

Elected officials in Thurston County begin allocating new federal funds

A substantial infusion of money—is anyone counting?

Bethany Weidner

Soon after Biden took office, Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP Rescue Plan). Thurston County jurisdictions will share a windfall of over \$82 million in “fiscal recovery funds.” Half the money came this May and the rest will come next May. It all has to be obligated by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2025.

The Treasury Department has published initial rules for spending the money, but it's not possible to know exactly what expenditures are eligible until the final rule comes out. While each jurisdiction has already made decisions about the use of funds, they might have to be adjusted later.

Who's deciding how to spend the money

Officials here have made little effort to include the public in deciding how to allocate the money. This runs counter to the Rescue Plan's directive to address systemic challenges that contribute to unequal outcomes of the pandemic. The directive indicates that enlisting meaningful participation from the community—including underserved members who are often excluded from civic life—is essential to the best use of the funds.

The task of ensuring that ARP funds are deployed in a way that isn't wasteful—doesn't duplicate efforts or overlap other funding—has also been neglected. A Thurston County report on ARP notes that “It has been difficult to plan the best use of these funds when we don't know what the state or neighbor jurisdictions are investing in.”

Finally, the fiscal recovery fund is a one-time injection of money that shouldn't create obligations for future budgets. As one analyst noted, the funds should be “transformative,” instead of adding money for existing structures and programs.

A lot of money has been allocated already

Elected officials in all jurisdictions have identified uses for some of the money, but none have publicized their decisions. Olympia and Tumwater have approved allocations for the total amount of the funds. Officials in Thurston County and Lacey are still in the process of evaluating some possibilities.

Thurston County—\$56.4 million
Details of the County's process and proposals for use of the ARP funds

are in an August 31 report that is available online. (1) The report includes ideas for using \$45 million still unallocated.



According to the report, the County will invite community comment on these ideas via survey and outreach through partner organizations, program providers and social media, “to ensure feedback from traditionally underserved populations, includ-

ing people of color, people with low income and populations with limited English proficiency.”

So far, Commissioners have approved allocation of \$11 million of their total, to be distributed as follows: business including minority (51%), intern job hires (14%), nonprofits including youth support (14%), agricultural markets (9%),

basic needs (8), public health (3%). [See the sidebar on page 10 for specific amounts.]

The report points out that the County will spend more than \$100 million in pandemic-related funds from federal programs and other sources. For context, the County points out that its annual budget is \$110 million.

Lacey \$11.45 million

At an April 23 retreat Lacey City Council members decided to focus use of ARP funds on increasing the number of permanent supportive housing units available to the homeless population. The idea had been presented and discussed at an earlier work session and a joint meeting with Thurston County Commissioners. Some documents indicate that Lacey has also committed \$1.3 million to a regional pot of money to be administered by the Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC).

► **Federal funds**, continued on page 10

How to position Thurston County to be attractive? A Real Estate Forum offers answers from a market perspective

Esther Kronenberg

Growth was still the grail at the Thurston Economic Development Council's Real Estate Forum on Oct 7. Specifically, growth in the commercial and industrial sector—with opportunities for South Sounders to make money in related real estate development.

Attendees were primarily from local real estate firms and banks, title companies, attorneys, prominent builders and engineers like Thomas Architects, Kaufman Construction and SCJ Alliance. Also present were elected officials and staff from Thurston County, Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater, Port EDC and staff and a handful of local businesses and nonprofits, including Homes First and Enterprise for Equity.

Heather Burgess, a high-profile real estate attorney, kicked off the forum touting Thurston County's attractive investment environment. Burgess is President of the Board of the Economic Development Council (EDC) whose Executive Director, Michael Cade, hosted the event.

The focus of the virtual event was on how to perpetuate business-as-usual in the face of “changing commercial and industrial market impacts.” One focus was on local conditions—how to keep traffic flowing on I-5 and how remote work expanded the residential market—and the other was on how to reach beyond the local economy.

There was no recognition that “business as usual” has brought about a future of catastrophic weather events and encroaching sea levels—not to mention locally creating ever-increasing traffic congestion, a housing affordability crisis, significant loss of agricultural land, worsening water quality and marine habitat, and more.

Adding transportation capacity never gets old

“Business as usual” was the approach presented by Marc Daily of Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) who identified the I-5 corridor as the highest transportation priority for our region. TRPC predicts that by 2045, normal weekday traffic on I-5 will be backed up 4 to 5 miles

between Nisqually and JBLM, and at the US 101 interchange.

Plans are underway to invest \$2-4 billion in new capacity, including development of SR 507 through Yelm as an I-5 alternate and adding HOV lanes from Marvin Road to Mounts Road. I-5 acts as a dam across the Nisqually River, causing erosion that is predicted to undercut the roadway between 2040 and 2055, endangering the highway as well as salmon habitat. The solution for this dilemma anticipates several billions to replace bridges and to put I-5 on piers, elevating it above the intertidal waters at the Nisqually Delta.

Remote work ushers in an “era of innovation”

According to the presentation, for every 1% of vehicles taken off the roadway, there is a three-fold decrease in congestion. This suggests telework could have financial implications for our transportation infrastructure—but also for the real estate market.

► **Real estate**, continued on page 8

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 accounts 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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THOUGHTS ON THE THEME

Gimme shelter

Whether it’s permanent refuge for undocumented immigrants, sustainable housing for low-income people, creating zones of protection from electromagnetic frequencies, or making sure habitats remain intact for native species, contributors to our theme of “Gimme Shelter” make it clear they understand the primacy of shelter and that safe haven is the right of all sentient beings.

If only so much of it didn’t come down to money. As our front-page articles make clear, there’s a lot of it flying around these days. Veteran reporter Bethany Weidner labored mightily to uncover how local and county officials plan to allocate the \$82 million coming in two installments under the American Rescue Plan Act, but it’s still far from clear.

Admittedly, budgets of this magnitude are challenging, especially when projects in multiple jurisdictions overlap and the parameters for eligible uses are open to interpretation. Maybe that’s why Olympia appears to have decided that soliciting input from its residents about how to spend their \$9.2 million was unnecessary. By contrast, Thurston County is inviting community participation through various organizations, social media platforms and surveys.

Residents might want to consider giving the county some feedback about the millions earmarked for the Economic Development Council. The EDC’s raison d’etre is to steer commercial, real estate and industry investors toward profitable investments in a constantly changing marketplace, but as Esther Kronenberg implies in her cover story on the EDC’s recent overview of economic trends in Puget Sound, those investments often benefit the few at the expense of the many. With this public-private entity charged with handling millions in taxpayer-supplied ARP funds, who know how they will use the money? Where is the transparency? Where is the accountability?

The writers at GuerrillaThink Press have a few things to say about traditional economics in their page 4 article on innovative approaches to fundraising for low-income housing that sidestep financial middlemen. While most of us are still trying to get a handle on cryptocurrency and tokenized transactions, GuerrillaThink pushes us to get comfortable with NFTs, cooperativism and mutual aid to build resilient housing that addresses the needs of our most vulnerable—instead of yet another luxury apartment building using developer tax exemptions. Talk about economic trends!

Dan Leahy takes a hard look at just how much real estate is devoted to low-income housing in Thurston County. You guessed it: not much.

About the cover

This month’s digitally drawn cover art is by Anh Nguyen. Inspired by the Gimme Shelter theme, Nguyen, a senior in fine arts at the University of Washington, based the drawing on a Google street view of the Capitol building grounds.

A tangled maze involving a Reagan-era tax credit program, the economic crash of 2008, cuts from the Trump administration, questionable decisions by local governments and the perennial greed of corporate players has resulted in no new low-income housing since 2017.

We know what you’re thinking. What is it with WIP and their relentless coverage of disturbing local news? We offer two points in our defense: first, someone’s gotta do it! Second, it ain’t all bad. Exhibit One is our coverage of the new book commemorating the PNW’s own Woodstock, the Satsop River Fair. Who knew Eric Clapton,

Eric Burdon, Albert Collins and Steve Miller performed there in 1971? You heard it in WIP first (unless you were there, that is).

Exhibit Two is Charlotte Persons’ article on the imminent adoption of the Habitat Conservation Plan, which will help preserve Washington prairie land and the endangered species who call it home. The frogs and butterflies, sparrows and gophers who’ll benefit from the plan aren’t just cute critters at the edge of extinction. They’re not even merely vital to soil aeration, pollination, and animal food webs. They’re indicators of viability. If they’re gone, humans aren’t far behind.

During this winter season, may warm homes and safe haven be found for all creatures great and small.

—LL

Fearful prayer of a high-rise developer

Luke 16:19–31

Dear Lord, my latest high-rise plan is this:
fabulous views, a Starbucks down the block,
security with cameras you can’t miss,
and rooftop tracks where dogs can take a walk.
I’m filling up my neighborhood with these
apartment towers built for city life
(just keep us separate from the homeless, please,
who beg along our street, upset my wife,
and interrupt a pleasant shopping trip).

Some nights I fear the flames where I’ll be flung.
That beggar—will he dip a fingertip
in water so it cools my burning tongue?
It’s night. I look down at the street and see
my beggar looking up and straight at me.

Steven Peterson

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Upcoming themes

January: Where do we find light?
It’s dark out there but the light hasn’t gone away. Can you see it yet? What helps you navigate dark times? **Deadline: December 17**
February: Grifters, Moochers & Lovers. Dark players don’t take a

holiday on Valentine’s Day but lots of regular folx keep their love light burning all year long. Is anyone watching out for us or are we always being played? Where does love fit in when so many messages tell us just to look out for number one? **Deadline: January 17**

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2021 election results—Olympia Council and Port of Olympia

Dan Leahy

City Council: incumbents—5, real estate—0

The challenge by real estate to take direct control of the City Council failed as City voters rejected the candidacies of Spence Weigand, Robbi Kesler, Cory Gauny and Candace Mercer in the general election, as well as Wendy Carlson's candidacy in the primary.

The real estate candidates' general position of more developments like West Bay Yards, more police downtown and the idea that homelessness is caused by drug addiction and mental illness did not play well enough for victory. Olympians may be worried about the current City Council's direction, but not worried enough to hand the Council over to direct real estate control.

All incumbents won easily in the

general election: Jim Cooper over Spence Weigand, Yen Huynh over Robbi Kesler, Clark Gilman over Candace Mercer, Lisa Parshley over Talauna Reed. Dontae Payne, not an incumbent but with the full support of all incumbents, won over Cory Gauny.

While the majority of Olympia's 37,038 registered voters didn't vote, approximately 41% (15,400) did vote. This was about 1,500 more votes cast compared to the August primary. Olympians also made a total of \$326,372 in cash contributions to the five races, for an average of \$65,268 per race.

The Spence Weigand/Jim Cooper race was the most expensive. Cooper raised \$37,817, the most of any incumbent, and Weigand raised \$81,795 in cash contributions. However, Weigand also received an additional \$20,646 of independent assistance from the National Association

of Realtors Fund, making Weigand's total \$102,441. Despite the Weigand campaign's heavy investment in signs, newspaper, radio and cable TV advertising and the endorsement of The Olympian newspaper, his \$64,624 advantage over Cooper didn't translate into votes. Weigand lost 6,956 to Cooper's 8,322.

The only non-real estate challenge to an incumbent was the race between Council member Lisa Parshley and challenger Talauna Reed. Parshley, like all her colleagues on the current City Council, is a supporter of more market rate housing in the downtown core and in neighborhoods, subsidized by a variety of exemptions from property taxes and environmental regulations where final decision-making is in the hands of a Hearing Examiner from Centralia. Parshley supported a modest increase in low-income housing, but only outside the downtown core, like the 62-unit LIHI project on Martin Way.

Reed, an organizer/activist with SURJ and BLAST, advocated challenging this policy by requiring developers to pay for affordable housing and by prioritizing community investment over policing and mass incarceration, but her campaign was not strong enough. Parshley won with a margin of over 2,600 votes.

Port of Olympia: real estate–1, environment–1

There were two open seats for the Port of Olympia's three-person Commission. County wide, 37% (approximately 74,110) of the County's 195,645 registered voters participated in the election

In one race, Kidder Matthews Vice President Amy Evans ran on a platform of “Getting Stuff Done” against business developer Josh Hansen. Hansen advocated for affordable broadband, local agriculture and clean energy. Hansen raised \$42,010 while Evans raised \$50,964. In addition, Evans received independent assistance of \$24,531: \$20,000 from the Washington Realtors PAC and \$4,531 from Concerned Taxpayers of Washington. With this assistance, Evans total campaign fund was \$75,495.

