

Every month since February 1987 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has produced one-hour TV programs on issues related to peace, social justice, economics, the environment, and nonviolence. The Olympia FOR's program airs several times every week (currently every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm) for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for Thurston County's cable TV subscribers. You can see TCTV's **current schedule** at [www.tctv.net](http://www.tctv.net).

You can also watch the program described below (and more than 160 of our previous monthly interview programs and also many special programs) at the Olympia FOR's website, [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org). Simply click the "TV programs" link, scroll down, and click the program you want to watch. Many of our website's TV program listings also include links to documents summarizing the program in Word and/or .pdf format.

## APRIL 2017

# "How to REALLY Make America Great"

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at the "TV Programs" part of [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org)

by Glen Anderson, this TV series' producer and host

The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's April 2017 TV program proposes how to move from the status quo to a better future. Simplistic political propaganda has created a mess, but our five guests propose meaningful solutions for our nation's problems.

Trump campaigned to "make America great again." What does he mean by the word "again"?

- When white men had exclusive power to dominate women and people of color?
- When big business was free to pollute and nobody objected?

And what does he mean by "great"?

- Although the U.S. used to lead other nations in terms of economic well-being, health, education, and so forth, now the U.S. is far down the list in these rankings. But he is not promoting ways to really improve public health, education or quality of life.
- For the past 40 years – under both political parties – economic inequality has gotten worse. A truly great nation would have a more just and fair economic system, but the policies being proposed will only widen the inequality gap even further.
- For the quarter of a century since the Cold War the U.S. has been the world's only superpower, with the biggest, most violent military. But this extreme militarism cannot win wars anymore, so we need to thoughtfully analyze reality, not simply increase the bloated military budget by another 10%, as he proposes.
- A truly great nation would protect everyone's right to vote, instead of finding ways to suppress voting by people likely to vote for the other party.

For more than 100 years the Fellowship of Reconciliation ([www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org)) has opposed all wars and worked for peace. The FOR has opposed animosity and divisiveness of all kinds – national, racial, religious – and worked for the inclusiveness of one human family.

Now in 2017 the U.S. is suffering from a government that is more divisive than ever before. The new national administration and Congress are pitting people with power – rich, white, male, right-wing – against people who lack those kinds of power and privilege.

Although the new person in the White House campaigned to “make America great,” he and the majority in Congress are actually undermining America’s best values and hurting our nation in many ways.

In order to make America truly great, we must reverse the harmful aspects of our nation’s culture and organize for positive changes in public policy.

Nowadays people are inundated with problems. What people need are solutions! Merely lamenting, “Ain’t it awful,” only depresses and disempowers people. Instead, we need positive solutions and grassroots empowerment. That’s what we’ll focus on during this hour.

Five guests will share their values – and their visions and their proposals – for how to REALLY make America great. To address all of the problems and solutions, we’d need fifty guests instead of five. But this is a good start. These five guests will propose a variety of ways to REALLY make America great:

- **Karen Fraser** is one of the most respected people in our region. She holds humane values and acts upon them. She is very savvy about many public policy issues. That’s why – for decades – voters have been electing her to the Lacey City Council, Thurston County Commission, and the Washington State Legislature.
- **Paul Pickett** is an environmental engineer with expertise in several scientific fields. He has worked for the State government, taught at the college level, served as an elected commissioner of our local Public Utility District, and volunteered for many environmental and climate-related non-profit organizations. I always enjoy connecting with Paul when working on issues.
- **Tamborine Borrelli** is someone I did not know until we arranged for her to be a guest on this TV program. In the past few days when I’ve been telling my friends who the guests would be, several of my friends were enthusiastic about Tamborine’s participation in this interview. She has solid information and experience in our electoral system’s problems and solutions, and several important issues. She recently ran for the State Senate from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District. She is a director at Election Justice USA ([www.election-justice-usa.org](http://www.election-justice-usa.org)), working for election integrity.
- **Kim Dobson** is well informed about a wide variety of issues – really the full range of issues that we might talk about during this interview, and many more. I enjoy listening to his thoughtful multi-issue radio program “Parallel University” on KAOS radio, 89.3 FM every Thursday from 12 noon to 1 pm. His academic background is in organic, sustainable agriculture. He is a professional auto mechanic and does other hands-on work.
- **Cindy Corrie** has become internationally prominent in working for peace worldwide, especially peace between Israel and Palestine to provide fairness for Palestinian people, who are especially at risk. She is a leader in the Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice ([www.rachelcorriefoundation.org](http://www.rachelcorriefoundation.org)), and she is well respected for acting upon her humane and compassionate values, which her late daughter Rachel also had worked for.

