

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS
OF SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM

yes!

NO. 79

FALL
2016

THE VANISHING 9-TO-5

WELCOME TO
THE GIG
ECONOMY:
RUTHLESS AND
LIBERATING

NEXT UP, AN ECONOMY
OF **SHARED VALUES**

THE **EMOTIONAL TOLL**
OF FREELANCING

IN THE RURAL WEST, THE JOB
IS **BUILDING COMMUNITY**

Finally, a Job
That Works
For Parenting

HOW TO VOTE EVEN WHEN YOU
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FROM THE EDITORS

Going From Jobs to Gigs

WE KNOW A BIT about the gig economy from experience.

Sometimes you want a regular job, but you can't get one. Senior editor Stephen Miller arrived in Seattle during the recession. Initially unable to land a steady job, he cobbled together rent by picking up gig work as a musician, freelancing as a writer and editor, and cleaning boats on Lake Union. Other times, you want your freedom. In the years before James Trimarco became an editor at YES!, he did everything he could to avoid having a traditional job. He worked for temp agencies doing factory and warehouse jobs. He took seasonal jobs on political campaigns or fundraising efforts, edited people's Ph.D. dissertations, and refinished the floors in their homes. He says it was all about staying as free as possible so that he could focus on his activism during those years: the peace movement and local struggles for affordable housing in New York City.

Without knowing it at the time, people like us have been part of the mass migration of Americans out of traditional employment. Some of that migration has come from people trying to break free and focus their time on things that matter—their children, art, health, or community. For others the move has been less voluntary, as businesses ramp up profits by replacing traditional jobs with contracts with no benefits and no guarantee of work tomorrow.

All told, we're at the point where roughly 40 percent of American workers are in some part of the vast, complex world of the gig economy. They're contractors, freelancers, temps. They're seasonal. They're paid under the table. Only a tiny minority work for the app-based companies like Uber that get so much of the gig economy press these days. But that sector is growing fast.

As people who love creativity, we can see the appeal of freedom from old work models that rarely worked for women and families. And because we love community, we also see how this gigs-not-jobs model threatens the financial security of workers and their families. Most of this issue looks at how we might resolve these two things by creating something new, keeping the empowerment without the exploitation.

Part of the solution is to resist the temptation to think of the gig economy as new. Millions of workers—many immigrants and low-income people of color—have always dealt with the problems of precarious employment. We can learn from them. We're already seeing Uber drivers organizing around labor centers like day laborers and domestic workers do, requiring codes of conduct for companies that hire contractors. Those are exciting responses from the grassroots.

Other workers are using the very technologies that allow companies to hire hundreds of thousands of contractors as organizing tools. Responses like these shine a light on the creativity and solidarity emerging from even the most precarious spaces of the gig economy.



Miller



Trimarco



Loeffelholz Dunn

This issue's In Depth section, "The Vanishing 9-to-5 and the Rise of the Gig Economy," was developed by Stephen Miller, James Trimarco, and Tracy Loeffelholz Dunn.

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Chris Farrell

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Martin do Nascimento

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Martin do Nascimento is a freelance photographer and videographer based in Austin, Texas, who stumbled upon his love of visual storytelling while serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Nicaragua. Since then, Martin's work has appeared in national and international publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, NBC News, *El Espectador*, Univisión, *News Photographer* magazine, and YES! Magazine.



Tristan Ahtone

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Tristan Ahtone is an award-winning journalist and member of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma. He was born in Arizona, raised across the United States, and educated at the Institute of American Indian Arts and the Columbia School of Journalism. Since 2008, Tristan has reported for *PBS NewsHour*, *National Native News*, *Frontline*, Wyoming Public Radio, *Vice*, *Fronteras Desk*, NPR, and *Al Jazeera America*. He serves as Treasurer for the Native American Journalists Association. He lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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Summer 2016

Gender justice and getting married

Between Hillary Clinton's candidacy and the debates kicked up by regressive anti-transgender legislation, gender is hotly top-of-mind. YES! weighed into the fray with our Summer 2016 issue on gender justice—going beyond the headlines to look at updated and inclusive understandings of female identity, intersectional feminism, and basic human rights.

Although many of the featured stories stirred debate, YES! readers were perhaps most provoked by the infographic, “Why Not Getting Married Is Smart Economics for Women”:

“Interesting. Women earn more money when they don’t get married (and men earn less) #AllTheSingleLadies”—*Kay Sch*

“I learned this when I was young and married with two toddlers. I was always sent to the back of the line. Unmarried is considered more reliable, available for overtime, possibly better performance on the job ... Never mind that the singles might be up all night hanging at a bar, partying, caring for an elderly parent, etc.” —*Thupton Rabgsal*

“What a generalization, and it doesn’t measure or capture the quality of life marriage can bring when done right. I’d prefer to redefine what marriage means since it’s no longer necessary for (many but not all) a gal’s financial well-being.”—*Dawn Michelle Morgan*

“In Sweden’s feminist reform of their welfare state in the early 1970s, they focused on women as economically independent and men having the ‘right to be human,’ that is, to also care for children. Their idea was to strip away as much of the non-affectional part of marriage as possible so that partnering would be about love and care, and not so much about economics. They did away with joint tax filings, increased the quality and decreased the cost of child care, introduced generous paid parental leave, and worked on making work days ‘family friendly,’ meaning

encouraging people (not just parents) to leave work after eight hours. What this does is to give partnered women many of the advantages of single life pointed out in this article.”—*SophieBlue*

Black Lives Matter and policing strategies

With the deaths of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile adding to the toll of Black people killed by police in the United States this year (137, as of July 8, 2016), the inevitable question persists: What can be done? YES! reporter Kate Stringer pulled together well-researched strategies that would reduce police violence:

1. Train for racial bias.
2. Hire more female officers.
3. Match the racial diversity of the community.
4. Open departments to research.
5. Wear body cameras.

These strategies were widely shared by public interest organizations like the Aspen Institute, Films For Action, and United Church of Christ; in other media, such as openDemocracy, BillMoyers.com, NationofChange, *San Diego Free Press*, and Public Radio International; and by thousands of YES! readers in social media.

Of course, mental health first aid

Jasleena Grewal’s article “What If Mental Health First Aid Were as Widespread as CPR?” generated more than 60,000 likes, shares, and comments on Facebook alone. The story looked at New York City’s current initiative to make mental health first aid a public health priority and first aid trainings as ubiquitous as CPR classes. Readers responded with excitement and told us about related initiatives happening in their own communities:

“This training is, without a doubt, as essential as CPR. Officers that learn more about mental illness become front line ambassadors in the fight against stigma.” —*Julianna Shapiro*

“This is great, but I’d like to see mental health care be as common as dental care and an annual checkup.” —*Emily*

“Because all too often law enforcement has not been sufficiently trained for/are not well suited to dealing with crisis response, we have started a community circle exploring what grassroots Albuquerque can do to work toward better outcomes.” —*Isle Biel*



Send your updates and responses to our outreach manager Susan Gleason at sgleason@yesmagazine.org. Or mail to 284 Madrona Way NE, Suite 116, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110.

SIGNS OF LIFE

SMALL STEPS, BIG CHANGE

Yessenia Funes

FIVE REASONS TO VOTE WHEN YOU HATE EVERYTHING ON THE BALLOT

On Election Day, what do you do if you were a die-hard Bernie Sanders fan and are now faced with a ballot that offers you a choice between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, whose favorability ratings are the worst among presidential candidates since CBS News and *The New York Times* started polling in 1984? Do you skip the booth altogether? Maybe. Only about 65 percent of Americans 18 and older are registered to vote, according to U.S. Census data from 2012, and only about 58 percent actually vote.

Why vote if you hate everything on the ballot? Elections are about more than the candidates. They're about voters, too, and what issues they think deserve attention. Here are five reasons to voice those issues with a vote.



People who vote the least have the most to lose this election.

Latinos and Asian Americans are voting at historically high rates, but those rates are still low. In the 2012 election, Asian Americans voted at a rate of 47 percent and Latinos at 48 percent, while African Americans voted at a rate of 66 percent, slightly above whites at 64 percent. Together, Latinos and Asian Americans make up the majority of the U.S. immigrant population, the main target of Trump's proposals to deport children of undocumented immigrants, even if the children are U.S. citizens by birth.

The deportation of U.S. birthright citizens isn't likely, says Faye Hipsman, an associate policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute, but another Trump proposal is: ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which protects from deportation those U.S. immigrants who arrived as children.

IN 2012, ONLY ONE
IN FOUR VOTERS
EARNING LESS THAN
\$10,000 TURNED
OUT. WHEN THESE
CITIZENS DON'T CAST
VOTES, THEIR VIEWS
REMAIN UN- OR
MISREPRESENTED.



2

If you're not down with a President Trump or President Clinton, there is always a third party.

Do third-party votes matter? It's complicated.

In 1992, Ross Perot won nearly 19 percent of the popular vote running as an independent candidate. That was nearly 20 million votes—plenty, but not enough to win an election. Some claim this cost Republican candidate George H.W. Bush a second term. Eight years later, Republican George W. Bush beat Democrat Al Gore. Gore won the popular vote but lost the electoral vote by five votes. The third-party candidate, Ralph Nader, was blamed. He gathered nearly 3 million votes, which some argue would have gone to Gore. Then again, if Nader—or Perot—hadn't been on the ballot, maybe their supporters wouldn't have voted at all.

Voting is personal. People vote because they want to give voice to their beliefs.

Political activist Angela Davis told *Democracy Now!* in March that she had never voted for a candidate from either of the two major parties until Barack Obama. For her, electing the nation's first Black president was personal, as were her previous boycotts of the two major parties.

3

Voting—in high or low numbers—can have serious consequences.

The past two Obama elections show what's possible when people of color come out to vote—even though they made up only about 27 percent of all voters nationwide for each election. The Pew Research Center points out that if it weren't for his nonwhite constituency, Obama would have likely lost re-election in 2012, when 59 percent of White voters sided with Mitt Romney.

Why don't people vote? Let's look back, all the way to the 19th century.

In 1896, Republican William McKinley defeated Democrat William Jennings Bryan in an election that introduced many modern campaign techniques: cross-country speeches, extensive fundraising, and polling to target specific voters. Voter turnout before and during that election hovered around 80 percent; afterward, it averaged only 65 percent.

Historian Mark Kornbluh, in his 2000 book *Why America Stopped Voting: The Decline of Participatory Democracy and the Emergence of Modern American Politics*, blames a changing American culture. Politics lost its "entertainment value" as sports and theater hit the mainstream. Spectacle-style campaigns replaced participatory-style campaigns that invited the public to shape a candidate's platform. Kornbluh theorizes that voters grew disinterested when they felt unnecessary to a campaign.

**4**

Let them know you exist and that you're not satisfied—write in a name.

At the 2015 Equity Summit, Linda Sarsour, executive director of the Arab American Association of New York, spoke to people of color. "If voting didn't matter, they wouldn't be trying to take your right to vote away from you," she said. If you don't like the candidates, write in someone else, even your mother, Sarsour said. "The idea is to be counted." Her argument is that people need to show up if they want politicians and decision-makers to listen to them. This is especially true for low-income people. In 2012, only one in four voters earning less than \$10,000 turned out. When these citizens don't cast votes, their views remain un- or misrepresented.

At least seven write-in candidates have made it to Congress, including South Carolina Republican Strom Thurmond in his first bid for the U.S. Senate.

5

Consider all the people who have an important opinion but can't vote.

Some people can't vote because their local laws require strict identification that they won't have in time for Election Day or because their work schedules are so demanding they can't take off five hours to wait in line. Shorter early-voting periods in states like Georgia and North Carolina also create obstacles for people. And some can't vote because they aren't naturalized citizens (even if they've spent most of their lives in the United States) or because a criminal record prevents them. Some 5.8 million Americans cannot vote because of a past felony conviction.

Americans are free to do as they please, and voting won't solve the nation's problems. But it's a start—especially in this election, when the security of so many is at stake. **v**

Yessenia Funes is a writer at *Colorlines* where she covers environmental justice.

New Ways to Think About Ink



JAMES SPOONER

Animal-free ink and ethical alternatives

When most people think of veganism, tattoos aren't top of mind. But many of the ingredients that make up tattoos are full of animal products: Inks can contain glycerin from animal fat as a stabilizer, animal bone ash for dark lines, and, in some cases, gelatin from animal hooves and shellac from beetle waste as binding agents.

So when longtime vegan James Spooner opened his tattoo shop in Los Angeles seven years ago, he wanted to offer a service consistent with his political and ethical choices. Monocle Tattoo is believed to be the first and only 100-percent vegan tattoo parlor in Los Angeles, using animal-free alternative products in every step of the process. Spooner uses plant-based inks and animal-free aftercare soaps and lotions.

"Being vegan is like breathing," says Spooner. "It's what I do." And as a tattoo artist, he believes he's leading by example, raising awareness, and offering a service that allows other vegans to, literally, embody their values.



FRIDAY JONES

Bringing out the beauty of healing

As a tattoo artist, Friday Jones is a kind of symbologist. She brings an education in philosophy, religion, and art to the craft, enabling clients to imagine and wear their internal narratives. Today, after more than 20 years in the business, Jones focuses on a specific client base: breast cancer survivors.

Jones, based in New York City, and scores of other tattoo artists across the country partner with Personal Ink, a Colorado nonprofit that connects breast cancer survivors with professionals who specialize in post-operative tattoos.

Jones aids in reconstruction by tattooing breasts to have the natural shape, color, and, with shading techniques, three-dimensional effect of a real nipple. She also tattoos full illustrative coverings over survivors' scars, transforming one of the darker chapters of their lives into art. "These women want to look beautiful again in whatever form that takes for them," says Jones.

There is a certain healing through the process of getting a tattoo, Jones says. And for her clients, those designs turn a narrative of trauma into one of strength.



MIYA BAILEY

Empowering clients and encouraging inclusivity

In the early 1990s, Miya Bailey was trying to make it as a tattoo artist in Atlanta. At that time, he said, he was one of only a few African-American tattoo artists working professionally in the United States. Amid police harassment and violent biker gangs, Bailey struggled to convince other African Americans to participate in the visual art form. It was "a hard time for Black tattoo artists," he says.

Bailey's career took off at age 19 when he started an apprenticeship at West End Tattoo—known as the only parlor in Atlanta to hire African-American artists. Inspired by a new wave of tattoo artists who were bringing the world of fine arts to skin canvases, Bailey developed techniques to make color inks visible on dark skin. He brought the basic principles of tattooing—"clean line work, smooth shading, and solid color"—and mixed them with a painter's vision for Black clients.

Today, Bailey is the co-owner of City of Ink, a tattoo shop and gallery with two Atlanta-area locations. He's also a cultural force in his community: He produced the 2012 documentary *Color Outside the Lines*, chronicling the history of African-American tattoo artists, has made his stores hubs for creativity, and sponsors monthly art walks.



A unique affordable housing project supports both foster families and elders who might be looking for a few extra grandchildren

Homes Designed to Bridge the Generations

Kim Eckart

After a long day of preschool, 5-year-old Joaquin Crowell still has energy to burn. He bounds from a TV cartoon to a magnetic fishing game, from blowing up a green balloon to listening to his favorite story, *Bedtime for Frances*. And 73-year-old Chris Conners is only too happy to oblige. To Joaquin, she is his *oma*—“grandma” in her native German. And to Conners, “He’s like my grandson. I fell in love with him the first time I saw him.”



Cheryl Crowell and her four boys are known around Bridge Meadows as the “First Family” because they were the first to move in when the community opened in 2011. Left to right: Noah, Cheryl, Joaquin, Tomas, and Eli Crowell.

provides on-site services and creates a support network for all. Inspired by Hope Meadows, a similar development in Illinois, Bridge Meadows is building an additional site in the Portland suburb of Beaverton and has become a model for others, from a home for pregnant teens aging out of foster care in Washington, D.C., to a community for Native American foster families and elders across town in Portland.

Multigenerational housing is not a new concept. But the nation’s aging population—with the number of people age 65 and older expected to nearly double by 2050—is changing the way people live. As baby boomers age, their numbers will necessitate new options for retirement living and long-term care. Bridge Meadows addresses that need, and more, by supporting foster children, who tend to face learning and behavioral challenges, while giving often-single elders some connection to others. Here, the proverbial village cares for everyone.

“Living at Bridge Meadows requires a willingness to be connected and part of a community,” says Executive Director Derenda Schubert. “When you want that, then you will have an abundant life inside such a community.”

“Elder” at Bridge Meadows means anyone older than 55. (The oldest resident is 92.) The elders have a range of health-care needs. Some have jobs, although most are retired. Many talk of children and grandchildren, near and far. They chose Bridge Meadows for similar reasons: affordable rent, a chance to live in a community, an interest in being around young and active families. To live here, they had to complete a 22-page application and pass a series of background checks. But those prerequisites aren’t daunting: There’s a waiting list.

Joaquin isn’t the only child Conners watches regularly in the comfort of her apartment. She is one of 29 senior citizens who live at Bridge Meadows in Portland, Oregon, where elders help neighbors in myriad ways, gaining what amounts to an extended family in return.

That’s the mission of this privately funded nonprofit organization that established a multigenerational community on a former elementary school site in North Portland. The cluster of townhomes and apartments brings together low-income elders and nine adults who have adopted or are in the process of adopting children out of foster care through an organization that

A few elders were drawn to the volunteerism that is required: 100 hours per quarter, in any form that benefits the Bridge Meadows community. Some elders feel more comfortable with their peers, so they drive others to doctor appointments, teach an activity class, or stock the building’s library. But most are involved directly with the 29 children—tutoring after school, offering art lessons, or caring for the little ones while parents work, run errands, or simply need a break.

That involvement prevents isolation, Schubert explains.

“Elders talk about coming to Bridge Meadows because they feel like, in the greater society, they’re invisible,” she says. Experts say a sense of purpose is critical for senior citizens. Connections with others can prevent elder abuse, keep seniors active and productive longer, and improve their lives as well as the lives of those around them.

Pairing older adults with children and teens benefits both generations, says Amy Yotopoulos, director of the Mind Division at the Stanford Center on Longevity. Vulnerable youth, such as those placed in foster care, often lack trusted, supportive adults in their lives. Senior citizens, meanwhile, can bring life experience and emotional intelligence to their friendships.

“Being able to give back serves an important role in providing meaning and purpose in the lives of seniors,” Yotopoulos says.

Multigenerational housing is on the rise. More seniors are living with their grown children, lowering costs while establishing stronger family bonds. Still other communities are being developed that cater to a range of ages and family styles.

“Housing models are changing. Older adults aren’t interested in being put out to pasture, and a lot of them



Multigenerational housing is on the rise. Communities like Portland's Bridge Meadows are being developed to cater to a range of ages and family styles. Reba Chainey, right, prepares dinner for roughly 50 people every Wednesday for "Happiness Hour," when families and elders convene for a meal, conversation, and, later, playtime.

aren't interested in being in a senior-only community," says Donna Butts, executive director of Generations United, a Washington, D.C., advocacy and research organization. "When you have young people and older people, you have better opportunities for informal interaction, keeping people engaged in thinking about their history and roots, but also hope and the future."

