



WORKS IN PROGRESS

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Serving the social justice community of Olympia since 1990.

August 2012

Lions, tigers, and local investing

Area investors consider putting their money into Olympia's small businesses

Marissa Luck

A new group of Thurston County residents is gearing up to take the "buy local" concept to a new level. Working off of a model pioneered by a Port Townsend group called LION (Local Investment Opportunities Network), the Olympia cohort is forming a network of investors interested in funneling funds into the local economy. Instead of investing in bonds or stock in the formal market, investors in the new network would work directly with local small businesses to provide private loans or financing from anything to stocking supply, expanding capacity, or refinancing credit debt.

"It's really a do-it-yourself kind of investing, and that is definitely *not* the kind of investing that Wall Street has gotten us used to," James Frazier, co-founder of Port Townsend LION, explained to an audience of 40 or so people interested in starting a similar Thurston County group. The audience was gathered at an local-investment event sponsored by Sustainable South Sound and Enterprise for Equity in late June. Sunlight filtered through the tie-dye window coverings in the Olympia Ballroom as Frazier and co-founder Steve Moore explained the concept of LION.

Port Townsend LION was formally established in 2008 just before the financial crisis hit. Many of its founders had the foresight to begin looking for alternatives to Wall Street investments before then. Since 2006, LION investors have lent \$3 million to small businesses in Jefferson County. Currently, there are around 50 people are involved in the network.

How LION's model works

"They hate it when I say this, but it's sort of like a dating service," Moore joked after the presentation. "I've got two people that are interested that would like to meet somebody, one has money they'd like to loan, the other has a need they'd like to fund, and so what

I'll do is facilitate your meeting." He chuckled, "I'm not going on the date with you, I'm not promising this is going to work out, I'm just facilitating."

Although LION members discuss opportunities, the group doesn't engage in vetting and there's no centralized committee or person assuming liability for the investments.

"It's a collective effort but only

While some potential investors expressed interest in de-linking from the volatility of markets, others emphasized the community and economic development potential of the group.

informally," explained Frazier. "When it comes to the bottom line, everyone is responsible for making their own decisions." He pointed out that direct negotiations "remove the middle people" which allows investors to take home a bigger return while offering more favorable interests rates for businesses.

(For LION, most investors earn between 5-7% compared to 1-3% they'd typically received on a CD.)

Port Townsend's LION functions as an informal network of people performing private transactions. That allows businesses in the network to operate under the "non-public offering exemption" of state and federal laws so that businesses don't have to register with the SEC or state, or file certain disclosure reports. That enables businesses to save on the cost hiring lawyer or dedicating time to completing the disclosure reports with the SEC or state.

"Most 'corner-store' type local small businesses do not have the time or money to undertake registration," Frazier elaborated in an email, "or have the connections to wealthy people to do Reg D offerings [another less costly registration option under the SEC]."

In order to qualify for this non-public offering exemption, businesses can only raise money from people they know well. As investors and businesses built relationships, Frazier described how

LION became an unintentional method of community building.

"Along with that sense of community, there's more of a sense of duty for the person that's accepting investment, like 'Oh I better take this seriously, this is my neighbor, this is not just some bank that I can walk away from if things don't work. We feel that it has a practical effect of lowering the default rate."

The default rate of LION loans is currently around 8.6% which is slightly lower than the 9.3% average charge-off rate of Small Business Association loans in Washington state, according to the 2011 Coleman Report. (The charge-off rate is based on the percentage of loans in default the SBA needs to repay).

What would a local investment group mean for Thurston County?

The idea of not investing in Wall Street was appealing to some audience members. Thad Curtz, a retired Evergreen professor and fellow WIP volunteer explained, "I'd like to find some way to have less of my retirement money in the gigantic global capitalist flux of dollars."

While some potential investors

► LOCAL INVESTING, continued on page 5

Public Power is on the ballot—now the real work begins!

Paul Pickett and John Pearce

Congratulations Thurston County! As you probably already heard, public power is on the November ballot. We blew past the 10,734 signatures needed and turned in over 15,000 signatures to the County Auditor, who certified the Initiative without even looking at the last 2,002 signatures!

Now it's a battle between a 99% of Davids and one corporate Goliath. Thurston County gets a choice: continuing to pay Puget Sound Energy to maintain their monopoly on electric power; or transitioning to a future when Thurston Public Utility District (TPUD) gradually assumes responsibility for the county's electricity.

How do you feel about paying one of the highest electrical rates in the state? Do you want to continue renting your

electricity from a foreign owner, who in 2011 pumped over \$17,000,000 in profits out of our county to their Bellevue headquarters and beyond? How will you feel next winter when a storm takes out the power lines again by tree branches that a PUD would have trimmed but that PSE

Do you want to continue renting your electricity from a foreign owner, who in 2011 pumped over \$17,000,000 in profits out of our county?

didn't, and we wait while contract workers arrive slowly from far away?

The actual ballot initiative this November is very simple. A "Yes" vote on the Public Power Initiative authorizes TPUD to enter into the electrical business. That's it. An affirmative vote does not tell the PUD how or when to provide electric service, other than the require-

ment to provide some kind of service within ten years. The vote does not authorize a tax or mandate any particular kind of service.

What kind of electric service could the PUD provide? As a new electric public utility TPUD would have access

to cheap federal hydropower, available in lumps over several years. At first there might be 50 megawatts of BPA power available, out of a total demand of roughly 350 megawatts for the County. There are a wide range of possibilities for serving us with that first installment of

power, such as serving one large business, the Capital Campus, or the South County. TPUD has hired a consultant to explore potential opportunities. The PUD will issue a final report in August, and plans to hold a public workshop in September.

A common question is how TPUD

► PUBLIC POWER, continued on page 7

Works In Progress is in the process of replacing the page one masthead graphic. The temporary photo is by Robert Whitlock.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

Works In Progress is a free, all volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions

Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

Works In Progress is committed to stories misrepresented or ignored by the mainstream media. We value local, well-researched news stories, accounts of personal experience and reflections by local authors. Opinion pieces, also valued, are often best supported by facts, examples, and sources, and we encourage writers to include these elements to submissions. We're also looking for graphics, poetry, cartoons, and articles that push the boundaries of conventional journalism.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number. Articles may be reprinted. Please cite sources.

If your issue isn't being covered in *Works In Progress*, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or haven't found someone else to cover it!)

Send submissions to olywip@gmail.com or mail to *Works In Progress*, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

Governing Tool

The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.

Mission Statement

"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause

We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues

WIP is archived on microfilm by the University of Washington Library. Some issues are held in the Timberland Library system. The last five years are online at www.olywip.org

WORKERS IN PROGRESS

Ferdinand Bridges	Fred Schug
Stan Butler	Sandia Slaby
Marylea Coday	Sylvia Smith
Izzy Ceccanti	Jeff Sowers
Teresa Jennings	Pat Tassoni
Jerome Johnson	Tinker Belle
Marissa Luck	Nigel Weiss
Maggie Reardon	Berd Whitlock
Creighton Rose	Scott Yoos

On the front cover —

The Healer created by Leon White
Photographer: Lucas Saul

Submission Deadline:**August 17**

PO Box 295
Olympia, WA 98507
olywip@gmail.com

Proofreading:

August 25 ♦ Noon

**Lacey Timberland Library in
the Group Study Area**

(Be there for the first read!)

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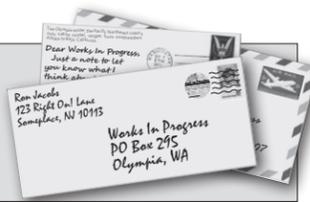
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**LETTERS TO
WORKS IN PROGRESS****Florida imprisons domestic abuse victim for 20 years**

As a human being and a person of value, I am infuriated at the treatment Marissa Alexander a mother of three, and an MBA holder has received under the draconian and racist policies of the Florida state Legislature and the Florida State Attorney's office and specifically the fraudulent behavior of the prosecuting attorney Angela Corey.

Marissa Alexander "stood her ground" when she fired one non-injuring round into the wall of her home where Rico

Gray, her estranged husband, the admitted abuser who already had a restraining order

against him, attacked her. Marissa did everything humanly possible to stay on the side of law and reason.

Rico Gray, the alleged victim is free and alive which sheds light on the ability of Marissa Alexander to critically analyze and synthesize the information of the moment. He is on the streets. Marissa received 20 years for the use of a firearm in her defense.

In light of this obvious travesty of justice I intend to hold a Rally, Fundraiser and 24 hour Candlelight Vigil in Support of Freedom for Marissa Alexander and Survivors of Domestic Abuse at Percival Landing in downtown Olympia commencing on the eve of August 27, 2012 at 6:00 pm and terminating on August 28, 2012 at 6:00pm. While the historical significance of August 28, 1963 is not lost on the writer, I hope to increase the awareness that many voiceless communities are still waiting for the "Dream" to be realized.

In the belief that when people of con-

science do nothing when they are called, the Earth dies just a little bit more every time, I also intend to hold a vigil at Percival Landing for a period of no less than twenty-four hours without substance other than water, black coffee and heart vitamins, which I take on a daily basis, to protest the unjust and inequitable treatment of Marissa Alexander. In the realization that I am but a mere fiber in this web of life where we are all connected in one way or another, I await the choir, however I do not expect others to stand the 24 hour vigil with me, albeit I would love to have a showing up for

**Support for Marissa Alexander Rally
and 24-hour Candlelight Vigil
August 27, Rally from 6-8 pm
Percival Landing, downtown Olympia**

the 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm rally on August 27. As the noted American philosopher, author, critic, actor, and civil rights activist Cornell West states, "None of us alone can save the nation or the world. But each of us can make a positive difference if we commit ourselves to do so."

The fight for Marissa is a fight against all types of tyranny and hateful ideologies. In a recent Southern Poverty Law Center article, it states hate groups have "topped 1,000 for the second consecutive year, following strides made by the radical right, shows "continued explosive growth in 2010." Of these crimes are: voter suppression, voter intimidation, domestic abuse, the War against Women, xenophobia, gynophobia, institutional racism, paid elections, and a fight against equal rights, equal justice, one vote-one person, marriage equality, LGBTQ communities, and the Occupy Manifest.

