

Feb. 4 Environmental Forum

By Marc Krasnowsky

Voters rejected climate Initiative 732 in November in part because it failed to address social, racial, and class inequities structurally embedded in existing systems of energy production and use. The move to a climate-healing, clean energy economy is a singular opportunity to undo those injustices rather than letting them fester and ultimately undermine our common goals.

So what would an equitable climate plan look like?

For some time, a broad alliance of labor, environmental/clean energy groups, communities of color, low-income and health advocates, progressive businesses, and others has been working on that question. The latest version of their answer will be the topic of a PSARA Environmental Committee-hosted event on Saturday, February 4, from 1:30-3 p.m. at the Washington State Labor Council office at 321 16th Ave. S. in Seattle.

Stephanie Celt, Washington State Policy Coordinator for the BlueGreen Alliance, and Felipe Rodriguez Flores, Director of Civic Engagement and Advocacy for the Latino Community Fund, will present the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy’s (AJCE) “Fund the Solutions, Price the Pollution” climate action policy. PSARA’s Kristen Beifus will moderate the event, which is co-sponsored by the Martin Luther King County Labor Council and the BlueGreen Alliance.

AJCE’s policy is reflected in a House bill introduced by State Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon in the current legislative session. Should the legislature fail to act, it likely would form the basis of an initiative to the people.

Continued on Page 11

February 23 is 2017 Senior Lobby Day

By Chuck Richards and Tim Burns



The 2017 legislature has been in session a month, and now it’s time to give them a report card on their progress. Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA) members will be going to Olympia on Thursday, February 23, 2017, Senior Lobby Day, to once again urge legislators to consider both increasing revenue and sharing the prosperity that is returning to the state’s economy with seniors and working families.

Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA) released their 2017 legislative agenda at the November 29 Legislative Conference (see the December *Retiree Advocate*). It includes a mix of funding suggestions and advocacy for policy programs. At that time, PSARA members committed to meeting with legislators in-district before the beginning of session. Now is the time to follow up and ask our legislators in Olympia for a progress report.

With a legislature so closely divided between the two major political parties, it is more important than ever for PSARA members to have conversations with Democratic legislators as well as their Republican legislators about shared prosperity being the surest way to strengthen the economy of Washington State.

And, as in years past, PSARA is offering its members transportation to reach Olympia on February 23. If you haven’t already signed up at PSARA’s Winter Party on December 17 then contact us at govrelations@psara.org or the PSARA office at (206) 448-9646. If you are interested in riding on the Machinists Union vans provided by District 751, contact Tom Lux at tplux@comcast.net or (206) 367-0288.

We are helping neighbors network within their legislative districts so that we can lobby together most effectively for the things we believe strengthen Washington families.

Chuck Richards and Tim Burns are Co-chairs of PSARA’s Government Relations Committee.

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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Officers of PSARA Education Fund:

President: **Robby Stern**, president@psara.org

Vice President: **Sally Davis**

Treasurer: **Garet Munger**

Advocate Editor: **Mike Andrew**, organizer@psara.org

Associate Editor: **Bob Shimabukuro**

Photographer: **Garet Munger**

Printing: **Trade Printery**

PSARA Directory:

President: **Robby Stern**

Administrative Vice President:

Bobby Righi, adminvp@psara.org

Membership Vice President: **Jessica Bonebright**, membershipvp@psara.org

Outreach Vice Presidents:

Vivian O. Lee & Susan Levy,

outreachvp@psara.org

Secretary: **Frieda K. Takamura**

Treasurer: **Tom Lux**, treasurer@psara.org

Diversity Committee Co-chairs: **Frank Irigon & Mildred Ollee**, diversitycommittee@psara.org

Education Committee Co-chairs: **Steve Bauck & Bob Swanson**,

educationcommittee@psara.org

Environmental Committee Co-chairs:

Kristen Beifus & Tom Lux,

envirocommittee@psara.org

Government Relations Committee Co-chairs:

Chuck Richards & Tim Burns,

govrelations@psara.org

Our web page: www.psara.org

Web Master: **Reed Wacker**, info@psara.org

Board Members: Mauricio Ayon, Steve Bauck, Kristen Beifus, Maureen Bo, Tim Burns, Jim Grayson, Frank Irigon, Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney, Steve Kofahl, Tom Lux, Mark McDermott, Mac McIntosh, Bonny Oborn, Mildred Ollee, Garry Owens, Chuck Richards, Karen Richter, Bob Shimabukuro, Ronnie Shure, Sarajane Siegfriedt, Bob Swanson, Aganita Varkentine, Michael Warren, Imogene Williams, and Katie Wilson.

