The awkward conversation on tax reform most legislators are avoiding

Marissa Luck

“One thing we could say in this state is, let’s not use the tax code as our public policy lever,” Rep. Chris Reykdal argued, his eyes widening behind wire-framed glasses. “Let’s not have half the high-paid lobbyists come to Olympia pound- ing on the tax code because that’s the special little place...you do that by very low, broadly-applied [taxes] so that people say, ‘Hey, I may not like it, but at least it’s fair.’” Reykdal (D-Thurston County) was sitting in a suit across from TVW’s Austin Jenkins explaining the philosophy behind legislation he and Sen. David Frockt (D-Seattle) introduced that would eliminate the Business and Occupation (B&O) tax, reduce exemptions, and institute a flat income tax in Washington state.

Reykdal’s rhetoric on the benefits of a low, broad-based tax structure isn’t new—it’s a narrative conservatives have used for years both within the state and nationally. One of the main reasons why the opposite: unfair, complicated, and opaque. While Reykdal and Frockt’s measure isn’t likely to gain steam this session, efforts to reform the B&O tax by regulating tax breaks are underway.

Why “revenue” is a controversial word in Olympia

Although conservatives and liberals agree that tax preferences make the B&O tax convoluted, they can’t agree on what should be done with them.

The Senate and House bills (SB 6398 and HB 2637) were identical, sponsored by Sen. Maralyn Chase (D-Shoreline, 32nd Dist.) and Rep. Cary Condotta (R-Wenatchee, 12th Dist.), reflecting urban and rural, bipartisan support across the state. The wheat farmers who first approached Condotta to sponsor a labeling bill are self-proclaimed Libertarians.

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Huge support for labeling GMO foods

Organic Consumers Fund

Bills to label genetically engineered (GE) foods in Washington state failed to move out of the Senate and House agriculture committees, but advocates feel the show of public support was a measureable “win” and are committed to another push next session, or an initiative if necessary.

Legislative aides in Olympia say the number of citizens who called, e-mailed, and traveled to Olympia to support labeling was second only to the number supporting same-sex marriage.

There were overflow crowds at House and Senate committee hearings in late January and we heard from Democratic aides that every individual who called or e-mailed supported labeling; none were opposed.

The volume of support was even more remarkable since people had only six days after the bills were announced to plan to get to Olympia or comment. A number of Representatives and Senators said they didn’t know the bills even existed and may be sponsors next session.

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The tricky business of closing tax loopholes

Announcements

is committed to sto

Interview of Rudolfo Acu

is dedicated to providing

“Our aim is to confront injustice and encour

WIP

Progress

Opinion pieces, also valued, are often best

agreed upon resolution, but

right as a last resort to edit or not print submit

for graphics, poetry, cartoons, and articles

black & white.

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a voice for those most affected by the exclu

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expressed progressive community newspaper based

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mented progressive community newspaper based

For the front cover—

Promise of spring on the Eastside

Creighton Rose

Marissa Luck

Izzy Ceccanti

Stan Butler

Executive Director

Jamie Poteet

Olympia, WA 98501

On the front cover—

Promise of spring on the Eastside

Photographer: Bred Whitlock

Submission Deadline: March 16

PO Box 295

Olympia, WA 98507

olywip@gmail.com

Proofreading: March 24

(To be read for the first read!)

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Olympia City Council has until March 2 to reconsider 7-Eleven

Dear Mayor Busbaum and Council Members Cooper, Hankins, Jones, Langer, Roe and Rogers:

You have until March 2, 2012 to decide which side you are on. We filed our legal brief in Superior Court on February 16. Each one of you have been e-mailed and mailed a copy of our brief. Your City Attorney has until March 2 to file your response brief. He represents you. How do you plan to instruct him?

This is present time. Your decision is not in the past and it is not in the future. Now is the time. Time to take responsibility. You can act on this at the Council meeting on February 21 or at the Council meeting on February 28.

Why pretend you don’t have “power,” as Council Member Hankins stated at your February 7 meeting? Power by you is exercised with simply four votes. To insist that your City Attorney to support your arguments; you can assert that you have the power to instruct Mr. Michael Jenkins, the Vancouver developer who wants a 7-Eleven at this dangerous intersection; or, you can tell your City Attorney not to file a brief at all because you don’t want to spend more time and taxpayer money on this.

Please read our brief. You can see clearly that your staff made numerous errors in appraising this project. Your staff wouldn’t even conduct a Traffic Impact Analysis to assess how this intensely car-dependent use, a 7-Eleven and an undisclosed other use would affect our pedestrians, but riders, alley users and those of us being overrun by cut-through traffic avoiding this dangerous intersection.

What will it be?

