

Mutual aid groups build community in Olympia

Everyone has something to contribute;
Everyone has something they need

Sarah H. Keefe

The COVID-19 pandemic response in the US has challenged communities, as local food banks experienced shortages and shelter beds became even more restricted. Confronted by an uncertain and under-resourced governmental response, many communities countered with energized “mutual aid” organizing. People recognized their common need and decided on a strategy of mutual support. In Olympia, at least four mutual aid groups sprung up, each with a somewhat different focus: MAC, MAP, META, BPI.

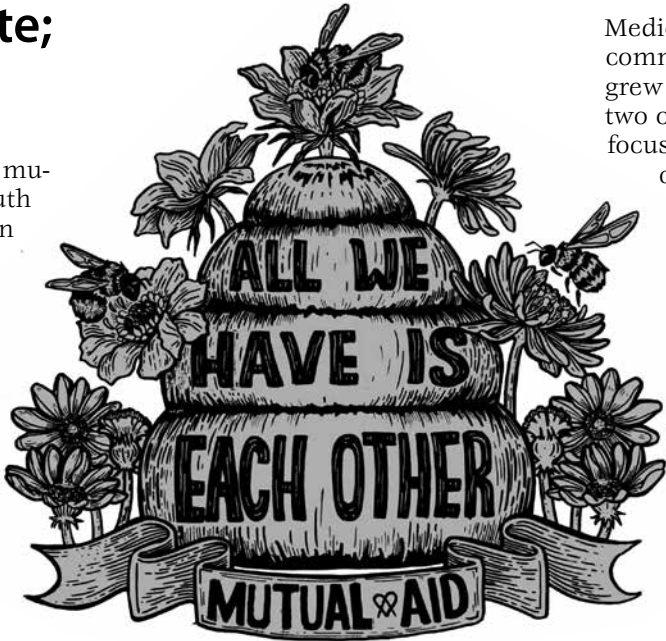
Olympia Mutual Aid Collective (OlyMAC) was started as a Facebook page in March 2020, at the beginning of the stay-at-home orders, by a local teacher. By mid-April, the page had grown to over 3,000 members and now has over 5,000 members. Their goal is to be a bottom up structure of cooperation that meets all expressed needs.

A volunteer with OlyMAC, Audrey Daye, recalls that “in the past year, in addition to the countless asks that have been fulfilled between members on the page itself, we’ve streamed tens of thousands of dollars in direct aid contributions to community members most in need of those funds. Sometimes this aid is in the form of food or Visa cards, to help struggling families get groceries or keep their heat on. Sometimes it’s for things like a refrigerator, or a car battery, or a bus ticket. Sometimes it’s for insulin... It’s everything.”

Another impetus came when Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and organizer Mariame Kaba called a virtual town hall to support organizing in response to COVID-19. Their toolkit shared that mutual aid is about “getting people to come together to meet each other’s needs, recognizing that as humans, our survival is dependent on one another.”

Olympia Black Power Initiative The BPI is a project started by the Olympia Black Panthers. “The Black Power Initiative provides emergency financial support in the form of small, low barrier cash grants to black people in need. It’s an attempt to help alleviate the constant crisis that racism, state and civil violence, and marginalization force black people into. To make this possible we need those in our community with white privilege and financial privilege to step into solidarity with us and radically redistribute your finances.”

Shon Meckfessel echoes that mutual aid efforts have been youth of color-led. These serve as an antidote to liberal charity efforts that often perpetuate existing inequalities, are hierarchical and top-down, versus horizontal and relational. Charity often centers the generosity of the donor and their good will, versus the needs and experience of the person receiving support. “By choosing a name [mutual aid] that focuses on relationship, a reciprocal relationship, between people sharing out resources and people who could use those resources—there is a politics that goes with that, prefiguring equality, an egalitarian society, freely helping each other out because that’s what we do. As opposed to charity and literal saviorism or “helping hands” liberalism.”



Mutual Aid Partners (OlyMAP) OlyMAP grew out of work by Just Housing in response to downtown houseless camp sweeps back in 2018 and 2019. They started Mutual Aid Mondays along with Olympia Assembly and Solidarity Network, and Olympia IWW and Oly Community

Medics focusing on the houseless community. Mutual Aid Mondays grew until it was decided to form two organizations—Just Housing to focus on advocacy, and OlyMAP to continue mutual aid work.

MetaCooperative is a mutual aid affinity group, founded to focus on resiliency and mutual aid in the event of an ecological disaster. MetaCooperative member G.t. Press shares that “we aspired to be good neighbors, despite distance, and to participate helpfully in each other’s lives, with an understanding that our internal “gift” economy would be the mutual aid that we needed.”

Combining for mutual support isn’t the norm in our society

Audrey at OlyMAC shared that the growing recognition of mutual aid has required larger conversations navigating political differences. “A

► **Mutual Aid**, continued on page 12

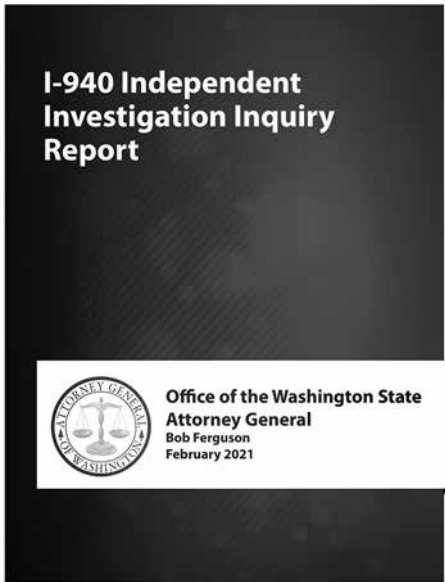
Thurston County Sheriff’s Office—a law unto itself?

Investigations of deadly force must be transparent and credible to regain public trust in policing

Eleanor Steinhagen

A February report from Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson reveals that the Thurston County Sheriff’s Office (TCSO) refused to cooperate with an AG inquiry into whether law enforcement agencies are complying with Initiative 940. Among other mandates, the law created by I-940 requires that investigations of police use of deadly force be conducted by an agency independent of those involved. It also calls for appointing a family liaison, providing weekly updates to the public, and involving at least two non-law enforcement community representatives.

TCSO is part of the Region III Critical Incident Investigation Team (CIIT), along with four other area sheriffs’ offices. The AG report covered incidents occurring between January 6, 2020, when I-940 became law, and June 30. The Region III CIIT conducted three use-of-deadly-force investigations during that time — the most of any agency. These include investigations into the shooting deaths of 60-year-old Sok Chin Son in January 2020, Kathryn Hale in March 2020, and the killing of an “Unidentified Individual.”



The Region III Team refused the surveys needed by the AG inquiry instead offering their investigation files for review: “Investigations into police use of deadly force are complex because each incident has unique intricacies and context. We believe that the questionnaire is a blunt instrument that will strip away the context that is so important when trying to understand the steps taken in a complex investigation.”

Can the TCSO investigation of Michael Reinhoehl’s killing be reliable?

Officers from the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department, Lakewood Police and the Washington Department of Corrections made up the task force assembled by US Marshal Ryan Kimmel on September 3 that carried out the extrajudicial killing of Michael Reinhoehl. Reinhoehl, a Portland activist wanted in the shooting death of a far-right activist, was gunned down outside Olympia. Shortly before the fatal encounter, Trump infamously tweeted, “Do your job, and do it fast. Everybody knows who this thug is.”

The Thurston County Sheriff’s Office led the investigation into Reinhoehl’s killing. TCSO has not released their full report, but a review of the shooting turned over on March 31 to the Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney is riddled with contradictions, inconsistencies, and questionable claims by the officers involved. Police said Reinhoehl fired his gun, initiating the gunfire exchange, but they didn’t find a bullet. Reinhoehl’s gun was found in his pants pocket with a full magazine. There was no forensic evidence he fired his gun and no exit hole found through his car. Police fired 40 rounds, five of which pierced Reinhoehl’s body.

► **Sheriff**, continued on page 13

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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Finding common ground

There's a lot of talk these days about how polarized "the country" is. The talk fixates on Trump voters vs everyone else, or Democrats vs Republicans or liberals vs conservatives.

When we at WIP began thinking about polarization, two things came up. First, consider that the two parties promote the "Trump v everyone, libs v conservatives" idea of "polarization" as an electoral strategy. We think the explanation for the country's division lies in the effects of racism and inequality.

THOUGHTS ON THE THEME

Second, we thought it better to pose the question of division from the opposite side: finding common ground.

Racism

Eleanor Steinhagen's article argues that our Sheriff's support for white supremacy undermines trust in the practices of law enforcement. A second review of Caste lays bare the legal and structural mechanisms that divide us along racial lines.

There are signs of hope, though. On page 4, there is a reflection on local actions stemming from the new awareness of the effects of racism triggered by the police killing of George Floyd. An article about the search for a new chief of the Olympia Police Department

acknowledges small steps toward involving the community in defining what is needed. Bill Fishburn describes the way racism divides us but then embarks on an effort to bring people together: something as basic as serving beer.

Inequality

The United States is a country of staggering disparities and we tried to show a bit of that on page 6.

There is a graphic illustration of how little common ground there is in the way we treat those who are responsible for providing services absolutely essential to the health of our community.

To become employed as a teacher or a nurse you must first invest thousands for training, be tested and certified — and be paid at a modest level at entry. Throughout your career you must demonstrate continued ability to meet standards to keep your certification.

To become employed as a police officer you only need to be a high school graduate (or have a GED), pass a test and be eligible to possess a firearm. That qualifies you for an entry-level salary above the median household income in Thurston County. And while a police officer attends training as part of their job, no state law sets milestones for them to meet throughout their career and they don't need to do anything to maintain their certification.

As for how we meet the requirement to house people — we leave that to individuals whose only qualification is money, and who are able to compensate themselves in the hundreds of thousands.

Common ground

It turns out that the space for common ground is small when the public sector is ravaged and essential needs of society are privatized. Privatization puts a price on everything so that those who have money can avail themselves of the essential services; and those who do not cannot.

Can there be "common ground" when there is no public sector? As the stories about Mutual Aid and raising food communally show, creating common ground becomes the task of individuals grouping together to provide for community needs. These stories highlight the many positive aspects to this—ingenuity, commitment, satisfactions of working together to do something important. But these kinds of arrangements are not sustainable in the long run. There aren't enough people with time to work for free month after month and year after year. This is confirmed by the continuous and urgent pleas for volunteers that you can find all over the internet (and in this paper).

We need a healthy well-funded public sector that supplies essential public needs. We need governments at all levels that work for the people.

—BW



Upcoming themes

June — The big lie.

Deadline May 15.

July — The ballot or the bullet.

Deadline June 15.

There's a change in the Works

The volunteer Managing Editor of *Works in Progress* is stepping down after five years. Unless someone volunteers for the position and is in place by August 1, the last issue of the paper will appear in September.

To support a new managing editor (if one is in place) we are also looking for individuals to fill the role of "section editor." This would be a less demanding role for someone who would commit to recruiting articles each month around a particular topic area.

Details for these positions and how to contact us are online at **www.olywip.org** under *About Us*. There you will also find information about the mission and structure of the paper.

Common ground ? Where?

