



WORKS IN PROGRESS

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Evergreen grad pokes a giant hole in austerity

An interview with Thomas Herndon, author of the “economic term paper heard ‘round the world”

Matson Boyd/Peter Bohmer

Matson: On April 15, Thomas Herndon, a former Evergreener, released a paper critiquing Reinhart-Rogoff, which is perhaps the most influential economic analysis of the last few years. It was immediately clear why this was a very big deal: Thomas found huge errors in the key paper in the intellectual edifice behind austerity. Within days, newspapers and magazines around the world were covering the story of the “Grad Student Who Shook The Global Austerity Movement,” to quote the New York Magazine headline, and Thomas appeared on CNN and the Colbert Report.

A quick bit of context: Reinhart and Rogoff are Harvard professors who put out a paper in 2010 making the case that if countries’ public debt exceeds 90% of GDP, average growth in those economies drops close to zero. This paper was used by the global austerity movement to help push for immediate cuts to spending, which have since been instituted here and around the world, most sharply in Europe. The human consequences of these austerity measures have been dreadful—just last week reports emerged out of Greece of children going hungry. Needless to say, the policies haven’t succeeded at restoring the economies or balance-sheets either, instead they’ve caused a depression-level disaster. Then mid-April Thomas Herndon and his colleagues at UMass Amherst released their “epic wonk takedown,” showing that Rogoff and Reinhart made serious mistakes. Once corrected, the data shows no such drop-off of growth at the claimed 90% debt threshold.

Thomas joins us now for an interview with *Works In Progress*, with questions from myself and Peter Bohmer, Thomas’s mentor at Evergreen.

Matson: I think it makes a lot of sense that this discovery, as simple as it was, was made first by you, a radical from Evergreen at radical UMass, and it wasn’t made by the thousands of economists out there at other more orthodox schools. Do you see anything in your background, Evergreen or UMass or elsewhere, that gave you the skepticism and persistence to make this happen?

Thomas: I’ve always been skeptical,

and I will say within the profession there were a lot of critiques out there, they just weren’t taken seriously before this “emperor has no clothes” moment. And no one was able to find these errors because Reinhart and Rogoff wouldn’t share their spreadsheet with anybody.

The pain austerity policies inflict on populations across the world made me critical of austerity policies because I had studied their human effects. That inspired me to look at the study more critically.

People had been asking for it for years, and those people were also from a critical background as well. Certainly my skepticism is influenced by my knowledge of the history of austerity policies and the pain they inflict on people.

I think the most important thing I

got from Evergreen that helped me with this project, besides being critical of capitalism, was the ability to read through text line-by-line, like we always did in seminar. It was that word-by-word, paying close attention to details, those were the practical things that I used for this. And as for being critical, Evergreen helped give me the confidence to think that the big, really highly prominent economists could be wrong.

Matson: Before we get back to Evergreen, you mentioned that Reinhart and Rogoff weren’t sharing their spreadsheets. What is with economists hiding their data like this, and do we have any prospect of this kind of behavior ending someday?

Thomas: I don’t think I would really describe it as hiding data. They did make their debt/GDP series available to the public, but they didn’t make their actual spreadsheet available, where all the data was put together. Dean Baker even requested it publicly, and never received it. Part of



this was because it wasn’t in a peer-reviewed edition of the *American Economic Review*, but you’re also right that the professional standards for releasing data aren’t entirely consistent. There have been a few attempts at making replication easier. I think we are moving
► **INTERVIEW**, continued on page 10

PSE pushing for 6% increase on gas and electric rates without public comment

John Pearce et al

Did you know that PSE is currently trying to slam a 6% rate increase through the UTC without public or professional input/comment?

Give your opinion at the open meeting on Thursday, May 16.

PSE proceedings before the WUTC

Before the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), there are three different PSE cases, composed of five different “dockets” that have been consolidated into one proceeding.

First, there is the TransAlta proceeding, Docket UE-121373. Puget Sound Energy (PSE) agreed to buy power from the TransAlta coal power plant in Centralia through 2025. This is allowed by the legislation crammed through by PSE and TransAlta, with help from Sierra Club and NW Energy Coalition. The theory

was that this would lead to the closing of the coal plant. Not so as discussed below.

Second, there is the “decoupling” proceeding, Dockets UE-121697 (electric) and UG-121705 (gas). These would create a mechanism by which PSE would be assured of a defined amount of revenue regardless of power sales. It is intended to make the company more receptive to energy conservation and customer installation of solar (both of which cause

sales to go down).

Third, there is the “expedited rate filing” or “attrition” proceeding, Dockets UE-130137 and UG-130138. This would allow Puget to raise rates once a year with a very short review process to account for inflation in labor and

specific improvements made to its system, rather than going through the full year-long rate case process.

Each of these three cases is controversial on a stand-alone basis. The “multiparty proposal” now before the WUTC combines them into a guano stew.

TransAlta Coal Plant

PSE agreed to buy 380 megawatts (MW) of power at a fixed price from the TransAlta coal plant in Centralia.

Under the legislation, PSE is entitled to a “profit” on this, even though purchased power is normally flowed through at cost. Utilities earn a profit on their investment in “plants” like poles, wires, transformers, and power plants. Not on their “operating expenses” like labor, fuel, or purchased power.

The TransAlta contract is controversial for many reasons:

First, many believe that if the

► **PSE**, continued on page 10

Utility and Transportation Commission meeting
Thursday, May 16, 6:00 pm
1300 S Evergreen Park Dr SW, Olympia
Richard Hemstad Building

WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE
THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

Works In Progress is a free, all volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of Works In Progress and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions

Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

Works In Progress is committed to stories misrepresented or ignored by the mainstream media. We value local, well-researched news stories, accounts of personal experience and reflections by local authors. Opinion pieces, also valued, are often best supported by facts, examples, and sources, and we encourage writers to include these elements to submissions. We're also looking for graphics, poetry, cartoons, and articles that push the boundaries of conventional journalism.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number. Articles may be reprinted. Please cite sources.

If your issue isn't being covered in Works In Progress, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or haven't found someone else to cover it!)

Send submissions to olywip@gmail.com or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

Governing Tool

The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.

Mission Statement

Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. Works In Progress is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed.

Anti-Discrimination Clause

We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues

WIP is archived on microfilm by the University of Washington Library. Some issues are held in the Timberland Library system. The last five years are online at www.olywip.org

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Submission Deadline:

Friday, May 17
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Proofreading Meeting

Saturday ♦ May 25 ♦ Noon
**Lacey Timberland Library in
the Group Study Area**
(Be there for the first read!)

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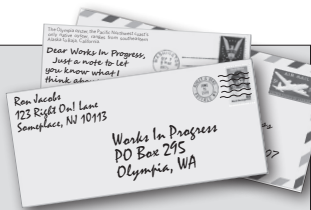
On the front cover —

Reverse image: *Idle No More
Salish Sea Water Blessing at Golden
Gardens Park, Seattle*

Photographer: Robert Whitlock

WORKS IN PROGRESS

LETTERS TO WORKS IN PROGRESS



Before exploring outer space

Friends, neighbors, fellow thinkers,

On the topic of extraterrestrial exploration and NASA's Curiosity Mars Rover. Did you know that the rover is fueled by a plutonium reactor? And that it was sent to Mars equipped with a laser canon (weapon) powerful enough to vaporize rocks?

Part of the mission for this machine has been to explore the planet for mineral resources—what do you think about that?

And how about the ethics of sending weapons and radioactive material to other planets—what do you think?

So far, it seems that human society on earth has been incapable of living in peace and harmony. In light of this long-standing pattern of violence, does it make sense to question the merit of extraterrestrial exploration? What do you think?

Is it possible it would make more sense to focus on advancing peace and sustainable harmonious life here on Earth before expanding our reach to other planets? What do you think?

Thoughtfully yours with gratitude,
Robert F. W. “Berd” Whitlock
robertfwwhitlock@gmail.com

Mothers' Day Message

As a Mother, who likes Mother Earth and has seen life issue from my womb, I speak against war that destroys life!

I cannot support a federal government which is imperialistic and attacks sovereign people. Nor can I continue to read, watch and listen to media which suppresses the truth about our government. Nor can I honor soldiers, contractors and product manufacturers who kill out of the necessity for a job or to acquire great personal wealth. Killing each other whether directly, or indirectly through unsafe products, is insanity—pure and simple logic. We are the divine children of God/Mother-Father Principle/Love and should know better! Shame on us all!

The historical truth, found by those who ‘read’ and not simply allow themselves to be brainwashed by the controlled medias, reveals that since Napoleon elitist bankers have caused all wars; for national debts, weapon sales, and the rebuilding of countries after a war is big money.

Remember how President Eisenhower, after being used by these elitist bankers etc. during WWII, in his elder and obviously more fearless years, warned America of the military/industrial complex? Also, I recall a time when the press was more free and fearless; and, we were actually informed that Howard Hughes could demand of Nixon not to end the Vietnam war—“I have helicopters to sell!” [No wonder Hughes became crazy; the deaths of thousands were on his soul]. Fearless reporting by Naomi Klein in her book, *Shock Doctrine* tells the story of the greed of the Bush administrations and how they cleverly stole directly from the American Federal Budget for personal gain/wealth. Finally, many Americans are beginning to wake up and are reacting against the recent illegal and massive bailouts; our money being given away because our politicians are either “bought” or simply “clueless”!

To manufacture paper money out of thin air and sell it to governments as our Federal Reserve and other Central Banks do, is even bigger money!

We are all, worldwide, currently being “controlled” by an elite banker member club. Enough I say! Poor people of planet Earth! Poor soldiers who are being used as cannon fodder by these elitist bankers/investment class and the military/industrial complex.