### **Build a culture of compassion and caring:**

The new White House and Congress have overwhelmed the American people with many incredible and astounding accusations, decisions and proposals. Many millions of Americans see them as ignorant, cruel and corrupt – and actually hurting America instead of “making America great.”

A good place to start this conversation is with the broad goal that Karen told me when we were on the phone preparing for this interview. Karen said the U.S. needs to “build a culture of compassion and caring.” Now she told the TV viewers what she had in mind. She said that compassion and caring are already widespread in the U.S., so we need to expand those. She said that when she has talked with people recently, many have said that they will be doing more to help other people individually and provide more support for organizations that help people. This includes helping people develop their abilities, get out of serious problems and desperation, and avoid falling into desperation. Examples include education, youth development, safety net, health care, and so forth.

Karen said, “The more you spread values of sharing and caring and compassion ... you will elect people who care about that.” People elect candidates who share their values, so the more we spread these positive values, the better will be the candidates who get elected. We’ll end up with elected officials who share these values and make decisions based on them.

### **Deliberate distractions from political decisions contrary to our best values:**

Karen’s humane vision is being rebuffed by powerful people in Washington DC. Tamborine said that the new administration and Congress are deliberately generating publicity in outrageous ways in order to “divert and distract us” from their really nasty legislation and executive decisions. Mainstream media publicize outrageous things – similar to the front page of the *National Enquirer* – that capture people’s attention so people will talk about the drama and get distracted from the horrible stuff going on without adequate public awareness.

As examples, Tamborine listed several very extreme bills that were introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in the week before we videotaped this interview on March 9, 2017. Examples included bills to: Abolish the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Abolish the Department of Education. Repeal wildlife protection. Repeal the Affordable Care Act. Eliminate all funding for Planned Parenthood. Change the law to radically restrict labor unions through a nationwide “right-to-work” law. Impose sanctions against Iran. Criminalize abortions.

Tamborine said that if the American people knew what Congress was doing, people would say, “Hey, we’ve got to do something about this! Let’s rally together and make change!”

Glen agreed. People get distracted by the stuff that gets publicized, while more horrible things are slipped through underneath without adequate public awareness or discussion. Tamborine said this is like what a pick-pocket does: distract the victim’s attention while picking his pocket.

### **Urgent and serious threats to the survival of human civilization:**

Paul expressed his deep concern that the survival of human civilization is threatened by nuclear weapons, toxics, and climate disruption. But he also affirmed some positive ways for us to proceed. Glen expressed appreciation for Paul’s participation as a guest on our TV programs because he is able to lay out the very hard realities but also take strongly positive approaches to solving them. Paul did this throughout this interview.

Paul affirmed that nuclear weapons, toxics and climate disruption really are existential threats to human civilization. But he proceeded to ask what America's greatest strengths are, and he suggested that innovation is something our nation is really good at. We have a history of bringing people together to solve problems through innovation. Throughout our more than 200 years of history, we have faced huge challenges squarely, and the best solutions have come when people come together to seriously tackle the problems with our best thinking and with compassion. Now that earth has more people and more interconnections, earth's problems have gotten bigger. The U.S., of course, is not the only nation that solves problems, but we do have a great history of bringing our minds and our spirits together to solve problems.

Glen agreed that attitude is important. Let's approach problems with a "can-do" attitude and our traditional value of "Yankee ingenuity."

### **What foreign policy would really be good?**

Cindy said that because the American people are threatened by some things, there might be "a tendency for Americans to look inward," but she also urged us to "look outward and work on relationships with other people in the world." She said that being a friendly neighbor with the rest of the world would help to "make America great." She urged us not to step back away from international connections because we are worried about problems within the U.S.

Cindy said, "We live in a beautiful world with beautiful people," and she enjoys connecting. Now social media allow us to connect more easily. She is very much connected with people in Gaza, Palestine, but she said if she has not been there for a while, it's easy to lose touch because of distractions here at home. She recognizes a hunger among people in Gaza to talk with people elsewhere, including people in the U.S. She said that she and her husband Craig were in Israel on November 8, 2016, when the U.S. election occurred, and people kept asking them, "What's going on in the U.S.?" Those people have eagerness to understand – "and also some empathy" because they know what it's like to be dominated by a government that does not represent their values.

