

Micro housing for macro impact

Transforming Olympia’s Mitigation Site with new structures and systems

Guerilla Think Press

On a given Tuesday morning last month, anyone traveling on or around Franklin Street in downtown Olympia would have beheld a curious spectacle. A two-forklift relay was running colorful shed-type buildings five or so blocks from the Port of Olympia to the somewhat infamous lot north of the Transit Center known as the “Mitigation Site.”

A roof over your head is a big deal

Many in Olympia go about their lives in quiet non-awareness of the City-sanctioned encampment while others harbor a nagging curiosity about what transpires behind the linked fence. Some maintain an open contempt for this epicenter of transition that 80 people call “home.”

There’s a big change in the works: the site is undergoing an upgrade to resilient, insulated, locking ‘micro-homes.’ Sixty plywood structures 8 ft x 8 ft, with a floor and a roof, as well as windows and doors, are replacing the collection of tents (and three shipping container units) that along with two lit hygiene trailers, for several years filled the site.

These new solid structures (pictured here) will provide safety, warmth, security, and privacy, as well as the opportunity for more organization. This means that occupants of the site can re-center and re-build...from whatever they’ve faced and undergone.

Growing numbers of people live without shelter

In 2020, census numbers showed well over half a million people nationally without shelter on any given night. Out of those, Washington state claimed 23,000 and Olympia itself almost a thousand.

Hardly a simple issue to understand and respond to, though any conversation about “homelessness” is likely to contain exclamations and resolutions as to what could cause this phenomenon, especially in a society that so proudly boasts independence and prosperity.

Thurston County is among the most responsive municipalities nationwide, with a Five-Year Homeless Response Plan coordinated by the Regional Housing Council, as represented by residents of Lacey, Tumwater, Olympia, and Yelm.

Yet we keep seeing extreme behavior and ways of life cropping up in our midst. Statewide, the Low Income Housing Alliance coordinates with over 5,000 organizations that respond to and engage with homeless-

ness issues. Institutions like Familiar Faces, Community Action Council and various task forces all provide assistance to ‘health and economic



Aaron Sauerhoff, Project Manager for micro home upgrade to Olympia’s Mitigation Site.

refugees’ to stabilize themselves and orient better toward self-sufficiency.

Creating solutions that work as we wait for housing that’s affordable at a low income

Why is it now normal for some people to avoid walking around Capitol Lake or venturing too deeply downtown because they fear harassment, overwhelming panhandling or physical danger?

“We have a lot of institutions doing a lot of things around these issues, but they just don’t connect very well,” says one former State worker who’s well-versed in the social and political climate in Olympia. “There is a great need for [accessible] housing, and that falls on the cities to codify and make room for it and not just big real estate development.”

Even as we face criticism for the failure to provide permanent housing, the Mitigation Site is committed to stepping up not only its structures

but the agreements and systems of accountability necessary to transition through it.

Catholic Community Services manages the Mitigation Site to ensure round-the-clock safety for those onsite. The former site manager has described... those coming through the site as “often traumatized; some maybe never having experienced real security, or not wanting traditional housing at all and trying to find their way. It’d be great to just provide everyone a place but without that, we’ve got to create solutions that work to figure out what’s best for them.”

Steps that can lead from the street to permanent (affordable) housing

Catholic Community Services has managed the Mitigation Site since it took over from Union Gospel Mission in March, 2020. Once the decision was made to place a case worker onsite, the number of people starting the process to actual housing has now entered double digits.

A representative of CCS described the transition as, “wanting to establish basic safety first and foremost.” As part of these actions to improve the site, there will be more collabo-

► Mitigation, continued on page 7

Say the magic word: Affordable low income housing A cynical use of the “poor and infirm” on behalf of Olympia’s No. 1 developer

Bethany Weidner

Over the past seven years or so, the city of Olympia has offered a variety of incentives to several developers to invest in “market-rate” apartment buildings downtown. One of the most lucrative offers is an 8-year exemption from property taxes for the building’s owner. The main beneficiary of that incentive has been one developer: Walker John, principal of Urban Olympia LLC.

John has been awarded the tax holiday for six apartment buildings and one “historic” commercial building. Already, the City has given up \$6 million dollars in property taxes they would otherwise be collecting from Walker John for the seven buildings his company owns. Another three buildings now under construction will likely be awarded the exemption

All of John’s buildings along with the others enjoying the tax exemption (J Brent McKinley’s Harbor Heights; Aaron Angelo’s Easterly and Shuo Lou’s 123 4th Ave) are all looking for tenants at “market rates.” What once was a downtown with options for very low-income renters is being reinvented as a picturesque location for well-heeled climate refugees.

The City steps in deeper—to pay Walker John directly

In 2016, Olympia’s City Council continued its turn away from “market forces,” and decided to buy a building that had sat empty since it was damaged by a fire in 2004. The City bought the Griswold Office Supply



building at 308—4th Avenue from Clifford Lee for \$300,000. Lee had paid \$257,500 for the building seven years earlier. The City sold the property to Big Rock Capital for \$195,000 in 2017, with the bonus that the city would pay for \$150,000 worth of environmental remediation. Big Rock’s project never materialized and the

property remained with the City.

In the meantime, Walker John had become a preferred downtown developer. In 2020-21, City staff formulated an attractive offer to sell the building with John in mind. The City would give the property to Urban Olympia for \$50,000—eat-

ing \$250,000 of the \$300K they had spent (on a property now assessed at \$212,000). Taxpayers would also cover demolition needed to prepare the property for John to redevelop—estimated to cost \$308,850 (with no ceiling named).

► Say the magic word, cont’d on page 6

Works in Progress (WIP), is a community newspaper based in Olympia, WA, that has been published monthly since 1990.

WIP's mission is to contribute to the struggle for justice across economic, social, environmental and political realms, and to expand participatory democracy across classes, races, and genders.

Editorial policy

Our priority is to focus on stories that are ignored or misrepresented in the corporate media, especially those that relate directly to our mission. We seek well-researched news stories, serious analyses of issues confronting our communities and accounts of personal experiences or reflections by local writers. We encourage articles that relate to the monthly theme, but material on other topics is also welcome.

Informed opinion pieces are accepted when accompanied by facts, examples and sources. We discourage writing where a key point is stated as fact when it's unproven or in serious dispute. Writing that stereotypes groups or categories of people won't be accepted.

Once we receive a submission, we may choose to publish it or not. While the views expressed in the material we print are those of the author alone, WIP aims to print material that is consistent with our mission. WIP reserves the right to edit all submissions for accuracy, length, and clarity of expression. We will work with authors if there is a need for editing that extends beyond those areas.

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The Big Lie and big-ish lies

When we established this theme, we were thinking about the Big Lie that Donald Trump won the 2020 election and the Democrats stole it. But the more we talked about it, the more we realized that there are a lot of big-ish lies out there, not just one Big Lie.

The definitive Big Lie of the 20th Century

After World War II, the US Office of Strategic Services (precursor of the CIA) presented a profile of Hitler and described his use of the Big Lie in this way:

His primary rules were: never allow the public to cool off; never admit a fault or wrong; never concede that there may be some good in your enemy; never leave room for alternatives; never accept blame; concentrate on one enemy at a time and blame him for everything that goes wrong; people will believe a big lie sooner than a little one; and if you repeat it frequently enough people will sooner or later believe it. (Printed in The Jewish Virtual Library)

THOUGHTS ON THE THEME

This brings us to the Big Lie of our time

Donald Trump refused to concede the 2020 election in November. He spent the following days and weeks repeating that the Democrats had stolen the election, that mail-in ballots were fraudulent, that dead people had voted in great numbers, and on and on. When the courts denied his challenges he continued to make the same claims of fraudulence. He never admitted that his claims were wrong and continually accused Democrats of being out to destroy him as President.

It might have seemed that this would end with the failed attempt to reject the electoral college results on January 6, but instead it continues and has been amplified ever since. And sure enough, people believe Trump's Big Lie. This has consequences. Legislatures in more than 47 states have acted on that lie: responding to the Big Lie that the 2020 election was stolen, they have enacted dozens of new laws to restrict voter access to the ballot, not to eliminate fraud, but to eliminate voters.

Whose interest is served by eliminating voters in a democracy?

As capital is concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, it gives the very rich ever greater power over politics, government and society. We are witnessing the transfer of responsibility for public goods and services from democratic institutions to the wealthy, to be provided to the few for the profit of the few. This is autocracy: "Ruling governments first attack the media and civil society, and polarize societies by disrespecting opponents and spreading false information, only to then undermine formal institutions."