(Christian soldiers is truly an oxymoran; for Jesus stated firmly, “Put your sword back into its place; for all

who take up the sword will perish by the sword.” Matt. 26:52 Furthermore, His death on the cross was NOT meant as a ‘sacrificial lamb’ to cover our sins; but, it was a demonstration of absolute fearlessness. Jesus went to the cross to inspire us to be fearless *as Him*; His intent was never to have us worship him. How He now suffers from our misinterpretation, especially when we “kill” in His name!)

Enough I say! It is time to revolt! After all, they are not only paper money tigers!

Yet, these Illuminati members too are suffering! They do not understand the love of God and the love of their fellow humans. Pray for them! Love them! They have substituted the *emotional chemistry of power and control* and lost their true genetic heritage of unconditional, divine and holy spiritual love. They are clearly *addicted to power and control*! We must *love* these families of tyrants back into the Family of Humanity from which they have long ago deserted!

Also, the financial, political and religious *structures of control*, which their relatives built in the past and which they have inherited, must come down! As Jesus said, “The walls must come down!”

Furthermore, all “tribal systems” (racial, cultural, gender identities, religious, political, economic etc), which factionalize the entire world can be dissolved when we all realize collectively that the *enemy*, which we all fear is not just each other but God Himself! Jesus spoke out against this wrathful Jehovah God of the past. Jesus knew that the true Creator God lived within Him; and that true Creator God lived within everyone else too!

(Jehovah was, apparently, an alien space-being god with impressive laser power and a transmission loudspeaker system (Ark of the Covenant) who sought adoration and total control of a desert tribe. This Jehovah of the Holy Bible ordered mass murders and even the ‘rape of virgins’; so, he obviously could not have been the Creator/Mother-Father Principle/God. Wake up Jews and Christians! It is right there....read your

Scott's latest nupdate (no news is no news)

Scott Yoos Support Committee

Malheureusement, once again we find ourselves with nearly *no* newsy new news to report regarding the increasingly strange and sinister case the State of Washington has brought against friend (and fellow WIPworker), Scott Yoos!

You may recall that nearly two-years ago (on the night of June the 1st, 2011), the accused (Yoos) was brutally-arrested by a whole posse of four officers from the Olympia Police Department.

His “crime”? Scott had been seen making a brief stop at a (wide-open) City dumpster, during his lengthy bike-ride home from downtown Olympia.

At this receptacle, he disposed of a small bag, (containing damp napkins), and closed the dumpster's lid, (to guard against roving raccoons). Yoos was promptly arrested as he rode from the open parking lot, then was tackled to the pavement and handcuffed. Later, once he was at the Jail, Scott was charged with two misdemeanors: “Obstructing Justice” and “Criminal Trespass”. (Perhaps unwisely), he had attempted to communicate with the policemen via the (civil) use of Sign language, + pen/pad. (Yoos is mute, and has been unable to speak for nearly 3 decades, due to an ill-fated hitch-hiking misadventure in 1984.)

The OPD officers labelled his strange gesturing as “possibly assaultive” behavior, obviously worthy of an ugly, violent, and undeserved arrest. A month later (as it became increasingly clear that Scott was not going to agree to plea “Guilty” to these bogus “crimes”), the elder Ser-

MAY 2013

Bible! Num.31:18 The time of ignorance must end.)

Enlightenment of our collective human family of our innate eternal divinity and oneness with the love source/God will eliminate all of our past survival fears! This was the true message of Jesus Christ and *message* of the Declaration of Independence.

I believe that if the United Nations Peace Pledge was considered by every human on this planet as a personal pledge we could quickly stop all war and begin our collective *resurrection*. It is simple—just three rational statements:

We are peace prophets.

We will never kill another brother or sister human being.

We believe only the Creator of that human life has the right to end that life.

Also, I ask my fellow Americans to write or call your Congressional and Senatorial representatives to end all military funding; bring the troops home; ‘bar’ corporate lobbyists, which are not constituents, from their offices; get rid of the Federal Reserve system; set term limits on representatives; demand the decrease of the federal budget and demand full disclosure of alien presence—past and present.

The mistakes of the *past* can be corrected! A *new vision* of peace, health, Happiness and abundance for every human being on this beautiful Mother Earth can be achieved!

With this new knowledge we can become enlightened and no longer act fearful and insane. Instead we can become strong and sovereign individuals... supporting and caring for each other. Let us together *own* the *past* of wars and control.

With a light heart I ask you in the words of Ramtha, “ If you are a soldier—come home! If you work in a defense industry—find another job! If you are an elitist addicted to power—get over it! And, if you are controlled by your religion—leave it!”

“And as for the great mother - Mother Earth—love her! Love all humans, animals, plants, soil, water and air—cherish everything—for all is God! “

Mother Mary Hath Spokane

A peace prophet, author of the United Nations Peace Pledge, AND MAW (Mother Against War)

geant Paul Johnson submitted his police report, now claiming Yoos had kicked him during the fray. This brought the whole mess into the even uglier realm of a “Felony” charge. (The City, sagely, had fully *dismissed* this hyper-inflated case in early August 2011, But—alas—a week later, it was resurrected from its grave, and with a felony “Assault” claim against Yoos. It was trumped-up to the Superior Court and moved to the Thurston County Courthouse.)

During the past two years, Scott has made more than twenty different Court-appearances. At the dogged insistence of its Prosecuting Attorneys Jon Tunheim and J. Andrew Toynbee, Thurston County's taxpayers have paid tens of thousands of dollars towards the effort to “criminalize” Scott Yoos. (Makes one wonder about our policing priorities, -eh?)

The Court is currently in-the-midst of hearing a “Motion to Dismiss,” presented by Scott's Attorney, Larry Hildes of Bellingham. This Hearing was scheduled to re-convene in mid-April, but, at-the-last-minute, the Persecuting Attorney informed us that one of the arresting police officers was unable to conveniently attend, so, it has (again) been postponed until a (yet-to-be-decided) mystery date(!)

...If the injustice of this weird-o-rama case is of any interest, then please take an occasional glance at our nifty blog site: <http://www.scottsupport.blogspot.com> or follow Scott on Facebook—Scott Yoos Ldf—to see the latest *updates* regarding possible hearings during May.

(We'd love to pack the courtroom!)

The Cuban Missile Crisis revisited—This time in Korea

George Katsiaficas

The current threat of a major war in Korea is akin to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, when the US and the USSR nearly waged nuclear war. Peaceful coexistence was assured only after an agreement was reached for Russia to withdraw its missiles from Cuba and for the US to pull its own out of Turkey.

In recent weeks, as a similar standoff has escalated in Korea, the US has sent B-2 bombers from Missouri and B-52s from Guam to fly up to the Demilitarized Zone between South and North Korea. These flights are as close to a threat of a first strike—possibly a nuclear one—that the US can make.

President Obama’s recent policy shift to an “Asian pivot” is perceived in North Korea as a direct threat to its existence. Before the Asian pivot, Saddam Hussein agreed to disarm, after which Iraq was invaded and he was killed. Gaddafi faced a similar fate after he destroyed his major weapons systems. North Korea is clearly interpreting these events as reasons *not* to disarm. The harder the US now presses North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons, the more they feel menaced.

In 1993, the US came quite close to bombing North Korea’s Yongbyon nuclear plant. Harvard professor Ashton Carter publicly stated he was telephoned by the Pentagon and asked to assist them in determining bomb targets. Only the personal intervention of former President Jimmy Carter prevented a US first strike. Carter flew to Pyongyang, met Kim Il-sung (Kim Jong Un’s grandfather) and negotiated an “Agreed Framework,” according to which North Korea shut down Yongbyon and the US



and its allies were supposed to supply fuel oil to the North.

For decades now, North Korea has stated that it will forsake its nuclear weapons and rocket program if the US Senate signs a peace treaty to end the state of war. (The armistice of 1953 was only a cease fire.) Whether one believes them or not, isn’t diplomacy worth

North Korea has stated it will forsake its nuclear weapons and rocket program if the US signs a peace treaty. Whether one believes or not them, isn’t diplomacy worth another attempt to diminish the threat of war?

another attempt to diminish the threat of war?

As the world’s preeminent military power, the US has a responsibility to prevent wars. One such means to do so in Korea would be for President Obama publicly to state that the US will not make a first strike against North Korea. Rather than seeking to reduce tensions,

however, the US has ratcheted them up, and as a result, US companies will sell billions of dollars of missile systems to South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan.

President Obama has repeatedly stated that our main strategic partner in Asia is Japan, even as Japan presses territorial claims against China, both Koreas, Vietnam, and the Philippines concerning islands it took when the Japanese Empire expanded before the end of the second world war. Unlike Germany, which has apologized for Nazism, educated its citizens, and paid reparations, Japan has never apologized for the war, never properly explained its atrocities to its citizens, and refuses to express its regret to the more than 100,000 “comfort women” who were forced into sexual slavery. In fact, Japan has repeatedly refused to apologize to these women even when pressed by US congressional resolutions. In the long run, the US should consider multilateral alliances, rather than a preeminent one with Japan, in order to diminish regional tensions.

In the past few days, Fox News and others have repeatedly called attention to that “nut” in North Korea who’s trying to prove himself. Yet Kim Jong Un is a mere figurehead in the world’s most Confucian society, where young people must respect their elders and listen to them. An aging military bureaucracy runs North Korea, not the young grandson of their “Dear Leader.” If we allow Kim Jong Un to be demonized while a major war breaks out, hundreds of thousands of people will perish in its first hours—no matter who is to blame. It is not too late for the Obama administration to change course and find a peaceful solution to this crisis—if that is what they want to do.

The author is a professor of Humanities at Wentworth Institute of Technology and author of Asia’s Unknown Uprisings. He was a Senior Fulbright Fellow in South Korea in 2008.

This article is reprinted with the author’s permission.

