We need a dinner table conversation about changing the menu

Jon Epstein

“You can’t be an environmentalist and consume animal products. Period. Kid yourself if you want. If you want to feed your addiction, so be it, but don’t call yourself an environmentalist.”

I was born in 1957, and I grew up on the Standard American Diet (SAD). My diet was characterized by high consumption of animal protein and low intake of complex carbohydrates like fruits and vegetables. As a secular Jewish boy from New York, I typically ate bacon and eggs for breakfast, a roast beef sandwich or burger for lunch, and a Swanson’s frozen “TV dinner” in the evening.

Despite being a hippie, attending The Evergreen State College, and volunteering at the Olympia Food Co-op when it opened in 1977, my diet changed little. That is, until 2005 when a 48-year old friend died from an aggressive cancerous brain tumor. The impact of that shocking event continued to this day, having radically shifted my consumption to a whole foods plant-based diet. As a result, I lost thirty pounds, stopped having heartburn, stopped suffering from seasonal allergies, and stopped having colds and flu.

Animal, vegetable, minimal

I’m not alone. Each year approximately one million Americans choose to give up their animal-food laden diets and switch to a vegetarian or vegan diet. There are many reasons why; not everyone makes this decision for personal health. Some choose a plant-based diet through awareness of the horrible and deplorable ways factory-farm animals are mistreated and abused — they can no longer support an industry that exploits animals and workers.

For others it’s awareness that about 25,000 people (one-third children) die from starvation every day worldwide, according to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and eating animals is wasteful. The food these animals consume could be used to feed the starving masses. These are moral reasons for adopting a plant-based diet.

...our addiction to eating animals may actually be more damaging to the planet than all fossil fuel activity combined

Desdra Dawning

Olympia is fortunate to have long-time institutions that have for many years served the progressive needs of this community. Three of these are The Evergreen State College (TESC), Traditions Cafe and World Folk Art, and the Olympia Food Co-op (OFC).

TESC continues to give us graduates who infuse creative liveliness and social awareness into Olympia’s art and commerce. Traditions Cafe has long been a gathering place where locals meet, engage in conversation about issues important to the community, hear music in an intimate setting and know that the folk art offered there comes fairly traded from cultures around the world.

The Olympia Food Co-op, around since the 1970s, brings organic, environmentally sustainable food and other products to our community, while also working to stand for social justice as an underpinning of the staff collective organization.

While these three testify to our community’s healthy past, each of them continues to grow and change as they face the future. How each of these engages with their community in this process may well nurture the direction of Olympia’s growth—not only as a city, but as a community.

The unique position of the Olympia Food Co-op

The Olympia Food Co-op’s key position, as one of the primary sources of local produce and other healthy products, and with a unique commitment to social justice, has the potential to help us create and move into a future that is environmentally sustainable and socially just—one that contributes to a community that is both conscious and compassionate.

We currently live in a very divisive social and political environment. The media constantly promote a bleak and frightening future that causes many citizens to live in fear. It carries a narrative which insists that we are all separate individuals competing with one another for survival.

This story does little to support community, and in fact, our capitalist economic system depends on this point of view to fuel its continued spread across our planet.

There is another view, though it is often trivialized and discounted. This
The future we create

The future is the past in disguise, but it is also constructed from our hopes, wishes, and actions in the present. In other words, as this month’s WIP theme suggests, the future is something we create. It is a form of living in the present, acknowledging the cumulative consequences of our previous actions and at the same time, holding the conviction that a better reality is not only needed but possible if we are to get beyond the current social injustices and construct a world of social redemption and reconciliation. In this way, a sense to understand the future is as a relationship between the actual and the possible. Nothing illustrates the connection between our actions in the past, their impact on the present, and their long-lasting implications on the future better than the enormous dependency of humans on fossil fuels as the main source of energy and profit since the mid 1940s.

This process—known as The Great Accumulation—clearly shows the correlation between capitalist patterns of energy consumption and economic expansion. Their dramatic effect (in some instances irreversible) on the geological, geopolitical, and chemical components that constitute Earth as an integrated system will persist for hundreds of years to come. The current climate alterations including record global heatwaves, coral reef destruction, Amazon forest annihilation, Arctic and Antarctic ice melting, increasing frequency in the number of hurricanes and floods, etc. are the latest examples showing the results of past relations between humanity and nature threatening the current and future survival of the human and other species.

By the same token, the current expressions of reinstitutionalized racism via presidential declarations, the restriction of voting rights for African-Americans and Latinx, the establishment of discriminatory practices within the judicial system as well as police brutality and other developments are direct outgrowths of the past, in which the institution of slavery served as the cornerstone of Capitalist supremacy served as the dominant cultural code of the nation. We can only understand this how we are to understand this past, and any possible future must contend with these specific historical actions.

The future does not rest on benevo- lent Gods or malicious demons, not even on the ‘mysterious hand’ of the natural processes, the logic or dog- mas of capitalism. Instead, the fu- ture can be understood as a form of human agency that lurks in the gaps of history.

Nonetheless, this act of social cre- ation varies in content and form ac- cording to the social forces, social interests, and main beneficiaries pro- posing a given model for society. The vision of those who want to transform social reality and believe that a bet- ter world is possible stands in radical opposition to the vision of those who want to perpetuate or make small modifications in the status quo in or- der to secure it.

The ability to create a just and better future pre-supposes an understand- ing of forces, influenced by specific historical circumstances, that are act- ing in the present along with a way of thinking about the progressive roles and limits of those classes and groups interested in such change.

From these pages of WIP, we hope you find inspiration and hope. We are aware of the ways that those who want to transform social reality and believe that a better world is possible stands in radical opposition to the vision of those who want to perpetuate or make small modifications in the status quo in order to secure it.

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The Green Cove estuary

Everything we need is right here

Paul Cereghino

Green Cove Watershed could be the most cherished stream in South Puget Sound. Olympia offers art shows to promote “the importance of salmon to our community.” The Evergreen State College cultivates “creative, critical thinkings” for environmental work and leadership. However, if I want to understand stewardship, I listen to the swumpee stream that sits between them.

Most people I meet don’t know Green Cove Creek. We don’t see Mud Bay Road as an indistinct sable marking the Southern divide. We don’t notice how our road causeways have walled its headwater swamps into cells, or where our polluted discharge trickles in through glacial swales. We guess at how many different kinds of salmon mander have survived. They wait for warm night rains to crawl our roads.

We don’t count the Green Cove chum as one very small road culvert from ever making their nests. We don’t gather or siftage. When we need water, we extract it from injected well casing. When we need food we bring it in on trucks. We don’t see the land in front of us, and so how can we understand where we are going?

This discordant gap between the social narratives in our heads, and our relationships “at the land in front of us” may be the cornerstone of our ecological crisis. Each day we express in miniature, our relationship with the Salish Sea. The most brutal parts of our colonial project are mostly complete, and unremembered. Our new homeland has been tamed, made qui- et, marked with deep wounds, drying out slowly with road ditches.

There is a quiet struggle at Green Cove Creek. Twenty years ago the City was impelled to buy the Grass Lakes, signed the Green Cove Watershed Plan — another treaty. South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group is just starting to explore the salmon-bearing habitats, a project recommended 20 years ago. Project managers grimace at the fish-barrier culvert buried deep under road fill (have we ever abandoned a road, for the love of a stream?). A volunteer counts salmon redds.

The Squaxin Nation struggles at more urgent sites. Between Stadium- team, Stormwa- ter and Parks, the City affords a lit- tle work here and there. A couple middle school teachers champion a science and service program, and Native Plant Salvage Foundation lends a hand.

We must enforce good planning at the permit counter.

