



Wholesale reform or tinkering at the edges?

Sentencing Task Force recommends major changes in WA criminal law

Bethany Weidner

The sentence for attempted murder in Washington state is between 308.25–411 months.

You might expect therefore that a teenager who shot his marijuana dealer during a drug transaction would be charged with attempted murder, and if found guilty could face up to 35 years in prison. (The dealer recovered.)

You would be wrong. Derek Williams was sentenced in 2004 to 58 years in prison.

He’s still there, now aged 36.

A 58-year sentence is not unusual in Washington. A recent study by the ACLU/University Washington showed that the number of felony defendants sentenced to long, very long and life sentences increased dramatically from 1986 to 2016. In 2019, 41.5% of all people in Washington prisons were serving a sentence of 10 or more years. Seventeen percent were serving life sentences.

The frequency with which long and life sentences are imposed by Washington courts has increased steadily over four decades even as the rate of violent crime fell. Between 1986 and 2016, violent crime decreased by 31% but the rate at which long sentences were imposed rose by 174% and judges meted out 4 times as many sentences ranging from 10-20 years. In the same period, five times as many defendants received sentences of 20-40 years. (40 years and over is considered a life sentence.)

Derek’s 58-year sentence

People of color, adolescents like Derek Williams, and young adults were overrepresented among those serving long and life sentences. One reason for this is because prosecutors have the option to pancake charges: In Derek’s case, he was charged with First Degree Attempted Murder—and three other counts, each carrying its own sentence.

The sentencing grid defines hundreds of distinct crimes and assigns each one a sentence range. What might be understood by the average person as one crime can, in the hands of a prosecutor, turn into several felony counts.

The sentencing grid also identifies a level of seriousness (from 1 to 9+) which produces a “score” based

on an individual’s criminal history. The purpose of this point score is to lengthen sentences. A recent report to the legislature stated that this “use of criminal history operates behind the scenes to aggravate sentences.” The ACLU study found that repeated changes to the rules for calculating scores were the most significant factor in the proliferation of long and life sentences.



Family members and friends of formerly incarcerated individuals described their experiences with Washington’s prison system in front of the Capitol on February 7.

Scoring for juveniles is especially pernicious

Where young people are concerned, scoring criminal history can add years to a sentence and includes points even for minor “juvenile dispositions.” This contradicts the new understanding of the adolescent brain as different from a mature adult brain. Decisions by the US Supreme court and Washington state courts recognized this and have allowed retrials for people like Derek Williams who were sentenced to life for crimes committed before age 18. Treating past behavior by a juvenile as if it represents the same culpability as an adult, is subject to the same criticism.

Tinkering can be important

HB1324, introduced by Rep. Dave Hockney, would exclude use of scoring in setting sentence length for crimes committed as juveniles. Hockney spent most of his career as a federal prosecutor. He was joined on Feb. 7 by a small group of people working with the Freedom Project and Dream.org who gathered to support the bill. “Why are we using ‘juvenile points’ when we know that the juvenile brain is still developing?” was the question. The bill would also allow some incarcerated individuals to have their sentences recalculated exclusive of points.

How did we get here?

In the 1970s and ‘80s, a new idea about “criminal justice” took hold: the purpose of putting offenders in prison was to exact retribution and remove “dangerous criminals” from society. By the 1990s, Democratic politicians had joined Republicans in competing for the label “tough on crime,” stoking fear and promising to “get criminals off the streets,” a

Task Force (Task Force) to review state sentencing laws and provide recommendations for the purpose of: (a) Reducing sentencing implementation complexities and errors; (b) Improving the effectiveness of the sentencing system; and (c) Promoting and improving public safety.

The Task Force just submitted its final report to the Governor and the Legislature in January 2023. Their conclusion: the law has become a crazy quilt of contradictions and inconsistencies, with frequent errors and no connection between sentence length and deterrence or public safety. Not a single one of the 7 purposes enumerated in the 1981 law has been realized. Instead, it produces sentences that are neither fair nor predictable—nor even understandable.

Will anything change?

The Task Force’s recommendations, if adopted, would produce sweeping changes in the state’s criminal justice system. Such revisions would reflect the reality that hundreds or thousands of people who pose no threat to society stay in prison for decades. Still, we know from experience that these reports, replete with data, quantitative information, interviews and analysis, are too often undone by one horrifying instance of a parolee who commits murder, or even by catchy slogans like “Hard time for Armed Crime.” So don’t get your hopes up.

Katherine Beckett and Heather Evans. 2020. About Time: How Long and Life Sentences Fuel Mass Incarceration in Washington State. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Washington. <https://lsj.washington.edu/file/1060/download?token=QnSejkOj>

Freedomprojectwa.org is a team of 25 people working with community members inside and outside of prisons to keep people accountable and show up for the community. Dream.org organizes “Day of Empathy” in cities across the country.

Read the Executive Summary of the Washington State Criminal Sentencing Task Force at tinyurl.com/cstf

sure vote-getter. Federal incentives kicked off a spree of draconian crime bills in state governments.

In 1981, the Washington legislature passed its own stringent Sentencing Reform Act (Act), replacing the goal of rehabilitation with the goal of punishment. Sentence length was to reflect the severity of the act regardless of circumstance. The Act was supposed to make jail time more predictable and sentencing less discriminatory. Parole was abolished. The Act was completed with the adoption of official sentencing guidelines in 1984.

Since then, a series of policy changes have been implemented, including the so-called “Three Strikes” (which mandated life without parole for a third “serious” offense) and “Hard Time for Armed Crime” which added “enhancements” up to 5 years to be served prior to the calculated sentence for convictions involving a gun.

A thorough review

Over the past 40 years, it became clear that the Act had not produced the outcomes anticipated whether in spite of, or because of, the continuous amendments. In 2019, the Legislature established the Washington State Criminal Sentencing

See related article on page 9,
The prosecutor decides.

Works in Progress (WIP) is a community newspaper based in Olympia, WA, that has been published 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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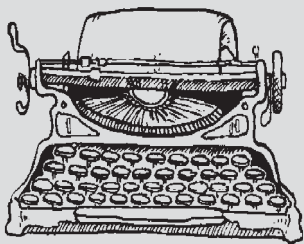
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The Farmer’s Lawyer: The Fight to Save the Family Farm, by Sarah Voge. The author’s real life story of fighting for farmers pushed off the land by a plan, ordered and carried out by top government officials.

We Won’t Be Here Tomorrow and Other Stories by Margaret Killjoy. A lot of it takes place in the Pacific Northwest with characters defending their territory.

Sold a Story: how teaching kids to read went wrong, Corinne Adams watches her son’s lessons during Zoom school and discovers he can’t read and he’s not the only one. *[this is a podcast, but available to review too]*



The Ecosystem Guild— Budswell and Springtime

The Ecosystem Guild is not an institution, it is a community network built of relationships in pursuit of a regenerative bioregional culture. The Guild has been emerging across the Salish Sea and Cascadia for generations.

A website was developed by stewards in the estuary cities of Olympia and Tumwater, where the Deschutes River enters Budd Inlet on the southernmost Salish Sea, an area once tended by the Lushootseed-speaking Steh’chass band, ancestors of the Squaxin Island Tribe.

Below is an excerpt from a post that is part of a standing body of work to capture the seasonal nature of our lives, and how the 8 seasons of the year might apply to the work of the Ecosystem Guild and Restoration Camping. Visit the website here to read

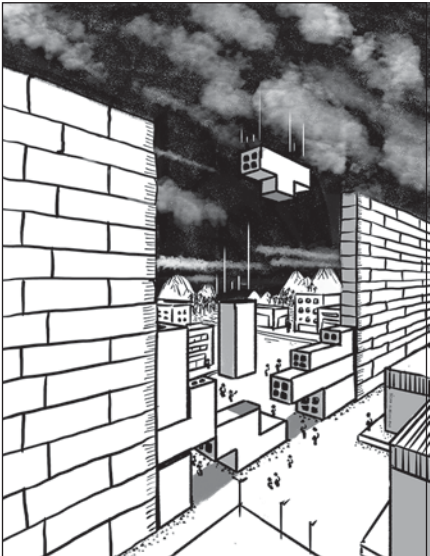
more about this unique approach to restoring watersheds through community.<https://ecosystemguild.org/2019/01/24/budswell/>

Budswell and Springtime
Budswell February 1 to March 22
Budswell begins sometime around Brigid’s Day, also called Imbolc or Candlemas, with the Chinese Lunar New Year sometime near. Day length grows rapidly, buds swell, and bulbs push through duff. Budswell ends, and springtime begins with the Spring Equinox, celebrated around the world since time before memory, now remembered as Nawruz, Higan, Easter or Passover.

Winter still holds the land in its wet cold grip, but many creatures,

marking the day length, know that the green flush of spring is just around the corner. The mountains are hopefully deep in snow, a vast crystalline reservoir ensuring summer river flow.

Springtime
March 20 to May 1
Springtime begins on the Vernal Equinox in late March. The balance of light and dark has been celebrated around the world since time before memory, and is now remembered as Nawruz, Higan, Easter or Passover. Days lengthen and shoots and flowers spill from swelling buds. By Mayday, the green cloak is renewed and Springtime turns to Bloom.



About the cover
The theme of this issue came from a line in a Robert Frost poem: “Before I built a wall, I’d ask to know / What I was walling in or walling out...” When our cover illustrator Aicha El Beloui read that line, she thought about a Tetris: “It is one of the few thought-provoking metaphors that asks whether we lose or win by building a wall? Some ways of walling provide permanent shelter, some create room for growth, others are destructive and others harmless. It is ultimately about mindful wall building: what do we get? what do we give? when is it protection? when is it prohibition?”
Aicha El Beloui is an illustrator and graphic designer. She lives in Olympia.

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The Heroico Batallón de San Patricio

Chrysta Faye

[Editor’s note: This reminiscence was written in honor of TESC Faculty Member Dan Leahy who died in December of 2022.]

During the years of 1846-1848, many Irish people were immigrating to the US due to extreme economic hardship and famine in Ireland. This coincided with the US invasion of Mexico, known as the Mexican-American War. Many new Irish-Catholic immigrants joined the US army to earn money and possible citizenship in the war against Mexico. At that time, the army was intolerant of Catholicism; many immigrant soldiers suffered severe abuse and discrimination from higher ranking officials. Realizing that they shared values and

religion with the Mexican people, many immigrant soldiers questioned the expansionist war.

Roughly 265 Irish Catholics, along with almost 5,000 other immigrant and expatriate soldiers defected from the US army and created a unit in the Mexican Army. Under the leadership of John Riley, an elite unit was formed and named the *Batallón de San Patricio* or Saint Patrick’s Battalion. The soldiers carried a flag that read “Irish till the end of time.” The Batallón served as an artillery unit in many battles, including Buena Vista and Churubusco, where US forces suffered great damage. Ultimately most members of the Batallón were captured and hanged, yet the solidarity between Irish Americans

and Mexicans is very much alive to this very day.

An Evergreen faculty member decided to revive the *Batallón* in a new form. Dan Leahy, Irish and raised Catholic, was working with UAW members building relations with Ford workers in a plant outside of Mexico City. One of the organizers told Dan there was a plaque honoring Irishmen who joined the Mexican Army and fought against the US.

At Evergreen, Dan and his students decided to research the history of the *Batallón*. This became the basis for a new iteration of the *Batallón* when Dan spent a sabbatical year in Zacatecas, Mexico. Thus was The *Heroico Batallón de San Patricio* born with “commandantes” and as well as new cadets from Dan’s classes.

During his 1995 sabbatical, Dan learned of a week-long celebration in the town of Melaque-San Patricio, honoring Saint Patrick on March 17. The *Heroico Batallón* established a relationship with the community, and joined forces with San Patricio to make structural and educational improvements driven by local educators and community leaders. Such improvements included the rehanging of a bell that had fallen from a bell tower. The *Batallón* was also an instru-

mental part of supplying funds and materials for a new preparatoria (high school). The *Heroico Batallón* helped rebuild the Plaza de Armas, and paid for a plaque that honored the original Batallón.

The *Heroico Batallón* also sponsored the final day of the St. Patrick’s day festivities, and participated in the town’s parade for over ten years. They created a contest to bring two students to the US, paying for their travel and accommodations. In addition, the HB invited students from TESC to learn about solidarity and history of the Mexican Nation State during two classes offered by Dan Leahy. As part of their study, students met historians, educators and local organizers and participated in inspirational cultural events. The program ended with a month-long stay with a local family in San Patricio, Jalisco.

Today, the *Heroico Batallón de San Patricio* survives mainly with Dan’s former students who are reconnecting with communities they met in Mexico. They will honor both John Riley, and their beloved Daniel Leahy, for seeing beyond US imperial agendas and teaching us the value of alignment and solidarity.

Chrysta Faye was a student at Evergreen and continues as a commandante in the Heroico Batallón de San Patricio. She lives in Arizona.

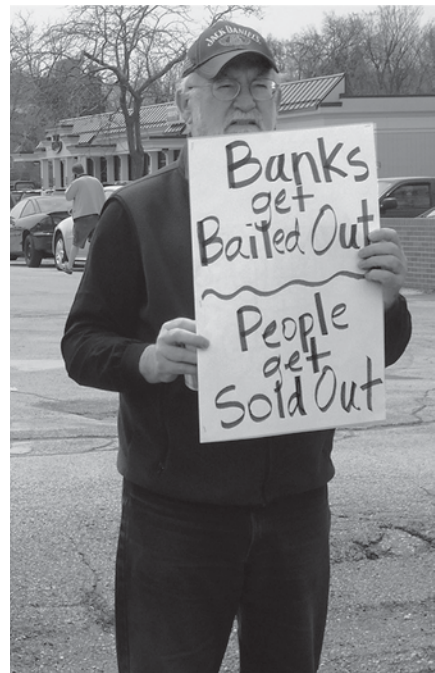


Dan Leahy was a storyteller, teacher, organizer, traveler and writer. He contributed regularly to Works in Progress, where his political analysis and organizing work were reflected in articles about housing, local elections, traffic on neighborhood streets, oil companies and oil trains—and private developers and their role in government among other issues.

Most recently he organized residents across SW and NW Olympia to create a community vision for the Capital Mall Subarea Plan—in contrast to Olympia planners’ intent to transform a big part of the Westside. [You can read the proposal signed by hundreds of neighbors here: tinyurl.com/trianglesubarea .]

He had fun with his WIP press credentials, serving as our foreign correspondent, sending in stories about people demonstrating for political change from Mexico, Ireland, Spain, France, Greece and Turkey as he traveled in those countries.

When in 2010, the City of Olympia approved a 7-11 on a contested intersection in the heart of the Westside, Dan led a successful two-year effort that stopped the development and opened the way for a



community park. He continued to track policies in Olympia’s City government, among other things investigating and publicizing the City’s grant of property tax subsidies for private developers to build “market rate” apartments. In 2021 he discovered that the City was seeking a developer for housing on a city-owned site. He enlisted the community in a successful effort in support of Habitat for Humanity sole nonprofit applicant, holding the city to its promise of affordable housing and home ownership for working families.