Evans won 134 out of the 145 rural precincts, as well as Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Tenino and Rainier, while losing to Hansen in Olympia. She won by 7,710 votes or 55.4%.

The other Port race featured Bob Iyall, a Nisqually business leader, against Jessie Simmons, an Army veteran. Iyall raised \$36,196 in cash contributions; Simmons raised \$27,032. However, Simmons' campaign fund was matched by independent assistance of \$28,000 from two political action committees. The Washington Realtors gave \$20,000 and the “Coalition for Family-Wage Jobs”—an entity set up solely to support Simmons in this race—gave \$8,000. The largest contributor to this “coalition” was the Weyerhaeuser Company's \$5,000 followed by \$2000 from the Thurston County Realtors, with another \$1000 from the International Longshore & Warehouse Union Local 47.

Iyall won 93 of the 145 rural precincts, 48 of Olympia's 55 precincts and 14 of Tumwater's 22 precincts while losing Lacey and splitting Yelm's four precincts with Simmons. Iyall won by 2,712 votes or 51.7%.

Note: All voting statistics are as of November 10, 2021 with 1,500 votes yet to be counted.

Dan Leahy reports regularly for WIP on Olympia elections.

Let’s not do that

The Olympia City Council in June approved a Housing Action Plan that lists specific actions the City will take to ensure our housing supply is adequate and affordable for the people who live here now and in the future.

It also lists actions the Council considered but decided to exclude from the Plan. Both lists are useful for understanding the City's commitment to market rate housing as the answer to the need for low-income housing. *Excluded actions:*

1. Allow more housing types in commercial zones.
2. Allow ADUs in commercial zones.
3. Retain existing subsidized housing
4. Limit the density of group homes to prevent concentration in any one area.
5. Establish a manufactured home park zone to promote their preservation.
6. Fund self-sufficiency and transitional housing programs that help break the cycle of homelessness.
7. Provide funding to Regional Housing Council for temporary emergency housing programs.
8. On a regular basis, evaluate the effectiveness of (MFTE) is being used to further affordable housing goals.
9. Require developers to provide income restricted units as part of low-density developments.
10. Require property owners to provide an affordable housing fee when building homes over a certain size.
11. Establish alternative development standards for affordable housing.
12. Require the owners of rental properties to obtain a business license.
13. On a regular basis, inventory rental housing.
14. Require developers to provide relocation assistance when a manufactured home park cannot be preserved.
15. Establish a property tax assistance program for low-income homeowners..
16. Establish a property tax assistance program for homeowners with disabilities.

Then this happened

...a happy ending! In May of 2018, WIP told how two years of organizing and strikes led by the IWW brought Oregon's Burgerville to the bargaining table. Now after (only!) three years, workers will vote on a contract that includes a three-month set schedule, paid vacation time and parental leave, improved job safety, and more. An organizer with the union added “We need real change in our society, and these improvements are just the beginning of new struggles to win even more.” Burgerville has branches in Centralia, Kelso and Vancouver.

..never-ending: Olympia's Department of Planning and Development for the fifth time accepted as complete Jerry Mahan's ap-

plication to develop Green Cove. The property on Cooper Point is a former gravel mine and waste site now the focus of a pending order from the Dept of Ecology on hazardous contamination. Read the whole story in the Aug. 2021 issue of WIP.

...never enough? Will warehouses be the new “farm crop?” Over the next year, the county will investigate the environmental impact of rezoning agricultural land for warehouses. Thurston County lost 11% of its farmland acres since 2000. Warehouse investor UPCastle also has its eye on new “Federal Opportunity Zones” that offer tax advantages—in Lacey, Nisqually and downtown Olympia.

Readers’ Alert—Review a book! Get \$50!

WIP still has funds from our “Readers Review” grant. Each month we 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. If any of these books looks interesting, let us know. Or propose a book yourself.

What Orwell Didn't Know: Propaganda and the New Face of American Politics, Andras Szanto, ed. Uses George Orwell's essay *Politics and the English Language* to shed light on today's TV and social media narratives.

Franchise: The Golden Arches in Black America, Marcia Chatelain.

You thought you knew who makes and who eats MacDonald hamburgers? Maybe not.

Newly on the list

The Kapernick Effect, Dave Zinn. What happened in high schools and colleges after the furor about Kapernick's knee died down.

We the Corporations: How American Businesses Won Their Civil Rights, Adam Winkler. Businessmen worked steadily to get the upper hand...beginning 100 years ago! Good read for history buffs.

Rise of the Warrior Cop, Radley Balko. What came of telling cops we're in a “war” on drugs, crime, terrorism etc. and giving them military equipment to wage that war.

Ghost in the Shell-ter

Exploring fresh models of cooperativism and permaculture design for Olympia’s housing crisis

GuerrillaThink Press

Olympia planners must awaken to two things if they hope to fundamentally shift the affordable housing landscape of our city: our bioregional climate reality and the viability of cryptocurrency and related technologies.

No number of consultants producing \$50,000 reports will ever reduce homelessness when hyperinflation and stagnant wages threaten existing renters’ and homeowners’ right livelihood.

No amount of scouring planning documents will reveal meaningful solutions if the designs fail to acknowledge that our era is marked by increasingly destructive, human-perpetuated, global climate change, and fail to implement any permaculture principles. Further housing developments that neglect the socio-ecological cost of materials and design verge on negligence.

Bioregional technologies, cooperatives and startups to the rescue

The appropriate technologies and social structures needed to employ and shelter the unhoused are already available: autonomous modular micro-grids, biodiesel fuel cooperatives, regenerative agriculture distribution networks, and a natural building industry based on renewable biomaterial composites.

Most of this technology is difficult and expensive to pursue for individuals, yet relatively small and coordinated fundraising efforts could fund ambitious startups willing to tackle the challenge at a bioregional scale.

Affordable housing for employed people can be addressed with the same methods but requires an exploration of integration with cryptocurrency given recent inflation rates. Bioregional land-use planning also requires confronting contractors, developers, financiers, and politicians who prefer business as usual in Cheetwoot (one of many indigenous names for this area of the Puget Sound).

Community support models, such as Mutual Aid Cooperatives, have experienced a resurgence in the financial void left by the pandemic, as people strive to make ends meet in challenging times. Techniques

and tools for operating these cooperative technologies are already being disseminated globally by students, entrepreneurs, local organizations and social purpose-driven businesses. Alternatives to centralized internet platforms include Neighbourhoods and Hylo, who offer “digital agency” and “data sovereignty” for users coordinating group tasks or economic activity.

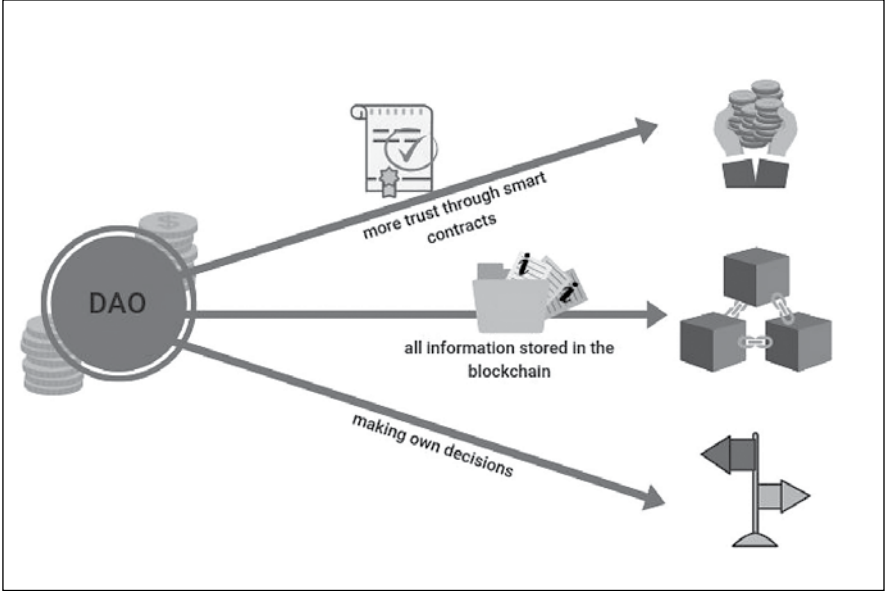
Evergreen leads in teaching cooperative innovation

An institution with considerable means at its disposal, The Evergreen State College (TESC) is primed to become a bioregional leader in facilitating strategic public-private cooperative partnerships, providing a platform for students, staff, and faculty to

No company in our hyper-capitalist society should have any business other than making the world a better place for all beings. Using radical financial transparency, open membership models, emergent technologies that support cooperativism, and Evergreen’s potential leadership, we can create a sustainably-financed, multi-stakeholder, social purpose meta-cooperative that can solve systemic issues.

Such a vision could lead to the development of resilient low-income housing that is place-based and rooted in values of appropriate technology, traditional ecological knowledge and solidarity.

@GuerrillaThink is a distributed identity comprised of eleven individuals who identify as Greeners, changemakers, and coop-operatives. Their main activities include guerrilla marketing, cooperative business consulting, crypto-onboarding, co-creating NFTs, building naturally, and gardening. (guerrillathink.substack.com)



Decentralized autonomous organizations

New ways of raising capital for projects

New methods of financial transacting—cryptocurrencies and Decentralized Finance (DeFi)—could transform current approaches to low-income housing. Once the domain of early adapters, non-fungible tokens (NFTs), unique units of digital art like photos, animated graphics and videos, are now recognized as legitimate fundraising tools—just like selling art for charity traditionally.

Large sales of NFTs by famous (or young) artists at auction houses like Sotheby’s or Christie’s may steal the headlines, but the utility of digital provenance provided by NFTs enables anyone to sell digital art for any purpose. To put it simply; selling digital art to fundraise for social purposes is just a few clicks away.

Combined with hard cryptoassets like bitcoin, these tools may lead to decentralized economies with global liquidity and cooperative governance. Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs) already accomplish this task, albeit crudely, compared to traditional multi-stakeholder cooperatives using current software. The technology may be maturing, but the public may still need time to digest the concept of using tokenized digital art to raise funds for permaculture designs for eco-villages to solve the housing crisis, or anything else for that matter.

engage with their community. Service-learning programs emphasize cooperative alignment with appropriate technology, team-preneurship, permaculture, regenerative agriculture, natural building, and cooperative business dynamics, among other areas.

Evergreen’s Center for Community-Based Learning and Action (CCBLA), Center for Climate Action and Sustainability (CCAS), and Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Transformational Change (CELTC) were early advocates for innovative approaches to persistent social problems through partnership with existing government agencies. These departments could contribute to Olympia’s “One Community Plan,” which calls for developing affordable housing action plans and leveraging the city’s Home Fund to build at least 300 new units of supported and low-income housing within the next five years.

What if all the units built through One Community Plan were connected in a resilient team-based food sovereignty network that emulated GruB and implemented gamified garden education programs for residents, supported through Evergreen-led student service-learning exchanges? Public funding for these expensive-to-start alternatives is theoretical so far, but could be realized with new approaches to financing.

divine proportion
meets basic shelter

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Who’s building affordable housing in Olympia?

The limits of a federal tax credit program as a way to produce stable housing for low income households

Dan Leahy

I've spent the last few years writing about the City of Olympia's relentless push to construct market rate, luxury apartments in the downtown core. This policy of increasing the equity ownership of developers like Walker John continues. If you add Walker John's four new projects to Ronald Newman's West Bay Yards, this makes 675 more market rate luxury units, unaffordable to the 47% of Olympians who are low income.

Are there any low income housing complexes in Olympia? Where are they, how much do they charge and are there any projects under construction? The Housing Authority of Thurston County (HATC) has five low income complexes in Olympia with 204 units, but the biggest source of low income housing is financed primarily through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program.