Even when we feel disconnected or powerless, it's important for us to maintain personal connections and community connections. For example, Cindy affirmed the Thurston – Santo Tomás Sister County Association (TSTSCA) ([www.oly-wa.us/tstsc](http://www.oly-wa.us/tstsc)), which has maintained a relationship between our local community in Thurston County WA and a community in Nicaragua since 1988. TSTSCA will take their 12<sup>th</sup> delegation of students from The Evergreen State College to Santo Tomás, Nicaragua, this spring. So even though our government has strained relations with other nations, people-to-people relationships can persist.

Glen agreed and said the Olympia FOR's TV series has featured TSTSCA on several of our programs, including our March 1987 program – 30 years ago – which was the second program in our TV series' 30-year history. Jean Eberhardt had just come back from the Seattle-to-Nicaragua Construction Brigade, and she was helping local folks consider whether to organize an Olympia-to-Nicaragua Construction Brigade. When that was accomplished, it helped to lay the groundwork for TSTSCA to get organized. Our solidarity has include delegations going from here to there and delegations coming from there to here. Glen also affirmed the work that Cindy and Craig Corrie and the Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice ([www.rachelcorriefoundation.org](http://www.rachelcorriefoundation.org)) have been doing, and the Global Days of Listening ([www.globaldaysoflistening.org](http://www.globaldaysoflistening.org)), which emerged as an Olympia FOR-based project from Olympia and Afghanistan to include a nationwide FOR connection, and other kinds of egalitarian international relationships.

**What federal budget priorities would be good? How much military spending? How much for other purposes?**

Trump called for a \$54 billion increase in the already-bloated military budget. There is not really a functional need for that increase, because the U.S. spends overwhelmingly more on our military than any other nation. Instead of a legitimate need for a 10% increase, he seems to have picked that number arbitrarily as a simplistic remedy (like his other simplistic remedies) because our violent foreign policy is failing to win wars.

Cindy said that the military can help with disaster relief and a few other useful functions. But, she said, “Relying on military power as our way to provide security has not served us well.” Instead, it has caused many problems, in the Middle East and elsewhere. She wants the U.S. to emphasize prevention. Even some military leaders understand that. She expressed concern that our nation’s political leaders do not understand this.

**How would we address environmental problems – globally, nationally and locally?**

Worldwide and in the U.S., environmental problems are causing many problems for our food, public health and safety, and so forth. In order to “make America great,” we must protect the environment. Paul said that for 50 years we have been seriously disrupting the environment and climate. Climate scientists have been alerting us to some possibly catastrophic outcomes, including the possible collapse of the ocean’s food chain, disruptions of ocean currents and wind and rain patterns, resulting in deserts and famines and massive disruptions of populations and refugee crises.

Paul said this pertains to what Cindy had said. We must pay attention to food security, water security and climate security. These endanger world security and various nations’ national security. When we neglect these worsening problems, we might end up with a radical action such as, “send the army in.” Paul mentioned David W. Titley, a very savvy retired U.S. Navy rear admiral, who is the Founding Director of the Center for Solutions to Weather and Climate Risk at Penn State University. He makes those kinds of connections in very compelling ways. He told the military that climate disruption will cause many problems and make the military’s job much harder. Therefore, we must step back and seriously address the underlying problems (such as the climate crisis) that disrupt society, cause refugees to move around, and break governments down.

**Proposals for dealing with the climate crisis:**

The new administration and Congress want to weaken or abolish many laws and regulations that have been protecting the environment. This would cause more pollution. A polluted nation is not “great.” A polluted nation is dirty, and it makes people sick. So if we want our nation to be “great,” we must demand that governments at all levels – federal, state and local – take strong actions to protect and sustain a clean and healthy environment.

Kim agreed with Paul and said, for example, that climate disruption also disrupts ocean currents, including the Atlantic Ocean currents that bring warm water to the British Isles. If those warm ocean currents are disrupted, colder water could make the British Isles colder and disrupt their environment and agriculture. This could happen to other geographical areas too, reducing their agricultural output. Climate disruption is not uniform warming throughout the planet, but instead it is “hit and miss,” he said. For example, here in the Pacific Northwest, our temperatures in early March (when we taped this TV interview) are about 8 degrees colder than usual, and we have had some snow on several days.

