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October 2019

Act in haste, repent at leisure

The Port of Olympia: economic development or real estate speculation?

Esther Kronenberg

For the past several years, the activities of the Port of Olympia have produced a shortfall in revenues over expenses. So, when the Port staff suggested a way to increase revenues by investing in real estate it seemed like a good move. As Commissioner Zita stated, “The potential to own and make revenue, instead of leasing, was a good idea worth considering.”

Relying on the confident advice of staff and positive statements from a feasibility study, the Port Commissioners moved to acquire the Commerce Business Center (CBC, or Center) in 2017 in Lacey for \$6.5 million. Now, two years later, Commissioners discovered that those confident predictions left out details that could have raised questions about the wisdom of the purchase. How did that happen?

A unique opportunity to generate revenue

Mike Reid, the Port's manager for business development, approached Commissioners in the summer of 2016 with the idea of buying the CBC. According to Reid, it was a unique opportunity that could generate revenue to support multiple objectives of the Port. There were 3 industrial “flex space” buildings that could be used either as warehouses or showroom/offices. They had historically low vacancy rates. It would diversify the Port's real estate offerings and lead to a multitude of future opportunities.

After outlining the potential benefits of purchasing the CBC in an August meeting, Mike Reid urged the Commissioners to authorize then Executive Director Ed Galligan to enter into a Purchase & Sale Agreement (PSA) for the property.

The Commissioners told Galligan to

go ahead with the PSA, with the understanding that there would be no recommendation on closing the deal until they did a feasibility study. Expert firms would evaluate the condition of the buildings, offer an appraisal

8% rate of return on investment. An annual inflation of 2% for revenues and expenses was projected.

Reid concluded his presentation by recommending that the Port make

development opportunities for small and emerging entrepreneurs seeking to develop and grow in Thurston County.” It would provide “space for such businesses that is *not readily available or adequately served by today's real estate market*” [emphasis added]. The ILA committed the Port to formulating a management plan, and Lacey to investing \$200,000 for improvements to Building 1.

Lacey and the Port agreed to contribute \$10,000 each for a Market Analysis.

Meanwhile, those nagging financial problems remained.

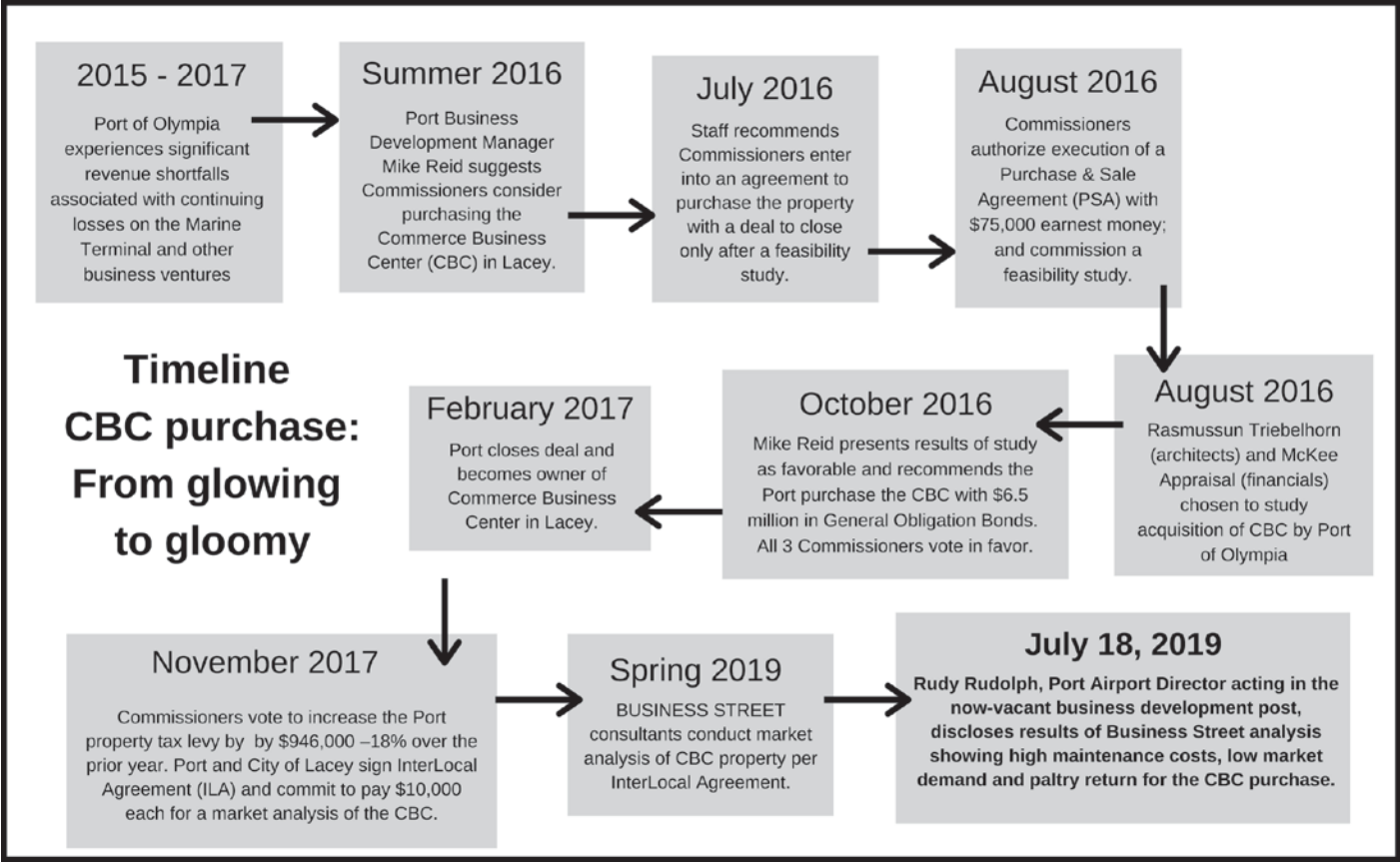
As the Port's revenues continued to fall short of operating costs, Port Commissioners needed to address finances for the coming year. Commissioners McGregor and Downing favored increasing the Port's property tax

levy. Over the objections of Commissioner Zita, they voted to bump up the levy by \$946,000—18% over the prior year—for a total of over \$6 million to be collected from Thurston County residents' property taxes.

The Commissioners get some unwelcome news

Two years into their new responsibilities as owner of the Commerce Business Center buildings, on July 18, 2019, Port staff disclosed the results of that Market Analysis jointly commissioned with the City of Lacey. The news was an unpleasant surprise.

Neither Executive Director, Ed Galligan, nor Mike Reid was there to hear it. Ed Galligan had been replaced as Executive Director by Sam Gibboney in January of 2019. Mike Reid had taken a new job as Economic Development director for the City of Olympia a year earlier.



al including costs and risks to the Port, and consider the likelihood of a financial partnership with the City of Lacey.

Looks good to go—minor defects, an 8% rate of return, high demand

At a meeting Oct. 24 2016, Mike Reid presented results from the feasibility study that corroborated his initial favorable view. According to Reid's PowerPoint, Architects Rasmussen Triebelhorn had found that “the buildings are in good shape” with a “normal amount of wear” and defects that were “minor in nature.”

The firm McKee Appraisal had set a market value of \$6.5 million for the property. Reid's Power Point highlighted the financial analysis showing vacancy rates declining since 2012: “There is very little flex space available in the Thurston County area, so the space that is available tends to be in very high demand.” Other PowerPoint slides showed the report's assumed occupancy rate at 75% with an

the purchase—and finance it with general obligation bonds. Assured by these favorable indications, the Commissioners voted to go ahead with the acquisition. When the Port took possession of the Center in March, 2017, the Olympian quoted Commissioner McGregor saying that the Port expected an “immediate return” on the property with a net of \$80,000 a year after the sale.

Financial participation from the City of Lacey

Several months after the Port took ownership, Reid and Rick Walk, Lacey's Community Development director briefed the Port and the City of Lacey on the partnership idea for Building 1. In November, the two jurisdictions entered into an InterLocal Agreement (ILA) to “create economic

At least one Commissioner wondered why this disturbing information was only now coming to their attention.

Works In Progress

Editorial Policy

Works in Progress (WIP) is a community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington and published monthly since 1990.

WIP aims to publish writing and graphics that confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on justice in the economic, political, environmental and social realms and across classes, races and genders.

Our priority is to focus on stories that are ignored or misrepresented in the mainstream media, especially those that relate directly to our mission. To this end, we seek well-researched news stories, serious analyses of issues confronting our communities and accounts of personal experiences or reflections by local writers.

Informed opinion pieces are welcome, especially when accompanied by facts, examples and sources. Writing that stereotypes groups or categories of people will not be accepted for publication.

We discourage writing where a key point is stated as fact when it is unproven or in serious dispute. Articles can relate to the theme but material on other topics is important. While the views expressed in the material we print are those of the author alone, WIP typically will favor material that is consistent with our mission.

Once we receive a submission we may choose to publish it, or not. 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 that.

Deadlines. Submissions must be received by the third Sunday of each month to be considered for the following month's issue. See Submission Guidelines at www.olywip.org for details.

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Submission deadline next issue:

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olywip@gmail.com

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115 Legion Way SW, 1pm

On the cover: Olympia's port anchors the north edge of the city and links us to the rest of the world. Photo by Carla Wulfsberg.



The rest of the world (is us)

Prejudice and hostility as the official vocabulary of the nation

With President Trump and other high-ranking officials of his administration, prejudice and hostility against some nations and members of specific ethnic groups have become a predictable and integral part of official White House discourse. This attitude reflects what has come to be known as America First, a term that refers to a foreign and internal policy that emphasizes U.S. nationalism and unilateralism.

America First is the unsubstantiated belief (to borrow from G. W. Sumner's classic definition of ethnocentrism) that this country is “the center of everything.” All other nations or groups of color “must be scaled and rated” in reference to the self-inflicted delusions that the President and others have about themselves and the world. This ideological and political stance has taken the United States to levels of international isolation seldom experienced in previous administrations.

Neither history, nor ethnicity, nor language

For obvious reasons—the specific modes that constitute the economy and the social relations among ethnic groups within this nation—and contrary to most national states around the world, the U.S. has never been able to assert the idea of a national identity among its people through a sense of shared history, ethnicity or language. Dispossessed of these constitutive elements, what is left is the cynical claim that the American variation of democracy is what amalgamates America's identity, and at the same time places the U.S. above all other nations.

This idea has proven to be a key element in manufacturing national consent. It has provoked the unconscious assent of many generations of Americans eager to forget or circumvent the fact that our democracy rests on the institution of slavery, the ethnic genocide of indigenous people, aggressive military interventions and economic expansionism around the planet in order to fulfill the needs of America's expanding capitalism. It has produced a society with the highest levels of human incarceration and income and social inequality as compared with other industrialized nations. To this, we must add the existence of blatant discriminatory voting barriers against people of color; and the imposition of a surveillance state on its citizens. An objective evaluation of American democracy is impossible if we continue to minimize the significance of these realities.

