

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

From the Selected Works of William W. Riggs

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Love is a Two Way Street

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AGING POPULATIONS ARE FORCING CITIES TO **RETHINK EVERYTHING**

BY CHRISTOPHER FLAVELLE
BLOOMBERG NEWS

In U.S. politics, “seniors’ issues” usually means Medicare and Social Security and how much to spend on them. That needs to change, as a new report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development illustrates: The pressure of demographics will turn plenty of more mundane

things into seniors’ issues. For a glimpse into that future, take a look in Philadelphia’s garages.

The city is being squeezed by an aging population, poverty and housing costs. One in seven Philadelphians is already 65 and older, a number that is projected to grow 24 percent by 2020. Most want to stay in their own homes. Many are poor. And as in many U.S. cities, money for social services is tight: Philadelphia’s budget fell 12 percent

from 2013 to 2014 alone.

So in 2011, the city council adopted zoning changes that make it easier to build “accessory dwelling units” — such as garage, basement or backyard apartments — designed for the elderly to move into while they rent out their homes to make money or their families move in as caregivers.

Putting Granny in the garage might not seem like loving elder care, but the OECD’s report shows that cities need to try new pol-

icies, and fast. From 2001 to 2011, the number of people 65 or older living in developed-country cities jumped 24 percent — three times the speed of growth for those cities as a whole. By 2050, 1 in 4 people will be 65 or older, with the fastest growth among those 80 and up.

That means more than just finding new places for seniors to live. The report looks

See **RETHINK** Page C7

Love is ...

A TWO-WAY STREET

BY WILLIAM RIGGS
AND JOHN GILDERBLOOM

William Riggs is an assistant professor of city and regional planning, California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo. John Gilderbloom heads the Department of Planning and Public Administration at the University of Louisville.

A half a century ago, we were in love with our streets. They were also living things. They were the open-air living room of our society, the conduct for neighborhood play and discussion, the glue of our social fabric. One of the key urban theorists of the 20th century, Jane Jacobs, wrote in Fortune Magazine that the street “...works harder than any other part of downtown. It is the nervous system, it communicates the flavor, the feel, the sights. It is the major point of transaction and communication. Users of downtown know very well that downtown needs not fewer streets, but more, especially for pedestrians.” Today, however, much of that is lost, and cities, both large and small must reevaluate streetscapes designed for faster speeds auto mobility — and one key thing is to evaluate whether or not multi-lane, one-way streets have a role in walkable, livable and sustainable neighborhoods.

Over the last two years, we have conducted repeated research experiments on the livability benefits two-way versus multi-lane one-way streets at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and the University of Louisville. While we understand the purpose of one-ways in traffic flow, and the beauty that they can provide as one-lane corridors in North End of Boston or Lombard Street in San Francisco as social scientists in planning, urban design and transportation we hypothesize that in their multi-lane variation one-way streets degrade neighborhood quality. This is not well researched area so our work has sparked debate among traffic engineers and some who fear the loss of auto mobility that these places provide. That said, our work has shown something much different that runs counter to those fears and appears to be catching fire across the nation. In cities of many shape and size the result has been the same. As multi-lane, one-way streets are converted to two-way we have seen: traffic accidents, crime, and abandonments fall; traffic volumes rise with more people choosing to move in a network of two-way streets rather than one-way couplets; prices spike despite a broader downtown by; and business enterprises with increased profits.

Specifically in our most recent assessment in Louisville, KY, we evaluated in Census Tracts with 2 or more one-way segments, and found that they had 2,992 more colli-

sions and 792 more injuries requiring medical treatment than the Tracts without one-way concentrations. Likewise, in terms of property values, if you own a house in a neighborhood with one-way streets your house values approximately half a

neighborhoods with two-way streets — an average of \$152,629 compared to \$64,681. This data shows that two-way street conversions can be a value proposition for local government raiding the tax base and increasing municipal coffers — and many people including mayors, police chiefs, council members, developers, and community activists have taken note.