I offer my hand out stretched in hopes of forming a communal partnership for this event. For more information contact me at allhill@comcast.net.

—Allan Hill



ERIC J. GARCIA 2012

Inside Works In Progress**Page 4** The Affordable Care Act and why you should care about it**Page 6** Why coal?**Page 8** Waterfront workers vow to build solidarity**Page 9** McKenna's minimum wage stance decried**Page 10** A couple of movies to view at the OFS in August**...my cold, dead hands.**

Friday's *Olympian* [July 20] featured a front page picture from "Kids Boot Camp." In it, a "game face" 5 year old grasps a M-240B machine gun. "It's really cool. I wish I could have one" said a 7 year old.

As a parent and former teacher, I found these images and words appalling. Worse yet, this image of violence would become horribly distorted within hours. How could *The Olympian* have known that by Friday morning the breaking news story would involve a deadly shooting at the movies in Aurora? How indeed?

In this great nation, our vocal need for citizenry to bear assault rifles and Glocks, like adult security blankets, makes gun violence numbingly predictable. Add to this grim mixture tomorrow's shooters today given shoddy schooling, abysmal mental health care, or overwhelmed parents, and we have a bleak recipe for more deaths.

You can pick the high school, the university, the movie house, and wait. Or, we can take aim at the real problems and act. Start early: ensure quality health care and family support for crucial growing years from zero to three. Follow up with child—not test—centered education in classrooms uncrowded so teachers can attend to each individual student. Develop meaningful high school curricula so that students can feel challenged, invested and ready for the world of university or employment.

It's only a start, but with action like this our terrifying headlines can change to stories of success, our need for assault rifles can fade to a thing of the grim past.

—Steve Macuk

Announcing WIP's new Writers' Group

With the intention of "expanding coverage of local issues," *Works In Progress* has formed an inhouse group of community writers.

The group of regular contributors meets once or twice a month to discuss ideas for articles, ensure that crucial issues are being covered, and provide editing support to one another. Not only will this improve the content and coverage *WIP* delivers to our community, it's also an opportunity for writers to develop and hone their skills in journalism, writing, and research.

For those interested in joining the Writers' Group and becoming regular *WIP* contributors, please contact *Works In Progress* at olywip@gmail.com.

Works In Progress seeks help managing its new website

We at *WIP* are estatic and grateful that Thad Curtz volunteered to undertake the creation of a modern website for us. The almost completed website is, of course, a vast improvement over the old one and it feels as if we have finally entered the 21st Century.

Now that we are soon to have a new website, we are looking for someone from the community to manage it. To those interested, please contact us at olywip@gmail.com.

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FACEBOOK!****WORKS IN PROGRESS**

An open letter to MoveOn.Org Must we vote for a mass-murdering fascist war criminal because the other one is worse?

Dana Walker

Editor's note: On June 21, the national MoveOn.Org announced its seven million members had voted to endorse Barack Obama.

It has been very sad to discover that leftys are just as willing to blindly follow the leader over the cliff as the Bush-Bots ever were. Obama is mass murdering women and children with unmanned drones—a war crime—and he has claimed authority to incarcerate and even execute people without a trial—the very definition of a police state; yet organizations such as MoveOn.Org advocate voting for a mass-murdering fascist war criminal because the other fascist is even worse?

What is wrong with this picture?

One reason that Goldman Sachs installed Obama in the White House was because they knew that his election would effectively shut the liberals up and it has done just that. The Anti-War Movement simply evaporated with Obama's coronation. There was barely a peep from the left when Obama vastly increased military spending whilst freezing or slashing funding for everything else. Yes, the Democrats are better on some of the social issues that Wall Street doesn't care about. Yes, when pressured the Democrats will reluctantly vote the right way on environmental issues. However, on all of the truly big issues—from the economy to secret police state tactics to the War Machine Prison Industrial Complex to immunity from prosecution for Wall Street criminals to immunity from prosecution for war criminals—but lengthy prison sentences for the whistle-blowers who tell us about it—on all of these issues Obama is just as bad as Bush ever was and on some of them he is far worse; even Bush never advocated murdering American citizens without a trial.

Can MoveOn.Org or anyone else please explain to me how all of this is in any way any different than when Republicans do it? Can MoveOn.Org or anyone else please explain to me why the very same people who screamed the loudest over Bush's perfidy now refuse to condemn Obama's even though his is even worse? Rather than sitting in prison cells for the largest criminal fraud in human history the Wall Street perpetrators are instead running his White House. To this day they continue reaping record profits while the rest of us continue paying for their crimes. Even Reagan prosecuted hundreds of banksters after the S&L debacle; the only one that Obama has prosecuted was the whistle-blower in the UBS scandal. Get it? One guy went to prison for exposing a massive tax-fraud whilst the people who actually committed the fraud not only were not prosecuted but their identities have been kept secret; we aren't even allowed to know who they are.

That is Obama's White House.

Under Obama, fully armed Tea Partiers are free to rally without hindrance

whilst the non-violent and unarmed Occupy Movement is brutally suppressed. Under Obama the richest corporations in the world continue to pay no federal income tax even as our schools are gutted and as poor families and the disabled are thrown out onto the streets. Obama mouths platitudes about defending freedom whilst providing \$30 billion in weapons to the brutal dictatorship in Saudi Arabia. Obama demonizes people like Kaddafi and Castro whilst ignoring Bahrain as it mass-murders protestors and Uzbekistan as they slowly lower disidents into vats of boiling water. Obama even emulated his self-proclaimed role model Ronald Reagan by secretly backing right-wing military coups that overthrew democratically elected governments in both Honduras and the Maldives. Then for the icing—again emulating Reagan—he lied to us about it.

Is MoveOn.Org advocating that we do get fooled again? Can MoveOn.Org or anyone else please explain to me how any of this is in any way even remotely acceptable? Do you seriously contend that mass-murdering women and children with unmanned drones is ethical as long as a Democrat is doing it? Really? You can find it in any way acceptable that Obama says it is legal to imprison and even execute people without trial? Are you kidding? Do you really contend that prosecuting more whistle-blowers than the combined total of all the other presidents in the entire history of the United States can be justified? Do you really feel that granting immunity to the telecoms for illegally spying on us is only scary when Republicans do it? Is promoting nuclear energy and 'clean coal' cool with you? How about launching a war with Libya without congressional approval? (Oh how all of you howled when Bush did that!) Does MoveOn.Org really contend that continuing the rendition program extending the Patriot Act trashing the Constitution criminalizing dissent and on and on is acceptable as long as a Democrat is doing it? Are you chill with the fact that the only people going to jail are the whistle-blowers and the protesters?

No. None of this is acceptable in any manner whatsoever no matter who is doing it. Obama works for them. He does not work for us. If MoveOn.Org wants to continue supporting fascist war criminals that are conducting business-as-usual then as far as I am concerned you are agents of the Machine. Please stop pretending you represent the 99%.

Please stop pretending that you are on my side.

Dana Walker spent 28 years traveling all over North America, 6 years in a federal prison (ostensibly for marijuana; in actuality for refusing to sell his friends to the feds), and 3 1/2 years in Olympia hurling verbal barrages of sarcasm at the Machine. He is currently a Real Change vendor and a caretaker at Media Island. He is also the author of numerous novels and a radical bi-weekly political newsletter.

Annual dinner to honor Ground Zero co-founders

Ground Zero Center

Celebrating thirty-five years of non-violent resistance to the Trident nuclear weapons system, Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action will honor two of its co-founders, Jim and Shelley Douglass, who will speak at its annual August event at the Ground Zero Center in Kitsap County, Washington.

By the 1980s the Douglasses and a community of activists were organizing people across the county to protest the "White Trains" that carried nuclear weapons to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor. In subsequent years the community that became Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action has continued the spirit of resistance to the Trident nuclear weapons system with regularly scheduled vigils and nonviolent direct actions at the Bangor Trident submarine base.

The theme for the August 4 through August 6 event, "Nuclear Weapons: The Most Inconvenient Truth", will focus participants on the history, current status, cost, and future plans for more nuclear new subs and missiles.

Cindy Sheehan and Dorli Rainey will also speak about their experience with this "Most Inconvenient Truth." Sheehan's son Casey was killed by enemy action during the Iraq War. Her makeshift camp outside President George W. Bush's Texas Ranch in 2005 launched her career as a dedicated peace activist. She continues to be a vocal critic of US foreign policy under President Obama.

Rainey, at 84, pepper sprayed in the face at Seattle Occupy, became a "poster child" for the Occupy movement through national media attention to her picture and story. Rainey has been a peace activist for five decades, and has a strong commitment to nonviolence in foreign affairs.

In addition to speakers, on Saturday, August 4, participants in the Interfaith

Peace Walk for a Nuclear Free Future will arrive at Ground Zero Center, ending their 13-day walk that will begin on July 23rd in Portland, Oregon. The Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist order conducts annual peace walks as a reminder of the very real dangers presented by all uses of nuclear materials.

The weekend includes education about nuclear weapons and the Trident base, nonviolence training, music, movies, and a vigil at the Kitsap Mall. There will also be special sessions on the Navy's plans for a Second Explosives Handling Wharf at Bangor and its plans for a new generation of ballistic missile submarines.

Participants at the weekend event will walk down to the Bangor entrance gate early Monday morning for a traditional vigil and nonviolent direct action. Monday, August 6th, marks the anniversary of the atomic Bombing of Hiroshima.

According to one estimate, the Bangor base, just 20 miles from downtown Seattle, has the largest concentration of operational nuclear weapons. As Rear Adm. Joseph Tofalo, Commander, Submarine Group 10, said on April 18: "A single Trident Submarine is the sixth largest nuclear nation in the world all by itself."

In related action the Peace Fleet will arrive in Seattle's Elliott Bay on Wednesday, August 1st. The Peace Fleet is a water-based nonviolent protest against the glorification of weapons of war at the Seattle Seafair festival. Peace activists will simultaneously demonstrate near Pier 66.

All or any part of the weekend gathering at Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, at 16159 Clear Creek Road NW, Poulsbo, WA is open to anyone interested in the nature and practices of nonviolent action and working toward a nuclear weapons-free world.

