Preservation, Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Cultural Landscapes, and Olympia Archeological Society, among others, plus over 130 unaffiliated individuals.

**Arguing for approval:** City Planning and Development staff; Ron Thomas, WBY architect; eight other business and development interests including Olympia Master Builders, Kidder-Matthews, Thurston Economic Development Council, two professional planners, a couple of business owners and a Missing Middle activist; plus six unaffiliated individuals.

acres of land that promises market rate housing and excludes affordable housing, then they would be signing onto private gains at the expense of the public. We have people in our own community who are carrying the burden for the city's lack of action. Mutual aid has picked up because city resources are lacking. In addition to the lack of affordable housing, thousands of tenants currently can not make their rents. Despite job loss and COVID shutdowns, there is a continued expectation for tenants to pay rent. It is illogical to support high end market rate housing when we have a growing houseless population with people facing evictions once the moratorium is lifted. Although the issue is the lack of housing and the need to increase housing in our city, that is not the only thing that is keeping housing unaffordable or inaccessible. If the city were to approve this agreement, it would further perpetuate the pandemic that marginalized people have already been facing. We need to focus on accessible and equitable housing.

*Dan Leahy is an organizer and long-time resident of the Westside.*

Reasoning offered

Opponents submitted extensive and varied comments ranging from uniqueness of the shoreline and related ecosystem, lack of key provisions in the contract, and unsuitability of the site. Most urged the Council to begin with an environmental review that could answer many of the questions about the project. Here are excerpts from three statements:

A specialist in urban restoration: *I am concerned that this approach to shoreline development weakens our city, and undermines our regional public investment in ecosystem recovery. A 30-foot fringe of trees and some dredge spoils at the foot of riprap is not restoration—it's superficial decoration to sell you on a bad idea. This development group has indicated through its opening design that it has no interest in the health of the Salish Sea. You should ask for a real proposal that demonstrates a commitment to ecological health. It would be a betrayal to all of us if the City Council gave away the bank at the opening bell.*

Students from Marshall Middle School CSI who will live with this decision. *In our research we've found that there is no benefit this proposed development has to the community. Whether it's limiting natural space, or the increasing traffic, a development this big will have crushing impacts. In the end, this growth will not pay for itself. You may be long gone, but we will be left holding the bill.*

*So much inaction has left our generation tired. Tired of waiting for a fate doomed by the messes others have left us to clean up. Tired of watching the same mistakes unfold time and time again, history repeating itself so clearly for all to see but not clearly enough for anyone to do about it. There is no way for the effects of Climate Change to reverse themselves.*

► **Binding contract**, continued on page 10



# Work that's its own reward

## West Central Park is an oasis in the heart of Olympia

### SW neighbors and park volunteers past and present

For years it was home to an abandoned building. In 1997 the City paid to demolish the building, leaving the lot vacant. It was the last unoccupied parcel located at the intersection of two busy arterials on the Westside—Harrison and Division. Early one May Day morning, guerilla gardeners from TESC transformed a corner of the lot with plants and flowering shrubs. The City's Public Works Department bulldozed them the next afternoon.

### How about a convenience store, then?

For the next 15 years, people in Olympia's Southwest neighborhood fought off proposals for gas stations, minimarts and drive-by banks. The intersection was dangerous without adding more traffic. Then, in 2011, Olympia's Community Planning staff approved a 7-Eleven with cars entering and exiting from two streets. It promised to generate money—development fees plus property and sales taxes for the city; profits for the foreign owners of the 7-Eleven chain. But this was not to be.

Instead, people in the neighborhood organized and succeeded in reversing the city's approval.

How was this possible in our world where investors call the shots and "development" trumps all other land uses?

### Making the neighborhood safe for community

Confronted with the "done deal" of the 7-Eleven, residents set to work to show how the Planning Department ignored City rules when it approved the store. After an appeal to the Hearing Examiner—who predictably ruled for the staff—the neighbors raised \$8000 for another appeal. With the help of a local attorney working for free, they took their case to Superior Court where Judge Lisa Sutton found that the community was right—the City had failed to abide by its own Municipal Code.

### The possibility of a green and welcoming space

The neighborhood won a second time in December 2012 when a Westside resident, Alicia Elliott, purchased the property and turned it over to the community to create a neighborhood park.



Today "West Central Park" is a neighborhood oasis. Stroll along one of the pathways and take note of the shrubs and plantings offering color and texture even on the rainiest cold winter day. Take note



of the innovative: pervious surface the Park Board chose for all driveways and parking areas.

Rain gardens bursting with texture suck up water that used to flood nearby sidewalks. There's fanciful path lighting, a chess table, and

picnic areas. In the summer all kinds of vegetables are there in raised beds for anyone to harvest. During the years (before the pandemic) there were concerts, workshops, movies and seasonal events free to everyone.

How did this come about with no employees and limited funds?

It started with the founder and an initial board of talented volunteers who took on the formal task of creating a nonprofit organization—filing for tax exempt status, keeping records, developing an initial vision for the park.

That first board started by creating a structure to attract and support the volunteers who would be needed to create and maintain the park. From the first year, regular Sunday work parties have been the way people gave their time and ideas to the park. As one volunteer said, "I needed to collaborate with people in my community on something positive and growing and beautiful...beyond the day-to-day cares of my own situation."

Coming together from 10 to 2 every Sunday for hands-on work out-of-doors not only built and maintained the park, it allowed for relationships to develop and ideas to bear fruit. Volunteers who have been involved from the first day

had the pleasure of seeing the park take shape as the product of many hands and heads. Here's a little of what they experienced, taken from weekly newsletters that yet another volunteer sends out:

**11/2013**—We are over half way to our goal of planting the whole Eastern side of the park. Come Sunday to help move dirt and mulch and turn sod into new beds.

**12/2013**—We plan to file our 501(c)3 application. This should improve our chances to raise \$120,000 toward building our permanent park.

**2/2014**—We'll be painting, digging another irrigation trench and continuing work on the permaculture seminar area. The weather should be great

**6/2014**—If you're an artisan, a musician, a crafter, a food vendor, a local cause...sign up for the June Jubilee with its focus on demonstrations of old skills and crafts.

**1/2015**—At the weekly work party we'll be completing work on the arbor and putting on a few more labels to identify plants. Looking to add new board members.

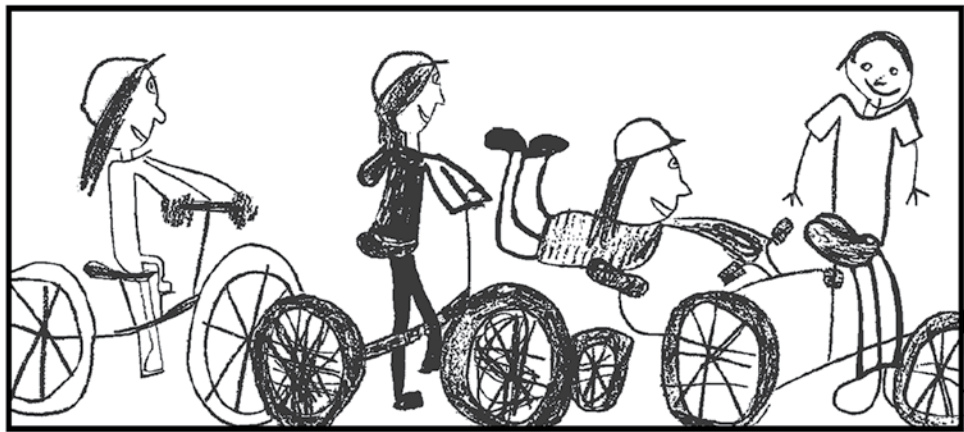
**4/2016**—Still a few spaces left for our Mini Bird and Bee House workshop.



