

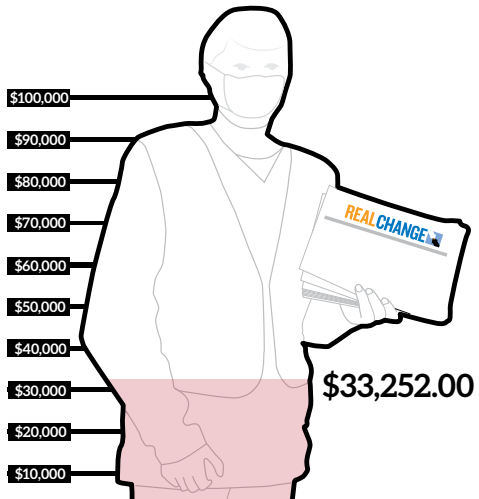
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REAL CHANGE

MAY 27 - JUNE 2, 2020 ■ VOLUME 27 NUMBER 22 ■ REALCHANGENEWS.ORG

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SPRING FUND DRIVE

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A TICKET TO RIDE

Fare enforcement is back on Sound Transit June 1 but the fares will be discounted, **p.3**

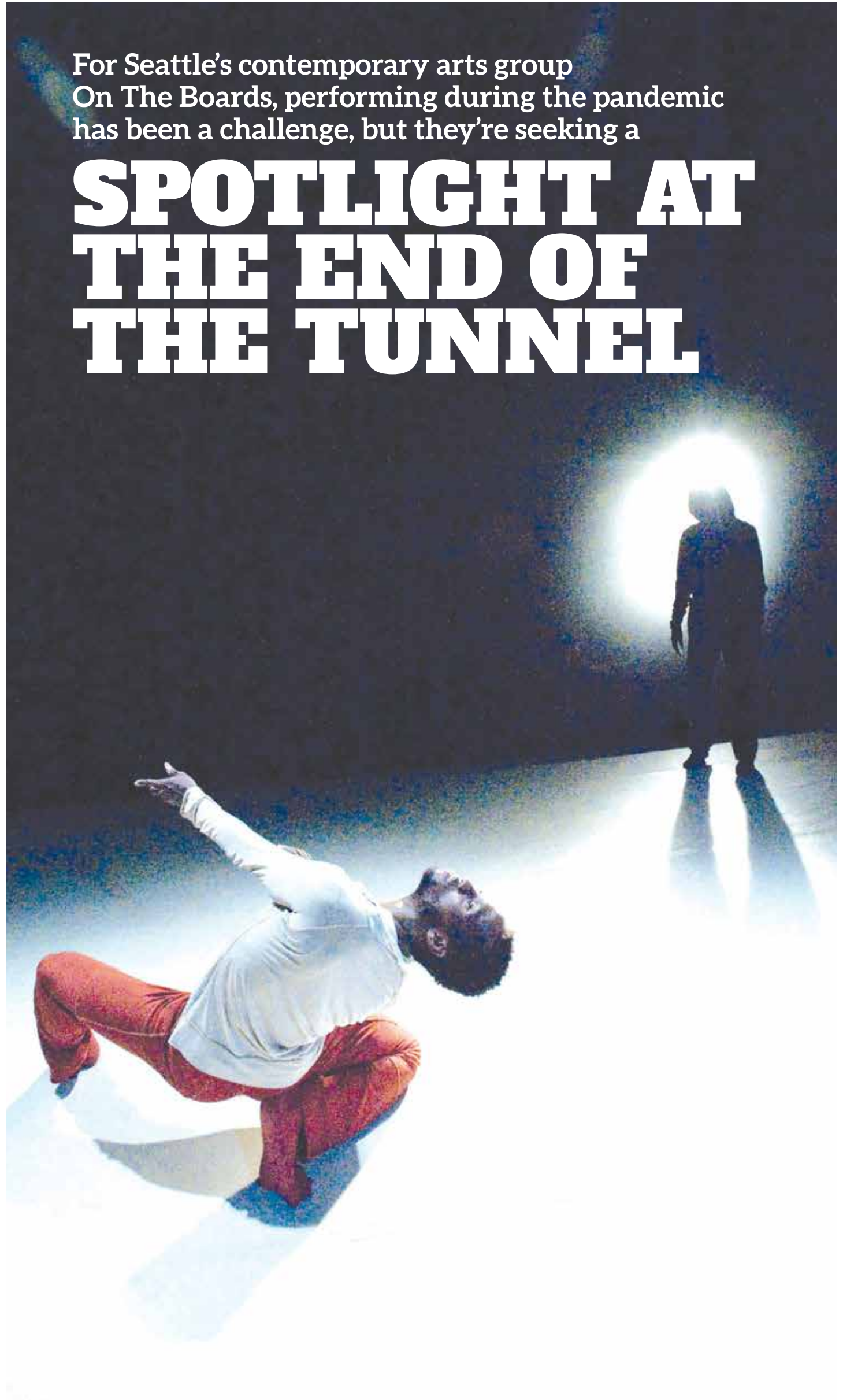
THE SWEEPS CONTINUE

Seattle continues to sweep homeless encampments during the pandemic, which is putting city officials at odds with each other, **p.4**



STOP ALL THE NOISE

Living in a noisy city affects our health in many different ways, **p.5**



For Seattle's contemporary arts group On The Boards, performing during the pandemic has been a challenge, but they're seeking a

SPOTLIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

A SWEEPING CONUNDRUM

Seattle officials debate whether to sweep away encampments, all the while frustrating and displacing community members

By **ASHLEY ARCHIBALD**
Staff Reporter

The morning of May 21, dozens of police arrived at Weller Street and 12th Avenue in Seattle's Chinatown International District (CID) for a publicized clearing of a large homeless encampment. Community members were there to meet them in the cold rain, bearing protest signs and witness to the events.

It was the second such sweep in two days. According to the city's homelessness response blog, 25 people at the two sites accepted referrals to shelter, although local homelessness advocates argue that the sweeps should not have taken place at all.

Two hours after the sweep began, elected officials and experts sat down on a digital call, their faces popping up in Brady Bunch-style panels. It was the first meeting of the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA), a body years in the making that some hope will better coordinate a regional response to the homelessness crisis that has been growing in King County for years.

Johnathan Hemphill, a member of the board and part of the Lived Experience Coalition, which brings people who have experienced homelessness to the policy-making table, called that out.

"There is a sweep going on, on Weller. That's not the way we should do things.

That does not center the humanity of people who are going through the struggles that they are," Hemphill said.

The juxtaposition was stark, and part of a sometimes confounding array of recent attempts to reduce homelessness and human suffering on the streets even as authorities are dealing with the dual crises of homelessness and infectious disease outbreaks among housed and unhoused people alike.

In the past weeks, the city has conducted three large sweeps — one in Ballard Commons park and two in the CID — in the name of public health and

safety. In parallel, City Councilmember Tammy Morales, who represents the CID neighborhood, put forward legislation cosponsored by councilmembers Teresa Mosqueda and Kshama Sawant that would throw the brakes on such actions, effectively defunding the operations except under specific conditions.

Last week, a partnership of public and private entities called the Third Door Coalition announced a \$1.6 billion plan to reduce chronic homelessness in the region to "functional zero" by getting 6,500 people who have been surviving outside

or in shelters — often for more than a year — into their own housing. They have not yet secured the funding.

Now, the KCHRA has met, although the two-hour meeting on May 21 seemed more of an update than a meeting of minds as the necessary committees, governing bodies and implementation groups are not yet active.

Even the bylaws are at question.

The Seattle City Council, represented by Council President Lorena Gonzalez, raised concerns in December 2019 about changes to the structure of the KCRHA that took power away from policy-minded technocrats and handed it to elected officials from King County and incorporated cities. The new format meant Seattle was putting up most of the funding without a commensurate amount of voting power, handing more authority to smaller, more conservative cities in the county.