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PSARA Hits the Streets

Photos by Garet Munger



Above: PSARA members Susan Levy, Bobby Righi, and Michael Righi at the January 21 Seattle Women's March. Below: Some of the estimated 125,000 marchers pass the International District Transit Station on Jackson Street.



At right: PSARA members listen intently to speakers at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Rally on January 16. Some 10,000 people attended the march, making it one of the largest MLK Day events in history.



The Fight for Social Security

By Robby Stern

"I was the first and only potential GOP candidate to state there will be no cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Huckabee copied me."

— Donald J. Trump, May 7, 2015

Representative Tom Price (R-GA), Trump's pick as Secretary of Health and Human Services, has said about his desire to dismantle Social Security:

"Whether it's means testing, whether it's increasing the age of eligibility. All those things ought to be on the table and discussed."

In 2015, 1,260,474 or one in six residents of Washington received Social Security payments totaling \$19.4 billion in personal income. No doubt those numbers increased in 2016 with the aging of the baby boomer population.

Due to the failure of wages to keep up with the cost of living and a significant decline in private savings and defined benefit pensions, Social Security has become more important than ever. It is the most successful anti-poverty program in our country. According to 2015 data, it lifted 301,000 elderly Washingtonians out of poverty. Without Social Security, 35.1 percent of seniors would live in poverty. With Social Security, 7.4 percent of the elderly live in poverty, still an unacceptable number. An improved Social Security program is a legacy we must work to pass on to future generations.

In the new administration and Congress, there are many individuals who advocate policies that would cut Social Security benefits. PSARA and other organizations are contacting our Washington Congressional delegation and asking that they adhere to the following principles:

1. Social Security benefits should not be cut. They provide vital protection to Americans of all income levels against the loss of wages as the result of disability, death, or old age. Those benefits should not be reduced in any way.

2. Social Security has stood the test of time. It should not be privatized in whole or in part.

3. Social Security is an insurance policy and as such should not be means-tested.

Workers pay for this insurance, and they and their dependents are entitled to it regardless of their income or savings.

4. Social Security's retirement age should not be raised further. Raising the retirement age constitutes a benefit cut.

5. In order to modernize and strengthen benefits and assure long-term stability for future generations, Congress should act to eliminate the earnings cap on contributions.

6. Social Security benefits should increase to reflect the dignity of all work regardless of income, to better cover health and long-term care costs, and to improve fairness. This can be accomplished by changing the benefit formula to replace a higher percentage of low earnings; providing a care-giving credit for at least five years; guaranteeing elderly survivors 75 percent of the couple's benefit; changing the COLA to the CPI-E (Consumer Price Index for the Elderly) to better reflect the expenses of seniors; and allowing benefits for state-recognized same-sex couples and family members.

We need help and involvement from PSARA members to engage in this fight. Here is one thing you can do. We will be publishing short personal stories on the Social Security Works WA website that answer two questions. Below are the two questions and a response by one of our members, Jonathan Rosenblum.

Why is protecting and expanding Social Security important to you?

"During my entire work life I've assumed that Social Security benefits will play an important part in my retirement. Now that I am closer to retirement than college, I am more aware of how important Social Security benefits are to my generation. For better or worse, I am counting on Social Security being a primary source of income after I turn 65."

What will it mean to you, personally, if Social Security is cut or changed in any way that could reduce benefits in the future?



"Our Constitution speaks to the right to 'the pursuit of happiness.' To me, cutting Social Security would violate that basic right.

"I think about all of the years of retirement happiness that my dad enjoyed – the ability to pursue hobbies, relax with a modicum of security, dandle grandchildren on his knee. After working for decades, he earned the right to that happiness. I am looking forward to being able to do the same things. Anyone trying to cut or change my Social Security benefits for the worse won't be simply cutting my income – they will be undermining a core value of our country."

We will be posting a number of these personal stories with pictures of the individuals telling the story. If you are willing, email me your personal statement, and if we decide to use it, I will ask for a head shot picture of you.

As it becomes clearer how the Trump administration and Republican-controlled Congress will be attacking Social Security, and we will be asking members to take action through phone calls, emails, meetings with elected officials, etc.

We can win this fight. The majority of the American people are with us. As these elected right-wingers expose who they really are, we will be laying the foundation for the next progressive era in our history.

Fighting Back on Health Care

PSARA, along with 50 organizations in Washington, have signed on to the following letter to our Congressional delegation. We are in the process of seeking commitments from our delegation that they will oppose all legislation that would make it more difficult for Washingtonians to receive comprehensive, affordable health care coverage.