Special Events

Shelton Farmers Market 2013 Opening Day
Saturday, May 4, 9 am until 3 pm
3rd and Cedar, Shelton, Wa.

Come celebrate the market’s spring re-opening. Enjoy good music, fresh produce, wonderful handmade crafts and good food.

Native Student Alliance @ TESC 3rd Annual Pow Wow
May 4 at 1 pm until May 5 at 5:30pm
College Recreation Center
The Evergreen State College

Saturday Grand Entry 1 pm and 7 pm
Sunday Grand Entry 1 pm
For more information contact: Jesse Drescher drejes27@evergreen.edu

May Day Meeting of the Minds, Hearts and Bellies
Sunday, May 5, 3-8pm
Fertile Ground
311 9th Avenue, Olympia

We come together to share food, feelings, thoughts and ideas around the current, prevalent food systems inadequacies.

Olympia pickets Bank of America!
Wednesday, May 8, 4 pm
Bank of America in Olympia

Nationwide picketing during business hours at the Bank of America locations. Be there, dress in a way that welcomes strangers’ conversations, carry a sign that wins their support.

Girl Rising!
Monday, May 13, 7:30 pm
Hosted by OlyFolks-Zonta-HTPA
Regal Martin Village 16 & IMAX in Olympia, Washington

A portion of ticket sales will help fund programs for girls, so seeing the film literally makes an impact on girls’ lives. This showing will only happen if at least 100 people sign up to see it. Here’s the link: <http://gathr.us/screening/2783>.

Art Exhibit
May 16 - July 12
The Matrix Coffeehouse
434 NW Prindle St., Chehalis

Artists: Don Graham, Jill Musick, Juliet Frew, Lena Davidson, J.W. Kalin, Hank Clay-camp, David Fox, and Patricia Kalin-St. Clair.
The exhibit is free.

PIPE Line
Friday, May 17
Evergreen Ballroom

Any performers out there who want to play?

NW Regional Leonard Peltier & Mother Earth March!
Saturday, May 18, 12 pm - 4 pm
Tacoma, Washington

President Obama has yet to listen to us. But we cannot stop until our goals have been met. We ask all supporters to please join us here in Tacoma.

OCCUPY LOVE
Saturday, May 18, 4 pm - 6 pm
Capitol Theater in Olympia

Occupy Love makes a broad, beautiful, soaring and eloquent argument for placing love at the centre of our understanding of what moves people to make revolution...It’s a heaping buffet table of food for thought.
—Dru Oja Jay, The Media Co-op

March Against Monsanto
Saturday, May 25, 11 am
Washington State Capitol in Olympia

Research studies have shown that Monsanto’s genetically-modified foods can lead to serious health conditions such as the development of cancer tumors, infertility, and birth defects. Fight for our food!

Dance Oly Dance with the Blues Dancer Crew
Friday, June 7, 8 pm
Thurston Community Television, 440 Yauger Way SW Suite C, Oly

Dance on live TV to the songs selected by the DJ who works with the downtown Blues Dancers Club.

Everyday our worker-collective goes to work to build a better world. On May 1st we strike to keep that dream alive.

Happy May Day!



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Thanks to MIXX 96 for its generous support in providing much needed space for Works In Progress production meetings.

Post mortem

The man, his umbrella, and his reflection of events on Oly's eastside

Michael Di Marzo

On Tuesday, March 12, 2013, during the course of six-and-a-half hours, I was transformed three times. The first metamorphosis occurred the moment I stepped out onto the road at 7:30 that morning. My attire was not unusual for a cool, rainy morning on the far end of winter: all in black with turtle neck pulled up, cap on and hood over the top.

I'm not a native Washingtonian but I am an avid pedestrian, so I tend to dress warmer and dryer than most. And when rain seems likely, I carry an umbrella. Not some 15-inch compact, mind you, but sleek, black and almost a meter long. When opened the canopy presents a large, squared octagon, rather than the typical pinwheel circle, suspended on fiberglass composite.

I love this umbrella. I bought it for twenty bucks and it's lasted for almost four years. That's a personal record, by far. I've even given it a name: "Cloud Chaser." My favorite trick involves balancing it on the very tip of my finger, while opened, in the rain. I hold it up high and dance with the downward wind. Cloud Chaser spins and reels as if drunk in the pleasure of being a conduit between Heaven and Earth. Other times, when the chemtrails have yet to take full effect, I raise it like a staff against the gathering clouds, rebuking them sharply.

At 7:30 am on March 12, when I left home, Cloud Chaser was tucked into its case and under my arm. As I walked down Quince Street a teen drove past. Upon her seeing me, I was immediately changed into a silhouette, a two-dimensional caricature against a predefined form. Today, I realize how often this occurs. We could not have "types" of people without profiles to quickly alert us to their presence. Certainly, the media spends millions reinforcing myths about body types. Consumers and investors spend billions seeing to it that they do. We are trained to judge each other and ourselves as quickly as possible based almost exclusively on appearance. Our silent acceptance of this status quo is the means by which we forfeit our humanity and are transmuted into paper dolls.

Each of us has a catalog in our mind, by which we can choose to compare our index of profiles against the one being presented to us by an unknown person. This is the basis of prejudice. We don't mind prejudice when people are predisposed to like us. Unfortunately,

we also carry our ideas of what a "violent" person looks like. The young girl who drove past me had her's. Tall. Sometimes White. Sometimes Black. Male. Dressed in black. The image is so ubiquitous. In the brief opportunity she had to decide what she saw, the profile matched and my second transformation began.

Magically, my hood, cap and turtleneck became a ski mask. Cloud Chaser, my beloved umbrella, turned into the most unspeakably hideous instrument of death: an assault rifle. This didn't happen out of malice. It happened out of necessity. Some voice in the life of this young lady compels her to believe she must be ever watchful for violent people. This belief engenders

fear, bypassing critical thought and creating a psychological need for immediate response when the profile of a violent person is encountered.

The judgment of this girl does not offend me. She did nothing worse than most people are capable of while under their own prejudicial delusions. Just read the comments

that have been posted surrounding the articles written about this incident. The violence I see there is unbridled and unashamed. Is there even such a thing as a person who isn't violent? I wonder.

Meanwhile, by the time I arrived on the West Side near Capital Medical Center, all Hell had broken loose in my neighborhood. As it happened, busloads of children were en route to Roosevelt Elementary and Reeves Middle School, both within walking distance of my house. Given the recent horrors at Sandy Hook, swift and dramatic measures were taken. Neighbors who normally shuttle carloads of kids to school received frantic texts from other parents about the lockdowns, leaving them unsure of what to do. Some parents claim they were told an armed man had broken into Roosevelt the night before. No such break-in occurred. Outside the security of the schools, families were disoriented and afraid. This has been called a "successful training exercise." Training for what? Are we more prepared today to face the real issues of violence in our community?

I am not an anarchist, as some have suggested. I see the value of government and of law enforcement agencies. My concern is that if we continue to allow the police to be our only answer to violence, we will lose the fight. The use of force may prevent an act of violence but does little to address the underlying motives. And as law enforcement

responses escalate, the fear that keeps us from claiming our streets will only grow stronger.

Reconciliation, the peaceful union

So began my third metamorphosis. The events of March 12, 2013 have given me considerable cause for reflection. For instance, I can't deny that I dress in a paramilitary style, precisely because of my uneasiness with the veil of terror that blinds us to all but self-preservation. It's how I deal with the isolation that is part of the tension between who I am and who I am expected to be.

Although I haven't decided to dress much differently, I do see how I can be clearer about my intentions and



Michael Di Marzo

Photo by RFW Whitlock

of formerly divided parties, serves as perhaps the most potent weapon against violence. Many perpetrators of violent crime act out of a false identity that isolates them from the rest of society. Sadly, we tend to reciprocate. I suspect that we incarcerate criminals and the insane (and the elderly and homeless) not so much from a sense of duty to Justice as by a desire to put the brokenness and pain in these people's lives out of our view. Could this willing ignorance of real violence explain the American preoccupation with grotesquely violent, often abusive entertainment? As I searched my own soul, a penitent "yes" responded.

friendlier in my disposition. It may not be as much fun as total autonomy but it is much safer (especially for me).

As a Christian, I believe that only radical, compassionate love can drive fear from the throne of my heart, where violence begins. If I am willing to allow my thoughts, opinions and motives to be examined, I can see how even an open threat could be an invitation to peace.

Michael Di Marzo is 42, works in a bed and breakfast, and has lived in Oly for almost ten years. "Having loved my living experience in the Northeast Neighborhood, I will be moving back downtown at the end of the month."

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Five policies that could improve job quality in the United States

Despite increased educational attainment, an older workforce and higher productivity, job quality has declined in the United States over the last 30 years.

And despite substantial increases in the educational attainment and age of the US workforce over the last three decades, which are reflected in productivity, the quality of jobs in the United States as measured by wages and access to benefits has deteriorated sharply.

The report, “Making Jobs Good,” considers the impact of five policies on job quality, in essence, “good jobs” and “bad jobs.” A good job is defined as one that (1) pays at least \$19 per hour (in constant 2011 dollars) and (2) has employer-provided health insurance and (3) has some kind of retirement plan (either a traditional pension or a 401(k)-style plan). A bad job is defined as one that meets none of these three criteria. The policies considered in the report are universal health insurance, a universal retirement system (over and above Social Security), a large increase in college attainment, a large increase in unionization, and gender pay equity.

These policy simulations yield intriguing results. For instance, the pay equity simulation shows that if women and men of the same level of education receive the same pay, the gender gap in the share of good jobs is all but erased. The policy simulations also demonstrate that increasing unionization appears to be substantially more effective than a comparable expansion of college attainment in increasing job quality in the economy. For all workers, and separately for men and women, increases in unionization consistently raise the share of good jobs more than similar-sized increases in college education. Given that increasing college attainment is a long and expensive process, and one that is likely to be much less effective for older workers, these findings suggest the importance of emphasizing unionization as much

or more than college attainment as a key path to improving job quality.

