Mutual aid groups build community in Olympia

Everyone has something to contribute; Everyone has something they need

Sarah H. Keefe

The COVID-19 pandemic response in the US has challenged communities, as local food banks experienced shortages and shelter beds became even more restricted. Confronted by an uncertain and under-resourced governmental response, many communities countered with energized “mutual aid” organizing. People recognized their common need and decided on a strategy of mutual support. In Olympia, at least four mutual aid groups sprung up, each with a somewhat different focus. MAC, MAP, META, BPI.

Olympia Mutual Aid Collective (OMAC) was started as a Facebook page in March 2020, as the beginning of the stay-at-home orders, by a local teacher. By mid-April, the page had grown to over 3,000 members and now has over 5,000 members. Their goal is to be a bottom up structure of cooperation that meets all expressed needs.

A volunteer with OlyMAC, Audrey Daye, recalls that “in the past year, in addition to the countless asks that have been fulfilled between members on the page itself, we’ve streamed tens of thousands of dollars in direct aid contributions to community members most in need of those funds. Sometimes this aid is in the form of food or Visa cards, to help struggling families get groceries or keep their heat on. Sometimes it’s for things like a refrigerator, or a car battery, or a bus ticket. Sometimes it’s for insulin... It’s everything.”

Another impetus came when Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and organizer Mariame Kaba called a virtual town hall to support organizing in response to COVID-19. Their toolkit shared that mutual aid is about “getting people in the community into. To make this possible in an ancillary role, the BPI is started by the Olympia Black Panthers. “The Black Power Initiative provides emergency financial support in the form of small, low barrier cash grants to black people in need. It’s an attempt to help alleviate the constant crisis that racism, state and civil violence, and marginalization force black people into. To make this possible we need those in our community to step into solidarity with us and radically redistribute your finances.”

Shon Meckfessel echoes that mutual aid efforts have been youth of color. Those serve as an antidote to liberal charity efforts that often perpetuate existing inequalities and are hierarchical and top-down, versus horizontal and relational. Charity often centers the generosity of the donor and their good will, versus the needs and experience of the person receiving support. “By choosing a name (mutual aid) that focuses on relationship, a reciprocal relationship, between people sharing out resources and people who could use those resources—there is a pedagogical goal that, prefiguring equality, an egalitarian society, freely helping each other out because that’s what we do. As opposed to charity and literal saviorism or ‘helping hands’ liberalism.”

Mutual Aid Partners (OlyMAP) grew out of work by Just Housing to downtown homeless camp sweeps back in 2018 and 2019. They started Mutual Aid Mondays along with Olympia Assembly and Solidarity Network, and Olympia IWW and Oly Community

Thurston County Sheriff’s Office a law unto itself?

Eleanor Steinhagen

A February report from Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson reveals that the Thurston County Sheriff’s Office (TCSO) refused to cooperate with an AG inquiry into whether law enforcement agencies are complying with Initiative 940. Among other mandates, the law created by I-940 requires that investigations of police use of deadly force be conducted by an agency independent of those involved. It also calls for appointing a family liaison, providing weekly updates to the public, and involving at least two non-law enforcement community representatives.

TCSO is part of the Region III Critical Incident Investigation Team (CIIT), along with four other area sheriff’s offices. The AG report covered incidents occurring between January 1, 2019, when I-940 became law, and June 30. The Region III CIIT conducted three use-of-deadly-force investigations during that time — the most of any agency. These include investigations into the shooting deaths of 60-year-old Sok Chin Son in January 2020, Kathryn Hale in March 2020, and the killing of an Unidentified Individual.

The Region III Team refused the surveys needed by the AG inquiry instead offering their investigation files for review: “Investigations into police use of deadly force are complex because each incident has unique intricacies and context. We believe that the name invokes a blunt instrument that will strip away the context that is so important when trying to understand the steps taken in a complex investigation.”

Can the TCSO investigation of Michael Reinoehl’s killing be reliable?

Officers from the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department, Lakewold Police, and the Washington Department of Corrections made up the task force assembled by US Marshal Ryan Kimmel on September 3 that carried out the extrajudicial killing of Michael Reinoehl. Reinoehl, a Portland activist, was wanted in the shooting death of a far-right activist, was gunned down outside Olympia. Shortly before the fatal encounter, Trump infamously tweeted, “Do your job, and do it fast. Everybody knows who this thug is.”

The Thurston County Sheriff’s Office led the investigation into Reinoehl’s killing. TCSO has not released their full report, and the review of the shooting turned over on March 31 to the Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney is riddled with contradictions, inconsistencies, and questionable claims by the officers involved. Police said Reinoehl fired his gun, initiating the gunfire exchange, but they didn’t find a bullet. Reinoehl’s gun was found in his pants pocket with a full magazine. There was no forensic evidence he fired his gun and no exit hole found through his car. Police fired 40 rounds, five of which pierced Reinoehl’s body.
Finding common ground

There’s a lot of talk these days about how polarized “the country” is. The talk fixates on Trump voters vs everyone else, or Democrats vs Republicans or liberals vs conservatives.

When we at WIP began thinking about polarization, two things came up. First, consider that the two parties promote the “Trump vs everyone, libs vs conservatives” idea of “polarization” as an electoral strategy. We think the explanation for the country’s division lies in the effects of racism and inequality.

Second, we thought it better to pose the question of division from the也没 the side: finding common ground.

Racism
Eleanor Steinhauser’s article argues that our Sheriff’s support for white supremacy undermines trust in the practices of law enforcement. A second review of Caste lays bare the legal and structural mechanisms that divide us along racial lines.

There are signs of hope, though. On page 4, there is a reflection on local actions stemming from the new awareness of the effects of racism triggered by the police killing of George Floyd. An article from November 5, 2020 on a new chief of the Olympia Police Department acknowledges small steps toward involving the community in defining what is needed. Bill Fishburn describes the way racism divides us but then embarks on an effort to bring people together — something as basic as serving beer.

Inequality
The United States is a country of staggering disparities and we tried to show a bit of that on page 6. There is a graphic illustration of how little common ground there is in the way we treat those who are responsible for providing services absolutely essential to the health of our community.

To become employed as a teacher or a nurse you must first invest thousands for training, be tested and certified — and be paid at a modest level at entry. Throughout your career you must demonstrate continued ability to meet standards to keep your certification.

To become employed as a police officer you only need to be a high school graduate (or have a GED), pass a test to be eligible to possess a firearm. That qualifies you for an entry-level salary above the median household income in Thurston County. And while a police officer attends training as part of their job, no state law sets milestones for them to meet through their career and they don’t need to do anything to maintain their certification.

As for how we meet the requirement to house people — we leave that to individuals whose only qualification is money, and who are able to compensate themselves in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Common ground
It turns out that the space for common ground is small when the public sector is ravaged and essential needs of society are privatized. Privatization puts a price on everything so that those who have money can avail themselves of the essential services, and those who do not cannot.

Can there be “common ground” when there is no public sector? As the stories about Mutual Aid and raising food communally show, creating common ground becomes the task of individuals grouping together to provide for community needs. These stories highlight the many positive aspects to this—initiatives, commitment, satisfactions of working together to do something important. But these kinds of arrangements are not sustain able in the long run. There aren’t enough people with time to work for free month after month and year after year. This is confirmed by the continuous and urgent pleas for volunteers that you can find all over the internet (and in this paper).

We need a healthy well-funded public sector that supplies essential public needs. We need governments at all levels that work for the people. —BW

Upcoming themes
June — The big lie. Deadline May 15.
July — The ballot or the bullet. Deadline June 15.

In this issue...

Mutual aid groups build community in Olympia.........................1
Thurston County Sheriff’s Office— a law unto itself?..............1
By train via Stampede Pass to Yakima and beyond..................3
A year after the killing of George Floyd ..................4
The search for an OPD chief and police reform .............5
The Victory Garden on Martin Way ..................6
Sowing community with veterans in the garden ..........7
Reflecting on bringing people to the table ..................8
OCEP appeals Oly City Council on West Bay Yards .......10
Lessons of Imperium ...........................................11
Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents ..................11
Political roots of mutual aid ......................................12
Endless war update ..............................................13
Priest detained at Sea-Tac FDC continues resistance ....14
Where will the money come from? ..................14
Community spotlight .............................................15

There’s a change in the Works

Common ground
Where?
The middle is a point equidistant from two poles. That’s it. There is nothing inherently virtuous about being neither here nor there. Buried in this is a false equivalency of ideas, what you might call the “good people on both sides” phe nomenon. When we revisit our shameful past, ask yourself, Where was the middle? Rather than chatting up a nice program of indentured servitude? Instead of subjecting Japanese-American citizens to indefinite detention during WWII, what if we had agreed to give them a receipt for them to rejoin their lawful American citizenship? We would be less a demanding role for someone who would commit to recruiting articles each month around a particular topic area.

Details for these positions and how to contact us are online at www.olywip.org under About Us. See the web page for all information about the mission and structure of the paper.
Then this happened...