As an organizer, Dan’s strategy included a large measure of friendship and fun. In the context of his work in Mexico he revived the Battalion of San Patricio, a battalion of Irish soldiers who fought alongside Mexicans in the Mexican-American War. (See the story on this page.). Over last summer and fall, dozens of Dan’s students came to visit. Two of them created a website at DanLeahy.org where you can find all kinds of writing by and about Dan.

The editors

¿Donde está Dan Leahy?

(o porqué los revolucionarios no van al cielo)

¿A donde van los revolucionarios después de muertos?

Su destino no es el cielo

ni mucho peor el infierno

Ellos se quedan aquí en la tierra

viven en las páginas del inmemorial libro de la memoria colectiva

donde cada hoja registra la vida de un camarada que ha partido

Allí viven sus luchas

allí se registran sus sueños y utopías

allí están los secretos de todos quienes imaginaron ‘un mundo mejor’

Es por eso que los revolucionarios

no van al cielo

ni mucho peor al infierno

Dan Leahy está ahí, en ese libro.

Dan Leahy está aquí entre nosotros

Solo hace falta atreverse a abrir el libro.

Enrique Quintero

Where is Dan Leahy?

(or why revolutionaries do not go to heaven)

Where do revolutionaries go after they are dead?

their destination is not heaven

or much worse hell

They stay here on earth

live in the pages of the immemorial book of collective memory

where each page records the life of a departed comrade

There their struggles are alive

there their dreams and utopias survive

there live the secrets of all of those who imagined a better world

That’s why the revolutionaries

don’t go to heaven

or much worse to hell

Dan Leahy is there, in that book.

Dan Leahy is here among us

You only need dare to open the book.

*Enrique Quintero
Tacoma, 12/13/2022*

Dan Leahy was a contributor to and supporter of Works in Progress for more than 20 years. Writing by and about him is at www.danleahy.org

Available at all local schools

A new curriculum tells the history of the Nisqually tribe

Debbie Preston

With a click of a mouse, 15 years of cooperative work to create a Nisqually Tribe curriculum to be used by local school districts zipped over to an Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) employee's remote drive.

With clapping and whoops, Nisqually Tribal Council blessed the result of the teamwork of Nisqually Archives Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Annette Bullchild and local educator and historian Abbi Wonacott.

"We know that many times tribal information is submitted, but teachers don't know the history or are afraid to teach it because of making mistakes," said Bullchild. "Abbi has used Nisqually information from the Cecelia Svinth-Carpenter collection and some of her own research as a curriculum for teachers and we're going to pilot it in the Bethel School District in 2023 to make sure this works for teachers."

Ceceila Svinth-Carpenter was a Nisqually tribal member who dedicated a significant part of her life to researching the tribe's history. She wrote several books, but also kept meticulous records. Wonacott worked directly with Svinth-Carpenter and, following her passing, with the records along with her own research.

The resulting curriculum is a living document that can be amended by Tribal Council resolution. Legislation championed by Washington Senator John McCoy, Tulalip tribal member, was passed in 2005, requiring the teaching of tribal history that has been submitted by tribes. Known as Since Time Immemorial (STI), the materials for general education have been

created, but specific curriculum for tribes in the local areas of schools is the responsibility of each tribe.

"While the state Legislature passed STI, they didn't attach any funding to it," said Bullchild. The Nisqually Tribe, however, donated charitable funds to STI over several years. "This would not have happened without the tribe's contributions," said Dr. Laura Lynn, Interim Executive Director of the Office of Native Education at the OSPI.

Wonacott grew up near the Mashel River and always wanted to know more about the history. She worked with her honors classes in the Bethel School

District to research the story of the Mashel Massacre and that began a long journey of reaching out to Nisqually and working to create the full curriculum, even before the passage of STI. She also wrote a book, *Where the Mashel Meets the Nisqually: The Mashel Massacre of 1856*.

"That history haunted me as a child, and I just thought it was so important to have all the students know about it," said Wonacott.

"It's a beginning, a first step, is how I think about it," said Bullchild. "It's something that's organized in a curriculum, and we can point to it whenever anyone calls for this

kind of information. It's been researched and vetted and it can be updated as needed."

"This is a huge step to have this available to school districts or really anyone that wants to know our story," said Willie Frank III, Chairman of the Nisqually Tribe. "It complements the outreach we are doing and reduces some of the load. We love doing the outreach, but it is helpful to have this basic education about Nisqually always available to schools and the public."

Debbie Preston is the Public Information Officer for the Nisqually Tribe. This article is reprinted by permission from the December issue of the Nisqually Absch News. Other newsletter issues (available online www.nisqually-nsn.gov/index) offer a wealth of interesting articles, pictures and events related to the Tribe's activities.

The new curriculum can be found online at: tinyurl.com/curriculum5433

The café is closed for now, but Traditions carries on

Margaret Thomas

The owner of Traditions Café in downtown Olympia hopes rentals can sustain this community venue that never recovered from Covid.

The café, connected to New Traditions, a fair-trade store located on Fifth Ave., has been known for hosting concerts, fund-raisers and other events for 26 years. On Dec.31, the café served its last meal, said owner Jody Mackey. Actually, by then cookies, bread and avocados were all that was left.

"We just ran out of food on that last day," she said. "The last two days were the busiest we ever had." It was also the last day for six café employees.

Mackey said rising food and labor costs piled on top of pandemic problems. State workers and students stopped coming downtown to eat. Many of the café's regulars were educated and older, said Mackey. "We have a clientele that is careful around Covid, and I want them to be." The number of diners fell by half.



Mackey and a former business partner bought the store from Dick Meyer in 2016, and the café in 2018. Meyer, who started the business in the '90s, was grandfathered into outdated health-department regulations, but the new owners were required to make changes.

"And then suddenly it was Covid," said Mackey. "What timing."

A couple concerts a week are scheduled through March, but they won't generate enough to cover debts and about \$4,000 in monthly expenses. Between 75 and 80 percent of the ticket price goes to the musicians, said Mackey, who might take in \$300.

She hopes she can bring in additional revenue by renting the café space at \$40 an hour for things like meetings, weddings and music lessons. Even before she began to promote rentals in February, Mackey had booked a Saturday writing and storytelling group, a seventieth birthday party and a retirement party. A group of teens working on environmental-justice issues will use the space for free, and a labor organization gets a discount on the rental rate.

Business at the attached store has returned to pre-pandemic levels, but the future of community events will depend on rentals.

"I am hopeful about this. I don't know what's going to happen. Do we ever know what's going to happen?" said Mackey, who suddenly remembered it was time to organize a benefit for the victims of the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey.

"Maybe I'll work on that tonight."

Margaret Thomas is a recently retired librarian.

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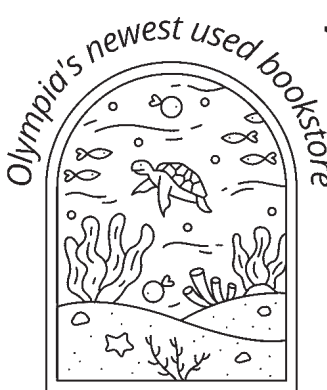
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Trend toward lower enrollment, revenue

SPSCC looks for ways to avoid a budget shortfall

Margaret Thomas

In an attempt to blunt an impending budget shortfall, South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC) has offered employees a \$25,000 incentive to leave their jobs. The college received just two applications by the January deadline, said College spokesperson Kelly Green.

If the college accepts those applications, it will save approximately \$150,000 in salary and benefit costs. More than 300 full-time college employees were eligible for the offer. The two who applied for the incentive are both faculty members, said C.J. Dosch, president of the faculty union. He wasn't surprised by the low number of takers. "The reality is that we have a young faculty."

As part of the Voluntary Employee Separation Incentive agreement, those positions would be held open for a year, said Dosch. "After that we certainly will be pushing to get them filled."

Following the trend at state community colleges, SPSCC enrollments have shrunk to about 4,000 students per quarter, a 24 percent decline over three years. A constellation of causes includes shifting demographics, a strong jobs market and options for online education highlighted by the Covid pandemic.

Regina Alcantara Aviles is a 19-year-old SPSCC student from Mexico. She said she hears from others her age that finances are a roadblock. Some say they are too busy to go to college.

As Student Senator for Diversity and Equity, Aviles hopes to help revitalize the campus. "The people you meet here are going to have an impact on your life," she said. "I just want everyone to be treated fairly and have opportunities to experience amazing things."

While the college is feeling the impact of falling tuition revenues, administrators are optimistic about avoiding a budget shortfall this year. Marketing efforts boosted Winter Quarter enrollments, said Green. And the college will dip into the last \$1.5 million in federal funding made available to address pandemic losses.

Next year the college faces a deficit of \$1-2 million. Layoffs could be on the table, said Green. "That would be one of the options we would consider." So far, conversations about layoffs next year have been informal, said Dosch. "To date, there has been no discussion of laying off faculty," he said. "If that were to happen the union would push back."

To forestall more drastic measures, the college is holding open for now about \$850,000 in unfilled positions. Salaries and benefits account for at least 85 percent of the college's budget, so other options for savings are limited, said Green. The college has healthy reserves, but is reluctant to use what it considers emergency funds to cover operations.

Most immediately, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, which represents 34 colleges statewide, is focused on convincing state legislators to fully fund proposed state employee wage increases, which will otherwise add to the college's budget troubles.

Gov. Jay Inslee's budget proposal leaves 17 percent of the cost unfunded, said Green.

The governor's proposal covers two years of cost of living increases, said Dosch. "Faculty are still well below regional averages."

Margaret Thomas is a recently retired SPSCC librarian.



SPSCC reopens program offering discounts on car repair

Avian de Keizer Mendoza

A local college is again offering discounted auto repairs to the public, and applications are easier than ever with a new online form.

The automotive department at South Puget Sound Community College is offering auto repair for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic hit. The public is invited to get their cars fixed by students at a discounted price. They have revamped their application process so now all customers need to do is fill out an online form. According to Kate Moore, the program manager, the previous process involved printing a form at home, filling it out by hand, and taking it to the college in person.



According to Malynda Murphy, a long-time customer, the service is great and she would recommend it to anyone. The only downside is that it can take more time and that the service has to fall under their curriculum that quarter, Murphy said. After she filled out the form, she heard back from Moore and got her car in the shop within 4-5 days. Moore was very detailed in explaining to her what was going on with the vehicle and what her options were, in addition to following it up with an email that summarized their conversation.

The shop also found two oil leaks in Murphy's

car that a different mechanic in Olympia had missed, and gave her more options for solutions. Their service felt more relaxed and less intimidating to use, involved more communication, and was incredibly thorough, Murphy said.

She plans to go in next quarter to get the oil leaks fixed. "I look forward to it. Why not benefit me and the students that get to check out the car?" Murphy said.

Just how discounted are the prices? The program charges a 30-percent markup on parts, compared to 100 percent from a typical dealership; a \$50 per hour flat rate labor cost compared to \$150-250, a 4-percent hazard fee instead of 10-15 percent, and no miscellaneous fees.

They can also sometimes cut labor costs even more for struggling community members. "We are not here to make money," Moore said. Their primary goal is to get students hands-on experience.

There are some other considerations for using the service. It takes longer, and they do not offer any warranties. However, all the instructors are master certified through the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence, and no work gets done on the cars without them.

A memo sent out from the department describes what classes are going on and what services are offered. One class is working on basics like oil changes and tire rotations, while others are working on manual transmissions, engine performance, and electrical issues.

The applications are open to everyone, and if there is doubt about whether or not a problem fits under the curriculum, Moore is happy to discuss it. The link to the online form is https://forms.spscc.edu/automotive_service_request.

Avian de Keizer Mendoza is a student at South Puget Sound Community College.



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A PSR train wreck

More than bad brakes caused Norfolk Southern’s train wreck

Railroad Workers United

The major fiery train wreck in Ohio last month serves as a reminder of just how potentially dangerous long and heavy trains can be. Add to this the fact that in the last 10 years, Class One rail carriers have dramatically increased both the length and tonnage of the average train, while cutting back on maintenance workers and inspection times, and we have a time bomb ticking. A decade ago, similar problems led up to the Canadian disaster that destroyed a whole town and took the lives of 47 people.

Thousands of people in Palestine, OH were evacuated, property damage to both rail and non-railroad property will no doubt soar into the millions. Still, we dodged a bullet as no rail workers and no trackside residents were killed. This time.

The train, NS 32N, part of Norfolk Southern Co., was built in Madison, IL and headed east to Conway, PA. The train swapped out crews in Decatur, IL. The new crew experienced trouble while running their route between Decatur, IL and Peru, IN. In fact, they didn’t complete their trip to Peru since they exceeded the federal hours-of-service statute. The train severed a knuckle between two cars at Attica, IN. This occurred while the train was going downhill and while in dynamic braking.

Pretty much the only time a train breaks in this scenario is when the train isn’t blocked properly. In order to mitigate in-train forces, railroads prior to PSR (Precision Rail Scheduling - an automatic override) composed trains with heavier cars on the head end and lighter cars on the rear end. This arrangement prevents severe slack run-ins and run-outs throughout a trip.

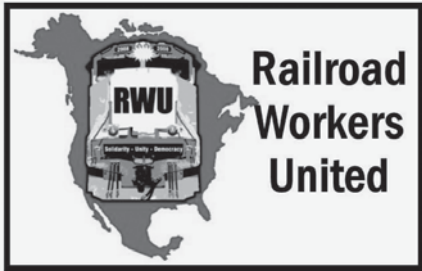
If a train’s emergency brakes are applied in this arrangement, you don’t have heavier cars running into lighter cars and causing jackknifing. Train NS 32N had 40% of its weight at the rear third of the

train. Most of this tonnage was made up of loaded tank cars. The contents of these very heavy cars slosh back and forth when coming to a sudden stop.

the derailment. The damaged car apparently was allowed to leave its initial terminal because it wasn’t inspected properly. Norfolk Southern, like the rest of the

Last year Norfolk Southern paid \$4.16 in dividends per share with 247 million shares outstanding

This sloshing at a stop can continue, pushing more cars off a track in a jackknifing situation. This is what occurred in the Ohio wreck. The block of tank cars was placed directly behind a block of cars equipped with cushioned draw



bars, in the middle of the train. Drawbars on these cars are intended to slide in and out independent of the car body in order to protect the merchandise inside from damage. These types of drawbars are usually on vehicle carriers to prevent the cars/trucks inside from being damaged.

Putting cars with these drawbars in the middle of a train creates elasticity. Building a train like this (Locomotives, which are the heaviest part of any train at the head, followed by heavy mixed-freight loads, followed by a block of cushioned drawbar cars; followed by a block of heavy tank cars (such as the case with this 32N) is akin to placing two bowling balls on the ends of a rubber band and praying the rubber band doesn’t break.

Video footage has emerged online (see video link below) showing one of the wheels on this train on fire. If this footage is authentic, it’s very likely that this car caused

the derailment. The damaged car apparently was allowed to leave its initial terminal because it wasn’t inspected properly. Norfolk Southern, like the rest of the industry, has laid off inspectors and dramatically reduced the time allowed for per-car inspection. In a scenario where the wheel was on fire and damaged, the train would have gone into emergency stop. The heavy tank cars on the rear end would have slammed into the derailed cars causing the 50 cars to pile up off the track and catch fire.



