A business that serves workers will become a business owned by workers

Bethany Weidner

The people who peer into computers on the third floor of the Mottman Building in downtown Olympia are about to embark on a new stage in their working lives. Working Systems was started out as an idea to offer tech services during the slack season at Cascadia Research Collective, morphed into an S Corporation providing programming services to nonprofits and unions for the next 25 years, and today is in the process of converting to a worker-owned cooperative.

Distinct from the start

The business was unique from its beginning in the 80s when computers were new and little understood. The owners were unique as well. Neither Steven Kant nor Jim Cubbage was driven by money. Neither had gone to school for technology. Jim was a biology major doing marine mammal research at Cascadia Research Collective. Steven worked with computers as an intern at NASA, and later became involved with food co-ops, taught at an alternative high school, supported Nicaragua construction brigades, naturally fiddled with computing in his spare time, honed his computer skills in combat and became organizing chair at Local 443 of the Washington Federation of State Employees and in that role brought those skills to Evergreen’s Learning Resource Center just as local unions were meeting to keep track of funds and other things.

Steven was running the math center and teaching classes at the Evergreen State College when its staff unionized. He became organizing chair at Local 443 of the Washington Federation of State Employees and in that role honed his computer skills in combat with some bulky old computers. He brought those skills to Evergreen’s Labor Center just as local unions were wondering whether this new technology could help them keep track of membership.

“You have to make your own stuff!”

The next stop was Cascadia Research Collective where Steven and Jim shared space and began helping groups to acquire and set up computers and networks in the days before the internet. Both kept on with part-time work, which meant they had a freer hand in developing this new area. The fact that they were their own bosses meant it was easy when they decided to leave hardware and focus on creating custom software for their clients. “The dream was to make things we could sell at a really low price to small locals so they could have really good programs,” Steven said in a recent interview.

Success in serving unions and workers

“Working Systems” was born as a way to pursue this dream. Working Systems was structured as a corporation by default—the newly minted owners hadn’t found others interested in taking on the risk and responsibility of such an untried venture. It turned out that many unions needed this kind of support and Working Systems’ client base grew steadily. Starting small with the Washington Public Employees Association, the State Labor Council, Sign Painters, United Way of Centralia and other area nonprofits, they quickly needed more employees. And like the founders, these new people didn’t come from formal IT courses—they too developed programming skills in their own idiosyncratic ways.

But the group still had to make ends meet. They needed to find ways to make versions of their software that could work nationally. Early on, they connected with a California company called Union-Friendly Systems (UFSI), and contracted to modernize a software package called MUMS that UFSI had created for the Communication Workers of America (CWA). Another key achievement came with a contract with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) to supply the union’s 400 locals across the US with a program to manage their member services.

A worker-centered workplace

The business continued to add products—a whole slate of software programs managing services and membership, creation of websites and training and reporting. Sometimes they say they didn’t program for everyone, “non-binary” to replace the old field that assumed everyone was male. Other times, when there’s a critical strike action, they take pleasure in knowing that their software is helping.

Compared to a lot of businesses, Working Systems has an absence of hierarchy. Pay is hourly and the range from top to bottom of the (transparent) pay scale is small. Neither Steven nor Jim is at the top. Benefits are equivalent across the board. As befits an organization that believes in the value of organized labor, everyone is a union member (the CWA). The owners are also members, but not part of the bargaining unit. Because of the distorted way health insurance is offered and premiums are calculated in the US, Working Systems like other small businesses faced increasing difficulty this year in providing reasonable coverage for everyone. As with other issues in this workplace, the decision as to how to proceed came from members of the bargaining unit.

Staying connected to the outcome of your work

Programming is an isolating kind of work that requires a lot of “me and the computer” time to produce outcomes. At the same time, everyone at this shop moves from the screen to the help desk, which means they get to interact with people, solving problems and making lives better. Scott Breidenbach (who’s working on the co-op transition) said a visit to a union office can be an eye-opener when you see a staffer struggling with the software; you get to say, “we can fix that!” and then do it. Two people do phone support full time, but everyone

The appeal of a co-operative economy

The easiest way to think about how a cooperative differs from a typical business is that in a co-op, people who do the work—people who own it in common and make decisions in common. There’s not an outsider investor who has ultimate control over the life and work of the business. The other big reason is that cooperatives are motivated by service—to their members or to the people who do the work—and not by how much profit they can reap. Generally, people who join or form cooperatives are also interested in sustaining family businesses, fair trade, equitable community growth, and even protecting natural resources—considerations that in a profit-driven business are contradicted by the profit motive.

The biggest and most familiar co-op in Olympia is the Olympia Food Co-op. The Food Coop is a member-owned co-op managed by a collective formed by the people who work there. People join the Co-op by paying a small fee or purchasing equity, depending on their situation. Most of the other co-ops on this list are worker co-ops, formed by the individuals who produce the goods or services that the business sells. They are their own bosses, managing the organization, performing the work and shouldering the risks and rewards.

Olympia is fortunate to have the Northwest Cooperative Development Center located right here. They provide a critical introduction to anyone interested in converting to or starting a coop. Then they offer guidance, support and resources to help make that conversion or do the startup. Both Orca Books and Working Systems are working with NCDC on their transitions (see Orca Books notice on page 5.)

A random list of co-ops in Olympia

Olympia Food Co-op co-op workers’ collective

New Moon Cafe
Dumpster Values
Capitol Homecare Cooperative
Westside Cooperative Preschool
Eastside Cooperative Preschool
Hidden Village—a manufactured home community
Cascadia Research Collective (not exactly a coop)
Orca Books—forming

Working Systems—forming

Workers, continued on page 11
Our theme for May

This issue is dedicated to Labor in all its forms, from waged to unwaged labor, and the forms that are neither, those that re-
directly to our mission. To this end, we seek well-researched and creative articles and contributions on labor or by members of the community, broadly de-
fined. We also receive support from the Workers’ Defense Fund whose purpose is to strengthen those engagement in struggles 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 main-
stream media. Those stories that re-
directly to our mission. To this end, we seek well-researched and creative articles and contributions on labor or by members of the community, broadly de-
fined. We also receive support from the Workers’ Defense Fund whose purpose is to strengthen those engagement in struggles against the powerful for the empowerment of the powerless.