A federal tax incentive for private investors

The LIHTC mechanism was created by the 1986 Reagan Tax Reform Act. It creates low income housing by combining a “Managing Partner” with an “Investor Partner.” The Managing Partner is usually a 501c3 Tax Exempt Non Profit organization, like the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) or Mercy Housing. An “Investor Partner” is a corporation or bank that wants to reduce what it pays in taxes via a tax credit for 10 years. The Inves-

tor Partner gets his tax credit in exchange for investing in an income and rent restricted housing project that will be rented to low income tenants.

built four years ago in 2017: the Billy Frank, Jr. and Drexel House II --with the majority of their units for the homeless --and an expansion of the Evergreen Villages on Division Street NW.

In the midst of our housing crisis, why have there been no significant LIHTC projects in Olympia since 2017?

The tax credit program represents the country's largest source of financing for low income housing and has made possible an estimated 3 million housing units since 1986. This program has cost the federal government an average of \$8 billion each year in lost revenue, according to the Tax Foundation. Here in Washington State, it generated 103,000 units in the 33 years from 1986 to 2019. However, this financing source can be fairly unpredictable depending upon corporate income and federal tax policy.

What those incentives have produced in Olympia

There are seventeen LIHTC apartment complexes with an Olympia address. They have 1,738 units that are rent- and income-restricted. The earliest of these, Stuart Place in downtown Olympia, was built in November 1994. This was followed by the Fern Ridge apartments in December 1994, the Courtside Apartments in 1995, the Fleetwood in 1997 and the Boardwalk (senior only) apartments in 1999. The remaining complexes were all

Income levels and maximum rents in these complexes are set according to the Area Median Income (AMI). The Federal Housing and Development Department (HUD) determines each county's AMI. As of April 2021, Thurston County's AMI was \$90,200 for a family of four. The income limit for the vast majority of LIHTC apartments in Olympia, 1,316 units, is set at 60% of AMI. Rents vary depending on unit size. A studio rent is \$948, a one bedroom is \$1,015; a two-bedroom is \$1,218 and a 3-bedroom is \$1,407. Importantly, these rents can be lower if the project or the tenant has a HUD voucher. or if the owner chooses to set rents lower than the maximum allowable.

A shift away from low income to market rate housing

The question is, in the midst of our housing crisis, why have there been no significant LIHTC projects in Olympia since 2017? Beginning with the 2007-2008 financial collapse, LIHTC financing slowed down and has declined ever since. In addition, the Trump 2017 Tax Cut Act (TCJA) slashed the corpo-

rate tax rate to 21 % thus decreasing the incentive for corporations to purchase LIHTC tax credits.

The City of Olympia has focused primarily on granting 8-year property tax exemptions for the construction of high-end luxury units affordable only to high-income households. This has supported construction of 549 units since 2015, with a tax gift to developers amounting to \$10 million dollars over the eight years. The City has authorized an additional 675 luxury units, a total of 1,224. In contrast to the City's prioritization of market rate units, the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) and the Family Support Center have sought to use the tax credits to build low-income units, 62 units at 2828 Martin Way and 62 units on 7th Avenue SW, respectively.

Lower rents in LIHTC-financed projects aren’t permanent

There's another difficulty with the LIHTC mechanism. This financing mechanism does not necessarily produce permanent low income housing. Typically, after 15 years, the non-profit partner uses their “right of first refusal” to gain full project ownership while still allowing the investor to make use of the tax credit for an additional 15 years.

This transfer of ownership ensures the project will remain a low income housing project for the foreseeable future. However, with the rise in real estate values, there is a financial incentive for investors, known as aggregators, to challenge the non-profit partner for direct ownership of the property and begin charging market rate prices. There are four separate lawsuits in Washington federal district courts attempting to do just this.

City Council members talk about equity in housing, Their policies have led to a massive growth of inequity in housing. They've promoted 1,224 units of luxury apartments and only 124 units of low income housing. They must change course if enough low income housing will be built to meet the community's need. Instead of subsidizing Walker John or Ronald Newman, they could be working with the Housing Authority of Thurston County, the only source of permanent low-income housing in the City.

Dan Leahy taught public policy analysis at The Evergreen State College MPA program for six years. He retired in 2008 and lives on Olympia's Westside.

Apartments in Olympia Financed with Low Income Tax Credits									
This chart lists apartment buildings in Olympia that qualify for Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). Income and rent limits for the tax credit are calculated annually by the Federal Housing and Urban Development Dept. (HUD). The HUD-determined area median income (AMI) for Thurston County as of April, 2021 is \$90,200. An income at 60% of AMI is \$54,120, at 50% it's \$45,100, at 40% it's 30,080 and at 30% it's \$27,596.									
Site Name	Address	Occupied	LIH	50%	60%	1b	2b	3b	Management
Affinity Olympia	4701 7th Ave. SW		34	34		111			FPI Management Inc
Ashwood Downs	1900 Ashwood LnSE	01/11/13	95	48	47				HayesGibson Property
Billy Frank Jr. Pl.	318 State Ave.	05/16/17	42	21		21	7		LIHI
Boardwalk Apts	410 Capital Wy N.	10/15/99	280		180				Fairfield Residential
Cooper Trail	701 Alta St. SW	08/04/14	258		258	44	154	62	FPI Management Inc
Courtside Apts	515 Courtside St. SW	08/28/95	209		209				Mission Rock, AZ
Crowne Pointe Apts	2800 Limited Ln	12/31/06	158		110	120	172	28	Cambridge Mgmt.
Drexel House	606 Devoe St. SE	02/21/07	25		5				Catholic Housing WW
Drexel House II	607 Pattison St. SE	05/31/17	50	25					Catholic Comm.Service
Evergreen Villages	505 Division NW	06/02/17	178	63	115	144	54	36	FPI Management Inc
Evergreen Vista I	1209 Fern St. SW	06/24/11	102		102		29	75	Mercy Housing NW
Evergreen Vista II	1225 Fern St. SW	08/30/07	50		15				Mercy Housing NW
Fern Ridge	1309 Fern St.SW	12/02/94	49		49				Targa R.E. Services
Fern Ridge II	1309 Fern St. SW	12/02/94	49		49				Targa R.E. Services
Fleetwood	119 E. 7th St.	08/31/97	42						LIHI
Olympia Vista Apts	3600 Forrestbrook Wy	11/01/14	141		141	96	45		American Prop. Mgmt
Stuart Place	110 Legion Way SE	11/22/94	36		36				Targa R.E. Services
All Complexes		1994-'17	1738	191	1316	536	430	201	

1. Data is from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission's website.
2. All properties are financed in a manner that requires at least some low income units
3. Occupied means the date on which the building received an occupancy certificate.
4. LIH - Number of units restricted to low income tenants. Only Affinity has market rate apartments (136).
5. 50% - Number of units income-restricted to 50% of AMI. 60% - Number of units income-restricted to 60% of AMI.
6. Four complexes have units restricted to tenants with incomes at or below 30% of AMI: Billy Frank Jr.(21), Drexel House (13), Drexel House II (25) and Evergreen Vista II (20).
7. Three complexes have units restricted to tenants with incomes at or below 40% of AMI: Drexel House (7) Evergreen Vista II(15) Fleetwood (42%)
8. There are two complexes with studios: Billy Frank Jr. (15) and Drexel House II (50).

—Dan Leahy, 10/19/21.

For a lively and eye-opening read about how housing policy has shaped people’s lives in this country, get a copy of best-selling *Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein.



Distress calls to SafePlace lead to healing and empowerment

Pat Hughes

When Becky* unlocked the door to her room at the SafePlace Emergency Shelter, she described it as the first time she could remember having a place she could relax enough to rest. Her home life had become so dangerous that she'd taken to sleeping in a car to avoid her partner's physical abuse.

A neighbor helped her contact SafePlace's 24-hour helpline, which connected her with both the Shelter and Supportive Housing Programs. Along with a safe room and brand-new sheets and blankets, Becky received groceries, personal care products and a gas card. She told staffers she'd never before experienced such "great hope that things were unfolding as they should."

SafePlace's Crisis Helpline and downtown Olympia Business Office receives over 100 calls and walk-in inquiries each week. Whether in person or over the 24-hour helpline, a screening is initiated by a trained advocate who asks about the caller's experience of domestic violence and intimate partner situation. They inquire whether incidents of stalking have occurred and whether other lethality factors are present. After a screening and assessment, case-conferencing begins.

For those who qualify, a plan is initiated to help get them (and often their children) to the safety of the shelter. Once there, safety planning begins in earnest - connection with housing specialists and legal advocates, individual and group case management and meeting clients' specific needs such as childcare and/or job training.

Those who stay at the Shelter at night are supported as they search for work or continue to work, navigate the court process as they seek safety from their perpetrator, access community resources, and keep their children engaged in school activities. They are also free to leave the shelter permanently if they choose.

When fleeing domestic violence and entering the Shelter, clients understandably spend less time in public settings but re-entry into public life is always the goal. During their short stay at the Shelter (up to 90 days) they meet often with staff and advocates who help them develop a safety plan for long-term success.

The plans help clients navigate often-bewildering challenges like enrolling for medical care and insurance coverage and sorting through employment benefit options. Many Shelter clients have never been allowed to make decisions about their family budgeting or medical care or even what groceries to buy.



For them, safety planning begins at an even more basic level.

Mental health and emotional empowerment are also integral to client success. We often make referrals for outside therapy and counseling services. SafePlace offers both Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault support groups for those who are interested.

When their time at the Shelter ends, clients continue to receive support through legal and housing programs, case management and other services through SafePlace. Before leaving, they are asked to indicate what level of support, if any, they would like SafePlace to continue to provide.

A troubling trend emerged at Safe-Place during the first few months of the pandemic: fewer calls to the Helpline. Staff determined that while people were quarantining in their homes, survivors and their children might still be in dangerous situations, but they had less privacy to make calls reaching out for help.

That trend has since reversed. Calls to SafePlace are now the highest ever recorded. Staff believe a big reason for this increase is that isolation during the pandemic means people spend more time than ever in unsafe living situations.

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault are so prevalent that it takes far more than one agency to help clients succeed. Every caller to the Helpline caller receives an average of two direct referrals to services such as mental health counseling, substance abuse disorder counseling, and access to basic needs.

Client confidentiality is maintained throughout the process unless the client has consented to having information shared. Otherwise, the only instances in which information may be shared are as mandated reports when a minor child or vulnerable adult are involved.

For over 40 years, SafePlace has been providing people with life-changing tools, resources and interactions. We serve all ages and genders at no cost to the survivor or their children. SafePlace's primary limitation is, unsurprisingly, a lack of funding. Because the need for support outweighs resources, many of SafePlace's programs have a lengthy wait list.

It takes a village for SafePlace to give clients the best chance to succeed. The overall cost to operate the SafePlace 24/7 Emergency Shelter, including full staff coverage and ten bedrooms as well as significant wrap-around resources for participants, exceeds \$50,000 per month. Government agencies and programs such as the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, Office of Crime Victims Advocacy, and Thurston County Office of Housing and Homeless Prevention (and several others), provide crucial funding for services. Individual and corporate donors make generous contributions every year. SafePlace also has strategic partnerships with many nonprofits in Thurston County.

In addition to paid staff, Safe-Place also relies on trained volunteers for their many 24/7 programs. The Training and Volunteer Coordinator oversees 32-hour Advocacy Core Trainings, which are required for new staff and volunteers. This is generally followed by two to four weeks of shadowing by current staff and volunteers to help acclimate to any new role.

Safelace continues to improve its cultural competency with traditionally underserved populations. We are hiring more bilingual staff, having additional resources for interpretation services (both in-person and telephone), increased outreach to rural populations in and near Thurston County, and significantly increased training for staff in areas of trauma-informed services and anti-oppression work.

Pat Hughes is Development Director at SafePlace, 521 Legion Way SE in Olympia. The 24-hour helpline is 360.754.6300.

**Becky is a pseudonym. The identity of all Shelter clients is carefully guarded.*

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Fair immigration policies still elude a nation of immigrants

Lisa Seifert

I have been an immigration lawyer for more than 30 years. My work has always been mainly to help people inside the US to secure permanent legal status. Most of my clients have been or are currently part of an undocumented class. Some have been in deportation proceedings—the government actively trying to detain or remove them from the country. My job is to find a way to stop that and keep the person here with his or her family.

Winning legal cases and becoming documented has never been easy. There are complex rules and processes and court cases that can take four or five years. Some people choose a path to get status that requires leaving the US for a visa interview, risking a chance they won't be able to return for 10 years. That's a big risk, but it's the only way for many.