If you poison us, do we not die?

The advent of the Trump administration along with the Republican Party

apparatus has fueled and provided political framing for emergent forms of American nationalism. These are imbued with racism and white hegemonism as political and ideological residuals of the deceptive model of democracy established in 1776. The latest white supremacist attacks in various American cities targeting Latinos and Muslims, black Americans, LGBTQ people, Jewish people, and other people of color reflect this persistent white nationalist ideology.

But this type of “white gang nationalism,” abhorrent as it is, is not by any means the most dangerous or the most threatening. Trump and the Republican Party are currently responsible for accelerating the destruction of the conditions that make possible the continuation of human life on the planet. The two main factors menacing survival on the planet are (a) the possibilities of nuclear war and (b) human-induced climatic alterations of the Earth system. Most of the nations in the world seem to recognize the seriousness of these two scenarios, and most nations, particularly regarding climate change, appear willing to do something about it (i.e., the Global Climate Strike in over 132 countries and the UN summit on climate change), but the U.S. is not.

The logic of destruction

The most powerful and wealthy na-



photo by Ricky Osborne

Then this happened...

It helps to know people. In April, WIP featured a story on the Green Cove Park Project, a housing development proposed in West Olympia on the site of an illegal hazardous waste dump. Neighbors and environmental advocates urged the city to test the site for buried waste, including wood treatment wastes and herbicides likely to contaminate wells and groundwater.

On August 8, the City notified developer Jerry Mahan that he had six months to answer many of the same questions raised by citizens.

Then this happened: Mahan hired the very well-connected Heather Burgess to represent him at a meeting to negotiate with the City. Bur-

gess serves as the attorney for the Port of Olympia and president-elect of the Thurston County Economic Development Council (one of those friendly public-private things). Also she's a member of the Chamber. And the Master Builders. Citizens concerned to see that the City acts to protect environmental and public health should contact Senior Planner Cari Hornbein at chornbei@ci.olympia.wa.us, and Council members at city-council@ci.olympia.wa.us.

No approval for the Green Cove project should be granted unless Mahan meets all city requirements and removes all buried wastes as required by State law. Find details about the project at www.olywip.org “Green Cove Park.”

tion in the world consciously uses its power to exacerbate the conditions that have placed humanity in the current survival dilemma. Nuclear risks have escalated as a consequence of U.S. withdrawal from the 1987 INF Treaty. This required superpowers to renounce forever all nuclear, conventional and cruise missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 kilometers. At the same time, Trump increased the budget of the National Nuclear Administration by 8.3 %, aiming to complete production of new low-yield nuclear missiles. By so doing, Trump has effectively reinstated “the great power rivalry” of the cold-war.

In the case of climate change, this administration operates with the cocky confidence of those who have given up science in order to increase the profits of the fossil fuel industry in the U.S. and overseas. The two most dangerous measures against the environment are American withdrawal from the Paris Accord, and the aggressive campaign of environmental deregulation. According to the *Guardian*, deregulations forced upon EPA has meant the “elimination of the rules that combat climate change, water pollution and vehicle emissions,” along with the elimination of 25% of its employees and 56 programs “including pesticide safety, lead toxicity and environmental justice.”

If we add the fact that the US is the second largest polluter country on Earth (15%), we can affirm that no other country contributes so much to endangering the planet and the human species. In this context, there really is no such thing as “the rest of the world” because as a planet and as a species, we all share the precarious circumstances of survival.

Enrique Quintero

Upcoming themes

November-December: Winners & Losers. We live in a society built on competition—in economic life, sports, online, social settings; everywhere. The contestant who ran the race in 4.10 seconds is celebrated and the one who crossed the finish line at 4.12 seconds is forgotten. What kind of culture does this create? Plus – it's election month. Send us your stories. Deadline for submissions Oct 20.

January 2020: What keeps us safe. Deadline December 15

February: Our lived values. Deadline January 19

Correction: We neglected to identify Nancy Thorne-Chambers as the sculptor of the “pig listening” statue on page 2 of the August WIP.

Apparently the City of Olympia has plenty of money.

In August, WIP covered the City's refusal to accept a decision by the Growth Management Board that required them to fix flaws in a residential rezone known as the “Missing Middle.” The City has now appealed to Superior Court to overturn the decision. The Board gave the City until mid-December to come up with a plan to bring the ordinance into compliance with the law. City Council members instead are following the advice of staff (who wrote the ordinance) and lawyers (who bill by the hour) to continue fighting the decision. At this point, citizens challenging the rezone estimate that the City has spent \$80-\$100,000 on legal fees. All to avoid redrafting parts of the rezone so it is accurate and in line with the City's own Comprehensive Plan. Money is no object?

Long-time Olympia residents forced to leave affordable housing units

Lohen Che’

In July 2019 my partner and I received notification that our home of eight years had been sold to a new owner. The new owner’s property management company told us that we had a “generous” 60 days to vacate. We were not the only tenants to be forced from our homes. All 13 people, who lived in the three duplexes from 1112 to 1122 10th Avenue SE were notified that were expected to vacate. This included two single mother families with a total of five children.

Rent for these units was around \$800 which qualified as affordable since us tenants had been living in their units between 8 and 15 years. Assuming an average rent over the years of \$500 per month for the tenants who’d lived there 15 years they have contributed almost \$100,000 in rental costs which reflects on city tax income. Those who’d been there 8 years had paid something like \$60,000 – assuming rent averaging \$600 a month over those years.

Soon after the notice, I spoke at a city council meeting, trying to find out what the Council proposes to do about the housing and homeless crisis so many people are currently facing. I was met with a lot of sympathy and little help. They referred us to WA Community Action Network and Northwest Justice project. That provided legal protection from eviction for a month which ended on September 30. In continuing a search for alternatives, I contacted the IWW, the Tenants Union of Washington, and other tenant unions from Oregon and Idaho. That was a call to action made as a cry for help. My partner is unable mentally or physically to move on his own in the time allotted, and even if he were, there is no place to go, with his meager income of \$760 from Social Security.

I tried to speak to City Council members again in September. I was prevented because the Council and Mayor Selby delayed public comment for over an hour arguing about the 4th

Avenue bridge encampment. During that Council meeting, the Council discussed whether to allow the encampment to remain. Mayor Selby

Mayor Selby and City of Olympia seem to be acting unaware that Olympia is steadily losing affordable housing units.

referred to the collective homeless, to those facing homelessness and to advocates for housing rights as the “vocal minority” and said “you do not reward a toddler in a candy aisle for throwing a fit.” The mayor added her opinion that homelessness was related to bad behaviors: “we are conflating a lot of behaviors that aren’t related to homelessness, they are just, bad behaviors.”

Mayor Selby and City of Olympia seem to be acting unaware that Olympia is steadily losing affordable housing units. The duplexes on 10th NE will be remodeled as much more

expensive housing. Tenants in affordable downtown apartments – most recently The Angelus – are being evicted as real estate speculators move in to take advantage of City policies promoting market rate housing.

Is homelessness really about “bad behavior?” Data collected by Thurston Regional Planning shows a significant decrease since 2015 in housing affordability. The county’s poverty rate has risen by 4 percent since 2000. In the meantime, the city does not collect data on evictions that would show their frequency, causes and trends - and relation to rising homelessness. The UW studied evictions state-wide earlier this year and found that “given that evictions contributes to homelessness, the steady stream of evictions likely feed people into the homeless population each year while the loss of affordable housing exacerbated the problem.”

Lohen Che` is a multifaceted activist, writer, and local of Olympia.

I am and am not a toddler

I am yet I am ***not*** a toddler.
I say to you, Mayor Selby
As a toddler, having rats crawl
over me
in your city, so many decades past
before me I see you
I have nightmares you will never see

A toddler will take the
lollipop because
as a toddler I need nurture,
never harm
and those of us that you call
they, them,
and it—The problem
to depersonalize and
separate yourself
from me as a human being
I say to you
let me be a free toddler
kicking and screaming with
livid fear
and do not punish me

—Lohen Che’

Homily for Sergio

Paul McCarthy

Most people who saw Sergio on the streets of Olympia would only see the little man, the homeless, disheveled man, the sick man, and probably the migrant man—all labels that tend to marginalize a person and make it easier to dismiss them. Saint Michael parishioners and supporters who prepared meals at the Interfaith shelter saw a different Sergio.

To them he was Sergio the great guitarist and vocalist who could sing a thousand different songs in English and in Spanish. He could play every Beatles song and sing them in both languages. He was the ultimate defender of the most vulnerable with a smile, an embrace, and a song for all in need of help.

When his guitar was stolen, the light in his eyes dimmed until Saint Michael parishioners got together and bought him a new guitar. The music returned to the shelter and to St. Peter’s Hospital where he was often a patient.

The St Michael staff surrounded Sergio with love, providing shelter meals,

prayer shawls, clothing from St. Vincent’s—and a guitar to keep him playing. A few weeks ago Sergio passed away at the age of sixty-one. He was sitting in his wheelchair in a parking lot one block from the Interfaith Shelter. His guitar was in his lap.

I wish we could have done more to help Sergio, but I am proud of the many parishioners of Saint Michael Parish who came to Sergio’s aide.

If you would like to help others like Sergio, contact Bene Reece at (360) 292-7143.



Sergio

Sergio, *hermano*, *lo siento*.
I think your life was so hard
When it was over and you rose into that light,
was someone there waiting for you?
Was it such a relief to leave your amputated body
and be done with it all?
I didn’t know about your guitar and your music,
Just an idea of your years on the streets—
the night your toes froze in the cold
your months in the hospital.
I knew you as a gentle patient with a bandaged stump
who wanted a rosary and a cross
and put up with my mangled Spanish.

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Ijeoma Oluo to speak at Womxn of Achievement Awards

From press releases

Olympia YWCA Womxn of Achievement award ceremony this year will feature special guest Ijeoma Oluo, a Seattle-based writer, speaker, and Internet Yeller. She's the author of *The New York Times* best-seller *So You Want to Talk about Race*, published by Seal Press. The *Seattle Times* said that the book "pulls the most exasperated among us back from the brink and reminds us of what's to be gained from continuing the discussion."

Oluo's work focuses primarily on issues of race and identity, feminism, social and mental health, social justice and the arts. She's an engaging writer and popular speaker—her work has appeared in all kinds of outlets from the *Washington Post* and *Time Magazine* to *Elle* and *The Stranger*. You can get a taste of her approach in a piece called “The Conversation I’ve Been Dreading: Ijeoma Oluo Talks about Race with her Mom” online at **Lithub.com**. “Trenchant and lucid” describes her writing. And she grew up in Seattle.

Oluo has a heap of honors and recognitions: she was one of The Root's 100 Most Influential African Americans in 2017, named one of the Most Influential People in Seattle by *Seattle Magazine* and one of the 50 Most Influential Women in Seattle by Seattle Met. She was the winner of the 2018 Feminist Humanist Award by the American Humanist Society. Since the YWCA Olympia established its Womxn of Achievement Award in



1994, it has become one of the most prestigious honors for womxn and businesses in the South Sound. The award seeks to center and recognize

the accomplishments, professional contributions, and public service performed by womxn in the community. The Womxn of Achievement Award recognizes those who embody outstanding leadership qualities, are exceptionally committed to their community and/or profession, and live or work in the Greater South Sound area.