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Art by Kennah, age 7

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# Olympia's Westside

**8/2016**—Time for mowing, weeding, raking, torching, picking up litter! Building new turf with 30 yards of soil just delivered! We hope to get to the seeding too. Some volunteers will be working on a low berm to create amphitheater seating for Monday Movie Madness.

**6/20/17**—We need help to install steel edging along the Park pathways. The United Way team will be there for the Day of Caring if you'd like to plug in.

**10/2017**—We're hosting our third annual Harvest Fest with apple pressing, cider making, seed and veggie swap or share; mushroom cultivation workshop, hügelkultur workshop, edible landscape tour, natural beekeeping workshop and the incredible, edible, community stone soup!

**6/2018**—This Sunday, we'll be helping out at the Senior Services Garden. We planted the beds about 3 weeks ago and stuff is growing fast. Come to work and stay to play bocce ball.

**9/2018**—Friday around 4 o'clock we'll be hanging lights for the Equinox Dance Party. Grab a string of lights and some vines to help make the Park special.

**Bee & Wasp Update**—Thanks to everyone who helped make wasp traps last week. We put the traps in the park and nearby properties to help reduce the wasp population. We have a few containers of honeycomb left for sale from last year's hive.

**10/2018**—Just finished the compost system at the park in partnership with OlySunrise Compost Concierge! The new wire coverings will help keep the birds out and make the overall process easier for our crew of volunteers to maintain.

**6/2019**—Hügelkultur is a water-wise planting technique that acts something like a nurse log. Workshop with a master gardener—how to plant and the benefits.

**7/2019**—Movie Madness! Mondays in July and August from 8:45 to midnight. Come early for popcorn and slides from Park work parties and local business ads. Bring blankets, lawn chairs and your besties to snuggle in for your own walk-in theater!

## And now it's 2021

The pandemic changed life at the park, but it's still there providing respite and community. The crew of dedicated volunteers turned to staggered schedules for safety and kept pruning, mowing, and weeding since last March.

Current board members are looking to scale up activities in the park as safety guidelines allow more people to gather. A major new structure—an open-air canopy—has just been completed, offering new ways to use the space.

Projects that were put on hold during the pandemic, will have priority along with new ideas that have been germinating—as always:

Starting in April the park will return to summer hours, with volunteers meeting from 11 to 1 every Sunday. It's beautiful in the spring, and here are some places to contribute:

Some volunteers are building new benches for more park seating. Love wood-working, or have ideas?

Donated sandstone is being cleaned and prepped for a spiral herb garden slated for a special work party this summer.

It's nearly time to plant the ADA accessible raised beds. Cathy Visser, who with her



husband helped build these beds, said "Gardening and nurturing this space beautifies the neighborhood and helps us to feel more connected to our community." A class or group could adopt a bed—and food sharing is always possible.



Another goal is to bring more art and craft events to the park. Someone with a yen to

connect with artists or looking to organize events would be a welcome volunteer.

Until larger gatherings are safe, the park can be a venue for small events such as recitals and limited performances. Once concerts are back the search will be on for stage crew and support volunteers.

In addition to helping tend the park itself, there are many great projects waiting for the right people to help them grow. There is an opportunity for everyone to be part of programs, events, and projects that bring our community together in the park all year round.



**Why not join us?** We currently have openings for an additional board member, volunteer coordinator, and someone to help with outreach and program/activities. Except for gardening and landscaping tasks, most of the work is done virtually right now, making it accessible to everyone. We can provide supervision reporting for students and others who might need official volunteer hours. Shoot us an email or give us a call for more information.

*info@westcentralpark.org Office phone: (833) 223-727*

## Thurston County Food Bank

Food Distribution at the Downtown, Client Service Center.

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### Office & donation hours

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*For more information go to our website:*

**<https://thurstoncountyfoodbank.org/80-2/grocery-distribution/>**

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# Annual plant sale benefit for Nicaraguan scholars coming up

Jean Eberhardt

How novel to be together, scattered safely across Jean's yard on Oly's Westside, potting up perennials once again. It's our annual plant sale to raise money for scholarships for students in our sister town of Santo Tomás, Chontales Nicaragua.

Every weekend from mid-March through April, masked volunteers will be chatting and digging, dividing, and potting up the promise of colorful spring and summer blooms. Avid gardeners and local farmers (shout out to Rising River Farm, Spring Creek Farm, and Common Ground Farm, among others) contribute to the diversity of plants available. Call 360-943-8642 (no texts) or write [tstsca@gmail.com](mailto:tstsca@gmail.com) to inquire about volunteering your time, seedlings or plant divisions.

Twenty first-generation, low-income students have graduated from our program and found work in their chosen fields. A \$500 annual scholarship allows each of 16 young Nicaraguans to continue in higher education in their country. They become professionals able to stay and build a stronger community.

### Meet one of our current students, Dany Lazo

Hello, I'm Dany Lazo. I'm studying to be a high school social science teacher. I'm 20 years old and in my third year at the Martin Luther King Jr. University in Juigalpa, about 40 minutes away from Santo Tomás (ST) by bus. I enjoy my classes in philosophy, sociology, English, geography, and

history. I read a lot about what's going on in Nicaragua and around the world, and I think critically about the complexity of our situations. Pedagogy has been the most difficult of the subjects for me as

other fruits and vegetables. My industrious mom buys fresh milk to make *cujada* and bake *rosquillas* for sale in the *Mercado Campesino* in Santo Tomás every Sunday. She and I bring these delicious prod-



Spring 2018 delegation from Santo Tomás with supporters from Olympia

I've not been exposed previously to theories about how young people learn. I am confident that I will grow into a good teacher, one who uses thoughtful strategies that take into consideration students' distinct backgrounds and their individual and group needs.

I am from El Alto, a rural community outside of ST, where my father is a *campesino* who works hard on the farm of his patron. Our family has access to a plot of land we do not own to grow our annual subsistence crops of corn and beans, as well as root crops of yuca and *quequisque*, vines of *ayote* and

ucts to town on the local bus and then I help her with sales.

I dedicate quality time to my homework and know that I'm investing in my future and that of my family. I think I've inspired my little brother to dream big too. He wants to be a veterinarian. My older sister wasn't able to pursue more education. There just weren't any options for her at that time. The economy is not doing well and her husband has not been able to get steady work on local farms. Too few rural students are completing even basic education. I want to be part of changing that. After I graduate in another two years, I

would like to return to my rural community to teach and inspire my students to reach for their dreams.



The Thurston-Santo Tomás Sister County Association is a non-profit community organization founded in 1988. It is entirely volunteer-run and relies on the support of this community to keep this exchange alive.

You are invited to read more about the scholarship program on line at <https://oly-wa.us/tstsca/>

Our infrequent newsletters always include interviews with two or three of the university students. Donate directly through our PayPal link on this site: <https://oly-wa.us/TSTSCA/>.