Land Trust stopped buying land in Green Cove when Thurston County started boarding all our Conservation Futures money to offset bringing forest development. Some- times groups of college students wander by and look. Government biologists count mud minnows. Commu- nity activism ebbs and flows with each new subdivision proposal. Does this add up to stewardship?

A stig is an old English hall or home, a warden or the ward or guardian. Steward is a verb. If we don’t guard the hall of Green Cove Creek, what do we expect for the Salish Sea? The number of institutions dabbling in Green Cove offers an illusion of stewardship. I propose that we fundamentally lack the social infrastruc- ture to be stewards for our watershed. Don’t take this personally, it could be said for any watershed. Anyone in the ecosystem industry can tell sto- ries. Watershed stewardship depends on three practical capabilities that emerge from culture.

First, we must be capable of study. I mean strategic environmental education lectures, but rather that we have mechanisms by which every cit- izen can grow to deeply understand their home. This means that we gath- er and organize evidence and knowl- edge, and share it with each other constantly. We remember together. We observe the land and synthesize shared knowledge of where we live. This capability cannot be found in our schools nor our governments. We must become again our own carriers of knowledge, but we lack the rituals to do the work.

Next, we must be capable of protect- ing. All our laws, acts, plans, and restora- tion projects will not defend the watershed. At this moment, a Payal- lup developer wants to build a mono-crop of 181 single family homes on an illegal garbage dump located a five- minute drive from 11 toxic waste sites. We struggle to push our city govern- ment to negotiate on our behalf.

This is just one of a monotonous se- ries of development proposals grind- ing away at the last forests and soils of Green Cove Creek, each trying to extract the maximum, and give the least. Do we just wait for the next? Protection is more than effective re- sistance (and our resistance could be much more effective).

We must enforce good planning at the permit counter. We must be capable of restor- ing. We can be allies to beaver clans, infiltrate water, capture carbon in for- ests and soils, and re-weave the web of life. We need not wait in line for state and federal grants. Restoration can be a community celebration that only requires of us that we under- stand and take control of our exist- ing shared resources. Restoration is an educational opportunity for our schools. Restoration is employment that builds knowledge, belonging, and wealth. We can restore a water- shed with a graduate student, a farm- er’s backhoe, and a middle school nursery. What exactly are we waiting for?

In practice, our capabilities to study, protect and restore, will work in synergy. These capabilities will not be given to us. This is a do-it-yourself retrofit that we must earn. We must cultivate the “commons of knowledge.” This requires continu- ous practical effort.

I am doubtful that we should trick ourselves into waiting. We have plenty of those. What we need is to lean in and shape them. We have mechanisms by which every one of us, to become part of a clearer vision and a stronger effort. This requires that we shape how we spend our lives, and nimbly gather in shared work. I hear my professional colleagues say we need more resources to be stewards. I have to laugh. We squander more re- sources than anywhere on earth! You don’t buy a culture. Everything we need is right here.

Paul Cereghino is a federal ecologist, who spends evenings and weekends working on an Ecotone Guild—a network of stewards. The Guild studies social systems together, and then designs and builds the capability to study, protect and restore. We are currently cultivating effort in Green Cove Watershed. www.ecosystemguild.org

End Note—Green Cove Watershed are lands of the Squaxin Indian Tribe ceded under duress, cared for by their ancestors since time before memory (probably at least 400 gen- erations). They have mechanisms by which every one of us, to become part of a clearer vision and a stronger effort. This requires that we shape how we spend our lives, and nimbly gather in shared work. We hear my professional colleagues say we need more resources to be stewards. I have to laugh. We squander more re- sources than anywhere on earth! You don’t buy a culture. Everything we need is right here.

We need more resources to be stewards. I have to laugh. We squander more re- sources than anywhere on earth! You don’t buy a culture. Everything we need is right here.
It's been 42 years since my husband and I fell in love while starting the first recycling center in the small town of Colville. People liked to do their part and brought us their recyclables – huge amounts of them. For this article, I contacted Ron Jones, the Senior Planner in Public Works for the City of Olympia who shared a wealth of information with me. Ron relayed that “Before January 1, 2018, China was the world’s largest consumer of recyclables, roughly half of what the world produced. The Pacific Northwest sent a large portion of its recyclables – huge amounts of plastic floating from rivers to oceans. The US and other countries contributed by sending unclean and contaminated material.”

Wait, recycling is still alive

Although US recyclables are no longer sent to China, Ron says recycling is not dead. The city has been able to find purchasers for our recycling but we are getting much less money for them. Our utility bills rose by 5.5% in 2019 partly to cover the reduction. Nothing is going to landfills. Part of the reason is because Olympia does not recycle a large number of items. Where our recyclables end up changes depending on where the city finds the best price. “For example,” Ron said, “mixed paper might be sent to a local Pacific Northwest mill, to the Midwest, or overseas to Indonesia or another country.”

The gospel of “empty, clean and dry”

Ron emphasized a number of times that the community should keep recycling. We should recycle whatever is on the “acceptable items” list and make sure everything is empty, clean, and dry. This goes for each community. The secret is in the shape

For plastics, Ron says to focus on container shape and not the number printed on the bottom. Olympia accepts bottles and jugs with a neck smaller than the base, as well as non-clear dairy tubs, buckets without their handles, and rigid black flower pots. Olympia also accepts glass, mixed clean paper (not shredded), aluminum cans, milk cartons, and aseptic (broth, almond milk) containers. No plastic bags—not even to wrap up the actual recyclable items. I had to laugh when Ron encouraged people not to “Wishcycle”. I knew automatically what he meant, and I know my family is guilty of it. I have put prescription bottles or tofu containers into the bin, thinking “They must be recyclable, because... I want everything to be recyclable!” And they’re plastic!

Not a job for the faint of heart

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It’s most important to follow your hauler’s acceptable list – not one from a neighboring community or one you see on TV. Ron also asked me to imagine the potential for rodents and unpleas-ant odors in a facility where large amounts of recyclables are sorted with human labor, mechanical separators, optical sorters, magnets, eddy currents, and air separators, to name a few. From there the items are sent to end-users to make new products.

The most impressive video showed how every two hours certain ma-chines have to be stopped because their huge metal parts are totally halved up with plastic bags. Workers risk injury crawling into otherworldly large metal rollers to pull out the plastic. Think: when your vacuum rollers get something all wrapped around them.

Some positive developments

Will business and government do their part to make things right after putting all their eggs (recyclables) in one basket? China still takes some of our recycled resources as processed recycled material (for example paper roll stock instead of the raw mixed material). This could encourage the building of more mills to take more recyclables. This is a new development, but it is happening.

Meanwhile, Olympia remains active in the Washington State Recycling Association and engaged with their recycling processor and industry trends.

Another positive development is passage of HB 1543, the Sustainable Recycling bill, earlier this year. This new law directs the Department of Ecology to create a recycling develop-ment center. Its duty is to incentiv-ize and assist in increasing recycling, domestic processing and markets through research, grants, and other means.

The other piece of helpful legislation passed this session was SB 3397 Plastic Packaging. The bill provided for producers of plastic packaging to take responsible management of their products from design through the end of life. Although British Co-lumbia and Europe have similar laws, our state is the first to press the plas-tics packaging industry in this way. The law calls for 100% recyclable, reusable or compostable packaging in all goods by 2025. 2025 for plastic packaging must contain at least 20% post-consumer recycled content, as well. The bill should increase recycling of plastics.