...left at the altar—again. At their April 12 meeting, Port of Olympia Commissioners McGregor and Downing said they needed to act urgently to approve an arrangement for Matson Shipping to park an empty cargo vessel at the Ma- rine Terminal. They overrode the third commissioner’s objections to proceeding with no discussion and no public notice because the situation was urgent. Matson said they might need to bring the ship there for 3 years, but someone would have to move the derelict ferry that’s been docked there for 3 years, but someone would have to figure that out. A few days later the urgency disappeared. As did the Matson vessel. The port “received word” that the ship wasn’t coming. This was the port’s second disappointment—a plan to bring two Ready Reserve Fleet ships fell through in February. The Evergreen Ferry continues dockside. The rent is paid through June. That’s one sure thing.

...housing prices aren’t “filtering down.” One idea is that approving more market rate housing will bring prices down. Nope. Even with tax incentives for market rate units downtown and applications to build over 1000 new housing units in Olympia, prices only go up and up. Since the begin- ning of this year, the median price of homes sold in Thurston County jumped from $385,837 in January to $444,500 in March. According to Thurston Regional Planning, housing affordability in Thurston County decreased every year since 2015 and continues to decrease.

...“trickle down” doesn’t work either! Joe Biden admitted that this theory is just an excuse to give tax breaks to the rich. “It’s time to grow the economy from the bottom up and middle out,” the Prez said. Let’s give “bubble up” eco- nomics a chance!

...the court was not convinced, item 2. Washington’s insurance industry executives went to court to stop a new rule that prevented them from including “credit scores” in setting insurance premiums. When their lobbyists mangled proposed legislation that would have done the same thing, Insur- ance Commissioner Kreidler issued an emergency ruling. The big boys argued that Kreidler overstepped his authority, but the judge found otherwise. A win for the little guy.

...the judge was not convinced, item 3. A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit filed by the Jewish Na- tional Fund (JNF) accusing the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights of engaging in “material support for terrorism,” citing the group’s speech and support for the Palesti- nian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. Lawyers say the lawsuit was part of a growing pattern of suppressing activism in support of Palestinian rights. The Center for Constitutional Rights and the organization Palestine Legal have documented this and called it the “Palestine Exception” to free speech. The Olympia Food Co-op honors the boycott (called by Palestinian civil society), and some years ago was the object of a suit over BDS which was similarly dismissed.

Down the Yakima Valley and on to Spokane. This route was active un- til 1981, when AMTRAK shifted to the current Empire Builder route, which goes north from Seattle to Everett. Then crosses the Cascades to Wenatchee and heads straight east. Yakima is the largest commu- nity in the state without passenger rail service. I’ve been involved for many years with All Aboard Washington, an ed- ucational nonprofit that advocates for improved and expanded pas- senger rail service. The restored E-W route would provide service to many communities whose resi- dents have few if any affordable intercity travel options. The latest ‘state of play’ I’ve heard during this year’s legislative session is a House Transportation Plan that includes sufficient money to plan and cost out improvements to the route that will satisfy Federal grant application requirements. If this budget item survives the House-Senate reconciliation process, the planning process would be ideally timed to tap the Biden Administra- tion’s proposed infrastructure funding for improved passenger rail service nationwide.

Thanks for bringing this issue to your readers’ attention. Cascade service Seattle to Portland/Eugene is available to local residents via Intercity Transit’s FREE bus service to the AMTRAK station on Yelm Highway. Once the border reopens, Vancouver BC will again be the end of the line. Try it!

Mark Foutch

Readers’ Alert—new book titles for review!

WIP has received a grant to print book reviews in 2021. How will it work? Each month we’ll publish a list of books (see right column) with All Aboard Washington, an ed- ucational nonprofit that advocates for improved and expanded passenger rail service nationwide.

The Sum of Us—Heather McGhee (how racism allowed public goods to be replaced by private benefit)

Union Made—Eric Lotke (fast-paced novel with a plot about union organizing)

Bring the War Home—Kathleen Belew (white power movement & militias)

Formula Preemptt—Elliott Young (history of immigrant incarceration highlighting individual lives)

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A year after the national outcry over the killing of George Floyd

Janine L.

Nearby a year ago, George Floyd was murdered by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in an arrest, after a store clerk alleged that Floyd had passed a counterfeit $20 bill. The obscenely violent act of kneeling on Floyd’s neck for over nine minutes, killing him—seen and known about only because one young bystander caught it all on video on her phone—ignited a nation into action. Racism and police brutality in America are not new; they have been an integral part of our history.

The jury’s guilty-on-all-counts verdict delivered accountability to Derek Chauvin, but not true justice for George Floyd, much less for the countless people of color whose deaths, torture and victimization from police violence have been zero accountability. Real justice for Floyd and too many others can only happen when we build a nation that fundamentally respects the equal dignity of every person.

How far have we come on that front in a year?

There’s no doubt that these real images of heinous police acts move citizens to action, not unlike how devastating images of the Vietnam War drew a nation into the streets to stop it. But meaningful change in an entrenched racist system is met at every juncture with more resistance from law enforcement and citizens to action, not unlike how it was met at every juncture with more resistance from an entrenched racist system is met at every juncture with more resistance from law enforcement and citizens to action.

The Black Lives Matter movement is alive and well here, yet the pace of reform is slow:

• Street protests continue and so does the police violence upon them. Olympia City Council banned using tear gas for a short time, then rescinded the ban.
• Glaring differences in police force used against BLM protestors, relative to lax police engagement with far-right militia, is disturbing and counterproductive. Olympia police officer Tiffany Coates, warmly greeted by a group of armed vigilantes, smiled and posed for photos, joining in racist hand gestures with the Three Percent far-right group.
• Sgt. Amy King, a 21-year veteran of the OPD, has become a finalist candidate for the Olympia Police Chief position, despite reprimands she received in the last five years—one in which she pulled out and referenced her gun, what she felt like doing while interacting with a particularly mentally ill person.
• Officer Ryan Donald still patrols our streets even after perpetrating serious and maiming violence on two young black brothers.
• The effort to re-allocate policing dollars to community care and mental health services is stymied while two more city police were hired during a reported hiring freeze.

There is an ongoing, gargantuan effort to make change, mainly by committed people of color and their allies. There’s no doubt that these real images of heinous police acts move citizens to action, not unlike how devastating images of the Vietnam War drew a nation into the streets to stop it. But meaningful change in an entrenched racist system is met at every juncture with more resistance from law enforcement and citizens to action, not unlike how it was met at every juncture with more resistance from an entrenched racist system.

 Locally, those working for change are organized and committed

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immediate transformation on multiple fronts—from direct collection of funds for disadvantaged people in our community to consistent activism leading marches, attending protests, and holding countless meetings to hammer out specific commitments.

• Earnest organizing towards equity and justice is met regularly with OPD and far-right militia groups siding on social media platforms—leading to harassing, intimidation and violence towards our citizens.
• While programs such as Friendly Faces and the Crisis Response Unit are in place, they have little power—much less budget.
• The formation of the Social Justice and Equity Commission is a good step, yet it has been a struggle to get the City to include proven activist leaders in the process.

When placing all these facts, and more, in the broader context of police accountability, it’s challenging to feel hope. The City seems to be listening, yet transparency is an issue, and whether there is a true appetite for needed change.

A coalescence of groups have come together around racial justice. The local chapter of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), Standing up for Racial Justice (SURJ), Economics for Everyone, the Salish Coalition, and many others, have contributed thousands of hours to immediate transformation on multiple fronts—from direct collection of funds for disadvantaged people in our community to consistent activism leading marches, attending protests, and holding countless meetings to hammer out specific commitments.

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•…a gifted interpreter…

Those who do this work are vulnerable to disillusionment, exhaustion, and burn-out. It is the duty of all moral citizens to join together to make the work of justice and equity a shared burden. We may need to expand our vision outside our region for help with what’s working in communities elsewhere. As the great Nina Turner wrote, “We have people across the nation rising up to say, in the words of Ella Baker, ‘We who believe in freedom cannot rest.’ This is our moment to make sure we do what we can, where we are, with what we have.”

Janine L. lives mostly local in what will hopefully one day be known as the South Salish Biosphere. She’s young enough to still have hope and old enough to know better.
What the search for an OPD chief says about the hope for police reform

Daniel Mootz

The Olympia Police Department (OPD) is in a troubled search for a new Chief of Police. Olympia’s City Council had hired Karras Consulting to help recruit Oly’s next top cop, and on March 25, the City announced the names of four finalists under consideration for the job. Finalists were OPD Acting Interim Police Chief Aaron Jelcick, OPD Community Policing Lieutenant Sgt. Amy King, Port of Portland Police Officer Derrick Turner and former Anchorage, Alaska Deputy Police Chief Sean Case.

Following the announcement, evidence surfaced revealing apparently threatening incidents involving two of the candidates’ pasts. Despite their vetting process, the consulting firm missed these incidents. After the second revelation, the City cancelled its contract with Karras.

In 2016, Amy King, a 21-year veteran OPD officer, drew her firearm while supervising a “graveyard shift” meeting in the presence of 15 officers. According to the written complaint, King brandished her gun as part of a “joke” about a mentally ill “problem person,” stating that the subject in question “will make you want to…” She then implied using her gun to put the subject in “penalty far worse than trespassing.”

