

UNION SPOTLIGHT

AFT Washington, AFL-CIO

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June 2022



Members of the newest AFT local at Whatcom Intergenerational High School

See Page 7 For More Details

Photo by anonymous

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Always Preheat Your Oven: A Farewell from James To

By James To, Operations Manager

As an avid foodie, I often relate life experiences to cooking, dining and recipes. As I depart AFT Washington and look back on the changes I've seen, my mind turns toward dinner parties.

I came to AFT Washington as the first operations manager in May of 2018, and during my time, we have faced some of the biggest challenges to the labor movement and humanity in the last century. The US Supreme Court weaponized the first amendment by handing down the Janus decision in June of 2018. The Freedom Foundation invaded the privacy of our membership through a gross misuse of the Freedom of Information Act in late 2019. And of course, in March of 2020, we and the rest of humanity were faced with the global pandemic that continues to threaten lives worldwide.

It's like we're throwing a dinner party when the stove breaks, the fire alarm goes off and all the food in the fridge has spoiled! Many would give up. What I've learned over the last four years is... that's not how AFT rolls. We come together, adapt, push forward and win.

I am grateful to be part of a rebuilt AFT Washington team, that combines the

best of the experience, relationships, and vision of long-time staff with the skills, passion, and energy of new additions. I've watched as locals have stood strong, pushing back against injustices threatening both our members and those who haven't yet joined alike. I've seen our members and leaders step up again and again to make their voices heard both at the legislature and in our schools and colleges, all the while renewing and deepening our connections and alliances with community allies and the broader progressive labor movement.

In essence, we've shifted from a fancy dinner party put on by a few dedicated hosts, toward a legendary potluck where we all come together, bringing our best dishes, decorations, and playlists to throw a party so epic that it will shake Washington state to its core.

When I look back at your wins; the bills you've passed, the wage increases and language you've gained through collective bargaining, and the strength you've built by joining with community, I know you are on the road to a victorious 2023. All your ovens are preheated, and you are ready to cook.

The two awardees from Washington are Tracy Lai and Jeb Wyman, both at Seattle Central.

Tracy's project brings together Asian American and Labor Studies by examining the significance of the Supreme Court Case, *Wards Cove Packing Company v. Atonio*. Filipino cannery workers challenged their

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Board meetings are usually held on the first Saturday of the month except for holidays and summer months. Board members are elected to two-year terms. AFT Washington represents over 6,500 members and prospective members in early childhood education, K-12, and higher education in Washington State and is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, which represents 1.7 million members nationwide.

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2022 Mellon/ACLS Faculty Fellows Announced

The American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) has announced the 2022 Mellon/ACLS Community College Faculty Fellows, an initiative now in its final year that recognizes the vital contributions of community college faculty to humanistic research and teaching. The 30 awardees for the final cohort of the program will receive a monetary award to advance their projects,

President's Column



Karen Strickland

I admit it ... I'm a bit of a news junkie. In rare moments, however, I've had enough and I turn off the radio and close out news site tabs. Sometimes I even manage to stop my doom-scrolling. Recent days (I'm writing this on May 25th) have led to a lot more baseball games and music in my life. Perhaps you can relate.

Uncertainty, conflict, threat, insecurity ... these are the terms that come to my mind in this moment. The fact of our isolation to varying degrees over the last 2.5 years has intensified these feelings for many. While Zoom has been an invaluable tool during the pandemic, connecting with other humans in the flesh around our shared values and aspirations serves as an antidote to difficulty and buoys us as we work for progress. I'm missing that feeling of hope and progress that can fill a space when we come together.

And the need for progress right now shows up everywhere. While I'm tempted to name the assaults, both physical and psychological, surrounding us, I'm mindful of the harm to our individual and collective wellbeing doing so could have, so I'm not going to do that. I do, however, want to acknowledge the harm our members are experiencing, some very directly and some indirectly. Trauma, grief, and loss carry a heavy price tag; as we continue forward, we must acknowledge that and seek respite, healing, and hope. The reality we are in demands that

we consider seriously how we create the conditions that allow respite, healing, and hope.