And without children, there would be no Bridge Meadows.

It's just before 4:30 p.m. on a Wednesday, and 10-year-old Reba Chainey and her 9-year-old sister Lydia are impatient for people to arrive in the Bridge Meadows community room. They can see their grandmother, also named Reba, in the pass-through window to the kitchen, busily dishing up ham and peach quiche with salad. The elder Reba prepares dinner for roughly 50 people every Wednesday for "Happiness Hour," when families and elders convene for a meal, conversation, and, later, playtime. The atmosphere is casual, familial. People drift in and out. Children snuggle up to elders, and friends catch up on each others' days.

Little Reba, as she's known, shows a visitor her small digital camera—a gift from her elder buddy Eileen, a photographer herself. Little Reba clicks through images of flowers and insects ("all from outside here," she explains, pointing to the back patio), along with one of her at the Portland Art Museum. Just a few weeks prior, Little Reba's painting was chosen as part of an exhibit of student work from around the city—a proud accomplishment for any young artist, but perhaps especially so for Little Reba.

Until she and her sister were placed in foster care three years ago, Little Reba had never been to school, never learned to read, and never knew a home with consistent rules or routines. When the older Reba Chainey learned the state of Oregon had removed the girls from her son's home, she flew up from California to move her granddaughters out of

"ELDERS TALK ABOUT COMING TO BRIDGE MEADOWS BECAUSE THEY FEEL LIKE, IN THE GREATER SOCIETY, THEY'RE INVISIBLE. NOW THEY'RE LIVING WITH MEANING AND PURPOSE, AND THEY FEEL THEY BELONG."

foster care and to begin the process of adoption. Now in her tidy townhouse, adorned with framed photos and inspirational sayings, Chainey insists on instilling her values and giving the girls the experiences they never had before, from church services to summer camp.

In 2013, the year Chainey moved from California, Little Reba and Lydia were among approximately 8,500 children in Oregon's foster care system. The goal of the state's Department of Human Services, to keep children with their biological families whenever possible, plays out at Bridge Meadows. The 24 former foster children have either been adopted or are in the process of being adopted by a relative. (The other five at Bridge Meadows are biological children.) Some of the children were in foster care only briefly, others longer, but they are still overcoming their pasts and dealing with problems that manifest today.

Here, there is a counselor for families once a week, along with regular support groups—Wisdom Circle for elders only, Community Circle for parents and elders. There, adults can share what they're experiencing with children or neighbors and seek feedback or advice. The revelations have led to workshops on understanding and appreciating diversity and on child development and trauma. Some elders have confronted their own biases or adjusted to new parenting styles; parents have learned how to accept help, to lose the fear of being judged.

"People are challenged here," says Associate Director Renee Moseley. "But over time, a level of compassion grows."

Initially, the staff organized families and elders into "teams," hoping to facilitate new bonds. But the structure

felt artificial. Eventually, residents gravitated toward each other naturally, as friends do.

Cheryl Crowell and her four boys are known around Bridge Meadows as the "First Family" because they were the first to move in when the community opened in 2011. For Joaquin, the youngest of the boys, it's the only home he's known. For Crowell, 57, it's the strongest family she's had.

Crowell spent years in foster care herself. Eventually, she had two children of her own, raised them as a single parent, and became a dental technician. Then, nearly a decade ago, she was living in a two-bedroom house in Portland and adopted her adult daughter's first two sons, Eli and Noah, then 4 and 2, respectively. "She's struggled all her life," Crowell says of her daughter.

When a third boy, Tomas, was just a few months old and in Crowell's care, she learned her daughter was pregnant with Joaquin. It was a tipping point. Crowell felt overwhelmed by the boys' needs and her own inability to cope. She told her state caseworker, who recommended Bridge Meadows.

"It was very important to me to keep the boys together and that I wanted something bigger and better for them," Crowell says. "But I knew that I couldn't do it by myself at my age. I was determined to do whatever I had to do."

It turned out to be a godsend. Crowell didn't feel so alone. The boys found stability, the company of other children, and some ready-made grandparents.

"The elders have our children, and our children have them. The relationships they build may carry with them

the rest of their lives," she says. "I just wanted what was healthiest for them. Then I found out that it was the best thing for me, for all of us."

The oldest, 13-year-old Eli, puts it this way: "There's just so many people you can become family with."

It's not a perfect match for everyone. Over the years, three families have left because they were no longer participating in the foster care program. Two other families found homes of their own. Another eight elders decided to live elsewhere.

The commitment is significant, many elders admit. You have to want to be here, to live in this tight-knit environment where it can be tough to set personal boundaries and where, like in any extended family, people don't always get along.

Nor has it been a completely smooth ride for the Bridge Meadows organization. Neighbors in North Portland and near the first proposed Beaverton site feared a "housing project" and all that might entail.

Since then, Bridge Meadows has chosen a different Beaverton location, and the neighborhood surrounding the North Portland community has warmed. Nearby residents often drop by for Happiness Hour as the next venture for the Bridge Meadows organization proceeds without incident two blocks away: New Meadows, a home for young adults transitioning out of foster care.

Meanwhile, other advocates and agencies are looking to Bridge Meadows as they embark on their own similar projects.

In February 2016, the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) broke ground in Southeast Portland



Joy Corcoran gets a hug from one of the resident children. There are 29 kids and 29 senior citizens living at Bridge Meadows.

on Generations, a housing community for Native American elders and Native youth in foster care. Generations, like Bridge Meadows, aims to house those who are in the process of being placed permanently with a family.

NAYA Deputy Director Rey España says he was sold on the Bridge Meadows model from his first visit. The multigenerational approach, he says, resonates with the Native community.

"Intergenerational housing is a philosophy that's very much in keeping with indigenous tribal and cultural beliefs. Having elders and extended family around is a very familiar housing arrangement," he says.

Generations and Bridge Meadows alone won't solve the problem, given the thousands in foster care, says Reginald Richardson, deputy director of the state's Department of Human Services. But the communities' structure and mission represent a form of home and permanency that's as close to a stable, multigenerational family as many foster children can hope for.

"Places like Bridge Meadows can become a successful model for other folks who might want to replicate it," Richardson says. "Research clearly shows that kids do better when they know they have a forever family, when

they have adults who care for them. At Bridge Meadows, there is unwavering support for the child and for the family who's parenting that child.

"It isn't the government imposing a solution on folks," he adds. "It's the community imposing solutions on themselves."

Back at Happiness Hour, Noah Crowell and his elder buddy, Winona Phillips, are about to take the microphone.

They're ready to announce 11-year-old Noah's most complicated dish yet—ratatouille—and that he wants to share it with his neighbors.

Noah has donned a chef's toque—a gift from Phillips—and clutches a stuffed rat from the Pixar movie named for the French stew. He smiles proudly.

Later, he ticks off all the recipes he's made with Phillips—macaroni and cheese, meat loaf, pineapple upside-down cake—and says he dreams of being a contestant on one of those kids cooking shows on TV.

The cooking lessons started as an extension of after-school tutoring, Phillips explains. Noah was at her apartment one day, ready to start his homework, and stopped to grab a snack first. Assembling a basic salad,

Noah asked Phillips if she would teach him to cook. And so, on Tuesdays, they put pencils and paper aside and pick up ladles and pots instead. They wear matching cooking aprons.

At first, Phillips viewed her time with Noah as a simple act of volunteering. Noah was 7 then and struggling with reading comprehension; she was commuting to a suburban job, visiting siblings regularly, and juggling obligations of her own. But Noah's academic needs grew. And when Phillips got a technical writing job closer to home, she had more time and energy to give. The homework routine turned into something more than hours of reading and writing: It promised talk, laughter, and cooking. It is, she says definitively, the highlight of her week.

Phillips does not have children or grandchildren of her own. She has Noah.

"He is a blessing to know," she says.

Eventually, diners fill up on Grandma Reba's quiche and Noah's ratatouille. The kids trickle outside, grabbing a basketball and bikes. The adults linger over conversation, some wandering to other tables. And then, among five friends, a game of Farkle breaks out.

Each player has brought her own bag of six dice. One at a time, they roll and tally; different number combinations are worth varying amounts. First to get 10,000 points wins. The play is good-natured but serious. Conners keeps score and occasionally serves as rule reminder. Happiness Hour Farkle is guaranteed; weeknight Farkle is more spontaneous.

But it's not about Farkle. It could be any game, really.

"It's the companionship," one player offers, and the others agree. That's why they hang around after dinner or go to art class. Or meet in Community Circle. Or gather on the patio. Or in the lobby.



Companionship is why they come. And why they stay. 

Kim Eckart is a Seattle-based writer and associate editor at YES! Magazine.

Liza Bayless and Kate Stringer

The watts of electrical current drawn by a charging phone: **3.68¹**

Watts drawn by a fully-charged phone that is still connected to an outlet: **2.24**

Watts drawn when a charger is left connected to an outlet: **0.26**

Percent chance of being bitten by a venomous snake in the United States: **.00002²**

Percent chance of being struck by lightning in the United States: **.00008³**

Percent chance of a woman in the U.S. experiencing physical violence by an intimate partner: **33⁴**

Percentage of non-white speaking-role characters in 2014's top 100 films: **27⁵**

Percentage of minority Hollywood writers in 2014: **12⁶**

Minority percentage of U.S. population: **38⁷**

Percentage of waste Germany recycles and composts: **65⁸**

Percentage of waste South Korea recycles and composts: **59**

Percentage of waste the United States recycles and composts: **35**

Estimated net migration of Mexicans into the United States, 1995–2000: **+2,270,000⁹**

Estimated net migration of Mexicans into the United States, 2009–2014: **-140,000**

Number of U.S. breweries in 1873: **4,131¹⁰**

Number in 1932: **0**

Number in 1985: **110**

Number in 2015: **4,269**

Average price of a Big Mac (U.S. dollars) in Switzerland: **\$6.44¹¹**

Average price in the United States: **\$4.93**

Average price in Turkey: **\$3.41**

Average price in Peru: **\$2.93**

Average price in India: **\$1.90**

Average price in Venezuela (though the Big Mac is temporarily off the menu due to a bread shortage): **\$0.66¹²**

Global median percentage of people who believe it is important that religion

is able to be practiced freely in their country: **74¹³**

Global median percentage who believe it is important that women

have the same rights as men in their country: **65**

Global median percentage who believe it is important to have

freedom of speech without state censorship in their country: **56**

Complete citations at yesmagazine.org/ptc79

1. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory 2. University of Florida Department of Wildlife Ecology & Conservation 3. National Weather Service

4. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence 5. USC Annenberg

6. Writers Guild of America, West 7. United States Census Bureau 8. OECD Publishing

9. Pew Research Center 10. Brewers Association 11. Statista

12. International Business Times 13. Pew Research Center



MEET THE TURKERS

Amazon's Mechanical Turk labor force is always online and hungry to work. Some fit it in as a side job. Some do it as their main job. Members of this "artificial" artificial-intelligence network work in isolation for as little as pennies to carry out tasks from "requesters." It's a situation that sidesteps minimum wage laws and can leave workers hanging when "employers" don't pay. Turkers, as they're called, have forged online communities that empower them to share advice, boycott bad requests, and build the kind of relationships found in traditional workplaces. We hired a few Turkers to tell us about their work.

Welcome to the Gig Economy

IN A FEW YEARS, THE MAJORITY OF WORKERS WON'T HAVE TRADITIONAL 9-TO-5 JOBS. TODAY'S CONTRACT WORKERS COPE WITH INSECURITY AND EXPLOITATION, BUT THEY'RE ALSO FORGING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPOWERMENT IN COLLABORATION AND COOPERATIVE OWNERSHIP.

Paul Hampton

Estelle Becker Costanzo has worked in Pittsburgh restaurants since age 15. Now 56, she is a server at The Capital Grille, a position she is proud of. "This is a good job," she says—relative to the rest of the industry. Still, because her base wage has stayed put at \$2.83 per hour for 25 years, she struggles to cover her basic expenses. "Originally, [tips] were supposed to be 50 percent of our income. Now it's more like 100 percent."

As tips became her primary income, the demands on that income increased. As is standard in the industry, The Capital Grille charges Costanzo a fixed percentage of every bill as a tip for bussers and bartenders. The charge assumes she receives a 20-percent tip. This was workable when large parties were charged a tip by default—a policy known by the awkward Americanism “automatic gratuity” or “autograt.” Recently, however, The Capital Grille ended autograt, leaving Costanzo’s income up to her customers’ whim. When large parties reserve private rooms, they’ll often tip only a fraction of what she needs to cover her obligations. As a result, she might work for hours only to pay for the privilege.

For Costanzo, the loss of autograt is just the latest of a series of attacks on her security. At this rate, even if autograt is reinstated, she doesn’t see an end to struggle. “Retirement? I’ll be working ’til I’m 80,” she says. “We don’t really think about the future until it finally comes up on us.”

Toronto’s Kristy Milland thinks a lot about the future. Like Costanzo, Milland’s income long depended on how much the people she served decided to pay. But she didn’t work in restaurants or get paid in tips. In fact, for years, she never even met a single one of the many customers she served. Milland is one among the possibly half-million people who currently work for

Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (“MTurk”), one of the largest employers in the gig economy of network platforms, like Uber or Handy, that link workers to employers one job at a time.

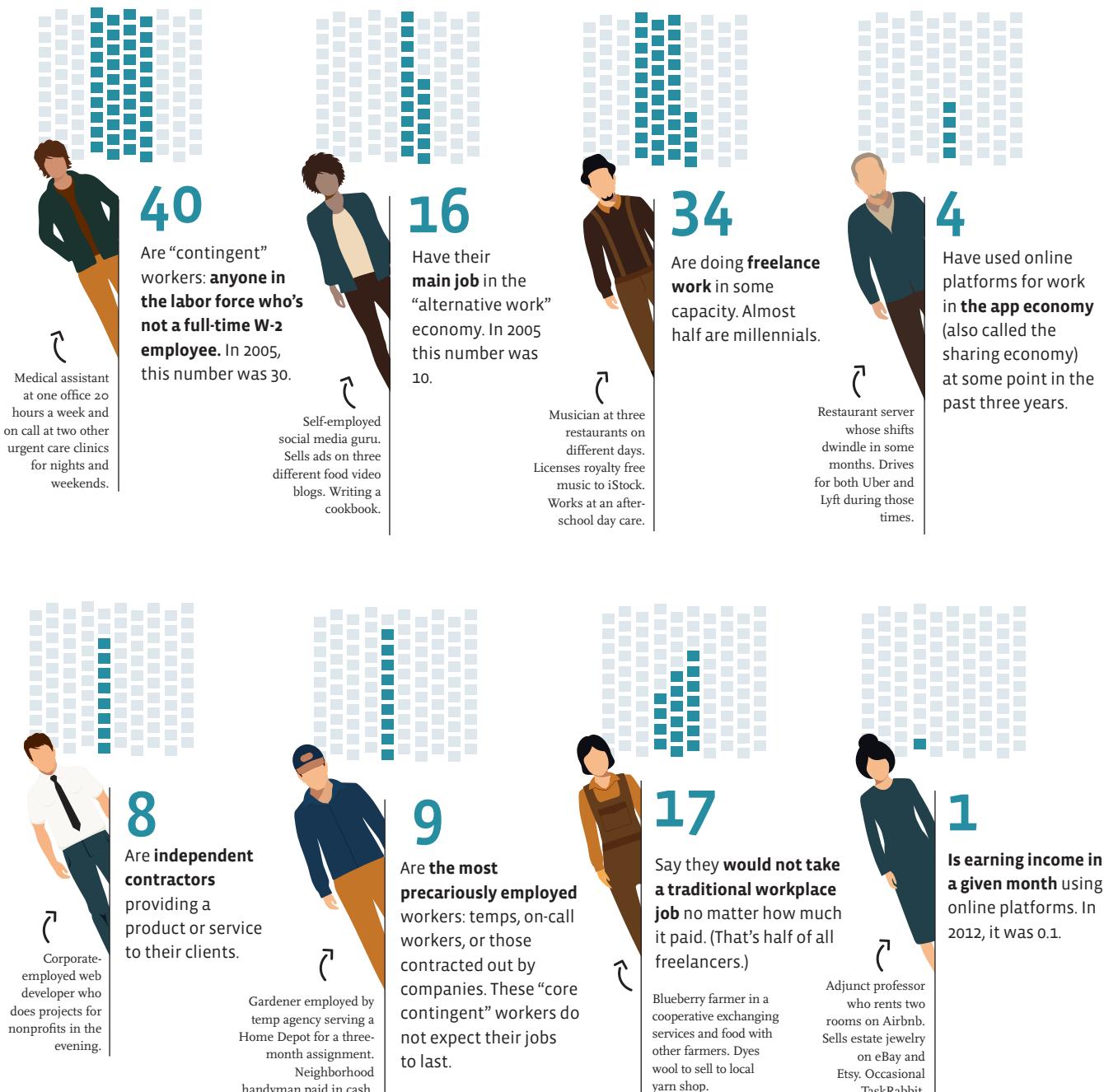
“Turkers,” as they call themselves, connect with “requesters,” employers who advertise fixed payment in exchange for a single task. Amazon touts Turkers as “artificial intelligence” that can skillfully perform jobs that computers can’t do well: transcribe audio, categorize images, or serve as subjects in academic experiments. Pay ranges from pennies to dollars for tasks that require seconds to hours. Though wages are tiny, competition can be fierce. “Sometimes I’d get a text in the middle of the night and get out of bed to start,” Milland says. To put together a reasonable day’s pay, she would sometimes find herself working 17 hours at a stretch. Other times she might go a week without working, but that week was no vacation. “That’s still 17 hours a day looking,” she says.

Even when work was steady, Milland couldn’t be sure she’d get paid. Requesters can reject work with no explanation—and minimal consequences: Another Turker will take the

IF THE LABOR FORCE WERE 100 PEOPLE ...

WHO'S IN THE GIG ECONOMY?

Some may be working a freelance gig plus a 9-to-5 job or multiple gigs pieced together. People are constantly moving in and out of the growing number of alternative work arrangements. Some exist in many categories at once. Here's what we know.



returned task, often in seconds.

What links gig workers like Milland with tipped employees like Costanzo is that both workers' situations can fairly be called precarious—their income, employment, and ability to meet basic needs are insecure and, increasingly, unprotected. This lack of security is self-perpetuating. Workers laser-focused on finding—and keeping—work can be unwilling to risk attempts to organize for better conditions.

Rochelle LaPlante, a moderator for Turker discussion forum "MTurk Crowd," has publicly criticized the platform and faced recrimination—from other Turkers. She says that even some members of her own forum would prefer she stay silent. Privately, they tell LaPlante that they worry requesters might leave the platform if its poor treatment of workers is exposed. Others fear more direct reprisal: LaPlante says at least one person's account was permanently suspended after they spoke publicly about worker conditions. That sort of retaliation is explicitly outlawed against employees, but because the work that Turkers perform—and from which Amazon and requesters derive revenue—is considered independent contracting, the company doesn't have to comply with those labor laws.