That the pool of candidates for the top job in law enforcement produced four “finalists” with serious flaws points to the systemic problem with the institution of policing.

The painful “subject control method” Turner used unnecessarily, is now widely acknowledged to be extremely dangerous, as well as potentially lethal. Rans against it have become increasingly popular in recent years in jurisdictions across the US. Turner has since withdrawn from the running.

That was not the end of the problems with the finalists. Aaron Jelcick, who took over for outgoing OPD Chief Ronnie Roberts in 2019, effectively spearheaded the violent police response to recent BLM protests in Olympia. In early February, 2021, Jelcick mangled The Olympian and the community when, in a press briefing about the excessive police response to a 31 incident at the Red Lion, he stated that no unhoused people would be charged with trespassing.

There was a three-month delay in the process due to the City’s refusal to pay for the consultant’s services. Two but unhoused people were charged with First Degree Burglary, a Class A Felony that under Washington law includes trespassing as one of three elements required for the charge—and comes with a penalty far worse than trespassing. These two individuals spent over a month in jail and (along with three housing activists) currently face lengthy prison sentences. At that same meeting, Jelcick also failed to mention the brutal, unwar- ranted assault by his officers on a Black unhoused individual. That encounter, caught on a January 31 tape, shows how casually Olympia police deploy racist violence and escalate nonviolent situations.

Public records requests for OPD officers King and Jelcick pre-dating 2010 have reportedly been filed, but no response is expected until April 30. This comes around the same time City Manager Jay Burney, who is the City official with the sole power to select a new police chief, was expected to make his decision. Also unavailable are disciplinary records for Sean Case, the fourth finalist. These were requested from the Anchorage Police Department but have yet to be disclosed due to restrictive state laws.

Case was Deputy Chief of the Anchorage Police when an internal investigation found the department owed millions in damages to a former employee in a wrongful termination suit. The suit revealed active discrimination against at least one officer based on their medical diagnosis, as well as other compounding allegations of interagency corruption and guilt by association, according to Alaska Public Media.

While Case was not caught directly in the controversy, his high ranking authority on the force over the last five years is pertinent to an informed understanding of where he’s coming from and what kind of culture he would bring to the department. Similarly, Jelcick’s lead role in Olympia’s policing over the last two years has exposed a deep-seated, militaristic resistance to progressive community engagement.
A diversion, a refuge and a pantry
Growing community in the Victory Garden on Martin Way

It’s Saturday afternoon and we are at the Victory Garden, a fenced 2-acre plot owned by Thurston County Food Bank on Martin Way in Lacey.

Mercy Karuki-McGee is kneeling in a bed of newly enriched dirt, and looks up from her dirt mound. “This place saved us last year. We’d be sitting at home not doing much and someone would say, ‘Let’s go to the garden and pick some tomatoes!’” Mercy says there was plenty of food here last summer, fresh and delicious.

For diversion, refuge, nourishment—and healing

The garden began last year as a veteran-focused project initiated and managed by Beau Cromley of GRuB (Garden-Raised Bounty)—see story on p.7. When it was started, the garden served as a diversion, a refuge and a pantry for members of the veterans’ community. Once the pandemic hit and the state went into a lockdown, the vets were not able to use the space as planned. Mercy Karuki-McGee and her daughter Elisa McGee, who are co-founders of the Haki Farmers Collective, found this place at the end of last August after Mercy had a vision and saw a need for a healing space for black and indigenous people, and people of color (BIPOC).

The vision begins to bear fruit

It seems inevitable that Mercy and Deb Crockett, the Director of GRuB, would talk about a vision for a BIPOC-focused farm. The conversation became a reality when GRuB accepted the request from Mercy and Elisa to allow the Haki project to share the farm. GRuB has been providing food access to the community for many years. They saw the benefit of a BIPOC-focused space and how the Victory Farm was exactly the place for it. Mercy and Elisa saw the opportunity to realize their vision of diversity, equity and inclusion within a framework of gardening and farming.

Today there are raised beds neatly arranged all over the place. Mercy, her husband and their daughter Elisa along with new volunteers have added more raised beds and filled them with soil made according to a recipe GRuB has been using for the last 20 years. The beds will be planted with vegetables, herbs, and medicinal herbs as well as flowers, inside a 10-foot perimeter of trees that will one day supply fruit.

Within the shared space, Haki will focus on producing food for the community, hosting community workshops and eventually offering a food sharing conversation with special guests. Haki will also be conducting some education programs through the North Thurston Public Schools while GRuB will focus on veterans’ programming.

Gathering for a day of work

That Saturday, the April sun had energized a scatter of masked volunteers unloading wheelbarrows full of dark, rich soil to prep traditional soil mounds, some building a new trail in the mini food forest, and others weeding the berry patches. “There’s a tradition in Kenya where Mercy grew up, for getting a farm started in the spring, ‘We used to get together with everyone and meet at one farm in the morning and do everything that same day. Then we’d make a schedule for the next farm. And do that farm in one day. And then really be relaxed just sitting around in the park anymore. You’re afraid police will come up and start asking you what you’re doing.’ Mercy has lived in Olympia more than two decades, and is part of the Afro-fusion Mazigazi Band, Mercy’s family also ran an East African restaurant in the historical.

The aim for this summer is for the small urban farm space in Lacey to provide visits with fresh vegetables and to demonstrate how diaspora communities adapt their ancestral foods to grow here in the PNW. Acclimating crops while acclimating people.

Haki’s gardening framework is a roomy framework

In its first year, the Haki Farmers Collective has managed to join hands with an astonishing roster of partners to help realize its goal of reincorporating traditional farming knowledge and practices from migrant and indigenous communities into local farming activities. In addition to GRuB, the Haki Collective is working with the North Thurston School District and TOGETHER! as well as Thurston Community Farm Land Trust and Washington State University.

North Thurston Public Schools and TOGETHER! Mercy and Elisa are in conversations with North Thurston (NTPS) about developing a CTE agriculture curriculum for student programs. The idea is to create a pathway to careers in farming and natural resource management. Haki’s approach to equity in working with schools and especially youth is that “we educate each other,” a vital message and experience for a future where everyone can coexist in harmony. Discussions are also planned for including members of the Black Students’ Union in a mentorship program. This February North Thurston 8th graders created a banner to hang on 4th Avenue during black history month to show solidarity with BLM. Haki is also part of the NTPS Equity Advisory Team in partnership with TOGETHER, a local after-school program they have been teaching food sovereignty concepts. Using examples of world food systems and Mercy’s own food system traditions the program gives students an understanding of how food is grown, where it comes from, and the impact of world food production on climate change and health.

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Photo by Fletcher Ward, Straightlight Studios

May 2021

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VICTORY GARDEN, next page
A brief history of GRuB

Sowing the seeds of community with veterans in the garden

Beau Gromley

The seed for GRuB was planted in 1993 as the Kitchen Garden Project (KGP).

Inspired by the work of Vietnam veteran Dan Barker (founder of the Kitchen Garden Project—KGP), South Sounders Richard and Maria Doss began building free vegetable gardens for low-income people in southwest Washington. The KGP mission was to empower low-income people by giving them more control over their food security and decreasing their reliance on emergency food programs.

A few years later, in 1996, Bonnie Turner, an elder in our community, offered her back yard for an intergenerational community gardening project. This gave our founders an opportunity to establish and anchor a garden program for youth and seniors. In 2001, these programs merged to become Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB).

Since we began building gardens, GRuB has had a consistent veteran presence as either “Lead Builders” for the season or as key volunteers. With the help of our communities and veterans we’ve built over 3200 free gardens throughout western Washington.

The Victory Farm on Martin Way is a new space for veterans and their families to connect with and build community through gardening, nature and the outdoors. We offer in-person workshops at the Victory Farm (pre COVID and again this summer) for recipients of our gardens, as well as resources and services such as mental health support, connection to resources and services, and a free form Q&A. This gives participants an opportunity to connect with community and grow their own food.

Victory Garden

From previous page

WSU and TCFLT.

A group of BIPOC farmers, researchers and educators from WSU is researching certain crops. While the organization participates being able to showcase diasporic foods that matter to the BIPOC community, to resources and services more efficiently and holistically. Veterans who are interested in pursuing farming/gardening as a career now and veterans in our community, to heal, celebrate and community through growing, sharing, and supporting each other.

Guerrilla Gardening, Plant Teaching for Growing Social-Emotional Skills, and a free form Q&A. This is an opportunity for veterans and gardeners to interact and build community through growing, sharing, and supporting each other.

If you need a garden, want to deepen your roots in our community, or are looking to connect with people who have diverse life experiences, the GRuB Garden Project has a place for you.

Cultivating generational wealth

One of Haki’s aspirations is to close the gap to land access in the county, something that can only be done if the community is integral in building systems that meet daily needs. This also requires finding ways to remove barriers to land ownership and creating generational wealth for BIPOC families. It begins by empowering people and giving them the tools that they need to sustain themselves for generations to come.