The middle is a point equidistant from two poles. That's it. There is nothing inherently virtuous about being neither here nor there. Buried in this is a false equivalency of ideas, what you might call the "good people on both sides" phenomenon. When we revisit our shameful past, ask yourself, Where was the middle? Rather than chattel slavery, perhaps we could agree on a nice program of indentured servitude? Instead of subjecting Japanese-American citizens to indefinite detention during WWII, what if we had agreed to give them actual sentences and perhaps provided a receipt for them to reclaim their things when they were released? What is halfway between moral and immoral?

This paragraph appeared in an essay by Tayari Jones in the November 5, 2018 issue of TIME. Jones is a professor at Emory University and the author of three novels.

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YOU WRITE TO WIP

By train via Stampede Pass to Yakima and beyond

Regarding Tom White and Bill Moyer's article about passenger trains, I understand that it was focused on a comparison between improving current N-S Cascades service and the proposal for Ultra High Speed Rail that would essentially parallel the current Cascades N-S route but on "dedicated" track.

The article references the State's Long-Range Plan for AMTRAK Cascades. That plan isn't limited to improved and more frequent N-S service on our side of the state. It also calls for restoring E-W service over the Stampede Pass route,

down the Yakima Valley and on to Spokane. This route was active until 1981, when AMTRAK shifted to the current Empire Builder route, which goes north from Seattle to Everett, then crosses the Cascades to Wenatchee and heads straight east. Yakima is the largest community in the state without passenger rail service.

I've been involved for many years with All Aboard Washington, an educational nonprofit that advocates for improved and expanded passenger rail service. The restored E-W route would provide service to

many communities whose residents have few if any affordable intercity travel options. The latest "state of play" I've heard during this year's legislative session is a House Transportation Plan that includes sufficient money to plan and cost out improvements to the route that will satisfy Federal grant

application requirements. If this budget item survives the House-Senate reconciliation process, the planning process would be ideally timed to tap the Biden Administration's proposed infrastructure funding for improved passenger rail service nationwide.

Thanks for bringing this issue to your readers' attention. Cascades service Seattle to Portland/Eugene is available to local residents via Intercity Transit's FREE bus service to the AMTRAK station on Yelm Highway. Once the border reopens, Vancouver BC will again be the end of the line. Try it!

Mark Foutch

Then this happened...

...left at the altar—again. At their April 12 meeting, Port of Olympia Commissioners McGregor and Downing said they needed to act urgently to approve an arrangement for Matson Shipping to park an empty cargo vessel at the Marine Terminal. They overrode the third commissioner's objections to proceeding with no discussion and no public notice because the situation was urgent: Matson said they might need to bring the ship as early as May 8. The two commissioners saw potential millions in rent. They'd have to move the derelict ferry that's been docked there for 3 years, but someone would figure that out.

A few days later the urgency disappeared. As did the Matson vessel. The port "received word" that the ship wasn't coming. This was the port's second disappointment—a plan to bring two Ready Reserve Fleet ships fell through in February.

The Evergreen Ferry continues dockside. The rent is paid through June. That's one sure thing.

...housing prices aren't "filtering down." Our officials sell the idea that approving more market rate housing will bring prices down. Nope. Even with tax incentives for market rate units downtown and applications to build over 1000 new housing units in Olympia, prices only go up and up. Since the beginning of this year, the median price of homes sold in Thurston Co. jumped from \$385,837 in January to \$444,500 in March. According to Thurston Regional Planning, housing affordability in Thurston County decreased every year since 2015 and continues to decrease.

...'trickle down' doesn't work either! Joe Biden admitted that this theory is just an excuse to give tax breaks to the rich: "It's time to grow the economy from the bottom up and middle out," the Prez said. Let's give "bubble up" economics a chance!

...the City was not convinced, item 1. The City of Olympia Development Department recently instructed the developer of a proposed project at Green Cove off Cooper Point Rd to submit further information about contamination on the site. The City has been asking for details about the site at least since August of 2019. Developer Jerry Mahan has 6 months to respond to the recent request or the application becomes void.

...the court was not convinced, item 2. Washington's insurance industry executives went to court to stop a new rule that prevented them from including "credit scores" in setting insurance premiums. When their lobbyists mangled proposed legislation that would have done the same thing, Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler issued an emergency ruling. The big boys argued that Kreidler overstepped his authority, but the judge found otherwise. A win for the little guy.

...the judge was not convinced, item 3. A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit filed by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) accusing the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights of engaging in "material support for terrorism," citing the group's speech and support for the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. Lawyers say the lawsuit was part of a growing pattern of suppressing activism in support of Palestinian rights. The Center for Constitutional Rights and the organization Palestine Legal have documented this and called it the "Palestine Exception" to free speech. The Olympia Food Co-op honors the boycott (called by Palestinian civil society), and some years ago was the object of a suit over BDS which was similarly dismissed.



Nick Leppmann is a Seattle-based artist who depicts the often overlooked impact of our ambitions on the natural world. He can be reached at nickleppmann.com, on Instagram at @nickleppmannart or on Facebook at @NickLeppmannArt.

Readers' Alert—new book titles for review!

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, email us 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 page 11.

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!

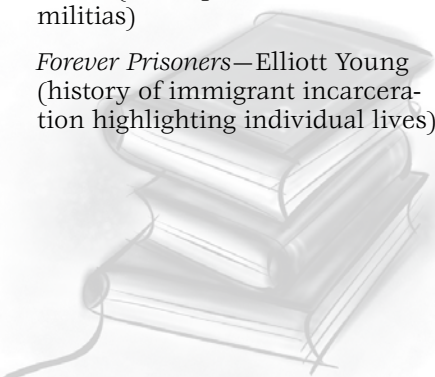
Moving the Bar: My Life as a Radical Lawyer—Michael Ratner (Autobiography "taking the law to places where it had never been")

The Sum of Us—Heather McGhee (how racism allowed public goods to be replaced by private benefit)

Union Made—Eric Lotke (fast-paced novel with a plot about union organizing)

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

Forever Prisoners—Elliott Young (history of immigrant incarceration highlighting individual lives)



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How far have we come?

A year after the national outcry over the killing of George Floyd

Janine L.

Nearly a year ago, George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis policeman Derek Chauvin during an arrest, after a store clerk alleged that Floyd had passed a counterfeit \$20 bill. The obscenely violent act of kneeling on Floyd's neck for over nine minutes, killing him—seen and known about only because one young bystander caught it all by video on her phone—ignited a nation into action. Racism and police brutality in America are not new, they have long been an integral part of our history.

The jury's guilty-on-all counts verdict delivered accountability to Derek Chauvin, but not true justice for George Floyd, much less for the countless people of color whose deaths, torture and victimization from police violence have seen zero accountability. Real justice for Floyd and too many others can only happen when we build a nation that fundamentally respects the equal dignity of every person.

How far have we come on that front in a year?

There's no doubt that these real images of heinous police acts move citizens to action, not unlike how devastating images of the Vietnam War drew a nation into the streets to stop it. But meaningful change in an entrenched racist system is met at every juncture with more police violence, slow-moving or inactive City Councils, powerful opposition by police unions, and even disagreement amongst citizens about what changes should occur.

The Black Lives Matter movement is alive and well here, yet the pace of reform is slow:

- Street protests continue and so does the police violence upon them. Olympia City Council banned using tear gas for a short time, then rescinded the ban.
- Glaring differences in police force used against BLM protestors, relative to lax police engagement with far-right militants, is disturbing and counter-productive. Olympia police officer Tiffany Coates, warmly greeted by a group of armed vigilantes, smiled and posed for photos, joining in racist hand gestures with the Three Percent far-right group.
- Sgt. Amy King, a 21 year veteran of the OPD, has become a finalist candidate for the Olympia Police Chief position, despite reprimands she received in the last five years—one in which she pulled out and referenced her gun, what she 'felt like doing' while interacting with a particular mentally ill person.
- Officer Ryan Donald still patrols our streets even after perpetrating serious and maiming violence on two young black brothers.
- The effort to re-allocate policing dollars to community care and mental health services is stymied while two more city police were hired during a reported hiring freeze.

- Earnest organizing towards equity and justice is met regularly with OPD and far-right militia groups spying on social media platforms—leading to hassling, intimidation and violence towards our citizens.
- While programs such as Friendly Faces and the Crisis Response Unit are in place, they have little power—much less budget.
- The formation of the Social Justice and Equity Commission is a good step, yet it has been

Locally, those working for change are organized and committed

There is an ongoing, gargantuan effort to make change, mainly by committed people of color and their allies. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

A coalescence of groups have come together around racial justice. The local chapter of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), Standing up for Racial Justice (SURJ), Economics for Everyone, the Salish



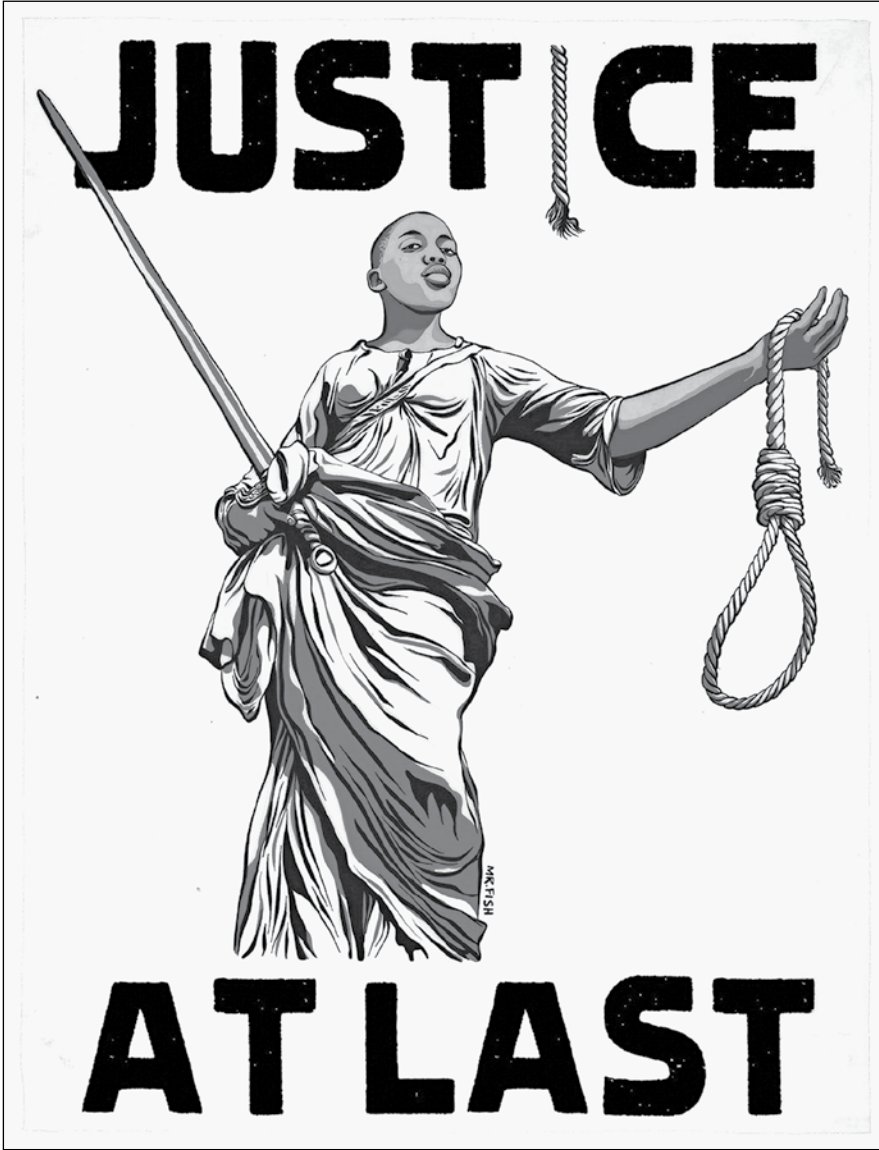
a struggle to get the City to include proven activist leaders in the process.