Workers in Progress Publishing Committee: Emily Larson, Enrique Quintana, Bethany Weinreich, Kevin Pestinger
Managing Editor: Bethany Weinreich
Designers: Kim Peterson, Miller
Photography and art: Ann Vandeman, Ricky Osborne, James O’Barr, Chris Shortt, Scott Yoos, Kevin P, James O’Barr, Jean-Marc, Shad Overdier

Submission deadline next issue

www.olywip.org

Contact WIP: Online at olywip@gmail.com or by voice mail in Progress: P.O. Box 215, Olympia, WA 98507

Need help with your understanding of conference@usworker.coop

Proofreading Meeting
Tuesday, May 26

On the cover:
The grocery store checker sees the world, rich and poor, pass by every day.
Art by Michelle Olson

Designers, builders, welders, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, architects, landlords, university professors, nurses, social workers, tow truck drivers, janitors, janitors, construction workers, bus drivers, workers in factories, tech support staff, computer programmers, video game developers, minimum wage workers, high school diploma.

The necessity defense wins one

In the December 2017 issue of Works in Progress we reported on the trial of four valve-turners charged with turning off a pipeline carrying oil from Canada to the US.

Now, five years later, the Washington Court of Appeals has reversed a decision in the State of Washington v. Kennedy and the Washington v. Ward cases. These cases were one of the few instances in which defendants were not convicted. Instead, they were necessary in order to prevent a harm larger than the harm caused by the act itself.

An important aim behind the valve turning strategy was to bring the nec-

essity defense into courtrooms, ar-
guing that climate-based civil disobe-
dience is necessary as a lesser evil compared to the harm being done by previous efforts.

In that trial in South Dakota, Judge Laurie Fontaine ruled that defendants Michael Foster and Sam Jessup could not use the necessity defense testimony "could confuse or mislead the jury into believing the legitimate concerns regarding climate change are an excuse or defense to the crimes charged." That was exactly the case the valve-turners had hoped to bring to the fore.

Now valve turners will get their chance. On April 8, 2019, the Wash-
ington Court of Appeals Division One reversed a decision made in the State of Washington v. Kenneth Ward. Ward was one of the people arrested in a four-state action for turning the valves on Kinder-Morgan pipelines transporting oil from Canadian tar sands into the US.

The Washington court found that “The necessity defense is not intended to second-guess a jury’s ability to evaluate a case. The necessity defense is not intended to absolve the defendant of responsibility for the act itself.”

And this happened...
It was never just about raising wages

Celeste Robinson

When the $15 minimum wage was signed into law in Saint Paul City Hall in November, I burst into tears. I spent three years working on the campaigns for $15 in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, including 18 months as the co-director of 15 Now Minnesota, where I coordinated the coalition of faith, labor, and community groups that fought for and won $15 in Saint Paul. I poured my heart and soul into the campaign.

A victory amid continuing fears

Most of the people who saw me that day in City Hall probably assumed I was crying tears of happiness and satisfaction, and in part I was. But I was also overwhelmed with exhaustion, frustration, and fear and that I hadn’t expected to feel so strongly. It was hard to celebrate our victory without thinking about the context of what lies ahead.

For millennials like me, the future looks bleak. New headlines break every day exposing the precarity of our global economy where a handful of billionaires hoard the majority of the world’s wealth. My generation is having fewer children, citing economic insecurity and fear about global political stability and climate change. I fought for $15 as a part of resisting that future and building something better.

Creating billionaires and impoverishing workers

From the beginning, the Fight for $15 was never just about raising wages, it was also about building public anger at a system where corporations make billions in profits while workers are paid poverty wages. In many ways, it is the modern incarnation of the root of the labor movement, the refusal to accept the labor structure, makes it appropriate for one single, significant day: it is closed to the public as a day off in solidarity with others. Our collective would like to acknowledge the contributions of oppressed communities and immigrants to this day. This year is different, as many unions and low wage workers are planning a day of action.

In recent years, May Day celebrations and rallies have focused on the struggles of oppressed communities and immigrant rights. This year is different, to be no exception, as many unions and allies gathered to support migration and low wage workers planning a day of action.

As this day is celebrated in numerous countries, with a variety of history and cultural events, much information can be found online.

Here are some places to look for more information:

Industrial Workers of the World—A Union for All Workers/The Brief History of May Day

These organizations have websites that may be of interest to you:

Food Chain Workers Alliance

Grassroots Global Justice Alliance

Beyond the Movement: Uniting Movements

Organized Workers for Labor Solidarity

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Taking a day off from the job on May 1

Celeste Robinson is a waitress and member of UNITE HERE Local 17. As the co-director of 15 Now Minnesota, she helped win a 15 minimum wage in the struggle for my generation. Right now, the labor movement has huge opportunities around Medicare for All, New Deal, and more. Working successfully with young people like me will be key not only to the success or failure of these campaigns, but the success or failure of the labor movement itself. We in the labor movement need to push our unions to meet these challenges with all the passion, discipline, and courage that defines the best moments of labor history. If unions can rise to the challenge, young people like me will take notice, and we will join.
Penny wise and pound foolish
The campaign to make members quit paying union dues

Chris Brooks
Holly Lindsey, has been a licensed home-daycare provider for 22 years and a union member for 12. She joined SEIU 925 when the local formed in 2013.

Who’s knocking at your door?
‘At the very beginning, the union went house-to-house to recruit us,’ recalls Lindsey. The union began a home daycare and preschool near Longview, WA. In time, the union began holding regular meetings, and Lindsey, who is isolating, so Lindsey is thankful for SEIU 925’s large network of childcare providers. ‘It’s been huge for us to collaborate and communicate as a group,” she says. ‘The union just opened all these doors for us.’

But the union isn’t the only one trying to get your dollars?
One day in 2017, Lindsey heard a knock on her sliding glass door. A casual dressed man in his 20s stood outside, clipboard in hand. He was with the Freedom Foundation.

‘He told me I pay a lot of money to the Washington Center for arts and the arts, so I was very surprised,” Lindsey says. ‘They tried to give me pamphlets showing how much money I would save if I opted out of paying dues during a year in dues, he claimed. Lindsey felt threatened by the experience. ‘Most times, people try to hear a union’s story, they do it in the workplace,’ she says. ‘They don’t go to union members’ homes. They don’t bother them and their families like this.’