The responsible course for our policy makers is to expand coverage for all by building on the Medicare & Medicaid systems, expanding coverage and subsidies through the ACA, and sharply limiting and/or regulating the role of the insurers in our health care system. Health care is a human right.

As meetings are set up, we will be calling on PSARA members, particularly in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 8th Congressional Districts, to contact their representatives and possibly attend a meeting with their Congress member along with other local constituents. If you are in one of these four Congressional districts, let Mike Andrew know (organizer@psara.org) if you would be interested in attending a constituent meeting to discuss health care issues with your elected representative.

LETTER

We, the undersigned organizations throughout Washington State, are deeply concerned by Congressional threats to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), block-grant the Medicaid system, and undermine Medicare through the use of vouchers. These efforts would erode and undermine the healthcare for millions of Washingtonians, destabilize the system, and increase health care premiums for all.

There are over 2.896 million individuals in Washington State who are currently enrolled in coverage through Medicaid, Medicare and the Affordable Care Act:

- over 190,000 individuals enrolled in the Exchange
- over 1,531,400 individuals enrolled in Medicaid
- over 1,174,700 individuals enrolled in Medicare

Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, our Washington State's uninsured rate dropped from 14 percent to 5.8 percent, an unprecedented drop. Any effort to repeal, eliminate or reduce these federal health coverage programs would throw the system into chaos, removing the guarantees and protections provided by Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act.

Repealing or undermining the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, or Medicare will cause ripple effects across the state economy, bringing an unbearable cost and harm to our population's health:

- *In 2015, an estimated 51,196 jobs were saved or created as a result of the Affordable Care Act Medicaid expansion, which will be at risk across the state.*
- *Uncompensated care in hospitals as a percent of total revenue dropped approximately 50 percent between 2013 and 2014, which saved unnecessary costs and improved the health of Washingtonians. The state and the people covered stand to lose \$3.0 billion in FY18 and \$3.2 billion in FY19 including loss of tax credit subsidies and loss of funding for the Medicaid expansion population.*
- *Seventy percent of Qualified Health Plan enrollees in the Exchange received federal advance premium tax credits. In 2016, on average 115,265 people per month received tax credits totaling over \$300 million, and 69,577 people per month received cost-sharing reductions totaling over \$64 million due to deductible and other out of pocket costs exceeding their capacity to pay, which protected enrollees from bankruptcy and allowed their health coverage to be more affordable.*
- *Approximately 3.1 million Washingtonians with private health coverage (including 597,000 children) and 1.2 million Washington seniors on Medicare will lose guaranteed access to free preventive care, like blood pressure screenings, immunizations, and cancer screenings – a protection applying to all Washingtonians under the ACA.*
- *Thousands of seniors and people with disabilities could lose comprehensive drug coverage if the Medicare donut hole is re-opened as a result of repealing the ACA. This will leave Washington's seniors and*

people with disabilities with a gap in prescription drug coverage and cause them to be forced to pay thousands more in drug costs.

• *Seniors and people with disabilities in Washington have saved approximately \$296 million on drug costs thanks to the ACA's closing the Medicare donut hole. In 2015 alone, approximately 75,000 seniors and people with disabilities in Washington saved on average \$978 on drug costs.*

There is no one replacement or small fix that can be made without harming individuals, families, children, and seniors. For example, repealing the ACA would roll back the improvements in prescription drug coverage and undo cost-saving measures that have increased Medicare's sustainability for seniors and people with disabilities. Additionally, if proposals to cut Medicaid funding through block grants or per capita caps become a reality, millions of Washingtonians will be at risk of losing part or all of their health coverage.

Washington State receives around \$43 billion in funding when the total federal assistance for our state's Medicaid program, Children's Health Insurance Program, and federal subsidies for the Exchange are combined. Washington cannot make up federal cuts with state money. There is no way we can replace tens of billions of dollars in federal cuts over time, and the immediate loss of federal dollars to coverage under the ACA, Medicare or Medicaid would result in millions of Washingtonians losing their coverage. For example, repealing just the ACA would result in a loss of over \$3 billion each year for ACA coverage expansions, cut federal assistance for drug costs relief for those in Medicare, threaten over 51 thousand jobs in Washington, and put the health of Washingtonians at immediate risk.

We urge the Washington State Congressional Delegation to invest in and improve our federal health coverage programs, not repeal the Affordable Care Act, cap the Medicaid program through a block-grant or per capita cap, nor privatize or "voucherize" Medicare. Such proposals would cause millions of Washingtonians to lose their health coverage, cut billions of federal dollars that flow to our state, and ultimately lead to increased health costs for everyone.

