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NEWS

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Members of the MDC Health Care Task Force update members on the progress toward health care for all. Seated at table from left are Bert Wyman, Seth Armstrong, Dean Fournier, Charlton Price and Vinod Goswami.

health care reform

## Task force provides update, ideas

Members of the Metropolitan Democratic Club of Seattle’s Health Care Task Force updated fellow members on health care options, actions and suggestions at its August 23 meeting. According to task force member Charlton Price, the options for health care reform are

- repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act
- the public option (like Social Security)

- publicly financed, affordable health care for all

Mr Price reminded members that the task force was formed to keep the MDC apprised of progress towards universal health care at the state and national levels. Task force members represent the MDC at Health Care for All – Washington, Physicians for a National Health Program, and the Health Care is a Human Right Coalition.

The task force is also tasked with

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back to schools

## Director Geary to speak at September meeting



Jill Geary

Seattle School Board Director Jill Geary is scheduled to speak to the Metropolitan Democratic Club of Seattle at its September 13 meeting on “Seattle Schools: progress, challenges and opportunities.”

Ms Geary, a member of the MDC, is serving her second term on the Seattle School Board and is its legislative liaison. She also sits on the board’s operations, curriculum and instruction and capital committees.

She notes that during her tenure she has been “an outspoken advocate on behalf of inclusion and closing the achievement gaps that exist within Seattle Public Schools.”

## Nowhere to go but forward on health care cost coverage?

The MDC Health Care Task Force

This just in: Polls now say that a majority of Americans think that everybody should have their health care costs covered as a public service (like police, fire, highways, and defense). But how should the costs of health care services and products be paid? We’ve fussed over this for over a century. We must make further progress on health care cost coverage.

How better to meet the costs of our

health care is still undecided. This fall in Congress there will be two bills on health care cost coverage. One of these, HR 676, from Michigan Representative John Conyers, has been introduced in every session since 2003. Bernie Sanders is about to introduce a similar bill in the Senate.

Can the US keep moving toward single payer (public funding) of our health care expenses? Or must we continue the presently tangled, enormously inad-

equated, outrageously expensive, inefficient, confusing ways of paying for our health care? Currently, about two thirds of Americans have coverage of most of their basic health care expenses – if they are over 65 (Medicare), if they are of low income (Medicaid, but that varies by state), if in a protected group (such as active military or veterans, many government and other public employees), if they have health insurance through their jobs, or if they have signed up for pri-

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# Ticket splitters

By Al Rasmussen

I did much campaign advising in the 1970s for candidates including Douthwaite, Lysen, Sommers and Nelson. The attached article is based on that work and even though the examples cited are dated the principles are still valid, and the crucial 2018 legislative elections are nigh. - Al Rasmussen

At any particular general election, voting behavior can be divided into three groups:

- (1) generally straight-ticket voting Democrats (D)
- (2) generally split-ticket voting Independents (I)
- (3) generally straight-ticket voting Republicans (R)

Here the term Independent refers strictly to that voting practice, not to membership in any party that might have the word in its name, and not to how voters self-identify, but strictly to how they vote.

Because individual ballots are usually not available for analysis, the classification can be made only at the scale of the precinct, and then cumulated over a group of precincts, over an entire legislative district, over a county, or statewide.

Calculation of the profile depends on having appropriate races high on the ballot. An example was the 1968 general election, when statewide for US Senator Warren Magnuson (D) beat Jack Metcalfe (R) 65-35, and for Governor Dan Evans (R) beat John O'Connell (D) 55-45. Taking the O'Connell vote to indicate D strength (45) and Metcalfe R strength (35), because the three



*Al Rasmussen*

groups must add to 100, I strength was 20.

Calculation of the profile is possible only from top-of-the ballot races, because results for races further down the ballot are vitiated by falloff. That is, races where voters who vote for top-of-the-ballot races but do not vote for the race in question.

Because the straight-ticket voting Ds and Rs have so little effect on election results, having nearly eliminated themselves, by a process of mutual cancellation, the Is have disproportionately large influence on results.