The report also shows that enacting combinations of these policies has a more significant impact than each individual policy. For example, a combination of universal health care and a universal retirement plan increase the share of good jobs by 20.8 percentage points. A universal retirement plan on

its own would raise the share of good jobs by 9.6 percentage points, while universal healthcare would increase the share of good jobs by 4.7 percentage points.

The authors note that restoring the link between economic growth and job quality will be a heavy lift. Over the last three decades, increased educational attainment and work experience alone

have not been sufficient to prevent a decline in the share of workers in good jobs or an increase in the share of workers bad jobs. However, the simulations described here demonstrate that there are policies that—alone or in conjunction with other policies—can slow and perhaps turn around the fall-off of job quality in the US economy.

—Center for Economic and Policy Research

A Dana Walker tongue-in-cheek commentary

Club Fed! New educational opportunities for today’s youth!



other criminals who have absolutely nothing to do but learn to hate the world even more than they already did—and to share their trade secrets!

It’s education by immersion!

But wait, there’s even more!

In addition to the educational opportunities there is also the fact that *Club Fed is a socialist paradise!* 100% of your schooling is paid for by your government! Food, lodging, and a semblance of health care—everything is provided to all residents completely free of charge!

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Consider some of Club Fed’s amenities:

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Menu

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Cuisine

Exactly compliments the menu!

Services

- 24-hour armed security! A change of bedding every few weeks! Restroom facilities you can rest assured are cleaned after every few hundred uses!
- Nature lovers will be amazed at the incredible diversity of the parasitic insect population and at the proliferation of disease-bearing microorganisms!
- Enjoy dull and uninteresting conversation with the ignorant and untrained staff!
- Put some edge into your life by spending every hour of every day surrounded by violent psychopaths!
- (You have to watch out for some of the other inmates too...)
- Or—if you prefer—you can just relax and enjoy the scenic view featuring vast expanses of pretty razor-wire glittering picturesquely in the sunset; the entire scene framed by quaint little gun towers...
- And in addition to all that, you will automatically become part of the Prison Industrial Complex, which is the fastest growing industry in the United States!

And best of all...

There are neither women nor children nor any normal social interaction of any kind to distract you from your studies! You have all the time you need to devote to learning the fine arts of thievery, corruption, and mayhem!

Come learn from the Masters!

Yes, I’m talking about . . . Club Fed!

Tell me, have you ever considered how you could stretch the family budget during those lean times at the end of the month by knowing how to pick locks and neutralize alarm systems? How would you like to supplement your slave-wage by cooking a little meth in your spare time? Think how handy it could be to know how to steal someone’s identity and credit card numbers! Do you know the best places to stab someone in order to kill them? How would you like to learn to produce fire, alcoholic beverages, or lethal weapons under almost any condition or circumstance?

Well Club Fed offers intensive graduate-level courses on all the above subjects and many more!

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In a move that reflects their genius, your government has concentrated most of the criminal masterminds throughout the entire country into confined intensely personal spaces where they associate with nothing but

We must face the facts; very soon only rich people are going to be able to afford higher education.

It is time to adapt to our changing environment.

As youth find their educational and economic opportunities disappearing

Act now to take advantage of this special offer!

prospects that take into account the likely financial situation young people will soon find themselves facing...

Well never fear, kids! Dana always has your back and I happen to know of a great opportunity to learn the skills of the future! This unique opportunity will not only provide invaluable expertise for dealing with this bewildering new world in which you find yourselves trapped, but the experience itself is guaranteed to change your entire view of life!

Playback Theatre Performance

Stories of transforming suffering

In collaboration with Hospice Without Borders

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Each month we invite a guest artist(s), community organization, arts program, or social service agency to be a part of our performance. This month we will be collaborating with Hospice Without Borders (HWB) whose mission is to grow peace at the grass roots by cultivating the healing potential of hospice. HWB supports, mentors, and works in solidarity alongside community partners from Rwanda and Burundi to those here in the USA striving to improve pain control and provide palliative care for all—especially the vulnerable and very poor. In bearing witness to monumental suffering, hospice nurtures the roots of compassion—so that peace may blossom in our hearts. Suggested donation \$5.00-\$10.00 (No one is turned away)

Background information about Playback Theatre:

Playback Theatre is a spontaneous collaboration between performers and audience. People tell moments from their lives, then watch them re-created with movement, music, and dialogue.

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Procession of the Species

The critters have their say

Robin (Desdra Dawning)

For the past 18 years at the Olympia Procession of the Species, we animals have been silent witness to the joyful exuberance of our human counterparts. So very many of you—of all ages—have come together in playful abundance, animating the Community Studios, up to your elbows in multi-colored batik dyes, glue-gooey paper mache, chicken wire and rice paper, paints and glitter, creating us so that you can BE us. You have studied our bodies—what we look like, how we walk, swim, flutter and fly, slither, plod, stalk and tunnel. Some of you have taken the time to look into the many problems we have encountered as we attempt to share our planetary home with you. You have created a safe haven where we can join with you to celebrate Earth Day on the very streets of Olympia, Washington. Your drums announce our beating hearts and honor our joy at being alive on this, our only blue-green pearl-of-a-home.

And now we come to tell you “Thank you!” Our gratitude for your excellent enthusiasm, your sparkling creativity, and your joyful embrace of life, brings grace into our lives. We carry Eli Sterling, our Procession Papa—the one who thought up this whole wonderful adventure—up high on our round, sticky, spiky, slick and sometimes nonexistent shoulders! We speak, too, for that which give us life—our sweet wet liquid homes, the broken-down nutritious rocks that hold our smallest cousins, our green sisters and brothers that suck in our carbon and breathe back sweet oxygen into our airy space, and the leader of the Procession—our fiery star who lights our way and sustains us every day.

We have come, each year, in silence, for that is the way of the Procession. We do not toot our own horns. We do not ask to be put on pedestals. We do not say “Look at me! Bow before me! Worship me!” That is not our way. We come to remind you that we, like you, are temporary travelers on this rocky, watery home. We come to remind you that the true measure of life is in the Being of it. Not in its name, not in its celebrity, not in what it has accomplished, even. We come to remind you to join us in sincerely loving this home, this life we all share.

So, while the Procession itself allows no printed words, which has kept it, for so long, immune to the commercial world, we have been honored this year with a questionnaire, asking us if there is anything *we* would like to say! So we of the species asked our humans—the Procession participants—if they would

be so kind as to write down our answers and toss them into a colorful box left strategically placed at both studios.

That *Critter Questionnaire* asked questions such as these:

- What is the name humans call you?
- Why is it important to you to be in the Procession of the Species?
- How’s your life on Mother Earth going for you these days?
- What are you celebrating this year?
- Anything you would like humans to know, change or do to make your life easier?

And these were our answers:

First, my questionnaire answer.

“Your human word for me is ‘robin.’ I sing this year for Rachael Carson, and for so many in my whole family of songbirds who have been silenced by your pesticides. I celebrate their missing songs. Wake up! Our songs are asking you to Wake up! And if you listen closely, you will also hear us say ‘Cheerup! Cheer up! For it is your burdened heart that blinds you to the beauty all around you.’”

“I am called ‘wolf.’ I come to the Procession to show humans that animals really do matter. I celebrate endangered species because I am one myself, which makes life for us not so good right now. I mostly live out in the middle of nowhere and yet still some humans hate us. I’m hoping you will stop killing us just because you believe that silly story about the ‘big, bad, wolf!’ We love our mates for life. Can you say

the same?”

“Humans like to call me ‘dragonfly,’ maybe because I look a little like a dragon (although I am much smaller and less ferocious)! I wanted to join the revelers this year because I celebrate

the fact that we dragonflies are still around, after hundreds of millions of your earth-years, and we are able to live all over the place—from cold and snowy to hot and dry places. You need to know that while we are still very prevalent,

there aren’t as many of us as there used to be. Your pesticides are destroying our habitats. And that is sad because *we can be your pesticides!* We eat mosquitos and small annoying flies. We don’t bother you. In fact, we will fly away if you get too close. When *we* thrive, you need fewer chemicals—and this is healthier for *all* species!”

“My fancy name is ‘chromodoris annae.’ Sometimes I am ‘nudibranch.’ But I like ‘sea slug’ best, although none of the names humans call me measure up to the colorful beauty that is mine! Just wait ‘till you see me slip-sliding down the street, celebrating the beauty of this world. It will be a joyful event... and yet...I am saddened as I watch the living space in my favorite home, my coral reefs, shrink and die. Stop, humans, I say! Stop using trawling nets that disrupt the sea floor!”

“I’m known as ‘elephant,’ although I do not know why. I am happy to be in the Procession of the Species this year so that I can show people that there is more to life than just video games and



Photos: Laura Killian

television. Way more. You really need to get a life. And not only that, some of you need to get over your obsession with our tusks. I mean really, those crazy poachers want to hunt us down and kill us just so they can have some dollar bills in their hands? Just so somebody else can make piano keys and jewelry?”

“Humans call me ‘scorpion.’ I know I

► **CRITTERS**, continued on page 7

Art “gives courage to risk and never be afraid of tenderness or the absurd”

Eli Sterling

The following is the speech Eli Sterling, the founder of the Procession of the Species, gave when accepting the Earth Day proclamation award from the Thurston County Commissioners.

Good day, and thank you each, the Commissioners of Thurston County, for the honor of this Earth Day Proclamation and for the opportunity to share with you the presence of the 19th Procession of the Species Celebration.

