



Growth by annexation

Should City Councilors expand the boundaries of Olympia?

Jim Lazar

Olympia officials are considering a major annexation of neighborhoods at the Southeast periphery of the city that would increase Olympia’s population by about 18%. If it moves ahead, the annexation will have a significant economic and political impact on the city of Olympia. All evidence to date shows an adverse effect: annexation would impose more expense on the city budget than the revenue produced by taxes from the area.

When the Growth Management Act went into effect in 1990, communities in Thurston County formed Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) where population growth was to be concentrated. Multiple purposes of the UGA included providing adequate land for future development; protecting rural agricultural land; and concentrating development to minimize the cost of providing for roads, schools and utilities.

The Olympia UGA includes areas along both sides of Yelm Highway, from Henderson Boulevard to the Chehalis-Western Trail (which forms the boundary between the Olympia and Lacey UGAs). The area is almost entirely residential, with small commercial businesses along Yelm Highway, a restaurant inside Indian Summer, and a golf course community at the SE edge of the potential annexation.

Some realities of municipal finance

Property taxes, sales tax and business taxes are the three pillars of municipal revenue. Areas that are primarily residential like that of the possible annexation produce primarily property tax, in contrast with areas with retail or office businesses that produce all three kinds of tax. When a city annexes an area, it’s responsible for providing services such as police, fire and parks. It also takes on the maintenance of roads. In general, residential annexations impose more expense than the revenue they bring in.

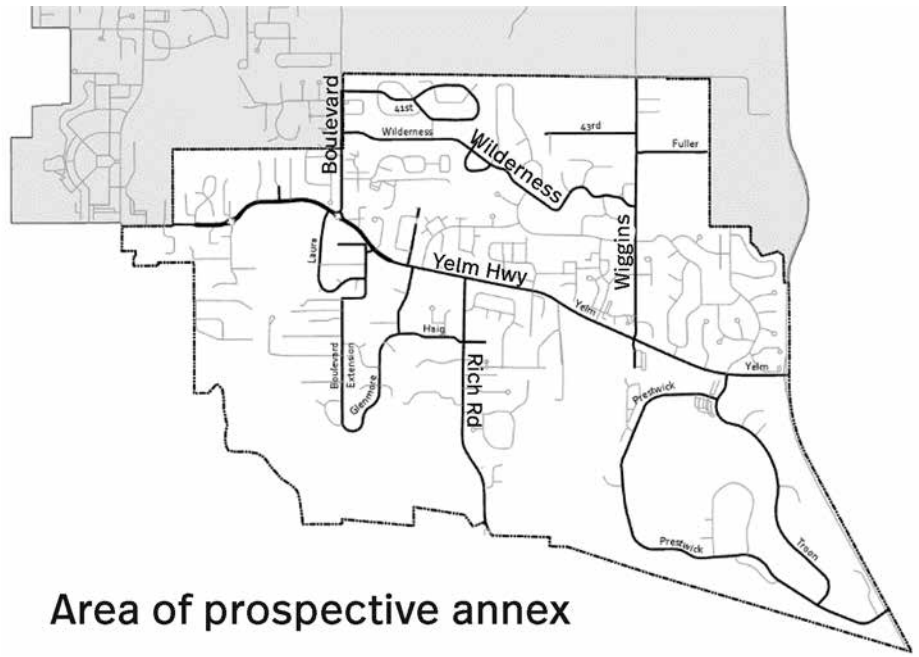
In the current Olympia budget period, property taxes contribute the smallest amount of the three taxes – projected to bring in \$17 million. Business taxes provide \$20 million, and sales tax \$29 million. The annexation area would generate almost no additional business taxes. The only meaningful sales tax would be from mail-order purchases by residents in this area.

Economic impacts for the City of Olympia

The City has twice studied the

potential impact of the annexation. City staff prepared a study in November, 2019, updated in May, 2020. The City also hired a consultant to examine the annexation, with a report in January, 2023. Both studies

was estimated to produce less new revenue than expense. The only categories of expense considered were these: fire, police, roads, stormwater, community development, and street lights. This study did not address



showed that the annexation would add more to city expenses than to revenues. That negative result would have been even worse had not both studies left out major costs and incorrectly added in revenues sources.

The 2019 study

The 2019 staff study looked at additional revenue from north and south annexation areas separately. Each

additional expenses associated with sidewalks, bicycle lanes, parks, or city administration. Sidewalks alone, just for major roads and school walking routes, are at least a \$5 million investment. And while additional labor expense for the Fire Department was considered, the estimated \$10 - \$20 million cost to build a fifth fire station to serve the area was omitted.

Overstated revenues and understated costs

The inclusion of Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) property tax as “revenue” is a significant error. Technically, the MPD is a separate government agency whose revenues can ONLY be used for parks and recreation purposes. (See table on page 11)

MPD revenue augments about \$7 million/year in city funds appropriated for parks, plus about \$2 million annually in a voted tax on electricity, natural gas, and telephone bills. However, the staff included zero additional amounts on the expense side for parks and recreation. MPD revenues cannot be used to pay for police, fire, roads, or other city expenses that were considered. When MPD revenue is properly excluded from the revenue calculation, the net annual loss to the city budget rises to over \$1.1 million.

There will be expenses for physical parks as well as recreation programs if annexation were to occur. Olympia has a policy to provide neighborhood parks within a half-mile of all homes, which means one or two additional parks in addition to a Community Park planned on the south side of Yelm Highway.

These costs are missing from the analysis. This could add an additional \$5 million in capital costs and \$500,000 per year in operating costs not considered by the staff. In addition, under an agreement between the City of Olympia and MPD, 11% of all revenues from property tax, sales tax, business tax and utility tax is dedicated to parks purposes under yet these were not subtracted from the total when computing dollars available to meet other city expenses.

► **Boundaries**, continued on page 11

You can influence how our communities grow over the next 20 years

Today’s children will live in the future we create

Esther Kronenberg and
Charlotte Persons

“The devil is in the details” is all too true when it comes to Comprehensive Plans that determine the shape of the communities we live in. The plans identify a series of goals, objectives, policies, actions and standards that guide day-to-day decisions of local government officials. The plans go a long way to determining how quiet our streets will be, whether there will be trees, thriving farms and wetlands, will there be affordable places for families to live, and on and on.

If or when it comes time to challenge a decision by city or county officials, the specific language in the chapters

of these plans will suddenly become very significant.

Comprehensive Plans were mandated by Washington State’s 1990 Growth Management Act as a way to ensure that population growth would be accommodated in local communities without jeopardizing the environment and quality of life over the long term.

ment for robust public participation. This includes establishing a work program with a public participation component along with a public engagement program. That in theory gives everyone the opportunity to contribute to the plan and to ensure that the devil does not get into the details. It pays to pay attention.

...the task of updating these plans comes with a requirement for robust public participation

Thurston County and the cities within it must update these consequential plans by June 30, 2025. Fortunately, the task of updating (or, amending) these plans comes with a require-

The Local Good Governance Coalition has been following and participating in the Comprehensive Plan update. The Coalition has been

► **Influence**, continued on page 15

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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- Workers in Progress Publishing Committee**
Emily Lardner, Kevin Pestinger, Enrique Quintero, Bethany Weidner
- Editor:** Bethany Weidner
- Treasurer** Ann Vandeman
- Production & Design** Lee Miller
- Proofreaders** James O’Barr, Scott Yoos, Matt Crichton, Margaret Thomas, Charlotte Persons
- Distribution** James O’Barr, Kevin P, Dave Groves, Mike Pelly, Scott Yoos, Sandia Slaby, Matt Crichton
- Website** Carolyn Roos, Heather Sundean
- Contact WIP:** olywip@gmail.com or by snail mail at PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507 or donate at our website: **www.olywip.org**
- Cover collage:** GL Johnson III is a multimedia artist and activist whose work has been shown in galleries and cafes in the Pacific NW. He works in Portland as a mental health specialist in the non-profit world.

The Fall issue will be the final issue of Works in Progress.

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THOUGHTS ON THE THEME

What do we mean when we say, “Children are our future?”

What is it about children? They can melt the hearts of the most curmudgeonly misanthrope, test the patience of Job, and show astounding awareness of the world around them—at the same time.

We speak of children as “hope for the future.” Each of us reading this was once a child. How have we done? Have we embraced hope? Expanded it? Abandoned it?

And what of the future? The effects of climate change, a turn toward autocracy in bulwarks of democracy, violence in the name of religion, wars waged for dreams of empire or imagined power, millions of immigrants seeking new homes because of corruption, war, climate change or intolerance, unchecked greed in the name of profit, gun violence at children’s schools, implacable poverty and exploitation, a resurgence of racist practices all paint a rather bleak outlook.

And yet children play, attend schools, prepare for a future. Some, against all odds, cast off their pasts to make a future for themselves and others. Others remain lost. Still others, boosted by the right action of parents or neighbors or friends or governments, find a path forward. Toni Kincaid Bambara says “Children are eternally valid, are eternally the reason for right action.”

So what is “right action”?

This issue of *Works in Progress* offers a few possibilities, while also acknowledging barriers to it.

Our lead article suggests sensible growth for Olympia. Does Olympia need to annex an area to the southeast when such expansion cannot sustain itself? Jim Lazar suggests not: “All evidence to date shows an adverse effect: annexation would impose more expense on the city budget than the revenue produced by taxes from the annexed area.” Such expansion would affect schools and infrastructure necessary to assure a future for Olympia’s children. So it seems that annexation would not be the right action for children’s futures.

Articles by Margaret Thomas consider the right action of education. More men are needed in schools, particularly elementary schools to offer role models to boys and offset the problems Richard Reeves outlines in his *Of Boys and Men*. Reeves suggests a “redshirting” of boys, delaying their start in school.

In her review of Reeves’ book, Thomas points out that “the benefits [of redshirting] aren’t so much that boys arrive at kindergarten later, but that they get to middle and high school with the maturity that sets them up for a chain reaction of successes.” Such success can be accomplished without the turn to for profit charter schools, which, as Ilana Smith points out in “Hidden in Plain Sight,” dupe would-be teachers into believing they are supporting a public good when in fact they find they are exploited for the benefit of a corporation.

And Steven Marquardt reminds readers of the paraeducator, whose low pay does not match their high value, particularly for children with special needs.

John Van Eenwyk suggests that while city leaders do not see the deleterious effects of continuing to support a failed port in Olympia, “our youth do. They stage 20-minute ‘die-ins’ at the City Council, yet nothing is done beyond token minimalism.”

If children are the future, perhaps city leaders should listen to them. But one wonders if city leaders have abandoned, instead of expanded, hope, despite the hope signaled by the activism of youth.

In “Influencing how our communities grow over the next 20 years” Esther Kronenberg and Charlotte Persons suggest that “right action” for our children can be found in getting to know and joining The Local Good Governance Coalition, which monitors planning. And in recounting the history of the Columbia Street Food Co-op, Anna Schlecht finds lessons in grassroots democracy—“for consensus process, perhaps best described as full-fledged democracy”—and sustainable thinking—“communities work best when they have control over how they meet their essential needs.” She offers a double dose of hope.

Back to the future, so to speak, Enrique Quintero, in “The Splinter in the Eye,” questions a future’s very possibility. In a system based on profit, people and the planet lose: “putting profits over everything else is like having four or even five bullets in the chamber while playing Russian Roulette.” In his article on the resurgence of child labor, Sam Pizzigati decries “the number of kids employed in direct violation of existing child labor laws,” and notes that “analysts at the Economic Policy Institute this past March reported [that child labor] has soared 283 percent since 2015—and 37 percent in just the last year alone.” Apparently profit trumps even children.

In “Breeding Hope,” Lindsey Bineau wonders about her and her husband’s decision to have children when she knows their children will “live through climate catastrophes worse than anything we’ve experienced.” But children will also, she writes, “feel the relief of sunshine on their faces on a rare cloudless winter day. They’ll learn to value the plants and animals around them for their intrinsic beauty”—not simply for profit. And so she and her husband opt for the possibility of hope, even love, in their decision to bring children into the world.

My poem on war suggests that war is as quotidian as a child reciting the ABCs, while Lenée Reid’s poem, “Breathe,” says that if we “worshiped water and air” instead of war and money, there would be “enough goodness everywhere,” “plenty to eat,” and “the right to breathe.”

The review of Matthew Desmond’s *Poverty, By America*, points out the sobering statistics of poverty in a “land of plenty”—the stunted futures and thwarted hope it breeds. “Like an Old Testament prophet,” Desmond decries the lie that we don’t have the money to fund anti-poverty policy. He calls this the “great lie” of poverty amidst plenty and calls for “poverty abolitionists” to rally for a future without poverty through social action.

Social justice is “right action,” and like *Works in Progress* itself, it offers hope for a future—a messy, difficult and fraught future, to be sure, but a future nonetheless—one that might provide children a chance to “breathe” and “feel the relief of sunshine ... on a rare cloudless winter day.” -Ed

Fall theme: Local news coverage matters. **Deadline August 20.**

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Critical home repair program to preserve homeownership in Tumwater

[Tumwater, WA] – South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity is proud to announce the launch of its Critical Home Repair program, an initiative designed to provide affordable repairs to homeowners in Tumwater WA. The program aims to help families live in safe and decent homes by addressing critical repairs that would otherwise be unaffordable.

Through the program, South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity will provide a range of repair services, including roofing, plumbing, electrical, and accessibility modifications. The program is open to homeowners who meet certain eligibility requirements, including owning and occupying their home, meeting income guidelines, and being current on homeowners insurance and mortgage payments.

“We understand that homeownership is one of the most significant investments a family can make, and it’s crucial that we do everything we can to help families maintain and improve their homes,” said Critical Home Repair Manager, Zac Marti. “Our Critical Home Repair program is an important step towards ensuring safe and affordable housing for all.”