The other element is that one individual governs on behalf of a small group. Thus, the main achievement of the Trump Administration was a huge cut in taxes for corporations and the rich, and the steady

elimination of regulations that protected the public and conditioned the actions of corporations.

Going to the polls in 2022

The only possible brake on this would be an organized mass of voters going to the polls to send their own representatives to the halls of Congress and State legislatures. Keeping that from happening is one function of the Big Lie. Be sure to pick up the paper next month when our theme is "The ballot or the bullet."

What about those other, big-ish lies?

There's a whole list of such lies—we generally refer to them as "narratives." These are in service of an overarching lie: that capitalism and capitalists work for the majority of ordinary people. Here's a list of such narrative-lies. Some of them stimulated our cover. Some of them are addressed in this issue. You can argue with this list, amend it, or add your own. We look forward to hearing from you.

That we went to war in Afghanistan to save Afghani women.

That public schools are failing and the solution is to replace them with private charter schools.

That building more "market rate" housing will produce homes that working people can afford.

That rampant homelessness is caused by people making "bad choices."

That a massive military is what protects our country and defends human rights globally.

That immigrants and refugees are a drag on the economy.

That if things get better for black people it's only at the expense of white people.

That Israel is defending itself when it bombs Gaza.

That people refuse to work because they got an unemployment of \$1200/month.

That rich people are to be admired and the very richest should be in charge.

—BW



Coming themes

- July—The ballot or the bullet.**
Deadline June 15
- August—Some things are changing; some are not.** Deadline July 15
- September—Back to school.** This theme is a metaphor for taking time to re-think and learn a-new. And also a chance to reflect on the role of school and teachers in our democracy. Deadline August 15.



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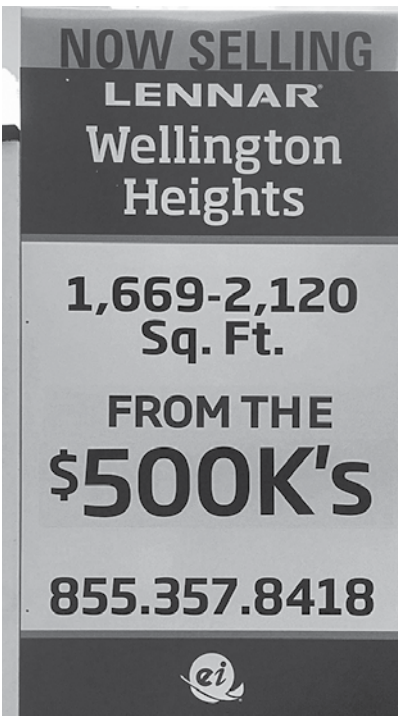
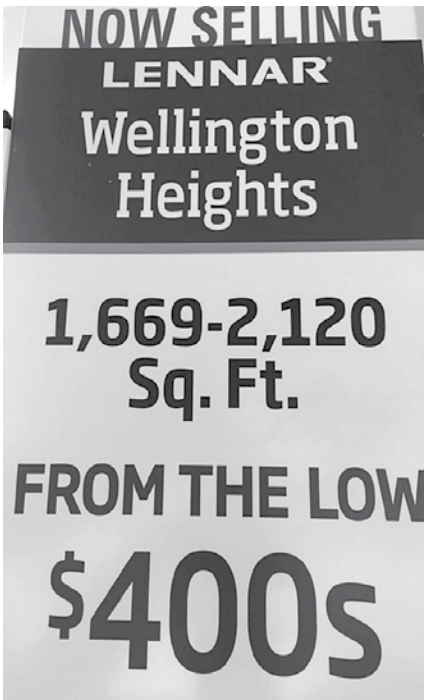
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Out with the old price, in with the new

Our city leaders keep telling us that building more market rate housing will help moderate real estate prices? More supply brings prices down. Thousands of new housing units have been built in Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater in the last year or so—including many of the sought-after single-family homes.

It won't be long until all those new housing units ("all housing is good!") with quarter million price tags will be snapped up by high-end buyers. The rest of us will be able to afford the old homes they didn't want.

But no—instead of prices moderating, everyone is cashing in. That's how the market works. Older



homes in Olympia neighborhoods that sold for \$350,000 two years ago are on the market for \$500,000 and up. Modest homes are selling for \$395,000 and being renovated in expectation of selling for 50% more in a couple of years. The real estate industry noticed.

A national real estate company, Lennar Homes, is building 56 new single family homes in Wellington Heights, abutting the Auto Mall in West Olympia. They put up the sign on the left this February: all three models priced in the \$400,000 range. In May, the sign on the right replaced the "old" sign. Same houses, now for \$500,000. The more houses, the higher the price. And a rising market raises all prices.



Then this happened

...crabs are coming back. It seems like aeons ago that the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (that's our Maggie) passed, but now it's time to celebrate! Two-thirds of the closely monitored fish species once devastated by overfishing have bounced back in a big way thanks to management plans instituted 10 to 15 years ago. "It's not 100 percent. So it's not unbridled good news but it does show the effectiveness of a law that has had its share of controversy," according to Brad Sewell, author of a study using data from the National Marine Fisheries Service. The Alaska fishery recovery was among the best.

...an observant local man wondered why some Thurston County Sheriff vehicles were driving around with a "thin blue line" flag sticker on their rear window. In a comment on Reddit, he suggested they should be removed, and symbols other than official logos and flags be banned. He said, " it is impossible to ignore how [the thin blue line flag] has been used to signal support of abusive police practices, up to and including murder. Since it is essential for police to be welcome in a community for them to perform their duties, displaying the flag both makes it more difficult for deputies to perform their duties, and makes them less safe while they are carrying them out."

...Los Angeles took a different approach to seeking "infill housing" aka "missing middle." They ran a contest called Low Rise for local architects. The winners offered modest, inclusive possibilities for homes that look like places you'd want to live—and, critically, like housing that could easily already exist in Southern California. The winner of the "Corners" category, which looks at how to densify corner lots in low-rise residential neighborhoods, is Vonn Weisenberger's "Branch-style" home, a play on the California Ranch that joins two lots with a community center for multi-generational living. Chief among the goals of the \$100,000 design challenge was to yield new ideas not just for how low-density housing should look and feel, but a process that might lead to housing that actually gets built. In addition to the Subdivision and Corners categories (for duplex homes and joined lots, respec-

tively), Low-Rise called for proposals for "Fourplex" housing. The winning Fourplex entry doesn't scream gentrification, however. The entry by the L.A.-based firms Omgivning and Studio-MLA features interlocking apartments for households of different sizes. The complex shares public and private gardens, parking spots, another green alley and a community easement or parklet. For this design competition, the city turned the process inside out, asking Angeleños what they might like to see in housing (and what they dread, too). Hawthorne credits Alejandro Gonzalez, a fellow in the city's design office, for spearheading five conversations—with designers, leaders, sustainability experts, residents and others—to fill out the design brief for the contest. This approach puts the community input hearings before the project design—an approach that can achieve both density and community acceptance.



Justice vs. capitalism

The big-ish lie that there's a labor shortage

The news lately is that businesses just can't find people to fill the jobs they're offering. But it's not a sign that people don't want to work, it's a sign that something is wrong with the American economy. Businesses have become addicted to a low-wage economy—one that contributes daily to increasing inequality and malaise among families.

There's an easy way to solve the problem: Pay more.

Wages today are historically low. They have been growing slowly for decades for every income group other than the affluent. As a share of gross domestic product, worker compensation is lower than at any point in the second half of the 20th century. Two main causes are corporate consolidation and shrinking labor unions, which together have given employers more workplace power and employees less.

Corporate profits, on the other hand, have been rising rapidly and now make up a larger share of GDP



Source: New York Times

than in previous decades. As a result, most companies can afford to respond to a growing economy by raising wages and continuing to make profits, albeit perhaps not the unusually generous profits they have been enjoying.

One more reality check: small businesses who say that if they have to pay people a living wage to work for them, they would have to close? Unfortunately, theirs is not a viable business model.

Thurston’s Guardian *ad Litem* Program fills an important role

Ilana Smith

In Thurston County, the need for advocates for children who have been relinquished to the foster care system is intensifying. Local volunteers who work with children in foster care report that the pandemic has affected children’s welfare in ways that may be unseen. Recently, a volunteer in the Dependency Guardian ad Litem (DGAL) Program verified that the number of children served over the past year has increased substantially.

Isolation increases the need but decreases reporting

Stressors like homelessness and drug addiction, which may have been exacerbated by the pandemic, have been on the rise. Positive tox screens for newborns in welfare programs show that the numbers of children born with drugs in their system is a large issue. There may be even more children who are in need of advocacy and interventions than are currently being reported due to isolation caused by the pandemic.