Sincerely,

Kathleen Byrd

Elizabeth Baldo

Nancy Allen

Jan Imus

Jim Ammons

Nancy Sullivan

Megan Jones

Amy Thomas

Ben Holtheussen

Jim Hill

Liz Frey

Rebecca Govert

Stan Lewis

Gabe Taylor

Nanam Garby

Bill Osterhout

Julie Swank

Kathleen Brown

Peter Sanderson

J D Ross Lebby

Eryn Farkas

Kelly Crandall

John Bates

Michael Pow

Tom Toote

Chelsea Buchanan

Kathy Harrigan

Phil Cornell

Seth Talbot

Dal Rechel

Diana Reinos

Elizabetgh Williamson

Juliana Kimbrell

Ann Vandeman

Jennine Ryne

Reine Crandall

Cameron Hostetter

Rob Swarr

Caroline Lacey

Ash Cox

Bruce Laing

Rich Bakala

Joshua Grods

Diana Gail

Diane Gail

Nick Sydons

Doug Fulwider

Joshua Grods

Sonja Wentz

Steve Macuc

John Carmichael

Hank Grov

Dana Smwth

Jeff Thomas

David Moseley

Lorraine Smn

Washington Safe Cannabis Initiative forced to refile

The Washington Safe Cannabis Act will be refiled after a major error was found in the amendment language just before being presented to the petition gathering. The discovery was made on a petition website but correcting the problem means a delay in getting petitions out into the hands of volunteers.

The initiative, which removes canna-

Medical marijuana was reinstated Under the Influence of Cannabis (DUIC) protections and redenef hemp, also contains a federal non-cooperation clause that is proving quite popular with the cannabis community. When the initiative was vetted on a petition web-

site, wasecannabis.com, that single page received over 90 hits in a matter of hours. Fans of the initiative raved fur-

iously, challenged to find the error them-

selves while looking for any others, and they did not disappoint. By the end of the evening of the announcement, the readers nailed the problem.

The amendment language for the iso-

mers, salts, etc. was missing, caught just

in time, less than an hour before being

released. The announcement was made

by the initiative group to the public with a

promise to release a federal non-cooperation

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Statement of Solidarity with the Olympia Food Co-op

We, the undersigned, stand in solidarity with the Olympia Food Co-op, and condemn the lawsuit filed against the Co-op in an attempt to undermine the Co-op's commitment to social justice by way of legal and financial intimidation. We call on the plaintiffs to exercise the Co-op’s democratic option—bringing the boycott of Israel to a member vote—instead of launching an aggressive lawsuit which seriously threatens the well-being of a cornerstone of the Olympia community. Lawsuits intended to silence and intimidate those who speak out against injustice should have no place in a democratic society.

For over three decades, the Co-op has enriched the Olympia community by striving to provide healthy, local, and sustainable food, and has rightly understood food sovereignty as one piece of the larger project of building a better world. From its emphasis on cooperative self-management, to its unwavering support for the local sustainable agriculture movement, to its persistent refusal to carry goods produced in ways that conflict with its core values, social justice has always been integral to the Co-op’s mission. The lawsuit against the Co-op is an attack on this commitment to social justice and, by extension, on all of us who raise our voices against injustice and in the hope of creating a better world. For, as the author James Baldwin once wrote to wrongfully imprisoned Angela Davis, “if they take you in the morning, they will be coming for us that night.”

We therefore stand in solidarity with the Olympia Food Co-op and say to those who have brought this lawsuit, we will not be intimidated or silenced!

Confirmed organization and business support for the Olympia Food Co-op

Adam Market
BRICK (Building Revolution by Increasing Community Knowledge)-SPSCC
Bridges Not Walls
Coffee Strong
Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES)
Don’t Stop Printing
Iraq Veterans Against the War - Olympia
Lacey’s Finest Tattoo
Last Word Books and Press
Latin American Solidarity Organization - TESC
Le Voyeur
Lit Fuse Tattoo
Media Island
Middle East Solidarity Project - TESC
Move to Amend - Olympia
New Moon Cafe
Oly Vegan
Olympia BDS
Olympia Coalition for a Fair Budget
Olympia Jewish Voice for Peace
Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace
Olympia-Rafah Solidarity Mural Project
TESCDivest!
Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice
Rainy Day Records
Shangri-La Co-Housing Intentional Community
The Cornerstone
Traditions Cafe and World Folk Art
Veterans for Peace - Chapter 109
Works in Progress

* Note that Thurston-Santo Tomas Sister County Association (TSTSCA) and the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation have each drafted and provided their own statements of support for the Olympia Food Co-op.
**Chances good for passing GMO labeling in 2013**

**GMO Free Washington**

At the last second we were informed that two GMO labeling bills had been introduced by liberal Democrat Mara

yn Thomas of the Agriculture Committee and conservative Republican Gary Condatta in the House.

GMO Free Washington and many other groups from around the state went into quick action, as the bills were heard in less than 10 days in Olympia. Because of this, we were involved with some of the top think tanks in the US, like Richard Kimmehr from the Center of Food Safety.

The bills were rewritten (many times) and the changes were approved by Sen. Chase and Rep. Condatta who resubmitted the revised bills at the last minute.

One of the states in the leadership of GMO labeling was Vermont and we even heard the Governor of our nation within a year. House speaker Frank Chopp, very much in favor of this bill last week!