Coalition, and many others, have contributed thousands of hours to

There is an ongoing, gargantuan effort to make change, mainly by committed people of color and their allies.

When placing all these facts, and more, in the broader context of police accountability, it's challenging to feel hope. The City seems to be listening, yet transparency is an issue, and whether there is a true appetite for needed change.

immediate transformation on multiple fronts—from direct collection of funds for disadvantaged people in our community to consistent activism leading marches, attending protests, and holding countless meetings to hammer out specific



action leading to actual change. The protective Wall of Moms, the Wall of Dads, and the Wall of Vets, have all organized in the streets. Multiple Peoples' Assemblies have been hosted, giving revolutionary voice to citizens' rights to food, shelter, police accountability, cooperative economics, mutual aid and community care, direct action, and ecological stewardship.

Citizens have spoken passionately and articulately about racial justice and equity at many City Council meetings. The DSA created a "Blueprint for Defunding" which includes specific, thoughtful, and comprehensive details in three main areas: Cutting the OPD budget, reinvesting in community, and increasing accountability (www.olydsa.org/committees/defund-opd)

Things are happening, yet so much reform is needed

Those who do this work are vulnerable to disillusionment, exhaustion, and burn-out. It is the duty of all moral citizens to join together to make the work of justice and equity a shared burden. We may need to expand our vision outside our region for help with what's working in communities elsewhere. As the great Nina Turner writes: "We have people across the nation rising up to say, in the words of Ella Baker, 'We who believe in freedom cannot rest.' This is our moment to make sure we do what we can, where we are, with what we have."

Janine L. lives mostly local in what will hopefully one day be known as the South Salish Biosphere. She's young enough to still have hope and old enough to know better.

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Graphic from Mr. Fish

What the search for an OPD chief says about the hope for police reform

Daniel Mootz

The Olympia Police Department (OPD) is roiled in a troublesome search for a new Chief of Police. Olympia's City Council had hired Karras Consulting to help recruit Oly's next top cop, and on March 25, the City announced the names of four finalists under consideration for the job. Finalists were OPD Acting Interim Police Chief Aaron Jelcick, OPD Community Policing Lieutenant Sgt. Amy King, Port of Portland Police Officer Derrick Turner and former Anchorage, Alaska Deputy Police Chief Sean Case.

Following the announcement, evidence surfaced revealing apparently threatening incidents involving two of the candidates' pasts. Despite their vetting process, the consulting firm missed these incidents. After the second revelation, the City cancelled its contract with Karras.

In 2016, Amy King, a 21-year veteran with OPD, drew her firearm while supervising a "graveyard" shift meeting in the presence of 15 officers. According to the written complaint, King brandished her gun as part of a "joke" about a mentally ill "problem person," stating that the subject in question "will make you want to..." She then implied using her gun to put an end to the disturbance. Three months after that, King received another citation for a botched vehicular pursuit in which she "did not comply with Department policy." At the time of this writing, OPD had not responded to a specific records request for King's reported infractions within the standard five day period.

Footage showing another one of the finalists abusing their power came to light after the announcement. On July 10, 2017, Derrick Turner, a sergeant and 10-year veteran



Photo credit: Janine Gates/Little Hollywood Media

with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS) in Kalamazoo, MI, was caught on body camera performing a violent chokehold maneuver on a young person pro-

The painful "subject control method" Turner used unnecessarily, is now widely acknowledged to be extremely dangerous, as well as potentially lethal. Bans against it have become increasingly popular in recent years in jurisdictions across the US. Turner has since withdrawn from the running.

That was not the end of the problems with the finalists. Aaron Jelcick, who took over for outgoing OPD Chief Ronnie Roberts in 2019, effectively spearheaded the violent police response to recent BLM protests in Olympia. In early February, 2021, Jelcick misled *The Olympian* and the community when, in a press briefing about the excessive police response to a January 31 incident at the Red Lion, he stated that no unhoused people would be charged with trespassing.

But two unhoused people were charged with First Degree Burglary, a Class A Felony that under Washington law includes trespassing as one of three elements required for the charge—and comes with a penalty far worse than trespassing. These two individuals spent over a month in jail and (along with three

That the pool of candidates for the top job in law enforcement produced four "finalists" with serious flaws points to the systemic problem with the institution of policing.

testing his brother's arrest. Turner was later found to have violated the Department's Use of Force Policy. He received only a written reprimand, as it was officially ruled that his actions were not "malicious or egregious" enough to warrant further discipline.

housing activists) currently face lengthy prison sentences. At that same meeting, Jelcick also failed to mention the brutal, unwarranted assault by his officers on a Black unhoused individual. That encounter, caught on surveillance tape, shows how casually Olympia

police deploy racist violence and escalate nonviolent situations.

Public records requests for OPD officers King and Jelcick prior to 2010 have reportedly been filed, but no response is expected until April 30. This is around the time City Manager Jay Burney, who is the City official with the sole power to select a new police chief, was expected to make his decision. Also unavailable are disciplinary records for Sean Case, the fourth finalist. These were requested from the Anchorage Police Department but have yet to be disclosed due to restrictive state laws.

Case was Deputy Chief of the Anchorage Police when an internal investigation found the department owed millions in damages to a former employee in a wrongful termination suit. The suit revealed active discrimination against at least one officer based on their medical diagnosis, as well as other compounding allegations of interagency corruption and guilt by association, according to Alaska Public Media.

While Case was not caught directly in the controversy, his high ranking authority on the force over the last five years is pertinent to an informed understanding of where he's coming from and what kind of culture he would bring to the department. Similarly, Jelcick's lead role in Olympia's policing over the last two years has exposed a deep-seated, militaristic resistance to progressive community engagement.

In April, Burney postponed the search for a chief but "will stay in contact with the finalists regarding their continued interest in the position." Some positive signs in Olympia include the solicitation of an outside consultant to manage the important task of "Reimagining Public Safety" to be completed before the search for a chief is resumed. This process is a programmatic approach geared toward improving police-community relations through equity, inclusivity, and diversity training, but it has an annual budget, according to documents, of only \$50,000.

Such half-measure, bureaucratic incrementalism has, since 2016, adopted the language of social justice reform while simultaneously failing to enact serious changes to policing procedures. There are innumerable accounts, including some of those mentioned above, that directly contradict critical, common-sense ideas proposed by new voices in the City regarding the future of public safety.

OPD's annual budget is roughly \$22 million, but only a fraction of a percentage of that has, and not until very recently, been allocated to community leaders and reconciliatory policies, like Friendly Faces and Crisis Response Unit. These new practices aim to bring changes to the harsh system of policing and criminal justice reform in law and in practice.

That the pool of candidates for the top job in law enforcement produced four "finalists" with serious flaws points to the systemic problem with the institution of policing. It shows us up close the culture of impunity that is shared by police unions and defended by their leadership—and will likely be continued here in Olympia unless there is a radical change in leadership.

Daniel Mootz is a WIP contributor and advocate for equity.

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Your food will be brought out to you once you check in.

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For more information go to our website:
<https://thurstoncountyfoodbank.org/80-2/grocery-distribution/>

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Growing community in the Victory Garden on Martin Way



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A brief history of GRuB

Sowing the seeds of community with veterans in the garden

Beau Gromley

The seed for GRuB was planted in 1993 as the Kitchen Garden Project (KGP).

Inspired by the work of Vietnam veteran Dan Barker (founder of the Kitchen Garden Project—KGP), South Sounders Richard and Maria Doss began building free vegetable gardens for low-income people in southwest Washington. The KGP mission was to empower low-income people by giving them more control over their food security and decreasing their reliance on emergency food programs.

A few years later, in 1996, Bonnie Turner, an elder in our community, offered her back yard for an intergenerational community gardening project. This gave our founders an opportunity to establish and anchor a garden program for youth and seniors. In 2001, these programs merged to become Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB). Since we began building gardens, GRuB has had a consistent veteran presence as either “Lead Builders” for the season or as key volunteers. With the help of our communities and veterans we’ve built over 3200 free gardens throughout western Washington.

The Victory Farm on Martin Way is a new space for veterans and their families to connect with and build community through gardening, nature and the outdoors. We offer in-person workshops at the Victory Farm (pre COVID and again this summer) for recipients of our gardens, as well as resource info sessions and council practices/talk circles specifically for vets.



Victory Garden

From previous page

WSU and TCFLT. A group of BIPOC farmers, researchers and educators from WSU is researching certain staple crops. This project will conduct a quantitative and qualitative needs assessment of culturally relevant staple crops within BIPOC farmer and consumer communities. It will assess best practices and develop next steps for reviving small-to-mid scale ecologically grown (biologically-intensive, organic and sustainable) staple food economies within BIPOC communities in Washington state. These communities are most likely to face barriers to healthy food access. The research team hopes this project can find ways to bring foods that matter to the BIPOC community closer to them.

The hope is that Haki can play a key role in representing the BIPOC communities in the South Sound area. By summer 2022, HFC anticipates being able to showcase diaspora crops. While the organization is awaiting farmland to steward from their partnership with TCLT, a local farmer has offered land in Little Rock for their use. This opportunity will help Haki expand food access in the South Sound as well as establishing a plant medi-



Haki Farmers Collective volunteers build soil at the Victory Garden using a recipe perfected years ago at GRuB. Photo by Fletcher Ward

GRuB has partnered with the Washington Department of Veteran Affairs (WDVA) and other “veteran specific” resource groups and non-profits in an effort to help connect veterans within our community

and a host of other resources either through GRuB or our network.

Our workshops go over everything from basic gardening “how to”, houseplants (care, bonsai, etc),

If you need a garden, want to deepen your roots in our community, or are looking to connect with people who have diverse life experiences, the GRuB Garden Project has a place for you.

to resources and services more efficiently and holistically. Veterans who are interested in pursuing farming/gardening as a career now have low-barrier access to education, funding, land, mentorship

Guerrilla Gardening, Plant Teaching for Growing Social-Emotional Skills, and a free form Q&A. This is an opportunity for veterans and gardeners to interact and build community through growing, sharing, and supporting each other.

Veterans Council Practice is a rally point for anyone in the military family. In council we get to the heart of our experience by laying down all we carry and honoring all of who we are, whole warriors living our truth in a return to true belonging in society. This space is held for any adult in the military family, including survivors of veteran suicide loss, Gold Star families, active duty, reserves, guard members, dependents and our civilian allies.

One of our veteran partners, Woods Bee Co., donated hives and equipment for the Victory Farm in 2019. This season, as we start to open back up, we will incorporate honey bee workshops and beekeeper certifications into our programming. In the meantime (April 19–May 22) Alan Woods from Woods Bee Co will be offering a beginner beekeeping certification course online for \$45. GRuB has scholarships available for veterans, too.

GRuB empowers veterans to continue serving their community as partners, builders & farmers in our GRuB Garden Project and Victory Farm. The Victory Farm is a safe, non-confrontational environment where veterans work shoulder-to-shoulder immersed in the healing nature of the outdoors, agriculture, and working in dirt! Victory Farmers are an integral part of the GRuB Garden Project, expanding the work we’ve been doing throughout the South Sound since 1993. Veterans lead the effort to build gardens with low-income people and families in Thurston County, WA. From 2014-2020, they’ve built over 500 gardens in the community and provided a means for people to grow their own food.