The issues we have been discussing are interconnected. Climate disruption causes droughts and famines, which force people to become refugees in search of water and food. In turn, this causes intergroup and international conflicts, which in turn threaten various nations' national security. This TV conversation's purpose is not to merely lament the problems but rather to lift up workable solutions – solutions better than the simplistic and counter-productive ones coming out of Washington DC nowadays.

Paul urged investing in non-carbon energy to replace wood, coal, oil, and natural gas. He said the challenge is huge, but the technology already exists. Solar and wind are already efficient. But the U.S. has lagged behind Europe in developing modern windmills. Europe has invested in wind technology, much more than the U.S. has done. When San Francisco wanted to improve mass transit, they bought vehicles from China because the U.S. has failed to invest adequately in mass transit vehicle technology. Let's invest in the technology and spread it around. He said that he had visited Santo Tomás, Nicaragua, a number of years ago and saw the potential for generating solar electricity from rooftops, but in order to do this, people would need to develop the social awareness and some aspects of infrastructure. The U.S. could and should be a leader in alternative energy.

Karen pointed out that when the federal government abdicates its responsibility to work for a clean environment (clean air, clean water, clean energy, etc.), state governments could and should step forward to fill the gaps. States can act individually and work together. Also tribal governments could be real leaders, too, because their treaty rights are being protected by the federal court system. Tribes care about environmental quality, so they could become stronger partners with state governments for these purposes.

Glen agreed with Karen and mentioned that historically, the best reforms have come from local and state governments and been copied into a number of places before Congress finally adopts the reforms nationwide.

Paul agreed too. He said that cities – “blue islands” – have been adopting progressive policies at the local level even when states overall fail to meet the needs.

Tamborine affirmed tribal efforts to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. Late last year it was put on hold pending an Environmental Impact Statement, but recently Trump removed that limitation and is pushing the DAPL ahead without an EIS. She said that instead of putting money into the DAPL and other pipelines, we should invest our money into green alternatives – and we should take our money out of the banks that have invested in these pipelines, such as Chase Bank and Wells Fargo. We have that power as individuals, so we can pressure the banks in this way. She said the banks “pay attention to their money,” so individuals do have leverage and power.

### **Proposals for agriculture worldwide, nationally and locally:**

Kim has an academic background in agriculture and a lot of practical experience and continued study. Our nation's policies about food and agriculture are hurting our nation, so in order to “make America great” we would have to significantly change our policies about food and agriculture.

He said Washington State and Oregon already have strong agriculture policies. The term “tilth” pertains to soil quality and much more. For example, see [www.oregontilth.org](http://www.oregontilth.org) and [www.seattletilth.org](http://www.seattletilth.org). There are 23 certified organic farms in Thurston County WA. There are even more certified organic farms in the counties with more agriculture (many in Skagit, 70 in Whatcom, 63 in Okanogan, and more than 90 in Yakima, etc.).

People do not want to eat the pesticides that are sprayed on food crops, so buying organic food is a practical thing that ordinary people can do at the very local, personal level to change our nation's food system.

**To be great, our nation must protect science's integrity from attack and distortion:**

Many of our nation's most important issues – not only about the environment and climate, but also about health care, consumer protection, and so forth – are issues where we need to pay attention to honest science. But some of the problems coming from Washington DC now show a serious ignorance about science and actual contempt and hostility toward science. When a nation ignores scientific reality and makes policy decisions based on greed or religious doctrine, that nation is not “great,” but instead is heading for bad decisions and national weakness.

Karen said more people need to understand science and the scientific method, so people can knowledgeably discuss and make decisions about public policy issues for which science has something to say. She said this is a very common problem in the state legislature. Legislators need to be able to make smart decisions when people claim scientific evidence on each side of an issue. Young people need to learn more about science. Olympia's Hands-on Children's Museum teaches preschoolers about science.

Karen also said some court cases involving science are “sealed,” but the public should have access. Also, some scientific studies' results are suppressed if they “failed” to show what their sponsors had hoped for. She said we need to promote more openness for public access to scientific reports. She also called for more open-minded scientific studies that do not have pre-determined end-points in mind. Glen agreed. Often the pharmaceutical companies fund and design research to validate their own drugs and – lo and behold – their findings are just what they wanted to find.

Paul said that he attends many scientific conferences and sees that “scientists are starting to find their voice.” Although traditionally scientists have merely focused on their work without getting “political,” now they are recognizing that they can't do that anymore. Social scientists are helping natural scientists understand how to communicate and engage with the public and policy-makers about scientific realities. He mentioned that the March for Science on Saturday April 22, 2017, will help scientists and other people affirm the importance of understanding science and protecting scientific integrity.