“Precision Scheduled Railroading” is more than likely a major culprit in this incident for the following reasons:

- Inspection times have been cut resulting in the defective car remaining in the consist.
- The train was excessively long and heavy... 151 cars, 9300 feet, 18,000 tons.
- The train was not blocked properly because PSR calls for limited “car dwell” times in terminals.

Blocking a train for proper train handling (placing the majority of weight on the head end, and ahead of cushioned drawbar cars) takes longer—so rail company owners have mostly eliminated this practice

Documents show that when current transportation safety rules were first created, a federal agency sided with industry lobbyists and limited regulations governing the transport of hazardous compounds. The decision effectively exempted many trains hauling dangerous materials—including the one in Ohio—from the “high-hazard” classification and its more stringent safety requirements.

Amid the lobbying blitz against stronger transportation safety regulations, Norfolk Southern paid executives millions and spent billions on stock buybacks—all while the company got rid of thousands of employees despite warnings that understaffing is intensifying safety risks. Norfolk Southern officials also fought off a shareholder initiative that could have required company executives to “assess, review, and mitigate risks of hazardous material transportation.”

Railroad Workers United is an inter-union, cross-craft solidarity “caucus” of railroad workers and their supporters, from all crafts, all carriers, and all unions across North America.

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An open letter to Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland

Dear Madam Congresswoman,

As a lifelong Democrat who eagerly voted for you to succeed Lt. Governor Heck as our community’s representative in Congress, I am shocked and saddened by your yes vote for H.Con.Res.9, “Denouncing the horrors of socialism.” This resolution states that “Congress denounces socialism in all its forms, and opposes the implementation of socialist policies in the United States of America.”

This resolution did not dignify a vote in the first place—it is not a serious attempt at governance or establishing sound policy. It is instead a disingenuous attempt by Republican ideologues to grandstand and generate talking points for the perpetual outrage machine that is modern right-wing media.

Furthermore it falsely conflates the entire concept of socialism—which can be defined simply as the people, through the state, leveraging the power of government to improve the lives of its citizens or provide a service that would otherwise be provided for profit by private actors—with the worst abuses of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes throughout history.

Socialism is not a four-letter word, nor is it inexorably tied to the heinous legacies of Stalin and Mao. Despite the fact that the US and many other Western democracies, now and for the last several centuries, have all engaged in various forms of socialist enterprise, the radical right in this country seeks to demonize the term as a catch-all for any form of government spending they disapprove of.

Since your vote comprises a denunciation of all forms of socialism, I’d like you to clarify which “horrors” of socialist governance you specifically disapprove of.

Is it Social Security, which since the Great Depression has formed a stopgap against poverty and allowed millions of Americans to retire with dignity?

Is it Medicare and Medicaid, which for over half a century have provided access to life-altering medical care for elderly and needy Americans?

Is it the Affordable Care Act and the Washington Apple Health program established under it, which has helped countless Washingtonians access affordable health insurance?

Is it SNAP and WIC, which provide essential nutrition to millions

of needy families every year helping to prevent countless children from going hungry, in addition to supporting our nation’s farmers and helping to keep grocery prices lower for everyone?

this country, no matter how remote they are, the ability to send and receive mail from almost anywhere in the world? Or Amtrak, which provides transportation lifelines to rural communities far from major airports and other public transit?

The US and many other Western democracies, now and for the last several centuries, have all engaged in various forms of socialist enterprise.

Perhaps you refer to our public education system—as championed in our state by the late Governor Rogers, to whom a public memorial commemorating his advocacy for the Barefoot Schoolboy Act stands in Sylvester Park in the heart of your district—offering a free education to every Washingtonian regardless of income, race or creed?

Or perhaps you disdain our nation’s public libraries, which for centuries have helped educate and illuminate people with free access to information, and today helping Americans without computers to access the internet for job-seeking and education?

Perhaps your denunciation is reserved for the Postal Service, which guarantees any resident of

Is it our best-in-the-nation minimum wage, which protects workers from exploitation by greedy employers and automatically adjusts for inflation to ensure wages keep pace? Or the guaranteed paid sick pay you yourself fought for as mayor of Tacoma, which now protects every Washingtonian from having to choose between their health and a paycheck?

All of these programs have been described in recent decades as “socialist” by Republicans who seek to gut our social safety net and leave poor and middle-class Americans entirely at the mercy of the wealthy elite.

These programs are overwhelmingly popular in your district and among the people who voted you into office. By voting to “denounce socialism in all its forms” in the guise of con-

demning oppressive Communist regimes, you feed the Right’s scare tactic, demonizing any government program that helps the average American as some sort of slippery slope turning the US into North Korea.

In closing, I would remind you of a profile in courage—one of your former associates in Congress, Rep. Jaime Herrera-Beutler. When the enormity of former president Donald Trump’s crimes against the American people in the days leading up to January 6, 2021 was laid bare before the House (you were a member at the time), Herrera-Beutler voted to impeach.

Although this decision cost her her seat in Congress, it showed her to be willing to place country before politics and do the right thing despite the target it would paint on her back. Though I don’t live in her district, she earned my respect through that act, and I hold her in higher regard than most of her fellow Republicans. I call on you, going forward, to show the same courage when faced with this type of political showmanship. When it comes time to determine who will hold your seat in the next Congress, I would hate to have to choose between a Republican whose positions I find abhorrent and a Democrat who I do not believe will stand up for her positions.

John Charles Pickford McFarland III is a grocery store worker and 19-year resident of Olympia

Thumbs down on more legacy timber sales



Proponents of saving Washington’s few remaining legacy forests testified at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) monthly public hearing wearing yellow caution arm bands. On the auction block were four large parcels of land including legacy forests—defined as forests containing trees over 100 years old.. The community action group showed thumbs down when the Board passed yet more timber sales. In March a 172-acre stand named Juneau will be up for auction. The group was asking for a moratorium on timber sales in order to save the last 5% of the state’s legacy forests. These forests are understood by climate scientists as necessary carbon sinks. Cutting them poses a severe threat to the region and undermines climate commitments and emissions reduction targets. Turning out for this theatrical action were activists from multiple community groups, including Friends of Trees, Restoring Earth Connection, and the Climate Art in Action Group of Thurston Climate Action Team. —Julie Ratner

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A new Regional Fire Authority for Olympia and Tumwater?

An election this April could impose the biggest increase ever in property tax bills for people in these two cities

Jim Lazar and Larry Dzieza

Olympia and Tumwater voters will decide in a special election this April whether to merge their fire departments into a new Regional Fire Authority (RFA, Authority). Proposition 1 requires approval by 60% of the Olympia and Tumwater voters who cast a ballot in the April election.

If approved, the RFA will bring increases in costs for everyone who pays a property tax bill, with very large increases for rental apartments—which landlords will likely pass on to renters. All fire stations, fire engines, other equipment and personnel currently belonging to the two cities would transfer to the new Fire Authority.

Public involvement was lacking

Officials from the two cities created a committee of Councilmembers, fire chiefs, and firefighter union members (the RFA Committee) two years ago. Members reviewed a proposal from staff and approved a final RFA Plan in December. Despite an emphasis on public participation contained in authorizing legislation, only two public hearings were scheduled with no special notice. The result was attendance by just five members of the public questioning the proposal plus two firefighters supporting it.

The rationale for creating this independent taxing authority is 1) it is needed to provide additional funding for fire services, and 2) that merging the Olympia and Tumwater fire departments will produce economies of scale.

The RFA would be funded by shifting much of the property tax now going to the two cities to the Authority, and giving it the power to impose an additional “Fire Benefit Charge” (FBC, Benefit Charge) on everyone who pays property taxes. The FBC is calculated using a formula based on the “square root of the square-feet” of all properties subject to property tax. It is technically a fee, not a tax, so it is not subject to restrictions that otherwise limit property tax increases.

The combined City/RFA property tax doesn’t change the amount of property tax a property owner will pay. The Benefit Charge imposes a new, additional fee to be collected via the property tax bill, on top of property taxes.

If the RFA is created, each city would see a reduction in expenses beyond the amount of property tax transferred to the Authority. Council members in each jurisdiction would be free to spend this “RFA dividend” as they wished. Property taxes do not go down. The Benefit Charge is a new source of revenue to be collected for the RFA in addition to the existing property tax .

How will the new Fire Benefit Charge affect property tax bills?

The initial FBC in the Plan to be put before voters would collect

\$10.5 million per year from property owners. It would amount to the largest increase on property tax bills in the history of either city.

The design of the FBC raises concerns both in terms of equity and how the amount to be charged can be increased. In terms of equity, single-family homes will pay about \$.09/sq.ft., but apartments will pay \$.24/sq.ft. An 800 square foot apartment (\$195) will pay more than a 2,000 square foot house (\$189). When landlords pass this through in rent, the biggest impacts will fall on some of the people least able to afford an increase in the cost of housing.

The Regional Fire Authority, if approved by voters in April, will have the power to raise the Benefit Charge another \$15 million/year in addition to the initial \$10.5 million from the public for a total of \$25 million without another public vote. Someone paying a \$400 Benefit Charge fee the first year, could pay as much as \$1,000 per year after that.

After six years, the Authority is required to seek voter re-approval for continuation of the Benefit Charge beyond 2030.

Here is a closer look at claims put forth in support of the Fire Authority:

- **Is there a funding emergency for fire response?** No. Both the Olympia and Tumwater Fire Department budgets have risen faster than the combination of inflation and population. They are more than keeping up.
- **Will fire response times get worse without an RFA?** The Plan that voters will vote on does not add firefighters, fire engines or fire stations beyond those not already committed by the cities. Without additional people, equipment, or facilities, fire response will not improve. And if populations grow, calls for assistance go up and staffing during the 7-year plan isn’t increased, response times may get worse with the RFA.
- **Is the FBC based on fire risk?** The Plan now calls for the fees supporting the charge to be set based on the square footage of a building, regardless of any associated hazard: a welding shop pays the same as an ice cream shop. An early draft did impose higher fees on specific types of buildings with high fire risk, but that has been removed.
- **Where does the new \$10.5 million go?** A portion goes for existing operating expenses not covered by the property tax transfer from the cities. A portion goes to paying employees more money. The balance pays for \$2 million in new, duplicative administrative costs for things like human resources, public relations staff and attorneys, and for paying back, over time, a \$10 million start-up loan from the cities.

- **Will the RFA improve emergency medical response?** There are no new emergency responders funded in the Plan. Improvements are already underway. This will happen whether or not the RFA passes. Olympia is adding 18 new firefighter/EMTs plus 2 support staff who would not be paid from the FBC charges but from reimbursements from insurers and the federal government. If the RFA is created, these new positions would transfer to the RFA. Otherwise, they will remain Olympia Fire Department employees. Creation of the new Regional Fire Authority would have additional important yet little noted consequences

RFA Compensation with Benefits		
Top management	# of positions	2024 annual total compensation with benefits
Fire chief	1	\$235,684
Dept chief-support svcs	1	\$238,171
Dept chief-ops	1	\$270,728
Asst Chief-ops	1	\$248,736
Asst chief-EMS	1	\$261,578
Asst chief-FM	1	\$249,304
Examples of other positions		
Lt firefighter-paramedic	7	\$201,795
Firefighter-paramedic	28	\$193,051
Firefighter	51	\$174,320
Social worker	2	\$169,891
Mechanic	5	\$173,862
Source: Tumwater Olympia Regional Fire Authority Strategic Plan Spreadsheet, 10/14/22		

Emergency response costs will be left to the cities. Currently, if an earthquake, flood, or other non-fire disaster strikes, the two city fire departments respond, together with the public works and police departments. Under the RFA Plan, the cost for the “emergency response” function remains with the cities, but much of the personnel and equipment would be transferred to the RFA.

Loss of local control. The RFA will be controlled by a separate board, not the two City Councils. Experience with the Port of Olympia and other “special purpose” government agencies shows that special purpose government agencies tend to be captured by those with a vested interest in the outcome of such little-watched elections.

Higher costs for current firefighters. The state “binding arbitration” process uses “comparable” fire agency pay. Bigger departments pay higher wages. Instead of being compared to smaller cities like Kelso and Bremerton, wages in the combined RFA will be compared to larger and more urbanized cities with higher costs of living like Auburn.

The table above shows examples of the 2024 compensation schedule as contained in the work papers presented to the RFA Committee. It represents about a 20% increase above 2022 compensation levels (a little more for Tumwater firefighters, currently paid less than Olympia firefighters).

Olympia and Tumwater have other funding alternatives

Currently, if these two cities need more money for fire or EMS services, they have many funding options. A voter-approved “levy lid lift” could raise property taxes which are based on property value. Cities also have many tax options they can use to support fire and medical response. They can issue bonds to pay for fire engines and new fire stations.

A YES vote in April will approve the formation of the Regional Fire Authority including the imposition of the new Fire Benefit Charge.

A NO vote in April will reject the formation of the RFA, leaving the Tumwater and Olympia Fire Departments intact, as part of the annual budgeting process carried out by the two City Councils.

Jim Lazar is an economist and former Thurston Co. Public Utility District Commissioner. Larry Dzieza is a local advocate for good government. For more information: Go to www.SaveOurFD.org or tinyurl.com/fbccalculator

What’s in it for the City of Olympia?

The answer is millions of dollars in savings and costs off-loaded to the RFA – if it’s voted in.

At a Jan. 23 meeting on annexing an area around Indian Summer Wilderness, an EcoNorthwest consultant told Olympia Councilmembers that revenue even with the new tax base would fall short of costs by \$69 million over 20 years – IF no RFA is formed and the Olympia Fire Department serves the new population. Regardless of impact fees, growth will not pay for growth.

On the other hand, if the RFA is approved, it will supply the new area and the City of Olympia will gain \$11 million in net revenue over the period.

To supply the new area, the RFA can increase its Fire Benefit Charge fee to taxpayers in both Olympia and Tumwater, with no requirement for a vote. For the City of Olympia to pursue a levy lift for the funds, would require a vote and a discussion of how this benefits current residents.

Community Sustaining Fund awards \$3,605 in fall grants to local groups

Desdra Downing

For 36 years the Community Sustaining Fund (CSF) has funded individual and organizational efforts to strengthen the fabric of people, environments and habitats that make up our Thurston County communities. The Community Sustaining Fund (CSF) was able to offer support to four local community organizations as part of its Fall 2022 grant cycle. This was made possible by the generous participation of community members in the Olympia Food Coop “Round Up” program.

Sustained vision and commitment to community building by the Coop Board makes the Sustaining Fund possible. Significant funding through the ‘round-up’ option depends on invaluable staff and working member cashiers who administer the program and ask members/shoppers if they would like to round-up with each purchase. Add to that the amazing coop members who kindly “round up” to the nearest dollar, and we have a successful grassroots effort that provides funding for important community needs.

All grant funds flow from community member donations. One hundred percent of donations go directly into the grant fund, with applications and awards made annually in the spring and fall. The amount of money available varies each cycle.