"We're faced with a situation — eight to nine months from

now — being put in the position of having the new City Council having to vote to decline participating with our dollars in the regional government authority if we are unsuccessful in executing upon the intent as described in this ordinance," Gonzalez said in December.

What did come out of the Thursday meeting, however, was at least tacit acknowledgment from some that the new authority be cochaired by a member of the Lived Experience Coalition, a push led by Hemphill.



"I do feel it's important for us in the structure of setting up this committee to support the effort of really baking in those folks with lived experience into our leadership model."

— Lorena Gonzalez

See **SWEEP** Continued on Page 11



HANDY HYGIENE



Photo by Susan Fried

ROOTS Young Adult Shelter Executive Director Jerrold Clouse tries out the new, environmentally friendly street sink that was installed in an alley next to the University District shelter.

Street sink installed at ROOTS Shelter

The Real Change Advocacy Department partnered with University of Washington College of Built Environments faculty to design and install environmentally friendly "street sinks" for people experiencing homelessness. On May 19, workers installed the first of its kind at the ROOTS Young Adult Shelter in the University District.

The Seattle Street Sinks project uses off-the-shelf parts that can connect to a hose on private or public property. The setup drains into a trough of plants so that the water isn't wasted. The sinks are one new way to open much-needed hand-washing stations throughout the city.

People experiencing homelessness have had difficulty accessing hygiene facilities to protect themselves from the coronavirus. Businesses that might have offered them restrooms are shut down and many public places like libraries and community shelters are, too, although some have reopened to the public. A

rented Portland Loo in Ballard Commons park was closed a week in March for a deep cleaning after several people tested positive for hepatitis A, an infectious disease that has been circulating in the Seattle community for more than a year.

Real Change Advocacy has fought for solutions to the problem, which predated the coronavirus pandemic but was exacerbated by it. They ran a successful "Everybody Poos" campaign to secure funding in the Seattle budget for five mobile pit stops: facilities with toilets, sharps containers, dog waste facilities and more. As the pandemic struck, the city sidelined the project, but announced in April that eight new hygiene stations and two hygiene trailers would be deployed.

The new sink prototype outside ROOTS cost around \$400 and was up and running within a month of conception. ■

— Ashley Archibald

TURNING DOWN THE VOLUME

Constant exposure to noise has become an integral part of city life. We are so used to the noise of modern life that we think little of it, but sound — when it exceeds certain levels — can have multiple impacts on our physical and mental health

By **MARIA PAPADODIMITRAKI**
Street News Service

"Noise pollution is a form of violence," said Voula Pagagianni, who is an educator and the president of the Hellenic Young Children's University. "[It is] an unrecognized danger that threatens the health of everyone."

Noise pollution is currently the second most significant environmental risk factor for our health, after air pollution. As a result, the European Union (EU) set the maximum noise exposure limit for people at 55 decibels (dB) during the day and 50 dB during the night. The World Health Organization's guidelines are even stricter. In order to counteract the negative impact of noise pollution on health, it recommends that external sound levels should not exceed 40 dB at night — a level of noise around equal to that of a quiet road in a residential area.

The United States has much higher — some would say "lower" — standards. The U.S. has a standard for occupational noise pollution and one for environmental noise pollution. The first refers to the sounds and noises in your workplace; people who work industrial and manual labor jobs are more likely to encounter higher thresholds for noise exposure. Environmental noise might include what you hear on your daily walk or when you are sleeping at night. Ideally, these environs would result in less noise exposure.

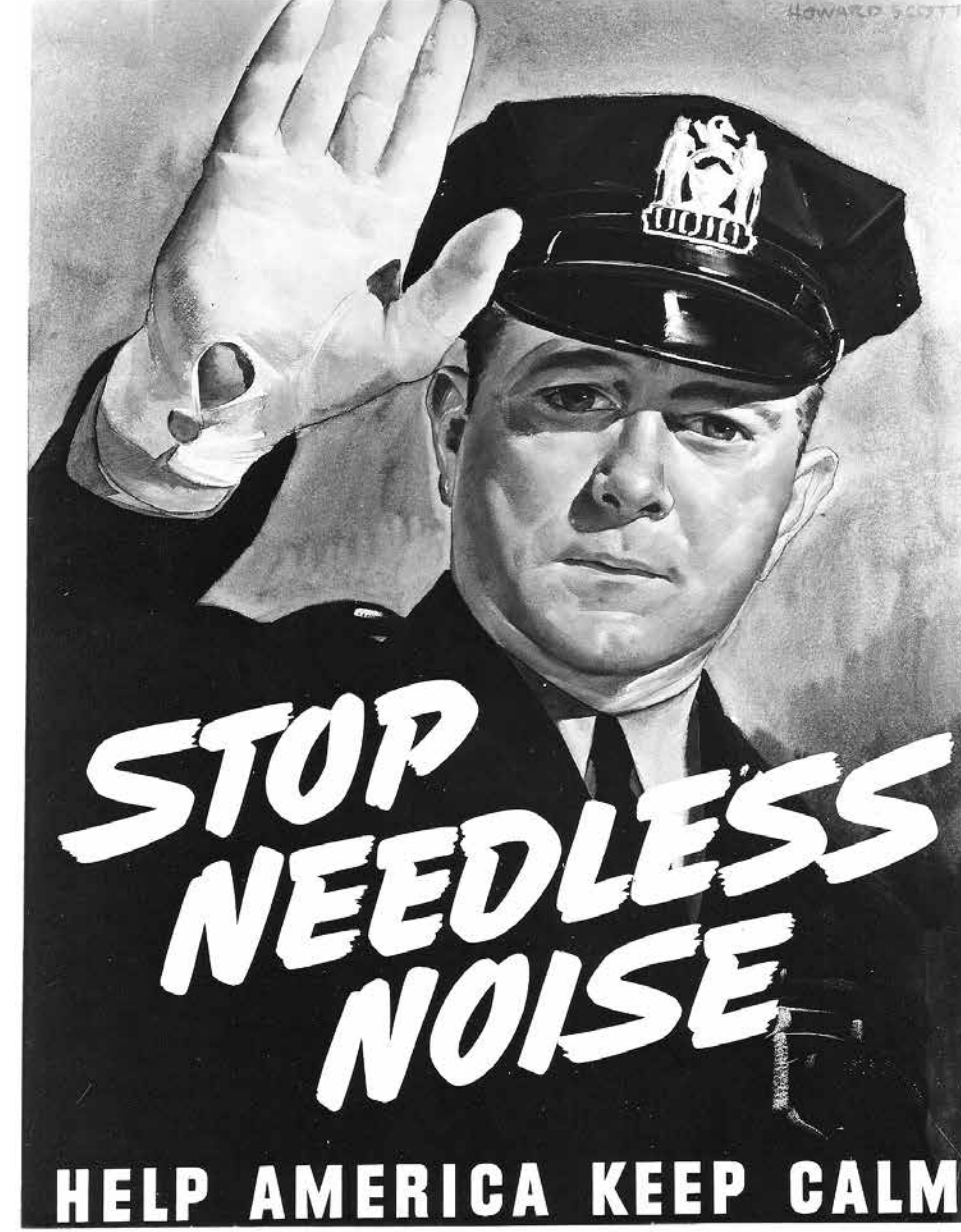
The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health limits occupational noise exposures to 85 dB at a sustained rate during an 8-hour work day. That is the equivalent of listening to a chainsaw stationed 10 meters (roughly 33 feet) away from you, for eight hours a day. Enduring this exposure for 40 hours in a week could lead to hearing loss. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), noise-induced hearing loss is the third most common chronic health condition in the country.

In the Seattle area, a noise code limits the amount of noise outside coming from roadways, machinery and construction, but it doesn't apply to public nuisances (like loud music, people yelling, etc.).