There could be more rate increases

I encourage readers to follow recy-cling issues in Olympia. Because the markets are weak, there will be a tendency for jurisdictions to drop items from the list of accepted recyclables. Get involved—attend the Olympia city council study meet-ings on recycling in mid-September. On Sept 2 there is a Utility Advi-sory Committee meeting that may discuss future price increases. Go to olympiawa.gov/city-utilities/garbage-and-recycling for the lat-est updates.

Robin Ivey-Black is an Olympia writer, artist and community builder.
This election matters: Reclaiming primacy for the public interest at the Port of Olympia

Denis Langhans

The political reality in which we reside is government of, for, and by special interests. Today, the essence of government is that of a support system for a corporate welfare capital. At the federal level in Washington DC, we see that corporate lobbyists have become the regulators of their client industries. Below, at the Port of Olympia, the majority of port commissioners serve as handmaiden to special interests such as log exporters and hoarders.

In the scheme of things, the Port of Olympia is but a drop in the bucket. Yet, it presents a microcosm of the larger political reality, and therefore, has a value in being examined under a microscope.

A port in Washington is an intersection of commercial and fiduciary functions, a hybrid of commercial venture and public agency. But first and foremost, it is a public agency which carries a fiduciary duty beyond its commercial role.

The people are sovereign

In our state the conduct of public officials and agencies is governed in large part by Title 42 of the Revised Code of Washington. Public officials such as port commissioners have a primary fiduciary duty to the public interest. In this regard, RCW 42.56.030 asserts the following:

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This provision shall be liberally construed to serve the entity —the public interest—on which you serve."

Tanaka, an attorney with the port of Seattle, has traveled far and wide to preach a doctrine that asserts the supremacy of the public entity.

In 2015 Tanaka made his presentation in Olympia at a Port Commission Work Session. Until recently, the port carried his presentation on its website. I attended his presentation to the commission and was appalled by his attempt to undermine the sovereignty of the people.

Much of Tanaka’s presentation made common sense, e.g. the commission should govern and not try to manage operational details. However, when it came to a commissioner’s duty of loyalty, he asserted: “Your paramount duty is to serve the entity—the port—on which you serve.” [Emphasis added]

Effectively, he threw out the sovereignty of the people and replaced it with the sovereignty of the institution.

Bad things can happen when the public interest is abandoned

When the institution’s interest becomes paramount, bad things can and will happen. One need only look at the governance of the Catholic Church to see the horrors that can flow from this. The governing body of bishops decided that their paramount duty was to protect the institution by covering up the widespread sexual abuse of children. Here, the interest of the institutional entity trumped its moral code, with the young victims being cast off as acceptable collateral damage.

When a port commission holds the port entity above the public interest, it opens itself up for abusive practices. One need not be aware of a moral equivalency between child abuse in the church and port financial actions.) Nevertheless, governmental abuse can come in the form of excessive tax levies that siphon public dollars from the tax base. However, in its hybrid role when the port invests in commercial projects, there must be an expectation that the nature of the investment should be symbiotic (mutually beneficial) and not parasitic (private benefit at public expense).

With a distorted theory of governance, critical thought and analysis give way to a fundamentalist and uncritical mindset making possible investments ranging from the bad (e.g. log loaders) to the absurdly bad (e.g. mobile restrooms). Ever-increasing taxes to pay for parasitic commercial investments A biblical passage holds that by their fruits you shall know them. In this regard, the insight to examine the port’s last five major capital investments which totaled over $27 million in tax dollars. These investments are: the mobile harbor crane, the marine terminal stormwater system, the manmade dock, the Lacey commercial building, and the new log loaders.

Every one of these commercial investments has failed to support itself and requires a significant subsidy from the ever-increasing tax levy. I contend that one can never measure the input in basic nature rather than symbiotic.

A free hand to levy additional taxes

A question arises: What is the effect of these boondoggles on our county’s tax base? According to the County Auditor, the tax levy for the port district has increased by 27% since 2016, compared to less than 13% for other districts. The current tax levy is $6.5 million and the port commission has the power to increase this by 27%.

In its public relations campaign of Vision 2050, the port put out a very misleading propaganda piece entitled “You’re the reason we work.” If one only read that piece, you would think that the port is producing outstanding results for tax payers.

Dressing up a poor performance

However, this document presents a grossly false narrative. It brags that the Port of Olympia is one of the leading ports in operational results. In actuality, of the 15 largest Washington ports, Olympia is the worst in operational results. The port generates 13% of the current tax levy for the county’s tax base? According to the County Auditor, the tax levy for the port district has increased by 27% since 2016, compared to less than 13% for other districts. The current tax levy is $6.5 million and the port commission has the power to increase this by 27%.

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Hope for a future of permanently affordable housing

Dan Rubin and Susan Davenport

In Thurston County we are experi-
encing what happens when market
forces drive up the price of hous-
ing, leaving most people of ordinary
means without a home of their
own. This one might think impov-
erished in the dust. We see people
on the streets. We see grown-up
children who can’t afford to buy
homes at the ages their grandparents
could. We see people losing apart-
ments they once were able to afford.

We award developers property tax
exemptions to build market-rate
housing. And even when the exemp-
tion is tied to inclusion of a nominal
percentage of affordable units, the
requirement that they remain affor-
dable for only a few years.

These “market forces” include specu-
lation greed, but also the process by
which we have conflated several dis-
inct ideas of the function of a house:
having a place to live, owning a home,
building a nest egg, invested in for sta-
ble community. What is income
growth as a personal bonanza. There
is a model that avoids the dilemma
fostered by these contra-
dictory ideas. A Community Land
Trust (CLT) removes housing from
the play of market forces to achieve
its most crucial function: providing
stable comfort—and cashing in on re-
multiple benefits of home
ownership
Owning a home rather than per-
petually renting continues to have
huge benefits. Families build equity
(which is a form of saving), stability,
security and much else. Community
land trusts separate owning a home
from owning land. The house con-
veys through a 99–year or longer
ground lease, while the land remains
in and buy those homes. We have
put considerable thought into how
to move forward in a way that can
expand with success, visibility and
credibility. To understand this path-
way requires a little elaboration.

The multiple benefits of home
ownership
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land trusts separate owning a home
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veys through a 99–year or longer
ground lease, while the land remains

with the trust. Yet this is much more
than a rental agreement. When a
family has a real stake in their home,
their work and effort is their own,
and it often creates strong ties to lo-
tal community.

Like other community land trusts,
THLT will provide extensive support
to help homeowners be successful
Affordability is achieved and
preserved in three ways.

First, homeowners do not pay for
or own the land itself, which is a
sizeable chunk of usual costs.

Second, owners can only sell to
another low-to-moderate income
family, with exact limits for speci-
cific homes reflecting restrictions
tied to some subsidy funding.

Third, the ground lease also re-
stricts price on resale. THLT is
headed toward a limit that allows
the owner to capture no more than
25% of market appreciation in the
value of their stake.

Fourth, like all affordable housing
organizations, THLT will seek sub-
dies (in the form of government
dunds and property donations) to
allow low-income families to get in

The significantly lower foreclosure
rate for land trusts homes during the
Great Recession demonstrates the
value of the trust structure, with
this “back-stopping,” compared with
otherwise disastrous standard mort-
gages. CLTs also have en-
forceable principles in place to prevent specu-
lation. THLT will use a ground lease that locks in residential use, prohibits rentals (including Airbnb) with special approvals. Limits how much can be charged when the home is sold (see more below) and requires sale only to income-qualified buyers.

Maintaining affordability and
rolling subsidies forward
CLTs safeguard affordable housing
with a shared equity arrangement.
The trust owns the land under the
home, while homeowners acquire
an enforceable ownership interest
under provisions for a ground lease. Ground leases are not a new or untested legal device; they are extensively used in
commercial properties. They have
survived legal challenge for decades
in CLTs in the US, including several
in the northwest.