Mercy and Elisa and Beau hope that the Victory Farm (and their future urban farms) will become places for gathering for the community, to heal, celebrate and organize community events. Haki means “justice” in swahili, a term familiar by now to nearly everyone. Making a just community needs more than just saying it; it needs green spaces like this where everyone feels very welcome. Mercy says, “We hope we can create that here. Community needs that today.”

Mercy Kartikai-McGee and Beau Gromley contributed to this article.

Read more about HAKI mission and goals here and the GRuB veteran contingent here.

GRuB has partnered with the Washington Department of Veteran Affairs (WDVA) and other “veteran specific” resource groups and non-profits in an effort to help connect veterans within our community and a host of other resources either through GRuB or our network.

Our workshops go over everything from basic gardening “how to”, houseplants (care, bonsai, etc), resources and their groups. It begins by empowering people and giving them the tools that they need to sustain themselves for generations to come. GRuB empowers veterans to continue serving their community as partners, builders & farmers in our GRuB Garden Project and Victory Farm. The Victory Farm is a safe, non-confrontational environment where veterans shoulder-to-shoulder immersed in the healing nature of the outdoors, agriculture, and working in dirt! Victory Farmers are an integral part of the GRuB Garden Project, expanding the work we’ve been doing throughout the South Sound since 1983. Veterans lead the effort to build gardens with low-income people and families in Thurston County, WA. From 2014-2020, they’ve built over 500 gardens in the community and provided a means for people to grow their own food.

Beau Gromley is Food Solutions Manager at GRuB and a veteran of the Marines and US Army.

Veterans Council Practice is a rallying point for anyone in the military family. In council we get to the heart of our experience by laying down all we carry and honoring all of who we are, whole warriors living our truth in a return to true belonging in society. This space is held for any adult in the military family, including survivors of veteran suicide loss, Gold Star families, active duty, reserves, guard members, dependents and our civilian allies.

One of our veteran partners, Woods Bee Co., donated hives and equipment for the Victory Farm in 2019. This season, as we start to open back up, we will incorporate honey bee workshops and beekeeper certifications into our programming. In the meantime (April 19—May 22) Alan Woods from Woods Bee Co. will be offering a beginner beekeeping certification course online for $45. GRuB has scholarships available for veterans, too.

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Volunteer as a Dependency Guardian Ad Litem

A brief history of GRuB

Sowing the seeds of community with veterans in the garden

Beau Gromley

The seed for GRuB was planted in 1993 as the Kitchen Garden Project (KGP).

Inspired by the work of Vietnam veteran Dan Barker (founder of the Kitchen Garden Project—KGP), South Sounders Richard and Maria Doss began building free vegetable gardens for low-income people in southwest Washington. The KGP mission was to empower low-income people by giving them more control over their food security and decreasing their reliance on emergency food programs.

A few years later, in 1996, Bonnie Turner, an elder in our community, offered her back yard for an intergenerational community gardening project. This gave our founders an opportunity to establish and anchor a garden program for youth and seniors. In 2001, these programs merged to become Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB).

Since we began building gardens, GRuB has had a consistent veteran presence as either “Lead Builders” for the season or as key volunteers. With the help of our communities and veterans we’ve built over 3200 free gardens throughout western Washington.

The Victory Farm on Martin Way is a new space for veterans and their families to connect with and build community through gardening, nature and the outdoors. We offer in-person workshops at the Victory Farm (pre COVID and again this summer) for recipients of our gardens, as well as resources and council practices’ talk circles specifically for vets.

Victory Garden

From previous page

WSU and TCFLT.

A group of BIPOC farmers, researchers and educators from WSU is researching certain staple crops. This project will conduct a quantitative and qualitative needs assessment of culturally relevant staple crops within BIPOC communities. It will assess best practices the community can find ways to bring and veterans who are interested in pursuing farming/gardening as a career now have low-barrier access to education, funding, land, mentorship and a host of other resources either through GRuB or our network.

Our workshops go over everything from basic gardening “how to”, houseplants (care, bonsai, etc), resources and their groups. It begins by empowering people and giving them the tools that they need to sustain themselves for generations to come. GRuB empowers veterans to continue serving their community as partners, builders & farmers in our GRuB Garden Project and Victory Farm. The Victory Farm is a safe, non-confrontational environment where veterans shoulder-to-shoulder immersed in the healing nature of the outdoors, agriculture, and working in dirt! Victory Farmers are an integral part of the GRuB Garden Project, expanding the work we’ve been doing throughout the South Sound since 1983. Veterans lead the effort to build gardens with low-income people and families in Thurston County, WA. From 2014-2020, they’ve built over 500 gardens in the community and provided a means for people to grow their own food.

Beau Gromley is Food Solutions Manager at GRuB and a veteran of the Marines and US Army.

Volunteer as a Dependency Guardian Ad Litem

A child becomes a dependent of the State when he or she has been found by a judge to have been abandoned, abused or neglected, or has no parent or guardian capable of adequately caring for the child. A volunteer GAL provides a judge with court-researched information about the child’s situation to help the court make a sound decision about the child’s future. The DGAL advocates for the best interests of the child by keeping all parties focused on the child’s health, safety, and well-being. DGAL volunteers are the consistent and powerful voice for the child during complex legal proceedings.

A Dependency GAL:

- Devotes approximately 5-15 hours per month to each child’s case
- Objectively investigates case circumstances
- Interviews parents, foster parents, family members, social workers, teachers, health care professionals, therapists and the child
- Maintains confidentiality
- Makes recommendations to the court
- Monitors court ordered services
- Advocates in the child’s best interest
- Stays with the child’s case until it is permanently resolved.
“A community gathering place”
Reflecting on ways to bring people to the table

Bill Fishburn

It’s been hard to hope. Beginning with the 2020 election in November, and then the Electoral College vote in December, and then the official electoral vote count in January 2021, and then the inauguration on January 20, each was an opportunity to hope. Each was its own shining opportunity for a shift toward a positive, more hopeful direction.

Yet consider the Derek Chauvin case, and the continued killing by law enforcement—the very people who are sworn to protect and serve—and the violence against our Asian brothers and sisters, and the epidemic of mass shootings that our nation continues to experience, and 43 states putting forward voter suppression laws—and the pandemic. It’s been hard to hope.

When I was a project manager in high tech, a teammate accused me of always wearing “rose-colored lenses.” It was odd, considering I always felt like I was walking a fine line between telling people it would take longer than they were estimating, and trying to encourage them to complete tasks by due dates they themselves gave me. I can tell you I have misplaced my rose-colored lenses, and I struggle every day. Because it’s been hard to hope.

As an engineer by education, I feel like a child—a pragmatist, an optimist, so I think of these musings as a pragmatic endeavor, as opposed to a dark or pessimistic outlook. To that end, I revisited the Real Work article I wrote in January, just five days before the insurrection at the US capitol, an event instigated and inflamed by the Big Lie. The piece proposed that the “real work” ahead of us is to bring to the table the people who voted for Trump, to find in such discussions something to work towards, something to give hope.

In terms of this “real work,” I haven’t made much progress. I have been looking for ways to understand the people who voted against Biden and normalcy, those who continue to buy into the Big Lie, those who maintain that “Q” is going to save us. I had a conversation about this mindset with a very good friend, a psychiatrist who has made progress on this, or an organization that has? Please share about that in the comments below.

Seeing some of the work that’s happening could give us all hope.

Bill Fishburn is an IT project manager and supervisor with Washington State. He served as Chair of the Thurston Co. Democrats, and was president of the Hispanic Roundtable of South Sound.

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I thought, “Okay, then! That’s one way to demonstrate the value in our differences while also making kids feel more comfortable with those differences.” And that triggered the thought that there is some adult equivalent out there, waiting for me to find it and make it happen, in order to give others hope.

...when I talk about it with people... I call it a “community gathering place doing business as a brewpub.”

In fact, it could be a place where ‘the real work’ starts —where different members of our community actually come to a table where they might have conversations and even begin to discover the value in our differences. We have a ways to go to get it off the ground (I’m drafting the business plan now, setting up social media accounts, working on a website, etc.), but, like Club Mundo Kids, it gives me hope.

As this article was going to print, the Chauvin verdict was handed down. Like many others, I awaited the verdict with little hope. As National Guard members were deployed across the nation in anticipation of a “not guilty” verdict and the unrest that certainly would have followed, I remained riveted to the news, awaiting a small reward for our collective patience with a justice system that has too often failed us. Then it came. Former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was found guilty on all three counts brought against him. While the verdict doesn’t represent justice for George Floyd, it does represent accountability for Derek Chauvin. At last! A glimmer, a spark, a nascent flicker of hope!

I’m grateful to Works in Progress for this opportunity to take stock and reflect on how I’m bringing opposing viewpoints to the table. While I feel remiss in not making much progress on the Real Work, I recognize those efforts can look very different and still have a potential impact.

Which makes me wonder... what’s going on in your corner of the world? Have you done anything towards the Real Work, towards understanding how to bring supporters of Biden’s opponent to the table? Do you know someone who has made progress on this, or an organization that has? Please share about that in the comments below.