**Protect truth and honesty in government, political speech, journalism, etc., from lies that are deceptively called “alternative facts.”**

Glen said he shares the nationwide astonishment that the new federal government is actually attacking truth. Government should pursue truth and honesty. But now we have an executive branch that repeatedly lies and – instead of admitting that it had lied – simply calls those lies “alternative facts.” Lying cannot “make America great.” A society based on lies cannot even endure.

In order to be “great,” a nation must have honest and professional journalism. A president who calls legitimate journalists “enemies” is not fit to hold office in a democracy.

He said that government in a truly “great” nation also would serve the broad public interest. Instead we have possibly the most corrupt executive branch cabinet in our nation's history. Billionaires and business executives have been appointed to manage agencies that directly affect their own business investments. For example, while oil companies have long had powerful influence over U.S. foreign policy, Trump appointed as Secretary of State – the U.S.'s top foreign policy cabinet member – the recently retired CEO of Exxon-Mobil, the world's largest privately owned oil company. Many of the new administration's appointees came directly from businesses that they will now be “regulating.” Some of them are actually hostile to the agencies' missions and seek to destroy those agencies.

Greed and corruption do not make a nation “great.” To be a truly “great” nation – and to protect honest democracy – the American people need to vigorously and nonviolently reject such blatant greed and corruption.

Glen said that when Stalin was running the Soviet Union, Stalin believed that the USSR’s Communist system was so perfect that it could not cause problems. Under Stalin, the USSR rapidly industrialized, but Stalin’s ideological blinders prevented him from recognizing the pollution and environmental damage that the USSR’s mines and factories were causing, so no scientific evidence of environmental damage was allowed, and horrible environmental and health problems resulted. This was a case where ideology trumped science, and now the U.S. is doing what Stalin had done. Just look at Trump’s appointments, the federal government’s gag orders preventing scientists and employees from speaking about the climate, and their websites’ removal or distortion of climate-related and environmental-related information. Denying truth does not make a nation “great.”

Tamborine connected this reality in the U.S. with the corrupting influence of money in politics. She said politicians are tempted to do this because such deception has financial benefits for them. Many of them do not serve the public interest when the lobbyists and campaign donors are paying them to serve the big corporations and other narrow special interests. The remedy is to get money out of politics. She said people are tired of the status quo and will not take it anymore.

Fortunately, some non-profit organizations such as Common Cause ([www.commoncause.org](http://www.commoncause.org)) and Public Citizen ([www.citizen.org](http://www.citizen.org)) and the Project on Governmental Oversight ([www.pogo.org](http://www.pogo.org)) are challenging those problems. Ordinary people can support these and other watchdogs.

Karen pointed out another problem that the new federal government’s lies cause: they undermine public trust in government.

Cindy asserted that in such a political climate, people getting out in the public with protests and marches can make our voices heard. Don’t let lies and deceptions be the only voices out there. We need to assert ourselves and our voices to counter those.

Tamborine alerted us to a piece of Washington State legislation that would outlaw protests that would interfere with fossil fuel infrastructure. She said that the fact that this legislation was introduced shows that our protests are indeed effective. We must protect our First Amendment rights!

Paul agreed and said that instead of merely complaining, we must get out there and participate, march, etc. He said the march that started at the State Capitol on the day after the inauguration was so powerful! He said the front of the march was already returning to the starting point before the end of the march was departing. He also mentioned the power of the anti-WTO rally and march in Seattle in 1999.

Paul said he recently spoke to an audience of science teachers. He said that one of the problems is that people feel the climate crisis is so huge and any individual is so small and powerless. (He said this is true of other issues too, such as foreign policy.) He told this audience of science teachers, “Just pick one thing and act on it. Go to the march. Write a letter. Join an organization.” If each individual does something, the cumulative results are huge. “It’s like the drops creating the river.”

Glen agreed. Different people are in different situations, so different persons have different opportunities. For example, somebody with kids in school can pay attention to the education system. Another person in a different situation can do something different. No one person can do everything, but each person can do something.

Kim said that a few hours before we produced this TV interview he produced his weekly radio program (Parallel University every Thursday from 12 noon to 1 pm on KAOS 89.3 FM in Olympia and streaming online).



