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An ice rink appears from nowhere in downtown Olympia

Bethany Weidner and
Ricky Osborne

When rumors circulated that Olympia would install an ice rink on the isthmus once county buildings were demolished, no one could fathom it. But on November 16, a rink opened across from Bayview grocery. It turns out that it's a temporary, seasonal rink built, installed, equipped and operated by a company called Ice Rink Events with a world-wide business installing these portable rinks.

The rink is the inspiration of the Olympia Parks Department staff who brought it to the City Council this past May. Ice Rink Events would charge \$204,000 to provide and install the facility; and \$92,000 to operate it.

A memo from Park Department listed the variety of funds to pay Ice Rink Events and cover \$67,000 in additional city expenses—a total of 363,000: \$125,000 shifted from the park capital budget (delaying some renovation work at Priest Point Park), \$67,000 in departmental revenues set aside from extra money earned in fees and charges for other park programs; \$24,000 in current Park budget capacity, and at least \$60,000 from sponsors and advertising businesses. The remaining \$92,000 or so would come from fees the skaters paid. If the fees fall short, the city will make up the difference; if more revenue comes in during the 7 weeks, it will be returned to the city.

Council members loved it—a downtown winter amenity the city would offer its citizens. The Parks Department materials included an architect's glowing rendition of a rainbow of skaters inside the rink and a chart listing costs. The vote in favor was unanimous. As Mayor Cheryl Selby said later, this would be a bright spot for a downtown much in need of such a thing.

Still, this awesome winter wonderland seemed to materialize out of thin air. The Olympia Park Plan was created in 2016 with input across the community, to set priorities and guide expenditures. There's no ice rink nor any hint of a recreational facility on the isthmus in the Park Plan. None of the public comments envisioned even the possibility of an ice rink.

According to one Councilmember, there was in fact no process involved in the decision to approve the staff's proposal for Ice Rink Events. Even shifting funds from the Parks capital budget to its operating budget required nothing other than this Council vote. One Councilmember said such



shifts “happen all the time.” In the end, community input came only from downtown business interests—the Visitor and Convention Bureau, the Downtown Alliance and the Economic Development Council.

No doubt that the ice rink will be fun for families—and an asset to downtown business for the holiday season. But should that be the only consideration? Why did the Council unquestioningly sign off on this amenity even though it requires a subsidy that amounts to about \$30,000 per week of operation? Was the expense of this project evaluated against other uses—including permanent options for the space or pending underfunded park projects? Is the Parks budget so cushy that there's no opportunity cost? Maybe it's time to reduce park impact fees if there's \$200,000 easily available just for fun. Does the Council have a criterion for when their touted public process can be overlooked? The Park staff offered Oly Ice as ready for this winter—but only if the Council didn't



C.C. Coates, known in Olympia as a homeless advocate, can be seen on 4th Ave. with her neat sign and good-humored smile. When she first arrived, Oly Ice staff called the police to have her removed. The police politely informed the Ice staff that C.C. had every right to stand where she was. Oly Ice next approached the Parks Department to make C.C. get rid of the sign—with equally little success. So give C.C. a wave next time you pass—it can be cold out there
Photo by Ricky Osborne.

ask for a lot of information beyond the staff's succinct presentation.

The city purchased the land that the rink occupies in 2013 for about \$3 million. It was bare for some years, and a few people found the lots a safe place to live in their vehicles. They were swiftly removed when the city cleaned up the property and built a hardscape, maybe with the ice rink in mind.

CC Coates, who was among those moved out last spring, has been inviting passers by to chat about the choice that the skate rink represents: “I'd like to see us using our public resources for public good, not private gain.” She has lived in Olympia for 30 years, working as a commercial carpenter. She takes her citizenship role seriously.

CC Coates' concern seems valid: this temporary but expensive amenity may be a money-maker for Ice Rink Events and boost downtown businesses. As for offering recreation to people in Olympia, Oly Ice's fees could end up limiting its use mainly to those with means. A 90-minute turn is \$10-\$12 (including skates). On “cheap” Tuesdays, the charge is \$8 for 90 minutes. At a recent City Council meeting, Parks Department Director Paul Simmons announced that they will be giving 120 free passes to organizations that will allow low-income people to skate. That's \$1200-1400 worth. Maybe, since Olympia taxpayers are kicking in a couple hundred thousand dollars, and the goal is to offer something fun for all Olympians, they could double or triple the number of free passes.

It's important that the city didn't sign a three-year contract with Ice Events. That means they will have a chance to evaluate whether to go ahead in 2019 for another season. At that point, maybe they will have some questions for the Parks Department.

Ricky Osborne is a photographer and musician. Bethany Weidner is a regular contributor to Works in Progress.

It was a hard place to live Then the City of Aberdeen decided to make it worse

The Rev. Sarah Monroe

People experiencing homelessness in Aberdeen have been camping out and living on the banks of the Chehalis River for decades. More and more people have joined the encampment over recent years as they got squeezed out of a dwindling housing market.

In August of this year, the city purchased the land people have been camping on. The city says they intend to clear it, as it is not safe for

human habitation. At the same time, they rolled out a transition plan. On September 25, police and city officials required that anyone on the property or visiting the property must obtain a permit. The city then granted permits to people who wish to continue residing there, or who have nowhere else to go—the total number of permits granted was 108.

Next, the city gated the property, cut off vehicle access and announced that all advocates and social service pro-

viders would also need to apply for a permit to access the property. When the Rev. Sarah Monroe applied on Oct 4, citing her position as a pastor and the fact that she serves as pastor to most residents at the encampment, her application was denied.

The city engineer, in charge of deciding what services would be allowed, told her that she “did not provide enough detail” or a schedule. Rev. Monroe informed the city that pastoral

► Aberdeen, continued on page 4

Works In Progress

Works in Progress (WIP) is a community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington and published monthly. The paper was established by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition which published the first issue in May 1990.

Our mission. The aim of WIP is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on justice in the economic, political, environmental and social realms and across classes, races and genders.

How WIP is produced. WIP depends on a volunteer managing editor, supported by the Publishing Committee, to see to the accomplishment of nearly all organizational, administrative and editorial tasks.

How WIP is supported. First and foremost, WIP depends for survival on the contributions and participation of writers, activists, students, organizers, and other members of the community, broadly defined. We also receive support from the Workers' Defense Fund whose purpose is to strengthen organizations that engage in struggle against the powerful for the empowerment of the powerless.

Guidelines for writing for WIP. 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. We also consider poetry, graphics, cartoons and articles that challenge the boundaries of conventional journalism.

Submitting your writing: Send an email to olywip@gmail.com with the word SUBMISSION on the subject line. Attach your submission as a word document. Include your name, a brief bio and contact information. WIP volunteer editors will contact you if there is significant editing needed. Send pictures etc as attachments. Pictures should be high resolution with dimensions in relation to the content. Generally 300 pixels is one inch.

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olywip@gmail.com
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Sunday, December 30, 1pm
Buck's Fifth Avenue, upstairs

About the cover:
Collage by Kelly Miller



Sharia Law vs Bible law and the American experiment

Quite a lot of Americans seem to be worried about the looming threat of Sharia Law—at least 14 states have adopted statutes that prohibit recourse to “foreign law” as a means to reassure their citizens that Sharia Law will not be allowed to encroach on America's freedoms. In any case, the US Constitution already expressly denies authority to “foreign law” so these states are wasting their time. Unless of course their purpose isn't to reassure their population but to rile them up. Talk show hosts tell listeners that we already have “creeping Sharia Law” in this country.

On the other hand, Bible law has a much greater likelihood of making inroads into the freedoms Americans enjoy. Despite the First Amendment guarantee that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” some elements of a conservative Christian ideology have found their way into state and municipal laws and practices, and increasingly into federal administrative agencies. And conservative christians have increasingly found their way into governing circles at both the state and federal level

The courts have found that no federal or state government may adopt a law that aids or prefers one religion, or aids all religions. Any law subject to challenge on those grounds must pass a three-part test: 1) it must have a clearly secular purpose; 2) its primary effect must neither enhance nor inhibit religion; and 3) it must avoid excessive entanglement with religion.

Whether those criteria are sufficient to preserve this country from seeing beliefs espoused by Christians become drivers of public policy seems open to question. This, not Sharia Law, is the danger.

Three articles in this issue talk about the good that can come when churches or other religious groupings take positions on public policy or perform social services. However, when the positions taken do not relate to an expansion of justice and equity, but are fueled by nationalism and rejection of an open society that should alarm us. We cannot wait until those positions are funded with public dollars or codified in law to strengthen protections against them.

The power of Christian groups in the political sphere in the US reflected in the term “Christian right.” Dozens of organizations including Christian Voice, Moral Majority, Religious Roundtable, Focus on the Family, Free Congress Foundation, the Heritage Foundation, along with massive radio networks such as the Christian Broadcasting Network and Trinity Broadcasting Network pursue a Christian fundamentalist agenda across many institutions. Churches have also sought opportunities to embody their dogma in government. Their views have shaped politics and in some instances been incorporated into laws on global warming, reproductive health, sexual activity, abortion, public school curricula, the status of women, foreign policy, etc.

We've come a long way since John Kennedy said, “I do not speak for my church on public matters and my church does not speak for me.” From the President on down, politicians trumpet their religious positions..

Many officials in the current administration are veterans of the Christian Right. One, Scott Lloyd was responsible as Director of the Office for Refugee Resettlement, for intervening to prevent a young refugee woman from having a legal abortion. Another, Roger Severino, as director of the Office for Civil Rights in the Health and Human Services department created a new division Conscience and Religious Freedom Division. Donald Trump soon after his election, converted Bush's “faith-based” office into the White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative, with officials in 13 federal agencies.

The 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) has developed into a tool that allows businesses to avoid obeying laws that are said to conflict with the company's religious beliefs. This has enabled businesses to exclude coverage for abortion and contraception otherwise legally required in insurance plans. Some officials in the Trump administration seem to specialize in finding ways to disguise regulations that are motivated by religious aims. A newly proposed rule would require ACA insurers to send consumers an “abortion bill” each month, representing the share of their premium going toward covering abortion services. Consumers would be required to pay this bill separately.