The DGAL Program, which partners with the Washington State Family & Juvenile Court System, advocates for children who cannot advocate for themselves to ensure the most vulnerable members of our community are protected. Volunteers receive extensive training to properly support the children they serve.

Wendy Mayo, the Dependency Guardian ad Litem Program Manager for Thurston County Superior Court, explained how this program serves local abused and neglected youth. The program currently supports approximately 225 children here in Thurston County with 6 paid staff and close to 50 volunteers.

Eyes and ears help the court find a safe home for a child

The “dependency” in the DGAL acronym reflects the fact that children being served by the program are dependents of the State of Washington when there are no capable parents to care for the child. In many cases, parents have voluntarily ended all association with their child.

The ultimate goal of the DGAL program is to find permanent and safe housing for children currently in the foster care system. The permanent home could be that of their parent, adoptive parents, or an appointed legal guardian, or another situation that ensures the child is safe and cared for.

Mayo states that “The DGALs are the ‘eyes and ears’ of the court, appointed to advocate for the best interest of the child within the dependency process.’ DGALs investigate the circumstances of the case they’re assigned to in order to offer interventions and recommendations while advocating for child safety. Providing interventions to keep the children at home with their biological parent is always a first choice, but that is not always possible.

A concern where there is drug addiction

In cases where parents are affected by issues with executive function, mental health, and drug addiction,

the court may remove children from the home of their biological family in order to ensure their safety. As some parents struggle with addiction to methamphetamine, or opioids, and sometimes a combination of both, their children’s safety is the major concern of those who provide protective services.

While there are many programs to help parents struggling with addiction, some parents fall into recidivism. Based on her experience with children of drug-addicted parents, in the eyes of one volunteer, “meth is one of the meanest drugs there is.” Some parents have had incredible difficulty staying clean after being steeped in addiction to a drug and many are permanently affected by having used it.

Countering the effects of an unstable home

Many parents whose children have been placed in the foster care system participate in Family Recovery Court in order to return to health and repair their families. Many parents who have issues with addiction realize on their own that they have a problem, but some are able to follow through only with the support provided by the courts. Some even freely relinquish their newborns or older children to ensure that their children receive proper care.

Some of the parents have no experience with what many consider to be a “regular” life: “they live with a different set of routines” and are not able to maintain things most would consider a daily practice in adulthood. Often such parents lack the things that are typically important to raising a healthy child—the ability to keep a schedule, to have

a job, to manage a bank account or provide a stable home life.

The importance of the parent and child connection

DGALs ensure that children are provided appropriate care while in foster care and they observe interactions with parental visitations as dictated by the court. Parents who want to remain in contact with their children will never be denied the opportunity to maintain the relationship.

Even where parents are struggling with dependency, the courts can’t deny them contact with their children. For example, parents don’t have to be clean to visit with their children; the courts can allow supervised visits to help parent and child to stay connected. Hopefully, as parents heal from addiction and learn effective childcare practices, the supervised visits can lead to a child returning permanently to the home of their biological parents.

Training for volunteers is followed by continuing support

DGALs receive extensive training in order to provide appropriate care for the children they serve. Mayo described a training program that is designed to help volunteers develop an understanding of how to support the whole child. This includes 35 hours of initial training that DGALs complete along with support as they prepare to begin working with a child.

Mayo discussed the relationship between the 50 active volunteers and their supervisors who are employed by the program. The volunteers do more than just supervise visits and observe children in foster care settings. While some volunteers may have experience in

the legal field, DGALs are not attorneys. Paid supervisors are there to ensure that complicated legal matters that arise in some of the cases are properly addressed.

Identifying and meeting the child’s needs

DGALs are advocates for the children they serve in the school day and ensure that the child is receiving support and interventions to help each child be successful in their academics. DGALs often attend team meetings with counselors, special education teachers, and general education teachers to ensure that caregivers are aware of interventions and supports for the child. They ensure proper implementation and support during and after school hours.

Some children come to the program with significant health concerns. DGALs ensure that dental and medical needs are taken care of and where mental health and other services are needed for the child to thrive, they make sure those are provided as well. While most of the contacts with the children in the program have been through Zoom during the past year, DGALs usually get to meet the children they serve in-person at least once monthly.

Volunteers come from many walks of life

The DGAL program is actively recruiting volunteers. New volunteers will receive 35 hours of training through Zoom in sessions lasting a couple hours per day. Once certified, DGALs participate in about 12 hours of continuous education annually while serving in the program. Upcoming training will begin in May and at the end of this summer.

Current volunteers are from a variety of walks of life. About half are retired and half have full-time employment and volunteer on the side. Some of the volunteers are former foster kids who want to help children just like they were once helped.

When children can thrive, outcomes are remarkable

A long-time volunteer thought recently of her many years in the program. While some of the things she has witnessed are troubling, she is comforted in her role and the opportunity to help protect children. She said she always keeps in mind that these are “children who are victims of victims. They didn’t choose to have this lifestyle.”

Ultimately, Mayo reflects, there are remarkable outcomes for the children they serve. “Some of the kids that are supported in the program were drug affected, mentally delayed, or vulnerable in other ways. It is amazing to see the kids thrive once supports have been provided.”

Ilana Smith is an avid reader, wishful traveler, and an advocate for child welfare who has laid down roots in Lacey.

To learn more about becoming part of a program that makes a difference in the life of a child who has been abused or neglected, visit the Thurston County Superior Court’s Dependency Guardian ad Litem Program webpage www.thurstoncountywa.gov/sc/Pages/dependency-casa-program.aspx or contact the program at (360) 709-3137. Check out the PSA for the program at left on this page of Works in Progress..

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 DGAL provides a judge or commissioner with carefully 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.



Washington Association
of Child Advocate
Programs

For more on how to volunteer as a DGAL in Thurston County, contact Wendy Mayo at (360) 709-3231.

From page 1

However, the prohibition doesn't apply when taxpayer money is to be used "to provide for the necessary support of the poor and infirm." Here was a way to circumvent the prohibition.

Thus, the Agreement between Walker John and the City states at the outset that the City's grant of money is permitted under the exception for "necessary support for the poor and infirm." John will offer 60% of the units in his market rate building as "affordable low income" apartments for a period of 12 years. Assuming a building with 30 units, this would be 18 apartments.

How—and why—could this happen?

Low income? Whoever drafted the Agreement chose the highest possible measure for “low income”—the federal Housing and Urban Development Dept. Area Median Income (AMI). The Agreement

There is a more realistic calculation of median household income in Olympia that might actually be the basis for affordable rents in Walker John's new

Every market rate apartment downtown qualifies as affordable if the person renting it has wages or income three times the monthly rent. For

1928	The Avalon Theater opens at 308 4th Ave., closes in 1952
1960s	Griswold Office Supplies locates in the old Avalon building
2004	Griswold's damaged by fire
2007	Clifford Lee buys 308 4th Ave for \$257,500
2013	City defines downtown "blight" to obtain Community Renewal Area powers
2016	City of Olympia purchases the building for \$300,000
2017	City of Olympia arranges sale of 308 4th to Big Rock Capital for \$195,000 with city paying \$150,000 in "environmental remediation". Big Rock plans a building with 30 apartments—half "affordable"—to open in 2019
2020	Assessor values the building at \$212,000 in a rising market downtown
2021	City staffer Mike Reid negotiates a sale of 308 4th Ave to Urban Olympia for \$50,000 with a proviso that taxpayers will pay \$308,850 to demolish the building and Council will approve a 12-year tax exemption for the project
4/20/21	Effective date on the Agreement of Sale to Urban Olympia
5/04/21	Date City Council votes to approve the Agreement

According to a study by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLRC), use of the HUD AMI has had the effect in other Washington cities of producing “affordable” units that are even priced above market rates.

Affordable? The Agreement uses Olympia Municipal Code's definition of "affordable." Under this definition, whether an apartment is "affordable" isn't deter-

example, City manager Jay Burney, who signed the Agreement, has an annual income of about \$200,000. For him, an apartment priced at \$5000 per month meets the definition of “affordable”. The City’s Economic Development Director Mike Reid, who took the lead on the Agreement, has an annual salary of \$120,000. For him, rent of \$3000 per month would be affordable according to the City code.

The Agreement's terms require John to offer 60% of his apartments to people defined as low income by HUD, and to charge them no more than

According to a JLARC study of the 12-year tax exemption, other cities that authorized the exemption have ended up with units priced above market rates.