The day-to-day of active union members and leaders presents opportunities to "do good." We are called upon to solve problems, provide support, think proactively and, in general, make things better. Some of our leaders are bargaining another COVID MOU. Members of our Contingent Faculty Issues and Legislative Affairs Committees are strategizing to attain pay equity. Classified members are generating visions of what it would look like to be treated like an essential worker. This work can be draining, but it can also be energizing.

I've been in a union leadership role for twenty-five years, and although I've had those moments of being fed up, done, ready to shrug off the responsibility of it, I've stayed in it because of a few powerful draws. One of those is my connection to my union family ... the friendships that revolve around shared values, a commitment to justice, and a readiness to take on a fight have produced a solid bond. I've always found it invaluable to have fun together – it's hard to sustain hard work when there's no play. I have a vivid image of a scene in my living room with two union friends making "bags of money" for street theater we had planned at our college to address inadequate funding. We also wrote lyrics calling out the governor and proceeded to sing them at every chance we had. It was fun and energizing and even offered a bit of respite. Since we're still fighting for adequate funding of our colleges, you could say we didn't complete the work, and honestly, I don't remember how the budget turned out that year, but I do remember that moment, that energy that was so refreshing. Whatever our impact in the moment, students, staff and faculty came together, marched around the building with our bags of money and a member-turned-governor villain and felt

empowered by the collective raising of our voices. We created hope in our community and strengthened our collective resolve to be actors in our workplace and our state, rather than passive observers waiting for decisions to be handed down.

What gives you hope? In these troubled times, this is an essential question. It might be the fact that this is not a unique moment in time, and that humans have faced and resolved challenges throughout our history.

Indeed, we still are. On May 21st our Human Rights Committee created space for reflection, learning and connection, providing respite and healing, because a load shared is a lighter load; knowing that our human rights and social justice work is in allyship with others amplifies our impact. We were joined by activists in police accountability, voting rights and political representation, immigrant rights, health equity, and American Indian and Indigenous sovereignty movements (see more on page 4). Coming together provides hope and it helps us see the ways our work connects, helping us build more just schools and colleges while contributing to the collective movement toward thriving communities.

The challenges and threats we face right now – racism, sexism, homophobia, gun violence, environmental degradation and more – are extraordinary. The continual uncertainty and the depth of individual and community pain demand something more from us, whether that "us" is our union, our employer, our government, or ourselves. Continuing our work to *fulfill our big dreams, reclaim our future, and attain the better world* we know is possible requires that we maintain hope. Find your sources of hope, take your respite, allow for healing, and know that you are surrounded by a union family that shares this journey with you.

Add Your Voice to the National Movement for Adjunct Pay Parity

By Enrie Marusya, Union Organizing Representative

One of the legislative priorities of AFT Washington in the 2023 session is pay parity for adjunct and contingent faculty. We plan to follow in the footsteps of bills introduced recently by unions in California, Colorado, and Massachusetts. The California bill, AB 1752, is noteworthy; it legislates pay parity to full-time faculty but doesn't fix that at a set amount. Instead, it requires bargaining the amount at the local level, based on a statewide-mandated set of duties that comprise an adjunct job description.

Lacking that mandated set of duties here in our state, we need to have a conversation about what pay parity means to adjuncts. Contingent Faculty Issues Committee members have, since at least 2019, fixed the floor figure at 85% per credit hour compared to full-time, accounting primarily for the fact that adjunct job descriptions rarely

entail committee work and advising. Some contingent faculty insist that pay parity must entail step raises that are commensurate with experience, which means they should be tied to the full-time pay scale.

Other contingent faculty in this conversation want to emphasize that pay parity can't be legislated without focusing on job security and increasing the ratio of tenure-track faculty in our colleges. We took major steps toward the latter in 2020, winning funding from the state for 200 new positions across the system, but this only puts a dent in the overall ratio of full-time to contingent faculty.