The intention of the Procession is to elevate the dignity of the human spirit by enhancing the cultural exchange between communities and the natural world... and to advance that exchange through the languages of art, music, and dance.

Each year, as organizers, we are faced with this singular question: Does any of this color and pageantry truly make a difference on behalf of the natural world?

There are two separate answers to this question.

The first is explicitly expressed by the artist and sculptor, Mary Frank. During an interview on National Public Radio headlining a national retrospective of her work, Mary Frank, now at 90 years of age, was queried as to the purpose of art.

“Art,” she responded, “has many purposes: To comfort the dead and to awaken the living, to know the migration seasons of birds and fish,



Eli Sterling participating in Procession of the Species. Photo: Earthbound Productions

and to know the human immigrations of the past and present. To be able to use experiences and transform them. To make the eyes of children widen. To feel the power of color and shape. To fill an unspoken hunger for community. To give courage, use the heart, to risk and never be afraid of tenderness or the absurd. To gather joy.”

The second answer is no less explicit. In 2012, we witnessed the 50th anniversary of Rachel Carson’s publication of *Silent Spring* highlighting the destruction of song birds due to the

pesticide DDT.

Yet, in the last several years, our spring, throughout the entire nation, has become even more silent due to the unlawful actions of the Scotts Miracle-Gro Company that defy comprehension.

In 2012, the Scotts Miracle-Gro Company pleaded guilty to selling wild bird feed that was poisonous to birds, along with deceiving regulators by falsifying pesticide registration documents, distributing pesticides with misleading and unapproved labels, and

► **ART**, continued on page 7

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► **Critters**, cont. from page 6

can give you quite a sting. But really, all I want is to feel like I belong to a powerful, creative and positive collective--and when I join my Procession community, that is how I feel. It is an incredible and dynamic dance with humans, music and creative work toward good and loving goals. Mostly I would like humans to commit to treating each other better. That would help my world come back to a more natural and gentle balance.”

“‘Lion’. ‘Big cat.’ ‘King of Beasts.’ My power scares most humans half to death. Yet here I come, dancing down the street in the best community event on the planet! Celebrating hope, I am. Hope for a saner world. Hope that humans will stop burning down my forest so that they can raise their beef. Tasty as they are, they don’t belong in *my* forest!”

“‘Slug.’ You all just call me ‘slug.’ And mostly I don’t get much appreciation from you folks. I live a slow life. Really slow. But tasty! Please keep on planting lettuce. Yep, more lettuce, I say. I vote for more lettuce...and way less salt.”

“I am known as ‘deer.’ I move along the edges of the city, through the gardens and parks, as silently and carefully as I can, cautious and carefree. On Procession Day, I can dance in the streets and celebrate the full majesty of life under the wide open sky. Procession Day is a day when the balance between humans and other animals is restored, when we fall into right proportion and generous relationships of honor and delight, humility and pride. As for my life here on Earth, it’s increasingly difficult for me to find places away from humans--my meadows and woods are being swallowed by subdivisions and strip malls. So, my human cousins, please hold yourselves with humility, and live your lives awake to the joy of this green Earth.”

So there you have it. Thanks for asking us what *we* see, feel and think! We hope you learned a thing or two. And we hope you will pass the word: Love this life and take care of it—all of it!

Desdra Dawning writes for the Olympia Food Co-op Newsletter and Works In Progress. She has an MA in Creative Writing from Northern Arizona University.

► **Art**, continued on page 8

distributing unregistered pesticides.

According to the EPA, Scotts added the pesticide Storcide to its wild bird feed products to prevent insect infestations while the product was in storage. The warning label on Storcide, a product that Scotts sells, specifically states that the pesticide is toxic to birds, fish, and other wildlife. Scotts sold the tainted bird feed for two years after it began marketing the product, and for six months after company employees alerted management to the danger posed by the pesticides (truth-out.org).

Scotts Miracle-Gro poisoned their bird feed—a product intended to nourish song birds, in gestures of delight and care—as a means to preserving their market capacity to sell the product—not provide the care.

So let’s do the math: Scotts Miracle-Gro sold 71 million “product units” over two years, and was fined \$4 million dollars by the EPA. Even if they had been fined one dollar per unit, \$71 million dollars, it is not difficult to imagine that they still would have maintained a substantial margin of profit.

When nature does the math however, the calculations are even more brutal. Imagine a conservative calculation of one dead bird per unit sold. 71 million units of poison bird seed—71 million dead song birds.

Silent spring.

What is the worth of a song bird? \$4 million dollar fine—71 million birds: six cents a bird.

Silent spring.

Back to the question of the relevance of the Procession—

This year, Thurston County Solid Waste is creating a life-sized grey

From the soul, for the world Reem Kelani performs in Olympia

Thomas Petrie

The cozy interior of Traditions Cafe is almost full. The noises of people conversing fills the air as the stage and microphones are prepared. As 7 o’clock rolls around, the lights are dimmed and someone gets onstage to introduce the night’s performer—Reem Kelani.

Reem begins her set simply by saying, “Don’t be scared.” It becomes obvious why as she begins to loudly and rhythmically stamp her feet and clap her hands. After this first song (an intense piece with minimal musical accompaniment) she tells the audience that it is an old Palestinian wedding song. This is typical of the rest of the evening. Kelani is as much telling stories at this performance as making music. Virtually every piece of the night is prefaced and expanded upon with both Kelani’s personal feelings and historical facts. The effect of such knowledge is profound. It transforms what would otherwise be simple bits of musical experience into equal parts folk tale and history. Every piece of music Kelani sings has a place in the world and in her soul, and she expertly imparts this onto her audience.

The fact that much of the performance is personal inevitably leads to personal opinions. Kelani does give her own political views during the show, but not in the form of a lecture or self righteous tirade. They are simply given as facts that inform the music and her choices, and once again the audience is richer for it. It helps greatly that the show is not a somber parade of pain and suffering. It is rather more akin to a stand-up show. Kelani is not afraid to let humor flavor her ideas, in fact it is a big part of the show. Throughout the night she asks the audience, “Is there anyone here from Spain? Any Arabic speakers?” When there are no audience members fitting the description she simply laughs it off. And she asks these questions for a

whale made of plastic bags, milk jugs, fishing nets, and other discarded plastics readily found in Puget Sound. As these plastics break down in the marine environment, they take on the appearance of a food source for marine life—a whale, a cormorant, a salmon, a dolphin come to that deceptive plastic-as-food as innocently as a songbird to a feeder of poison seed.

Bits of plastic floating in Puget Sound have the same reverberations in the sea as pesticide in bird feed.

What does the art and dance and music of the Procession have to do with our betrayal of this beyond-human world?

Art keeps our sensibilities alive—it keeps our tenderness alive, and tenderness matters because its companion is fierce determination to protect beauty and innocence.

Math and regulation alone will not hold our sensibilities for how we should engage the Earth and all that live upon it. Art and culture remind us who we want to be and how we want to live.

Art “gives courage, invites us to use our hearts, to risk and never be afraid of tenderness or the absurd. Art gathers joy.”

Thank you for recognizing the joy and art of the Procession as necessary responses to poisoned bird feed and plastics in the ocean; as a means for us to hold that we are a community where life on Earth matters.

Eli Sterling is the founding director of Earthbound Productions and the Procession of the Species Celebration. He can be reached at (360) 705-1087, PO Box 7192 Olympia, WA 98507, or www.procession.org.



Photo: Thomas Petrie

reason. The night is filled with audience participation, whether simply clapping along or singing onstage with her. Combined with the storytelling and history provided, it superbly ingrains the listeners into the world Kelani brings into being.

The music of jazz pianist Bruno Heinen bares mention as well. He accompanies her on all of her pieces during the night, whether on piano or drum. His skill on the keys deftly slips from classical jazz to Middle Eastern inspired minor chords to 15th century troubadour. Heinen also becomes part of the audience— participation of the night, as Kelani constantly apologizes to him for rambling, or encourages him to take the stage with her, or tells parts of his life and family. It truly comes off as unrehearsed (which it may well be) and adds further to the atmosphere of fun and personal storytelling of the show.

Kelani and Heinen’s musical variety

shines throughout the performance. While all but a few of the songs are contemporary Egyptian or Palestinian, the differing styles make each one feel like an entirely different genre. And

Kelani does give her own political views during the show, but not in the form of a lecture or self righteous tirade. They are simply given as facts that inform the music and her choices, and once again the audience is richer for it.

there are traditional songs like the opener, and even older ones dating back hundreds of years. The aforementioned humor is quite often there, but Kelani knows when to make things somber and quiet, such as during a piano backed reading of poetry.

Reem Kelani is currently working on her second album, dedicated to the work of Egyptian composer Sayyid

Darwish, and she has worked with the BBC for “Songs for Tahrir.” After her performance in Olympia, she went on to perform at Seattle’s Town Hall.

Thomas Petrie is a student at The Evergreen State College, studying creative writing. He is currently an in-program internship with WIP.

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The real issues surrounding GMOs

Sandra Lee

GMOs (genetically modified organisms) are a political hot topic. With a GMO labeling initiative on Washington's voter ballot in November, we will hear a lot about it.

Over fifty countries, including the European Union, either ban GMOs outright, or require labeling of foods containing them. Arpad Pusztai is a reputable UK expert in feeding studies. When he publicly shared preliminary results of his safety tests for GM potatoes, the EU decided to require labeling. In response, large corporations producing processed foods in the EU chose to use only non-GM ingredients. However, those same companies still put GMOs in their products in North America. We should have GMO-free food too!

Because corporate interests are so politically powerful, the citizens of the U.S. are fighting first for labeling requirements. In 2012, the Washington State Legislature considered labeling bills, and private citizens swarmed Olympia for House and Senate hearings. Last year Californians voted on a labeling initiative. In 2013, it's up to Washington's voters.