City Council members who approved the Agreement were presented with a staff report that contained none of this information. Nor did they ask a single question of staff. Saying the magic words “affordable low income housing” was sufficient.

The Walker John Agreement serves neither the poor—nor actual low income Olympians

We've seen above that the beneficiary of the Agreement is Walker John. He received a building worth thousands more than he paid for it; he will be able to charge Olympia taxpayers for demolishing existing structures and preparing the ground for redevelopment; he will receive an exemption from property taxes for 12 years; at the end of 12 years, he need only offer 30% of the apartments pursuant to HUD calculations, and at the end of 20 it's his building to do whatever he likes.

In 2021 the federal poverty line for an individual was \$12,880; for a family of three it was \$21,960. These match closely to a definition in an article on poverty in Washington in the Sept. 2019 issue of UW News. A single person under age 65 is considered poor if their total income falls below \$13,064. A family with two adults and two children is poor with income below \$25,465.

So if an apartment in John's building were to be affordable for a poor individual under this definition, the rent would be less than \$322 a month. For a small family it would have to be less than \$550. The day a rent in downtown Olympia qualifies as affordable for a poor person or family is not of interest to any of our decision-makers, nor to real estate developers.

As noted above, TRPC puts median household income for Thurston County at about \$60,000. Note that these are “household” incomes—which includes every earner in the household. That usually means both partners are working. Many are working for wages we would consider below a living wage. In Thurston County, jobs in social service, retail trade and hospitality account for half of the jobs in the top five employment sectors. Annual average wages for those jobs were \$55,000, \$34,000 and \$22,000 respectively in 2019.

For contrast, the median income of individuals employed by the City of Olympia is close to \$82,000. (1) Eighteen employees with the

► **Say the magic word**, cont'd page 7

"Pizza so good it deserves police protection!" - Mayor Selby

DAILY SPECIALS

Poor & Infirm
comes with a
City Council resolution

Walker John
comes with a
sales tax exemption

J. Brent McKinley
comes with everything
(55 and older)

Mistake by the Lake
served with decorative salmon

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The storm that Netanyahu unleashed

Adam Keller

[Note: This is an excerpt from an article in Tikkun, an on-line magazine "The Voice of Spiritual Progressives." It was written May 12, the day after 21 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, and two people in Israel—www.tikkun.org/the-storm-which-netanyahu-unleashed/ By the "end" of the bombing, at least 240 people had died in Gaza under Israeli bombs, and 12 in Israel under rockets fired from within Gaza. The author is the spokesperson for Gush Shalom, an Israeli peace group.]

On Friday, May 7 —just five days ago, though it seems like an eternity—public attention in Israel was totally riveted to the complicated dance of party politics. Prime Minister Netanyahu, facing three serious corruption charges at the Jerusalem District Court, had just failed in his efforts to form a new cabinet. The mandate passed to the oppositional "Block of Change," whose leaders embarked on delicate negotiations aimed at forming a very heterogeneous government coalition comprising right-wing, left-wing and center parties, which have virtually nothing in common except the wish to see the last of Netanyahu.

We had very mixed feelings about it, especially since the intended new Prime Minister Naftali Bennet is, if anything, more right-wing than Netanyahu. Still, the new government would have very strong mechanisms of "mutual veto" in place that would prevent Bennet from doing too much harm—though the same would also prevent the new government from doing much good, either. And this government would be the very first in Israeli history to rely on an Arab party for its parliamentary majority (other than the Rabin Government in 1995, whose tenure was cut short by Rabin's assassination).

Anyway, there were very concrete plans to have the new cabinet ready for parliamentary approval by Tuesday, May 11. The anti-corruption demonstrators who have been demonstrating every week outside the Prime Minister's residence were joking about when the movers will arrive to take away the Netanyahu family furniture.

But Netanyahu had other irons in the fire.

First, there was the planned expulsion of hundreds of Palestinians from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem. Dozens of them were due to be expelled within days and extreme right settlers were going to enter into their vacated homes.

Protests in Sheikh Jarrah and elsewhere in East Jerusalem met brutal

police repression. Then, protests spread to the Haram A Sharif (Temple Mount) compound, and so did the police repression. Police started to shoot "rubber" bullets directly into demonstrators' faces, causing them to lose eyes—at least two of them losing both eyes and becoming blind for the rest of their lives.



Footage of the police breaking into the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site and a place considered, even by secular Palestinians, as a major part of their national heritage, spread widely through the social networks, escalating the protests.

And then there was the plan to have thousands of radical young settlers hold the provocative "Dance of the Flags" right through the Damascus Gate and the Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, chanting their habitual racist slogans.

Hamas activists—but unable to hinder the Palestinians' ability to go on shooting rockets.

And relations between Jews and Arabs, fellow citizens of Israel, have descended to unprecedented depths of inter-communal violence. In Lod, the police declared a night curfew "to stop the rampaging Arabs" but Arab inhabitants refuse to abide by it and are involved in violent confrontations with police around a local mosque.

In Bat Yam and Tiberias, mobs of extreme right Jews are assaulting

random Arabs and smashing up Arab-owned shops. And repeated again and again in the media is the government's total refusal to make a ceasefire. "No, no, no ceasefire—we must teach Hamas a lesson!"

Of course no ceasefire. Why should Netanyahu want a ceasefire? Every day in which the shooting continues is one more day of keeping that dreaded mover's truck away from the Prime Minister's Residence, one more day of keeping power in his own hands.

If there was concrete proof that

Police started to shoot "rubber" bullets directly into demonstrators' faces, causing them to lose eyes—at least two losing both eyes and becoming blind for the rest of their lives.

The police and government reiterated hour after hour that the "Dance of the Flags" would take place as scheduled. And it was then that Hamas in Gaza threatened to retaliate for the attack on the Palestinians of Jerusalem, and the government declared that it would not bend to "the ultimatums of terrorists".

At the very last moment the "Dance" was cancelled—but it was too late. At 6.00 pm came the salvo of seven Hamas rockets at the outskirts of Jerusalem—which in fact caused no casualties or damage, but which precipitated the Israeli deadly retaliation on Gaza.

And now, a bit more than 48 hours later, here we are, in the midst of an escalating war, the Israeli Air Force destroying high rise buildings in Gaza and proudly announcing the "elimination" of senior

Netanyahu did it all consciously and deliberately, it would constitute criminal charges far more serious than those he is facing at the District Court of Jerusalem. But any such evidence is probably classified Top Secret and would only be published fifty years from now. So, we can't prove that he did it deliberately, though there can be little doubt about it. We can only end the war, and immediately afterwards get rid of him.

Perhaps what is happening now will shake President Biden out of the attitude of keeping a low profile on Israel and the Palestinians? After all, all this mess had fallen on his desk with quite a loud clatter...

Adam Keller is an Israeli peace activist and the spokesman for Gush Shalom, the peace group founded by Uri Avnery.

"A cash cow"

Phyllis Bennis

Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, has a whole lot to gain from this assault—among other things, it may keep him out of jail. More broadly, Israel's strategic military planners have been waiting for another attack on Gaza. And for Israel's arms manufacturers, assaulting Gaza is what the leading Israeli daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* has called "a cash cow."

Netanyahu's political capital is also bound up with his claim to be the only Israeli leader who can maintain the key levels of absolute impunity and uncritical economic and political support from the United States. Certainly the Trump years were characterized by Washington's warmest embrace of Netanyahu's right-wing government and the most extremist pro-Israel policies to date. But so far President Biden, presumably convinced that moving to restore the Iran nuclear deal means no other pressure on Israel is possible, has recalibrated only the rhetoric.

Washington's actual support for Israel—including \$3.8 billion in military support every year and the one-sided "Israel has the right of self-defense" rhetoric that refuses to acknowledge any such right to the Palestinians—remains in place. And history shows us that direct US backing—in the form of additional cash and weapons as well as effusive statements of support—rises when Israeli troops are on the attack.

[Gaza has been the frequent target]—in 2008-2009, 2012, and especially for the 50 days of Israeli bombardment in 2014 that left 2,202 Palestinians, including 526 children, dead.

Israel's arms industry

These attacks on Gaza have provided a critically valuable testing ground for the Israeli weapons manufacturers whose export deals—worth \$7.2 billion in 2019—represent a huge component of Israel's GDP.

During the height of the 2014 assault, *Ha'aretz* reported that the company's factories "worked around the clock turning out munitions as the army tested their newest systems against a real enemy. Now, they are expecting their battle-tested products will win them new customers."