We need to hear from you as we formulate our legislative priorities, and so does the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges! AFT Washington's CFIC intends to be present at the next

SBCTC meeting on June 30th (exact time TBD) when they will announce results of their survey on progress toward job security and pay parity for adjuncts. This survey was sent to colleges and union leaders. They will announce the results, and we'll have the chance to speak to them during public comment.

Why is this important? The SBCTC is mandated to consider this survey in their budgeting process. They finalize their legislative agenda during the summer and have indicated that our pressure over the last year has them considering supporting increased pay for adjuncts. We need the help of members like you to keep up the pressure! By signing up on our website, <https://www.aftwa.org>, we'll send you details as we get them and work with you to help you to prepare and share your story about the importance of pay parity if you choose to do so.

The First Community and Labor Summit Was A Success!

By Ray Carrillo, Union Organizing Representative

We held our inaugural AFT Washington Community and Labor Summit: Strategizing our Rights on Saturday, May 21st. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Lynn Palmanteer-Holder was inspirational and informative in her presentation, as she touched on the experience and history of Native American Sovereignty and Indigeneity. We had a number of attendees from our AFT locals and from the community. The summit featured workshops on Economic & Workers' Rights, Immigration, Voting Rights & Political Representation, and Police Accountability.

Our vision of the Community and Labor Summit was to center our work in relation to Native American sovereignty and build relationship between our organizations by sharing our work. From that standpoint, we were pleased to bring together organizations to share approaches to topics of concern. While we had to move the event to online due to scheduling issues and for safety reasons, we still ended up with a fantastic event that

included presentations from the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington, the Northwest Health Law Advocates, La Resistencia, the Washington State Labor Council, the Washington BUS, Disability Rights Washington, and Dr. Ligaya Domingo of both APALA and SEIU 1199NW.

There were several comments to the effect that the presentations were both engaging and compelling, and we truly appreciate the presenters who made the time to help us build community and solidarity as we continue the fight for human rights for all.

This will continue as an annual event and to grow our relationships with other organizations. Our goal is to support human rights and to build long term and lasting mutual support for those fantastic organizations that advocate for both our community and workers' rights. This year's Summit was a great start to a new event, and we're looking forward to seeing you at next year's!

2022 Mellon/ACLS

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second-class working conditions that persisted into the 1980s. Through oral history interviews, Tracy will help document the experiences of the cannery workers and their legal team, as well as how they built upon the successful organizing by Tyree Scott and other African American trade unionists. Through this research and curriculum development, Tracy challenges the Model Minority Myth that claims Asian Americans have contributed little in the struggle for civil and workers' rights.

Jeb's project comes from his experience as a teacher. In 2003, a student in Jeb's classes informed him that he was being deployed to Iraq and was worried about his GPA since he would have to drop all his classes. The following decade saw many veterans raw from the wars in his classroom, and

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Education Is Greater Than Misinformation ... If We Use It

By David Hyde, Professor of Sociology, South Puget Sound Community College, Local 4603

If we can be sure of anything, it's that the spreading of false information to sway the public is not new. Over a century ago, Senator Hiram Johnson noted "When war is declared, truth is the first casualty." The term propaganda dates to the early 1600's. Religious in origin, it referred to a "propagation of the faith."

But with the 2022 midterms looming, the rise of "information warfare," claims of "fake news," and our relationship with social media, perhaps it's a good time to examine misinformation.

Whether maliciously or innocently, we are regularly subjected to inaccurate information. Commercial claims of miracle medical treatments or the ultimate luxury getaway to the Fyre Festival have taught us to be skeptical of those trying to sell us something. Sometimes. Statistica reports that annual spending on advertising in the U.S. is approaching \$300 billion. Corporate America would not spend that kind of money without getting a predictable return on its investment.