### How to order your plants

At 5pm on Thursday April 29 we'll launch our online site for purchases through May 1 and May 2. [thurston-santo-tomas-sister-county-organization.square.site/](https://thurston-santo-tomas-sister-county-organization.square.site/)

Email [tstsca@gmail.com](mailto:tstsca@gmail.com) to be placed on the list for an alert when the site goes live. \$30 minimum purchase required: we will complete orders in the sequence received, select our best plants and box them up for free curbside pickup at specific times. You'll also have the option of free delivery if: 1) you make a minimum purchase of \$50 and 2) you live within 5 miles of the Westside. Order early to get the plants you want. Great prices, great gifts, great gardening, great cause!

*Jean Eberhardt has lived in Olympia for 44 years(!) and, after participation in two volunteer construction brigades to Nicaragua, became a founding member of the TSTSCA, committing to this long standing relationship with Santo Tomás in 1989.*

## Binding contract

From page 7

*The choices are in our hands, so we hope you'll be able to make the right one. (signed by 30 students)*

An individual who has learned from experience. *You must call for an Environmental Impact study on this development BEFORE an agreement is made, so that we avoid what the Supreme Court has forcefully rejected as*

*"a dangerous incrementalism where the obligation to decide is postponed successively while project momentum builds. Even if adverse environmental effects are discovered later, the inertia generated by the initial government decisions (made without environmental impact statements) may carry the project forward regardless. When government decisions may have such snowballing effect, decision makers need to be apprised of the environmental consequences before the project picks up momentum, not after."*

Hearing from Tim Smith [planning staff] that the land has indeed been sold to the development group speaks directly to this effect. Would the development corporation buy that property if they didn't believe the City was going to give them a green light?

**Proponents questioned no element of the project but saw it as all benefit.**

One business owner summed up everyone: Let's not squander this once-in-a-generation opportu-

nity for much-needed economic development, market rate housing, environmental restoration and new public access and amenities, injecting new life into the West Bay neighborhood and hopefully leading to additional improvements along the water front.

*Bethany Weidner is a former policy analyst. She serves as volunteer editor of Works in Progress.*

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# A victory for railroad workers and the public

Like most private corporations, railroad companies are continuously trying to do the same work with fewer employees. In the case of freight trains, the goal has been to get down to a single crew member running an entire train. Automation can take care of the rest.

The goal would have been met, if a three judge panel had not ruled against an order issued by a Donald Trump appointee to cancel state laws mandating two-person crews and at the same time authorizing one-person crews nationwide. In February, the judges ruled in favor of a challenge to the order by Washington, Nevada and California along with railroad workers' unions. (Washington and several other states have laws requiring two crew members.)

The judges said that the Trump Administration failed to provide any factual basis for their order, instead offering “an economic rationale” in lieu of safety considerations that are the main concern of the Federal Railroad Administration.

Trump's order was also in violation of administrative laws that require an opportunity for public comment – but the judges were able to take into account comments submitted in 2016 in response to an Obama Administration proposed ruling on the same issue. There were 1,545 comments supporting multiple-crew rules – out of a total of 1600 total comments. Sometimes comments make a difference.

In Washington, railway unions work under a contract with BNSF that requires 2-person crews, which the union says are essential to operational and community safety. Union leaders were pleased with the ruling, and continued to assert that “having two sets of eyes and two people working in concert together with any improvements in technology will be the best way to serve public safety...”

### A “self-regulated” industry

The railroad industry is largely “self-regulated” which means that

there is no outside agency that monitors safety or anything else, including collecting accident data. Recently the Railroad Workers United (RWU) decided to prepare an annual list of “major” derailments on Class One railroads—not including passenger trains.

### The total in 2019 was nearly one per week. 2020 was only slightly better.

Those who work directly on railroads attribute some of the cause to “PSR” which stands for Precision Scheduled Railroading. This allows companies to extract more profit by running longer trains, working fewer people longer and fewer assets harder.

### 2020 Major Derailments

UP (Union Pacific Railroad)—Polk County, Iowa 12/25. 2 derailed tank cars leak octane.

UP—Lee County, Illinois 12/24. 39 cars derail carrying freight.

BNSF(Burlington Northern/San Francisco Railway)—Yakima County, WA 12/23. 3 engines, 7 cars derail after semi truck crash

NS (Norfolk Southern Railway)—County line road, Indiana 12/23. 20 train cars carrying 132 cars, 2 locomotives, and containing hazardous waste.

BNSF—Custer, Washington 12/22. A train derails, catches fire, leaks crude oil, residents evacuated.

NS—Cleveland, Ohio 12/4. 10 train

cars derail, possibly due to snow.

NS—Jones County, Mississippi 12/2. Several train cars carrying motor vehicles, acetone, and polyvinyl derail, blocking traffic. No injuries.

BNSF—Vado, New Mexico 12/2. 12 empty rail cars and 2 locomotives derail. The engineer and conductor are injured.

NS—Amherst Township, Ohio 12/1. 5 train cars carrying grain derailed.

UP—Highway 99, northern California 11/23. At least 6 cars derail. Tankers carrying hazardous materials spill/are at risk of spillage.

NS—Wayne Township, Ohio 11/24.15 cars derail, there are no injuries.

CSX(Chessie-Seaboard Consolidated)—Baltimore, Maryland 11/23. 21 cars derail, no injuries.

NS—Atlanta, Georgia 11/15. 1 locomotive and 6 rail cars derail. There is a minor diesel leak from the locomotive. A small fire is reported, and power lines are downed. Only one injury.

NS—Roanoke County, Virginia 10/30. A bridge collapses causing 22 rail cars carrying coal to fall in and contaminate Roanoke River with 2000 pounds of coal. No injuries.

KCS (Kansas City Southern Railway)—Mauriceville, Texas 10/29. A 25 car train derails, leaking petroleum from 4 tankers, and a corro-

sive product from another. Power is cut and the area is evacuated.

CSX—Atlanta, Georgia 10/11. 38 cars derail, causing a fire and 2 injuries, hazardous materials spill.

NS—Ferguson, Missouri 9/25. 6 out of 125 cars derail.

CN (Canadian National Railway)—Hope, British Columbia 9/14. 60 cars carrying potash derail and 20 spill contents.

CSX—Charleston, South Carolina 9/7. 9 empty steel cars derail.

UP—North Platte, Nebraska 8/23. 38 cars derail.

UP—Laramie, Wyoming 8/23. 57 cars carrying corn derail.

UP—Phoenix, Arizona 7/29. Partial bridge collapse after 10 cars derail and catch fire. .

NS—Tuscaloosa, Alabama 7/18. 17 cars derail, causing a vegetable oil spill.

UP—Sheboygan County, Wisconsin—7/6. 13 cars derail, spill coal into a river, block intersections.

BNSF—Winslow, New Mexico 7/6. 29 cars derail.

UP—Phoenix, Arizona 6/29. A train derails and a diesel leak occurs, starting a fire.

UP—Temp Town, Arizona 6/26. 12 cars derail.

BNSF—Wynnewood, Oklahoma 6/13. 11 cars derail, 2 of which leak hazardous materials. Nearby residents are evacuated.

UP—Sweetwater County, Wyoming 6/13. 30 cars derail, and 10 catch fire.

NS—Linden, Virginia 5/29. 14 cars and 5 locomotives derail.

B&P—East Aurora, New York 5/18. 15 empty railcars, two loaded ones, and locomotives derail.

UP—Campbell, Missouri 5/4. 25 cars derail. No spillage or injuries reported.

CSX—Tiffin, Ohio 3/12. One locomotive and 8 cars derail.

CN—Prince George, British Columbia 3/6. 27 cars go off the tracks and a small spillage occurs. An elementary school nearby evacuates.