People stood up, and spoke from their hearts; some were testifying for the first time. The sheer numbers of people wanting to speak was overwhelming for these committees. This was good, and bad.

In the House there were 11 pages of people wanting to testify.

Because of the large number, the committees only gave the floor to the first 10 people, and one and a half minutes to present the data. It was hard to present in such a short time my medical testimony on why GMO crops are harmful.

An Associated Press story was printed in less than 10 newspapers around the world from Australia to Ireland, and even Ballard! Everyone wrote an article about the woman and again and again and poured their hearts out, but this time - money talked.

Both chairmen of the Agriculture and Natural Resources committees, Sen. Brian Hatfield and Rep. Brian Blake, have received contributions from Monsanto.

Monsanto: the committee chair, Democratic, Senator Brian Hatfield, and two Republicans, Senators Jim Honeyford and Mark Schoesler.

Committee Chair Hatfield denies what's the hold up? Who blocked the vote on GMO labeling in Washington state?

Schoesler is a wheat farmer who says he’ll grow genetically engineered wheat somewhere in Washington state. He’s quoted in the Capital Press article, “Many speak out on GMO food, labels.”

In the House, it’s the two politicians on the thirteen-member Senate Agriculture Committee who have taken money from Monsanto: the committee chair, Democratic, Sen. Brian Hatfield, and two Republicans, Senators Jim Honeyford and Mark Schoesler.

The Union of Concerned Scientists reviewed 12 academic studies and indicates otherwise: “The several thousand field trials over the last 20 years for genes aimed at increasing operational or intrinsic yield (of crops) indicate a significant undertaking. Yet none of these field trials have resulted in increased yield of crops, with the exception of Bt corn.”

However, it was further stated that this increase is largely due to traditional breeding improvements. —American Academy of Environmental Medicine

**Who blocked the vote on GMO labeling in Washington state?**

**Organic Consumers Assoc.**

February 1 – Thousands of emails, hundreds of calls, packed hearings and national media attention have proved that the bills to label GMOs in Washington State are wildly popular with voters. So, who’s holding up the bill? Who blocked the vote?

In the Senate it’s the three politicians on the eight-member Senate Agriculture Committee who have taken money from Monsanto: the committee chair, Democratic, Sen. Brian Hatfield, and two Republicans, Senators Jim Honeyford and Mark Schoesler.

Committee Chair Hatfield denies taking campaign cash from Monsanto, saying the Organic Consumers Fund is making “wild claims,” even though any one can see the public record of these contributions by entering “Monsanto” at: [www.politiFact.com](http://www.politiFact.com).

Also left unsaid, farmers with less than 10 acres were not approached, leaving out the majority of wheat farmers. However, if you examine one page petition, there is no reference to GE, GMO, Genetically Modified anything mentioned.

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If these sold-out politicians are bent on blocking the democratic process, they’d better do it in the light of day and have the courage to go against their voting public on the record! We can’t let them kill this bill silently behind closed doors.

National Action Network is on the side of the scientists who are quoted in the April 27, 2013, AP reported (“Some Washington wheat farmers throw support behind required GMO labeling” – published across the nation in 160 different news outlets) that the hearings were a sham.

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Organic Consumers Association is a grassroots nonprofit public interest organization working for health, justice, and sustainability.

**GMOs are not providing larger crop yields**

The biotechnology industry claims that GMO foods can feed the world through a world of higher crop yields. However, scientists report that the Union of Concerned Scientists reviewed 12 academic studies and indicates otherwise: “The several thousand field trials over the last 20 years for genes aimed at increasing operational or intrinsic yield (of crops) indicate a significant undertaking. Yet none of these field trials have resulted in increased yield of crops, with the exception of Bt corn.”

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**Ten reasons to be concerned about GMO foods**

1. Michael Taylor, former Monsanto VP and attorney, 1994 spearheaded getting GMOs through the FDA and had legislation passing stating GMO foods were no different than regular foods and GMOs never have to be researched. Taylor is now the Obama - US Food Safety Czar. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, Monsanto’s former attorney, is advising the FDA on dealing with “Foodborne Diseases: Nice to know that the CDC is taking the lead on GMOs from a man who says “there is no difference between GMOs and food.”

2. GMO foods are mainly found in conventional soybeans, sugar beets, corn, canola, cottonseed and now alfalfa, and less so in Hawaiian papaya, zucchini and some commercialized major food crops. The issue is: why are GMOs so widely grown to the point of cause of the food they are fed. The FDA is trying to introduce GMO Salmon, wheat, and adding pharmaceuticals to plants. Avoid GMOs by buying Organic or displaying the non-GMO Project label.

3. Monsanto’s Bt-toxin (Bt-producing GMO corn & cotton) is produced by a “living pesticide factory” that could be responsible for the “increase in gas and cancer” of isolated areas. This is why we’ve heard about the rise in crop duster activity in isolated areas.