"Combat is like the highest seal of approval when it comes to the international markets," explained Barbara Opall-Rome, the Israel bureau chief for *Defense News*, told *Ha'aretz*. "What has proven itself in battle is much easier to sell. Immediately after the operation, and perhaps even during, all kinds of delegations arrive here from countries that appreciate Israel's technological capabilities and are interested in testing the new products."

"From a business point of view," concluded the editor of *Israel Defense*, "the operation was an outstanding thing for the defense industries."

Phyllis Bennis directs the New Internationalism Project at the Institute for Policy Studies. This is an excerpt from her May 24, 2021, article in *Foreign Policy in Focus*: fpif.org/understanding-israels-latest-attack-on-gaza



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BOOK REVIEW

Women Who Rock: Bessie to Beyoncé, Girl Groups to Riot Grrrl

Edited by Evelyn McDonnell

Siân Kear

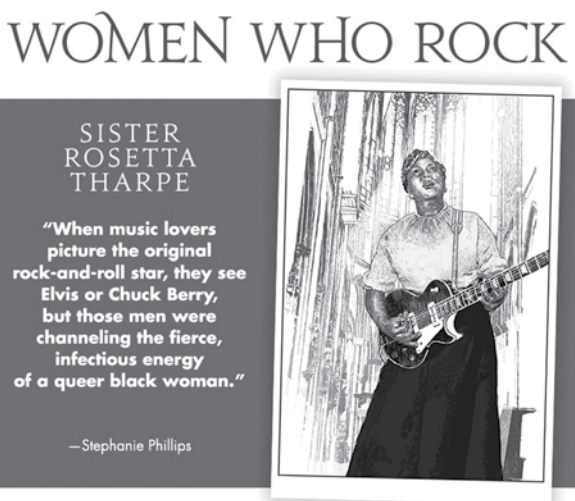
Women Who Rock is a celebration of, and a tribute to, 103 female musicians throughout history who not only shaped music, but used their voices, their instruments and their songwriting to fight for human rights, civil rights and societal change. These are women to celebrate not only for creating outstanding music and for making change within the music industry, but for using the platforms that they built to fight for an end to apartheid, for racial equality, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, social justice, protection of the environment, an end to war, and so much more. As the editor herself says, this is “a narrative story focusing on key select figures who were true game changers.”

Evelyn McDonnell is a writer and professor of journalism at Loyola Marymount University. She has authored four books, is a former pop critic for *The Miami Herald*, music editor for *The Village Voice*, and has been writing about music for over 20 years. To create *Women Who Rock*, she brought together a team of female writers to compile these biographies. Her hope was to “Inspire the next generation of wayward daughters to pick up a bass, or a microphone, or a sampler. Or a pen, or a laptop, or a paintbrush.”

Biographies—and playlists

Each musician is presented in a 2-3 page biography which covers key moments from their

personal lives and music careers, including interesting connections to other musicians and insights into their own musical influences. The writers have also combed through extensive back catalogues to offer a bite-sized playlist for



each artist—a combination of undeniable classics as well as lesser known tracks. If you have a music streaming platform ready as you read, you can discover and play music from across decades.

A beautiful and unexpected extra is that every musician featured is illustrated with an original portrait commissioned in paint, ink, pencil, or digital colour—no reproduced, much-before seen photography here! These artworks, each

created by one of five female artists, command to be adored in their own right.

Overcoming barriers in the music world and beyond

Two recurring themes throughout the many biographies are the additional challenges that these musicians faced, and continue to face, because of their gender and/or race. Many had to overcome adversities, break down barriers, and smash through ceilings, in order to make the music that they wanted to, and in some cases, to receive the recognition they deserved.

These stories take the reader beyond appreciating the musical brilliance of these women and the roles they played in the evolution of music itself, and ‘lights a fire in your belly’ to fight for the causes that they so passionately fought for. We must keep blazing the trail that these women worked so hard to ignite.

This book reminds us to encourage and empower women and girls to follow their dreams and fulfil their ambitions (musical or otherwise), and not be limited by the confines that society can impose. Kamala Harris should not be making history as the first woman of colour to be elected US vice-president. This should not even be notable—it should be normal.

Everybody has something to learn from within these pages, not just about some of music’s most remarkable female musicians, but also about the differences they made beyond music—the causes they fought for (and continue to fight for). *Women Who Rock* unearths new icons and new music. It celebrates how far we have come and highlights how far we still must go.

Siân Kear recently relocated to Olympia from the UK. Forever frustrated by our treatment of the planet and each other, but forever hopeful that together we can do better.

Say the magic word

From page 5

title of “Director” make salaries ranging from \$131,000 to \$161,000. The manager who handles the Home Fund (homeless and affordable housing program) makes \$104,000. The City has hired a “Homeless Response Coordinator” for a salary between \$78,000 and \$95,000.

A summary of Block Grant priorities for Thurston County for 2018–2022 identifies families with two parents and two children as low-income if household earnings are at or below \$62,150 per year; very low-income at \$38,850 per year, and extremely low-income at or below \$25,100 annually. According to the report, more than two-thirds of these households are housing cost-burdened.

There is nothing in the Agreement with Walker John that relates to supporting the “poor and infirm” nor even any hope for people who are officially burdened by their housing costs.

Meanwhile, back at the encampments

The 2020 Thurston County homeless census found that 995 individuals were experiencing homelessness—living unsheltered or in emergency or transitional housing. This is a 24 percent increase over 2019 and is the highest count since the homeless census began in 2006.

Approximately 54% of homeless individuals were unsheltered in 2020 compared to 49% in 2018. “Unsheltered” means living in places not meant for human habitation such as cars, tents, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, or on the street.

Last month, Thurston County committed \$1 million to fund case managers to work with encampment residents at Deschutes Parkway, Wheeler Road and Ensign Road, as well as clean up camps and establish codes of conduct. No commitment to actual housing, but careers in homelessness are thriving.

Find this information at <https://govsalaries.com/>

Bethany Weidner is a long-time resident of Olympia and a close reader of official documents.



Completed micro homes destined for placement at Mitigation Site.

Mitigation

From page 1

ration with supportive services. The goal is to see a higher rate of people moving from the street to micro-houses; into appropriate counseling and guidance and ultimately to permanent housing.

How this all came about

The contract to transform this shelter site was an intersectional agreement between public and private sectors. The City of Olympia contracted design and build firm Earth Homes LLC to oversee and organize the build, including merging labor efforts of volunteers and people from the homeless community merged to construct the 60 shelter units. \$12,000 was allocated for compensating a handful of workers from the Mitigation Site. Fundraising efforts are underway to make up the difference in the now-depleted “Homeless Employment Program” budget.

“The original budget for the project was \$127,000, contributed by Thurston County, Providence Foundation, the City of Olympia and private donors. The final budget for the micro-homes effort is projected to be \$207,000—extended in part by materials delays that dictated more staffing,” says Outreach Coordinator, Rabi Verdante of the Earth Homes crew.

Positive developments already emerging

One of the paid workers, “Big Steve,” has reported a sense of renewal in his time working on the shelters, and foresees positive changes in others at the camp as final delivery on May 27 came into view. “Just getting to sleep off the ground and start your day that much higher feels like you actually matter,” he mused. “You don’t have to fight just to want to do something with your day in the morning.”

Steve is also a peer counselor to fellow Mitigation ‘participants’ and deals with a lot of burdensome external influences on people inside the gate. “It would be great if other people around the site could go somewhere so there are less problems coming in and people could work on themselves.”

With about an eighth of the recently-passed state budget allocated toward Social and Health Services, forging connections between supportive alliances, and a balanced city plan to make housing accessible for all residents, we hold out hope that 2021 census numbers will report more people mattering.

For more information about the Micro-Housing Project, visit www.earthhomes.design/community

Suddenly—concerns for women in Afghanistan are news

[Note: In an interview on Democracy Now, Zaher Wahab makes it clear that current claims that the US needs to stay in Afghanistan to keep women safe ring hollow. Wahab is an Afghan American professor who taught for four decades at Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education in Portland and for seven years at the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul. He goes back and forth between Afghanistan and the United States. He was interviewed by Amy Goodman on May 10, 2021.]

Amy Goodman: One of the early justifications, Professor, for the invasion of Afghanistan was protecting women and girls from Taliban misogyny. I remember Laura Bush would often come out to talk about this. You're highly critical of this pretext. What is your message to those who say now, "See, the US has to stay in Afghanistan once again to protect girls"?