THLT will use a ground lease that
locks in residential use, prohibits
rentals (including Airbnb) with
special approvals. Limits how
much can be charged when
the home is sold (see more below).
We are building a model for families
that are excluded from or burdened
by the commercial real estate market
and its ruinous consequences.

We see people losing apartments
they once were able to afford.

By the commercial real estate market
and its ruinous consequences.

We are building a model for families
that are excluded from or burdened
with the trust. Yet this is much more
than a rental agreement. When a
family has a real stake in their home,
their work and effort is their own,
and it often creates strong ties to lo-
tal community.

Like other community land trusts,
THLT will provide extensive support
to help homeowners be successful
Affordability is achieved and
preserved in three ways.

First, homeowners do not pay for
or own the land itself, which is a
sizeable chunk of usual costs.

Second, owners can only sell to
another low-to-moderate income
family, with exact limits for speci-
cific homes reflecting restrictions
tied to some subsidy funding.

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Reflections
The sweeping consequences of today’s housing market

Andrea Bauer

The Seattle area is home to the world’s two richest people, Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates. And, as noted by a real estate pro, Seattle has a track record of being one of the best long term real estate investments in the nation. Under the influence of a tech boom led by Amazon, yearly rent increases until very recently have been among the highest in the country.

Evicted from a home, the moment

The latest homeless count for Seattle’s King County reported 11,199 people with a residence, far more than the number of shelter beds available. 2,451 of the 11,000-plus were people with children, and 1,089 were young people on their own. Twenty-seven percent were African-American, which makes up only 6 percent of the county’s population.

It’s no coincidence that Seattle is also a place where those who have no homes are treated with profound callousness. The city regularly evicts people from their tent encampments with “sweeps” that force them to scramble for shelter and often destroy their few possessions in the process.

Wielding the broom aggressively

Without any policy announcements, 83 raids took place in Seattle during the first four months of 2019, compared to 11 in the same period in 2018.

One such raid took place on August 7 in Seattle’s University District. It was a military-style operation that included a large, ominous detachment of police cars, bulldozers and garbage trucks spreading out for 11 blocks along I-5 freeway ramps.

It was a military-style operation that included a large, ominous detachment of police cars, bulldozers and garbage trucks spreading out for 11 blocks along I-5 freeway ramps.

Community outrage and concern over sanitation and safety are often cited as the reason for the sweeps. But James, known as “Little Man,” who was one of the people roosted, was not buying this excuse.

He told reporters for the Freedom Socialist who stopped to talk, “It’s not the community that wants us to move. It’s the state and the Seattle Police Department.” The SPD, of course, takes its orders from Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan and the rest of the city establishment.

Just making matters worse

The August 7 sweep displaced 50 people, who showed amazing resilience in the face of this disruption. A man with a full-time job was trying to figure out if he could get his belongings settled somewhere in time to report for work for a half-day. A social worker was organizing to get her homeless client squared away and to a court hearing on time.

Speaking of where the victims of the raids were supposed to go next, James said, “The social workers are excellent people, but there is nothing they can do for us in the moment. Where’s the housing?”

Another world is possible

Seattle has spent $638 million on new infrastructure specifically to accommodate Amazon’s needs. (See “The Amazon and Boeing gentriles” in the June issue of Works in Progress, reprinted from Freedom Socialist)

Surely the city can spend the amount of money needed to service encampments and provide sanitation, instead of destroying them, as they work to find housing for people in these situations. Seattle should also officially sanction more tent encampments and set aside spaces for people living in their vehicles.

Long-term solutions aren’t rocket science. Rent control, quality public housing, an end to Washington’s repressive tax system. In the absence of such positive measures homeowners and renters alike may be forced out of Seattle or into homelessness.

It’s a matter of priorities. The future stability and livability of our community depends on the city doing right by workers and the poor instead of catering to corporations and the rich.

Andrea Bauer organizes with the national Freedom Socialist Party. She was arrested defending the original Nickelsville camp in 2008. Contact her at abauer@socialism.com.

Conversation
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moved everyday worldwide having nothing to do with fossil fuel production. The Amazon rainforest is one of the greatest carbon sinks on the planet, and cutting it down accelerates global warming.

Some studies have concluded that our addiction to eating animals may actually be more damaging to the planet than all fossil fuel activity combined. It’s not hard to leap to this conclusion when you factor in all the factors involved. It’s not just about GHG emissions. We also need to factor in rainforest destruction. The pollution of our land and water, and the waste of limited freshwater used in the growth and slaughter of billions of animals raised for food. It takes 660 gallons of freshwater to create one hamburger. That’s enough water for a full month of showers for most people.

"Climate change" vs Demoburgers

I attended a reception at the governor’s mansion in the winter of 2018 where they were serving smoked salmon and bite size sirloin burgers for guests to nosh. The Thurston County Democrats continue their long-standing tradition of selling burgers to raise money. I’ve attended several Democratic campaign events this summer with burgers on the menu, including Karen Fraser’s 29th annual picnic, feasting burgers, hot dogs, and pulled pork. I don’t mean to pick on Demo, just announced they are removing all beef products from their cafeteria menu in response to the climate crisis. Beginning this fall, students and staff will no longer be able to purchase burgers or beef burritos on campus. This seems like a reasonable response to the mounting evidence linking animal foods and the livestock industry to the worsening climate crisis.

Can’t we start the talk about the [steer] in the room?

I don’t expect climate change deniers to stop eating burgers. But when our governor (the self-proclaimed climate change presidential candidate), as well as international environmental organizations like the Sierra Club and Greenpeace, avoid discussing diet change to help curb the climate crisis, I think: what chance do we have to avert this catastrophe? If climate change activists are unwilling to discuss diet change in the light of day is there any hope of saving planet Earth?

When are local progressives, Democrats, and environmental activists going to change their eating habits? If activists aren’t willing to change their diets can we at least begin having conversations on this subject?

Originally from New York City, Jon Epstein has lived in the Olympia area since 1975 when he moved here to attend The Evergreen State College. He has been employed by the Legislature, Lacey Chamber of Commerce, Washington Center for the Performing Arts and the State of Washington. His volunteer work includes the Thurston County Fair, Suspending Fund, and Mount Rainier National Park Ski Patrol.

The opening quote is from Mad Cowboy, by Howard Lyman, a former livestock farmer.

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South Thurston County is in danger of being transformed into a slightly smaller version of the Port of Tacoma (POT). The Port is proposing to sell 745 acres of prairie habitat it owns near Maytown to an industrial developer. The developer’s plan is to construct an enormous logistics center. With as much as 6 million square feet of warehousing, where trucks and trains will swap cargo. Continuous operation will mean traffic, noise and light for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

The POT, which owns the so-called “Maytown Property,” is in the process of selling it to NorthPoint, a private company which builds huge inland ports and intermodal (trains and trucks) facilities. An article in the January New Republic describes the disastrous results that ensued when similar facilities came to the rural community of Etnowood, Illinois.

Who decides?
Should the Port of Tacoma be able to decide what kind of industries will be built in Thurston County and where they will be located? Thurston County residents have no say over the actions of the Tacoma Port, but we do have a say for Thurston County commissioners. The POT and NorthPoint need to obtain a change in the zoning of the Maytown property in order to allow the logistics center to be built. The Thurston County Commissioners need to have the ability to prevent industrial development where it doesn’t belong by keeping the current zoning unchanged.

Why care about Rocky Prairie?
Rocky Prairie is located 13 miles south of Olympia in Thurston County, near Millersylvania State Park, and right next to West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area, owned by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The state park and other nearby natural areas are part of a large, undeveloped wildlife corridor that would disappear with the development proposed for the POT property.