According to data from an interactive National Transportation Noise Map, the highest concentrations of traffic and aviation noise in the Pacific Northwest are near the downtown Seattle core and moving south along the city's industrial district and down South King County, including Renton, SeaTac and Des Moines. Areas on the Eastside, West Seattle and North Seattle neighborhoods are mapped as having noise exposure around 40db, similar to what the EU recommends for environmental noise exposures.

Zooming out

The Worldwide Hearing Index — a 2017 study by Mimi Hearing Technologies of 50 cities — found the highest levels of noise pollution are observed in Guangzhou, China. Delhi is second, followed by Cairo, Mumbai, Istanbul and Beijing. Barcelona is number seven on the list, while Mexico City, Paris and Buenos Aires are eighth, ninth and 10th. In contrast, the five quietest cities in the world are Zurich, Vienna, Oslo, Munich and Stockholm, followed by Dusseldorf, Hamburg;



Portland, Oregon; Cologne and Amsterdam.

Several European and non-European countries are adopting a series of measures by which to limit noise pollution and its negative effects. Germany, for example, has been experimenting since 2007 with the use of special paving materials for roads that reduce the noise caused by car wheels; trains started having so-called "quiet zones" in designated wagons, where additional noise is forbidden, at around the same time.

In Oslo, urban quiet zones are mostly designated for use for recreation. In fact, 35 percent of the city's residents live less than 300 meters from such a zone. Ellen Johnson, from the city's Agency of Urban Environment, says that the municipality's action plan to address noise pollution focuses on areas of dense urban development in central areas and around urban transport stations, furthering programs that promote walking and cycling and highlighting the importance of protecting trees, since natural sounds contribute positively to the city's soundscape. Moreover, the speed limit in the center of Oslo is 30 kilometers per hour (roughly 18 mph), the rails of the tram and underground networks have been upgraded, and the port freight station was moved out of the city.

In past years, Stockholm has also made significant efforts to reduce noise pollution. In 1970, 200,000 residents were exposed to high levels of noise in their apartments. Today, this number has been reduced to a few thousand: a reduction of around 80 percent. The installation of 60 kilometers of acoustic fencing and more than 50,000 soundproof windows in 17,000 flats have brought positive

results. The increased shift to the use of tires without studs has allowed for the use of new types of asphalt and has resulted in lower levels of noise at street level. The construction of road tunnels has also resulted in a reduction in local noise levels, and heavy vehicles are prohibited from using the roads at night.

Model cities

For its part, the city of Vienna has taken steps to ensure, among other things, extensions of bike lanes and their underground transportation network; additions of traffic-calming measures on roads; conversions of roads into pedestrian walkways; provisions of subsidies for the installation of special windows in homes along main roads; and the modernization of public transport. Moreover, because the noise created by vehicles is dependent, in part, on the speed at which they travel, so-called "Tempo 30" zones have been put in place, where the speed limit for vehicles is 30 kilometers per hour. In fact, years ago, the Municipal Department of Environmental Protection ran a pilot program with the name SYLVIE. It was a process of mediation between the involved parties — namely, those who produced sound and those who were impacted by it — and it attempted to find a joint solution to the problem. It was then followed by another similar program.

Yet another model city is Zurich. Anke Poiger is the head of communication in the Safety, Security, Health and Environment Administrative Department of the city. She said that "car trips are the most important source of noise in the city, which is why we have implemented a 25-year policy called

"Urban Traffic 2025" in order to minimize car traffic and its negative effects. This is a program that includes the expansion of the public transport network, the prioritization of public transport over car traffic, the promotion of bicycle use, the creation of an attractive pedestrian trail network, and the expansion of Tempo 30 zones. In addition, the City Council has approved a program for electric buses, which are quieter than the conventional ones."

For her part, Sonja Zöchling, the head of corporate communication at Zurich airport, informed us that in order to protect residents of the surrounding area from the noise caused by planes, the residents were provided with special soundproofing windows. The residents pay for the installation themselves and they can submit a request for compensation, as this is something that they are entitled to. In addition, the airport operates from 6 a.m. to 11.30 p.m., but after 11 p.m. it is only used in special circumstances; for example, to facilitate the movement of aircraft when traffic is increased or for delayed flights.

The results of a survey conducted in 62 European cities shows that Istanbul (72 percent), Bucharest (67 percent), Palermo (66 percent) and Athens (66 percent) are the urban centers with the least satisfied residents in terms of the noise levels experienced in their daily lives.

"These numbers do not surprise us. They are to be expected in big cities," said Dr. Konstantinos Vogiatzis, professor at the Polytechnic School of the University of Thessaly and national representative of the European Noise Committee. "In addition, let us keep in mind that the residents are not continuously exposed to a constant intensity of noise."

"Perhaps the best way to deal with noise pollution is prevention — to not make noise. It is through our individual attitudes that we can contribute to the reduction of noise emissions," said Athanasios Trochidis, emeritus professor in the civil engineering department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

"Unfortunately, in Greece, entertainment, lifestyle, and even the act of being outside, are often associated with noise and agitation," added Nikos Barkas, professor at the Democritus University of Thrace in the Department of Architectural Engineering and president of the Hellenic Institute of Acoustics. "We suffer from a lack of education on how to behave so as not to be loud."

A complex burden

Research that focuses on the health impacts of noise is on the rise, especially in relation to noise from vehicles, aviation, industry and some recreational activities. According to the Global Burden of Disease Study by the World Health Organization, all of the health problems caused by noise pollution result in about 1 to 1.6 million years of healthy living lost due to illness, disability and death (DALYs) in the EU every year.

The most common problem related to our hearing is tinnitus; that is, the perception of a sound like whistling or ringing that cannot be attributed to an external source. In some people, tinnitus can cause several problems, such as irritability, reduced efficiency and a limited social life. However, the effects

See **NOISE** Continued on Page 12

Right, choreographer Beth Gill's "Electric Midwife" is a performance by six dancers.

Photo by Steven Schreiber



Below, a scene from Crystal Pite's "Dark Matters."

Photo by Chris Randle



Image courtesy of OtB

Choreographer Kyle Abraham's "When the Wolves Came In" is inspired by famous jazz drummer and composer Max Roach's "We Insist Freedom Now."

ON THE ROPES

By **RIIS WILLIAMS** | Contributing Writer

Like so many arts organizations, On the Boards (OtB) ended its season early this year, forced by the novel coronavirus pandemic to cancel four shows, cut employee hours and close the doors of its performance hall in Seattle's Lower Queen Anne.

Resident performance company On the Boards is hurting like everyone else, but creative sparks are giving the nonprofit a fighting chance

And yet, the group's executive director tells a tale of astonishing growth. Even as the venue remains shuttered, the organization is imagining ways it might fold social distancing into future events.

Normally, the nonprofit performing arts venue is filled from September through May with the talent of local dancers, actors, musicians and speakers. Since its founding in 1978, OtB has provided a place for people to showcase their work and meet and collaborate with other performers and art-lovers in the Seattle area. The theater puts on nine to 13 shows per season, in addition to an annual Northwest New Works Festival in June. OtB also does programs in partnership with Seattle Theater Group.

This year, as everyone is aware, was different.

"It was probably around the second week of March that my colleagues and I started to have conversations about canceling some of our events," Betsy Brock, OtB's executive director of nearly four years,



Photos by Paula Court

Above and right, in scenes from New York playwright and director Young Jean Lee's "The Shipment," five African American actors challenge the audience to face their preconceived notions of race and culture.

said. "At OtB, we start most of our evening performances with a 'studio supper,' where we partner with a local chef and provide a large meal for our audience members. But it became evident that having people eating so close together maybe wasn't such a good idea."

At the time, the gravity of the looming health crisis had not quite sunk in. Brock felt fairly confident that shows would still be able to go on, with a few modifications to prioritize audience safety, such as stepping up sanitation.