While not all advertising involves overt lying, the point stands: messaging and information, regardless of the subject or the veracity of the claims, will persuade some portion of the population to consume products, click links, donate money, hold views, or vote a certain way.

After the 2020 election, the news sources people used strongly predicted their opinions on the reliability of the results of the election. Last month, researchers David Brockman and Joshua Kalla at UC Berkeley reported results of an experiment in which Fox news viewers were paid to watch CNN regularly for a month. The study found that many of those viewers, self-identified conservatives, changed their views

on the legitimacy of the election after exposure to a contrary media source. Some study participants changed views on Trump, Biden, and pandemic policies as well. The conclusion was significant: people don't gravitate to news sources with which they already agree, they are also persuaded by what they view.

Misinformation is abundant. Sometimes it's a fringe "conspiracy theorist" spreading disinformation for some ideological or financial purpose (Alex Jones's claims about Sandy Hook). Other times it's a well-meaning, but ultimately inaccurate call to action that spreads like wildfire on social media (The film Kony 2012 united internet users to demand Joseph Kony be removed from political power in Uganda...six years after he had been). Sometimes the mainstream press gets the story wrong (As happened with the Covington Catholic students wrongly accused of harassing an elderly Native American activist in 2019). Sometimes the government distorts the truth (consider the Gulf of Tonkin incident or some of what we've heard about the war in Ukraine that later turned out false). And sometimes the press and state work together to amplify misinformation, as occurred in the lead up to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Claims that Iraq had significantly developed WMD's and had been responsible for the 9/11 attacks were both later proven false).

As individuals, we may also get the story wrong. Confirmation bias leads us to seek out sources which concur with our preconceptions and avoid those which challenge what we think we know. The Dunning-Krueger effect, which holds that the less someone knows about a topic, the more they overestimate their knowledge of it, encourages us to double down on our narratives, even when presented with conflicting information.

But our misinformation problems today are not only the result of personal cognitive biases. We increasingly rely on social media for news. A 2021 Pew poll found that 86% of Americans get much of their news digitally, and a little more than half routinely use social media as a significant source of information. Similar to confirmation bias, we are surrounded by social media peers who think like we do, resulting in "idea bubbles" of unchallenged groupthink, where "everyone we know believes this to be true." More ominously, tech companies have designed algorithms that ensure that rather than seeing a balanced or random stream of news, we are prompted to engage with content that reenforces what we already believe or is designed to spur our outrage. Because social media relies on our connections to friends and family, we may subconsciously trust the content more than we might if it were in a newspaper, even when it's of lower quality. And the quality is often low, including plagiarized information, misquotes, pictures of older events presented as new, and "deep fakes," photos or videos presented as evidence that were altered or wholly created digitally. Information presented as fact may be wrong and might even be deliberately propagated by those who have interests other than a well-informed public.

Institutional efforts to "fix" social media's misinformation problem are unlikely to be successful. Attempts to censor inaccurate content often backfire; much misinformation gets through while at least some important investigative reporting or whistleblowing gets buried. It also raises the question, "who would we want to be the censor?" A small handful of tech billionaires who likely don't share all our views or priorities, and have agendas

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Our Endorsements Are Out For The August 2 Primary Elections

By Anna-Marie Magdalena, State Affiliate Political Organizer

Our members on the Committee on Political Education (COPE) and the Executive Board have approved our 2022 Primary Endorsements. Travis Margoni, Vice President of COPE, John Gilbertson, United Faculty of Western Washington University, and Gillian Reese, Vice President of the Tacoma Federation of Education Support Professionals make up the COPE team.

The team decided to complete the endorsement process before the 2022 Washington State Labor Council COPE Convention to better advocate for our endorsed candidates. Most of our endorsed candidates received a singular endorsement or a dual endorsement.