All womxn, and especially Womxn of Color, continue to be under-represented in significant ways. Womxn of Achievement helps to increase the visibility of womxn by celebrating the contributions of incredible leaders and businesses in our community, who are not only making a huge

difference, but who are often overlooked because of historic and current patterns of racism and sexism.

While all womxn and businesses are encouraged and eligible to receive awards, Womxn of Achievement as an event is a platform for centering Womxn of Color, who are the leaders of change at the intersections of race and gender justice. Our honorees work to eliminate racism and sexism, to empower womxn, and have advanced the political, social and economic status of womxn and girls. They embody the YWCA's vision of a world where all people are valued, live free from oppression, and thrive in a just society.

When is the event: Saturday, November 2, 2019

Where is the event: at South Puget Sound Community College.

When and where can I get tickets: Ticket info online at www.ywcaolympia.org, under Events (2019 Womxn of Achievement). All proceeds benefit YWCA Olympia.

For more information contact
Cherie Reeves Sperr, Development
Director at 352-0593 or [crsperr@
ywcaofolympia.org](mailto:crsperr@ywcaofolympia.org)

**YWCA is using the "label" womxn to encompass a broader range of identities than woman and is based on self-identity*



Helen Wheatley

for Port of Olympia

Democrats, Progressives and Environmentalists support Helen!



"Our Port and maritime businesses face challenges as they adapt to rapid economic, technological and environmental change. I will work to set realistic boundaries with urban redevelopment and demand transparency to spare the Port from making costly mistakes with public funds."























"Helen's education and experiences make her the ideal port candidate. With no ties to special interest groups, her genuine concern for the environment is unfettered and unconditional."
~ Bill Fishburn

"Helen will bring exactly the kind of fresh and forward thinking that is needed on the Commission."
~ Sandy Mayes

"Helen supports a port for the people, not for big business."
~ Peter Bohmer

Paid for by Helen Wheatley for Port of Olympia, PO Box 12711, Olympia, WA 98508-2711
www.helenforport.com

ICE: relentless pursuer

Zahid Chaudhry, who has lived in Olympia for a number of years, exemplifies some of the ways that the US government can deny citizenship to individuals who otherwise meet all tests. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is appealing a March 2018 decision by a US Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) judge affirming Zahid's status as a legal US resident.

Zahid qualifies for citizenship in multiple ways, including Qualified Military Service; his marriage of nearly 20 years to a US citizen; and US family ties on his father's side for forty years. However under a national security program known as the "Controlled Application Review and Resolution Program" (CARRP), the government excludes many applicants from Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian communities by delaying and denying their applications without legal authority. Learn more: <https://www.aclusocal.org/carrp>

Zahid's case illustrates another means to deny citizenship to individuals from Muslim countries: Zahid's name was added to the secret Terrorist Watchlist, from which there is no meaningful way to get removed. Research by *The Intercept* "revealed a staggeringly due-process-free system in which the government was routinely affixing the word 'terrorist' to an individual's name and disseminating that information to a sprawl-

ing network of foreign and private partners, with virtually no evidence required to support the claim." A federal judge has recently ruled this practice unconstitutional:

Zahid and his wife Ann have received consistent support from the Olympia community. After a yet another hearing on October 3, there is hope that the couple will finally see their citizenship claim resolved positively.

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In praise of print

The Testaments by Margaret Atwood

Denver Hatcher

[Note: *The Testaments* picks up fifteen years after Offred leaves readers in the *Handmaid's Tale*, and just as Atwood waited and quietly planned to revisit one of her most favored works, Aunt Lydia has been waiting patiently to strike Gilead.]

In the three decades since its publication, Margaret Atwood's prose in *The Handmaid's Tale* has aged well, but the potency of the fascistic, religiously motivated, hyper-patriarchal country she created, Gilead, has not. This is, in all likelihood, why the Hulu series of the same name has done well—it took the bones of Atwood's world and created a fleshy kinship to how we live and think today.

Now, in her highly anticipated follow up, *The Testaments*, Atwood has remedied the charge of cultural irrelevance by some readers. What's more, Atwood seems to have done what no author has before, namely, to pluck integral plots elements directly from the television show and marrying them with her own. The result is a well-paced, topical, and thoughtful novel.

Readers and viewers of *The Handmaid's Tale* will be pleased to reunite with Aunt Lydia, one of three main women characters in *The Testaments*. Newcomers to the story will be spared the whiplash of reconciling discrepancies that arise when fusing together the varied renderings of this story that longtime fans may encounter. Even so, readers will probably

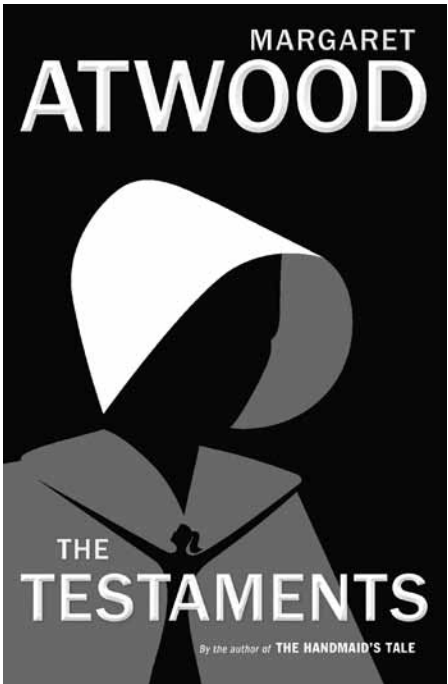
forgive the incongruencies, instead relishing the dexterity of Atwood's writing, which is as clean as ever.

The narrators live both in and outside of Gilead, but as the novel wears on their interconnectedness becomes clearer, eventually merging into a satisfying harmony. Aunt Lydia begins the narration, revealing her past life as a judge and how her willingness to comply during the coup that birthed Gilead has positioned her to not only maintain existing systems of women's oppression but to aid in building new ones from the ground up. Daisy is a discontented teenager in Canada whose true identity has been kept from her for her entire life. Once revealed, she is called upon to infiltrate Gilead. With almost no understanding of what she

is to do, Daisy accepts. It is one of the delights of *The Testaments* to read now 79-year-old Atwood's portrayal of the angsty, sailor-mouthed Daisy. We also come to know Agnes, the daughter of a powerful Commander in Gilead who struggles after the death of her adoptive mother. Ultimately, Agnes shirks her divine duty to marry and attempt reproduction, either herself or via a fertile handmaid, to become an Aunt under the charge of Aunt Lydia.

One cannot help but feel Atwood is having a wonderful time here, writing each woman with such care that you may be tempted to guess whose voice is her favorite. Each of the stories aids in her grandest feat: commenting on the real-life patriarchy and the descent into fascistic values subtly enough to allow readers to stick with the story but ponder over her astuteness later. Without beating us over the head, Atwood shows us that we must remain vigilant in our criticism and subversion of political conditions. But she offers a world just far enough removed from our own to feel safe and we are in turn unable to not turn the next page.

Denver Lively-Hatcher, an Olympia native, is a junior at the University of Illinois in Chicago where she studies social welfare policy and pre-law.



It is one of the delights of *The Testaments* to read now 79-year-old Atwood's portrayal of the angsty, sailor-mouthed Daisy.

The Line Becomes a River: Dispatches from the Border by Francisco Cantú

Veronica Atkinson

The Line Becomes a River: Dispatches from the Border is a fair and empathetic reflection that illustrates the complexities surrounding the issues on both sides of the US-Mexican border.

Francisco Cantu studied International Relations and is familiar with the history and current policies of immigration and border security, but it is his personal history that gives him an intimate familiarity with the language, people and culture of the area. The grandson of a Mexican immigrant raised by his mother in the rugged landscape of the Southwest, Cantú sought a deeper understanding of the border.

To deepen his perspective, Cantu joined the US Border Patrol in 2008, spending the next four years along the border in the deserts of Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The experiences recounted in the book give an unflinching look at the consequences of a broken border policy that prioritizes building barriers and dehumanizing Immigrants.

The stories are beautifully written even when the images are haunting. Cantú writes of finding the bodies of the dead, of finding drugs, of finding people crossing a week after being picked up and sent back, most from a crackdown on ports of entry. He tells of agents tearing apart the clothing and slashing open the water jugs left hidden by people fleeing capture.

Stories of cruelty, hopelessness and compassion are entwined with references to poetry, sociology and psychology, including interludes detailing the author's increasingly disturbing dreams as he struggles to align his moral compass with the realities of his job on the border.

Beset by nightmares, he resigns his post.

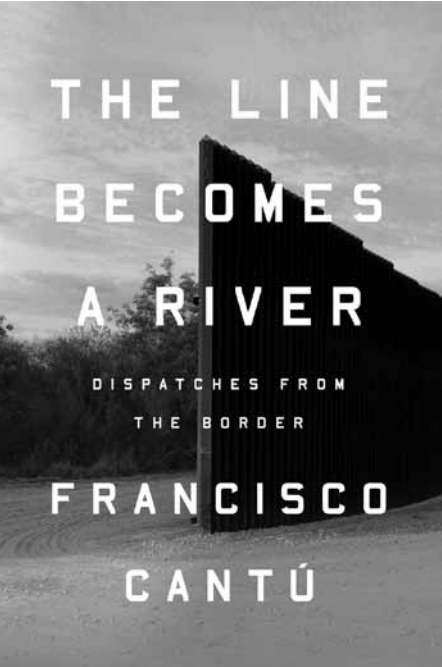
At that point the book turns into the story of a friendship Cantu developed with José, an immigrant, while

they worked together at a coffee shop in Tucson. After living in the US for thirty years, José leaves for Mexico to see his dying mother and finds himself unable to return to his wife and children despite months of interven-

tion by Cantu and José's former employer.

The final chapter of the book is written as a monologue from José and makes clear why a policy based on the belief that "by deporting a mother or father, the family will follow" can never be successful. For Cantu, any solution must unite humanity, not divide it.

The epilogue finds Cantu once more on the border, this time as a tourist in



Big Bend National Park, stepping into the river at Boquillas Canyon.

"I stood to walk along the adjacent shoreline, crossing the river time and time again as each bank came to an end, until finally, for one brief moment, I forgot in which country I stood. All around me the landscape trembled and breathed as one."

Veronica Atkinson is a retired Registered Nurse living in Grays Harbor. She spent her formative years living along the borderlands of West Texas and Arizona.

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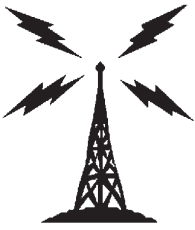
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Bush Creek volunteers sift damaged habitat to relocate unique aquatic species

Lee First

Wading softly through the mud of Bush Creek, I netted lampreys, crayfish, snails, beetles, worms, and clams. Every so often, someone in our little group of volunteers cheered after netting a Coho salmon fry.