Zaher Wahab: ...if you look at the statistics in the last 20 years, a lot of women and a lot of children have been killed. But right now there's no safety or security anywhere. ...it's very interesting to read the United States State Department advisory, which advises Americans to leave Afghanistan but also advises Americans and

others not to go to Afghanistan. The advisory lists all kinds of places—schools, universities, clubs, restaurants, mosques, sports events,

simply a reflexive response to the crime of 9/11. So, later, of course, the American government had to have these justifications, and the



Photo: UNAMA-Fraidoon Poya

etc.—these are unsafe all over the country and that people should not

liberation of—so-called liberation—of women was one of them.

“... the American government had to have these justifications, and the so-called liberation of women was one of them.”

go to Afghanistan.

We should also remember that the initial assault on October 7, 2001, by the United States was really a retaliation. It wasn't a planned action or invasion or occupation... it was

But women and children continue to be the main victims of the oc-

Award-winning short film “The Present” gives a glimpse of Palestinian life

The Present, a short film shot in the West Bank, just won the 2021 British Film Actors' Award for Best Short Film along with an Academy Award nomination and dozens of prizes around the world. It sheds light on a reality that is ignored by the US press in reporting Israeli bombs falling on Palestine and rockets sent from Gaza into Israel.

The 24-minute film follows a father and his young daughter as they set out from their home to buy an anniversary gift—a highly desired refrigerator. It turns out that this seemingly simple goal is nearly unattainable. The pair is forced to navigate Israeli checkpoints, heavily armed Israeli soldiers and seg-

regated roads, the father spending hours waiting behind bars as his ID is checked and rechecked, renegotiating what would otherwise be a simple route as new army roadblocks appear out of nowhere..

“... these checkpoints aren't here to make lives easier.” They exist to “to deliberately frustrate and humiliate” and to “forcefully encourage” the Palestinians to leave, said the film's director Farah Nabulsi (quoted in the Hollywood Reporter).

The film features the renowned screen and stage star Saleh Bakri and Maryam Kanj as his daughter. The film was acquired by Netflix and is currently available.



cupation and invasion and the mayhem. For example, 85% of the women in the country are still illiterate. Child marriage is very common. Polygamy is very common. Poverty amongst women is very, very common.

Altogether, 70% of the people are poor. So, whether it was the so-called liberation of women or ending the narcotics trade or bringing peace, prosperity and democracy to Afghanistan, all of these were, I think, sort of for television, for the American audience, because the facts on the ground are entirely different.

It's being asked by observers: What happened to the \$135 billion aid package from the United States? And where is the development? Because right now most people—and women, in particular—live in the Middle Ages. They're poor. They're widowed. They're brutalized. A few women, we should point out—a few women in the major cities—are going to school, and some to the universities, and have government jobs and travel.

Most women, like most Afghan people, live in pain and suffering and have since the beginning of the US invasion.

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Strategic advances for immigrant rights in the 2021 WA legislature

[Note: These summaries were provided by Strengthening Sanctuary Alliance (SSA). The group follows the lead of immigrants and connects closely with Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network, Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition and Farmworker organizations.]

We were told that the “COVID session” was to be limited to one bill passed per issue. Think again. What we accomplished was perceived in January as impossible, but it is true what Nelson Mandela said: “They will say it is impossible until it happens.”

At the legislature, in a difficult year done remotely, people in communities stood up and said: “Change things.” We had amazing people from immigrant communities across the state networking and offering powerful testimony at hearings.

We worked with our three 22nd District legislators (Jessica Bateman, Laurie Dolan and Sam Hunt), along with Legislators of Color and LBGTQ communities and advocates for civil and human rights and equity to make significant gains. On police accountability we had great testimony from Olympians, including City Councilwoman Lisa Parsley, Native activist Noel Parish and other people of color. Wins for the people of the state brought improvements in democracy, political accountability, social justice and compassion. equity, environmental justice, and protection of those most at risk in the human and natural environment of our state.

It is exciting to win in the legislature, and to achieve as much as we did this year is really, really exciting and fun. Still, we must not be deceived by legislative victories. They are just one step in a long journey to equity, but it's a journey we're committed to—a journey that we hope will lead to a revolution of values and social justice. We are committed and we are persistent.

Some legislative highlights

Our focus is on immigrants, but there were many bills that benefitted other communities.

- Fairstart for Kids: The largest investment in child care and early learning in the state's history.
- Capital Gains: To fund critical programs, we taxed those who can afford it and started to fix our regressive state tax system by taxing capital gains from the wealthy.
- **SB 5141 HEAL ACT:** See Solidarity Agenda, below.
- Washington New Americans program: \$2 million to ensure immigrants have access to free citizenship services in WA.
- Language support for families in schools: \$1.85 Million for this and to continue our dual and heritage language programs.
- Language access supports and rate enhancements: \$15.75 million for early learning and child care programs in WA state hit hard by the pandemic and critical to support immigrant child care providers.

Bills tracked by SSA in connection with WAISN (Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network)

Remember the legislative rule of thumb: It is much easier to kill a bill than to pass one. Our District legislators have a limited number of bills they can sponsor, so part of their contribution is as cosponsors, and of course their votes in committee and on the floor mean a lot.

- La Resistancia's **HB 1090:** To close private prisons and detention centers—First justice bill passed and signed by the governor.
- Health Care for undocumented immigrants: Insufficient funding but a partial win, with money for free services at some clinics, to be expanded when funds become available next year.
- Unemployment coverage for undocumented workers: Money will be provided as COVID aid to immigrants. To be expanded to unemployment if funds are available next year.
- Three Farmworker support bills passed: **SB 5172**—Farmworker overtime pay (Hunt cosponsor); **HB 1297** Working families tax

- credit; (Bateman cosponsor); **HB 1297**; **HB1097** Worker Safety: (Bateman cosponsor)
- Eight Police Accountability bills passed: See details under Solidarity Agenda, below

Legislative news from the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN)

Our platform for the 2021 legislative session has been a total success. The budget provisos that we worked on this year made it and our two priority bills passed and were signed by the governor!

Workers

There will be an income replacement program for Washington's undocumented workers who lost their jobs or income due to the pandemic. (See Operating Budget priorities below.)

Communication from Lin Crowley, Co-chair of the Asian Pacific Islanders Coalition—South Puget Sound Chapter, to leaders and partners

Thanks to your support and advocacy both at API Legislative Week and throughout the session, we were able to get some very important wins for our community, including a funded Working Families Tax Credit as well as additional funding for the Washington Immigrant Relief Fund! Check out the in-depth recap below (drafted by Joseph) on how APIC's legislative priorities and solidarity items did this session.

Legislative priorities

HB 1368—The legislature approved \$65m in funding to the WA Immigrant Relief Fund (WIRF), and over 45,000 applications were submitted as of 4/28/21.

SB 5438—Emergency and Permanent UI Program for All. This bill would have required the state government to establish an unemployment benefits program for all Washingtonians regardless of immigration status. While the bill did not pass, we pivoted to a budget proviso strategy and secured funding to help establish an alternative that will help support our communities for the next two years.

HB 1297—Working Families Tax Credit/Recovery Rebate. The legislature fully funded the WFTC/RR at \$268m for the 21-23 biennium and \$563m for the 23-25 biennium. Households will receive \$300 to \$1200 depending on how many children they have. ITIN filers are eligible for this tax credit, meaning immigration status is not a barrier.

Operating budget

Expanded funding to support undocumented workers: \$340m to be distributed over the next biennium to support households excluded from unemployment benefits and federal stimulus payments. \$77,000 will go toward a DSHS study for a permanent unemployment benefits program open to individuals excluded from existing programs. \$80,000 will go toward a similar study at the Employment Securities Division.

Funding for LEP Pathways Program—Maintains funding at \$1.77m/fiscal year for the Limited English Proficient Pathways Program to support immigrants and refugees through ESL classes, job training, work support, and other social services.

Funding for Naturalization Services—Maintains funding at \$2.5m/fiscal year for programs to assist immigrants and refugees, especially elderly or disabled, with the naturalization process, including the N-400 application process, fee waiver requests, civics classes, and interview preparation.

Funding for COFA Islander healthcare and dental coverage— \$400,000 available for CBO to work with COFA community members to ensure continuing healthcare access. \$800,000 dispersed at \$100k/year to support transition of COFA community members to federal healthcare. \$583,000 for COFA dental coverage. \$1,173,000 to ensure COFA citizens can obtain dental coverage during open enrollment

Healthcare

\$35 million was appropriated to provide healthcare services to people with little or no health coverage, regardless of immigration status. This will be delivered as grants to providers. A long-term plan is included—funds will allow the Health Benefit Exchange to explore opportunities to facilitate the enrollment of people excluded from Medicaid or federal programs, such as undocumented persons, to a state health program for the year 2024. One option for the Exchange is to develop an application for a federal waiver. Other exceptions were included.