Soon, Lindsey’s phone was lighting up with calls from others in her local who had heard the same thing. Lindsey says, ‘They tried to give me pamphlets showing how much money I would save if I opted out of paying dues during a year.’ In time, the union began holding regular meetings, and Lindsey, who is isolating, so Lindsey is thankful for SEIU 925’s large network of childcare providers. ‘It’s been huge for us to collaborate and communicate as a group,” she says. ‘The union just opened all these doors for us.’

Leave the union—or stay but don’t pay
The first part is to continue advancing so-called opt-out campaigns to starve union budgets. For 15 years, SPN has collaborated with forces like the American Legislative Exchange Council, the National Right to Work Committee and the Koch brothers to infiltrate the right-to-work states as well as municipalities in blue states such as Illinois and New Mexico. The effort, aiming to win in Janus, the third part is to develop its opt-out campaigns to erode union membership, in partnership in Washington State with the anti-union, anti-public-sector union, SEIU 925 when the local formed in 2013.

The second part is developing its opt-out campaigns to erode union membership, in partnership in Washington State with the anti-union, anti-public-sector union, SEIU 925 when the local formed in 2013.

The third part is to require unions to recently more often with periodic votes, as Wisconsin’s Act 10 did in 2011. Such mandates saddle unions with regular battles for survival.

Who needs a union?
Negotiate your own contract
The fourth is to eliminate the right of unions to exclusively represent workers, allowing employers to divert out of collective bargaining and sign their own contract. This legislation, which SPN has not yet succeeded in getting a state to pass, splinters and weakens unions while creating an opportunity for the employer to sow discord. For example, employers could offer non-union workers a bonus or slightly higher hourly rate to discourage participation.

‘Taken individually, they are each bad,” Lafer says. ‘In combination, this represents a concerted effort to do away with public-sector unions.”

Only a small fraction of workers in the private sector—less than seven percent—still pay union dues, down 35 percent at their peak in 1954. The public sector, on the other hand, has enjoyed a Canadian level of union density, with one in three workers a member of a union. According to the Institute for Higher Education Policy, public sector unions could prompt a drop in public-sector membership as large as 8 percent—3.2 to 4.2 million members—in the coming years.

Opportunity of a lifetime
The Freedom Foundation calls Janus “the opportunity of a lifetime” to starve the union for nothing, Lindsey says. “We had no idea they had obtained this,” Lindsey says. “We had no idea they had obtained this.” These campaigns as opportunities to take back the funds from nonmembers’ paychecks” after Janus.

Personal addresses of union members are “a vein of gold”
Opt-out campaigns hinge on the ability for these organizations to obtain government employees’ contact information. SEIU 925 president Karen Hart was dismayed when the Freedom Foundation began contacting members in 2014.

“We were caught totally off guard,” she says. "We had no idea they had obtained a list.” These lists are often obtained through public records requests. In one fundraising letter, the Freedom Foundation described obtaining the contact information of 300,000 public employees in Washington using open records requests as being “like a prospector locating a vein of gold.” The Freedom Foundation claims that its multi-year campaign cost SEIU 925 two-thirds of its membership. The union confirms this loss rate, but attributes it to a high-attrition workforce, not the opt-out campaign.

Whether or not the government is obligated to release the personal home address of a high school librarian or home healthcare provider is a murky outcome of this legal area. Blocking SPN affiliates from obtaining private contact information is one way unions can nip opt-out campaigns in the bud—and sever union memberships—or indirectly funded by one of the foundations in the country, the Bradley Foundation, with $85 million in assets. Internal Bradley Foundation documents from 2015 praise the Freedom Foundation’s aggressive attacks on unions as “a national model.” Similar documents show the Bradley Foundation considering funded for SPN affiliates like the Empire Center for Public Policy in New York, on the basis of their having “the stomach” to follow the Freedom Foundation’s example. In May, the Empire Center mailed New York public state by the SPN-affiliated Freedom Foundation.

The Freedom Foundation calls Janus “the opportunity of a lifetime” to starve unions.

Deepening member engagement
In many states, public-sector unions have preempted opt-out campaigns with “all-in” campaigns, asking members to sign “recommits” cards confirming their union membership. The American Federation of Teachers says that by the time of the Janus ruling, it had secured 330,000 recommits cards from its estimated 800,000 members nationwide who would be affected. Some locals, like the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA), have used these campaigns as opportunities to deepen member engagement. “To date, the union has had one-on-one conversations and collected cards from almost 25,000 members.”

“We are making the case to our members that our all-in campaign and our contract campaign are inextricably linked,” says Jeff Good, UTLA executive director. “If you want good contracts with good working conditions, then you need a strong union, and we can’t have a strong union if people are choosing to sit out. So we are fighting for a good contract for community schools and building a fighting union.”
Strangling unions to starve public employment

Chris Brooks

The coordinated effort by wealthy financiers to eliminate unions has elements in addition to the “opt out” campaign. The State Policy Network (SPN) and its right-wing allies secure Republican domination of more state governments, as the movement to outlaw what they call “bargaining with union activists” continues to spread across the nation this year!” (SPN) and its right-wing allies secure Republican domination of more state governments, as the movement to outlaw what they call “bargaining with union activists” continues to spread across the nation this year!”

EDUCATION

Act 10 went into effect. And this de-

who doesn’t vote is effectively vot-

union dues more difficult, dramati-

passed Gov. Scott Walker’s union-bust-

publican-controlled legislature in 2011

messaging and moral support behind

its membership.

reforms across the nation this year!”

SPN affiliates couldn’t be happier with

in the two years since

bargaining unit to vote for repre-

sentation requirement: Each year, Wiscon-

sent to place language from our previous

contracts into the employee hand-

book. We don’t have dues, we have

members

spend a large part of their time to read, travel, and be a grandma.”

The iconic Olympia bookstore, Orca Books, will be expanding its owner-

ship cooperative

The bookstore has been a commu-

profits, and arts’ organizations. A huge

Orca has won

for meetings, first dates, and taking

acquaintances

Co-opatopia on April 27th during the

Rights. There will be a board of direc-

The superintendent announced that the district was restoring the funding by

district was restoring the funding by

superintendent announced that the

school district was restoring the funding by

We were constantly communicating,”

Be a part of a

Foster Care Community!