Key in your story
Send it to our editors at olywip@gmail.com

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Supporting the Art and Soul of Olympia since 1996!

The Store is Open
TUESDAY-SUNDAY 11-5

Shop With Us To Support:
Indigenous Communities
Women's Empowerment
Economic Opportunity & Cultural Survival

Shop With Us To Support: Indigenous Communities Women's Empowerment Economic Opportunity & Cultural Survival

Our Sweet cafe will reopen when it is safer for all of us. May you and yours be well.

See our new site at NewTraditionsFairTrade.com
## ESSENTIAL WORK: Requirements vs Rewards

### MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

| **Police officer** |  
| GED plus valid WDL, passing scores on Public Safety and psychological and physical ability exam. Polygraph and criminalbackground check, legal ability to possess a firearm.  
| **Registered nurse** |  
| Recommendation from completed approved nursing program per WA Administrative Code Passing score on National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for critical thinking skills and readiness to begin practice as an entry-level nurse.  
| **Teacher** |  
| Proof of clean background check, proof of 60 degree (transcripts) and completion of approved teacher preparatory school. Passing scores on content exam. Completed application for certification in WA.  
| **Property owner** |  
| Start-up money or access to credit |

### SALARY/WAGE/INCOME

| **Police officer** |  
| Annual salary paid to a beginning recruit pending certification is from current Olympia Police Guild Agreement with the City of Olympia.  
| **Registered nurse** |  
| Figure derived by annualizing hourly wage scales posted online for staff nurses at local hospitals. This may be a high estimate.  
| **Teacher** |  
| Base salary for a first-year teacher from current Olympia School District bargaining agreement.  
| **Property owner** |  
| Estimated Adjusted Gross Income for an individual whose livelihood is from renting out 30 houses in the Olympia area.  

### CERTIFICATION

| **Police officer** |  
| Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission Awards certification after hiring, upon completion of 770 hours of paid training at the WA Basic Law Enforcement Academy. Certification continues indefinitely unless there is a 24-month break in service.  
| **Registered Nurse** |  
| Initial license awarded by the WA Dept. of Health Nursing Commission upon completion of approved course work and passage of National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). Required to renew annually on DOB. Within a 3-year cycle, must document 46 clock hours of Continuing Education and 561 hours of active practice to show continued possession of skills and judgment necessary to practice safely and ethically (WAC 246-840-220).  
| **Teacher** |  
| SPI Office of Professional Certification awards initial certification to applicants who submit proof of a BA degree, recommendation from a completed WA-approved teacher prep program, completion of basic skills and content area test and fingerprints leading to a clean background check. To maintain certification, each teacher must complete 100 clock hours or equivalent every 5 years and other courses required under WAC181-79A-030.  
| **Property owner** |  
| None |

### PERFORMANCE MEASURE

| **Police officer** |  
| None specified  
| **Registered Nurse** |  
| None specified  
| **Teacher** |  
| RCW28A.405.100 adopted in 2010 requires that certificated teachers be evaluated for professional performance capabilities at least once every 5 years. The Teacher & Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) is prescribed in the RCW’s and is intended to promote teacher accountability and improvement. An employee whose work is unsatisfactory is notified of deficiencies and provided with a program for improvement. The program can result in probation.  
| **Property Owner** |  
| None |
On March 30, Olympia City Council members signed a 15-year contract needed by Milestone Companies to attract financing for their “West Bay Yards” project, a luxury mixed-use development on the edge of Budd Inlet. Hundreds of citizens weighed in with objections to the contract, which was drafted by the developer and agreed to by the staff of the City’s Development Department before being presented to the Council. Olympia Coalition for Ecosystem Preservation, which has been working to restore habitat that connects to the development site, has appealed the Council’s decision to Superior Court. They are asking the Court to vacate the contract and instruct the City to obtain a full accounting of the likely environmental impacts the development will cause.

In a statement on their website, OCEP observed that even with most shoreline industry gone, water quality in Budd Inlet is worse, not better. “This shoreline has a history of abuse. The buildings of the logging industry may be long gone but their legacy remains in the form of extremely high concentrations of deadly chemicals. This will be true whether or not the area is covered with additional fill, topped with buildings and forgotten again.” The movement of water will continue. The first hearing is set for August 30.

Restoration ecologist Paul Cereshti characterized the Council’s action in a letter to The Olympian.

In Washington state, shorelines and their fisheries are a 10,000-year-old public trust resource. Coastlines are so valuable and irreplaceable, we don’t leave them to the whims of private land speculators. Our local government is persistently groomed by a cabal of special interests. Our citizens need housing, and that makes us vulnerable to manipulation. Not all deals are good. It is important for citizens and their officials to aggressively protect the public trust. Hardel demonstrates our weakness and passivity.

The council has the power and responsibility to demand stewardship. South Puget Sound is blinding to death and just took another cut. Leaders cannot hide behind staff or procedure or ignorance or hollow words. You preside over the system, you set the rules, you sign the papers. Stewardship of the commons is a fundamental purpose of local government.

Payuppil developer Ronald Dean Newman must raise money for the project but he will soon be working with the Olympia Development Department staff with a Land Use Application. An attorney under contract to the City of Olympia to hear the application will be the one making the decision to approve the application. Troy Nichols, partner in Phillips Burgess, a prominent law firm active in Olympia politics and representing the developer, said the suit will not delay the project.

Ashes on West Bay

When we to home on the westside returned from an excursion to the north Cascades We found the remains of the burn

The ashes that floated from West Bay.

All over our little back yard

The charcoal remnants had fallen

We gathered up pieces, wondered what these were

How could anything cover us all?

The source of the fire was a mystery

We heard another factory had burned

The industries have a long history of leaving ruins, when will we learn?

The native peoples once had subsisted for millennia on this fragile shore.

The tides set the table with seafood

They never asked for anything more

After decades of dredging and shipping filling, dumping, oil tanks and more some neighbors took to helping the herons survive in the woods by the shore

For everything built for pure profit is soon to be all washed away and fly up in the sky, an anthropocene cry like the ashes that float up from West Bay

—Tom Ogler

Hard Ball Press

After writing six crime novels featuring Lenny Moss, hospital custodian, union steward and amateur detective, Timothy Sheard launched an independent publishing company, Hard Ball Press, in order to mentor and publish working class writers. You’ll find books ranging from history, memoir, YA, detective stories and more. For a peek at hard-to-find titles go to https://hardballpress.com.
Lessons of Imperium

Imperium is a 2016 movie based on the real experiences of undercover FBI agent Mike German who infiltrated white supremacist organizations and wrote a book called Thinking Like a Terrorist published in 2008. Unfortunately, the lessons he learned in the field are more relevant today, as white-supremacist Trumpism increasingly gains traction.

In the movie, after an automobile accident, there is a disappearance of most of a shipment of container-fulls of radioactive material, used in treating cancer. The FBI is concerned that this substance may be incorporated into a dirty bomb with the potential to kill and injure thousands. After conservative talk radio host Dallas Wolf publicizes the disappearance, FBI agent Nate Foster is sent to gain access to Wolf. The FBI creates a fictitious medical supply company that handles and stores radioactive material, for Foster’s possible use. He goes undercover, working with a small local white-supremacist militia group headed by Vince Sargent.

BOOK REVIEW

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson

Samantha Chandler

[Ed note: We believe this book to be so important that we are running a second review.]

Isabel Wilkerson's masterful Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents has left me clear exactly who we are. She expertly lays out how systemic discrimination, abuse, and murder of those within the lowest caste of the US is intrinsic to the fabric of our country. With each successive horrific abuse of black and brown people captured on phones and broadcast to the world, myriad white Americans exclaim, “This is not who we are.” They should read this book.

Wilkerson reframes the analysis of systemic racism within the broader understanding that we are living in a caste system. While some people might know that Nazis looked to the US to emulate their attempts to eradicate Native Americans, most are not aware of the racist policies as a blueprint for beginning the Holocaust.

“Caste reframes the analysis of systemic racism within the broader understanding that we are living in a caste system. While some people might know that Nazis looked to the US to emulate their attempts to eradicate Native Americans, most are not aware of the racist policies as a blueprint for beginning the Holocaust.”

They were looking to move quickly with their plans for racial separation and purity, and knew that the United States was centuries ahead of them with its anti-immigration statutes and race-based immigration bans” (p. 79).

This chapter alone, the searing reality that we were the model for the Nazi genocidal ideology, validates the book worth reading. She describes in detail the rigid systems of categorization developed by the Nazis, along with the Indian caste system, to illustrate how the United States is supported by the same “pillars of caste.”

White people must take seriously the responsibility of learning the true history of the US from authors of color. While we may not expect to be surprised by the atrocities inflicted on the lowest caste, gaining a greater understanding of how we got to this place is worth our time.

Throughout Caste, Wilkerson shares stories that drive home the daily abuses that people in the lowest caste of America go through, primarily the brutality against enslaved people to the daily disrespect, microaggressions, black and brown people face as they simply try to live their lives.

