PSARA Joins Labor Day Picnic

Annually, the M.L. King County Labor Council holds a Labor Day Picnic at Lower Woodland Park, Shelters 1, 2 & 3.

This is always a good time and PSARA fulfills a special niche. As Executive Board member Mike Warren likes to say…“grandparents provide cookies!” While many of us are not grandparents, the cookies we provide at the picnic are very popular and it gives us the chance to talk to a lot of people about PSARA.

For those of you who enjoy schmoozing with each other as we sit in our lawn chairs eating hot dogs (or veggie dogs), popcorn, and too many of our own cookies(!), there is lots of opportunity for socializing.

And for those of you who enjoy a unique opportunity to talk directly and informally with elected officials, from U.S. senators and representatives to state and local officials, there is never a better opportunity.

So, join PSARA at the picnic. We will be easy to find because we are usually right in the middle of the action!

Please see the flyer on Page 7 for more information.

PSARA Does Pride 2014

Some of the PSARA gang at Seattle's annual LGBT Pride Parade, June 29. PSARA joined 150 other contingents to march in celebration of equality for all people. (Photo: Garet Munger)

Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant stops by the PSARA contingent for a chat before the march begins. (Photo: Garet Munger)
Building a Better Future for All

By Mark McDermott

On May 17 and June 21, PSARA held two 2½ hour workshops in Seattle which brought together leaders from 30+ labor and community-based organizations. The organizations represented labor; faith; communities of color; immigrant rights; youth; environmentalists; seniors; women; and gays, lesbians, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) movements.

The goal of the workshops was to facilitate critically needed discussions across movements, organizations, and constituencies. Our focus was how we can collectively build the power needed to successfully resist the relentless attacks of Corporate America and more importantly, to build a better future for all. A critical component of this work is clearly articulating our thoughts on the following questions: What is the future that we want in addition to what are we trying to prevent? What deeply held values anchor our efforts to build that future?

After introductions, I made a short presentation about how Corporate America and the super-wealthy developed a comprehensive long-term strategy to reassert their dominance over our country. This strategy was based on the famous memo written by Lewis Powell on August 23, 1971. This memo became the blueprint of the well-organized attack of the following 40+ years. Two months later, President Nixon appointed Powell to the U.S. Supreme Court where he served 15+ years.

Our discussions began with a focus on all participants and their extended families, and their close friends and their extended families. They were asked questions focused on how they have experienced the past six years in terms of direct economic impacts, discrimination, and concerns about the environment and their economic futures. This exercise demonstrated a great deal of “common ground” in the midst

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A Caregiver Credit for Social Security

By Robby Stern

ew York Congressional Representative Nita Lowey has proposed H.R. 5024, the Social Security Caregiver Credit Act of 2014. This legislation will fix a significant problem in the calculation of Social Security payments.

When workers take time out of the workforce to care for children, aging parents, or ill family members, they suffer a significant penalty. Social Security benefits are based on an average of yearly wages over the highest earning thirty years. Years spent not earning wages are given a value of zero and have the effect of sharply reducing the average yearly wage.

H.R. 5024 would assign a yearly dollar value to caregiving for up to five years of time spent out of the workforce providing home care. This change would be particularly helpful to women who are more likely to take caregiver responsibilities.

NOW national president, Terry O’Neill, made an eloquent argument for the need for this legislation at the recent Social Security forums that we sponsored in Seattle and Bellingham. While we do not expect the legislation to pass this year, its introduction is a good step forward.

Rep. Jim McDermott agreed to be an original co-sponsor of H.R. 5024. Similar requests were made of several of Washington’s Congressional Representatives. Please be sure to thank Rep. McDermott when you have the opportunity.

Will Healthcare be a Human Right in Washington?

Three major research organizations issued reports in July indicating that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) made a significant impact on the number of uninsured across the country. The estimates range from 8 million to 9.5 million adults gaining coverage. According to the Commonwealth Fund, 15 percent of American adults were uninsured in the second quarter of 2014, down from 20 percent in the third quarter of last year. Young adults, age 19 to 34, dropped from 28 percent to 18 percent uninsured. In the 25 states that expanded Medicaid coverage, uninsured poor people declined from 28 percent to 17 percent. Tragically, the uninsured rate for poor people in states that did not expand Medicaid was and remained 36 percent.