Direct questions to info@gzcenter.org or call 360-930-8697.

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The Affordable Care Act begins

What matters in the new health law, and why you should care about it

Matson Boyd

This sunlit August, many Olympians will open their mailboxes and find checks from their health insurance companies. No, the companies haven't decided to repent for their sins. Instead the Affordable Care Act, a.k.a. Obamacare, mandates that health insurance companies send us a refund if they spend more than 15% of premium dollars on profits and administration. Also this August, those who need contraceptives, or screenings for domestic abuse or HPV, will suddenly find these services fully covered. These are only a few of the dozens of reforms included in the new health law that are gradually coming into force.

As a writer, I wish I had the pleasure to announce the implementation of single-payer universal health care. But this law is a major step forward out of the painful state of health care in America, and deserves the defense of good progressive activists. To understand the huge impact of this law, imagine how many lives damaged by the old system would have been better off under the current law. I think of the experience of my mother, Joann. Her experience is far from unusual: my mother works multiple low-wage jobs, often upwards of 60 hours a week, mostly in order to pay for exorbitant health costs that total about \$10,000 a year. Her health problems are largely work-related, such as arthritis from occupational repetitive strain. She doesn't feel that she has a way out of this crippling problem and there are millions of people across the country stuck in a very similar trap.

The new health law would subsidize her coverage by about 80%, in other words, giving my mother \$8,000 a year to pay towards her health costs. Had this law been in place before, my mother would never have had to work so much and in all likelihood wouldn't have developed so many health problems in the first place. She would have had a substantial improvement to her net worth and to her quality of life. She would have known all along that whatever happens to her, she will have her health taken care of. Across the country, tens of millions of people like her struggle to retain overpriced insurance. Under the new health law, subsidies will cover most of the cost of care for those who can't afford it. The subsidies are on a sliding scale, covering almost everything for a 62 year old who earns \$16,000 a year, and covering about half for someone of the same age who earns \$44,000 a year. To see how the subsidies affect you and those you love, google *health subsidy calculator*.

I am one of more than 50 million Americans without health insurance. Starting in 2014, most of us will get coverage, either through subsidized coverage or expanded access to Medicaid. If you don't understand how life changing this can be, talk to some people who have lived decades without insurance. You won't have to ask many before you start to hear stories about those who suffered in dire pain, or who lost their jobs from debilitating injury, or who developed terrible illnesses and cancers that could easily have been avoided if they had access to preventative care. The Urban Institute estimates that more than 20,000 die each year due to

lack of health insurance, and that this law will save about 150,000 lives over a 10 year period. In Oregon, where access to subsidized care had been doled out by lottery, researchers found that those who received subsidized coverage had better finances, better health, and better emotional well-being than those who didn't win access.

The fight for better health care isn't over. For starters, this law only creates a sort of universal health care: it leaves out the millions of undocumented Americans, many of whom will continue to suffer in silence. Until our circle of compassion is extended to the undocumented, American health care will remain partial.

Another troublesome part of the law is the mandate. Because the bill bans discrimination against pre-existing conditions and limits price discrimination, it also must mandate that people have coverage. Washington State was among several states that banned such discrimination in the 1990's, without including a mandate, only to see the market for insurance disappear. People waited until they were sick to buy insurance, and insurance companies gradually stopped offering coverage. The lesson that policymakers took from this is that a mandate was necessary, and in 2016

...this law is a major step forward out of the painful state of health care in America, and deserves the defense of good progressive activists.

there will be a tax penalty for not having insurance: \$695 for an individual or 2.5% of income, whichever is greater. Fortunately the subsidy is greater than the penalty, and there is an exemption for financial hardship. And if you don't pay the penalty, the only potential consequence will be confiscation of tax returns. Unfortunately Congress didn't consider simply ditching the private insurance system altogether and adopting a single-payer system.

The public option, on the other hand, almost became law. Conservatives correctly called the public option a "Trojan-horse for single-payer" (because most people would have ditched private insurance if a public option was available, and thus destroyed private insurance). The public option was in various versions of the bill as it was being discussed in Congress, and was only discarded at the last minute at the insistence of a few centrists. Left-wing activists were enraged, to the point of wanting the whole bill killed. It is unfortunate that we didn't get a public option in the health bill, and it is still more unfortunate that the whole issue has largely been forgotten by activists and politicians. Despite the immense popularity of the public option, most activists no longer fight for it and most politicians, even those running for nominations in very left-wing districts, are not being pushed to support it.

Despite these shortcomings, I believe that the truest progressive complaint against the law is that it doesn't start soon enough. Any law which can claim to save 20,000 lives a year should be implemented right away. But Democrats in Congress instead opted to phase in the coverage expansion in 2014.

The story of why they did so is infuriating. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scores bills to determine their budget impact over a 10 year window. A money-saving score is a crucial blessing to those stuck within the myopic world of Congress. The Affordable Care Act saves money over the long term, but over the first 10 years it would have shown a deficit if coverage was available right away. So to make the CBO score look better, Congress delayed the onset of expanded coverage to 2014, even though its true impact on the long term budget is negligible and its impact on real human lives over the interim is huge. Did I mention this bill *saves 20,000 lives a year*?

The provisions

There are many other aspects of the bill that are rarely discussed in the media. By 2014 most of the 50 million plus uninsured will either have Medicaid or subsidized coverage. Of Washington's 1.1 million uninsured, 328,000 will receive access to Medicaid and an

additional 477,000 are projected to receive subsidized coverage. Each state will have set up a website known as a health care exchange where insurance can be compared and purchased. Previously, one had to search company by company and settle on one with the hope that you weren't being ripped off—perhaps only to find out when you really needed care that what you bought was inadequate if not fraudulent. Now all the plans are in one place and there are watchdogs guarding the sites with the authority to throw insurers off if they are dishonest.

There are a myriad of new regulations as well. Cancer patients will be thrilled to know that there can be no lifetime or annual caps on how much health care insurers pay for; however much it costs it must be covered and there is no discrimination against those with pre-existing conditions. Seniors will receive fuller drug coverage, and young adults under the age of 27 can stay on their

Cancer patients will be thrilled to know that there can be no lifetime or annual caps on how much health care insurers pay.

parents' health plans. And the mentally ill among us, as well as those with substance-abuse disorders, now by law must have access to the same coverage as everyone else. There are also dozens of screenings, tests, and treatments that must be covered by insurance.

The way the health care business works is also addressed by the health care law: profits and administration are capped at 15% in the large group market and 20% in the small-group market.

The amount for companies is typically more than that, and now they have to refund us a check if they go over that mark, with more than a billion dollars in refunds now being sent out. Providers are also being pushed to adopt electronic medical health records, and coordinated care networks of doctors and nurses are gradually being introduced to reduce the tremendous inefficiencies of our current disjointed system.

And regulators now finally have the authority to penalize fraudulent drug makers and equipment makers, as well as to cut off payment for obviously wasteful care. (This was the laughable origin of the "death panel" meme.) And finally, in what has to be the most powerful act by any Socialist in the history of the United States Congress, Senator Bernie Sanders forced into the bill a provision calling for community health centers: now hundreds of community health centers are being built all around the country to provide care to all regardless of ability to pay. *(These provisions I mention are only a fraction of the total. Healthcare.gov has a helpful timeline but the only fully exhaustive list is the 3000-page bill itself).

Will the bill survive?

It would be careless to discuss the health care law at length without mentioning the possibility that the bill won't survive to its full implementation in 2014. The bill almost died this spring. John Roberts was prepared to kill it, along with 4 other Republican appointed Supreme Court justices. As the highest ranking justice, Roberts had the choice of who would write the majority opinion striking down the law, and he chose to write it himself. Jan Crawford of CBS reported that it was only weeks later, for reasons that are not yet known to the public, that Roberts changed his mind. The law survived on a 5-4 vote and Roberts wrote the majority opinion along with the liberal justices to save the law.

While the law survived the courts, Republicans can still kill it—and likely will—if they win Congress and the Presidency in the November elections. The law can be easily overturned because it isn't popular with the general public. But this is only because most people don't know what's in the bill—the only provision most people are familiar with is the mandate. Every other provision is very popular and people like the bill when they learn what's in it.

Future

I'm writing this because I want people to understand that building a better health care system starts with defending the good provisions in the law that is currently being implemented. Single-payer remains a better alternative, but we won't get closer to single-payer if Republicans succeed in turning back the clock on health care reform. There are many ways alternatives can develop within current law. It is still possible that a nationwide alternative to private insurance (similar to the public option)

can be created without the need for legislation. Millions of people clamor for such an alternative, and if enough of them band together to form a non-profit insurer, they could have

the bargaining power to keep prices low. This alternative could gradually eliminate the for-profit insurance sector. Single-payer enthusiasts should also be encouraged that the subsidies and Medicaid expansion put most of our total health costs on the government's books. This means that those who are genuinely concerned with reducing the deficit will look more and more at the single-payer alternative, because single-payer is the most cost-effective way at providing health coverage.

Conclusion

I have always been shocked by the dog-eat-dog nature of America. My family emigrated to the U.S. from Canada more than ten years ago, and the feeling that has always struck me is how easy it is to fall through the cracks here, and be swallowed up by the cutthroat maw of for-profit America. My mother's struggle is what impresses this feeling on me the most. But what encourages me and gives me hope is that the primary differ-

► HEALTH CARE, continued on page 5

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Precious Metalsmiths in downtown Olympia: On the left are carved wax models ready to be cast and, on the right, the final touches to a recently cast ring.

Photos: Marissa Luck

► **Local investing**, cont. from page 1
expressed interest in de-linking from the volatility of markets, others emphasized the community and economic development potential of the group.

"To me [local investing] makes much more sense than investing in something abstract in the electronic netherlands," argued Elayne Crow, a finance and accounting student at Baker College and potential Olympia investor. She smiled, "I like the whole idea of using money to create community."

At a small gathering after the event, 19 people met to discuss how a LION-style network could operate in Olympia. Potential participants observed that the Olympia network would likely include investors with a spectrum of thinking—some drawn to the network's sustainable, community-building aspects, others just looking for practical investment opportunities.