Detention and deportation

HB1090, Banning private prisons, has been signed into law! The contract for the Northwest Detention Center expires in 2025 and cannot be renewed.

Legal services

HB1072, Eliminating Restrictions on the Use of Civil Legal Aid Funds, has been signed into law! This change removes the restriction that prevents the use of funds to help undocumented persons.

Capital Budget

Asia Pacific Cultural Center—Approved for \$1.5m through the Department of Commerce's (Commerce) Building Communities Fund. This supports expansion of the Asia Pacific Cultural Center on its current site.

Aging in PACE—Approved for \$5m through Commerce's funding for Local and Community Projects. Supports construction costs for a partnership between International Community Health Services (ICHS) and Kin On to develop an aging-in-place program dedicated to serving AAPI elders.

Solidarity Agenda

Legal Defense Fund—\$2m/fiscal year to improve low-income immigrants' access to legal representation in immigration court proceedings (increase from \$1.5m/fiscal year).

Equity in health coverage—\$35m from Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Account to be distributed as grants to provide healthcare to uninsured/underinsured individuals regardless of immigration status.

HB 1078—Restoring voting rights. Approximately 26,000 Washingtonians not incarcerated but serving a sentence in community custody will have their voting rights restored.

HB 1090—Banning Private Detention: see WAISN above.

Police accountability. HB 1054—Limits ways police officers can use force against civilians including banning use of chokeholds, neck restraints, unleashed canines, no-knock warrants, and military equipment, to reduce cases of police brutality and killings. **HB 1202**—Peace Officer Accountability Act: Did not pass. Would have allowed survivors and families of police violence victims to hold officers accountable in civil court for misconduct, eliminating qualified immunity as a defense. **HB 1310**—De-escalation/Use of Force: creates a civil standard that limits when force (including deadly force) can be used by police. **SB 5051**—Officer Decertification: Ensures that the Criminal Justice Training Commission can discipline and decertify officers who engage in abuse of power.

HEAL Act (Environmental Justice): This legislation will implement many of the recommendations made by the Environmental Justice Taskforce, including ensuring an environmental justice analysis for state agencies to use to ensure that their practices don't cause unfair environmental impacts to vulnerable communities.

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BOOK REVIEW

Made in China: A Prisoner, an SOS Letter and the Hidden Cost of America’s Cheap Goods

by Amelia Pang

Jeff Angus

Stalinist Plutocracy was never going to be a pleasant social arrangement. But now that Red China is the world's most influential power, surveillance technology so cheap and artificial intelligence software so widely deployed (accurate or not), Stalinist Plutocracy is amplifying there. Tragically, UnitedStatesian consumers made it possible, and are funding its global expansion.

Made in China: A Prisoner, an SOS Letter & the Hidden Cost of America's Cheap Goods by journalist Amelia Pang explains what's changed for the (far) worse for workers in the last 30 years. Pang has won recognition for her investigative work on fraudulent “organic” food imports, sexual violence against indigenous women and the exploitation of smuggled immigrants recruited to work in Chinese restaurants. Now her focus is on China itself. In her book, she documents how wishful thinking by both political parties has funded an explosion of for-profit slave camps. Integrating the products of Communist Party plutocrats into the global economy did not make the apparatchiks more cuddly.

Global capital's lust for growing streams of cheap stuff to sell to the precariat at dollar stores—and Pelotons to the middle class—creates irresistible demand. The Davos crowd's addiction to ratcheting down production costs drives Chinese leaders' calculations. They need more free labor to keep up.

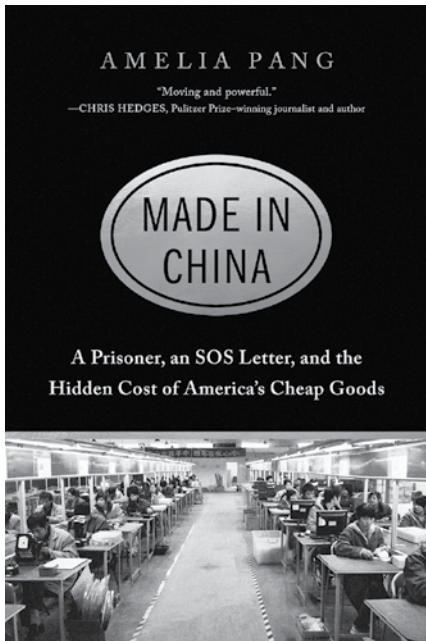
The “market” requires more prisoner-workers, thus more criminalizing of behaviors not previously crimes. Pang's book documents how the supply chain moves enslaved people from cities to rural “Re-education Through Labor” camps (RTLs), no longer running through the courts. Even Stalinist courts require processing time; supply chains are all about efficiency. In the new China, rendition from one's home to the concentration camp dispenses with the show trial.

Pang's book wraps a set of essays mostly around Sun Yi. A brave prisoner building seasonal decorations for an American outsourcer to sell through KMart, he secreted a personal note in the boxes begging for help. His history, voice, and the consequences on two continents illustrate in a powerful fashion the atrocities faced by many millions.

What was Sun Yi “in” for? Belonging to a social/spiritual/health club called Falun Gong, the most popular non-Party organization in Red China before the leaders cracked down. Sun wouldn't renounce his affiliation.

Pang argues that the crackdown is not for specific Falun Gong activities or beliefs. Her theory is that the Communist Party feels the need to be the sole distributor of marketing messaging. Other channels may not be intentionally subversive, but once established, they might be outside the span of Party control.

This explains the PRC's dirty war on Muslims (against all the indigenous Uighur people, most but not all of whom have a Muslim background) and on Christians. These are competing affiliations more than direct anti-Party cognates, but it hasn't stopped mass incarceration of 1 to 3 million Uighur folk.



Pang documents the latest commercial innovation, a perfect fit for the globalizers' unslakeable expansionist thirst. With increasing competition from countries that supply food, drugs and hard goods, PRC has home-grown a new service product that less repressive countries can't recreate: Discount

organ transplant clinics. They harvest the organs from...you guessed it. While concentration camp health facilities are rudimentary, visiting medical personnel will provide non-smokers with checkups, gathering DNA and other details in the process.

The database of details apparently makes for quick matching to a buyer. While legitimate transplant experts question the origin

rights issue. But the slave labor economy there also reinforces the Davos crowd's need to drive down labor and health standards to those of the PRC everywhere they invest.

Ending US complicity in China's atrocities will be tough, but it's not hopeless. Pang's “What We Can Do” has a checklist—behaviors to tweak and questions to ask the corporations that you give your business to. There are some new ways (less

In the new China, rendition from one’s home to the concentration camp dispenses with the show trial.

of cheapie human body parts, price seems to trump market and consumer concerns for the hidden cost to the victims.

Pang points out the magnitude of the challenge of pushing back. Many woke consumers demand that popular brands inspect factories. Pang, however, explains that even a factory that seems square, like Apple's, may (and in Apple's case does) buy component parts from torture shops without necessarily knowing (or perhaps not caring as long as they pass inspection).

Most inspections are cursory, to control cost. Further, long supply chains mean factories source components from suppliers who in turn source from others—the inspections never catch the off-site enslavers. Thus, even the woke-est consumers buying Made in China are subsidizing the Stalinist plutes' torture machine.

The book is well worth reading. Since Red China seems to have more political prisoners than the rest of the world combined, scale alone makes it a critical human

likely to be new to WIP readers than the general population) to weigh price and re-consider the consequences of your consumption.

“Reach across the aisle” dreamers will find addressing Red China's endemic human rights violations a worthy effort. Both the libertarian Right and the Christian Right are mortified at PRC's oppression of Christians. The oil-war priapic Right (the Bush Junior-Cheney wing) is scared witless of PRC's increasing weapons muscle and cyber-shenanigans. From my point of view, PRC policy would provide a viable point of entry for a Red-Blue collaboration. Bring Made in China to your bi-partisan book club. See where a mutually-respectful conversation leads.

Jeff is an activist who's been advocating avoidance of “made in China” products for decades, but who still learned a ton of new information from Pang's book.

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Earth Regenerators

A study group for restoring planetary health and avoiding human extinction

Want to do more to help regenerate the Earth for all splendid varieties of life? This is a study group about how to do this! This is a gathering place for people who would like to participate in the Design Institute for Regenerating Earth (DIRE). They come from many walks of life, live all over the world, and are unified in passion for healing landscapes and preserving Earth's biosphere. DIRE is a project of the Center for Applied Cultural Evolution and is built on the principles of gift economy -- meaning all are welcome to join for free. <https://earth-regenerators.mn.co/?autojoin=1> You will find community as we struggle together. Learn frameworks and tools for how to do regenerative design. Discover people and places to collaborate with. And help increase the prospects for future generations -- human and non-human alike.