We were helping to rescue small aquatic animals in a temporarily dewatered stream. A new culvert was being placed. In Washington State, thousands of undersized culverts and other fish passage barriers prevent salmon from reaching important habitats and spawning gravel. The giant new culvert in this photo has been placed under a road crossing at Bush Creek, a tributary of Cloquallum Creek in the Chehalis River watershed. It is replacing two much smaller pipes that blocked fish passage most of the time. Restrictive pipes like these have long prevented migrating fish from reaching 32.5 miles of crucial stream habitat in the Chehalis River basin.

But the tide is turning. During the summer of 2019, 16 more culverts in Grays Harbor and Lewis counties will be redesigned or reconstructed. Three replacements are currently underway on Bush Creek alone. A recent state Supreme Court decision affirmed a lower court's order that Washington State undertake massive repairs to roads (including culverts and below-road channels) that have damaged salmon habitats and contributed to population declines. As these barriers are remedied, salmon will have the benefit of miles of additional high-quality habitat.

Most of this work is done in mid-summer, when water levels are low. During these times, the fewest fish are present, minimizing harm to the streams from the necessary construc-

tion and excavation; by law, fish must be rescued during the time that water is blocked and re-routed around the culvert. A project like this takes a lot of time, planning, money, and environmental permits. Volunteers usually spend most of a day performing these rescue operations.

Specialized equipment was needed to block the flow of the stream in order to perform the rescue. The construction crew set up this system of screens and pumps, then metered out the water towards the stream section where six volunteers were prepared with

boots, nets, and buckets to give the animals safe passage. We wait for the stream water containing the animals to be slowly released. Then we carefully wade around, twitching just below the water line. There is only one native crayfish species in Washington: the signal crayfish, *Pacifasticus leniusculus*. All of its surfaces, even its claws, are uniformly brownish and smooth compared to other crayfish species. Native crayfish like these are very sensitive to pollution. We found many that were tiny, so catching these bigger specimens was extra fun.

Of all the salmon species in the Chehalis watershed, Coho salmon spend the most time in their natal streams before they out-migrate to the ocean. Whenever we found one, we made every effort to transport them back into the unimpacted stream as soon as possible.

Experts estimate that the current populations of Washington's coastal wild salmon runs are 10% of what they were just 100 years ago. The causes of this decline include intensive agriculture, forestry practices, pollution, changing climate, floodplain development, diking/drain- ing of estuaries, and more.

There are many, many ways for citizens to get involved with and help out with salmon restoration. If you have time to help out at a culvert replacement project, let us know. It's a great way to learn more about your local stream, its ecology, and the sensitive critters that depend upon clean water. In the Chehalis watershed, check with Twin Harbors Waterkeeper, or the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force for upcoming opportunities.

Lee First is the Twin Harbors Waterkeeper, a member of the international Waterkeeper Alliance. As such, she works to protect and advocate for the waters of the Chehalis Basin, Grays Harbor, and Willapa Bay. Learn more at Twinharborswaterkeeper.org or email Lee at lee@twinharborswaterkeeper.org.



scooping the animals up with small nets. Once we've captured a few, we put them in a bucket of cold water then release them into an unimpacted section of Bush Creek downstream from the culvert.

More waterkeepers, more salmon restoration

My first time working at a project like this, I was amazed by the diversity of animals we found. Though the immediate upstream area of Bush Creek does not have an especially impressive riparian buffer, there were a lot of animals to save. It was especially satisfying to catch Coho, lamprey, and crayfish – fast little escape artists! I found most of these by searching around on the recently-dried mud for

It was especially satisfying to catch Coho, lamprey, and crayfish – fast little escape artists!

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The costs of modern mountain biking

More public resources or pay to play?

Evonne Hedgepeth, Ph.D.

"I don't want taxpayers to foot the bill for my hobby." A mountain biker blogpost

Some people who ride off-road bikes take to the trails in ways that respect the environment and other users. But larger factors are at play in modern mountain biking. A growing industry and its supporters glorify high-risk, environmentally impactful riding practices in order to sell bikes. Increasingly they seek to obtain public trails for bikers' exclusive use.

An extreme sport is defined as one involving a high level of exertion and skill, high risk of injury or death, and an adrenaline rush. Such sports often require specialized skills, expensive gear and exclusive locations. Mountain biking necessitates all of these. For dedicated riders, financial outlays can reach \$10,000. An ambitious industry has developed to capitalize on this market.

Mountain bikers say they assume the risks of their sport. But we all assume some costs.

Privatizing public resources

Mountain biking depends heavily on predictable, free access to trails in parks and other public or private land. Therein lies a problem. Mountain biking causes environmental damage, is often incompatible with other user groups and leads to continuing pressure for more trails with special features like jumps. But, according to Singletracks.com, a mountain biking website, the full-throttle style of biking portrayed in industry videos belongs not on public lands but in private dedicated parks.

Costs to the environment

A 2010 literature review by Miistakis Institute concluded that while all forms of recreational use negatively affect the environment, mountain biking has some unique impacts. The extent of damage depends on trail design and site conditions (e.g., one with a rainy season), is greatest during trail-building and contingent on riding style. Mountain bikes'

fat, knobby tires damage tree roots, widen and erode trails, compact soil, damage vegetation and increase runoff. Beginning bikers do the most damage. Bikers' speed is likely to startle wildlife and disrupt habitat.



Mountain biking depends heavily on predictable, free access to trails in parks and other public or private land.

Some mountain bikers engage in illegal trail-building.

Kaiser Woods, where Olympia Parks and Recreation Department (OPARD) is proposing a mountain bike park, has bird habitat unique in Olympia, according to local birder Bill Tweit. Birders identified 51 bird species in a few weeks, and expect to spot many more. The park serves as part of a wildlife corridor for elk, deer, bear, mink and other mammals. The site's wetlands and seasonal streams are especially important for reptiles and amphibians. Wildlife biologists believe an endangered species—the Oregon spotted frog—inhabits the park.

An industry seeking to expand

Manufacturers of mountain bikes and associated gear utilize many strategies to grow their market. In addition to selling products, they sponsor mountain biking groups that seek to convert natural spaces like Kaiser Woods into regional and national draws for races, bike camps and other money-making events.

Bike companies also offer grants and programs to introduce children to the sport—and obtain more trails. The program Riding for Focus, now in 132 US schools, claims that mountain biking improves students' academic performance. In Hood River, Oregon, three mountain-biking middle school teachers procured a company grant for 30 bikes and helmets, a curriculum and teacher training. A local builder will be paid to design the trail and volunteers will build 1.5 miles of trails, available to the public.

From backcountry to city parks

The federal Wilderness Act prohibits bikes, but in 2015 the Sustainable Trails Coalition was created with the goal of modifying existing legislation and giving land managers more flex-

cluded broken bones, concussions, internal bleeding, organ damage and quadriplegia. Dr. Annie Gareau, co-author of the study, said a general rule of thumb is that "one in 1,000 skiers is injured, one in 100 snowboarders, and one in 10 downhill cyclists."

The most frequent injuries are head injuries and brain trauma. Beginning bikers are most likely to be injured; some have been killed. A closely-supervised twelve-year-old at a beginner bike park—wearing a helmet and riding on a gentle, gravel slope—fell and died. Accidental injuries are now the leading cause of death among children, worldwide, according to a recent report by the World Health Organization.

Public land entities gain some immunity from lawsuits by posting enter-at-your-own-risk signs at parks. But lawsuits happen anyway and cost taxpayers money—win or lose. The children of a mountain biker, who fell and died after hitting a pothole on a gravel road, successfully sued the state of New York for \$2.2 million.

The high cost of a search and rescue for an injured biker depletes resources of local emergency responders.

Tax-exempt status of some biking advocacy organizations like EMBA also imposes costs. Contributions to the organization are tax-deductible—resulting in lost tax revenues. EMBA charges to build trails and for bike camps, and relies heavily on volunteer labor. They lobby public officials to acquire more trails. Last year, EMBA reported nearly \$700,000 in assets, 75% of which they must funnel back into their organization and membership—a threshold it did not reach for 2014-16.

Pay to play

Many extreme athletes—mountain-climbers, windsurfers, skiers—have to drive long distances to enjoy their sport. Some pay fees to use exclusive recreational sites. Some ski resorts now offer mountain biking during their off season, for a day-use fee.

Development of Kaiser Woods as a mountain bike park would provide bikers with a free in-town workout spot and practice area to improve their skills in anticipation of traveling to other larger parks in Tacoma, Issaquah and elsewhere. Such development would mean that residents living adjacent to the park would have their property values lowered and their long-time access to Kaiser Woods as a multi-use park foreclosed to them—and all Olympia citizens.

That some bikers are tired of driving ten miles to practice their sport doesn't justify turning most of an Olympia park over to them to ride—and to a state-wide organization (EMBA) to design, build and manage. In order to obtain predictable trails, mountain biking organizations may need to persuade their corporate sponsors to procure use of private facilities for bikers, rather than seek near-exclusive use of more city-owned parks.

Like some other extreme athletes, mountain bikers may have to pay to play.

For more details about Kaiser Woods Park planning and a link to a Change.org petition, visit www.evonne.life/resources-and-tools.

Evonne Hedgepeth is a psychologist and health educator, widow of Andy McMillan, the wetlands biologist who led the fight to defeat developments at Kaiser Woods from 2006-2012.

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Our youth call us to act on the Climate Emergency

Baxter Lee

Over 2,000 Olympians, students, and other local Washingtonians gathered on the steps of the State Capitol last month to stand united facing the threat of climate change. Those attending the Global Climate Strike on September 20 were responding to a challenge issued by a young Swedish woman named Greta Thunberg who protested in front of parliament in the name of the climate change crisis. Since last year, her message has spread across the world culminating in rallies like this one, with supporters gathered to address climate change.

Elyanna Calle, a local high school student influenced by Thunberg, organized the strike in Olympia. Ur-

gency was at the heart of Calle's words. To prevent global temperatures from rising 1.5 degrees Celsius, she explained, carbon emissions must reach net zero by 2050. Reductions need to begin in earnest well before 2030, however. Thus, says Calle, an eleven-year countdown has sprung into motion.

Kaylee Shen, president of Olympia High School's Climate Action Club, made clear demands during the event. First, climate change needs to be called out for what it is: a crisis. Major legislation needs to be enacted to further mitigate carbon emissions and a more sustainable lifestyle was strongly encouraged. Going vegan, eliminating plastics, and using reusable containers were just a few of the suggestions. Shen also noted that OHS is striving to reach net zero waste by 2040.

Shen advocated strongly that people register to vote. Mitigating climate change will need to be a joint effort between the next generation and those who can vote now. "Because doing something is always better than doing nothing," she concluded.

Rejoining the Paris Climate Accord was another focus of the protest. Other local Olympians voiced their concern regarding the isolationist reputation the U.S has earned around the world.