Lisa Smith of Enterprise for Equity, an organization that provides training and microloans for local low-income businesses, said she hoped the new network would encourage "heart-centered and profit-centered" investments in the local economy.

In a follow-up phone interview, Aslan Meade of Sustainable South Sound said the group is open to drawing on

various forms of alternative lending and investment practices whether that means borrowing from the Port Townsend's LION model, relying more on microlending or participating in online crowd-funding made possible from the JOBS Act.

"This is a new wave," Marie Poland of Sustainable South Sound and BuyLocal said spreading her arms wide as the event closed. "We are the ones who can create a unique network for our community to really keep the beauty of local businesses alive."

The group lacks an official name at the time of print, although one member suggested it be called TIGER or Thurston Investment Group for Economic Resilience. Their next meeting will be August 3 at 11:30 pm at the Enterprise for Equity office. For more information, contact Marie Poland at buylocalss@gmail.com or Aslan Meade at aslanblue11@gmail.com.

Marissa Luck is a freelance journalist and regular contributor to Works in Progress. When not reporting on local issues, she works as a content director at a web-design firm. Marissa graduated from Evergreen with an emphasis in political economy and international studies. Contact her via Twitter@marissaluck7 or email marissaluck7@gmail.com.

Small business seeks involvement in local investment network

Downtown jeweler Precious Metalsmiths may be one of the small businesses that could benefit from an Olympia investment network. They were one of at least five businesses who attended the initial LION event. Precious Metalsmiths got its start selling artistic jewelry at the Farmer's Market 13 years ago and has since expanded into a new location on 5th Ave. The store is a maze of Mokume Game layered metals, opal pendants, precious stones set in silver, antique gems, and pieces from Pacific Northwest artists. Behind the glimmering shop lights is a full-fledged workshop where artists tinker away creating custom pieces, welding metal with fine-tuned lasers, and designing pieces with the same computer-rendering programs employed by architects.

Owners Joanna and Chris Thorton have paid for many of their employees' education and certificates in jewelry craftsmanship. Chris Thorton is also a member of the low-income credit union TULIP, and the company has also been a longtime participant of Arts Walk. Marketing Director and jewelry artist Matthew Crew said Precious Metalsmiths was eager to continue its involvement in the community. Crew's eyes widened as he discussed the potential of an Olympia LION-type network. "Instead of spending it elsewhere why not invest locally and keep it here? Instead of some CEO getting a vacation maybe a little girl of someone you know gets braces."

Crew said they could use funds from an Olympia investment network for purchasing new equipment or acquiring additional Northwest brands of jewelry. Eventually he explained, "It's possible that if we do well with this and we get to where we have have excess [funds], we'll want to invest in other businesses as well."

What if you want to support local investment but you are low-income?

Becoming an investor is predicated on the fact that you have extra money to invest; this of course precludes many lower-income folks who would otherwise support local economic development. But Aslan Meade of Sustainable South Sound pointed out that a local investment movement needs organizers in addition to investors. He insisted, "For anyone that feels in interest in or connection to this movement, there is probably some role for them, even if it's not financial."

► **Health Care**, cont. from page 4

ence between the welfare states of the United States and Canada has just been erased: no one in Canada has to work an extra twenty hours a week to afford basic health coverage, and now the Affordable Care Act means no one in the United States will either. The fight for a better health care system isn't over, but let's at least understand what we just won.

Matson Boyd is a long-time Evergreen student who is still trying to get into economics graduate school. He can be reached at matsonboyd@gmail.com

Because silence enables tyranny

Scott Yoos Support Committee and Legal Defense Fund

The title above is Scott's terse answer to all those who still wonder why he's refused to cop a plea and settle for lesser charges regarding the City of Olympia's (and now, the State of Washington's) bogus criminal case against him.

It's probably true. Had Scott plead guilty to the initial flimsy charges, he could have avoided the weighty move to the Superior Court, which occurred when Sergeant Paul Johnson filed a claim that Scott had kicked him. This claim, filed nearly a month after the arrest, increased the charges to include felony assault. If Scott had agreed to lie about his guilt, chances were good the prosecutor would've settled with two minor misdemeanor charges (trespassing and obstruction of justice) for his heinous crimes of throwing napkins in a city-owned dumpster and attempting to communicate with the police via sign language. In our opinion, this was an unacceptable option and Scott, who is mute due to a head-injury, fully agrees.

Last month there were two more hearings, hauling Yoos back into the Thurston County Courthouse for the long-awaited omnibus hearing. The first proved to be a wash-out. The court failed to provide the pre-requested, court-certified sign language interpreter as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The hearing rescheduled, we were called back two weeks later. This time, not surprisingly, the prosecutor was unwilling to back down on the state of Washington's zealous efforts to paint Scott as a "violent felon." At present, they're still moving forward with this sure to be a showcase trial.

Due to scheduling conflicts, we were granted another continuance. Now the trial will probably occur in late-September or October. We're unsure when the next pre-trial hearing will be scheduled.

For updates on this zany case, please check out the newly-created Scott Yoos Support page at www.scottsupport.blogspot.com and also the Scott Yoos LDF on Facebook.

Though Scott's not crazy about the notion of sin, we'll end with a pithy quote from Abe Lincoln: *To sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards of men.*

As Scott would comment, 'nuff said.



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Why coal?

Why do we still use coal when it so negatively affects the environment and human health?

Erik Schlenker-Goodrich

Editor's note: The following article was originally published in Readthedirt.org, an alternative online newspaper headquartered in Bellingham, WA. Readthedirt specializes in articles on environmental issues written by Northwest professionals and community activists. WIP is pleased to collaborate with this new publication.

I have a two-and-a-half year old son who asks, two-and-half thousand times a day, different iterations of a very basic question: "Why?" Sparked by a simple event like the flip of a light switch, he rarely accepts my answer without asking follow-up questions that force me to think really hard about how we live—and should live—on this fair planet. So let us take a cue from my son and ask a simple question of critical importance: "Why coal?"

The conventional answer is that coal is a black rock that holds lots of energy. To get at this energy, we rip up mountains and other landscapes in twenty-six states, mostly West Virginia, Wyoming, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Montana. We then transport this coal to one of the 600 or so massive, often antiquated coal-fired power plants that we've built in the United States to generate electricity. Once generated, electricity is transmitted along transmission lines to our homes, schools, and businesses. In the United States, we generate about 45% of our electricity from coal (24% comes from natural gas, 20% from nuclear, 10% from renewables, and 1% from oil and other liquids).

Extracting and combusting this coal is a brutal process. At every stage, coal infrastructure devastates wild landscapes and communities, releasing vast amounts of pollution into our land, air, and water, with tragic impact to the environment and human health. Much of this pollution comes in the form of greenhouse gases that are inching us towards catastrophic climate change. While we often focus on climate change, it's worth emphasizing the human health impacts. As Physicians for Social

Responsibility explain, "coal pollutants affect all major body organ systems and contribute to four of the five leading causes of mortality in the US: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and chronic lower respiratory diseases...[E]ach step of the coal lifecycle—mining, transportation, washing, combustion, and disposing of post combustion wastes—impacts human health."

Sometimes, we do clean up coal pollution, at least in part. For example, in a case I'm working on, the US EPA in 2011 mandated that New Mexico's 1800-megawatt San Juan Generating Station modernize its equipment to clean up regional haze pollution that impairs iconic landscapes like the Grand Canyon. The EPA's decision for this coal-fired power plant alone will clean up dirty skies across a four-state region. Each year, it'll also save seven

The Department of the Interior, furthering a poll-tested but foolish "all of the above" approach to energy policy, has opened up vast tracks of the American West to more coal mining. This is a really bad idea.

lives, prevent more than two thousand cases of exacerbated asthma symptoms, and reduce the risk of heart attack, respiratory illness, emergency room visits, hospital admissions, and lost days of school and work due to pollution-related illness. Even if you focus on economics and somehow put aside the moral responsibility to protect human health, the benefits of EPA's decision equal sixty million dollars annually. If we cleaned up every coal-fired power plant in this country—or, even better, stopped using coal entirely—the environmental, human health, and economic benefits would be incredible.

Too often, however, we don't clean up this pollution and the public—i.e., you and me—shoulders its impacts. As economists Nicholas Z. Muller, Robert Mendelsohn, and William Nordhaus conservatively determined in a 2011 study, the true cost of coal to society is more than five times its monetary value. This isn't chump change: we're talking about damages to the US public totaling



Photo: Simon Davis-Cohen

a third to over one-half of a trillion dollars annually.

Of course, our reliance on coal is not just an environmental and human health problem, but a political problem. Coal companies—and the power companies that use coal—have invested huge amounts of money in the landscape-scale infrastructure that mines, transports, and burns coal. As corporate entities, they're not set up to protect people or the environment. Instead, they're set up to make money and maximize their return on investment. To do that, they've co-opted and ossified our political system for their advantage and engaged in impressive disinformation campaigns.

Under the administration of President Barack Obama, we've seen some progress to wean our nation off coal and put us on a wiser, saner energy path. EPA, as suggested above, has taken some solid action to reign in coal pollution. This action may help tip the scale in favor of retiring coal plants and transitioning to an economy powered by the wind, water, and sun. As Stanford's Mark Jacobson and University of California at Davis' Mark Delucchi have shown, we can end our reliance on fossil fuels entirely and achieve this transition by 2050. Yet at the same time EPA has taken action, the Department of the Interior, furthering a poll-tested but foolish "all of the above" approach to energy policy, has opened up vast tracks of the American West to more coal mining.

This is a really bad idea, turning our country's coal resources (which, relative to the rest of the world, are abundant) into a loaded gun pointed at the climate and our own people. Even if we retire our existing fleet of 600 or so coal-fired power plants, other countries—like China—will still want to burn our coal. These countries would therefore love it if we turned the American West into an interconnected colony of coal mines, coal trains, and coal export terminals to power their booming, energy-intensive economies—economies that produce goods that are only fed back into our own energy-intensive, consumption-based lifestyles. So, as we question this system and ask "Why?," the logic justifying our reliance on coal looks ever weaker.