Milland believes that with the advent of these platforms precarity comes for us all in the end. "Teachers, doctors, lawyers, accountants, programmers, designers, authors, journalists—we'll all be going to some platform every morning and searching for work 17 hours a day," she says. She has lived the future that Costanzo sees coming. "We are working in the labor world of the future, and we're coming back with bad news."

To the platform owners, precarity is central to the future they want to create. In an open letter to the European Union, a consortium of 47 platform corporations argued against regulations for their industry. They described themselves as "innovators" who are "remodelling whole value chains." To the Millands of the world, they promise "new sources of income,

micro-entrepreneurship, and flexible working." In other words: more and deeper precarity.

Corporations have long tried to create precariousness. What's different about the current moment is the technologies that undermine old kinds of employment also enable new kinds of empowerment.

"Part of what we're doing is expanding the sense of what's possible," says Michelle Miller, co-founder of CoWorker.org, a platform for workers to build labor rights campaigns. CoWorker.org's users tend to be employees of large corporations or chains who are, like Turkers, physically isolated from both their employers and each other. The users tend to be non-unionized. But even when workers have unions, their unions can't fight every battle. They must allocate limited resources toward campaigns that have a high chance of success. This means that some of the issues most important to workers are left unaddressed.

CoWorker.org started from a simple idea: Let the workers lead. Its tools help people like Costanzo start their own workers' rights campaigns and build online networks to overcome isolation. Among the thousands who have pledged support for Costanzo's campaign are dozens of employees in the same restaurant group, from cities around the nation.

Miller thinks campaigns like Costanzo's, that use these new digital networks to regain lost protections, are absolutely critical. "We're in a place where we have some rights reclaiming to do," she says. But the fact that these campaigns are needed also reflects how far we have yet to go. "Our culture and our economy have reinforced for many years [that] when you go to work, you take what you get," she says. "You're 'lucky to have a job.'" When struggle is needed just to maintain the status quo, there's little hope for radically improving working conditions.

Costanzo agrees. She knows her campaign is important, but she sees the limits of the approach. "I'm not sure what recourse we have at this

CORPORATIONS HAVE LONG TRIED TO CREATE PRECARIOUSNESS. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE CURRENT MOMENT IS THE TECHNOLOGIES THAT UNDERMINE OLD KINDS OF EMPLOYMENT ALSO ENABLE NEW KINDS OF EMPOWERMENT.

point," she says. "More media attention? What happens is we do this thing, and then it just sits stagnant. We have to get stronger and more vocal, or we'll just disappear. Somebody has to take the next step."

Miller hopes these campaigns will be only the beginning of the beginning. She knows that, as employment becomes more precarious, issue advocacy alone isn't going to build lasting change. "With the growth of the contingent workforce ... we do need new forms," she says. She hopes that the networks built via CoWorker.org will eventually aim toward universal guarantees not tied to an individual workplace, employer, industry, or even employment at all. "We need to have a much more imaginative, robust set of options than just what we have right now, which is you have to be an 'employee' to even have a single right."

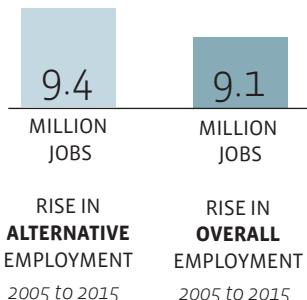
She thinks the path to this future begins by confronting the conditions of the present. "It is our civic responsibility to be active participants in our workplaces," she says.

WHY THE GIG ECONOMY IS GROWING

1

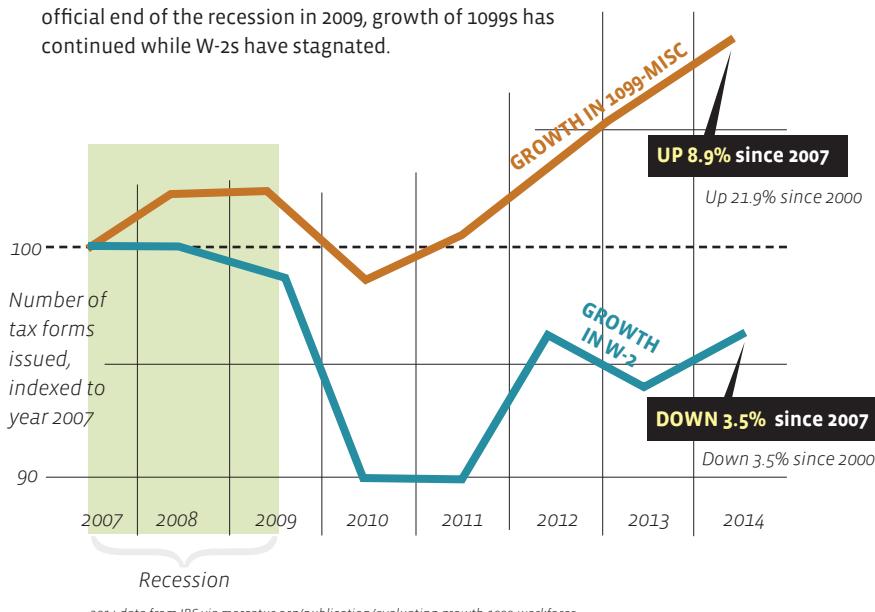
Traditional jobs lost in the recession have not been replaced.

The number of 1099 forms issued to workers has historically been strong following a recession as companies cut costs by shedding employees and hiring contract workers. Once the economy recovers, W-2s go back up and 1099s lag. Not this time. Since the official end of the recession in 2009, growth of 1099s has continued while W-2s have stagnated.



The recovery depended on gigs.

Alternative work arrangement jobs, which include 1099 independent contractors, offset a net decrease in traditional jobs.

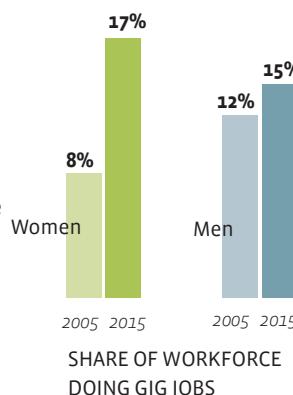


3

Gig flexibility especially works for women.

The percentage of women in the workforce has been declining since 1999. But the percentage of women in alternative work arrangements has jumped and now surpasses men.

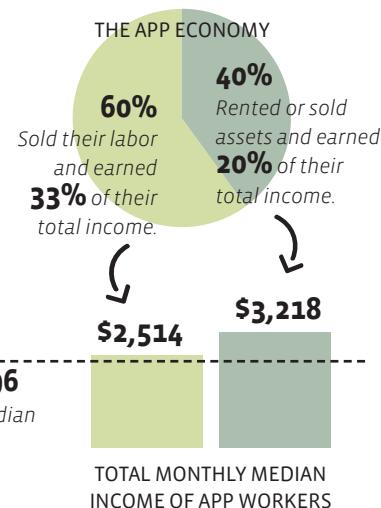
2015 data from Krueger-Katz study



2

App workers are doing it to keep from falling behind.

The app economy can be viewed as a symptom of the volatility of the larger contingent economy—plus wage stagnation of the W-2 economy—in which a source of extra income is critical.



How can gig workers become “active participants” when their workplace is virtual?

Turkopticon is one answer. The service, built by Lilly Irani, an assistant professor at the University of California, San Diego, allows Turkers to collectively track requesters. Smoothly integrated with the regular MTurk interface, it allows Turkers to see whether their peers have reported a requester for rejecting valid work. In this way, Turkers created a vital check on precariousness: consequences for wage theft and worker abuse. Importantly, they did it without appealing to the platform owners or waiting for regulators to step in. Turkopticon was the first time many Turkers realized they could fight back.

For bigger fights, though, they’ll need greater cohesion. Although Turkers readily collaborated on Turkopticon, coordination at greater scale was hindered by fractured, isolated communities.

“Dynamo was a place for us to come together,” says Milland. She is speaking about the website WeAreDynamo.org, a forum in which Turkers choose actions to take collectively. I talked to Niloufar Salehi, the driving force behind Dynamo. Niloufar is a third-year Ph.D. student in computer science at Stanford University. In the heart of Silicon Valley, alongside peers who build the algorithms that power precarity-generating platform services, Salehi has different designs. In early 2013, she heard Irani present on Turkopticon and was immediately intrigued. “I had never seen research used that way before.” That fall, she enlisted collaborators, including Irani, Milland, and one anonymous Turker, known by the nom-de-Turk “Clickhappier,” to build Dynamo.

Salehi’s view of Turkers is exactly opposite Amazon’s. She believes treating humans like algorithms leaves out most of what makes us human. “Human beings want to work with other people. They want to be able to grow,” she says. “They want to have

meaning in what they’re doing. There’s a lot of benefit in looking at human beings and trying to understand them as human beings.”

Following that ethos, the Dynamo project started with a listening tour. Salehi visited Turker forums to learn what features they needed. Dynamo is built with their concerns in mind. For instance, to ensure the forum wasn’t usable only by Turkers with spare time to spend organizing, Dynamo action proposals are limited to a single tweet-length message, and participation can involve a simple “up” or “down” vote. In this way, the community has inclusion at its core.

Two campaigns illustrate the promise—and the limits—of their efforts to date.

In one, a team of Turkers collaboratively wrote guidelines for academic requesters. The guidelines establish basic standards for decent behavior—“identify yourself,” “provide reasonable time estimates”—and, importantly, fair wages. That campaign was a success: The guidelines are widely embraced and even adopted as official standards at some universities.

In a second campaign, Turkers aimed to change the platform itself and found visibility has limits. They organized a letter writing campaign to Jeff Bezos, Amazon’s CEO, hoping he would see they were “human beings, not algorithms.” Despite media attention, the plan backfired. Soon after the letters, Amazon raised fees dramatically—effectively reducing wages—and, Milland says, appears to have banned communication between internal employees and Turkers. She says the last time anyone openly identifying as an Amazon employee posted to her forum, TurkerNation.com, was May 2015, just before fees were raised. The timing of the changes was suspicious, and Milland believes the letters were a major factor. “I think we pissed [Bezos] off.”

Amazon’s stonewalling prompted many in the Turker community to look for new ideas that go beyond appealing

to platform owners to change. As Milland puts it, “We’ve got to look for alternative points of pushing back. This is just the start.”

Part of what drives Turkers forward is that, for many, there is no going back. Because of medical issues and family responsibilities, “I can’t have a [full-time office job],” Milland says. She thinks the same is true for the vast majority of Turkers, and LaPlante agrees. “Some care for children or elderly relatives at home. Some cannot find employment in their rural areas. Some have felonies on their record. Some do not have transportation.”

Like Milland and LaPlante, some Turkers hope the decentralized, inclusive communities they are building can create something entirely new, something that reflects their principles. Milland has a very clear goal in mind: “We need worker-run platforms.”

Trebor Scholz, associate professor of culture and media at the New School in New York City, agrees. He thinks platform services reveal a flaw in the way we measure progress. “How is something innovation if it benefits 50 people in Silicon Valley?” he asks. Scholz sees the move of work to platforms as an opportunity to build new services owned not just by the designers, but by everyone who uses them. With ownership, he says, “you have more control.” Such platform cooperatives should be more likely to treat workers well, be good members of their surrounding communities, and generate shared wealth.

The idea is based on worker-owned cooperatives, which have found success throughout history. Generally, cooperatives succeed when they are protected—by geography, regulation, or culture—from competition with corporations. For instance, several taxi cooperatives have existed in cities around the United States for decades. But while these services may carve out local niches, they can’t aspire to the resources and visibility of a globalized platform like Uber.

At least, not alone. The promise of

platforms for cooperatives is that they can provide increased scale without taking away worker ownership. Arcade City is one such service that promises to cut out the middleman and connect drivers directly to riders via a single, cooperatively owned app.

Beyond duplicating existing platform success stories, Scholz's broader aim is to link many different kinds of cooperatives into a networked community, an ecosystem in which food co-ops work together with startups and with cooperatively owned social networks. Critically, he says, this linking up has to be part of a political movement organized enough to turn its collective influence into regulatory and legislative power. In Scholz's vision, this would entail a whole different kind of economy, in which resources are allocated and shared via platforms that participate in markets but also function as a firewall against them by, for instance, providing mutual guarantees of material support. For example, workers on a cooperative gig platform could earn shares at the food co-op. In this world, everyone would be an owner, and the benefits of innovation would always be shared.

The gig economy is often seen as the dystopian future of work. But there's not much new about the underlying economics. What is new is that the global network enabling the current wave of dispossession also allows workers unprecedented connectivity and reach. While connectedness alone won't bring revolutionary change, movements can now coordinate and build at unprecedented scale while remaining inclusive and democratic.

CoWorker.org and WeAreDynamo.org are two early examples of tools for building democratic, worker-led network communities. Right now they focus on issue advocacy, but Miller sees them as a stepping stone to a new way of working together: "I think the internet is not a set of tools. ... It's a place and a culture. It requires us to behave differently. And if we can do that, we can do amazing and incredible things."

The nascent networks of worker

Top 1099 Cities

Percent of workforce that is 1099 contractors

2014 2015



48 HOURS
GIGGING IN AUSTIN

Source: Zen Payroll

movements that come together via these tools could be the first adopters of new platform cooperatives. What kinds of services can thrive on the cooperative platforms and whether they can create a new kind of economy are questions that can only be answered through practice. Scholz agrees that no one yet knows where platforms will take us. "I'm as curious as you are as to what will happen."

Having spent a decade pioneering the future of work, there might not be anyone more curious—or more ready—to create something new than Milland. "What does it look like if we build it today? I don't know. We've got to try it." 

Paul Hampton is an independent writer living in Brooklyn, New York. In his spare time, he works to organize debtors and postgraduate researchers. He has written on debt organizing and basic income, and he is working on a series about worker-owned cooperatives.



Raymond Ledesma used to drive for Uber and Lyft before Austin voted to reject Proposition 1 in May, which jettisoned the ridesharing giants from the city.

"I've never been one for a 9-to-5 job, and offering rides has been a good way to make a good income. But I also work for a home remodeling company."



Martin do Nascimento

Shootting this assignment and meeting folks doing gig work all over Austin, Texas, I was surprised by the variety of perspectives that people have on working in the gig economy. Ask two rideshare drivers or two day laborers and you'll often get two completely different answers. One will tell you they love the flexibility, the variety of the work, and being their own boss. The other will tell you they can't stand the uncertainty or the relentless competition with their peers.

As a freelance visual journalist, my own experience is that you can love the flexibility and dread the uncertainty. You can savor the variety and wish for more stability.

For this project I spent a fast-paced 48 hours photographing gig workers around Austin, which along with Los Angeles has the nation's highest rate of 1099 jobs. I hired rideshare driver Raymond Ledesma, featured in the portraits. Since Uber and Lyft don't operate in Austin anymore, a good number of rideshare drivers organized independently to offer city residents similar services but without the middleman. Drivers and riders coordinate through "Arcade City Austin" and "Austin Underground Rideshare Community" groups on Facebook. Raymond and I drove all over town—from Miss Grace's Airbnb to Eric's pedicab workshop to Rat's South Austin bungalow—visiting with folks and taking pictures of them before running back to the car, tossing the camera gear in the back, and taking off for the next stop.



48 HOURS GIGGING IN AUSTIN



Eric Vanase, a welder by trade, has been working part time as a bicycle taxi mechanic for the past year because he cannot find work as a welder in Texas.

"I'd rather have a job in a factory for 40 hours, but I can't. I've been looking for work. It's pretty rough. I'm just trying to make a living."

YES! PHOTOS BY MARTIN DO NASCIMENTO





Sally Villarreal juggles three part-time jobs to make a living because health problems have made it difficult for her to keep a full-time job. Villarreal telecommutes part time to evaluate search engine performance and delivers food for Postmates, an online food delivery service, both while pursuing her passion for teaching knitting and crochet. She credits her parents' support and Obamacare for her being able to maintain her livelihood.



"My medical issues get in the way more than anything. I can't sit down or be standing for a long period of time. I'd like to do something full time with knitting [in the future,] but I don't know how reasonable that is. It's more of a daydream at this point."



48 HOURS
GIGGING IN AUSTIN



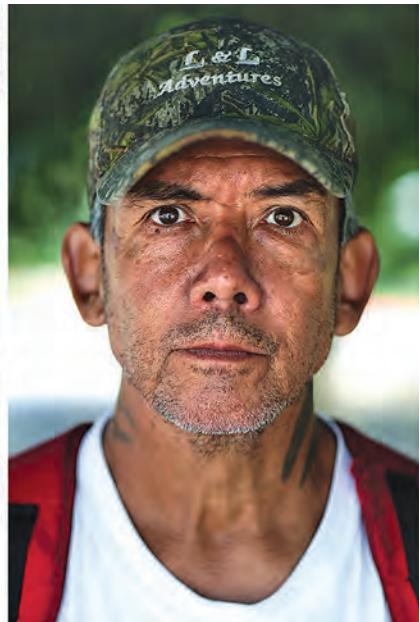
Miss Grace and Joe Bones renovated two aging houses in East Austin and began renting them on Airbnb in 2014 to fund their myriad other part-time occupations, including skateboarding instructor, massage therapist, clown, and yoga instructor.

"Life is crazy and erratic, and I think when you try to stick it in this 9-to-5 [job] you just meet frustration. Who can plan that? Life is not that plan-able."

Quinton Boudwin, a freelance videographer and recent graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, has found it hard to get full-time videography work. He is currently an unpaid intern at Austin NPR affiliate KUTX and works part time for a local video production company.

"It's a very difficult market. You have to constantly keep up with your peers, who are your competition. It's not like you come home at 5 p.m. and say, 'All right, I'm done.'"





Tattoo artist Erik Axel Brunt has been renting a tattoo booth at Austin's Triple Crown Tattoo since 2013. Although it was hard at first to make ends meet with the booth rental business model, he says online advertising and repeat customers have made his tattoo gig profitable.

"This is how I pay my bills. It's a pretty demanding and competitive career, especially in a tattoo city. It was definitely a little uncomfortable [financially] at first."



Raul Martinez, a day laborer from El Paso, Texas, who was recently released from prison, comes to an Austin-area Home Depot parking lot every day at 7:30 a.m. in the hopes of getting work for the day. His work has ranged from digging ditches and laying cement to trimming trees. Since being released from prison, Martinez has had difficulty landing other work because of his criminal record.

"Out here it's like rolling the dice. You see all the people. There's about 50 of us. It's hard getting jobs out here."



KEEPING IT REAL

OLD-SCHOOL ON-DEMAND WORKERS TAUGHT US THE VALUE OF ORGANIZING

Sylvia A. Harvey

NELSON GAMIO GETS UP AT 6:30 A.M. EACH MORNING. After putting on his usual t-shirt and jeans, he sits in the chair and laces up his paint-splattered boots. He has just enough time to run across the street to grab a \$1 cup of coffee with a piece of bread and to feel a bit of San Diego's gentle sun before he starts work at 7 a.m.

In 2010, the labor market was still recovering from the recession, so Gamio was happy to have a two-month long assignment remodeling an upholstery store. "I enjoy doing construction jobs," he confirms. "I like building things." Whether it was laying carpet, painting, or re-stuccoing, Gamio took pride in transforming spaces and nodded at his own craftsmanship when he saw the once-drap store take on new form. What he relished most was that he was in the seventh year of being his own boss. "I work like an independent worker, and I feel happy."