Anniversary of Executive Order 9066

By Sharon Maeda

The adage about history repeating itself weighs heavily on my heart these days. With all the talk about a president's power to issue executive orders, there's no telling what the 45th president might do in a late night tweet rant.

Even a rational president can get it wrong, and one mistake is very personal.

February 19 is the 75th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, which changed the lives of 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry and their families forever. Roosevelt, still revered today by many progressives, put my parents' and grandparents' generation into American concentration camps during WWII. Historians now state that EO 9066 was one of America's darkest days, but it would be decades before an official apology and token monetary compensation was paid to those incarcerated....and only after our community and allies mounted a major multi-year national campaign for redress and reparations.

And now, 75 years later, EO 9066 is being used as a justification for registering and rounding up Muslim Americans.

It is particularly ironic to our family. When cousin Holly Yasui approached friends and family to help pay tribute to "Uncle Min" (uncle through marriage) on what would be his 100th birthday year, we all jumped in to share stories, old photos, plan community events, and raise funds for a play and documentary video about her dad. Events were planned all across Oregon, in Denver, where he spent decades as the city's Human Rights Director, and here in Seattle.

The icing on the cake came when President Obama presented Min Yasui a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom. Yes, it's the same award he

recently gave to Vice President Biden and luminaries like Congressman John Lewis. Min, a young attorney in Portland, simply understood the Constitution and intentionally did not obey EO 9066. Oregon Governor Kate Brown counted recognition of Min Yasui as a highlight of the past year in her State of the State speech:

"...at the age of 25, Mr. Yasui put his personal liberty on the line, as he intentionally violated the curfew by walking the streets of Portland. He was to be arrested and imprisoned for nine months in solitary confinement at the Multnomah County Jail before being ordered to Minidoka Relocation Center in Idaho, where he would remain until near the end of the War."

During his 100th birthday year, many Americans learned about Min Yasui's courage for the first time. In Portland, elementary school children joined public officials, community folks, and civil libertarians as Min's family retraced Min's route from his law office to prison.

As I looked at his Medal of Freedom on display at the Hood River public library, I kept thinking about Min Yasui in the context of today's hate rhetoric that exploded into the slogans of a presidential campaign. I could imagine Min traversing the country, using his powerful voice of persuasion, not to campaign for a candidate, but to save his beloved U.S. Constitution.



Min Yasui

There's a lesson for us all as we are still shaking ourselves out of the shock, pain, and anger over the presidential election results. Khzir Khan and Min Yasui. It's time to re-read the Constitution and do everything we can to save our democracy. History repeats itself if we don't learn the lessons from the past.

Sharon Maeda, a member of PSARA, is a lifelong social justice advocate who grew up with role models like Min Yasui.

Fund the Solutions, Price the Pollution

AN EQUITABLE CLIMATE ACTION POLICY

- Reduce carbon emissions
- Create good clean-energy jobs
- Protect workers and their communities

Learn about the *Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy* plan for building Washington's clean-energy future

Saturday, Feb. 4, 1:30-3 p.m.
Washington State Labor Council office
321 16th Ave. S. in Seattle

**HOSTED BY PUGET SOUND ADVOCATES
FOR RETIREMENT ACTION**

**A slideshow and discussion featuring Stephanie Celt
of the BlueGreen Alliance, Felipe Rodriguez Flores of the Latino
Community Fund, and Kristen Beifus of PSARA**

*Co-sponsored by the Martin Luther King County Labor Council
and the BlueGreen Alliance*

Please RSVP to adminvp@psara.org



2017 PSARA Senior Lobby Day In Olympia

Thursday, Feb. 23

Join others from your Legislative District to visit your legislators.

RSVP now to join PSARA on Senior Lobby Day.

PSARA carpools leaving Seattle at 7:30 a.m.!

For RSVPs and carpool information contact

govrelations@psara.org

or call PSARA at (206) 448-9646

Morning Updates: 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Box Lunch provided: 12 noon

Visits with legislators to discuss our main issues:

- **Support for a more progressive revenue system.**
- **Support for significant resources for low-income housing.**
- **Support efforts to pass Paid Family Leave legislation.**
- **Support a state-based social insurance program to help defray the costs of long-term care.**
- **Support a carbon tax to promote renewable energy and provide assistance to workers impacted by the reduction in the use of fossil fuels.**

Let's be heard in Olympia in the 2017 session!