The Office of the Insurance Commissioner issued a similar report for Washington. Our uninsured rate dropped from 970,000 to 600,000. That is a good thing but not nearly good enough!! Hundreds of thousands of Washingtonians are suffering the injustice of barriers to the health care they need.

The Constitution of the World Health Organization states: “Enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition…Governments have a responsibility for the health of their peoples which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health and social measures.”

As a result of a grass roots organizing campaign led by the Vermont Workers Center, the governor and legislature of Vermont passed a single payer plan called Green Mountain Care. The Center began the campaign in 2008 with the principle that health care is a basic human right. By successfully mobilizing thousands of residents, in 2010 the Vermont legislature passed legislation adopting human rights principles as the basis for health reform in Vermont. In 2011, the Vermont legislature passed and the Governor signed legislation creating a framework for a system for single payer health insurance based on human rights principles.

Much is left to be done in Vermont, and the battle is not close to being over. Significant opposition is being mounted by conservative forces, the pharmaceutical industry and the state association of private insurance brokers. Significantly, the largest insurer in Vermont, Blue Cross, a nonprofit that has 70% of the market in Vermont, supports Green Mountain Care. Blue Cross expects to administer the payment system. Additionally, the hospitals and the medical association support the plan, particularly because it promises to equalize reimbursements for Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) allows states to apply for waivers beginning in 2017 to establish state-based systems. Vermont hopes to implement their plan in 2017 after receiving the waiver. Meanwhile, they barred the selling of health care insurance outside their health care exchange which was established in 2014 under the ACA. Their plan in 2017 is to transform their exchange into Green Mountain Care and enroll every payer they can into that one system.

There are significant challenges facing Vermont. They expect to partially fund Green Mountain Care with dollars...
Before departing for their four-month summer vacation, the Supreme Court handed down two decisions that will make life in the United States worse for women, the LGBT community, and workers.

By a narrow 5-4 majority, the high court ruled in 

**Burwell v. Hobby Lobby**

that some for-profit corporations may claim a religious exemption from the Affordable Care Act and deny contraceptive coverage to women employees.

The same 5-4 majority then ruled in **Harris v. Quinn** that some categories of public employees can refuse to join a union, even if it is recognized as their bargaining agent, and also refuse to pay the union fees for its work representing them.

In both cases, the court’s majority claimed that their rulings were limited in scope. In other words, they said, it could have been worse. In both cases, Justice Alito wrote the majority opinion.

In the Hobby Lobby case, Alito based his decision on the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act, a law originally designed to protect Native Americans from federal government interference in their religious sites and ceremonies. The court majority stopped short of saying that corporations have First Amendment freedom of religion rights, like they awarded First Amendment free speech rights in the Citizens United case.

Nevertheless, in her stinging dissent, Justice Ginsberg called the opinion “a decision of startling breadth,” which would allow many for-profit companies the right to “opt out of any law (saving only tax laws) they judge incompati-

ble with their sincerely held religious beliefs…”

As if to prove Ginsberg right, the Supreme Court immediately ordered lower federal courts to review **all** claims of religious exemptions from the Affordable Care Act, putting women’s healthcare in jeopardy across the country.

**Hobby Lobby Blowback**

Far from settling the issue, the court’s Hobby Lobby decision touched off a huge legislative battle to preserve necessary medical care for women. Only days after the Supreme Court ruling, Washington’s own Senator Patty Murray and Colorado Senator Mark Udall introduced legislation to reverse the decision.

“Your healthcare decisions are not your boss’s business,” Murray said. “Since the Supreme Court decided it will not protect women’s access to healthcare, I will.”

Although Murray and Udall were joined by 35 co-sponsors, Republican Senators filibustered the bill, and it was not brought to the floor for debate.

Undeterred, Murray then joined with New Jersey Senator Corey Booker to introduce the Access to Birth Control Act to ensure that no woman with a valid prescription is denied or intimidated when requesting birth control or emergency contraception at pharmacies.

“It’s disappointing that in 2014 this legislation is even necessary,” Murray said, “but as the tide of politically-driv-

en, extreme efforts to block a woman’s access to reproductive health services continues to rise, we are going to stand with women and help protect this ac-

cess.”