Beau Gromley is Food Solutions Manager at GRuB and a veteran of the Marines and US Army.



Volunteer as a Dependency Guardian Ad Litem

A child becomes a dependent of the State when he or she has been found by a judge to have been abandoned, abused or neglected, or has no parent or guardian capable of adequately caring for the child. A volunteer DGAL provides a judge or commissioner with carefully researched information about the child's situation to help the court make a sound decision about the child's future. The DGAL advocates for the best interests of the child by keeping all parties focused on the child's health, safety, and well-being. DGAL volunteers are the consistent and powerful voice for the child during complex legal proceedings.

A Dependency GAL:

- Devotes approximately 5-15 hours per month to each child's case
- Objectively investigates case circumstances
- Interviews parents, foster parents, family members, social workers, teachers, health care professionals, therapists and the child
- Maintains confidentiality
- Makes recommendations to the court
- Monitors court ordered services
- Advocates in the child's best interest
- Stays with the child's case until it is permanently resolved.



Washington Association of Child Advocate Programs

For more on how to volunteer as a DGAL in Thurston County, contact Wendy Mayo at (360) 709-3231.

“A community gathering place”

Reflecting on ways to bring people to the table

Bill Fishburn

It's been hard to hope. Beginning with the 2020 election in November, and then the Electoral College vote in December, and then the official electoral vote count in January 2021, and then the inauguration on January 20, each was an opportunity to hope. Each was its own shining opportunity for a shift toward a positive, more hopeful direction.

Yet consider the Derek Chauvin case, and the continued killing by law enforcement—the very people who are sworn to protect and serve—and the violence against our Asian brothers and sisters, and the epidemic of mass shootings that our nation continues to experience, and 43 states putting forward voter suppression laws — and the pandemic. It's been hard to hope.

When I was a project manager in high tech, a teammate accused me of always wearing “rose-colored lenses.” It was odd, considering I always felt like I was walking a fine line between telling people it would take longer than they were estimating, and trying to encourage them to complete tasks by due dates they themselves gave me. I can tell you I have misplaced my rose-colored lenses, and I struggle every day. Because it's been hard to hope.

As an engineer by education, I feel like I'm more a pragmatist than an optimist, so I think of these musings as a pragmatic endeavor, as opposed to a dark or pessimistic outlook. To that end, I revisited the Real Work article I wrote in January, just five days before the insurrection at the US capitol, an event instigated and inflamed by the Big Lie. The piece proposed that the “real work” ahead of us is to bring to the table the people who voted for Trump; to find in such discussions something to work towards, something to give hope.

In terms of this “real work” I haven't made much progress. I have been looking for ways to understand the people who voted against Biden and normalcy; those who continue to buy into the Big Lie; those who maintain that “Q” is going to save them. I had a conversation about this mindset with a very good friend, a psychiatrist I've known since childhood. What was intriguing about that conversation was watching her analytical process; one that appealed to my inner engineer, and might offer a starting point for some discussions around “the real work”—a potential source of hope.

In the grand scheme of things, a discussion between two friends seems small, but it might lead to something bigger. As an example, I heard an interview on NPR with Romina Puga, a young woman who started a show for children called Club Mundo Kids. (If you haven't heard of the show, I encourage you to check it out.

Ms. Puga sensed the struggles that children—especially Latinx children—were having with all of the negativity around immigration. She talked about challenges Latinx

children face because Hispanic and Latin American culture in the US is not monolithic—in my words, not all Hispanics and Latinx are the same. She decided to start a show something like Sesame Street, but specifically designed for Spanish-speaking children living in the US.



I thought, “Okay, then! That's one way to demonstrate the value in our differences while also making kids feel more comfortable with those

order to give others hope.

So here's where I am now. I've been focusing on starting a brewpub in Rainier with my wife. I call it a brewpub, but when I talk about it with people – and what excites me is – I call it a “community gathering place doing business as a brewpub.” I think that could be the

foundation for something pretty amazing.

In fact, it could be a place where “the real work” starts —where dif-

...when I talk about it with people... I call it a “community gathering place doing business as a brewpub.”

ferences.” And that triggered the thought that there is some adult equivalent out there, waiting for me to find it and make it happen, in

ferent members of our community actually come to a table where they might have conversations and even

begin to discover the value in our differences. We have a ways to go to get it off the ground (I'm drafting the business plan now, setting up social media accounts, working on a website, etc.), but, like Club Mundo Kids, it gives me hope.

As this article was going to print, the Chauvin verdict was handed down. Like many others, I awaited



the verdict with little hope. As National Guard members were deployed across the nation in anticipation of a “not guilty” verdict and the unrest that certainly would have followed, I remained riveted to the news, awaiting a small reward for our collective patience with a justice system that has too often failed us. Then it came. Former Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin was found guilty on all three counts brought against him. While the verdict doesn't represent justice for George Floyd, it does represent accountability for Derek Chauvin. At last! A glimmer, a spark, a nascent flicker of hope!

I'm grateful to *Works in Progress* for this opportunity to take stock and reflect on how I'm bringing opposing viewpoints to the table. While I feel remiss in not making much progress on the Real Work, I recognize those efforts can look very different and still have a potential impact.

Which makes me wonder...what's going on in your corner of the world? Have you done anything towards the Real Work, towards understanding how to bring supporters of Biden's opponent to the table? Do you know someone who has made progress on this, or an organization that has? Please share about that in the comments below. Seeing some of the work that's happening could give us all hope.

Bill Fishburn is an IT project manager and supervisor with Washington State. He served as Chair of the Thurston Co. Democrats, and was president of the Hispanic Roundtable of South Sound.



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Medical care
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AA and NCLEX license
Entry level wage/income
\$56,000
Certification
Renew annually
Performance measure
None specified
Primary interaction
Patients

POLICE OFFICER



Job
Public Safety
Minimum qualifications
HS Grad or GED
Entry level wage/income
\$74,137
Certification
Continuous
Performance measure
None specified
Primary interaction
Suspected lawbreakers

.....

**ESSENTIAL
WORK:
Requirements
vs Rewards**

.....

SCHOOLTEACHER



Job
Educating the young
Minimum qualifications
BA + teaching certificate
Entry level wage/income
\$48,867
Certification
Renew every 5 years
Performance measure
WA law requires evaluation by TPEP
Primary interaction
Students

PROPERTY OWNER



Job
Providing housing
Minimum qualifications
Money and credit
Entry level wage/income
\$720,000
Certification
none
Performance measure
Net profit
Primary interaction
Office mgr/ bookkeeper

Illustrations by Lucy Heminway

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Police officer
GED plus valid WDL, passing scores on Public Safety and psychological and physical ability exam. Polygraph and criminal background check, legal ability to possess a firearm.
Registered nurse
Recommendation from completed approved nursing program per WA Administrative Code Passing score on National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for critical thinking skills and readiness to begin practice as an entry-level nurse.
Teacher
Proof of clean background check, proof of BA degree (transcripts) and completion of approved teacher preparatory school. Passing scores on content exams. Completed application for certification in WA.
Property owner
Start-up money or access to credit

SALARY/WAGE/INCOME

Police officer
Annual salary paid to a beginning recruit pending certification is from current Olympia Police Guild Agreement with the City of Olympia.
Registered nurse
Figure derived by annualizing hourly wage scales posted online for staff nurses at local hospitals. This may be a high estimate.
Teacher
Base salary for a first-year teacher from current Olympia School District bargaining agreement.
Property owner
Estimated Adjusted Gross Income for an individual whose livelihood is from renting out 30 houses in the Olympia area.

Comparison of individual and household earning (2019)

Average wage for 75% of jobs in Thurston County in 2019: **\$54,512.**
Median household (includes all earners in the house) income by jurisdiction in 2019:

Tumwater:	\$69,685
Lacey:	\$67,687
Olympia:	\$59,879

CERTIFICATION

Police officer
Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission Awards certification after hiring, upon completion of 770 hours of paid training at the WA Basic Law Enforcement Academy. Certification continues indefinitely unless there is a 24-month break in service.
Registered Nurse
Initial license awarded by the WA Dept. of Health Nursing Commission upon completion of approved course work and passage of National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Required to renew annually on DOB. Within a 3-year cycle, must document 45 clock hours of Continuing Education and 531 hours of active practice to show continued possession of skills and judgment necessary to practice safely and ethically (WAC 246-840-220).
Teacher
SPI Office of Professional Certification awards initial certification to applicants who submit proof of a BA degree, recommendation from a completed WA-approved teacher prep program, completion of basic skills and content area test and fingerprints leading to a clean background check. To maintain certification, each teacher must complete 100 clock hours or equivalent every 5 years and other courses required under WAC181-79A-030.
Property owner
None

PERFORMANCE MEASURE

Police officer
None specified
Registered Nurse
None specified
Teacher
RCW28A.405.100 adopted in 2010 requires that certificated teachers be evaluated for professional performance capabilities at least once every 6 years. The Teacher & Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) is prescribed in the RCWs and is intended to promote teacher accountability and improvement. An employee whose work is unsatisfactory is notified of deficiencies and provided with a program for improvement. The program can result in probation.
Property Owner
None

This information comes primarily from the WA Dept of Health and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), RCWs and WACs. Police and teacher salaries come from current bargaining agreements with Olympia. Nurses and teachers are highly regulated by the State of Washington. Police and property owners are not. All roles except property owner must be a US citizen or otherwise legally able to work in the US. Source for 2019 wages comparison: Thurston Regional Planning Council.

OCEP appeals Oly City Council decision on West Bay Yards contract

“Stewardship of the commons is a fundamental purpose of local government”

On March 30, Olympia City Council members signed a 15-year contract needed by Milestone Companies to attract financing for their “West Bay Yards” project, a luxury mixed-use development on the edge of Budd Inlet. Hundreds of citizens weighed in with objections to the contract, which was drafted by the developer and agreed to by the staff of the City’s Development Department before being presented to the Council.

Olympia Coalition for Ecosystem

Preservation, which has been working to restore habitat that connects to the development site, has appealed the Council’s decision in Superior Court. They are asking the Court to vacate the contract and instruct the City to obtain a full accounting of the likely environmental impacts the development will cause.

In a statement on their website, OCEP observed that even with most shoreline industry gone, water quality in Budd Inlet is worse,

not better. “This shoreline has a history of abuse. The buildings of the logging industry may be long gone but their legacy remains in the form of extremely high concentrations of deadly chemicals. This will be true whether or not the area is covered with additional fill, topped with buildings and forgotten again.” The movement of water will continue. The first hearing is set for August 30.

Restoration ecologist Paul Cereghino characterized the Council’s action in a letter to *The Olympian*:

In Washington state, shorelines and their fisheries are a 10,000-year-old public trust resource. Coastlines are so valuable and irreplaceable, we don’t leave them to the whims of private land speculators.