Today he interviewed Eric de Place from Sightline Institute ([www.sightline.org](http://www.sightline.org)) about two big fossil fuel export proposals for the Port of Vancouver WA. One is the Vancouver Energy Project for the giant oil company Tesoro, which would export oil from North Dakota's Bakken fields. The other is the Kalama Methanol Plant, which would be built for a Chinese company that makes plastics. It would use the cheap, publicly owned electricity from Cowlitz County WA and water from our Columbia River to process methanol into a form that would be shipped to China in order to manufacture plastic products for export back to the U.S. and elsewhere. Both of these projects would cause enormous amounts of pollution. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has never been on the side of environmentalists, but has always supported giant energy companies. Although the federal government will be on the wrong side, we ordinary people of the State of Washington can urge our Governor Jay Inslee – who has the final decision power – to oppose these plants, which would be bad for the environment and climate.

Paul agreed with Kim that it is important and effective for people to pressure our government in this way. He says he has heard from governmental officials at all levels – federal, state and local – that they urge people to “give me the political space” to make the good decisions. They get pressure from big businesses and other powerful special interests, so they need strong grassroots pressure from ordinary people in order to make it politically safe for them to do what they know they really should do. Paul urged people to use various methods – writing, phoning, marching, etc. – and telling the whole story, including the science story, not only the simplistic story that “it makes jobs.” Glen agreed. We must also point out how many jobs would be killed by such projects when oil spills occur, etc. Tamborine agreed; it's not “if” but it's always “when” spills will occur.

### **Economic justice: To make America “great,” let's treat low-wage workers fairly:**

In November 2016 many voters expressed their economic pain by voting against a longtime politician who had long supported the status quo. Actually, since the 1970s – regardless of which political party was in the White House or Congress – the economic gaps between extremely rich people and everybody else have been widening. We have a very wide gap of incomes, and a very wide gap of wealth. I believe that a nation that does that is not “great.” A nation that mistreats and underpays its workers is not “great.”

We must raise the minimum wage significantly. When people have money in their pockets, they can spend it and help the economy grow. But much more important than growing the economy is treating workers fairly and improving their day-to-day quality of life. That's a more compelling reason for significantly raising the minimum wage. Treating workers fairly helps economic justice and the general public overall. Therefore, a minimum wage of \$15 or more would help make America “great.”

### **Universal single-payer health care would help America become “great.”**

One of our nation's worst problems is our inadequate health care system. Obama's 2010 Affordable Care Act was actually very modest, based on the right-wing Heritage Foundation's proposal from a number of years ago, and based on Massachusetts Republican Governor Mitt Romney's “Romneycare” plan for that state. But despite this Republican pedigree, when Obama passed it in 2010 the Republicans in Congress said if Obama is for it, then they are against it.

Actually Obama's ACA fell far short of meeting the needs, and the Republicans' March 2017 proposal for replacing it would take health care away from many millions of Americans, worsen the coverage for millions of us, and raise the costs for millions of us. Liberals oppose the Republicans' proposal because it is so bad, and hard-core conservatives oppose it because it is not harsh enough.

Tamborine spoke in favor of the humane, practical alternative to either plan. Universal single-payer health care (sometimes referred to as “Medicare for All”) would cover everyone with high quality care at a lower cost. Universal single-payer health care could help to “make America great.” She has interviewed many people and found that even while some now had health care because of Obama’s Affordable Care Act, many others still could not afford this “Affordable” health care. It was written largely by the insurance companies. Tamborine suggested, “Follow the money” to see what’s really going on.

We need a much stronger program. Tamborine said we must move toward universal single-payer in order to “make America great.” She said, “We must take care of the least of us.”

Glen mentioned that the Olympia FOR’s TV series has produced several programs about single-payer. The most recent one was for December 2015. Watch that interview and/or read an extensive Word document summarizing it and providing additional resources, by visiting the “TV Programs” part of [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org) and scrolling down to December 2015. Click the program title to watch the program, and/or click the adjacent Word document link.

All the developed countries except the U.S. States have decided that every human has a basic right to health care. “Among the world’s developed nations, the United States stands at or near the bottom in most important rankings of access to and quality of medical care.” Americans with chronic diseases (asthma, diabetes, etc.) fare badly compared to other nations. “Avoidable mortality” is a meaningful measure, and the U.S. ranked last in a list of 19 rich countries in curing people who could be cured with decent care. More people die young in America than in other rich countries. Life expectancy for people who have reached the age of 60 is bad in the U.S., compared to other rich countries. A 2006 Commonwealth Fund study of 23 nations had the U.S. tied for last. Other nations offer free prenatal and neonatal care for every mother and every baby, but the U.S. does not, so the US ranked last of 23 nations in keeping newborns alive. Japan has the oldest population in the world, and the Japanese go to the doctor almost three times as often as Americans, but Japan spends less than half as much per person as the U.S.