The backdrop of lively music, working alongside his comrades, and his passion for the project helped the 12-hour shifts pass by. Working long hours had become common for Gamio, who agreed to a flat rate of \$50 dollars a day, plus lunch. It was less than the minimum wage, "but it was near



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GIGGING IN AUSTIN

Christmas and I had to send money home," Gamio recalls. "It was a big recession at the time."

Though Gamio had accepted the rate, he was shocked when his employer refused to pay him—an issue he had never experienced before. He refused to take the loss without a fight. For the first time, he decided to reach out to a local association of day laborers to learn his rights. He later filed his case with the California labor commissioner and won.

Many of the current benefits and protections for workers like Gamio can be traced to the tireless grassroots organizing that came before him. Day laborers and domestic workers have long struggled in an on-demand and shift-work economy. These are some of the original gig economy workers, and they have decades of experience organizing in the absence of the job security, health benefits,

and retirement plans afforded by traditional workplaces.

Today, the scope of on-demand labor is expanding. Most of the new jobs created since the 2008 financial crisis aren't traditional jobs at all but some form of contract or temporary employment. The growth has been especially fast among those who find work through smartphone applications like Uber, Lyft, and TaskRabbit.

As these millions of newcomers struggle to organize, they can look to those who've come before for guidance. One of the most effective tools has been worker centers, where participants can learn their rights, get work assignments, earn certifications, and develop new skills. Large coalitions like Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC United), the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON), the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), and

Germán López Aguilar, a day laborer from Honduras, comes to an Austin-area Home Depot parking lot on his days off from his unsteady construction job in the hopes of getting work for the day. The work typically ranges from construction to gardening.

"Sometimes there are people who don't pay us. There are also people who take advantage of immigrants and pay very little money. We arrive really early in the morning and sometimes we get off work late."



the National Guestworker Alliance (NGA) are examples of effective mass organizing of informal workers.

The key has been moving from the individual to the collective, which is challenging because these workers are used to seeing themselves as lone entrepreneurs. But when independent contractors begin to face labor-related challenges, they realize they need support and seek alliances. "You start organizing by selflessly helping workers," says Mark Day, executive director at San Diego Workers Center (SDWC), "whether it's wage theft, social security, immigration, domestic violence, or health and safety questions." Gamio is one of the workers Day helped, and today the two co-run SDWC.

Day isn't sure the most recent crop of gig economy workers realize they need that kind of organizing yet. Uber drivers, for example, may be too "individualistic," he says. But they could start by having local house

meetings to establish their common concerns and goals and then branch out.

Hard-won wisdom

Omar Leon, workforce development coordinator for NDLON and a former Los Angeles day laborer, says workers' commitment to assembly meetings has been crucial to their success. Skilled in landscaping, carpentry, construction, demolition, and more, these workers contribute to many construction projects.

Day laborers who stand on the corner waiting for work are often a part of an "organized corner" supported by a day laborer center. "This is our workplace," says Leon. "We have rules. We're going to keep it clean. No one will be disrespectful, no drinking, no one goes out for less than the minimum agreed wage, and everyone participates on cleaning day." If a worker violates the rules, the center will give him a warning, a one- to

three-day suspension, or a permanent ban, depending on the offense.

The centers help regulate their industry by setting and enforcing standards. During assembly meetings—held in coffee shops, at workers' homes, or at work centers—laborers participate in the decision-making, speak up about their needs, and decide which actions and campaigns to support. The meetings serve as a platform to discuss issues and ways to grow. "Even though this is an informal economy," Leon says, "the workers learn about marketing, brand strategy, work ethics, and customer satisfaction."

Just like the makers of Etsy and the drivers of Uber, many day laborers say independence is a draw. Day laborers set their own schedules, work with a variety of employers, and decide what jobs work best for them. In many cases, they earn more than their counterparts in factories, says Leon. "Workers are part of these day laborer centers,



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but they're still independent and autonomous."

Building connections among the autonomous is part of the foundation for organizing old-school on-demand workers. Barbara Young, a domestic worker for 17 years, is a national organizer for the NDWA. She says she felt called to work on behalf of fellow domestic workers after receiving an informational leaflet while sitting in a Brooklyn, New York, park with the child she was tending. She later attended a Domestic Workers United (DWU) meeting.

"They offered CPR training from the American Heart Association, which was great, but [they also discussed] the history of the domestic workers in the country," said Young. "It was about the exclusion that we faced. I was so interested and I just wanted every domestic worker in New York to know what was going on." Soon, Young began handing out newsletters to domestic workers she encountered

at bus stops and park benches.

Abuse in the industry inspired Young and other domestic workers—alongside unions, employers, clergy, and community groups—to organize for labor protections they had been specifically excluded from. Although many domestic workers were sent out by an agency, that didn't mean they were safe. Young realized this after a housekeeper told her an employer in the Hamptons had said she could leave the worker to die in the basement and no one would know.

The NDWA's original goal was to make agencies accountable for workers' safety by keeping a three-year record of all workers dispatched. But the campaign ultimately led to greater achievements. In 2010, after six years of organizing, the New York Domestic Workers Bill of Rights passed, giving these workers the right to overtime pay, a day of rest every seven days, protection under the state's human rights law, and more. The NDWA later

Lisa Alley, bassist and vocalist in Austin-based psychedelic doom metal band The Well, works as a barista in Austin to pay rent when she is not on tour. Formed in 2012, her band tours across the United States for several weeks each year.

"The biggest challenge is the actual physical energy of working. I love the job at the coffee shop. Everyone in the band has jobs to pay rent, and the jobs are physically and psychologically draining. When you get home you don't necessarily want to create. You want to kick your feet up and relax like anyone else."

AS THE ENTIRE ECONOMY STARTS TO GET A TASTE OF ON-DEMAND WORKERS' LIVES, JAYARAMAN SAYS IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECOGNIZE THE CONCERNS SHARED BY ALL ON-DEMAND WORKERS—WHETHER THEY GET THEIR WORK ON THE STREET CORNER OR ON THEIR SMART PHONE.

successfully spearheaded the fight that led to the implementation of similar bills of rights in California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, and Oregon.

Some new on-demand workers are following the same path of grassroots organizing that Young credits for much of the NDWA's success. In 2015, the Seattle City Council voted unanimously to give workers for Uber, Lyft, and other ride-hailing apps the ability to unionize. The road to victory was fraught with obstacles, says Daniel Ajema, an attorney and former Uber driver.

Drawn in by the flexibility and independence, many drivers in Seattle started out happy at Uber. They felt in control and like an integral part of the company. But soon, Ajema says, drivers started to feel that the company was more concerned about its own bottom line than with workers' lives. "Whether it was disciplining, firing and hiring, or the percentage they took from the driver, they had all the power,

and the changes they implemented on a daily basis maximized their income as a company."

Seattle Uber drivers shared a common goal of job security and decent wages. Drivers wanted to act, but they didn't know where to begin, says Ajema. Many feared retaliation from Uber and didn't want to lose their jobs. "I needed to do some convincing and make them believe that we would make more impact as a group than individual," says the Ethiopian native. First, he needed a list of all Seattle-based Uber drivers—a list Uber refused to distribute. So he stood outside of the company's Seattle headquarters and spoke to drivers as they came and went. Soon, he assembled a cadre of drivers who began distributing flyers, using social media, and holding political forums to get the word out. After two years, Seattle's contract drivers became the first in the United States to win the right to unionize.

Some on-demand workers have also achieved success by forming alliances outside their industries. In 1999, when janitors in Los Angeles went on strike, some of the cleaning companies went to the corners and workers' centers where day laborers gathered and tried to hire them. But the day laborers didn't take the jobs and marched alongside the janitors instead. Each corner held an assembly meeting, took a vote, and decided to refuse all work from employers facing strikes, Leon recalls. Later, when car wash workers picketed because businesses failed to pay the minimum wage or abide by basic labor and safety laws, day laborers refused to accept their enticing offers of \$10 an hour.

"We always respected the picket lines and respected the struggle," Leon says. "No matter how much need we are in, even if we haven't paid our rent or worked for two weeks, we decided we wouldn't take the jobs."

Most recently, NDLON supported a Raise the Wage campaign in Pasadena, California, which fought to gradually increase the city's minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Leon believes allegiance across occupational lines aids all

informal and low-earning workers because they're more likely to gain leverage if they are unified.

New workers, new power

Gig economy workers aren't necessarily that different from traditional employees, says Saru Jayaraman, co-founder and co-director of ROC United and director of the Food Labor Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley. "There is a bit of an idea that 'Oh well, we're moving to a world in which nobody really has an employer and people transition from one place to another, and we're all sort of in an independent contractor world with portable benefits.'" She says that thinking fails to hold companies accountable.

"They're not just independent contractors. There is an employer. There are corporate actors involved—even if they are in Silicon Valley." She suggests a "low road, high road" strategy, in which organizers simultaneously name and shame and campaign against the low-road actors that dominate these industries, while lifting up those doing it ethically.

As the entire economy starts to get a taste of on-demand workers' lives, Jayaraman says it's an opportunity to recognize the concerns shared by all on-demand workers—whether they get their work on the street corner or on their smart phone. "The whole on-demand economy has become a lot more prominent, a lot more central, a lot more mainstream, as higher-income on-demand workers have now started to deal with the instability and insecurity of being on-demand," says Jayaraman.

Ajema agrees. The more the gig economy's labor force diversifies, he adds, and particularly as it includes people with voting power, the stronger chance there is for legislative change.

And that's the ultimate goal. 



Sylvia A. Harvey is an independent journalist and reporting fellow with The Investigative Fund at The Nation Institute.

Essay | John Nichols

Can Automation Turn Fewer Jobs Into Better Ones?

The cruelest hoax of the automation revolution that is now in the first stages of transforming the nature of work is the suggestion that it will play out as the industrial revolutions of the past: with people, perhaps grudgingly, perhaps happily, moving from one kind of work to another. That's not going to happen.

This revolution is moving people out of work altogether. Digital applications and automation innovations are creating a future where robots will do most of the work that was once performed by human beings. Bizarrely, shamefully, this reality continues to be obscured and even at times denied by elite analysts who spin the fantasy that the future of work will follow the familiar patterns of the past.

It won't. Capitalism guarantees that this revolution will be dramatic. The only question facing the great mass of Americans who are not currently occupying the top rungs of the economic ladder is whether it will be dramatically worse or dramatically better. For those of us who prefer the dramatically better option, honest recognition of where we are and where we are headed is essential.

The multinational corporations that already profit from the dislocation and disorientation of workers continue to peddle old understandings of industrial change to maintain that work is simply evolving and that workers need only adapt to new opportunities. A chipper headline from *The Atlantic* in January promised to explain "Why Computers Aren't Going to Steal Everyone's Jobs."

But consider the case of Uber, the multinational ride-sharing conglomerate that advertises incessantly about the employment prospects it offers those who have been displaced from steadier work (and the security associated with it). Its radio ads promise drivers a quick route to prosperity.

"How many different driving jobs are there?" Uber's website asks. "A lot," it answers. In fact, the most popular driving job in the United States is truck driving, which employs about 3.5 million people. Uber has only been around since 2012. "Despite this," its website claims, "it's growing the fastest because of the great earning potential and flexible schedule."

What is not mentioned is that, in 2015, Uber hired 40 scientists and researchers—yes, 40—from Carnegie Mellon University's National Robotics Engineering Center to envision "autonomous cars that could someday replace its tens of thousands of contract drivers," explained *The Wall Street Journal*.

In our research for *People Get Ready: The Fight Against a Jobless Economy and a Citizenless Democracy*, Bob McChesney and I found countless examples of corporations investing in research designed to replace the jobs of the future with robots, automation schemes, and digital applications. No matter what the starry-eyed futurists may tell you, corporations are not going to create millions of new robot-repair and oversight positions to fill the void that is being created. Nor will there be enough positions for software designers and managers to maintain a middle class. Companies are not going to pour resources into automation while at the same time creating jobs for displaced and downsized workers—doing so would negate the very profits they seek.

In this new age, old models for employment must be replaced. There will still be work, but there will be less of it. Will the work that remains be viciously exploitative, with workers pitted against one another in a fight for the last job? Or will workers begin to think of themselves as citizens of a new era, when the promise of technological progress can be made real?

Automation can and should eliminate drudgery, freeing people to work fewer hours for fairer compensation and to devote themselves to social advancement. To do this, however, citizens must assert themselves by demanding not just political but economic democracy. We must replace fantastical talk about "the future of work" with the honest understanding that there will be less work. We must shape a humane future in which corporate monopoly and inequality give way to a sharing society where technological progress benefits everyone. 

John Nichols is the Washington correspondent for *The Nation* magazine and associate editor of *The Capital Times* of Madison, Wisconsin. Co-founder of Free Press, John is also an author and co-author of multiple books, including the recently published *People Get Ready: The Fight Against a Jobless Economy and a Citizenless Democracy*.

AMERICA'S SOCIAL SAFETY NET WAS DESIGNED FOR A DIFFERENT LABOR MARKET AND ECONOMY

THE NEXT BIG THING: BENEFITS THAT GO WHERE YOU GO

Chris Farrell

Thomas Fisher, professor at the College of Design at the University of Minnesota, is a gig economy enthusiast. At a conference talk last spring, he touted it as a building block in the creation of a high-tech version of the traditional village economy. In this new community-based economy, he said, collaboration will trump competition, the pursuit of experience will replace the desire to own, workers will enjoy flexible jobs and multiple careers, and consumers will be producers.

A skeptical audience member questioned his enthusiasm: Isn't the gig economy a worker dystopia with low wages, no benefits, and job insecurity?

"We are in the early Industrial Revolution phase once again, and like then there is a lot of inequality," Fisher replied. "We'll need to develop laws and public policy to handle it."

There's the rub.

For workers, the gig economy offers the tantalizing prospect of greater opportunities for entrepreneurship, flexible jobs, and a variety of careers. But turning that promise into reality will take a major overhaul of America's social safety net, which was designed for a different labor market and economy. (Think 1950s and a gold watch at retirement.) The fundamental

priority of the gig economy era should be to attach safety net benefits—especially retirement savings and health insurance—to the individual or household rather than to the employer.

"You're giving people access to the benefits they care about, and, if they aren't attached to the employer, workers could be choosier about the jobs they take," says Lane Kenworthy, sociologist at the University of California, San Diego, and author of *The Good Society*.

Is this a pie-in-the-sky concept? Hardly. We've made a comparable social transformation before.

In the late 19th century, a majority of workers labored long hours at hazardous, arduous jobs. Most



1960

Meet John, 25

He served in the Army and attended the University of Nebraska. His first job after graduation was with a large Midwestern manufacturer.

AGE
25

John is hired on the factory floor.

He joins the union. He earns a little more than minimum wage, but he slowly starts moving up the ranks. He has a pension.

John's employer-provided benefits:

*Employer contributions to Social Security and Medicare taxes
Health and dental insurance
Traditional pension plan
Paid time off
Retirement health insurance
Workers' compensation*

1995

Meet Jane, 25

She started working the same year John retired in 1995. The job market was hot when she graduated from college, so she got a job right away at a major advertising agency in the Midwest.

AGE
25

Jane is hired at an ad agency.

Her employer offered her a 401(k) plan. It was her choice to join and, since money was tight, she didn't at first. Two years later she signed up. The company offered a 3-percent match.

Jane's employer-provided benefits:

*Optional 401(k)
Health and dental insurance
Disability insurance
Paid time off
Workers' compensation*

workers didn't have vacations, let alone pensions. A patchwork quilt of state and local programs and charitable organizations offered some relief to the jobless. But those efforts were limited, and job insecurity was part of working life.

The foundation for the modern social safety net was laid during traumatic years.

The 1935 Social Security Act provided support to the elderly and disabled in the midst of the Great Depression. Laid-off workers got financial relief with unemployment insurance. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 included a national minimum wage

and overtime rules. During World War II, large employers offered employees health insurance and pension benefits (though largely as a means of getting around a national wage freeze). The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) strengthened pension and health insurance protections. Labor laws like these were designed to provide workers with greater economic security. The baseline assumption was that the typical employee worked full time for a single employer. These laws still hold sway.

Imagine a worker named Jill. She worked out of a cubicle in the corporate headquarters for a major national

retailer for nearly two decades. She participated in her employer-sponsored retirement savings plan and health insurance benefit. She earned the federal minimum wage when she started in 1990, and, early in her career, got extra money from overtime.

Jill lost her job in 2008 during the recession. She filed for unemployment benefits to tide her over. She used COBRA to keep her employer's health insurance plan in place. (The 1986 Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act let workers keep their group health plan for up to 18 months after leaving.) She could no longer contribute to her 401(k) since

John gets married.

His wife—and eventually their two children—are covered under his employer's health insurance.

John buys a house.

His steady raises have allowed him to save a down payment and buy a home near the factory. Now that he owns property, he can build equity.

**John gets laid off.**

Corporate management tightens the purse strings. Work is increasingly outsourced, and the company relies more on contingent workers. The union negotiates for reduced benefits and wages to save jobs. He keeps the pension plan benefits he had earned, but the plan is closed. Everyone moves to a 401(k) plan.

**John gets rehired.**

The company often has to lay off workers during recessions, but some get called back when corporate profits and the economy pick up.

26 27 28 29

AGE 30

31 32 33 34

AGE 35

36 37 38 39

AGE 40

41 42 43 44

AGE 45

46 47 48 49

AGE 50**Jane, 1990s****Jane gets married.**

When she and her wife have their first child, medical bills are covered by insurance.

Jane gets laid off.

She rolls her 401(k) into an IRA. She files for unemployment benefits. As a new mother, she pays for COBRA to keep her health insurance.

Jane finds another job and buys a house.

Luckily she gets another full-time job six months later with all the same benefits. Home prices are high as the real estate bubble of the mid-2000s reaches its peak. However, Jane is finally able to qualify for a mortgage. Jane's wife stays home to care for the kids.

Jane joins the gig economy.

She is laid off in the 2008 recession. She exhausts her unemployment benefits and becomes an independent contractor. She works part time at a medical

clinic and drives for Uber on weekends. Her wife also earns extra money in the evening on the online platform Fiverr. They're thinking about converting a room in their basement to an Airbnb apartment.

Jane needs to take care of her mother.

They have a better health insurance plan thanks to Obamacare.

When Jane needs to take care of her aging mother, the flexibility of her schedule lets her tend to her mother's needs.