This system, and the failure of our political system to address its problems in a meaningful way, is troubling, and may lead you to despair. But don't. Hope—and action—remains. Whether you are a shop owner in Bellingham, Washington fighting coal-export terminals, a rancher in Montana fighting coal mines and railroads, or a public interest environmental attorney (like me) fighting coal-fired power plants in New Mexico, you are part of a shared, 'all-hands-on-deck' fight against the linked

network of coal mines, trains, power plants, and ports. Already, we've largely stopped this country from building new coal-fired power plants, and in the years ahead, we'll retire existing coal plants and stop coal mines, trains, and ports—all while promoting a life-affirming vision for this country premised on clean energy from the wind, water, and sun.

Every day, my son inspires me to ask "Why?" In essence, to question our country's problematic reliance on coal and fossil fuels. In answering that question with action, I work with smart, fearless, and dedicated people that are building a wiser, saner, and still beautiful world that my son will inherit. So don't despair. Hope. And fight as if our survival depends on it. Because it does.

Erik Schlenker-Goodrich is an attorney with the Western Environmental Law Center (WELC) and director of WELC's west-wide climate and energy work.

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► **Public Power**, cont. from page 1

will pay for taking over electric services. The answer is simple: they can use municipal bonds just like any other PUD, or like cities and counties. The interest rates on these bonds are far lower than the 10% return that the Washington UTC allows PSE to pay their investors. And the PUD can access grants only available to public agency. These advantages will typically offset a potentially high cost of acquisition.

With an electrified PUD we will join the more than half of Washington State who already are served by a system owned by its citizens. Electricity is a natural monopoly—there is only one set of lines going into your home or business—and we want the people to own it. Public power means the end of paying for huge profits because our only option is to either go off the grid or go dark. Public power will keep most of that money in the economy where it can multiply, add jobs, give us local control, and invest in our future.

You will reap the many benefits of public power, and your children and grandchildren will benefit even more. One example: the city of Hermiston, Oregon assumed control of its electrical system in 2001. After only six years the typical customer paid 25% less than if they were still paying the previous private utility, while the city built a significant financial reserve for future improvements and possible emergency repairs. We want to do the same here in Thurston County.

Most of the people who manage and maintain PSE's system live and work outside Thurston County. That's one of the reasons it takes so long for the power to come back on. With public power, those people will all work in the county and most will live here. That means local living wage jobs, local control, and local accountability—imagine personally knowing the person responsible for making sure your power stays on in a storm and restoring it quickly if it goes out. This is only one the reasons 95% of the people in our neighboring public power counties had their power back within 24 hours last January.

A vote for public power and its local accountability means you can go to the TPUD meetings and let them know that you want more "green" energy and less coal energy. Did you know that PSE uses Washington wind farms to power California and Montana coal to power Washington? Over 54% of the



A mountain view from Olympia.

Photo: Robert Whitlock

power PSE generates is from burning coal and California pays a premium for renewable energy. That's why PSE is very busy "greenwashing" with free light bulbs and an opt-in program that lets you help them pay for what the state says they must do under Initiative 937—all without adding one green watt to what we get. On the other hand, imagine what TPUD, which doesn't have to make a profit for its investors, could do with renewable, distributed generation.

To fight this initiative, PSE has hired high-powered political consultants and a celebrity spokesman. They are pouring money into an "Astroturf" political group headed by several local has-been politicians. They are paying for advertising and robo-calls. In 2008 PSE poured a half a million dollars into the three small counties seeking public power

authority. Imagine what they'll spend in the State's capital county.

How do we fight back? They have money power, but we have people power. Almost a hundred volunteers fanned out through the county to collect the signatures to put the initiative on the ballot. Now we need even more volunteers to raise money, organize events, make phone calls, put out yard signs, and can-

vass neighborhoods.

How can you help? Please go to www.ThurstonPublicPower.org where you can:

- Make a donation
- Find out more about how to volunteer
- Click on the FAQ button for more information and details on the points raised above.

Talk to your friends and neighbors, tell them the public power story, and ask for their help.

And if you have a question, email us at info@ThurstonPublicPower.org, or send a note to PO Box 7624, Olympia 98507-7624.

Vote "Yes" for public power. Your future depends on it.

Paul Pickett is a former Thurston PUD Commissioner. John Pearce is Chair of the Thurston Public Power Initiative.

Chemical weapons destruction deadline missed

According to an Alexander Kelle article in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, the US missed the April 29, 2012 final destruction deadline in the Chemical Weapons Convention, again. He stated this should "not come as a surprise...the anticipated time frames needed for the US to complete chemical weapons destruction were put forth in a 2000 Government Accounting Office report; it put the end point of destruction as far out as 2015.

"Then, in April 2006, after military spending priorities had led to a drastic reduction in the budgets for chemical weapons destruction facilities, then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld acknowledged the US would not meet the extended 2012 deadline and would need until 2017 to fully destroy its chemical weapons arsenal.

"According to a recent conservative Defense Department assessment, the end point for completing destruction is expected by 2023."

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In 2011 alone, mobile phone providers received 1.3 million law enforcement requests for customer records. This is actually a vast undercount of Americans affected by warrantless location tracking. These dragnet data requests are on the rise.

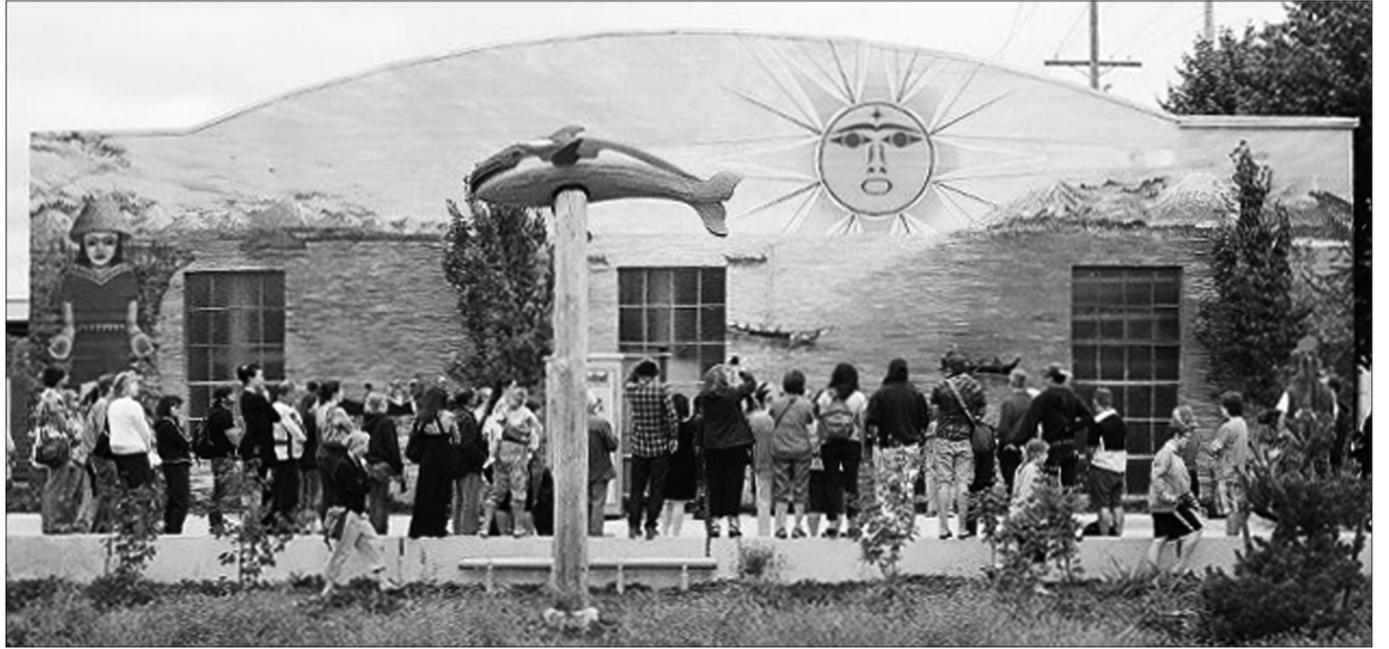
GPS Act proposed

In June, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) teamed up to write the Geolocation Privacy and Surveillance (GPS) Act. The bipartisan legislation creates a legal framework designed to give government agencies, commercial entities, and private citizens clear guidelines for when and how geolocation information can be accessed and used. Rep Bob Goodlatte, Chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Intellectual Property, Competition and the Internet, endorsed the effort as an original cosponsor.

Overall the GPS Act:

- Provides clarity regarding the legal procedures and protections that apply to electronic devices that can be used to track the movements of individual Americans.
- Requires the government to show probable cause and get a warrant before acquiring the geolocation information of a person, while setting out clear exceptions such as emergency or national security situations or cases of theft or fraud.
- Applies to all law enforcement acquisitions of the geolocation information of individual Americans without their knowledge, including acquisition from commercial service providers as well as from tracking devices covertly installed by the government.
- Applies to real-time tracking of a person's movements, as well as the acquisition of records of past movements.
- Creates criminal penalties for surreptitiously using an electronic device to track a person's movements that parallel those for wiretapping.
- Prohibit commercial service providers from sharing customers' geolocation information with outside entities without customer consent.

Law enforcement agents should always be required to obtain a warrant and show probable cause before accessing it.



In an unofficial kick-off to the Squaxin Island Tribe's portion of their hosted international Indian Canoe Journey of 2012, a canoe journey mural was unveiled and dedicated on the Les Schwab Building at State Street, Olympia, facing the headwaters of Budd Inlet at the beginning of the Port of Olympia boardwalk extending for blocks on the Inlet's boat-docking eastern shore. The mural was presented in protocol by artist Joe Seymour and other Squaxin Island tribal family members. —Hank Adams Photo: Hank Adams

Waterfront workers vow to build solidarity in countering anti-labor attacks

Linda Averill

Three rank-and-file labor leaders took to the podium Saturday night, July 21, to tell stories of outrageous abuse and inspired fightback in Longview and Seattle, Washington. Members of several different unions, workers in non-union shops, and community activists crowded into a community hall in south Seattle for the public forum, "Unfair to Labor," sponsored by the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP). The urgent need for solidarity between unions and the larger working class was an overriding theme of the event.