The real issue in the GMO debate

Understanding the precautionary principle and the scientific method is important when considering implementation of anything that has a potential for risk. Let's ask Wikipedia for definitions.

"The *precautionary principle* or precautionary approach states if an action or policy has a suspected risk of causing harm to the public or to the environment, in the absence of scientific consensus that the action or policy is harmful, the burden of proof that it is not harmful falls on those taking an act."

Basically this means 'do no harm'. We are considering the wisdom of spreading GMOs around the world, and of consuming them as food. Do *any* aspects of doing so have the potential to cause harm? The burden of proof falls upon the individuals and the corporations who promote the spread the GMOs. *The corporations need to prove that GMOs are safe, that they cause no harm.*

The scientific method is how we prove things. The *scientific method* is "a method or procedure consisting in systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of hypotheses."

Scientists develop a hypothesis, a

theory that they wish to prove. They perform experiments that clearly test the hypothesis. *If even one experiment has results inconsistent with the hypothesis, then the hypothesis is false.*

The theory being tested is that GMOs are 1) safe to produce and to consume, and therefore that doing so causes no harm; and 2) that they are effective in solving several related problems: world hunger, crop yields, pesticide

Because of this assumption of substantial equivalence, the FDA does not require safety testing of GMOs. Industry voluntarily submits their own studies, but they are understandably biased.

and herbicide use, and protecting the environment.

What is it *not* being studied?

When it comes to food for consumption by people, the ultimate criterion of safety is this. *It needs to be proven safe for human consumption.* That is why the FDA exists, why we have food safety and labeling standards.

The following is the FDA Statement of policy on GMOs, since 1992. "The agency is not aware of any information showing that foods derived by these new methods differ from other foods in any meaningful or uniform way." As far as the FDA is concerned, GMOs are *substantially equivalent* to non-GMOs. This means the FDA considers GMO and non-GMO corn to be the same. That there is no difference between the plants. And that foods consumed by animals or humans impact health in the same way.

Because of this assumption of substantial equivalence, the FDA does not require safety testing of GMOs. Industry voluntarily submits their own studies, but they are understandably biased. We can't trust them to honestly report results. To our detriment, the FDA trusts industry and does not perform independent testing.

In actuality, it is documented that FDA scientists *were* aware of the risks, before this 1992 policy was approved. They warned that GMOs could result in allergies, toxins, new diseases, and nutritional problems. They said that extensive feeding safety studies should be conducted prior to approval of *each* individual GMO.

Human feeding studies are not being done! There should be thousands of human feeding studies in the published literature.

To my knowledge, there is only one published human feeding study [that was in the February 2004 issue of Nature Biotechnology]. In this small study, the genetically modified DNA section from GM soy was found inside the DNA of the gut bacteria of human volunteers—*before* the volunteers consumed the soy foods being studied. The gut bacteria had incorporated the DNA segment at some earlier time when those volunteers

consumed GM soy! These DNA insertions continued to function in the gut bacteria, making GM soy proteins. Though this does not prove actual harm resulting from human consumption of GMOs, it does provide evidence that GMO soy is different from non-GMO soy, and that it affects our bodies differently.

Industry argues that they have done safety studies. They perform animal studies. Animals are not humans. Their bodies respond differently, and they are not able to give verbal feedback of suffering. Even if every animal feeding study showed the absence of risk for animals, that is insufficient to prove safety for humans.

Release of GMOs into our food supply began in the 1990's. *Since then, you, the members of the public, have been the lab rats for the ongoing GMO feeding experiment!*

Children and reproduction

The people most likely to be negatively affected by the consumption of GMOs are children. Their rapidly growing brains and bodies are much more susceptible to harmful substances. Several animal studies (see *Genetic Roulette*) have shown altered structure and function of reproductive organs. A senior scientist from the Russian National Academy of Sciences fed

female rats GM soy two weeks before they conceived, continuing through pregnancy and lactation. More than 50% of their offspring died within three weeks, compared with 10% offspring death for mothers who ate non-GM soy. The offspring of GM fed mothers were also smaller and more aggressive than normal. When the scientist tried to mate the offspring of the GM fed group, they did not conceive.

French feeding study

Recently there has been tremendous publicity about a [toxin] study conducted by a team of scientists led by molecular biologist and endocrinologist Professor Gilles-Eric Seralini, co-director of the Risk Quality and Sustainable Environment Unit at the University of Caen. This was the first ever study to examine the long-term (lifetime) effects of eating GMOs. Rats fed [Monsanto's Roundup Ready] corn developed horrendous tumors. Read the paper here: <http://www.biolsci.org/v05p0706.htm>

Of this study, Dr Michael Antoniou, molecular biologist at Kings College, London, and a member of the Committee for Research & Independent Information on Genetic Engineering scientific council, says: "This is the most thorough research ever published into the health effects of GM food crops and the herbicide Roundup on rats. It shows an extraordinary number of tumours developing earlier and more aggressively—particularly in female animals. I am shocked by the extreme negative health impacts."

Genetic Engineering Technology

Biotechnology companies claim that genetic engineering technology is precise and safe. But actual studies show substantial risks and problems.

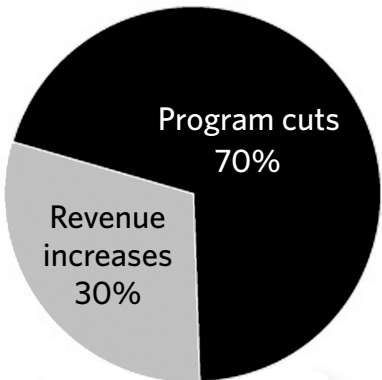
Genetic engineering changes the DNA, the plant's genetic blueprint. Nature fine tuned the DNA for each organism over the course of eons. How can we mess with the blueprints and still have viable organisms? Genetic engineering is imprecise, resulting in massive collateral damage to the plant's DNA.

► **REAL ISSUES**, continued on page 9

Programs cuts account for most of debt reduction

Some 70 percent of the \$2.3 trillion in policy savings that the President and Congress have enacted over the past few years — which will produce \$2.75 trillion in total deficit reduction when interest savings are included — have come through program cuts rather than revenue increases (see graph).

Richard Kogan, CBPP



Source: The Center on Budget and Policy

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► **Real issues**, cont. from page 8
One genetic modification may produce thousands of mutations. Doesn't it make sense that there will be unintended consequences? These consequences impact the viability of the plants, and the nutritional qualities conveyed to animals or humans that consume them.

Toxic substances may be produced, impacting the consumer. Any of these consequences could damage health.

Genetic Roulette, by Jeffrey Smith, of the Institute for Responsible Technology is an excellent, well documented book. He references scientific studies that demonstrate a wide variety of risks inherent in the process of genetic engineering. I highly recommend this book for anyone wishing to understand the science.

As mentioned above, the FDA was aware of risks before the FDA official policy on GMOs was approved. They said there was potential for allergies, toxins, new diseases, and nutritional problems.

Genetic Roulette cites numerous feeding studies that showed negative impacts on animals.

Hunger, crop yields & herbicides

The sales pitch for genetic engineering hypes high GMO crop yields as the solution to world hunger. But the promised yields don't materialize in real life. Yields may (or may not) be good when a farmer starts planting GMOs, but over time the yields fall.

What could make a GMO crop fail? Genetic engineering produces massive collateral damage to the plant's DNA blueprint. Resulting in plants that may struggle to thrive.

Long term herbicide use contributes to plant failure. Plants need minerals to be healthy. RoundUp, Monsanto's popular weed killer is the most commonly used herbicide on GM crops. It is extraordinarily effective at chelating minerals, making them unavailable to the plants. RoundUp makes the soil unhealthy, so it can't adequately support plant life.

Dr Don Huber is a soil scientist with decades of research focusing on the long term impacts of RoundUp on soil, plants, and animals. He explains it in easily understood language. An internet search for his name provides links to numerous interviews.

With continued usage of herbicides over time, weeds become resistant to them. The amount of herbicide applied increases, and farmers turn to even more toxic herbicides.

Bt corn and cotton

Corn and cotton are genetically engineered to make *Bt* toxin. By itself *Bt* toxin is

commonly used to kill insects. The toxin is produced by every cell of the plant, so biotech companies claim that pesticide application is not required. In the beginning, yields may be high and pesticide usage low. But over time, plant-produced *Bt* loses effectiveness and increased pesticide application is required.

The film *Unnatural Selection* shows a host of Indian farmers whose livelihoods have been devastated by the cultivation of *Bt* cotton. They complain about the high cost of *Bt* seed, low yields and crop failures, and ineffectiveness of the plant's pesticide. You see farmers with cotton plants looking quite unhealthy and showing very few cotton bolls. A farmer picks a boll of cotton and shows it to us, through the camera. There is a boll worm crawling on the cotton!

This contributes to farmer suicides in India. Farmers are in debt (partly due to high costs associated with GM cotton cultivation), and with smaller yields than they had with non-GM cotton. Non-GM seed is no longer available for purchase. Frequently they commit suicide by drinking the pesticide!

Indian farmers customarily allow their livestock (sheep, goats, buffalo) to eat non-GM cotton plants after the

cotton is harvested. When they allow their animals to eat *Bt* plants, the animals die.

Contamination of organic crops

Well publicized is the case of Percy Schmeiser and other organic canola farmers from Saskatchewan. Their crops were contaminated by GMO plants blowing onto their land from neighboring fields. These farmers have lost their livelihoods, and in some cases, had Monsanto sue them for unlicensed usage of GM seed. Courts determined that Percy Schmeiser was guilty of violating Monsanto's patent. But he was not charged damages, because he did not financially benefit from use of Monsanto's seed.

Now that GM Alfalfa is approved, I assume that a similar contamination methodology will be possible for alfalfa. All it takes is a couple of seeds being dropped (like from a truck), blown (the most common contamination mechanism for canola), or floated (on water) from one field to another.