Jane manages her own benefits and taxes:

- Purchases an individual health insurance policy—a health savings account*
- Opens SEP-IRA for retirement savings (but often doesn't have the money to pay into it)*
- Diverts 15% of her pay for Social Security and Medicare*
- Pays quarterly estimated income taxes*

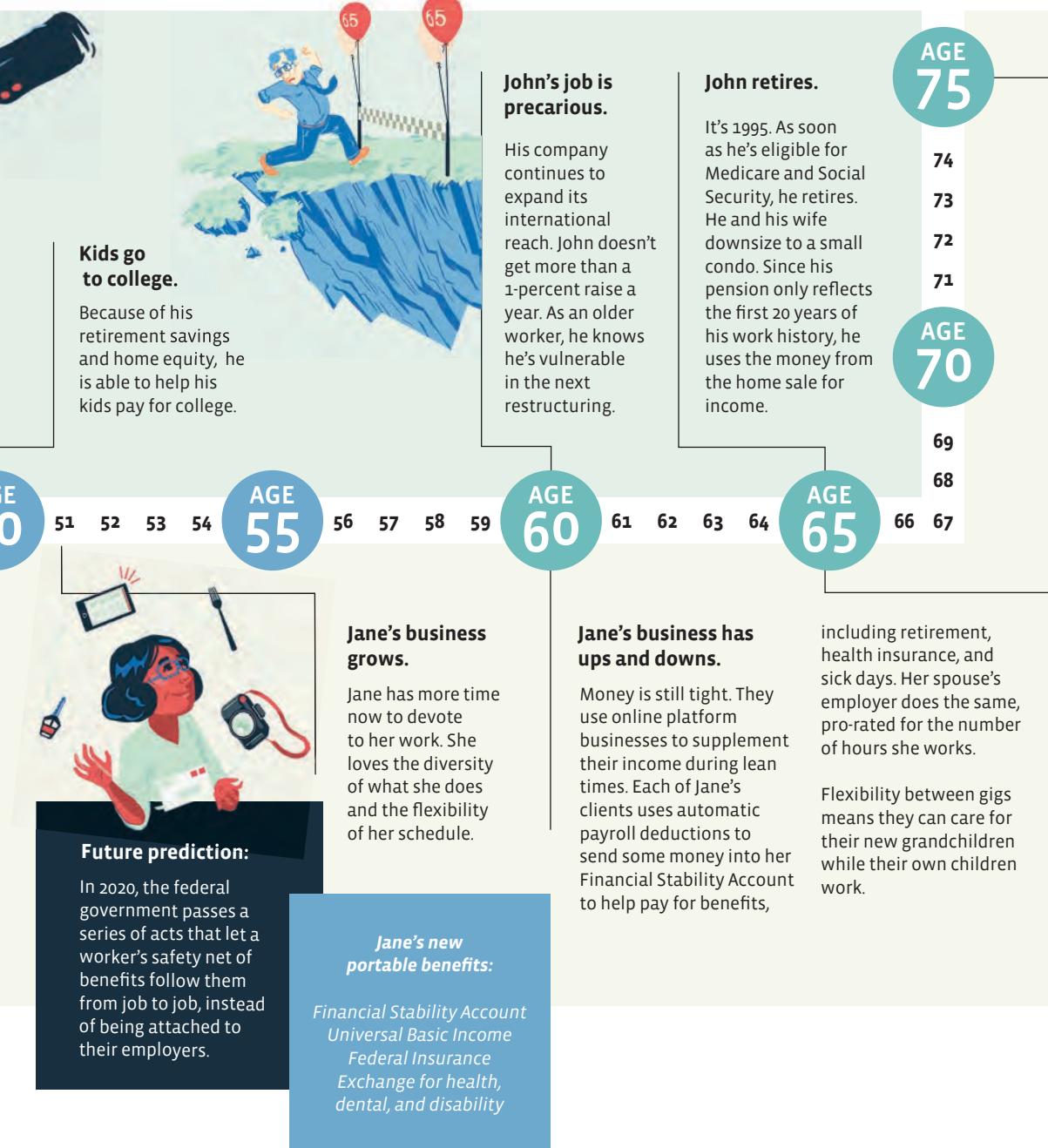
she wasn't on payroll, so she rolled it over into an IRA. Jill found another full-time job three months later. Her safety net is intact.

America's modern social safety net for the typical worker was a genuine break with the past and a vast improvement over what came before. The problem is Jill's segment of the workforce—the single employer, full-time worker—has been shrinking while the ranks of America's contingent workers, such as independent

contractors and freelancers, are swelling. The Government Accountability Office estimates some 40 percent of the workforce is contingent, up from 31 percent in 2005.

That's because contingent gig workers are exempt from most labor laws and, therefore, much cheaper for employers. Management has restructured, downsized, rightsized—pick your favorite euphemism. Jobs are less secure, wages are stagnant, and income inequality is high and rising.

Contrast Jill's situation to that of Robert. He graduated from college in 2004. He never managed to land a full-time job, so he has always been an independent contractor. His clients paid him decently for completing projects, although they usually stretched out payments from 30 to 90 days when business slowed. As an independent contractor, he wasn't eligible for minimum wage, overtime, workers' compensation, or Family Medical Leave Act benefits.



He couldn't participate in his clients' employer-sponsored retirement and health insurance plans. He pays the full 15.3 percent payroll tax. But when Robert lost his clients in 2008 during the recession, he wasn't entitled to file for unemployment benefits. His safety net is full of holes, which makes it financially hard for him and his wife to plan and raise their two young daughters. His wife works at part-time and temporary jobs, so she doesn't qualify for benefits either.

So how do we ensure that the jobs that do exist provide quality support? The answer lies in broadening the social safety net from its single-employer, full-time worker model to a universal framework that accommodates self-employment, gig work, contingent work, and multiple part-time jobs.

Take retirement savings. There have been a number of savvy proposals for establishing a universal retirement savings plan during the past

few presidential administrations, Republican and Democratic alike. The basic idea usually involves providing everyone with an IRA or 401(k)-type account with government matching benefits. For example, Gene Sperling, the former director of the White House National Economic Council under Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, suggests a version of a universal 401(k). Lower- and middle-income Americans would receive a dollar-for-dollar matching credit of up

One Strategy: Let Cities and States Take the Lead on Portable Work Benefits

Ideally, policies behind portable individual work benefits and safety nets would be enacted at a national level so that all employers are subjected to the same rules. But that doesn't mean they have to join the many dusty skeletons of social policies waiting for action from Congress.

One strategy suggested by Steven Hill, author of *Raw Deal: How the "Uber Economy" and Runaway Capitalism Are Screwing American Workers*, is for such a program to get its start at the city or state level.

Hill points to the four states (California, Connecticut, Oregon, and Massachusetts) and 18 cities (including Washington, D.C., New York City, Philadelphia, and Seattle) that have passed paid sick leave policies. Similar strategies could be used by cities and states to require employers to pay into general individual security accounts.

San Francisco's been there and done that, with a 2006 ordinance that requires large employers, including restaurants that often don't provide health care, to set aside a few dollars per hour for each employee's health—even if they're paid under a 1099 tax form. The ordinance even created city-operated Medical Reimbursement Accounts, which make it easy for multiple employers to pay into a single worker's benefits.

As more workers join the gig economy, local laws like San Francisco's can provide a time-tested model for D.C. legislators seeking solutions. —YES!
Editors

to \$4,000 annually per household. Higher income households would get at least a 60 percent match. This would also be available through IRA contributions for the self-employed and those temporarily not working.

Health insurance plans should reflect the needs of a mobile workforce. The Obama administration's Affordable Care Act took a huge step toward improved portability with the insurance exchanges. For the first time, individuals and families, regardless of their employment status, have access to comprehensive and affordable health coverage. Longer term, America's employer-centered health insurance system should be eliminated in favor of a Medicare-for-all plan.

Still, the most intriguing universal benefit gaining traction is a guaranteed minimum income or universal basic income. The idea is that everyone would get periodic income payments with no conditions attached beyond citizenship. The amount proposed is usually in the \$10,000-a-year range.

This concept garners support from both conservatives and liberals, although for very different reasons. Conservative theorist Charles Murray of the American Enterprise Institute promotes a \$13,000 universal basic income (with \$3,000 of that amount dedicated to buying health insurance). In exchange, he wants to scrap all antipoverty and social welfare programs. More liberal proponents of the idea don't buy that aspect of his proposal, especially if payments are limited to \$10,000. Instead, they see a universal basic income as a way to dramatically reduce poverty—in essence, by establishing an income floor for the poorest Americans that would supplement, rather than replace, a range of existing anti-poverty programs like Medicare.

The income is "equivalent to recognizing shared ownership of a significant fraction of the resources, physical and intellectual, that enable

the society to produce what it produces," explained the late economist and Nobel laureate Herbert Simon.

What might universal benefits mean to the typical worker?

Let's say Maria works full time at an advertising agency. She is unhappy with her new manager and quits her job. She picks up some gig economy work to supplement her universal basic income while she decides what to do next. She's making enough to keep contributing to her retirement savings. She keeps her health coverage too.

Eventually, she decides to start her own social media consulting business. She does well for a year, but business dries up in a recession. She files for unemployment insurance, which supplements her universal basic income. She realizes that she enjoyed entrepreneurship, but she wasn't good at finding clients. She joins several gig economy platforms that find her business while allowing her to exercise control over her schedule. At no point in this journey does she lose her retirement savings or health insurance. The combination of unemployment insurance and the universal basic income give her time to think through her options.

A shift toward universal benefits rather than employer-based benefits would encourage workers to embrace the variety that the gig economy (broadly defined) offers. That sense of freedom would also force management to pay more attention to their workers and pay them higher wages. Yes, genuine design differences exist among various universal benefit proposals, but embracing the principle should shape a new social compact, one better suited to a high-tech, internationally integrated economy. 



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Essay | Anne Miller

Did Working Moms Dream Up the Gig Economy?

I typed away at a makeshift standing desk in my living room, the baby bouncing in her carrier on my chest. I usually started work at 6 or 7 a.m. to ensure I could sign off when our nanny had to leave on the four days a week we had her. But some days I couldn't stop early enough.

This is my career after having a kid. I work at least 35 hours a week, often more. I work around child care and holiday schedules. I work early mornings, and I work weekends. I work from home and hustle for clients because we can't live on one income. Also, we would need at least 10 hours of daily child care if my husband and I both commuted to traditional office jobs.

There's an argument for changing systems from within. Break the glass ceiling, extend a hand, pull others up behind you. But how do we find the energy to break the glass ceiling on four hours of sleep, with a sick kid, a working spouse, no family around, and a strained bank account? School hours and office hours don't match, leaving parents scrambling for after care. Even if a parent has two weeks of vacation, summer break from school lasts five times that and day camps get expensive. For many, including myself, the gig economy is the only way the math works. We can't afford not to work, and we enjoy our careers. But we can't afford enough child care to cover the work and commute hours of a traditional job—and also, we'd like to see our kids before bedtime.

Shannon Joyce Neal was 30 with a toddler at home when the major metro daily newspaper where she worked offered her a promotion to business editor.

Instead, she walked away.

"I tried to be the change from within," Joyce Neal says of a job with 60-hour work weeks. She wouldn't have seen her son during the week. All the evening child care would fall to her husband, who also worked full time. "I asked for the flexibility, and they said no. Do I keep pushing forward in a situation

where I don't feel it's a good choice, or do I come up with another option?"

Her son won out. She quit and took occasional freelance work. For her and others, the gig economy offered what many workplace and government policies don't: room to stay in the professional game and also meet the needs of a growing family.

My own career track involved newspaper reporting for a decade before moving online, juggling breaking news for an audience of millions.

And then I had a kid.

And then my full-time, work-from-home editing contract ended. I didn't have a plan, really. A startup offered me work, and I landed some corporate writing assignments. A freelance career launched. I've yet to meet fellow parents in a two-income household who don't suffer some permanent state of anxiety trying to figure out schedules and money. We do too, but at least I can keep editing, keep writing, and stick dinner in the oven while I work or clean dishes during conference calls.

Joyce Neal had a second child who developed a seizure disorder. Child care outside the home wasn't an option. Returning to work full time remained impossible.

Continuing her occasional freelancing "was rewarding, to ... do something that I felt I was good at and that I was contributing and that was wholly separate from that parenting identity," she says.

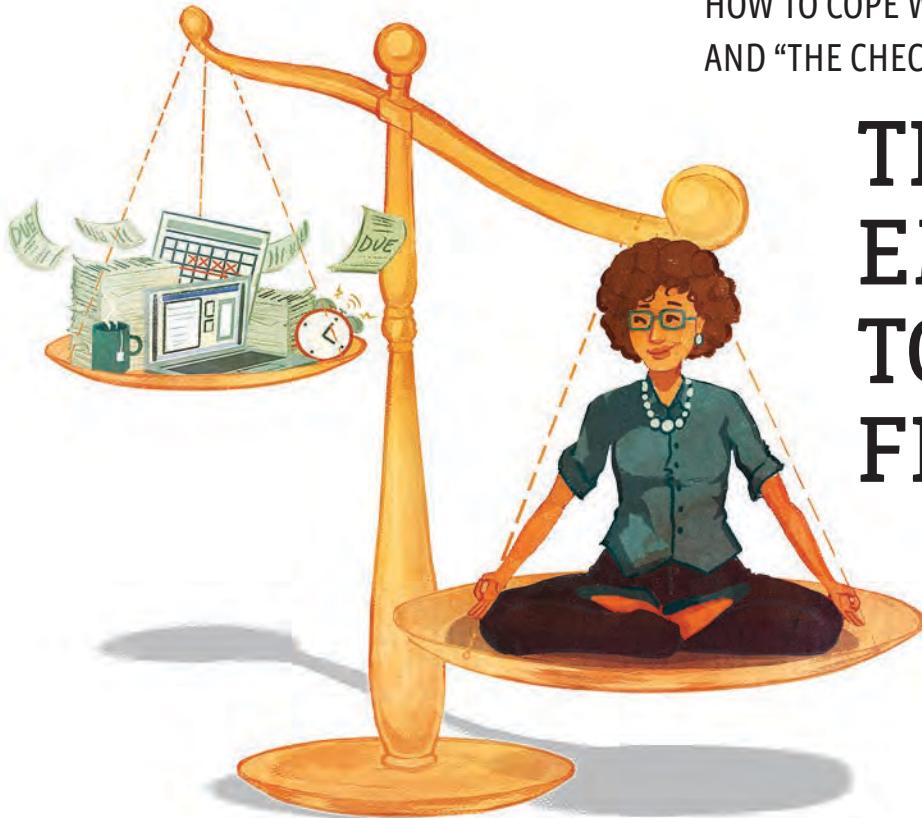
In her sentiments I hear my own. Maybe this is the new "having it all," balancing some form of my needs and my daughter's without giving up one or the other.

Someday I may return to an office position. Life happens. But for now, with a young child and my skill set, I'm embracing freelance work. I drafted this essay on a weeknight while my husband handled bath time and bedtime, and I edited sections at our local YMCA while my now preschool-age daughter took ballet.

Maybe it's selfish, but right now I'm not worried about the glass ceiling. I'm more worried about what to do with a sick kid and a spouse out of town. If enough of us freelancer parents are that selfish, maybe we'll create a new normal. 



Anne Miller is a freelance editor, writer, and occasional essayist who manages corporate publications and other content marketing editorial projects. She lives and works in Brooklyn with her husband and their preschool-aged daughter.



HOW TO COPE WITH ANXIETY, SELF-DOUBT,
AND “THE CHECK’S IN THE MAIL”

THE EMOTIONAL TOLL OF FREELANCING

Brandon Ambrosino

I’m currently waiting for around \$10,000 worth of paychecks to reach me for freelance writing projects I’ve done. Most of these projects were completed months ago. Some editors have since gone silent, leaving me to wonder if I’ll ever see my money. My partner is a dentist, so I am not going to starve, but it’s still frustrating to be unable to plan my finances like traditional workers.

Not getting paid impacts my sense of identity too. When I don’t get paid—or paid on time—or I have an assignment killed or don’t hear from an editor, I second-guess myself and the work I’m doing. I wonder whether I’m being honest when I tell people I’m a writer. I wonder if it’s accurate to say I have a job.

And because the second question we

often ask a new acquaintance is what they do for work, these self-doubting questions lead to an enormous amount of stress and anxiety for me.

According to a recent study from Roosevelt University, I’m not alone. Many freelancers regularly experience anxiety, frustration, anger, and depression.

Gianpiero Petriglieri, a psychiatrist and associate professor at the graduate business school INSEAD, studies the psychology of gig workers.

“We join organizations for a defense against anxiety,” says Petriglieri. “They give life a sense of security.” Gig workers, on the other hand, can struggle to find security, a sense of purpose, and fulfillment. While the traditional office offers a stable paycheck and shared responsibilities, freelancers are responsible for all aspects of their business, including marketing.

A 2004 study found that the cyclical nature and 24/7 brand management required by independent work creates “more rather than fewer constraints on workers’ time.” Freelancers are never not on the clock—that’s physically and

emotionally fatiguing. Gig workers also feel anxiety over what Irvin Schonfeld, a psychology professor at City College of New York, calls “reputational threat”—the concern that one client’s bad review is all it takes to make them unemployable.

Despite the challenges of gig work, many freelancers are able to “transform their anxiety from something debilitating to a source of learning and growth,” says Petriglieri.

So how do they do it?

The following suggestions come from the research of Petriglieri and others, as well as from freelance workers who have found ways to navigate the psychological obstacles they encounter in their work.

1. Plan ahead.

Seven in 10 freelance workers have trouble getting paid on time, according to Sara Horowitz, founder and director of Freelancers Union. To chase down their paychecks, many freelancers have to take time away from other activities, which means non-payment and late payment are doubly taxing. “Savvy freelancers will build in padding in their rates to compensate for potential client nonpayment,” says Horowitz. They’ll also learn to live on a budget and save up big paychecks for rainy days.

2. Foster connections.

“You’re so lucky to get to work from home!” If I had a nickel ...

In fact, working in isolation is the source of a lot of freelancers’ anxieties. In a traditional company, failures are shared. When a freelancer learns his pitch was rejected, his gig was killed, or his paycheck is MIA, he has to shoulder that burden alone.

To address this issue, Sara Frandina, a content strategist in Rochester, New York, co-created One Woman Shop, an online community and resource to help female solo business owners connect. Frandina thinks connecting with other freelancers is paramount for their success.

Finding a community of

like-minded individuals has been key to getting out of my own head, building in accountability, having productive conversations, and feeling like I’m not alone in this business journey,” she says.

3. Catch as catch can.

“My strategy is to not turn down any work that’s offered to me that pays well,” says Matt Brennan, a freelance reporter and film/TV critic based in New Orleans. Successful freelancing, he says, is basically “catch as catch can,” meaning gig workers should take advantage of opportunities that come their way—even if it’s not a dream job. As long as corporate gigs don’t require a freelancer to compromise her integrity, what’s the harm in writing a travel blurb for an airline magazine or creating a photo spread for a restaurant?

Schonfeld says this mentality is critical to success as a freelancer. “Every job has [a] certain amount of conformity and autonomy. Even when you’re self-employed, you do have to conform to customers’ expectations—otherwise you won’t get by.”

4. Know your value.

Magdalyn Duffie, a 32-year-old freelance graphic designer who specializes in social media, websites, and art installations, says she sometimes has to deal with impostor syndrome, the feeling that she doesn’t deserve her success. Duffie, based in Raleigh, North Carolina, says she feels this the moment she sends off an invoice, when she puts “a number to the skill.”

Although it can be tough, self-employed workers need to learn to stand up for themselves financially, says Duffie. More often than not, she says, the companies you’re working for can afford it.

So, she says, roll up your sleeves and tell yourself, “I am good. I can do something that is worth hard cash.”