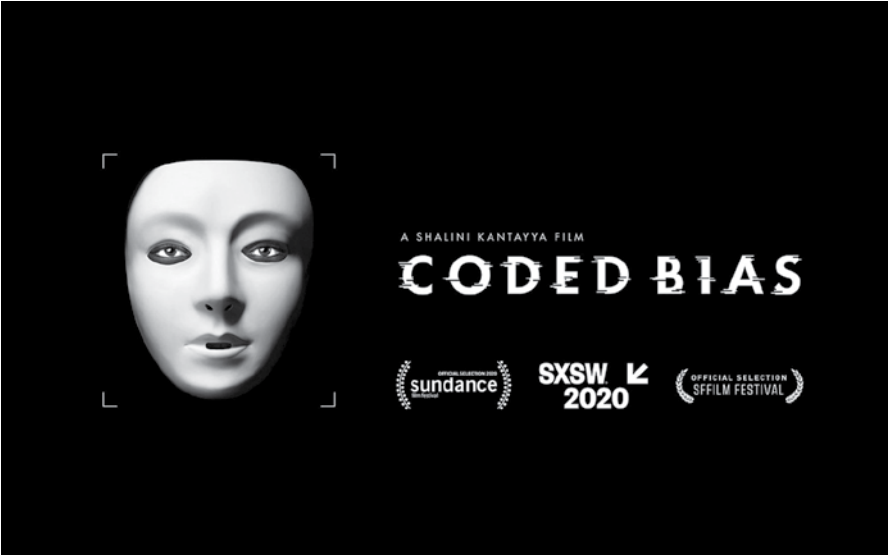
Our local government is persistently groomed by a cabal of land speculators. Our citizens need housing, and that makes us vulnerable to manipulation. Not all deals are good. It is important for citizens and their officials to

aggressively protect the public trust. Hardel demonstrates our weakness and passivity.

The council has the power and responsibility to demand stewardship. South Puget Sound is bleeding to death and just took another cut. Leaders cannot hide behind staff or procedure or ignorance or hollow words. You preside over the system, you set the rules, you sign the papers. Stewardship of the commons is a fundamental purpose of local government.

Puyallup developer Ronald Dean Newman must raise money for the project but he will soon be working with the Olympia Development Department staff with a Land Use Application. An attorney under contract to the City of Olympia to hear the application will be the one making the decision to approve the application.

Troy Nichols, partner in Phillips Burgess, a prominent law firm active in Olympia politics and representing the developer, said the suit will not delay the project.



MOVIE REVIEW

Coded Bias

Matt Crichton

1984? So you think it’s all still science fiction? No one will ever control your personal individual thoughts or feelings? Do you think it’s never going to happen in “real life?” After watching *Coded Bias*, you might change your mind. The movie follows Dr. Joy Buolamwini as she journeys from the Media Lab at MIT to discussions with mathematicians, data scientists, watchdog groups and even our elected representatives. Along the way, she uncovers how some computer algorithms are used to alter the playing field and change the actual trajectories of peoples’ lives. Companies are collecting your personal data to use for their gain, (read: stock price, power and control) and you are giving it to them free and willing.

A biased industry, unchecked

There is not much oversight (actually no federal oversight at all) right now, even though groups are fighting to change this. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are getting more powerful, to the point where the programmers who created AI do not know what is going on inside—a black box, if you will.

Still, those who control the lines of code have immense power, much of it currently unseen by the very people it negatively affects. *Coded Bias* describes how companies “test” a new code or process on communities of color before releasing it to the larger population.

History is messy but the huge amounts of historical data fed into the AI systems create a certain

bias toward white people and against people of color. Dr. Buolamwini presents specific examples, including how Amazon’s AI hiring system is biased against women, and how people of color are targeted by police...for being non-white.

Bias in facial recognition technology

Our own faces may be the final frontier in tech, and companies are racing to conquer that frontier. Facial recognition infringes on privacy and individuality. The data and AI create a way for companies to pinpoint, with scary accuracy, how consumers (you and I) will react to certain ads that we see in our Facebook (or other social media) feeds.

AI is not always correct, and the movie shows how computer efficiency leaves no room for compassion and humanity. Don’t think that big business isn’t chomping at the bit to determine how you react to the fabulous products and services they offer. It’s still about control. But “there are forces fighting through ‘the ballot’ (not the bullet, yet) to reverse this unsettling trend with technology, privacy, and equity.”

Dr. Buolamwini herself created the Algorithmic Justice League to combat the efforts of biased data and AI systems. Along with watchdog groups all over the world she will be following developments of artificial intelligence.

Matt Crichton is a frequent contributor to WIP.

More information: www.codedbias.com/virtualcinema, www.ajl.org, www.gendershades.org

Ashes on West Bay

When we to home on the westside returned
from an excursion to the north Cascades
We found the remains of the burn
The ashes that floated from West Bay.

All over our little back yard
The charcoal remnants had fallen
We gathered up pieces, wondered what these were
How could anything cover us all?

The source of the fire was a mystery
We heard another factory had burned
The industries have a long history
of leaving ruins, when will we learn?

The native peoples once had subsisted
for millennia on this fragile shore
The tides set the table with seafood
They never asked for anything more

After decades of dredging and shipping
filling, dumping, oil tanks and more
some neighbors took to helping the herons
survive in the woods by the shore

For everything built for pure profit
is soon to be all washed away
and fly up in the sky, an anthropocene cry
like the ashes that float up from West Bay

—Tom Nogler

Hard Ball Press



After writing six crime novels featuring Lenny Moss, hospital custodian, union steward and amateur detective, Timothy Sheard launched an independent publishing company, Hard Ball Press, in order to mentor and publish working class writers. You’ll find books ranging from history, memoir, YA, detective stories and more. For a peek at hard-to-find titles go to <https://hardballpress>.

Lessons of *Imperium*

Imperium is a 2016 movie based on the real experiences of undercover FBI agent Mike German who infiltrated white supremacist organizations, as related in his book *Thinking Like a Terrorist* published in 2008. Unfortunately, the lessons found in the movie are all the more relevant today, as white-supremacist Trumpism increasingly gains strength in our country.

In the movie, after an automobile accident, there is a disappearance of most of a shipment of containers of radioactive cesium-137, used in treating cancer. The FBI is concerned that this substance may be incorporated into a dirty bomb with devastating consequences. After conservative talk radio host Dallas Wolf publicizes the disappearance, FBI agent Nate Foster is sent to gain access to Wolf. The FBI creates a fictitious medical supply company that handles and stores radioactive material, for Foster's possible use. He goes undercover, working with a small local white-supremacist militia group headed by Vince Sargent.

LOOKING FORWARD

Dave Jette

Foster narrowly stops an attack by the highly violent militia group on an interracial couple. Through Sargent he manages to get into contact with Wolf by offering him money to support his radio program on the White America Network. In the meantime, Foster gains the confidence of Andrew Blackwell, the head of the Aryan Alliance, a national explicitly Nazi organization, by rescuing him from an attack at a white-supremacy march. Blackwell wants to recruit Foster to his organization. To show that he's serious about promoting a race war, he shows Foster the map of the whole water-supply system in the District of Columbia.

Members of Sargent's and Blackwell's organizations, and various other white supremacists, attend a party at the home of Gerry Condon, an engineer. Foster spends some time talking with Condon, and learns that he is fully a white supremacist but not a politically active one ("I avoid political stuff—not my thing"). His young daughter even refers to their tree-house as a place of refuge when the "mud people" come.

However, Condon holds these parties so that white supremacists can get together socially, but he actually despises them for using alcohol, drugs and coarse language. Condon and his family are highly "refined," and though antisemitic, his character appreciates the conductor Leonard Bernstein. Condon wonders what kind of world children will grow up in—his interest lies in having a whites-only society (more than in attacking nonwhites), since in his view it was white men who created civilization.

Foster finally brings \$7500 to Wolf, purportedly from an investor who would like to make more contributions if Wolf demonstrates his seriousness in promoting a race war. Foster tells Wolf about the Aryan Alliance's possession of the map of the DC water-supply system, and indicates that the investor wants information about Wolf's similar practical intentions.

It is here that Wolf would presumably describe use of the stolen radioactive material, but instead Wolf returns the \$7500 and kicks Foster out of his house. Wolf goes to the FBI, reporting what Foster has tried to do, and explains that he is just a public entertainer telling people what they want to hear—he couldn't care less about what he is saying. The FBI's project has collapsed and they shut it down, pointing out that the map of the water-supply system is only what Blackwell shows in order to recruit members, with no practical use.

Foster returns some white-supremacist books he has borrowed from Conway, and gains the complete confidence of Conway in his dedication to the white-supremacist cause. Conway finally recruits Foster to his own project, because Foster has the ability to obtain powerful explosives through his medical supply "company." Foster works with Conway and two associates, both totally clean-cut, to build a dirty bomb, and the FBI raids their operation and recovers the missing cesium-137.

What is to be learned from this story, which was inspired by real events? First, it doesn't end as might have been expected: the true villains were not the obvious, rabble-rousing hooligans like the Proud Boys and Three Percenters, but rather the Gerry Conways. Men considered highly cultured and rational, leading an exemplary family and social life, but dedicated to creating a whites-only society. Timothy McVeigh, followed the 1978 novel *The Turner Diaries* in carrying out the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City which killed 168 people. McVeigh was highly rational in his quest to institute chaos that would lead to race war.

This is why it is so important to combat Trumpism, to keep it from growing even after the dethronement of its progenitor. (But unfortunately, it seems that Trump is going to be around for a long time, actively building the cause of white supremacy). Trump's hardcore supporters, numbering perhaps 30% of the electorate, have no qualms about his constant lying, his denigration of the mass media, his attacks on science and rational thinking, his misogyny, his blatant rejection of democratic process, his disregard of the rule of law.

They don't care about anything other than maintaining white supremacy in our country. Many of them will constitute the storm troopers when widespread chaos is spread by the Timothy McVeighs and Gerry Conways. To avoid this fate, it will be vital to build an anti-right front as described in the previous column, and socialists must eschew their previous refusal to have anything to do with the Democratic Party.

Dave Jette writes this bi-monthly column and has been involved with Works in Progress since its beginnings. He has written three books, all available at www.lulu.com: A Reformulation of Dialectical Materialism, which incorporates feminist theory into a traditional Marxist framework; Beyond Classical Marxism, about socialism and how to bring it about in the US; and Looking Forward, mainly offering the columns that appear here over time.

BOOK REVIEW

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents

by Isabel Wilkerson

Samantha Chandler

[Ed note: We believe this book to be so important that we are running a second review.]

Isabel Wilkerson's masterwork, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, makes painfully clear exactly who we are. She expertly lays out how systemic discrimination, abuse, and murder of those within the lowest caste of the US is intrinsic to the fabric of our country. With each successive horrific abuse of black and brown people captured on phones and broadcast to the world, myriad white Americans exclaim, "This is not who we are." They should read this book.

Caste reframes the analysis of systemic racism within the broader understanding that we are living in a caste system. While some people might know that Nazis looked to the US to emulate our attempts to eradicate Native Americans, most are not aware they studied our racist policies as a blueprint for beginning the Holocaust.

"They were looking to move quickly with their plans for racial separation and purity, and knew that the United States was centuries ahead of them with its anti-miscegenation statutes and race-based immigration bans" (p. 79).

This chapter alone, the searing reality that we were the model for the Nazis' genocidal reign, makes the book worth reading. She describes in detail the rigid systems of categorization developed by the Nazis, along with the Indian caste system, to illustrate how the United States is supported by the same "pillars of caste."

White people must take seriously the responsibility of learning the true history of the US from authors of color. While we may not expect to be surprised by the atrocities inflicted on the lowest caste, gaining a greater understanding of how we got to this place is worth our time. Throughout *Caste*, Wilkerson shares stories that drive home the daily abuses that people in the lowest caste of America go through; from the brutality against enslaved people to the daily disrespect, or "microaggressions," black and brown people face as they simply try to live their lives.