Cities across the US are now having a lively debates over street conversion as a valid component of an urban regeneration and economic development strategy. This social movement is challenging people to love their streets again, to take them back and make them more livable — and to that extent we applaud the work that cities such as diverse as Baltimore, Napa, Raleigh, Indianapolis, Fargo and Minneapolis are doing things to change their streets, however in the words of the great social science thinker Max Weber, there are still “inconvenient facts” that remain. The most important issue facing our and the world is environmental degradation and climate change. It has become the number one threat to human life, and is not unconnected to the issue of livable streets.

If our society is going to attempt to mitigate the damage to our planet and our livelihoods we must address how travel, and this starts with thinking about streets. While our results show the tangible costs and savings in terms of reduced collisions and increases in economic value, the real benefit may be in re-

See **TWO-WAY STREET** Page C6

Jobs most likely to make you crave a stiff drink at the end of a workday

BY CHRISTOPHER INGRAHAM
THE WASHINGTON POST

Drug abuse — including and especially alcohol abuse — costs the U.S. economy billions of dollars in lost productivity each year. New government data released this month can now tell us exactly which industries’ employees drink the most, which do the most drugs, and where employees are most likely not just to use drugs, but abuse them.

Mining is tough work and dangerous, so it may not be surprising that miners are the hardest drinkers in the federal survey — nothing like spending the day deep underground surrounded by tons of rock to make you crave a cold one when you get home. Eighteen percent percent of miners are “heavy drinkers,” defined here as “drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on five or more days in the past 30 days.” They’re followed by construction workers at 17 percent, and hotel and restaurant workers at 12 percent.

When it comes to drug use, on the other hand, those hotel and restaurant workers are the heaviest users, hands-down: 19 percent of them used an illicit drug in the past month. They’re followed by arts and entertainment workers at 14 percent and, perhaps surprisingly, managers at 12 percent.

You might take some comfort knowing that your kids’ school teachers are among the least likely to be heavy drinkers or drug users: only 5 percent of educators drink heavily, and a similar proportion report regular drug use. And in what will certainly come as a shock to anyone who’s observed Congress in recent years, public administrators — e.g., government employees — are the group least likely to use illicit drugs.

Now it’s important to note that much of this variation isn’t necessarily a direct function of the nature of the work in these industries, but rather of the types of people who work in them. For instance, we know that men drink and do

See **JOBS** Page C6



LIFE AFTER CONCUSSIONS FOR ONE YOUNG ATHLETE

BY CLAUDIA HEITLER
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

As parents of a young athlete, my husband and I watched with great interest as NFL star rookie, Chris Borland, walked away from a promising career in professional football, and millions of dollars, not because of concussions he’s had in the past

but because of the ones he believed he could get in the future. His decision could be a game-changer for some of the millions of kids who play sports that put them at risk for brain trauma.

Our son, a hockey player, had three concussions by age 10. As a writer of a current events blog for kids, I’d been aware of the increasing number of news stories about

concussions and worried about our son getting hurt long before he ever did. Hockey, while a great sport, is high on the list for risk. Even though strides are being made to make it safer, the game naturally got rougher and faster as he got bigger.

So, needless to say, we were surprised when his first concussion happened at school. My concern had been centered on

the kids at hockey whizzing by him with knives on their feet, the hard boards and even harder ice. But it happened while he was sitting down in gym class where he was accidentally kned in the back of the head.

Within the year though, he’d have two

See **CONCUSSIONS** Page C7

Can we face up to our inner-city powder kegs?

BY COLBERT I. KING
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

It could have been billed as a postmortem on what we have been witnessing in Baltimore, except the event occurred 10 days before “Charm City” unceremoniously lost its luster. The event was an April 16 forum at Howard University — “From Protest to Policy: A Bipartisan Approach to Criminal Justice Reform” — moderated by Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md.