Many more have no options at all, despite family members and other permanent ties to this country. We are a country of more than 11 million undocumented people. It's not right and there is every reason to fix it.

Outdated laws affect professionals, laborers and those in-between

One in seven US residents—45 million people, or 14% of the population—is an immigrant. One in eight is a native-born US citizen with at least one immigrant parent. Immigration involves not just what happens at the southern border but also what happens when someone comes through immigration at the airport.

It necessitates parceling out per-country quotas of visas for family members, doctors and other essential workers, affecting the gamut from Grammy and Pulitzer Prize winners and high-level athletes to agricultural workers and caregivers. The system doesn't work for most immigrants, their families, or the people who depend on them.

Some workers are here legally as workers in the tech sector. But because of laws written decades ago, their priority date to seek permanent status is never reached, leaving them chained to one employer, unable to easily travel, or make family plans, etc. Because capacity cannot keep up with demand, outdated rules cause the government to “lose” thousands of visas every year for the year in which they are awarded.

Senate Reconciliation bill fails needlessly to help immigrants

The system needs a significant overhaul, or at least an update. It's not really a partisan issue, but it tends to be the Democrats who care about this issue more, and who drafted provisions in the Build Back Better Bill passed by the House of Representatives.



Migrants are detained by Texas Department of Public Safety. Photo by Christopher Lee for the *New York Times*

A few weeks ago, advocates were excited about the \$100 billion in the Senate Reconciliation Bill tagged to support immigration policy and process improvements. This would have been the most significant change to immigration policies since Ronald Reagan's amnesty program.

Putting these provisions inside the budget bills (where Congress decides what must be spent to keep the country running) was a good idea because an immigration bill by itself was likely to fail under Republican objections. Opponents in the Senate could filibuster to make sure the bill would not even come up for a vote. The budgeting process is more democratic—a simple majority could move whatever it wanted.

The package contained in the budget bills could have made real progress on many critical things. Immigration courts would get the tools needed to complete cases faster than the current three to four-year path. It also provided

for full legalization of Dreamers, TPS recipients and very essential farm workers, all of whom would've been able to move forward on a permanent path in this country.

As we now know, however, Democrats did not get everything they had sought. The proposed \$3-trillion-dollar package, after other big pandemic spending, was deemed too big. On top of this, the Senate parliamentarian ruled that a provision with such major impact could not be part of a budget reconciliation, even if the proposal was budget neutral. Immigrants themselves would have paid for each application; so it would not have cost any extra money

Why the powerful opposition to change?

Demographer Thomas Edsall, in his *NY Times* essay *The ‘Third Rail of American Politics’ Is Still Electrifying*, says that hardliners always claim to want to “strengthen the border” before anything else. They feel they can't risk seeming weak on this issue. They object to any immigration reform, even popular measures such as legalizing “Dreamers,” young people who've grown up and even graduated in the US but must maintain the status of their undocumented parents.

These same people often use the issue of immigration to ignite a deep sense of fear and threat among Americans, activating an “us vs. them” narrative to their political advantage.

It's far easier for many people to react to immigrant issues with emotion than reason. But are objections to immigration reform based on a concern about who is coming and not how? Immigrants are outsiders, mostly of a different race (most immigrants are now from China, India, Mexico and the Philippines) and a common line of thinking is “why can't they come legally, like my grandpa did?”

The answer is not that earlier generations of immigrants were more law abiding. It's more that the legal system of the 1920s and 1950s doesn't reflect today's reality about who needs to come to the US. Laws need to change after 60 years. But passing legislation is very difficult, as we have seen in the past few weeks.

Yet even in the pared down provisions of the current bill, we seem to be closer to some positive changes than ever before in my memory, improving the lives of some immigrants. But for many, it's just the perpetuation of temporary, uncertain status leaving them to ask themselves why are they not as deserving as anyone else to have permanent lives in the US? Will immigrants get the changes they need someday soon? I hope so.

Lisa Seifert is an immigration lawyer in Olympia. Learn more at www.seifertlaw.com

50 years ago there was the Satsop music Festival, the ‘Woodstock’ of Pacific Northwest

Somebody Else's Dream: Dakota, The Buoy, & “Timothy” by rock journalist Maxim W. Furek celebrates the 50th anniversary of the 1971 song “Timothy” and the legendary Satsop River Fair & Tin Cup Races Festival. Although banned by radio stations and called “the worst song ever recorded,” “Timothy” was a huge hit in the Seattle/Tacoma area, selling 6,000 copies in one day. The Buoy, who recorded the song, were the opening act at the Satsop festival, located in the foothills of the Olympic Mountains.

The *Seattle Times* reported that 150,000 spectators attended the four-day concert, “the first legal festival in Washington State.” Satsop included respected rock royalty of the day, Delaney and Bonnie and Friends (including guitar sideman Eric Clapton in his post-Cream, Blind Faith period), Eric Burdon, Flash Cadillac, Albert Collins, John Hammond, Charles Lloyd, Steve Miller, Billy Preston, Jimmy Weatherspoon, Wishbone Ash, War, and The Youngbloods. Satsop had its share of problems. It rained for much of the four days, and Buoy's drummer, Chris Hanlon, recalled, “They



brought the bands in by ambulance. They couldn't afford to pay for the helicopters.”

Finally, Satsop ran out of money. These groups refused to play: Ike & Tina Turner, Derek & The Dominos, Quicksilver Messenger Service, War, Earth Wind and Fire, Leo Kottke, The Everly Brothers, and Captain Beefheart.

After hearing “Timothy,” attendee Irven Lorange wrote a song about an 1899 mine disaster in Carbonado, Washington, called “Black Diamonds,” and “the reflection of coal in the eyes of a mule.” Local photographer and attendee John Caldbick said that losses were estimated at \$300,000, including \$100,000 from ticket counterfeiting.

Somebody Else's Dream depicts a cautionary tale of substance abuse, the pitfalls of fame and the actual price of the rock and roll fantasy—right here in the Pacific Northwest!

For more information or advance copies, contact Sunbury Press at 855-338-8359.

Good news for farmers, developers, conservationists—and gophers

Charlotte Persons

For over six years farmers, development interests and conservation advocates eagerly waited for a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). This 30-year plan will cover the entire Thurston County outside the cities' urban growth area. It targets four endangered animals—the Mazama pocket gopher, Oregon vesper sparrow, Oregon spotted frog, and Taylor's checkerspot butterfly.

Getting building permits faster, easier and cheaper

Currently if an endangered animal lives on a property, the owner has to apply for a federal "incidental take permit" to build any structure, from a shed to a huge truck depot. The process can take a year or more and is expensive. The landowner must create a mitigation plan to conserve land for the endangered species, but there is little monitoring to check whether the plan actually works.

Lands in Thurston County have been surveyed for prairie soils, types of vegetation and the likely presence of an endangered species. After the HCP is implemented, property owners can apply for a county permit under the HCP at the same time as their other building permits. The HCP includes a system to categorize each land parcel from high to low, according to their suitability to support endangered wildlife. County staff will use that system to compute mitigation fees for each building project. The fees will go into a county fund to conserve prairie habitat.

Conserving rare species and protecting disappearing habitat

The HCP focuses on four endangered wildlife species, but it will protect some of the best oak-prairie habitat left in the United States. This ecosystem contains other

summer. The prairies stretch from northern California to lower British Columbia, but only 1% remain from before European settlement.

The Oregon White Oak, sometimes called Garry Oak, occurs only rarely on these prairies in west-

Over time the HCP should create higher quality prairie preserves in contrast with the mitigation areas conserved under the present system.

plants and animals that are also increasingly rare but not yet listed as needing protection.

ern Washington and Oregon. On the edges and in lower areas are streams and wetlands. Plants and



"The Thurston County HCP will protect the plants and animals threatened with extinction in our beautiful and rare oak-prairie habitat better than the current building permit system..." Elizabeth Rodrick, VP, Black Hills Audubon Society. Photo by Rob Gilbert.

The “oak-prairie-wetland ecosystem matrix” was formed millions of years ago by glaciers that left gravelly soils that drain well and become totally dry during the

animals became adapted to this unique ecosystem and are now at risk of extinction as the habitat is degraded or disappears.

Real estate

From page 1

EDC's Michael Cade predicted these last 2 years of the pandemic will be looked on as an "era of innovation" in business, as people worked from home and residential markets expanded in a regional context. Cade cited 2021 as a record year for housing permits issued in all three jurisdictions, with Olympia running 55% above last year's total. He touted the high volume of permits issued, but didn't reference the fact that none of the new housing is affordable to the 47% of Olympia households who live on a low income. While almost 1000 market rate apartments have come online in the last 4 years, or are currently under construction in the downtown core, only 62 would serve low-income people. There was no response to a later question about how the market might address this imbalance.

From global to national

Keynote speaker Didi Caldwell is the founder of Global Location Strategies, a company that helps corporate leaders decide how and where to deploy their assets for greatest return. She now advises corporations to move back to the US, citing benefits like “the fracking boom” that [aided by federal subsidies] drove down energy costs. Surprisingly, she cited immigration as a positive contribution to population growth that’s providing a supply of younger workers not available in other developed

countries. Other advantages she cited are a stable currency, strong rule of law and limited regulation. Risks that might deter corporations are an emerging nationalism, tariff uncertainties and climate change - all accelerated by COVID.

From local to regional

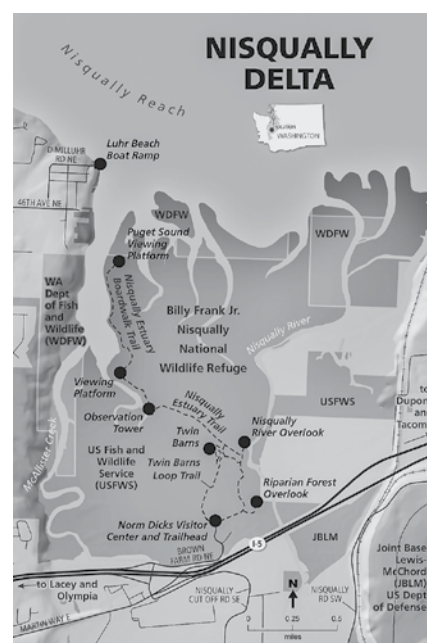
She identified Olympia's relatively educated population as offering an advantage for constructing a workforce. Caldwell noted the almost double cost of living between Seattle and Olympia, but then she added that creating more residential development, with its requirement for new services and schools, is expensive. Instead, she proposed strategies that focused on developing projects to attract business, like office parks, and diversifying existing properties to make them investment-ready. By enhancing workplace flexibility through remote work, Olympia businesses could employ workers who live outside the area.

Get beyond “buy local” or even regional

Caldwell advised the attendees to capitalize on Thurston County's proximity to large cities by attracting workers from outside and leveraging "trade clusters" that serve needs beyond the region. Caldwell said that 80% of businesses in the Olympia area are in "local clusters" meaning they serve the regional population. These clusters, though important for the well-being of the local population, don't inject money into the local economy. That role is played by "traded clus-

ters" serving the needs of entities beyond the regional borders and this is where business needs to go.

Among several expanding options for “traded clusters,” Caldwell listed some that have already begun to show up in Thurston



County: distribution, transportation and logistics enterprises. A slew of proposals to rezone agricultural land to locate warehouses in South County, if approved, would follow a new warehousing project next to the Port of Olympia airport and an existing logistics and distribution center in Lacey. Caldwell also described clusters that are weakening, including paper and wood products. This suggests that the Port's reliance on forestry and

Through controlled burning, Native Americans maintained the prairies for over 5,000 years to promote medicinal plants and edible plants like camas bulbs and berries. Modern-day prairies must be managed to prevent intrusion of native evergreen trees and non-native invasive plants like pasture grasses and Scotch Broom.

A resource for improved stewardship

Over time the HCP should create higher quality prairie preserves in contrast with the mitigation areas conserved under the present system. The HCP mitigation fund will buy some new preserves where endangered species are present. Humans will benefit as well as wildlife from the services provided by these open spaces, especially in relation to flood control and carbon sequestration.

The fund will also pay for monitoring and adaptive management to conserve both new and old preserves. When combined with restoration efforts from agencies, tribes, land trusts, and nonprofits, the future looks brighter for our beautiful and unique prairies.

This fall the public can submit comments to the County Planning Commission on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Habitat Conservation Plan. Staff will consider those comments when drafting the Final EIS, and the County Commissioners' approval could come within a year.