Then colleges and universities decided to go online, ending all in-person gatherings. Following their lead, Brock officially

postponed all upcoming spring OtB events. "It was just so hard to make decisions, with the coronavirus updates changing every single day," she remembered. "I found myself absolutely glued to the news to figure out all of our next steps."

Despite the theater being empty and the ongoing uncertainty of when it will be safe to have on-site performances again, OtB has managed to grow in an unexpected way.

"We've had an existing online platform called On the Boards TV for about 10 years, but the pandemic has encouraged us to expand it significantly," Brock said, describing it as "a sort of Netflix for dance and contemporary performance." Normally,



access to the platform requires a yearly subscription that costs \$50 for individuals, \$500 for academic institutions and \$5 for a single film rental. Today, it is free.

"With everything limited to online formatting, and with the postponement of so many of our shows, we decided to make it accessible for all viewers free of cost," Brock said.

During the pandemic shutdown, OtBTV has exploded in viewership. Visitors to the site have increased 618 percent compared with this time last year. Brock said more than 3,500 viewers have streamed content for free; another 3,100 new viewers have purchased a subscription or otherwise have paid for content. The international audience, in particular, has skyrocketed. Users

span 125 countries. Outside of the United States, the greatest growing numbers are in Turkey, Iran and Germany.

What kinds of performances can a viewer see at OtB? Brock describes them as "different from anything else in Seattle," involving a range of art forms, from avant-garde dance to experimental theater to other "completely uncategoryzable performanc-



For more information about On the Boards TV see ontheboards.tv

for experiences that feel 'real.' We've tried to make our videos with care and time and deep conversations with the artists," Brock said. "They can truly feel like a real performance."

Of course, providing free access to OtBTV has done anything but alleviate the financial stress the organization is facing as a consequence of the pandemic shutdown. The closure of the theater will result in a loss of \$250,000 to \$300,000 in revenue — from ticket sales, concessions, tenants being unable to pay rent and the new online format of their annual fundraiser — by the end of this fiscal year, in June.

Additionally, OtB has had to cut the hours of its associate technical director, production coordinator and audience services manager. Its house manager was laid off. All the positions are heavily dependent on the venue being open and active.

Despite the severe financial loss, Brock remains confident in the organization's de-

See **BOARDS** Continued on Page 11

es" — material that the organization had never, until now, presented solely through a computer screen. The content is based on archived recordings of live performances.

"I just think that right now, people are looking

BOOK REVIEW: 'A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things'

By Raj Patel and Jason W. Moore | University of California Press | 212 pages | 2017

REIMAGINING OUR WORLD

Current events
compel us to review
this 2017 publicationReview by MEGAN WILDHOOD
Contributing Writer

You've probably heard the idea that it's easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism. That's in large part because capitalism has remade the world, our understanding of our place in it and the relations between everyone and everything else. "A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things" is written in unique voice, which makes its points memorable, such as: Capitalism is cheapness at work. "Cheap lives turned into cheap workers dependent on cheap care and cheap food in home communities, requiring cheap fuel to collect and process cheap nature to produce cheap money." And, unfortunately, "Keeping things cheap is expensive."

The author, academic, journalist and social justice activist Raj Patel and Binghamton University Assistant Professor of Sociology Jason W. Moore explain why death and taxes are the only certain things and how they're linked (hint: it's modern warfare). As they lead us through the world capitalism has created and is consuming, they provide snapshots of the past 800 years. The most salient, but certainly not the only, of these snapshots is about the Irish Potato Famine: "During the 1845-1848 potato famine, poverty and market forces instructed the Irish to work for a living; even if there was no employment to be had and no food they could afford: at the height of the famine, Ireland was exporting around three hundred thousand tons of grain a year to feed the mother country."

It's difficult to cover almost a millennia of history, let alone the period where capitalism remade the world, in 212 pages, so the density of details is forgivable if not easily navigable. "A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things" makes a unique contribution to the annals of history books in that, while it goes into sometimes overwhelming and occasionally esoteric exposition about the major problems we face as those living under capitalism, it offers a holistic and integrated vision of what is possible. The movement for the end of capitalism is growing even as it is still too easily dismissed, and a common frustration of those who want a better world is articulating what a better world would look like.

Capitalism is so ingrained in the way we all think that, for example, "we continue to think of 'real work' solely as wage work and forget the care work that makes it all possible." Such work that even those who perform it dismiss when they say they "don't have a real job." What Patel and Moore call "household," nonmarket activity is roughly 80 percent of the gross world's product: nearly \$16 trillion. Thus, Patel and Moore can rightly claim that "to imagine a world of justice in care work [which includes household labor] is to imagine a world after capitalism."

Even the way we measure our impact on the environment is, for Patel and Moore, suspect and needs to be reimagined. "The idea of the 'individual [carbon] footprint

teaches us to think of consumption as determined by "lifestyle choices" rather than socially enforced logics. If you have been gentrified out of your old neighborhood and need to commute an hour to your job, your ecological footprint isn't a lifestyle choice. It's a choice in the same way that English peasants, once kicked off the land, were "free" to find wage work — or starve ... the ecological footprint, like so many environmentalist concepts these days, performs the very separation — of Nature from Society — that accompanied the rise of capitalism." The Green Revolution failed, because it was still based in capitalism's "world-ecology," as Patel and Moore say. "Communities where the Green Revolution was practiced most intensively have more recently become cancer clusters, with some areas officially declared 'cancer-stricken villages.'"

Readers may be asking, as I did, "OK, we know capitalism is awful. We now understand how deeply rooted in history it is. What do we do about it? Where do we start?" Patel and Moore admit that there is no roadmap for reinventing our relationships with each other and the natural world from inside the ecology that made us.