Tamborine recommended Michael Moore’s film “Sicko,” which is full of information comparing the U.S.’s health care system with much better systems in other nations. It is very sobering and calls for universal single-payer health care.

Paul sees the health care issue as an example of a larger view, and he actually does have hope. Paul quoted Winston Churchill, who had said, “You can always count on the Americans to do the right thing after they have tried everything else.” Paul sees the current right-wing politics as a backlash caused by people’s fear of huge economic changes, increasing ethnic diversity, and other changes. Paul has hope that people will now start to better understand what is going on. He said, “When Obamacare was passed, people complained, but now that it’s being taken away, everybody is freaking out.” Now is an opportunity to inform and energize people to reverse the negative trend and start moving forward with fresh momentum to carry us past the next two or four years.

Glen agreed and said this TV interview seeks to move past the lousy status quo. Everybody is angry now, and the proposals being imposed upon us from the federal government would make things even worse (worse pollution, worse health care, worst abuses of women and minorities, etc.), not “great.” Let’s inform and organize people to create leverage so people can turn that public outrage into a vision for a much better future so we can create a future that really will be “great.”

Kim recommended Physicians for a National Health Program ([www.pnhp.org](http://www.pnhp.org)) and National Nurses United ([www.nationalnursesunited.org](http://www.nationalnursesunited.org))

Glen affirmed those and also recommended Health Care for All – Washington ([www.healthcareforallwa.org](http://www.healthcareforallwa.org)), which focuses especially on our own state’s efforts.

**If we had more time we could discuss many other problems – and propose many more solutions – so we could REALLY “make America great.” These need attention and positive organizing and action:**

We have discussed several issues somewhat. We just don't have the time to discuss the many, many more problems that a truly “great” nation would solve in humane, compassionate, environmentally sustainable ways. I'll list just a few of the needs that a truly “great” nation would meet. These include – but are not limited to –

- Protecting every person's human rights, legal rights, constitutional rights, civil liberties, and constitutional due process
- Protecting every kind of underdog from all kinds of oppressors and bullies
- Stopping the divisiveness and injustices against various kinds of people (based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, immigration status, disability, language, etc.)
- Stopping gun violence and other kinds of violence, including domestic violence
- Working actively and strategically to change our national culture to be a culture that affirmatively supports peace and nonviolence in many practical ways – both internationally, within the nation, and locally
- Protecting the public sector from privatization. This would include protecting vigorous public Medicare, postal system, public lands, parks, and infrastructure such as bridges and water systems.
- Providing excellent free public education for everyone, regardless of who you are or where you live
- Stopping this administration's and Congress's “war on women.”
- Treating immigrants and refugees fairly and with compassion. The U.S. is a nation of immigrants! The Statue of Liberty and Emma Lazarus's poem excerpt on the statue's base confirm that we actively invite and welcome immigrants and refugees. This is what makes America great. Politicians who are negative toward immigrants and refugees are violating America's best values and undermining our greatness.

**We can “connect the dots” across issues and solutions to produce synergy and solve multiple problems at once in mutually reinforcing ways:**

It's OK that some problems are complex and connect with other problems. This means that they have more “handles” for people to grab onto and create solutions that might help to solve several problems at once. Two examples:

- Reforming how we conduct and finance elections can clear the way so our government will be able to solve other kinds of problems. Therefore, people who care about peace, health, the environment, consumer protection, etc., can fix our corrupt electoral processes in order to make it possible for our nation to solve their primary issues of concern.
- Washington State has the nation's most regressive state tax system, and for decades our state has failed to fund K-12 public education adequately. People who want to solve both problems can work together to solve both of these problems with a progressive tax system that would fully fund public schools.

Let's help people think strategically and connect with strategically connected allies to create synergy and solve several problems at once.

Also, we can see how the problems – and the solutions we are proposing – connect across geographical levels. We can “think globally and act locally.” We can organize grassroots progress that will provide leverage from the local level that cumulatively will solve national and global level problems.