One way to look at such forays is as “test marketing” for opportunities to carve out ever larger space to introduce religious demands and prohibitions into the laws that govern all of us. Our secular space won't disappear suddenly in a democracy. It's not easy to get people to give up their ideas of freedom and tolerance. And here I'll quote the Irish journalist Fintan O'Toole: “You have to do trial runs that, if they are done well, serve two purposes. They get people used to something they may initially recoil from; and they allow you to refine and calibrate. This is what is happening now and we would be fools not to see it.”

—BW

Theme for January: Political work in the context of the midterm election results. *(Ed note: I'm going to defer to Max Elbaum to stimulate thinking about submissions for next month's theme. Thank you, Max. —BW)*

Elections are about power. They are a barometer of relative strength of different social and political forces; and within certain constraints, they can shift that power. Those constraints vary, sometimes the outcome of elections can shift things only in the tiniest of ways, other times they have big consequences. This just-completed election, and likely even more the one in 2020, the stakes are quite high. Politics is about Power. One of positive things this moment is that the question of power has moved central to discussion on the left. Not just how to speak truth to power, or how to protest those in power, or pressure those in power. Rather, how to take chunks of power from those who have it now and get it for exploited and oppressed. —Max Elbaum, from his notes in Portside, November 18.

February theme: Rural life and the urban/rural divide.



Special events

Rally at the Capitol in defiance of the failure of Ref. 1631
Sat, Dec. 1, 1-3 p.m.,
Youth sponsors

Adventure speaker: Urban Trails
Wed, Dec. 5, 5:30-9 p.m., Friends Meeting House
Olympia Mountaineers potluck. Bring utensils & a dish to share.

Chanukah Street Feeds
Dec. 6 and 8 (see Holiday Crazy Faith Street Feed below for details)

Hearing to remove two supervisors from the Thurston Conservation District Board.
Fri, Dec. 7, 8:30 a.mh., Dept of Ecology HQ, 300 Desmond Drive SW, Lacey.
An official decision will be made.

Native Art Faire for the Holidays
Sat/Sun, Dec. 7& 8. The Longhouse at The Evergreen State College.
Jewelry, carvings, weaving, fine art prints and more.

Teachings of the Tree People
Now thru Dec 15. The Evergreen State College Library Gallery.
An exhibit of the work of over 50 indigenous fiber artists from the Pacific Rim. Combine with a visit to the Longhouse Art Faire.

Defending Women’s Rights “Missing & Murdered Native Women”
Sat, Dec 8, 1:00 p.m. at Safeplace, 521 Legion Way, Olympia
Thurston County National Organization for Women. Guest speaker. Gilda Yazzie, National Vice-President of NOW. And the continuing fight for the NRA.

Thurston Housing Land Trust Annual Meeting
Sat, Dec. 8, 1- 3 p.m., Friends’ Meeting House, 3201 Boston Harbor Road NE
Election of nine trustees. To inform yourself: ThurstonHLT@gmail.com

Help build a new Thurston Co jail library
Mon, Dec 10, til 5 pm.
Last day to donate paperbacks for a 2000 book library at the jail. See p. 11 for details.

Human Rights Day Celebration & Fundraiser
Dec. 10, 6:30-9:30 p.m., Dillinger’s Rachel Corrie Foundation

End of Year Potluck for Olympia IWW
Dec, 17, 5-8 p.m., MXX96 Meeting Rm, 119 Washington St, Olympia
Review progress and make plans.

Coffee with the Conservation District
Wed, Dec. 19, 9:30-10:30. Mills Diner, 10102 - US 12, Rochester, Drink coffee, meet district staff, learn about free programs and services.

Dinner for 60
Dec. 20, 5 - 9 p.m., First Christian Church
Participate in this holiday tradition, patdelaney8@msn.com for more information

“If a Tree Falls” - radical movie night
Dec. 21, 6-9 p.m., Mixx 96 meeting rm. IWW
A tale of Earth Liberation Front

Holiday Crazy Faith Street Feeds for Downtown Street Families
Dec. 25, Thu. Dec 27, and Sat, Dec. 29 all 6-9 p.m. State & Washington, across from the Transit Center
Come help serve, have a plate yourself, visit with street families.

For a comprehensive listing of events and activities of interest to the South Sound’s politically active community and friends, go to the Community Calendar at LocalMotive.org. For WIP listings visit our FB page.

You can't say 'hereafter' without saying 'here'

Can the church become a force for justice in this world?

Emily Lardner

The role of faith in our nation's politics and governance has long been contested, even though the separation between church and state is a founding principle. In practice, the two, religion and governance, have always been intertwined. We might want to explore what that means by asking what we would be doing if we were a "Christian nation." And then to contrast that with the direction that religion has prescribed for us.

Fredrick Douglass wrestled with this question in 1852, in an eloquent address entitled "What to a Slave is the Fourth of July?" In that speech, Douglass names the many accomplishments and values of the founders of the country; and then poses his challenge: how can he, a former slave, celebrate anything when the very principles and practices that are being celebrated have been deliberately designed to rob him and other African Americans of their rights?

Douglass makes clear the complicity of the Christian church in maintaining unjust and racist structures. Douglass was speaking two years after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. That act obliterated the Mason-Dixon line, Douglass said:

...New York has become as Virginia; and the power to hold, hunt, and sell men, women, and children as slaves remains no longer a mere state institution, but is now an institution of the whole United States. The power is co-extensive with the Star-Spangled Banner and American Christianity.

My experience with American Christianity introduced me to political awareness when I attended the Quaker meeting in Ann Arbor, MI, in the early 1980s. In Ann Arbor I met individuals whose spiritual commitments as Quakers were connected in material ways to civic and political practice through the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Their faith-based activism oriented towards social justice might have given Fredrick Douglass reason to amend his condemnation to some degree. In fact in the past activism had earned Quakers and others the label of "communist sympathizers."

Since its origins in 1917, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has come under attack by conservatives, particularly but not exclusively

during the Cold War when AFSC advocated for de-escalating tensions between the US and the Soviet Union.

AFSC has challenged the Department of Defense and the US Patriot Act for infringing on civil liberties. More recently, the AFSC has helped to establish the Bill of Rights Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing resources for teachers and students about the Bill of Rights.

Communism and Christianity: MLK's



Pro-life rally at the state capitol in Olympia. Photo by Paul Peck

view

In 1962, Martin Luther King Jr gave speech called "Can a Christian be a Communist?" In the first half of the speech, King explained why communism and Christianity are incompatible. In essence, King said, "Karl Marx was a materialist, and he believed that the whole of human history moved on, driven by economic forces. This was his idea. There was no place in that system for God, and so from that moment on, communism became an atheistic system."

And yet, King continues, there is something in communism "which challenges us all" because it emphasizes essential truths.

According to King, communism should challenge Christians to become more concerned about social justice. He explained to his listeners that the Communist Manifesto, published in 1847 by Marx and Engels, emphasized the exploitation of the lower class by the middle class, and that communism sought to transcend the superficialities of race and color. King also suggested Marx drew on religious teachings to inform his thinking:

Karl Marx was born a Jew in a rabbinic family. Somewhere along the way as a child, he must have heard his parents reading the words of Amos: 'Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.' Then, when he was six years old, his parents became Christians,

and somewhere along the way he must have heard them reading over the New Testament: 'Ye do it unto the least of these, ye do it unto me.'

King reminds his audience that "Christians are always to begin with a bias in favor of a movement which protests against unfair treatment of the poor" and in that way, Communism is not compatible with Christianity. But if Christianity fails to accomplish its mission, communism may be the nec-

Each section has diverse readings, and discussions include seminars, reflections, and community-based actions. It's as if it's a program aimed at rectifying the wrongs King pointed out when he said, "this is what we've done to Christ. We robbed him of his good name. And we've identified that name with segregation. We've identified that name with exploitation and with oppression and with so many of the evils of history."

The JustFaith curriculum is designed to help participants understand the forms and the causes of oppression and injustice. Paradoxically, according to its critics, that's exactly what's wrong with it. Writing for CatholicCulture.org, William A. Borst critiques JustFaith because it is designed to "stress more the divisive needs to reveal class antagonisms and to restructure society along Marxist lines." In other words, Christians are better off sticking to dogma, and not to deeds.

Christian is a euphemism for what?

Donald Trump invokes the US as "a nation of true believers" and cites the Pledge of Allegiance and the phrase "under God" as evidence that this has always been so. Trump and Borst, critic of JustFaith, are united in their belief that the right of private ownership is inscribed in dogma, and the government's role is to protect that right fiercely, not withstanding the claims of justice and the evil of injustice.

Douglass, King, and current groups like JustFaith and the Poor People's Campaign are driven by a different interpretation of dogma. As King put it, in his inimitable cadence, in 1962:

This is why Karl Marx one day looked out, and this is why others following him have looked out and decided to say, "Religion is the opiate of the people." It has too often been the opiate of the people. Too often the churches talk about a future good over yonder and not concerned about the present evil over here. ...But I'm tired of people telling me about the hereafter and they don't tell me about the here. (*Yeah*) You can't say hereafter (*Yeah*) without saying here....It's all right to talk about streets flowing with milk and honey over yonder, but I want to see men living in decent homes right here in this world. (*Amen*) It's all right to talk about all of these things in terms of a new Jerusalem, but I want to see a new Atlanta, a new New York, a new America, and a new world right here. (*Amen*)

Or as Douglass put it over 150 years ago:

For my part, I would say, welcome infidelity! welcome atheism! welcome anything! in preference to the gospel, *as preached by those Divines!* They convert the very name of religion into an engine of tyranny, and barbarous cruelty... It is a religion for oppressors, tyrants, man-stealers, and thugs. It is not that 'pure and undefiled religion' which is from above, and which is 'first pure, then peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.' But a religion which favors the rich against the poor; which exalts the proud above the humble; which divides mankind into two classes, tyrants and slaves; which says to the man in chains, *stay there*; and to the oppressor, *oppress on*; it is a religion which may be professed and enjoyed by all the robbers and enslavers of mankind; it makes God a respecter of persons, denies his fatherhood of the race, and tramples in the dust the great truth of the brotherhood of man."

Emily Lardner lives in Grays Harbor and is a member of the WIP Publishing Committee.