We are actively encouraging more groups to see if they qualify for CSF awards, and to make an application. One way to keep informed about the possibilities is to sign up for the CSF newsletter at oly-wa.us/csf. That way, your group will receive notice when grant rounds open. Another way is to follow the Community Sustaining Fund of Thurston County on Facebook and Instagram to help spread the word that we have a local grant fund. Fall grants went to the Nisqually Reach Nature Center, to the Community Nature Foundation, to the Community Farmland Trust and to JOLT community news.

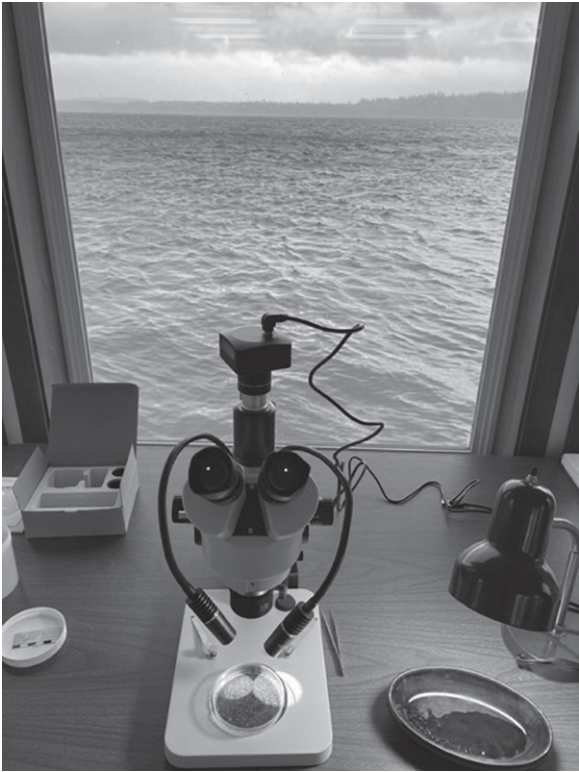
Nisqually Reach Nature Center (NRNC) - \$605

NRNC is located on the Puget Sound, as part of the Nisqually Nature Preserve. This small non-profit center handles important research through their Forage Fish Citizen Science Surveys Proj-

ect. Local citizen scientists, using microscopes for the research, examine sand gathered from beaches in the area during the season when forage fish (surf smelt and sand lance) spawn, laying their eggs in the sand. Their lifecycle is an important part of that of the salmon who feed on the forage fish. CSF funds will go toward a new and more powerful microscope.

Community Nature Foundation (CNF) - \$750

This local nonprofit works to protect the eco-



A new microscope for Nisqually Reach

systems of urban forests and open spaces from development through community projects. CNF came to us to help with a fundraiser for a project they call “Save Ferngully Forest.” This piece of land, located in Eastside Olympia, is next to a wetlands and Indian Creek. It is up for sale and potential development, and CNF is planning a fundraiser in the hopes of purchasing the land to stop any development from happening.

Funds awarded by CSF will support an event designed to bring in high-level entertainment in order to draw major funding to complete a sale currently being negotiated with the owners.

Community Farmland Trust (CFLT) - \$750

The Community Farmland Trust supports local farmers and the land vital to producing the food we depend on for sustenance. CFLT secures land that might otherwise become subject to development, instead retaining it for agricultural use. Each year they publish a comprehensive newspaper, “Fresh From The Farm,” listing farms, CSAs (community supported agriculture), and farmers’ markets in our region.

They are in the process of migrating and updating their information technology (IT) services from the University of Washington to an in-house system, which will greatly reduce their costs for this service.

Jolt News - \$1,500

Jolt News is a “Journal of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater,” reporting online on local issues. Project Coordinator Danny Stusser spoke at his interview about the need for funds to support writing contractors, part-time editors, reporters and researchers. There is no local non-partisan news source that covers the various meetings, citizen actions, and other important activities in our tri-city community, particularly those related to social justice, community-building and the environment. In order to gather information JOLT employs five reporters and two assistant editors. Their request to CFS was for funding for stipends for the members of the news team.

Desdra Downing is on the board of the Sustaining Fund.

The Prosecutor decides

On March 10, 2003, Derek Williams walked into a house to meet a drug contact. But instead of paying for the baggie of marijuana—he didn’t have the money—he shot the dealer and ran out of the house.

He was arrested four months later and charged by the Thurston County prosecutor with the following crimes:

- Attempted murder in the first degree: 322 months
- First degree robbery with a firearm: 171 months
- Unlawful possession of marijuana while armed: 29 months
- First degree unlawful possession of a firearm: 116 months

Derek’s “offender score” for prior juvenile dispositions was 11—he had “maxed out.” His score was based on these things: Age 12 (malicious mischief, burglary, burglary, reckless burning), Age 13 (unlawful possession of a firearm), Age 15 (attempted unlawful possession of a stolen firearm). The score increased his sentence.

Once the counts to run concurrently and consecutively were set, at age 18, Derek was sentenced to 700 months, or 58 years and 4 months, in adult prison. There is no parole.

In 2018, Derek was granted the right to a resentencing hearing afforded to people imprisoned for life for a crime committed at 18 or younger by a new interpretation of the 8th Amendment. A Supreme Court ruling established that for juvenile being sentenced, the court was required to consider 1) whether

there were mitigating circumstances and 2) whether the youngster was capable of reform.

An investigator dug into Derek’s past to answer the question of mitigating circumstance. He searched out records and interviewed family, social workers and other agents of the state. Derek grew up in South Seattle during the crack epidemic; the picture of physical, emotional and sexual abuse was harrowing. His home was the site of constant drug activity with all the behaviors and chaos that goes with it. Drive-by shootings, domestic violence and suicides were routine in the neighborhood. Home was not a source of food, clothing, comfort or guidance. By the time he was 12, Derek was surviving on the street.

The question of Derek’s ability to reform was equally easy to answer. In 15 years in prison Derek had earned his GED, taken every course and program on offer, become a leader counseling younger inmates. He was transferred early from Clallam Bay to minimum security at Stafford Creek.

Derek’s resentencing hearing lasted most of a day. At the close, the judge did what the investigator said she would do: cut the sentence in half. Derek went back to Stafford Creek in 2018 to serve 11 more years.

[Note: the name and some minor details have been changed for privacy. The information about the sentence, Derek’s background etc. have not been changed. Prisoners can earn a limited amount of “good time” that reduces the number of years they are behind bars. But that too is a complicated calculation.]

Plants! Plants! Plants!

The Thurston-Santo Tomás Plant & Scholarship Benefit Sale Workparties—February - March Sale May 3-7, 2023

The Thurston-Santo Tomás Sister County Association annual plant sale funds programs that have been going on for 35 powerful years in Santo Tomás. These include childrens’ free lunch and after school programs plus 20 on-going university scholarships for local students and more.

Here’s how the Plant Sale works:

Share your plants. Now’s the time to divide sprawling plants and pot up the offspring plants—our volunteers can come to you to do the digging and potting.

Volunteer to help dig & prep plant donations. March and April will be “potting party” months for as many volunteers as we can get. The plants like to settle into their pots long before the sale.

How to participate. Call or text Sande, our volunteer coordinator (text is best but calls are fine), at (541) 297-8714 to check in about what we already have and what we could still receive. Schedule a time for us to come dig in March. Let us know if you’d like to be on the volunteer list.

And in May—review and order plants online. Be sure to email us to get onto our list for updates including information about the sale and how to order.

If you’d like to know more about these projects and our volunteer work, please visit our website at oly-wa.us/tstsc or email tstsc@gmail.com

With gratitude from all the volunteers with the
Thurston-Santo Tomás Sister County Association

Worker ownership and empowerment in the home healthcare industry

Matt Crichton

[The need for in-home care is growing rapidly. While the field of in-home care is known for low wages, cooperatives provide an alternative. Recently WIP's Matt Crichton talked with Nora Edge, founder and past executive director of Capital Homecare cooperative, and CHC current executive director Paulette La Douceur.]

MC: How did you get into the in-homecare field?

Paulette: I was raised in a large, multi-generational family. I've been a caregiver since I started babysitting when I was 12. It's a skill that is minimized in our culture, and often we minimize ourselves as domestic workers. Coming to Capital Healthcare was one of the most empowering experiences of my adult life.

Nora: I started out taking care of our grandfather in high school, through the end of his life. I knew about the Northwest Cooperative Development Center. I got into the field after I was invited by someone here to come and learn about cooperative homecare. I eventually started the coop we are discussing today.

MC: What is the demand for in-home care workers?

Nora: Right now, we are in the "silver tsunami" of the baby boomers. Over 10,000 people are turning 65 every day. Ironically, as the number of seniors who need care goes up, the number of people trained in that industry is going down. The need for caregivers is intense. The 2016 census by the NW Cooperative Development Center found that for every caregiver available, there are 16 people who were not going to receive care in their lifetime, regardless of need.

At the same time, the caregiver workforce is one of the most exploited in the country. Most homecare agencies make a very nice profit while paying their caregivers the lowest possible wage. The hours are incredibly difficult, inconsistent, and very person-centered. It requires a great deal of skill to do this work. The average homecaregiver is aged 39 to 75, but 40% of these are between 65 and 75. 60% of homecare workers are immigrants. A similar percentage are women and speak English as a second language.

MC: How long has Capital Home-care Coop been around?

Paulette: CHC is five years old. New York has one of the oldest home-care coops. It was started in the Bronx in 1983 and has over 2000 members who make the highest caregiver wage in New York State. In Washington State we have five care coops. The oldest, Circle of Life in Bellingham, has been around about 15 years. We're one of the newer ones.

MC: How is the coop in-home care model different from the regular model?

Paulette: What sets the cooperative model apart is the notion of worker ownership and empowerment. Our workers are invested in this business and have the opportunity to make their voices heard, their

needs addressed, and to learn skills that come through business ownership. In most agencies, workers have no place at the table.

Members of our board of directors are appointed by the workers. This governing body creates all of our policies. Each worker who wants to engage in our processes can become a part of the on-going story of who we are, what we create and implement together.

MC: Many WIP readers are familiar with the Olympia Food coop. Is this coop organized in the same way?

Nora: In the coop world, there are different types of coops. A grocery coop is a consumer coop with customers as members. Typically, they are the ones making the decisions. In a worker cooperative, like ours, the workers own the business. Both types have a board of directors, but one has a board made up of customers/consumers, and the other has workers as board members. What's similar is one member, one vote.

How profits are distributed is up to the workforce. Membership has control over the rates and wages that are set, and the overall goals of the business. That makes it much easier to support workers in this industry. In Washington, on average we pay our caregivers \$2 more an hour than standard competitors. Our caregivers voted for that. They have a lot more control.

MC: How does the cooperative model address issues of burn-out?

Paulette: Instead of having top-down management scheduling people without offering them any say, we try to be like matchmakers. We set people up for success by connecting well with clients. We want our workers to set boundaries for themselves, to take on what is manageable. Some clients need 24-hour care. How do we break that down, and make that manageable? Some clients only need a few hours a week.

It's not necessarily a 9-5 job. Some folks really enjoy working evenings, preparing a meal for an elder and making sure they get their medications before they go to bed. We have others that are early birds and like to greet the day and help people get their day started.

MC: How did you function during the pandemic?

Nora: When Covid happened, we had weekly meetings for about four months to review our Covid policies. If a caregiver felt like some things were left out, we worked until it was right. We brought policy changes to the board on a regular basis. Anytime a caregiver raised a concern, we would try to create an allowance for that.

MC: Is the cooperative model of in-home care sustainable?

Nora: The standard profit margin for home care is 35-45%! Some people think that business owners don't have much money and can't raise wages. That is just not true. The cooperative model is completely sustainable. The big "crisis" with the caregiver shortage is that corporate organizations have to raise wages and think about ben-

efits because workers are cardholders now.

Our caregiver coops have survived and thrived. People want good, quality care. They want their money to go back into the community and they want to employ people from the community. The coop model is solving a lot of problems that the corporate model has helped to create.

MC: How do you navigate traditional state agencies, doctors, hospitals, etc.?

Nora: Capital Homecare is licensed with the Department of Health as an in-home services agency. We follow the RCW and the WAC, just like any agency. Sometimes we partner with assisted living or memory care facilities. Sometimes we coordinate with hospital social workers, receiving somebody getting discharged; figuring out the timing. But unfortunately our work is not treated on a social or monetary level as part of the healthcare system. We are healthcare workers but seen and treated as "chore workers"—glorified babysitters.

MC: What's the connection between this coop model and high quality care?

Paulette: Happy caregivers do a better job. People who feel valued and taken care of are going to enjoy what they are doing. We attract folks who want to engage in cooperative development, to learn about it and do what we can to dismantle capitalism. This is a commitment. A life way, not a hobby. We are serious about it.

Nora: What the cooperative model offers is a place for caregivers to bloom in skill building. It offers support so they can do their job and provide care at a higher level. The clients get to receive this immediately. No one enters the caregiving workforce for the money. It's not an easy job. Oftentimes they took care of a family member or neighbor, or had some random job and found they had a unique skill. It requires a rainbow of abilities to be successful.

MC: How do you maintain high quality care?

Paulette: We do evaluations and assessments often. For new folks, we provide shadowing and training and introductions. A huge part of homecare, and what makes someone really good at their job, is honoring the client's preferences. It's about coming in and asking the client, "can you show me how you make your bed, or load your dishwasher?" If you don't do that, you have frustrated people, who feel like it's invasive and not a help in their life.

MC: How do you know the coop model is working?

Paulette: Happy clients. Happy workers. When people feel valued and respected in their home and their job, that's the measure of success. We build trust and authentic relationships with people. This is very different from the business world. Profit growth, member engagement, quality of care; those are the most important things at Capital Homecare.

Nora: We encourage skill development, even if it leads to a caregiver

moving on. One of our caregivers started developing bylaws, working with our consultants, became board president, then went to law school and is now a public defender. Another caregiver was at Evergreen College in graphic design and volunteered to make videos. She developed an awesome portfolio while working at CHC, and went on to get a graphic design job. When people are engaged and growing because of skills learned at CHC, that's success.

MC: What are you most proud of about your organization?

Paulette: That we help people stay in their homes to live out their final days. That family members come to us and say, "you brought meaning to my father's life at the end of his time."

Nora: I am really proud of how CHC treats its workers, especially as a young business. We've had an average of 33% wage growth almost annually since we opened. During Covid-19, we distributed a huge chunk of our Paycheck Protection loan to our workers. We put so much effort into protecting our workers. I think CHC really lives up to the moniker of "coop," we really are about the people.

MC: What is the biggest challenge for your coop currently?

Paulette: We have a lot of competition. That sets us apart from other coops in Washington that are situated in less densely populated areas where they're the only gig in town. Then there are a lot of massive entities where management is not connected to the client or the workers. I see that changing over time. I want to foster the growth of this coop by providing exceptional care. It's not babysitting and it's not housecleaning.

What suggestions do you have for workers interested in starting a coop like yours?

Nora: My big advice would be to do it. If you're in the care industry and someone asks if you want to open a business, you think they're making fun of you. In a capitalist system, low income workers are taught they cannot do it. But you can! One huge benefit of coops is that coops support coops. While we have a lot of competitors, we also have a lot of allies. People all over the world will throw you copies of their bylaws, policies and best practices because we all want to see each other succeed.