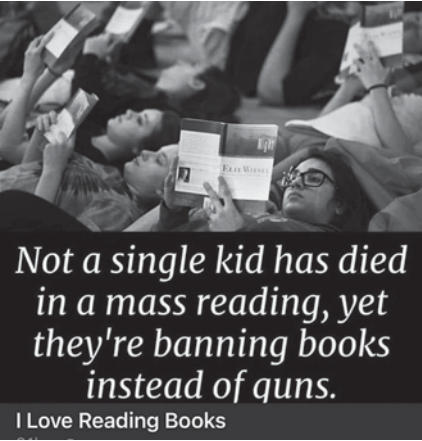
repairs and donations to fund the program’s operations.

Calling all Tumwater homeowners in need of critical repairs! Apply for our Critical Home Repair program and let us partner with you on this life changing journey.

To learn more about South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity’s Critical Home Repair program or to apply for assistance, visit www.spshabitat.org/what-we-do/critical-home-repair/ or contact repairs@spshabitat.org

About South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity: South Puget Sound Habitat was established in 1989 by Jerry and Cindy Shultz to serve Thurston County. Working with volunteers and donors, South Puget Sound Habitat develops and builds affordable housing communities in Thurston County. South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity has an open-door policy: All who believe that everyone needs a decent, affordable place to live are welcome!

Contact: 360-956-3456 | repairs@spshabitat.org



Unplugged music in the streets *You, too, can make it!*

Becky Liebman

Think of joyfully singing old Beatles tunes on a road trip with friends, or stomping your feet to Queen’s “We Will Rock You” at a sporting event. How did it make you feel? Connected? Energized? Part of something larger than yourself? You don’t need to be told that music, with or without lyrics, has a powerful binding energy.

Think of the ubiquity of military bands, across history and geography. With their horns and drums, their mission has always been to pump up the energy, cohere the troops, and communicate across distance. Why not use some of that energy in our efforts to fight the good fights for the world we want to see? And you can help make that music!

An iconic graphic in the 70’s punk scene proclaimed, “This is chord, this is another, this is third... now, form a band.” And why not start a band? More specifically, why not start - or join - an unplugged, all-weather band that can play rain or shine, to help lift up voices and rally the troops? It’s a good antidote and complement to the fight, to bring life affirming energy to other people and to yourself, too. There’s immediate gratification. And as someone once observed about the music of Wagner, “[our] music is better than it sounds!”

So, what does it take to start an unplugged band for marches, protests, celebrations? It turns out, not a lot. Someone transmits some musical know-how and tunes emerge. There are at least three bands in town that would be glad to support would-be players:

Artesian Rumble Arkestra. Organized for “the socially just and the just social”, this band hosts a public jam on Fridays at 5:00 near the Kissing Statue, between the Oyster House and Childhood’s End, in support of the long-standing Peace Vigil. All are welcome to play at this jam, and, if there is a mutual fit, maybe become members. There is no such thing as a wrong note on the dock. **Artesian-Rumble@yahoo.com**

Sticks and Bones. This women/LGBTQQIA- led, multigenerational, all weather street band of musicians is committed to providing sonic energy for a more just and joyful world. Absolute beginners are welcome. Sticks and Bones is recruiting new members to add to their ranks. **OlySticksBones@gmail.com**

Samba Olywa. Sometimes just adding infectious rhythms on the street is a political act in and of itself. To be inside that rhythm machine is a dream. Samba Olywa has been a gateway drug for many musicians in town. They are recruiting. **SambaOlywa@gmail.com**

Many people in these bands had never played instruments before hopping in. You could do it. Even a drum bucket line with a few groovy rhythms can energize our quest for the world we want to see. The more bands the better! Now, go start - or join- a band!

Becky Liebman is a longtime supporter of WIP and passionate believer in people’s ability to make joyful, musical noise, even if they’ve yet to discover that happy fact themselves.



DO YOU HAVE A BE-LOVED instrument

languishing in a closet, starved of sunshine, air, and love?

We can literally blow new life into your old horns!

We can make your stilled drums vibrate!

Contact **Sticks and Bones**, an all women, LGBTQ led band, beginners welcome, bringing sonic energy into the streets for a more just and joyful world.

And maybe you’d like to join us?

Contact us at **OlySticksBones@gmail.com**

Hidden In plain sight

For-profit schools masquerading as free public education

Ilana Smith

Along with many former coworkers, I only found out we were working for a for-profit school when I was denied credit for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. This program, which seemed like a dream come true for teachers and others struggling to pay off school loans, was out of reach. We felt duped.

A “Free Online Public School”

I was recently divorced and returning to the workforce after being home for my children’s early years. I had been substitute teaching, but the pay was unsteady and stopped completely in the summer. Without my ex-husband paying for housing, I needed to teach full-time again.

It was my ex who shared that he had seen a job post from a new school in the area. It was a “free online public school,” something entirely new to me, but it sounded ideal. I could work from the office, and eventually from my home.

I could schedule my duties with some flexibility; as long as I taught my classes at the same time each day. I could volunteer in my own children’s schools. Getting to be active in my kids’ schools while working full-time felt like a win. I took a chance and applied.

It wasn’t until after a few months on the job that I realized how far from that ideal the job actually was. The company is able to take advantage of teachers and staff by offering remote work to those who have life circumstances requiring a work-from-home job.

Wages in the for-profit “free public school”

It took a couple of months for me to see how little I was actually being paid since I didn’t qualify for benefits right away. As soon as payroll deductions for healthcare started coming out of my wages, I had barely enough to keep a roof over my head.

Calculating my bills, I realized that after rent, gas, phone, internet, electricity, etc., I had only \$2.00 for non-essential expenditures! If I needed an oil change or a new pair of pants; if I got a flat tire or had an emergency, I would need to put it on a credit card or borrow from family.

I was a full time public school teacher, and I couldn’t cover the bare minimum. I made the decision to file for assistance and was grateful to qualify for food stamps to help make ends meet.

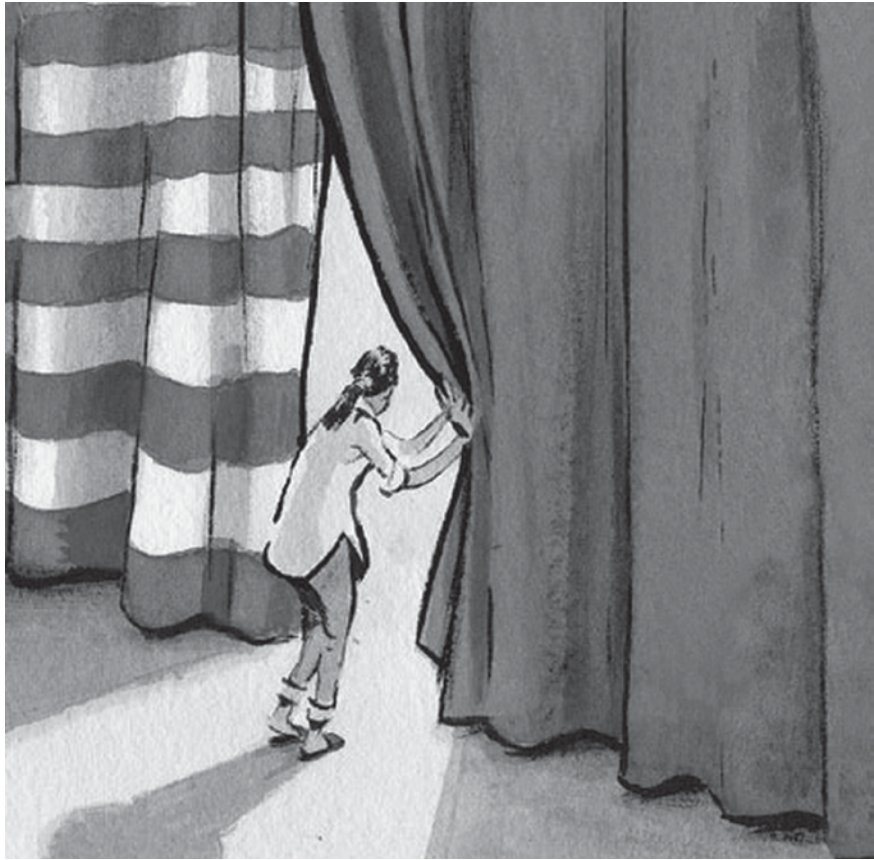
Parents and teachers sold a lie

Families are told they’re receiving services specialized for their children in a public school setting, but that is a lie. In online public programs not run directly by the local school district, families are actually enrolling their students in for-profit private schools. These operate outside of the rules, regulations and standards that true public schools in Washington must enforce. Teachers who work in these online schools are told they’re being hired at a “public” school. They might hear the term

“business model,” but the fact that they are working in a for-profit organization is not revealed.

Workload that serves neither teachers nor students

I was teaching a class of about 45 for a few years, but at times the number of students in my class increased to almost 60. Managing more than 30 students in a virtual setting creates a tremendous workload for the teacher in terms of grading as well as providing individualized intervention and support.



Once class size reaches a certain level, teachers can only treat students as data points and not as individuals. There is not enough time to make meaningful contact with each one of the students. When trying to do even the minimum to support a class well – considering the time to prep lessons, grade assignments, teach class and check-in with students – it took us up to 10 or 12 hours of work daily. Which still left us doing schoolwork on the weekend.

At the secondary level, caseloads are upwards of 300 students. Teachers in these online schools who concede that they cannot manage the workload are told to work longer hours, told that they must not be right for the job, or are dismissed.

Extra funds go to the corporation

Teachers in Washington receive an additional pay of about \$140 per student per month for class size over the maximum allowed, by grade level–around 24 students. The “free online public school” receives money for each additional student they serve, but teachers in these for-profit virtual schools receive none of this additional pay. Neither I nor the teachers I worked with ever received a penny when we had more students than would be allowed in public school classrooms. The corporation keeps the funds and doesn’t compensate the employees who provide the services.

A personalized system to determine pay

When they are hired at the “free online public school,” teachers are told about a merit pay incentive that’s supposed to honor “hard working” employees. There was no salary scale based on years of service like unified school districts have. Instead, staff was hired in at a wage the company decided on..

The “merit” increase one could earn depended on points. Even though an employee could in theory earn up to “4” on their

evaluation, no one ever received top marks. And since any possibility of a salary increase depended entirely on the supervisor’s evaluation, employees never complained for fear of a bad review.

One teacher shared this truth on **indeed.com**: “[The] principal and her admin team are very condescending. Only if you were one of her favorites did you get extra pay or benefits. Everyone else was beneath her.”

Huge disparities in teacher salaries

Two of the largest for-profit virtual school corporations operating in Washington offer wages well below those of public school districts. According to **zippia.com**, the average annual salary for teachers at the company called “K-12 Schools” is \$44,387; for teachers at Washington Connections Academy (WACA) it’s \$42,687.

In stark contrast to these teacher salaries, board members at the parent companies are lavishly compensated. Stride Inc. owns K-12 Schools; its CEO earns \$7.6 million annually while other board members earn around \$2.5 million dollars each per year. Pearson Publishing in the UK owns Washington Connections Academy. Its CEO takes home the equivalent of about \$14 million in US dollars.

My final salary as a teacher with 13 years of service and a Masters’ Degree in Education, after five years with the for-profit virtual school I

worked for was half what it would have been in a traditional public school. The salary for a teacher with an MA and 13 years teaching in the Tumwater School District, which is where the for-profit school has its main office, is over \$90,000 a year.

Even using the payscale for Mary M. Knight, the first School District to host this particular for-profit virtual school, if I had been paid the same as the teachers actually working directly for the Mary M Knight SD, my salary would have been about \$77,000, or close to \$30,000 more annually.

Obstructing union efforts

There is no collective bargaining or representation to advocate for fair compensation and working conditions. Though their efforts have not received headlines, virtual school teachers have been trying to unionize. As reported in *The Stand*, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) supported the efforts of teachers to organize at one of the “free online public schools” last spring.

According to a former online school staff member, the effort failed by only three votes. One of the teachers leading the effort with SEIU said that the principal called an all-staff meeting right before the vote. She came to the virtual meeting crying, and through tears told the employees that she would have to let many of them go if they unionized.

Ilana Smith is the pen name of someone who now goes to a school house where she teaches her students in an actual classroom.

Sources available online at www.olywip.org

What needs to happen

It is imperative that the veil concealing for-profit on-line schools in Washington be lifted. When people are hired to teach at a public school funded by taxpayer money, they deserve to know if they are truly working at a public school, or if their prospective employer is a for-profit organization disguised as a public school. Families should know where their choice transfer dollars go. Private, for-profit school employers must inform prospective teachers of that fact, including that they will be denied government benefits available to public school teachers.

Virtual schools run by many public school districts keep essential educational dollars in our public school system and in our communities. However, in some districts, the virtual schools give the district hosting their program only a small portion of the funding they receive in order to be able to operate in Washington State. Families deserve disclosure of a school’s for-profit or non-profit status prior to finalizing enrollment when choosing a “choice transfer” option.

IS

Missing: Men in elementary school classrooms

The share of male elementary and middle school teachers combined fell from 40% in 1980 to 20% in 2020

Margaret Thoma

As a kindergarten teacher, Chad Hargrove purposely emulates the late Fred Rogers, better known as children’s television host Mister Rogers.

No one in Hargrove’s class needs to be told that men can be kind and soft-spoken. Or that men can be teachers. But only about one in 40 students at Peter G. Schmidt Elementary School will have a male teacher this year. Including Hargrove, the Tumwater school has just two.

Strong evidence suggests that male teachers raise academic performance for boys. “Role models are crucial,” says Richard Reeves, author of a new book *Of Boys and Men: Why the modern male is struggling, why it matters and what to do about it*.