4. Monsanto’s GMO “Bt” corn and cotton plants are engineered to produce an herbicide called Roundup. Monsanto also produces GMO “RoundUp Ready” crops (that we eat), engineered with its herbicide RoundUp. They also produce GMO “RoundUp Ready” crops (that we eat), engineered with a bacteria DNA, that allows the “crops” to survive otherwise deadly doses of its herbicide RoundUp.

5. Mice fed Monsanto’s Bt-corn had elevated levels of immune system substances that are also higher in humans who suffer from rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, cancer, osteoporosis, multiple sclerosis, allergies, Lou Gehrig’s disease, autoimmune disease, and colitis.

6. In the only human feeding study ever published on GMOs, Monsanto’s GMO “RoundUp Ready” soybeans were found to transfer Monsanto’s “RoundUp Ready” DNA to the bacteria livin inside human intestines. (FYI – soy and soybean oil is in most processed foods).

7. According to Jeffrey Smith of the Institute for Responsible Technology, the transfer of Monsanto’s GMO Bt DNA to human digestive bacteria could create a “living pesticide factory.” This could be responsible for an increase in intestinal problems, autoimmune diseases, food allergies, and childhood learning disorders – since 1996 when Bt crops came on the market.

8. Animal studies show GMO foods cause infertility, accelerated aging, poor insulin and diabetes, weaker immune organs, smaller livers, and testicles, atrophy of the liver and pre-cancerous cell growth in the intestines after 10 days of GMO feed. Many farmers have found GMOs cause increased infertility the death of livestock.

9. GMOs are made mainly to make plants herbicide tolerant to force farmers to use it on their crops and increase corporate profits. GMO seeds are patented and ownable along with the organic farmer whose fields are invaded and cross contaminated are forced to pay in court.

10. Could GMOs be causing the increase in Food Allergies, rise in ADHD & Autism seen in children, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome or Fibromyalgia, Cancer, or Diabetes? All of these condition have increased or didn’t exist until GMOs were introduced.

SO-70% of “natural” food stores and 80% of grocery stores contains GMO Knowing all of this, what do GMOs mean for our children & future generations?

Source: www.GMOFreeWashington.INFO
Stop oppressive budget cuts that kill communities

Toward building a legislative solidarity movement—Part IV

Carole Willey, BSW

Budget legislative advocacy

The following three Wikipedia explanations do not make a persuasive case; without doubt, explain how our legislatu-
re is influenced by powerful, wealthy entities.

1. Budget Advocacy: Another aspect of advocacy that ensures proactive engagement of Civil Society Or-
ganizations with the government budget to make the management more accountable to the people and that reinforce a more active advocacy also enables citizens and social action groups to compel the government to be more alert to the needs and aspirations of people in general and the deprived sections of the community.

2. Bureaucratic Advocacy: People con-
sidered “experts” have more oppor-
tunity to influence public policy at present issues to decision-makers. It is used to influence the agendas, however at a slower pace.

3. Interest-Group Advocacy: Lobbying is the main tool used by interest groups doing mass advocacy. It is a form of action that does not always succeed at influencing political deci-

sion-makers as it requires resources and organization to be effective.

The Organic Consumers Fund (OCF) is the 501c4 allied organization of the Organic Consumers Association. OCF is focused on grassroots lobbying and cor-

sion of clean food and living. This movement is built on community building, social justice, and protecting the health and rights of workers, users, and consumers. OCF is a powerful organization that is able to influence public policy at a local, state, and federal level. They have offices in Washington, DC, and San Francisco, with a network of over 100 local chapters across the United States. OCF has a strong track record of advocating for policies that protect the environment and promote health, safety, and justice. They have partnered with other organizations and communities to achieve their goals and have been successful in achieving significant victories. OCF is a trusted source of information and advocacy, providing research, analysis, and campaigns to protect the rights of all people. They are committed to building a movement that is powerful, inclusive, and effective in achieving their goals.
We have a very affluent state that doesn’t pay an income tax, and because the sales tax is largely based on taxing goods instead of services, the tax code here is 50 years out of date.

The tricky business of closing tax loopholes

Marissa Luck

Washington state legislators are considering yet another bill to close tax loopholes — something that activists on the left argue is a problem while the tax base continues to grow. Although it is very good to see some of the bloating of budgetary cuts, two bills are gaining momentum in the legislature that would require that all future tax breaks automatically expire after five years, unless legislators take measures to extend them. Another bill would retroactively apply ten-year expiration dates on more than 500 of the nearly 700 tax breaks in Washington state. Currently, when a tax break is implemented in Washington state, it runs indefinitely, unless it happens to have an expiration or sunset, or legislators specifically pass legislation to extend it. Therefore, a tax break can be a loophole (aka a hole) and continue even if it is no longer achieving its original purpose or even achieved that purpose in the first place.

As most policymakers and economists will tell you, an unattained goal is a waste-ful loophole; many broadly benefit the public — the ones that remove sales tax on food-related prescription drugs. Still, several tax breaks serve more narrow interests, or because of lack of expiration dates — even continue past the point of obsolescence.

