



Solar energy comes into its own

Community Solar creates economic, social and environmental justice

Charlotte Persons

Frustrated by the lack of local, state, and federal action to address the climate emergency, in 2019 a group of local activists set out to create tangible change. The team included an environmental organizer, a marine corps veteran, a bartender, a solar installer, and a water protector fresh off the frontlines of oil pipeline resistance. They shared a belief that clean energy must be accessible to everyone.

Where solar energy is concerned, significant barriers exist for people who live in multifamily buildings; for building owners who cannot (or assume they cannot) afford the up-front cost; and for building owners with unsuitable roofs due to shade, orientation or the need for repairs.

The team incorporated as a non-profit organization, Olympia Community Solar, to address these barriers through community solar projects, group purchasing campaigns, and public policy. As president of OCS, Mason Rolph, notes, solar power should be accessible and equitable, “Solar is not only a climate solution, it’s also a vehicle for social and economic justice.”

Since their inception, OCS has completed three major projects. Solarize Thurston organizes individual and group purchase of solar installations. Two community solar projects—the Hummingbird Project at the Hands On Children’s Museum and the Sunflower Project at the Olympia Farmers’ Market—allow people to share in the benefits of a solar array generating electricity elsewhere than on their building.

Solarize Thurston reduces the cost to individuals

Last spring OCS launched a solar group-purchasing program seeking to reduce the costs by turning the normally individual choice of installing solar into a community effort. A solar installer offered a group discount and a credit union provided discounted financing—if fifty households signed up.

The volume-purchasing discount, combined with federal tax credits, made solar panels accessible for many Thurston County families. The program exceeded expectations and contracted 139 solar installations, representing more than \$2.7 million dollars of investment.

“Our team was not sure what response we would receive from the community,” Rolph said. “That wasn’t a concern after we passed our campaign goal in less than a month. Participants say that they are shocked by how easy and inexpensive generating your own energy is.”

OCS is expanding the program in 2022 with a goal of 200 participants spanning Thurston, Mason, Lewis, and Pierce counties. The program supported homeowners with sunny roofs, but how can others access solar?

Community solar spreads benefits broadly

The answer is community solar. Community solar allows people to own and benefit from a single solar array. Similar to how a community garden provides farming plots for people who may not have their own garden, a community solar array expands solar access to everyone.

An individual or group buys one or more units of a project. The energy

community members could choose to subscribe to a unit (about half of a solar panel) or to donate a unit to a participating non-profit. When the payback period is over, the installation will be donated to the Hands On Children’s Museum.

Community solar will supply all Oly Farmers’ Market energy needs

Over the summer, OCS worked with the Farmers Market and local solar installer South Sound Solar to design an installation that will provide 100% of the markets’ energy needs. This makes it the first net-zero farmers market in Washington. {See “Bringing clean energy to the Farmers’ Market,” WIP, Aug. 2021}

solar projects to access bill-crediting systems that distribute participants’ energy credits.

The change would allow for a competitive community solar market that provides customers with tangible savings on their electric bills. Rolph estimates that this bill will expand Washington’s addressable solar market five times over and create many new jobs

If the bill is passed, solar providers will be able to apply to the Washington State University Extension Energy Program for project funding. The fund could pay up to 100% of the solar project costs that benefit low-income customers and would reimburse some of the provider’s development expenses. Governor Jay Inslee announced in December that he was proposing a one hundred-million-dollar grant program



The solar installation at Merritt Manor, a low-income housing development with 82 apartments in East Olympia, has 324 solar panels and will produce about 129 megawatt hours of electricity a year - roughly a third of the building’s total consumption. With the panels, every apartment will save about \$260 dollars a year on energy. Installation by South Sound Solar.

is metered and credited to the participants. In some community solar projects, the energy credits reduce the participants’ electric bills while in other projects the participants periodically get a check for the value their solar units produce.

Local community solar with 97 owners

The Hummingbird Community Solar Project began generating energy in February 2021 after more than eighteen months of organizing. OCS leased the rooftop of the Hands On Children’s Museum, enrolled participants and contracted a solar installer. The technology is impressive—300 solar panels, commercial inverters, and a public online monitoring system.

The truly unique thing about the Hummingbird Project is that it has 97 owners. Participants include 83 individuals and 14 non-profits. Com-

Over the summer more than 100 community members purchased units for themselves or donated units of the project to twelve participating nonprofits. Organizations such as GRuB, the Thurston County Food Bank, Salmon Defense, the Dispute Resolution Center, Homes First and several more participated.

When community members donate solar units they not only help build a solar project, they benefit the community at large by providing long-term support to a nonprofit.

A third community solar project will be available in 2022.

Public support for shifting energy markets away from fossil fuels

In 2021, OCS began working on legislation to fund solar projects for low-income homes and to require utility companies to allow community

to install solar panels on buildings throughout the state.

Bringing the sunshine in pays off

In a short period, Olympia Community Solar has helped hundreds of people access the benefits of solar power and created new “green collar” jobs. Last year alone their projects created work for seven different crews from three different solar installers. It has dozens more projects in progress for next year. With the support of Olympia’s residents, the organization’s momentum will continue expanding equitable and accessible solar power for everyone.

Learn more about each program at these dedicated sites: <https://olysol.org/solarize-thurston>, <https://olysol.org/hummingbird-project>, and <https://olysol.org/sunflower>.

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

Beg, borrow or steal, but...

Take back the light in 2022

"There is light in darkness, you just have to find it." —bell hooks

After the year we just had, asking readers where they find light may sound like a maddening and unanswerable Zen koan. And honestly, given our species' epic capacity for self-delusion and antipathy, abandoning a trope as shopworn as darkness giving way to light seems justifiable. Yet we return again and again to the idea of seeking light because light—and its first cousin, hope—are not empty ideals. They are cellular imperatives.

We received many thoughtful submissions this month that suggest the answer to where and how we find light is through connection to others. "What's in your wallet?" makes a case for opening our hearts and hearths to each other as the most direct path to lighting our way. "Fire" takes the theme to its most elemental level, reminding us of that most ancient of ways to bond.

Our feature on page one talks about the kind of light that shines when a diverse group of activists and visionaries pool their talents to become a force for change in the community. Olympia Community Solar's efforts to bring renewable energy to people of all income levels reframes our understanding of the power of light.

The needed opinion piece by "Cassandra" shines a light on our diminishing freedoms at the hands of officials who are bending laws to accommodate questionable—and unlegislated—agendas. Considerable inner fortitude has always been required to defend the rights of those we oppose but such is the responsibility of those who champion liberty.

For sheer fun, don't miss Dave Harris' reminiscence on the energy and excitement surrounding the music scene in Olympia in the 90s and why this area provided such fertile soil for bands like Sleater-Kinney and labels like K Records. The only question is whether the same conditions that made such a nexus possible, like youth-friendly venues and affordable housing, will reappear. Matt Crichton's interview with psychologist Pete Sanderson reminds us that kids have it pretty tough these days and that helping them build a healthy self image is a slow but sacred task.

As the new year begins, we are mindful of the devastating fire that claimed so many small businesses downtown on December 15, 2021. Their losses are staggering and, in some cases, irretrievable—equipment, hardware, customer records, memorabilia. Some are facing the possibility of shutting their doors permanently. Still, as some of the business owners told WIP, the support they are receiving from the community—often in the form of \$5 and \$10 donations—is keeping the lights on, if only virtually and psychologically, for the moment. We invite you to give oxygen to their re-kindling efforts on page 15.

The losses of 2021 are undeniable: social isolation, illness, reduced income and an increased distrust of each other via a media machine that delights in darkness. Bishop Desmond Tutu, Steven Sondheim,

bell hooks, E. O. Wilson, Hank Aaron, Cicely Tyson, Beverly Cleary, Betty White and so many other light bearers left the planet last year. How do we embrace the uncertainty of what lies ahead? The great soul who bore much dark-

ness in his life, Bishop Desmond Tutu, said "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness."
Happy 2022. Keep the home fires burning.

—LL



"Someone I loved once gave me a box full of darkness. It took me years to understand that this, too, was a gift." ~ Mary Oliver

Upcoming themes

- 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 when so many messages tell us just to look out for number one? **Deadline January 17.**
- March: What lies beneath.** What might be hidden from our view just below the surface of things? Does decay fester under a veil of chipper platitudes or can we trust that dormant seeds of life are about to burst forth to nourish us? If you scratch the surface of a cynic, is there an idealist underneath? **Deadline February 14.**

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You write to WIP

Dear WIP,

The article “Elected officials in Thurston County begin allocating new federal funds,” in the November/December issue, is an encouraging example of watchdog journalism. I was especially struck by the fact that \$100 million in pandemic-related federal funding has nearly doubled the size of the Thurston County budget. “A substantial infusion of money,” notes the article’s subheading. “Is anyone counting?”

Clearly, this article required a substantial amount of reporting on a half-dozen local government entities’ poorly publicized spending plans. This article highlights the importance of local news—what’s left of it.

It may be unclear who’s counting, but I’m glad to know WIP is watching.

Margaret Thomas

Dear Editor,

David Jette’s article on identifying fascism (November/December 2021) is misleading. He bases his remarks on a book by a former FBI agent. I would argue that the FBI is one of the most anti-socialist, pro-fascist organizations out there and that his affiliation with them has caused author Mike German to be unable to recognize our own government’s fascist tendencies.

Just look at the history of the FBI’s involvement in the deaths of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Che Guevara and the violence surrounding the American Indian Movement, the Black Panthers, and more recently, the Proud Boys, who were FBI informants during BLM marches.

Benito Mussolini, fascist leader of Italy, said, “Fascism should more appropriately be called Corporat-

ism because it is a merger of state and corporate power.” Why were the above-named leaders killed or imprisoned? Because they were a threat to capitalism. To be anti-fascist one must also be anti-capitalist.