BOOK REVIEW

Of Boys and Men: Why the modern male is struggling

By Richard Reeves

Margaret Thomas

Males increasingly struggle in school, work and families. The reasons are varied and somewhat mysterious, says author Richard Reeves, who proposes, among other things, “a simple but radical reform:” redshirt the boys.

Perhaps it is not surprising that advantaged white families (and teachers) are most likely to hold back their sons, who reap additional advantages by starting school a year later than the girls. In *Of Boys and Men*, Reeves points to gender differences in brain development and suggests a staggered start should be the default rather than an option for some families. He deftly counters arguments about increased child-care costs and delayed workforce entry. (1)

The benefits aren’t so much that boys arrive at kindergarten later, but that they get to middle and high school with the maturity that sets them up for a chain reaction of successes.

Reeves, who works on equality issues at the Brookings Institute, a nonpartisan think-tank, acknowledges that worrying about boys goes against a liberal worldview. He makes a strong case, however, that gender inequalities go both ways—just not in the same ways. And he provides evidence that black boys and men, who face the double hurdle of race and gender inequalities, are impacted most.

Reeves provides stark examples of gender imbalances on measures of well-being: men are significantly more likely than women to live apart from their children and to die by suicide or overdose. Of every 100 bachelor’s degrees earned by women, only 74 are earned by men. Again and again, policy initiatives such as free college show large gains for women and none for men.

Reinforcing a stereotype

Nationwide, the gender imbalance among teachers is getting worse. The share of male elementary and middle school teachers combined fell from 40% in 1980 to 20% in 2020, according to Reeves. In 2018, only 11% of elementary teachers were men. The absence of men in the classroom, especially in elementary schools, reinforces the stereotype that teaching young children is “women’s work.”

Locally it’s the same

Thurston County schools mirror national trends. The state Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction reports that in North Thurston, the county’s largest school district, fewer than a quarter of the teachers are men. Furthermore, only 1.2% of all teachers in the district identify as Black/African American and only 4% as

Hispanic/Latino.

Men are more likely to teach at the secondary rather than elementary level. At Olympia High School, 42% of the teachers are men; only two are African American. It matters because academic achievement gaps by race and gender persist.

The cavalry isn’t coming anytime soon

“When it comes to recruitment, school districts are faced with the overarching problem of a national teacher shortage,” says Dan Casler, an assistant principal at Olympia High School. According to Reeves, in a 2021 survey, two-thirds of school districts across the country reported teacher shortages, especially in rural areas.

Enrollment in teacher training programs is in steep decline, with the deepest dip among men. The pandemic has made things worse. Just

out of a meeting about impending budget cuts, Casler is grim. “We’re going to lose teachers.” When that happens, labor contracts and seniority, not gender or race, will determine which teachers stay.

A wonderful teacher is a wonderful teacher

Low pay for teachers is an obvious deterrent, but social stereotypes also work against recruiting male teachers. Some people see male teachers in lower grades as predators. “Administrative support is key to dispelling that fear,” says Hargrove. When a grandmother complained that her granddaughter’s kindergarten teacher was a man, his principal responded, “Yes he is, and he’s wonderful.”

Says Hargrove, “I deserve to be treated with the same respect as any other teacher.”

► Missing, continued on page 13

The overlooked paraeducator

To thrive, students need more than just a good teacher

Steven Marquardt

In the long and merited discussion of teacher pay, one group of educators in the classroom has been forgotten: paraeducators. These are the people working in and out of classrooms to fill the gaps to help ensure that vulnerable students receive a quality education and a chance at a good life.

Many classrooms would not run, and some schools could not function, without paraeducators. In special education they work one-to-one with students or as whole class support. In general education, they work with students needing extra support to master foundational skills like pronunciation, reading, and math in one-on-one and small group settings.

The pay is low

In the Olympia School District (OSD), paraeducators start at \$21.29/hour and earn the maximum rate of \$25.12/hour after 15 years. Paraeducator jobs are generally 30-35 hours a week, and a school year is 180 days. A 15-year veteran working 35 hour weeks will earn a meager \$31,651 a year. For a paraeducator with fewer years, working the same hours, the pay is much less. The average annual salary for a paraeducator in Washington was only \$24,589.

The value is high

I work in classes for the severely handicapped and I know that they cannot function without paraeducators. Paraeducators help students eat their food, read, write, color, change their clothes, use the bathroom, calm down when upset, physically stay in class and participate in play during PE.

Students in general education classrooms with paraeducators are better off, too. Not only do para-

educators support and redirect their assigned students, they also take responsibility for redirecting other students, which helps keep the whole class on track.

When teachers are absent, paraeducators play a major role in managing classes. When I’m called on to serve as a substitute teacher, I’m relieved when a class has a paraeducator because I know that will help me teach more effectively. Conversely, at times when a teacher is out, I’ve been assigned as a paraeducator and I had to step in to lead instruction because of an ineffective substitute teacher.

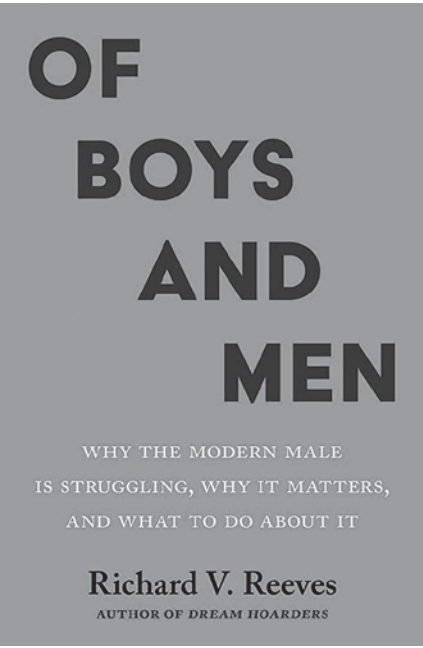
Paraeducators play a crucial role in ensuring that teachers can teach

At the elementary level, paraeducators also fill vital roles outside of the classroom. They staff the crosswalks so students get to and from school safely. They supervise lunches, including opening milks, wraps and a dozen other tasks so students can eat. They supervise recesses, keeping students safe and instilling values like sharing and respecting boundaries.

It’s time

Paraeducators play a crucial role in ensuring that teachers can teach—for a wage well below their value to student learning. It’s time to recognize the value of those who engage students, teach them skills, keep them safe, and bring smiles to their faces every single day. It’s time to pay paraeducators a wage commensurate with their value.

Steven Marquardt is a contributor to Works in Progress who works as a paraeducator and substitute teacher in Olympia schools.



Reeves’ recommendations center on education, work and family life. In addition to boys starting school later and investing more in vocational education, he proposes an aggressive effort to recruit male teachers. Men make up just 24% of elementary teachers, compared to a third in the 1980s. Only 3% of preschool and kindergarten teachers are men.

Reeves’ recruitment ideas are part of a larger agenda to steer men

► Boys and men, continued on page 13

New stewards for Black Lake

Clean Black Lake takes on the challenge

Esther Kronenberg

Building on its experience and advocacy for cleaning up Black Lake, Citizens for a Clean Black Lake has applied for non-profit status as the Clean Black Lake Alliance (CBLA). CBLA is dedicated to educational and environmental research and remediation of Black Lake and its watershed.

Uncovering a lost past

At a March program at the Black Lake Grange, CBLA members introduced an audience to the lake’s geological, native American and early settler history. One surprising revelation was the existence of a 1920s proposal to use the lake as part of a ship channel from Budd Inlet to Aberdeen and the ocean via the Black and Chehalis Rivers. The early settlers’ accounts of the pristine waters, abundant and diverse presence of fish and wildlife, reminded listeners of what has been lost and what members active in CBLA seek to restore.

Pooling resources and expertise

Thurston County currently has two Lake Management Districts—Lake Lawrence and Long Lake—with two more proposed at Lake Offut

and Lake Pattison. These districts were formed to address problems of aquatic weed and algal control – the same conditions that plague Black Lake (among other lakes around the world). CBLA would



Native Americans lived on the shores, prairies, and surrounding woodlands of Black Lake for many thousands of years.

like the County to take an integrated approach that pools resources and expertise in a County-wide lakes management program with active community engagement.

There are healthier ways

As part of this goal of restoring a healthy ecosystem to Black Lake, Citizens for a Clean Black Lake

CBLA advocates for reduction of aluminum sulfate, glyphosate and other herbicides for controlling algae and aquatic weeds, and seeks alternative methods of control that improve water quality and the lake

ecosystem. Mechanical harvesting, for example, is one such method where the harvested plant material could also be used to make high grade compost sold to County residents and public projects.

There’s research to be done!

CBLA will be working with the County’s Healthy Lakes Program to propose research and innovative low-cost projects to improve water

quality. One such project uses bio-char to filter septic effluents before they enter the lake. Others will advocate pursuing research to intercept stormwater runoff before it enters the Lake along with tracking the connection between declining fish populations and increased algal blooms that cause water to turn green.

CBLA is interested in partnering with citizen scientists and environmental professionals—active or retired—who would like to participate in research into sustainable solutions to the problems posed by weed control and septic and stormwater pollution. It also welcomes participation from residents of other county lake management districts to help develop solutions to the environmental consequences of expanded and expanding urban development.

To contact CBLA about upcoming events, or to join the email list, please write to CBLAoly@gmail.com

CBLA will sponsor an event in July at Kennydale Park with Thurston County, covering the ecology of Black Lake, paths to lake restoration and stewardship opportunities.

REFLECTION

Breeding hope

The paradox of parenthood in a world on the brink

Lindsey Bineau

I ask myself the same questions many others in my generation ask: Should I have kids, given the world we live in today? What will my future child’s life look like if climate projections come to fruition? How will my child’s existence affect the earth’s ecosystems, plants and animals? Will it be better to be alive, despite these challenges, than never to have been born at all?

I will be able to teach them how to navigate inevitable change while treading as lightly on earth as possible.

I planned to write a short and sweet article weighing these questions, considering the pros and cons and ending on a clichéd message of hope: “Having children in today’s world is like planting a seed in the dead of winter. Things may feel dismal now, but the world is awash with color in spring.”

I was kidding myself. I wanted to write that piece because my husband and I recently decided to have children. I hoped to develop a positive spin to feel entirely at peace with this choice.

But there is no feeling “entirely at peace” with any choice, much less one this significant – much less in today’s world. Like so many things in life, we must make the decision that feels right in our gut, then hope for the best.

Our future children will live through climate catastrophes worse than anything we’ve experienced. They’ll experience increased heat waves, stronger storms and larger wildfires. They’ll

wonder why we didn’t take action sooner.

But they’ll also experience the burst of a home-grown cherry tomato, fresh off the vine. They’ll feel the relief of sunshine on their faces on a rare cloudless winter day. They’ll learn to value the plants and animals around them for their intrinsic beauty – not just for what they can provide humans.

Most importantly, they’ll know the love of their parents and the grandparents, aunts and uncles that surround them.

All these small pleasures amongst so much pain. They’ll know life.

No matter how many hours I spend

navel-gazing about the question of children and climate change, I can’t predict the future. Nor can I counteract the natural, biological desire to watch time unfold through new life – as much as my rational mind might question the decision.

In this regard, it is impossible to separate what makes me human from what makes me animal. I cannot separate myself from nature because I am a part of nature.

Our kids will face challenges I can’t begin to envision. I won’t be able to protect them, nor will I be able to magically wave away the existential threat of climate change. But I will be able to teach them how to navigate inevitable change while treading as lightly on earth as possible. And, ultimately, I believe it will have been better to have been alive than not at all.

I can only hope I’m not wrong.

Lindsey Bineau lives in Olympia with her husband, dog and cat – and a rapidly expanding garden.

An Anniversary

of War

The dictator looks over his shoulder, afraid.
The actor rallies his countrymen, tired,

Surprised at the soul he has found, the souls he has roused and lost.

This year of killing.

Pundits write of history and hurt, tell of heroes and cowards, ancient tropes found anew.

Nothing new under the sun, a chase after the wind, which smells only of decay.

Each day an anniversary— a calendar of death— Agincourt, Afghanistan Boer, Balkan Civil, Crimean.

The ABCs of war. As quotidian as a child reciting.

War feeds our spirit even as we feign fear of its fathomless history.

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BOOK REVIEW

Poverty, by America

By Matthew Desmond

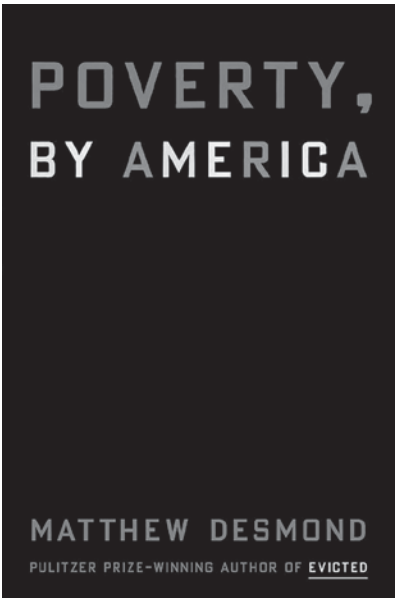
Eddie DuPuy

Matthew Desmond has written a powerful, compelling complement to his 2017 Pulitzer Prize winning *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*.

The son of a pastor, Desmond begins *Poverty, By America* by telling a personal story. When Desmond was young, his father lost his job, and the house he loved was taken by the bank. Even then, Desmond questioned “why this was our country’s answer when a family fell on hard times”. This experience sets the stage for what *The New York Times* calls “a compact jeremiad on the persistence of extreme want in a nation of extraordinary wealth.”