Help with Long-Term Care

By Courtney Neubauer

PSARA's 2017 legislative agenda states:

"Retirement Security: PSARA supports state-based efforts to enhance retirement security, including a state-based social insurance program to help defray the costs of long-term care."

PSARA is part of Washingtonians for a Responsible Future (WRF), a coalition which includes organizations such as Alzheimer's Association, Washington Association of Area Agencies on Aging, Washington State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, and many others.

WRF was first introduced in the October 2015 newsletter, where PSARA members Paul Muldoon, Bob Shimabukuro, and Felicita Irigon shared the coalition's success in passing a bill. This bill funded a study to research the best way to provide for Washington's long-term care needs. Now that we have the research behind us, it's time for action, and we need you!

The Problem

Long-Term Care (LTC) refers to the work that unpaid family caregivers as well as a system of supports such as adult day centers, assisted living facilities, etc. provide for older adults. Although these services are vital for so many, there are few ways to pay for them. Many families are planning on accessing Medicare or traditional health insurance to pay for LTC but are shocked to learn that neither provides coverage. As a result many people spend-down to poverty levels to access care through Medicaid. Our families are being left with few choices despite the fact that 70 percent of those over 65 will need LTC.

It is more urgent than ever that we have a plan as demographics change. In previous generations many families relied on children to care for their parents. However, as the boomer generation ages there will be fewer people available to take on the role of unpaid family caregiver. There will be a 43 per-



cent drop in potential family caregivers in our nation by 2030. This means it will be much more challenging in coming years to find someone to provide care. Today there are 850,000 family caregivers in Washington State who take on this role for someone they love. However, due to cost to family budgets, it's not a role everyone can assume. Given this decline in potential family caregivers the State and families in Washington could be responsible for \$6.3 billion in additional LTC costs by 2030 if we do not act.

Our Progress

The long-term care study was produced this year by the Milliman actuarial firm. This study researched two policy reforms to help make LTC more accessible and affordable: a publicly funded system supported by all workers similar to Social Security, or a public-private partnership to stabilize the existing private LTC insurance market. Milliman found the public benefit would have a broad and favorable impact on family and state budgets. They also found any attempts to revive the private market

would come at a huge cost to the state without significant increases in LTC insurance coverage.

The Solution

With the recommendations of the study, the coalition is working toward a Long-Term Care Trust Act (LTC Trust Act) to help provide our families with the security they need as they age. This legislation will be open to all workers over the age of 18 and is a \$100/day maximum benefit reimbursed to providers. This is 365 days worth of benefits and can be used consecutively or nonconsecutively. This benefit also works to ensure that we continue to give families the most choices possible, as it can be used on services by any certified provider or choice of setting – including in-home care aides, adult family homes, assisted living, or skilled nursing facilities. This benefit would be financed by a 0.49 percent payroll deduction on all workers with a vesting period of 3 of the last 6 years, or 10 years total. The LTC Trust Act has bipartisan sponsorship – Representatives Laurie Jenkins and Norm Johnson, both members of the Joint Legislative Executive Committee on Aging & Disability.

What Can We Do?

The most important thing we can do is to tell our representatives how the cost of LTC affects our families by sharing our experience. To sign up for email updates and follow the coalition's progress please sign up at Responsible-Future.org/JoinUs. You can also follow us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/WAresponsiblefuture](https://www.facebook.com/WAresponsiblefuture), or you can email our organizer at Courtney@ResponsibleFuture.org.

We hope to hear from you soon because Your Story is Your Power.

Courtney Neubauer is a PSARA member. She joined Washingtonians for a Responsible Future a year ago and is active in promoting security for older adults.

Fo' Real: *Allegiance* and a Little Sun, a Little Stew

By Bob Shimabukuro

Bear with me as I order my thoughts, memories, anger, depression, and feelings over the last few months in order to write about my reactions upon seeing the movie of *Allegiance*, the Broadway musical produced by George Takei. *Allegiance* is about the incarceration of Japanese Americans living on the West Coast during the 1940s. Takei's artist's rendering of the past collided with the remarks of our President-Elect about inclusion and exclusion, enemies lists, and the spectre of mass incarceration.

In addition, my older sister, Toki, is in a memoir workshop at her assisted living center, and she asked me to help with memories and documents that I had about Dad, stuff that Toki and I had collected years ago under the Freedom of Information Act. About his "subversive" activities. And lists of organizations he was tied to. About citizenship school. His "alien registration card." I remember Mom reminding Dad to get his registration done.

I'm trying to focus on the past, the future, and the present, because it's all connected. Right now. My brain's working on overload.