Coping with the span of English language usage to the present, she makes clear how Trump’s election was not an aberration, but a manifestation of the fears of those at the top of the system, working to ensure they don’t lose power. “Many political analysts and left-leaning observers did not think that a Trump win was possible and were blinded by the outcome in 2016. Unfortunately, because they had not figured into their equations the degree of reliable consistency of caste as an enduring variable in American life and politics” (page 324).

As Wilkerson adeptly weaves historical research, interviews with Indian Dalit (or “untouchable”) activists and scholars, I found myself nodding in agreement, shaking my head in disbelief, and wishing for a magic wand that could bring reconciliation, healing, and reparations to those who have suffered at the bottom rungs of caste. This book should be required reading in high schools and colleges across our nation.

There are no answers within this book, as much as one might hope for in a genteel discussion of history, but no one escapes its resonant messaging. “In the foundations of our intentions and beliefs, if we have grown up in this country, we have internalized it.” Whether you have read numerous books on the history of race and power in America, or have yet to explore that aspect of who we are, Caste is an essential read.

Compelling, engaging, scholarly, and filled with metaphors to illustrate our current condition, Wilkerson’s voice helps to make the reader see where we are and how we got here.

Whether you have read numerous books on the history of race and power in America, or have yet to explore that aspect of who we are, Caste is an essential read.

Isabel Wilkerson’s first Pulitzer Prize winning book, The Warmth of Other Suns, was illuminating in its own right, following African Americans in the Great Migration from the southern US. Caste lays bare the foundations that meant their opportunities could never be enough to free them from the position they had been assigned the day they were born. Whether you have read numerous books on the history of race and power in America, or have yet to explore that aspect of who we are, Caste is an essential read.
Mutual aid
From page 1

lot of folks have an impulse to help but don’t have an understanding of mutual aid as a concept. We have lost members who have moved away, so we were too accommodating and not radical enough, and we have lost members who have thought we were too restrictive and too radical. It has been a very challenging balance.

Mutual aid is a political concept that highlights contradictions in power. “Mutual aid is a paradigm shift away from colonial paternalism and embraces a prefigurative world in which people look out for and support one another,” shares Audrey with OlyMAC.

Robert at OlyMAP also describes how mutual aid goes beyond existing systems to build community connection. “It can be really inspiring. You’re building solidarity with people and encouraging healthy skepticism of government’s ability to take care of us. Charity can miss seeing people. There’s a sense of— you might hand out a meal every week—but if you’re not talking to folk, and building connections, you might be holding onto preconceptions about people. You might not be seeing them as we can actually help each other. Charity is one-sided, you’re only conceiving of the way you can help them. Versus, when you build that connection, you can work together, you can accomplish all kinds of things.”

Mutual aid is “solidarity, not charity”
Becca Chrisler, another volunteer with OlyMAC, got involved after looking for ways to connect after moving to Olympia. “I didn’t know what mutual aid was but liked what my friend was telling me about it. It was amazing, the energy of the volunteers was infectious, and so many people brought so many different foods and supplies. It grew from there, after the last Stop The Sweeps campaign by Just Housing Olympia, I got involved in organizing.”

Becca also described the importance of the mutual aid model, as distinct from charity work. “The main concept behind our work is that anybody who shows up to interact with the residents, we do not assume anything for them or take action without knowing what the residents want. We have no one leader or manager; every member volunteer has an equal say and the membership is made up of housed and unhoused folks.”

Meeting challenges in working together during a pandemic
Becca observed that the COVID-19 pandemic presented new challenges to this relational model of mutual aid organizing. “We couldn’t hold meetings in person anymore. A lot of our unhoused members weren’t able to contribute like you could before because their access to technology is more limited.”

Another situation experienced by MAP was due to the pandemic: “A lot of our volunteers are older and concerned about their health. To get around this, we came up with volunteer intake forms and held a zoom orientation. The form helped us figure out where we could fit people with their interests and availability. It’s really cool, now we’re trying to figure out how we can expand… for example, crisis supply distribution, supporting self-governance and promoting collaborative garbage cleanups with camp residents have been made stronger in the last year despite COVID.”

The origins of the term mutual aid has roots in anarchist and social movements, explained Dr. Shon Meckfessel shares that “from my own point of view, it’s a heartbeat how much movements in the days of social media shred themselves with infighting... People are steeped in trauma. All these wonderful groups are.” To help navigate these dynamics, Becca shares “you gotta take care of yourself before you can take care of the community, and you can take care of community in ways you might not have known otherwise.”

This relational and politically centered mode of mutual aid organizing can be challenging. Shon Meckfessel shares that “from my own point of view, it’s a heartbeat how much movements in the days of social media shred themselves with infighting... People are steeped in trauma. All these wonderful groups are.” To help navigate these dynamics, Becca shares “you gotta take care of yourself before you can take care of the community, and you can take care of community in ways you might not have known otherwise.”

Structural and political roots of mutual aid
The origins of the term mutual aid has roots in anarchist and social movements, explained Dr. Shon Meckfessel, long-time anarchist organizer and current faculty at Evergreen College. Some understanding of the term goes back to the 1902 publication of Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution by Russian naturalist and anarchist Peter Kropotkin.

“Darwinism has been used to justify social inequality, in ways [Kropotkin] never said. Kropotkin, an admirer of Darwin, pointed out the neglected aspect, that biological competition between species, one of the things that makes species more successful is their ability to cooperate. Our own survival is based on helping each other out.”

“You do not need to subscribe to any particular political philosophy to participate in the mutual aid offered and received in this group, like sharing your extra toilet paper or seed starts or receiving assistance picking up your prescriptions or having groceries delivered,” says Audrey at OlyMAC. “However, it is important to understand that mutual aid is historically a radical act, with a rich history that has defined it.”

OlyMAC references author Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, who wrote Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economics, who was energized by surprises all the time. “Mutual aid Mondays” and I have a ton of supplies for folks at the end of each month. “It’s a radical kind of thing... it’s the kind of thing that makes me feel fuzzy. This work forges these connections and solidarity which matters. Olympia is... small enough that you can feel the consequences of these connections.”

How to get involved
Black Power Initiative: Please consider donating to the Black Power Initiative, their cashapp handle is Blackpowerful.

MetaCooperative Business Incubator’s public projects: Visit Eartharfs.funs or eartharfsdesign, whose goals are to transform our bioregion into a bastion of biodiversity, a leader in disaster resiliency attuned to ecological principles.

OlyMAP: Join the Facebook page or email olymutualaidcollective@gmail.com. Snail mail works too: OlyMAC P.O. Box 2272, Olympia, WA 98501.

OlyMAP: Contact admin@olymap.org or visit www.olymap.org.

Samb H. Keele lives in Olympia and has worked for a variety of state and non-profit institutions serving the public.

G.T. Press also shares the importance of self-care and not forgetting to have fun. “Personal health and emotional hygiene are incredibly important when everyone is stressed out and uncertain about the future...[Community] is the fun free-personal shift away from colonial capitalism and embraces a prefigurative world in which people look out for and support one another—that is the soil from which a functional mutual-aid group will emerge.”

“You don’t need to subscribe to any particular political philosophy to... share your extra toilet paper or seed starts or receive assistance picking up your prescriptions...”

Robert also acknowledges it can be difficult to navigate some of the conflicts and real challenges to survival and thriving, but ultimately, “it’s a kind of thing where you’re energized by surprises all the time. We’re trying to figure out how to be seeing the ways we can actually help each other. Charity is one-sided, you’re only conceiving of the way you can help them. Versus, when you build that connection, you can work together, you can accomplish all kinds of things.”

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Becca shares “you gotta take care of yourself before you can take care of the community, and you can take care of community in ways you might not have known otherwise.”

The origins of the term mutual aid has roots in anarchist and social movements, explained Dr. Shon Meckfessel, long-time anarchist organizer and current faculty at Evergreen College. Some understanding of the term goes back to the 1902 publication of Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution by Russian naturalist and anarchist Peter Kropotkin.

“Darwinism has been used to justify social inequality, in ways [Kropotkin] never said. Kropotkin, an admirer of Darwin, pointed out the neglected aspect, that biological competition between species, one of the things that makes species more successful is their ability to cooperate. Our own survival is based on helping each other out.”

“You do not need to subscribe to any particular political philosophy to participate in the mutual aid offered and received in this group, like sharing your extra toilet paper or seed starts or receiving assistance picking up your prescriptions or having groceries delivered,” says Audrey at OlyMAC. “However, it is important to understand that mutual aid is historically a radical act, with a rich history that has defined it.”

OlyMAC references author Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, who wrote Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economics, who was energized by surprises all the time. “Mutual aid Mondays” and I have a ton of supplies for folks at the end of each month. “It’s a radical kind of thing... it’s the kind of thing that makes me feel fuzzy. This work forges these connections and solidarity which matters. Olympia is... small enough that you can feel the consequences of these connections.”

How to get involved
Black Power Initiative: Please consider donating to the Black Power Initiative, their cashapp handle is Blackpowerful.