Is there anything else you would like WIP readers to know?

We are hiring, and we are seeking new clients. Come and join us!

Resources: Capital Homecare cooperative-capitalhomecare.coop Northwest cooperative Development Center-nwcdc.coop

Matt Crichton is interested in social justice issues and teaches math.

The “point in time” count of people living outdoors

A participant asks why the annual survey of Thurston County’s homeless residents is both invasive and inaccurate

Steven Marquardt

I was among the many social workers, state employees and volunteers who approached and questioned our unhoused neighbors in Thurston County during the last week of January.

This annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count is mandated by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the state of Washington.

The PIT count is a key factor that federal and state governments use to allocate funding to address homelessness - our steadily worsening national crisis affecting well over half a million people. The more people counted in a county, the more money that county receives. Counties then distribute the money to projects and organizations aiding unhoused people.

Citizen analysis of how the government addresses our most pressing issues is vital. Doing so helps us move towards a future where everyone’s basic needs are met. With that in mind, it feels vital to share how the PIT count is both problematic and inaccurate.

Invasive questions

There is an inherently invasive and problematic nature to this undertaking. The PIT is much more than a mere count. Even if it were, that alone could be degrading. Unhoused people are already viewed as subhuman by society at large (if they’re acknowledged at all) and many loathe being boiled down to a number by the state that oppresses them.

Beyond that, the PIT survey captures more than just basic information. It scrutinizes people’s housing history, health condition,

personal challenges and needs through a list of 18 questions. It was very uncomfortable to ask such personal questions to people who didn’t know me. Invasive questions like “What circumstances led to your homelessness?” were particularly hard to ask because most circumstances were traumatic experiences like losing a loved one, abuse, addiction, injuries, illnesses, or financial trouble. Asking questions that may have caused these people’s trauma to resurface



felt wrong.

“Bad choices” rather than system failure

Since then, I’ve been wondering why these questions are mandated in order to allocate money. It seems to be a way of legitimizing the idea that homelessness is a result of an individual’s bad choices or fortune, rather than a symptom of our unjust systems. Maybe that’s how the government tries to justify denying people their right to housing (thus violating international law) In thinking about where our tax dollars go, I’m reminded that this year the US Department of Defense received \$45 Billion more than the White House even requested although it has failed its

last five audits in a row. Scrutinizing desperate people because they lack housing while annually throwing billions at a Pentagon that can’t keep track of it shows me where the government’s priorities are.

Inaccurate results

I’ve heard from Thurston County homeless service providers who believe last year’s PIT count was under the true total by almost half (although that total will never be known). If the government wanted a more accurate total, they would allow for the count to be done

over a much longer period of time than the mere 7-10 days currently allowed.

The count is also executed in January instead of during a warmer month, which means that only individuals with absolutely no other option for housing are counted. Many people escape the miserably cold January nights by couch surfing or temporarily crashing with friends or family. They and others are not counted even though they too are experiencing homelessness.

Last year, PIT counters missed some of the biggest encampments in the county. People living alone outside of encampments are regu-

larly left out of the count. These are just some of the red flags that lead me to believe our government is intentionally miscounting this extremely vulnerable population. Doing so would allow it to continue acting as if homelessness isn’t the national crisis it is.

We can do better

People being counted don’t deserve to be subject to invasive questioning, especially when it continually fails to result in significant improvements. There’s no secret formula to ending our homelessness crisis. The majority of people captured in the PIT count need the same things in order to obtain permanent housing—housing affordable at modest incomes, rental assistance, and case management to help them access those things. The state knows this and it should not be burdening people with invasive questions just to get confirmation of the same thing year after year.

We must knock down the walls of greed, bureaucracy, and inhumanity trapping our unhoused neighbors in hardship. We have the means to construct walls for permanent housing that people working for modest wages can afford. In the meantime, we can house people inside the walls of the empty buildings that fill our cities. Imagine if a few hundred million dollars of the \$816 billion dollar defense budget were reallocated towards those ends. It would save a lot of American lives, and the Pentagon probably wouldn’t even notice.

Steven Marquardt is an Olympia-based educator and organizer.

For more information: tinyurl.com/8percentincrease

Hands-on learning about the housing industry

Chase Patton

Some time ago, I was employed as a cost estimator for a large local siding company. We installed siding on hundreds of single-family new homes and several multi-family buildings throughout Puget Sound every year. I would create estimates and order packages on between 25-50 homes each week.

That experience provided me a view of the various groups working together to get houses built. It isn’t extremely complicated yet at the same time it isn’t simple. The housing industry is massive and it can take a while for changes to be made.

More recently I had the opportunity to participate in work study placements through the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action at The Evergreen State College. During this time, I’ve gotten an education on the housing situation in Thurston County from a few different perspectives.

First, tiny homes at Quixote Village

I was at Quixote Village during the 2021-2022 school year. It was a great experience as I watched the arrival of new residents and observed the way they changed and improved their lives. From this experience I learned how important it is for the local community to be involved in improving the quality of life in the community.

I learned that change doesn’t take place overnight. Change takes time and it can start with a small group of dedicated people, which can grow in numbers as awareness and interest develops.

Next, a housing land trust

My current work study placement at Thurston Housing Land Trust (THLT) is providing me experience with a local non-profit organization dedicated to developing solutions for generating affordable housing for low-to-moderate income households.

Thurston Housing Land Trust has been around for several years. However, they received their non-profit designation in 2018. THLT is using the community land trust model to provide the framework for affordable housing which will be available from generation to generation.

The land trust purchases properties that they then sell to a member of the community. The land trust maintains ownership of the land while the family takes ownership of the house. This reduces costs and creates a process which can provide affordable housing as long as the trust is operating. The homeowner and trust abides by a set of rules which governs the operation of the trust and some aspects of the property.

Right now, THLT is laying the groundwork to connect their first property with a family. This has been in the works for some time and everyone at THLT is working hard to develop more housing opportunities in the near future.

A chance to work with purpose in your community

There are many opportunities to participate in our community through work study placements and internships. Sometimes it can be difficult to know where or how to start. You could start by looking at different organizations that relate to your personal interests and then contact an organization.

Find out more

Consider learning about something that is new or unexpected. In any case, it can be fulfilling to work with community members towards a goal or an ideal. For myself, it has been exciting to be a part of THLT as it begins to move forward to meet the needs of the community.

To learn more about what Thurston Housing Land Trust is doing in our community, go to **Thurston-housinglandtrust.org** or contact the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action at the Evergreen State College.

Chase Patton is a student at The Evergreen State College. He also has helped WIP on occasion with graphics that accompany articles.

Will private investors build affordable homes?

New legislation mandates zoning in cities statewide to allow multiple housing units on a single-family lot

Mary Jo Dolis

Every piece of legislation begins with words like these: “The legislature finds that...” What follows is free from any grounding in evidence or constraints of logic. “Findings” are not a place to recognize reality with all its complexity, but to imagine that “saying something makes it so” if you’re a lawmaker. Others have described the “Findings” element of legislation as marketing.

HB 1110 is a bill introduced in Washington’s 2023 legislative session and championed by former Olympia City Councilmember Jessica Bateman. The bill proposes to remedy the housing crisis by mandating changes to city zoning rules.



Under HB 1110, multiple buildings can be put on one single-family lot but they are supposed to be “compatible in scale, form and character with single-family homes.” The charming duplex on the left is pictured in the City of Olympia’s handbook as if it is the kind of housing that developers will build under the “Missing Middle” upzone. The two photos on the right show the reality. The triplexes (2 per lot, one in front; one in back) are new condos (12 units) built after Seattle upzoned lots in this Queen Anne neighborhood. Yes, more units—but they’re in no way compatible with the existing housing, nor, priced at \$1 million per condo, are they “affordable.”

Bateman was part of the Olympia City Council in 2017-18 when it pushed to impose upzones similar to those in HB 1110. A community challenge to the proposal was upheld by the Growth Management Board. At a Council work session, Bateman responded by saying that “these are complex decisions that should be made by experts. The public shouldn’t have any input on this.”

Zoning rules caused a housing shortage

The experts at the House Committee on Housing have now weighed in, beginning with these “Findings:” ...there is a housing shortage caused by “bans on the development of modest home choices.” Lifting these [zoning restrictions] will lead to construction of homes at higher densities that are “more affordable by design” and that although the state has made “historic investments” in affordable housing through the Housing Trust Fund, private investment is needed to produce housing “at all income levels.”

There is unfortunately no necessary connection between these findings and the provisions of law that follow.

Will mandating cities in Washington re-zone single-family lots to allow buildings “that are compatible in scale, form, and character with single-family homes and contain two or more attached, stacked or clustered homes including duplexes to sixplexes... with four to six units” mean that private investors will soon begin building “modest homes” affordable to working households?

(The only affordability provision in the new law is contained in permission to build the maximum six units if two are affordable (six units

are also allowed on lots near bus routes or “amenities.”)

The wrong definition of the problem

Addressing the “housing shortage” doesn’t address unaffordability; it addresses availability. The assumption is that zoning caused the problem so upzoning will fix it. Policies like upzoning with no strings attached assume that if only we would give private investors more opportunities, they would build houses for every income level.

The assumption that “more housing means cheaper housing” fails to recognize that private investors base their decisions on profitability. Construction enabled by HB1110

Research from the National Housing Conference, confirms the widespread reality that there is a huge gap between what it costs to construct and maintain housing compared to the rent most people can pay. This gap is the reason that Olympia, like other jurisdictions, gives for its award of property-tax exemptions to developers. Developers have used the subsidy to build market rate apartments, enhancing their return on investment, even though there is a longer-duration subsidy for building “affordable” units.

The only significant project in Olympia that will produce owner-occupied and “middle” housing that’s affordable to low-income households came because the city

HB1110 refers to the “historic investment” by the state’s Housing Trust Fund as insufficient, in order to support its focus on the private sector as the solution to the housing crisis. In reality, the HTF has had minimal funds to invest in construction of actual housing. Since its creation in 1986, the Fund has managed to build only an average of 1400 new units statewide each year.

Nothing in HB1110 acknowledges the reality that half of the million houses we need must be affordable to households earning half of the median income—in Thurston County that would be about \$50,000 a year. Nothing the legislature is doing addresses that.

As Helen Wheatley wrote in these

will serve higher income earners and that might actually tend to reinforce rather than diminish the effects of income inequality.

A few years ago the City of Seattle upzoned 27 neighborhood hubs under its Mandatory Housing Plan. Developers were given the opportunity to put more buildings on one lot—but required to include affordable housing—or pay into a fund that would allow the city to build affordable housing. The result? Developers chose to build market rate and higher priced housing and pay into the fund.

In Thurston County, the offer of automatic property tax exemptions, has stimulated construction of housing units at a brisk pace. A visit downtown and to many residential areas reveals hundreds of new homes and apartments. Yet rents and mortgages continue to rise, remaining beyond an “affordable” level for over a third of households.

The market economy is the problem, not the solution

The housing crisis has more to do with poverty and inequality than with housing supply. According to Thurston Regional Planning 32% of households in the county are “cost burdened”—they spend over a third of their income for housing. This hasn’t changed significantly in a decade.

No private developer is going to invest in construction of dwellings that are within the reach of a household earning an annual income of \$50,000 or less—which is the case for a third of all households in Thurston County. Nor is this likely to change as 51% of jobs in the area are in the low-paying service sector.

made 10 acres of city-owned land available to the non-profit Habitat for Humanity. The cost of land was reduced, and there was no requirement for a return on investment.

Meaningful public investment

The first section of HB1110 cites the legislative goal of creating 1,000,000 homes by 2044. This is corroborated by data from the Department of Commerce: Washington needs more than one million additional homes across Washington by 2044 BUT it also found that more than half or 500,000 must be affordable to people earning below 50% of area median income.

pages last year, “No matter how many housing units are built for people with higher incomes, we will still have people moving here to work in jobs where they earn less, and those people will be struggling to find housing they can afford. If we don’t use public resources to help working families, they will continue to struggle with increasing desperation in the private housing market.”

Mary Jo Dolis is an intermittent contributor to Works in Progress. She has lived in Olympia since 1984.

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

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In pursuit of a safe workplace

Sharing ideas and strategies that can actually work

Lin Nelson

For the public to understand the dangers posed by many jobs, it’s vital that journalists write about the real story of everyday conditions, risks and strategies affecting working people. At its 2022 annual conference, the National Council on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) enabled participants to explore how workers and the broader public can learn about workplace hazards and take action to challenge and resolve them.

Space for workers and advocates

The 2022 conference (COSHCON), held online in the 2nd and 3rd weeks of December, involved a diverse network: newcomers to the labor movement, organizers around Amazon and Starbucks, immigrant workers facing high risk and retaliation, women workers reporting and resisting sexual harassment in the workplace, veteran union organizers and occupational health professionals—industrial hygienists, docs, nurses and researchers. The conference was presented in both English and Spanish, with opportunities for small group work sessions and active sharing of resources.

Melissa Moriarty, storytelling and communications strategist on the National COSH staff, reflected on this year’s gathering:

“Workers know their jobs and know what is needed to stay safe. But employers and public officials don’t always listen to those who pay the price for preventable hazards in the workplace. At COSHCON we create the space for workers and advocates to share ideas for creating positive change—and that includes strategies for making public what happens behind closed doors.”

Getting the story out

The session on media featured one of the key investigative reporters on conditions and resistance at Amazon. Will Evans, longtime staff at REVEAL, talked about the process for making injury data public and about ongoing efforts to make government and corporate data more accessible and understandable.

His series on Amazon emerged through building relations that employees could trust. Carlos Ballesteros is based at Injustice Watch in Chicago. He focuses his stories on older undocumented workers who face retaliation for speaking out. They endure the insecurity of not qualifying for Medicare and Social Security, even though they’ve been paying into it.

An unusual participant in this year’s COSHCON was Gretchen Carlson—unusual because she is a longtime media celebrity on FOX news. But she’s taken a new journey: revealing the

sexual harassment she was subjected to at Fox and becoming a champion for workers facing sexual harassment.

All three speakers conveyed the challenges and urgency of workers getting their stories out into the public for others to learn from. They spoke of the vital need to support those who come forward—sometimes at great risk—to protect themselves, their co-workers and the broader community.

Activating the system for protection

Discussions at this year’s conference included introductory explorations of the governmental terrain that folks have to travel to protect workers from injury and disease. It’s daunting to enter into the world of OSHA, NIOSH and the NLRB—especially, if you’re new to all of this. You need to figure out if you’re in a state that is covered by OSHA or in one of the 27 states that has its own system that is supposed to be built upon OSHA as a baseline. Washington is one of those states, with occupational safety and health standards considered to be quite solid and effective.

One theme emerged throughout the conference. We need to be informed about that system, we need to call on and activate that system, and we need to call it to account when it falters. A repeated message: it’s one thing to have reasonable safety-and-health regulations on the books; it’s another to have those regulations actively enforced, with enough staff prepared and able to make the system real on a daily basis.

Asking the hard questions

Against the backdrop of dealing with government agencies and less-than-responsible employers, there is the daily challenge for workers and allied occupational health professionals of actually conducting inspections. One COSHCON session featured seasoned union-based inspectors from UAW and USW leading a problem-solving session on how to ask the hard questions about what caused an accident or exposure.