That property and the WDFW preserve form a fragile and unique habitat that contains some of the state’s last native outwash prairie, rare oak stands, riparian and wetland areas. The property is a state and federal threatened and endangered species, including prairie-dependent butterfly species like the Taylor’s checkerspot. Rocky Prairie also forms the headwaters for two estuaries, beaches, ridges, groves of trees, swampland, and light for twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

The property is less than one half-mile from historic and popular Millersylvania State Park. A family hoping to camp at Millersylvania would have to watch trains rumbling through, coupling and uncoupling all night long.showing kids the night sky would be impossible if this facility were built with the lights of a city interfering.

Many residents moved to the area as their permanent home because of the predominantly rural residential zoning of one house per five acres, with plenty of fresh air, little or no light pollution, and quiet nights. Others chose to purchase homes in the area only after having performed diligent research about the zoning of nearby properties and finding the property they wanted to buy. POT was zoned one house per 20 acres. These residents who trusted the assurance of the zoning protections are now confronted with a neighbor that wants to sell its property for a continuously operating industrial facility.

What good is zoning?
While there are legitimate criticisms of the Growth Management Act (GMA), the state law that guides decisions about what can be built and where, at least it provides a framework for making decisions about which human activities should go where. In general, its aim is to keep city and industrial sprawl from spreading out into rural and agricultural areas. Zoning is one tool used to accomplish that goal.

Zoning designations should not change as dramatically as this change requested by the POT. Residents and farmers should be able to rely on zoning in order to make long term plans about how they use their own property.

What can we do?
The first step in developing a logistics facility in that location would be to obtain a change in the zoning from the current Rural Residential, one home per twenty acres, to Rural Resource Industrial. The Port of Tacoma and NorthPoint are asking our Thurston County Commissioners to make that zoning change. Their application will be considered beginning in January 2020.

If you agree that our Commissioners have a responsibility to protect county residents, not a port district from outside Thurston County or an out-of-state developer, please let all three Commissioners know that you do not approve of changing the zoning for Rocky Prairie. “The Maytown Property.” Make sure they know that we want to keep rural Thurston County rural, as the Growth Management Act intended. Having a massive rail/truck/cargo transfer center and giant warehouses such as NorthPoint is proposing is not consistent with the GMA or the conforming use of this area. Please consider signing the petition offered by Friends of Rocky Prairie on their website (https://www.friendsofrockyprairie.org/petition/). That reads: “We, the undersigned Thurston County residents and visitors, support the current zoning designation for the property located at 13120 Tiley Road SW, Olympia, WA. We request Thurston County Commissioners uphold the one-house-per-20-acre designation that was initiated in 2010 by more than 2,000 citizens to protect this sensitive area from inappropriate development.”

Friends of Rocky Prairie is an all-volunteer group of Thurston County citizens dedicated to protecting Rocky Prairie and preserving the treasure that is rural Thurston County.

Debra Jaqua and her family have lived in Olympia since 1995. She helped save LIA Woods and thwart the first incursion of big-box stores in south Thurston County. Past lives included working as a Medical Technologist and recently as a Web Designer.

Website: https://www.FriendsOfRockyPrairie.org/
The Co-op reflects the people who participate in it. From the very start, those who founded the Co-op had a vision of how we as a species could move gracefully into the future. Food being a primary source of wellbeing, the Co-op has long held a key position of leadership in this community—one that can help usher in a more sustainable and more “socially and economically egalitarian society.”

Part of establishing this sort of leadership is determined by the world view that insists that we actually respect and even reverence the planet itself—with more than just the benefits it provides us. The cooperative movement, founded on consensus decision-making, is a movement that honors and cares for each of us, both individually and collectively, and moves into the future involves a third approach that isolates us from each other—that causes us to judge and view some as friends and others as enemies in need of punitive response, even within our own membership—can no longer serve us if the Co-op is to not only survive these difficult times but to offer thriving leadership into the future. It is the job of the Board to nurture and encourage a more positive world view, and to take it into account in policy and practice.

Creating policies and practices that reflect these values can become difficult in an environment that is divisive and isolating on our society has become. The temptation to take an approach that isolates us from each other, that causes us to judge one another—to view some as friends and others as enemies—is strong. We rely on these elected leaders to find ways to take the Co-op in a direction that does not give in to pressures for self-interest through the use of identities that separate, but rather one that unites us in building toward a kinder and durable community.

The Co-op members
Critical to this more conscious movement into the future involves a third party of the cooperative community—the members. Co-op members hold a key position in any cooperative. They are the lifeblood of the organization. Without the membership, there would be no Co-op. Through their patronage, they are the ones who pay all of the bills. Several hundred Working Members at OFC serve in a variety of capacities to lighten the workload of the Collective. It is the savings the Co-op receives from their contribution as stockholders, cashiers, and more that makes it possible to provide the Staff Collective with the good salaries and excellent health care benefits they now enjoy. Efforts are currently being made to give this part of the workforce a voice in the future of the Co-op.

When motivated, members can offer guidance and direction to both the Staff and the Board, through their in-store suggestions and during participation in the Member Comment portion of Board meetings. Further, they can bring their voices to the table by running for election to the Board of Directors, and by attending the Annual Meeting (See sidebar for more info). At the Annual Meeting those running for election have the opportunity to speak to fellow members and share their thoughts and concerns about the future of the Co-op.

Participatory Democracy
As with our local and national legislative processes, Participatory Democracy is the key to ensuring that the Co-op can move gracefully into the future. All of us are challenged to experience our own world view, our own stories about each other, and how we can walk in the world in a way that brings peace and a sustainable and peaceful future.

Just as our national political environment benefits greatly from citizen input, so too does this hold true for the Co-op. More member participation is called for and needed now if this cooperative community business is to flourish and “make human effects on the earth and its inhabitants positive and renewing.” A new world view, needs to emerge and it is only through us all coming together, listening to each other, overcoming any perceived differences, and working cooperatively that this can happen.

Desdra Dawning is a retired educator and writer. She has been a member of the Co-op since she made a home in the Pacific Northwest in 2011. She served several times on the Board of Directors. She wrote this piece for the health and well-being both of the Co-op and the Olympia community.

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world view insists that we actually are all made from the same star stuff, with very little real difference between us in our essential humanity. That if we realize how truly connected we are, we might just treat each other—animals and plants and our planet itself—with more respect and even reverence. The cooperative movement, founded on consensus decision-making, is a movement that honors and cares for each of us, both individually and collectively, and moves into the future involves a third approach that isolates us from each other—that causes us to judge and view some as friends and others as enemies in need of punitive response, even within our own membership—can no longer serve us if the Co-op is to not only survive these difficult times but to offer thriving leadership into the future. It is the job of the Board to nurture and encourage a more positive world view, and to take it into account in policy and practice.

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The current deadline to apply for a seat on the Co-op Board is September 11. With ballots available from October 15 to November 15. Application forms are on the Co-op website—www.Olympiafoodcoop.com. Members are welcome and encouraged to attend and comment at Board meetings, held the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 at the Co-op of 110 North Street. Member comments are the first item on the agenda. The Co-op’s Annual Meeting will be held November 2, 11Am-2Pm at the Olympia Center. Board candidates will be speaking and will be available for questions. This is a time for members to learn about Co-op operations, offer their voice, socialize and enjoy some good food.