TRADITIONS

CAFE & WORLD FOLK ART

Brass and Bead Necklace
Women's fistula rehabilitation project, Ghana
Ojoba Collective

Earrings
India
Mata Traders

Handbag from recycled grocery bags
Women's group, India
Asha Imports

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The left hand of God

Esther Kronenberg

In our secularized and technological society, religion is seen by some as superstitious nonsense, something people made up to explain natural phenomena and conquer their fears of the unknown. By others it is seen as the opiate of the masses, used to subjugate the lower classes with promises of eternal life. And still others use it to demonize those who do not believe as they do, as in the political Right's attacks on Islam, abortion and LGBTQ rights, or Islamic fundamentalists' attacks on the West. For centuries, millions of people have been slaughtered and ghastly acts of cruelty committed in the name of God. No wonder that religion is regarded as a reactionary force with no place in progressive circles.

A view based on love and justice

But that isn't the only story. There is a view of a world based on love and justice that finds direct expression in the Bible. The Hebrew prophets, Jesus, St. Francis and Rumi speak of a world based on love, compassion and justice. Their words inspired the Abolition movement, Gandhi and the Rev. Martin Luther King, as today they inspire Rabbi Michael Lerner, founder of Tikkun and the Network for Spiritual Progressives, and Dr. William Barber

of the Poor People's Campaign.

Perhaps the most eloquent spokesman for the rational necessity for religion was Leo Tolstoy. Best known for his novels, in his later years Tolstoy turned to the Christian Gospels and found there truths that people could live by.

Identifying as an individual naturally pits us against other individuals to satisfy our narrow self-interest

Tolstoy's work exposes the fallacy of violence as a motivation

Similar to the makeup of our country, Tolstoy's Russia consisted of a very small wealthy class, an educated elite and the masses of peasants and working class people. In the last chapter of his book, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*—which was the inspiration for Gandhi in his non-violent independence movement—Tolstoy describes a scene in which government officials conscript peasants. The officials rip the peasants of one town to send them to a neighboring town to kill and torture peasants who are resisting the rich landowner's effort to divert water from the fields on which their lives depend.

Complicity in these immoral actions is rational in a world where people

identify with their social position of governor, policeman, official, soldier, and feel themselves bound to obey not their conscience or human duties, but their social duties. Tolstoy exposes how the entire society, the Church and State, is based on violence or the threat of violence.

This law of violence, what Rabbi Lerner would call the worldview of fear and domination, causes us to divide the world into “us” and “them” where we need protection from “them” because they will try to take advantage of “us.” Tolstoy saw that violence for any reason, whether by the ruling class or the revolutionaries, could never unify people or lead to peace, and only persists because it profits some and deceives the rest.

The worldview of love

The way out of this world, writes Tolstoy, is through the law of love as expressed in the Gospels. He saw religion as the relationship of man to the universe, and morality as the guide to life that follows from this relationship. As all persons are equal in the eyes of the Infinite, our conduct towards each other necessarily follows the Golden Rule—“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Rabbi Lerner would call this the worldview of love, caring and generosity, with God the force that makes possible the transformation of “that which is” to “that which can and ought to be”—the force of possibility.

The flaw in identifying as an individual

This understanding of religion gives a meaning to life that transcends the individual and the group. It asks us to embody love in the world as fully as possible, recognizing that God (the force of possibility and transformation) is love and that we all are sisters and brothers. When rooted in this understanding, one has a reverence for life in all its forms, and learns to recognize oneself as a manifestation of this force, as are all other beings. By contrast, identifying as an individual naturally pits us against other individuals to satisfy our narrow self-interest, and identifying as a member of a group creates a wider version of the “us” and “them” mentality that leads nations and different belief systems to conflict.

Resources to guide your thinking

This isn't easy, especially in our society where TV and computers peddle sadistic violence, egotistical posturing and a barrage of consumer appeals to greed, selfishness, pride, gluttony and vanity. Yet there are plenty of examples of the law of love and generosity in the political arena. Check out the Network for Spiritual Progressives. Look up ideas for a Global Marshall Plan (www.tikkun.org/gmp) as a path to homeland security, and the Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the US Constitution (www.tikkun.org/esra) to insist that corporate power be subject to democratic restraints.

Locally, there are several groups working in our community on issues motivated by the progressive spiritual worldview.

Spiritual progressives at work in our area

Interfaith Works consists of 32 faith communities who are politically active in social justice and peace issues in our community, such as homelessness, hunger, immigration, refugee advocacy, environmental stewardship and improving relations with local Native tribes. They introduced and got the City of Olympia to adopt the Charter for Compassion to “recognize the inherent worth and dignity of all persons.” Through the statewide Faith Action Network, they lobby the legislature to pass bills that support education, poverty reduction, voting rights, criminal justice and gun control. This year they will advocate a tax on capital gains.

A yearning we all may share

Interfaith members include Temple Beth Hatfiloh, which voted to become a sanctuary for immigrants. The Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation is working on climate change issues. South Sound Buddhist Fellowship members hook up with Olympia Indivisible, Thurston County Progressives and the Green Party in actions. Farther from home, local faith communities also support non-profit charities like Friendly Water for the World that provides access to low-cost clean water technologies in rural areas of Africa and India. There's a reason why we are moved by the speeches of Martin Luther King. He expressed the yearning for a world of love and justice that is shared by everyone on the planet.

Don't give in to the “reality police” and think this is the way it has to be. As John Lennon sang,

*Imagine all the people living life in peace
You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one
I hope some day you'll join us, and the world will be as One.*

Esther Kronenberg is a member of the League of Women Voters and the Faith Action Network

Aberdeen

From page 1

care and visits could not be scheduled and that, as a matter of confidentiality, she could not provide the personal information of people she was visiting.

As a result of this action, a lawsuit was filed in federal district court on November 19, by the Rev. Sarah Monroe, April Obi Boling, and Tim Quigg against the City of Aberdeen, Mayor Erik Larson, and City Engineer Kris Koski.

Tim Quigg, a local businessman and philanthropist, and April Obi Boling, an enrolled member of the Quileute Tribe who has multiple family members living in the camp, joined the suit. Neither of them applied for permits. All three plaintiffs believe that it is a violation of their First Amendment right to speak to their friends and loved ones and to exercise freedom of religion.

The Rev. Sarah Monroe is the priest in charge of Chaplains on the Harbor, a ministry that serves people experiencing poverty and homelessness in Grays Harbor County:

“We have not undertaken this lawsuit lightly. The recent actions of the City of Aberdeen regarding the encampment along the Chehalis River pose a threat to our deepest moral and constitutional values. It seems unprecedented, in this country, for a local government to bar advocates, clergy, service providers, family members — basical-

ly anyone trying to assist vulnerable people in getting out of homelessness — from meeting them where they are staying. We do not believe that this is a good or safe place to live; we simply acknowledge that, for many people, there is little other choice and, while they are in those circumstances, they need pastoral care and support.

It is troubling that the City Engineer has been tasked with leading this process, as opposed to someone whose expertise is in health and human services. This signals to us that the City of Aberdeen is not primarily concerned with the 100+ human beings living in crisis on this site, but rather concerned with aesthetic appearances and “cleaning up the town.”

Mayor Larson himself has argued, on the public record, that the process of registering encampment residents and requiring all third party visitors to be approved by the city is comparable to the process of visiting incarcerated people — and that the key difference is these encampment residents can come and go as they please.

Combat veterans living with acute agoraphobia cannot easily come and go as they please. Disabled people living with severe chronic pain, amputations, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress cannot easily come and go as they please. People who look visibly poor, in this city, often cannot come and go as they please due to frequent incidents of harassment and vigilante violence on the basis of their housing status.

Reverend Monroe's permit to visit this encampment was denied by the city on the grounds that she did not provide enough detail, or a schedule, or a clear list of what she intended to do during her visits. Reverend Monroe stated in response that she is a priest:

I have been pastoring the people in this camp for five years. I do everything from drive people to the hospital, to prayer, to taking people to social service appointments, to performing last rites when people die here. These essential pastoral duties do not happen on a schedule, as any member of the clergy can attest. I have continued to visit people, even though I have been denied a permit, and am petitioning the court to prevent the city from arresting me.

Homeless people have a constitutionally protected right to freedom of religious expression. I have a constitutionally protected right to my freedom of religious expression, which includes serving the poor and the sick and the hungry. The city's actions are a clear attempt to isolate, marginalize, and further criminalize people who have already been pushed to the edge of existence in this community. I consider it my duty as an American citizen and my vocation as a priest to stand against this.

This statement was presented at a press conference held in front of the gates on River Street in Aberdeen on November 20, 2018.

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Growing up Irish Catholic on Queen Anne Hill

Dan Leahy

“Dig that man with the crazy tan; he’s our Dan from the Irish clan.” Frankie Warner made that up. It was a poster of a big-eared, freckle-faced eighth-grader running for class president. It hung at the back of the classroom in St. Anne’s Parish School in Seattle’s Queen Anne neighborhood.

The nuns, like today’s electronic voting systems, never let us use paper ballots. We all put our heads down on the desk and raised our hand for our candidate. It was hard for the nuns to choose—the elections were always so close, a one vote difference. I can’t remember who won, me or Kip Toner, but the loser got to be Vice President.

Queen Anne Hill was my neighborhood from 2nd grade on. We lived on Crockett Street (a grown-up cricket, my Dad said) just below John Jay Elementary. John Jay was a public school, out of bounds for an Irish-Catholic kid like me, just like the public library. But we hid our stash of cigarettes at John Jay in a cigar box under the portables, me and Johnnie Sweet who lived on Newton, my main buddy.

I’d ride my bicycle to school most days. Up past McCauliff’s house, turn right up the hill, past the park with the wading pool full of polio possibilities from peeing children, down past Al’s hamburger place where you could get a cheeseburger and a green river float for 75 cents, to the school to park my bike between the nuns’ convent and the back of the school.

Sister Rachel Ann, my second grade teacher, said I had the hands of the priest... Even though I was in love with her, she headed me in the opposite direction.

Then there was George Vanni, the Italian boy, who would always wear orange on St. Pat’s day. Even though he was kind and didn’t want to fight me, I would have to challenge him. That lead to a few bruises and a “D” in deportment. Frankie Warner tried to give me hints about fighting but I was no good at it, despite my temper.