When the 1968 DIR profiles of each of the state's 49 legislative districts are compared with how those districts voted on several highly important 1970 statewide ballot measures, it emerges that D strength correlates very poorly with how the 49 districts voted on the measures, but I strength correlates very well. Moreover, there is a pronounced association of the liberal side of the ballot measure with the I strength of the district.

**I-251** Mandates no new taxes, nor tax-increases

**I-256** Requires 5-cents bottle deposit

**Ref 20** Legalizes abortion

**Ref 21** Extends authorization for bonds for outdoor recreation facilities

**Ref 22** Extends authorization for bonds for various public building projects

**Ref 23** Extends authorization for bonds for water pollution control

**HJR 6** Lowers voting age from 21 to 19

**HJR 42** Limits property tax to 1 percent, creates personal and corporate income taxes

Of these, only Ref 20, Ref 21, Ref 23 passed.

Democratic campaigns for legislative positions are faced with a two-front war. With D voters, actual or potential, the enemy is apathy, which comes in three forms, each being combated with a different effort: voter registration programs, Get Out the Vote drives, encouraging those who do go to the polls not to get tired – that is, voting all the way down the ballot. With I voters, the appeal must be made to their intellects in terms of the issues of the day.

According to a July 2016 nationwide survey by the estimable PEW Research Center, in 2014 Is (39%) outnumbered either Ds (32%) or Rs (23%), but most of them expressed a partisan leaning. Of the 39%, 17% leaned D and 16% leaned R, with 6% leaning toward neither. When the support for Ds is augmented by those leaning D, the total is 48%, compared with 39% supporting or leaning toward Rs.

PEW documents the three-group composition of the electorate but then falls back on a two-group analysis of it. That is, PEW makes the mistake of splitting the ticket splitters.



## From the editor

Please send notices of upcoming events, letters, articles, and book reviews to Editor Eleanor Munro at walkere1@msn.com or 1925 41st Ave SW, Seattle WA 98116 no later than the fourth Wednesday of the month. All contributions are subject to editing. For more information call 206-370-1374.

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## book review

# Capital in the Twenty-First Century

by Thomas Piketty

The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2014

Reviewed by Allan Munro

This tome – 577 pages of charts, graphs and another 106 pages of notes, footnotes and index – has been characterized as the most important economics book of the decade. It is also said to be the most displayed book that has not been read of this decade.

I have read it.

Piketty is concerned with the growing inequality of wealth for the economically developed world. His thesis is summarized:

Historical data supports the idea:

1. Long-term average returns on capital equal approximately five percent
2. Long-term average economic growth equals approximately one-two percent
3. Therefore, if ownership of capital is unequal, than inequality of wealth will mathematically increase.

It is hard to argue with Piketty's logic, but what about his premises? He spends more than half of the book discussing evidence to support his two premises. He has been very resourceful in extracting what little evidence exists. It is an impressive effort but it is not totally convincing. I agree with economists like Paul Krugman, who think he is probably right or at least close to the mark.

Along the way Piketty confirms other economic observations. Inequality of wealth and income creates economic instability (like the Great Recession of 2008) and retards economic growth. Beyond a certain threshold, capital tends to reproduce itself and accumulates exponentially because larger accumulations of capital have a higher



Allan Munro

rate or return than smaller accumulations.

The total of worldwide national income accounts are negative when, mathematically, they have to be zero. This means that a substantial amount of income comes from assets concealed in places like Panama, The Cayman Islands, Cyprus, etc.

Piketty's solution, a graduated annual tax on capital wealth would solve the problem. This would work like a property (ad valorem) tax on all forms of wealth with larger estates paying incrementally more. But such, a tax would require full disclosure of assets by citizens of all countries. This implies a degree of disclosure and cooperation that does not currently exist among nations. There is much to recommend about this book, but it is a reading challenge.



### Letters to the editor

To the editor:

Al Gore's new film, "An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power," is very compelling. One wishes the Trump people could see it because the footage of climate changes around the world speaks for itself. I had the great pleasure of seeing Al Gore at a screening of the film in July and am very sad that he did not become President.