Another popular theme was deep disenchantment with the Democrats, and how best to advance labor's agenda in the political arena. Agreement was strong on the need for militant strikes and mass actions, such as the December 12, 2011 Seattle port shutdown. Several people also raised the urgent need for a mass workers party, and the FSP presidential campaign of Stephen Durham-Christina López as an important vehicle for building such a party. The evening struck a high note when panelist Calvin Borders, a short-haul trucker, clasped hands with co-panelist Mike Fuqua, a longshoreman, and the two vowed to collaborate to advance the cause of both their struggles.

Two separate battles

Borders, a 14-year veteran driver at the Port of Seattle, is a mainstay of the newly formed Seattle Port Truckers Association, which led a strike in February 2012 to protest deplorable conditions. The truckers, many of them East African immigrants, haul millions of dollars in freight for a profitable industry. Yet most drivers barely make a living. Designated as "independent contractors," they pay for breakages en route, repair of rigs, and hefty fines for overloads – even though they have no control over the weight of

the containers they haul. Borders decried the long hours they sit in traffic and at the dock – without pay. They also are not even allowed to use restrooms at the gates of the ports. Others called these appalling conditions "apartheid" on the waterfront.

In December, Occupy, and community organizations including FSP, organized a shutdown at Seattle's port as part of a West Coast Shut Down. In February, 400 truckers went on strike. These actions cost shippers millions of dollars, and Borders called the solidarity accomplished a "milestone" in organizing truckers.

Yet conditions remain intolerable and the Association is still trying to change drivers' job status from "independent contractor" to employee. This would

President Obama set a terrible precedent, calling on armed Coast Guard vessels to escort EGT's non-union ship through floating ILWU picket lines. Like the truckers, ILWU's fight is far from over.

qualify them for workers' compensation and other benefits under labor law, including the right to unionize. Panelist Annaliza Torres, a leader in Organized Workers for Labor Solidarity (OWLS), expressed dismay over the racism of some longshore workers toward truckers, especially given the International Longshore and Warehouse Union's (ILWU) proud history of fighting discrimination. Torres, whose father was an organizer in the Alaska Cannery Workers union, said that multiracial solidarity was instrumental in improving conditions for cannery workers. Those workers ultimately became part of ILWU. Mike Fuqua from ILWU Local 21 in Longview, also expressed outrage. "Faulty equipment is not OK!" he said. "Lousy wages are not OK! A fight for humanity is what we have here!"

Fuqua's Local 21 is locked in its own struggle with Export Grain Terminal (EGT), a story that captured headlines last year when the multi-national consortium tried to bust the Local and end 75 years of ILWU jurisdiction on the docks. Fuqua described how he was radicalized by the fight, and said that "if we didn't do anything, we were going to lose everything." Fuqua and other rank-and-filers, backed by ILWU's courageous Women's Auxiliary, faced off cops on the picket line, and formed alliances with the Occupy Movement. This led to historic shutdown actions to demonstrate solidarity with Local 21 and short-haul truckers along the West Coast.

The actions helped Local 21 preserve their jurisdiction at Longview when EGT and ILWU signed a contract in February. But the courts, police, and government are still backing EGT, Fuqua reported.

The Local lost their hiring hall in the contract with EGT and key union activists are being blacklisted now. Also, President Obama set a terrible precedent, calling on armed Coast Guard vessels to escort EGT's non-union ship through floating ILWU picket lines. Like the truckers, ILWU's fight is far from over.

Coming together

Panelist Torres, who worked on the Port shutdown as an activist with OWLS and the FSP, described some key barriers holding back labor. One problem is union misleaders "who too often collaborate and compromise with the bosses, and keep a lid on the movement." Another is the Democratic Party which, she said, is "clearly not a friend of labor." Torres urged the building of a mass party for the working class, because without a political voice of its own, labor is losing. She also advocated a write-in vote for FSP's presidential ticket — Stephen Durham and Christina López, as an important protest in the electoral arena.

In addition to the above challenges, Torres said labor "must bridge the divisions within our class." High on the priority list is tackling racism, such as the attitude of some ILWU members toward short haul truckers, and anti-immigrant bigotry, especially toward darker-skinned immigrants. This destroys solidarity and excludes the most militant, Torres said. She also pointed to red-baiting as a problem that has "got to go."

The discussion that followed was as electric as the speakers. A carpenter declared that members did not support their union leadership's lack of solidarity with longshore workers. A union bus driver told the crowd, "If we want to change things, we've got to step up to leadership in our unions." An ILWU Local 52 member paraphrased railroad porters union organizer A. Philip Randolph, advising, "You can't hold onto your victories without an organization." The Seattle FSP organizer echoed that sentiment, inviting everyone to get involved in the FS 2012 Presidential campaign. A former Teamster said the fight for union democracy is critical. And a female ILWU member from Longview said, "When one wins, it's a win for everyone." Following that descriptive conclusion, the crowd stuck around to plan, in sync with one panelist's remark, "We're all fighting against the same small group of people. And the fight's coming."

Linda Averill, a member of Amalgamated Transit Union 587 and bus driver for public transit in King County.

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GMO Free USA launches campaign boycotting Kellogg's

On June 26, 2012, Kellogg Company contributed \$20,167.59 to the California political campaign, Stop the Costly Food Labeling Proposition, sponsored by farmers and food producers. This organization was set up to spread propaganda about the cost of labeling GMOs to California residents. In this digital age, you have to wonder why a company would spend more money than it could possibly cost to change their product labels to fight against the consumer's right to know what we are eating.

Kellogg's products contain genetically engineered ingredients (GMOs) that were released into our food supply without independent long term testing. The FDA does not oversee the nature or extent of testing that these GMOs undergo. Instead, they allow the companies that develop them and profit from their sale, to determine whether they are safe. "The superficial studies they do conduct are widely criticized as rigged to avoid finding problems." "Genetic engineering is crude and imprecise, and the results are unpredictable." Mounting scientific evidence has shown that the GMOs in our food supply are not safe for human consumption.

Kellogg's products contain an EPA Registered Pesticide also known as GMO Bt Corn, and other GMOs that have been scientifically linked to health problems. These problems include:

infertility
organ damage
certain cancers
leaky gut
autism
autoimmune diseases
allergies
birth defects
inflammatory bowel diseases
learning disabilities
attention deficit disorders
accelerated aging
faulty insulin regulation

The FDA doesn't care, *but we do*. Please boycott Kellogg's products until they remove GMOs!

Data reveals that risk of using supplements is "super-safe"

The UK-based Alliance for Natural Health International recently revealed data showing that compared to the risk of supplements use, an individual is:

- Around 900 times more likely to die from food poisoning
- Nearly 300,000 times more likely to die from a preventable medical injury during a UK hospital stay, which is comparable to the individual risk of dying that active military face in Iraq or Afghanistan

Additionally, the data shows that adverse reactions to pharmaceutical drugs are:

- 62,000 times more likely to kill you than food supplements
- 7,750 times more likely to kill you than herbal remedies

The data, which was collected from official sources in the UK and EU, demonstrate that both food supplements and herbal remedies are in the 'super-safe' category of individual risk—meaning risk of death from their consumption is less than 1 in 10 million. Besides drugs and hospital injuries, you're also more likely to die from being struck by lightning or drowning in your bathtub than having a lethal reaction to herbs or supplements.

—Organic Consumers Association

McKenna's minimum wage stance decried

David Groves

SEATTLE--Low-wage workers and community supporters gathered outside Republican gubernatorial candidate Rob McKenna's Attorney General's office in Seattle on Tuesday, giant McKenna-faced pennies in hand, to give him their "two cents" about their struggles to make ends meet while McKenna has opposed a small increase in the minimum wage.

McKenna tried to block a voter-approved 12-cent increase in Washington state's minimum wage for 2011, issuing a new interpretation of the popular 1998 initiative that aimed to end the annual inflationary adjustments in certain years, including 2011. Citing McKenna's interpretation, corporate lobbying groups representing minimum-wage paying industries sued the state to try to block that increase. The judge quickly ruled against them on summary judgment, saying the law was clear and the 12-cent increase in 2011 should proceed.

But apparently, the industries that pay low wages haven't forgotten McKenna's advocacy on their behalf. A recent report shows that the four of the six largest low-wage employers in the country has given a total of more than \$16,000 to the McKenna campaign

—Walmart, Yum Brands (which owns Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, and KFC), McDonald's, and Subway.

On July 23, in a protest organized by Working Washington, low-wage workers including a child-care workers and airport worker demonstrated outside McKenna's office to criticize his position on the minimum wage and

to tell him "the 99% needs a raise." They held 12 pennies—representing the 12-cent minimum wage increase McKenna tried to block—that had his image on it and read, "In low wages I trust."

They also pointed out that McKenna has said his six-figure salary as Attorney General is "too low." At Washington's \$9.04 an hour minimum wage, a full-time worker earns about \$18,800 a year. The state's business lobbying groups have begun to push for a sub-minimum "training wage," and Republicans in Olympia are expected to introduce

legislation in 2013 to accomplish this. The prospects for passing such a bill would be greatly improved if Rob McKenna is elected governor this fall.

The event in Seattle on Tuesday was part of a national day of action to raise the minimum wage. Low-wage workers in dozens of cities are calling on elected officials and big corporations to give the 99% a raise by supporting higher state minimum wage laws and measures like the proposal by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) to raise the federal minimum wage to \$9.80 an hour and adjust it for inflation every year, as Washington does.

David Groves is the editor of The Stand, Washington State Labor Council's online newspaper providing news about and for working people.

This article, originally printed in *The Stand*, is reprinted with permission.



McKenna pennies--engraved on the coins "For the ONE perCent." Photo: Working Washington

Obama may grant immunity to former Mexican president responsible for the 1997 massacre of women and children

Camilo Pérez-Bustillo

News reports indicate that the Obama Administration is "actively considering" whether to grant immunity to former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, currently a Professor at Yale University and Director of its Center for the Study of Globalization, in connection with the suit currently pending before Judge Thompson in New Haven regarding his responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity related to the December 1997 massacre of 45 displaced Ma-

yan villagers—36 of them women and children—by paramilitary forces acting in complicity with the Mexican Army, under Zedillo's command. Most of those killed and wounded were assaulted as they prayed for justice.