When an employer steals your wages

If someone steals money from their employer, they could be guilty of a serious crime. But what if an employer takes money from their employee’s paychecks?

Employers steal billions of dollars from their employees each year by working them off the clock, by failing to pay the minimum wage, or by cheating them of overtime pay they have a right to receive. Survey research shows that well over two-thirds of low-wage workers have been the victims of wage theft.

Nonetheless, few local governments commit resources to enforcing laws that prevent wage theft. On the other hand, plenty of resources—police and prosecutors—are devoted to enforcement of laws against shoplifting.,

In 2012, there were 292,074 robberies of all kinds, including bank robberies, residential robberies, convenience store and gas station robberies, and street robberies. The total value of the property taken in those crimes was about \$341 million.

By contrast, the total amount recovered for the victims of wage theft who retained private lawyers or complained to federal or state agencies was at least \$933 million in 2012. This is almost three times greater than all the money stolen in robberies that year. The nearly \$1 billion successfully reclaimed by workers is only the tip of the wage-theft iceberg, since most victims never sue and never complain to the government.

People worry about things like shoplifting, auto theft, bank robberies and home burglaries, but wage theft affects far more people than these more well-known crimes.

Using an example of a nurse who “made an error” due to poor staffing and inappropriate interference, the workshop leaders offered questions that would help ensure a solution that protects workers’ rights. Their key message: we must learn from errors and mishaps so that workplaces function to support workers and the broader public.

Elevated risk from climate change

Many COSHCON participants were eager to talk about the impacts of climate change on workers and communities. Two very energetic workshops hosted lively discussions about the unequal and unjust burdens of climate change: heat, smoke, storms and floods. Many workers, particularly those who work outside, face elevated risks that will likely worsen. There is a push for national legislation providing an effective and enforceable heat exposure rule. At the state level, Washington, Oregon and California are taking the lead to protect workers from heat and smoke exposure.

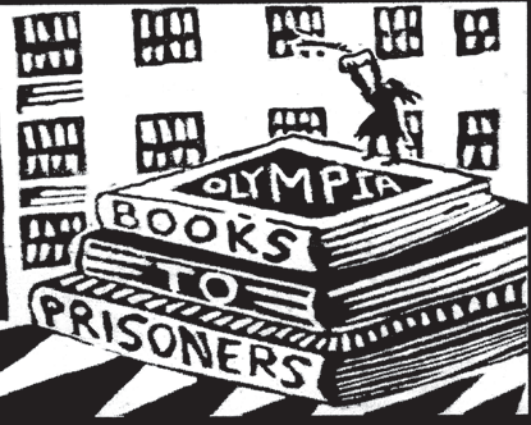
Seasoned activists and rising meteors

In the closing session, there was an enthusiastic focus on the cross-generational strengthening of the safety-and-health world. Elder activists talked about the “rising meteors” of the movement—young folks who are facing severe hazards and coming up with new models, inventive ways to use social media, and building a dramatic presence in communities across the country. Seasoned activists from civil rights struggles talked about facing down “terror on the factory floor” and applauded emerging groups that are building on labor’s past achievements to reach out to more marginalized workers—immigrant workers, incarcerated workers, domestic workers.

Jaribu Hill, from the Mississippi Workers’ Center for Human Rights, offered this as COSHCON came to a close: “We are all students in this.”

COSH is a network that brings together the labor movement, health providers, researchers, environmental advocates, and social justice activists. COSHCON is its annual gathering for folks on the frontlines who face imminent hazards and long-term health risks, as well as employers that undermine workers’ right-to-know and right-to-act.

Lin Nelson serves as part of the COSH Advisors Network; she retired fromThe Evergreen State College. Her article first appeared in The Stand.



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The 1975 origins of SafePlace

“Young-hippie-students” rowed upstream in provincial 1970s
Thurston County to create refuge a for battered women

Susan Davenport

In 1975, one of Olympia’s social spots for young adults and students was, oddly, the local crisis clinic. Many Evergreen and Saint Martin’s students looking for ways to connect volunteered there. Word of mouth got around that the clinic offered exceptional training in communication skills, crisis intervention, suicide prevention and de-escalation of acute mental health episodes. It was also the source of expansive knowledge about local agencies and resources along with contact numbers and eligibility criteria.

This was a treasure trove for students studying sociology and psychology and those interested in internships or social-issue policy work.

Another draw was Kathy McKinnon, the founding executive director of the clinic. She was a force to be reckoned with. She designed and led the training and held the young women she mentored to a high standard. She taught grant writing, organizational development and facilitation skills to those who sought her guidance.

Two best friends, Colleen and I, decided to take the graveyard shift—a weekly opportunity for a girls’ night sleepover. The clinic had two twin beds adjacent to the phone room for rest during the night shift. Two people took turns—one awake and alert responding to calls while the other slept. Not much rest though, as Coleen and I talked the night away.

One morning, Kathy McKinnon asked us if we ever responded to calls from battered women. Kathy had been reading about “battered women” in the *New York Times* and books like *Battered Wives* and *Scream Quietly or the Neighbors Will Hear*. This was some of the first public examination of “wife abuse” as a social problem, brought to light by feminist activists in the 1970s. Until then, battered women had essentially been invisible.

Yes, we had had such calls, and we had responded with the clinic protocol: get permission to call the police, get the address, put the woman on hold, call the police, and then get back to the woman to support her until the police got there.

Kathy saw from our work on the phone lines that this was an issue. Colleen and I knew it because we were survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Kathy gave us volunteers the assignment to log these calls with “women in crisis” under a new title “battered women.” One morning she showed us the total for eight weeks. It was substantial. She looked at us and asked, “Would you be interested in starting a women’s shelter for our community?”

Kathy encouraged us to take on the task. She laid out steps we would have to take to get established as a task force, including the type of supporting data we would have to collect to demonstrate need. She handed us an application packet for a community needs assessment put out by the Law Enforcement Association of America—and offered us guidance for writing the grant. The FBI reported that a quarter of all fatalities encountered by law enforcement were due to

“domestic disturbances.” We were briefly put off by the idea of working with the FBI and law enforcement, but being pragmatic community activists, we forged ahead.

The justification for the grant was our experience at the clinic. The grant was to pay for a comprehensive community needs assessment, including data from law enforcement, hospitals, doctors, dentists (tooth loss due to beatings), the



The team of young women who formed the Womens’ Shelter Task Force on the front steps of the YWCA on Union St. Top step left to right: Sarah Albertus and Colleen Spencer. Bottom step left to right: Susan Davenport, Lisa Pontopidan, Lauren Herbert, Kathy Haviland.

community mental health center, the Department of Social and Health Services and other child and family service agencies such as Head Start.

In order to receive grant funds, we needed an administrative body. Kathy suggested the YWCA. As Colleen and I had no experience with this type of ask we went to the meeting raw and unpolished, speaking from our hearts. Ethel, their Executive Director, was an old-school, refined, charitable agency administrator. She gave our young hippie-student selves a once-over, saying this was a “highly unusual request.”

She also said “Yes” and gave us the attic in the YWCA building at Union and Franklin for an office.

Coincidentally, I was enrolled in the Community Advocacy Program at Evergreen (1975-76). Our class assignment was to form teams to do a community needs assessment and write a fictional program proposal. I presented the idea for our shelter project as “unformed and fitting the criteria for the assignment.”

My professor was not pleased when he discovered my subterfuge. He knew what we were getting ourselves into and saw it as conflicting with our work in the academic program. It wasn’t a short-term, one-quarter fictional assignment. It was the real deal. Our team would be committed to a twelve-month timeline. (I did get credit for the course—and a terse note in my evaluation about not following instructions for a one-quarter project.)

The women who worked with us were all survivors of child abuse, sexual abuse, rape or domestic violence. We were committed to making the shelter happen. We formed the Women’s Shelter and Support

Services Task Force under the mentorship of Ethel at the YWCA. Kathy fed us high-level community contacts essential for moving the project forward.

Our team embarked on an amazing journey, rowing upstream in 1970s provincial Thurston County to bring the issue of battering to light and accountability. We were young: Sarah, age 23; Lisa, 19; Lauren, 19; Kathy, 21; Colleen, 21; and me, Susan, 19.

We did one-on-one contacts to educate community leaders. We put on “dog and pony shows” to local civic groups. We researched and examined models, including one through Radical Women in Seattle run by Coyote, a Portland-based prostitutes’ union. Colleen and I travelled to Portland to attend their meetings about rape and violence against women. We looked at their “safe house” model—taking women off the street and away from violent pimps, sheltering them in private homes in a network across the West that got them out of state and safe. We thought this might be a model for our project prior to finding a facility.

Colleen and I kept our shift at the clinic. On occasion we arranged to help women get out of their homes to stay with people in our personal network. Any domestic violence worker today will faint hearing that. All the “safety rules” forbid anything like that now—one woman

helping another, unencumbered by agency policy.

My role on the Task Force was collecting raw data from hospitals and law enforcement. There were no computers—records were kept in huge eleven-by-seventeen-inch ledgers like something from the 1800s. In hospital ER logs listing injuries, I found a pattern of “doorknob bruises” (black eyes the women claimed were from falling against a doorknob); kitchen counter bruises (bruised ribs), falling down stairs bruises (sometimes internal injuries) and various red marks or bloodied noses with no explanation. Mental health admission records were even more vague. The term “domestic violence” had not come into common legal usage yet.

In speaking with municipal police departments and sheriff’s offices, I learned they had a designation called “domestic disturbance.” This was more specific for our data gathering. In one Thurston County municipality the police chief told me, “There is no need to look over our ledger because that’s not a problem in this town.”

Most police and sheriffs took the same approach to these calls. They described taking the perpetrator out of the home to “walk him around the block” or “sit and cool off in the squad car” with admonitions to “stop doing that”—whatever “that” was—and send them back into the house warning they better not hear about “that” happening again. No one went to jail in those years unless there was extreme assaultive behavior requiring hospitalization.

We completed our report as a well established program of the YWCA. Eventually we merged with the local Rape Relief program, also under the YWCA umbrella. Local women politicians and community leaders now opted to get in on this growing part of the Women’s Movement. Once the shelter project became “legit,” the Task Force was disbanded and a new name was created: “SafePlace.”

As funding rolled in and a facility was established, women committed to feminism and anti-oppression kept SafePlace operating as a collective, non-hierarchical, anti-oppression organization for over twenty-five years.

Eventually, the shelter movement began morphing into a program beholden to governmental agencies and grant funders. At that point, the element that was social justice activism was replaced by standard social service policies and procedures. Once the board for SafePlace hired an executive director, the collective model was disbanded. It was the end of an era.

Thurston County Food Bank

Food Distribution at the Downtown, Client Service Center

Regular distribution 11:00 am – 3:00 pm Mon, Wed, Fri
All food is prepacked and distributed through either the Drive-Up or Walk-Up distribution model.

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

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

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

220 Thurston Ave. NE
downtown Olympia WA

Days of Change

Olywa Days of Change

A community memoir in many voices

Jean Eberhardt

Olywa Days of Change is gathering memories from the 1960s to the 1980s for a book project. A group has met online for over two years, encouraging each other to write down stories, share histories and gather photographs and graphics.

We are also reaching out to other folks to help us capture experiences of the era. We envision our stories coming together in hard copy as well as in an e-book, with chapters such as First Peoples, Arrivals, Food, Activism, Home, Work, Fun and School. Some memoirs offer first-hand accounts of the founding of key institutions like The Evergreen State College, the Farmers Market, and the Food Coop. Other stories offer more intimate accounts of young people finding work and finding community...essentially, finding themselves.

“For three decades, Olympia, Washington was a crucible for cultural revolution. We are collect-

ing memories of those turbulent and creative years not only as a community history but also to see what peoples’ experiences can teach us about many of the same issues today.”—Don Martin



Factual timelines and corroborating links to other records can be included either within narratives, as footnotes or in an appendix. Individual authors’ words will represent their sole perspective rather than a definitive historical record. Some events will be portrayed from more than one vantage point.

“Together, these reminiscences give form to the vibrant bustle of creation that filled the streets of Olympia from the 1960s to the 1980s. For

some of us, it was Socialism in real time. For others, it was the counterculture to a mainstream we wanted no part of. For others, it was called the hippie community. And some of us simply called it the community, suggesting that this was how people should live their lives.” — Anna Schlecht “These stories ... are also notes

Perhaps you have a rich story or two to share? Please contact us! Join our Facebook page: OlyWA

in bottles for the future, for our stories revolve around the perennial needs of humans everywhere: food, housing, work, the arts. Just as our experiences were shaped by the people before us, so might our stories feed into the lives to follow our own.” —Becky Liebman

Read Susan Davenport’s memoir on Page 14 about the origins of SafePlace, written as part of this project.

To participate and for more information: jean@olywadaysofchange.org

Lesson plans from the Pentagon

Poverty is the recruiter for our “volunteer” army

Robert C. Koehler

Oh, the children!

Filling the ranks is more complicated than it used to be, thanks to a change that occurred back in 1973, a year of startling historical significance. 1973 was the year of the Roe v. Wade decision and the Watergate hearings (remember those?).

But there was more: the United States was tangled militarily in Vietnam and torn apart by protests on the home front. Leaders were on the brink of conceding defeat in ‘Nam and getting the hell out of the ravaged country.

But first they ended the draft

The idea was to shut up the protesters by taking away their personal stake in America’s militarism. The term then emerging was “Vietnam syndrome”—people were sick of war. Big problem for the defense industry and the acquiescent politicians indebted to it.

Patriotism itself had become poisoned. People began calling for profound national change, including an end to war. Was the antiwar movement becoming the new patriotism?

Ending the draft turned out to be the right move

PR-wise, the military could laud its dependence on an “all-volunteer” army. Patriotism lives! But quietly, secretly, the military had to make some changes in its recruitment procedures to ensure it could still get enough boys (and girls) “to keep the country safe.”

Marketing and grooming

Their new approach to recruitment had two main thrusts. One was to make full use of the poverty draft — marketing enlistment to poor and disadvantaged young people as the entryway to middle-class financial .

Second was to capture the minds of potential recruits while they were still children: introducing them to real-world militarism via video-games and high school gun fun, officially known as Junior ROTC. US Department of Defense (DOD) invites children as young as fifth grade into “Starbase,” a program that exposes children to “positive civilian and military role models found on Active, Guard, and Reserve military bases...”

We need indebted students

The nature of the poverty “draft” burst into the news recently when 19 Republican House members signed a letter to President Biden, expressing alarm at his decision to partially cancel student debt. They warned him:

“By forgiving such a wide swath of loans for borrowers, you are removing any leverage the Department of Defense maintained as one of the fastest and easiest ways of paying for higher education.”

Careful! Giving everyone equal financial opportunities may sound nice, but it can screw up the system.

As Thomas Gokey, an organizer with the Debt Collective, which works for debt cancellation, put it, according to *Vice*:

“Debt is a form of social control. You can force people to do all kinds of things if you put them in debt first, including waging unjust wars, killing and hurting other people, and risking (their) own life and limbs.”