The candidate questionnaire was sent to all the candidates for open positions, incumbents who did not score high enough on the legislative report card to receive automatic endorsements, and incumbents who had been appointed to office during the past legislative session. Candidates who filled out the questionnaire were scored on the endorsement matrix. Candidates with midrange scores were interviewed for

the endorsement by the committee and decisions were based on the interviews. The final endorsements were presented to the AFT Washington Executive Board at the May meeting and the endorsements and contribution amounts were approved by the board.

Below is the list of endorsed candidates organized by legislative district. You can find your legislative district at the Washington State Legislature District Finder by looking up your residential address. We also recommend knowing the legislators who represent your school, college, or university's district.

Remember to mark your calendars for the Primary Elections on Tuesday, August 2nd. The 18-day election period begins on Friday, July 15th, so keep an eye on your mailbox. If you need to check the status of your registration, you can do so by visiting the VoteWA website.

As we look at the changing landscape of our judicial branch

of government, stateside campaigns are extremely important and depend on a large voter turnout. We are joining our union siblings with WSLC's Labor Neighbor for phone banking, text banking and to make sure union members vote for the labor friendly candidates. Please reach out to State Affiliate Political Organizer, Anna-Marie Magdalena, at amagdalena@aftwa.org or call 425-738-8900 for more information.

Washington State Senate

21 Marko Liias	36 Noel Frame
26 Emily Randall	37 Rebecca Saldana
27 Yasmin Trudeau	38 June Robinson
29 Steve Conway	42 Sharon Shewmake
30 Claire Wilson	43 Jamie Pedersen
32 Jesse Salomon	44 John Lovick
33 Karen Keiser	45 Manka Dhingra
34 Joe Nguyen	46 Javier Valdez
35 Julianne Gale	48 Patty Kuderer

Washington State House of Representatives

1 Davina Duerr	22 Maria Siguenza	30 Jamila Taylor	38 Julio Cortes	45 Larry Springer
1 Shelley Kloba	22 Jessica Bateman	32 Lauren Davis	38 Mary Fosse	46 Darya Farivar
3 Timm Ormsby	23 Tarra Simmons	32 Cindy Ryu	40 Alex Ramel	46 Gerry Pollet
3 Marcus Riccelli	23 Drew Hansen	33 Mia Gregerson	40 Debra Lekanoff	47 Shukri Olow
5 Bill Ramos	24 Mike Chapman	33 Tina Orwall	41 Tana Senn	47 Debra Entenmann
5 Lisa Callan	24 Steve Tharinger	34 Emily Alvarado	41 My-Linh Thai	48 Amy Walen
10 Dave Paul	27 Jake Fey	34 Joe Fitzgibbon	42 Alicia Rule	48 Vandana Slatter
11 David Hackney	27 Laurie Jenkins	35 Sandra Kaiser	43 Frank Chopp	49 Sharon Wylie
11 Steve Bergquist	28 Dan Bronoske	36 Julia Reed	43 Nicole Macri	49 Monica Stonier
18 John Zingale	29 Sharlett Mena	36 Liz Berry	44 Brandy Donaghy	
21 Strom Peterson	29 Melanie Morgan	37 Sharon Tomiko	44 April Berg	
21 Lillian Ortiz-Self	30 Kristine Reeves	Santos	45 Roger Goodman	

Whatcom Intergenerational High School Is Union Strong!

By AFT Washington Staff

We are thrilled to report that the first bargaining unit of charter school teachers in Washington State is our most recent addition to the ranks of AFT Washington! Led by Cam Kolk, the teachers at Whatcom Intergenerational High School joined together in this first year of the school's existence, committed to working for the best working conditions possible.

Washington State's charter school law requires that these schools be non-profit, non-religious, non-sectarian, and free of charge to students. Charter schools in Washington may not exclude students from enrollment for any reason besides age, grade level or limited capacity. We have a high standard for charter schools, unlike most other states. AFT has

organized workers in over 250 charter schools and advocates to improve the quality and requirements of them to ensure public and charter schools operate on an even playing field. AFT also works to limit the diversion of funds from charter schools to public schools, ensure students aren't excluded from enrollment, and protect workers with collective bargaining rights.