The Baltimore lawmaker kicked off the discussion with this ringing declaration: “Right now, we have an unprecedented moment. Right now, the nation is listening.” Citing the deaths of unarmed black males in police encounters in South Carolina, New York, Missouri and Ohio, Cummings told the gathering of 150 students, faculty and off-campus guests, “We hear your call for long-overdue criminal justice reform.”

Days later, Cummings would find himself speaking at the funeral of Freddie Gray, a young African-American man from his congressional district who died from a spinal cord injury he suffered while in the custody of Baltimore police.

Cummings could also be seen this week walking the Baltimore streets past looted and burned-out businesses, pleading with angry demonstrators to obey a curfew and go home.

The forum at Howard, as it turns out, was an antemortem, an examination of the factors that would contribute to protests and destruction only days away. Looking back, it was almost surreal.

The panelists assembled by Cummings spanned the ideological spectrum: Rep. Raúl Labrador, R-Idaho, a self-described “fiscal conservative;” Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., a progressive former Newark mayor; Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., a right-wing, libertarian presidential candidate; Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., a criminal justice and civil rights champion; and Del. Stacey Plaskett, D-Virgin Islands, a former Bronx assistant district attorney.

And they struck all the right chords: the misguided war on drugs, overcriminalization, sentencing disparities and the inequities in the criminal justice system.

A second panel, consisting of an activist and ex-drug offender, a law professor, a student leader, a conservative social policy analyst and a think-tank director, delved into police interactions with the community and the toll of social and economic injustice on neighborhoods.

Was Gray’s death the event that caused it all? Does it even matter? Yes, it matters, as the deaths of Walter Scott, Eric Garner, Michael Brown and Tamir Rice also matter.

And it matters big-time that State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby found probable cause to charge six police officers in connection with Gray’s death. In the context of community anger, protests and civil unrest, those deaths are merely the sparks that lit the powder keg.

Why the shock and dread over Baltimore? We have been here before, America. Recall the chain reaction of civil disorders in 1967?

From the 1968 Kerner Commission report on the civil disorders of the summer of 1967, which began with rioting in Newark following a case of police brutality: “It was decided to attempt to channel the energies of the people into a nonviolent protest. . . . Negro leaders began urging those on the scene to form a line of march toward the city hall.

“Some persons joined the line of march. Others milled about in the narrow street. From the dark grounds of the housing project came a barrage of rocks. Some of them fell among the crowd. Others hit persons in the line of march. Many smashed the windows of the police station. The rock throwing, it was believed, was the work of youngsters; approximately 2,500 children lived in the housing project. Almost at the same time, an old car was set afire in a parking lot.”

The commission’s observations about the disorders that erupted around the nation in 1967 are applicable today: “Disorder . . . was generated out of an increasingly disturbed social atmosphere, in which typically a series of tension-heightening incidents over a period of weeks or months became linked in the minds of many in the Negro community with a reservoir of underlying grievances. At some point in the mounting tension, a further incident — in itself often routine or trivial — became the breaking point and the tension spilled over into violence. ‘Prior’ incidents, which increased tensions and ultimately led to violence, were police actions in almost half the cases; police actions were ‘final’ incidents before the outbreak of violence in 12 of the 24 surveyed disorders.”

Nearly 50 years — and millions of “ghetto enrichment” dollars — later, look at West Baltimore, segments of Washington or other U.S. inner cities, and what will you see? A quiet state of crisis: chronic unemployment; children growing up without fathers and living amid poverty and crime and in overcrowded or substandard housing; idle high-school drop-outs; alienation and hostility toward institutions of law and government, including the police — all conditions documented decades ago.

All that’s needed is a triggering event. Cummings said: “Right now the nation is listening.”

Every good wish. Does history have to repeat itself?

JOBS
Continued from Page C10

drugs more heavily than women, and that young people are more into drugs and alcohol than older ones. So if an industry is dominated by young or male workers, it stands to reason that you’ll see higher rates of drinking and drug use in that industry.