The co-op goals are to
- Provide information about food
- Make good food accessible to everyone
- Support efforts to increase democratic process
- Support efforts to foster a socially and economically egalitarian society
- Provide information about collective process and consensus decision making
- Support local production
- See to the long term health of the business
- Assist in the development of local community resources

Participate in shaping the future of the Olympia Food Co-op
The OFC Board of Directors is a group of elected leaders with the power to determine how the Co-op will continue to grow and change even in these difficult times. Just as our national political environment benefits greatly from citizen input, so too does this hold true for the Co-op. More member participation is called for and needed now if this cooperative community business is to flourish and “make human effects on the earth and its inhabitants positive and renewing.” A new world view, needs to emerge and it is only through us all coming together, listening to each other, overcoming any perceived differences, and working cooperatively that this can happen.

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Emily Lardner

Racism. White supremacy. White nationalism. So many people are in- volved in these conversations, if not the President or not President Trump can accu- rately be called a white supremacist that Americans might not publish an article providing essential definitions.

In her August 19, 2019 ar- ticle, entitled “Defining and Racism: White Supremacist, far too few hours have been spent outlining how the policies promoted and enacted by the Trump administration reinforce and aggravate structural racism. Environmental Protection Agency rules weaken air quality protections. This summer, the EPA issued its new "Affordable Clean Energy" rule (ACE), which will replace the 2015 Clean Power Plan (CPP) which aimed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from new and existing power plants by 32% below 2005 levels by 2030. The CPP established state-based limits for re- ducing emissions from their electric power sector as a whole. The ACE rule instead directs states to establish emission reduction levels for individual power plants. Standards set under the ACE rule will be significantly less stringent than those set by the CPP. A June 20, 2019 blog post for the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law, based at Columbia University, notes that according to EPA, the ACE rule will reduce car- bon dioxide emissions by just 11 mil- lion short tons in 2030, whereas the CPP would have delivered emissions reductions of 415 million tons (both relative to a no-action baseline). EPA assumes CO2 emissions have increased for fossil-fuel energy companies and their stockholders to people and other spe- cies. In another administrative move, providing a textbook example of structural racism, the EPA report on ACE explains its decision to exclude consideration of people and places outside the US by citing to a circular.

"Circular A4 states that analysis of economically significant proposed and final regulations should focus on benefits and costs that accrue to citizens and residents of the United States. We follow this guidance by adopting a domestic perspective in our central analysis."

It may be that the EPA staffers who wrote this report understood the spe- cious reasoning behind Circular A4— which ignores the fact that the cli- mate crisis affects everyone, everywhere, and it's impossible for any country to extricate itself from the planet. Unlike the immigration judge who resigned, however, the writers of the ACE report labored on. EPA impact analysis based on faulty assumptions. In the initial regulatory impact anal- ysis (RIA) of the ACE rule the EPA used to go along with the ACE rule proposal, the EPA estimated that replacing CPP with ACE would result in an additional 470-1400 pre- mortality deaths; 48,000 cases of ex- treme asthma, 4,600 lost work days, and 21,000 missed school days. Faced with these estimates, the EPA revised its methodology, and claimed that the ACE rule would avoid 38-122 premature deaths in 2030, as well as 1,400 asthma attacks, 4,600 lost work days, and 8,200 missed school days. These improvements in health outcomes were achieved by a rhetori- cal sleight of hand.

In the first scenario, the Trump ad- ministration assumed that the ACE rule would replace the CPP. Standards would go down, regulation would ease, and the concomitant health outcomes would go down as well. In the revised methodology, the Trump administration assumed that there were no federal standards govern CO2 emissions. Instead, they posited that there would be no regulations, hence no standards. The ACE standards could then be compared to no standards, rather than the result that health outcomes "improved" under the ACE rule.

Public policies that promote racial justice. John Dewey once wrote that "the public has no hands except those of human beings." Donald Trump and his administration is directing people in government agencies to enact poli- cies that are separating resources and risks, maintaining inherited group ad- vantages and disadvantages, allowing human life to be differentially valued based on race, and limiting the self- determination of certain groups of people. Far too many people are go- ing along with these plans. We cannot create the future we need unless and until this changes. Emily Lardner currently lives in Boston, MA.

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Don’t panic–rebel

Jenny Stamps

“Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course,” said The Union of Concerned Scientists in their Warning to Humanity issued in 1982. Last October, thousands gathered in the streets of the five major bridges over the Thames in London.

“We’re the ones we’ve been waiting for,” activists chanted, superimposed on the gothic spires of Buckingham Palace. A letter was read to the Queen announcing a declaration of rebellion against the UK Government. This was the catalyst of Extinction Rebellion (XR).

XR has three demands:

- Governments must tell the truth by declaring a climate and ecological emergency and working with other institutions to communicate the urgency for change.
- Governments must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025.
- Governments must create and be led by a citizens’ assembly that is representative of all major faiths and views, so that they can develop a future we can support.

Extinction Rebellion’s website states that XR is an international political network using non-violent direct action to persuade the government to act on the climate and ecological emergency.

The Warning to Humanity predicted that without drastic changes, we will experience increased global temperatures, rising sea levels, melting of the poles, air pollution, loss of the ozone layer, sea level rise, mass extinction and loss of biodiversity. These have escalated in the years following the release of the report. The image shows the frightening picture of our possible future.

The Paris Agreement, drafted in 2015, brought world leaders together to establish goals for rising to the climate challenge. However, even if the agreements were kept, they meet only the bare minimum to avoid the worst case scenario. As the UN Secretary General pointed out “we are all at risk – even after the Paris Agreement – the leadership and ambition to do what is needed.”

We don’t have time for an administration that denies climate change. We don’t have time for governments and institutions that deny the science or our right to demand regarding the climate emergency. Our systems have failed us and unless we act now, we are heading for a global catastrophe.

Despite the plethora of warnings, the climate and ecological emergency has been shunted into a raffle of popular political topics. Science brought up and disputed then filed away for another administration to deal with. What is needed is to take control of the narrative. What is needed now is to assume a specta- tor position. This is no time to carry on with business as usual. We simply can’t afford to. The science is clear and we are facing an unprecedented global emergency. We are in a life or death situation of our own making.

International momentum is building. All around the world, people are mobilizing to rise up in open rebellion against the systems and practices that threaten life as we know it. There have been continuous actions worldwide to draw attention to the devastation of our present course. On Oct. 7, there will be a massive protest directed at the White House and the US Capitol. Activists have every intention of overwhelming the system until the three demands are met.

No one has the power to initiate this kind of rebellion in their local community, and to peacefully take direct action. 2020 is last approaching. It is time to alter our course and take on the work necessary to prevent our own extinction. We must act with the urgency and ambition we have yet to see in our leaders. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.

Consider this the call to action. What we do now will determine whether or not we have a future at all. ‘To be or not to be’ is not the question, it’s how we go beyond.

Jenny Stamps is a self-initiated activist, world traveler, and writer from Tahoe, CA. She has lived in the Olympia area for three years, working on projects inspired by her travels.

Impeach Trump to protect the Constitution and the Rule of Law

In 1787 Benjamin Franklin was leaving Independence Hall at the close of the Constitutional Convention when a woman asked him what kind of government they had created. Franklin's reply was, “A Republic, if you can keep it.”

To protect us from tyranny, the nation's founders created a Constitution with checks and balances across the three branches. The Constitution also includes impeachment so we can protect ourselves from a tyrant who acts like he is above the law.

This month's interview on “Glen's Wednesdays at 5:00 pm, and Thursdays at 1:30 pm,” we discuss what impeachment means, how it works and the need to impeach Trump now instead of hoping he'll lose the 2020 election. Bonnie and Steve are knowledgeable activists and experts on impeachment.