Three climate change activist groups showed their support during the protest. The Sunrise Movement, a growing group of young people dedicated to making climate change an urgent priority across America and putting a stop to the influence of the fossil fuel industry, the Thurston Climate Action Team, who collaborate with others in the community to find the most effec-

tive ways to reduce carbon emissions, and The Climate Reality Project, whose mission is to "catalyze a global solution to the climate crisis by making urgent action a necessity across every level of society."

Will and Olivia, two recent graduates, echoed similar concerns. "There needs to be more accountability over larger corporations and what they say. if you haven't stayed up to date about what's happening, really begin to pay attention to multiple sources. Get a diversified understanding of what is happening. Watch closely to what is being done to the environment and who is doing it."

Baxter Lee is a recent graduate from the Evergreen State College.

“This is all wrong. I shouldn’t be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you! You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I’m one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!”

Greta Thunberg, address to the UN Climate Action Summit, September 23, 2019



Photo essay by Ricky Osborne



Perspectives

Port of Olympia election offers needed change

Jeff Sowers

Many people don't realize that the Port of Olympia serves all of Thurston County, that the Port levies property taxes on every property owner, and that everyone in the County can vote for Port Commissioners.

Ballots for the 2019 Port election are coming in October. I would like to explain why voters in Thurston County should vote for Helen Wheatley for Port of Olympia Commissioner, Position 1. This election is particularly important because electing Wheatley will put a strong progresssive majority on the Port Commission consist-

ing of Wheatley and current commissioner E.J. Zita. Together they will have the ability to create a Port that serves the people of Olympia rather than subsidizing a handful of wealthy corporate interests like Weyerhaeuser, SSA Marine (one of the largest corporate marine terminal operators in the world), and Brusco Tug and Barge.

The Port has consistently lost money on serving these businesses -- in 2018 a total of \$4 million. The marine terminal operation lost \$1.5 million; Swantown Marina and Boatworks over \$300,000 and Peninsula Properties, the Port's real estate enter-

prise, lost \$400,000. This pattern is the same year after year as past Port Commissioners have turned to taxpayers to cover these losses.

This is not the way it is supposed to work. Weyerhauser and other profit-making businesses that use the Marine Terminal should pay the cost of operations. Instead of losses, there would be revenue that the Port could use to undertake new operations, environmental clean up, and public access projects.

For example, the Port of Tacoma last year obtained more than \$20 million in net revenue from their operations. This was after covering all their operating and non-operating expenses, including interest on debt. And not just Tacoma, but the Port of Port Angeles marine terminal made more than \$2 million and the Port of Everett marine terminal made \$1.7 million. The Port of Everett has a stated policy that all operations must be self-sustaining, including debt interest and repayment, and that tax dollars are used only for environmental

and public access projects.

Fortunately, in this election we have an opportunity to clean up Port politics and make a major course correction. Helen Wheatley is running a progressive campaign backed by a grassroots movement of concerned citizens who want fiscal, social, and environmental responsibility at the Port. She has a long record of public service and environmental activism, and is the kind of strong progressive leader that our Port needs. I urge all WIP readers to support her campaign with a donation or help the campaign directly by doorbelling or phone banking. Most importantly, please vote this November for Helen Wheatley for Port Commission.

Jeff Sowers graduated from Capital High School in 1982, from the UW in 1987. For the past 17 years, he has taught math and environmental science at East Grays Harbor High School, an alternative high school in the Elma District. He is a Democratic precinct committee officer in the Ames precinct.

Port

From page 1

The task of presenting the results of the analysis conducted by Business Street thus fell to Rudy Rudolph, Port Airport Director and Interim Real Estate Director.

The Market Analysis focused primarily on Building 1, but effectively contradicted much of the information that Mike Reid had presented to the Commissioners. According to the summary, Building 1 presented problems:

- ▶ There is a limited demand for flex space in Thurston County
- ▶ There are few businesses of the kind envisioned for this type of building
- ▶ A limited number of businesses need 2000 square feet or more of space
- ▶ Current zoning would likely prevent half of potential users.
- ▶ Converting Building 1 to small industrial flex space was a bad idea—it would cost more than \$200,000 and require modifications that would eliminate parking.

That wasn't the end of the bad news. Rudolph put the current occupancy rate of the Center at 58% -- far too low to cover debt service and capital outlays. He indicated that the Center could lose still more tenants due to a possible recession and competition from new buildings south of the airport—plus deferred maintenance that would come to \$1 million currently and another \$400,000 over 30 years. The still-vacant Building 1 alone was losing \$100,000 per year plus maintenance costs of \$20,000. Rudolph said he would look for a tenant for the building in 2020. Finally, the rate of return for the venture was now projected at .2%—dramatically below the 8% return included in the October 2016 PowerPoint.

What did they know and when did they know it?

Instead of ownership leading to more revenue, the Port's new real estate venture looked to become another money-losing investment. At least one Commissioner wondered why this disturbing information was only now coming to their attention.

Apparently, there was a lack of communication and transparency between Port staff and the Commission. In a telephone conversation, Rhonda Gillogly of Rasmussen Triebelhorn, the firm who evaluated the building for the feasibility study, stated that their report did include a cost estimate for repairs to each building, all of which would soon need new roofs. The cost estimate for Building 1 was about \$460,000. Building 2 needed \$30,000 in repairs and \$100,000 for the roof. Building 3 needed \$400,000 plus \$100,000 for the roof.

The record bears out Commissioner Zita's claim that deferred maintenance was not in the PowerPoint presentation of October 2016. Port staff who read the feasibility report, including Mike Reid and Rudy Rudolph, were aware of the adverse findings but did not include them in their presentation. Commissioner Downing responded to a question saying that he hadn't seen the building report but was happy with his vote to purchase the property.

Commissioner McGregor wrote an email to this reporter saying that he had reviewed both the appraisal and the inspection report and knew that \$1 million in repairs was needed. He noted "this was over an estimated 10-year cycle and with proper maintenance some of these items could last longer than the estimated life-span provided by the inspection report."

Rick Walk only learned about the deferred maintenance in the spring of 2018. He is still happy the Port has a presence in Lacey, but in view of the problems with Building 1, he is com-

mitted to renegotiating the ILA to use space in one of the other buildings.

When you're in a hole the first task is to stop digging

At the July work session, Commissioners looked at options for moving forward: McGregor suggested moving the Port offices to Lacey could save \$278,000 they currently pay to the Rants Group for space. However, staff said such a move would require \$900,000 in renovations as well as millions in lost revenue.

More recently, Executive Director Sam Gibboney supported Commissioner Zita's recommendation that construction of a new facility combining Port and Marina offices on Port peninsula property would offer savings over time. The other two Commissioners asked for more ideas for using the CBC site.

Whether the Port's real estate investment in the Commerce Business Center becomes an asset or a liability remains to be seen. The new Executive Director has expressed an interest in improving transparency, communication and analyses of Port finances. Helen Wheatley, a candidate in this fall's Port election, has made that a key goal if she is elected. We'll keep you posted!

Esther Kronenberg is a member of the Observer Corps of the League of Women Voters of Thurston County. For more current information about the Port and its finances go to olywip.org and search for Port of Olympia.

Quotes from the PowerPoint report on the CBC feasibility study are from Reid's presentation at the Port's October 12, 2016 meeting, available online. Information from the Market Analysis is from the Port's Work Session agenda for July 18, 2019.



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2019 Sierra Club South Sound local endorsements

Helen Wheatley, Olympia Port Commissioner, District 1

Helen has served on the Hanford Advisory Board, as a team leader in a U.S. Dept of Energy review process regarding cleanup along the Columbia River, and was Vice Chair of the Columbia River and Plateau Committee. Her priorities are to provide fact-based oversight and good governance, prioritizing the environment, and enhancing sustainable economic development. She believes the Port has a direct role in the planning for the future of Olympia peninsula/downtown area for sea level rise and for protecting and restoring native fisheries and productive estuarine tidelands in Puget Sound. She opposes the use of the Port for storage and export of fossil fuels and fracking materials. She advocates the Port should promote local farming and food production. She believes the Port has a key role to play in addressing water quality issues in considering dredging a She believes the Port has a key role to play in addressing water quality issues and in considering dredging and stormwater treatment.

Nathaniel Jones, Olympia Mayor

Nathaniel has been a City Council member for 6 years, is currently Mayor Pro Tem, Chairs the Thurston Regional Planning Council, and contributed to the development of the Thurston County's Climate Adaptation Plan and Mitigation Plan. He is strongly aligned with Sierra Club goals and policies. He has been an advocate for policies to combat climate change by reducing the use of fossil fuels. He advocates for building and transportation policies that reduce pollution and conserve energy. He has been a leader in Olympia's planning for sea level rise and advocates for a county wide collaborative Five Year Homeless Response Plan that will address housing issues, combat the environmental effects of homelessness, and provide compassionate programs to assist people off the streets and into homes.

Jessica Bateman, co-endorsed for Olympia City Council, Position 2

Jessica is an incumbent whose proudest environmental accomplishment was when the city of Olympia adopted ambitious greenhouse gas emission targets. Her priorities are to increase capacity to address homelessness and affordable housing, revitalize downtown and create a strong local economy, and reducing our climate impact while adapting to sea level rise. She supports converting Capitol Lake back into an estuary.

Phyllis Booth, co-endorsed for Olympia City Council, Position 2

Phyllis hopes as a council member to inspire people to live more simply and respect the environment. She hopes to be an example of putting environmental values into practice. Her priorities are to increase citizen participation, to make city departments more accountable to taxpayers and to incentivize carpooling and bus ridership. She supports infill in neighborhoods, as long as infrastructure is addressed and she supports a plan to remove the dam at Capitol Lake.

Dani Madrone co-endorsed for Olympia City Council, Position 3

Dani has a Master's degree in Public Policy and a B.S. in Environmental Studies. She is employed by NW Indian Fisheries. Her priorities are environmental protection and addressing homelessness/housing by advocating for strong neighborhoods, better conversations and community organizing.

Matt Goldenberg co-endorsed for Olympia City Council, Position 3

Matt is a Clinical Psychologist and is running on an environmental justice platform. His priorities are housing, equity and improving communication. He advocates preparing for climate change by plans for floods, warming and cooling centers, and fire prevention.

Leatta Dahlhoff, Tumwater City Council, Position 1

Leatta was appointed to the City Council in 2018 and prior to that served on the Tumwater Planning Commission for 4 years. Since 2002 she has been a Toxics Waste Reduction Specialist with the Washington Dept of Ecology. Her priorities are Public Health (substance abuse/mental health), Smart/Sustainable Economic Growth (developing the Brewery District), and Environmental Sustainability (ensuring clean air, land and water for generations to come).

Tom Oliva, Tumwater City Council, Position 2

Tom is a 10 year incumbent and is running unopposed. He warranted a Sierra Club endorsement because of his contributions to the Sustainable Thurston Plan and work to pass the Tumwater Metropolitan Parks District ballot which will expand and improve city parks. He represents Tumwater on the Climate Mitigation task force at the Thurston Regional Planning Council which will produce actionable steps to reduce our regional carbon footprint.