Yes, my temper. In the 7th grade, I was tripped by a girl on my way to my desk and I yelled out. The sister got mad at me! “When will you learn to control that temper, Danny?” she said. I thought she was talking to the wrong person. How about the girl who tripped me?

Temper or not, I headed for the Seminary right after 8th grade. What else

would one want to be but a priest? There were no professionals in our immediate family. My Dad ran a gas station up on Capitol Hill and he never let me be around cars or the gas station. I was not supposed to be him.

I guess I couldn’t be my Mom. My Mom was a church lady, one of a cadre of women, like Mrs. Dalton and Mrs. Salladay, who ran the altar society and helped keep the priests happy and the church clean.

Plus, my Dad had a younger brother who was a priest. Pastor of Christ the King parish in Seattle, the largest in the diocese. Father Lester Leo Leahy. Father Les drove his V-8 Chevy sedan like a madman. He would pass long lines of cars on Stevens Pass while we winced in the back seat too frightened even to pray. I wanted to drive just like him.

I had cousins who were either priests or in the seminary—Terry, Whalen and Pat. Of course, if a son becomes a priest, his mom gets a straight, no stops, passage direct to the pearly gates. Plus St. Edward’s tuition was free. (It was only later that I found out parents had to pay tuition if their son left without becoming a priest.)

Off to St. Edward’s seminary I went. The entrance to St. Edwards was a long single-lane road through the woods, past the soggy football field on the left, curve around to a circle drive with a statue in it. There was a grayish, brick, three-story building, facing west, then an open space, then the woods and further down the hill, Lake Washington. After four years there, I wanted to bulldoze it and salt the grounds – a plan, years later, I reserved for the Rockefeller Estates in upstate New York.

The seminary was a place made to break all the rules. Our freshmen year we were in a barracks away from the main building. Lights out at 9:00 pm. One kid would play taps through a nozzle he had found and then roll out the window and into the woods. Another young recruit knelt in front of his short dresser and slapped himself so hard with the sign of the cross I couldn’t get to sleep.

By sophomore year we were in the main building. The mornings were harsh and, as in the rest of my life, we went by the bell. Obedience training, my friend Rick Fellows would have said.

Up, showered, dressed, with a coin flip on your bunk and off to mental prayer at 6:30 am followed by one-and-a-half masses depending on the speed of the priests. Then breakfast in the refectory with a line of priests staring down at you as they ate whatever the French nuns cooked up. We sat at tables of eight ranked from top to bottom by class.

As a freshman, I sat at the end of the table and got the food last. I and my fellow freshman inmate across from me, were at the mercy of the six unknowns further up the food chain. If they didn’t like us, we got less. If I broke any of the real rules, the ones

Returning to the [seminary] after visiting Sunday was hard , from a loving family to a cruel institution.

the seminarians made up and enforced, I’d get “starved out.” Sometimes the ones higher up the food chain would be nice and send down chocolate ice cream laced with ex-lax.

The third Sunday of every month was visiting day. My family could come and they always did. It was human contact and it was great. The whole area in front of the main building would fill up with cars and families. Soon, of course, we were looking out for sisters, the real kind, the ones with breasts like Rufus the Reds’ sisters who not only had breasts, but wore dresses with zippers right down the front! Always a main attraction if you could peek a direct look.

Returning to the building after visiting Sunday was hard, from a loving family to a cruel institution. My Dad taught me a rule. Say your goodbyes once, walk toward the building and don’t look back. I did that and still do.

There was another touch of home during those years—my laundry bag. My mom would do my laundry and drop it off at the seminary. I’d rush down to get it but it wasn’t my fresh clothes I was after. My Mom was a rule breaker, a co-conspirator. She’d stash treats in the bag—date-filled cookies and brownies.

The seminary authorities did weird things. I had to leave my letters home unsealed so they could read them. One of the cruelest things they would do

was to “disappear” my friends. Where is Jimmy? He wasn’t at early mass, not at breakfast. Is he sick? Let’s find him. No luck. No explanation. Gone in the night. Gone. Never seen again. No word. No nothing.

I can’t say I had a hard life at the seminary. We were boys. We went to class. Made jokes about our teachers. Played tricks on them. Played hard at six-man, flag football, tennis, handball, basketball, said our rosaries, walked the grounds, played in the woods, made friends, snuck out to Kenmore to read Playboy magazines, drank altar wine, hung wires out our windows to listen to banded music from Seattle, tormented those who broke our rules—and learned Latin and Greek. By the 4th year, only 4 of 43 freshmen who entered with me were still there. Years later, the other three had all become priests.

I wish I knew exactly why I left. Decisions never seem to be clear cut, rational and well thought out. Maybe it was Marilyn Dalton, Jimmy’s sister, who I went water-skiing with on Lake Washington during summer break. I didn’t know what to do with Marilyn, but I liked being with her. That was a no-no for seminarians.

Maybe it was the Seminary’s Rector, Father O’Neil calling me on the carpet at the end of my junior year, telling me that I was a “rascal” and that he was going “to boot me out of here.” I think Father O’Neil suspected me of having smoke-bombed the priests cars and outfitted them with high pitched squealers that blew when they took off for a Sunday mass. But it wasn’t me. Either way, Father Les reportedly said, “No, you are not. Not my nephew.”

Maybe it was seeing really great guys, my friends, disappeared over the years or not coming back and wondering why? Maybe it was coming to the conclusion that the only real criterion to priesthood was answering the bell.

Maybe it was that we all learned we were being taught by priests who themselves could not be what we wanted to be. All the priests at the seminary were, for various reasons, priests who could not work in parishes.

What I think really did it, though, was a conversation I had with my uncle. When I told my mother I didn’t want to go back, she said I had to talk to Father Les before I made my final decision. I went to his big office in Christ the King parish in Seattle. He sat behind his big desk and I timidly said I didn’t want to return to the seminary. His response was: “Do you want to end up like your Father?”

What I ended up doing was hating Father Les for the rest of his life and leaving the seminary that summer. Being like my father was okay by me, even though he didn’t have a new car, a big office or a prestige job like Father Les. My Dad worked hard every day, often for 12 hours. He went to mass every morning and fell asleep every night saying his rosary. He did right by his family and never complained. I wasn’t going to be my Dad but his brother had no business putting him down in front of his son.

My sister, Sister Daniel Maureen, a Holy Names nun, and fourteen months my senior, along with her fellow conspirators at Seattle University’s admission office got my late application to the top of the pile and I entered Seattle University as a freshman in the fall of 1961.

This reflection is excerpted from an upcoming autobiography entitled When the Mayonnaise Ran Red. Dan is the grandson of Eastern Washington pioneers.

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Gunfire and wildfire: The new abnormal

Robert C. Koehler

Thousand Oaks, California: a city torn apart by wildfire and gunfire. Both are unnatural disasters.

“This is the new abnormal,” Gov. Jerry Brown said in November at a press conference, talking about global warming and the three voracious fires that were tearing up his state, one of them—the Camp Fire, in Northern California—the deadliest and most destructive in the state’s history.

“Unfortunately, the best science is telling us that dryness, warmth, drought, all those things, they’re going to intensify,” Brown said.

No time to grieve

In Thousand Oaks, northwest of Los Angeles, the new abnormal met the new abnormal. On Nov. 7, a gunman entered the Borderline Bar and Grill in that city and started shooting, killing 11 patrons and a police officer. He then shot himself. Several of the patrons, including one of the victims, had survived the mass shooting a year earlier at a Las Vegas concert.

There was no time to grieve. A day later, as the Washington Post reported, “catastrophic twin blazes had formed a ring of fire around this Southern California community. The second tragedy of the week had somehow dwarfed the first.” Thousands of people were forced to evacuate their homes.

Gunfire and wildfire

This is a country at war with itself in multiple ways. The shooter, Ian David Long — described, of course, as a troubled loner — was a former Marine who had been deployed in Afghanistan. Is there a relationship between the shooting at the Borderline Bar and Grill and the fact that Long had been trained as a machine-gunner?

The American mainstream media are far more willing, it seems, to acknowledge a relationship between human activity and climate change, including the increasing intensity of natural disasters, such as hurricanes and wildfires, than they are willing to acknowledge a relationship between killing abroad, which is called war, and killing at home, which is called murder.

It’s the simplest possible solution to life’s paradoxical complexity: Kill the bad guy.

A New York Times story in the wake of the shootings, however, wades into the complexity of this relationship. Reporters interviewed a number of his fellow Marines. One of them, utterly shocked by what happened, said: “He was a really good guy. He gave me the Bible I still carry today.” But he added: “We were trained as machine-gunners, so you know you are capable of doing something like this. But that he did it makes

no sense. It is against all our values.”

A militarized society deforms values

Presumably the violated values concern the killing of Americans, which, I fear, is a precarious distinction. The *Times* story also informed us that Long’s battalion “saw little action” during his deployment in Afghanistan, pointing out, without comment or further context: “The only casualty in the battalion died by suicide after being hazed by other Marines.”

Wait, what? This bit of data may have absolutely nothing to do with the mass shooting spree in Thousand Oaks, but it seems to say something about values as defined by the military and reported by the media. When life itself isn’t sacrosanct—when the taking of it is allowed to serve tactical and strategic purposes—values can quickly crumble. Killing people, at the very least, becomes no big deal. Sometimes it’s even, you know, necessary.

A Marine is “hazed” by fellow Marines and commits suicide. The awfulness of this resonated for me partly because it was reported with such a shrug, worth half a sentence. (The *Times* did, however, link to a longer story about the incident.)

Here’s another quote from the story, from someone who served with Long: “I’m not surprised someone I knew ended up doing a mass shooting. We had another guy recently committed suicide by cops in Texas. Guys struggle. We’ve lost more Marines in our peer group to suicide than we ever lost in Afghanistan.”

A willingness to kill

I fear the influence of militarism expands well beyond the strategy and

tactics that are under its control. The essential value it maintains, with a budget almost beyond comprehension, is that safety, freedom and morality itself require belief in — and willingness to kill — a designated enemy. It’s the simplest possible solution to life’s paradoxical complexity: Kill the bad guy.