Whether or not a tax break should be canceled depends on the argument of whether many tax breaks do not clearly state why they were implemented in the first place, or if they can be effectively evaluated and objectively achieve their success. This became a popular issue when the Joint Legis- lative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) published their 2011 report reviewing state tax breaks. A tax break after tax break, the report concludes, “The Legislature did not specify the public policy objective of this preference.” This ambiguity factored into the JLARC’s report of a legal challenge, legislators have to prove that a preference is not without its flaws, at the very least it must be worth it for them to come? Should its cost be worth the price? Should it allow ample room for flexibility? five years would be the default expiration date for tax breaks, and it always makes exceptions and extensions for any tax breaks. That’s why all previous tax breaks would not be subject to the new regulations unless additional legislation is passed. The JLARC begins the question, how effective are regula-tions for tax loopholes when there are potential loopholes in the very tool that is supposed to be regulating them? Even if a tax preference is reviewed every five years, a financing shortfall in Washington’s budget process persists. A tax break, like spending for a particular educational program, amounts to tax expenditure because it reduces the amount of available funds.

The Washington Policy Center explained, “It’s spending on both sides of the ledger.” Both are tax expenditures, we have a very affluent state that doesn’t pay an income tax, and because the sales tax is largely based on taxing goods instead of services, the tax code here is 50 years out of date. Eventually, on average, spending for a social program is scrutinized annually while tax expenditures are only reviewed once a decade. “We’re not saying that all tax breaks should be closed or that business subsidies should not be closed, we’re not saying that all tax breaks should be closed or that business subsidies should not be closed, we’re only saying that tax expenditure does not make sense if we’re doing the same thing, state spending on one side but not on the other.

The JLARC’s report to consider legis-lation aiming to strengthen or regulations for tax preferences because of their flaws, at the very least it can begin to correct an inequitable time frame for the re-view of expenditures while clearing some of the fog surrounding tax preference regulation.
Olympia’s Move to Amend Campaign
An invitation to attend

Molly Gibbs

Many of you know that the Move to Amend group meets the first Thursday of each month at MIXX 96 in the conference room. Join us at 6:30 pm. We’re pretty excited about the breadth of what is going on in our community.

Our group, along with Occupy Oly Political Action Work Group (PAWG), is about to approach our local city council to create a resolution, which will demand our state representatives take forward a 28th Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing corporate “personhood.” We will also call on state and national representatives to overturn Citizen’s United, making sure that every vote counts, as well as our participation, and will insist that “money does not equal speech.”

We wish to ensure our communities are protected from harm to the environment. We want small businesses to be self-sustaining, providing local jobs and stopping corporate “personhood.”

We are excited because small-business owners understand how multinational corporations keep jobs overseas, take money out of our communities, and stop credible solutions like a Washington Investment Trust from getting the green light among our legislators. Who owns our “democracy”? Not the 99 percent who work harder than ever for less or no money.

Recently Eugene, Oregon passed a resolution to amend the Constitution, as did Portland. Special thanks to the Occupy Wall Street movement for bringing banking and foreclosure issues, and corporate power into our lives, front and center.

As cities are passing these amendments each week, I’ve been reflecting on what I’ve seen just since going to Madison at the March of last August to attend the Democracy Conference. One thousand of us attended some great workshops, and all the Affiliate Move to Amend chapters held a day-long strategic planning session. We learned from several cities planning campaigns, many of whom have now passed their resolutions (Mary Beth Gardham led the Los Angeles County effort, with a stunning 11-0 majority Council vote). My recent count shows 77 cities, counties and organizations have passed resolutions to abolish corporate personhood. Several states have, or are in the process of completing resolutions.

Scott Silver, an organizer from Boulder CO, where a resolution to amend the Constitution passed early last fall, talked about how important he felt it was to get the whole city involved in understanding and supporting a resolution. We concur, it is important, presenting us with the opportunity to build on shared community values.

People do understand that corporations do not have the right to buy elections. Most understand that corporations are not living “people” with human rights. Over the past 125 years corporations have claimed many rights, as the British did with the Hudson Bay Company, the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the East India Company. (Wasn’t our Revolution rooted in overthrowing the tea-trading corporation imposing taxes on us?)

Turn a corporate charter from a contract that cannot be altered by the people to:

• Turn a corporate charter from a contract that cannot be altered by the people to: (1) Interpretation of the Constitution, (2) Limitation of the Right of the People, or the States to Tax or Duty任何 other corporations.
• Assume “free speech rights” in 1947.
• Obtain 7th Amendment rights to a jury trial in a civil case. The Court implied that the corporation has this right, because a shareholder’s derivative suit would have right this.
• Have the right to not speak and therefore protect the corporation’s freedom of mind (since 1936 in Pacific Gas & Electric v Public Utilities Commission).
• Overturn state restrictions on corporate spending on financial contributions to political candidates or parties, and on corporate spending on political referenda (1976, 1977).
• Use the 5th Amendment to protect itself against double jeopardy to avoid retrial in an anti-trust case.