What to do, what to say, what to write? So here goes.

"Little Sun" and "Little Stew." Two preschools that were started by Mira's mom Cathie and some of her friends. "What cute names for preschools," I thought, before being told that they were "Littles I" and "Littles II." This project had something to do with LBJ's "War on Poverty" funding, when an agency called "4 Seas" (again, my mistake, this was really CCCC, for Community Coordinated Childcare Centers, I believe) sponsored this modest early learning program.

My daughter Mira attended Little Stew.

Back then (the 1970's), major national cultural events were on one of three major TV networks (ABC, CBS, NBC). There were no other media (PBS just didn't have any clout then) that could compare.

The Wizard of Oz

One day, Cathie came home from work and noted, "Today, all the kids were talking about *The Wizard of Oz*. I think every kid (and probably their parents) had watched it." Including Mira.

"They were talking about Dorothy, the Wicked Witch, Tin Man, Cowardly Lion, etc., and of course, the red shoes." Including Mira, even though we didn't have a color TV. Mira had seen *The Wizard of Oz* movie (at a theatre) at least three times before that television "happening," so I'm positive she saw the red shoes on the black and white TV also.

George Takei's *Allegiance*

I. Big Sun: Mira and I arrived at the theater fashionably late JA time (15 minutes before the film was scheduled to start), and it looked crowded going up, so we went down into the front section. Sat in seats with nobody sitting in front of us. If I was at the live musical, I would have been at the back of the theater, squinting, trying to see what was going on, while weaving my head to get good sight lines to the stage.

II. Big Stew: When the movie of the stage performance started, I was overwhelmed by the size, everything was huge. The people on the movie screen were, well, larger than life! I could see everything, and realized immediately this was not going to be just a documentary with some music and dance, but had a chance of being good. Of epic proportions.

As the movie progressed, I was drawn into the individual characters' stories and the music because the production became a stage for how people cope with forced confinement. Confinement for no other reason than what they look like and who their ancestors are. Try to make some sense out of that. They collect stones, they talk, they write, build baseball fields, then play baseball on them. Grow flowers. Vegetables. Sing and Dance. Fight amongst each other. Volunteer to join the army to prove their loyalty. And resist the draft to prove they're American. Anything to take the sting away from being locked up.

III. Big Tree: After the movie credits ran, there was a short film clip of a George Takei interview that brought the whole project into perspective. One jarring note in the plot line of the play: an implication that the Nisei Vets were isolated when they returned, and the draft resisters were more welcomed by the community.

Resister-coming-home stories do not back that up.

Upon further thought after the film clip, I realized that the play was Takei's own take about what went down during the post-mass incarceration years.

In the clip, Takei said that he had, in anger, criticized his dad for leading the family to the incarceration without any resistance. His dad silently walked out of the room and closed the door behind him. Takei said that he never got a chance to apologize to his Dad.

Takei was not alone. Many others thought the same. But a larger group thought it best to ride the tide. Even forget the whole thing had happened. Group amnesia. It happens.

IV. Big Shi: I've heard Takei speak many times about the mass incarceration, and he has always said that he admires the Nisei Vets for their services and sacrifices in WWII, but he did find what the resisters did to be more heroic. *Allegiance* reflects GT's personal story and thoughts about the experience, and the production is partly the apology to his father. He is also telling us how easy it is to divide communities and families into fighting amongst themselves while ignoring the true oppressors. And even worse, to continue those divisions into the next generations.

As such, this was a very important production for the Japanese American community. A lot of people seemed to be talking about it the next day on social media.

If the objective for the movie was to tell the story to a greater American audience, then it probably failed in that purpose. The audience in the theater I saw it in was mostly Asian.

But for the folks who were there, the focus on the breaking up of families and community was a major theme that needed to be addressed. Especially to the generations in attendance that did not experience the mass incarceration but most certainly were affected by it in some way they could not even fathom previously.

To George Takei, thank you. *Allegiance* is a gift to all of us.

Time to Catch a deep, deep breath, then keep moving.

“Where Resides the Rebellious Heart” – Harry Belafonte

By Robby Stern

Recently Harry Belafonte spoke at the fiftieth anniversary of Amy Goodman’s “Democracy Now!” As we face the Trump administration, he was calling for the “rebellious hearts” to emerge and carry on the fight and sacrifices that others before us have waged for a just society based on love and caring rather than greed and possessions.

When my wife, Dina, and I and 14 other activists went to Cuba this past December, we visited a country that responded to the dreams of determined “rebellious hearts.” We met numerous Cubans who are committed, against enormous obstacles, to continue the fight for a genuinely just society.