**Get big money out of politics. Make elections honest. Protect voting rights. Count votes accurately:**

The time for this interview was running out, so we did not have nearly enough time to discuss the many ways we need to fix our nation’s electoral systems in order to REALLY “make America great.” A few months from now we will focus an entire hour’s TV interview on this topic, and we’ll include Tamborine Borrelli as one of the guests. Right now we had only a few minutes for a few of her ideas.

Tamborine urged public funding for election campaigns instead of having big-money entities (corporations, business groups, unions, rich individuals, etc.) fund them in order to gain private advantages. We must overturn the legal notion of “corporate personhood” and the U.S. Supreme Court’s corrupt *Citizens United* decision. If we get big money out of election campaigns, the politicians will be free to serve constituents and the broad public interest instead of rich special interests that abuse us.

We must fix several other serious problems with various aspects of our electoral system. Tamborine called for putting “our electoral system in shape where we can trust it,” so we will be able to “elect people who are going to be of the people and for the people.” She urged people to search YouTube for Bev Harris’s “Fraction Magic” and videos on “Hacking Democracy,” and Greg Palast’s “The Best Democracy Money Can Buy.”

Glen agreed and also recommended the Fall 2016 *Justice Rising* publication produced by the Alliance for Democracy ([www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/peoplesvotejr.html](http://www.thealliancefordemocracy.org/peoplesvotejr.html)), which featured many of these kinds of problems and recommended many solutions.

Tamborine invited people to e-mail [ElectionJusticeUSA@gmail.com](mailto:ElectionJusticeUSA@gmail.com) or visit [www.ElectionJusticeUSA.org](http://www.ElectionJusticeUSA.org) for information.

Glen recommends [www.FairVote.org](http://www.FairVote.org) and – at the Washington State level – [www.FixDemocracyFirst.org](http://www.FixDemocracyFirst.org)

**Closing encouragement:**

The U.S. is not alone in having right-wing extremists gain political power. Several other nations recently experienced this, including India and the Philippines and some in Europe. Right-wing extremism gains political power when ordinary people are continually hurting in economics and in other ways – and when moderate governments fail to deal effectively with the long-standing underlying problems. When politics-as-usual fails to solve problems, right-wing politicians exploit people’s pain and anger. But instead of offering good solutions, they scapegoat vulnerable demographic groups, appeal to religious fundamentalism, and promise a return to what they imagine as past golden age.

These sham remedies, of course, fail to solve problems, make the problems worse, and abuse vulnerable people. When the new extremist government makes problems worse, we must not seek to merely return to the previous moderate government because they were not solving the problems either. Instead, we must identify the actual underlying problems and work for bold, progressive solutions.

America has faced serious crises before, such as during the Civil War and the Great Depression. We can affirm our best values and act upon them to reverse our current crisis. Fascism is being forced down upon us, but we can resist nonviolently, and we can use our nation's best values to turn things around. We can mobilize the American people to not only resist fascism but also to push ahead with bold compassion and wisdom to solve the underlying problems and REALLY make America great.

Oppressors like to use “shock and awe” to overwhelm the population and diminish their will to resist. Let's recognize their scheme and expose it. Don't let them put us into a merely reactive mode. Instead of being merely reactive, let's ground ourselves in our best values, get proactive, and organize at the grassroots for bold, positive goals that could engage and mobilize broad public opinion. For example, we could:

- Support local “sanctuary cities” to protect immigrant rights, and
- Invite people to envision and build a nonviolent economy.
- Set the agenda for what we want instead of the status quo, and propose bold, positive alternatives.
- Reach out to new audiences, welcome people into our movement, and create progressive public policies at the local and state levels, where positive reforms historically have begun.

The decisions and proposals coming out of Washington DC now are destroying America. Instead, we need the kinds of positive solutions that our five guests have been proposing to solve the problems. Our guests' positive solutions are not only necessary for our nation's survival, but also they really could “make America great.”

Indeed, because the status quo and the new government simply cannot continue without destroying us, our guests' solutions really are inevitable. It's not a matter of “if.” It's a matter of “when.”

- The sooner we move toward solving the climate crisis, the better.
- The sooner we treat all demographic groups with dignity and equality, the better.
- The sooner we provide high quality health care for every person, the better.
- The sooner we adopt a peaceful foreign policy, the better.

Let's get on with it starting right now!

We're all one human family, and we all share one planet.  
We can create a better world, but we all have to work at it.  
The world needs you! You can help!

**You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence by contacting the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation at (360) 491-9093 [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org)**