*To learn more about our prairies
or how you can visit or volunteer
to help them, go to the South Sound
Prairies website [http://www.
southsoundprairies.org/](http://www.southsoundprairies.org/)*

log shipments which already lose money, could bring deeper losses.

Keep calm and embrace chaos

The forum was promoted as a way to find out how Thurston County could “position itself to be attractive” and “what are the critical elements...to be aware of in terms of augmenting, promoting and strategizing to compete?”

But attractive to whom? Competing for what? The answer is important, but nothing in the forum acknowledged this. Will the goal of economic development in Thurston County be sustainable and serve the people who call Thurston County home? Will it protect our natural resources and diminish our reliance on fossil fuels? Or will it be to maintain “business as usual” even if it means becoming attractive to investment that uses our resources to serve needs beyond our boundaries?

Caldwell's parting advice at the forum to "keep calm and embrace chaos" is not reassuring.

Esther Kronenberg attended the forum and reports regularly on development issues in the Thurston County area.

(1) The EDC is a “public-private” organization, one of many created by statute to coordinate economic development activities in Washington counties. Most recently, officials at the Thurston EDC handled the distribution of over \$12 million in federal funds received to aid recovery from the pandemic.

A watershed moment for the Chehalis River Basin

Lee First

A small section of the Chehalis River is easily viewed from I-5 between Centralia and Chehalis, but this river is much more. To start with, it is the largest watershed completely within the boundaries of Washington State. It's a watershed of immense reach, 2,700 square miles in area, with over 3,300 miles of tributary rivers and streams.

From headwaters in the Willapa Hills, it flows in all four directions before it reaches the Grays Harbor estuary. The mainstem has no dams at this time. In most years, the Chehalis produces more salmon than any other river in all of Washington.

The Chehalis River is known by the Chehalis people as nsu lapš, which means “our wealth

water.” For thousands of years, the Chehalis people lived with and accommodated flooding as a fact of life.

Building in a flood plain

That changed as settlers came to the Basin to harvest timber, to farm, to fish and to live. They built roads, homes, bridges, shopping malls, airports, wastewater treatment facilities and more infrastructure in the river's flood plain. Major floods have become more common and climate change will drive an increase in their frequency and intensity.

In 2007, a catastrophic flood shut down I-5 for days and caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage. That flood is the impetus behind the Chehalis Basin Strategy, a state initiative with an ambitious dual mission: to reduce flood dam-

age and to restore habitat for salmon and other aquatic species.

Identifying impacts of a long-sought dam

As part of the Strategy, members of the Chehalis River Basin Flood Control Zone District (FCZD) proposed a dam near the headwaters of the Chehalis River. Hopes for a dam have been in the works for over 20 years.

The dam was presented as a way both to provide flood control and to restore salmon, but a February 2020 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) revealed instead that construction of a dam would have adverse impacts on salmon.

When the DEIS was issued, questions and concerns about impacts and the lack of examination of any alternative to the dam drew statewide attention. One of the most troubling impacts of the dam was increased water temperature—water over 20 degrees centigrade is deadly to salmon. Extinction of Spring Chinook that spawn above the dam site is virtually guaranteed if a dam is built. The dam would also accelerate the decline of Coho, fall Chinook, Steelhead and culturally important Lamprey.

One of the most troubling impacts of the dam was increased water temperature—water over 20 degrees C is deadly to salmon.

Taking a step back

The consequence of these findings for the dam proposal was made clear in a statement by a Board member serving on Ecology's Office of the Chehalis Basin (OCB), which is tasked with implementing the Chehalis Basin Strategy. Tyson Johnson of the Quinault Nation stated, “We can't support the dam based on the DEIS which says the dam would have unavoidable impacts on salmon and our treaty rights.”

In light of the DEIS findings, Governor Inslee in July of this year issued a directive to pause work on the impact statement for the dam and to use the time to develop and evaluate a basin-wide, non-dam alternative. A final EIS is due in 2023.

And a step forward

Today this evaluation is beginning as the Local Actions Non-Dam (LAND) alternative. LAND represents the missing piece of the Chehalis Basin Strategy, providing a critical back-up plan, revealing solutions to flooding that have not been considered. This is especially important for the lower Basin, where a dam would not provide the same degree of flood protection as for the Centralia/Chehalis area.

The OCB has approved a new steering committee to work on the LAND alternative. This came after pressure from the tribes and environmental groups, including the Chehalis River Alliance. Members of the steering committee include three OCB Board members (including Tyson Johnson), three representatives of environmental organizations (American Rivers, Conservation Northwest, Wild Salmon Center), one farmer, and representatives from the Lewis County Economic Development Council and the City of Chehalis. According to Johnson, “One of the biggest goals of the LAND is the public engagement piece—we want to hear from all the different communities of the basin to get a sense of what works for them. We have to find ways to maintain community safety without sacrificing the environment.”

Here are three ways to keep informed about the Chehalis Basin Strategy and the LAND: Sign up for the Strategy's email list; attend the virtual OCB Board meetings and the LAND meetings; learn about the work of the Chehalis River Alliance.

Lee First lives in the Chehalis watershed and is the Twin Harbors Waterkeeper.

Read more about the Chehalis River Basin in the April 2021 issue of Works in Progress at www.olywip.org

Aquatic Species Restoration Plan website: <https://chehalisbasinstrategy.com/asrp/asrp-implementation/>



The Southern Resident Orcas of the Salish Sea depend on Chehalis River spring Chinook in winter when food is scarce – and they are starving. Chinook from the Chehalis River are on the list of priority stock for these orcas. Satellite tagging has shown that they feed off Grays Harbor where the Chehalis River enters the Pacific Ocean. Pictured: Members of the South Sound Sierra Chapter on a recent field trip to the site of the proposed dam south of Pe Ell. Photo by Lee First.

RETHINKING EVERYTHING #13

Our world on the verge of transition

We are moving from a world in which individual choice and competition made sense to one in which collective choice and cooperation are necessary, not because ideologies have changed but because both the problems we face and the nature of the resources required to solve them have changed.

When the costs of economic activity are collective, capitalism (i.e., private property rights and individual choice) is suicidal; when the benefits are collective (e.g., new vaccines for COVID, new forms of alternative energy), capitalism is inefficient. The main challenge remains how deeply wedded politicians, economists and even the average person are to economic growth.

—Joshua Farley, University of Vermont, Professor of Community Development and Applied Economics

Federal funds

From page 1

After the retreat, Lacey Mayor Andy Ryder suggested to the members of the Regional Housing Council (RHC) that the three cities and the County work together to leverage ARP funds for a major project on housing. The purpose would be to achieve the goal of the Homeless Crisis Response Plan that had been developed with broad participation in 2019: to make homelessness “rare and infrequent” by 2024. RHC members agreed to seek funding to obtain 150-200 of the 300 supportive housing units called for in the Crisis Response Plan.

Lacey received \$2.3 million in funds from the CARES Act in 2020. Lacey adopted a budget for 2022

that is below their 2021 budget.

Olympia—\$9.2 million*

Olympia has taken a staff-led, top-down approach to deciding how to use its ARP funds. Staff conversations produced an “Economic Recovery Plan” that was presented by the City Manager and approved by Council members at their May 4 meeting. That plan covered a total of only \$2.08 million and listed items ranging from downtown and homeless camp clean-up to support for the Downtown Alliance and minority-owned businesses and revenue recovery. \$1.375 million was shown as regional investment via the EDC. An amendment by Councilman Cooper to reserve \$2 million related to the regional housing effort brought the total to \$4.08 million.

On Nov. 1, City Manager Burney presented a proposal that covered Olympia’s full \$9.2 million: \$6.6 million related to homelessness

(purchase of the Quince St. Mitigation site plus operating costs) and \$2 million for regional housing, \$1.2 million for body cameras, \$1.3 million to clear overdue utility bills, \$700,000 to recover lost city revenues. Despite the Act’s emphasis on one-time only enhancements and a deepening revenue shortfall projected for future Olympia budgets, at least seven of the proposed expenditures are for new FTEs. (Both the May 4 and the Nov 1 documents can be seen in this article online at www.olywip.org.)

In 2020, the City of Olympia received \$2.4 million through the CARES Act. The city is currently considering raising taxes on some city services along with a 2022 budget higher than the current budget.

Tumwater—\$2.5 million

Tumwater’s decision as to use of the ARP funds is tied to the city’s Strategic Plan and Goals and reflects results from Tumwater’s most recent Community Summit. Mayor Pete Kmet and City Administrator John Doan presented a conceptual plan for allocating the funds at a work session with Council members.

At a subsequent meeting (September 7, 2021), Tumwater Council members discussed the pros and cons of different possible options for spending the ARP money (each member’s statements are summarized in the minutes posted online). They decided on a plan that included items ranging from donating a house to Homes First (\$400,000), funding local and indigenous artists, renovation of the Brewtower, recovering utility debt (\$50,000), \$550,000 for the regional housing project; a two-year position to oversee economic development, and \$350,000 to the EDC.

Tumwater’s adopted (biennial) budget for 2021-22 is less than the preceding biennial budget. This reporter was unable to identify CARES funds that went to Tumwater.

Yelm—\$2.6 million

At their October 26, 2021 meeting, Yelm City Council Members discussed and adopted a recommendation by City Manager Michael Grayum to use about half of their ARP funds as follows: 1) pay off the City’s investment in a 640-acre property that is part of a Local Improvement District slated for future development; 2) purchase body cameras for Yelm police officers; 3) recover the City’s investment in remote technology acquired for use during the pandemic. This amounted to about \$1.2 million, with the remainder available for uses to be identified in the next three years.

Thurston Economic Development Council—Many millions of dollars

The Thurston Economic Development Council is a “public private” entity, created by state law as and reporting to the Dept. of Commerce. The EDC, operating through “Thurston Strong” has been the program and grant administrator for millions of dollars in federal funds aimed to alleviate local impacts of the pandemic. This reporter was not able to find information about how the EDC administers the funds or decides on eligibility criteria for awarding grants.

How to follow the money?

It isn’t easy to pin down the use of the cash that has flowed into the county during the pandemic. Who

decided, how they decided, where exactly the money went—and will go—remains to be discovered. But with these taxpayer dollars we should expect inclusion, transparency and accountability.

(1) Thurston County, Washington Recovery Plan, discoverable online under that name.

**Some documents including the minutes of the May 4 meeting say that Olympia’s ARP allocation is \$10.06*

Initial ARP funding decisions—Thurston County

In a report dated August 31, 2021, Thurston County set out their approach to using American Rescue Plan funds. The report identifies decisions made already, along with programs and projects that are under consideration.

The latter include such things as broadband, access to affordable housing, repair of small local water and sewer systems, expanding access to government, a safer environment at the county corrections facility, providing resources to clear court backlogs and replacing lost revenue.

Over the next eight months the county “will refine the plan for funding allocation and track the effectiveness of the programs funded.”

The three County Commissioners as of Aug 31 had approved funding for proposals listed below. This shows the amount allocated. You can read an explanation for each expenditure plus the other possibilities by searching online for: *Thurston County Washington, State and Local Fiscal Recovery Plan, 2022.*

Public Health

- Vaccine incentives: \$100,000
- Body scanners for the county jail: \$250,000

Negative Economic Impacts

- Food, nutrition, basic needs: \$150,000 (seniors), \$476,000 (food banks)
- Job champion network program: \$1.5 million
- Thurston Strong Microbusiness Recovery grants: \$2.25 million
- Minority Business Investment: \$3.3 million, staffing & grants
- Non-profit Organization grants: \$900 thousand
- United Way: \$120,000 administrative support
- Econ Impact Grants to Youth Support organizations: \$540,000
- Tourism, Recreation and Entertainment: \$100,000 promotions
- Thurston County Agriculture Market grants: \$1 million + \$100,000 food

Services to disproportionately impacted

- Shelter & other basic needs: \$215,000, shelter operations & overnights

REFLECTION

Finally a home in an overheated market

How the Thurston Housing Trust found its first property

Russ Fox

This is the story of how the Thurston Housing Land Trust (THLT) was able to offer its first affordable home to a low-income family on Olympia’s westside. Community Land Trusts provide a model for our community to assure people in low-or-moderate income households that they can own a home.