Covering the span of English colonization up to the present, she makes clear how Trump's election was not an aberration, but a manifestation of the fears of those at the top of the system, working

to ensure they don't lose power. "Many political analysts and left-leaning observers did not believe that a Trump win was possible and were blindsided by the outcome in

2016, in part because they had not figured into their expectations the degree of reliable consistency of caste as an enduring variable in American life and politics" (page 324).

As Wilkerson adeptly weaves historical research, interviews with Indian Dalit (or Untouchable) activists and scholars, I found myself

nodding in agreement, shaking my head in disbelief, and wishing for a magic wand that could bring reconciliation, healing, and reparations to those who have suffered at the bottom rungs of caste. This book should be required reading in high schools and colleges across our nation.

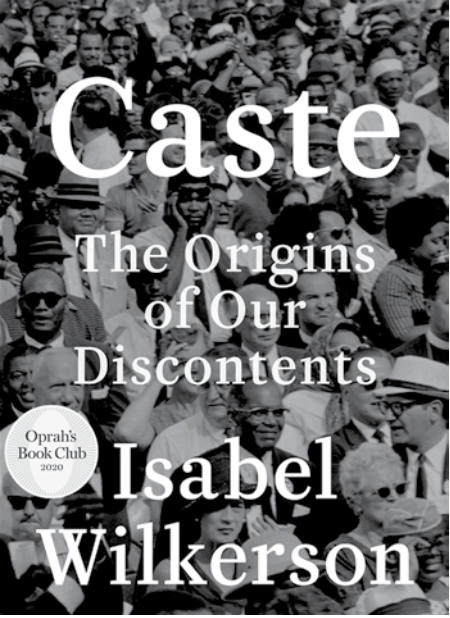
There are no answers within this book, as much as one might hope for a guide to dismantling the system. But how could Wilkerson offer an antidote to the foundation-

al poison that runs through our blood? "No ethnic or racial category is immune to the messaging we all receive about the hierarchy, and thus no one escapes its consequences" (p. 71). Regardless of our intentions and beliefs, if we have grown up in this country, we have lived with toxic ideas of lower caste people infusing the air we breathe.

Wilkerson's first Pulitzer Prize winning book, *The Warmth of Other Suns*, was illuminating in its own right, following African Americans in the Great Migration from the southern US. *Caste* lays bare the foundations that meant their change of location could never be enough to free them from the position they had been assigned, long before their births.

Whether you have read numerous books on the history of race and power in America, or have yet to explore that aspect of who we are, *Caste* is an essential read. Compelling, engaging, scholarly, and replete with analogies and metaphors to illustrate our current condition, Wilkerson's voice helps to understand the cost of the brutality and division our country was founded on.

Samantha Chandler is a white, queer, anti-racist language arts teacher at NOVA Middle School and Co-founder of the Olympia Family Theater.



Caste reframes the analysis of systemic racism within the broader understanding that we are living in a caste system.

Mutual aid

From page 1

lot of folks have an impulse to help but don't have an understanding of mutual aid as a concept... We have lost members who have thought we were too accommodating and not radical enough, and we have lost members who have thought we were too restrictive and too radical. It has been a very challenging balance."

Mutual aid is a political concept that highlights contradictions in power. "Mutual aid is a paradigm shift away from colonial capitalism and embraces a prefigurative world in which people look out for and support one another," shares Audrey with OlyMAC.

Robert at OlyMAP also describes how mutual aid goes beyond existing systems to build community connection. "It can be really inspiring. You're building solidarity with people and encouraging healthy skepticism of government's ability to take care of us. Charity can miss seeing people. There's a sense of—you might hand out a meal every week—but if you're not talking to folk, and building connections, you might be holding onto preconceptions about people. You might not be seeing the ways we can actually help each other. Charity is one-sided, you're only conceiving of the way you can help that person. Versus, when you build that connection, you can work together, you can accomplish all kinds of things."

Mutual aid is "solidarity, not charity"

Becca Chrisler, another volunteer with OlyMAP, got involved after looking for ways to connect after moving to Olympia. "I didn't know what mutual aid was but liked what my friend was telling me about it. It was amazing, the energy of the volunteers was infectious, and so many people brought so many different foods and supplies. It grew from there, after the last Stop The Sweeps campaign by Just Housing Olympia, I got involved in organizing."

Becca also described the importance of the mutual aid model, as distinct from charity work. "The main concept behind our work is that we approach everything with the residents, we do not assume anything for them or take action without knowing that it is what residents want. We have no one leader or manager; every member volunteer has an equal say and the membership is made up of housed and unhoused folks."

Meeting challenges in working together during a pandemic

Becca observed that the COVID-19 pandemic presented new challenges to this relational model of mutual aid organizing. "We couldn't hold meetings in person anymore. A lot of our unhoused members weren't able to contribute like you could before because their access to technology is more limited."

Another situation experienced by MAP was due to the pandemic: "A lot of our volunteers are older and concerned about their health. To get around this, (we) came up with volunteer intake forms and held a zoom orientation. The form helped us figure out where we could fit people with their interests and availability. It's really cool, now we're trying to figure out how we can expand... for example, crisis

supply distribution, supporting self-governance and promoting collaborative garbage cleanups with camp residents have been made stronger in the last year despite COVID."

Caring for each other and for yourself, and having fun

What advice is there for people interested in joining mutual aid efforts? Becca shares that you



This relational and politically centered mode of mutual aid organizing can be challenging. Shon Meckfessel shares that "from my own point of view, it's a heartbreak how much movements in the days of social media shred themselves with infighting... People are steeped in trauma. All these wonderful groups are."

To help navigate these dynamics, Becca shares "you gotta take care of yourself before you can take care of the community, and you can take care of community in ways you might not have known otherwise."

should "Tear down all assumptions and go into it with an open heart and mind. Ask questions, get close, get to know people. It's hard to see people you care about going through this survival struggle, so also knowing your boundaries is important, always take care of yourself before you extend yourself to others... Because we've built relationships with residents, it's not just they're asking for help—they're concerned for my wellbeing and they want to take care of me and know how to help too. It's a two-way street."

Structural and political roots of mutual aid

The origins of the term mutual aid has roots in anarchist and social movements, explained Dr. Shon Meckfessel, long-time anarchist organizer and current faculty at Highline College. Some understanding of the term goes back to the 1902 publication of *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* by Russian naturalist and anarchist Peter Kropotkin:

"Darwinism has been used to justify social inequality, in ways [Darwin] never said. Kropotkin, an admirer of Darwin, pointed out the neglected aspect, that besides competition between species, one of the things that makes species more successful is their ability to cooperate. Our own survival is based on helping each other out."

"You do not need to subscribe to any particular political philoso-

phy to participate in the mutual aid offered and received in this group, like sharing your extra toilet paper or seed starts or receiving assistance picking up your prescriptions or having groceries delivered," says Audrey at OlyMAC. "However, it is important to understand that mutual aid is historically a radical act, with a rich history that has defined it."

OlyMAC references author Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, who wrote *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice*, saying "mutual aid is part of the history of all communities but especially of communities of color that face obstacles accessing resources... In major cities, more than half of Black Americans were part of at least one mutual aid society by the late 1800s."

G.t. Press also shares the importance of self-care and not forgetting to have fun. "Personal health and emotional hygiene are incredibly important when everyone is stressed out and uncertain about the future... [Community] is the fun of life—start there! Fun can look like making food together, enjoying each other's company, and actually learn from one another—that is the soil from which a functional mutual-aid group will emerge."

"You don't need to subscribe to any particular political philosophy to ... share your extra toilet paper or seed starts or receive assistance picking up your prescriptions...."

Robert also acknowledges it can be difficult to navigate some of the conflict and real challenges to survival and thriving, but ultimately, "it's a kind of thing where you're energized by surprises all the time. Random people will show up [to Mutual Aid Mondays] and I have a ton of supplies for folks at the Jungle, sometimes, say \$500 worth of things... it's the kind of thing that makes me feel fuzzy. This work forges these connections and solidarity which matters. Olympia is... small enough that you can feel the consequences of those connections."

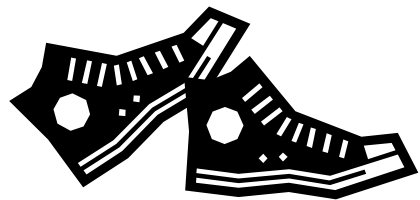
How to get involved
Black Power Initiative: Please consider donating to the Black Power Initiative; their Cashapp handle is \$blackispowerful


MetaCooperative Business Incubator's public projects: Visit [Earthfarms.fun](https://earthfarms.fun) or earthhomes.design, whose goals are to transform our bioregion into a bastion of biodiversity, a leader in disaster resiliency attuned to ecological principles.

OlyMAC: Join the Facebook page or email olymutualaidcollective@gmail.com. Snail mail works too: OlyMAC HBA, PO Box 2272, Olympia, WA 98501.

OlyMAP: Contact admin@olymap.org or visit www.olymap.org .

Sarah H. Keefe lives in Olympia and has worked for a variety of state and non-profit institutions serving the public.





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Sheriff

From page 1

Reported witness statements contradict the TCSO review

Oregon Public Broadcasting and ProPublica spoke to several witnesses who contradicted the officers' claims to have been "readily identifiable." They said that as police pulled up quickly in unmarked vehicles, they didn't hear them identify themselves. "There was no 'drop your weapon' or 'freeze' or 'police'—no warning at all," said Garrett Louis, who witnessed part of the shooting. The New York Times spoke to 21 people near the scene who did not hear the officers identify themselves or give any commands before they started shooting.

According to Fred Langer, a Seattle personal injury lawyer hired by Reinoehl's family, the findings open the door for a wrongful death lawsuit. "This is a case that cries out for investigation," he said. "What we have is police acting as judge, jury and executioner, all in one nanosecond." A ruling on whether the killing was justified is anticipated by the end of May.

TCSO did not follow state law investigating the Reinoehl killing

A fundamental purpose of I-940 was to restore public trust in the integrity of investigations of deadly force incidents. In addition to requiring that investigations be independent, new rules call for transparency, communication and that the investigators be credible. Thus, one requirement is that every law enforcement agency include at least two civilian community members on their investigative team. The community representatives help choose officers to serve on the team by reviewing

their qualifications and examining potential conflicts of interest.

According to state law, "Chiefs and Sheriffs of each regional team shall create a transparent process for soliciting names and creating a roster of individuals willing to serve in this capacity."

A TCSO press release from September 10, 2020 states, "We are working closely with our community representatives in this case." Out of the 31 press releases issued by the Thurston County Sheriff about the Reinoehl investigation, this is the only mention of community representatives. In fact, the September 10 and October 22 releases are the only place on the Sheriff's entire website that mentions I-940.

In response to a contact from this reporter, TCSO Lt. Ray Brady said people can apply to join a panel from which community representatives are selected by calling him or Team Leader Cameron Simper. According to state law, sheriffs and chiefs decide who will serve on the panel prescribed by I-940. Brady said the current panel was put together in 2019.

This is in stark contrast to other area law enforcement agencies who have worked with local government to notify their communities, including through press releases and their websites, of how to serve as an I-940 community representative. In many cases, this also includes information about the process for how representatives are chosen.