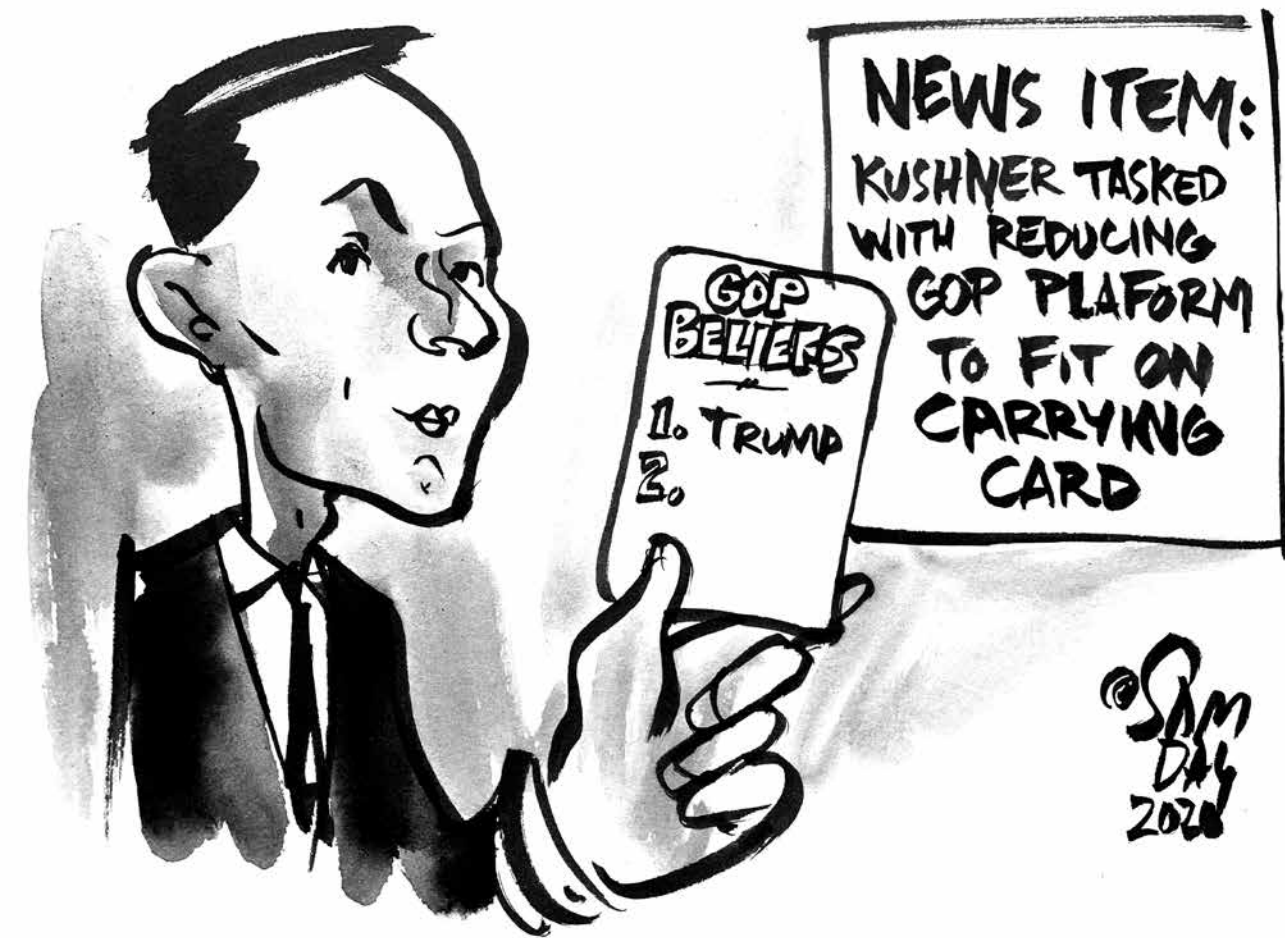
Illustration by Jon Williams

"Restorative justice" is an approach that is gaining some traction in the justice system; Patel and Moore suggest that this only works if the status quo to which it aims to restore people isn't awful.

But to name a few examples: "Cheap oil is coming to an end even as climate change is on its way to killing one hundred million people by the end of 2030" and "...up to ten calories of oil are required to produce one calorie of food" and "one pound of beef requires 1,799 gallons of water and seven pounds of feed to produce."

What we need is a collective reimagining. "This reimagining is a collective act of liberation. Never under capitalism have the majority been asked about the world we'd like to live in." Whatever that world is, we need more than allyship and unity. Patel and Moore would argue that we need a dismantling: "The practice of decolonization is more dangerous than simple solidarity because it's more likely to work." It starts with asking, from as blank of a slate as we can get, without constraining ourselves to what we have been told for centuries is possible: "What kind of a world do we want?" ■

THE MIDDLE GROUND | By Sam Day



Everybody gets hydroxychloroquine! And you can stay home only if your home looks like mine

According to the interweb, NASA has found a parallel universe where time flows backward. Big deal. Time has been flowing backward for me since March.

Time has been in reverse in Washington, D.C., since Jan. 20, 2017, and now it is starting to look like the 12th century. The Department of Justice wants legislators to suspend habeas corpus from now until at least a year after the COVID-19 emergency is over without telling any of us what would constitute it being over. When no one has died from it anywhere in the world for one year? Or one month before that?

Doing so would deny hearings and bail for just about everyone, let the government lock people up without charges and crowd jails just when there have been moves to thin jail populations to reduce the spread of the virus. The idea as always has been it's OK to write off people who are arrested because they would not have been arrested unless they were criminals or people of color — a concept that even people in the Middle Ages were able to realize was nuts, and those people believed in the divine right of kings.

Speaking of concepts that are nuts: thinking it's a good idea to conduct homeless sweeps at a time like this. For homeless people living in tents, doing so is their version of staying at home. Tearing the tents down and driving their occupants away does not help slow the disease.

Sweeps also don't help end homelessness. If they did, with how many we have done since Greg Nickels became mayor, we would have negative point-in-time counts by now. There have been so many sweeps done in the past 15 years that, had they led to all the homeless people

Adventures
in Irony

Dr. Wes Browning

involved getting into housing or at least shelter, they would all be sheltered 10 times over. Homelessness would be nonexistent.

Sweeps are not supposed to be happening for now: The city's own directive in March was "All encampment removal operations have been suspended," except in certain emergency conditions. Recent sweeps have not been a result of emergency conditions and have only served to make emergency conditions.

Maybe the parallel universe is not the one that's backward: It's this one.

Well, at least we finally got those videophones we were promised. So, some of our time is inching forward.

Remember how we were all going to be using videophones in the 21st century? They didn't tell us how crappy they'd be. I expected the picture wouldn't be very good, but I thought they would get the sound right, since they would still be phones, yes? All they had to do was keep the phone and add the picture.

Anyway, we have had videophones for years, but nobody used them because it turned out no one wanted to do their hair and wear clothes to answer the phone.

The trick to getting us on videophones was to make it happen by appointment. That's all it took to get the people to put pants and a shirt on. It just takes little

things to make big changes, like being told by your boss when to be at the Zoom meeting: "Thursday, 12:30."

"OK, I'll even put some pants on."

"Thanks a lot, Wes. You're such a hero."

Besides pants, I've been wearing a cat. Our cat has been loving the stay-at-home order. He's a glutton for petting, and he's getting spoiled. Every Zoom session now features a cat climbing all over me. Good times.

Questions for further discussions: Trump says it's time to reopen America, except for Georgia, which is going too fast. Trump doesn't wear a mask, except, he says, when there are no cameras. So why can't there be judicial hearings? Just give all the judges and detainees in the country hydroxychloroquine, and our justice system can be back in business, in two weeks, maybe three weeks, tops. BAM. Am I a genius, or what? Your answer should use the words "cognitive dissonance" and be in the form of sarcasm. Don't hold back.

If the purpose of the economic stimulus checks was to stimulate the economy, why does it matter who gets them as long as they spend them and stimulate the economy?

Shouldn't someone in jail get a stimulus check if they haven't been charged yet? Someone who has not been charged or convicted is still technically a free person, right?

That's what I was taught in civics class. "Innocent until proven guilty," yadda-yadda. ■

Sound off to Dr. Wes:
drwes@realchangenews.org

Notes from
El Noroeste

Oscar Rosales

Viva La Huelga!

This month began with a celebration of worker power and solidarity in the face of daunting odds. An emergent struggle has emerged over reopening Washington businesses. The irony is that this clamoring over "state overreach" with Gov. Jay Inslee's orders had neglected to include the voices of those impacted most, Washington state's farm workers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately hit the Latinx community hard. As Danny Westneat of The Seattle Times noted in a recent column, COVID clusters have hit Yakima County's agricultural and fruit packing plants. As of this past week, Yakima County had the highest rate of COVID-19 cases per capita on the entire West Coast, a figure noted to be three times higher than that of King County.