Non-profit land trusts provide a very important opportunity for citizens and community members to collectively own land preserved for habitat conservation—as well as for economic and social justice initiatives that we as a community want to support in perpetuity. Conservation Land Trusts, such as The Nature Conservancy or our local Capitol Land Trust, Nisqually Land Trust and Chehalis River Basin Land Trust, are examples of land trusts that help preserve critical habitat from residential or industrial development. The Community FarmLand Trust helps to preserve farmland in a way that makes it affordable for continuing generations of farmers.

In the early 1990s my family had the good fortune to be able to purchase a house on the westside of Olympia that we could fix up and use for extended family or for rental income. Shortly after, I learned about Community Land Trusts as a successful model that could assure home ownership affordability for low-or-moderate income households in perpetuity. I attended a few Community Land Trust national conferences, helped create our local Community Farm Land Trust to adapt this model to supporting the sustained affordability of land for local family farms, and became a charter member of our Thurston Housing Land Trust.

Now in my 70s I am ready to divest myself of property ownership and

management responsibilities. I have enough financial security to live comfortably, so I do not need to sell my rental house for maximum profit. Thus it has been an easy decision to support the THLT by donating the land (the housing lot) so that home ownership can be affordable for a low-or-moderate income family that only needs to qualify for a mortgage for the house. The land, which can be anywhere from 25-35% of the value of a house on a city lot in our urban area, will be owned by the Trust. The homeowner will have a 99-year lease for full and private use of the land.

To me, there are multiple benefits to my making this donation. Our local community benefits by having a house that will be permanently affordable for home ownership by a low-or-moderate income household. The THLT will benefit by gaining its first property and home. A low-or-moderate income family will be able to achieve home ownership. Finally, my family and I have the opportunity to leave a legacy that is consistent with our community and social justice values, and the donated value of the land deeded to the non-profit land trust is a charitable donation on my federal taxes.

My story, community values and financial or philanthropic options at this stage in my life are unique to myself. But there are many variations in the ways that all can contribute to providing safe and affordable housing for everyone in our community. These can include partial or full-value land donations to our Thurston Housing Land Trust.

Russ Fox taught for many years about housing and local agriculture at The Evergreen State College. He was a founder of the Thurston County Community Farmland Trust.

Not so fast, please

Rural residents ask that new wireless tower rules do more to safeguard health

Lori Lively

A popular comedienne touts the hyper speed connectivity of 5G technology in playful commercials that offer free phones for switching to their network. Her disarming smile and a diverse cast of players suggest that no one in their right mind would settle for internet connections that are merely fast and that life without instantaneous downloading capability is hardly worth living.

Despite these blue sky promises, a proposal to revise the code governing deployment of wireless towers alarmed residents of rural Thurston County this fall who understand that the phased arrays, beam forming, omni-directional frequencies broadcast by 5-G technologies have been shown to degenerate vital cellular processes in living beings.

Every human has a unique electromagnetic signature which is vulnerable to low-level electromagnetic frequencies (EMFs). All “generations” (the G in 5G) of wireless technology harness electromagnetic microwave radiation. Whereas current 1G-4G broadcasts a limited range of frequencies from which humans are reasonably protected, 5G introduces over 3,000 additional frequencies.

Citizen opposition to the County’s proposed rules centered on the serious health risks associated with aggregated 5G towers; the short notice households would have before installation; and on the diminishing property values that would likely follow.

The opposition was so strong that County Planning Commission members took a step back. They created an advisory committee that would work with lawyers, county staff, and private providers to come up with new draft rules that put protection of public health first.

Research has identified health risks posed by proliferating EMFs

While information about the health dangers of EMFs continues to be absent from major news outlets, studies in many countries are consistent in their assessment of harm from exposure to low-level emissions.

Over the past 20 years, researchers worldwide have found that exposure to frequencies between 300 MHz and 3 GHz results in serious health dangers.

Martin Pall, PhD, professor emeritus at Washington State University, has written and lectured extensively on the Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) in human skin and how sweat ducts, which respond to signals and frequencies like tiny surface antennae, coupled with the conductive nature of water, heighten electromagnetic sensitivity. Over time, exposure to those frequencies results in molecular degeneration and altered DNA sequencing.

Devra Davis, PhD and master of public health in epidemiology, is the founder of Environmental Health Trust. In her book, *Disconnect*, she describes damage to skin, eyes and brains associated with microwave radiation and warns that children are far more vulnerable than adults to its accumulated absorption.



Lena Pu is an environmental health consultant for the National Association for Children and Safe Technologies (NACST.org). Her research on blood membranes proved that within 5-15 minutes of proximity to wireless microwave technology, healthy blood heats up, becomes sticky and essentially “cooks.”

More health risks—and more opportunities to make money

John Stottlemeyer, a citizen member of the advisory committee, estimates that he has spent hundreds of hours reviewing laws governing wireless towers and their installation.

He explains that installation involves three entities: one company scouts the location for the tower, another company installs it, and a third company is the actual service provider, such as Verizon or T-Mobile.

Scouting companies are motivated to erect as many towers as possible because they make money on every tower they rent to providers. “The closer a tower is to a large power source, the less expensive it is for the installer,” Stottlemeyer says. “Companies prefer to erect towers where a power grid already exists, not necessarily where they are the most helpful. The goal of the citizens on the committee

is to have the least number of facilities built, in the most efficient way, spread out to cover gaps in coverage and nowhere else.”

FCC guidelines favor telecom companies

Federal law appears to give local governments control over placement of wireless facilities, but municipalities tend to follow the advice of wireless providers who urge them to adopt FCC guidelines. These guidelines generally serve to make wireless installations “denser and bigger.” The advisory committee advocates an interpretation that there can be additional towers only if they fill a significant gap in coverage

And FCC Commissioners favor their former colleagues

Martin Pall warns the FCC is a “captured organization” in which high level executives formerly employed in the telecom industry are now in a position to regulate their friends. In February 2020, FCC Commissioners approved a 280 MHz (megahertz) spectrum for 5G that resulted in 5G towers being “deployed” across the country at a furious pace.

Norm Alster, writing in *Captured Agency: How the Federal Communications Commission Is Dominated by the Industries It Presumably Regulates* points out that The Telecommunications Act of 1996 removed zoning authority from local governments, stating that health concerns cannot be used as a reason to deny licenses for towers that are in FCC compliance:

“In preempting local zoning authority—along with the public’s right to guard its own safety and health— Congress unleashed an orgy of infrastructure build-out. ...industry has had a free hand in installing more than 300,000 sites. Church steeples, schoolyards, school rooftops, even trees can house these facilities.”

Towers, Next page

“Smart” meters—always on, always emitting

Sound Energy is currently replacing customers’ analog electric meters with Advanced Meter Installations (AMIs), commonly called “smart meters.” AMIs use a form of electromagnetic energy known as radiofrequency (RF) waves to measure energy usage in your home, transmitting it wirelessly to PSE.

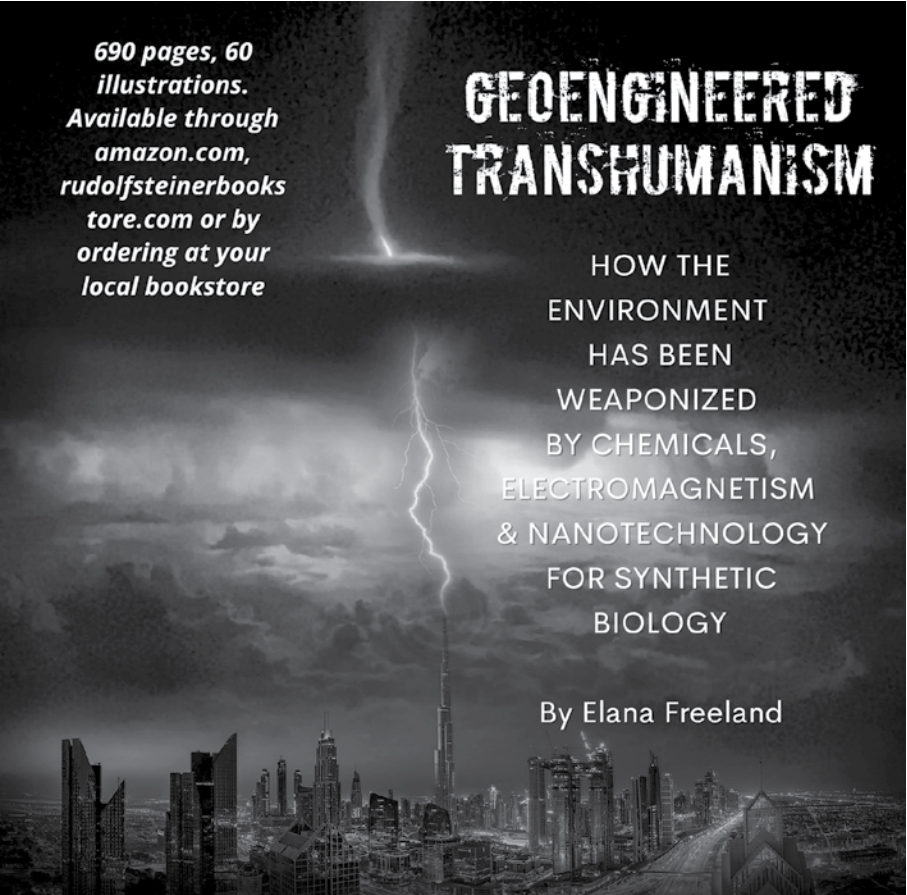
Industry proponents insist smart meters will eliminate the need for manual meter-reading, increasing the speed and accuracy of relaying usage data and lowering electric bills. Critics say the risks to human health outweigh any savings on bills, which are far from assured.

By design, smart meters are always on, always transmitting data and emitting radiofrequency radiation. Despite US safety limits for RF (1,000 microwatts per square meter), Amy Myers, MD, says “it’s not uncommon for some smart meters to produce up to 60 times this amount.”

Home appliances and cell phones use direct current (DC) of around 12 volts, while modern electrical circuits use alternating current (AC), at 120-240 volts. The constant conversion from DC to AC and the difference in voltages results in spikes and surges through a building’s wiring, creating ionizing radiation frequencies and electromagnetic interference (EMI). This “dirty electricity,” is thought by industry critics to be the source of symptoms like anxiety, disturbed sleep patterns and irregular heart-beat reported by some people who have smart meters installed outside their homes.

Olympians can opt out of AMI installation by contacting PSE and requesting a Non-Communicating Meter Service Agreement. A charge of about \$15 every other month will be added for the replacement and manual meter reading.

Learn more at takebackyourpower.net or the multi-award-winning documentary *Take Back Your Power*, available on youtube.



LOOKING FORWARD

Recognizing emergent fascism

Fascism is a set of behaviors

Dave Jette

In *Thinking Like a Terrorist*, published in 2008, Mike German proposes a Government Accountability Scale ranging from “fascism” to a “free government” (democracy). He points out that most governments fall somewhere between these two extremes. One purpose of making such an evaluation is to determine the legitimacy of terrorist groups’ calls for self-determination. For instance, attacking a fascist government would likely be considered justifiable, but attacking a democratic government would not be legitimate. (This consideration is independent of the particular acts of the terrorist group.)

What concerns us here is to understand the characteristics of fascism, so that we can prevent its rise in a basically democratic country such as ours. It’s useful first to make clear the features of a “free government” that occupies the opposite end of the scale. German provides the following list:

Respect for the supremacy of the law

- Free and fair elections
- Freedom of speech and assembly
- Freedom of the press
- Freedom of religion
- Due process of law and an independent judiciary
- Legal protections of minority rights
- The right to a publicly funded education
- The right to private property and free markets
- Civilian control of the military
- Open access to government records
- The freedom to emigrate

Except for the evidently unrestricted free markets, hopefully socialists will strive to fully implement these points, notwithstanding that some socialists (myself included) see a substantial role for small-scale private enterprise for an indefinite period. (Please see my column on Ralph Miliband’s practical model of socialism published in June 2020.)