5. Ditch the word “should.”

“It’s easy to [think] we ‘should’ be doing specific things [when] we see other people we deem successful doing

those things,” says Frandina. That musician landed a gig with the symphony. That dancer booked a Broadway show. That writer had a cover story in *The Wall Street Journal*.

We rarely know the story behind other people’s successes. “It’s all too easy to compare our beginning to someone else’s middle,” says Frandina. “Success is a relative term.”

Perhaps a little grass-is-always-greener wisdom might help here. I’m regularly surprised to hear that freelance writers I’m jealous of are actually jealous of my accomplishments.

6. Have a sense of purpose.

Of the freelancers Petriglieri interviewed, those with a clear sense of purpose were better able to manage their anxiety. For example, if they were writers, he said, they wouldn’t say they “just write.” They’d say something like, “I try to change people’s perception of this issue.” Same thing with musicians: They don’t “just make music”—they enrich others’ lives through art.

Keeping my sense of purpose in mind motivates me on those days when inspiration doesn’t strike. Then, I file invoices, update my calendar, send pitches, and clean my work space—all the things I have to do if I want to call myself a writer.

Gig work isn’t new, but the sheer size of the industry is. If projections are to be believed, 40 percent of U.S. workers could be freelancers by 2020. That means conversations about self-employment and mental health are becoming increasingly important.

In the meantime, I’ll update my editorial spreadsheet to show I completed another article. And I’ll look forward to receiving my paycheck in two to three months.

Editor’s note: We paid him. 



Brandon Ambrosino has written for *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Atlantic*, BBC, *The Economist*, and *Politico*. He lives with his partner, Andy, in Delaware.

THIS IS A LIFE, NOT A JOB

IN RURAL COLORADO, FAR FROM THE 9-TO-5, THE WORK OF BUILDING COMMUNITY CAN BE A CHALLENGE WHEN VOLUNTEERS ARE JUST PASSING THROUGH.

Olga Kreimer

Mark Schneider and Val Phillips have never heard of the gig economy. Two hours from the nearest train stop and even farther from the coastal cities where companies like Task-Rabbit and Postmates got their splashy starts, they live what could be considered a simple lifestyle, the opposite of the perpetually iPhone-adjacent city hustle. Their house, built by many hands out of straw bales and heated solely by southern sunlight in winter, stands in a thousand-year floodplain in Huerfano County, one of the poorest in Colorado. They're the stewards of Shii Koeii (a name meaning "people's water" in Jicarilla Apache), a creekside homestead now in its ninth year.

Smartphones are basically moot here. The internet and electric coffee grinder get turned off on gray, windless July days when battery power is low. The daily rhythm of feeding, milking, watering, planting, and harvesting could be determined by almanac. But the uncertainties that accompany the urban gig economy are a presence here too. Mark and Val opted out of the traditional 9-to-5 workforce to return to something like subsistence farming, but they rely on Medicaid and food stamps to stay solvent, despite working almost constantly in the high season.

Though the land feeds the goats and chickens, which in turn supply the surrounding community with eggs, produce, and four different kinds of goat

cheese, a large part of the labor powering Shii Koeii is not homegrown at all. Beside Mark, Val, the goats, chickens, bees, and worms are intern farmers who come to provide the bartered labor force that keeps the place running.

I came to Shii Koeii four years ago, one of a handful of interns who arrived from around the country to learn about small-scale farming, study intentional community, and get dirt under our fingernails. The garden walls we built then are direly in need of patching. That's more a sign of time than of neglect; built out of willow branches and a muddy stew of sand, clay, straw, and horse manure, they're built to blend with the land, not

overpower it.

Most interns find their way to Shii Koeii through the internet, on sites like WWOOF-USA (the national chapter of World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) that connect the dots between intern and farmer. Most, like I did, come from far away, eager to get their hands in the ground and see a part of the country where the roads have names instead of numbers. They trade farm labor for home-cooked meals and a place to sleep, and like the garden walls they patch and the seeds they nurture, they become part of the living landscape for as long as they stay.

I had saved up for my trip, then spent my savings on visits to nearby cities, slices of pie from the cafe on market days, and one memorable outing to the rodeo. My funds ran out





Mark Schneider and intern Cait Coyle harvest chives from the spring garden, still mostly covered against the early May chill, to mix with fresh goat cheese for farm share deliveries. Behind them are the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

just as my real life called me back east; the start of the school year and a job waiting for me back in Brooklyn, New York, meant that my commitment was fleeting from the outset. It also meant that my months without an income were limited. You don't need much cash to survive at Shii Koeii; the land provides piles of vegetables, Mark shapes loaves of bread from giant bulk bags of flour, and there's a stash of shampoo left over from past interns. But those with consumer debt, medical expenses, or insufficient savings may be unable to make it work long-term.

Caitlin Fogarty, one of my fellow interns during the summer of 2012, had also saved in advance to make her way to Colorado from central Florida. She had health insurance through her mom's employer and a cell phone bill

around \$20 a month on her parents' family plan. "I didn't really spend any money while I was at Shii Koeii," she says, beyond an occasional cup of tea on day-off outings. "They're kind of this microcosm in this crazy capitalist world," she says of the farm. It's a bucolic respite that wouldn't be sustainable for her long-term, though. Mark and Val have asked her back, but she just can't afford it.

"My health insurance keeps going up. Right now, it's like \$400 a month," Caitlin says. A few years ago, she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, making access to care a priority consideration as she looks into possible future opportunities to live in an intentional community and continue small-scale farming. Even with subsidies, her medical expenses are high. "If I

was in a place like [Shii Koeii], I'd have to have an outside job," she says—an untenable option given the farm's remote location and the intensity of the work required on site.

Mark and Val are generous with rides from the transit hubs two or three hours away, and they recently introduced a modest completion bonus to help departing interns on the next legs of their travels. Sometimes, they're even able to help an intern pay their way to town. Shii Koeii's nonprofit status also means that some student debts are eligible for deferment, opening the door to a bigger pool of interns. But the kind of financial support that an apprentice like Caitlin would need to stay long-term is still impossible, which means the door just isn't open to everyone—and Mark and Val are left



Mark works in front of the milking shed with goats Cholla, Chamisa, Luna, and Piñon. Both barns were built using straw bales.

without the lasting partners they still hope to attract.

With its built-in expiration date, my stay on the farm was not much different from the temporary gigs I pick up as a freelancer. It was just another piece of cobbling together a living. In self-employment, self-sufficiency free of any *Office Space* overlords is held up as the prize and the principle. Although Val and Mark are similarly building a way out of the rat race, their approach aims for a new paradigm altogether.

For example, self-sufficiency isn't one of their goals. In fact, "there is no such thing," says Val. "You are always interdependent with other people, with other life, with other beings. The question is, who do you want to be interdependent with?" Their answer is their community. Their budget relies on donations to break even every year, a conscious choice that's both pragmatic and deeply aligned with their view of the world. Asking annually for community investment is a radical move, relying on generosity to survive. It's "a spiritual practice of being vulnerable enough to have to ask for help," says

Val. "And to ask your community to believe in you."

The farmers market they started five years ago is thriving, with more vendors every season and a committed customer base. Their customers come to market to stock up on heirloom tomatoes and goat "farmesan" cheese, then stop by the farm to take the goats to pasture when there aren't enough farmer hands on deck. This is what community support looks like.

But it's not only community support that helps sustain Shii Koeii. Mark and Val's minimal income qualifies them for government aid like SNAP benefits, which pay for food that the land doesn't provide. Those benefits allow them to contribute more to the community by making cash available to purchase high-quality local meat, for example, which supports local ranchers—"keeping the money in the county," says Val.

Government aid also means that funds are available for Shii Koeii's direct initiatives to make good food available to people regardless of their means. They offer two-for-one produce and protein deals for low-income customers and are set up to

accept payment in SNAP benefits at the market. In a region where the median household income hovers near \$33,000, these incremental measures are part of the slow work of expanding food access and growing lasting connections.

Despite the long-term investment and commitment necessary for growing food and community, life at the farm is attended by many of the same uncertainties that plague gig economy job hoppers. Mark and Val have no retirement plan, no fancy health insurance, no guarantees that the land that sustains them now will continue to do so for the next 40 years. To an outsider, the facts might seem frightening: With a \$45 a month allowance and a plan to eventually sign over their deed to a nonprofit (once the legal entities are all in order), Mark and Val have committed themselves to poverty-level wages and no financial fallback plan.

If you ask them, though, these problems are not problems at all. Health insurance? Though they're enrolled in Medicaid, they prefer alternative medicine and—Mark points to the table where we're eating dinner—kale. Retirement? They trust the community



Left, two different kinds of raw cheddar are made from Shii Koeii goat milk. At right, interns Cait Coyle and Christopher Cordeiro go over the day's chores at the morning coffee meeting around 7:30 a.m. Mark prepared the bread loaves earlier that morning for afternoon farm share deliveries in the "nearby" town, about 40 minutes away.

they're building to take care of them the way they want to take care of their elders, though so far no one is committed to staying on beyond a season. In place of retirement plans and health insurance, Mark and Val have chosen to rely on people. "For us, the contingency plan was always community," says Val.

That's why it's so painful when the gig mentality intrudes.

With a few stray bad apple exceptions, Val says that their interns have been thoughtful, collaborative, kind, adept—and every one this year has cut their stay short or, in some cases, not shown up at all.

The revolving door of help can make long-term planning for projects, like a cheese cave and added living space, tenuous at best. But in some ways, the pattern of truncated commitments is not surprising. The remote farm, approached by unpaved roads pitted with cattle guards, is hard to imagine for someone who hasn't been there. Interns accustomed to light pollution might marvel at the starscape that stretches all the way down to the horizon, but they may not know ahead

of time how stir-crazy they'll feel in such a spot, how much they'll miss their homes, or even how little they like farming. It's a big question mark for a lot of well-meaning visitors, and when technology all but encourages last-minute cop-outs with a text or the tap of an app, that attitude can carry over to farm life.

I've been the one to bail sometimes too. When a commitment made in good faith has turned into more than I could offer, I've chosen my own well-being over my word, even while more than a little conflicted. For young people who have grown up in a time of few guarantees, it's not intentional flakiness that drives such behavior but the sense that no one else will care about their needs as much as they do. It can feel like a fine line between being unreliable and taking care of oneself when no one else will.

Paradoxically, the intensity of farm life may reinforce the mentality that makes it easy for interns to bail. The greens and the goats don't have time for gradual introductions, especially in the high season. Arriving at Shii Koeii, interns bypass the slow process

of building long-term community and jump immediately into intimacy. After such a rapid transition from stranger to local, interns may feel that a sudden departure is just as easy. The short-term contracts of modern gig employment—easily made and easily broken—don't exactly lend themselves to the kind of deeply rooted community that Mark and Val are building.

Still, even with its uncertainties, the land provides security for Mark and Val in a way that urban living never did. "I grow the same food. The seasons come and go. Nothing dramatically changes for me, and it's very familiar, and I really like it," says Mark.

The deep roots the farmers have been nurturing are apparent all over, from the goat share members who take the goats to graze one busy morning to the fried egg sandwiches Mark serves them for lunch: top-to-bottom homemade. "It's farm table," he jokes. "We don't even need the 'to.'"



Olga Kreimer has lived in California, Maine, New York, and now Missoula, Montana, where she's a graduate student in environmental journalism.

DEAR W-2 PARENTS, WELCOME TO MY 1099 WORLD

GENERATIONS SWITCH ROLES IN THIS NEW ECONOMY



Giulia Pines

In 2009, my mother lost her job. The associate director of New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, she was moved out, along with many others her age, when her boss retired and a new director rolled in. Over 60 and overqualified, she suddenly found herself not only unemployed but perhaps unemployable. Once an influential player in the museum world, she now had the keen sense that a large part of her carefully constructed identity had been shattered.

A few generations ago, that may have been the end of the story. But it wasn't the end of hers. Examining her skills, connections, and prospects—perhaps for the first time in years—she came to the same conclusion others already had: She was likely never to enjoy the salary and prestige she had before, but, more for reasons of self-esteem than finances, she simply wasn't ready to retire.

Since my mother had last searched for work, the economy had changed many single-track, steady career animals into workers who thrived on one-off gigs and hazily defined "projects." This sudden shift in the work landscape triggered an unexpected role shift within our family, turning the

table so I became the career adviser.

My mother's journey cobbling together a second career—as a headhunter and consultant for museums, galleries, and art-related nonprofits—included a wide range of freelance positions. At the beginning, very few of them paid. This closely mirrored the experience of many in my generation. So I shouldn't have been surprised when she and my father began looking to me, a recent college graduate only a few years into a freelance writing career, for advice, support, and pep talks about money and worth. "You're a successful freelancer," my father said, asking for help on my mother's behalf. "She needs to hear she can do this."

Apparently, many in her position are

already doing this quite successfully. A joint study by Elance-oDesk (now Upwork) and the Freelancer's Union titled "Freelancing in America" found that more than 30 percent of U.S. workers over age 35 freelance. That includes a good number of Americans approaching retirement.

My mother and I had always been close, but now I simply wasn't sure how to become her mentor. I was, after all, just beginning to build my own career. Taking cues from my parents—who had once told me I could do and be anything—I had moved to a foreign country on a whim and was struggling with a new language, untold bureaucracy, and the particularly maddening challenge of trying to get noticed in my field from across an ocean. Now, I found myself punting their words of encouragement back again, hoping my mother would absorb them. She understood the obstacles she faced, but I felt it was up to me to help her—to use a particularly life-coach-ready turn of phrase—turn those obstacles into opportunities.

One of those obstacles was mindset. Having just graduated from college, I

street address, city or town, state or province, country, zip code, and telephone no. VOID CORRECTED

RECIPIENT'S name, street address, city or town, state or province, country, zip code, and telephone no. VOID CORRECTED

PAYER'S federal identification number: RECIPIENT's identification number: *Dad*

RECIPIENT's name: Street address (including apt. no.): City or town, state or province, country: Account number (see instructions): 15a Section 409A deferrals: \$ Form 1099-MISC

OMB No. 1545-0115 2016 Form 1099-MISC DMB No. 1545-0115 Miscellaneous Income Copy A For Internal Revenue Service Center File with Form 1096. For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the 2016 General Instructions for Certain

1 Rents	2 Royalties	3 Other income	4 Federal income tax withheld	5 Fishing boat proceeds	6 Medical and health care payments	7 Nonemployee compensation	8 Substitute payments in lieu of dividends or interest
\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Finance proceeds

was, in a sense, more malleable and open, with more time to try on various career hats. My mother, who was fast approaching retirement age, had a set notion of what she could and could not do—regardless of whether that turned out to be true.

"I finally had an epiphany when I realized at my age, which was not so young at the time and is even less young now, it was unlikely someone was going to hire me," she told me.

After decades within an organized office environment, finding success as an independent contractor proved to be tricky. "I don't really know very much about the business end of things," she conceded.

She wasn't the first to admit that this

came from growing up with a very different vision of women in the workplace. "My parents didn't expect me to work, and, I mean, I didn't particularly expect me to work," she said. I was shocked to hear this at first, but then pleased at how far we had come. Just one generation lay between me, an aspiring freelancer struggling to build my own business, and my grandmother, a full-time homemaker. My mother was the middle link. No wonder she was often sorely lacking in confidence.

Contrary to what my parents and parents' parents may have thought, these days my mother is sure to find more encouragement from fellow travelers along her particular road. "Career reinvention is viewed today

not as a lack of commitment but as a sign of imagination and entrepreneurship," said Jennifer Zaslow, 49, partner at Clear Path Executive Coaching. "I remember my dad telling me, 'I always wanted you to find a job you could stay at,' but now people are leaping from stone to stone."

Of course, my mother is quite aware she's been able to make those kinds of leaps from a position of tremendous privilege. After the end of a near-40-year career at the Met, with her husband still working, "we had no mortgage, we had no car payments, we have no debt, and that's huge."

For my part, since that conversation with my father, I've encouraged my mother to go in for interviews and I'm vocal when I think she's getting a bad deal. After hearing about a train ride to Boston for a lackluster interview followed by a particularly disappointing meal with a potential boss, I declared, "Bad food? Deal breaker!" I was half joking, but she didn't take the job.

I've helped transform her resume into a LinkedIn profile and advised her on which profile photo to use. Our next plan is a sit-down meeting over a new website, which I will design for her based on the skills I learned designing my own. My mother's story has made me all the more appreciative of my freelance writing career—one I stumbled into more than chose deliberately—and how it has prepared me in myriad ways for whatever may lie ahead.

Just a few short years later, as my own earnings grow along with my confidence, I remember how my father put it when he first asked me to help my mother: "She needs to hear she can do this." Looking back on it now, it was exactly that moment that made me realize *I could.* **V**

Giulia Pines is a travel, food, and lifestyle journalist and photographer. Her work can be found in publications like *Departures*, *Roads & Kingdoms*, *Kinfolk*, *Serious Eats*, *Atlas Obscura*, and *NPR Berlin*. She splits her time between New York, Berlin, and a big old house in Brandenburg.



Kaleena Marcellin, a recruiting coordinator at LeadGenius, video chats with the director of recruiting, Ruby Bhattacharya, while her daughter sits on her lap. Marcellin works from home, which lets her be there for her children.

HOW TO TURN GIGS INTO GOOD JOBS

SEIZING THE GIG MOMENT TO CREATE AN ECONOMY OF SHARED VALUES

Christa Hillstrom

KALEENA MARCELIN WAS WORKING as an office manager for an air conditioning company when she gave birth to her fourth child. Marcelin had raised three children in Margate, Florida, a suburb of Miami, but she couldn't afford day care with four. She started looking for work that would allow her to stay home. First, she tried Craigslist, where she found gigs typing and editing. But there wasn't always enough work, and she never got to interact with anyone.

"You kind of felt like you were a machine," she said.

Then Marcelin found a company that offered steady work, a generous wage, and consistent interaction with co-workers. But she didn't have to go back to working 9 to 5. Instead, her job at the tech company LeadGenius combined the flexibility of gig work with the stability and structure she wanted. She doesn't receive benefits and is paid as a contractor, but she sets her own hours, can afford to pay for health insurance, and is able to care for her young children without hiring help.

Creating fair jobs for people who needed them was part of the mission for the three founders of LeadGenius in 2011. But as they seek to fine-tune their labor policies, they've turned to a new ally: the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), a coalition that represents more than 3 million home caregivers, nannies, and other domestic laborers nationwide. Palak Shah, the organization's social innovations director, had seen how quickly the gig economy was growing and worried that millions of new workers were facing the job insecurity, unsafe conditions, and precarious wages domestic workers had long experienced. She saw an opportunity to help a new crop of businesses to factor dignity, compassion, and fairness into their bottom lines—especially young companies whose norms remained malleable.

"If we're going to shape the future of the new economy, we're going to have to agree on where to go," she said.

Late last year, Shah and her colleagues began drawing on domestic workers' experience to define

some core values that could steer the gig economy toward honoring workers' well-being. The result was the Good Work Code, a set of eight values that companies can adopt and implement. Some of them, like "a livable wage" and "safety," would be familiar to labor organizers a century ago. Others, like "support and connection" or the combination of "stability and flexibility," reflect the unique situation of contractors who often work remotely and may rely on apps to find gigs. While the code is not an accountability program—participating companies aren't ranked or graded on their performance—signing on requires a public, demonstrated commitment to implementing the code's core values.