The U.S. Government has considered Cuba in their sphere of control since shortly after the American Revolution. The opportunity for the U.S. to exercise domination of Cuba occurred with what U.S. history calls the Spanish-American War. For the Cubans, the war against Spain is considered the war for independence. The Cuban victory over Spain was sold out by Cuban leaders who had the backing and were under the control of the U.S. imperialists. From the time the Cuban people, inspired by Jose Marti (considered the father of Cuban independence), began the fight against Spanish domination until the revolution of 1959, there has been a consistent struggle by the Cuban people against domination and to control their own destiny.

Our Cuban journey began in the rural eastern part of the country in the foothills of the Sierra Maestra mountain range. Our base was a small village, Bartolome. (More about Bartolome in the March edition of the newsletter.) Our tour guide for the entire trip, Adriana, was very knowledgeable about Cuban history and how it played out in different regions of the country. We learned that the eastern provinces were among the most sympathetic, militant, and engaged in the struggle for independence. It is by and large a rural area and was and still is very poor.

There had been an aboriginal people in Cuba when the first Spaniards, including Christopher Columbus, came to Cuba in 1492. The aboriginal peoples were

essentially wiped out by the Spaniards, although there remain genetic markings of the aboriginal people. (Adriana was very excited that genetic testing had revealed that she had genetic traces of the first people.) There are also thatched roofed structures, which are based on aboriginal culture, and they are everywhere in the eastern rural areas in which we traveled.

Adriana and our bus driver in the eastern region, Adrian, expressed gratitude for the Revolution and what it had delivered for the Cuban people. They also expressed enormous love for Fidel and the sense of great loss at his death. We were to hear this same feeling from many people during the journey.

Fidel had promised the poverty-stricken campesinos that when the revolution won, there would be electricity, roads, health care facilities and schools brought to this poor region. The Revolution delivered big time. We were amazed at the isolated areas that had electricity and roads. There is a doctor for every 1,000 Cubans, and all the kids go to school. School is mandatory until the 6th grade and they are working to make it mandatory until the 9th grade. Schools, including higher education; health care; and housing are free.

On our second day in Cuba, we took a fairly strenuous hike in the Sierra Maestras to Commandancia de La Plata. Commandancia is the encampment from which the successful guerilla war was launched. The path we took was precisely the path Fidel, Che, Cienfuegos, Cecilia Sanchez, and the revolutionaries and campesinos with the “rebellious hearts” took. The terrain was rugged and physically demanding. While we took vans to the trail head, there were no roads when Fidel and the revolutionaries landed in the *Granma* on a bay in eastern Cuba and headed into the mountains. Fidel was 34, Che had asthma that could overtake him at any time, but they would not be deterred.

The peasants protected the fight-



*In the mountains.
Fidel (second from left) and Che (center).*

ers and provided them food. They were hugely outnumbered by Batista’s army, but they had the support of the peasants. Our guide for the hike, Jorge, shared with us information about the struggle of the revolutionaries as well as about the flora and birds along our trail. Jorge said that three conditions for ultimate victory by the revolutionaries were met: 1. Understanding by the vast majority of the Cuban people about why they were living in the conditions they were experiencing and who was responsible. 2. Conviction on the part of the fighters and the trade unionists, students, Communist Party, and other activists groups in the cities that they would win. 3. Really smart people who could design an effective plan for defeating the Batista forces and other enemies of the Revolution and Cuban independence.

We were inspired by walking the same ground that these determined women and men walked. They were convinced that they could lead the humble, spirited, poor people of Cuba in a fight to end the dictatorial rule of Batista, who had been a corrupt handmaiden for greedy corporate interests, the Mafia, and the U.S. Government. It felt like we were walking on holy ground as we visited Fidel’s shack, Che’s makeshift clinic, and all the other shacks where these young fighters, almost all in their 20s, carried out their mission and sacrificed enormously, including death for many of them.

We were inspired by these “rebellious hearts.”

Feb. 4 Environmental Forum

Continued from Page 1

The plan aims to cut statewide carbon emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2035, and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. It calls for

- Taxing climate pollution at an escalating rate, likely beginning at \$15 per ton of carbon dioxide or equivalent (CO₂-e) emitted in the state.
- Investing in clean energy, clean water, forest health, and other emissions-reducing projects.
- Supporting just transitions for workers and communities affected by the move away from fossil energy; funding new projects in those communities; and giving preference to projects that pay prevailing wage and hire locally.
- Providing rebates to low- and moderate-income families to offset any carbon tax-related increase in their energy expenses.