CN—Toronto, Ontario 2/28. 30 cars derail and crude oil spills..

CSX—East Chicago, Indiana 2/26. 18 tank cars derail, no oil is spilled.

CSX—Draffin, Kentucky 2/13. Mudslide pushes many cars and 2 locomotives into a river. The cars catch fire, and 2 people rescued from the river.

NS—Columbia, South Carolina 2/8. 3 locomotives and 8 rail cars derail.

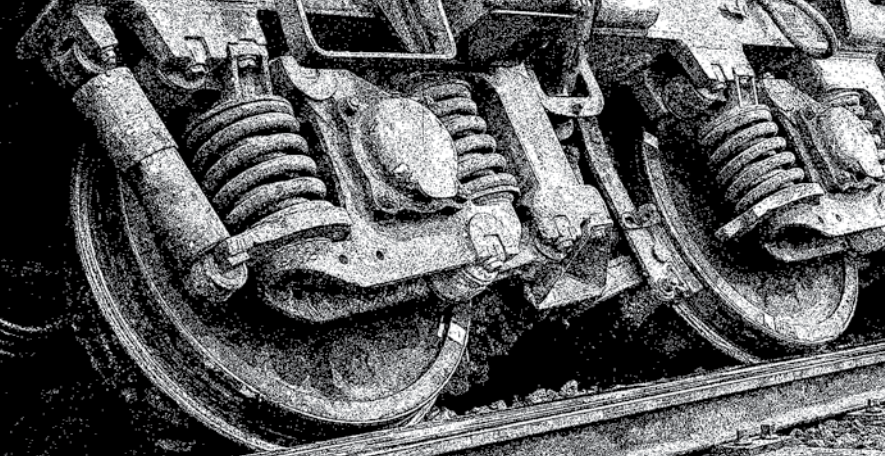
CP (Canadian Pacific Railway)—Guernsey, Saskatchewan 2/6. 34 cars derail and catch fire, leaking crude oil.

NS—Petal, Mississippi 1/24. 18 cars derail, and ethanol leaks, causing the evacuation of nearby areas.

UP—Knapp, Wisconsin 1/12. 38 cars derail out of 192. No injuries or spillages occur.

CP—LeClaire, Iowa 1/3. 12 cars derail, and a chemical leak is detected.

Lucy Hemenway prepared this list from data collected by the Railroad Workers' United website.RWU is at [www.railroadworkersunited.org](http://www.railroadworkersunited.org)



## Red Lion

From page 1

First Degree Burglary in Washington is a Class A Felony that carries a lengthy prison sentence. In this case it does not accurately describe what happened during the event, but instead serves as a political deterrent. Everyone involved in the action entered the Inn legally, demonstrated only peaceful intent, and exercised their right to possess survival tools as they would any other belonging.

### The disproportionate response to leftists, in contrast to right-wing violence

At a City Council meeting, Mayor Selby called the people involved in the incident “domestic terrorists” echoing previous comments she has made about progressive social activists.

Right-wing militia members shot two antifascist community defenders in December at anti-democracy “Stop the Steal” rallies. In January, a Trump-supporting mob broke through the gates protecting the Governor's Mansion and no immediate arrests were made.

Judge Murphy (one of two judges assigned to the Red Lion trials) set bail for Chris Guenzler at \$50,000 for shooting into a crowd of protesters and attacking someone with his gun in a Dec 5 rally at the Capitol. Thurston County declined to press charges against Forest Machala, a King County resident who traveled to Olympia for a Proud Boy-led rally on Dec 12. Machala shot a young counter-protester and was jailed only briefly.

### Where do we go from here?

The City claims that they lead the way on the response to homelessness. This is contradicted by a census of the homeless population, conducted by Thurston County Public Health and Social Services on the evening of January 21, 2021. They compiled a list showing that half of the nearly 1,000 homeless residents are unsheltered, and that since the 2019 survey, the number of unsheltered folks has increased from 49 percent to 54 percent.

If City officials have any concern for the homeless people involved in the incident, they would urge the county to drop the charges and focus on finding options and partnerships to provide housing through FEMA funding.

Trial dates for the Red Lion 7 are coming but the City continues to push things out. Some members of City Council suggested that the people affected by the police response should be let off without charges. However they have done nothing to convince the Thurston County Superior Court judges James Dixon and Carol Murphy, to that effect.

### Housing as a human right

There are a myriad of cities, Minneapolis, Austin, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Vancouver BC, that have adopted progressive measures to dramatically increase housing for people who did not want to live outside in camps. Led by nonprofits and activists (especially supporters in the Movement for Black Lives), there is a large movement for Housing as a Human Right.

*Daniel Mootz is a WIP contributor and advocate for equity. Miguel Louis is a journalist, writing for the Cooper Point Journal, an activist, and student of political economy, based out of Olympia. They have reported on protests and the Movement for Black Lives since the death of George Floyd.*



# Can we heed the lessons of the past?

## A new nuclear arms race is brewing

Leonard Eiger

On March 16 the United Kingdom that it will increase the limit on its nuclear arsenal for the first time in decades. Instead of maintaining a cap of 180 warheads (as it had previously stated), the UK will increase its stockpile cap to 260 warheads—a 40% increase. The UK will also broaden the role of nuclear weapons to include the possible use of nuclear weapons to address emerging technologies (cyber attacks). This is shocking and unacceptable! Indeed, it seems the British Empire is flexing its imperial muscles as it breaks away from the rest of Europe.

The announcement comes at a precarious time. A new nuclear arms race is brewing. The US and Russia, the two largest nuclear powers (with some 93 percent of global nuclear warheads) are failing to lead the world away from reliance on nuclear weapons, and other nations are following their lead. At a time when most nations are calling for an end to nuclear weapons (UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons), rather than setting a positive example and supporting the treaty, the UK is instead fanning the flames of proliferation. It is getting loads of help along the way.

Looking into the future, both the US and UK are engaged in programs to build the next generation of ballistic missile submarines to replace their current fleets. New subs will incorporate the US-built Common Missile Compartment. There has been talk about a replacement missile for the D5. A new warhead called the W93 is planned, and the British government is engaged in extensive lobbying for it.

### Can we learn the lessons of the past?

Isn't it time to end the special UK-US nuclear relationship? Isn't it time to re-think "deterrence" the-

ory and "national security"? Isn't it time to recognize that so long as nuclear weapons exist, humanity teeters on the brink of disaster?

And speaking of history, we need to learn the lessons of the past. We have come close to the nuclear precipice far too many times, and the (Doomsday) clock is still ticking. We can't stop the Clock until we abolish nuclear weapons. Empires come and empires go, yet humanity has only one chance. As for the US and UK, it is time for citizens of both nations to come together to pressure our governments to end the special nuclear relationship, and sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, showing real leadership towards a world free of the threat of nuclear annihilation.

*Leonard Eiger coordinates the Puget Sound Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, among other things. This is an excerpt from his full article on US-UK nuclear collusion available here: [www.gzcenter.org/2021/03/22/end-us-uk-nuclear-collusion/](http://www.gzcenter.org/2021/03/22/end-us-uk-nuclear-collusion/)*

## Nuclear submarine

From page 1

times when America doubted itself, but those times are past."

### An emerging controversy

Immediately, there was a disconnect between those who saw the USS Olympia and its crew as a business opportunity and a mainstay of summer patriotic celebrations; and those who saw it as a vexing community intersection with the global arms race. The disconnect grew with each visit of the submarine.