Join Family Behavioral Health as we build an intentional community to support our foster families!

We Provide:

• Training

• 24/7 support and assistance

• Reimbursed respite

• Innovative care approach

• Team of professionals dedicated to supporting your family

For more information:

Scarlett Gentry

360-280-5017

scarlettg@cssw.org

Orca Books to convert to membership cooperative

the results. “In 2010, our Network unit-

ed our intellectual resources, winning

decided to fight for workers outside

the official system of collective bar-

gaining.

Finding new avenues to support workers

“We’ve developed this model we call

the association model,” says Rain-

ford. “It relies on politics and electing

people at the local level, and then we

voting on the terms and conditions of

employment annually through a meet-

and vote process. We have been able to

place language from our previous

contracts into the employee hand-

book. Dues don’t pay for dues, fees, which are taken out of member

paychecks by local government.

Since we generate outside the state system, none of it requires any oversight or in-

volves with the state.”

Building new relationships with members

According to many in the Wisconsin labor movement, the shift in AFSC-

ME’s approach was born of necessity. Details of how this approach con-

trasted with Wisconsin public employee unions have lost be-

between 30 percent and 60 percent of their members in the two years since

Act 10 went into effect. And this de-

line has in turn cost organized labor tens of millions of dollars. Imagine the impact this will have when we achieve even more government union reforms across the nation this year.”

Indeed, Wisconsin AFSCME—which once represented almost every state, county and city employee across the state, close to 63,000 government workers—has now lost 90 percent of its membership.

it decimated our ability to represent

local and state government employ-

ees,” says Neil Rainford, a Wisconsin

AFSCME staff member for 18 years. Union spokesperson Michael Horecky

says that the losses were especially

bad in rural areas, where “many coun-

ties have few, if any, remaining union

members”

After Act 10, Wisconsin AFSCME let its

locals choose whether to keep fighting for recertification, and many stopped

seeking official recognition by the state as the exclusive representative of

government employees. Instead, they

decided to fight for workers outside

the official system of collective bar-

gaining.

Many working people, the union has no relevance.”

Engaged and energized teachers

There is hope amidst the wreckage. In Milwaukee, seven out of every 10 teachers are members of the Milwau-

ee Teachers Education Association (MTEA), which has fought to maintain its re-

certification elections each year. “Most re-

gions are losing members every single month, and every single month our union is holding steady or putting numbers up on the board,” says MTEA vice president Amy Mizalke.

After the Milwaukee school district proposed a 2019 budget that cut class-

room spending by 5 percent per stu-

dent, MTEA launched an aggressive campaign to restore funding. At rallies, MTEA members often chanted, “If we don’t get it, shut it down.” The threat was not idle. The union spent months organizing escalating actions, from town hall walks to walk-ins, at which teach-

ers rallied outside schools to greet par-

ents and students with signs and in-

fon of them tried to take their bargaining rights.

Teachers in Florida shared a similar story in response to a new law requi-

ring unions to annually prove they have 50 percent membership.

Those organizations have few, if any, remaining union members into highly legalistic organi-

zations incapable of responding to the

crisis. “The culture that people have known historically is the business model: professional staff taking care of problems, meeting the needs of mem-

bers and doing the organizing,” says

former Wisconsin AFSCME organizer Edward Sadlowski. “The fundamentals of organizing—mapping out the work-

site, identifying leaders, building rela-

tionships on the shop floor, that kind of thing—were completely missing from most unions’ culture. Without a vision and no plan to move forward, union density plummeted. For too

many working people, the union has no relevance.”

Being a union member is an act of

resistance

That same spirit is evident in Iowa, where in 2016, Republicans scored a trifecta and seized the governorship and both chambers of the state govern-

ment. The new legislature passed its own version of Act 10. The law cur-

tailed collective bargaining, capped wage increases, required bargaining at the rate of inflation, outlawed the deduction of union dues from paychecks, and required a majority of all eligible voters—even those who are not union members, since Iowa law is right-to-work—to vote on the union during an annual two-week election.

Even though the law was largely the same as in Wisconsin, the result was very different. 99 percent of unions recertified.

“It really backfired on them,” says An-

kly Sadlowski. “The fundamentals that tried to take their bargaining rights. It worked.

Even though the law was largely the same as in Wisconsin, the result was very different. 99 percent of unions recertified.

The Iowa activists had a simple mes-

sage: Being a union member is an act of resistance. Their message was: "It relies on politics and electing people at the local level, and then voting on the terms and conditions of employment annually through a meet-and-vote process. We have been able to place language from our previous contracts into the employee handbook. Dues don’t pay for dues, fees, which are taken out of member paychecks by local government. Since we generate outside the state system, none of it requires any oversight or involvement with the state."

It decimated our ability to represent local and state government employees,” says Neil Rainford, a Wisconsin AFSCME staff member for 18 years. Union spokesperson Michael Horecky says that the losses were especially bad in rural areas, where “many counties have few, if any, remaining union members”

After Act 10, Wisconsin AFSCME let its locals choose whether to keep fighting for recertification, and many stopped seeking official recognition by the state as the exclusive representative of government employees. Instead, they decided to fight for workers outside the official system of collective bargaining.

Many working people, the union has no relevance.”

Engaged and energized teachers

There is hope amidst the wreckage. In Milwaukee, seven out of every 10 teachers are members of the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association (MTEA), which has fought to maintain its certification elections each year. “Most regions are losing members every single month, and every single month our union is holding steady or putting numbers up on the board,” says MTEA vice president Amy Miziale.

After the Milwaukee school district proposed a 2019 budget that cut classroom spending by 5 percent per student, MTEA launched an aggressive campaign to restore funding. At rallies, MTEA members often chanted, “If we don’t get it, shut it down.” The threat was not idle. The union spent months organizing escalating actions, from town hall walks to walk-ins, at which teachers rallied outside schools to greet parents and students with signs and in-
News you might have missed: Extinction Rebellion actions here and abroad

(Ed note: Extinction Rebellion is an international movement that uses non-violent civil disobedience to achieve radical change in order to minimise the risk of human extinction and ecological collapse. Recently, a string of demonstrations blocked bridges and major streets in central London, disrupted train services and saw over a thousand people arrested. The group is rallying behind warnings that significant reductions in carbon emissions must be achieved within the next 11 years to avoid devastating consequences for the planet, such as mass extinction, by the end of the century. )

Portland, Oregon, April 22. Local citizens from Extinction Rebellion took a stand on Earth Day at Zenith Energy, dumping a truck full of soil over the train tracks and planting a "victory over fossil fuels" garden—complete with sheds, scarecrows, and a real growing garden.