**Hobby Lobby and LGBT Rights**

One of the far-reaching consequences of the Hobby Lobby decision was that national LGBT organizations changed their legislative strategy to adapt to the new legal climate.

In response to the ruling, almost every national LGBT organization pulled their support from ENDA (the Employment Non-Discrimination Act), which had once been the centerpiece of their legislative agenda. The problem is that ENDA includes religious exemption language that – after Hobby Lobby – many feared could nullify the protections in the bill.

“While we fully support strong protections for LGBT workers in the workplace, something that for many workers is currently only afforded by a union contract, after the recent Supreme Court decision in the Hobby Lobby case, it is clear that these broad religious exemptions would gut the intent and purpose of ENDA,” Pride At Work executive director Jerame Davis said in a statement.

At the urging of LGBT rights groups, Pres. Obama omitted a religious exemption from his July 21 executive order barring companies that do business with the federal government...
Taking Care of the Caretakers

By Bob Shimabukuro

January 2012 call from my nephew Carlos in Virginia: "Mom’s in the hospital. Intensive care. She’s had some hemorrhaging in the brain."

A stroke, I decided. The same thing the doctors told me when my own mother had a stroke. Later, they said "aneurysm."

"Bad?" I asked Carlos.

"Well, she’s in intensive care," he answered.

"Bad," I decided again.

And it was.

My younger sister Ann survived, barely. It was a long six months later that she returned home after spending months shifting between hospitals, rehabilitation and assisted living centers. She was wheelchair bound, could understand what was going on, but couldn’t talk or write.

Her primary caretakers were her fiancé, John, her son Carlos and daughter Marisela, and our sister Toki. Ann and John live with my oldest brother Tom. Toki lives about a mile away from them.

October 2013 call from my brother Ned: "You know anything about what’s going on with Tom?"

"No, what’s happened?"

"I was talking to Carlos, then he said, 'The emergency guys just got here. Can’t talk to you now. Will call you later.' And he’s never called back."

Well, it turns out that Tom suffered a diabetic “event.” That’s what doctors call it. An event. He passed out, fell, resulting in a small fracture of his pelvis.

He didn’t return home until 5 months later, after being shuttled from the hospital, to a rehabilitation facility, and finally "rescued" from the assisted living home he had stayed in for less than a week.

In this unfair society we live in, the most difficult jobs, the ones many people can’t or don’t want to do, are often the ones we pay the least for. Taking care of other people: children, sick, elderly. People who need assistance of any kind. I’ve been on both ends of the spectrum. As a child and as an adult, too, I received a lot of help, for various ailments, mostly because of respiratory problems. But the older I got, it seemed as if I was getting better and more able to give help, while those close to me were having more health problems.

Since I’ve been thinking a lot about Tom, Toki, Ann and John, and the rest of my aging siblings I thought it would be interesting to talk to Hodaviah Okonda, one of the youngest PSARA members who works at an assisted living home.

When I asked about her job, she said, "Basically, assisted living doesn’t deal with incontinence; those with that go to nursing homes. We help with the medications, food, take their blood pressure. Most of the people who stay there are sometimes forgetful or have some dementia. In assisted living we deal with minor things."

This seemed all too familiar. At least for the more recent challenges with Tom and Ann. The more distant memories I had dealt with nursing home issues.

Any training involved?

"Before I applied for a job, I went to a CNA program, learned how to talk, deal with the elderly. And I had to pass a test, to get a Certified Nursing Assistant Certificate. Then after I got my job, they trained me on ‘passing meds,’ how to give a shower, how to remind the elderly about their meals, how to do their own laundry, how to talk to them."

Okonda, who is from the Congo and came to Washington when she was 14, said the elderly in the Congo are treated with respect, but generally stay at home.