Sociologist Peter Turchin has called it the “principle of social substitutability.” After the Sandy Hook killings six years ago, he described this principle in an essay: “On the battlefield, you are supposed to try to kill a person whom you’ve never met before. You are not trying to kill this particular person, you are shooting because he is wearing the enemy uniform. . . . Enemy soldiers are socially substitutable.”

I fear this principle has spread through our gun-saturated society like carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Angry and troubled souls can wage their own wars, and more and more of them are doing so. Perhaps the problem isn’t that many people are troubled — there are lots of reasons to be troubled, both crazy and legitimate — but that so many of them have embraced a simplistic, life-devaluing solution to the trouble. It’s the same solution the country itself has embraced.

“Mass shootings and mass burnings,” said Stephen Pyne, a wildfire expert at Arizona State University, quoted by Wired magazine. “Welcome to the new America.”

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This is our lane: Furious docs explain they’re not anti-gun but anti-bullet hole

Abby Zimet.

Last week, hours before the slaughter of 12 people at a country music bar in Thousand Oaks, CA., our 307th mass shooting this year, the ever-judicious NRA denounced doctors and other health care professionals—those steadfast, often blood-soaked heroes who daily labor to pick up the shattered pieces from NRA-funded carnage universally deemed a public health crisis, who for years “have seen and heard things that cannot be unseen and unheard”—for daring to seek to reduce gun violence.

Citing a recent paper on the epidemic from the American College of Physicians titled, “Reducing Firearm Injuries and Death in the United States,” the ghouls at the NRA sneered, “Someone should tell self-important anti-gun doctors to stay in their lane.”

This, from a grotesque group that for years has blindly denied culpability for the butchery, or recognized that parents burying children and teachers practising lockdowns are in all our lanes.

They have derided gun-control efforts by doctors as a tired “hobby,” lobbied the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from even discussing or researching gun violence, simultaneously, disingenuously blamed video games and mental health and late-night hosts and pretty much anything but guns for the bloodshed as they continued to view anyone who stood between them and their grisly paychecks—kids in school, people at a nightclub, people praying—as “just another problem,” and, in 2016, successfully brought a lawsuit to block a law

passed by California voters banning the kind of high capacity magazine most recently used by...the Thousand Oaks shooter.

That massacre, along with the NRA’s heedless charge doctors “have consulted NO ONE but themselves,” was too much for those who daily “cut open chests and hold hearts in our hands (and try) to repair the damage from bullets on pulverized organs and splintered bones.”

Their seething response included op-eds—“Anyone who has ever worked in a trauma bay can remember the visceral cry of a parent who has just been informed their son or daughter has died at the hand of a gun...This is our lane”—and an open letter to the NRA from doctors who “bear witness to every trauma...regardless of outcome.”

Along with surgeries, they write, they tend for decades to the paralyzed or disabled, offer mental health care to families and survivors, treat trauma among teachers, students, colleagues, train civilians to #StopTheBleed—a protocol for battlefields, not classrooms—hold the hands of victims taking their final breaths, and “escort parents into our treatment rooms to take one last look at their dead child.” “We invite you to be part of the solution,” they end. “We are not anti-gun. We are anti-bullet hole.”

The most searing rebuke to the NRA came from doctors posting heart-rending stories and blood-spattered pictures on #ThisIsEveryone’sLane and #ThisIsMyLane. “Do you have any idea how many bullets I pull out of corpses weekly?” fumed a forensic pathologist. “This isn’t just my lane. It’s

my fucking highway.”

That relentless sense of “just another day in America” is palpable in other posts. On bloodied scrubs: “This is what it looks like to stay in #mylane. I speak out for this patient, for their parents who will never be the same, for every person who came after this one and didn’t have to.” From others: “16 y/o GSW to the Aorta. @NRA his mother is in the waiting room. Should you tell her he didnt make it? Didnt think so...”

My lane is a pregnant woman shot in a moment of rage by her partner. She survived because the baby stopped the bullet. Have you ever had to deliver a shattered baby?...My lane included caring for paraplegic 25 year old now opiate-addicted after drive-by shooting afraid of everything...A beautiful 3 year old shot by a 5 year old ‘just playing.’ A hole in his chest, his back was shredded. No chance at survival. #ThisISMyLane.”

Joshua Corsa, a former Army medic and senior surgical resident, spent many grim hours treating the victims of the Pulse shooting in Orlando, where 49 people died. Later, he posted on Facebook a photo of his bloodied sneakers, not even a week old. He later explained why he would keep wearing them: “On these shoes, soaked between its fibers, is the blood of 54 innocent human beings. I don’t know which were straight, which were gay, which were black, or which were Hispanic. What I do know is that they came to us in wave upon wave of suffering, screaming, and death. And somehow, in that chaos, doctors, nurses, technicians, police, paramedics, and others, performed super human feats of compassion and care...This blood, which poured out of those patients and soaked through my scrubs and shoes, will stain me forever.”

The just-elected Democrat-controlled House will boast up to two dozen new

gun control advocates; they will now be joined by scores of doctors passionately citing experiences they demand must be heeded, rejecting the power of the NRA, and declaiming to them, “You’re here to make money and we’re here to save lives. Get out of *our lane*.”

Their voices, based on grisly, intimate, unceasing knowledge of what bullets do to bodies, carry a singular weight. “Unless you’ve had someone’s heart stop beating in your hands,” says one trauma surgeon, “you don’t get to tell those of us who have what is and is not our ‘lane.’” Or, more succinctly, “Unless you’ll (treat and) transport my patients dying from gunshot wounds to the OR for me, shut the fuck up.”

Abby Zimet is a staff writer for Common Dreams. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License

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BOTANICAL HAIR CARE PRODUCTS

Olympia carpenters at the New School for Union Organizers: Getting another set of tools

Mark Bean

[Note: The first installment of this series appeared in the November Works in Progress]

At the end of the summer in 1988, I enrolled along with a carpenter named Gary, in the New School for Union Organizers, a program of the Labor Center at The Evergreen State College. I had been working for Jones & Roberts on a new middle school in Elma and Gary was the local's Business Agent. There were about 20 of us set for 9 months of evening classes—members of unions, community organizations, and a few Evergreen students. All of us needed to confront new challenges to our community and our unions.

The Labor Center utilized a popular education model, where participants took a direct role and responsibility in their education. This was not education as “banking.” That model took the teacher's lessons as information to be deposited in the student's head like coins into a piggy bank. In that model, there is no thinking required. Just memorize, digest and regurgitate to demonstrate understanding.

.In the New School, we were asked to think critically about what our instructors presented and from each other as a learning community. Our classes offered information; demanded discussion and analysis; practice and evaluation.

It was a framework Gary and I took to right away because it reflected how we worked as carpenters.

- 1) absorbing information: tool knowledge and translating blueprints into three-dimensional objects;

- 2) thinking strategically and critically: organizing a timeline, make the steps which lead to the completion of the structure; and
- 3) employing group participation, analysis and evaluation: a building does not build itself, it takes teamwork: a community of carpenters, not just one individual.

Together we delved into labor history; political economy; past and present models of successful organizing. We began to develop strategic thinking; honed our research skills; experienced the potentials of diversity and group process. To paraphrase noted organizer Fred Ross, Sr.: We learned that we educate people in order to organize them. Our teachers were leaders only in the sense that they led by getting behind us and pushing. We also realized that if we did all the work for people, it meant that we'd stopped understanding what it meant to be an organizer.

Our nights were filled with talks from workers, other faculty, experienced organizers—each other. We viewed videos and other presentations on economics, politics and local and national labor history. Working in groups or cohorts we practiced engaging in productive, democratic discussion and analysis of the material that grew more compelling as the school progressed. We were given a chance right away to speak – in a “Talkin’ Union” workshop. We discovered the importance for workers to find their “voice,” to see others acting and speaking. It was good fun too—even though I froze, my first time on the soapbox.

We also did plenty of reading. Most helpful for me were: Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* (strategy and tactics), *History of*

the Labor Movement in the United States, Vols 1&2 by Philip Foner, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* by Harry Braverman (analysis), *Labor in America, A History* by Melvyn Dubofsky, *Empire in Wood* by Robert Christie (history of the Carpenters Union), Eric Mann's *Taking on*

We discovered that our local represented only 20% of the working carpenters in our area. This came as a shock!

General Motors (community strategy), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paolo Friere (critical pedagogy: using personal knowledge to examine the dominating power in one's life), and Labor Notes' *A Troublemaker's Handbook* (a how-to manual for organizers).

We graduated in May 1989. Along with our new-found knowledge we came away with a New School jacket to wear with pride. We took as our final assignment the slogan on the back: “educate, agitate, organize” rotating inside a gear circle with a lightning bolt in the center.

Gary and I had already begun applying our New School education to organize our local union. We found willing members to work in groups to learn, analyze and discuss why our position in our area construction economy had dwindled. Here was a subject on which we all had an opinion from personal experience, and carpenters to act on it.

We discovered that our local represented only 20% of the working carpenters in our area. This came as a shock! A few decades earlier, 70% of

the working carpenters in the area were union members.

We recognized that we needed to regain this level of strength if we were going to be able to raise the standards under which we lived and worked—and not just in an economic sense.

We saw that to improve our position required organizing as many of the other 80% of competent carpenters as possible, no matter what their stripe. We also began to rekindle lost union and community connections for the strength and resources a community could bring to a fight for justice.

From our self-critique, we realized that we had seen the enemy, and it was primarily us. Our union had coasted for many years on its past success. Our union had turned away many competent hands because of race, gender and a mistaken notion of our exclusivity and privilege. Our union had turned its attention inwards.

The carpenter workforce at large had also changed in its makeup and needs, of which we knew little nor had any relationship. We realized we first had to find and listen to carpenters to understand them and their position. How were we to do that? The old-timers had a solution: go talk with carpenters on their job sites.

In 1990 the winning bid for a new state Natural Resources Building on the East Capitol Campus was awarded to a Colorado building firm—Hensel Phelps Construction. This was a first for us—to have a state building in our town built by an outfit which was not signatory to our bargaining agreement.