Last year, Zenith Energy quietly began exporting tar sands oil from its Willamette River facility. The Oregonian reported that in 2018 alone, Zenith exported more than $71 million of crude oil, up from only $2.53 million in exports the year before. Now Zenith Energy is expanding its facility so that it can handle more than three times the number of oil train cars. Over the past year Zenith Energy transformed a sleepy asphalt operation in the heart of Portland's industrial district into a multi-million-gallon oil spout. The oil arrives in the tank cars is processed bitumen, to which a solvent has been added in Canada. It's known in the industry as "dilbit"—diluted bitumen. According to its manufacturer, it is extremely dangerous.

Oil trains endanger public safety and public health. They create environmental risks for communities that live close to rail lines in Portland and along the Columbia River, and for those who rely on waterways that could be contaminated from an oil train spill. Another note of interest: Zenith Energy is a project of an international hedge fund, Warburg Pincus. Former bail-out doctor and Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner is now president of Warburg-Pincus.

Extinction Rebellion PDX accompanied the action with this statement:

“We believe that local struggles, like the one we’re facing here in Portland, are critical to shutting down the fossil fuel industry. We also believe that it’s high time to begin taking the next step in our movement, that is, coordinating our resistance with our allies all across the PNW, the US and the world, and combining our efforts into a unified physical and political force. We want the flow of fossil fuels, and the flow of capital that supports it, to stop—at the brink of extinction, we are not asking for permission.”

For further information: To understand the consequences of the changes at Zenith, Gordon R. Friedman, a reporter for The Oregonian/OregonLive spent a month poring over thousands of pages of records from local, state and federal regulators. He interviewed officials working at nine oversight agencies, toured the Portland terminal and talked with Zenith Energy executives. This extraordinary, alarming article is worth reading. You can find it at https://expo.oregonlive.com/news/crude-oil-trains

Streams, salmon, orca and the cycle of life

Streams are rated healthy when they support many kinds of life. For a salmon stream, that means benthic invertebrates—little "bugs" that live in sediments and have evolved over thousands of years in the cold, clear running streams of the Pacific Northwest.

The best conditions for stream bugs also tend to be very good for salmon, as these bugs represent part of the primary food supply for young salmon. Salmon later return the favor when they die, becoming food for a variety of bugs in the stream. Salmon also contribute nitrogen, recycled for the trees on the stream banks. And because salmon are the main source of food for the killer whale population, the fact that their runs are dwindling is directly connected to the feared extinction of our southern resident Orcas. As salmon continue to decrease in number, the suffering of our river ecosystems will increase.

League of Women Voters of Thurston County’s final public forum of the year, Where’s the Water: Streams, Salmon, and Orcas, May 7 at the Olympia Center. Doors open at 5:30 pm, program starts at 6:00 pm. Admission is free.

The final presentations of the League of Women Voters’ 6-part forum on water will tie together the series and the final presentations of the League of Women Voters’ 6-part forum on energy, dumping a truck full of soil over the train tracks and planting a “victory over fossil fuels” garden—complete with sheds, scarecrows, and a real growing garden.

From Geoengineering to Bioengineering

A free talk on military manipulation of the ionosphere, 5G, nanotechnology and Transhumanism with Elana Freeland & Chris Fontenot

Saturday, May 11
11 am - 2 pm
3201 Boston Harbor Rd NE
Olympia WA

Refreshments provided
More info at
Elanafreeland.com

Chris Fontenot moderates A Microwaved Planet on Your Wager: Involved in nuclear propulsion and electric engineering and is a proponent of the Electric Universe Theory.

Eastside Smoke Company
Affordable local glass and much more.
Open daily 11 am-8 pm • eastsidescmeko.com
2008 State Avenue NE in Olympia • 360-350-0385
The vilification of the Left and the pursuit of [more] capital

Enrique Quintero

Things happen for a reason
It is easy to vilify the left. Effective pointing at the enemy may be impor-
Continuing the line of force from Big Corporations (money)
1. Big corporations (money)
2. Political institutions in Washington
3. Professional incubators of misinforma-

The contemporary merchants of capital pursue the [more] capital

The new agents of disturbance of American capitalism
Bernie Sanders and his movement de-

This campus club has been active over the years in our community on issues related to social justice. They have also participated in rebuilding homes in New Orleans.

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.

The Power of Youth

Saturday, May 11, 2019 • 7:30 p.m.

Traditional Cafe – 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 justice group to be 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 Olympia High School’s student club, STAND – Students Together Advocating for Non-Violence and Diversity (No one is turned away)

Friday, May 10, 2019 • 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 justice group to be 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 Olympia High School’s student club, STAND – Students Together Advocating for Non-Violence and Diversity (No one is turned away)

Friday, May 10, 2019 • 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 justice group to be 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 Olympia High School’s student club, STAND – Students Together Advocating for Non-Violence and Diversity (No one is turned away)
An immigration legacy from the Red Coast

Did Steve Miller and Wilbur Ross copy Albert Johnson?

Congressman Albert Johnson, one of the Pacific Northwest's most influential political figures, struck many of the same themes in relation to immigrants as does the current commander in chief. Johnson's greatest moment was the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act, which applied a stringent quota system to American immigration policies, and is widely regarded as the most important piece of restrictive immigration legislation in United States history.

On November 5, 1912, voters in Southwestern Washington, known then as "the Red Coast," elected Albert Johnson, editorial page editor of the Daily Whidbey Island News, to serve as their member of Congress. Over the next twenty years, Johnson became one of the nation's powerful Congressional leaders in the United States, serving in nine successive congressional terms until his defeat in the 1932 election.