Quoting Robert O. Paxton’s *The Anatomy of Fascism*, published in 2004, German lists the “mobilizing passions” that drive the political behavior that marks fascist regimes:

- A sense of overwhelming crisis beyond the reach of any traditional solutions
- The primacy of the group, toward which one has duties superior to every right, whether individual or universal, and the subordination of the individual to it
- The belief that one’s group is a victim, a sentiment that justifies any action, without legal or moral limits, against enemies internal and external
- Dread of the group’s decline under the corrosive effects of individualist liberalism, class conflict, and alien influences
- The need for closer integration of a purer community, by con-

sent if possible; by exclusionary violence if necessary

The need for authority by natural chiefs (always male), culminating in a national chieftain who alone is capable of incarnating the group’s historical destiny

The superiority of the leader’s instinct over abstract and universal reason

The beauty of violence and efficacy of will, when they are devoted to the group’s success

The right of the chosen people to dominate others without restraint from any kind of human or divine law, right being decided by the sole criterion of the group’s prowess within a Darwinian struggle

Observing the adherence to such passions helps us to identify where persons are on the fascism-democracy scale. Which brings us to the question: Are die-hard supporters of Trump fascists? There are various ways in which they differ from the Nazis of Germany, so socialists dismiss the fear that Trump has been laying the groundwork for fascism in our country.

But while all Nazis are fascists, not all fascists are Nazis. As Germany emphasizes, Nazism is a particular militant, racist, anti-Semitic political philosophy. “Fascism,” by contrast, is not an ideology but rather a set of behaviors—“a method of securing and exercising political power.”

The advantage of German’s Government Accountability Scale is that it allows people’s outlook to be placed in the continuum between outright fascism and full-fledged democracy. The danger is not simply from those who are full-fledged fascists but also—more importantly—from those who are approaching the extreme of fascism. Thus it is the latter group of people whose views we have to combat by vigorously promoting democracy. In this sense the die-hard supporters of Trump indeed are fascists, and we must not be lulled to sleep by the claim that many of them are not Nazi fascists.

Of further interest: In 2019 Mike German published a book *Disrupt, Discredit, and Divide: How the new FBI Damages Democracy*. It shows how FBI leaders exploited the fear of terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11. They used this fear to shed legal constraints imposed on them in the wake of Hoover-era civil rights abuses, and as a consequence, undermined public confidence in justice and the rule of law.

Dave Jette writes this bi-monthly column and has been involved with Works in Progress since its beginnings. His three books are 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.

New resources for landlords and tenants can help avoid eviction

Early in the pandemic, state and federal governments enacted moratoriums to prevent eviction of tenants for nonpayment of rent. People losing jobs, losing wage-earners, and losing childcare were falling behind on rent. The moratoriums meant that at least they wouldn’t lose their homes.

The moratorium ended in Thurston County on Oct. 31, and landlords can now pursue 14-day eviction notices. The conditions that necessitated the moratorium haven’t disappeared. But because of the pandemic, there are some resources that can help people stay in their homes even when they owe the landlord money.

The legislature passed an Eviction Resolution Pilot Program and along with federal and state resources, this is expected to bridge the transition from the moratorium to business as usual.

In Thurston and Mason Counties, the Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) offers the following help under the Pilot Program. From the DRC website:

For Tenants

If you’re behind on rent, your landlord may serve you with a notice asking you to take part in the Eviction Resolution Pilot Program. If you receive a notice from your landlord, you must contact the DRC by the “Respond By” date at the top of the notice to participate in the program. If we do not hear from you by that date, we must issue a DRC Certificate that allows your landlord to file for eviction. You will have to pay back any missed rent through a payment plan or rental assistance funds

now that the eviction moratorium is over. Landlords are required to present a personalized, reasonable repayment plan for any rent missed up to 6 months after the end of the Covid-19 State of Emergency. Prepare for this conversation and consider how you can help your landlord understand your financial situation in order to make your payment plan work for you.

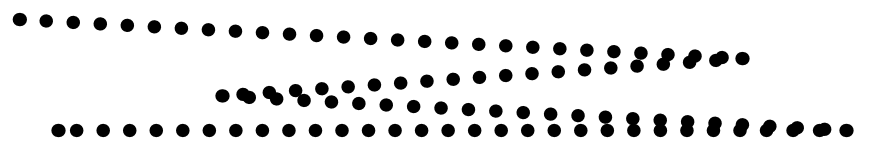
You can reach the Eviction Resolution Team at (360) 956-1155 ext. 113. To access legal resources and advice, contact Thurston County Volunteer Legal Services at (855) 657-8387.

For Landlords

If you have a tenant who is behind on rent, you can now submit an ERPP Resource Notice to your tenant and to the DRC. We can also offer you a DRC Certificate at the end of the resolution process. A DRC Certificate is required to file for eviction in court for nonpayment of rent.

You are required to present individualized and reasonable payment plans for your tenants to pay back any rent they missed up to six months after the end of the Covid-19 State of Emergency. Your flexibility can help preserve your relationships with your tenants, help your tenants continue to put food on the table and help keep people in their homes.

To get started, contact the Eviction Resolution Team at (360) 956-1155 or by email. To access affordable legal resources and advice, contact the WSBA Moderate Means Program at (855) 741-6930.



Wireless towers

From previous page

Will revised wireless regulations protect the health of Thurston residents?

The advisory committee members have proposed that facilities be placed as far from residential dwellings as possible and that testing be carried out to verify that the electromagnetic radiation is within FCC limits.

The committee also worked to ensure that right-of-way laws are strictly observed. The original draft allowed towers to be erected in a front, back or side yard with virtually no setback requirements. Those details, as well as the size of the towers, how many are needed, and whether environmental reviews should be submitted are all reconsidered in discussions on the new draft.

Stottlemeyer offers the experience of citizens in Petaluma, CA as a model for compromise in Thurston County. In 2018, people in Petaluma challenged their city’s interpretation of FCC

guidelines and ultimately achieved strictly codified regulations for wireless carriers.

Stottlemeyer hopes that the evidence he and his fellow committee members provided at their November 10 meeting with staff and companies was sufficient to convince them that what committee members want is well within legal limits.” The challenge for the advisory committee is to convince the County that the best way to preserve property values and rural aesthetics is to abide by federal law rather than the FCC’s interpretations of it.”

Whatever the outcome of the rewrite, city and county residents will need to familiarize themselves with the details of their wireless codes and if they find them unacceptable, research pathways to revise them. “People don’t realize they can challenge the codes and ask for them to be rewritten.”

BOOK REVIEW

No Good Men Among the Living: America, the Taliban and the War through Afghan Eyes, by Anand Gopal

Jeff Angus

If you'd read Anand Gopal's 2014 book about Afghanistan and the last three decades of its history, America's August donnybrook exiting that country would have been unsurprising.

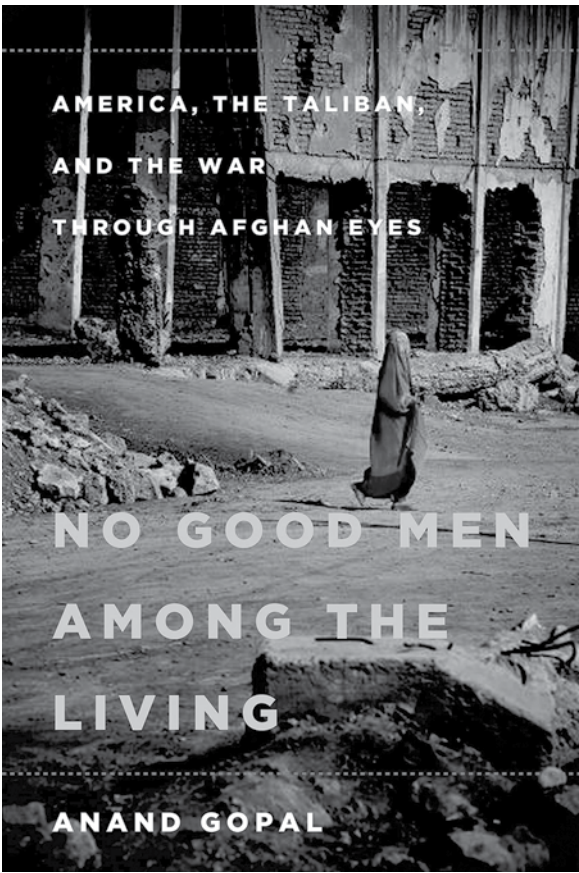
No Good Men Among the Living: America, the Taliban and the War Through Afghan Eyes explains everything about the US occupation and how it avidly pursued its own failure. It wasn't just the self-serving corruption of George Bush Junior and his henchpeople—it was the failure to serve the Afghan people—our claimed mission. Seen through Afghan eyes, the narrative is wholly different from what we've been fed since 2001.

Gopal is a journalist, a New Yorker who was in the city when Al-Qaeda launched the suicide attacks. His interest in the war is explicitly personal. He worked for over a decade in-country, reporting for The Atlantic and Harpers. The book stands apart from other anti-war critics because Gopal sources his material from all kinds of "regular" Afghan people, not just US allies. His informants include men who fought to install the Taliban régime during the 1990s, some commanders who fought against both Taliban and Soviets and non-combatants striving for a modicum of normalcy. Their personal perspectives aren't always sympathetic, but do consistently describe how events affected Afghan people and their perceptions of Bush Junior's Crusade.

The most engaging of Gopal's storytellers is Heela Achekzai. Achekzai is a college-educated woman whose tiny portion of privilege melts away through every shift of régime, including most of the US occupation. It's Achekzai who provides the author the framework to interpret the historical arc. Gopal wants to know how the US takeover might have benefited her (the kind of person many Americans hoped to benefit). She explains that to understand the present, you have to know the past that led to it.

Heela and her family get by during the Soviet

occupation (1979-89) in Kabul, holding down professional jobs. The husband she chose is a worldly partner, grateful for an educated spouse who works. The Soviet times were beneficial overall to metropolitan residents, beefing up education, health and secular rights for women. At the same time, the Soviets were criminally vicious in the bare-subsistence majority of the country, engaging in war against US-funded "warlords." Outside Kabul, there was no state, just a crazy-quilt of rival brigand gangs, cashing in on opium crops, preying on farmers and shopkeepers, running police as shakedown machines.



The pro-Soviet régime crumbles. The brigands readily form new alliances, survival depending on taking advantage of every opportunity for gain. Kabul falls to rival gangs. Kidnap-for-ransom, protection rackets and rape become the norm.

Heela's family escapes to the small town of her husband's origin. There, he caves to custom. She's subject to "purdah." Beyond the walls of her house, all her rights vaporize, subject to practices that prevent women from unaccompanied anything, or even letting a stranger hear her voice. She struggles to integrate herself into this very different culture. People finger each other as enemies of one vicious warlord or another. Those fingered die.

This "civil war" lasts until 1996, when the Taliban take over about two-thirds of the country. The Taliban establish a law-and-order society reflecting their fundamentalist religious values. They eliminate crime, end opium growing and the drug business. Ordinary people ally out of a wish for public order.

Heela was now able to work under great stress, mostly in secret, as a midwife. Basic safety improved, but her rights evaporated further. People seem to appreciate the stability, but the Talib elect not to act as a government, only as a terrifying police apparatus. Institutions and infrastructure erode further. Few folk are Taliban adherents. When the US invades and occupies the country, the Taliban pretty much cease to exist, melting away to return to their prior lives.

Achekzai's family, like most, are hopeful about the invaders, pleased at the opportunity for rebuilding, looking for the cycle of corruption and

violence to end. Kabul mostly flourishes. The international effort pretty much ignores the countryside beyond military bases and roads. Heela, trapped in her rural village, can find only small advantage in her conservative town. She secretly manages a workshop that employs women to make clothes and get paid for it. Her in-laws turn on her and the community expels the alien concept.

The billions of dollars that the US poured into the country renewed cycles of corruption, acquisition, private mercenary militias, police running protection rackets, and a lavishly-funded version of the "civil war" period. By the book's 2014 publication, it's evident the US mission has failed (even though the occupation government included Heela as an elected representative).

The new occupiers ended up failing to move rural culture (a multi-generation endeavor). Instead, the US did the lazy thing, dispensing fortunes to many of the same ruthless brigands who made the people welcome the Taliban in 1996.

Gopal's thesis is built on the narratives of the storytellers. Are interviewees telling Truth in all cases? Perhaps. But when you read Heela's story and that of ordinary people not privileged to have education; people who shift alliances to try to care for their families, it's chilling. You see how George Bush Junior's imperial adventure bypassed the historic French practice of adopting the previous war's victorious strategy ("fighting the last war"), instead cloning the Soviets' losing strategy.