The truth of our position could not have been made any clearer to us at the Olympia Building Trades meeting with Hensel Phelps management the summer of 1990. We were told that “we won't be needing your services for this project.” Oly Building Trades representatives were dumbfounded. They did not know what to do. But after the meeting, carpenter representatives declared that they were going to do something about it, and anyone else was welcome to join us. And we had the tools to make good on that promise.

Next month: A new way of thinking and acting to organize successfully: Carpenter to Carpenter; and making trouble for Hensel Phelps.

Mark Bean was born and raised in Olympia and has written the “Months of Labor” column for Works in Progress.

We are not robots

Amazon workers across Europe walk out on black Friday over low wages and ‘inhuman conditions’

Jessica Corbett

Amazon workers across Europe staged a walkout on Black Friday—when retailers offer major deals to holiday season shoppers the day after Thanksgiving—to protest low wages as well as “inhuman conditions” at company warehouses.

“It is one of the days that Amazon has most sales, and these are days when we can hurt more and make ourselves be heard because the company has not listened to us and does not want to reach any agreement,” said Eduardo Hernandez.

Eduardo Hernandez, a 38-year-old employee at an Amazon logistics depot in Madrid, Spain—where about 90 percent of staff walked off the job—told the Associated Press that the action was intentionally scheduled on the popular shopping day to negatively impact the company's profits.

“It is one of the days that Amazon has most sales, and these are days when we can hurt more and make ourselves be heard because the company has not listened to us and does not want to reach any agreement,” he said.

Protests were also planned for Amazon facilities in Italy, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

Some 620 employees at Amazon distribution centers in Rheinberg and Bad Hersfeld, Germany joined the walkout to demand higher wages, while union members in the U.K. organized

actions at five warehouses across the country to highlight safety concerns.

As Tim Roache, head of the London-based GMB union explained: “The conditions our members at Amazon are working under are frankly inhuman. They are breaking bones, being knocked unconscious, and being taken away in ambulances.”

While Amazon denies these claims—telling Business Insider in a statement Thursday that “all of our sites are safe places to work and reports to the contrary are simply wrong”—Roache said the workers are “standing up and saying enough is enough.”

Amazon CEO “Jeff Bezos is the richest bloke on the planet; he can afford to sort this out. You'd think making the workplace safer so people aren't carted out of the warehouse in an ambulance is in everyone's interest,” Roache added. “These are people making Amazon its money. People with kids, homes, bills to pay—they're not robots.”

In a video from the union targeting Bezos, workers also declared in multiple languages, “We are not robots.” Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the U.K.'s Labour Party, shared the video on Twitter and expressed “solidarity” with those participating in the walkout.

Jessica Corbett is a staff writer at Common Dreams, where this article first appeared. It is printed here under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License

Poor old Amazon

Recall that Amazon's profits—and Jeff Bezo's wealth—will be boosted by taxpayer subsidies and government investments of more than \$2.4 billion from New York and Virginia. One of the most prosperous companies in the world expects cities to buy them the people who will make their profits. New York will offer \$48,000 per job (did they specify humans rather than robots?) in tax credits if the company creates 25,000 positions by 2028. Virginia is paying only \$22,000 per position in tax credits.

New Yorkers will also be building Amazon's new facilities, spending up to a half-billion dollars to build the company's offices. Instead of property taxes, the company will be able to take advantage of a city program called PILOT to pay mostly for improvements—to its own new neighborhood.

Virginia made out a little better, offering to invest only a couple hundred million in the company's facilities.

You'd think New Yorkers, at least, would get a discount on their Amazon orders. Or maybe the company could pay a good wage to the people who actually perform its services...



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Opinion

Class war on Olympia’s sidewalks: Gentrification, homelessness and the battle for public space

Bobby G

On August 24, 2018, Olympia Parks, Recreation and Arts Director Paul Simmons made the dramatic and apparently unilateral decision to shutter the Artesian Commons Park. The park is a small, asphalt-covered area featuring tables and a basketball hoop and devoid of green space. It also contains Olympia’s Artesian Well, a natural spring, which remains open.

Public parks as good for business

Notably and notoriously, the park is an important hangout for street youth; as such it is illustrative of the crises of homelessness and poverty afflicting Olympia. The Artesian Commons closure decision was issued on the unusual basis that threats from park users had been directed against city staff. The spuriousness of such a claim is indicated by the lack of any parallels in the way officials deal with other public concerns: sidewalks aren’t closed when muggings, public intoxication or street harassment are reported, for example.

The decision to close the Artesian Park was informed by class and the political pressures of gentrification. In fact, in an unusually honest follow-up to his original statement, Simmons asserted that “Our parks are supposed to enhance the quality of life for people around them. It’s supposed to make businesses better, it’s supposed to make property values increase. Unfortunately the challenges surrounding this one are doing the opposite.”

Public parks as good for community

A few weeks later, on September 22, protesters cut locks, tore down the fence and occupied the Commons. Over 100 street kids, anarchists and other community members and activists played basketball, shared a meal from Food Not Bombs, hung banners and streamers and chalked the concrete.

In just a few hours this festive and joyful expression of defiance was met with riot cops, arrests, pepper balls and concussion grenades. Although obviously outflanked, protesters temporarily re-opened the Commons a second time following initial expulsion. Police failed to fully disperse the

crowd for hours. Three people were arrested during the protest, a few more would be picked up in its aftermath; others sustained injuries from concussion grenade shrapnel.

Homelessness and the meaning of public space

The Artesian Commons closure and attempts to re-open it with direct action are significant events in a wider historical context of general anti-homeless and criminalizing tendencies in Olympia as well as periodically explosive social conflict over questions of homelessness and public space in the city.

This essay seeks both to analyze homelessness and public space under capitalism generally and in Olympia in particular, and to provide an historical account of the criminalization of homelessness and struggles for homeless rights. Through this analysis it is hoped that readers will be able to see that conflicts between the homeless and municipal governments and business owners are an analytically and practically neglected but potent dimension of class struggle found throughout urban capitalism.

Moreover, contingent upon that hope is the hope that radicals and leftists will support or join movements in solidarity with the homeless. Despite the fact that homeless individuals compose a fraction of the general population, the class dynamics of homelessness fundamentally characterize the nature of municipal governance and gentrification, and thus have implications for society at large.

Gentrification and the politics of public space

Gentrification is a process of urban and neighborhood change characterized by displacements of established, lower-income residents and (usually) influxes of newer, wealthier residents, with accompanying changes in racial demographics, economic composition and physical infrastructure. From this definition political conclusions are frequently forged that indict individual consumer habits or entire lifestyle categories, such as that of ‘hipster’ or ‘yuppie.’ While understandable, these

assumptions are analytically shallow.

Fundamentally, gentrification must be understood as a process inherent to capitalism. Under capitalism, the dictates of profit determine all economic decisions, including within the realm of housing. How much housing is built, where it is built, and who it shelters are all decisions made in the interest of profit.

Distortions in the local economy

Gentrification, at its core, involves fluctuations in levels of capital investments in housing markets in varying areas. This causes some neighborhoods or cities to experience increas-

The City government vigorously enforces unfamiliar rules against property owners that are seen as too homeless-friendly.

ing property values and the attendant rise in property prices, rents and other basic living expenses, i.e. to “gentrify.” Increasing investment levels in certain regions occurs simultaneously with disinvestment in other regions, causing some areas to experience underdevelopment. This inverted relationship between gentrification and underdevelopment occurs at a range of geographical scales, from that of the metropolitan area to the global level.

Demands of a profit-driven community

Property investment flows are mediated and facilitated by states that encourage gentrification in the respective territories they govern as a means to grow economies, increase profit rates and secure sources of taxation and revenue. Governments offer tax credits and subsidies to developers and, as discussed below, actively criminalize marginalized residents and certain behaviors while enclosing and policing public space in an effort to make areas more attractive to investors.

The role of public space in a capitalist economy

“Public space” refers to places relatively open and accessible such as parks, public bathrooms, public libraries, sidewalks or squares. Public spaces are usually owned and managed by municipal governments, although some

are “privately-owned public space.” While rarely owned by private enterprises or utilized as sites of direct profit realization, public space is governed according to the interests of the state, which in turn reproduces itself by protecting the interests of capital within particular geographic territories.

Embedded in the private economy and the state is the proposition that public space exists to ensure consumption in the formal economy. This proposition is in sharp tension with the reality of public space’s uses, which are varied and contradictory. Along with formal workers and consumers utilizing public space to access their respective workplaces and sources of goods and services, public space is also utilized as living space, locations for subsistence in informal economies and sites of subcultural expression. Homeless people use public spaces, such as benches and parks as dwelling space, skaters, punks and others use squares as sites of recreation and lifestyle experimentation, and street vendors, sex workers and drug traffickers and others in the informal economy use sidewalks as sites to procure an income.

Proscribing some community members

In the context of gentrification, with increased investment and commerce in formerly underdeveloped areas, an ever-greater emphasis is put on policing certain behaviors and activities and the people who exhibit them in public space. Municipalities increasingly enact and enforce ordinances and regulations that criminalize public camping, loitering, sleeping on benches or in cars, skateboarding, or smoking in public. Moreover, public spaces are increasingly inaccessible or being removed entirely, from the shuttering of public bathrooms to park curfews and removal of benches.

Olympia and its downtown core

Olympia is currently experiencing waves of gentrification and new investment in real property. As property values increase, area rents and home prices skyrocket, and with them comes general price inflation. While this phenomenon is increasingly geographically widespread throughout the whole city, real property investment remains particularly concentrated in the downtown core.

In Olympia, gentrification has been concentrated mainly in the downtown

► Sidewalk, next page.

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Sidewalks

From previous page

area with its relatively small amount of existing housing. Downtown is also somewhat distinct with its highly visible and concentrated homeless population, estimated to be in the hundreds in the daytime. Although downtown is amidst a market-rate development boom, most construction is occurring on previously vacant lots. Thus these developments are not directly displacing lower-income renters through the redevelopment of low-cost housing. Nonetheless, they contribute to displacement indirectly because such large influxes of investment in property markets leads to near universal property value increases in a given region. Like elsewhere, the city government seeks to encourage development through a range of financial incentives.