Joan Cathey, Tumwater City Council, Position 3

Joan is a 10 year incumbent and is Mayor Pro Tem. She advocates working on reducing the city's carbon footprint, supporting the regional Climate Action plan, promoting the use of solar and wind energy and increasing biking paths. She has requested a review and mapping of truck routes to develop a plan to reduce the impact on air quality, especially near schools and senior living developments. She worked to establish the Isabella Bush park as a site for the Tumwater School District and the nonprofit GRuB where students, teachers and volunteers grow food sustainably.

Charlie Schneider, Tumwater City Council, Position 7

Charlie was recognized as the top National Sierra Club Outings Leader in 2015 and has been active in the American Hiking Society, the Capitol Land Trust, Native Plant Salvage, Stream Team and a Salmon Steward Docent. He advocates promoting the use of renewable energy, public transit and energy efficiency in building codes. His priorities are more parks and open spaces, affordable housing and reducing drug use by our youth.

Rethinking everything Lesson #5

We must reject the assumption that our built environment must become one big computer. We should erect barriers against the spread of “smartness” into all of the spaces of our lives.

This proposal will no doubt be met with charges of Luddism. Good: Luddism is a label to embrace. The Luddites were heroic figures and acute technological thinkers. They smashed textile machinery in 19th-century England because they had the capacity to perceive technology “in the present tense.” They didn’t wait patiently for the glorious future promised by the gospel of progress. They saw that certain machines were endangering their livelihoods right then so they dismantled them.

Big tech companies talk incessantly about how “AI” and digitization will bring a better future. In the present tense, however, putting computers everywhere is bad for most people. It enables advertisers, employers, and cops to exercise more control over us—in addition to helping heat the planet. . . .

Ben Tarnoff, writing in *The Guardian* Sept 17, 2019

Being Christian in America in a time of crisis

The October 2019 interview on “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” takes a fresh look at some public policy issues that have been pushed hard from conservative Christian viewpoints, showing that those are not the only voices of Christianity. Glen interviews three retired Christian ministers—Paul Wee, Melody Young, and Paul Lundborg—who share faith-based insights and perspectives that differ greatly from those of the Religious Right.

We discuss how the Religious Right has hijacked Christianity and American politics. Theologians and religious leaders pushed back in an essay called “Reclaiming Jesus: A Confession of Faith in a Time of Crisis.” Our interviewees discuss points in this article that affirm an

authentic Christian faith that supports all people’s human rights and equality.

We also discuss the constitutionally required separation of Church and State, Jesus’ radical nonviolent campaign for social justice, the Liberation Theology movement and other remedies.

More information about this topic and our discussion is on my blog, www.parallaxperspectives.org. You can find this program and previous programs there as well. Cable TV subscribers in Thurston Co can watch this interview on TCTV Mondays at 1:30 pm, Wednesdays at 5, and Thursdays at 9 throughout the month. **Questions?** Contact Glen Anderson, producer/host at (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net

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Reflections on Yemen’s Arab spring...and after

Luke Somers

[Ed note: This essay appeared as part of an exhibit of photographs presented by the Rachel Corrie Foundation at the Olympia Film Society last year. Luke Somers took the photographs while he lived in Yemen from 2011 to 2014. See a brief bio below.]

After I moved to Sana’a in February 2011, Yemen’s (now “Honorary”) President Ali Abdullah Saleh long remained unreal in my imagination. I didn’t watch television much, but did hear people speak about him to an inordinate degree. Pictures of him, plastered about the city, again inordinately contributed to my sense of the man. Based simply on the pictures, he was waxy, vibrant, stern and yes, rather unreal.

Ali Abdullah Saleh, Yemen’s 33-year-long president, soon found a firmer foothold in my imagination. Not through personally witnessing him issuing directives and giving orders, but through coming into close contact with people daily affected by those directives and orders. Seeing with my own eyes (but thankfully, somehow, with my camera’s viewfinder acting as something of a buffer) how sniper fire from paid “balatiga” (“thugs”) could make a man’s face unrecognizable; how young people who, after a frantic motorcycle ride and who mere minutes earlier were forming the peace sign with their hands, can then be deposited on a mosque floor, bleeding and unable to breathe.

Saleh has, from early this year, met his country’s brightest hopes for the future head on, and with unmitigated brutality. He, like many of the youth that desire some hope for themselves and their children (whether at home or in their future imaginings) have learned, understands that the world, simply put, generally cares as much as it knows about Yemen and its people—that is, very little.

The difference is, while Saleh’s regime manages to capitalize on this lack of knowledge and interest to extract funds from more powerful nations for military equipment and training, Yemen’s pro-democracy protesters managed to see the world around them not with cynicism, but with hope.



Yemeni children present documents to receive food rations as Saudi Arabia aided by the US continues to wage war on them. AP Photo/Hani Mohammed

Inspired by protests that swept dictators from Tunisia and Egypt, young men and women put down their books and individual aspirations with the aim of doing the same for their own country.

This point can’t be emphasized enough. Living in a poor country, a country largely cut off from the daily swirl of world affairs, these young

modest numbers of university students took to the streets, unarmed, with peace signs held high, their safety receiving no guarantees

men and women realized that opportunities for individual betterment don’t come cheap—and may come around only once. Even so, modest numbers of university students took to the streets, unarmed, with peace signs held high, their safety receiving no guarantees. Their numbers only grew.

That the “shabab”—the youth—are less savvy when it comes to political affairs, and less organized than one might hope shouldn’t come as a surprise. The man they have been struggling to depose has been in power for longer than most people in this young country have lived.

It has, in fact, been both heartbreaking and beautiful to witness, to photograph, to spend hours with people who expect the best from the world and who have dared to believe in one of the best, most absurd ideas imaginable: that of peaceful protest.

Barely-conscious protesters, sprayed with chemicals and shot at close range, have raised the peace sign in the hope that a camera would see and that a world would care. Meanwhile, reality says that these same young Yemenis would be more easily associated with al-Qaeda than with peace. Yet it is impossible to find citizens from any part of the country who consider the local branch of the terrorist organization to be anything more than a ragtag band of men not numbering more than a hundred – but who have skillfully been used by Saleh’s government to extract concessions, funds, equipment, and military training from foreign powers.

Ali Abdullah Saleh has since signed a power transfer deal [November 2011]. Government ministries have been divvied up between Saleh’s General People’s Congress party and opposition parties. Meanwhile, youths around the country have not left their “tent cities.” Resolving Yemen’s various states of crises has very possibly—and purposefully—been allowed to take precedence over meaningful change and grounds for future hope.

Saleh’s signing of the GCC power transfer deal may have seemed like an apt opportunity for the youth to celebrate. Some did, but many others resisted the temptation. I communicated with and photographed the 20-or-so denizens of the “Deaf and Dumb Youth Revolution Alliance” tent, not far from opposition-held Change Square, in the moments before and after Saleh’s signing. Gesticulating with fervor but managing not to overwhelm the lone translator, their comments ran from “Yemeni blood is precious, there must be a trial” to “As for the west, we tell them not to have double standards and use us to test their weapons. You demand

human rights—where are human rights in Yemen?” Their manner was nonetheless warm and their dedication to peaceful protest unquestionable.

Their pointed words reflect frustration that their revolution—after so much blood has been shed and so much hope put into action—may somehow be lost. After ten months in Yemen, after being in the midst of Yemenis in the most trying and revealing of circumstances, I don’t see such young men becoming future threats to global security. Rather, if their revolution and their positive outlooks have, in the end, proven to be futile, I see them growing older, living with dignity in impoverished conditions, and wondering where the rest of the world—and where their youthful, naïve hopes—went.

Luke Somers, a British-born American freelance photojournalist and resident of Yemen arrived in Sana’a,

Yemen in 2011 to teach English. He was killed there in 2014. Though revered by his students and colleagues, Luke shifted into photojournalism to bear witness to the visceral realities—both bleak and inspiring—of the country, as well as the cultural phenomena of the Arab Spring as it swept through the region. Luke had spent much of his time in Tent City, Change Square—the protestors’ main area of living and congregating—where he had spent countless hours, days, weeks and months sharing food, plans, conversation, and stories. This was Luke’s home. He was killed in a failed rescue attempt in December 2014, a year after he had been abducted by armed tribesmen. You can see some of the Luke’s photos at the Rachel Corrie Foundation, “A Day in the Life of Yemen.”

Dispute Resolution Center seeking volunteers

October is Conflict Resolution Month.

The Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County is actively seeking volunteers to help resolve conflict, promote civility and create peace in our community.

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mediators and work directly with people in conflict, help people over the phone through the DRC’s Resource Line, or assist with community education and outreach efforts.


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No oil facilities were damaged in waging this war

Our roving reporter

"This was an Iranian attack. It's not the case that you can subcontract out the devastation of 5% of the world's global energy supply and think you can absolve yourself of responsibilities," said US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, on his way to talk with Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. The Crown Prince is demanding that the US and the international community retaliate against Iran after a drone attack on their oil fields.

Five days after the oil field attack, Saudi-led war planes bombed a Yemen town, killing 16 people, including seven children. One house was blown up.

Mike Pompeo didn't announce that the Saudis shouldn't think they could absolve themselves from responsibility for these childrens' deaths. Don-



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo chats with Saudi Arabia's Prince Salman about weapons sales, waging war in Yemen, and maybe attacking Iran.

unpopular transitional government. The Saudis weren't about to let a Shia movement govern Yemen so with some other Sunni Arab states, they initiated a bombing campaign aimed at restoring the transitional government.

The Saudi coalition immediately received logistical and intelligence support from the US, the UK and France. The US and Britain have deployed military personnel in the command center that targets Saudi strikes in Yemen. Despite this help, the Saudis have not defeated the Houthi movement.

Under President Barack Obama's administration and, now, President Donald Trump's, the United States has put its military might behind the Saudi-led coalition, waging a war without congressional authorization. That war has devastated Yemen's infrastructure, destroyed or damaged more than half of Yemen's health facilities, killed more than 8,350 civilians, injured another 9,500 civilians, displaced 3.3 million people, and created a humanitarian disaster that threatens the lives of millions as cholera and famine spread through the country.



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Europe. There was hardly a news report.

But a strike against an oil field in Saudi Arabia that killed no one? That dominated the airwaves for days. Our government and the rest of the international establishment condemned it in the 'strongest terms.' Our government is (was? will be?) ready to attack Iran because the Iranians supplied weapons that Yemenis used to destroy oil fields in Saudi Arabia.

Does no one remember that we are supplying weapons that the Saudis are using to destroy hospitals, schools, water and electrical facilities—and

United States has put its military might behind the Saudi-led coalition, waging a war without congressional authorization.

Will we continue to absolve ourselves from responsibility for supplying weapons and support for killing people in Yemen? Or worse still, will we just go about our business of trying hard not to be depressed about all the bad things the US seems to be implicated in? Last April, Congress voted to end military assistance to the Saudis for their war on Yemen. Why isn't this along with our wars in Afghanistan and Syria a campaign issue?

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wreak havoc on people who we don't even know where the country is?