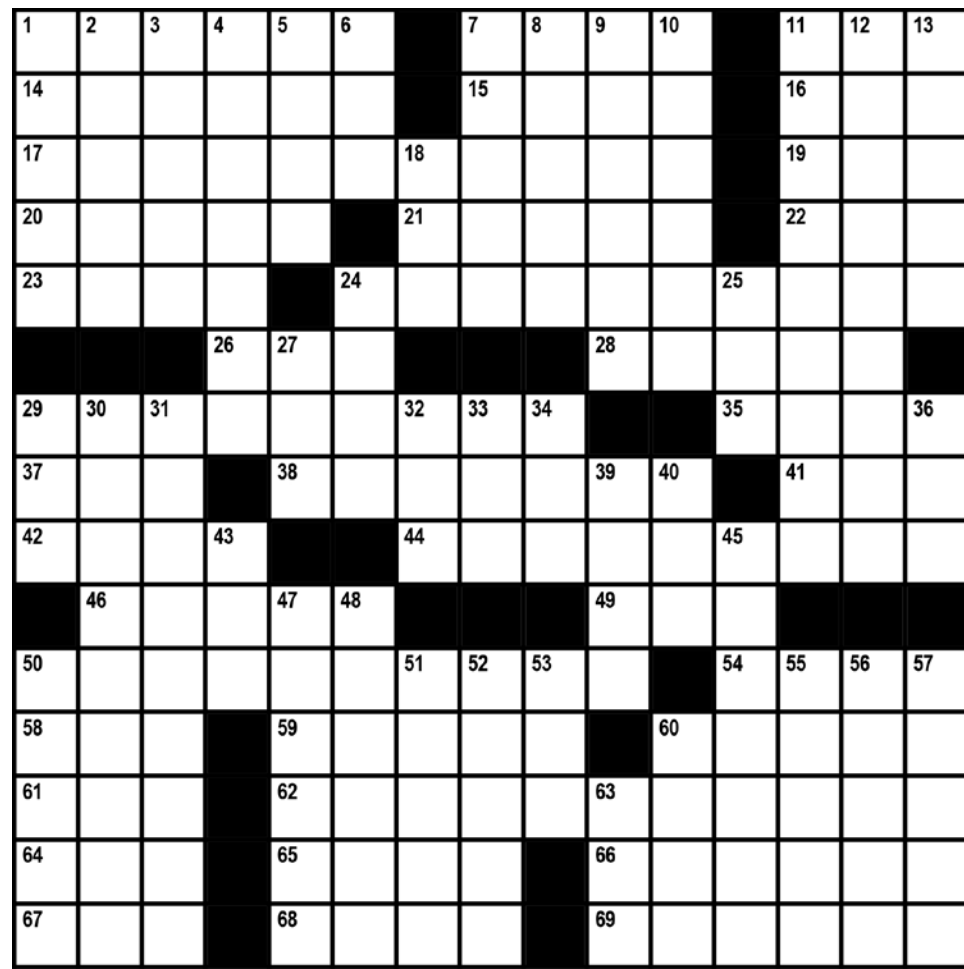
On May 7, workers at the Allen Bros Fruit packing warehouse in Naches, Washington, went on strike over inadequate safety precautions, lack of transparency over COVID-19 infections and lack of hazard pay. Many had only heard of coworkers infected by way of word of mouth, with little information coming from their employer. In subsequent days, six other warehouses went on strike, citing similar conditions.

Workers are also seeking protections from retaliation and being replaced for bringing these concerns forward. They have met resistance from employers, as well as malicious harassment and threats of shootings from racist community members.

As talks stalled, some workers went on hunger strike at Allen Bros. In an interview with Northwest Public Radio, a hunger striker noted, "These are our lives, not the lives of our bosses, not the lives of the government. ... We're here exposing ourselves." He further said, "If we're 'essential,' why aren't they giving us the pay we're asking for? Are their apples worth more than our lives?"

Most of these workers earn minimum wage, regardless of the amount of time worked at these warehouses. Those who feel ill do not report symptoms because taking two weeks off from work is a luxury they can't afford as they are also not provided medical insurance, despite essential worker designation. In these workplaces, enforcement of workplace protections were so lax that both the United Farm Workers Union and Familias Unidas por la Justicia, a local union based in Skagit County, sued Washington state in April as a way of securing mandatory and enforceable rules for workplace safety.

It is our collective responsibility to support and stand with our essential and excluded workers who bear the brunt of this pandemic. They illustrate that we cannot simply become fodder for business interests who line their pockets with no regard to health concern and human dignity and wish to place us as offerings on the sacrificial altar to capitalist enterprise. ¡Viva la Huelga! ■



Not Exactly Bionic

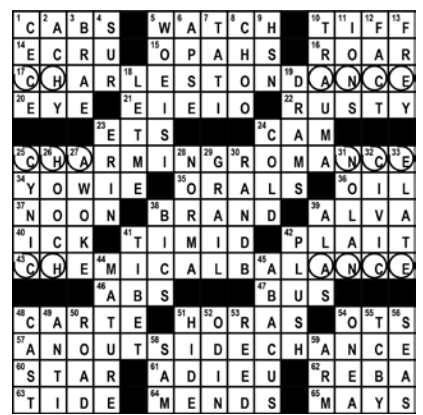
Puzzle by **Patrick "Mac" McIntyre**

ACROSS

1 Asian performer with many fans?
7 Holier—thou attitude
11 Hosts (Abbr./Acron.)
14 Loose overcoat named for a Northern Ireland province (LUSTER anagram)
15 Who comes to the rescue
16 Hurler's stat. (Abbr.)
17 Cowardly (4-7)
19 Egyptian boy king
20 The one numbered 23 begins: "The Lord is my shepherd..."
21 Muse of poetry
22 High __ kite (2 wds.) (2,1)
23 Highway hauler
24 What one thought to be a 15-Across may unfortunately turn out to have (3 wds.) (4,2,4)
26 Busy W. Coast airport (code ltrs.)
28 In days __ (yore) (2 wds.) (2,3)
29 Lester Holt and Wolf Blitzer, e.g.
35 Stadium section
37 Life story, briefly
38 Blotto (3-4)
41 French vineyard
42 Broadway opening (3,1)
44 "Hey, slow up!" (3 wds.) (3,2,4)
46 Web site?
49 "Enough! No more oversharing" in a text
50 Adjective frequently used to describe tyrants and despots (4-6)
54 Discovery grp.? (Abbr./Acron.)
58 Did a marathon
59 June Cleaver or Marge Simpson (2 wds.) (2,3) (incls. abbr.)
60 Something to do to a shoulder or the brakes (2 wds.) (3,2)
61 Grade A item
62 An extraordinarily kind and generous person is often said to possess one (3 wds.) (5,2,4)
64 __ generis (unique) (Lat.)
65 Major 1960's - 70's record label (Abbr./Acron.)
66 An early nonsilent film in the lingo of those times
67 Amy who wrote "The Joy Luck Club"
68 Sounds of disapproval
69 "If it __ it leads" (old trope about sensationalistic journalism)

2 Dedicattee of a Beethoven piano classic
3 Religion with the Five Pillars
4 Fashionable
5 Big wheel on a ship
6 The Diamondbacks, on scoreboards
7 " __ but for the grace of God go I"
8 City in northwestern Afghanistan (EARTH anagram)
9 Denial of a denial during a youthful spat (2 wds.) (3,3)
10 Drift into dreamland (2 wds.) (3,3)
11 "Death Magnetic" group inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2009 (ALT MALICE anagram)
12 Group that campaigns vigorously for social, political or religious change (AD CURSERS anagram)
13 Indonesian shish-kebab relative
18 Neckline shape
24 "Forgive me, Father, __ have sinned" (2 wds.) (3,1)
25 Bed that folds up
27 Dandyish dresser
29 Legal org. (Abbr.)
30 Its capital is Managua
31 Eli Whitney's best-known invention (2 wds.) (6,3)
32 "The mass of __ lead lives of quiet desperation"; Thoreau
33 Fair-hiring inits. (Abbr.)
34 National newspaper with worldwide readership nicknamed "The Gray Lady" (Abbr.)
36 Same old, same old
39 Founded (Abbr.)
40 Suffix with free or serf
43 Sri Lanka-based corporation that competes with the BBC (Abbr.)
45 Achieve something by devious means (LEAFING anagram)
47 At most (2 wds.) (2,4)
48 Cat-like mammals that secrete a musk used in perfumes (EVICTS anagram)
50 " __ my case" (closing line of a closing argument) (2 wds.) (1,4)
51 Old slang for heroin
52 Bullfight bulls
53 CPR pro (Abbr.)
55 A pig in __ (purchase or deal accepted without being fully examined) (2 wds.) (1,4)
56 Not liquid, gaseous or plasmic
57 Peruvian peaks
60 Big name in nonstick cookware
63 Initials related to place to put down stakes? (Abbr.)