We discuss Trump's impeachable offenses, including:

- Kidnapping children and imprisoning people in concentration camps
- Taking "emoluments" (using the presidency to enrich himself from foreign and domestic sources)
- Obstructing justice
- Violating the Constitution’s “separation of powers” and acting like a king without legislative consent
- Violating the First Amendment in several ways, including attacking the free press
- Provoking violence in several ways, including depriving people of their rights

We compare Trump's case and Nixon's case, recognize the progress that has been made toward impeaching Trump, and call for a stronger grassroots movement to impeach him.

We have more information than we could squeeze into a one-hour interview, so I encourage people to visit my blog, www.parallaxperspectives.org where they can watch this video, read an article I wrote summarizing what we said during this interview and find even more information.

Watch on your computer or on TV

Everyone can watch this interview or see a summary of what we said (plus get a list of links for further information) through Glen's blog, www.parallaxperspectives.org. Cable TV subscribers can watch on Thurston Community Television (TCTV) Mondays at 1:30 pm, Wednesdays at 5:00 pm, and Thursdays at 8:00 pm.

Contact Glen Anderson, at (360) 491-0903 and glander@in-tegra.net

Climate Strike! Sept. 20
11 am – 1 pm
Capitol steps

The fight is for every life
Information about the amazing work they are doing will be available at the strike from Thurston Climate Action. We are asking Olympia Indivisible’s “Get Out the Vote” team will be registering people to vote. There will also be information for you from your local climate activists, along with much more.

We are fighting for every single life on this planet, we cannot take this lightly. School strike, strike from work, or simply attend. We hope to see you there.

Elyanna Calle is a student at Timberline High School and the organizer for the Olympia Climate Strike.

See Special Events on the back page of this issue. Follow climate strike updates @climatestrikewa on Twitter, or Olympia Climate Strike on Facebook

Student-led strike for action on climate
September 20

Elyanna Calle

When Greta Thunberg’s UN speech first hit social media, her fiery words and powerful rhetoric gave me chills and a wave of inspiration. Afterwards, it didn’t take long for the climate justice movement to pick up speed and make its way to the US. When the Youth Climate Strike took place on March 15, I saw students who were ready to fight. With this event they had created a voice that I knew the students of Olympia wanted that voice, so I began to organize a strike at our state capitol.

Local students take the initiative
I have been blown away by the kindness and support from the people of this city and its surrounding areas. Along this journey, I met Kaylee Shen and Louisa Sevier, students at Olympia High School, who make up our dedicated group of organizers, who are working hard to make this event successful and impactful.

On Sept. 20, students will be striking from school to demand action, and we invite people of all ages to attend in solidarity. We are demanding that our local, state, and federal governments treat climate change as a crisis, and pass meaningful and ambitious legislation to combat it.

Some kids have realized their potential and are involved in various forms of social justice. We want to impact they can make, and we hope they feel empowered.

It took me a long time to call myself an activist, and I wasted valuable time telling myself I couldn't be strong enough to make a difference. I want every student at the strike to know that they are enough. I want them to know that they are powerful. There is no age limit to activism, and if that is not already known, it soon will be.

Our youth are our future

Alongside that, one of our main goals is to give a spotlight to the powerful young people in our community. Some kids have realized their potential and are involved in various forms of social justice. We want to give them a space and opportunity to shine. However, there are countless youth who do not realize the massive impact they can make, and we hope they feel empowered.

Climate Strike!

Wake up, Olympia.

Elyanna Calle is a student at Olympia High School.

Capitol steps

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Downtown Strategy

Not from Olympia, I found a home. Full of Donna, Marcy, Mike, Teresa A home called, “Benz’s.”

Old Olympia knew this place. Savor it, meet there, drink there. I joined in.

Student dinners, out of town guests rendezvous during Art Walk Bar talk with Tom the Bartender.

Now City says, it’s all blight. Tear it down, pave it, build a parking lot. Even the Cuisine next door Olympia climate strike. Downtown has two years left. Blight.

Wake up, Olympia. As Joni says, you don’t know what you got till it’s gone.

Dan Leachy
Ranked Choice Voting: easy, fair and long overdue

John Gear

This article asks you to imagine a place where elections are so different from what we experience in the US today that it’s almost unbelievable. Imagine election campaigns where candidates try not just to distinguish themselves, but also go out of their way to identify areas of agreement and points of commonality with opponents, and where negative campaigning is treated like poison.

An approach that predates the discovery of electricity
Yet this isn't some imaginary paradise. This approach works all over the world, because most countries have long since given up on our voting method -- a method invented before the steam engine, the discovery of electricity, the advent of modern medicine, and social science.

Upgraded elections empower voters by giving them a good way to discourage the kind of dirty, negative campaigning that is so damaging and that helps make governance after the election so hard.

Best of all, this upgrade is simple, time-tested, and well-proven with a long and successful history of use in the US, shown again and again to solve the negative campaigning problem.

The time has come for Ranked Choice Voting
What is it? It’s simple. Instead of limiting voters to casting only a single vote for their preferred candidate, voters rank as many candidates as they choose by order of preference, 1 for the first choice, 2 for the second choice, and so forth.

Hence the name, Ranked Choice Voting, or RCV for short.

With Ranked Choice Voting, you never have to think about whether your vote for your favorite candidate might wind up helping elect a candidate you believe is terrible. Now, when there are more than two candidates in a race, our vote can backfire on us by helping to elect the candidate we like the least. This happens because of the potential for vote splitting, where the majority of voters inadvertently help elect their least preferred candidate by splitting their votes over several opponents – leaving the disillused candidate with the most votes.

Despite being opposed by the majority of voters, because their votes were split among several other candidates.

The fact that this can and does happen regularly creates a terrible dynamic among people who are actually allies. They generally agree on most things – they just happen to differ on which candidate best reflects their position. Thus their votes are spread across different candidates and wind up helping elect the candidate with whom they disagree on nearly everything.

If, when there are more than two candidates, you were able to rank your choices, this outcome would be avoided. You would list your favorite as your first choice and rank as many of the other candidates as you like.

No more voting for the lesser of two evils
Other than that, voting in ranked choice elections works just like voting today. Whoever gets the most votes wins. If no candidate gets a majority in the first count, the candidate with the fewest votes is dropped. Those who selected the dropped candidate as a first choice then have their votes added to the totals of their next choice.

This “instant run-off” process continues until one candidate has more than half of the votes.

You vote will count even if your first choice is dropped
Ranked choice voting means you can always vote the way you want to, ranking the candidates in the order you personally prefer. You don’t have to worry that you might be splitting the vote to the benefit of your least favorite. If your top choice is eliminated, your vote will count in an instant run-off round for the person you listed second. If both your first and second choices are dropped, when the ballots are counted in an instant run-off round, your third choice will be added to that candidate’s total. You can relax about who anyone else is voting for, and simply rank your choices according to your own opinions, free of any worry about helping cause the election of the winner you liked least because you voted for the candidate you wanted most.

Other positive benefits of RCV
In other words, goodbye to “lesser evil” arguments and all the toxins that they inject into our politics, where a divided majority can and often is defeated by a united minority.

Unintended consequences of the present system
No matter where you are on the political spectrum, you’ve probably seen elections where a candidate wins despite being opposed by the majority of voters, because their votes were split among several other candidates.

The benefits go further, because RCV replaces the zero-sum nature of our current elections with a different kind of dynamic, where candidates have every reason to form candidate coalitions and slates, even though they are all running for the same seat.

Candidates form these positive, issue-oriented coalitions in ranked choice voting elections because the ranking gives voters a way to reward and empower voters by giving them a good way to discourage the kind of dirty, negative campaigning that is so damaging and that helps make governance after the election so hard.

In other words, candidates compete to be the second or third choice of voters who plan to put someone else as their first choice.