In 1986, with its second appearance in town, there was some outrage over the way the Chamber handled visits to the submarine. "My family and I stood in the cold... four hours to get close enough to actually think we might get to go aboard," complained one Olympian, only to see a line of privileged "ticket holders" squeeze past the patient public.

Protestors also showed up, focused on the dangers of nuclear warfare and the nuclear-fueled submarines. Opponents, including Port Commissioner Sam Bradley, demanded a community forum. They suggested the possibility of requesting that the City's name be removed from the vessel.

### Symbols to be proud of, or tourists spending money

With the submarine's third visit in 1994, protestors including local peace activist Glen Anderson continued to organize. Librarian Becky Liebman declared, "We need other symbols to be proud of... We need a symbol that shows us that we can turn around the lack of hope that many people have about the future."

Bob Ziegler used the opportunity to draw a line between downtown vacancy problems and military

spending. He suggested that the local economy suffered more from federal budget priorities like a \$700 million nuclear sub, than from the local optics of the Bread & Roses soup kitchen.

Another Olympian, Melinda Howard, pointed out that while she respected the men who served on the submarine, the whole concept of military honor and sacrifice was lost when the push of a button took away the soldier's ability to make their own choice. She regretted the attitude of the head of the Chamber of Commerce's USS Olympia Committee, who "made light of" the crew and their solemn mission, describing them as "nice and clean. They'll come in and spend their money and leave."

### Briefly, a nuclear-free zone

The USS Olympia became part of a debate starting in 2000 over whether Olympia should become a nuclear-free zone. The Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace pressed the Port and other officials to bring an end to visits by the warship, especially as it became engaged in Iraq. "Olympia should not be celebrating a war machine," argued Lawrence Mosqueda.

In 2005, the City Council agreed with this sentiment and declared the city a nuclear free zone. Three years later, new Councilmembers repealed the zone designation. Visits by the USS Olympia's crew had become enmeshed in the local culture of Lakefair, the Chamber of Commerce and the Olympia Yacht Club.

### Is a nuclear submarine part of Olympia's "maritime history?"

Commissioner Zita has recommended bringing Veterans for Peace and the Fellowship of Rec-

onciliation on board to discuss the USS Olympia artifacts. The history of the submarine in the community shows that its legacy is not a simple one.

Should the remains of the USS Olympia stand somewhere on the shoreline of Olympia? A mothballed navy fleet floated in Budd Inlet for almost 30 years as a remnant of World War II, but nobody mourns its absence.

Any display of military artifacts must acknowledge historical realities. What is the nature of the "long partnership" with the submarine that Councilman Cooper seeks to memorialize? Is it more than a name and a public relations opportunity? Does it have anything to do with Olympia's ongoing argument about American ways of war?

If the rudder and anchor were displayed at a federal site it would be expected to incorporate and explain the object's multiple meanings. For instance, our State is prepared at last to set aside Marcus Whitman and celebrate the legacy of Billy Frank, Jr.

It is hard to imagine a cast-off and odd-looking anchor or mysterious rudder piece exciting patriotic feeling, or inspiring the tourist magic of a real nuclear submarine and an actual Navy crew. Once the 40,000 pounds of metal arrive, possibly this month, Olympians will be forced to find meaning in it. They will argue about patriotism and imperialism once again. The memory pieces will have a greater and more lasting presence than the ships themselves ever did.

### A proper disposition of USS Olympia's dismembered parts

Meanwhile, a true resting place for the USS Olympia is in eastern

Washington at the Hanford nuclear site's Trench 94. It would join over 100 defueled submarine reactor cores watched over by Russian satellites—as we watch theirs, and the Cold War continues. Historians of the future will not heed silver sets and stray rudders, but they shall surely study Hanford to ponder the 20th century ancients who conceived this solemn and toxic monument to the breathtaking human capacity for self-destruction.

*Helen Wheatley is a former college teacher with a Ph.D. in world environmental history from Johns Hopkins University. She is a long-time Port watcher and was a candidate for Port Commissioner in 2019.*

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PERSPECTIVE

This dam idea isn't new

Flooding in the Chehalis River Basin

Lee First

Although I've lived and worked in the Chehalis Basin for fifteen years, I did not experience the 2007 and 2009 floods first hand. But I vividly remember the footage of catastrophic property damage: dead cattle and images of people and their families devastated by the floods.

Many people in Western Washington were affected by the cascading impacts of those events. A decade after the tragedy, we are still searching for a solution that will make sure the same thing doesn't happen again.

Reduce flooding around the Twin Cities

Talk of a new dam on the Chehalis River has been around since the 1980s when it was proposed as a way to control flooding and create a recreational destination above Pe Ell. Since then it has taken many forms but the general idea is always the same: hold back water to reduce flooding around the Twin Cities. The idea is that this would limit damage and increase opportunities for development. Unfortunately, the newest dam proposal won't produce these results.

There has been a lot of information published about the dam—most of it true and some of it not. This article is meant to lay out the facts about the dam and its ability to reduce flood risk in our communities. Let's begin with the first and most widely-reported claim: the dam will provide substantial flood protection throughout the whole basin.

Not all flooding is alike

There are a few types of flooding that happen along the Chehalis River. Minor and moderate flooding happens every winter, when streams and rivers fill to their banks and sometimes spill over creating shallow pools and soggy fields. This type of flooding is important in sustaining fish and wildlife in the basin.

Then there is major and catastrophic flooding, which happens about every seven years or more when the main stem of the Chehalis River exceeds 38,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) at Grand Mound. This is the type of flooding that forces evacuations, can overtop roads, damage property and in the worst circumstances, result in the loss of life. The most recent events happened in 1990, 1996, 2007 and 2009 and were well over

38,000 cfs. While these types of floods are severe, they are hardly new.

Both Chehalis and Cowlitz history speak of great floods in the basin. The Indigenous names for many places—like the modern-day Black River, which literally means “becomes a lake”—indicate the long history and understand-



ing of these natural flood events. Early settlers were warned by their tribal neighbors to build on the hills outside of the lowland valleys, which they knew regularly filled from valley wall to valley wall. And early settlers heeded those warnings, building on high ground and also witnessing the frequent floods. In the book Centralia, The First Fifty Years, 1845-1900 by H. Smith, one group of settlers described “a sea of water – a mile to dry land in all directions” just south of Centralia.

A dam that targets the Centralia and Chehalis area

The purpose of the proposed dam is to reduce flooding during major or catastrophic events on the main stem of the Chehalis River around Chehalis and Centralia—not the entire basin. It does relatively little to reduce flood damage from moderate or large floods in the Chehalis, and nothing to address floods of other streams and rivers such as those that occurred in the Newaukum and Skookumchuck in 2009. Storms this January caused the Chehalis River to crest at just over 30,000 cfs. A new dam would not have reduced the damage or erosion that occurred.

Heavier winter rains are becoming more frequent, with four major catastrophic floods in 20 years.

Projections from the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group confirm increased flooding on the Chehalis. The State Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the new dam projected a 26 percent increase in flooding by 2080. More recent estimates show that this was conservative; flow increases may actually be as high as 50 percent.

A recent letter to the Chronicle makes a blatantly false claim: “those downstream can be at ease knowing the dam will help control flooding in the whole Chehalis watershed to Aberdeen.” Reductions in flood levels will have almost no effect downstream of Centralia, much less Aberdeen. According to the SEIS, even with a dam, more than 56 percent of structures

inundated during major and catastrophic flooding events will still be inundated. “Areas where the [dam] reduces flooding may still be flooded in larger floods like the 2007 flood.”