The case was brought pursuant to the Torture Victims Protection Act and Alien Tort Statute. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Bartolomé de Las Casas Human Rights Center in Chiapas have extensively documented the Achteal case and the broader context of the Mexican government's responsibility for persistent human rights vio-

lations by the Mexican Armed Forces throughout the last 20 years, funded at least in part by US tax dollars through assistance to purported "counter-insurgency" and "anti-drug" initiatives.

The National Security Archive at George Washington University has revealed declassified cables from the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) indicating official US knowledge of "direct support" provided by the Mexican Army to paramilitary groups such as those responsible for the Achteal massacre between 1994 and 1999, implicating both Zedillo and his predecessor Carlos Salinas de Gortari. International media such as *The Economist* (in its edition of January 1, 1998) have reported along the same lines that the "authorities knew the Chiapas killing was on its way." Meanwhile the case has been admitted for review by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission of the OAS in Washington, and has recently been submitted to the Permanent People's Tribunal, based in Rome, the successor to the renowned Russell Tribunal of the 1960's.

Given this context, for the Obama Administration to grant immunity to Zedillo would be a gross violation of fundamental norms of due process and the imperatives of international justice, and a shameful admission that US "interests of state" tainted by our complicity with Mexico's ruling elite, the "drug war," Mexican oil, and NAFTA have greater weight than the rights of the victims of crimes against humanity to truth, justice, reparations, and non-repetition of the conduct which violated their rights.

Camilo Pérez-Bustillo is Research Professor of the Graduate Programme in Human Rights and the Faculty of Law, Autonomous University of Mexico City.



SHOWING AT THE OLYMPIA FILM SOCIETY



5 Broken Cameras August 10 - 16

An extraordinary work of both cinematic and political activism, *5 Broken Cameras* is a deeply personal, first-hand account of non-violent resistance in Bil'in, a West Bank village threatened by encroaching Israeli settlements.

—Rotten Tomatoes

It may seem perverse to praise an eyewitness account of political trauma for its formal accomplishments, but for a project like this to claim the attention of an audience it has to justify itself as cinema. ... this film, made collaboratively by Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi, is partly a piece of advocacy journalism. But it is also a visual essay in autobiography and, as such, a modest, rigorous and moving work of art.

—A. O. SCOTT, NY Times

What makes *5 Broken Cameras* stand out is its insistence on nuance and its refusal to get caught up in the self-defeating war of words over who is the bigger victim.

—Ella Taylor, The Village Voice

Koch Brothers Exposed August 31 - September 6

With an unflinching investigative look at the Koch brothers' money and power, *Brave New Films* has once again created a film full of rollicking and rigorous facts that informs and challenges corporate media with the truth

—Katrina vanden Heuvel, The Nation

Kochs are the subject of a blistering (but to all appearances factual) documentary by the activist filmmaker Robert Greenwald. *Koch Brothers Exposed* aims to show how the brothers' machinations affect the lives of "living, breathing human beings."

—Julian Brookes, Rolling Stone

The content is explosive, and Greenwald knows it. That's why he is working to find "alternative venues" to get his documentary out to the public and break through the "gatekeepers."

—Marcia G. Yerman, Huffington Post

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For more information contact Allan Hill at 306-705-0922

INFO WWW.JUSTICE4MARISSA.COM DONATE

USDA to okay the gnarliest GMO soy yet

On the sleepy Friday after Independence Day, the USDA quietly signaled its intention to greenlight a new genetically engineered soybean seed from Dow AgroSciences. The product is designed to produce soy plants that withstand 2,4-D, a highly toxic herbicide (and, famously, the less toxic component in the notorious Vietnam War-era defoliant Agent Orange).

If the two products are deregulated, Dow will enjoy a massive profit opportunity. Every year, about half of all US farmland is planted in corn and soy. Currently, Dow's rival Monsanto has a tight grip on weed management in corn-and-soy country. Upwards of 90 percent of soy and 70 percent of corn is engineered to withstand another herbicide called glyphosate through highly profitable Monsanto's Roundup Ready seed lines. And after so many years of lashing so much land with the same herbicide, glyphosate-resistant superweeds are now vexing farmers and "alarming" weed-control experts throughout the midwest.

And that's where Dow's 2,4-D-ready corn and soy seeds come in. Dow's novel products will be engineered to withstand glyphosate and 2,4-D, so farmers can douse their fields with both herbicides; the 2,4-D will kill the weeds that glyphosate no longer can. That's the marketing pitch, anyway.

The USDA, for its part, is buying what Dow is selling. In May, the agency released its Draft Environmental Assessment for the product, declaring that its "preferred alternative" was to deregulate it. And on July 13, USDA put out its "Plant Pest Risk Assessment" for it. This is a key document in the regulatory process for GMOs. Under the industry-friendly framework for GMO oversight cobbled together in the early '90s by then-Vice President Dan Quayle, the USDA can only regulate genetically modified organisms if they literally pose a risk to other plants as defined by the Federal Plant Pest Act. This is a very high bar; and as happens with nearly all GMO applications, the USDA's assessment of Dow's novel soy concluded that it's "highly unlikely to pose a plant pest risk."

Mexican cartel pot growers in California are a threat to wildlife

Damage done to wildlife and the environment by illegal marijuana growers is causing great concern, especially for officials with the state Department of Fish and Game.

The evidence is growing - pesticides used on illegal marijuana grows may be sickening and killing wildlife. Specifically, a new study documents deaths of fishers, a forest carnivore of the weasel family, in remote forested areas due to rat poisons, but Fish and Game Warden Patrick Foy said the damage goes far beyond one species.

"No question. It's not just fishers, it impacts all scavengers, all the animals that scavenge on carcasses," said Foy.

The recent study by UC Davis Wildlife Veterinarian Deana Clifford said there is now evidence that pot grows use large quantities of pesticides and poisons and they have a longtime impact on wildlife.

Tulare County Sheriff's Capt. Mike Boudreaux said his officers have found all kinds of pesticides and poisons at grow sites in the forest. On top of that, he said, they have found remains of wildlife killed by the gardeners.

"We find rattlesnakes that are killed, deer and bears. We find rat poison there that's to kill squirrels and mice," he said.

And, what they are finding is not your garden variety poison or pesticide. It is illegal stuff brought here from Mexico.

"These gangs are using that (Mexico products) because they're more effective," said Foy. "That's pretty potent stuff," he added.

WIP Announcements

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

Community Special Events

New Direction Fest 2012

Friday, August 3, 4 pm

The Midnight Sun

Sat/Sun, August 4/5, 10 am - 11:30 PM
Eagles Ballroom

New Direction Fest 2012 will be a space for people of the worldwide hardcore and punk community to share experiences, skills, ideas, and information about community organizing, activism, labor organizing, and other forms of radical action. This convergence will include live bands, workshops, and speakers engaged in the practical application of the radical ideas and values of hardcore punk.

Check their Facebook page for updates.

The Make Olympia Street Markets

Saturdays, August 4 & 18, 11 am - 5 pm
415 4th Ave E, Olympia, WA

Make Olympia is a community market in Olympia, Washington. Our mission is to encourage, support, and promote the entrepreneurial efforts of local, independent, and small-scale crafters, artisans, artists, performers and other talents.

Lots more info at www.makeolympia.com

First Annual YELL Convention

Sunday, August 5, 10 am - 2 pm

Coast Wenatchee Center Hotel

201 N Wenatchee Ave, Wenatchee, WA

Washington Young Emerging Labor Leaders over the past year has been engaging the young and young at heart in the political process with canvassing and phonebanking, in leadership development with the Emerging Leaders Initiative (a program of the WA State Labor Education and Research Center), and civic engagement by hosting workshops touting the power of being UNION, and adding our voices to the many rallies and marches around the state. Our mission is to develop future leaders (approximately 35 years and younger) with the knowledge and skills necessary to strengthen their roles as leaders within the labor movement and to work towards progressive change. WA YELL participants are union members, community and student activists of all ages.

We have been a part of many successes thus far, but we want to continue to grow and move into more communities. We are very excited to be hosting our first event in eastern Washington. The cost is only \$20 which covers the cost of lunch.

washingtonyell@facebook.com

Media Island Juicy Benefit Brunch!

Sunday, August 5, 12 pm - 2 pm

Media Island, 819 Adams St. SW

(Across from the Timberland Library)

Media Island International is a resource and networking center for individuals, organizations, and movements working on Social Justice, Economic Democracy, Ecological Sustainability, and Peace. We gather, evaluate, and distribute under-published information on critical issues at strategic times.

Come eat good food and drink good juice for a good cause! Live music! Live people!

A Reading from Hurt: Notes on Torture in Modern Democracy

Sunday, August 5, 6 pm

Last Word Books

211 4th Avenue East, Olympia

HURT is Portland activist Kristian Williams' collection of articles and interviews on the history, psychology, and current state of torture in democratic societies. Williams, author of *Our Enemies in Blue* and *American Methods: Torture and the Logic of Domination*, has pulled together a vast and comprehensive resource on this abominable act. Articles include David Cunningham's "Prisons, Torture, and Imperialism," a piece on the anarchist perspective taken from comments at the 2008 Anarchist Bookfair in San Francisco, and a great essay on writing about torture, among many others. This sober 64-page document is a heavy piece of work—dark, informative, and oft times harrowing. But it's also about working hard to intact change. As says Williams in the Gyoza Nehez interview, "At the outset, I think it's more important to have a

sense of hope, that things can be different and through our actions we can contribute to that change. The joy comes later, from struggle itself as much as from victory." HURT is a how-to manual on fighting and understanding torture—a piece of the struggle itself.

thee [quotidian quondam quartet]

Monday, August 13, 8 pm

The Royal Lounge

311 Capital Way, Olympia

Mellow jazz standards and soft ballads. Richard Lopez on alto flute and trombone. Drew Gibbs on piano. Ethan Jodziewicz on bass. Craig Cootsona on drums. There is a \$5 cover.

Love Our Local Fest

Sunday, August 19, 1-9pm

Intersection of San Francisco and Bethel

Sharing a day of music, inspirational speakers, delicious food, skills, friends and fun, we will showcase many types of local talent and opportunities. Common spaces, a children's area, interactive art projects, local non-profits and a marketplace create our celebration's unique village microcosm.