These acts continue because capitalism is more important than people’s lives. We see more evidence of this with how the Covid response is being handled. There are no more stimulus checks even as new variants are raging through communities of color.

The social implements Jette is talking about will uplift fascism instead of tearing it down. Free and fair elections elected Hitler and Mussolini. And the US has a long history of overthrowing legitimate democracies and economies. Especially ones that happen here.

After World War 2, the FBI imported over 1,500 Nazis and incorporated many of their tactics in their day-to-day operations. That’s why so many democratically elected governments in Latin America (and elsewhere) fell after US-backed coups installed fascist leaders. Chilean leader Augusto Pinochet is a perfect example. Chile was rich with natural resources that the free market coveted. And since the business of America is business, the Chicago School (another beacon of Nazi ideology) with Milton Friedman at the helm, had then-president Salvador Allende killed, clearing the way for backed Pinochet to come to power.

Friedman was a key developer of the economic policy of the free market that is still in effect today. The Chicago school is also where Carl Schmitt, another “ex-Nazi”, developed the Duoply theory that Jette refers to in the first paragraph, in which most governments fall between two extremes. Those who fail to see fascism as an ideology missed the point of all those WW2 documentaries on the History Channel.

Hannah Arendt in her book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, says it’s not the street fascist we need to worry about—the bureaucrats who enact fascist policies are much more dangerous. I have fought street fascist in the Pacific Northwest. I was in Portland when the Trump caravan went through and witnessed street fascism in action. We need to take fascism out at the roots. Are we prepared to stand up to the federal government? Or will most of us go back to the couch with a cup of coffee while the real anti-fascists die in the street; while the anti-fascists are slowly being destroyed by the federal government and capitalism? That famous quote about the holocaust is being played out in front of us. “I was not a socialist, so I did nothing....”

Maybe we should listen to the people who have been fighting fascism since 1492 instead of ignoring it until it comes to our front door.

DM Krizic

Recommend Reading

A Little Matter of Genocide, Ward Churchill
Eichmann in Jerusalem, Hannah Arendt

The Service Memoirs of Reinhard Gehlen
The Shock Doctrine, Naomi Klein
The New Jim Crow, Michelle Alexander

Year 501: The Conquest Continues, Noam Chomsky
A People’s History of the United States, Howard Zinn

**Jette does note that German authored another book about the FBI’s civil rights abuses after 9/11. But those tactics, foundational to the FBI, may only have come to light after 9/11 because that is when such abuses started to affect white people. Black, indigenous and people of color have been the subject of such harassment since the inception of the FBI. —Ed.*

Benito Mussolini created the word 'fascism.' He defined it as 'the merging of the state and the corporation.' He also said a more accurate word would be 'corporatism.' This was the definition in Webster's up until 1987 when a corporation bought Webster's and changed it to exclude any mention of corporations.

~ Adam McKay, writer and director of Don't Look Up

About the back cover

bell hooks is the pen name of Gloria Jean Watkins, a groundbreaking professor and author of over 30 books on race, feminism, art, history, education, gender, community, family, love, and politics. The fierce, reflective, soulful nature of hooks’ work, colored by her unique blend of Buddhism and Christianity, continues to inspire people of all ages, races and orientations. Born in Kentucky, hooks held teaching positions at Stanford, Yale, Oberlin College and New York’s City College. In 2004 she returned to Kentucky, where she joined the faculty of Berea College as Distinguished Professor in Residence. When she died there in December 2021, tributes and



memorials poured into Berea from around the world. Dr. Cornell West, co-author with hooks of *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life*, said “she was an intellectual giant, spiritual genius and freest of persons! We shall never forget her!”

Then this happened

Media Island’s low-power radio station KOWA is no more. No turning the dial to 106.5 and getting an earful of great Pacifica Radio programs. Years ago, when the operators at Media Islan had problems with their transmitter, they moved it from Black Hills into town. They never found a suitable new location and now the opportunity is gone.

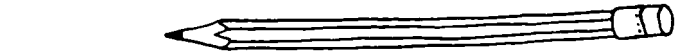
France brought the woman we stereotype as a banana dancer, to rest among its heroes in the Pantheon. Josephine Baker served as a French intelligence agent in WWII, a civil rights activist who appeared with MLK at the 1963 March on Washington, and the adoptive mother of 12 children from all over the world. (Reminding us of how we limit our knowledge of Black people.)

Venezuela and Chile didn’t vote for right-wing candidates. The US-backed right-wing opposition

participated in Venezuela’s regional election...and were crushed. The socialist alliance won 20 of 23 states and the capital Caracas. Chilians chose as president Gabriel Boric, who promised a new treaty for indigenous peoples and a state that guarantees universal social rights. (He was immediately branded as “far left” by the western press.)

Scotland attendees at climate talks heard Joe Biden vow that the US will “lead by example” to tackle global warming. Four days later his administration okayed the largest ever auction of oil and gas drilling leases in the Gulf of Mexico. He didn’t say which direction he would lead.

Everybody freaked out about \$4.00/gal gas prices. In the year 1980, the average retail price of gas was \$1.19. \$1.19 is equivalent to \$4.04 in 2021 dollars. Real dollar calculation from DollarTimes.org—related graph on page 12.



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.

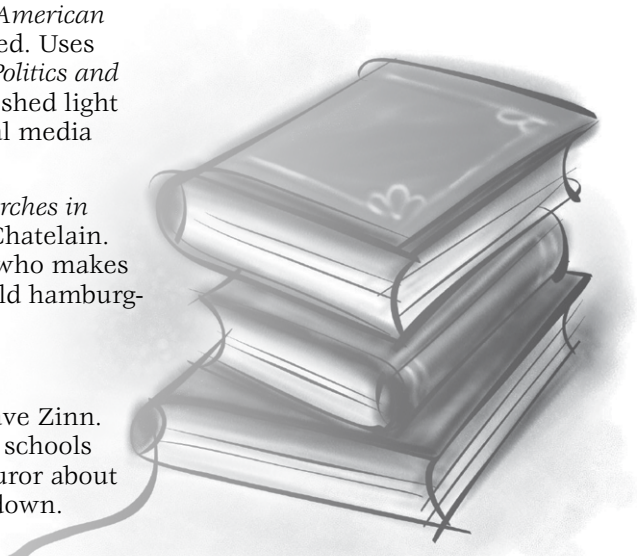
What Orwell Didn’t Know: Propaganda and the New Face of American Politics, Andras Szanto, ed. Uses George Orwell’s essay *Politics and the English Language* to shed light on today’s TV and social media narratives.

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.



Where’s the deluge?

Court actions and other safeguards may keep renters from eviction

Dan Leahy

One month after Governor Inslee lifted the Eviction Moratorium on October 31, 2021, only 12 cases were filed in Thurston Superior Court. This is less than the number of cases filed in October when the moratorium was in effect. The Court expected a deluge of unlawful detainer filings, the legal term for evictions.

Where’s the deluge?


There are at least three possible explanations. The first consists of anticipatory actions by the State Supreme Court and various Superior Courts. Second is the Legislature’s passage of Senate Bill 5160, which became effective April 22, 2021. The third possibility is the Landlord Mitigation Program available through the Department of Commerce.

An Eviction Response Program includes mediation and rental assistance

In September 2020 the Washington State Supreme Court, in anticipation of a large number of evictions, enabled Superior Courts to take preemptive action. In November 2020, Thurston County Superior Court issued an order stating that after expiration of the moratorium, a landlord seeking a residential eviction for non-payment must first comply with the Eviction Response Program administered by the Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) of Thurston and Mason Counties.

The Center’s Eviction Response Program (ERP) offers the possibility of resolution and mediation for back due rent outside of the Court process. The landlord must inform the DRC that they have sent a 14 day notice to the tenant. If the DRC is able to contact the tenant, they let the tenant know there are funds available through the Community Action Council to pay back rent and possibly allow them to remain in their home.

Since the program became mandatory on November 1, the DRC has been involved in 331 ERP notices as of December 14. 126 were resolved and seven required formal mediation. If the DRC cannot contact the tenant within 14 days, they issue a “Dispute Resolution Certificate” which the landlord must have to proceed with a legal eviction. Thus far, the DRC has issued 38 such certificates.



233 Division St NW
(360) 943-8044

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The funds the DRC can help facilitate and the Community Action Council can distribute came initially from the US Treasury either directly to Thurston County or

separate landlord funds administered by the Housing Assistance Unit of Commerce. The largest one by far is the Landlord Covid Relief Fund.

OCLA had to set up an entirely new system of legal defense, engaging 13 legal aid providers, training 65 attorneys and hiring the NW Justice Project to establish a statewide point of contact for indigent tenants.

via the Department of Commerce to the County. These are Treasury Rental Assistance Program or T-RAP funds. Thurston County received approximately \$37.7 million in T-RAP funds either from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of February 2021 or the American Rescue Plan Act of March 2021.

The County had distributed \$14.8 million in rental assistance to 2088 households by the end of September. Thurston County is 81.5% white; most households receiving assistance are also white (62.8%), Non-white households are also receiving assistance.

In the future, it appears these rental assistance funds will come from Washington State’s Department of Commerce. The Department received a legislative allocation of \$403 million for its Eviction Rent Assistance Program or ERAP 2.0. This program will eventually replace Treasury’s T-RAP allocations to the County.

New law provides unprecedented legal representation and options for reduced rent

Senate Bill 5160 which became effective April 22, 2021 gave additional protections to tenants. This bill focused on tenants who were unable to pay their rent between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2021.