Genetically modified corn has been found in Mexico, though I believe that no GM corn has been intentionally planted there. All it takes is one dropped kernel that grows. Corn contamination also occurs another way. Pollen from GM

labeling would increase the cost of food for consumers. Many Californians initially supported labeling, but voted no in the election. Industry spent millions—daily—on television advertising in California leading up to election day.

Changing packaging and labels would not increase costs. The frequent changing of labels is a marketing strategy. Examples are the heart healthy, low fat, and sugar free claims plastered on our food products. If the industry-claimed consumer benefits of GMOs were proving to be actual benefits, then packages would proudly proclaim the presence of GMOs.

What would increase costs? Requiring ongoing testing of finished products. Knowing this, my assumption is that the writers of Washington's current initiative did *not* include such testing in the initiative. (The 2012 Washington legislative bills did not require testing, and I imagine the California initiative did not, but I do not know.) Increased food costs resulting from labeling requirements would be insignificant.

Non-GMO project

Some small companies voluntarily label their products as GMO free. Read labels and support them. There is an independent organization, the Non-GMO Project, to which companies submit products for labeling. Because they believe in the cause, companies voluntarily pay to join the project and conduct testing. Plus Non-GMO Project certification increases their sales.

Precautionary Principle and Scientific Method

Remember, the theory being tested is that GMOs are 1) safe to produce and

to consume, and therefore that doing so causes no harm; and 2) that they are effective in solving several related problems: world hunger, crop yields, pesticide and herbicide use, and protecting the environment.

There is much more than one piece of evidence showing the harm resulting from GMO production and consumption. Even without human feeding studies, that is clear. If the government continues to approve of the cultivation of GMOs, then scientifically conducted human feeding studies should be performed. We are not laboratory animals.

The public

Since GMOs are currently allowed in our foods, people deserve to be informed of their presence. The voice of the public should be taken into account. Our government is supposed to be "of the people, by the people, and for the people." The people demand labeling.

Corporate interests spent many millions of dollars to defeat California's Proposition 37, yet the margin of defeat was small. The organizations supporting passage of the labeling bill had a pitifully small funding pool, contributed by individual citizens and small private companies. Corporate money convinced enough people that labeling would increase the cost of their food.

It's Washington's turn. We represent everyone this year. When people are informed, the decision is obvious. Educate each other and get out the vote.

Sandra Lee gives educational presentations about genetically modified foods. She has been a health care provider in Olympia since 1992. She has a bachelor of science degree in Chemistry. However, it is her 10+ years of self-directed education in health and nutrition that she considers the most valuable. In 2011, she received training in giving presentations about GMOs from the Institute for Responsible Technology. She now lives in British Columbia and visits Olympia frequently. You can reach her at sandra@MiracleInspirations.com.



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► **PSE**, cont. from page 10
NW Energy Coalition is made up of over 100 public interest, environmental, low-income advocacy, labor, clean energy business, and utilities that work together implementing a clean energy agenda. In this case, they are being led along by one of their members, the Natural Resources Defense Council. Their membership has not endorsed their position in this case.

Public Counsel is a branch of the Attorney General's office that represents the public. They have opposed the TransAlta contract (mostly on cost to ratepayer grounds), are skeptical of decoupling, and oppose attrition adjustments that only consider things that are going up in cost without analyzing everything to see what is going down.

Industrial Customers of NW Utilities and NW Industrial Gas Users represent Boeing, Weyerhaeuser, and the like. They have are opposed to all three proposals.

Kroger is QFC and Fred Meyer grocery chains. They are lightly involved.

Energy Project is a group that represents low-income ratepayers. They are skeptical of all three parts of this.

What Should People Say?


1. The TransAlta deal costs too much. PSE has to pay the coal power price even when cheaper power is available from hydro and wind. Ratepayers pay more, and PSE and TransAlta shareholders get the money.
2. There is no guarantee the TransAlta plant will shut down, and without that guarantee, the entire basis of the legislation is being evaded.
3. The TransAlta deal makes PSE more dependent on coal. They should be investing in wind, solar, geothermal, tidal power, wave power, and energy efficiency instead.
4. A 3% rate increase per year is unjustified. In 2012, PSE earned more than its allowed return, sharply up from 2011. The big reason is that the cost of borrowing has come down, PSE has refinanced a lot of its debt at lower interest rates, and that brings costs down. The 3% annual increase does not consider this.
5. It was all negotiated in secret. The WUTC should NOT allow its staff to have secret meetings with PSE. The public should be allowed to participate.

It's being rushed through the approval process. The WUTC needs to really examine the underlying basis for the proposed 3% per year increases, independent of the TransAlta and decoupling pieces. They are cramming it down in a very quick proceeding, without giving Public Counsel and the industrial customers time for adequate analysis by experts who can then testify in front of the UTC.

We must bring sunshine to these backroom dealings. Attend the May 16 public comment meeting at 6 pm at the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission offices: Richard Hemstad Building, 1300 S Evergreen Park Drive SW, Olympia. Tell the UTC what you think about their secret negotiations and this outrageous "deal".

John Pearce is a founding member and current Chair of Thurston Public Power Initiative.

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Welfare fraud investigations perpetuate fraudulent stereotypes

Jordan Beaudry

Negative stereotypes of low-income folks are perpetuated by lopsided media investigations, which feed into the narrative of conservative lawmakers intent on destroying the social safety net. Yet most voters think that poor children deserve to eat, live indoors and go to a doctor when they are sick. Monica Peabody, POWER (Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights) Board member

Last February, Congress passed legislation that bans the use of TANF funds at casinos, strip clubs, and liquor stores. TANF, or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, is a federal block grant program that provides cash assistance to low-income families with children. This cash assistance is made accessible to recipients through the use of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. The bill sponsor, Louisiana Republican Representative, Charles Boustany, claims that illicit use of TANF funds is a nationally rampant problem. For proof he probably looked to sources like an early 2011 fraud investigation done by Seattle's King 5 television, which revealed that 13,000 TANF recipients made 20,465 separate withdrawals in state casinos.

This was reminiscent of a scandal in California, where the *Los Angeles Times* reported that EBT card users pulled \$4.8 million out of casino ATM's between the beginning of 2007 and middle of 2010. What these reports failed to take into account is how often casino's are located in rural areas with limited ATM availability. Half the transactions in California took place in rural areas, and based on the locations of Washington's casinos it's reasonable to assume these statistics are comparable.

Troy Huston, deputy director of DSHS (Department of Social and Health Services), was asked by King 5 News if he thought the money being withdrawn in Washington casinos was being used for gambling. Mr. Huston acknowledged that, "I don't know if someone who is withdrawing money at a casino is actually using it to gamble . . . I don't have enough information to make that determination."

Despite this lack of information, the "forbidden" businesses mentioned above are now required to alter their ATM's and point of sale machines so they cannot accept EBT cards, an expense they are covering out of pocket. Washington's Office of Fraud and Accountability has utilized US Postal Service data to create a tracking system for matching TANF recipient's cards to transaction records they are accessing from ATMs at "forbidden locations".

The Office of Fraud and Accountability has thirty employees; six new full-time

positions were created in March 2011 to reduce fraud and misuse of benefits through EBT cards. A figure has not been released for the cost of this investigation, but it's safe to assume it surpasses the \$6,600 TANF recipients withdrew from ATM's at 'adult entertainment venues' and casinos last year.

In 2012 Washington State had an average of 54,427 people receiving TANF benefits per month. Over a seven-month period last year 63 Washingtonians used their EBT cards at ATM's located in casinos, liquor stores, tattoo parlors, and strip clubs. That is less than .002% of Washington State EBT card users. Of these 63, seven are "re-

Over a seven-month period last year 63 Washingtonians used their EBT cards at ATM's located in casinos, liquor stores, tattoo parlors, and strip clubs; that's less than .002% of Washington State EBT card users. Of these 63, seven are "repeat offenders." How is this news?

peat offenders." How is this news?

Tracking EBT card use has also become a pastime for the conservative media. In January Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post* revealed that welfare recipients made *dozens* of ATM withdrawals at a handful of porn and liquor stores across New York City during an 18-month span. Kansaswatchdog.org tracked Kansas TANF recipients' spending habits over a 3-month period last year by accessing ATM records at casinos, strip clubs and the like. They found that Kansas welfare recipients withdrew \$43,000 at 'questionable locations', the largest two being "smoke shops and cigarette retailers", a common ATM location where \$19,302.42 was accessed. Cash advance and payday loan places, which are a debt trap that specifically targets low-income folks, came in second with \$8,578.10. Not to be outdone, Florida's NBC2, with the help of Virginia-based software firm FMS, Inc., recently sorted through 1.3 million EBT ATM transactions, totaling \$201.8 million dollars, to find that between 2009 and 2011 \$190,733 had been spent in bars, liquor stores, strip clubs, casinos, and bowling alleys. That is less than one percent of the total money they monitored and almost certainly less than the cost of the investigation.

The sentiment behind these investigations was perfectly summarized, albeit unintentionally, by Michael Tanner of the Cano Institute. When interviewed about EBT use at sex shops in the *New York Post* Article he stated, "I have nothing against strip clubs, but that's not what benefits are for. I don't blame [recipients]. If you are poor, it's a crummy life and you want to have a drink or see a naked woman. I blame the people who are in charge of this."

Mr. Tanner's statement paints low-income folks as drunks with crummy lives who want to party on the taxpayer dime. They don't know any better, so it's up to those in power to put a stop to their debauchery. The entire purpose of reports like these seems to be advocating for the prejudices of Mr. Tanner's lot. This narrative is the latest line of attack in a smear campaign that stretches back even further than the phrase 'welfare queen'. Once these stereotypes are planted in the public consciousness it becomes that much easier for conservative lawmakers to swoop in with discriminatory legislation.