Increasing dominance by commercial interests

Along with market-rate developers, business owners, their political front groups and the municipal government are also agents of gentrification in Olympia. These actors seek to boost

commerce in the downtown core through a range of initiatives. There is a push to orient Olympia's economy towards tourism through various municipal-sponsored projects, such as the bi-annual ArtsWalk events and promotion of cultural activities at Percival Landing Park, while other parks and public spaces are neglected. The business front group, Olympia Downtown Alliance (ODA), hosts “Third Thursday” monthly business booster events, lobbies for pro-business policies and provides technical assistance to member businesses.

The component of gentrification that is primarily driving conflict in Olympia, however, has been the right to use public space with the intimately related efforts by government and businesses to criminalize and displace homeless individuals.

Stern economic realities

As noted earlier, downtown is home to a visible and concentrated population of hundreds of homeless people. The homeless presence downtown is an obstacle to gentrification in Olympia (and elsewhere) for a number of reasons. First, anti-homeless prejudice runs deep, despite the fact that huge

swaths of American society currently are or are on the brink of experiencing housing instability.

Olympia is no exception to this trend, with many residents telling business owners that they refuse to venture downtown due to the presence of the homeless. Second, many homeless people seek daytime shelter in warm businesses and nighttime shelter in the alcoves of storefronts. On top of often holding prejudiced anti-homeless attitudes themselves, business owners have a material interest in banning or displacing homeless people on the basis that they don't consume at the same rate as housed people. Third, municipalities like Olympia also have a material interest in displacing homeless people in an effort to redirect funding from social services into more promising revenue-generating activities.

A policy of making life unliveable

The City of Olympia actively criminalizes homelessness through the enforcement of a number of ordinances and codes. A No Sit/Lie ordinance prohibits loitering, a camping ban forces people out of parks and off sidewalks and a range of parking

regulations effectively bars sleeping in vehicles. The city government vigorously enforces unfamiliar rules against property owners that are seen as too homeless-friendly. Property owners who allow homeless people to sleep on their property are targeted by code-enforcement for allowing substandard shelters (lack of sanitation, running water, etc.) on their property.

Moreover, social services are dismal. The discrepancy between the number of shelter beds available and those in need continues to increase. What services are provided, either via the municipal government or non-profits, are constantly under threat of closure due to financial difficulties or political pressure.

Bobby is an Olympia-based organizer involved in housing justice efforts and homeless solidarity movements

Simmons quote is from KIRO7 broadcast Aug 24, 2018. For more on the political economy of gentrification see Short Circuit: An Anarchist Approach to Gentrification and The New Urban Frontier by Neil Smith.

Connecting across boundaries at the Parliament of World Religions

Lisa Gosiaco

The Parliament of the World's Religions is the oldest, largest, most diverse and inclusive global interfaith event. The Parliament was created to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and to foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions to achieve a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

This was the seventh world gathering since the very first Parliament in 1893 in Chicago. The Parliament convened again in Chicago to mark its 100th anniversary in 1993. Since then it has been held in Cape Town, Barcelona, Melbourne, Salt Lake City, and now for its 125th anniversary, in Toronto, Ontario.

This year's gathering at the beginning of November drew approximately 10,000 people of faith and conscience representing 80 nations and more than 200 spiritual traditions. Lisa Gos-

iaco and Catherine Carmel attended from Olympia. Lisa is the Co-Executive Director for Interfaith Relations and Catherine is Board Vice-President of Interfaith Works. IW is a non-profit association of faith communities and individuals of diverse faith traditions that has evolved over the last 44 years in Thurston County.

“It's really difficult to find the words to describe this experience,” said Lisa. “The energy of openness and respect toward one other was very powerful, as well as the call to action in addressing global concerns.”

A diverse group of renowned speakers and presenters addressed significant topics confronting religious communities across the globe. Plenary sessions, panels and workshops covered many issue tracks, including:

- Indigenous Peoples – the spiritual evolution of humanity and healing our Mother Earth

- The dignity of women across the world's wisdom traditions
- Climate Action – care for our earth, responsibility for our future
- Justice—advancing concrete change toward a just, peaceful, and sustainable world
- Countering war, hate and violence
- Interfaith Understanding
- Science and Religion
- The next generations – interfaith has no age; youth voices for change

Lisa reported that she “greatly admired religious historian and author Dr. Karen Armstrong since reading several of her books, and for her work creating the Charter for Compassion.” Lisa added that she is “in awe of the work that physicist, author and ecofeminist Dr. Vandana Shiva has done in India to protect water and native seeds, often battling against GMO corporations. Both of these women are true heroes to me, and I so appreciate that the Parliament offered the opportunity to see and hear them.”

Members of the Sikh community offered daily lunch for all attendees from their tradition, known as *Langar*—a free meal served without distinction as to religion, caste, gender, economic status or ethnicity. *Langar* was established in Sikhism to reject the Hindu caste system where people of different castes aren't allowed to eat together. Catherine and Lisa enjoyed partaking of this communal meal, which united Parliament attendees and offered the opportunity for a close connection with one another while enjoying vegetarian Indian foods.

In response to local and global threats and attacks on religious spaces, the Interfaith Works Board of Directors wrote the following:

Statement against violence toward faith communities

There are places set apart and dedicated for the practice of sacred faith traditions. We, the Board of Directors of Interfaith Works, stand with all faith communities that condemn violence against the sacred space of any spiritual or religious group.

We believe that:

- Violence on any sacred place is an attack on all places so dedicated; and that
- Violence on any sacred place is an attack on the principles on which the United States was founded.
- Everyone deserves to be safe when participating in their faith communities.

One of the many things Lisa acknowledged from this experience is an appreciation for Interfaith Works' long history of promoting dialogue across faith traditions:“It was encouraging to realize that Interfaith Works' early commitment to interfaith dialogue was unique for that time, and has resulted in the many programs and organizations that serve our local community. One of the workshops I attended discussed Best Practices in Promoting Interfaith Dialogue. It was clear that Interfaith Works has already achieved success in creating opportunities for dialogue and collaboration. I came away with a deep appreciation for those who started this work in the early 1970s, and for each person who has been part of moving the organization forward. We have an amazing legacy to build from, and I'm excited to see where we go from here.”

Watch highlights from the Parliament of the World Religions gathering here. More information about Interfaith Works is at <http://interfaith-works.org> including a description of their many programs and projects.

A Playback Theatre performance

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In collaboration with Rainbow Health Center

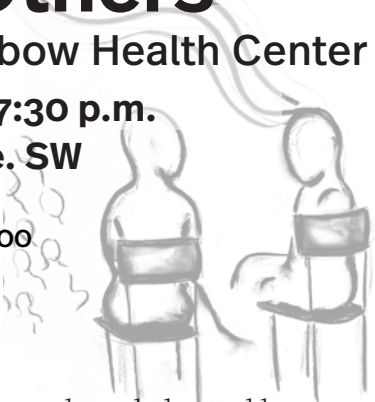
Friday, December 14, 2018 • 7:30 p.m.

Traditions Café – 300 5th Ave. SW
downtown Olympia

Cost: Suggested Donation \$7.00-\$12.00
(No one is turned away)

Each month we invite a guest artist(s), community organization, arts program or social service agency to be a part of our performance. Through this collaboration we acknowledge and honor the work individuals and organizations do in our community.

This month we collaborate with **Rainbow Health Center**. Rainbow Health Center is a building with a mission to provide a healing space for providers with marginalized identities and their guests. They work collaboratively to provide excellent services for trans and non-binary folks on the gender spectrum (including cisgender folks), lesbians, gays, bisexuals and others on the sexual orientation spectrum (including straight folks). **Playback Theatre** is a spontaneous collaboration between performers and audience. People tell moments from their lives, then watch them re-created with movement, music and dialogue.



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Extinction rebellion takes to London streets to stand for the planet over polluter profits

Jake Johnson

[Ed note: Here in the US, the Oregon-based nonprofit, Our Children's Trust is suing to force states and the federal government to take action on climate change. In that lawsuit, 21 activists aged 9 to 20 argue that the federal government's actions violate their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property, and the government has violated its obligation to hold certain natural resources in trust for future generations. In Washington State, petitioners aged 12 to 16 years old asked a judge to require the state Department of Ecology to come up with science-based numeric emissions reductions. That case awaits a ruling by King County Superior Court Judge Hollis Hill.]

Business as usual equals extinction. As scientists warn that the “window of opportunity for action” to prevent catastrophic and irreversible planetary harm from the climate crisis “is almost closed,” members of the Extinction Rebellion movement took to the streets of London on November

24 to demand an urgent response to the world's ecological emergency and mourn the lives that human-caused

“It is not just our right to rebel. It is our duty.”

climate change has already taken—and will take in the near future in the absence of radical change.

“Last Saturday we celebrated all the life we wanted to save. This Saturday we mourn all the life we've lost, are losing, and are still to lose,” Extinction Rebellion said in a statement. “We rebel because we love this world, it breaks our hearts to see it ravaged, to watch so many people and animals all over this world already dying, to know that this will soon happen to our children if nothing changes. There is no way forward without giving credence to our grief.”

Demonstrations across the globe After kicking off last weekend, Extinction Rebellion demonstrations have spread to over a dozen countries, bringing thousands into the streets to disrupt the everyday workings of major cities and demand the attention of governments that have either resisted taking bold climate action or attempted to move in the opposite direction to appease the destructive fossil fuel industry.

“We will continue sitting down in city streets,” states Extinction Rebellion's website. “Only through daily economic disruption will the government recognize the gravity of the crisis we all face and

agree to meet with us to address our demand for radical action.”

The climate crisis has already caused devastation The Extinction Rebellion's direct action over the past week has attempted to highlight the dire need for immediate action to remedy the devastation the climate crisis has already caused and prevent the horrific harm that is coming in the very near future due to continued burning of fossil fuels.

“This is a climate emergency,” the movement, which aims to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2025, wrote on Twitter. “It is not just our right to rebel. It is our duty.”

Jake Johnson is a staff writer at Common Dreams. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License

Choose a better worldview to build a better world

Part 2

Each month's episode of the TV series “Glen's Parallax Perspectives” explores issues from fresh perspectives. The November and December 2018 programs deal with how we see the world, and therefore how we govern our society. Specifically, I contrast the nasty worldview that has been dominating the U.S. with a much more ethical and humane worldview that should be guiding public policy.