Besides other tenant protections, the bill mandates that landlords offer a “reasonable schedule for repayment of unpaid rent” before asking the Court to evict. “Reasonable” means one-third of the tenant’s rent. For example, if the tenant’s rent was \$1500/month, a repayment plan could be no more than \$500/month.

Another provision of the bill might help to explain the lack of formal evictions. The bill created “the nation’s first appointed counsel program for tenants in eviction proceedings,” according to Jim Bamberger, Director of the state’s Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA).

Now indigent individuals not only have the right to counsel in criminal matters, but also when facing eviction. OCLA had to set up an entirely new system of legal defense, engaging 13 legal aid providers, training 65 attorneys and hiring the NW Justice Project to establish a statewide point of contact for indigent tenants.

Landlords can be reimbursed for some claims

The third reason for fewer than expected evictions could be the Landlord Mitigation Program at the Washington Department of Commerce. There are actually four

This fund allows landlords to be reimbursed up to \$15,000 for any unpaid rent accrued between March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021 if the tenant leaves his home voluntarily. If the landlord gets reimbursed, the landlords can’t take legal action against the tenant for unpaid rent or for damages.

At the end of November 2021, there were 10,024 landlord claims statewide in the amount of \$48.3 million. Of that amount, \$23.7 million has been distributed to landlords. In Thurston County, landlords have submitted 160 requests for reimbursement.

Evictions of unsheltered people continue in Thurston County

There are, of course, “evictions” that take place outside the Superior Court. Governor Inslee lifted the moratorium at the end of October. People living on land without the owner’s permission were left unprotected. Olympians saw this winter what can happen next.

For over two years an estimated average of eighty individuals lived in an encampment on the Deschutes Parkway. The owners of the nine parcels are Sean Threatt, Jean Holbrook and Richard Marcelynas. According to the City’s press release, these property owners requested that the City enforce trespass laws and remove the people living there.

The City did just that on Wednesday, December 8. The City did that while at the same time stating “it does not have the resources to provide alternative shelter options...” Whether the City will continue this practice and remove homeless people from other encampments remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, it seems that as long as tenants participate in the now mandatory DRC process, there will be no flood of legal evictions for nonpayment. Of course, the DRC process must be adequately staffed to deal with the volume of requests, the County’s funds need to continue to flow and the Community Action Council’s capacity must be sufficient to distribute the needed funds. With all this in place, it seems possible that legal evictions, a leading cause of homelessness, will remain low for the immediate future.

Dan Leahy lives on Olympia’s Westside and has been writing housing-related articles for Works In Progress over the past several years.

Eviction Day

Wading through homelessness.
Can you imagine a lengthy stay?
Mired in mud and damp
I did it just one day.

I was with refugees in Lesvos
fleeing US wars.
Their camps were no where close to
these homegrown sores.

Homegrown refugees,
beneath official contempt,
private property points its finger
cleanse the vermin’s tent!

Not one Council member
came with their personal conviction
Just phone calls from their director
The police will enforce the eviction.

The Council would rather tour sites
with their own millionaire builder
designing a city these US refugees
could never get past the filter.

There is a fundamental criminality
that this local government endorses
as it spouts its equity claptrap
and sends in its police forces.

Dan Leahy
12/08/21

Green Cove has friends at City Hall

The continuing quest by local attorney Burgess and City staffers to turn a toxic waste site into a housing development

Esther Kronenberg

This summer, the President of the Economic Development Council, the legal counsel for the Thurston Chamber of Commerce's public policy advocacy arm, the former Port of Olympia attorney and the attorney representing developer Jerry Mahan, sent an email to the City of Olympia asking it to consent to a "quiet title" action.

The well-connected attorneys listed above are one person - Heather Burgess. Burgess's goal was to get the City to agree to vacate public rights-of-way in favor of Mahan's controversial Green Cove Park development.

In putting forth the request, Ms. Burgess claimed "There is no evidence that the portion of the Unopened Area sought to be vacated...

has ever been formally vacated nor opened to the public, and there is no person known who would claim otherwise..."

In fact, the City had been informed of persons "who would claim otherwise" since 2006, when a resident objected to a 2005 Mahan proposal that would have built houses right up to the edge of his property. The streets claimed as unopened have been used for years by nearby residents to access northern parts of their property.

Despite this and other evidence that the area in question was open and used by the public, the City obliged Ms. Burgess. On August 4, the Superior Court granted the stipulation without any public notice or input, as required.

In order to support Ms. Burgess to facilitate the development, City staff ignored their responsibility to

examine maps and photos or consult neighbors. Information from these sources and from the City's own records would have shown Ms. Burgess's claims to be invalid, and required the rejection of the quiet title request.

The City ignored the law in one further area. Mahan's project is on the Department of Ecology's Confirmed and Suspected Contaminated Site list, making it subject to cleanup under the Model Toxics Control Act. The staff used City resources in taking the quiet title action on behalf of the Green Cove Park project. This violated the State Environmental Policy Act, which states that "appropriate consideration of environmental information shall be completed BEFORE an agency commits to a particular course of action."

It may be only a matter of time before parties excluded from the quiet title process ask the Court to remedy this miscarriage of justice.

Esther Kronenberg has followed progress of the Green Cove proposal for years.



Haunting at City Hall

Eleven ghostly souls braved the elements on December 4 to underscore the city's lethargy in implementing the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan. Adopted in all jurisdictions of Thurston County last year, the plan lists over 70 action items that must be completed within the next decade to maximize adaptation and preparation for the impacts of climate change.

Citing the fact that only one item on the list has been addressed so far, members of the Thurston Climate Action Team used Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* as inspiration for their December action in front of City Hall. Dressed as "Ghosts of Holidays Future," protestors planted cardboard cutouts and carried signs calling on council members to avoid being Scrooges by honoring their commitment to the mitigation plan.

As if to underscore their message, the weather was bleak, cold and wet. Despite voices nearly drowned out by a roaring fleet of motorcycles on State Street, co-organizers Alice Grendon and Lynn-Fitz Hugh rallied the ghost-activists, who persisted through a heavy rain, holding their signs aloft for drivers who slowed to read their messages from the future.

Learn more: thurstonclimateaction.org (360) 350.6507
IG: @thurstonclimateactionteam Twitter: @thurstonclimate

REFLECTION Fire

Peter Brown

Fire has been central to our existence as humans since the time before time. Fire helped to bind us to each other. This is where I find light.

In Latin, the word focus meant fireplace, and it came to be used for fire itself. It may have been used metaphorically for the notion of the hearth, symbolizing the center of the home, the center of our attention and intention. Humans have always had fire as their center. Fire gave us our humanness. Fire is seen as residing in the heart.

Fire was, and still is for many, central to the homes that people inhabit, whether it be a cave, a tipi or a house made from wood or earth. The hearth was where the family gathered for cooking, meals, socializing, warmth and light. It was our opportunity to commune with each other, to see each other's light, their fire. Some say that fire as the gathering place for our ancestors helped to promote language and exchange.

Over the years this has shifted, and we now regulate the fire that warms us to a closet, a garage, a tv set or a phone/computer screen.

An example is the Huichol people of Sierra Madres in Mexico. Fire is core to their lives. Tatewari, Grandfather Fire, is the original shaman. A God that is central in their daily lives and who they receive guidance from. Their ceremonial house, a Tuki, has in the center a fire pit. Fire is at the center and connects life for the Huichol.

So how do I bring light into my life? How do I bring warmth, connection and movement into my life during these times of polarizing influences and the traditional time of darkness, cold and going within, I sit with the fire and invite others to come and talk and share.

Winter is a time, traditionally, when generations gather around the light and warmth of the fire and listen to stories from their elders and learn about their ways and the way to live a good life, a proper life in community. An opportunity to slow down and be



embraced by what binds us as a people, to renew our values, beliefs and experiences.

Sitting with the fire, the rugged individual, or at least individualism that is perpetuated in America, becomes softer and more open. As one sits with the fire in community and we talk about our lives, a common, primordial bond that we each have, our humanity, our light is rekindled.

Come sit with the fire.

Peter Brown lives in Olympia. Peter and his wife host fires. To learn more, contact him at p2b48@yahoo.com.

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Will democracy return after COVID?

Cassandra

I'm fully vaccinated—two Moderna shots this summer. I've had lots of vaccinations in my life: as a kid I had them all. For global travel I had them all. I can't recall any adverse reactions from those vaccinations. But as the COVID vaccines rolled out early this year, many of my friends got sick from them—some really sick. I began to hear reports of heart problems after some COVID vaccinations.

After hearing of these problems, I got my two Moderna vaccinations mostly because my government employer mandated it: COVID vaccinations or perpetual weekly testing—or get fired from my job.

This surprised me. Never before had any employer required vaccinations: not for the flu nor measles. Since all my pre-COVID vaccinations had gone OK and I'm pretty fit, I thought, "No problem." But within four hours of the second Moderna shot, I was sick, and for about a week thereafter. For two days I was really sick and in bed.

We were told in 2020 that vaccination was the gateway out of COVID lockdowns. When even countries like heavily-vaccinated Israel had lots of new COVID cases, I began to get worried. Several friends and their family members got sick from COVID despite having been fully vaccinated.

Today nobody is promising the vaccine will prevent COVID—and everyone is talking about booster shots. Will I have to get sick with a new vaccination every few months as a condition of my employment, as each new variant of COVID emerges; perhaps for the rest of my life? Can my employer force me to do that, or fire me if I refuse—even if the vaccine is not very effective?

Never in my life have I heard of mandates so absolute that there was no reasonable way to opt-out. My own vaccine-created illness didn't seem to matter. My devout Catholic friend says her request for an exemption based on religious objections was denied—and she was fired. My devout Jewish friend has already lost his job. All appeals appear to have been denied. There is a huge personal and social cost for these terminations. Lose your job, done, no recourse.