Misplaced development puts families in danger

Other recent articles and studies claim that the dam will reduce flooding so significantly that new development can occur in previously flooded areas. This is perhaps the most dangerous claim that has emerged. It is a pattern that has repeated itself for over a century across the county—usually with devastating consequences.

Large infrastructure projects like levees or dams are constructed with hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. Flood risk is reduced just long enough for people to move in and develop the floodplain. Next, the infrastructure either fails or cannot keep up with a changing environment—the people who moved in pay the price. Their families are in harm's way. Insurance rates skyrocket while homes and businesses lose value, making it almost impossible to leave.

This is a common trend and one that is entirely preventable, yet Lewis County has not

adopted higher floodplain management standards, using FEMA flood maps that were developed in 2010. Relying on old and inaccurate flood maps has increased the flood risk for our community, all for short-term economic gain.

Long-term solutions that benefit communities

A dam is not the best option to limit flood damage. The only way to reduce long-term flood damage is to work with communities to relocate the highest-risk homes and businesses out of flood-prone areas and prevent future development from making the situation worse. If this approach were adopted it would result in massive economic opportunities for our communities in a way that is sustainable given predicted changes in the climate.

We can create a different future for ourselves—one that invests our tax dollars back in our communities to reduce local flood risk and create high-paying local jobs. We can create new business districts and development opportunities on high ground. Building in areas safe from flooding will provide long-term economic growth for our communities.

Today the best thing to do is acknowledge the problem and plan for it by improving local defenses. This includes helping those prepared to move to high ground. It means discouraging development in flood-prone areas. Our kids and grandkids shouldn't be dealing with this issue in the future, short-sighted solutions that benefit the few at the expense of the many will make the situation worse. Thinking holistically about this issue will enable us to identify long-term basin solutions that are resilient and adaptable. This is what is needed to ensure the long-term prosperity of our communities.

Lee First lives in Grays Harbor County and is a Twin Harbors Waterkeeper.

Chehalis: A Watershed Moment

This 60-minute documentary tells the story of how climate change and a legacy of human impact is affecting Washington's Chehalis River and the people living in the watershed. Told by the people grappling with decisions that will affect the fate of the river, its salmon and their communities, the film explores the intersection of social, cultural, economic and environmental values that are increasingly being defined by a new climate reality. Available on Amazon Prime.

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# There’s a right track and a wrong track for the future of Washington state rail

Thomas White and Bill Moyer

Washington state has two potential tracks toward a 21st century rail future, with starkly different outcomes.

One provides higher speed, climate-friendly passenger service linking as many as 13 communities on the Cascadia corridor, with increased capacity for freight trains. It has been in development since 1991 and some elements have already been completed. It would provide clean, electrified Amtrak Cascades passenger service at up to 110mph along existing lines. The phased effort would rapidly create jobs, upgrade service and cut carbon pollution. It could be completed in a decade.

Tragically, this shovel-ready plan is being ignored while another flashy vision grabs the spotlight. That is the “ultra-high-speed rail” (UHSR) project proposed by Washington State Governor Jay Inslee’s administration and developed by WSP, a giant engineering firm. It offers a maximum of five stops along the route.

o facilitate speeds up to 220mph, it would require an entirely new passenger-only corridor acquired through costly land acquisitions and the controversial use of eminent domain, with many environmental challenges. While science tells us we need to dramatically cut carbon pollution this decade, UHSR would take many years before the first track is put on the ground and decades more to completion — if it happens at all.

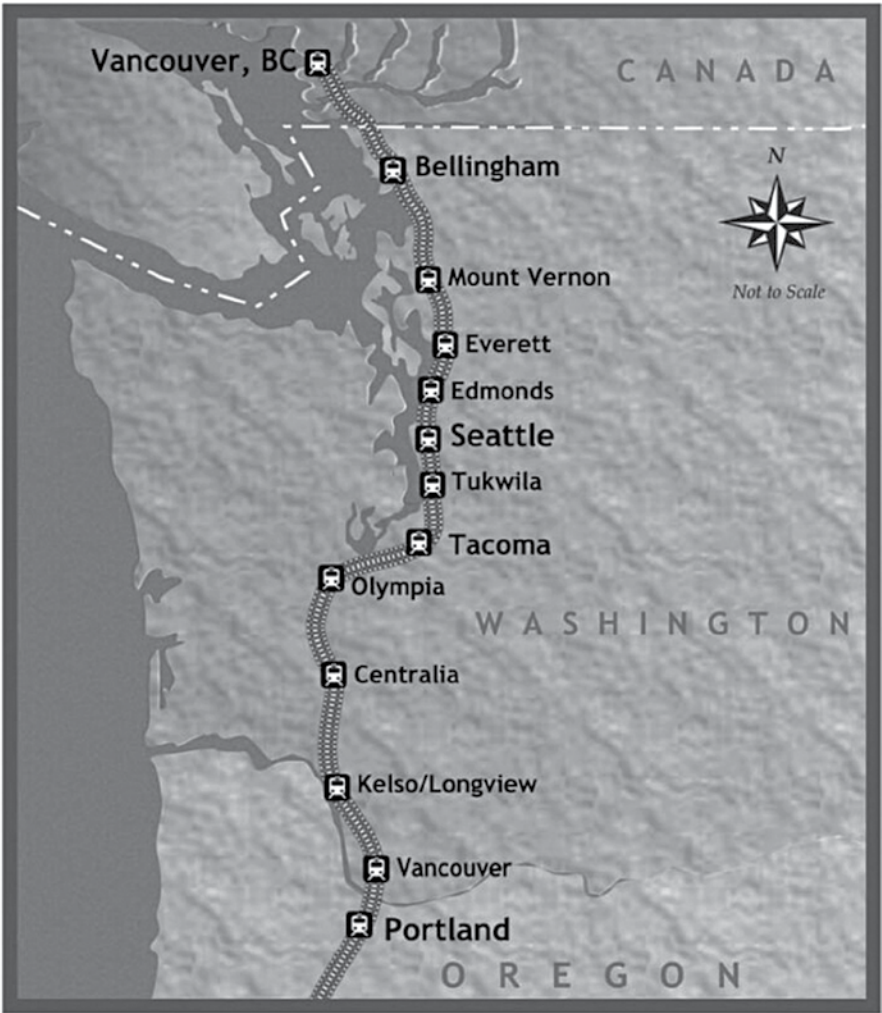
The Washington State Long-Range Plan for Amtrak Cascades is a careful and detailed study done by the state beginning in 1991 and updated through 2006. Set out in six phases, the plan’s climate, service and job creation benefits would begin to be realized in the first few years. Thomas White, one of the authors of this essay, played a key role in the studies. Based on the plan, the current cost of upgrades would be \$8.4 billion. While the plan did not include line electrification, we estimate that would add another \$800 million for a total cost of \$9.2 billion.

The UHSR line would cost an estimated at \$24-\$42 billion according to the 2019 study by WSP jointly supported by the state and Microsoft, Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation Business Case Analysis. The WSP study projects a 20-year path to completion. But the experience of California UHSR should give pause. An original estimate of \$33 billion has ballooned to \$80 billion and will likely rise higher. California began serious planning for its UHSR around 1990, around where Washington is today, and because of many delays will not complete its LA-Bay Area line until at least 2033, and probably later, a 40-year-plus stretch.