November's PART 1 focused mostly on the problems, and now December's PART 2 focuses on the solutions and proposes how we can accomplish them.

A “worldview” is the overall perspective from which a person, a group of persons, or a society as a whole sees and interprets the world. A “worldview” reflects beliefs and assumptions about what is real and good – and therefore assumptions about what we should do.

The way you SEE the world will largely drive how you INTERACT with the world. Your understanding of reality will largely drive whether you act to reinforce a bad status quo or to create positive changes.

For many years – and especially recently – the U.S. has been dominated by a worldview whose assumptions foster greed, corruption, cruelty, oppression, war, and other bad things.

But most Americans want the opposite. We want our nation to be guided by a worldview that is humane, compassionate, peaceful, fair to everyone, and environmentally sustainable.

The November 2018 program focused mostly on the problems in the nasty worldview that has been

existing. Now the December 2018 program focuses more on solutions – the worldview that we want to replace the one that exists now.

The program also explains how we could help our society move into that better future.

The bad worldview was already dominating the U.S., and it has escalated horribly since Trump and Republicans grabbed power over all three branches of the federal government and many state and local governments. Trump and the Republicans are vigorously destroying the parts of the government that serve the public and protect the environment. They are imposing Orwellian lies and abuses, appointing extremely incompetent and corrupt people who are vigorously hostile to the missions of the agencies they have been appointed to run.

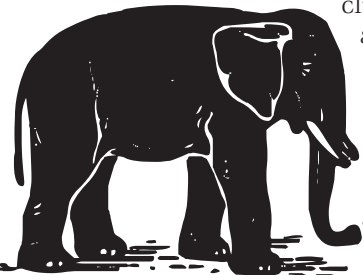
The Trumpian and Republican escalation includes blatant lying and outright contempt for truth and honest journalism. They rig processes so they can win at any cost and hurt anybody who stands in their way. We saw this with their war on women and contempt for truth and democracy when they steamrolled Brett Kavanaugh onto the Supreme Court.

Cable TV subscribers in Thurston County can watch this interview on Thurston Community Television (TCTV) three times a week throughout the entire month: every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm.

Questions?

Contact Glen Anderson, the TV series' producer/host at (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net

Glen's Parallax Perspectives



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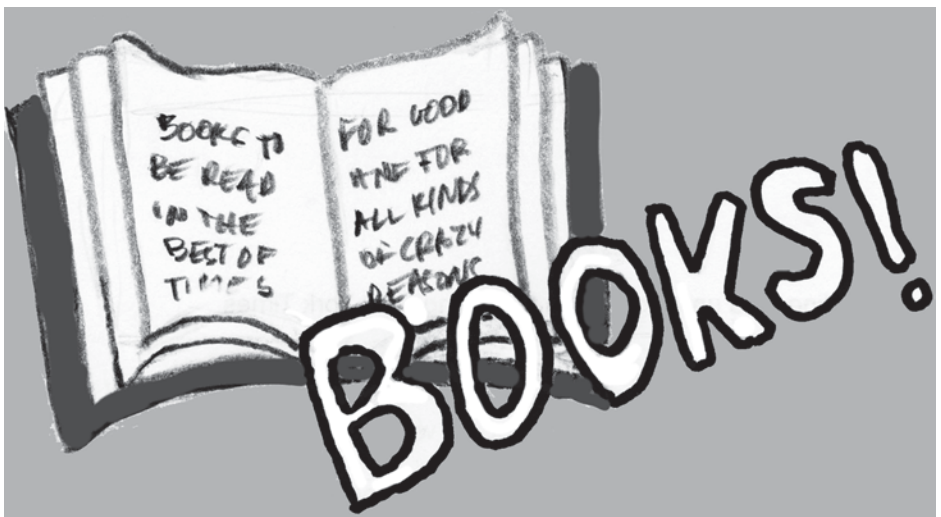
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A mystery for the Millenials

Darlingtonia, Alba Roja
Left Bank Books, 2017

Darlingtonia is a mystery reimagined for the 21st Century. There's a classic opening with a dead body and a person who doesn't figure in the story. The main character, Dylan, is a graphic artist in the advertising department of OingoBoingo, a company with a suspicious product - electronic mind games. In place of continuously lighting up a "smoke" (though there is some of that), Dylan constantly scrolls down her twitter account, her facebook account, her instagram account - not to mention her iphone, her gmail and other media. The Bay Area setting, a favorite for many mystery novels, has new opportunities as Dylan navigages through landmarks of the tech world.

Dylan's colleague Ricky has gone missing. Ricky's job at OingoBoingo involved working on data for special images and when he doesn't turn up one

morning, things start getting weird. Dylan hooks up with a funny - maybe homeless - friend of Ricky's and embarks on a search that's interrupted by migraine headaches, imigrants, gentrification, police brutality, hacking, tracking with eventual excursions into the secrets of the internet and the possibilities of algorithms. But as the bookseller informed this reader - the heroine does not suffer violent indignities, and that's a plus.

It turns out that this book was written by "an anonymous collective of individuals strewn along the west coast." That might explain why some of Dylan's actions are described in a detail that contributes to the flavor but might seem a little too much: "... Dylan opens the freezer and starts eating ice cream out of a container. She removes her makeup with an apricot scented wipe while holding a plastic jar of organic pistaschio gelato." Nonetheless, it's a fun read.

WIP is looking for book reviewers! We'll buy the book, you read it and write the review. We have a list of books we'd like to have reviewed, but we're willing to entertain your preferences. If you're interested, contact us at olywip@gmail.com. We'll agree on a book and a timeline and you will be able to order the book through Last Word Books. C'mon down!!

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Religion's truths— a found poem

Taoism: Shit happens

Buddhism: If shit happens, it really isn't shit

Catholicism: Shit happens because you deserve it

Islam: If shit happens, it is the will of Allah

Protestantism: Work harder, or shit will happen

Materialist: Whoever dies with the most shit wins!

Judaism: Why does shit always happen to us?

Atheist: I can't believe this shit.

Agnostic: I don't know shit.

Eco-spiritual: Compost happens. It's all good shit!.

Rastafarianism: Let's smoke this shit!



Help rebuild our jail library

Thurston County Public Defense Office and the Thurston County Jail are working to replace the depleted collection of torn and worn books at the jail.

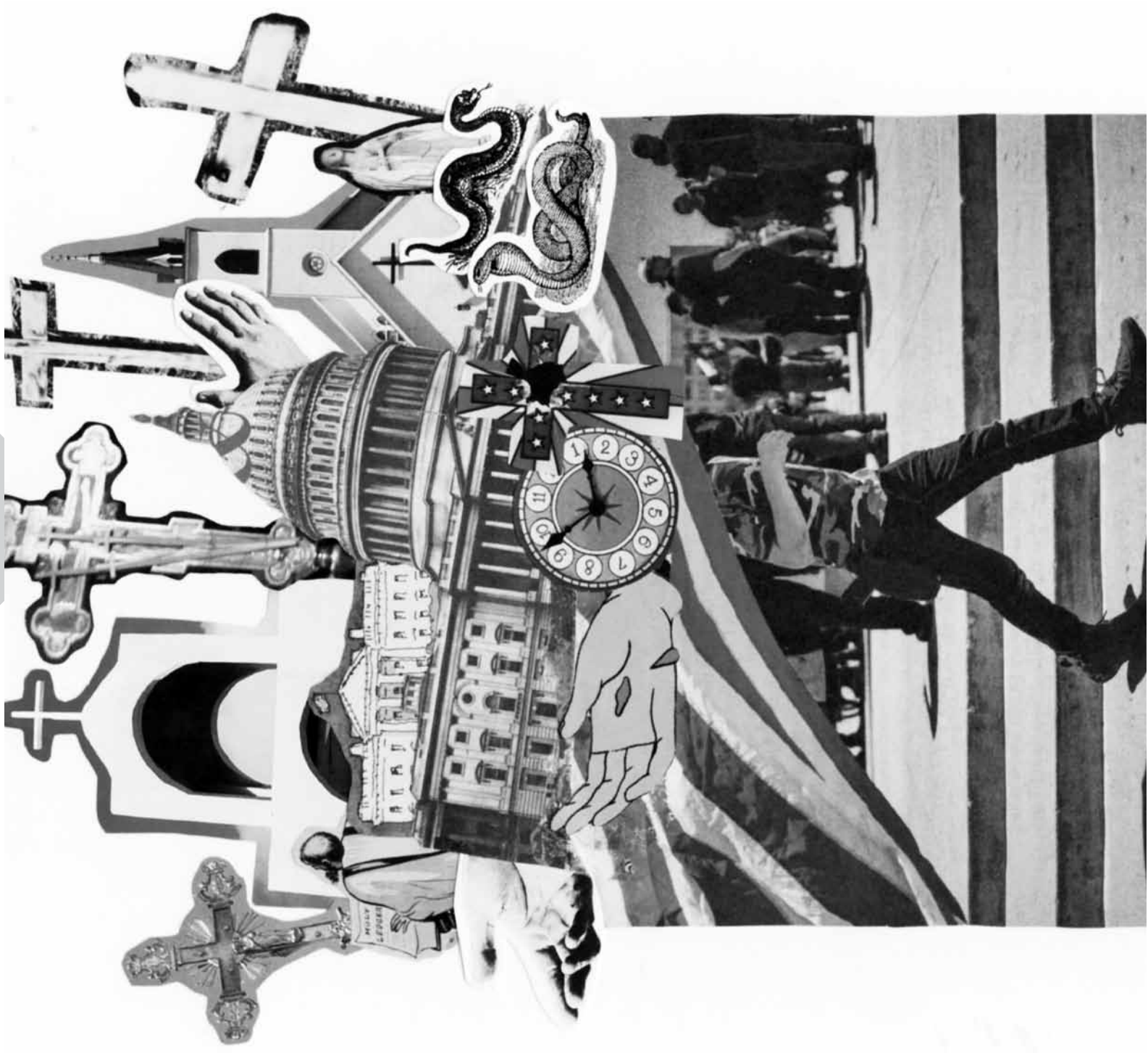
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Works In Progress



YWCA Olympia Youth Action Board

northwest detention center

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