It was an eye-opening day looking at the role of a Supreme Court Justice, and pondered what institution is going on in our community. As cities are passing these amendments each week, I’ve been reflecting on what I’ve seen just since going to Madison at the March of last August to attend the Democracy Conference. One thousand of us attended some great workshops, and all the Affiliate Move to Amend chapters held a day-long strategic planning session. We learned from several cities planning campaigns, many of whom have now passed their resolutions (Mary Beth Gardham led the Los Angeles County effort, with a stunning 11-0 majority Council vote). My recent count shows 77 cities, counties and organizations have passed resolutions to abolish corporate personhood. Several states have, or are in the process of completing resolutions.

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In late December, the court dismissed a lawsuit brought by students at UC Berkeley who claimed that they faced anti-Semitism on campus. The court determined the plaintiffs could not provide evidence to support their allegations.

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Rudolfo Acuña on the continuing culture wars

Michelle Chen

Ethnic studies pioneer Dr. Rudolfo Acuña, author of Occupied America, talks to CultureStrike’s Michelle Chen about what the ongoing debate over Tucson’s Mexican-American Studies program says about deeper currents of America’s history and political culture.

Michelle Chen: You made public statements last year warning that the crackdown on ethnic studies in Tucson was a harbinger of things to come. Since then, we’ve seen the legal and political war on ethnic studies intensify, culminating in the “book ban,” along with a slew of other anti-immigrant policies from the state legislature. In your view, have those earlier fears been borne out in the last few months?

Rudolfo Acuña: Yes, they unfortunately were born out. What many don’t understand is that Arizona is a much more fertile test ground from the right than places like Wisconsin or Ohio where there is a long tradition and trade union movement. The press in Arizona is much more reactionary and money via the Koch Brothers and other special interests gets much more for the buck. Consequently the American Legislative Exchange Council, the Tea Party, the Southern Arizona Leadership Council, et al can control the legal system. It does not help that the White House is spineless and does not enforce the Constitution but he thinks he can ride it out. Tucson is one of your book or any other ethnic studies books. I published three children’s books before Occupied America, and two were banned in Texas. Some teachers in California threw their lesson plans in the waste basket. Censorship in Tucson did not begin recently. I hark back to the practice of bilingual education. What is frightening about Arizona is that the right has singled out Mexicans because they know that there will be little push back. I think this will continue. In California the drive will be different, it will be through the initiative process. If nativists go too far, they will just not get elected to statewide office. However, listen to the Republican presidential candidate, they truly represent what Americans think.

MC: This presidential campaign will bring an onslaught of right-wing rhetoric and pandering to anti-immigrant groups. How might that escalate tensions with respect to issues of race and diversity in public education?

RA: What I am most afraid of is Obama. He is genuinely gutless. If he would have put his foot down and enforced the law in Arizona this would be over with. The right wing of the Board of Education, Tucson is still segregated. Charter schools offer white people an escape.

MC: Overall, what trends have you witnessed in public education and higher education over the past generation in terms of progressive pedagogy that emancipates in public education as deeply intertwined. When you have advice on how advocates for Mexican-American Studies were part of the pedagogy to bring about methods built around critical thinking. But I don’t have much faith in the “progressive scholars.”

Michelle Chen is the Associate Editor of CultureStrike, a loose network of artists, thinkers, activists, musicians and other cultural workers who fight anti-immigrant hate by bringing out the stories of and about immigrants and migrants.

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Come on, people: Olympia gets together for the Occupy Solidarity Social Forum

A Conversation with Bruce Wilkinson, Kerri Griffis, and Lee Durfey

Mike Coday

Olympia hosted a national gathering of Occupy organizers on the weekend of February 17 - 19, and the event was a rousing success.

The Forum kicked off on Friday night at the Labor Council with dinner and social time. Saturday was devoted to workshops and included a showing of the movie This is Not a Test, followed by a QA session with the filmmaker, Foster Gamble. Saturday ended with talks by David Korten and Dorli Rainey.

David is the author of several books, including Agenda for a New Economy, and co-founder of Yes! magazine. Dorli Rainey is an 84-year-old, life-long activist from Seattle who became the face of Occupy after she was pepper-sprayed by Seattle Police Department. She has strong opinions with which you will either agree or disagree.

Kerri Griffis, and Lee Durfey

The outcome is ours to choose.

The old economy of greed and dominion is dying. A new economy of life and justice meetings and events turn out the most positive I have seen in Olympia since the Port Militarization Resistance efforts in November of 2007. When people who have never come to the various social justice meetings and events turn out in force, ready to share their skills and experiences, we are beginning to have a chance.

Our community support was essential in maintaining the camp for as long as we did and helped show us all what real community can look like. Just as important was the willingness of Occupiers to learn new skills, step up into new roles, and begin to create a new way of living. Interactions between folks from different classes and backgrounds helped strengthen our resolve to learn to work together toward a common cause. If we are able to effectively learn from this experience of the Occupy movement, its roots, and how you came to the decision that Olympia needed to host an Occupy Solidarity Social Forum?