Speaking of the effort to unionize, Cam said, "Teachers at WIHS elected to organize with AFT to support and advocate for our students and school. Our charter school is mission driven and serves marginalized students from all over Whatcom County. As teachers we have a mandate to elevate our

students' voices and fight for a system that is equitable and sustainable. Union membership and collective bargaining empowers us with better classroom conditions, teacher leadership and policies that help us to hire and retain quality teachers through an equity-based lens."

By organizing with AFT Washington, the teachers at WIHS will improve their working conditions and create conditions to freely speak up on behalf of their students without fear of retaliation. We look forward to the next step – bargaining a contract and writing a constitution and by-laws with the membership. Congratulations to our newest members!

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(from pg. 2)

their trauma was front and center in the work they did in Jeb's English classes. Their stories did not center on heroes; they did not feel like heroes. But the stories were clearly ways to get their emotions expressed, which led to a book of veterans' stories, *What They Signed Up For*, published in 2017. The book led Jeb to begin teaching courses for veterans, using the humanities as a vehicle for becoming whole again after war, which led to becoming interested in the social history of veterans and how wars are remembered and mythologized, leading to his fellowship proposal: to look specifically at how the 20 years of the War on Terror has affected American culture and society.

We congratulate both Jeb and Tracy on their selection to the fellowship! Both their projects sound fascinating, and we will be interested to see the work!

Greater Than Misinformation

(from pg. 5)

of their own? Government employees? Of which party? Do we think appointees of Donald Trump and Joe Biden define the same things as "fake news?"

Personal steps can be taken to ensure the best information to make informed decisions. Begin by treating everything a bit skeptically, including the sources you read and your own knowledge and analysis. Get as close to the raw information as possible. Do you know and trust the source? Is it a firsthand account (not someone else forwarding something labeled as a firsthand account)? Local news is often more reliable for local issues simply because there is more interpersonal accountability. Doctors, teachers, attorneys, journalists, and others you have personal connections to, and

organizations (schools, civic clubs, unions) you have a history with may earn your trust over time with information that turns out to be consistently accurate. Read divergent ideological perspectives, critiques of media, and the foreign press. Look for multiple sources verifying the same information. When several ideologically opposed publications agree on some basic facts, there's a good chance those facts are accurate.

Ultimately our strongest tool against misinformation may be education. Ask yourself if the news seems probable, given the history of the situation and the interests of those involved. Those who know history, understand context, and are familiar with different perspectives are difficult to deceive.



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Get In On TRAINING

Did you know? AFT Washington offers a number of trainings, including the following! Watch the Weekly Update (out on Mondays) for more information. If you're not subscribed to the Weekly Update, please contact Cortney Marabetta at cmarabetta@aftwa.org.

Powerful Locals

August 4 - 6, 2022

Powerful Locals is designed to develop your local's activists and leadership. Training tracks will focus on Contract Bargaining and Membership Engagement, with an eye to our virtual opportunities. We've also got workshops that augment the training.

New! Race & Labor

The Washington State Labor Council is doing ground-breaking work on racial justice, equity, and the labor movement's responsibility to tackle racism. Now, AFT Washington staff and members have been trained to be

able to provide training. If you and your local are interested in conducting a Race and Labor workshop to discuss these critical issues, let us know!

Student Debt Clinics

Come learn how two federal programs can potentially reduce your monthly payments and forgive your remaining debt, as well as how to take advantage of the Limited Time PSLF Expansion Waiver. The waiver deadline is this fall!

Adjunct Unemployment Workshops

This training has helped hundreds of adjuncts successfully apply for unemployment benefits. This workshop is intended for seasoned and new applicants alike. The aim is to increase your chances of getting your unemployment claims as adjuncts resolved quickly, decreasing the potential of accidentally triggering delays that could delay payments by months.