Are we going to summarily terminate a worker, perhaps an important, experienced worker and friend in the community? What ripple effects will their termination have as their blameless children lose healthcare? What will our community do as we lose the investment in their experience, knowledge—and friendship?

My union didn't bother to ask our membership when they signed agreements binding me to vaccination or termination. Actually, I could have chosen to get tested weekly—at my personal cost—possibly in perpetuity.

Both my employer and my union agreed that my COVID vaccination data and any test results would be submitted to a company called "Qualtrics." Their website motto as of a few days ago was: "Find Out What your Employees and Customers Aren't Telling You." Pretty



A protester at the Washington State Capitol raises the same question.
Photo by Lori Lively

chilling stuff, that in my world is equivalent to calling me a liar. We are considered "Unvaccinated" until Qualtrics decides we're OK. I don't know what becomes of my personal and confidential medical data. It has become the property of the corporation—not me. Since these companies sell data or get

hacked every day, will my personal medical data get hacked or sold? The privacy of my personal health data is important to me. In a disturbing shift, we are no longer focused on the disease but on vaccinations—injections that we dearly hope are good for us. I see the people of Olympia, my home-

town, hardening in their attitudes and it scares me. I see "Vaccinated Only" signs downtown that remind me of "Whites Only" signs. Are we really going to create a 'COVID Jim Crow' population in Olympia? Unvaccinated does not mean that a person is diseased. If you are unvaccinated, I personally welcome you. Since I was forced to get an injection, and the abortion debate is back, I thought about a woman's choice. Her right to terminate her pregnancy is good. "Her body, her choice." Period. This has been a mantra for progressive-left voters for decades. But mandatory COVID injections—that's OK?

I began to wonder, where was all the power coming from, that the COVID mandate could be dropped on me and my fellow union members? The COVID emergency has lasted a long time—more than 20 months. Executive branch government officials at the county, state and national levels have had extraordinary powers over this period to mandate working conditions, impose requirements and set penalties using emergency declarations. Legislatures have been very quiet.

Emergency powers in government are usually limited in time and in scope. Legislatures may cede power for 90 to 180 days. In such situations, the legislative branch of government gives away some of the powers of democracy to the executive branch. That's great for a hurricane or an earthquake.

What about an emergency that lasts 600+ days? When does the emergency end and normal democracy return? Do emergency powers last forever? There are many nuances in life. Do you work at home? With colleagues or alone? How much interaction do you have with the public? Are you an EMT or an accountant? One of the most important parts of democracy is the *listening* to the voices and experiences of others. Might there be ways forward that keep people safe, short of an absolute mandate?

I ask that we consider a thing called a 'Reasonable Accommodation' standard. It says, in effect, that we must make some accommodations for the needs of others who may be at risk. The balancing of appropriate risks is something legislatures—democracy itself—are supposed to figure out. Consider where we are right now. Without being asked, without voting, you can now be fired for not getting vaccinated or tested—with no democratic process involved. The mandate is absolute and without appeal. Your adherence will be subject to surveillance. Facilities are now segregated. This is the first time this has been done—but this situation could last forever.

If you are not OK with that, then we have to solve this democratically. And soon. The writer is a resident of Olympia who has borrowed the name of Cassandra, a priestess who could foretell the truth—but was cursed never to be believed.

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REFLECTION

What’s in your wallet?

Social capital is the real currency

Ls.D

When the Capital One credit card “campaign” was launched in 2001, we were besieged with the phrase “what’s in your wallet”? I was really annoyed by this question and horrified by such offensive messaging. I was annoyed because I haven’t had a credit card in 30 years and my life is vastly improved by having been out of that vicious cycle.

I was horrified because we know consumption does not lead to happiness. The constant harangue to buy more (not to mention the co-optation of the public airwaves to push this dangerous impulse) is threatening life on this planet. Fundamentally, it struck me as a life-threatening message based on a lie.

What might be an antidote to the poison of such unhealthy and irresponsible messaging? Let’s consider asking ourselves what’s in your wallet? The word wallet (origin of the word walet) is defined as a provisions bag, sack, pouch, or container for receiving offerings or blessings. It can also mean a bag of wisdom, or one’s store of good ideas. Considering the current state of planetary affairs, what might we most want and need in our blessing bag?

It’s apparent to many of us that modern society is plagued by fragmentation as demonstrated in businesses, schools, governments, social service organizations and churches, all of whom have been unable to work together effectively. Existing in separate worlds, this condition has been defined as “The Silo Effect”.

Multiple studies have shown the dangers of maintaining business departments or societal systems in “silos” where innovative ideas die and communication consistently fails. This effect describes organizations typical in today’s world (despite its disadvantages) and also describes individual citizens who want connection but end up marginalized, with



their talents overlooked, their potential contributions to solving problems lost. This disconnection and detachment make it hard, if not impossible, to envision a common future and work towards it together. What we evidently need in our wallet is social capital.

The term social capital refers to “connections among individuals, social networks with the norms

of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.” The importance of generating social capital at this time cannot be overstated. The erosion of social bonds and connectedness is the first requirement for mass opinion formation underlying the development of governments that discourage individual freedom of thought and action.

Two examples are totalitarianism, which attempts to assert total control over the lives of its citizens, and authoritarianism, which directs the unquestioning submission of its citizens to authority. How can we work collectively to mitigate the erosion or loss of social capital, the first condition necessary for the formation of repressive systems?

your neighbor.” When I’ve initiated this practice, I have reaped benefits greater than I could possibly have imagined.

Here is an example from my graduate school days at The Evergreen State College when I had a colleague living in Longview who traveled several times a week to and from Olympia to attend classes. Otherwise, she had to stay overnight in a motel to avoid the 150-mile round-trip the following day.

She was not someone I particularly wanted to get to know, but I was committed to building social capital and so extended hospitality to her. Getting to know her as she spent multiple nights on my futon couch and shared a tiny bathroom with me, were circumstances that bonded us together, leading to the development of a deep and precious friendship.

This would not have happened in the absence of this exchange and surprisingly, this friend turns out to be one of the most hospitable folks I know, an inspiration to me to continue the practice of extending hospitality.

I recommend this practice because when I turn toward someone, rather than away, I have consistently experienced the best in them, and in me. One way for me to experience the light has been by simply turning it on so a guest can see their way to my front door and bless me with social capital. Happily, this ensures I also have a place to land when needed, and that my wallet is plump with provisions!

Ls.D lives in Olympia and has a Masters in Public Administration from The Evergreen State College.

RETHINKING EVERYTHING #14

The educational vs the custodial function of school

I was a teacher at the pioneering Small School in Devon [England] which opened in 1982 and closed in 2017. Pupils ranging from eleven to sixteen were offered a broad, balanced program of academic, creative and practical activities. Qualified teachers and skilled people from the community collaborated: pottery was taught by the local potter, wood-working by the local carpenter, art by a local artist. The older children went for work experience in local businesses and on farms. We used the village playing fields for games; we bought vegetables in the village for lunch (and also grew our own), which the children took turns to cook.

The school was permeable to the community: it provided rehearsal space for local music and drama groups; adults were allowed to join in lessons; staff and pupils worked on restoring woodland and footpaths. Several old students returned to teach classes. The staff and students were on first-name terms; no uniforms, of course; one school inspector congratulated us on creating “an informal yet orderly community.”

...it is possible to imagine things being done differently. Perhaps the disruption of the pandemic will force us to reevaluate the custodial versus the educational functions of schools and come up with something better suited to the future patterns of work and learning that may emerge.

—Caroline Walker in a letter to the London Review of Books, March 2021

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INTERVIEW

Bullying, shaming and stigmatizing mental illness

More counselors needed to meet increasing demand for mental health support

Peter Sanderson is a licensed marriage and family therapist who practices in both Thurston and Mason Counties. He participates among other things in 3 of the state's five Medicaid Managed Care plans. He was interviewed by Matt Crichton for Works in Progress in December 2021.

Matt (MC): How did you get into counseling?

Peter (PS): It was a pretty circuitous journey. When I was in high school, people said “you might be a good psychologist someday.” A few decades ago I enrolled in an undergraduate program for psychology, but I kind of dropped out. I was a construction worker for 15 years. Just after age 40, I went back to school as an undergrad and then went on to get a Masters Degree in psychology, in couple, child and family therapy.

MC: Give us a general sense of what is happening locally with the mental status of adults? Of youth?

PS: I hear stories about how the need for mental health services has hugely increased over the past two years. But this year, the people I encounter are largely coming to me for the same reasons they came before. People are anxious, depressed, dealing with the effects of trauma, things like that. Covid is just one more thing.

In contrast, in 2020, people would respond to me asking, “why are you here?” by putting on their intake form, “I’m really scared of covid....I don’t know how to deal with covid....I work in a medical environment and covid is heavily impacting my work and making me scared to go to work”. We live in very stressful times, and it’s just one more stressor to add to the mix that people deal with.

MC: What things do you hear from the youth in our area?

PS: I work with about 2/3 adults and 1/3 teenagers. Not many of my teenage clients have expressed a lot of stress about covid, unless it’s directly impacted a family member...someone has gotten sick or died. The top anxieties of teenagers are being bullied or shamed. Being trolled online is really huge.

Also school and school work and how to deal with that. Most of my teenage clients didn’t do very well when school was mostly online. That actually surprised some of them. They thought it would be their wildest dream—not have to go to school and just learn online. Then they discovered it wasn’t much fun and they missed human contact. This school year, some have stressed over having to re-learn how to interact with other human beings

MC: What have you found is a good way to engage with youth?

PS: Building trust. Many younger adolescents are dragged into counseling by a parent who wants somebody to fix them. It’s pretty understandable. Suddenly, your kid is acting differently. Their grades have gone down, and it

seems like a mental health issue—and it may or may not be. Somebody, a parent, will schedule an appointment for their kid—often without telling them.