Saudi Arabia, one of the world's richest countries, has been bombing Yemen, the fifth-poorest nation in the world, since 2015. That was the year that a Shia-led resistance movement looked like it would succeed in taking over the country and ending years of authoritarian rule. Many ordinary Yemenis supported them against an

A best friend revered in Vietnam

It was probably 14 meters long and weighed 15 tons, and towing it to land would be a challenge, but Sau and the other fishermen decided to do it anyway. It took them nearly seven hours to bring it to Mui Ne in Phan Thiet town on the south-central coast. Locals organized a funeral for the animal, placed it in a shroud and buried it with respect. After a period of time the bones will be dug up, carefully cleaned and placed in a temple for worshipping.

Why these solemn rituals for a dead animal? To fishermen in Vietnam, especially on the central and southern coasts, the whale is not just any animal; it is worshiped as Ca Ong, or "Lord Whale," who protects them at sea. Ca Ong is a deity who helps them overcome all hazards at sea, and so fishermen pray to the whale for a safe trip every time they go fishing. This is a practice that has been followed for generations.

Reprinted from June 16, 2019 —vnexpress



Van Thuy Tu Temple, located in Phan Thiet City showcases many huge, carefully preserved whale skeletons. Every June 20 of the lunar calendar there is a community celebration with rituals, folk songs and games.

At a poetry festival

In front of each poet stands their country's name
And behind my name nothing but Jerusalem

How frightening your name is, my little country
For me, nothing remains of it except the name
I sleep and wake in it
Its name a boat with no hope of arrival
Or return

It neither arrives nor returns
It neither arrives nor drowns

*Mahmoud Darwish
Palestine's National Poet*

يَرْعَش نِاجِرْهَمْ يَف
هدال ب مس ا رعاش ل ك مام
يوس يمس اءارو نكي ملو Jerusalem

قري غصلا يدال ب اي ك مس ا بُعرم وه مك
امس ا يوس يل قبي مل يتلا
ظقي تس او هي ف مُان ا
لوصول اب اهل لم ا ال قن يفس لثم يذلا امس ا
عوجر ل اب الو...

عجرت الو لصت ال
قرغت الو لصت ال

Austeridad para todos excepto los parasitos financieros

Alejandro Alvarez Béjar

A diez meses efectivos del nuevo gobierno la austeridad presupuestal, la violencia, la militarización, las concesiones a Donald Trump, el asambleismo y la religiosidad como cultura de gobierno, son auténticas piedras en el zapato, que pueden trabar avances de la 4aT (Cuarta Transformación) a lo largo de los próximos años.

Las políticas de austeridad bajo el neoliberalismo han tenido una doble utilidad: la primera, disminuir el tamaño del Estado para abrir nuevos espacios a un sector privado tan “ansioso de invertir” como reacio a concretarlo si no tiene asegurado rendimientos altos y a largo plazo. La segunda, fue poner a toda la sociedad a trabajar para pagar las deudas acumuladas con los fallidos negocios privados y los quebrantos públicos (que ocurrieron con las crisis financieras en 1976, 1983, 1987, 1994, 2001, 2008-09), con cargo a las finanzas estatales.

Exacerbada la austeridad a extremos absurdos en una economía estancada, el peor despilfarro para México está en destinar 725 mil millones de pesos del presupuesto (del orden de 37 mil millones de dólares), para cubrir el servicio de una deuda pública ilegítima e insostenible.

En México, la 4aT supone que la austeridad del gasto nos sacará del hoyo del estancamiento disfrazado de estabilidad, pero su aplicación extrema en aras de un “superávit fiscal” está

agravando la caída de la actividad económica, el desempleo, el desabasto en áreas de la salud pública y de la educación y el parasitismo financiero sobre las finanzas públicas. Todo lo cual ha sido aprovechado inteligentemente por intelectuales neoliberales, políticos panistas, empresarios farmacéuticos, energéticos, por medios de comunicación y poderes fácticos como las calificadoras de riesgo, el ejército y las iglesias. Argumentando “la defensa del Estado de Derecho”, los conservadores y la ultra-derecha han apostado a una alianza con el Poder Judicial para bloquearle muchas iniciativas al gobierno de AMLO y asediarlo políticamente.

El estancamiento económico y la austeridad extrema son caldo de cultivo de una descomposición social que ha recrudecido la violencia en el país, siempre siguiendo unos patrones que más parecen acciones de “fuerzas en operaciones especiales”, pues persiguen un impacto político fríamente calculado sobre la gobernabilidad, o que son literalmente espasmos reveladores de la perversa dinámica que nos deja el saldo brutal de diez años de “guerra contra las drogas”.



Vivimos desde hace varios años una delicada crisis humanitaria propia de un país en guerra (con centenas de miles de muertos, decenas de miles de desaparecidos, miles de fosas clandestinas por todo el país,

cientos de periodistas y militantes de organizaciones sociales asesinados); pero habiendo ofrecido el fin de esa guerra, el Poder Legislativo dominado por Morena dio luz verde a una Guardia Nacional que está realmente en manos de las fuerzas armadas que ahora, por compromisos con Donald Trump, tiene la “novedosa” función de contener las migraciones de Centroamérica y de México, asunto que choca frontalmente con la primera propuesta de hacer de México un “santuario para los migrantes”.

Se rechazó pagar el muro que quiere Trump en la frontera México-EU, pero sólo para caer en el dispendio

de movilizar a los militares para contener en la frontera sur de México unas migraciones que son producto directo de las políticas de libre comercio de EU, del cambio climático, del hambre y de la violencia política neoliberal de origen multi-diverso.

No es entonces trivial que, desde los territorios Zapatistas de Chiapas, personalidades democráticas de México y el mundo, nos alerten sobre el agravamiento del cerco militar sobre ellos, al calor de la estrategia de contención de flujos de migrantes, como si se preparara una guerra contra los indígenas que alzaron su voz en contra de los proyectos de desarrollo que omiten una consulta rigurosa con las comunidades.

Por todo eso y más, urge una profunda recomposición del tejido social, pero eso no puede hacerse convergiendo con el proyecto cultural de la derecha neo-conservadora en el poder de Estados Unidos, que recurre a la Iglesia Evangélica como su gran aliada política nacional e internacional, desplegando actitudes misóginas, homofóbicas, racistas, contra el aborto, antisemitas y anti-islámicas, más otras graves cuestiones por el estilo.

Aquí, como lo ha advertido con oportunidad el equipo periodístico de Carmen Aristegui, la decisión reciente de cambiar reglamentos secundarios de la Secretaría de Gobernación para replantear silenciosa pero radicalmente las relaciones Estado-Iglesias, estuvo precedida de la apertura de espacios en el diseño de la estrategia gubernamental (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo), ha seguido con concesiones por el IFETEL (Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones) de espacios radioeléctricos a una iglesia disfrazada de ONG, colocando a sus líderes como oradores principales en mítines como el de Tijuana, abriendo recintos como Bellas Artes para celebraciones personales de líderes religiosos que luego cayeron encarcelados y despejando la vía para regresarles el registro como partidos políticos. Todas ellas, son medidas que apuntan en el peligroso sentido de cambiar la histórica raíz laica del Estado Mexicano. ¿Quién y a cuento de qué, promueve eso? ¿Porqué se dio tanto peso legislativo al Partido Encuentro Social (PES), si no juntó votos ni para sostener su registro? ¿Será porque es fuerza afin a Donald Trump?

Y por último, en el campo de las consultas a modo y las decisiones asambleísticas sobre proyectos de desarrollo o inversiones públicas de alcance local, regional o nacional significativo, las impugnaciones ya se acumulan por la izquierda y por la derecha, con la diferencia de que la derecha está apoyándose en el Poder Judicial (como algunos integrantes de “Mexicanos Unidos Contra la Corrupción” que le achacan al gobierno casi 30 violaciones del Estado de Derecho), mostrando que la lentitud y torpeza en unas decisiones contrasta con la rapidez y ligereza en otras, dejando las consultas a las comunidades directamente afectadas en un peligroso limbo, políticamente costoso. Es cierto: sabíamos que el camino era largo y sinuoso, pero hay que advertir que será muy difícil de concluir con éxito llevando estas piedras en los zapatos.

Alejandro Alvarez Bejar es profesor de economía en la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Escribe sobre eventos actuales en México para WIP

Myth-busting Mexico

Chuck Burton

Do you believe Mexico is mainly a country of cartels and violence, corrupt cops and federales? A place of desperate poverty where people yearn to escape to the United States? Dusty villages with men dozing under huge sombreros against cactus trees?

Or perhaps you see beautiful resorts with gleaming beaches like Cabo and Puerto Vallarta and Cancun and say yes, that is the Mexico I am interested in.

All those things do exist in Mexico, but they are an insignificant sliver of what makes the country so warm and embracing.

I first visited Mexico in 1974 and have spent about eight years of my life there, traveling rough with a backpack in all thirty-two states, visiting most of the best-known destinations and hundreds of almost-never-heard-of towns and countryside. I speak Spanish fluently and know the culture and the traditions.

Being of small build and brown complexion, I'm able to come and go virtually unnoticed, privileged to view the scene without being it. Currently I live half of each year in beautiful and charming Mazatlan. I feel completely comfortable and at home there in contrast to a United States that each year feels more alienating.

A tourism economy means protection for visitors

Mexico has atrocious violence and a high murder rate. So does the United States. But the random gun violence we experience is unknown in Mexico. There, violence is related to internal

cartel wars, localized to a number of high stress areas. The greatest part of the country is safe and unaffected.

As a foreigner, you are now a protected species because it is your dollars the cartels need. With hundreds of millions of dollars to launder, they buy hotels, restaurants and resorts. They do not countenance anybody messing with their patrons. If you are minding your own business and not going somewhere you know you shouldn't be, you are going to be fine.

The government wants visitors safe, too, our dollars being the provision of hard currency. The days of shake-downs by corrupt cops and federales are in the past.

Pace, economy, culture, and geography converge

Mexico has backward and less-educated rural areas. So do we. It has dog-eat-dog city slums. So do we. Yet there are far fewer homeless in Mexico, where families take care of their own.

Urban Mexico is vibrant and sophisticated (and unfortunately everybody has cell phones). There are gleaming malls and cineplexes, spotless and excellent supermarkets, fine restaurants and humble eateries.

Mexico's public transportation puts ours to shame and Ubers are also cheap and plentiful, while almost nobody has difficulty living without a car. Basic medical service is clean, professional and knowledgeable. It is careful and attentive. You can walk in or make appointments easily. There is no paperwork or bureaucracy, and costs are very low.

Life in Mexico is much slower, more relaxed and more pleasant than in

our culture. People chat and call out to each other in the street. There are plenty of parks and squares. People do not rush around aimlessly. The street markets are colorful, bountiful and cheap. Gorgeous beaches, mountains and tropical scenery abound. Fresh fruit, produce, fish and seafood are omnipresent. The weather is much more temperate. You rarely or never see Mexicans yelling at each other, angry, or isolated in rival political factions. People are generally friendly, polite, respectful and welcoming. It is their culture.