Kerri Griffis

I had been closely following the US movement since it started in Zuccotti Park. I supported the Olympia Occupy movement, 1,000 people showed up in 60 minutes, the police started closing down the encampments that Occupy would move into a new phase.

Lee Durfey

My experience of the Occupy movement has mostly been limited to Olympia. I was part of the first planning meeting in Sylvester Park and worked with many others to put together Olympia’s first General Assembly. We were all struck by the strong community turnout and the subsequent attendance—over 100 people for a good length of time. While there were difficulties, such as explaining the conscious model to folks unfamiliar with it, the overall attitude and energy were the most positive I have seen in Olympia since the Port Militarization Resistance efforts in November 2007. When people who have never come to the various social justice meetings and events turn out in force, we are able to effectively learn from this experience of the Occupy movement, its roots, and how you came to the decision that Olympia needed to host an Occupy Solidarity Social Forum?

Olympia’s Community Radio

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Olympia 98501
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Store Hours
M-F: 9-6
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Sun: 12-5

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**Forum was both retrospective in terms of leading up to and coming away from the likely to be completed in a single season. I looking back at how we got here, and was interested in helping with is networking Occupy is going to do next. One area I am thoughts about the path forward for the Occupy Movement will move forward in 2012 and beyond. The Arab Spring and the American Fall Occupy Uprising that followed the Arab Spring always faced challenges at the expense of those very people who are showing us the way. kerri: I am also watching to see what Kerri: One thing that was apparent to me over the course of the weekend was the extent to which a large group of individuals and organizations made big commitments of time and energy to make this event successful. The support strengthened across many organizations including the West's great benefit. Recognizing the privilege inherent in being an “American” does not mean taking on a crushing burden of guilt, but rather provides an opportunity to challenge and overcome our preconceived notions of American superiority. 99% of the global population is and must take on a crushing burden of guilt, and the other 1% to get an explanation when he went to the Secretary of State's Sacramento Office the next morning. He reported that officials in the office refused to divulge what criteria Bowen used to make their choices, which was present at the meeting, where the criteria were developed, and whether Bowen herself was present at the meeting. California election officials on Feb 23 finally explain that Peta Lind-say was omitted because she is not yet 35-years-old and is therefore not eligible to run for presidential office. However, the Secretary of State won't print his filing until after the deadline. Weber cites Elections Code sections that specify how presidential candidates must be selected by the Secretary of State, and suggests that code sections cover other parties may have improperly been applied to the Peace and Freedom Party candidate. Calvin says of the Peace and Freedom Party candidate: “We have no law that says it has ever overruled our party’s report listing our primary candidates,” says Weber, “until this mistaken decision by Sec-reter of State.” He also cites a failure by the Secretary of State to consult party chairmen that are required in the Elections Code, and accuses Bowen of failing to consider the filing. Weber was not explicit about whether Stephen Durham was omitted. Durbin, the presidential nominee of the Freedom Socialist Party that is not ballot-qualified in California. He is seeking the presidential nomi-nation of the Peace & Freedom Party, which is ballot-qualified. There is no allegation that Durham doesn’t meet the constitutional qualifications, yet the Secretary of State won’t print his name in the April edition of WIP. We expect to have Mary Spokane join us in the April piece with her insights about the movement. California Secretary of State leaves party’s candidates left off June 5 primary ballot list
March 2012

Send in announcements to olywip@gmail.com or Works In Progress PO Box 295 Olympia WA 98507

Community Special Events

Regularly held events

Volunteer at Books to Prisoners
- Regularly held events
- Visit the website for more information.
- http://www.lastwordbooks.org

Drinking Liberally
- First Sunday of each month, 7pm

Eloquent Jazz Latin Escapes
- Mondays at 1:30 pm
- 311 Capitol Way N, Olympia

Live music unites a community together for festive enjoyment and social fun. We invite you to meet with us, make new friends and relax to the beautiful sounds of the Momenti Rubati.

Our regularly-scheduled hours of operation,

Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace (OMP)
- Every Friday from 5:00 to 6:00 pm
- 4th Avenue and Water Street, Olympia

Welcome to come in peace for nonviolence. We provide plenty of signs. The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has sponsored this since 1998.

Women in Black
- Every Friday from 5:00 to 6:00 pm
- W. 4th Avenue, near the Fountain

Women only. Please wear black. Some signs are provided. Women in Black is a network of women committed to peace with justice.

Paralegal Peace Living Wage Vigil
- Every Friday, 4:30-6pm
- 4th Avenue and Water Street, Olympia

We welcome all to come in peace for nonviolence. We provide plenty of signs. The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has sponsored this since 1998.

Bread and Roses
- Saturdays, 1-5 PM
- 2511 NW Jefferson St. Olympia

We have a food garden! If you have a pickup truck, have yard tools to loan, are passionate about community, or if you just like doing fun projects with your neighbors, please join us! There are many ways to be involved. Saturday Supper at 6:00pm. Saturday Supper Bread & Roses volunteer hosts serve a payment meal Saturday evenings.