Carole Glickfeld

- Task Force continued from p1 -

suggesting actions that will promote health care for all. For example, continue to support the campaigns listed above, provide educational programming to legislative district organizations, and talk with family, friends and neighbors.

The task force suggests that members purchase and read (or at least read) a pamphlet authored by John Geyman, MD entitled *Common Sense about Health Care Reform in America*. This document uses simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense to compare three financing alternatives, discuss today's crisis in health care, cover an historical prospective and describe how Medicare for all would work. It can be purchased from the MDC Health Care Task Force by contacting Charlton Price [charltonrp@gmail.com]. It is also available at Amazon.



- Nowhere continued from p1 -  
vate health insurance. (Please note: It's not health that's insured but the cost of health care services and products.) But about 30 million (individuals and families) are uninsured. Millions more can't afford enough insurance – especially if they already face major health care expenses.

Should people pay directly for their own health care (unless they're not in an entitled group)? Or should public funds from taxes and other government revenues be used to cover health care costs? Most developed countries use public funds for this. Most care providers in these countries are not public employees. And prices for health care services and products, such as drugs, are negotiated. Other countries have single payer. Why can't we?



mark your

# MDC calendar

September - December

*MDC meetings take place noon – 1:30 pm, the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at the plaza 600 Building #205, 600 Stewart St unless otherwise noted.*

**Wednesday, September 13**

“Seattle Schools: progress, challenges and opportunities,” presented by Seattle School Board Director Jill Geary.

**Thursday, September 28**

(NOT Wednesday September 27)

General endorsement proceedings. Discuss whether and for which endorsee(s) to hold fundraisers.

**Wednesday, October 11**

“Fixing our Democracy in Washington State” presented by Cindy Black, executive director of Fix Democracy First.

**Wednesday, October 25**

Senator Bob Hasegawa will provide an overview of what happened and what didn’t during the last legislative session.

**Tuesday, November 7**

Pete’s Progressive Election Night Party

**Wednesday, November 15**

Discuss governance and develop operational plan for 2018.

**Sunday, December 10**

Winter Holiday Party

**Wednesday, December 13**

Approve budget for 2018.

## Cindy Black talks about how to Fix Democracy First



*Cindy Black*

Cindy Black, executive director of Fix Democracy First, will speak at the October 11 meeting of the Metropolitan Democratic Club of Seattle.

Fix Democracy First was established in 2001 as Washington Public Campaigns. In 2014 the name was changed to Fix Democracy First. Recently it combined forces with WAmend. Its mission is to achieve fair elections and government policies that reflect the will of the people and not the power of money.

Ms Black previously served as WAmend’s campaign director for Initiative 735 and as secretary during the I-735 signature gathering campaign. In 2014 she served on the executive committee for I-1329, the predecessor of I-735.

## For your information

Members of the Metropolitan Democratic Club of Seattle who are currently serving as elected officials include:

- Seattle City Councilmember **Sally Bagshaw**
- Senator **Marilyn Chase** (32nd LD)
- Edmonds School Board Director **Carin Chase**
- King County Executive **Dow Constantine**
- King County Councilmember **Rod Dembowski**
- Port of Seattle Commissioner **Fred Felleman**
- Seattle School Board Director **Jill Geary**
- Representative **Roger Goodman** (45th LD)
- Senator **Bob Hasegawa** (11th LD)
- Seattle City Councilmember **Lisa Herbold**
- Seattle City Attorney **Pete Holmes**
- King County Councilmember **Jeanne Kohl-Welles**
- Shoreline City Mayor **Chris Roberts**
- Representative **Gael Tarleton** (36th LD)

The MDC also boasts among its members former elected officials and chairs of legislative districts.

Prior to that she was a grassroots organizer for I-522 to label GMOs.

Her involvement as an activist was spurred by a desire to see her grandchildren grow up in a more sustainable and just world. She has been a small business owner and veteran, and believes it’s our civic duty to stand up to the moneyed influences corrupting our democracy and to give power back to the people.



Have you paid your dues? Check the date above your name on the address label. That’s your due date.

Membership renewal date appears on above label

September 2017

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OF SEATTLE



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