Immigration as a last resort

One last important point. Would you want to leave your family, friends and community, food, music and culture, and sunny weather to make a difficult, dangerous and expensive journey to a cold and unfriendly place where you do not speak the language, where the natives are often unfriendly if not hostile, where you must live in fear of discovery, where the winters are dark and freezing and where you will never feel completely at home?

Of course not. The people who make this trip do it because they feel they have no other choice. They are desperate to make some money and provide for their families and children and are willing to work hard to do it. Most are homesick and dream of going back to Mexico. In any given year, more cross the border heading south than north.

Gracias por su atencion.

When he's not in Mazatlan, Chuck Burton uses a home in Steilacoom as a base to launch his ongoing exploration of the world, which includes most of Asia, India, eastern and western Europe and South America.

An urgent need to restructure Mexico’s social fabric

Alejandro Alvarez Béjar

Ten months ago Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) was elected for a six-year term as Mexico's president. Since then, budget austerity, violence, militarization, concessions to Donald Trump, and religiosity as a culture of government are stones in the shoes that could hinder advances in Mexico's Fourth Transformation (4aT)—the label given to AMLO's movement.

Austerity policies under neoliberalism have had a double function. The first was to reduce the size of the State in order to open new spaces for a private sector. The second was to put the whole society to work to pay debts accumulated by failed private businesses and public bankruptcies that occurred with each successive financial crisis: 1976, 1983, 1987, 1994, 2001, 2008-09.

Austerity policies don’t solve the problem, they make things worse
The worst example of waste is Mexico allocating 725 billion pesos of the budget (around \$37 billion) to service an illegitimate and unsustainable public debt. In Mexico, 4aT assumes

that stiff constraints on spending - promoted as stability - will take us out of the pit of stagnation. On the contrary - the extreme application of austerity for the sake of a “fiscal

For several years Mexico has experienced a humanitarian crisis on par with a country at war



surplus” is aggravating the drop in economic activity, rising unemployment, shortages in areas of public health and education and financial parasitism on public finances.

All of this has been cleverly exploited by neo-liberal intellectuals, by PANistas (members of PAN, a conservative political party), pharmaceutical and energy entrepreneurs, the media, financial powers such as risk-rating agencies, the army and the church. Arguing “the defense of the rule of law,” conservatives and the ultra-right have made an alliance with the judiciary to block

many of the AMLO government's initiatives, and to besiege it politically.

The political uses of violence
For several years Mexico has experienced a humanitarian crisis on par with a country at war, with hundreds

of thousands dead, tens of thousands missing, thousands of clandestine burials throughout the country, and hundreds of journalists and militants of social organizations killed.

The intensified violence in the country might seem to be the action of special operations forces, because they pursue a coldly calculated political impact on governance. Or they are literally spasms from the perverse dynamic that left Mexico with a brutal ten years of “war on drugs.” Moreno, the dominant legislative party, offered an end to that war, giving a green light to a National Guard. But the Guard is in the hands of the armed forces and the armed forces, thanks to commitments with Donald Trump, has the novel function of containing migrations from Central America and Mexico. So much for the proposal to make Mexico a “sanctuary for migrants.”

Paying for the follies of the US
The current administration refused to pay for the wall Trump wants on the US-Mexico border, only to fall prey to the expense of mobilizing the military to contain migration. These migrations are a direct result of US free trade policies, climate change, hunger and neo-liberal political violence.

Restructuring Mexican politics to preserve its secular roots
For this and other reasons, there is an urgent need to reorganize Mexico's social fabric. This reorganization, however, cannot be like the one happening in the United States. There, a right wing neoconservative movement is joining with the Evangelical church to create a cultural project on the national and international level. This cultural project raises many questions even as it opposes abortion and promotes misogynist, homophobic, racist, anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic attitudes.

Carmen Aristegui's journalism team has warned that the Ministry of the Interior is determined to radically rethink State-Church relations. Their effort began with changes in the design of the National Development Plan, and has continued with concessions by the Federal Telecommunications Institute, using church leaders disguised as NGOs as keynote speakers at rallies (such as the Bellas Arts opening in Tijuana, where religious leaders were celebrated—but later went to jail). Such measures demonstrate the danger of changing the historical secular root of the Mexican State.

A stone in your shoe will hobble you
Other challenges are accumulating on the left and on the right. The difference is that the right is relying on the judiciary (like some members of “United Mexicans Against Corruption” who blame the government for almost 30 violations of the rule of law). Some decisions are slow and clumsy while others are conducted with speed, leaving communities who are directly affected in a dangerous, politically expensive limbo.

We knew that the road would be long and winding, but be warned: it will be very difficult to achieve success walking with stones in our shoes.

Alejandro Alvarez Bejar is a professor of Economics at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). He sends WIP periodic dispatches on Mexican politics. This translation is by Enrique Quintero.

Cuba’s forests thrive under socialist planning

As fires rage across the Amazon in South America, a result of exploitation by agro-capitalists, Cuba has increased the percentage of its country covered by forest in the past year. Around the world, 7.3 million hectares of land is deforested each year. Brazil is among the worst actors. From only 2017-2018, 7,900 square kilometers were cut down an amount roughly equivalent to 987,000 football pitches. The rate of deforestation in Brazil has significantly increased with spreading Amazon fires under far-right President Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro actually sacked the head of the government's space agency for pointing out new areas of deforestation.

Cuba has tripled its forested area since 1959
A report published on Wednesday by Cuban media outlet Granma, reports the increase in forested area and examines how state environmental policies achieved it. The report also illustrates how today, Cuba's forested area has almost tripled in the period since 1959, despite mass deforestation in every other part of the world.

The report by Granma points to figures from the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture which show an increase of over 22,000 hectares of forested area in the last year, an increase of just 0.26 percent, meaning that forest now makes up almost a third of the entire country's surface area, just over 31%. This is in stark contrast to 1959, prior to the revolution, when just 13% of Cuba was covered by forest.

State polices have produced forests covering 31% of the island
State intervention to reforest large areas and strengthen existing trees has been key. According to the report, these policies include planting new trees and supporting natural regeneration where it happens, and setting aside 69% of the increase purely for conservation purposes.

Other policies include enriching existing forests that are at risk of degradation. This is done by measures such as pruning trees and cutting away dead ones to make way for new growth.

Mining companies are required to replant trees
The Ministry of Agriculture stressed that protecting forests doesn't have

to come at the expense of economic growth. Mining is one of Cuba's largest industries; the country has one of the largest nickel reserves in the world. In recent years foreign investment has increased with partnerships alongside nationalized Cuban mining companies. Under Cuban law, mining companies are allowed to clear forests, but are also under obligation to replant the same number of trees that they cut down within a two year period. 3000 hectares are cleared annually for mining operations but figures show that Cuba has an average reforestation rate of 16,000 hectares per year, therefore outstripping what is lost.

Ending the US blockade would accelerate the task
Cuba is nevertheless still affected by forest fires. Figures from the Ministry say that around 3000 hectares are affected by fires annually, with 90% of these caused by human activity such as irresponsible farming and accidents. However,

In June, the President of Cuba's Central Bank, Irma Martinez, spoke at a conference in Switzerland highlighting the gains in reforestation, but argued that reforestation could accelerate even further if the US blockade on the island were to be lifted. Cuba would be able to import more modern technology at the service government reforestation operations.

Reprinted from teleSUR, September 5, 2019



Special events

- **The Women - theater**
- Wed., Oct. 2, doors open at 7 pm, show at 8.
- Harlequin Productions, 202 4th Ave E
- Sneak peak at the dress rehearsal of The Women
- Get a sneak peak of Harlequin Productions' The Women, final dress rehearsal. Fund-raiser for programs of the Childcare Action Council. Suggested donation of \$15 - \$50.
- Find out about their many family programs at www.ccacwa.org. Call Nancy at 360-786-8907 x100 to reserve a ticket.
- **Organizer training 101**
- Sat, Oct 5-6, 8 am - 5 pm
- Learn IWW organizing techniques to fight for respect and fair treatment at your workplace. To attend register at forms.gle/MEaWE3AydxbHHd7X6.
- **Labor Wars of the Northwest**
- Wed, Oct 9, 7:30-9:30 pm
- Olympia Library after hours
- Film examines labor conflict in the context of a decades-long struggle that began with the arrival of the railroads in the1880s and permeated the region. Discussion follows.
- **Nutritional Pest Control**
- **Workshop**
- Sat., Oct 12, 10 am - noon
- Violet Prairie Grange, 17910 Violet Prairie Road, off Old Hwy 99
- Get rid of insects & diseases by using smart soil nutrition.
- Contact: Janice Erickson, 360- 273-9987 or JanicErickson@outlook.com

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Freedom Socialist Party National Convention

Oct. 12-15, Tukwila, WA
For more information: FSPus@socialism.com

Olympia Food Co-op Elections 2019

Oct 15 - Nov 15
Ballots available at East and Westside stores, also online at www.Olympiafood.coop. On the ballot: two board positions and whether the coop should carry beer and wine. To vote make sure your address is correct in coop records.

Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

Thu, Oct 17, 5 pm
Mixx 96 meeting room SW corner of State & Washington. Regular meetings third Thursdays
For more information Glen Anderson 360.491.9093.

“What is Socialism”

Thu, Oct. 24, 7-9 pm. Traditions Café, 5th & Water.
Economics for Everyone panel presentation and discussion with IWW, OlyAssembly, Olympia DSA. Everyone welcome.

Olympia Tenants Assembly

Sat., Oct 26, 2 - 5 pm
See location at facebook address
Talk to neighbors and other renters about precarious living situations, deteriorating conditions, invasive landlords and rising rents. Stand together as tenants to build a stronger voice to demand healthy and affordable housing for all. <https://www.facebook.com/events/557666244766767/>

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Make check out to Works in Progress and mail to PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507.



Benefit Luncheon - Thurston LWV Education Fund

Sat, Oct 26, 11:30 am
Indian Summer Country Club, 5900 Troon Lane SE
Michelle Gonzalez, Dir., WA State Women's Commission, will speak. Also Citizenship Award Recipients CIELO, Integral Latino Education Center of Olympia and Cascadia Research Collective. Auction. Tickets \$65, available online at www.lwvthurston.org/luncheon.

Olympia Food Co-op annual membership meeting

Sat, Nov 2, 11 am - 2 pm
Olympia Center, 222 Columbia St
Meet Board candidates, discuss policy, share lunch. Co-ops make another world possible but only if members choose a strong board. Vote Oct 15-Nov 15.

Womxn of Achievement Celebration

Sat, Nov 2, dinner
South Puget Sound Community College
Special Guest Ijeoma Oluo and presentation of 2019 awards. Ticket info online at www.ywcaofolympia.org, under Events (2019 Womxn of Achievement). All proceeds benefit YWCA Olympia.

Forums for Olympia, Lacey & Tumwater city council and port candidates

All month of October
Videotaped and posted online by the League of Women Voters. View at www.lwvthurston.org

For a fuller listing of October events go to LocalMotive.org. Check the WIP facebook page for other events that arrived after deadline.

October 2019

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Works In Progress

This issue: The rest of the world