Johnson's anti-immigrant policies, though inherently racist, stemmed in part from his belief that America's growth was too great to be slowed by the "human tide" that had assaulted Wobblies, socialists, and those who were considered radicals. His newspaper, the Home Defender, used his first speech on the House floor to set the stage to the nation's capital. When Johnson moved to Washington, D.C., he brought the Home Defender along. There, while serving within the minority Republican Party in Congress, he worked to establish the paper as "A National Newspaper Opposed to Revolutionary Socialism."

Overall, though, the Congressman made his mark on Washington—and on America—not through his hateful editorial content, but through his work to enact racist restrictive legislation. During his first term in Congress, Johnson served on the House Immigration Committee.

Northwest newspapers credited his assignment to that committee to the "fact" that "Mr. Johnson has made the immigration problem a matter of special study for many years." Johnson used his first speech on the House floor to assail Asian immigration, giving the public a hint of what was to come. Speaking of the need to retain a tariff, the Congressman claimed "China will send her hordes into this nation to fight the IWW. He relied on the much-used caricature of the anarchist as a radical, and helped to create a system that would have little effect on the future entry of British, German, Irish, or Scandinavian immigrants, whereas many potential immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe would be barred from entry.

Still, to Johnson and many of his colleagues, the restrictions seemed too lenient. Building on his public reputation as an immigration expert, Johnson took up a position as president of the Eugenic Research Association during 1913-1924. This group pushed for the adoption of public policy based on the pseudo-science of eugenics. The eugenics movement, with Johnson as its chief Congressional advocate, pushed for more stringent limits to recognize Northern and Western Europeans as more intelligent, democratic, and more readily assimilable into the United States.

On March 17, 1924, Johnson proposed a new bill using the 1890 census as its benchmark. The bill limited European immigrants to 2 percent of each group's population in this country as of 1890. A maximum of 150,000 immigrants, drawn almost entirely from the eugenicists' favored nations, was set as the annual ceiling on all immigration. The act excluded from entry any one born in a geographically defined "Asiatic Barred Zone," which included most of the continent of Asia. A final section of the act banned immigration by groups ineligible for naturalization, a category that included the Japanese.

The measure easily passed both houses and was signed by the President on May 26, 1924. The law is rightfully seen as among the most important immigration laws in US history.

The law's impact exceeded even its most optimistic supporters' expectations. In part due to the Johnson-Reed Act, over the 23 years from 1924 to 1947, only 2,718,006 immigrants came to the United States. The effects of Johnson's campaigns against immigrants and radicals lasted far beyond his Congressional career. By placing race-based quotas on immigration, Johnson succeeded at "putting up the bars" against millions of people who saw the United States, warts and all, as a potential sanctuary against war and injustice.

Aron Goings, Ph.D., is a senior research associate at the Institute of Advanced Social Research in Auckland, New Zealand. He previously taught at St. Martin's College.

This piece is excerpted with permission from The Red Coast: Radicalism and Anti-Racism in Southeast Washington by Aron Goings, Brian Barnos, and Roger Snider, copyright 2019. Available from bookdealers or Oregon State University Press.

healthful
defeatable
affordable

WESTSIDE STORE & GARDEN CENTER
921 Rogers St. NW
Olympia, WA 98502
360.754.7666

EASTSIDE STORE & DELI
3111 Pacific Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501
360.956.3870
The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable, by Amitav Ghosh

Kathleen Byrd

Amitav Ghosh, an Indian novelist and winner of numerous honors and awards, including Literary Doctorates from the University of Puget Sound and Maastricht College in the Netherlands, is a brilliant novelist and thinker. Ghosh writes that “Studies have shown that a mention of global warming at the dinner table is almost certain to lead to a quick change of subject.”

It doesn’t have to be that way

Read The Hungry Tide, for an introduction to the subject, and then immediately follow with The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable. Next, organize a dinner party. Ghosh’s book is sure to add a new potency to your conversation.

Ghosh invites readers into his intellectual and imaginative inquiry, asking questions like “What is it about Climate Change that the mention of it should lead to histrionics from the preserves of serious fiction?” And what does this tell us about culture, and its pattern of evasion? His questions probe underneath the surface of politics, denial, and even rage.

Language that reveals a deeper plenum

Ghosh’s exposition of the modes and varieties of climate concealment closes in the last section “Politics” with an illuminating critique of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change whose “diction … is borrowed directly from the free-trade agreements of the neoliberal era.” This “gives the impression of language being deployed as an instrument of concealment and withdrawal; in contrast with Pope Francis’s Laudato Si, which challenges contemporary practices not just in its choice of words but also in the directness of its style which challenges contemporary practices not just in its choice of words but also in the directness of its style and over again to the theme of “how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.”

Ghosh reminds us that as dire as our predicament is, every crisis is an opportunity. The opportunity now is to see reality and to spread words that reveal rather than conceal. In recent weeks, I’ve followed Greta Thunberg and listened to her direct and visionary luminosity. The Great Derangement is divided into sections that were originally presented as four lectures at the University of Chicago in 2015. As the book advances, Ghosh connects stories, cultural habits, and land use planning, to our knowledge of history and to structures of power at local, national, and global levels.

An honest and hopeful analysis

I hope that Ghosh’s book becomes the subject of many dinner conversations, along with Thunberg’s vision. They offer a more accurate map, a more honest and hopeful analysis of our current predicament. It might not make you comfortable, but it might help you to wake from a sleep of despair.

Kathleen Byrd is a teacher and writer who has lived and raised her daughter in Olympia.

For an exciting dinner party, put catastrophe on the menu

The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable, by Amitav Ghosh

With friends like these, who needs enemies?

Mary Jo Dolis

The Social Security Board of Trustees released its 2019 report to Congress in April. Right now, the average annual Social Security benefit is about $16,000. The Trustees Report confirms that expanding vs. cutting Social Security is the best benefit in a question of values and choice, not affordability.

What the report actually says:

• Social Security has a large surplus projected to reach roughly $2.9 trillion next year.
• Social Security continues to be extremely affordable with less than one penny of every dollar spent on administrative costs (this is a fraction of what other industrialized countries pay for similar programs).
• Social Security can pay out ALL benefits owed for the next 16 years until 2035 at which point it can still pay 80% of benefits.
• Well, Forbes magazine of all things, predicted exactly what happened—the news coverage of the report would completely misrepresent the contents.