And like Jeremiah, who railed against a nation in crisis, Desmond calls out America and Americans. It’s not just the sobering statistics:

- ◆ More than 38 million people living in the United States who cannot afford basic necessities



- ◆ More than a million of our public school children homeless
- ◆ More than 2 million Americans without running water or a flushing toilet
- ◆ 18 million people in the United States live in “deep poverty,” a single person having an income of less than

Make America safe for child labor—again

Sam Pizzigati

America’s social studies textbooks urgently need an update — on child labor. Our textbooks, ever since the middle of the 20th century, have been applauding the reform movement that gradually put an end to the child-labor horrors that ran widespread throughout the early Industrial Age. Now those horrors, here in the 21st century, are reappearing.

The number of kids employed in direct violation of existing child labor laws, analysts at the Economic Policy Institute this past March reported, has soared 283 percent since 2015 — and 37 percent in just the last year alone. Last week brought the alarming news that three Kentucky-based McDonald’s franchises had kids as young as 10 working at 62 stores in four different states. Some of these

\$6,380 or a family of four with less than \$13,100.

It’s also that poverty is “a piling on of problems.”

Why, in a country so abundantly wealthy, does such poverty persist? The uncomfortable reason: “Poverty persists because some wish and will it to.... One man’s poverty [is] another man’s profit.”

Desmond shows three broad ways Americans “will” poverty’s persistence: “First, we exploit the poor.... Second, we prioritize the subsidization of affluence over the alleviation of poverty.... Third, we create prosperous and exclusive communities.”

Exploitation happens when people are less free to make choices or when productivity benefits corporate CEOs and shareholders but not those producing the profit. Exploitation exists also in the housing and banking sectors.

Furthermore, Desmond argues that poverty persists because our country does more to keep the wealthy rich than to remove the burden of the poor. The wealthy receive more in benefits from the government than do the poor—through home mortgage taxes, capital gains taxes, Roth IRAs, 529 savings plans. The “average household in the bottom 20 percent receives roughly \$25,733 in government benefits a year, while the average household in the top 20 percent

receives about \$35,363.”

Desmond also shows how the concentration of private, exclusionary wealth, robs the public square, so that the rich, who rarely use public facilities, grow less interested in supporting projects for the public good, which the poor use more often.

Desmond rails most forcefully against the usual response in resisting efforts to abolish poverty: “How can we afford it?”

With the zeal of a preacher’s son (or an Old Testament prophet), Desmond calls that question “sinful [and] dishonest.” “We could afford it,” he writes, “if we allowed the IRS to do its job. We could afford it if the well-off among us took less from the government. We could afford it if we designed our welfare state to expand opportunity and not guard fortunes.”

Such dishonesty perpetuates the “big lie” of scarcity amidst plenty. And though he doesn’t make the connection overtly, Desmond recalls another “big lie” called out by Frederick Douglass in his Farewell to the British People, the lie of equality in America: “The fact is, the whole system, the entire network of American society, is one great falsehood, from beginning to end.”

And so, like Douglass the abolitionist, Desmond calls for “poverty abolitionists.”

Desmond recognizes the obstacles such abolitionists will confront: a deeply divided nation with an equally divided government. Despite division, vitriol and war, slavery was abolished in the 19th century, and despite 100 years of backsliding and rancor, equality was bolstered by civil rights legislation, voting rights and elements of the Great Society.

Though abolition will stir backlash, Desmond shows that government funding can be found and put to work. During Covid, for example, funding helped cut child poverty by more than half. Furthermore in 2021 (upon emerging from the pandemic) there were about 16 million fewer Americans in poverty than in 2019 (before the pandemic).

Desmond’s book is a moral call to action, joining antipoverty movements such as People’s Action or Poor People’s Campaign or even newspapers such as *Works in Progress*. Desmond believes that social action, accompanied by imagination and vision, can lead to the abolition of poverty.

Desmond’s book is important, and will make readers squirm, as a jeremiad should. But *Poverty, By America* does not simply shed light on the persistence of poverty; it provides a way forward through moral vision and a redirecting of will.

Eddie Dupuy lives in San Antonio, TX. He and his wife will move to Tacoma this summer to be near family.

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New support for worker cooperatives

Revisiting Capital Homecare Cooperative

[A new Washington law, SB 5096, provides a path for workers in Washington businesses to create cooperatives. In the Spring issue of WIP, we interviewed Nora Edge, founder and former General Manager, and Paulette LaDouceur, current General Manager of Capital Homecare Cooperative. We decided to revisit some of their insights into the benefits a cooperative structure offers for workers.]

WIP contributor

As a worker cooperative, Capital Homecare has a structure that is uniquely able to deliver quality service – and quality jobs – in an industry that struggles to retain staff and maintain quality and still remain profitable. In the co-op model, the people doing the work make the policies, set the terms of work, provide for skills development and share in the profits.

This makes all the difference. As Nora Edge noted, “The co-op model is solving a lot of problems that the corporate model has helped to create. It’s how our culture treats and values vulnerable adults and the people who take care of them.”

Owning the business

CHC workers are invested in the business. Our workers are the owners of the co-op and they elect the members of the Board of Directors from among their number. The board is the workers. That creates a check and balance - an administrator is overseen by the people they are supervising. It forms a symbiosis where all involved benefit. Corporate capitalism trains low wage workers that they can’t own anything - and if they have a bad manager they have to take it or leave it.

Making policies

An example of how a co-op makes policies that serve both workers and clients comes from the very challenging time of Covid, where there was fear for vulnerable clients and caregivers. The state issued regulations for everyone down to group homes, but it was a year before they issued guidelines for homecare. CHC and other agencies were on their own. For about four months, CHC had weekly meetings to develop and review Covid policies. With open feedback, whenever a caregiver raised a concern, there was discussion of potential solutions. Policy changes were brought to the board on a regular basis and CHC ended up with a solid set of Covid protocols.

CHC meets as a community once a month to check in about things: there are many eyes on everything. “Communication is a huge aspect of this business. The idea is that workers delivering care are thinking like owners. We empower them to participate in the development of the business and what keeps it going.”

Financial viability

The cooperative model yields a good profit, but unlike corporate homecare, how profits are distributed is up to the workforce. Corporate homecare agencies have a standard profit margin of 35-45%—primarily achieved by paying caregivers the lowest possible

wage. In our co-op, membership has control over setting rates and wages and the overall goals of the business. CHC has had an average

CHC is committed to being accessible to clients at all levels of income. They are applying to accept Medicaid clients, but the

may include up to a 12-hour minimum payment.

Quality of care



The crew at Capital Homecare Cooperative during the 2023 Annual Meeting. Pictured left to right: Suzy Creamcheese, Erin Huffman, Kara Butler (Board Member), Zev Gray (Treasurer), Scott Dison (Care Coordinator), Paulette LaDouceur (Executive Director), Rowan Allport (Board President), Madison Delp-McCrary (Vice President), Trevor Miller, Lois Talotta, Glenn Harper

of 33% wage growth almost annually since it opened. During the pandemic, they distributed a major chunk of their paycheck protection loan to the workers. In a co-op, profits beyond reserves are voted on and distributed to the workers. Similarly, workers are heard when they bring something to the table. These principles are built into the bylaws.

process is complex and can take many months. Currently, they serve private insurance and private pay clients. In addition to shift-care, one way CHC now makes their services more available is by allowing people to pay for as few as 2 or 3 hours if that’s all they need. This makes it possible for CHC to compete with other homecare agencies in Olympia, whose rates

Instead of having schedules set by top-down management, CHC takes a “matchmaker,” approach, setting people up for success. Caregiving isn’t a 9-5 job and clients have specific preferences and needs. Workers at CHC set boundaries for themselves, taking on what is manageable. Regular care team meetings collect feedback from caregivers about their experiences with clients, to inform what’s needed, what’s working. For new caregivers there is shadowing, training and introductions.

The co-op model supports quality care because caregivers are supported to build skills and develop authentic relationships that enable them to provide care at a high level. Quality care for clients is the immediate consequence of this support.

The co-op culture and member engagement

This is an important aspect for Capital Homecare. No one enters the caregiving workforce for the money. It is not an easy job. People are there because they find the work meaningful. Paulette calls this “a community of care,” that extends to both clients and workers. Lots of opportunity for communication and frequent training allow for solving inevitable conflicts together. This is completely different from the corporate business model which sees those who provide the homecare as a cost to be managed, and if there are problems, to be replaced.

Intergenerational connections
The co-op model recognizes that by empowering workers to participate in running the business the work will be better, the pay will be better, and there will be a future. CHC prioritizes intergenerational connections - in contrast with the overall industry, CHC has many younger caregivers. The longest serving worker has been with us for over four years. The newest worker is a few months into their service.

Paulette LaDouceur summed up what is success at CHC:

‘We recognize that empowerment is about setting up caregivers for success. One of the benefits of being a business owner is learning all of the skills involved as a business owner. We encourage skill development, even if it leads to a caregiver moving on to the next step for them. When you see people engaged, when you see people going out and growing in their world because of skills they learned at CHC, that’s success.’

CHC is actively hiring and seeking new clients! For more information go to tinyurl.com/chccoop

Breathe

If we worshiped water and air
Things like Ohio wouldn’t happen
Or Valdez, Chernobyl, Deepwater Horizon
There would be no DAPL to protest
I would not have to monitor air quality
Or toxic gas plumes
If we worshiped life
I bet you could swim in and drink the water
Almost anywhere
There would be plenty of food to spare
Growing here and there
I’m sure flowers would be abundant
Safe environmentally friendly housing
Would blossom too
Made from hemp and bamboo
We would have better schools
If we worshiped soil and mycelium
Learned how to build and share
I’m sure there would be enough goodness
Everywhere
Things like DDT, glyphosate, and vinyl chloride
Would not exist to spill
Birds could fly instead of being killed
We would not need these things
If we worshiped skies and seas
I’m sure we would have houses
And plenty to eat
I don’t know why we need phosgene
Probably to worship oil and money
Or to paint a war machine
I think if we worshiped water and air
It could fix everything
Simply worship
The right to breathe

Lennée Reid, a qbipoc poet, author, multimedia artist and healer is based in Olympia. Find them at Awareni.wordpress.com.

How the past created the present

Homeownership and the legacy of racially restrictive covenants

Bethany Weidner

At one point in America’s history state and federal policies were designed to encourage families to own their own home.

But not all families

New Deal policies subsidizing homeownership explicitly excluded non-white families, guaranteeing the creation of segregated communities that endured for generations. Combined with restrictive covenants, redlining, denial of credit, displacement and other measures, these policies and practices robbed African American and other nonwhite families of the wealth they could have accumulated as homeowners.

Without these explicit and implicit actions to keep some Americans from participating fully in the economy, the country would have looked very different today.

The role of Washington state

This session, the WA legislature recognized that the state government was “both an active and passive participant” in promoting measures designed to keep people from access to homeownership solely because of their race.

They focused on the presence of the racially restrictive covenants prevalent in many cities and towns in Washington. These “covenants” were written into property deeds and were legally enforceable on successive owners, until outlawed in 1948. Despite being illegal, they persisted through the late 1960s when the Fair Housing Act was passed.

Keeping parts of Thurston County white

In Thurston County, according to the Auditor’s Office, there are several neighborhoods where such racial restrictions were in place for years: Beachcrest, Lake St Clair Summer Home Tracts, Scotts, Scully’s First Addition, Stratford Park, and Stratford Park Place and Annex.

Here is the restrictive provision from a deed in Scully’s First Addition:

This said premises shall never be used or occupied by any Negro, Mulatto, Indian, Chinese, Japanese or person of the so-called black, brown or yellow race, except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or tenant. (A section of the actual deed is on this page.)

Plat maps for these neighborhoods, showing all properties where the covenant applied, are available online through the Auditor’s Office. (The Auditor will also provide landowners with a document to strike the language from an existing deed.)

HB 1474—The Covenant Homeowners Account

While presented as a remedy for the destructive effects of restrictive covenants that continue to exist in the present day, HB 1474 is itself very restricted. Its centerpiece is a “special purpose credit program” that will loan “qualifying first-

time home buyers” money to assist with down-payment and closing costs. The loan must be repaid when the house is sold.

A “qualifying first-time home buyer” must have an income below 100% of the area median; be a resident of Washington (or their descendant) who resided here prior to April 1968, and who was or would have been excluded from buying a home because of a racially restricted covenant.