"They don’t have any facilities for them to go to. Family members take care of them. Of course, life expectancy is very low. When elderly get sick, there’s not much they can do about it. What we consider old here is maybe 80s or 90s. There, it’s like 50s-60s. I work with people here over 90 years old. They’re very strong, they dance, do a lot of things. My grandmother is 63-years-old. She says she’s old. I tell her she’s not." "Well, I’m going on 69, and I do feel old; I wanted to respond to Okonda, but I knew I’d feel differently when I went to a Virginia family reunion of sorts for the wedding of Marisela and Angel. Whenever we get together, I’ve always felt that I’m doing better than my siblings…, well, except for Toki. Over the past two years I’ve gone to Virginia four times to help out Toki and the others with the caregiving. With all of our ailments, we’re lucky that we’ve been able to share our load. With Medicare and insurance, we’ve also been able to get professional caregiving, when needed, at nursing homes, assisted living, and at home.

From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs. We were brought up by our parents to that ethical code. And it didn’t refer only to economic justice. It works as a care philosophy also.

What’s the wage for a CNA?

"$12.25."

So the $15/hr will make a big difference?

"Oh yes. I’m the only one who has one Continued on Page 11
Washington activists take fight for paid leave to White House Summit on Working Families

By Tatsuko Go Hollo

On June 23, 2014, the White House hosted the first-ever Summit on Working Families, a full-day event featuring workplace policies that build economic stability and prosperity for today’s families. Speakers, including President and First Lady Obama, Vice President and Dr. Biden, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Gloria Steinem, and Maria Shriver, highlighted paid sick leave, family and medical leave and paycheck fairness as key factors for economic success. These issues also make up the agenda for the Washington Work and Family Coalition, who led the fight for Paid Sick and Safe Leave in Seattle and of which PSARA is a member.

I had the fortune of attending the Summit, along with a dedicated Washington State contingent, including Marilyn Watkins, Policy Director at the Economic Opportunity Institute and Chair of Washington Work and Family Coalition, Sandy Restrepo and Amanda DeShazo from the Healthy Washington, a coalition fighting for paid sick and safe leave in Tacoma, Representative Laurie Jinkins, House sponsor of the statewide paid sick and safe leave bill, and Makini Howell, small business owner and restauranteur in Seattle and Tacoma.

Makini, owner and chef of Seattle’s Plum Bistro, was a featured speaker, discussing her experience in providing paid leave for her 42 employees. Since participating in the effort to pass Seattle’s Paid Sick and Safe Leave ordinance, Makini has offered paid leave to all her employees – and her business has grown in the process. She shared that the cost to implement paid leave has been “pennies on the plate” and more than paid for itself in reduced turnover and increased morale. Her businesses are a shining example of the economic success reaped by treating employees with dignity and enabling them to care for themselves and their families with good wages and benefits, including paid leave.

Research has shown time and again that paid leave policies lead to better health outcomes for workers and their families, help business to thrive and boost the economy. While cities and states have begun to recognize the urgent need for these policies, far too many workers continue to make the impossible choice between paying the bills and caring for their family. This is especially true for workers of color, who are less likely to have access to paid leave and more likely to experience pay inequity.

The Obama administration acknowledged legislation is needed to ensure all workers have access to paid leave. The President urged mayors and governors to be leaders in passing these policies in their own jurisdictions, noting the stagnancy in Congress.

Here in Washington we cannot accept that one million workers in our state do not have access to a single day of paid sick leave and that many more are unable to take paid parental leave or leave to care for an aging or seriously ill loved one.

We know that progress must start in our own communities. With the advocacy of voters and residents across the state, Washington workers will no longer have to choose between putting food on the table and recovering from the flu. Now is the time to call on our own elected officials to make policies that enable upward mobility and economic security for working families their top priority.

Tatsuko Go Hollo is Senior Policy Associate at the Economic Opportunity Institute and a member of PSARA.

Marilyn Watkins is also a PSARA member.
We're celebrating Labor Day!

M. L. King County Labor Council
Labor Day Celebration

Monday, September 1st
11 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Lower Woodland Park — Shelters 1, 2 & 3
(N. 50th Street & Woodland Park Avenue N, Seattle)

Featuring live music by
Maia Santell & House Blend

Hot Dogs • Ice Cream • Soda • Clowns
Games • Face Painting • Raffle Prizes

It's all free!
Join us!