PBS—“Despite the lack of big short-term changes, both Medicare and Social Security remain on unfailurable financial paths that will without serious reforms soak up ever-larger shares of government spending.”

CNBC—“The report shows the Social Security Trust Fund projected to be depleted in 2035.”

CBS News—“Social Security is on a path to become insolvent in 2035, with only enough money to cover about 80 percent of its obligations.”

Fox News—“Social Security Shortfall: Social Security is slated to run dry in 2035, faces shaky fiscal future.”

Here is Forbes’ (a business magazine!) explanation of why this happens:

“Thanks to decades of a billionaire-funded campaign to undermine confidence in Social Security, the Trustees Report will likely be greeted with alarm that Social Security is going broke. The truth is that Social Security is in strong shape. The Report shows that Social Security has an accumulated surplus of roughly $2.9 trillion. It further shows that at the end of the century, it will cost just 6.07% of GDP. That is considerably lower, as a percentage of GDP, than what is spent today by Germany, Austria, France and most other industrialized countries on their retirement, survivors and disability programs.

That brings us to the second misrepresentation we are likely to see. Along with that modest, unsurprising shortfall being the cause for breathless media reports about supposed collapse, the report will be greeted, again if past experience repeats, with little interest from many observers that Congress has no plan to address Social Security’s projected shortfall. That is incorrect.

Democrats have specific concrete plans that they stand behind. They plan not just to ensure that all promised benefits are paid in full and on time for the foreseeable future, but to address our nation’s retirement income crisis by increasing Social Security’s modest benefits.

It is only Congressional Republicans who have no plans—except cutting benefits and turning the program over to private businesses.”

So don’t be fooled.

Mary Jo Dolis is the pen name of a committed skeptic.

Cartridge Care Inc.

THE PRINTER EXPERTS since 1990

TONER • FILM • INK JETS
Remanufactured and new - Hundreds in stock

REPAIR • SERVICE • SALES
for Printers - Fax - Copiers - Plotters

Free Pick Up & Delivery

1314 Lebanon St. SE - Lacey
360-459-8845
Financial instability up close: A single parent’s memoir

Emily Lardner

Four days of debate in June may yield a progressive Democratic platform focused on addressing systemic inequality. If so, that change will be in no small part because of the ongoing grassroots activism across the country demanding changes. One powerful strategy has been to change the dominant narrative that disproportionately shapes the systemic undervaluing and exploitation of labor in favor of personalizing reasons for failing.

Changing the narrative matters. The Poor People’s Campaign, working towards their Moral Action Congress in DC June 17-19, articulated this as a central tenet of their work: “We aim to shift the distorted moral narrative often promoted by religious extremists in the nation from issues like prayer in school, abortion, and gun rights, to one that is concerned with how our society treats the poor, and with how we allow some to thrive while those on the margins, the least of these, are stripped down and privatized. Everyone to survive and thrive.

The Economic Hardship Reporting Project (EHRP) is similarly designed to disrupt narratives about financial instability and poverty. Founded in 2012 by Barbara Ehrenreich, EHRP aims to give voice to workers and photographers from under-represented groups, following in the tradition of the Farm Security Administration and the Works Progress Administration. As they say on their website, EHRP’s “aim is to humanize inequality.” Our writers and photographers, some of whom may be on the brink of poverty themselves, tell intimate, heartbreakingly and sometimes shocking stories originating from their own communities.

Stephanie Land, author of the memoir Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother’s Will to Survive, is a writer whose work has been supported by EHRP. In Maid, Land recounts her experiences living as a single mom in and around white-collar Denver, in a flat she was paying for, creating a living cleaning houses. Through her descriptive writing, Land unveils the circumstances of her life as a housecleaner.

“My job afforded me little money to spend on clothes, even for work. I worked through illnesses and brought my daughter to daycare when she should have been at home. My job offered no sick pay, no vacation days, no foreseeable increase in wage, yet through it all, I never begged to work more. Wages lost from missed work hours could rarely be made up, and if I missed too many, I begged for the job. My caregiver’s reliability was vital, since a broken hose, a faulty thermostat, or even a flat tire could throw us off, knock us backward, send us teetering, falling back, toward homelessness. We lived, we survived, in careful imbalance. This was my un witnessed existence, as I polished another’s to make their appear perfect.”

Land describes listening to co-workers...

...when a person is too deep in systemic poverty, there is no upward trajectory. Life is struggle and nothing else.

Strangling

From page 5

the tragic school shooting in Parkland “All three of the educators shot down were union members,” says Broward County Teachers’ Union president Anna Fusco. “This legislation just proves that these union members were union members,” says Broward County Teachers’ Union president Anna Fusco.

Writing in 2017, anti-tax crusader and conservative strategist Grover Norquist, president of IBEW 2304 in Madison, Wis., said, “the modern Democratic Party has become a party of unions, which is the largest, the best funded, the most reliable was vital, since a broken hose, a faulty thermostat, or even a flat tire could throw us off, knock us backward, send us teetering, falling back, toward homelessness. We lived, we survived, in careful imbalance. This was my un witnessed existence, as I polished another’s to make their appear perfect.”

Land describes listening to co-workers...

...when a person is too deep in systemic poverty, there is no upward trajectory. Life is struggle and nothing else.

Strangling

From page 5

the tragic school shooting in Parkland “All three of the educators shot down were union members,” says Broward County Teachers’ Union president Anna Fusco. “This legislation just proves that these union members were union members,” says Broward County Teachers’ Union president Anna Fusco.

Writing in 2017, anti-tax crusader and conservative strategist Grover Norquist, president of IBEW 2304 in Madison, Wis., said, “the modern Democratic Party has become a party of unions, which is the largest, the best funded, the most reliable was vital, since a broken hose, a faulty thermostat, or even a flat tire could throw us off, knock us backward, send us teetering, falling back, toward homelessness. We lived, we survived, in careful imbalance. This was my un witnessed existence, as I polished another’s to make their appear perfect.”

Land describes listening to co-workers...

...when a person is too deep in systemic poverty, there is no upward trajectory. Life is struggle and nothing else.