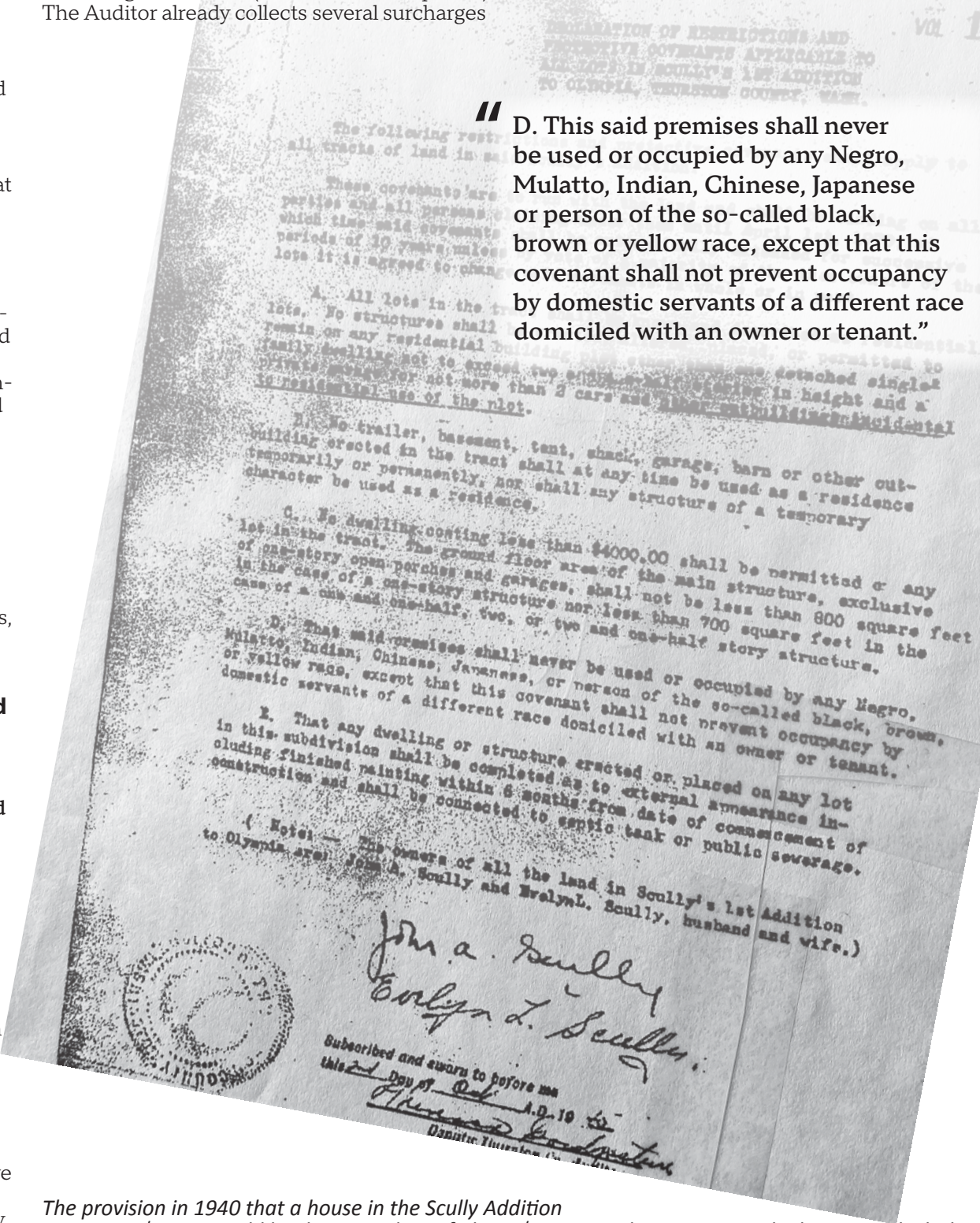
Creating the program

The legislature created a new funding source for the program. Beginning in January 2024, county Auditors will add a \$100 surcharge to the fee for recording documents (with certain exceptions). The Auditor already collects several surcharges

imposed by earlier legislation so the new surcharge will bump up the total to about \$300 per document.

The program won’t begin to operate until the Washington State Housing Finance Commission completes a study that documents past discrimination and the effect of existing remedies, and makes recommendations about how the loan program should be structured and run. The study is due in March of 2024.

Bethany Weidner writes often for Works in Progress and was the beneficiary of the Homestead Act when her parents settled in Alaska in 1949.



The provision in 1940 that a house in the Scully Addition must cost \$4000 would be the equivalent of about \$85,000 today. However, the home to which this covenant applied was assessed at many times that amount since 2000 and over \$500,000 today.

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Launching the Columbia Street Food Co-op

A formative period for the Olympia Food Co-op -- and those who helped to organize it

Anna Schlecht

In 1977, the brand-new storefront Co-op downtown on Columbia Street was slowly coming together, the result of volunteers building shelves, laying flooring, and setting out food.

I had moved out West to find my people—the hippies. The best place to look was near co-ops and collective restaurants that sprouted up wherever hippies had settled. Before leaving Madison in 1976, I found a list of all the co-ops on the West Coast. The only listings for Olympia were a couple of “food conspiracies,” which I later learned were food-buying clubs.

The year I arrived, these food buying clubs were shifting to become a storefront, which for some people signaled a loss of direct democracy over their food. After a year of controversy, the storefront opened with new members. Charlie Lutz, one of the organizers, served as the first staff person.

Since this was the first year of operation, there wasn’t much history to go on. Process was something we made up as we went. No bosses and lots of opinions. As part of our emergent way of doing business, early hiring decisions were made by vote. Anyone interested in Co-op business could just show up at a meeting to participate.

The early days were light on amenities like chairs or board rooms, so our meetings were held in the center of the new store with everyone seated on five-gallon tubs or grain sacks. Flour dust wafted through the air, along with the scent of produce edging past its prime. The buzz of the aging coolers provided a soundtrack. Notes were taken on the back of old fliers and food orders. Overall, we operated with an underlying belief that none of the earth’s resources should be wasted. Beyond the environmental concerns, it would add to the cost of food, an essential commodity for all people regardless of means.

Soon it was time to hire (elect) a second staffer. That sounded like the job for me. I had already worked on a few elections, notably the 1973 election of Paul Soglin, the so-called “hippie mayor” of Madison, Wisconsin. But I had never been up for election in my own right.

I remembered everything I learned from my grandfather who was a Milwaukee ward boss from the 1930s on. He ran many campaigns and knew where to find the voters. Being the beer capital of the nation, all politics happened in taverns. If the crowd already supported the candidate, he passed out matchbooks. If they were a hard sell, he bought a round of drinks for the house.

With those stories in mind, I figured I should head to Olympia’s most popular hippie bar, the Rainbow Restaurant. After a couple beers with friends, I went down the block to the Co-op hiring meeting. That night, there were only two of us who wanted to become the second staffer. As candidates, we each made our pitch for the job, sharing our experiences as a way to underscore our belief in food co-ops.

Being only 19, my stories were few. I talked about the horror of touring

our concept of how people should work together for the common good was a rough work in progress.

Shortly after I started, Beth Hartmann was hired as the third staffer, and for a short time Beth and I were the dynamic duo. Then Charlie Lutz left and Jim Cunningham was hired. Beth, Jim, and I became a troika.

Largely because of Jim’s talents and experiences, he gravitated toward being the brains on the staff. His cerebral palsy limited his

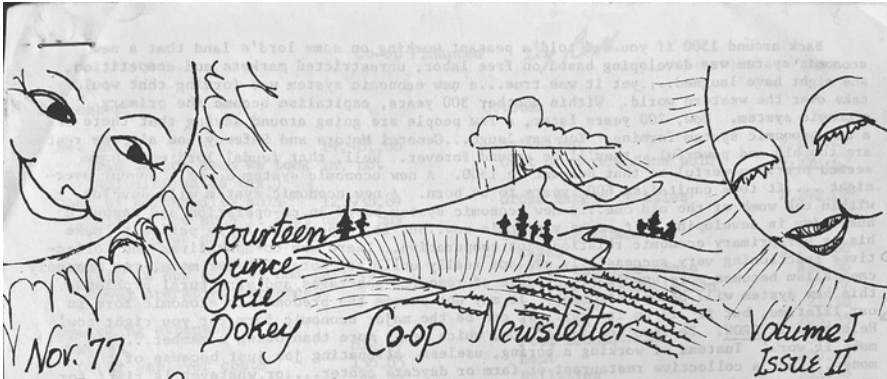
ance. Getting them up there was a schlep, but moving them into their individual piles was dangerous heavy-lifting in a crouch. Totally insane. All kinds of OSHA violations. Sometimes we’d throw twenty-five-pound sacks down on the main floor, other times Beth and I would play catch with the bags of legumes.

I stayed with the Co-op for about a year, on par with my attention span as an almost 20-something. Since we barely made minimum wage, I often ended the month owing more on my food tab than I earned. But I did earn a wealth of knowledge about community building and how to come together around a basic survival need—food.

It meant a lot to me to work outside the corporate agribusiness model and to help raise consciousness about where food came from. Local control over the supply of healthy food was a cornerstone of the community we created together in Olywa during that generation. And learning together how to run a cooperative food business for people, not for profit, was a powerful experience. All of that was amazing during our first year, but we quickly outgrew the cramped little store.

I left the Co-op to attend Evergreen, solely to mobilize a team to relocate our store to the Westside. After that school year, I returned for a second stint at the Co-op. This time we had a real walk-in cooler, aisles lined by well-designed shelves and new refrigerated cases to display the perishable food. We finally developed a children’s play area, which proved to be the most effective way to stop kids from diving into flour bins. Our membership had grown exponentially, our staff had expanded and our board had matured as had our decision-making process. We had become a real food store run on cooperative principles.

After another year, I left once again, this time for good. I remained a loyal Co-op member, but I had lost my tolerance for long meetings and was never again deeply involved. My years at the Co-op taught me that communities work best when they have control over how they meet their essential needs. Those core beliefs have stayed with me all my life.



the Oscar Mayer plant back home in Madison, something that grade schools did every year to teach and celebrate our food factory history. On every trip, at least a couple kids hollered out, “Hi Dad!” Oscar Mayer was a showcase of barbarism toward animals and immensely wasteful. By high school, when the book *Diet for a Small Planet* came out (Frances Moore Lappe, 1971), I learned the political impacts of eating so high on the food chain.

Sometime later, I wrote a cover story for the *Cooper Point Journal* titled, “Agribusiness: A View from the Dumpster,” which examined the politics of food. At that point, I wanted to dedicate my life to the Olympia Food Co-op as a means to gather healthy food from ethical and sustainable producers and make it affordable to low-income people in a way that upheld workers rights. All that and I needed a job.

We cycled between campaign pitches and votes, deadlocked each time. After the fourth round, my gaggle of bar friends finally stumbled in through the front door and boisterously sat down. Once the final vote was taken, I got voted in as the second staffer. My opponent was pissed off.

“You didn’t win. You rigged the vote with all your drunk friends!”

She was right—that was not the way to run a co-op. This was the first of my Olympia Food Co-op dramas, born of sincere young people trying to figure out the best way forward. In the years that followed, trial and error made for better decision making. Our learning was also enhanced by a nationwide conversation held by cooperators via letters, publications, and conferences. But at the time of the vote,

ability to hoist fifty-pound sacks and tubs, which left Beth and me to serve as the brawn. The delivery days were an intense workout, only



Young Anna and Cookie Monster

slightly improved once we got a hand truck. We’d line up a bucket brigade of people to haul in all the grains, liquids, and boxed goods to their respective nooks for storage.

Not having a walk-in cooler meant that all perishables went directly into our second-hand display coolers, often packed beyond capacity on delivery days. Eventually, we made an arrangement with Laura May from the Rainbow Restaurant to rent some cooler shelf space, but still our produce suffered. Our motto of “Waste not, want not” prevailed, and we managed to persuade, perhaps guilt trip, some of the members to buy the overripe food to avoid wasting any of it.

The sacks of grains had to be hauled up a ladder to a mezzanine storage loft, an odd space that only had four and a half foot clear-



Olywa Days of Change is gathering memories from the 1960s to the 1980s for a book project.

For three decades, Olympia, Washington was a crucible for cultural revolution. We are collecting 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

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Boundaries

From page 1

The staff study also fails to include general overhead expenses. These costs represent nearly 20% or about \$30 million of the city’s total budget: city manager, city attorney, municipal court, city council, finance, human resources, and “strategic initiatives” (whatever the Council wants to do in a particular year).

Southeast Urban Growth Area Annexation Feasibility Analysis DRAFT November 1, 2019		
	Annual Per Study	Errors
Revenues	\$5,295,713	Includes Parks District (MPD) revenue of \$533,521
Expenses	\$5,932,661	Excludes costs for parks, sidewalks, and all city administration
Net	(\$636,948)	

Adding population adds to the budget. When Olympia’s population passed 50,000, the city added a second “assistant city manager.” The City Manager office has ten staff in the current budget, plus 7.5 in human resources, 22 in information services, 17 in finance and 5 in the City Attorney office.

Administrative staff generally grows in proportion to the budget. Tumwater, with half the population of Olympia, has significantly less than half of Olympia’s staffing. A 20% “overhead” allowance on top of the estimate of \$5.9 million in direct expenses for the departments examined would add another \$1.2 million to the net loss associated with this potential annexation.

Another potential expense not addressed in the staff study involves rural fire districts that would lose territory. When the City of Tumwater carried out a major annexation, it agreed to pay the losing fire districts three years’ worth of property tax to avoid litigation.

Bottom line. The 2019 study overstated revenues, understated costs, and still concluded that the annexation was a money loser for Olympia.

The 2023 ECONorthwest Study

City officials then decided to hire a consultant, ECONorthwest, to study the annexation from a more current perspective.

The ECONorthwest study looked at two scenarios: one that assumed formation of a Regional Fire Authority (RFA) and one that did not. This April, voters in Olympia and Tumwater rejected the proposal for an RFA, so at least for now, that scenario is not relevant.

The ECONorthwest scenario that assumed fire services remain within the city budget made many of the same errors as the 2019 staff study. It assumed zero increase in parks expense, zero increase in administrative expense, nothing for crosswalks, sidewalks, bike lanes, and other infrastructure capital and operating costs, and no dedication of 11% of general fund revenues

ECONorthwest Olympia Annexation Feasibility Analysis/ Draft 1/6/23 Revenue and Expenses 2024 – 2045 (Exhibits 2 and 3)			
	Revenue	Expense	Net
Without RFA	\$77,000,000	\$162,000,000	(\$85,000,000)
With RFA	\$43,000,000	\$ 72,000,000	(\$29,000,000)
Errors	Omits costs for parks, sidewalks, and administration		

for parks. Even with these errors and omissions, the ECONorthwest study showed a clear adverse impact on the City budget.

For the scenario based on forma-

tion of an RFA, the EcoNorthwest study included a table showing a net positive impact on the City budget. (Taxpayers would still shoulder the costs, however, through charges imposed by the RFA.) However, this positive result was also based on the same errors and omissions as the staff study.

Bottom line. The 2023 EcoNorthwest study overstated revenues, understated costs, and still concluded that the annexation was a money loser for Olympia.

Political consequences of annexation

The annexation precincts are almost entirely large-lot and newer single-family residences. There are some apartments in Wilderness and along Yelm Highway, and some townhouses in Indian Summer, but overall, these precincts contain voters more conservative than the average for Olympia.