SOLUTION



It Could Happen, Y'know!

May 20 Issue
Solutions to this week's puzzle will appear in the next issue.



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Streaming to stay sane

Almost all King County events are canceled, so we're listing streaming events for optimal physical distancing

June 3

My Big Run (virtually), Fleet Feet Seattle, 6-7 p.m., \$10 registration, tinyurl.com/y9mcwvz2

This year, Global Running Day will look a bit different. And by a bit, we mean very, since we're deep in a pandemic. But don't let that get you down! Fleet Feet is still working to bring runners together the best way they can: with their new Big Run. At the link and time above, you can register for whatever distance you choose and get instructions on how to participate in this year's races. They've included fun touches, like at-home photo props and race bibs to really get you in the spirit. Plus, if you're new to running, you'll also get access to training tips to help you reach your goals on Global Running Day and beyond. So get going and good luck!

June 5

Virtual Story Time, Pacific Science Center, 10-10:30 a.m., Facebook Live, free but donations accepted, tinyurl.com/yaa9mrtl

Do you have a young science enthusiast in your household? If so, join along in this virtual story time with the Pacific Science Center. Each week has a specific theme with stories rotating around it. You and your little ones will be able to engage with the educators as they read aloud. The PacSci Facebook page leads to lots of fun and brainy virtual events they're doing—check 'em all out.

Singing OUT "Virtual" Tour: Heather Mae & Crys Matthews, 8:30 p.m., video link

provided after ticket purchase, \$15, tinyurl.com/y7nt443q

While lots of things are being put on hold, Pride must go on! Start Pride month off strong with two award-winning singer-songwriters, Heather Mae ("the queer Adele") and Crys Matthews ("the Woody Guthrie of our generation"), at this fun-filled event. Everyone is encouraged to come dressed in their best Pride gear, however you identify, and ready to sing along, play some games and compete in giveaways. While we can't gather physically, we can gather in song and spirit to kick off Pride month with good tunes, good vibes and good times.

June 6

Online Food Forest Plant Sale, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., details to follow, free, tinyurl.com/yaukaj25

South 47 farms will be hosting an on-line sale with steep discounts on their inventory! Plants to be sold include ones for your food forest, such as edibles, medicinals, flowers for pollinators and more, so be sure to check out the sale when it goes live. Plants will be available for coordinated pickup at this Redmond farm. Transform your life with lots of new little ones. Plus, you'll eventually be able to grocery shop in your yard!

June 7

Queer N'Teen Chats, 3:30-4 p.m., Instagram Live, free, tinyurl.com/y8lhkyd9

Gay City: Seattle LGBTQ+ Center will be hosting members of the Youth Advisory Council as they go live on the @GayCity and @YAMWashington Instagram

accounts to talk about ways to support queer youth in quarantine, things that bring them joy, ways to stay busy and lots more! This event could be a great resource if you're looking for support or to learn how to give it, or you just want to make some connections. If you have any questions, you can also reach out directly to Gay City at info@gaycity.org or (206) 860-6969 ext. 7.

Thursdays in June

Cheers for Peers, 6-6:30 p.m., Facebook & Instagram Live, free, tinyurl.com/y8fzszmj

Imagine this: riding your bike along the Burke Gilman Trail until you reach Woodinville, then going for a few tastings at the plethora of wineries, distilleries and breweries and enjoying a perfect PNW day. Now, to prepare for that eventual outing (when safe to do so), you can join the four Cheers for Peers events planned that will be hosted by the Woodinville community to highlight their magical makers. Be sure to follow along at the above link for special offers so you can pre-purchase from the featured businesses. Aaand cheers!

This is compiled by Michelle Galluzzo. Got something we should know about? Email it to calendar@realchangenews.org. The deadline for calendar submissions is nine days prior to the date of publication.

BOARDS Continued from Page 7

cision to keep OtBTV free at least through May. "It's been more work on our end, and the server fees are very expensive. But it is so worth it," she said, "knowing that more people are using the resources, spreading the word and engaging with performance, despite the limitations of stay-at-home orders and social distancing. It was always meant to be a tool for greater access to art."

Beyond free OtBTV, other plans are afoot. During her interview with Real Change via Zoom, Brock revealed some of the new thoughts about the relationships among audiences, artists and institutions she has had while working from home: "Honestly, I think that theaters, dance venues and music venues have gotten into a really transactional relationship with their audience members. I pay you some money, you tell me when to show up for maybe an hour and a half, and then I go home. Maybe I think about that performance for a little while, maybe I don't. But, there's very little investment that actually goes into the institution that created the whole opportunity."

While many Washingtonians await the day they can safely gather for dinner at their favorite restaurant, a play at the local theater or just when everything will

go back to "normal," Brock said that at OtB, "normal" is no longer what they're aiming for.

Following their apparent success with OtBTV, Brock and her coworkers are continuing to look for more ways to make performance art increasingly accessible to a wider range of audiences, and perhaps ways that continue to prioritize social distancing measures.

"We've definitely been thinking about [social distancing] a lot and not just for performances in the near future, but even those long past June," she said. "I was just having a conversation with our artistic director about maybe issuing a call for proposals for works that happen outdoors. Regardless, we will definitely be coming up with these kinds of solutions alongside the artists."

To prioritize audience and artist safety and comply with state mandates, OtB has postponed all on-site performances indefinitely. But Brock is determined that art will continue to be shared and experienced in the organization's signature untraditional and experimental ways.

"Everyone is being affected, and there is something strong and empowering about that," she said. "Nobody is untouched by this, and it is this solidarity that is incredibly important now and should continue to be in the future." ■

"Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread."