You've read the book - now see the upcoming short film! The short will be published on the website http://sacrificelinks.com/ film/ and simultaneously on more screens.

Last Word Books
- First Sunday, 1-4 PM
- 211 East 4th Ave, Olympia

1st and 3rd Mondays of each month, 7 pm

2nd Sunday, 1-4 PM

Channel 22
- Every Friday from 5:00 to 6:00 pm

Welcome all to come in peace for nonviolence. We provide plenty of signs. The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has sponsored this since 1998.

Protestors plan to demonstrate against the next war in the Middle East on March 1, 3:00 - 5:00 pm, in the NW corner of Sylvester Park.

On the Internet
- On the Internet
- On the Internet

We seek to end corporate rule and place power in the hands of people.

OCTOBER MAY DAY - GENERAL STRIKE
- Send in announcements to
- works in progress
- PO box 295 olympia WA 98507

Drunken Poetry
- First Thursday of each month, 5:30-7:30 PM
- Darby's Café, 211 5th Ave. SE, Olympia

For reservations or information contact: pnyxpericles@gmail.com

HARFORD: North America's Fukushima
- Sunday, April 15, Noon until 3 pm
- John Dam Plaza
- Richland, Washington

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
- Volunteer at Books to Prisoners
- Books to Prisoners is a 100% volunteer-run, nonprofit organization. We don't provide any transportation for you or do any work related to the generous support from our wonderful team of volunteers who make organization, we always welcome new volunteers. As a volunteer with Books to Prisoners, you can become a key part of our team and make a difference. We need you, like also. Like you, can begin volunteering immediately. There are no training sessions required. Simply show up to volunteer during our regularly-scheduled hours of operation, and we'll promptly train you as we go.

OCCUPY WASHINGTON
- Occupy May Day - General Strike
- Tuesday, May 1, Midnight until 11:30 pm
- Global, 99 Occupy the World

General Strike Called
- NO WORK - NO SCHOOL - NO SHOPPING
- NO BANKING - NO TRADING

Start planning now for a Global Strike. The goal is to shut down commercial worldwide and show the 1% we will not be taken for granted, we will not be silenced, and we will not move until our grievances are redressed.

Migrant/immigrant rights
Economic, social, and environmental justice
Peacemakers
Civil liberties: to end police state
Housing, education, and health care as human rights

Women's rights and gender equality
TAKING THE STREETS
Public Power—At the crossroads

At some point in our lives, we’ve each procrastinated. Maybe it was in junior high school as you worked up the courage to ask that special girl or boy to dance... and then watched as someone else stepped up, spoke the question that was still turning repeatedly in your mind, and danced off into the night. Or perhaps it was ten years later when, after years of renting, you and your new spouse searched far and wide for just the right first home—only to find it and lose it again because you had waited before submitting your offer (“Something must be wrong with it; it’s just too good to be true.”)

It may be something entirely different from either of these—what could have been and never... the road not taken... still bugs you. Today we must avoid that same procrastination.

Years from now, as we look back to 2012, we will see that we were at a major crossroad in Thurston County history. It was the year we were able to decide whether we stayed on the path of getting our electricity from a for-profit electric monopoly or we began the change to a publicly supplied, citizen-owned non-profit electricity.

There are actually two crossroads in front of us, the second only reachable if we take the first: collecting the signatures of 10,733 registered voters living in Thurston County. Crossing that threshold (or, to continue the analogy, taking that road) gives all voters in the county the choice this November: “Shall Public Utility District No 1 of Thurston County construct or acquire electric facilities for the generation, transmission or distribution of electric power?”

The question you may have is, “Why would we want to do that?”

The answer: it would allow us to gradually transition from renters to owners. In Thurston we rent the electrical system from Puget Sound Energy, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Macquarie Infrastructure Partners, part of a privately-owned Australian mega-corporation. Most of the counties around us—Grays Harbor, Mason, Lewis, Clallam, Cowlitz, Pacific, Cowlitz, and parts of Pierce—have Public Power. They own their electrical system and have for many years. Jefferson County will soon own theirs. This means that instead of paying PSE what we pay, the counties put the money back into maintaining and upgrading their system to make it more reliable, more efficient, and responsible to its citizens.

Over the decades, we in Thurston have paid PSE and its predecessor a huge guaranteed profit (currently over 10%) that they use to pay off their debt on the electrical system and reward their shareholders. The counties with Public Power charge their customers between 10% and 35% less than PSE charges us and pay for the system—now owned by the citizens, each of whom is a shareholder. It’s time to stop paying high profits to the absentee landlord and start paying ourselves. Sign the petition to put the choice on November’s ballot and then take our power back by voting YES for Public Power.

Go to www.ThurstonPublicPower.org for more information and to contact us.

—John Pearce

We’re still waiting for a few good WIPsters

Works In Progress is always looking for a few positive, mature (not necessarily referring to age), responsible, and self-motivated progressives—preferably WIP readers—who can work co-operatively and respectfully with others. We currently are in need of an advertising representative.

All those interested, please contact WIP at oly-wip@gmail.