Strangling

From page 5

the tragic school shooting in Parkland “All three of the educators shot down were union members,” says Broward County Teachers’ Union president Anna Fusco. “This legislation just proves that these union members were union members,” says Broward County Teachers’ Union president Anna Fusco.

Writing in 2017, anti-tax crusader and conservative strategist Grover Norquist, president of IBEW 2304 in Madison, Wis., said, “the modern Democratic Party has become a party of unions, which is the largest, the best funded, the most reliable was vital, since a broken hose, a faulty thermostat, or even a flat tire could throw us off, knock us backward, send us teetering, falling back, toward homelessness. We lived, we survived, in careful imbalance. This was my un witnessed existence, as I polished another’s to make their appear perfect.”

Land describes listening to co-workers...

...when a person is too deep in systemic poverty, there is no upward trajectory. Life is struggle and nothing else.

Strangling

From page 5

the tragic school shooting in Parkland “All three of the educators shot down were union members,” says Broward County Teachers’ Union president Anna Fusco. “This legislation just proves that these union members were union members,” says Broward County Teachers’ Union president Anna Fusco.

Writing in 2017, anti-tax crusader and conservative strategist Grover Norquist, president of IBEW 2304 in Madison, Wis., said, “the modern Democratic Party has become a party of unions, which is the largest, the best funded, the most reliable was vital, since a broken hose, a faulty thermostat, or even a flat tire could throw us off, knock us backward, send us teetering, falling back, toward homelessness. We lived, we survived, in careful imbalance. This was my un witnessed existence, as I polished another’s to make their appear perfect.”

Land describes listening to co-workers...

...when a person is too deep in systemic poverty, there is no upward trajectory. Life is struggle and nothing else.
Continuing programs for peace at the Rachel Corrie Foundation

The Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace & Justice (RFC) is a grassroots, 501(c)3 non-profit organization that conducts and supports programs that foster connections between people, that build understanding, respect, and appreciation for difference, and that promote cooperation within and between local and global communities. The foundation encourages and supports grassroots efforts in pursuit of human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice, which we view as prerequisites for world peace. Continuing the work begun and envisioned by our daughter, Rachel Corrie, our initial emphasis has been on Israel/Palestine.

The Rachel Corrie Foundation is gearing up once again to support projects in the Rachel Corrie Gaza Sport Initiative, the Samira Project (with MECA and Madison-Rafah Sister City Project partners), providing academic and psychological support for Gaza kids, and the Palestinian Cultural Palace Youth Performances.

Throughout the years, many in our community have demonstrated support and generosity for these efforts, they can’t happen without you. Members of the community can join together once again in sustaining these grassroots projects. Please mark and celebrate Rachel’s 40th birthday by standing strong with RFC and with the youth and families of Gaza.

When too much money is concentrated in too few hands, the owners of the money are motivated to look for places to “invest” for themselves: golf courses, more homes, beach homes, bigger beach homes, bigger golf courses, rare wines, famous paintings by artists who died destitute and so on...Not in production useful to the society.”

RankandFile, California

The left

From page 7

anisms of vilification, which include deliberate trivializing of serious issues, serious platforms, serious people. Second, we need to recognize that the struggle against the domination of capital and its interests is a long one. As Terry Eagleton writes, we have to maintain hope without optimism. Finally, we need to be alert to and supportive of the use of political rhetoric that transgresses traditional tropes and in so doing, opens up new spaces for reflection and debate. AOC’s new video on The Intercept is a brilliant example.

A way forward with the next generation

In that video, AOC breaks away from tradition. The protagonist of the struggle to address climate change is not a singular actor, but rather a member of one generation seeking to be replaced by members of an even younger generation. The protagonist isn’t driven by her interest in serving as a leader but rather by the suffering inflicted on others through deliberate strategies of vilification. The protagonist is merely one person in a long line of people who are committed to doing the right thing for the people and the planet—the axis of history does not run through an individual, but rather the individual places herself in a larger historical tradition. At the same time, the protagonist has a self—she isn’t acting selflessly but rather, she’s acting in the interests of her own and the next generation.

Enrique Quintero is an engaged observer of the current political scene.
Fifty years ago, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and many other leaders launched a Poor Peoples Campaign to tackle the pervasive problems of systemic racism, poverty, and militarism. By many measures, these interrelated problems are worse today than they were back in 1968. And if you add in climate change and ecological devastation, the urgency is even greater.

**NATIONWIDE:**
- Voting rights protections in many states are weaker than they were 50 years ago.
- We imprison, detain and/or deport more people than any country in the world.
- 140 million people are poor or low-income.
- Despite strong economic growth, wealth inequality has expanded, and social programs have been cut dramatically.
- 53 cents of every federal discretionary dollar goes to military spending and only 15 cents is spent on anti-poverty programs.
- 13.8 million U.S. households cannot afford water, while the poor are bearing the brunt of climate change effects.

**IN WASHINGTON:**

Somebody’s been hurting my people and it’s gone on far too long:
- 41 percent of people in Washington are poor or low-income—a total of 2.9 million residents. This includes 51 percent of children (839 thousand), 43 percent of women (1.5 million), 54 percent of people of color (1.2 million), and 36 percent of White people (1.7 million).
- From 1979 to 2012, the income for the top 1% grew by 169 percent, while the income for the bottom 99% declined 4 percent.

Systemic racism and its relationship to poverty:
- Washington is one of 17 states facing a crisis of native voting issues.
- Of the 19,104 people imprisoned, about 40 percent are people of color. Black residents are incarcerated at almost six times the rate of White residents.

Militarism and the war economy:
- 12.6 billion dollars were spent on defense in 2015, with 6.8 billion in defense contracts.
- Almost 177,000 veterans have incomes below 35,000 dollars in Washington—20 percent of Washington’s veteran population.

Ecology and health:
- 515,800 people are uninsured.
- 17.3 percent of census tracts are at-risk for being unable to afford water.
- 9,586 tons of NOx are emitted yearly in Washington, a leading cause of respiratory problems.

Everybody’s got a right to live:
- Over 21,100 people are homeless, the fifth highest total in the country. Working at the state minimum wage in 2017, it took 86 hours of work per week to afford a 2-bedroom apartment.
- 1.1 million workers make under 15 dollars an hour—37 percent of Washington’s workforce.
- 894 thousand people participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.