For example, the City of Olympia has an entire page dedicated to I-940. They list the I-940 Community Representatives for Police Use of Force Events on their Advisory Committees. The City of Lacey Police Department has a Community Safety Act (I-940) Citizen Representative Application easily found

by searching the internet. And a three-page November 2020 press release from the City of Tumwater Police Department shares detailed information on the need for, roles, and responsibilities of I-940 community representatives, as well as instructions on how to apply.

Finally, under the rules for I-940, "No member of the involved agency nor the IIT will provide the media with criminal background information of the person against whom deadly force has been used, unless required by law." TCSO violated I-940 by releasing criminal background information about Reinoehl in two weekly news releases.

The September 4 news release describes Reinoehl as "a wanted homicide suspect," and the final news release on March 31 states, "At the time of this incident, Michael Reinoehl had an active Felony warrant out of Multnomah County Circuit Court in Oregon for Murder in the Second Degree with a firearm."

The head of the TCSO fails the law's requirement of impartiality and ethical behavior

Considering the following indications of pro-Trump, anti-BLM sentiments, Thurston County Sheriff John Snaza's role at the head of the investigation into Reinoehl's killing is alarming—and can only undermine the credibility of any conclusions.

At an October 2019 gun rights rally in Yelm, where attendees floated the idea of attempting a citizen's arrest of Attorney General Bob Ferguson, Snaza asserted he had the authority to swear in a militia (though said he wouldn't do so at that time). The Seattle Times pointed out state law does not appear to empower Snaza or any other sheriff to raise a militia.

"Many wore insignia of the Washington Three Percenters — a group whose website says its goal is to 'utilize the fail safes put in place by our founders to reign (sic) in an overreaching government and push back against tyranny,'" reported *The Seattle Times*.

Masking not required—then a COVID outbreak

Sheriff Snaza also refused to require TCSO deputies and corrections officers to wear masks. A June 2020 news release from TCSO states it will not require deputies to wear masks. It leaves the decision to wear a mask "up to the individual deputy and situation they encounter." The Olympian reported the same policy was applied to corrections officers.

A photo of Snaza at a Blue Lives Matter rally in Yelm in July 2020, at the height of local BLM demonstrations, shows him maskless while hugging an attendee. Amid a COVID outbreak at the jail in September 2020, Snaza was reprimanded by County Commissioner John Hutchings (a former Olympia cop and Snaza ally) during a Board meeting for failing to require staff to follow COVID-19 precautions. At least nine inmates and four staff tested positive for COVID during that outbreak.

When the Commissioners learned that some deputies and corrections officers hadn't been wearing masks or social distancing while on duty, they voted to stop the hazard pay increase TCSO employees had been enjoying for the previous six months—a total of \$333,000 was paid out. During a second outbreak in January 2021, at least eight inmates and three staff, including Snaza, tested positive for COVID.

In the meantime, TCSO's budget consumes 37% of the County's general fund spending. And the loss of the hazard pay might not be such a big deal—in 2019, Snaza's salary was \$146,160 while Undersheriff Tim Braniff was paid \$177,936, just \$2,000 less than Governor Inslee. Chief deputies were making almost \$164,000; the operations lieutenant and a captain made more than \$146,000.

A new office to investigate use of force

Will I-940's goal to enhance transparency, credibility and communication be achieved? Attorney General Ferguson followed up his inquiry by recommending ways to strengthen the investigative rules that implement I-940. In April 2021, Washington lawmakers passed HB 1267, which creates the Office of Independent Investigations, a new non-law enforcement agency tasked with investigating police deadly force incidents. The bill was opposed by law enforcement groups.

It will be some time before the office has the capacity to investigate more than a handful of cases per year, so teams like the Region 3 CIIT will continue to handle many deadly force cases. According to the Fatal Encounters database, which tracks all manner of deaths by police, police in Washington killed 55 people in 2020.

Eleanor Steinhagen is a 15-year resident of Olympia.

The current requirements for investigations of use of force incidents are at WAC 139-12-030. Information for the article is in published news sources.

Endless war update Yemen and Afghanistan

WIP war correspondent online.

Out with the government, send in the commercial contractors.

President Biden announced in February that he would end support for Saudi Arabia's offensive operations in Yemen. No more refueling warplanes, providing logistical support, no more advanced weapons systems for the Saudi war effort. But the warplanes are still delivering their bombs. Through a US government process, the Saudi government pays commercial contractors to keep the jets flying, and the US military still provides "defensive support." This enables the Saudis to continue bombing and enforcing a blockade on Yemeni ports.

The war was started 6 years ago by Saudi Arabia to restore a ruler friendly to them, when a Houthi movement took over Yemen's capital. Aided by the US, the war took the lives of more than 230,000 people, caused outbreaks of disease and brought famine to the population. The World Food Program said around 400,000 children could die in Yemen by the end of this year. In April, 80 Democrats sent a letter demanding that Biden do more to force Riyadh to end the blockade that contributes to the famine.

Bring the boots home, send in the drones.

Headlines on newspapers and computer feeds across the country on April 14 proclaimed: "Withdrawal of US Troops from Afghanistan." President Biden did not say that the United States will stop bombing Afghanistan. And he pledged that "we will keep providing assistance to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces," which can only be "war by any other name."



Monica Isaac and Iman Saleh organized a hunger strike to call attention to continuing US support for the Saudi-led blockade. "We know that if the blockade ends, the war ends," Isaac told *Middle East Examiner*. "But within that goal is creating awareness about who the Yemeni people are and what they have been dealing with."

In the face of a budget dedicated to war profiteering

Jesuit priest detained by Feds at Sea-Tac continues resistance to nuclear weapons

Sea-Tac, April 1. Father Steve Kelly, S.J., a Jesuit priest and longtime nuclear resister, was brought in chains to Tacoma on March 30 to appear in the US District Court on a warrant for a previous probation violation. Father Kelly came from Brunswick, GA where he had been imprisoned for his part in the 2018 Kings Bay Plowshares action.

**Symbolic disarmament—
a felony**

The Kings' Bay action took place on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Kelly and others, known as the Kings Bay Plowshares 7, entered the US Navy's East Coast Trident nuclear ballistic missile submarine base at Kings Bay. At trial, they pled not guilty, because they had not entered the base to commit a crime, but rather to prevent one from occurring; the crime of "omnicide," the destruction of the human race in a nuclear war. In the face of the threat that the US nuclear arsenal poses to the world, they believed what they had done was not illegal, but a "symbolic disarmament," an act of necessary civil resistance.

All seven were found by a jury to be guilty on three felony counts and a misdemeanor charge.

Father Steve Kelly, S.J. had earlier been arrested in March of 2017 in Silverdale, WA on a charge of trespassing at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor during a Pacific Life Community nonviolent direct action. Father Kelly refused to cooperate when a judge imposed supervised release so a warrant for his arrest was issued. After a preliminary hearing, the probation office agreed with the priest's attorney, who pointed out that by the time a new hearing was scheduled, Father Kelly would have served his maximum sentence. The probation office then agreed to recommend that Father Kelly be sentenced to time served.

**A lethal combination: tactical
and strategic nuclear weapons**

The combined fourteen ballistic missile submarines at Bangor and Kings Bay, carry the Trident II D5 ballistic missile armed with some combination of W76-1 (100 kiloton) warheads and W88 (475 kiloton) warheads, in addition to some

of the newer "low-yield" W76-2 warheads. These are, in addition to being what the US government calls "the most survivable leg of the US nuclear triad," arguably a first-strike nuclear weapon that is inherently destabilizing and an impediment to efforts toward cooperation

of nuclear weapons. So it is my life long quest to imitate the Good Shepherd. I will insert myself between the dangers and the flock."

Kelly was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in the Jesuit order in 1990, and participated in numer-

In contrast to US courts, jurors in many other countries where Plowshares actions have been carried out have acquitted activists. In the case of the Pitstop Plowshares, five members of the Catholic Worker Movement who damaged a US Navy C-40 transport aircraft (enroute to Iraq) at Shannon Airport, Ireland in 2003, were allowed to present a reasonable defense. They were acquitted by a jury that determined the defendants had acted to save lives and property in Iraq.

**Courts in the US have consistently refused to allow
Kelly (and other Plowshares activists) to present
any reasonable defense of their actions.**

with Russia and disarmament. The continuing warhead modernization and construction of the next generation of ballistic missile submarines, with plans for a new warhead and missile, is speeding more rapidly toward nuclear catastrophe.

**The right to act in accord with
one's religious beliefs is not
uniformly honored**

Reaching to the heart of Gospel teachings, in Kelly's own words: "The Gospel has many instances in the parables of Jesus inserting himself between the flock and the dangers; namely the thief and the wolf. In today's or rather contemporary application of the Gospel is that Christ is incarnate in the poor in the flock and the thief is the budget dedicated to war profiteering and nuclear annihilation. The wolf is the ever-present danger of the threat and, God forbid, the use

ous Plowshares action since his first-- "Jubilee Plowshares"-- in 1995. Since then he has spent over 10 years behind bars, and roughly a third of that time in solitary confinement (non-cooperation).

**Elsewhere in the world, courts
are willing to listen**

Courts in the US have consistently refused to allow Kelly (and other Plowshares activists) to present any reasonable defense of their actions. In nearly every case, judges have agreed with Federal prosecutors to prohibit the defendants from introducing anything constituting a reasonable defense—including religious motivation, international law and treaties, Nuremberg principles, necessity defense, or the existence, numbers, or lethality of nuclear weapons, all of which are established, public knowledge and/or precedent.

Punishing the messenger

Rather than prosecute Fr. Kelly and others who attempt to shine the light of conscience on the profound danger of nuclear weapons and a new arms race, the US government should listen to their warnings and begin to "pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date." The next step would be "a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control." This is required by Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to which the US is a signatory.

This is an edited version of a press release issued by Leonard Eiger of the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action. www.gzcenter.org

Where will the money come from?

Mary Jo Dolis

Where will the money come from? The big question and the Republicans' number one argument against President Biden's long-overdue program to repair the country's infrastructure is: where will the money come from? For example, what about the \$40 billion the President asked Congress to spend on the huge need for public housing?

Maybe it could come from a place no one ever asks about even when there's nothing to show for money already spent.

What about cancelling our missile defense boondoggle? The premise behind national missile defense comes from video games: when a hostile launch is detected, destroy the incoming missiles by ramming them with ground-launched "interceptors." It's a strategy known as "hitting a bullet with a bullet." In reality, the system is easy to defeat, and has routinely failed even simple, heavily-scripted test intercepts. (1)

To date, the system has cost more than \$40 billion—and there's no end in sight.

In August of last year, the Pentagon announced its intention to build Next-Generation Interceptors. These will replace the current RKV (Redesigned Kill Vehicle) interceptors.

The RKV was cancelled after 10 years in development and three times the original cost estimate.

The RKV was supposed to replace another Kill Vehicle (the Exoatmospheric KV) deployed in 2005 despite controversy and problems with performance in tests.



Executives from Northrop Grumman opening their brand new Launch and Missile Defense Systems facility at Chandler, Arizona. It offers "a modern work environment with unique amenities."

The Pentagon has already selected Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman to compete to develop and build the interceptors. While the Missile Defense Agency anticipates placing the new interceptors roughly by 2027 or 2028, "industry proposals will dictate final schedules and what is doable," according to the Pentagon.

When they cancelled the RKV program, the DOD Undersecretary of research and engineering said, "Development programs sometimes encounter problems. After exercising due diligence, we decided the path we're going down wouldn't be fruitful, so we're not going down that path anymore. This decision supports our efforts to gain full value from every future taxpayer dollar spent on defense." (2).