MetaCooperative Business Incubator’s public projects: Visit Eartharfs.funs or eartharfsdesign, whose goals are to transform our bioregion into a bastion of biodiversity, a leader in disaster resiliency attuned to ecological principles.

OlyMAP: Join the Facebook page or email olymutualaidcollective@gmail.com. Snail mail works too: OlyMAC P.O. Box 2272, Olympia, WA 98501.

OlyMAP: Contact admin@olymap.org or visit www.olymap.org.

Samb H. Keele lives in Olympia and has worked for a variety of state and non-profit institutions serving the public.
Yemen and Afghanistan

According to Fred Langer, a Seattle TCSO did not follow state law whether the killing was justified is Reinoehl’s family, the findings was to restore public trust in the community members on their investiga- tion into Reinoehl. This is in stark contrast to other area law enforcement agen- cies who have worked with local government to notify their com- munities, including through press releases and their websites, of how to serve as an I-940 community representative. In many cases, this also includes information about the process for how representa- tives are chosen. For example, the City of Olympia has an emergency Community Repre- sentative Application easily found by searching the internet. And the final news release from the City of Tumwater describes Reinoehl as “a wanted ho- micide suspect,” and the final news release of the investigation into Reinoehl’s killing is alarming—and can only undermine the credibility of any conclusions.

At an October 2019 gun rights rally in Yelm, where attendees floated the idea of attempting a citizen’s arrest of Attorney General Bob Ferguson, Snaza asserted he had the authority to swear in a militia (though said he wouldn’t do so at that time). The Seattle Times pointed out state law does not appear to empower Snaza or any other sheriff to raise a militia.

The Institute for Public Accuracy reported this statement from a former State Dept official: “the US military will still be present in the form of thousands of special operations and CIA personnel in and around Afghanistan, through dozens of squadrons of manned attack aircraft and desert-based manned surveillance aircraft, based on land bases and on aircraft carri- ers in the region, and by hundreds of cruise missiles on ships and submarines.”

Despite the headlines and the White House announcements, US taxpayers will be paying for killing in Afghanistan until there is an end to the bombing and “special operations” that have long been carried out in secret.

President Biden announced in Feb- ruary that they would end support for Saudi Arabia’s offensive opera- tions in Yemen. No more refueling warplanes, providing logistical sup- port, or sharing weapon and propulsion systems for the Saudi war effort. But the warplanes are still deliver- ing bombs. Through a US govern- ment process, the Saudi govern- ment pays commercial contractors to keep the jets flying, and the US military still provides “defensive support.” This enables the Saudis to continue bombing and supporting a blockade on Yemeni ports.

The war was started 6 years ago by Saudi Arabia to restore a ruler friendly to them, when a Houthi movement took over Yemen’s capi- tal. Aided by the US, the war took the lives of over 200,000 people, cau- sed outbreaks of disease, and brought famine to the popula- tion of the World Food Program’s 20 million and around 400,000 children could die in Yemen by the end of this year. In April, 80 Democrats sent a letter demanding that Biden do more to relieve the blockade, to end the war.

Monica Isaac and Iman Saleh organized a hunger strike to call attention to continuing US support for the Saudi-led blockade. “We know that if the blockade ends, the war ends,” Isaac told Middle East Examiner. “But within that goal is creating awareness about who the Yemeni people are and what they have been dealing with.”

“Many wore insignia of the Washing- ton Three Percenters — a group whose gesture was to demonstrate how they would utilize the fail safes put in place by our founders to resist (sic) in an occupation of a government and push back against tyranny,” report- ed The Seattle Times.

Endless war update

WIP war correspondent online.

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“The head of the TCSO fails to serve on the team by reviewing their bombs. Through a US gov- ernment process, the Saudi govern- ment pays commercial contractors to keep the jets flying, and the US military still provides “defensive support.” This enables the Saudis to continue bombing and supporting a blockade on Yemeni ports.

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Masking not required— then a COVID outbreak

Sheriff John Snaza said he did not require TCSO deputies and cor- rects officers to wear masks. A fund created in May 2021 to require I-940 community reps to wear masks. It leaves the decision up to a mask “up to the individual deputy and situation they encounter.” The Olympian re- ported that the fund was applied to corrections officers.

A photo of Snaza at a Blue Lives Matter rally in Yelm in July 2020, at the height of local BLM demon- strations, shows him maskless while hugging an attendee. Amid a COVID outbreak at the jail in September 2020, Snaza was regri- mated by County Commissioner John Hutchings (a former Olympia cop and Snaza ally) during a Board- roomed meeting for failing to require staff to follow COVID precautions. At least nine inmates and four staff tested positive for COVID during that outbreak.

When the Commissioners learned that some deputies and correc- tions officers hadn’t been wearing masks, they added the inspectors to the jail’s inspection team in mid-January. Although the deputies in their capacity were paid $146,160 while Un- dersecretary Tim Braniff was paid $177,936, just $2,000 less than Governor Inslee. Chief deputies were making almost $164,000, the operational lieutenant and a captain made more than $146,000.

A new office to investigate use of force

Will I-940’s goal to enhance trans- parency, credibility and commu- nication be met? The Governor’s General Ferguson followed up his inquiry by recommending ways to strengthen the investigative rules that implement I-940. In April 2021, Washington lawmakers passed Senate Bill 539, which tracks all manner of deaths by police, police in Washington killed 125 people in 2020 and 13 in 2021. Eleanor Steinbagen is a 15-year resident of Olympia.

The current requirements for investigations of use of force include: “45 days at the County’s general fund spending. And the loss of the hazard pay might not be such a big deal—in 2019, Snaza’s salary was $146,160 while Un- dersecretary Tim Braniff was paid $177,936, just $2,000 less than Governor Inslee. Chief deputies were making almost $164,000, the operational lieutenant and a captain made more than $146,000.

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In the face of a budget dedicated to war profiteering

Jesuit priest detained by Feds at Sea-Tac
continues resistance to nuclear weapons

Sea-Tac, April 1. Father Steve Kelly, S.J., a Jesuit priest and longtime nuclear resister, was brought in chains to a hearing on March 30 to appear in the US District Court on a warrant for a previous probation violation. Father Kelly came from Brunswick, GA where he had been imprisoned for his part in the 2010 Kings Bay Plowshares action.

Symbolic disarmament—a felony
The Kings’ Bay action took place on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. Jr. Kelly and others, known as the Kings Bay Plowshares 7, entered the US Navy’s East Coast Trident nuclear ballistic missile submarine base at Kings Bay. At trial, they pled not guilty, because they had not entered the base to commit a crime, but rather to prevent one from occurring, the crime of “omnicide,” the destruction of the human race in a nuclear war. In the face of the threat that the US nuclear arsenal poses to the world, they believed what they had done was not only defiance of a symbolic disarmament, an act of necessary civil resistance.

All seven were found by a jury to have violated the priest’s attorney, who pointed out that by the time a new hearing was scheduled, Father Kelly would have served his maximum sentence. Father Kelly refused to cooperate when a judge imposed supervised release so a warrant for his arrest was issued. After a preliminary hearing, the probation office agreed with the priest’s attorney, who pointed out that by the time a new hearing was scheduled, Father Kelly would have served his maximum sentence. The probation office then agreed to recommend that Father Kelly be sentenced to time served.

A lethal combination: tactical and strategic nuclear weapons
The combined fourteen ballistic missile submarines at Bangor and Kings Bay, carry the Trident II D5 strategic ballistic missile armed with some combination of W76-1 (100 kiloton) warheads and W88 (475 kiloton) warheads, in addition to some of the newer “low-yield” W76-2 warheads. These are, in addition to being what the US government calls “the verifiable leg of the US nuclear triad,” arguably a first-strike nuclear weapon that is inherently destabilizing and an impediment to efforts toward cooperation with Russia and disarmament. The continuing warhead modernization and construction of the next generation of ballistic missile submarines, with plans for a new warhead and missile, is spreading more rapidly toward nuclear catastrophe.

The right to act in accord with one’s religious beliefs is not uniformly honored
Reaching to the heart of Gospel teaching, Kelly’s own words: “The Gospel has many instances in the parables of Jesus inserting himself between the flock and the dangers, namely the thief and the wolf. In today’s or rather contemporary application of the Gospel is that Christ is incarnate in the poor in the Flock and the thief is the budget, dedicated to war profiteering and nuclear annihilation. The wolf is the ever-present danger of the threat and, God forbid, the use of nuclear weapons. So it is my life long quest to imitate the Good Shepherd. I will insert myself between the dangers and the flock.”

Kelly was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in the Jesuit order in 1990, and participated in numerous Plowshares actions since his first—“Jubilee Plowshares”—in 1985. Since then he has spent over 10 years behind bars, and roughly a third of that time in solitary confinement (non-cooperation).

Courts in the US have consistently refused to allow Kelly (and other Plowshares activists) to present any reasonable defense of their actions.

In the face of the threat that the US nuclear arsenal poses to the world, courts in the US have consistently refused to allow Fr. Kelly (and other Plowshares activists) to present any reasonable defense of their actions.