Rankings have proven in real-world elections to make a huge difference in how candidates think and talk about each other. Candidates know that they can’t designate someone’s favorite candidate and then ask to be listed as the second or third choice of that voter.

No voting system is perfect but Ranked Choice Voting is far superior to our current system. Growing numbers of people from Maine to California are learning from the example of Australia, where RCV has been used for over 100 years.

Note: FairVote Washington is a non-partisan 501(c)(4) social welfare nonprofit dedicated to promoting awareness and interest in ranked choice voting here in Washington. To find out more or get involved, go to www.FairVoteWA.org, or find us on your favorite social media channels.

John Gear in 1999 organized and led a campaign in which voters in Vancouver, Washington passed a revision to the city charter to give themselves the option of using ranked choice voting to elect city officials. He recently moved from Oregon to Olympia.
Hero, author and educator Toni Morrison gave complexity to the American experience

CHICAGO, August 6, 2019—The Chicago Teachers Union issued the following statement regarding the passing of legendary Nobel Laureate and Pulitzer Prize-winning author and educator Toni Morrison:

“Toni Morrison was the embodiment of the soul of Black folk as she gave complexity to the American experience in all of its splendor and suffering. She wrote as she lived, from her early works as a single mother to recognition as one of the greatest artists in American history. Our union sends condolences to her friends, family and colleagues. We are blessed to have been among the many lives she so greatly touched.”

Bail reform

We choose our priorities

There are more jails and prisons—over 5,000—in the United States than degree-granting colleges and universities. State and local spending on prisons and jails has increased at triple the rate of funding for public education for preschool through grade 12 education in the last three decades, according to a report by the US Department of Education.

It’s rarely noted that one out of every three incarcerated people is held in a local jail, not a state or federal prison. That 5000-plus number includes 3,283 jails—like the ones in Thurston County and surrounding jurisdictions. Yet our local jails receive scant attention.

Sitting in jail but factually innocent. According to the Prison Policy Initiative, at any given moment there are more than 700,000 people held in local jails. More than half of these individuals have not been convicted of anything. They are in jail because they are either too poor to make bail and are being held before trial, or because they’ve just been arrested and will make bail in the next few hours or days. These people are legally considered innocent until proven otherwise in court. But if they don’t have the money to post bail, the principle that they are legally innocent is not enough to keep them from being locked up until trial.

Our priorities transform our future. It seems our jails function as modern-day debtor’s prisons, with the consequences that family life is disrupted, jobs and housing can be lost even when the person in jail is found not guilty. Pre-trial detention also coerces people to plead guilty to some offenses, including people who are factually innocent.

In addition to those jailed awaiting trial, the remainder are serving time for minor offenses, generally made-meanors with sentences under a year. There is a movement today to reform the bail system. But meaningful bail reform is not enough. We need to be asking why we arrest so many people on low-level offenses in the first place and why so many of them come from poor black and brown communities.

Dear WiP,

Did the mountain bikers build trails in Kaiser Woods illegally? They certainly do everywhere else in the world that has been infected by that extreme sport. Will the park remain attractive to people and wildlife after being turned into a race track? I doubt it! Will bikers and runners enjoy sharing narrow trails with mountain bikers? It’s hard to believe. How will the wetlands and neighboring homes survive the inevitable runoff from soil-shredding knobby tires? Why wasn’t the question even raised?

Mike Vandeman, Ph.D.
Formerly of Olympia

Our roving correspondent

There is a movement today to reform the bail system. But meaningful bail reform is not enough. We need to be asking why we arrest so many people on low-level offenses in the first place and why so many of them come from poor black and brown communities.

New Traditions Fair Trade

Café & World Folk Arts

Folk art brought here through equitable trade relationships with artisans and farmers from more than fifty countries.

Every sale supports the work of the people.

Café hours: Mon–Sat 9–6 • Sun 11–5
real good food always

Check the website for music and other events

300 5th Avenue SW, Olympia • 360.705.2819
Special events

Climate Strike!  
September 20-27, everywhere in Olympia
Events everywhere will emphasize the importance of actions taken right now to stabilize our climate. It’s an emergency! Local events include:

- Two electric vehicle events planned for that general period:
  - September 14 at Capital Mall, sponsored by PSE; and
  - September 22 at the OUUC, sponsored by OUUC

- Plant a Tree for the Climate, Thursday, September 26 at 12 Noon, venue TBA. The Green Party sponsors a day of tree-planting as part of the Climate Strike, to emphasize how important trees are and how easy it is to plant more of them. More details at 360-232-2869.

- Steadywise, you can also join these activities:

  - Walk to Protect & Restore the Salish Sea  
    Sept. 20-24, (Tacoma)

  - Sept. 2: Climate Emergency Gathering at State Capitol
    Start your own event!
    Go to https://wip.wipnews.org/ to get started organizing.

  - Native Plant Nursery Learning and Work Party  
    September 5, 5 to 7 PM, at 2214 NW Johnson Blvd SW
    Potting, division and organizational projects, led by the WSU Extension Service.
    Get to know others with an interest in native plants. Visit https://streamteam.info/events to register.

  - Harvest Party  
    September 7, 12 noon – 4 PM at West Central Park at Division & Harrison, West Oly
    Enjoy food, music games and prizes as we celebrate the bounty of the harvest season.

  - Grant Writing 101 with Alison Pride  
    September 7, 10:30 AM at Orca Books, 509 E. 4th Ave.
    Celebrate the holiday season with holiday music, food, drink, and friends.

  - GRub’s 2019 Harvest Soirée  
    September 7, 5 to 8 PM, at the OUUC Congregation, 2215 Division St. in West Olympia
    An evening featuring live music, food, drinks, and socializing. Tickets $30.

  - The Detention Lottery—a live drama  
    September 9, 7 – 9 PM, at Temple Beth-Hatfichon, 201 8th Street Olympia
    A performance of a play based on a Seattle immigration lawyer's experiences, set in a detention center. Promotes understanding of how our nation's immigration laws are enforced. Free.

  - Lighting the Way with Community Solar  
    September 10, 5:30 to 8 PM, at the Olympia Center Banquet Room
    Learn how to join the community solar movement. Work with others to bring solar energy to our local public area.

  - Heroes for Housing VI  
    September 11, 7:45 to 9:30, at South Puget Sound Community College
    Fundraiser for low-income housing in Thurston and Mason Counties. Inspirational stories from tenants. Free, donations encouraged.

  - Meaningful Movies: Transfigurations – Transgressing Gender in the Bible  
    Thursday, September 19, at 6:30 PM at the OUUC Congregation, 2215 Division St. in West Olympia
    A one-person play featuring transgender Biblical characters from the most widely-read Bible stories. Free. Discussion follows.

  - Democratic Socialists of America Monthly Meeting  
    Saturday, September 21, 4 to 6 pm at MUX 96 Meeting Room, 119 Washington St NE
    The largest socialist organization in the U.S. holds meetings to promote socialist policies and empower citizens. Info: dsaolympia@gmail.com.

  - Thurston County Democratic Women Monthly Meeting  
    September 25, 6 to 8:30 at the Oly Center, 222 Columbia St
    Supporting Democratic women in politics.

  - Northwest Permaculture Convergence  
    September 27-29 at the Lost Valley Education Center, Dexter, OR
    Learn how to apply permaculture principles in your backyard or your community. Many presentations to choose from (in regenerative agriculture, social permaculture, or any sustainable system). Keynote Friday night. Tickets $175 for camping and food, special prices available.

For a fuller listing of events of September events, go to LocalMotive.org. For some events posted to WIP after the deadline, check out the WIP Facebook page.