In the 2020 Presidential campaign, for example, precincts that currently make up Olympia voted 78% for Joe Biden. The Biden vote in the annexation precincts ranged from 55% to 75%. This is not MAGA country, but based on vote data, every precinct in the annexation area is more conservative than the Olympia average.

Currently, the residents in the annexation area do not vote in city elections, but if annexed, they would. Adding 18% to the Olympia population in more conservative precincts could clearly change the outcome of elections.

For example, the most hotly contested election in 2021 was Spence Weigand, a fiscally conservative Democrat challenging Jim Cooper for City Council Position 7. Over \$120,000 was spent by the three candidates in this race, with Cooper defeating Weigand in November by a margin of 54% to 45%. Weigand carried many of the perimeter precincts in Olympia, which are most similar to the annexation area. Adding thousands of more conservative voters could have changed the outcome of this race.

Winners and losers

Why are Olympia city officials considering this money-losing idea? There are several possible reasons. First, manifest destiny: the assumption that under the GMA, cities will eventually expand to the boundary. Second, Olympia is already providing water and sewer utility service, and our fire department regularly provides “mutual aid” to the two rural fire districts that now perform primary

response. Bringing these customers into the City can seem logical. And third, City staff self-interest – managers and department directors of larger cities get paid more than those for smaller cities.

Is this a good idea for the people living in the annexation areas?

They will pay significantly higher taxes: higher utility taxes and higher property taxes. These will add about \$500–\$1,000 per year per home, depending on value and utility consumption. On the other hand, residents will get city police and fire services, which are superior to the local fire districts and sheriff deputies now responding.

Do the residents have a choice?

Annexation requires a 60% vote of approval (based on value of holdings) from property owners in the annexation area. The City already has 60% “approval” in the form of “Waiver of Protest” agreements signed by developers as a condition of utility service. It’s unlikely that residents would have the opportunity to weigh in.

PERSPECTIVE We need to expand young voters’ access to the ballot

Charlotte Hill

On April 20, Cleta Mitchell, a leading voice in conservative politics said this: *Republicans should make it harder for young people to vote.*

At a private retreat in Nashville for donors to the Republican National Committee, she called for banning voting on college campuses, rolling back same-day voter registration and ending the practice in some states (like Washington) of automatically mailing ballots to registered voters. All of these are necessary, according to Mitchell’s presentation slides, for “any candidate other than a leftist to WIN in 2024.”

This brazen campaign of youth voter suppression is morally wrong. It’s arguably unconstitutional under the 26th Amendment. And it is especially high-stakes in this political moment, when youth turnout has been credited for electing presidents and staving off red waves. Yet the political elites with the power to counteract this cynical youth suppression strategy are not prioritizing a key strategy for fighting back: adopting popular voting reforms that boost youth turnout.

While Mitchell’s leaked comments were shocking to the outside world, she was preaching to the choir. As young Americans trend further “left,” they are increasingly seen by the political right as the enemy.

But rather than attempt to win them over, Republicans are pushing young people out of the electorate.

In state after state, conservative politicians are writing and passing laws that make it harder for young people to register and vote. Idaho now prohibits young people from using student IDs to register or vote. Ohio has long mandated that voters show a government-authorized photo ID to vote, but students are not allowed to prove their legal residency using their student ID, official dormitory documents or utility bills.

In Georgia, students at private colleges – including the vast majority of the state’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities – are barred from using their student IDs to vote.. Proposed legislation

Where does it go from here?

The City Council Land Use and Environment Committee is scheduled to look at the annexation issue again, perhaps in June. They may set the proposal aside, or they may direct the Staff to initiate the annexation process. That process includes notification to property owners, a public hearing, a decision on a vote – all leading to a decision by the Olympia City Council. Analyses by both staff and consultants found that this annexation would impose substantial costs on Olympia and its current residents. Will the Council take those findings seriously?

Jim Lazar is an economist and former Thurston County Public Utility District Commissioner.

in Texas would ban campus polling places entirely.

There are three ways to approach this problem. The first is legal: challenge any potentially illegal case of youth suppression in the courts. The second approach is what I call “out-mobilizing suppression.” The idea is to spark enough energy in young people that they put in the effort to overcome even the most cumbersome administrative and logistical voting barriers.

Easier, and more effective, is an approach that tackles suppression as the policy problem it is. Anti-democratic actors are passing laws that intentionally make it harder for youth to vote? Let’s adopt policies that intentionally make voting easier.

Start with voter pre-registration, which allows young people who will be 18 by the time of the next election to register ahead of time, before they graduate high school and are overwhelmed by new jobs, schools and living arrangements.

Add same-day voter registration, so that people can register and vote at the same time at their polling place. Make sure that every registered voter is sent their ballot by mail and has a range of options for returning it.

Colleges and universities also have a role to play in fighting youth suppression. Every institution of higher learning should make Election Day an academic holiday, giving faculty, staff and students the time they need to vote.

Youth suppression is only getting worse. Yes, we need to fight it in the courts. And yes, we must inform young people that their voting rights are under attack and provide unwavering support in overcoming voting barriers. But we also need to be proactive about expanding young people’s ballot access.

*Charlotte Hill is the interim director of the Democracy Policy Initiative at UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy. This is an excerpt from her May 26 article in Democracy Docket. **www.democracydocket.com/opinion/youth-voter-suppression***

“The land, at least, was giving”

Growing up Black in Jim Crow Texas

[An excerpt from a memoir, *From the Depths of Darkness*, by Dawud Al-Malik, (with James O’Barr), Mud Flat Shorts (mostly Fiction), Mud Flat Press, 2022]

I was born David Washington Rig-gins—what I came to think of as my slave name—in November of 1946. Growing up the eleventh of fourteen children, I learned early in life about struggling for a place in the sibling order of things. In spite of the rivalry, we kids always fought for each other.

Our parents, who were the grand-children of slaves, owned about twenty acres of land in Giddings, Texas. They grew all sorts of things: corn, peanuts, watermelons, pumpkins, peas, greens, tomatoes, okra, cabbage, carrots and cotton. They also kept chickens and hogs, and two horses, which Pop used to plow the fields.

The house we were raised in was a typical shotgun style, with three bedrooms, a kitchen and a front room that served as a bedroom at night. I remember getting splin- ters in my feet from the wooden floor as well as splinters in my butt, which Mama had to prick out with a needle. When it rained, the constant pounding of raindrops on the tin roof at night would put me to sleep.

We had no electricity or indoor plumbing. At night, we used kerosene lamps for light. There were two wood stoves, one in the front room for heat and one in the kitchen for cooking. Pop rigged the well out front with a faucet, and we kids brought water inside by the bucket. Saturday night was bath night. During the hot summer months, the grass in the front yard turned brown and the dirt turned black. We didn’t find out until after we moved to Seattle that there was oil deep under that ground, and it was rising to the surface.

Pop and Mama grew up together. Born around 1905, Pop quit school after the 4th grade to help at home. Short and powerful, with close- cropped hair, he was a stern man, but at the same time, patient and gentle, and he loved teasing us. Clean-shaven except for a well- trimmed mustache, Pop was prone to ingrown whiskers. He’d promise us kids a penny if we’d pull them out with tweezers. I never saw a penny, but I loved pulling out those ingrown whiskers because it gave me extra time with him, which I didn’t get real often.

Pop worked hard from before dawn until after dusk, planting crops, fix- ing farm machinery, repairing the property, maintaining the barn and adding on to the house.

As far back as I can remember, Mama was my best friend. Born in 1910, she was able to go to school through the 7th grade. Education was important to her, and she read a lot, particularly magazines and the newspaper. Part Native Ameri- can, with straight black hair and a regal manner, she was a striking woman.

Like Pop, Mama was always busy, spending her days canning, mak- ing preserves, cooking, and help- ing Pop in the fields. I can still see Mama sorting and mending our endless dirty laundry, then wash- ing it in an old hand-crank washer. She was an usher at church, and a member of the Order of the

Eastern Star, a branch of the Free- masons for women. Outgoing and caring, everybody loved her. Mama told the truth whether you liked it or not; she spoke her mind and didn’t bite her tongue.



Photo credit: Eileen Fuller.

Dawud Halisi Al-Malik

A remarkable life, a special man

James O’Barr

[*Dawud Al-Malik’s story, Fifty Years in Prison for Crimes He Didn’t Commit, was told in a two-part interview with Wendy Tanowitz in the July and August 2018 issues of Works In Progress. An excerpt from his memoir is in this issue.*]

Dawud Halisi Al-Malik died on Wednesday, March 22. His story, and his life, describe the all too predictable trajectory of growing up Black in these United States, its triumphs in the face of its tragedies.

Not only did Dawud use his time to educate himself in the law, but he helped other prisoners with their legal filings. He got a BA in Sociol- ogy from The Evergreen State Col- lege, became a facilitator with the Quaker Alternatives to Violence Project, and established numer- ous programs to better the lives of fellow prisoners and improve relationships between prisoners and prison staff.

After converting to Islam, he became Imam (prayer leader) at McNeil Island Corrections Center. Finally released in 2015, Dawud

He got a BA in Sociology from The Evergreen State College, [and] became a facilitator with the Quaker Alternatives to Violence Project...

In May of 1966, when he was 19 years old, having gone into the School-to-Prison Pipeline before it had a name, Dawud was arrested in Seattle and falsely charged with two murders. Dawud maintained his innocence, but in September of that year an all-white jury con- victed him and sentenced him to death.

After he’d spent seven years on death row, the US Supreme Court ruled capital punishment (tem- porarily) unconstitutional, and Dawud was released into the general prison population, with two life sentences and no possibil- ity of parole. He could have been released sooner if he’d admitted to the murders, but he chose to stay and fight for exoneration and clear his name, and to the end of his life worked to have the criminal-legal system rectify his wrongful convic- tion. (To understand what he was up against, see Daniel S. Medwed, *BARRED: Why The Innocent Can’t Get Out of Prison*, New York, Basic Books, 2022).

lived and worked in Olympia, where he’d hoped to start a clean- ing business employing prisoners on work-release.

Declining health called a halt to that venture, and Dawud eventually moved to Issasquah to be closer to his remaining family in Seattle. On March 23, the day after his death, he was given the traditional Mus- lim body washing and burial at the House of Mercy Islamic Cemetery in Covington.

On Saturday, April 15, a Celebra- tion of Life was held at the New Hope Baptist Church in Se- attle, which was Dawud’s family’s church when he was growing up, and which gave him its full sup- port over the years. In addition to friends and family, a number of men, former prisoners who had been helped and mentored and lifted up by Dawud when they were inside, came to bear witness to a remarkable life and express their love for this very special man.

oppression except when we went to town. Wise to the way things were, Pop minded his own busi- ness. He was a proud man, quiet and dignified.

The land, at least, was giving. Mostly it took care of us, but we al- ways needed money to make ends meet. In the summer, our entire extended family traveled to Rosen- berg, Texas, to work for Mr. Mor- mon, a white cotton farmer. This was before mechanical harvesting became common, and the cotton was picked by hand.

Mr. Mormon and his family lived in the big house, and he put us up in small shacks, like the old-time slave quarters. This was my first real encounter with white people. Mr. Mormon seemed nice at first, and he had a son named Billy, who was five or six, about my age. My parents warned me about playing with Billy, but they reluctantly let me go outside when he came over.

I couldn’t understand what they were worried about, but I eventu- ally learned that they just wanted all of us to be safe and to survive. From long and bitter experience, they assumed that we had no choice but to learn to “stay in our lane,” which meant toeing the color line. It also meant being smart about who we trusted. Just because someone smiled and acted nice didn’t mean we could be any less cautious.

They had especially good reasons at that time to be afraid for us. In addition to Texas segregation laws severely limiting our choices, the Ku Klux Klan and other violent white hate groups were getting more active because of the Su- preme Court decision that out- lawed school segregation along with the rise of a growing civil rights movement. But we needed the money, so we spent the entire summer on that old plantation, all of us picking and pulling cotton and working together.

Mud Flat Shorts (mostly Fiction), is available at Orca Books, Browsers Bookstore, Last Word Books and from Amazon.



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Time to revise its mission for the 21st Century

John Van Eenwyk

[The Rev. Dr. John R. Van Eenwyk has retired as a clinical psychologist and Jungian analyst in private practice, an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church, a clinical instructor at the University of Washington School of Medicine, and an Adjunct Professor at Antioch University. He co-founded the International Trauma Treatment Program here in Olympia.]

“The goddess of commerce is hard, and the lotus of beauty fed by human ideals does not bloom beneath her feet.” Rabindranath Tagore

The Port of Olympia has become a parasitoid. Parasitoids kill the “host” on which they feed. The Port of Olympia feeds on our tax dollars and destroys the environment upon which the people of Olympia depend for the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat.

How did this come to pass? Very simply, the Port’s mission has become an anachronism. There may have been a time long ago when the Port’s mission statement, “Creating economic opportunities and building community for all of Thurston County through responsible resource use,” may have seemed a good idea. But “responsible resource use” has rarely considered climate change and instead been a gift to developers.

The Olympia area is enduring a thirty-year drought. Cedars, hemlocks, firs, spruces—to name only the largest of trees—are dying. The water level of Budd Inlet, on its way to becoming a bog, has risen to the point where downtown Olympia faces the prospect of routine flooding. One could ask if the Port’s activities help or hurt Boston Harbor Marina. The answer is obvious.

How do the Port Commissioners not recognize this? Our youth do. They stage 20-minute “die-ins” at the City Council, yet nothing is done beyond token minimalism. The juggernaut of development churns on, devouring everything in its path. Our youth will watch their children suffer from lack of water, clean air and food.