All of a sudden the youth is sitting in a counselor’s office. At that point, the main thing I have to do is gain some conditional level of trust. One strange thing about Washington state law is that once you’re 13 years old, you’re the one who contracts for therapy services. You control access to your records, with a few minor exceptions. Once my clients understand that, it usually helps build trust.

I can’t tell a 13-year old’s parent anything without a release of information, unless they describe danger to self, others, or abuse. I try to provide all my clients a safe, non-judgmental environment. That’s important in building the trust needed to make progress.

MC: What about people who feel they’re hooked on social media and worry that it’s causing them harm?

PS: That’s something I work with on an individual basis. Most of my teenage clients would list social media as a stressor. But at the same time, social media provides a lot of positive things for those same clients.

MC: Are there general similarities or differences in Mason County vs Thurston County clients?

PS: I see some clients in Mason County who are pretty poor, and some who have good jobs. The people who are pretty poor often have survival-related stressors in addition to issues experienced also by my clients who have good jobs. There’s more seasonal employment in Mason County; there’s a forest products industry that produces Christmas type stuff. People go to work and that’s their only potentially regular job for the year. Other than that, the stressors are pretty similar...people worry about and get depressed about the same things.

MC: Can you talk about major misconceptions of people with mental illness?

PS: People think about mental illness like it’s abnormal; like there’s something wrong with them. Most of the issues that people bring to counseling are actually their brains doing what they’re supposed to do, just not in the right way.

For instance, anxiety may arise from a response to a perceived threat in the environment. It’s your brain’s survival mechanism (limbic system) kicking in, going

“warning warning you need to go into action!” People generate physiological symptoms as a result of a perceived threat, when there really might not be a threat in the environment. All of a sudden, the way they are thinking and acting is out of sync with their environment, which makes them look crazy.

MC: Society tends to stigmatize those with mental illness. What would you say to someone who may not know much about mental illness and sees a person on the street acting “differently?”

PS: Part of that goes back to people perceiving threat. We’re all wired to notice things that might hurt us. We pick out difference. If some-

Simply asking for help is huge.

one is acting in a way that seems strange, many of us go “oh, maybe that person is dangerous.” The fact that they’re acting weirdly or speaking weirdly doesn’t necessarily make them dangerous. It could mean a lot of things. A person who has a manic episode and doesn’t sleep for five days can hallucinate and walk around talking to people who don’t appear to be there. That can be scary to somebody encountering them.

MC: Does the occurrence of mental illness have a bias towards a certain economic, social, geographic, political, class, race or gender affiliation?

PS: In one sense, no. But in another, people who have more means, people at a higher socioeconomic status, have more ability to insulate themselves from some of the stressors that can aggravate or lead to mental illness. They are also able to avail themselves of help better and faster. Stress does come to everybody, but if you’re food insecure, or housing insecure, or in another situation based on not having money or resources, those are very big stressors that will impact your mental health.

MC: What do you say to someone who thinks homelessness is caused by mental illness or drug addiction?

PS: As a therapist, I don’t hold myself out to be an expert on homelessness. Many things can contribute to homelessness. We live in a time when a lot of people are just a few hundred dollars away from getting kicked out of their housing. It’s pretty scary.

MC: What would you say to someone who wants help but doesn’t know how to take the first step?

PS: Simply asking for help is huge. There’s still the perception that “there is something wrong with me.” Most people get counseling at some point. It’s not an abnormal thing. So part of it is deciding to take the first step.

How do you take that first step? There are multiple ways people look for therapists—like doing an internet search. It partly depends on whether people have insurance or not. People who are on Medicaid can use Community Mental Health. Places like BHR, Sea Mar, and Community Youth Services will provide counseling to some people depending on their income level. People with insurance can access lists of therapists through their insurer.

MC: Can you explain different kinds of counseling or mental health options?

PS: People who haven’t had counseling don’t really know who to go to. Who counsels you? People think it’s a psychologist or psychiatrist or someone like that but for the most part, they’re not the ones who do counseling. In this state, counseling is done mostly by masters level practitioners who are licensed either as mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists or clinical social workers. There are also peer counselors.

Some psychologists do counseling, although they also do other things like specialized testing and court testimony. Psychiatrists write prescriptions for medication and only rarely do anything like counseling.

MC: How could Thurston and Mason counties improve how we deal with mental illness?

PS: Find a way to create more therapists and provide better reimbursements. People below a certain income level can qualify for Apple Health (AH). Reimbursement levels for AH are really bad and the result is that not enough providers see clients with AH plans. A huge amount of people spend months searching for a therapist, sometimes calling 40 or 50 places. Even regular insurance plans, for the most part, don’t reimburse at a decent level.

Some therapists don’t even take insurance because of the hassle of billing and the level of reimbursement. But most people pay for counseling with insurance, so that shrinks the pool.

There aren’t enough people doing counseling. The demand is greater than the supply. So better reimbursement that would enable

► Mental health, continued on next page

BOOK REVIEW

The Constitution of Knowledge: A Defense of Truth

by Jonathan Rauch

Margaret Thomas

Because I'm a librarian, a journalist and a college faculty member, you may think it wasn't much of a lift for author Jonathan Rauch to sell me on his Constitution of Knowledge, a framework for harnessing truth in an age of mistrust and uncertainty.

Rauch reminds readers repeatedly that truth isn't what I think, or what you think. Truth is what we think, a fragile consensus based on current evidence and always subject to revision. Nonetheless, on any given day, the time-tested network of truth-seeking institutions still serves as a footing in reality. What a relief.

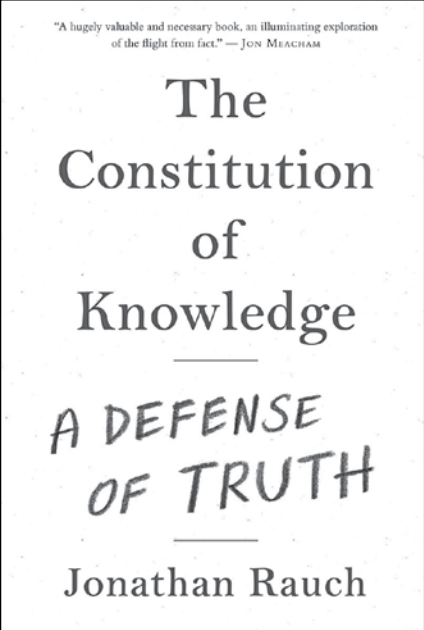
In our search for truth, Rauch urges us not to be disoriented by the

right's disinformation campaigns or cowed by the left's cancel-culture left's cancel culture insistence on thought conformity. Instead, he proposes two simple rules.

Seeded by Socrates and flowering in the 18th century, fallibilism is the principle that we must accept as knowledge even that which can't be proven. After all, it is impossible to prove much of anything. Therefore, the truth-seeking community accepts a prevailing hypothesis only until a better one comes along. Rule No. 1: No final say.

Rauch traces the rapid progress that followed adoption of the fallibilist system, which would have been impossible without Rule No. 2: No personal authority.

According to Rauch's constitution, anyone can present their ideas, no matter how whacky, without fear of persecution. Not the professor, nor the president, nor the pope decrees what is true. But neither are members of any historically persecuted group automatically granted the final word. Everyone must defend their truths from a gauntlet of critics and nay-sayers. This is a messy, mercurial business, but it is the necessary business of democratically sifting a sandstorm to capture a few grains of truth.



So which of society's beleaguered institutions make up the truth-seeking network? Judges, journalists, teachers, scientists and elected government officials are (or should be) collectively committed to an objective search for truth. "Figures," you might quibble: same old cast of despised, often-discredited elites and intellectuals.

Rauch argues that this system is the only one that is, in theory, open to all. It enshrines each citizen's right to posit and defend their thoughts, possibly even claim the contested high ground of knowledge.

It is an imperfect system, rife with human failings, but the Constitution of Knowledge establishes rules of civility, checks and balances and connections across network institutions. It harnesses the brilliance or self-serving ambition of individuals to propel society's

understanding forward. Rauch's latest book won't be much help to those who, for whatever reason, want to pin his constitution to one political camp or another. He is a senior fellow in governance studies at the Brookings Institute, which published his latest book this year.

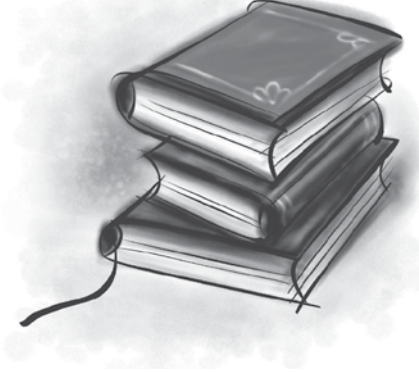
According to Wikipedia (an esteemed part of the truth-seeking network, according to Rauch) Brookings has been described by various media organizations as "centrist," "liberal," or "right-wing." The book's acknowledgements section thanks contributors including the libertarian Charles Koch Foundation, the liberal William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the conservative American Enterprise Institute.

Rauch honed his powers of persuasion as an outspoken warrior in the fight for gay rights and same-sex marriage. Still, his current romp from ancient philosophy through the 2020 presidential election might sound like as much fun as skipping across hot coals. But Rauch's long experience as a journalist and author makes his thoroughly researched, often witty, writing not only thought-provoking and accessible—but ultimately reassuring.

Margaret Thomas is a librarian and journalism instructor at South Puget Sound Community College.

Hey! Want to review a book for WIP readers?

On Page 3 we list books to review and the opportunity to earn \$50.