Debt as a means of leverage, a form of social control—how come kids don’t say those words when they recite the Pledge of Allegiance?

State-sponsored enticements

The Pentagon knows that student debt, or even poverty in general, is not sufficient to keep the recruits flowing. Having been a boy who was totally gonzo about playing war—pretending to die, pretending to kill—I can understand how kids (well, boys) of all economic strata constitute a susceptible market for recruiters.

For 20 years, the Army ran a video game website called America’s Army, which apparently was wildly successful at attracting the attention of young people. It began in 2002 and although it was discontinued earlier this year, the Army and other military branches are still involved in video games and competitive electronic sports.

The “war is cool” crowd

It doesn’t stop there and it isn’t just a game. Gokey, again quoted in *Vice*, pointed out that “colleges often benefit immensely from the GI Bill financially, giving them incentive to support recruitment on campus.” Recruiters are on college campuses (and in our high schools)—especially the ones desperate for funding. JROTC is where the poverty draft meets the war-looks-cool crowd.

Sylvia McGauley, a teacher in an impoverished school district outside Portland, Oregon, described her school as the “perfect prey for military recruiters who win points for filling the coffers of the poverty draft.” Her words are from an essay, written in 2014 and published by Re-thinking Schools, called “The Military Invasion of My High School.”

Military propaganda in the public school curriculum

She writes about the JROTC program at her school, which she describes as “a school within a school.”

“JROTC is not about education. But by housing recruiters and JROTC in public schools and offering them carte blanche privileges, we provide them a cloak of legitimacy. Militarism was one of Martin Luther King Jr.’s ‘giant triplets’ of societal destruction (along with racism and extreme materialism). Today it appears as a legitimate component of the educational system—most often at underfunded schools.”

JROTC gave students access to weapons training, and even, in partnership with the National Rifle Association, sponsored marksmanship matches. This was in direct contradiction with the school’s embrace of nonviolent conflict resolution, including its commitment to Restorative Justice and peer mediation.

It also made its way into classrooms. Via classes called “Leadership Education Training” JROTC instructors taught a Pentagon-scripted version “history,” which, McGauley notes, maintains that “the sole cause of the Vietnam War was containment of communism” and the United States “went to war in Iraq as part of its global war on terrorism.” Period.

Propaganda, in other words. Not in any way true history.

The US military needs more than just money (a trillion dollars or so) in its annual budget. It needs access to America’s young people—their wallets, their bodies and their minds.

Robert Koehler (koehlercw@gmail.com), syndicated by PeaceVoice, is a Chicago journalist and the author of Courage Grows Strong at the Wound.

Check out “Starbase”, a Defense Dept. grooming program

Our mission: To expose our nation’s youth to the technological environments and positive civilian and military role models found on Active, Guard, and Reserve military bases and installations. To nurture a winning network of collaborators and build mutual loyalty within our communities, by providing 25 hours of exemplary hands-on instruction and activities that meet or exceed the National Standards.

—from the Department’s introduction to *Starbase at youth.GOV*

PERSPECTIVE

What toxins lie under the ground at Green Cove?

Olympia’s review of a proposed development leaves the question unanswered

Esther Kronenberg

The City of Olympia has again ignored state law in its handling of developer Jerry Mahan’s application to build family homes on a toxic waste dump. The City issued a “Mitigated Determination of Nonsignificance” (MDNS) which allows the project to move ahead, without having first made a threshold determination about its environmental impact.

The City’s use of an MDNS as a threshold determination was earlier ruled unlawful by the Court of Appeals in a 2005 case between the City of Olympia and Thurston County. According to the Court’s ruling in that case, “an MDNS can be issued only after a threshold determination is made that an environmental impact statement is unnecessary.”

Yet when the City issued its MDNS to Green Cove Park LLC, it set a public hearing before the Hearing Examiner for January 23, 2023—the last step before a project gets the go-ahead.

The City claims it is acting in accordance with the law in spite of the Court of Appeals ruling to which it was a party. The MDNS had been issued despite City staff’s recommendation the project be denied because the effectiveness of the proposed mitigations was “unclear.” Green Cove occupies a critical aquifer recharge area affecting city and private wells, endangered species and federally impaired bodies of water. It is clear that the use of an MDNS to enable construction of family homes on a

former industrial toxic waste dump is a perversion of the State Environmental Policy Act—especially when essential facts about the toxic nature of the site have yet to be identified, let alone addressed.

A flurry of public comments opposed the issuance of the MDNS and urged the City to follow staff advice and deny the project. When developer Jerry Mahan appealed the mitigations required by the

tently ruled in favor of developers in his ten years with the City. At least 3 people, including the Green Cove Defense Committee, have asked for his recusal on grounds that his participation violates the Appearance of Fairness, a doctrine that requires a decision-makers to withdraw from a process when there is even an appearance of possible bias.

The City of Olympia has not is-

It is clear that the use of an MDNS to enable construction of family homes on a former industrial toxic waste dump is a perversion of the State Environmental Policy Act

MDNS, the City decided to postpone the public hearing to March. This allows Mahan what will be a fifth opportunity to meet City requirements.

It is noteworthy that Mahan is contesting the requirement that he obtain a “No Further Action” letter from Ecology certifying that the site has been cleaned up to Model Toxic Control Act standards. Mahan argues this is not “reasonable,” and proposes compliance with the Formal Order for cleanup instead.

Any appeal of a city land-use decision requires a \$1365 filing fee. (By contrast, Seattle charges \$85 and appeals are free before the Growth Management Hearings Board and the Pollution Control Hearings Board.) City appeals go to the City’s Hearing Examiner, Mark Scheibmeir. Scheibmeir is a real estate investment attorney with clients in Olympia who has consis-

sued a single Determination of Significance—a finding that would trigger an Environmental Impact Statement—since at least 2005. In spite of the Appeals Court ruling, the City has used an MDNS as a



threshold determination close to 50 times over the last few decades for projects such as 123 4th Ave downtown, Wellington Heights, Briggs Village Senior housing, and many other large (100+units) housing projects around Boulevard Way, Capital Mall, and Kaiser Rd

NW among others, thus avoiding the cost and greater scrutiny of an Environmental Impact Statement.

The Green Cove Defense Committee has submitted a Petition to the Department of Ecology to repeal WAC 197-11-350 (Mitigated DNS) because it is unnecessary, unclear, imposes unreasonable costs, conflicts with other state laws and was not adopted according to applicable provisions of law.

The Green Cove Defense Committee hopes that exposing this abuse of the MDNS to public scrutiny will motivate the Department to ensure that the SEPA process is not undercut by expediency, and that environmental and public health remains its top priority.

It is just this kind of intense public scrutiny that convinced Ecology to put the Sundberg site under a Formal Order for cleanup in 2020. The Committee is urging Ecology to take over lead agency status for the project, since the City has not done a proper threshold determination for at least 18 years.

The Department of Ecology has 60 days to respond to the Petition. Concerned residents can contact Rebecca.Lawson@ecy.wa.gov to ask Ecology to take over lead agency status, and the Rules Coordinator at the Department of Ecology to support the Petition to Repeal WAC 197-11-350 at this address: bari.schreiner@ecy.wa.gov

Esther Kronenberg on behalf of the Green Cove Defense Committee

REFLECTION

Walling in and walling out

Eddie DuPuy

In his book *Myth and Reality*, the late scholar of religion Mircea Eliade suggests that, contrary to the popular understanding of myth as a fiction, in early religious practice it defined both the constitution and understanding of reality—a line that defines the limits of belief or a wall that defines a city.

Myth tells of the original time that constitutes the world, and thus history becomes an effort to “go back,” to recreate reality in its pristine form through ritual and the recitation of the origin story.

Eliade’s writing made a big impact on me. When I first visited the medieval walled cities of Tuscany, each expanding outward from the central cathedral, I understood those cities as representing the original myth of Christianity.

In the medieval mind, reality radiated from the city’s center to its walls, beyond which other forces—chaos, dissolution—threatened. In the medieval city, gates, openings to those disintegrating forces, required constant vigilance.

When I rode around my neighborhood, looking at the houses and

the fenced yards, I imagined each fenced space as a world unto itself, thousands of competing “realities” connected loosely to the larger reality of the city, the state, the country, each with its own boundaries.

Later, I came across Robert Frost’s line from “Mending Wall.” “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall,” the poem opens. In his telling, I thought of Frost as creating a modern myth, in Eliade’s sense of “reality.”

Frost writes of the “gaps” in his stone fence that no one has seen or heard made, but which are there nonetheless, some so wide as to allow two abreast to pass. As he and his neighbor mend their walls in the spring, his neighbor says “Good fences make good neighbors.”

The mischievous poet wants to know “Why do they make good neighbors?” Before building a wall, he says, he might want to know “What I was walling in or walling out.” But the neighbor remains mute, except, with “a stone grasped firmly by the top / In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed,” to repeat what he has learned from his father: “Good fences make good neighbors.”

The neighbor holds on to the reality learned in his original time, from his father, not knowing, or caring, why he says what he says, only believing it to be true because it came from the time of his origin.

In the last four or five years, we heard ad nauseum the infamous call to “build that wall.” Few who made the call, however, thought to ask why. “What are we walling in and walling out?” Still, the cry became, in its way, a call to “go back” to a supposedly golden age, when the real could be distinguished from the threatening forces of perceived chaos. The wall necessary, presumably, to keep those forces corralled.

Among the loudest of those who shouted were those who identified themselves as “Christian.” They sought (and still seek) to retrieve, to go back to, a view of a nation wholly composed of like-minded people.

During the yelling and the ugliness, I came across the quiet, sane, voice of Marilynne Robinson. Robinson has a different take on the Christian myth. In her essay “The Awakening” from *The Givenness of Things*, she writes: “‘Christian’

now is seen less as identifying an ethic, and more as identifying a demographic.... History has shown us a thousand variations on the temptations that come with tribalism, the excitements that stir when certain lines are seen as important because they can be rather clearly drawn.”

The neighbor in Frost’s poem, like the “Christian” in Robison’s essay, draws lines, builds walls to define a reality that separates “us” and “them,” neighbor from neighbor, never thinking to ask why the wall is necessary in the first place.

I’d like to think that when Frost imagined the gap large enough for two abreast to pass, the two that passed might have been the neighbors themselves—us and them—celebrating a passage from fear into community.

Eddie Dupuy will be moving to Tacoma from San Antonio, Texas next summer as part of a family migration.

“Uncaged Art” transformative work by children who crossed a border

Jean Eberhardt

“Behind every piece of art was a child desperate to be free.”

–Freddy, a youth detained at the Tornillo Children’s Detention Center, El Paso, Texas, 2018-19

Uncaged Art is an exhibit of large-scale photographs of art made by adolescents, ages 13-17, from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

The exhibit, including educational elements, was organized by members of local cultural and activist organizations. The young artists were detained at the Tornillo Children’s Detention center in El Paso County, Texas, from June 2018 to January 2019.

The teenagers were housed in large tents in the desert with no idea when they might be released. A group of local teachers assigned to the shelter invited the youth to create drawings, paintings, knitting, embroidery and clay figures.

In January 2019, the Tornillo Detention Center was dismantled, and many of the youths and children were sent to different centers.

We don’t know what became of them. The artwork they left behind had their names, but the staff erased the names and started to throw the artwork out. Father Rafael Garcia from El Paso’s Sacred Heart Parish, who had said mass at the camp, intervened to prevent the work from being thrown away and forgotten—and so it was saved.

“What came through in the art was the strong spirit of these children who, even under those conditions, were still inspired to do something beautiful.”

–*Father Rafael Garcia, priest who saved the children’s art*

The exhibit includes paintings, drawings and sculptures that reflect the resiliency, talent and creativity of these young people. Some of them had traveled over 2,000 miles to reach the United States, and many were forcibly separated from their parents at the border.

Olympia became a Sanctuary City in 2017, joining cities and towns around the country. As the crisis on our southern border continues today, they look for opportunities to focus attention on the stories and struggles of thousands of children and adults who continue to seek en-

trance to the United States and a better life for themselves and their families.

Uncaged Art will be shown in several Olympia locations:

Friday, April 28, 5 pm-9:30 pm, during Arts Walk. Olympia Hotel Balcony

April and May. Books, speakers, films covering immigration. Olympia City Hall

May. View the exhibit all month, plus weekly presentations. Olympia Timberland Library, second floor and conference room.

Details on the presentation: www.strengtheningsanctuaryalliance.org

See the work: <https://bit.ly/3WpQ6s2>, <https://www.texasobserver.org/uncaged-art/>

Organized by: Strengthening Sanctuary Alliance, Familia at TESC, Art Forces. Contact: Anne Fischel, Strengthening Sanctuary Alliance (annefischel@gmail.com)



The man who saved the world from thermonuclear annihilation

Glen Milner and
Leonard Eiger

At a time when the probability of nuclear war is as nearly as high as it was during the Cuban Missile Crisis, it is crucial that we recall the story of Vasili Arkhipov, a Soviet submarine officer who prevented a Soviet nuclear strike against US surface warships during that very crisis in 1962. An attack by a single Soviet submarine using just one nuclear-armed weapon would have caused a major global thermonuclear response.

In the fall of 1962, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev secretly began the deployment of medium and intermediate-range ballistic nuclear missiles in Cuba. On October 22, 1962, President John Kennedy ordered US naval forces to enforce a naval “quarantine” of offensive military cargoes en route to Cuba. On the same day, CIA Director John McCone informed President Kennedy that four Soviet submarines were positioned to reach Cuba within a week.

All four Soviet diesel-powered Foxtrot-class submarines in the flotilla were equipped with conventional torpedoes and one “Special Weapon”—a torpedo equipped with a 15-kiloton nuclear warhead. Soviet officers were told that in the absence of the possibility of communication with Moscow, only the agreement of the captain of the submarine and the political officer were needed to launch a nuclear torpedo. But on submarine B-59, due to Arkhipov’s position as chief of staff of the flotilla, all three officers on board B-59 had to agree unanimously to authorize a nuclear launch.

On October 27, 1962, a group of eleven US Navy destroyers and the aircraft carrier USS Randolph located Soviet submarine B-59 near Cuba. Despite being in international waters, the US Navy started dropping signaling depth charges, explosives intended to force the submarine to come to the surface for identification.

At this time, the Soviet crew had been out of contact with Moscow for several days and the submarine was too deep to monitor US civilian radio broadcasts. The submarine’s batteries had run very low and the air conditioning had failed, causing extreme heat and high levels of carbon dioxide inside the submarine. Under these extreme conditions, the captain of the submarine, Valentin Savitsky, decided a war might have already started. As the depth charges exploded around his vessel, Captain Savitsky ordered the arming of the nuclear torpedo and came within minutes of launching it.

According to a Soviet intelligence report, an argument broke out on B-59, with Arkhipov alone blocking the launch. Arkhipov eventually persuaded Captain Savitsky to surface amid US Navy vessels and await orders from Moscow.

No one on the US side knew at the time that the Soviet submarines were nuclear-armed; no one knew that conditions in the submarines were so physically difficult and unstable that commanding officers, fearing they were under attack by US forces, might consider arming and launching their nuclear torpedoes.