The NDWA recruited 12 forward-thinking companies—including LeadGenius—to be the first signatories. Most of these companies, which together employ everyone from freelance veterinarians to graphic designers to home care workers, already had fair work at the core of their missions. Their leaders had long been trying to figure out how to tweak their models to better serve workers.

But participating in the Good Work Code helped them create and sharpen practices supporting specific values, all while participating in a wider movement to define and model new business norms. Shah hopes to take advantage of current attention to gig labor to shape a new conversation around what good work means now—and how business can build equity into its future.

When Sherwin Sheik's sister was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, his family started

PARTICIPATING IN THE GOOD WORK CODE HELPED THEM CREATE AND SHARPEN PRACTICES SUPPORTING SPECIFIC VALUES, ALL WHILE PARTICIPATING IN A WIDER MOVEMENT TO DEFINE AND MODEL NEW BUSINESS NORMS.

the long process of finding and hiring caregivers. The family was spending a lot of money on care, but the caregivers seemed to barely make ends meet. They earned just a fraction of what the agencies charged their clients. "How can we expect them to take care of our families when they're worrying about their own?" Sheik wondered.

In December 2011, he founded CareLinx, a company he describes as "LinkedIn for home care workers." Caregivers build their own brand on the platform, choose their own clients, and become official W-2 employees—not contractors—of those clients. Because it's a digital company, Sheik was able to cut down on overhead and prioritize wages. Those who find work through CareLinx make higher wages than the industry standard, while the company makes money on a fee charged to clients—not subtracted from workers' checks. Because low-paid jobs in private residences often put care workers at risk, CareLinx chose to focus on the values of livable

THEY HAVE FOUND THAT THEIR WORKERS STRONGLY VALUE HUMAN INTERACTION—THE SENSE OF BEING PART OF A TEAM—AND THAT LEADGENIUS WAS HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION WHEN IT CAME TO FLEXIBILITY AND JOB SECURITY.

wages and safety.

David Rolf is president of the Seattle-based Local 775 of the Service Employees International Union, which represents home care workers. He said other app-based home care companies are starting to follow CareLinx's lead, recognizing the advantages of having W-2 employees in the complex and intimate field of home care work. "[CareLinx] did it right, right out of the gate," Rolf said. "They were the first ones to prove they could make W-2 work."

This drive to experiment with best practices for employment is what ties the companies that have embraced the code together. When three graduate students at the University of California, Berkeley, launched LeadGenius in 2011, they looked at companies like Amazon's Mechanical Turk, where labor was often anonymous or unskilled. But because of the complexity of LeadGenius' work generating sales leads for corporate clients, the

company required skills, consistency, and strong communication in its workers. Many, like Marcelin, have been involved for two years or more and bring valuable experience to their jobs.

That's why LeadGenius decided to set up team groups, placing workers together in a simulated traditional work environment. William Wickey, senior manager of content and media strategy, said the company's hypothesis is that "we can get better work done for our client and do better by the people working for us by building in these support systems."

Part of the original mission statement was to provide "fair trade" work for unemployed and underemployed people around the world who may otherwise experience poverty. Currently, more than 500 people from 40 countries—including India, Serbia, the Philippines, and Kenya—are employed as contractors. Nearly half are women, and nearly a third, like Marcelin, support at least three other people with what they earn. Initially, the founders imagined providing supplemental, part-time work, but it didn't turn out that way. "[The contract workers] wanted steady, full-time or near full-time work as a full source of income," Wickey said.

The Good Work Code aligned with what LeadGenius was already doing. As participants, they selected the values of support and connection, along with stability and flexibility, as key areas of focus. They had already been surveying the entire workforce twice a year on issues like wage satisfaction, and the code guided staff in asking further values-based questions. They have found that their workers strongly value human interaction—the sense of being part of a team—and that LeadGenius was headed in the right direction when it came to flexibility and job security.

Not everyone is optimistic that voluntary efforts like this will be enough. Rolf, for example, applauds the efforts companies are making to improve working conditions within the gig economy, but he believes that a code lacking an enforcement mechanism

risks becoming a labor version of greenwashing. Though "stimulating public opinion is important," he said, "I worry about companies saying, 'I operate out of the Good Work Code' if they aren't accountable for changes." Rolf would like to see a certification process for companies that hire gig workers and points to the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' Fair Food Program, which engages a third-party organization to monitor farm working conditions and hold growers accountable.

Shah agrees that a "Good Work" certification could be a smart goal for the code as the online labor marketplace matures, helping both workers and customers make better-informed decisions about which companies to work for and support. "However, it's critical that we agree on the vision before any steps are taken toward enforcement," she said. "The Good Work Code is helping us articulate the reality we'd like to usher in, but we still have some work to do in sharing that vision and building consumer demand for good work."

The code is still new, and though broader corporate interest in fair work cannot be directly attributed to it, Shah is hopeful about the changes she's seeing in the industry: an increase in profit-sharing models, more companies classifying contractors as W-2 employees with benefits, and growth in partnerships between online companies and worker organizations.

"The size and scope of our social dilemmas are so great right now that no discipline alone is going to be able to address the magnitude of the conflict that we have today," she says, adding that neither the labor movement nor the tech industry can solve these problems by itself. "The breakthroughs are going to come when these disciplines collide and come into interaction with each other." 



Christa Hillstrom is a senior editor at YES!

Essay | Fan Kong

Hello, Community! Benefits of a Side Job Selling Cherries

When I first saw the “Help Wanted” sign posted at the stall of a farm at my local farmers market in Seattle, I hoped I’d get work picking cherries. When I called, it turned out the job was selling them, but that was almost as good.

I was looking to escape from the abstractions and theories that, until that point, made up most of my days as a doctoral student in the social sciences at the University of Washington. I was tired of rearranging text on a screen and longed for the type of work that involved my hands.

A day’s labor at Pike Place Market, the nation’s oldest public market, means selling over \$1,000 worth of cherries, learning something new about a neighboring vendor, and speaking Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese with tourists. These are the specific and concrete ways I feel successful—a stark contrast to the ambiguous notions of success that characterize my graduate studies.

However, not everyone comes to this work in order to escape abstraction. Working at various markets throughout Seattle, I’ve met other gig workers who were in some sort of transition. Maimoona is a recent college graduate hoping to work full time in an arts-focused organization, but in the meantime she has an internship with an art school, while also working for a movie theater and the farm. Lucas

is a licensed massage therapist who holds five jobs. Per has been meeting farmers’ daily deliveries and helping vendors set up and close down shop for the past couple of years. He told me that he purposefully wanted to “start at the very bottom” so that someday he might have his own stall at the market, selling his blown-glass creations. The flexible schedules help them make ends meet while continuing to take steps toward the careers they desire.

The farmers market community is both local and global. Talking to the Chinese-speaking tourists from China, Taiwan, Canada, and Australia reconnects me to the Chinese diaspora. Locally, the workers are bound together by the informal gift economy of market culture. On any given day, I can trade up to two pounds of cherries for coffee, cigarettes, and produce from other farms. Cherries serve as currency as well as social capital—by spreading general neighborly good will and cheer.

I moved to Seattle in order to study issues of equity and social justice in education. That work, which remains my life’s work, is just as important to me now as before. However, somewhere along the path of my graduate studies, the more I analyzed my object of study, the further away I felt from its urgency. My life was becoming one-dimensional, much like the texts I was manipulating on screen. During these times, I wanted a small part of my life to be separate from academia.

I didn’t expect to subject this new gig to any type of intellectual scrutiny. But, of course, even selling cherries is never just about selling cherries. I took this gig not only because it was convenient for my student schedule but because working at farmers markets makes us ask these inevitable questions: What does it mean to eat with the seasons? How should a community sustainably feed and nourish its people? Who does the work of farming and harvesting local produce? What percentage of profits is returned to the agricultural workers?

If there is any sense of community born from the gathering of people and the exchange of goods at a market, then it begins with the acknowledgment that everything

we do is politically and ethically related to those essential questions. ♦



Fan Kong is a grumpy graduate student in the social sciences who spends most of her days in front of screens thinking about educational inequities. In her spare time, she works for a farm selling produce at Seattle’s Pike Place Market.

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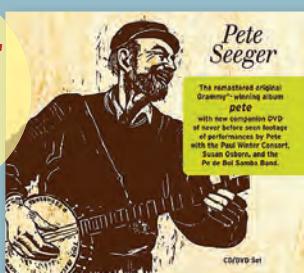
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Sally actively participated in the founding and development of YES! in her role as Fulfillment Manager, overseeing the magazine's distribution to subscribers until retirement a few years ago. Subsequently she has served as a frequent volunteer.

Richard has also been there from the beginning as a volunteer, providing advice on our office building (he's a retired architect), helping assemble furniture, and assisting with proofreading for many years.



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CULTURE SHIFT



Why Norway's Rush to Save the Sámi Language Involves a Talking Reindeer

Tristan Ahtone

A good puppet has to be liked, so Binnabánnáš was given a pair of friendly brown eyes, a set of uneven blue antlers, and leather shoes with red trim and curled toes reminiscent of *samiske komagers*, the traditional reindeer skin shoes worn by the Sámi, the indigenous people of Northern Europe.

He also has a job: to teach the Sámi language to children on Norwegian television on his own three-minute show. For example, Binnabánnáš teaches words that begin with the letter “B,” the difference between big and small, and colors. Think *Sesame Street* with an indigenous twist.

“Binnabánnáš could look like a reindeer calf, or it could be a cow calf. Some people thought it was a goat,” said Tamie Sue Runningen of NRK Sápmi, a unit of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation responsible for producing Sámi content. “It didn’t need to be one specific animal, but most of the Sámi will probably identify it as a reindeer.”

Reindeer herding is an iconic tradition practiced by the Sámi in the north, an area often referred to as Sápmi. Hunting and fishing are also common practices in Sámi communities, so Binnabánnáš will also have a fish sidekick named Uujuju.

“We want [children] to like both of

them and feel that we have covered everybody that is in Sápmi and all the Sámi people and what they work with and what they have in their communities,” said Runningen.

More than 80,000 Sámi people call Northern Europe home and live across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. They’re the largest indigenous group in Scandinavia, and it’s estimated that up to 35,000 speak the Sámi language. However, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has classified the language as endangered.

Binnabánnáš’s main goal is to keep the Sámi language alive in the next generation, but the character may also have a more subversive social role: demonstrating that indigenous culture is alive and growing in a world that has either forgotten or shown open contempt for its original people.

“I have a hope that through [Binnabánnáš] other kids will learn about the Sámi culture and learn about

diversity,” said Runningen. “When they see some of the generalizations and challenges that the Sámi people have had in history, or any other indigenous people have had in history, that they’ll have a little better understanding of what that is and why some of those fights were important.”

According to the United Nations, more than 370 million indigenous people live in nearly 90 countries worldwide and speak up to 6,000 different languages—half of which are in danger of disappearing by the next century.

“They are not passed on to the younger generation, so there’s an interruption of transmission,” said Christopher Moseley, editor of UNESCO’s *Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger*. “As long as a language is taught to children by adults, then to that degree it’s safe for the future. But if adults see no reason, whether it’s economic or social or any other reason, to pass on the language to their children, then the language is doomed, really, because the slide can only get worse unless some active measures are taken.”

Of 194 languages remaining in North America, it’s estimated that nearly 63 percent are spoken only by adults or elders. That’s where television and characters like Binnabánnáš can help.

“Children’s programming is really, really important both to preserve the language but also to pass on the cultural values,” said Duncan McCue, a correspondent for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and creator of *Reporting in Indigenous Communities*, an online guide for journalists working in Aboriginal communities. The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation has run puppet shows in Inuktitut for decades and has created Inuit super heroes.

Outside of the United States, indigenous programming is not uncommon. In Norway, NRK Sápmi broadcasts in the Sámi language; under NRK’s

OF 194 LANGUAGES REMAINING IN NORTH AMERICA, IT'S ESTIMATED THAT NEARLY 63 PERCENT ARE SPOKEN ONLY BY ADULTS OR ELDERS. THAT'S WHERE TELEVISION AND CHARACTERS LIKE BINNABÁNNAŠ CAN HELP.



Binnabánnas, held above by Tamie Sue Runningen of NRK Sápmi, will appear on-air this fall to teach children about Sámi language and culture.



corporate strategy, Sámi language and culture is to be strengthened through culturally relevant programming. New Zealand has Māori Television. In Ireland, there's TG4. And in countries like Canada, Australia, Taiwan, and South Africa, indigenous broadcasters have a place on TV.

In the United States, indigenous broadcasting is on the rise, but it's still relatively outside the mainstream. While media outlets like All Nations Network and FNX hope to become national providers of indigenous content, tribal broadcasters like the Cherokee Nation have begun broadcasting online and on local and regional stations.

"We've come off of a hundred years of history books that have not accurately depicted Native American tribes, let alone modern Native American tribes," said Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill John Baker. "But nobody can tell your story better than you can tell it."

The Cherokee Nation's 30-minute television magazine program, *Osiyo, Voices of the Cherokee People*, appears on stations around Oklahoma but can also be watched online, as requested by Cherokee citizens living in other parts of the United States and the world.

"Anybody anywhere in the world can stream the program, so it doesn't matter where you live; it's available any time of the day or night," said Chief Baker. "It gives us the opportunity to tell our story without letting someone else be in control of that story."

But when it comes to finding a home on the national stage, Native American voices continue to struggle.

"America has so much to learn from contemporary Native Americans that they're just not open to and they just don't seem to be able to open the media landscape to those contemporary indigenous voices," said McCue. "In other indigenous communities

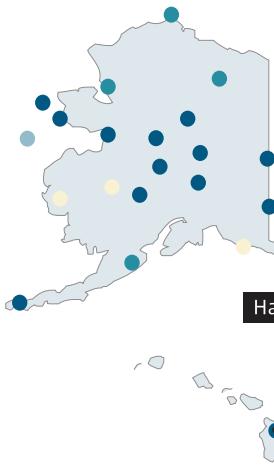
around the world, we're beyond that to some degree."

And it shows. On TG4, a new teen drama called *Eipic* follows "five rural teenagers who take over their local abandoned post office to start a musical revolution." It's broadcast in Gaeilge, the original Irish language. In Canada, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network offers dozens of programs, including *Mohawk Girls*, the indigenous answer to *Sex and the City*, and *The Other Side*, a paranormal investigation series. And in New Zealand, *Ngā Pirihimana Hou* follows Māori recruits as they train to become police officers. Māori television features a range of programs, from news and current affairs to performances of *Romeo and Juliet* in Te Reo, the Māori language.

"In the broader American media landscape you just don't hear about those Native American voices," said McCue. "I guess part of it has to do with the fact that America doesn't want to struggle with its difficult history, and when you start having vibrant voices, then you've got to deal with this really complicated history that Americans don't want to face up to."

For Aboriginal people in the United States, that means carving out digital spaces or harnessing old-fashioned technologies like radio to fill the void. Around the country, more than 40 tribal radio stations are currently on air, half of which broadcast in their own indigenous languages. At the same time, hundreds of newspapers and online outlets produce hyper-local content, from the *Potawatomi Traveling Times* in Wisconsin to larger national outfits like *Native American Times*.

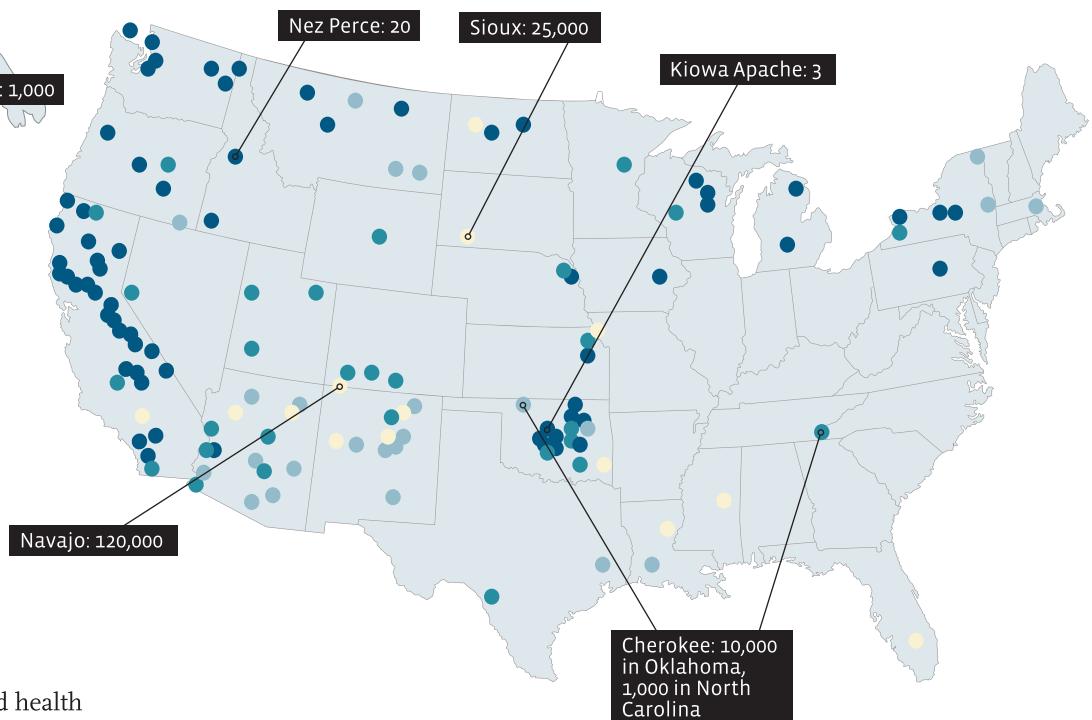
"Community-generated indigenous media has a very strong impact on the health and well-being of not only



Vulnerable
Definitely Endangered
Severely Endangered
Nearly Extinct

Endangered Languages in the U.S.

In the United States, there are 145 Native American languages left—some spoken by only a small number of elder tribal members. Forty seven have fewer than 20 speakers. Navajo, spoken by about 120,000 people, is the most widely used Native language in the United States.



2016 data, UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger

YES! INFOGRAPHIC 2016

languages but on the life and health of indigenous communities,” said John Schertow of the Center for World Indigenous Studies. “It provides communities with an easily accessible channel to disseminate culturally appropriate information, which helps maintain cohesion, but it also helps to ensure that communities can remain responsive to new challenges, threats, and opportunities that arise, which is something that mainstream mass media can’t generally provide.”

In other words, supporting indigenous media, and its potential to reach larger audiences, could increase the likelihood that languages will survive. Still, American media outlets remain primarily Indian-free zones, and that means encouragement for indigenous languages is lacking a big piece of support.

“I don’t want to say that the future is rosy, I think the trend all the way is toward homogenization, and I often feel that people who try to champion

endangered languages are fighting a losing battle,” said Moseley. “But there are plenty of reasons for hope in individual cases. As long as there are people to care about their own linguistic heritage, then you can’t give up hope, can you?”

At NRK Sápmi’s studio, Runningen took an admiring look at Binnabánnáš, then wrapped him in plastic. With the show still some months off, the puppet would return to storage until a little television magic could bring him to life.