Mental health

From previous page

more people to stay in the business of counseling would improve the situation. Most of us don't do this primarily for the money, but most of us rely on insurance for reimbursement and insurance simply doesn't pay enough.

MC: Winter can be hard for some people. Can you offer suggestions to help?

PS: I have a few things I try to get some clients to do. Full spectrum light, if you have access to that. Exercise. Getting out—getting outside. When you get outside, the nasty gray you see through the window that looks so depressing is really not quite so bad. Light does filter down through the clouds. The pro-

cess of getting outside and walking if you can is hugely beneficial to your mental health. Being around people helps some people.

MC: What can the community do to be helpful to people with mental illness?

PS: Support legislation that would expand mental health services. Donate to mental health related nonprofits like Community Youth Services or BHR foundation. Become a volunteer at the Crisis Clinic of Thurston/Mason counties.

Contact numbers for the Crisis Clinic: 360-586-2800 - adults; 360-586-2777 - Youth Help Line

Replace cheap meat with new policies that respect the people and animals

Set a livable minimum wage across the economy, and make real food more accessible. Hungry people who work hard and long are the ones who must buy fast food, cheap meat and junk food. Lift the prosperity of working-class Americans while supplying the market with affordable and healthy alternatives instead of inventing more "choice."



Provide a swift path to citizenship for immigrants, and eliminate the tipped wage. Undocumented labor powers the meat and restaurant industries and allows corporations to pocket the profits on denied benefits, taxes and fair wages.

Phase out medium and large CAFOs. Cory Booker has introduced a bill that would get it done. We don't need these animal-raising facilities any more than we need coal plants. Even easier: Enforce existing regulations. One other thing that would cut meat consumption with almost no work? Full transparency in the form of publicly available webcam broadcasts of factory farms and slaughterhouses.



Ramp up collective bargaining, accountability, and inspection in the meatpacking industry. Injuries happen in meatpacking plants because bosses are constantly trying to speed up the chain that moves carcasses by minimizing the inspections required — they even want their own employ-

ees to do it. Slow them down, provide union representation to stand up for workers and make workers' jobs safer.

Start talking about land reform. Returning land to Indigenous people, and making Black people, other people of color, and women equal partners in land ownership and farming will improve food sovereignty and provide us with a collective right to determine what we eat. We don't have that now: Our diet is determined in corporate boardrooms based on what's most profitable.



The uncomfortable reality is that stopping meat production means stopping meat production, not producing something else that reminds us of meat. The latest report from the meat-substitute industry says that if all goes according to plan, these tech meats will be 22 percent of the global market by 2035, and that's hardly enough, especially while the OECD predicts a 12 percent expansion in meat production by the end of this decade. We ought to confront agribusiness, and the myths that preserve their power, head-on.

Excerpted from How to Replace Meat by Mark Bittman (www.thebittmanproject.com).

Who’s in charge of fertile women’s bodies?

The light of principle and decency still shines, though it may not prevail

Katie Watson

[The Roe v Wade decision] said that there is no possible way that the framers in the 16 uses of the word “person” in the Constitution could have been thinking about embryos or fetuses. What is not in dispute is that women are people under the Constitution. So it said that women have a constitutional right to continue or end a pregnancy as they see fit until this medical moment called viability. The court used general phrasing to explain what that is. So think of cruel and unusual punishment or other constitutional standards that use words instead of specifics and numbers. They said that viability was a reasonable chance at a meaningful life. And they left it to the medical profession to decide what that was and when that happened.

There's no problem with the viability standard because it moves with medicine. The significant thing about the viability standard is that it is the only “principled standard,” to use the term of Julie Rikelman who argued the case, and I've argued this in my book, because it is the only gestational or developmental standard that accounts for the pregnant person. It is the only one that acknowledges the person in whom that embryo or fetus lives and is dependent on. So what the court did in Roe very wisely is to say essentially the biological goal of pregnancy is to deliver an independent person, a baby, and so at the point of development when at least theoretically that fetus could live separately with medical

support from the person in whom it lives, that is when the state can assert an interest in potential life. Fundamental rights are not something you're supposed to have to beg for at the polls at every election cycle. So when [Kavanaugh] says the Constitution is neutral on abortion, what he is hiding is that the Constitution is not neutral on the personhood of women. So to claim this false neutrality is to throw all American women under the bus.

The symbolic violence, the badge of inferiority, to say the Constitution is neutral on whether a state can commandeer your body and force you to produce a child against your will. To say the Constitution is neutral on that is to tell all women that the Supreme Court, our Constitution and many states see you first and foremost as a baby machine and do not trust or defer to your intellect and your moral agency to make a good and right decision. That is a badge of inferiority.

This is excerpted from the transcript of an interview with Katie Watson, bioethics professor at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, lawyer and the author of Scarlet A: The Ethics, Law and Politics of Ordinary Abortion. The interview was conducted by Amy Goodman on Democracy Now on the day after the Supreme Court Justices offered their views on a Mississippi State law that would prohibit women from legally terminating a pregnancy 15 weeks from inception.



Real money goes to actual childcare providers in Seattle

Theresa Mosqueda of Olympia was one of three sponsors of a Seattle City Council program that awarded up to \$835 per childcare worker to over 3,500 childcare providers in Seattle. In her regular news to residents of the city where she serves, Mosqueda said that the money is “an important small step toward recognizing the underpayment and economic instability in this sector.” Based on provider reports, the city estimates that almost 70% of the

awardees are BIPOC workers, providing care to over 20,000 children throughout Seattle. It's well-known that COVID-19 exacerbated problems related to childcare: punishingly expensive for parents, woefully low-paid for providers, lacking reasonable access to capital for facilities. How long it will take to replace the losses and closures experienced during the pandemic, even with this modest help, remains a question.

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 Rapid Testing is available for walk-ins with a 15 minute turnaround for \$34 with debit or credit card. The clinic offers PCR testing in conjunction with the Univ. of Washington with a 24-72 hour turnaround time and the cost charged to your insurance. PCR stands for polymerase chain

reaction, a diagnostic test that determines if you are infected by analyzing a sample on a nose swab to see if it contains genetic material from the virus. This is the most accurate test and the best choice for individuals with symptoms. Visit “testingbem.com” for more details. Weather conditions might delay some results.

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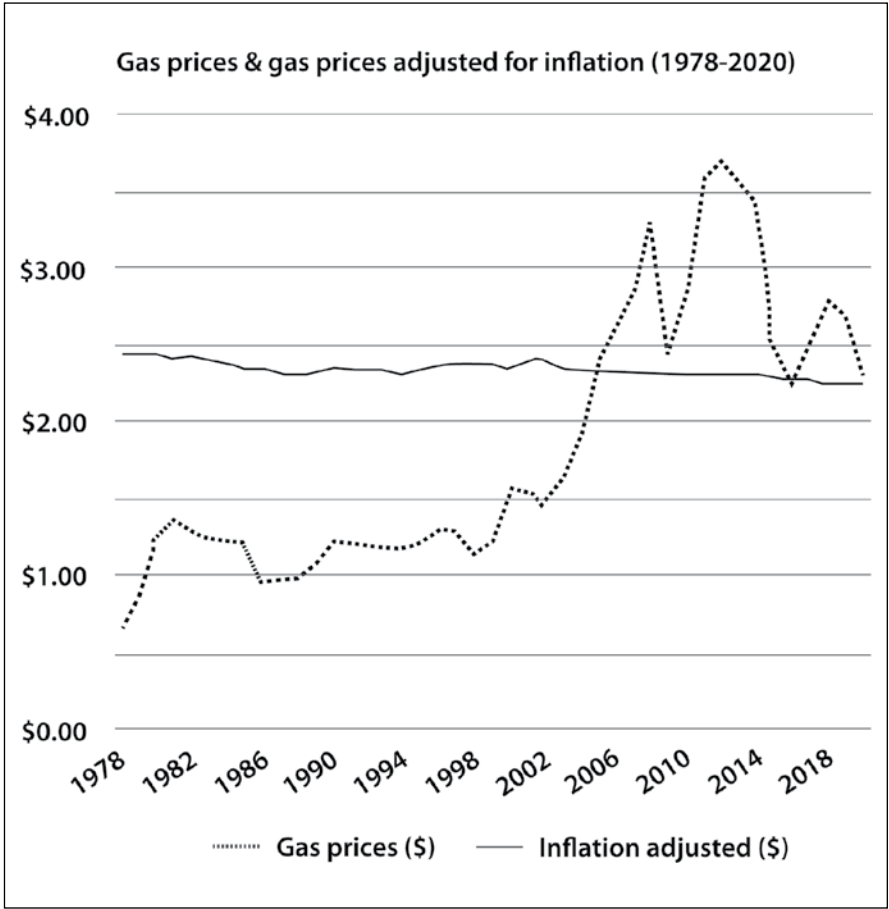
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Facing the facts about gun violence in the US

Laura Finley

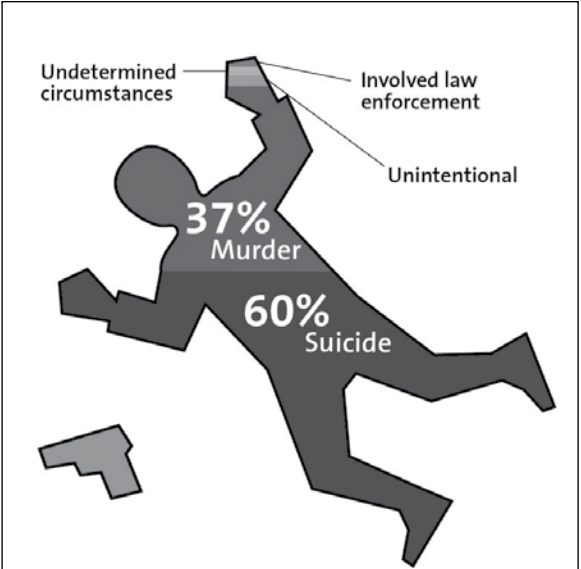
A day after yet another tragic school shooting, I just finished teaching a criminology class about gun violence and how to reduce it in the US. I found that my students have many misconceptions about the scope and nature of the problem. I believe they are not alone, and that these misconceptions that many others may hold work against the development of thoughtful and effective policy. Although whole volumes can and have been written about this, I share here just a few observations.