For a case study in this phenomenon we need look no further than Florida's mandatory drug testing of welfare recipients. Despite costing Florida a deficit of \$45,780 and proving the percentage of welfare recipients using illegal substances was lower than the general population, Kansas decided just last month to begin a similar drug testing policy for its welfare applicants. In these instances, stereotypes speak louder than statistics. Similarly, tracking TANF recipients ATM habits is absurdly wasteful, proving nothing except how little money is being withdrawn at locations that offend conservative sensibilities. Media reports have been playing down the truth and playing up shock value, which perpetuates pre-established negative stereotypes, attracting viewers like moths to a light. As these negative stereotypes become further engrained, logic falls by the wayside. The public is too busy buying into an absurd fantasy about welfare recipients being a bunch of drunken degenerates gambling away other people's money to care about how their tax dollar is being wasted in pursuit of this fantasy. This portrayal pacifies the masses as conservative lawmakers smash the social safety net to smithereens. Since 1996, due to TANF time limits and onerous requirements, the number of people receiving cash assistance has fallen by two thirds, though poverty has increased. In 2009 TANF assisted 28 families for every 100 in poverty, compared to 75 out of 100 in 1996. All this has occurred during the worst economic crisis in a generation, when the need for social services is greater than it has been in decades. In order to address this growing economic inequality we must first debunk the stereotypes about low-income individuals that are fueling this atrocity.

Jordan Beaudry has a pen in his pocket and a passion for social justice.

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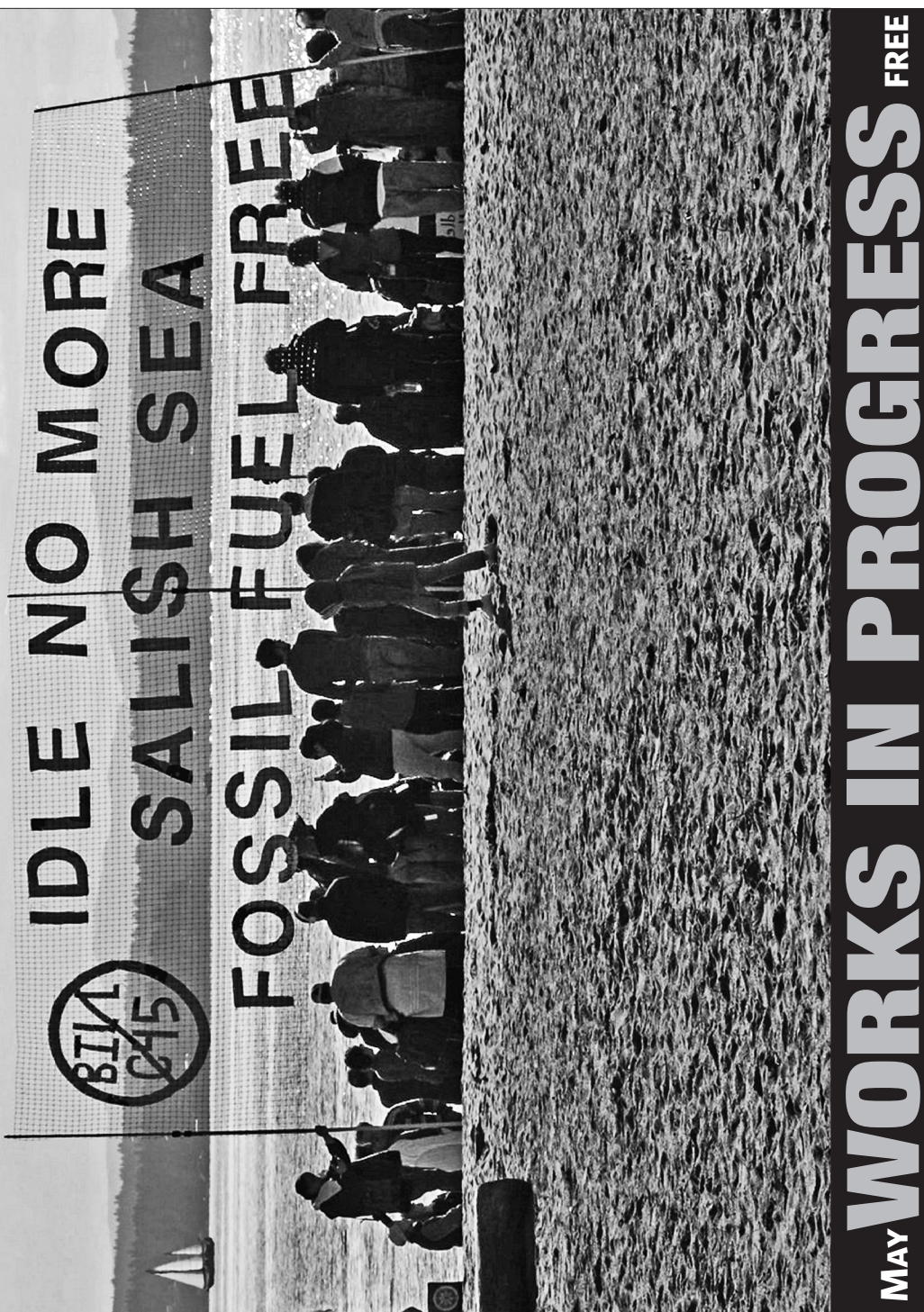
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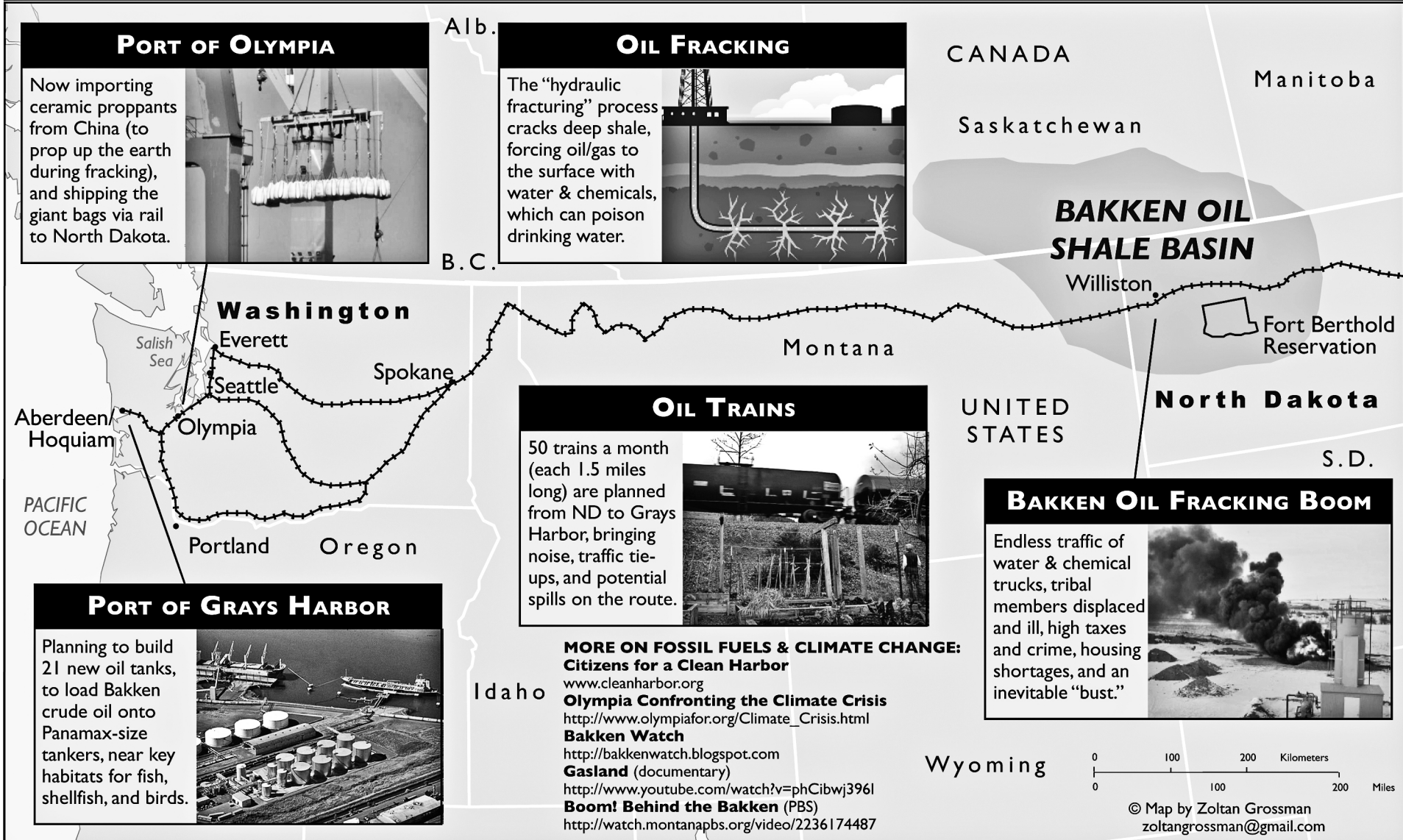
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THE WASHINGTON-NORTH DAKOTA OIL FRACKING CONNECTION



The Port of Olympia has been receiving shipments of ceramic proppants for use in the Bakken North Dakota oil fracking industry. The fracking has been causing environmental damage, has resulted in a boom-and-bust

economy, and has harmed public health—including the health of Native peoples. The Olympia F.O.R.'s Confronting the Climate Crisis working group is on a campaign to encourage the port to refrain from these

shipments. They have been meeting monthly on the third Wednesday, at the Olympia Center. For more information email http://www.olympiafor.org/Climate_Crisis.html

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