What is the Port’s response? First, clearcut and pave 200 acres of forest to make way for warehouses. Second, pave over the aquifer for a bottling plant run by Coca-Cola, “the world’s biggest producer of plastic waste,” as the University of Washington puts it. Third, expand the airport to handle scores of landings and takeoffs, each one contributing to the warming of the planet—not to mention toxic spills that seep down into the aquifer and ruin our drinking water.

Are Port Commissioners simply blind? One might reasonably think so.

Consider the Port’s current activities: ships that



burn bunker fuel and logging trucks and log loaders that pour tons of particulate matter into the air. Anyone noticed the increase in asthma lately? How about the carbon they spew into the atmosphere?

The “deep water port” loses money every year. Wasn’t the Weyerhaeuser deal supposed to be a shot in the arm? Not only does it lose money, it damages infrastructure. Who is going to pay for the wear and tear on Plum Street from the hundreds of logging trucks? The Port? Not likely. We the taxpayers are on the hook for that. The Port will say those losses are not their responsibility - nor something to be reported on their (un)balance sheet. Worse, they plan to renew the twenty-year contract with Weyerhaeuser.

Do the Port Commissioners not realize that their mission no longer works? Remember the Boutique Hotel idea? The one that would be sandwiched in between the sewage treatment plant and the lumberyard? Who did they think would want to spend time there? Now they are floating the idea of an RV park. Is it not enough that the Port has paved over virtually all of the peninsula north of downtown?

It may be time to revise the Port’s mission statement. How about “Cut It and Pave It?” Or “Where Nature Lives Shall Asphalt Be?” At least these would be more honest and candid.

Without tax dollars, the Port could not function. Can we help the Port see the damage it causes? Can we help it enter the 21st Century?

We can—maybe not individually, but certainly together. If tax dollars fund the Port’s destruction of our future, maybe we should turn off the spigot. Tax revolt is a last resort, but in this case, it’s all we have.

Parasitoids are not overly concerned about the hosts they kill. They simply find another. Likewise with the big money interests who have the option of numerous ways to exploit the Port.

The Port Commissioners may be doing the best they can under the circumstances. Bob Lyall, for example, has recently come out in favor of the

estuary option for cleaning up Budd Inlet. Of course, that poses a problem for a “deep water port.” But since it loses money every year, that would hardly be a loss.

If the commissioners are powerless to redefine the Port’s mission, then we the public must do so—starting by withholding tax dollars.

The mission then must change. Indigenous peoples preserved the environment for thousands of years before we arrived to pave it over. They recognized the following:

“When the last tree is cut, the last fish is caught, and the last river is polluted; when to breathe the air is sickening, you will realize, too late, that wealth is not in bank accounts and that you can’t eat money.”

Of boys and men

From page 5

toward work in what he calls HEAL professions: health, education, administration and literacy.

One of the most interesting charts in the book shows a reservoir of untapped potential for overcoming gender stereotypes in the workplace. While “natural preferences” tend to compel women into “caring professions” and men into science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), there is a significant (47%) overlap in interests. Social expectations and biases are what discourage a large number of men who might otherwise choose HEAL professions. Reeves says the same kind of effort and expenditures that have led a growing number of women in STEM professions could be marshaled to interest more men in HEAL jobs.

Other policy changes, such as child-support and parental-leave reforms, are needed to acknowledge and support the roles of fathers in families. While men no longer tend to be sole providers, they instruct and protect children. It is typically fathers who encourage boys to take socially appropriate risks and to stand up for themselves, especially in adolescence.

Reeves says society must once again rethink how it views gender and the roles of men and women. “We need a prosocial masculinity for a postfeminist world.”

(1) A kindergarten teacher interviewed elsewhere in this issue pointed out that government-mandated discrimination based on gender cannot be the solution. Instead of singling out boys for a default late-start in school, universal preschool might be a better approach. He also advocates more study about the role of gender as a factor in academic achievement.

Margaret Thomas is a retired college librarian who lives in Tumwater.

Missing men in the classroom

From page 5

Modeling is part of the solution

Male teachers fill a need for kids who do not have a father at home—because of trauma, divorce or same-sex marriage. Casler says, “It might help if children’s needs could be a factor in hiring decisions. That male figure is important to a lot of kids.”

“Helping boys see themselves as future teachers starts with modeling,” says Hargrove, who knows that boys like to “play teacher” as much as girls do. When he pairs fourth-graders with his kindergarteners to practice reading, the older boys are patient and compassionate. “First you let kids see a man in the role of teacher,” says Hargrove, “and then you let them model it right in front of you.”

The rewards of working with young kids

As a high-school student, Casler volunteered at an Olympia elementary school. “I always kind of knew I was going to go in that direction,” he says. After teaching math and working for several years as a school administrator, Casler took a job teaching fifth grade at Peter G. Schmidt, where he stayed for four years. “I really had an amazing experience,” he says. “I still tell people, it was my most favorite job.”

In *Of Boys and Men*, Reeves advocates for an aggressive national recruitment campaign with the goal of increasing to 30% the ratio of men teaching at the K-12 level.

Meanwhile, Hargrove has accepted a position as the school librarian at Peter G. Schmidt Elementary, where he will work with students in all classes. “Next year,” he says, “everyone will have a male teacher for an hour a week.”

Margaret Thomas is a recently retired college librarian.



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THE SPLINTER IN THE EYE

Does the future have a future?

Enrique Quintero

Answering this question calls for some clarification. Whose future are we talking about? What do we mean by having a future? And finally, is this question relevant?

Whose future anyway?

I am talking about your future and mine. And the future of my granddaughters, Sylvia and Stella, whose combined age is slightly more than nine years. I am talking about the future of humanity as a species, which paradoxically includes members of social classes for whom I have little empathy and who bear direct responsibility for the current situation of the planet.

I refer to those who insist that the ultimate expression of humanity is the freedom to accumulate wealth by whatever means are available. They assert that efforts to constrain that process, particularly by governments, are to be actively resisted in the name of individual liberty.

Our current record shows that over the past decades, a small number of people have accumulated wealth at a scale never before seen in human history. This wealth is also more concentrated, belonging to roughly one percent of the world's population. At the same time, the natural sciences tell us that we cannot play this economic game forever, that putting profits over everything is like having four or even five bullets in the chamber, playing Russian Roulette with the planet. The game is clearly profitable for a few, but as it's being played, it also means the end of our species. Of our future.

The demise of the world as possibility

This is not the first time that the end of the world has been announced. For example, within the Judeo-Christian tradition, we find a large platoon of apocalyptic enthusiasts and geography aficionados who foretold not only the date of the final cataclysm, but also its precise location: the Valley of Armageddon.

This menacing tradition endured through the Middle Ages with figures like Nostradamus. It persists in the present through televangelism figures like the famous media mogul and religious broadcaster Pat Robertson, who in 1980 declared: "I guarantee you by the end of 1982 there is going to be a judgment of the world."

Needless to say, these oracles of doom failed not because of lack of conviction or fervor, but because their clairvoyance was based on religious or moral systems of thought, rather than scientific evidence. In other words, the prophecies we've heard before were, from a scientific perspective, more like unsupported speculation. What we're hearing today is a scientific prognosis, which is understood as the likely course of a fatidic event based on material evidence.

Science as predictor

When we look at the future through the lens of the latest scientific findings of the IPCC (In-

tergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), we find these key points, summarized by Katharine Hayhoe, a scientist with The National Conservancy:

Although worldwide there has been some progress on the commitments to reduce carbon emissions, this is not enough to keep global warming to 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels. 1.5 C is a threshold scientists believe is necessary to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

I don't know what kind of meaning my granddaughters will construct, or how they will articulate their world — that is for them to decide.

If warming of the global temperature continues at the present rate, humans born in 2020 will experience by the year 2060 to 2080 extreme temperatures with substantial losses "to almost every aspect of human life on this planet".

Global Warming Levels (GWL) will cause extreme changes in climate: precipitation, soil moisture (desertification of the earth), and extremely hot temperature changes.

The impact of the above changes is very serious: they will affect our health, our food sources, access to water and more.

Animal species and seagrasses, as well as ocean species, will be at great risk of becoming extinct (e.g. thousands of species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, marine fish, krill, corals).

In conclusion, we are not doing enough to avoid some of the dangers mentioned above, let alone achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement.

(Readers can access the IPCC report and figures at <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/figures/>

What does it mean to have a future?

It means that the act of living as a species can be thought of as an experience *or as* an event that is likely to occur. Taking into consideration the latest indicators of the IPCC report, and the historical incompatibility between the interests of capital around the world and its pernicious mode of interacting with nature, the future appears problematic and elusive particularly for younger generations.

Under these new existential conditions, it is not an exaggeration to state that daily acts considered mundane and essential in the ways we articulate and experience the world acquire a new symbolism, a mix of nostalgia and premonition. In other words, simple acts of living can no longer be taken for granted. We no longer possess the certainty about the future that was once taken for granted. This applies to nonchalant acts like simply observing the world, as well as to the act of loving, to having close and lasting ties with other human be-

ings, to the act of working, or doing politics, or interacting with nature and society.

It applies most of all to the act of thinking about the future as a possibility that still harbors the lives of our descendants. Life has always been contingent, and we know that five billion years from now the expansion of the sun will eventually engulf the Earth. The difference in this case is that we have managed to make the future more uncertain and potentially more immediate than ever.

It seems that all humanity is hosted in the Grand Hotel Abyss, the last global boarding house built by capitalism.

Is the question about the future relevant?

Not for everybody. It depends on the position you adopt regarding science, economics, human subjectivity and human agency. The responses range from those who simply deny the scientific evidence about climate change and conduct their lives in a "business as usual" mode.

There are also those who, in an effort to disinfect capitalism, have given it a "coat of green" and want to attribute to this economic system qualities until now unknown regarding both the treatment of most humans and nature. This green-washed position rests on two obfuscations: first, it forgets the causal role of capitalism in the environmental crisis. Second, it ignores the central logic of the capitalist system, with its continuous appetite for natural resources and profit above all other considerations such as sustainability or the metabolism between humans and nature.

There are also those who experience despair, and are torn between on one hand acknowledging catastrophe as a possibility and doing something about it, and on the other hand embracing hedonism and not caring much about the future by remaining in the present.

To construct meaning and have purpose

Finally, there are those who understand that the universe has no objective or predetermined meaning, but would prefer to see the future as an event likely to occur. This in turn is a precondition for humans to continue having purpose and constructing meaning during their lifetime.

I don't know what kind of meaning my granddaughters will construct, or how they will articulate their world — that is for them to decide. It is our responsibility to make it possible for the new generations all around the world to derive meaning out of this beautiful universe.

In Marx's words: "Even an entire society, a nation, or all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the earth. They are simply its possessors, its beneficiaries, and have to bequeath it in an improved state to succeeding generations, as *boni patres familias*" [good heads of the household].

Enrique Quintero serves on the WIP Publishing Committee.

People Over Pentagon Act

We could hire 1 million elementary school teachers (at good wages, even!)

WIP News Services

[As politicians wrangled about cutting future spending on existing programs, in exchange for agreeing to raise the limit on US borrowing ("the debt ceiling") it turns out that defense spending is untouchable. No cuts there, period. The weapons industry has institutionalized the permanent war economy. Instead, Republicans demanded cuts in programs that address the failures of our economy --medicaid, food stamps, education— plus other key programs brought in by the Biden Administration (IRS staffing, student debt forgiveness, conservation, etc.) Yet here is proposed legislation that recognizes that out-of-control spending on "defense" undermines everything.]

The National Defense Authorization Act passed by Congress in December 2022 is the largest Pentagon budget ever. Yet we hardly notice it! \$858 billion - \$80 billion more than the amount authorized in 2021. The USA spends more on its military than the next nine countries combined. Over half of the military budget goes directly to for-profit corporations and their executives. No nation can afford this! On February 22, Representatives Barbara Lee (CA) and Mark Pocan (WI) re-introduced the People Over Pentagon Act in the House of Representatives. It identifies \$100 billion in military spending that could be redirected in ways that would actually reduce violence and militarism at home. \$100 billion is the minimum we must cut to transform our society from a permanent war economy to a sustainable economy of community care.

Community care is the economy that prevents crime - unlike spending more and more tax money on policing. Policing does not prevent crime; at best, it punishes people after a crime is committed (and sometimes when no crime has been committed).

Upon introducing the bill, Rep. Lee said "Cutting just \$100 billion could do much good: it could power every household in the US with solar energy; hire 1 million elementary school teachers amid a worsening teacher shortage; provide free tuition for 2 out of 3 public college students; or cover medical care for 7 million veterans."



PERSPECTIVE

Housing—a ‘crisis’ we have no intention of solving

Mary Jo Dolis

In 2023 Washington legislators proclaimed a housing crisis. Their solution? Build more housing! In the words of Rep. Jessica Bateman (D., Olympia) on March 5 of this year, “We must address our growing housing crisis by expanding our housing supply, stabilizing costs for families and providing more support for affordable housing and first-time home buyers.”

Six weeks later, this is what they actually did. The centerpiece of their solution is HB 1110, which requires cities to allow developers to build more housing units on smaller lots: expanding our housing supply.

Nothing to stabilize costs for families or support affordable housing. First time home buyers might get a better chance at owning a home once the Covenant Homeowners Account kicks in.

Someone repealed the law of supply and demand

Our legislators assume that developers are the solution—when in fact they are the problem. If “demand and supply” were anything but a slogan, the huge and enduring demand for housing that working people could afford would have produced a continuing supply! Unleashing developers by eliminating zoning requirements might add more housing for high income earners, but no developer is going to build modest housing or apartments no matter how lax the zoning.

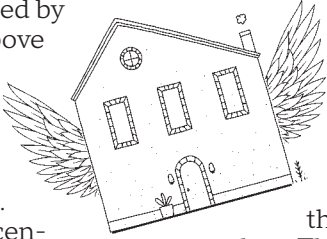
How does the private sector work, again?