The intersection of San Francisco and Bethel will be closed to vehicular traffic.

We will need greeters, recyclers, decoration stewards & help with many other tasks on the day of the event, as well as leading up to it!

If you interested in volunteering, being a vendor, or just have additional questions please contact Marie:

email: buylocalss@gmail.com

phone: (360) 918-3740

Dandelion Seed Conference: Herbal Medicine for Social and Community Healing

September 21-23, 2012

The Evergreen State College

The Dandelion Seed is hosting a conference on the role of plants and herbal medicine in community and social healing. Join us for a weekend in September at the beautiful Longhouse at The Evergreen State College with workshops by renowned herbalists, keynote speeches, herbal swaps, a community panel, plant walks, and more! And mark your calendars for September 21-23. You don't want to miss this!

\$250 registration. All proceeds benefit the Olympia Free Herbal Clinic, project of the Dandelion Seed Collective.

dandelionseedconference@gmail.com

www.dandelionseedcollective.org

Radical Mycology Convergence 2012

Thursday-Monday, October 18-22

Port Townsend, WA

We envision this unique event to be a volunteer-run gathering of mycologists, fungal enthusiasts, and Earth healers coming together to share skills and information related to the benefits of the fungal kingdom in terms of remedial properties as well as human uses. This 5-day event will culminate in a remediation project (putting theory to practice) and will also be a unique chance to build community with like-minded mycophiles (aka mushroom lovers) from around the world.

These skills need to get shared! We want to make information on fungi and their healing powers accessible and tangible for as many people as possible without making it overly-heady or technical. By creating an encouraging space we hope to "be-mushroom" and educate all who attend.

The organizers of the RMC would like to cordially invite anyone interested in participating in this event to come and learn, help out, or teach!

We have created a new website for the RMC! Please visit it here for all the information you will ever need about the event, including how to register. The suggested donation is \$10-50, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

NEW Radical Mycology Convergence website: www.radicalmycologyconvergence.com

Public Power Initiative Celebratory Party!

(and potluck of festive desserts)

Thursday, August 9, 7 pm

Traditions Cafe, 5th and Water Streets, Olympia

Thurston Public Power Initiative Crew teams up with Olympia's own Citizen's Band, other local musicians, and you!

Thurston Public Power Initiative (TPPI) was certified by the auditor, thus it *will* be on the November general election ballot. Over 15,000 of you (yes, thousand!) helped achieve this initial victory by signing a petition. Thank you. And, let the electoral campaign *begin!*

But wait! Before that gets into full swing, it's *time now to celebrate* this successful, grassroots effort. The TPPI crew is having a community party for those who support this local campaign, and those who want to know more about it. *Come enjoy some local live music, refreshments, and your neighbors!* Also, come hear what you might do to help this campaign get to that next victory when the headlines in early November will read, "the TPPI passes! Thurston County PUD can now go electric!"

Come enjoy your splendid community, and bring a neighbor; this achievement is something worth celebrating! Power to the people!

The Olympia Village Building Convergence August 19-26

Imagine living in a beautiful neighborhood that you have designed and co-created with your neighbors. If you are interested in changing the spaces where you live, work or play into more engaging and vibrant places to connect, please join the OlyVBC!

We envision Olympia as a network of neighborhood villages that share, preserve and celebrate culture, skills and resources; honoring the earth and building resilience for future generations. Whether you are a member of an existing community group, or an individual who desires closer community ties, we invite you to participate in the realization of this vision.

There will be a variety of workshops and events hosted downtown and in east and west Olympia including cobb wall building, a Village Kitchen, skill-share day, wild-crafting and more. For more information, visit www.olyvbc.org or email olyvbc@gmail.com.

10th Annual ARTrails of Southwest Washington Open Studio Tour and Gala Reception September 15-16 and 22-23, 10 am-5 pm (free, self-guided tour)

Spend a fall weekend wandering back roads, enjoying wonderful art, and watching the artists at work in their studios. Almost 60 artists will open their studios to the public the 3rd and 4th weekends of September.

The Gala Opening Reception will be held Friday, September 14 (4-8 pm), at the Exhibition Gallery in downtown Centralia's Historic Train Depot (210 Railway Avenue, Centralia 98531). Artwork includes Paintings, Sculpture, Glass Art, Jewelry, Pottery, Mixed Media, Fiber Art, Carved Wood, Basketry, Photographic Art, Collage, and much more.

The Exhibition Gallery at the Historic Train Depot in Centralia will be open September 16 - 25th, 10 am-5 pm, serving as the ARTrails Gallery and a starting point for the tour.

For more information contact ARTrails of South West Washington at Info@ARTrailsOfSWW.org or 360-736-1082 or PO Box 1628, Centralia, WA 98531. <http://www.ARTrailsOfSWW.org/>

Gather a carload of friends and discover Southwest Washington

Surprise, it doesn't trickle down!

A study by the Tax Justice Network (a British think tank) of data from the Bank for International Settlements and the International Monetary Fund reveals the "super-rich have taken advantage of lax tax rules to siphon off at least \$21 trillion, and possibly as much as \$32 trillion, from their home countries and hide it abroad—a sum larger than the entire American economy— that doesn't include non-financial assets such as art, yachts, and mansions, which the rich like to use as homes for their immense riches... In fact, some experts believe the amount of assets being held offshore is so large that accounting for it fully would radically alter the balance of financial power between countries."

In addition, this hidden money is not included in surveys of wealth inequality so the surveys "radically underestimate the true gap between rich and poor."

Source: Heather Stewart, 'Wealth doesn't trickle down', *The Guardian*

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Why I tried to arrest Avigdor Lieberman (again)

David Cronin

July 24, 2012--For the second time in as many years, I tried to arrest Avigdor Lieberman today.

As soon as I saw the Israeli foreign minister enter a room where he was scheduled to give a press conference in Brussels, I stood up and shouted: "Mr Lieberman, this is a citizen's arrest. You are charged with the crime of apartheid."

Immediately, I was grabbed by security guards. They whisked me to a side exit and the scariest-looking of them grabbed me by the throat and looked me in the eye with an air of menace. "I am pissed off with you," he yelled (in French). I tried to speak but was unable to. Once he released his grip, I found myself with my arms and legs forcibly outstretched as the security guards searched my pockets and patted me up and down. Then they tied my hands behind my back with plastic cuffs.

The security guards consulted among themselves for a moment about how they could avoid my detention being witnessed by journalists. "We should be discreet," said the scary guy (who I recognised from my attempt to arrest Lieberman last year). The scary guy pulled me backwards into a nearby room and told me to sit on the floor.

I sat trembling for a few moments, until the head of security for the EU's Council of Ministers arrived. He shook hands with the guards and looked behind my back to see my hands tied up.

"Mr. Cronin, we meet again," the head of security said.

"Yes, Sir."

"Why have you done this?"

"I feel very strongly about the occupation of Palestine, Sir."

He told me there were other forums than press conferences at which I could express my views on human rights. I explained that this was one of the few opportunities I had to confront senior representatives of the Israeli state directly.

I asked the head of security to remove my handcuffs, pointing out that I was no threat to anyone and that I was outnumbered by his colleagues. A moment later, the scary guy came through the door with cutters and removed the cuffs. I was allowed to sit in a chair.

The head of security explained to me that my press card was being confiscated and that I was banned from the Council of Ministers' building from now on. After 20 minutes (my estimate), I was told that I was free to go and was escorted by two

guards to the building's main exit.

Moral duty

While I had reservations about making a second attempt at arresting Lieberman, I felt that I had a moral duty to do so when I learned this week that the EU has formally offered to "upgrade" relations with Israel. By expanding the scope of its political and economic ties with Israel, the EU is becoming increasingly complicit in Israeli apartheid and the brutal treatment of the Palestinian people.

Since my earlier attempt to arrest Lieberman (in February 2011), Israeli apartheid has become more extreme. Last year I complained that Lieberman and his party Yisrael Beiteinu had sponsored about 20 laws and bills before the Knesset (Israel's parliament), all of which were designed either to discriminate against Palestinians or to deny the right to freedom of expression. The list of discriminatory and anti-democratic initiatives has now grown to 30.

Among the most egregious violations of human rights being planned by Lieberman and his fellow ministers are the displacement of 70,000 Bedouins in the Negev (Naqab). Many of the Bedouins have been living in this region since before the state of Israel was founded.

The Praver Plan—as the blueprint for

the dispossession of Bedouins is called—is just one of a series of measures intended to put Palestinian land in the hands of Israel. Two days ago, the Israeli high court was informed of plans to demolish eight Palestinian villages in the South Hebron Hills because the area is "needed" for training exercises by the Israeli military.

If there is any doubt that Israel is a racist state, please take note of the recent remarks by Eli Yishai, the interior minister, about African asylum-seekers. By declaring that "Israel belongs to the white man", Yishai has effectively encouraged pogroms against everyone with a different colour of skin to his own.

As a European citizen, I am deeply ashamed of how the governments and institutions which claim to act on my behalf are embracing the apartheid state of Israel. I refuse to be silent while the European Union abets apartheid, an internationally recognized crime against humanity. That is why I tried to arrest Avigdor Lieberman once again.

David Cronin, author of Europe's Alliance With Israel: Aiding the Occupation, has written for a variety of publications. He has also attempted to place Tony Blair under citizen's arrest for crimes against humanity. This piece is reprinted with permission from the author and was originally published in The Electronic Intifada.

Having succeeded in thrilling America with Obamacare, the president decides that it is high time that he also be appreciated for the other singularly magnificent achievement of his administration: Obamacarelessness.



MR. FISH

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August 2012

WORKS IN PROGRESS

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LIONS, TIGERS, AND INVESTING IN OLYMPIA

PUBLIC POWER INITIATIVE IS READY TO ROLL!

WHY WE SHOULD CARE ABOUT THE AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE ACT

KOCH BROTHERS EXPOSED AT THE CAPITOL THEATER

AUG WORKS IN PROGRESS FREE

AN ECO-FRIENDLY DELIVERY SERVICE

FREE