First, many have no idea how many people are injured or killed by gun violence in the US annually. According to the CDC, more than 45,000 people were killed by gun violence in the US in 2020, an increase in recent decades. This is an average of more than 120 gun-related deaths per day. It includes a 30 percent increase in homicides from the previous year. Between 2015 and 2019 there were 2,606 gun deaths by law enforcement alone. These numbers should be shocking, with US gun-related homicide rates 25 times greater than other wealthy nations.

Second, most are unaware that the biggest percentage of gun-related fatalities come from suicide. Nearly two-thirds of deaths by gun are suicides, an average of approximately 64 per day. Likewise, accidental injuries and deaths are far more frequent in the US than in other wealthy countries. A study by researchers from the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University found that between 2009 and 2017, there was an annual average of 85,700 ER visits for non-fatal gun injuries. ABC Newsdeveloped

a Gun Violence Tracker and found that for the week of November 19 to 25, 2021, there 345 deaths and 623 injuries due to firearms in the US.

Third, the cost of gun violence is astronomical. The US spends nearly one billion dollars annually on immediate healthcare costs alone, according to the US General Accountability Office. The costs are far greater when you factor in long-term physical and mental health care, as well as criminal justice and other costs.



US Gun Deaths
Data courtesy
Pew Research Center, 2017

Fourth, while mass shootings typically dominate the conversation about gun control, they represent less than three percent of annual gun-related deaths. Further, the primary reason for mass shootings in the US is domestic violence. Similarly, much attention has been paid to active shooter situations, with some potentially problematic policy implications, yet these represent just one percent of gun deaths.

Fifth, while many emphasize gun deaths in big cities like Chicago, approximately half of homicides by gun occur in suburban and rural areas. In addition, gun injuries are widespread and not exclusive to big cities. While Black males are disproportionately victims of intentional shootings, White males in rural communities are overrepresented in suicide by gun.

This is not an exhaustive list of misconceptions, nor does it offer solutions. My hope in teaching and writing about this is that, if we all discuss real data, perhaps then we can identify more appropriate policies and practices, which might include gun control, educational programs, mental health assistance and more.

Laura Finley, Ph.D., syndicated by PeaceVoice, teaches in the Barry University Department of Sociology & Criminology and is the author of several academic texts in her discipline.

Let the sunshine in! Oil vs solar subsidies

(From page 1)

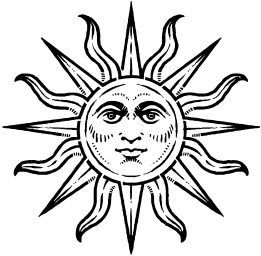
You could tell the independent oil men by their pinkie rings. The Big Oil guys wore expensive brown suits and conservative ties.

Both groups were visiting the US Senate for the same thing: to protect the lucrative tax breaks and public money that guaranteed growth in the fossil fuel industry. Life in the oil patch is easy and rewarding and they want it to stay that way.

Each year, the US pours an estimated \$20.5 billion into fossil fuels, including about \$14.7 billion in federal subsidies and \$5.8 billion in state-level incentives. Most of these are in the form of tax deductions, exemptions—“obscure tax loopholes and accounting tricks” permanently embedded in the tax code.

Solar energy sees barely a glimmer of such support. A federal tax credit for purchasers was offered in 2005 and renewed sporadically and set to decline yearly even then. It's now slated to end in 2024. Our state gives solar a tiny boost by eliminating sales tax for solar purchases. (There will be better support if the legislature adopts proposals outlined in the page 1 article.)

Despite these minuscule amounts, a coal industry publication griped that far too much money has been spent on renewable resources. From their initial adoption in 1979 through 2018, wind and solar “received subsidies amounting to more than \$100 billion.” They demanded an end to any subsidy: “the wind and solar industries are mature and able to compete with other electricity generators on an equal footing.”



Over the same years, subsidies to the oil/gas/coal sector amounted to \$640 billion—but who's counting? No one, apparently. The guys in the suits and pinkie rings have amassed a level of political power that enables them to repel each effort to reduce or eliminate the subsidies.

Taking just the 2015-16 election cycle, In the two years before the 2016 election, oil, gas and coal companies spent \$354 million in campaign contributions and lobbying. Their reward was \$29.4 billion in federal subsidies for those two years—a 8,200% return on investment.

US tax policy and other subsidies have privileged the fossil fuel industry and distorted markets; stifling innovation and contributing to the destruction of the planet.

At current oil prices, estimates are that if not for public subsidies, almost half of new oil fields getting drilled would have been left in the ground. If produced, that oil would generate the equivalent of 5.5 billion tons of CO2.

Time to cut off the flow of money to the fossils with their hands out.


—BW

Sources: Figures for fossil fuel subsidies are in “Dirty Energy Dominance: Dependent on Denial,” Oil Change International and “Friendly Policies Keep US Oil and Coal Afloat,” which also has lobbying expenditures David Roberts @drvols.

Figures on solar subsidies are from The Homeowner's Guide to the Federal Tax Credit for Solar at www.energy.gov.

America's Power published “Time to End Subsidies for Renewables.”

The effect of subsidies on future oil production is from Stockholm Environment Institute at <https://www.sei.org>



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National coalition addresses the need to safeguard our essential workers

Lin Nelson

In the first two weeks of December, around 300 worker health advocates made their way (online) to the 10th annual COSHCON—Council on Occupational Safety and Health Conference.

The fully bilingual conference was built on the long struggle—going back centuries—for the right to work without sacrificing life and limb. As the old song goes “we just come to work here, we don’t come to die.”

Over the course of six days, a broad range of workers and their allies shared stories about the conditions that make going to work a risky affair. Despite the short flurry of support (it seems so long ago) for health care workers and others on the frontlines of the COVID-calamity, many of the folks who help hold our health and the economy together feel abandoned and used up.

On the climate crisis front, many workers are sent into flood-and-fire—to harvest the food for our families, to fight the infernos of the West, or to do dangerous storm cleanup throughout the South and Midwest. Many of these people don’t have the benefit of unions or protective legislation or functioning public agencies. They’re just out there doing the work.

Joining the COSH gathering can be an antidote to the isolation that accompanies workplace risk and the vulnerability of speaking out on behalf of other workers. As one man said after having been actively involved in discussions with allies, “we don’t feel alone.”

Linking experience, legal strategies, science and movement building

COSH is a network of unions, public health providers, health researchers, legal rights advocates and members of movements for justice around race/class/gender, climate, COVID and economic rights.

Sponsors and participants in the conference included major unions along with groups like the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the National Day Laborers Organizing Network and the Mississippi Workers Center for Human Rights. Environmentalists such as Public Citizen and the Union of Concerned Scientists are also strategic partners.

These groups are increasingly joined by emergent worker centers. These are labor/community organizations that support workers who are not yet in a union, and whose organizing efforts assist and strengthen the mainstream labor movement.

Protecting workers has never been just about building legislation and administrative structures. It’s about working in real-time, with clear and present dangers that require creative, bold measures. It’s about connecting with scientists and health care providers who are democratic and committed in their collaboration with workers.

The mission of the COSH network is to support workers by learning from them about the specific health and safety conditions they face, and the efforts they make to protect themselves. The force of these conferences emerges from workers’ reports on what they face daily—in the political patchwork across the country.

Discussions about building safety and health committees, contract negotiations, getting the attention of local and national media—these are key building blocks for protecting lives. Conference members had a promising online meeting with OSHA officials—some of whom are considered strong friends of labor.

The worker safety and health zone is complicated, with a complex matrix of legal and legislated features to figure out... whether you’re in a state OSH system, or your workplace is regulated by OSHA. Whether or not you’re in a union and even then, depending on your contract and whether safety is central to the agreement. How your part of the economy—high-tech vs agriculture for example—fits into the health and safety picture.

The core principles of safety and health organizing were listed by Jaribu Hill, founder and director of the Mississippi Worker Center for Human Rights:

- stay engaged
- always prioritize those who suffer the most
- be respectful of workers’ time
- supporters shouldn’t take up the space
- sustain a strong critical stance against corporate power
- make this basic commitment: “We can’t let trauma paralyze us. We must let trauma mobilize us.”

Campaigns and goals at the national and local level

At COSHCON 2021, heat/climate was a major thread. We might be in the chill-blast of winter now, but we remember the summer’s heat, from fires in British Columbia to evacuated towns in Oregon. At the center of it in terms of risk: outdoor workers, from firefighters to farmworkers. A “Heat 101” workshop examined people’s experience with heat-stress (feeling “head-bumped,” “bear-caught,” experiencing fainting, heat rashes, cramps, and full-scale heat stroke). Exposed workers urgently need information on what to look for, how to care for each other and how to organize for protection—water, shade, rest breaks, diagnostic monitoring. Mapping protections across state lines can feel like a crazy-quilt, with regulations, proposed regulations or no regulations.

Another workshop, “Heat: Policy & Worker Campaigns” explored what operates on behalf of high-risk workers. Although OSHA was launched in 1970, there is to this day no “heat rule.” The movement for nationally enforced and effective protections resulted in a proposal by Public Citizen for a bind-

ing heat rule. (The rule and other information are on the Public Citizen site; comments are invited through the end of January.)