Need more info? Call us at (206) 441-8510 or send email to office@mlkclc.org

Bring your lawn chairs, your cookies, and join us at the PSARA picnic table.
Field Office Verification of Social Security Numbers Scheduled to End August 1

By Steve Kofahl

Unmoved by objections from Social Security advocates, the Senate Special Committee on Aging, and at least 123 Democratic and Republican members of the House of Representatives, the Social Security Administration will prohibit its field office employees from providing written Social Security Number Printouts effective August 1, 2014.

Those who need written verification of their Social Security Numbers and have misplaced their Social Security Cards, will have to visit a field office with appropriate documents, request replacement cards, and wait a minimum of 7-10 days to receive them in the mail. Nearly 6 million people visited field offices last year to obtain Social Security Number Printouts that they furnished to prospective employers, financial institutions, Departments of Motor Vehicles, or other third parties. Only in dire emergencies, as determined by SSA field office managers, will verification by telephone be provided to third parties, with the consent of the Social Security Number Holder.

This is just one of many service cuts that Acting Commissioner Carolyn Colvin, recently nominated by President Obama to serve a 6-year term as permanent Commissioner, has proposed and implemented. Ms. Colvin’s confirmation hearing before the Senate Finance Committee is scheduled for July 30, 2014.

SSA’s excuse for ending this particular service is that the Printouts have no "security features." Social Security Cards have no security features either, and are easily replicated. In fact, counterfeit cards are a standard part of the package that identity thieves and other criminals have been selling for years. AFGE is unaware of any instance in which a Social Security Printout, or a counterfeit Printout, has been used for illegal purposes.

Furthermore, an SSA telephone call providing a Social Security Number to an employer or agency in an emergency situation is clearly insecure. Telephone calls are regularly monitored for quality assurance purposes, and there is no way to know whether anyone has been listening-in on any particular call, or who has been listening-in. The Agency’s solution for providing immediate verification in emergency situations creates a new security risk.

SSA wants employers and financial institutions to pay fees to verify Social Security Numbers rather than send job applicants to field offices, but there is no incentive for them to do so.

The Consent Based SSN Verification Service is only available to employers and institutions who pay a one-time non-refundable $5,000 fee, so only the largest organizations utilize the service, but an alternate service for verification of 10 or fewer Social Security Numbers still comes at a cost. Neither service is reliable, since the requesting organization merely submits a name and number, and just gets a "match" or "no match" response. Name variations or misspellings in SSA records will result in an incorrect "no match" that could have been resolved on the spot if a Number Holder had instead visited a field office.

SSA also suggests the use of "E-Verify", a system that has also been proven to be unreliable, and to be misused and abused by employers. The National Immigration Law Center website contains excellent information about E-Verify.

On July 17, SSA announced that it will not stop providing Benefit Verification Statements after September 30, 2014, a service used last year by 5 million visitors who need proof of income in order to receive assistance from other agencies and organizations. That was a direct result of public pressure, but it may only be a temporary reprieve.

It is also rumored that field office closings have been temporarily suspended due to public and Congressional pressure.

We can successfully push back against service cuts at SSA.

We will keep you updated about what you can do at the www.afge.org "Save Our Social Security" site.

Steve Kofahl is President of AFGE (American Federation of Government Employees) Local 3937 and a member of PSARA’s Executive Board.
of considerable diversity in the room.

Participants were then asked how they felt about this shared pain. A second level of “common ground” emerged as many expressed their anger, frustration, sense of betrayal, and concerns for the future for their children and grandchildren. A few participants expressed hope that we can turn our country and world around toward a better future.

A third level of “common ground” emerged as the discussion shifted to what deeply held personal values were being violated by the economic injustice, discrimination and growing environmental concerns expressed by participants.

Five broad categories emerged:
1. We are all one people who care for each other.
2. Our economic and political life should serve the needs of we the people.
3. We the people and working people have a fundamental right to shape our future.
4. An injustice to anyone is an injustice to all and must be ended.
5. We must ensure that our earth’s environment is protected.

With three levels of “common ground” identified, the discussion shifted to the important question of “What is your dream for a better future?”

The following general themes surfaced:
1. We are all one people and one human family.
2. We have responsibility to create a peaceful and sustainable world for everyone.
3. We all have fundamental rights to genuine economic, social and political opportunity and security.
4. We must heal the longstanding injustices of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia and hostility to immigrants.
5. We have fundamental rights to fairness and justice in our world of work.
6. We need to strengthen our political and economic democracies to ensure a better present and future.