Provisions are made to help energy-intensive or trade-exposed businesses that otherwise might simply relocate their pollution as well as highly paid, community-supporting jobs to other states or countries.

Everyone is welcome to attend and judge the Alliance proposal for themselves. Again, it's Saturday, Feb. 4, 1:30-3 p.m. at the WSLC office, 321 16th Ave. S.

If you know you're coming, please RSVP to adminvp@psara.org. If you decide to come at the last minute, that's fine, too!

Marc Krasnowsky is a member of PSARA's Environmental Committee.

**Sign at the January 21
Seattle Womxn's March:**

"IKEA has better cabinets!"

Update: Standing Rock

By Bob Barnes

While not garnering the same level of national attention as it did in past months, the struggle at Standing Rock is far from over. Several hundred water protectors who are prepared for the brutal Dakota winter are at camp. There has been some relocation from the Oceti Sakowin camp because of impending spring flooding. Many people have left because they were not prepared to overwinter at the camp.

Regular actions are carried out in the vicinity of the pipeline. On January 17, a prayer vigil was held close to where work is still continuing. The water protectors were attacked by police with rubber coated steel bullets and tear gas. Several protectors were arrested.

In December, work to begin drilling under the Missouri River was stopped by the Army Corp of Engineers until a full environmental review was completed, including public input. DAPL attorneys lost an attempt to get a restraining order to stop the review. Public comments to the Department of the Army's Civil Works Division will be taken until February 20.

There have been over 600 arrests since this campaign began. The court system in Mandan County has been overwhelmed by the number of cases and the lack of in-state attorneys able and willing to take on defense work. Most of the cases have been continued with no court date set. The North Dakota Supreme Court ruled last week that out-of-state attorneys will be allowed to represent water protectors.

In December, people leaving camp were asked by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to go home and work on divestment campaigns. Folks took up the call, and by the most recent count over \$40 million has been divested from DAPL.

Actions in and around Seattle have been directed at Wells Fargo. On January 5, several hundred people joined together and withdrew their money from Wells Fargo. Efforts are currently underway to get the City of Seattle to divest. Calls to your City Council representatives are appreciated.

In the midst of the uncertain times in which we find ourselves, with climate crisis deniers at the helm of our ship of state, we must remain vigilant and prepared to step up to defend our planet like never before.

Bob Barnes is a member of PSARA's Environmental Committee.

To Renew or Donate

PSARA Education Fund
2800 1st Avenue, Room 262, Seattle WA 98121
Donations are tax deductible

- Basic contribution: \$20
- Limited income/living lightly: \$15 or whatever you can afford
- Supporting: \$50 New contributor
- Sponsoring: \$100 or more Renewing contributor

Name (Please print): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Meetings and Events

West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 1, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave SW, Seattle, 98126 (35th & Henderson). Topic: *Coping with limitations*. Brown bag lunch.

PSARA Environmental Committee: 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Thursday, February 2, WA State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle. All welcome.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Thursday, February 2, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave. All welcome as we make final plans for Senior Lobby Day.

PSARA Environmental Committee Forum: 1:30 – 3 p.m., Saturday, February 4, WA State Labor Council office, 321 16 Ave. S., Seattle. Presentation and discussion of the climate action policy

proposed by the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy, including a carbon tax with revenue to be invested in renewable energy and to assist communities and workers most impacted by the effects of climate change. See flyer on Page 6.

PSARA Education Committee: 1p.m. – 3 p.m., Tuesday, February 7, PSARA office, 2800 First Ave., Rm. 234, Seattle. All welcome as we discuss our work to expand outreach with the PSARA workshop, "Making Retirement Security Real for All Generations."

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, February 9, Green Lake Branch, Seattle Public Library, 7364 E. Green Lake Dr. N., Seattle. 98115. Brown bag lunch. Topic: *Learning about Dementia: Making Seattle a Dementia-Friendly City*. For

further information contact Susan at sjlevy.01@gmail.com

PSARA Diversity Committee: 11 a.m. – 12 noon, Thursday, February 16, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16 Avenue S., Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Executive Board Meeting: 12:30 p.m. - 3 p.m., Thursday, February 16, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16 Avenue S., Seattle. All are welcome.

Annual Senior Lobby Day: Thursday, February 23. Contact Chuck Richards or Tim Burns at govrelations@psara.org or call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646, if you are interested in going to Olympia with PSARA to advocate for PSARA's legislative agenda. See article on Page 1 and flyer on Page 7.