We're not going down that path anymore? Ask Congress and the defense contractors. The new missile system is "estimated to cost" nearly \$18 billion during the life of the program. There is no reason to expect a different outcome from this (as yet unnamed) "kill vehicle" program than those of the past 20 years: Decades of R&D, test flights that fail, billions in taxpayer dollars.

Why not avoid the next \$40 billion and use it for housing instead?

Mary Jo Dolis is a naturally skeptical person who occasionally submits something to Works in Progress.

Information from (1) the Union of Concerned Scientists www.ucsusa.org/resources/disastrous-us-approach and (2) www.defensenews.com.

91.1
Westport



89.1
Montesano

News
Democracy Now!
Feature Story News
National Native News

Discussion
Background Briefing
Law and Disorder
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Information:
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PO Box 1892 Westport, WA 98595

Community Spotlight



P.O.W.E.R Capacity-Building Fundraiser

Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights has an online fundraiser that continues through **May 9**. The fundraiser is hosted by The Peace Development Fund to augment a grant from the fund to POWER. The groups main work is informing people of their legal rights to public assistance, educating the community about poverty and working to alleviate poverty. Plans for 2021 include launching an on-line market for Alchemilla Feminist Economic Collaborative members to sell their wares. www.mightycause.com/story/Supportpower Give a little (or a lot if you can). Pass on the link with a note to friends to contribute. Learn more about POWER at m.mamapower.org/



National Bail Out: Black Mamas Day May 9, 2021

Since 2017, NBO has freed more than 500 people from cages and provided them with supportive services including long-term housing and trauma counseling. Today, while the country is slowly opening back up and many have access to the COVID-19 vaccine, there are Black mamas and caregivers suffering in jail simply because they can't afford to pay bail. We know that people who are incarcerated cannot practice social distancing inside a cage. Even in the midst of the global pandemic, people are still being criminalized, punished, and denied their freedom.



Join us to honor five years of Black Mama's Day Bail Outs! Help us reach our goal of raising \$500k to #FreeBlackMamas [<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/freeblackmamas>] by making an offering - as much as you can!

American Friends Service Committee

May 1 - May 10. AFSC invites everyone to join the #FreeThemAll Mother's Day Letter Writing and Caravan event, Communities across the US are joining together for the National Days of Action to #FreeThemAll from May 1 through May 9/10 (Mother's Day), 2021.



In Washington, there is a letter-writing campaign from now through May 7, to write supportive letters to immigrants who are being detained in the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma and save the date for a #FreeThemAll caravan to Tacoma on Saturday, May 8. Follow this link for a toolkit, zoom links and instructions as to how to participate in writing cards and letters. Join the call to #FreeThemAll [<https://www.afsc.org/FreeThemAll>]. You can access the toolkit in English here [<https://rop.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FreeThemAll-Letter-Writing-Toolkit-4.21.pdf>] and in Spanish here [<https://rop.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FreeThemAll-Kit-de-herramientas-para-escribir-cartas-para-el-Di%CC%81a-de-las-Madres.docx.pdf>]

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Evergreen public seminar: College behind bars

Saturday, May 15, 12-1:30. This is part of a series of seminars "Reimagining Public Safety"



This presentation focuses on the recent documentary about a Prison Initiative Program established at Bard College. The public series was designed to showcase the unique power of Evergreen's model of action-oriented community-based interdisciplinary inquiry. Each event put together a dynamic panel of contemporaries to engage in "urgent studies" that serve to "focus and legitimize research on solutions."

The Spring series, hosted by "Reimagining Community Safety," featured three seminars that focused on: (1) alternatives to policing and incarceration, (2) transformative and restorative justice, and (3) the power of a liberal arts education as a countermeasure to mass incarceration, as well as (4) a grand finale focused on bioregional regeneration.

More information for the May 15 online event and recordings of the previous 2 seminars are available at Public Seminars [<https://sites.evergreen.edu/communitysafety/public-seminar/>]

League of Women Voters

Join the Thurston Co. LWV "Talk about Race" book group. They will discuss Caste: The Origin of our Discontent. **Sunday, May 16, 2 pm.** (Reviewed in this issue and April WIP). Click here to find resources for increasing awareness, opportunities to participate in relevant events, and current information about the book group. The League is a nonpartisan organization that offers ways for people to learn about issues that concern them.



People Powered Fair Maps is a nationwide redistricting campaign of the US League. It's focused on creating fair voting districts in all 50 states- an important goal for all our futures. A Washington state Commission is now redrawing our legislative and congressional district boundaries. These districts are key to election results. The League created "Speak Up Schools" with information and support for people to bring their views to the Commission, which is made up of two people appointed by the Democratic Party and two by the Republicans, with a non-partisan chair. The live schools are completed, but the commission work is ongoing. Consider participating - find info in the Redistricting Forum Toolkit posted on the LWVWA website.

Glen's Parallax Perspectives: Economic Justice

On his May program, Glen will interview two guests who are experts in problems and solutions under the topic "Economic Justice." Bartlett Naylor is a Financial Policy Advocate working for Public Citizen (www.citizen.org), the savvy non-profit founded by Ralph Nader half a century ago. Sarah Anderson is a Program Director at the Institute for Policy Studies (www.ips-dc.org), another non-profit that has worked on a cutting-edge issues 1963. The speakers will cover long-standing economic problems that led to our current crisis along with ways to promote economic justice and fairness for ordinary people. The interview airs on cable channel 22 of Thurston Community Media (www.tcmedia.org) at **1:30 pm Mondays, 5:00 pm Wednesdays, 9:00 pm Thursdays.** Watch the interview and get a summary of the program plus more information at www.parallaxperspectives.org in the "TV Programs" and "Economics." Questions? Contact Glen Anderson, producer/host at (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net

GRuB is good in the springtime!

Sign up for a garden built by GRuB. Want a GRuBby Garden of your very own? GRuB is accepting applications from folks who would like a backyard garden and qualify for the program. Enrollment is open now for GRuB's Garden Program. Visit their website for links to an online application, or call (360) 753-5522 to request a paper application. www.goodgrub.org

Fireweed workshop with GRuB. Thursday, June 3, 3:00-4:00 pm. Fireweed represents the promise that beauty and balance will return after bodily illness or environmental destruction. In this workshop participants learn how to use fireweed for food and medicine, and explore fireweed teachings around restoration. Taught by Mariana Harvey (Yakama) and Charlene Koutchak (Inupiaq). Online, pay what you can (\$0/\$15/\$30 - no one turned away.). www.goodgrub.org/event/



2021 Bicycle Commuter Challenge

Saturday, May 1, 2021 - Monday, May 31, 2021 The BCC is open to ALL BICYCLE RIDES this year- just get out and ride, for the JOY of it! Log in [<https://bcc.intercitytransit.com/events/2021-5>] or create an account on the BCC website, log your May bike rides, and you will be entered in drawings for prizes! Click here for events in May [<https://bcc.intercitytransit.com/events>]



Youth Bike Challenge

May 1-31, 2021 **Saturday, May 1, 2021 - Monday, May 31, 2021** Thurston County Youth! Ride your bike on any 10 days in May and win a prize! [<https://bcc.intercitytransit.com/events/2021-5-1>] Challenge runs May 1 through May 31, 2021

OCEP Conservation Victory!

At the end of April, the Olympia Coalition for Ecosystem Preservation announced conservation of another 1.75 acres in West Olympia. Located at 1515 West Bay Drive, this site once hosted the offices of the Hardel Mutual Plywood Corporation and a Puget Sound Energy substation. It has 420 feet of frontage on West Bay Drive and represents a unique opportunity to conserve dwindling shoreline forest and to improve water quality through green infrastructure. The acquisition was made possible by a \$212K donation from an anonymous couple in the community and a matching donation from the Angela J. Bowen Conservancy Foundation.



Olympia Timberland Library - Genealogy Cafe

May 20, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm. Drop-in actually! Researchers are invited to bring their genealogy questions to get help from members of the Olympia Genealogical Society in the library's meeting room. The library offers many free resources. Use Ancestry Library Edition for free and Available Anywhere **until June 30, 2021.** Access other free genealogy tools at home with an Internet connection by logging in with your library card and look for the prompt. Staff members at any Timberland Library can offer in-person help as library services are fully restored.

Works in Progress

Advocating for social justice since 1990



This issue: Finding common ground

The myth of “trickle down” economics

Justification for tax cuts has often been that the economy as a whole will benefit — that lower corporate taxes would lead to company expansions, more jobs and higher incomes. It hasn't worked out that way. Instead, economic growth has been mediocre since the 1970s. Incomes have grown even more slowly than the economy for every group except the wealthy.

Furthermore, even given favorable tax rates, the wealthy disproportionately don't pay taxes due. A study released last month, which included two IRS officials as authors, found that the richest one percent of Americans don't report about 20 percent of their income to the government. Those individuals are able to use pass-through businesses and offshore structures to shield their income from the IRS's view, the study said. Collecting that money would boost tax collections by \$175 billion a year.

Corporate tax cuts: Corporate tax as a share of GDP

Source: *NY Times*

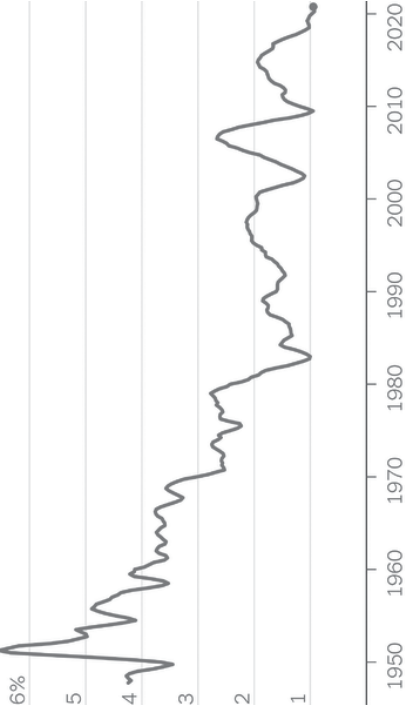
Economic growth: Real GDP 10-year annualized growth rate 1957–201

Source: EPB Macro Research

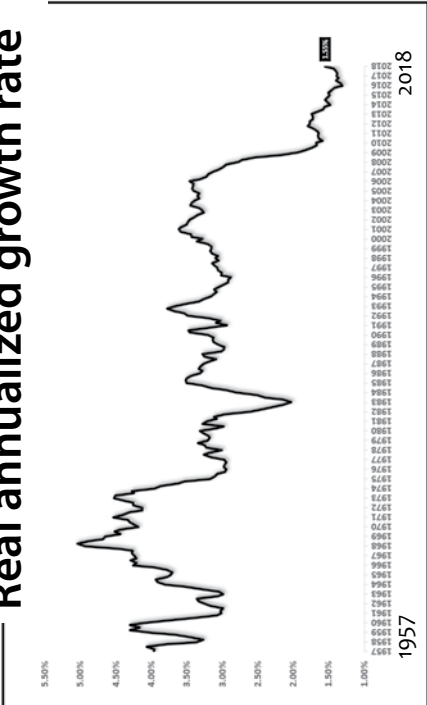
Income growth by group— Uneven Progress Among US Families

Source: US Census

Corporate tax rate to GDP



Real annualized growth rate



Income growth by quintile

Uneven Progress Among U.S. Families

Mean household income by quintile and top 5 percent (in constant 2012 dollars)