UHSR suffers from the law of diminishing returns. All those extra billions and decades would buy an hour or less in legs between major cities. The 110mph option would link Seattle to the other two cities in around 2-1/2 hours. The 220mph option would move from Seattle to Portland in 1-1/2 hours and to Vancouver in 1-3/4 hours. Though UHSR top speeds are double, they can only be achieved on part of the line. Annual ridership of around

three million is projected for both, but the 110mph option would provide that at substantially lower costs and far sooner. Both offer down-town-to-downtown service and are highly competitive with air travel, which requires trips to airports and

begin planning UHSR implementation. Unfortunately, the governor and regional elites have been seduced by the glamorous bullet train vision. It is to be noted that one of Inslee’s advisors is a former WSP government affairs manager,



security checks. Arguably, because more stops would be served, the 110mph option would displace more highway traffic, by far the greater source of climate pollution.

Much of the additional cost and longer timeframe of UHSR come from the need to acquire and build an entirely new right of way with the straight lines and minimal curves required to run trains at up to 220mph. This entails many uncertainties, and as the California experience has demonstrated, substantial legal costs to defend eminent domain acquisitions from unwilling private landowners. Those alone would likely range in the billions. An additional complication would be the need to do extensive environmental review along the new right of way. Putting a new line through Western Washington landscapes would require extensive wetlands mitigation. Legal and environmental challenges would consume years before construction could begin.

An advantage of improving the existing rail corridor over building a new one is that freight can also run on these lines, whereas a UHSR line must be dedicated to the bullet train alone. Freight trains could generally run faster with better roadbeds and more sidings for slower trains. Rail is already at least three times more efficient than truck transportation, so taking freight from highways to rail is vital for reducing carbon pollution. Since trucks cause by far the most damage to highways, moving to rail also saves road maintenance dollars, not to mention improving air and water quality. Electrified freight would amplify the climate benefits, allowing use of low-carbon renewable energy.

Gov. Inslee has asked the Wa State Legislature for \$3.25 million to

which may have contributed to the advancement of this deeply flawed vision.

Because of the many difficulties and high costs that will almost certainly befall it, the UHSR project is destined to squander public enthusiasm for rail, instead of building confidence for rail as a climate solution. UHSR is already well on its way toward making rail another wedge issue to be framed as “by metropolitan elites, for metropolitan elites.”

This would be a tragic outcome, when rail-based solutions that utilize our most energy-and-cost-efficient form of ground transportation offer the opportunity to transcend partisanship and solve problems together. Improved freight service and more stops in smaller communities are attractive in ways that a bullet train serving primarily metropolitan passengers is not.

In any event, the region will need federal dollars to accomplish any

vision for more rapid rail service. It is expected that rail funding will increase under Joe Biden, an ardent Amtrak supporter and user. Some might argue, why set one pathway against another? Can't we both improve the Amtrak Cascades and move toward a dedicated UHSR line? If the UHSR vision were not sucking oxygen and focus from the Amtrak Cascades plan, they might have an argument.

But the facts are that regions across the country will line up for federal dollars. California's HSR line is far short of the funding needed for completion, and it has a powerful congressional delegation and a vice president. The Washington state UHSR is nowhere near shovel-ready. In contrast, the Amtrak Cascades long-range plan provides multiple opportunities for funding, even in such a competitive environment. It already drew \$800 million into the region under the 2009 stimulus.

The state and the region should set aside the bright shiny object that is UHSR for now, and prioritize a practical proposal to move forward with the Amtrak Cascades long-range plan. It will create jobs, provide improved service and reduce climate pollution far faster.

*Thomas White is a veteran rail industry consultant. Bill Moyer is executive director of Backbone Campaign, co-author of Solutionary Rail, See [www.solutionaryrail.org](http://www.solutionaryrail.org) and [www.climaterailalliance.or](http://www.climaterailalliance.or)*

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# Community Spotlight



## WA Poor Peoples’ Campaign Open House

Monday, April 5, 7 - 8 pm.

Attend this monthly gathering to receive statewide and national Poor People's Campaign updates, as well as make your voice heard! [https://www.facebook.com/events/274070820532301/?event\\_time\\_id=274070830532300](https://www.facebook.com/events/274070820532301/?event_time_id=274070830532300)

## Lacey South Sound Chamber Military Affairs Meeting

Tuesday, April 6, 8:00 am  
Hawks Prairie Restaurant

We work to enhance communications and business opportunities between the Thurston County business community and local military installations and units. Representatives from various units on JBLM, the National Guard and Reserve Forces provide an update on their ongoing activities and current events. An opportunity to develop relationships with our local military individuals and be aware of their activities.

## South Sound Food System Network (SSFSN)

Apr 7 @ 9:30 am – 11:30 am

SSFSN is an amalgam of three coalitions – Thurston Asset Building Coalition Food Hub, Thurston Thrive Food Action Team and Thurston Food System Council – that formed to promote slightly different causes within the food system, but that, when combined, can develop the most effective mutually beneficial collaborative yet. The SSFSN is a voluntary coalition of organizations and individuals. No formal membership application required. More info: Thurston Asset Building Coalition Food Hub <http://thurstonabc.org/hubs/food/>.



## Inter-Gay-lactic night of fun and frivolity

Saturday, April 10, 7 - 8 pm, Pre-show at 6:30

### Pizza Klatch Annual Gayla and fundraiser gone virtual

With Gayle Evans, local astronomer with their own comedy alien abduction tale. Also music with guests Be Steadwell, SassyBlack and the Queen of Bounce herself, Big Freedra. Pizza Klatch is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to “foster resilience in LGBTQ+ youth and create a safe and positive school experience through support, education and empowerment.” Tickets to this year's A Slice of the Good Life: The 7th Annual Pizza Klatch Gayla are available now at <https://app.mobile-cause.com/form/cHWKIQ?vid=hpg1g>. They have several ticket options, including ones that come with a party pack delivered to your door! More details at Thurston Talk. Photo courtesy of Pizza Klatch



## The Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

Meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month. 5:00 pm through Zoom. Contact Glen Anderson (360) 491-9093 [glenanderson@integra.net](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net) in advance for the zoom link and the agenda

## Purple Martin Monitoring Training

Wednesday, April 14, 5 pm

Might you be interested in tracking the nesting habits of the beautiful purple martin? Stream Team is looking for volunteers to monitor the nest boxes at East Bay in downtown Olympia from April to September. Attend a short online training on monitoring basics and bird identification. Register at <https://streamteam.info/>



## Healing destructive divisions; respecting differences; finding common ground

Western WA 23rd Annual Spring Assembly

Saturday, April 17, 9 am-1:30 pm, videoconference

Throughout our country, many experience sharp divisions and frequent disrespect from and toward people of differing perspectives and backgrounds, from political leaders to everyday folks. What can people steeped in the nonviolent tradition, and deeply concerned about this schism, do to help bridge the communication gap and find some common ground? Please join us as we focus on successful strategies and models of what we as individuals, and within our groups can learn. Things that might provide us additional competence and confidence to move toward this communal healing. Western Washington FOR - [www.for.org/calendar](http://www.for.org/calendar) for more info and Zoom contact.