Haki Farmers' Collective

Haki farmers are working to create a garden that produces food and community at the urban victory farm they share with GRuB. Interested volunteers and people looking to get more joy out of life can contact them to see when they'll be working in the garden many days over the summer. The farm is located behind the newly developed Thurston County Food Bank on Martin Way. When you turn into the Food Bank, drive down the hill to the end of the parking lot, a volunteer will be there to greet you! Address: 7027 Martin Way E Lacey, WA 98516. (See our story about the collective in the May issue of WIP) Find out about dates to go to the farm at: hakifarmerscollective@gmail.com, or visit their facebook page.

Olympia Mutual Aid Partners (OlyMAP)

Mutual Aid **Mondays**. Every Monday each month, a group of volunteers bring food and hygiene supplies to an encampment where people without housing are living. Many volunteers cook food and drop it off on site, or bring clothes and supplies from home or churches. Many volunteers like to stay and get to know our houseless neighbors better.

Laundry Fairies and Do-ers. One of the biggest needs of any encampment is the availability of dry and clean clothes. Volunteers pick up laundry (Laundry Fairies) and take them to volunteers to do the laundry (Laundry Do-ers). The Fairies then pick the laundry up and redistribute it to people in the camps. Each Fairy has designated people to pick up for and coordinates with the Do-ers for locations and times. OlyMAP helps make these connections and provides a basic structure to help complete this weekly task. Email volunteer@olympa.org

Parallax Perspectives

Peaceful Foreign Policy

On his June TV program, Glen will interview two guests with smart solutions to persistent foreign policy problems, with insights into the relationship between a top-down foreign policy agenda, and the need for grassroots empowerment with positive overall values. The discussion will address specific foreign policy issues such as repairing the damage Trump caused, military spending, the "War on Terror," Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, right-wing extremists running governments and more. The interview airs on cable channel 22 of Thurston Community Media (www.tcmedia.org) at 1:30 pm Mondays, 5:00 pm Wednesdays, 9:00 pm Thursdays. Watch the interview and more info at www.parallaxperspectives.org in the "TV Programs" and "Peace." Questions? Contact Glen Anderson, producer/host at (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net

Whole Washington Universal Health Care - Initiative 1362

Whole Washington is gathering signatures for Initiative 1362 to get on the ballot. This is a well-researched and thought out program that would provide health coverage for all residents of Washington State. For info, visit Whole Washington - A Universal Healthcare, Single Payer. Small businesses owners who would like to make petitions available at their businesses can contact Whole WA or find a volunteer signature-gatherer. This program is based on the reality that access to health coverage should not be tied to employment or a spouse, or to one's age or income.

HOST Homes

HOST Homes is an emerging program for young people who have no parent or guardian in the picture, and most often not even permanent housing. TOGETHER is spearheading this effort and is looking for community support. Host Homes will provide youth-centered case management paired with wrap around support for the youth in addition to help from schools. Host Homes will promote advocacy on needed issues and connect youth with housing and other supportive services. Some supporting local organizations are Community Youth Services, Family Education Support Services, and Pizza Klatch.

Young people without stable adult support can spiral downward and untreated physical and mental health issues, drug use and violence can be on the list of daunting challenges. Host Homes is an investment in the future of our youth, our community and the world. Learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtBLfNuOnps&feature=youtu.be>

"Strings Attached" Art

Tuesday, June 1, 8am through Monday, June 7, 5pm

The "Strings Attached" student art exhibition is popping up at Heritage Park on Capitol Lake from June 1 - 7. Don't miss your chance to visit in-person. Sparked by conversations around the Netflix film "The Social Dilemma," students in two different art courses created pieces that represent the dangers and costs of social media, as well as re-imagining the app icons for popular platforms around the concept of authentic connection. The students collaborated with SPSCC Counseling and the Art Department.



World Peace Prayers

Sunday, June 6, 10 am - 11:15 am. Tushita Kadampa Buddhist Center, 211 Legion Way SW

A peaceful, contemplative time in your weekend. Join us for prayers for world peace and uplifting advice on how we can transform our day-to-day life into opportunities for personal and spiritual growth. Through developing inner peace in this way, outer peace will naturally come about. Everybody Welcome There is a suggestion for a donation of \$5-\$10. The prayers occur every Sunday from 10-11:15 am.

Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

Meets via zoom at 5 pm on the **3rd Thursday** of each month. To join the discussion contact Glen Anderson (360) 491-9093 glenanderson@integra.net in advance for the link and the agenda.

GRuB & GRAVITY Program

Open House, GRuB, **Jun 9** and Jun 23, 3:45-5 pm, 2016 Elliott Ave. NW

Are you, or do you know someone who is 16-21 and is thinking about dropping out of high school, or already have? GRuB and GRAVITY partner to offer the GroundED program in spring, summer, and fall. Come and visit the GRuB Farm, meet staff and youth participants, and see if the GroundED program is a fit for you and/or a young person in your life. The program offers support for earning a GED or HS diploma, with additional education and planning for personal success. In GroundED, youth participate in an outdoor education and job training program based on running the small sustainable GRuB Farm in West Olympia. While attending, youth also spend time working on their educational and employment goals with a GRAVITY Instructional Assistant. Youth can earn up to \$1,000 in an educational stipend for participation.

The Estuarium - 2021 Meet the Beach!

The Estuarium invites everyone to join volunteer naturalists to discover creatures like sea stars, snails, crabs, jellyfish and more this summer -- all available at low tide at various beaches including Burfoot Park, Tolmie State Park, Woodard Bay and Priest Point Park. This free program runs from June to August and helps you get up close and personal with the plants and animals in our extraordinary and unique estuaries. Look for a bright green vest with the word "VOLUNTEER" at these beaches this month: **June 12**, noon-3, Burfoot Park & Tolmie State Park. **June 13**, noon-3, Priest Point Park & Woodard Bay. **June 25 & 26**, 11-2, Burfoot Park. **June 26**, 11-2 Woodard Bay. **June 27**, noon-3, Priest Point & Tolmie State Park. For July and August schedule and more information about this free Meet the Beach program please visit: <http://www.puget-soundestuarium.org/mtb/>

Capital City Pride

Saturday, June 26, 2021 at 2 PM PDT - 6 PM PDT.

June 16/17 - Deadline to sign up for streaming. www.capitalcitypride.net

Capital City Pride will be hosting a Community Virtual Pride Celebration June 26 from 2pm - 4pmish.

To be part of our virtual pride you MUST sign up and share a talent to be aired and broadcast during our live streaming event. Or tell us your coming out story, SIGN-UP sheets are located at Olylamplighters Creative Workshop Space (211 4th Ave E) in downtown Olympia. Share poetry, spoken work, music, dance moves or whatever your gay heart desires. After the live streaming virtual pride event we will disperse into the night and hit up the variety of Pride events throughout Olympia's Downtown streets! Bring your flags and wear your rainbows!!! If you're a business having a pride gathering that day, let us know and we will put you on our pride map!!! Happy Pride, friends! Looking forward to all our small, safe covid compliant gatherings. <https://www.capitalcitypride.net/welcome>



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Are you a prospective Wipster? Works in Progress is expanding its editorial team

WIP is evolving! Along with a new Managing Editor who will oversee production (beginning in October), WIP is expanding our editorial team to include new volunteer Section Editors.

Each Section Editor will take responsibility for one or two pages of the paper for each issue. A Section Editor will 1) invite writers to submit work on specific topics within their interest, community involvement or expertise; 2) find interesting, beyond-the-mainstream material to reprint; and/or 3) write something themselves.

All such content must be submitted by deadline each month, to allow time for editing and working with the author.

Broad topics might include environmental justice, climate change, social justice, policing, and militarism, local governance and economic issues, and ongoing coverage of local neighborhoods, community building, gardening and topics of a spiritual nature.

If you are interested in helping shape the future of Works in Progress as a Section Editor, email us at **olywip@gmail.com** with the words **SECTION EDITOR** in the subject line and describe your interest and availability.



Works in Progress

Advocating for social justice since 1990

*Homeless people
make bad choices.*

The election was stolen.

*Developers will solve
the housing crisis.*

*Immigrants and refugees
are a drag on the economy.*

Israel is only defending itself.

**THIS ISSUE:
The Big Lie**