It's an entirely different perspective, painful and worth reading. For a brief but electrifying outline of the US' failed Afghanistan venture, listen to Anand Gopal's recent interview with The Intercept: www.tinyurl.com/Gopal-August.

Jeff Angus is a project manager and former US Senate aide specialising in renewable energy

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All food is prepacked and distributed through either the Drive-Up or Walk-Up distribution model.

Follow the signs for the vehicle line—please stay in your car—and friendly staff and volunteers will bring your food out and load it into your vehicle.

If you are on foot, line up along the Thurston Ave wall where there are marked spots to help with safe, social distancing. Your food will be brought out to you once you check in.

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

220 Thurston Ave. NE downtown Olympia WA

Granting religious exemptions: church Trumps state

Emily Lardner

Governor Inslee's vaccine mandates are widely credited with increasing the overall vaccination rate for our state. According to the WA Department of Health, as of November 8, 2021, 79.6% of our state population aged 12 and up have received at least one dose and 73.5% are fully vaccinated. Inslee is widely credited with basing public health decisions in the best available science. The next step would be to eliminate the religious exemption for school vaccinations.

Not all states allow religious exemptions

Not all states allow religious exemptions from school vaccination requirements. New York State eliminated religious exemptions in 2019 in response to a measles epidemic that hit the Orthodox Jewish community particularly hard. (1) Maine eliminated its religious and personal belief exemption in 2019. California eliminated religious exemptions from school vaccinations in 2015. Mississippi's religious exemption was struck down by its state Supreme Court in 1979 as a violation of equal protection laws. West Virginia has never allowed religious exemptions.

Religious support for COVID-19 vaccinations

Leaders of the three largest faith communities in the US have encouraged vaccinations against COVID-19. Among Christians, for instance, the Evangelical Lutheran Church issued a statement saying "there is no evident basis for religious exemption."

Both the Vatican and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops have said Catholics can receive the vaccine in good conscience given the goal of alleviating suffering. Pope Frances has declared getting a COVID vaccination an act of love.

Leaders of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese declared that "there is no exemption in the Orthodox Church for Her faithful from any vaccination for religious reasons."

Similarly, the National Muslim Task Force on COVID-19 and the National Black Muslim COVID Coalition released a statement

in December 2020 encouraging Muslims to get vaccinated. The joint statement addressed specific concerns circulating widely on social media, stating that this type of vaccine does not lead to future genetic changes in the vaccinated

When it comes to protecting public health, which is the rationale for school vaccination requirements, the expansiveness of the definition becomes problematic.

"Sincerely held religious beliefs"



person, that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do not contain porcine products and that they do not contain stem cell products or dead fetal remains.

What is a religious exemption?

Religious exemptions are granted when the person applying is determined to have a "sincerely held religious belief." The key term here is "religious belief."

Contrary to what many believe, guidance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) holds that religious beliefs include not only traditional organized religions but also "religious beliefs that are new, uncommon, not part of a formal church or sect, only subscribed to by a small number of people, or that seem illogical or unreasonable to others."

According to the EEOC, a belief is religious if it is religious in the person's "own scheme of things." The EEOC's expansive definition helps affirm religious freedom generally.

Some individuals are requesting exemptions to vaccine mandates because of their personal, sincerely held religious beliefs, like individuals who believe in healing power of prayer and refuse all vaccinations.

Other exemption requests are based on sincerely held religious beliefs regardless of whether they are factual: that the vaccines contain pork, and/or contain aborted fetal cells, and/or that they alter our genes. The way the law is written, religious beliefs that are not in agreement with other members of the faith but are sincerely held can justify an exemption. At stake is the sincerity of the belief, not the accuracy of the information on which it is based.

"How-to" resist "leftist" public health measures

The widespread presence on the internet of materials aimed at helping people successfully claim religious exemptions indicates that more is at stake than sincer-

ity. A quick search pulls up www.foundingfreedomslaw.org/covid19, with form letters for Jews and Christians. Another site gives more details about how to write exemptions, including the advice to include words from this list to emphasize the religious nature of your exemption request:

- Sacred
 - Holy
 - Worship
 - Blessed
 - Conviction
 - Faith
 - Religious Mandate
 - Translation of the word of my God/Creator
 - Unique understanding of the language of God/Creator
 - Personal understanding of God's/Creator's message to me
- Much active resistance to coronavirus vaccine mandates is politically motivated. As Adrian Bardon, professor of philosophy at Wake Forest University writes:

Conservative traditionalists from the historically dominant white Christian demographic in the US have had the most reason to feel threatened by science. Evolution by natural selection is threatening to many doctrinal religious traditionalists. Climate science threatens the economic status quo that conservatives seek to conserve. The whole concept of a public health mandate runs counter to the "small government" individualism of political conservatives.

Public health measures are associated with the political left. Rejecting public health measures in these cases becomes a signal of political and cultural identity.

An irreconcilable contradiction

Protecting religious freedoms is a fundamental value in this society. However, when religious beliefs trump science, as is the case when the state grants religious exemptions to vaccination mandates, church—or I should say churches—reign supreme. We no longer have a basis for understanding our shared physical reality.

The institution of science is imperfect, as are all institutions. But using science as the basis for public health decisions represents a better course for our collective future. It's time for our state to rethink religious exemptions for school vaccinations.

Emily Lardner serves on the Publishing Committee for Works in Progress, and is a long-term contributor to the paper.

(1) For an in depth article by a New York Assemblyman on that state's mandate, including a discussion of the free speech argument, search Ned Klein in the online issue of *Works in Progress* at www.olywip.org.

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Community Spotlight

Harlequin Theater performances

Until the Flood, through Sat., Dec 4. This riveting play uses a series of staged interviews to explore the uprising in Ferguson, MO following the shooting of Michael Brown.

A Christmas Carol, through Dec. 31. Lots of special effects make this holiday classic a super way to lighten the mood this winter. Harlequin Theater, 202—4th Ave. E. Call (360) 786-0151 for details.

Spaces that Spark

Join Window Seat Media for two community-centered fundraising series

Friday, December 3, 5pm,.virtual

A virtual reading and interactive conversation with Pat Holm from her book, *The Null Set Remembered*, about activism, organizing, and art in Olympia in the mid-1960s.

Friday, December 17, 5:30pm, Olympia Lamplighters

Storytelling with Brave Practice Play-back Theater Collective on the theme “Spaces that Spark.” Connect in community, share stories, and enjoy light refreshments. Learn more and register: www.windowseatmedia.org/post/spaces-that-spark. Donations support Window Seat’s community oral history and storytelling projects in the South Sound.



Holiday cheer there and here

Tree lighting ceremony at the Capitol. Friday Dec. 4, 6 pm. An annual event, a 25-foot noble fir.

Lacey lighted parade, Sunday December 6, 6:30 pm. Sleater-Kinney to Huntamer Park to light the holiday tree. Hot cocoa and Santa photos.

Tumwater tree lighting festival, Saturday Dec. 11, 1:00—5:30. City Hall & Fire Station HQ. Games, holiday crafts, local and school choirs sing, Santa photos.

LoveOly WinterFest Nov 28, noon—6pm at 5th & Washington and Yelm Winter Market Dec 11, all day. Festivities, activities and featured shopping.



Strengthening Sanctuary Alliance

Meets the first Monday of each month from 6-8 PM via Zoom.

Olympia has a strong branch of the Strengthening Sanctuary movement [aidnw.org] called “Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest.” They provide news and service as permitted to the inmates of the Northwest Detention Center. New members and ideas welcome: olympia.sanctuary@gmail.com. Or email Bob Zeigler at zeiglerbob@msn.com or call (360) 570-0848

What is OlyDSA?

Fri, December 17, 6:30pm – 7:30pm

Check out the Olympia chapter of Democratic Socialists of America. Orientation for new members, prospective members, and those looking to plug back in. Attendees will learn more about DSA, the work we’re doing in the South Sound and how to get involved. Via zoom the 3rd Friday of every month from 6:30-7:30pm. www.olydsa.org calendar.

Joy and Justice Book Drive and Gift Giving

YWCA, 220 Union Ave SE, Tues-Thur, Dec. 21-23, 5:00 -7:30

For the second year, Justice for Yvonne organizers will be giving away stockings, books, toys and treats to children ages 3—13. During December, contributions and donations of new, unwrapped stocking stuffers can be arranged by contacting j4ymolympia@gmail.com. Last year 168 children received books and other gifts; the goal this year is to serve 250 children and their families.

Birdseye Medical Clinic

Covid Testing, Mon-Fri, 9:00 am—4:00 pm.

Next to the old Greyhound bus station, 7th and Capitol Way S. in downtown Olympia

The clinic offers PCR testing in conjunction with the Univ. of Washington. 24-36 hour turn around with cost charged to your insurance. Rapid Testing is available for walk-ins with a 15 minute turn-around for \$34 with debit or credit card. Visit “testingbem.com” for more details.



Olympia’s new Social Justice and Equity Commission

The City of Olympia is recruiting people to serve on a new social justice commission. Commissioners will receive and investigate complaints about discrimination and advise the City accordingly. The Commission will have a budget and be staffed by City employees. People from all backgrounds, life experiences and skills are encouraged to apply. Applications are due by January 14, 2022. See details at <https://engage.olympiawa.gov/equitycommission>.

ASHHO Cultural Community Space

Pay it forward and buy-one-give-one. 5757 Littlerock Rd., SW, Tumwater. Ph. 360-918-8625.

Khurshida Begum founded ASHHO (Bengali for “come, join”) in 2020 as a place to unite people through food, education and community gatherings. ASHHO, in a beautiful building on Littlerock Road., serves as an event space and catering kitchen. ASHHO has partnered with street outreach organizations to provide food to 4000 people who otherwise have no access to hot meals. Explore or contribute to Khurshida’s vision for ASHHO and its community offerings at www.ashho.org

Longhouse at 25—Across the Waters

The Evergreen State College, Daniel J Evans Building. Through Jan. 29, 2022E

TESC’s Longhouse was the first of its kind built on a college campus in the United States. This retrospective features 25 years of indigenous art and culture—clothing, sculpture, weaving, painting—by artists from across the Pacific Rim. Hours at www.evergreen.edu/longhouse/markets-and-exhibits



Shower Power Plus

Free Showers, Saturdays 10 am—4 pm. Capital Cristian Center, 4431 Martin Way, (SW Corner of Martin & College)

Build-a-bus created a shower trailer with shower stalls and eight sinks and mirrors for personal hygiene for guests. The program is looking for more volunteers and community partners to help provide the people who come for a shower with information about resources for healthcare, mental health, housing options, outreach services. CCC volunteers also provide food. To schedule a shower text or call 360-890-3133. Walk-ins are welcome



Parallax Perspectives

Environmental Water Quality Problems and Solutions

In Glen Anderson’s December interview, Harry Branch explores the many pressures on water, from nutrient loading, abuses of estuaries, benefits of daylighting streams, consequences of inappropriate development, government policy contributions and more. Harry will discuss solutions and the movement to recognize a legal right for nature. The program will be on cable on Channel 22 Mondays at 1:30, Wednesdays at 5 pm and Thursdays at 9 pm and on Glen Anderson’s blog www.parallaxperspectives.org, along with a transcript from the TV program. Reach host/producer Glen at (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net

Americans United for Separation of Church and State

This increasingly relevant organization has a monthly publication [www.au.org] that covers actions in places where religion has seeped into the justice system and denied a fair hearing to those who disagree with the tenets imposed by a particular religion. It also speaks to those who fear the increasing demand to imbed religious prescriptions in legislation and civic life.

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To have your program or event highlighted in Community Spotlight, send it to olywip@gmail.com by the 26th of any month.

Works in Progress



Advocating for social justice since 1990

Ooh, a storm is threatening
My very life today
If I don't get some shelter
Ooh yeah I'm gonna fade away
War, children
It's just a shot away
It's just a shot away

Ooh, see the fire is sweepin'
Our streets today
Burns like a red coal carpet
Mad bull lost its way
War, children
It's just a shot away
It's just a shot away

Mmm, a flood is threatening
My very life today
Gimme, gimme shelter
Or I'm gonna fade away
War, children
It's just a shot away
It's just a shot away

I tell you love, sister
It's just a kiss away, it's just a kiss away, it's just a kiss away

selected lyrics from Gimme Shelter
by Mick Jagger & Keith Richards