— CDC guidelines

SWEEPS Continued from Page 4

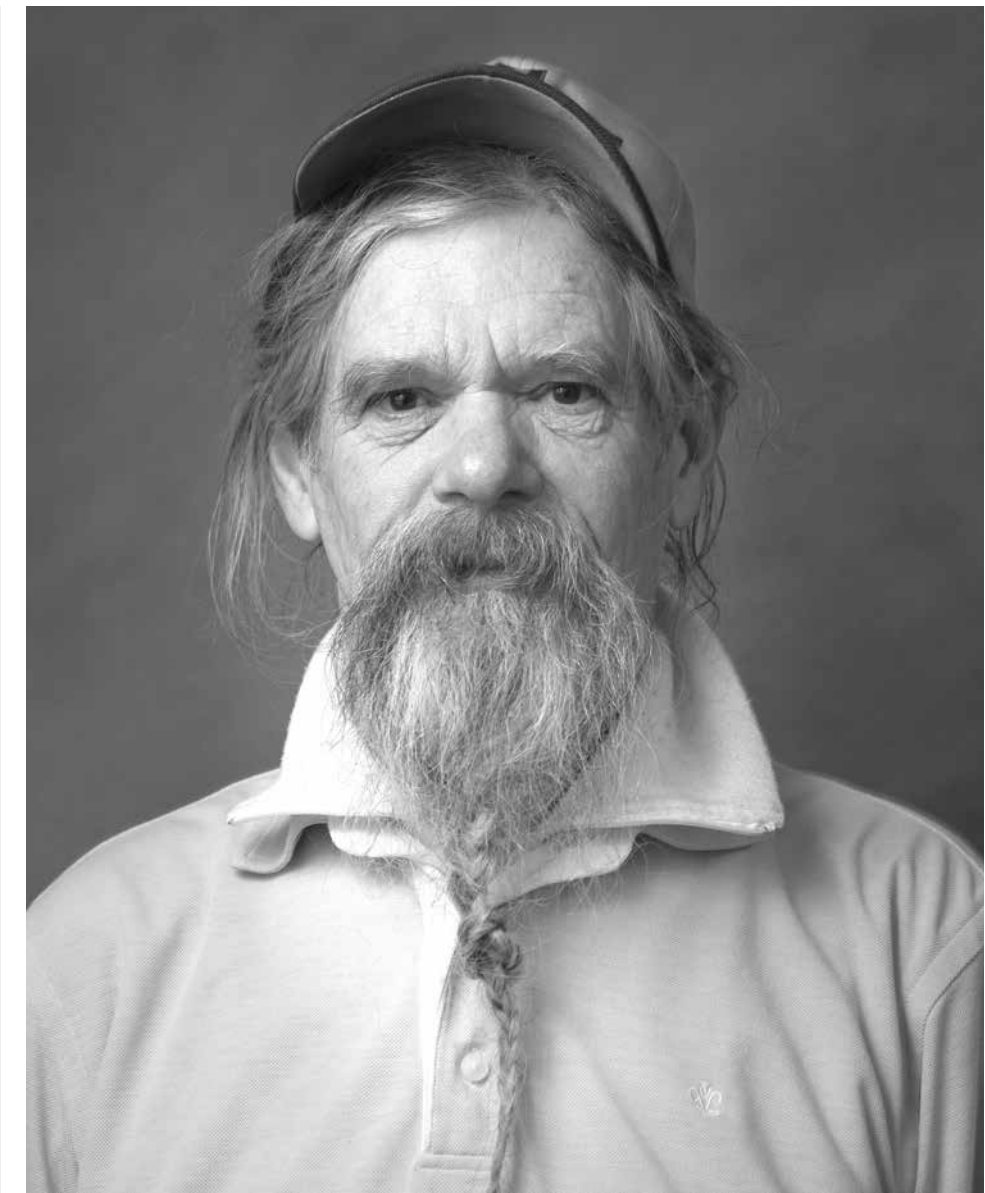
"You need to have people of lived experience if you're going to have a co-chair system," Hemphill said, immediately backed up by Gonzalez, who said that the move would send a "strong signal" to the wider community.

"I do feel it's important for us in the structure of setting up this committee to support the effort of really baking in those folks with lived experience into our leadership model," Gonzalez said.

As the KCRHA looks forward, conflicts in Seattle's leadership over how to deal with the current confluence of homelessness, coronavirus and hepatitis A are firmly rooted in the present.

Sweeps of Ballard Commons and the CID drew criticism from advocates who oppose the encampment cleanups in normal times. They see the current set as a threat to the health and safety of the homeless people who are displaced.

Recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say communities should allow people living in encampments to stay where they are unless "individual housing" is available. "Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread," the CDC guidelines read.



Jan, 74, was homeless for 10 years. Reading from a children's book, Jan tells elementary school students about life on the street: "An averagely happy life."

'I SEE MYSELF AS AN ASTRONAUT FAR ABOVE THE EARTH'

Hamburg street paper *Hinz&Kunzt* asked its vendors how they have been impacted by the pandemic

By **JONAS FÜLLNER**
Hinz&Kunzt

"I spend a lot of time sitting at home, playing my violin and reading," Jan told *Hinz&Kunzt* by phone. This street paper vendor finally found an apartment four years ago after being homeless for a long time. At 74, he's in the "vulnerable" bracket and, thus, in self-imposed quarantine. "I see myself as an astronaut far above the earth," he said and chuckled at his own ability to fantasize.

Then he becomes serious again: "People don't realize how lucky they are. The virus may be dangerous and deadly. But no one need be afraid that their house will be shot at or that a bomb might go off, as was the case during the war."

Matthias has a similar point of view. Homeless, he lives in *Haus Jona*, a homeless shelter. Before the coronavirus crisis, those who stayed overnight there had to leave during the day. Now they're allowed to occupy the rooms throughout the day. "I keep away from groups of people, though," he reported over the phone. "At the same time, my thoughts go to those who are unfortunate enough to have to sleep on the street."

One such individual is Micha. Before the sale of *Hinz&Kunzt* was stopped as part of pandemic restrictions, the 35-year-

old was still in good spirits. Fear of the virus was alien to him: "The homeless have strong immune systems."

This was reiterated by Kai. The 45-year-old has been living on the streets for many years. This past winter, he'd found a refuge through the Winter Emergency initiative of *Hinz&Kunzt*. The fact that selling of the magazine has been paused has deeply wounded him. "I'm back to begging," he admitted. But he remains optimistic. "Don't let things get you down" is his motto. Sooner or later the virus will die down and normal life will resume.

In contrast, Miro is rather afraid of this eventuality. These exceptional circumstances came at just the right time for the 54-year-old. When one of the homeless people on the Winter Emergency initiative became ill with COVID-19, Miro and the others on the program found themselves quarantined. In previous years, the program had ended April 1. This year, they are allowed to stay until the end of May. Even so, Miro has the same problem as all the other sellers of *Hinz&Kunzt*. Rainer, also a vendor, said what it is: "It's beyond me, how I shall manage over the coming weeks without selling the magazine." ■

Translated from German by Louise Thomas; Courtesy of Hinz&Kunzt / INSP-ngo

NOISE Continued from Page 5

of noise on hearing can also include more serious problems, such as hearing injury or hearing loss. More than 1 billion young people aged 12 to 35 are at risk of hearing loss due to exposure to noise in recreational areas. According to the CDC, 25 million Americans have experienced prolonged tinnitus at least once in the past year.

“Loud noises also increase heart rate and can trigger arrhythmias or worsen the condition of patients with cardiovascular failure or coronary heart disease,” explains Polyxeni Nicolopoulou-Stamati, professor of Environmental Pathology at the Medical School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. It is estimated that the inhabitants of developed European countries lose about 61,000 collective years of healthy life each year due to cases of heart disease that are associated with noise pollution.

The quality of our sleep is also negatively affected by noise pollution. This is because our bodies recognize, evaluate and react to environmental noise, even when we are asleep. According to conservative estimates, sleep disorders (such as difficulty in falling asleep and frequent awakenings) that are caused by noise pollution cost Europeans living in cities of more than 50,000 inhabitants 903,000 years of healthy living per year.

Our cognitive functions can also be affected by noise pollution. This is particularly the case for school-age children, as exposure to noise impairs their educational performance and affects skills related to the comprehension of written language, memorization and concentration.

Noise also has psychological effects on human beings. The overriding effect is annoyance, the feeling of frustration and

discomfort and the lack of satisfaction that occurs when noise blocks our thoughts and activities. One in three Europeans suffers from noise pollution during the day, with members of the EU population living in cities of more than 50,000 inhabitants losing a total of 654,000 DALYs.

Noise pollution also affects other living organisms. A study published in the records of the Hellenic National Academy of Sciences showed that city noise and the noise from planes can harm populations of hatchlings and adults in three species of birds. These species showed signs of chronic stress, such as the deregulation of stress hormone secre-

tions, which was possibly due to increased stress, distraction and overstimulation. As for marine organisms, a review of 115 studies has shown that noise pollution from ship engines and sonar can affect the communication, reproduction, development and even the survival of fish and invertebrates.

Nature can be noisy — whether these noises are those of the birds chirping or thunder and strong winds — but the natural environment creates and uses these sounds as a network of information. Most animals recognize and use them. When we add artificial and unknown sounds to the natural soundscape, the acoustic environment of

organisms is affected and it results in problems such as difficulties with finding food or a potential mate, as well as with regard to avoiding predators.

“Noise pollution is a factor in the deterioration of our quality of life,” Barkas concluded. This is why it is crucial that we change our attitude to noise pollution and take action to address the problem. ■

Translated from Greek by Antigone Debaut and given local relevance by Kamna Shastri of Real Change

Courtesy of Shedia / INSP.ngo

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