At the same time, Public Citizen and its allies are pushing for national legislation—the Asuncion Valdivia Heat Illness and Fatality Prevention Act. Named in honor of one of many farmworkers who

have died from heat exposure, the Act would require OSHA to create an effective rule.

Another promising development is a strategic campaign in Washington, Oregon and California to bring together primary care, worker health and environmental protection. This campaign is pushing governors and related agencies of the West Coast states to create a PACT that will coordinate across state lines to lift worker protection to the highest level.

As it is now, a migrant farmworker faces different levels of protection in each state, with confusing and inconsistent practices. Ira Cuello-Martinez (PCUN, Oregon farmworkers) and Mary Jo (Moses Lake Community Health Center) spoke about how movement building in the West emerged from farmworkers telling their stories and clinicians seeing the impacts. This led to a broad-based push on state authorities that bolsters the national coalition, by offering elevated and enforceable measures to protect farmworkers.

Local campaigns are in motion elsewhere. Estaban Wood from We-Count in South Florida spoke about Miami-Dade having “the first in the world” municipal heat officer and the goal of a “municipal heat standard.” In California, Jobs with Justice has mobilized “Farmworkers in Fires” in Sonoma County, focusing on language justice, premium hazard pay and community safety observers.

A panel titled “Climate Justice = Worker Justice”—promoted the foundational principle of “just transition.” Urgently needed moves to address climate change must include workers’ voices as part of the broader movement. Roger Cook, former director of the Western New York COSH in Buffalo, stressed the need for unions to divest from fossil-fuel companies, and for environmentalists to take seriously the development of “climate jobs”—funding green projects, with well-paid and well-trained workers.



A call for persistent action at the local level

A year from now there will be another COSHCON—to help lead the way. But way before that, our role is to look into ideas and resources that can be activated and deployed now.

Go to the COSH network to learn more about what’s going on, to build bridges between labor and related movements for environmental justice.

We don’t have a lot of time.

Lin Nelson is a retired Evergreen teacher and part of the COSH Advisors network, in support of workplace health education and organizing.

Sí se puede

A worker health activist from Central California talked about what it’s like to support farmworkers who are the life-force of the food economy. They’re told that they are “essential”, but they face reprimand or firing if they speak up about their concerns. This summer’s high heat in the West created worker sacrifice-zones, as they returned to the fields again and again to pull in the harvest. In many of California’s agricultural areas, close to 80% of the workers speak Mixtec, with Spanish their second language. “Language justice” has become central to health justice as workers grapple with urgent but inaccessible health alerts about temperature, air quality, signs of heat stress and fire risk.

Farmworkers are on the frontlines of risk, especially if they are undocumented.

Resources

National movement-building:

[https://www.nationalcosh.org/\(resources, right-to-know, films, organizations\)](https://www.nationalcosh.org/(resources,right-to-know,films,organizations))

<https://www.citizen.org/news/110-plus-worker-safety-and-health-groups-activists-unions-call-on-biden-administration-to-protect-workers-from-heat-related-illness-injuries-and-death/>

https://nationalcosh.salsalabs.org/2021/osha_heat_standard_comments/index.html

Regional workers support: connections and actions

<https://www.nwrpca.org/news/583928/Western-States-Pact-for-Heat-Wildfire-Smoke.htm>

<https://olywip.org/in-an-overheating-world-farmworkers-should-not-pay-the-price/>

- Letters to the editor in support of regional struggles
- Showing up for regional events and legislative battles
- Solidarity actions, guided by labor/farmworker groups

Community Spotlight Special Edition

A commercial fire in Olympia on December 15 took three hours to extinguish. A small two-story building that housed several unique small businesses and an apartment had water damage in addition to structural damage. No one was injured, but everyone must find a new place to live and work, and then try to replace the treasures and essentials that were destroyed.

A **gofundme** page for each entity was live in December, but now it's best to use the business name for updates and to find out how to help. As you can deduce from the brief self-descriptions below, you'll be introduced to some out-of-the ordinary "businesses" (and one resident). These are the kinds of places that give Olympia its distinct character and we need them downtown now more than ever.

Devon Woollett

Devon is a third generation Olympia resident who has been employed at Espresso Parts LLC for 21 years. He lived in the building in an apartment with his two children.

Revival Motors & Coffee Co

A unique venture consisting of a working motorcycle garage & coffee bar serving espresso and road snacks made in the PNW.



The Ton

is a Pacific Northwest motorcycle and lifestyle magazine created by motorcycle, tattoo, and rock and roll enthusiasts huddled in the rainiest drenched stretches of highways in the world.



Window Seat Media

This extraordinary nonprofit uses story-telling as a catalyst for connection, conversation and social change. They teach storytelling and oral history workshops among many other community engagement projects.



Sa Voix Salon

Sa Voix is an inclusive salon space where beautiful hair is considered a form of self expression and empowerment.



The building at 314 Capitol Way N. was gutted by fire and all of the groups listed below lost everything.

August Creative

This women-owned communications firm designs user-centered web pages and develops communications strategies for businesses and groups large and small. They shared a space with Window Seat Media, and their web page has had an up-to-date listing of contact links for everyone who was located in the building.



Ruby's Elite Barbershop

Rudy had just relocated and opened his first solo shop with prized furniture, all lost.

Community Print

Community Print is a member-run, community-supported letterpress studio, operating in Downtown Olympia for over 20 years. They work with mostly reclaimed materials, from donated type to paper that was slated for the dumpster, making beautiful and tangible things in an antiquated fashion.

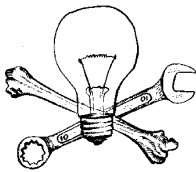
Sound Audio Repair

fixes audio gear right, for clients around the Salish Sea and the world -- so you can get back to doing what you love -- music. Sound Audio shared a space with Community Print.



CrimethInc

An all-volunteer operation. selling hard-to-come-by books, posters, stickers etc. in support of radical community organizing as opposed to globalization and representative democracy, at break-even prices, for 25 years. All was lost.



Golden Hour Tattoo

Victoria M. taught herself the art of tattooing and in 2020 opened her shop here to become a full-time professional.

Tree Action Group of Thurston Climate Action Team

5 pm, January 12

The Tree Action Group works to strengthen local ordinances to protect trees, promoting and participating in the planting of more trees as a carbon sink, and educating the public to why trees are part of the climate solution. For more information contact Lynn Fitz-Hugh at lynn@thurstonclimateaction.org.

Plant a chestnut tree—or two!

Pick up dates: Jan 15, Feb 13, May 19 Apr 10

Receive free chestnut trees to plant in your yard, farm, school etc. Chestnuts provide healthy local food, biodiversity, clean water, carbon sequestration and shade in a climate-changed world. 9-month old bare root seedlings will grow 40-80 feet tall at maturity! Chestnuts require another chestnut within 200 feet for pollination, so consider getting two, or coordinate with your neighbors to plant several! This project is a joint venture between the Vanguarders, Many Trees Project, and Build Soil. Email manytreesproject@gmail.com with questions and to sign up.

Mutual Aid by Dean Spade, author reading

5 pm, Fri, Jan 21

In person at Olympia Lamplighters

Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During this Crisis (and the Next), provides a grassroots theory and practical tools of mutual aid to support

people to survive crisis conditions, to prepare for coming disasters, and to build vibrant social movements that can tackle the root causes of crisis and disaster.

5 pm livestream on zoom; info and zoom link at www.orcabooks.com

Women of Color in Leadership Movement

KOWA Radio is transitioning from broadcasting for a time and moving more into podcasting as the Women of Color in Leadership Movement. Find more information and check out the video at <https://www.facebook.com/mediaisland/videos>.

YWCA Youth Action Circle & Youth Council

Olympia's YWCA is engaged in an ambitious project to dismantle racism and other oppressions. Programs and activities are built around the Youth Action Circle, a network of young people working on social justice issues; Social Justice Movie Nights; and a two-hour monthly "Let's Talk" open workshop among an array of other activities. A Youth Council that supports empowerment through mentorship is open to all young people, but centers girls and Black, Indigenous, queer, trans, and non-binary youth. These activities have had regular in-person schedules, but given the current stage of the coronavirus it's best to visit their web page at www.ywcaofolympia.org/what-were-doing, to find out about times—and also more creative opportunities to engage.



Greening of West Bay with OlyEcosystems

MLK Day, January 17

OlyEcoSystems is a coalition working to turn West Bay Woods into urban wilderness that will support native species into the future. There's a major planting event scheduled for MLK Day Jan. 17 with opportunities to contribute to this transformation. Volunteers spent a day in December spot weeding invasive plants to prepare the site for the January planting event. To find out more about this socially-distanced outdoor day in our community forest go to www.facebook.com/OlyEcosystems, or email Daniel at daniel@olyecosystems.org.

Affordable and effective acupuncture

Every Tuesday from 2-7 pm, Saturdays 2-6

Olympia Community Acupuncture is a nonprofit clinic offering group acupuncture, currently inside Unity of Olympia (1335 Fern St SW). Community acupuncture differs from standard acupuncture because patients are treated together in a large quiet room -- an approach that makes treatment more accessible and affordable, and mirrors how traditional acupuncture is practiced. Treatments are individualized to address particular health concerns. Pay on a sliding scale from \$20-50. Appts are preferred: www.olycommunityacu.org, but walk-ins can sign up.



Contact WIP with your Spotlight items at olywip@gmail.com

Free, take one!

¡Gratis, toma uno!

Works in Progress

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Volume 32

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Issue No. 4



"For me, forgiveness and compassion
are always linked: how do we
hold people accountable for wrongdoing
and yet at the same time remain in touch
with their humanity enough to believe in
their capacity to be transformed?"

- bell hooks, 1952-2021