## Weekly Peace Vigils - Olympia & Centralia

Fridays: Percival Landing, 4:30 - 6 pm, Olympia

Meet at NW Corner of 4th and Water Streets, downtown. Please join Olympia FOR for whatever length of time you can. We provide plenty of signs. Wear a facemask and stand at least 6 feet apart. [glenanderson@integra.net](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net)

Saturdays: Washington Park, Noon-1pm, Centralia

Meet at Locust & Pearl in Centralia. Lewis County “Fire Mountain” FOR chapter. Info: Larry Kerschner: [peacepoet@protonmail.com](mailto:peacepoet@protonmail.com)

## The Olympia Free Clinic Trans and Nonbinary Gender Health Clinic

First Monday of every month, from 5 – 8 pm.

At the Gender Health Clinic, you will find a comfortable environment where you can get connected with all kinds of trans- and non-binary-friendly health and social services. At your appointment you can connect with medical providers specialized in trans and non-binary health. Some services are available online and without an appointment! During each month's Gender Health Clinic you can connect virtually with various practitioners including for legal help. <https://zoom.us/j/96837287143>

[https://www.facebook.com/events/1652566801572178/?event\\_time\\_id=1652566838238841](https://www.facebook.com/events/1652566801572178/?event_time_id=1652566838238841). Medical & Mental Health Services are by appointment only. To make an appointment, call 360-890-4074 x3 or email [clinic@theolympiafreeclinic.org](mailto:clinic@theolympiafreeclinic.org)

## Solarize Thurston - warm your home with the sun (even in the PNW)

Workshop dates: April 3 at 11 am and 6 pm. April 14 at 6 pm. May 15 at 11 am and 6 pm.

Now through September 1, Thurston County residents and businesses can access solar at prices more than 25% below market rates, thanks to the solar group-purchasing program, Solarize Thurston.

This partnership of Olympia Community Solar and CapStone Solar will support 50 Thurston County homes and businesses to install clean energy via a group purchasing model saves local installers time and energy, and allows them to purchase equipment in bulk. Limited time reduced financing rates are also available. By participating in the program, you also contribute to low-income solar access: for every 50 kilowatts installed we donate solar capacity to low-income families.



Call for a free site assessment; get a group purchasing discount; save money every month on your electric bill; reduce pollution; qualify for a 26% federal tax rebate. Contact [SolarizeThurston.org](http://SolarizeThurston.org) and sign up for a free public workshop or site assessment.

## Working with Local Government

Wednesday, April 28, 6:30 pm,  
League of Women Voters

How can you effectively voice your opinion about Thurston County's handling of new drug possession rules, Lacey's response to its drinking water shortage, Tumwater's conversion of woodlands to warehouses, Olympia's plans for giant shoreline developments or other hometown issues? The League of Women Voters is offering the opportunity for you to hear directly from your representatives as they respond to questions about local planning, policies, and effective advocacy. Save-the-Date and watch for more information about this virtual event.



## Thurston Conservation District

One way that Thurston CD serves the community is to offset the high costs of some equipment with a rental program. They rent out specific equipment not available from another source in the community. For example, you can rent a shoulder-mounted light weight seed spreader suitable for lawns. The Weed Wrench is an easy-to-use tool for removing unwanted woody plants on your property. There are more useful items for a reasonable fee, rented on a one-week basis. Learn more and see what's for rent: Leah Kellog, Admin Asst. [tcadmin@thurstoncd.com](mailto:tcadmin@thurstoncd.com) or call (360) 754-3588 ext. 100

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# WHERE YOUR INCOME TAX MONEY REALLY GOES

U.S. FEDERAL BUDGET 2022 FISCAL YEAR

TOTAL OUTLAYS  
(FY 2022 FEDERAL FUNDS)

\$3,543 BILLION

MILITARY: 48% AND \$1,704 BILLION

**\$739 BILLION**

- Veterans' Benefits \$263 billion
- Interest on national debt \$476 billion (80% est. to be created by military spending)

21%  
PAST MILITARY

27%  
CURRENT MILITARY

**\$965 BILLION**

**Total Outlays DoD \$743 billion:**

- Military Personnel \$177 billion
- Operation & Maint. \$301 billion
- Procurement \$145 billion
- Research & Dev. \$105 billion
- Construction \$12 billion
- Family Housing \$1.5 billion
- Rev Fund & Adj. \$1.5 billion

**Non-DoD Military Spending\*:**

- Retiree Pay/Healthcare \$98 billion
- DoE nuke weapons/clean-up \$28 billion
- NASA (50%) \$12 billion
- Internl. Security Asst. \$13 billion
- Homeland Secur. (military) \$40 billion
- State Dept. (partial) \$8 billion
- Justice/FBI military \$12 billion
- Treas/Sec Serv/other \$11 billion

\*Based on coding and the military nature of activities, such as armed border patrol, DoD space flights, etc.

**\$198 BILLION**

- Treasury incl. 20% interest on debt (\$19 B)
- Government personnel
- Justice Dept.
- State Dept. (partial)
- Homeland Sec. (partial)
- Int. Sec. Assist. (partial)
- Judicial
- Legislative

6% GENERAL GOVERNMENT

43%  
HUMAN RESOURCES

**\$116 BILLION**

- Agriculture
- Interior
- Transportation
- Homeland Sec. (partial)
- HUD (partial)
- Commerce
- Energy (non-military)
- NASA (50%)
- Environmental Protection
- Nat. Science Fdn.
- Army Corps Engineers
- FCC and other

**\$1,525 BILLION**

- Health & Human Services
- Soc. Sec./Administration
- Education
- Food/Nutrition programs
- HUD
- Labor Dept.
- Earned Inc/Child Credits
- Health Insurance Credits

NON-MILITARY: 52% AND \$1,839 BILLION

## HOW THESE FIGURES WERE DETERMINED

“Current military” includes Dept. of Defense (\$743 billion) and the military portion (\$222 billion) from other departments as noted in current military box above. “Past military” represents veterans’ benefits plus 80% of the interest on the debt.\* For further explanation, please go to warresisters.org. These figures are from the FY2022 column in the *Analytical Perspectives* book of the *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2021*, issued last year, as the new budget with Covid relief has yet to be released this year. The figures are Federal funds, which do not include Trust funds — such as Social Security — that are raised and spent separately from income taxes.

What you pay (or don’t pay) by April 15, 2021, goes to the Federal funds portion of the budget. The government practice of combining Trust and Federal funds began during the Vietnam War, thus making

the human needs portion of the budget seem larger and the military portion smaller.

*\*Analysts differ on how much of the debt stems*

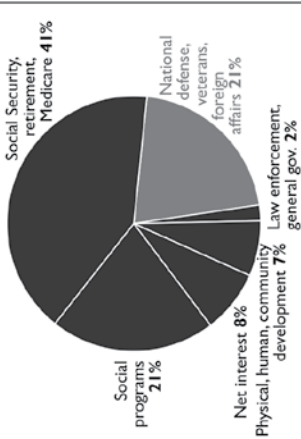
*from the military; other groups estimate 50% to 60%.*

*We use 80% because we believe if there had been no military spending, most of the national debt would have been eliminated.*

## Government Deception

The pie chart (right) is the government view of the budget. This is a distortion of how our income tax dollars are spent because it includes Trust Funds (e.g., Social Security), and most of the past military spending is not distinguished from nonmilitary spending. For a more accurate representation of how your Federal income tax dollar is really spent, see the large graph.

Source: 1040 Instructions 2020  
Federal Outlays for FY 2019



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## THIS ISSUE: Work vs Jobs vs Pay