Punishing the messenger
Rather than prosecute Fr. Kelly and others who attempt to shine the light of conscience on the profound danger of nuclear weapons and a new arms race, the US government should listen to their warnings and begin to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date.” The next step would be “a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” This is required by Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to which the US is a signatory.

This is an abridgment of a press release issued by Leonard Eiger of the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action. www.gzcenter.org

Where will the money come from?

Mary Jo Dolis

Where will the money come from? The big question and the Republican Party takes the country’s infrastructure is: where will the money come from? For example, what about the $40 billion the President asked Congress to spend on the huge need for public housing? Maybe it could come from a place no one ever thought about even when there’s nothing to show for money already spent.

What about cancelling our missile defense boondoggle? The promise behind national missile defense comes from video games: when a hostile launch is detected, destroy the incoming missiles by ramming them with ground-launched “interceptors.” It’s a strategy known as “hitting a bullet with a bullet.” In reality, the system is easy to defeat, and has routinely failed even simple, heavily- scripted test intercepts. (1)

To date, the system has cost more than $40 billion—and there’s no end in sight.

In August of last year, the Pentagon announced its intention to build Next-Generation Interceptors. These will replace the current KKV (Redstone- based KKV Vehicle) interceptors.

The KKV was cancelled after 10 years in development and three times the original cost estimate.

The KKV was supposed to replace another Kill Vehicle (the Exoatmospheric KV) deployed in 2005 despite controversy and problems with performance in tests.

The Pentagon has already selected Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman to compete to develop and build the interceptors. While the Missile Defense Agency anticipates placing the new interceptors roughly by 2027 or 2028, “industry proposals will dictate final schedules and what is doable,” according to the Pentagon.

When they cancel the KKV, the DOD Undersecretary of research and engineering said, “Development programs sometimes encounter problems. After exercising due diligence, we decided the path we’re going down wouldn’t be fruitful, so we’re not going down that path anymore. This decision supports our efforts to gain full value from every future taxpayer dollar spent on defense.” (2)

We’re not going down that path anymore? Ask Congress and the defense contractors. The new missile system is “estimated to cost” nearly $18 billion in the life of the program. There is no reason to expect a different outcome from this (as yet unnamed) “kill vehicle” program than those of the past 20 years or so, which have left behind massive, costly failures.

Why not avoid the next $40 billion and use it for housing instead?

Mary Jo Dolis is a naturally skeptical person who occasionally submits something to Works in Progress.

**Community Spotlight**

**P.O.W.E.R Capacity-Building Fundraiser**

Since 2017, NBO has freed more than 500 people from cages and provided them with supportive services including long-term housing and trauma counseling. Today, while the country is slowly opening back up and many have access to the COVID-19 vaccine, there are Black mammas and caregivers suffering in jail simply because they can’t afford to pay bail. We know that people who are incarcerated cannot practice social distancing inside a cage. Even in the midst of the global pandemic, people are still being criminally punished, and denied their freedom.

Join us to honor five years of Black Mama’s Day Bail Out! Help us reach our goal of raising $60K to #FreeBlackMammas [https://secure.orgblue.com/donate/freeblackmammas] by making an offering - as much as you can!

**American Friends Service Committee**

**May 1 - May 10, 2021**

AFSC is gathering everyone to join the #FreeThemAll Mother’s Day Letter Writing and Caravan event. Community ties across the US are joining together for the National Days of Action to #FreeThemAll from May 1 through May 9/10 (Mother’s Day), 2021.

In Washington, there is a letter-writing campaign from now through May 7, to write supportive letters to immigrants who are being detained in the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma and save the date for a #FreeThemAll caravan to Tacoma on Saturday, May 8. Follow this link for a toolkit, zoom links and instructions as to how to participate in writing cards and letters. Join the call to #FreeThemAll [https://www.afsc.org/campaign/immigration participación]. You can access the toolkit in English here [https://mcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FreeThemAllLetter-Writing-Activities-Toolkit-21.pdf] and in Spanish here [https://mcp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FreeThemAll-Kit-de-herramientas-para-escribir-cartas-para-el-DNCC-de-la-Madre-Dios-dos.pdf].

**Evergreen public seminar: College behind bars**

Saturday, May 15, 12-1:30pm. This is a conversation about the power of Evergreen’s model of a racially and economically diverse community-oriented college such as Evergreen: a sense of belonging to new and diverse communities, and the potential for bringing about social change.

**League of Women Voters**

Join the Thurston Co. LWV’s “Talk about Race” book group. They will discuss Casie: The Origin of our Discord. Sunday, May 16, 2 pm. (Review this in this issue and April WPL). Click here to find resources for increasing awareness, opportunities to participate in relevant events, and current information about the book group. This League is a nonpartisan organization that offers many ways to learn about issues that concern them.

**People Powered Fair Maps**

is a nationwide redistricting campaign of the US League. It’s focused on creating fair voting districts in all 50 states—important goal for all of our futures. A Washington state Commission is now redrawing our legislative and congressional district boundaries. These districts are key to election results. The League created “Speak Up” Schools with information and support for people to bring their views to the Commission, which met recently to make up the two people appointed by the Democratic Party and two by the Republicans, a non-partisan chair. The five schools are an extension of the commission work is ongoing. Consider participating - find info in the Redistricting Forum Toolkit posted on the LWVWA website.

**Glen’s Parallax Perspectives: Economic Justice**

On his May program, Glen will interview two guests who are experts in problems and solutions under the topic “Economic Justice.” Barrett Naylor is a Financial Policy Advocate working for Public Citizen (www.citizen.org), the savvy non-profit founded by Ralph Nader half a century ago. Sarah Anderson is a Program Director at the Institute for Policy Studies (www.ipsp-dc.org), another non-profit that has worked on a cutting-edge issue 1963. The speakers will cover a broad range of economic problems that face our current crisis along with ways to promote economic justice and fairness for ordinary people. They will be interviewed on cable channel 22 of Thurston Community Media (www.thrm.org) at 1:30 pm Mondays; 5:00 pm Wednesdays; 6:00 pm Thursdays. Watch the interviews and get a summary of the program plus more information at www.parallaxperspectives.org in the “TV Programs” and “Economics” Questions? Contact Glen Anderson, producer/host at (360) 491-6093 glenanderson@integrar.net

**GRUB is good in the springtime!**

Sign up for a garden built by GRUB. Want a community garden of your very own? GRUB is accepting applications from folks who would like a backyard garden and qualify for the program. Enrollment is open now for GRUB’s Spring Program. Visit their website for links to an online application, or call (360) 753-5522 to request a paper application.

Fireweed workshop with GRUB Thursday, June 3, 3:00-4:00 pm. Fireweed represents the promise that beauty and balance will return after bodies of illness or environmental devastation. This workshop participants learn how to use fireweed for food and medicine, and explore fireweed’s historical use.

**2021 Bicycle Challenge**

Saturday, May 1, 2021 - Monday, May 31, 2021. The BCC is open to ALL BICYCLE RIDERS this year—just get out and ride, for the joy of it! Log [https://bicyclechallenge.org] or create an account on the BCC website, log your bike rides, and you’ll be entered in drawings for prizes! Click here for more and ride in May. [https://bicyclechalleng.org/events]

**Youth Bike Challenge**


**OCEP Conservation Victory!**

At the end of April, the Olympia Coalition for Ecosystem Preservation announced conservation of Oyster Creek/Oyster Creek Island in West Olympia. Located at 1515 West Bay Drive, this site once housed the offices of the Hardsell Corporation. Taught by Mariana Harvey (Yakama) and Charlene Kouchak (Impiaq). Online, pay what you can (50/15/$30 - no one turned away). [www.oceplc.org/events]

**Olympia Timberland Library/Convenience Cafe**

May 20, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm. Drop-in actually! Researchers are invited to bring their genealogy questions to get help from members of the Old Army Genealogical Society in the library’s meeting room. The library offers many free resources. Use Ancestry Library Edition for free and available Anytime until June 30, 2021. Access other free genealogy tools at home with an Internet connection by logging in with your library card and look for the prompts. Staff members at any Timberland Library can offer assistance help as library services are fully renewed.
The myth of “trickle down” economics

Justification for tax cuts has often been that the economy as a whole will benefit — that lower corporate taxes would lead to company expansions, more jobs and higher incomes. It hasn’t worked out that way. Instead, economic growth has been mediocre since the 1970s. Incomes have grown even more slowly than the economy for every group except the wealthy.

Furthermore, even given favorable tax rates, the wealthy disproportionately don’t pay taxes due. A study released last month, which included two IRS officials as authors, found that the richest one percent of Americans don’t report about 20 percent of their income to the government. Those individuals are able to use pass-through businesses and offshore structures to shield their income from the IRS’s view, the study said. Collecting that money would boost tax collections by $175 billion a year.

Corporate tax cuts:

- Corporate tax rate to GDP
  - Source: NY Times
- Economic growth:
  - Real GDP 10-year annualized growth rate 1957–20
  - Source: EPB Macro Research
- Income growth by group—Uneven Progress Among U.S. Families
  - Source: US Census

This issue: Finding common ground