On November 2, 1962, Kennedy addressed the nation regarding the dismantling of the Soviet nuclear missile bases located in Cuba. All Soviet nuclear weapons were removed in the following months.

Strangely, many historians view the Cuban Missile Crisis as a triumph of rational leadership in both the Soviet Union and the United States. However, it was the leadership in both countries that brought the world to the brink of annihilation in the first place—only to be prevented by a single Soviet naval officer.

Ultimately, Kennedy and Khrushchev did negotiate in good faith to end the stalemate, with Kennedy agreeing to withdraw US nuclear-armed missiles from Turkey in exchange for the Soviets withdrawing their missiles from Cuba. Yet, had Arkhipov not prevented the launching of a single nuclear-armed torpedo against a US warship, the two leaders would not have had the chance to bring the crisis to a peaceful resolution.

Today, in the United States, hundreds of individuals have the awesome responsibility to launch nuclear weapons on the command of a verified authority in our government. In the case of any of the OHIO Class “Trident” ballistic missile submarines, up to ten of which might be on patrol at any given time, it is a possibility, even though a remote one, that one or more submarines would be unable to receive communications during a crisis involving Russia. In such a situation the anxious officers might question whether or not to launch their 20 Trident II D-5 ballistic missiles, each armed with an average of 4-5 thermonuclear warheads—the total equivalent destructive force of over 1,200 Hiroshima bombs.

In such a situation we could only hope that those officers would reflect on Arkhipov’s courageous act before deciding to initiate the launch sequence that, should a nuclear war have not already started, would certainly trigger the conflagration that would end civilization as we know it.

Considering the current crisis in Ukraine—Russia’s ongoing nuclear rhetoric, NATO’s encirclement of and pressure on Russia, the increasingly dangerous escalation in weaponry provided to Ukraine by the US and allies, and the high probability of tactical miscalculations—the probability of either accidental or intentional use of nuclear weapons cannot, and must not, be discounted.

Cooler heads must prevail to save humanity from annihilation, and the importance of Arkhipov’s actions are therefore more important than ever before.

January 30th would be Vasili Arkhipov’s 97th birthday: born on January 30, 1926; retired as a Vice Admiral in the mid-1980s; and died on August 19, 1998.

Glen Milner and Leonard Eiger are part of the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action. The Ground Zero Center was founded in 1977 on 3.8 acres of land adjoining the Trident submarine base at Bangor, Washington. Ground Zero resists all nuclear weapons, especially the Trident ballistic missile system.

Notes: Vasili Arkhipov and Soviet submarine B-59, forced to the surface by US Naval forces in the Caribbean near Cuba, with a US helicopter overhead. Source: Olga Arkhipova, 1955, and Soviet submarine by US Navy photographers, October 28, 1962, US National Archives. Also see source materials at the National Security Archive at <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/search?s=vasili+arkhipov&op=Search>

Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor is homeport to the largest concentration of deployed nuclear warheads in the US. The nuclear warheads are deployed on Trident D-5 missiles on SSBN submarines and are stored in an underground nuclear weapons storage facility on the base.

There are eight Trident SSBN submarines deployed at Bangor. Six Trident SSBN submarines are deployed on the East Coast at Kings Bay, Georgia. One Trident submarine carries the destructive force of over 1,200 Hiroshima bombs (the Hiroshima bomb was 15 kilotons).

Each Trident submarine was originally equipped for 24 Trident missiles. In 2015-2017 four missile tubes were deactivated on each submarine as a result of the New START Treaty. Currently, each Trident submarine deploys with 20 D-5 missiles and about 90 nuclear warheads (an average of 4-5 warheads per missile). The primary warheads are either the W76-1 90-kiloton or W88 455-kiloton warheads.

The Navy started deploying the new W76-2 low-yield warhead (approximately eight kilotons) on select ballistic submarine missiles at Bangor in early 2020 (following initial deployment in the Atlantic in December 2019). The warhead was deployed to deter Russian first use of tactical nuclear weapons, dangerously creating a lower threshold for the use of US strategic nuclear weapons.

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conflict and get to a resolution.

March 7th, April 4th, May 9th 2023

8:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.



Dispute
Resolution
Center
OF THURSTON COUNTY

Contact us for more information
about this and other DRC trainings:
(360) 956-1155
info@mediatethurston.org
MediateThurston.org



Community Spotlight

Krystal Two Bulls, Women’s Day Speaker

March 8, 11-12:30 on zoom.

Krystal Two Bulls is an Oglala Lakota and Northern Cheyenne water protector who is co-executive director of Honor the Earth (with Winona LaDuke). Two Bulls has opposed coal mining at Northern Cheyenne and an oil pipeline at Standing Rock. She is an Iraq War veteran and active in About Face: Veterans Against War. She headed the LandBack project of NDN Collective, and has been outspoken for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women The Evergreen State College <https://evergreen.zoom.us/j/89295816348>. For more information, contact “Taking Back Empire” faculty Savvina Chowdhury and Zoltán Grossman.

The Centennial Accord

Public forum on Thurston Area Tribal Nations and the Centennial Accord, Thursday, March 9, 6:30 - 8 pm.

In person at the Olympia Center and on Zoom. Hear from Tribal leaders and from the Governor's Office. To learn more about the Accord, review the History and What We Learned chapters in the Study of Thurston Area Tribal Nations on the LWVTC website. Copies of the agreements are available here. To join by zoom, register in advance at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89295816348>. For more information, contact “Taking Back Empire” faculty Savvina Chowdhury and Zoltán Grossman.

First United Methodist Church

Annual Rummage-Estate Sale. Friday March 10, 9am - 3pm, Saturday March 11, 9am-2pm. The United Women in Faith, Olympia First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way, Olympia.

Medea Benjamin

“Ukraine and the Threat of Nuclear War,” Monday March 13, 10 am, at the Ground Zero Center.

Benjamin is the co-founder of the women-led peace group CODEPINK. Her book *War in Ukraine: Making Sense of a Senseless Conflict*, will be available for sale. A potluck lunch then a demonstration at Bangor Trident submarine base in Silverdale will follow her talk.

Heartsparkle Players Playback Theater

Stories of Inspiration and Amazement, Friday, March 17, 6:30 pm.

Public Performance featuring the Thunders. Traditions - 300 5th Avenue SW, Olympia. Suggested Donation - \$10-20 (No one turned away).

Locals Only Film Festival

Call for entries, deadline April 5, 2023.

A short festival of films made in the PNW. All genres welcome. Audience choice winners receive laurels and showings at the 2024 Olympia Film Festival. www.olympiafilmsociety.org for more info.

South Sound Sierra Club

Community/member meeting to work on local environmental issues, Wednesday, April 12, 6 - 7:30 pm.

Come at 5:30 to order a meal. Mekong Thai Restaurant, 125 Columbia St NW, Olympia. **george.watland@gmail.co**. Meets second Wednesday every month.



Dirty Fuels Task Force.

Meets the third Thursday every month. For more information and details

Ruth Sawyer, ruth.sawyer@sierraclub.org, (503) 741-9103

ASHHO Cultural Center

Bazaar and Resource Fair. March. 4, April 1, May 6. Starts at 11.

Half-mile walk with Erin Jones and community members interested in making a change. Music by Choro Tomorrow and Parfait Basale. Plus soul food, crafts, community. More details and vender applications at info@ashho.org or visit www.ashho.org



Timberland Library StoryTrails

Walk a trail in Decatur Woods Park while you read We Move Together by Kelly Fritsch.

Family friendly interactive facts and questions. Choose your own time in March. For other book-connected trails look up Timberland Regional Library.



Headless Mumby Brewing Company

Book Fair March 18.

We'll have a wide selection of books and merch available at the book fair hosted by family friendly, locally owned Headless Mumby.

Street outreach pop up

Thursdays from 1 pm to 2 pm. Hot meals, water, gear including sleeping bags, tents, tarps and more. At the side parking lot next to 711 State St. All ages, including anyone unable to access CYS services. A power source (first come first serve). Referrals to community programs.

GRuB

Tend Teacher Training: Wild Spring Greens, Tuesday, Mar 28, 9am - 4pm.

Embrace the gifts of spring! Taste edible greens including nettles, dandelion, chickweed, wild lettuces, salmonberry sprouts, violets, and big leaf maple blossoms. Bring outdoor gear, a notebook, and a basket or bag for harvesting. The curriculum includes plant identification tips, sustainable harvesting techniques, nutritional values, medicinal uses and recipes. Or volunteer to help build raised beds for people this Spring. Contact volunteer@goodgrub.org to learn more! 2016 Elliott Ave NW, Olympia. More events: <https://www.goodgrub.org/calendar>



Glen’s Parallax Perspectives

“Smart Strategies to Organize for Peace and No Nuclear Weapons,” New in March. Fresh insights on ending war and eliminating nuclear weapons. Watch this and other Parallax Perspectives interview programs on Glen Anderson's blog, www.parallaxperspectives.org.

Lacey Public Library

Kaleidoscope Play & Learn. 10:30 - noon, daily through May 3.

Play group for children 0-5 with their caregiver. Story circles, songs, interactive games, art activities. Flexible arrival and departure times. Lacey Library, 500 College St SE

Wild Grief

Family journey campout. Friday, June 9, 12 pm - Sunday, June 11, 4 pm.

Lewis & Clark State Park 4583 Jackson Highway Winlock, WA. review the FAQs.

Teen day hike. Saturday, June 24, 10:30 am-4 pm.

Teens only, about 5-mile hike with skilled leaders. Meet in Olympia and vanpool to trailhead. Wild Grief makes space for sharing in nature for children and adults. All programs are free of charge, and camping supplies are provided. For more info, Programs are open until filled. More programs and info at <https://wildgrief.org/programs-overview>.

South Puget Sound Community College

Sunday in the Park with George, May 26 and 27, 7:30-9:30 pm, Student musical performance;

Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. Kenneth J. Minnaert Center for the Arts Main Stage (Bldg 21). Tickets at www.eventbrite.com.

The Thurston-Santo Tomás Plant Sale

Giant plant sale, order online May 3 - 7.

Volunteer work parties - dig and pot, through the end of March. See more about the plant sale on page 9 in this issue of *Works in Progress*.

Olympia Library

Teen Tech Tutors. 1st and 3rd Fridays, 4:30-5:45 pm.

Drop-in with your computer, phone or other device and work with a knowledgeable and patient teen volunteer to solve problems.

Climate Action

The Tree Action Group works on making stronger 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 information contact volunteer@thurstonclimate-action.org

American Indian Day

May 13 - so proclaimed by Ronald Reagan:

“In recognition of the unique position and contribution of the American Indian peoples to our Nation, the United States Congress, pursuant to House of Representatives Joint Resolution 459, authorized and asked the President to issue a proclamation designating May 13 as American Indian Day.”



CULTURAL BAZAAR

& Resource Fair

Dec 3, 2022
Jan 7, 2023
Feb 4, 2023
Mar 4, 2023
Apr 1, 2023
May 6, 2023



Come enjoy delicious soul food, buy
crafts, jewelry, cloths & more.....

Get to know local Direct Resources.



11 AM-3 PM

FREE entry!

Bring the whole family for a day of fun!

ASHHO Cultural Community Center

5757 Littlerock Rd SW#4

Tumwater, WA 98512

(360) 932-0682, (360) 918-8625

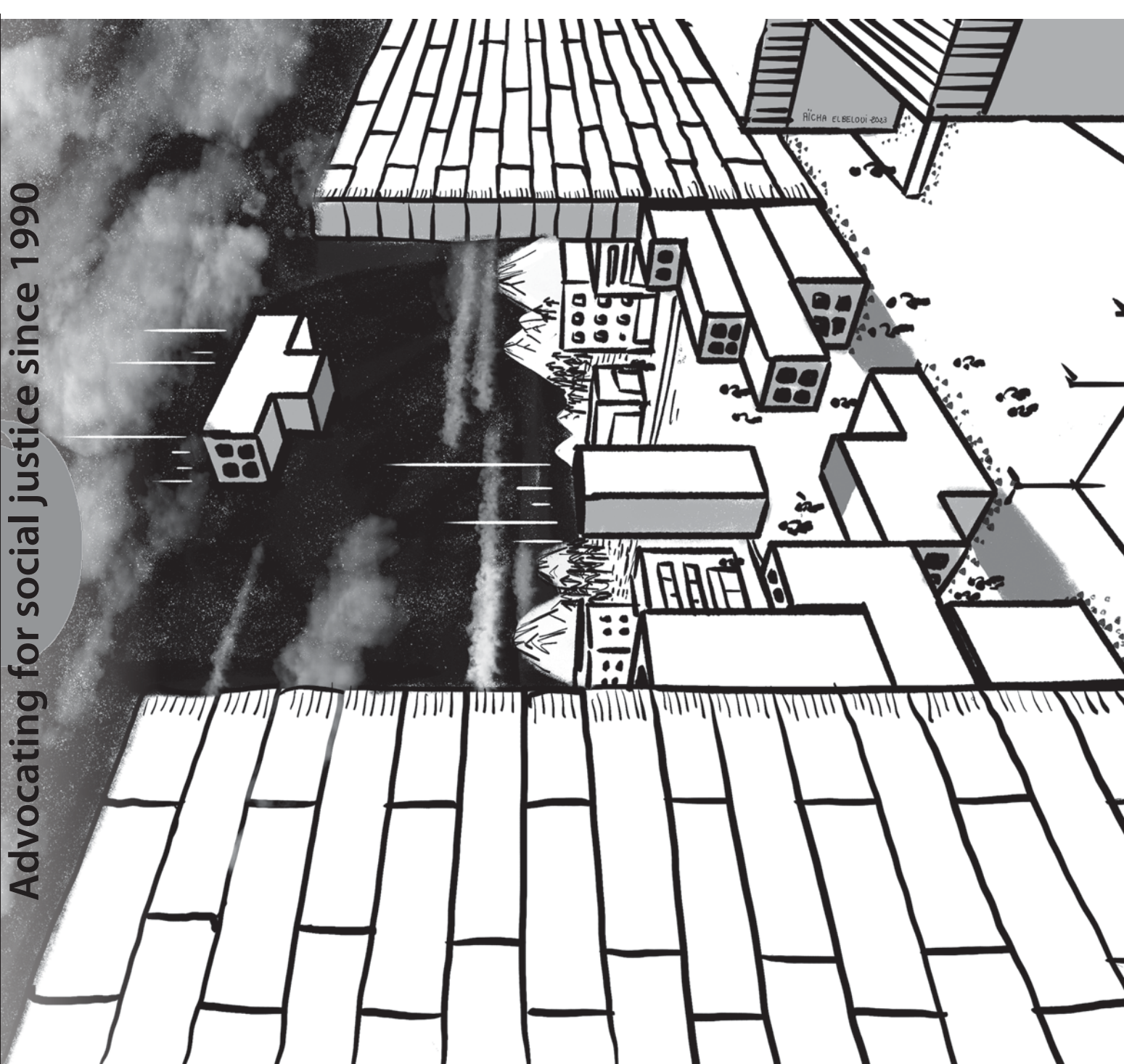
www.ashho.org

Free, take one!

¡Gratis, toma uno!

Works in Progress

Advocating for social justice since 1990



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