Our legislators have apparently been prevented from understanding how “free market forces” actually work, by our system of campaign finance and the otherwise inexplicable adherence to the idea that private investors are motivated by something other than the highest returns they can get. Generally, the benefits of allowing greater density are captured by developers who price new units above cost, at a market rate.

According to a May 25 article in the *NY Times*, “Last year, one in four home sales was to someone who had no intention of living in it. These investors are particularly incentivized to buy the sorts of homes most needed by first-time buyers: Inexpensive properties generate the highest rental-income cash flows.”

What is the crux of the “housing crisis?”

Housing affordability problems have far more to do with poverty and income disparities than with housing supply. Half the people in the country must pay more than a third of their income to pay for housing. Most of the next generation can’t afford to buy a house. According to a McKinsey report, “the growth of asset values has outstripped returns on labor for four decades, and a majority of those assets – 68 percent – are real estate.



Money for homeless programs not housing

TRPC projects that there will be 66,100 low, very low, or extremely low-income households (those earning less than 80 percent of the median family income) in Thurston County in 2045. This is an increase of more than 26,000 from the 2012-2016 average. The number of extremely low-income households—those earning less than 30 percent of the median family income—will increase by over 6,000 units. There are about 1860 units available at below market rents—well below the number needed by those who are most at risk for becoming homeless. (TRPC, Housing Needs Assessment)

Out of \$1.2 billion in funds appropriated by the 2023 legislature for “housing” needs, less than half goes to the construction of affordable housing. The bulk is devoted to programs that are proposed in order to deal with the problems created by the absence of affordable housing.

Cities and legislators are more willing to spend money on homeless programs than on building housing that can help stem the tide of homeless. The 2023 legislature put \$400 million into the state Housing Trust Fund but rejected a proposal to increase the tax on real estate sales to direct additional funds there. The Trust Fund has never been funded at a level to make a meaningful contribution to housing needs.

“Market forces” are not going to produce places for working class and struggling middle class families to live. Someone has to build housing outside the reach of market forces. Market forces have brought us radical inequality and a frightening and always expanding homeless population.

Mary Jo Dolis writes occasionally for *Works in Progress*. She has lived in Olympia for a long time.

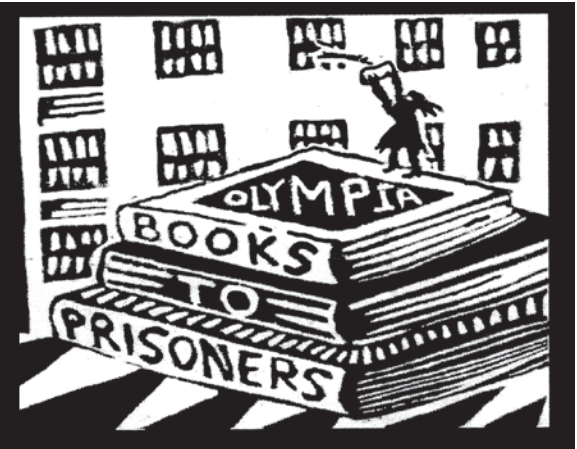
Influence

From page 1

educating and encouraging its members to submit comments that will influence the specific changes proposed over the next two years. Each jurisdiction’s process for completing the updates will be slightly different.

Thurston County

Thurston County’s Comprehensive Plan contains 13 planning goals. The Department of Commerce, which oversees implementation of the Growth Management Act, requires updates under goals related to land use, natural resource lands, housing, capital facilities, utilities, rural areas, transportation, recreation and open space and zoning. Updates to other elements of the Plan can be suggested by the Commissioners and the public, but they must be consistent with new state law.



Olympia Books to Prisoners works to offset the dehumanizing effects of incarceration by sending quality used books free of charge to prisoners all over the United States. Go to our website to find out how to support our work.
olympiabtp.org

The County set the scope of work for its Thurston 2045 update based on the required changes coupled with a survey of the community about what areas residents want the County to include.

950 survey responses and 121 public comments showed a strong interest in the inclusion of the following: climate mitigation, protecting sensitive areas and farmland, outreach to under-represented communities and increasing the availability of affordable housing.

Comments received to date reinforced the results of the survey, and asked as well for consideration of environmental justice, inclusion of quantitative measures and a mid-cycle check to track goals, along with requests to include the rights of nature in County planning decisions.

Members of the Thurston Planning Commission were then given six options to consider in drafting a scope of work. These were in addition to updates to address affordable housing and policy changes needed to preserve farmland. The Planning Commission ranked these options highest: climate change, a currently in-process Industrial Lands Study (which will help determine if and where warehouses will be allowed in rural areas), and the use of metrics to gauge progress.

After hearing the comments of the Planning Commission and the public, County Commissioners approved all six optional items, essentially opening up all chapters in the County’s Comprehensive Plan for potential change.

County officials plan to engage the public through a minimum of two public hearings, open houses, social media and staff visits to community groups during the outreach period this summer to late fall. The Board of County Commissioners will review the draft updates over the period from September 2024 until June 2025.

You can read about the current Comprehensive Plan and the Thurston 2045 update and leave comments and questions on the Thurston Planning webpage:

<https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/departments/community-planning-and-economic-development-cped/community-planning/thurston-2045>

Olympia

Olympia last completed a major update of their Comprehensive Plan in 2014. City officials have decided that their process for creating the update will be to work individually on each of 11 chapters - including a separate public participation process for each chapter.

They began work on “Olympia 2045” by posting an online survey asking people to agree or disagree with a series of aspirational statements about Chapter 1, the “vision and values” Olympia has for its future. (The survey closed on May 31.) Feedback on issues for the next chapter, “Public Participation and Partners” will be invited this summer. **Find out more at <https://engage.olympiawa.gov/olympia2045>**

Tumwater

In general, Tumwater’s update will continue the vision expressed in its 2016 Comprehensive Plan and incorporate changes as required by county and city regulations. According to Tumwater Planning Manager Brad Medrud, Tumwater is finalizing a public participation plan that “will include a general schedule of meetings as well as our Comprehensive Plan update website and an email specifically for comments and questions on the update.” Tumwater will begin the formal process of amending each chapter of its Plan next year, with opportunities for public comment included.

Lacey

The Lacey Planning Commission’s work plan for 2023 focuses on the following chapters for their update: Comprehensive Plan Outreach, Economic Development, Housing and Transportation. All but the chapter on Transportation will be completed this year. According to Ryan Andrew, Lacey Planning Manager, the public will be invited to comment on each chapter being revised. Watch the city’s website for opportunities to participate.

To contact the Local Good Governance Coalition, email LGGColy@gmail.com

Charlotte Persons and Esther Kronenberg are participants in the Local Good Government Coalition.

Community Spotlight

Arbutus Folk School

June 8, July 13, August 10, 5:30pm.

Acoustic Open Mic  ARBUTUS FOLK SCHOOL
Nights, emceed by Ahni-
wa Ferrari and Cliff Rice. Free to all ages. All skill levels
are welcome. At The Evergreen State College.

Juneteenth Celebration

Sunday, June 18, 1 to 5 pm.

Juneteenth commemorates the end of slavery in the US
and was made a federal holiday in 2021. Performances,
presentations and a marketplace featuring black-owned
and operated businesses. Rebecca Howard Park, 911
Adams St. Sponsored by Women of Color in Leadership
Movement and Media Island International.

Olympia Zine Fest 2023!

Apply for a table June 20 at 8:30 am
through midnight deadline, July 11

Zine Fest is a community event to
showcase zines and other forms
of DIY culture.  LIBRARY

Olympia Timberland Library will host this supportive
and safe space for people to promote their work, share
ideas, learn skills and make friends. Oly Timberland
Library, 313 8th Avenue SE, <https://olympiazinefest.org/>
about

Young Producers at TCTV

July 10-14, 2-5:30 pm.

In the News: TV Studio Production - Ages 8-11. Produce
video segments using Thurston Commu-
nity Media's state-of-the-art production
studio. Students will use professional video
equipment to shoot and edit a news story
they research. **Register through Lacey
Parks starting April 26.** Call 360-491-0857.

There is a \$175 fee.



Get the word out via TCTV

Nonprofit organizations may submit messages for
display on the TCMedia Readerboard. Thurston Com-
munity Media | 440 Yauger Way SW, Suite C, Olympia,
360.956.3100 | www.tcmmedia.org

Lacey Youth Council

Application deadline June 30

for Lacey students who will be sopho-
mores, juniors or seniors. Lacey-area high
school students can help guide discus-
sions of Lacey government leaders on
issues affecting youth. The advisory body
has 15 members, with seven spots desig-
nated for juniors and seniors. Find the ap-
plication form on the LYC webpage. After
interviews this summer, the city council will appoint the
youth council in August.



Juice Box Theater

In the morning all summer, plays for kids:
Goldilocks (June), Rapunzel (July), Billy
Goats Gruff (August). JBT was founded
by a group of local authors, tech wiz-
ards, and actors for kids and caregivers.
At OlyTheater, Capital Mall, across from
Old Navy. For tickets and information: www.olytheater.com/companies



Community Volleyball!

Tuesday, August 1, 2023 - 6 pm - 8:50 pm. The volley-
ball program at The Evergreen State College is hosting
open gyms with two courts for community members to
join and play volleyball.CRC Gym (Court 2) , CRC Gym (Game Court) . Organizer Email [carissa.bounds@ever-](mailto:carissa.bounds@evergreen.edu)
[green.edu](mailto:carissa.bounds@evergreen.edu)

Ranked Choice Voting

1st Saturday of every month at 9 am

The South Sound Chapter of
FairVote Washington meets
over zoom to organize to bring
Ranked Choice Voting to Wash-
ington state. Ranked-choice
voting is used for state primary,
congressional, and presidential elections in Alaska and
Maine and for local elections in more than 20 US cities
including Seattle. Sign up at [FairVote WA.org/Events](http://FairVote.WA.org/Events)

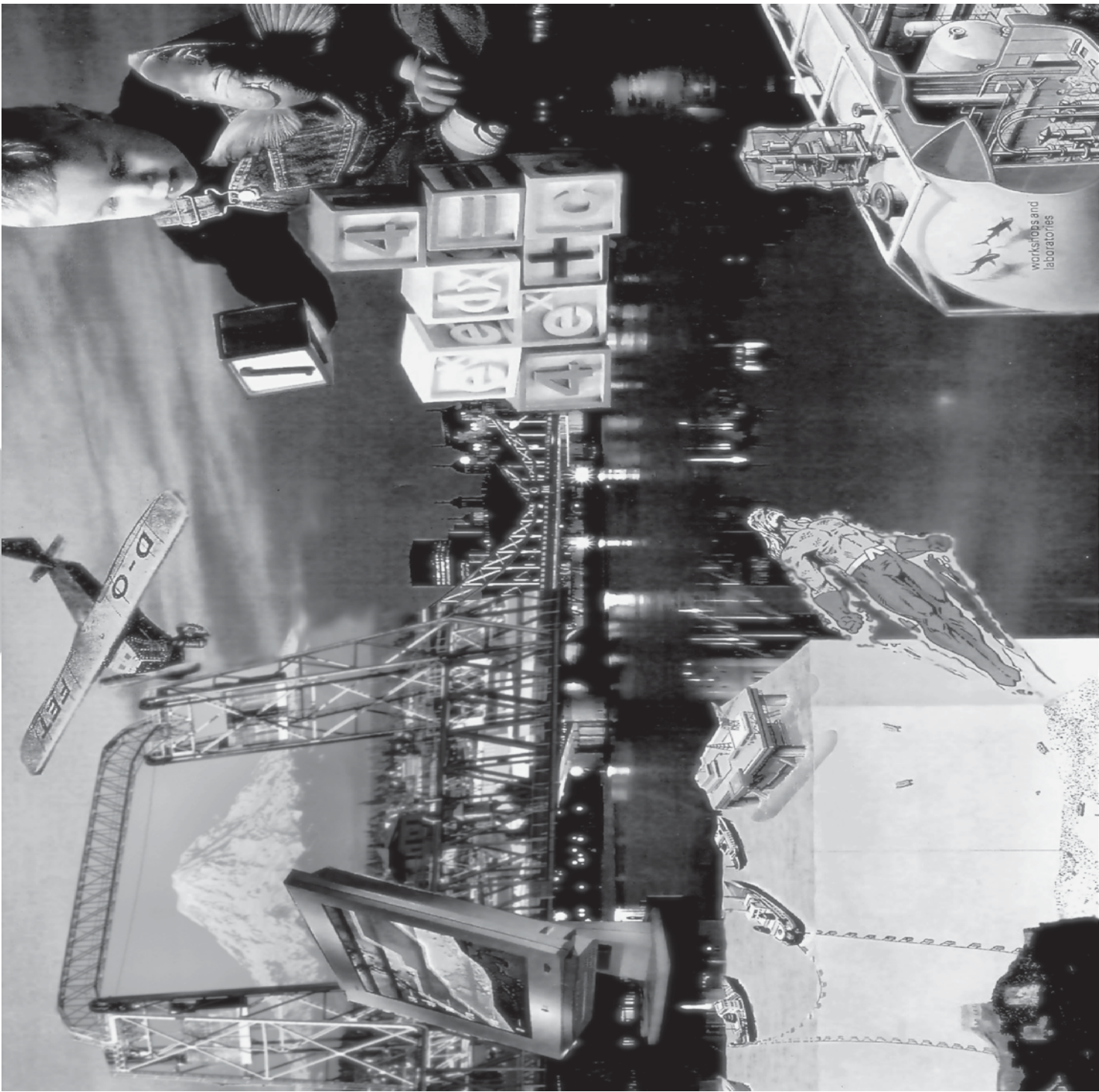


Free, take one!

¡Gratis, toma uno!

Works in Progress

Advocating for social justice since 1990



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