For instance, the researchers write that one reason miners drink so much is that miners tend to be young and male. Construction workers, on the other hand, showed abnormally high heavy drinking rates even after controlling for age and gender. If some of that alcohol use is spilling over on to the job it could be a problem, given the dangerous nature of that work.

However, the researchers found no difference in the distribution of drug use across the industries even when controlling for age and gender. Whether young or old, male or female, restaurant and hotel workers truly are the heaviest drug users in the nation.

There’s something of a false equivalence going on in these two categories, drug use and heavy drinking. The researchers didn’t break the numbers

down by specific drug, but given that marijuana is the most widely used illicit substance, it’s a safe bet that many people would show up in the “drug use” category simply if they smoked a joint or two in the 30 days prior to the survey. This is, unequivocally, much less harmful or risky behavior than drinking heavily over that same time period.

But the study did separately break out workers who would qualify as having a substance abuse disorder for either drugs or alcohol. To meet that criteria, your substance use would either need to interfere with your ability to do work, or cause you legal trouble or interpersonal problems, or otherwise put you in danger.

And again, hotel and restaurant workers show the highest rate of past-year substance abuse problems, followed by construction workers and employees in the arts and entertainment industry. Managers also make a relatively strong showing in this category.

Christopher Ingraham writes about politics, drug policy and all things data. He previously worked at the Brookings Institution and the Pew Research Center.

TWO-WAY STREET
Continued from Page C10

shaping the way we travel and by rethinking our streets as facilitating pedestrians, bikes, skateboards and wheel chairs over cars. These slower and calmer streets can help us reduce emissions and improve our environment at the same time as we increase safety and commerce, and while this goal sounds rather ambitious we are not alone in this thought. The goals of current US Department of Transportation Secretary Fox focus squarely on both livability and environmental sustainability at the same time as economic vitality — they are the same green goals being pursued by cities like Hillsboro, Ore. (www.oregonlive.com/hillsboro/index.ssf/2014/04/city_of_hillsboro_dedicates_we.html) and Ottumwa, Iowa (population 25,023) which are both moving forward with a strong and green downtown with two-way rather than one-way streets (www.ottumwacourier.com/news/local_news/two-way-street-conversion-successful/article_b0f90bb7-cc23-5cc2-94a4-c83a-2c2a1463.html).

Based on our work, a focus on converting malfunctioning one-way couplets to connected networks of two streets, may provide a vision for where to start pursuing these goals. Put succinctly converting streets increases safety, while increasing value and saving the planet. And it’s not just in big towns that this is

... Slower and calmer streets can help us reduce emissions and improve our environment at the same time as we increase safety and commerce, and while this goal sounds rather ambitious we are not alone in this thought.

happening. Ottomwa is just one example but in other places like New Albany, Ind. (www.newsandtribune.com/news/new-way-of-thinking-two-way-streets-now-seeks-support/article_1d7bea4c-1d5-11e4-a584-fb94750b7b05.html), with a population of 36,803 people are seeing the value of two-way conversions and work is being done to reshape streets to focus on multi-modal access for everyone — to focus on design that enlivens rather than destroys our urban neighborhoods. And if Jacobs were still alive they might talk about them as the heart, core, and lifeblood of urban vitality. To that we would echo that well-designed, two-way streets may be love — for our kids, our neighbors, and our planet. This is captured well in the soul hit of the 1960’s that “love is a two way street.”



power the festival

Help Power the Festival!

\$26,000 being raised to replace stolen electrical wiring

In early April, the Great Falls Balloon Festival learned that thousands of dollars of copper electrical wire had been stolen from a storage trailer. This wire was used to electrify the main festival grounds at Simard-Payne Memorial Park and will cost \$26,000 to replace.

We are hopeful that with the support of our fans and friends in the community, we will be able to raise enough money to continue the tradition of the Great Falls Balloon Festival.

Do you want to help Power the Festival? All donations are greatly appreciated and will help support this well-loved community event.

WAYS TO DONATE

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