“It’ll be really exciting when the set comes in in a couple of weeks because then the world will start forming,” said Runningen.

When Binnabánnáš and Ujuju hit the air this fall, they’ll be in stiff competition with children’s programming from around Norway and the world,

but Runningen says NRK Sápmi isn’t too worried: Binnabánnáš’ job will be to show that Sámi culture is thriving while preparing the next generation for how to be indigenous in the 21st century.

“Hopefully [non-Sámi] kids will grow up with the idea that the Sámi aren’t another people that are different,” said Runningen.



Tristan is a journalist and member of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma. His work has appeared on and in PBS NewsHour, National Native News, Frontline, Wyoming Public Radio, Vice, Fronteras Desk, NPR, and Al Jazeera America.

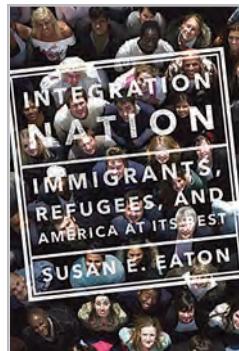


Jubilee Velez, 3, of Hazleton, gets ready to enjoy a bite to eat during the community event at the Hazleton One Community Center.

NO WALLS HERE: COMMUNITIES THAT EMBRACE IMMIGRANTS

Manuel Pastor and Magaly N. López

With all the attention the media gives to presidential candidate Donald Trump, some might think that the anti-immigrant sentiment he expresses is the dominant frame of mind in our country. But Susan E. Eaton's book, *Integration Nation: Immigrants, Refugees, and America at Its Best*, reminds us that, in fact, hate and xenophobia are being rejected by communities across the nation.



Integration Nation
SUSAN E. EATON
The New Press, 224 pages

What's the secret recipe to creating more welcoming communities in our country? Part of it involves making the economic case that immigrants contribute. In places like Dayton, Ohio, and Philadelphia, civic and business leaders have understood that economic revitalization can be driven by immigrant entrepreneurship and energy, and so have sought to foster and support small-business development.

But while direct economic interests fortify the case for immigrant integration, Eaton's book is a powerful reminder that it's a few fundamental values—being open, receptive, and neighborly—that are really critical. For what's at stake is not just our prosperity but the very soul of America—and this turns on the choices we make every day about how to act, how to lead, and how to inspire others to do the right thing.

Of course, welcoming attitudes and activities do not happen on a blank slate. In a recent co-edited book, *Unsettled Americans: Metropolitan Context and Civic Leadership for Immigrant Integration*, we tried to lay out the factors that make a difference in receptivity—that is, what “unsettles” native-born Americans about new immigrants and what factors best help new Americans settle in.

First, history matters. Cities with a longer legacy of immigrant arrival also tend to have the immigrant-serving institutions that help integrate newcomers. But such experienced cities often

are bordered by suburbs that are less familiar with immigrants—a big challenge because those suburbs are exactly where America's immigrant population is growing most rapidly.

Second, race matters. When a city or a region has a diverse immigrant community—both in terms of class and national origin—native-born residents are less likely to view immigrants in a negative, racialized manner. In Silicon Valley, highly skilled (often Asian) immigrants are seen as essential to business health, which has positive spillover effects: Silicon Valley was one of the first places in the United States to create a local health insurance program that covers undocumented kids.

Third, politics matters. Naturalized immigrants and their American-born children can vote and hold political representatives accountable for their actions. Consider New York, where immigrant voters, social movements, and advocacy organizations secured political support from then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg and current Mayor Bill de Blasio for immigrant-friendly practices, like municipal ID cards and resistance to the involvement of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in local jails.

Fourth, leadership matters. While some politicians seek to inflame anxieties to build their own political careers, other influential people and organizations are crafting more welcoming responses. For example, the Utah Compact, reached in 2010, embodied an agreement between business, civic, faith, law enforcement, and other leaders to have a more civil discourse on immigration and to avoid separating families. Strikingly, in one of the nation's most conservative states, undocumented immigrants have long had access to driver's licenses and in-state tuition.

What Eaton powerfully adds to this list of structural factors is something seemingly less concrete but, in fact, even more essential: the role of grassroots values. She does this by taking us far from the usual areas that come to mind when we think of immigrants in the United

States—New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles—to instead visit the heartland, New England, and the South.

In Omaha, Nebraska, Islam is a growing faith—this in a state whose image of whiteness is belied by the fact that more than 30 percent of the children under age 5 are people of color. In the face of change, leaders have chosen communication and coexistence. One example: A former Jewish country club—built for and by Jews that were barred from obtaining other country club memberships—is being converted into a tri-faith campus, where a synagogue, mosque, and church will stand side by side.

Or consider the state of Mississippi, where some in the African-American community initially viewed the growing number of Latino immigrants as job competitors. But stressing that jobs, work conditions, access to education—and basic human rights—are common goals, African-American elected officials have blocked a range of anti-immigrant legislation. Economic interests weren't the only reason: Eaton's book recounts a statement by James Evans, a Mississippi state legislator: "The Black Caucus knows its history—many of our members lived that civil rights history—and we vowed to never sit still when human beings are being treated as less than human."

Perhaps Eaton's most compelling story comes from Hazleton, Pennsylvania, a city of 25,000 that became famous in 2006 when its city council passed a series of ordinances to prevent employers from hiring and landlords from renting to undocumented immigrants. Appalled by the emerging tone, hometown hero and then-manager of the Tampa Bay Rays Joe Maddon decided to shift the conversation, helping to start the Hazleton Integration Project.

One of the results was the Hazleton One Community Center, where immigrants and native-borns alike can learn English or Spanish, enjoy cultural and sports programs, and send children to do homework. But equally important has been a new spirit of unity. When Maddon asked a cook in a Mexican restaurant

where he was from, he expected to hear a hometown in, say, Oaxaca. Instead, the cook replied in English, "I'm from Hazleton," sparking a messaging idea for a banner featuring multiethnic groups of residents with the tagline, "We're from Hazleton!"

But there must be more than banners and slogans. In a recent report, "Opening Minds, Opening Doors, Opening Communities," we review the wide range of policies and practices that can help cities and regions be more welcoming to immigrants. These include streamlining services, providing in-language assistance, shifting law enforcement to community policing, and making immigrant integration everyone's business.

But you don't get policies without politics, and our politics—sometimes for better and sometimes for worse—are fundamentally based on our values. Eaton reminds us that America is at its best when it welcomes rather than rejects immigrants, when it chooses integration over exclusion, when it builds bridges rather than walls. She stresses that what's at stake in the immigration debate is not only the policy details of guest worker programs, border security, and paths to citizenship; what's at stake is who we are as a nation.

The research shows that we all have an economic interest in welcoming our new neighbors—cities and regions do better when we do. But ultimately, immigrant integration is about more than our interests. It is about who we are and how we treat each other—welcoming the newcomer, helping those who are anxious find their way to their better selves, and bringing communities together to turn

the page on hate. 

Manuel Pastor is a professor of sociology and American studies and ethnicity. He is the co-director of the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII) at the University of Southern California.



Magaly N. López is a data analyst at the CSII and is a Public Policy and International Affairs Fellow at USC.





Farmers weed and till the plot on the first day of occupation of the Gill Tract.

A ROLE FOR COLLEGES IN GROWING YOUNG FARMERS

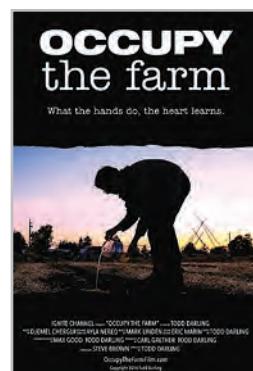
Chelsey Simpson

On Earth Day 2012, a group of University of California, Berkeley, students, former students, and other community members marched to the padlocked gates of UC Berkeley's Gill Tract carrying shovels, protest signs, seedlings, and hay bales. A small marching band kept time, and someone, it seems, remembered to bring bolt cutters. The Gill Tract, a relatively small piece of land, was about to be the setting for a months-long battle.

This is the scene captured by the documentary film, *Occupy the Farm*, which follows the battle for the Gill Tract, beginning with the Earth Day march and occupation of the farm and ending with a pivotal city zoning meeting several months later. In the interim, more than 15,000 seedlings were planted and 2,000 pounds of

produce were harvested by community organizers, many of whom set up camp at the Gill Tract in order to assert their right to the space and prevent police and campus authorities from reclaiming the land.

A 14-acre patch of green edged by city streets and a few palm trees (the film calls it a 20-acre plot, potentially



Occupy the Farm

Directed by Todd Darling, 2015, 90 min.

including other land in the estimate), the Gill Tract, in the eyes of the marchers and the filmmakers, is a once and future farm, one of the last arable plots in the East Bay. In the eyes of UC Berkeley administrators, the tract is a piece of university capital: valuable for agricultural research but also as the future site of a grocery store and

a senior housing development, the profits from which could help close a budget gap left by state funding cuts.

What isn't discussed directly in the film is how instrumental university farms could be in closing another critical gap: America's young farmer shortage. According to the USDA Census of Agriculture, over the next 25 years two-thirds of all farmland will need a new farmer and only 6 percent of farmers are under the age of 35. The organization I work for, the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC), has a goal of 25,000 new young farmers by 2022. But where will these young farmers come from?

MY FATHER IS A FARMER on the plains of Oklahoma, as is his father, as was his father before him. For generations, farming was a largely inherited profession, but in the middle of the last century, the world began to shift. Bigger and better machinery made it easier to plow more acres and milk more cows with less help—my family has a newspaper clipping showing my grandfather in his new milking parlor, waiting for the first bolts of electricity that would change his business forever. Sons and daughters, no longer essential labor, were sent to college. Some of them, like my father and uncle, went to study agriculture with the intention of returning to the farm, while others left the farm for good.

Today, however, another shift is taking place. College is, famously, a time for exploration, and more and more young people are using their undergraduate years to experiment with farming. Many of the young farmers in NYFC say they first got their hands in the dirt while they were in college. Drawn to the idea of public service and working with their hands, some campus farmers decide to make farming their career.

Some universities do have successful farms (ranging from just a quarter-acre to more than 800 acres) that provide hands-on learning experiences,

beneficial even for those who don't grow up to be farmers. But many university farms are far from robust at a time when agriculture and education are increasingly reliant on each other. Farming is a more demanding field than ever before, requiring knowledge of soil and animal science, as well as marketing, business management, and engineering. To fix farm machinery in the 1980s, my father needed to understand diesel mechanics and hydraulics; those skills are still relevant today, but drones and a host of complex sensors and tracking apps have also entered the scene. More than ever, we need universities that can both recruit new farmers to the field and educate them well.

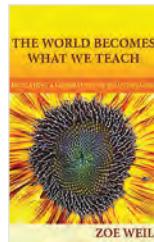
Universities should have farms for the same reason they have concert halls and lecture series: to give students a chance to expand their horizons, discover new passions, and enrich the quality of their overall education. Not everyone who attends a piano recital becomes a musician, and not everyone who visits a campus farm will become a farmer, but some will.

Occupy the Farm shows how hungry students and communities are (literally and figuratively) for urban farming opportunities and the positive impact universities could have if they leveraged their resources to create more farms and farmers. Although commercial development is currently moving forward on the south half of the Gill Tract, the north half is home to agricultural research plots, as well as the 1.5-acre UC Gill Tract Community Farm, now 3 years old. Last year, more than 1,300 volunteers worked at the farm, producing 15,500 pounds of produce. With any luck, a few career farmers sprouted as well. ☺



Chelsey Simpson is the communications director for the National Young Farmers Coalition, a network of farmers, ranchers, and consumers who support practices and policies that will sustain young, independent, and prosperous farmers. She lives and writes in Brooklyn, New York, but her heart resides in Oklahoma.

IN SHORT :: What's inspiring us



The World Becomes What We Teach Zoe Weil

An expanded version of Zoe Weil's 2010 TEDx Talk, *The World Becomes What We Teach* is both a problem statement and a call to action. Global crises, such as climate change, as well as the everyday stuff of life, require a generation of "solutionaries," Weil says, to tackle real-world problems. As president of the Institute for Humane Education, Weil discusses useful strategies, like a student "Solutionary Congress," and the integration of arts and reflection throughout the learning process. Hers is a guide to transforming schools that is a natural fit for K-12 teachers, parents, and anyone working with young people.



Notes from the Playground Greg John

A San Francisco elementary school principal, Greg John has presented life lessons through a collection of playground scenes. Grouped according to months of the school year and given one-word titles—from character traits such as "Grit" and "Wisdom" to you-just-have-to-read-it tales like "Pretend," "Jump," and "Trouble"—the vignettes show how the routines and events of a child's day add up to lifetime meaning. A story from October ("Grudge"), about an 8-year-old who's angry at a classmate, leads to John's thoughts on how grudges hold people back. "Nothing changes when things stand still, and leading may be about learning how to make things move." —Kim Eckart

URBAN FORAGING: WEEDS TO EAT

Research by Jasleena Grewal
Illustrations by Jennifer Luxton

Foraging, or wandering in search of food and plants, isn't relegated to remote forests and idyllic fields. Edible and usable weeds are abundant in urban environments too. Some are found in common cuisine: Dandelion and stinging nettle are often used in salads and teas. And many weeds are vitamin- and nutrient-rich.

Harvesting urban weeds can help us connect better with the natural spaces where we work, live, and play. But finding them requires a little technique. Melany Vorass Herrera, author of *The Front Yard Forager*, suggests carrying a field guide to help identify plants, picking only as much as you need, and avoiding areas known for pollution, heavy industry, or chemical use (pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers).

Your nearest urban patch may be home to a variety of edible weeds, including some you may never have heard of, like lamb's quarter (hint: it doesn't have to do with meat).

WHEN AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL
LAWNS AND LOTS		Plantain	Chickweed
GARDEN SOIL	Chickweed	Mallow	
	Lemon Balm		
	Lamb's Quarter		



LEMON BALM

HOW TO USE IT

Use dried leaves for tea, salads, and meat dishes. Crush leaves for lemon-flavored vinegar and herb butter.

WHAT IT DOES FOR YOU

Lemon balm reduces anxiety and remedies digestive problems.

DID YOU KNOW?

Lemon balm tinctures and oils are used to treat insomnia and to calm agitation in people with Alzheimer's disease.

LAMB'S QUARTER

HOW TO USE IT

Eat leaves raw or cooked. Use seeds in baked goods, like muffins and cakes.

WHAT IT DOES FOR YOU

Lamb's quarter may be a "superfood" contender—the leaves have more calcium and protein than spinach.

DID YOU KNOW?

Its seeds can be a staple for a gluten-free diet. Lamb's quarter is related to quinoa, with both in the *Amaranthaceae* family and commonly used as wheat substitutes.



CHICKWEED

HOW TO USE IT

A mild, lettuce-like taste makes it a good garnish in salads and sandwiches.

WHAT IT DOES FOR YOU

Water stored in the leaves flushes vitamins and minerals through the body.

DID YOU KNOW?

Chickweed blossoms are rainy day fortune-tellers. The blossoms close up when rain is imminent, signaling you to be raincoat-and-umbrella ready.

PLANTAIN

HOW TO USE IT

Add leaves to salads, steep for tea, or drizzle them in oil and bake as chips.

WHAT IT DOES FOR YOU

Tea from leaves soothes toothaches, coughs, and sore throats.

DID YOU KNOW?

The *Plantago* genus classifies about 200 plant species called plantains, completely unrelated to plantain bananas. *Plantago* is Latin for "sole of the foot," which ancient Romans believed the leaves resembled.

MALLOW

HOW TO USE IT

Add young shoots to salads. For soups, the leaves can be used as a thickener and to add a sweet taste. For baking, roots can be used as an egg white substitute.

WHAT IT DOES FOR YOU

High in calcium, magnesium, and potassium, the leaves aid bone strength and resilience.

DID YOU KNOW?

Celtic folk doctors used mallow to treat hair loss.



AT LARGE :: Sarah van Gelder

WHEN SHOWING UP REQUIRES MORE THAN A FACEBOOK POST

I had never seen a man die before watching the videos of Alton Sterling, age 37, and Philando Castile, age 32, each shot by police. Afterward, I rattled around the house, grieving and closing in on despair. How many more Black people will die? Are we really unable to change after so many years of racism? Will fear and rage—with the extra push from Donald Trump—win in the end?

Alone with a nonstop stream of violence and brutality, there seemed to be no hope, and, aside from some retweets, I couldn't think of what to do.

A few days later, across my Facebook page came a call to stand in support of Black Lives Matter in the nearby city of Silverdale, Washington, a suburb full of chain stores and fast-food restaurants adjacent to a large naval base. It was a new mothers' support group—mostly White—that put out the call, but attendees were Black, White, Native and all ages, from tiny babies to elderly activists. Strangers started introducing themselves, and small groups began working together on signs with the names of Black people who had been killed by police.

The county sheriff, Gary Simpson, showed up with several deputies. When he saw a group making a sign reading, "White people: What will we do to change our legacy of violence?" he asked permission to add a sheriff's badge sticker to the sign.

Later, as we stood at the street corner, some passersby yelled and cursed, but most honked or gave a thumbs up or a clenched fist in approval. As time went on, the group standing with signs relaxed a bit, and there were smiles and conversations. An anonymous street corner became a place to express grief, to feel connection, and, finally, to begin healing.

Social media does not replace this experience. Facebook, Twitter, Vine, Periscope, and other platforms have made it possible to mobilize quickly and at large scales. But what matters is that we show up in person.

At a recent technology conference, Sherry Turkle, director of the MIT Initiative on Technology and Self, explained why human-to-human contact is important: "What presence does is to create the empathic connection that comes from knowing that a person who has lived a human life is listening with all of themselves, body and mind. ... That is how you create an ethical connection."

That ethical, empathic connection suggests that we might make the greatest inroads on racism in our own communities, among our own families and friends.

"You have to bring it home," Joyce Hobson Johnson, a leader of Beloved Community Center in Greensboro, North Carolina, told me when I visited last year as part of my Edge of Change road trip. Johnson, a member of the North Carolina NAACP State Executive Board, has experienced horrific violence, including a 1979 shooting by the KKK and Nazis—with police complicity—that left five dead.

"To really make a difference, you have to have relationships and build a new culture of possibility—what we call beloved community," she said. "We've met with some of the Klan and Nazis," Johnson told me. "They too struggle for their livelihoods."

"You respect and honor their dignity and worth, the equality of every person," she said. "That's something that is in itself revolutionary."

In Greensboro, and in other places I visited during my road trip, I saw a pent-up longing to love one another. Lots of barriers get in the way: We get scared or sidetracked by trivia and cat videos. We don't have time; we're shy; we're not sure we measure up. And we have trouble connecting across race, class, gender, and generational lines.

But when we do take the time to connect, we weave a fabric of empathy and support. We make our communities more resilient and more centered on the common good.



We may even find the courage to finally defeat racism.

Sarah van Gelder is co-founder and editor at large of YES! Magazine. Her forthcoming book, *The Revolution Where You Live: Stories from a 12,000-Mile Journey Through a New America*, tells more stories of local power.

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