The values and elements of a desired future listed were not finalized but reflect the emerging thinking of the participants. The strong consensus was these were a good step but needed refinement.

At the end of the second workshop, there was strong support for continuing this important dialogue on shared values and visions. There was also support for talking about how we work together more effectively and strategically across organizations and movements over time. Several key leaders also volunteered to serve on a planning committee to consider next steps. PSARA agreed to report back on the work to date and make recommendations on how we might continue to move this process forward. Corporate America has their long-range vision and plan anchored in their values.

We ask “What is our long-range vision and plan anchored in our own shared values?”

A big question, but one we must answer...more later.

Mark McDermott is the Chair of PSARA’s Education Committee and serves on the PSARA Executive Board.
from discriminating against their LGBT employees.

**More challenges for unions**

In *Harris v. Quinn*, Alito said that Illinois home healthcare workers organized by SEIU were not full-fledged state employees, even though they were paid by Medicaid, and therefore they could not be required to join SEIU or pay fees for SEIU’s work negotiating contracts for healthcare workers.

Alito stopped short of applying his ruling to all public-sector workers, but he did say he thought a previous Supreme Court decision upholding union shops in the public sector was wrongly decided.

The plaintiffs in this case were represented by the right-wing National Right to Work Committee, in hopes that the ruling would cripple unions’ ability to fund themselves.

Public sector unions rely on so-called “agency fees” to compensate them for their efforts negotiating contracts for workers who do not wish to become regular union members. If unions do not have the right to collect agency fees, employers could load up the workforce with “freeloader” workers who get the benefits of a union’s work, but refuse to contribute to the expenses.

According to SEIU 775NW spokesperson Jackson Holtz, the *Harris v. Quinn* ruling “potentially” affects healthcare workers in the Pacific Northwest, but “there is a difference between the Illinois program and the Washington state model.”

“We have a much more robust collective bargaining model,” Holtz explained, that has brought home healthcare workers “40% more than minimum wage, L&I, social security, and healthcare.”

“Healthcare workers will continue to organize and stand up for themselves and their clients – and stand up against people like Alito who want to tear our communities apart,” Holtz vowed.

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**Interview with Will Parry**

Continued from Page 1

What was it like living through the Great Depression?

The Depression radicalized my father, who had his own small advertising agency and he, in turn, radicalized me. For example, he took me to hear speakers like William Z. Foster and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, both early-day communist leaders and also activists in the labor movement. Foster organized the first steel strike and Gurley Flynn was involved in the strike of the garment workers that led to the establishment of International Women’s Day. He also took me to hear Woody Guthrie sing and play in the Workers Alliance Hall down in the Skid Road.

What was that worldview?

I became communist. I had gone to [what was then] Washington State College and spent three years over there [in Pullman] and in my final year I hitchhiked over to Seattle and joined the Young Communist League. I had subscribed to the Daily People’s World, which later became the People’s World, a weekly. I was persuaded by its political line that [communists] were on the right track, so I thought I better get into the action.

Why? What was it that drew you to the Communist Party?

It was a period of rapid [labor] organization and major strikes. There was a seething foment among working people at that time in response to the impact of the Depression and unemployment. In Seattle, the Unemployed Citizens League set up a virtual city on the Duwamish tide flats—it was a Hooverville. They had a mayor and an informal city government and a sanitation department and a security detail, the whole thing. And no money—there was lots of barter. It was a vast sea of shanties and shacks made out of materials of all kinds. My dad wrote an article on it called the “The Republic of the Penniless” [that appeared] in the Atlantic Monthly. He got a generous check that tided us over through much of the Depression. Nobody was making any money, including him.

Watch for Part II of this interview in coming issues of the Retiree Advocate.
they presently receive from the federal government for Medicaid, Medicare and subsidies for their exchange. These dollars will not be enough to fund the program. They are determining how to finance the rest of the estimated $1.2 billion to $2 billion in costs. Additionally, ERISA bars the state from regulating large self-insured employers. Vermont must figure out how to get these employers into Green Mountain Care and tax them to help finance the new system.

According to the State of Vermont Agency of Administration in a report published in January 2013, “Green Mountain Care is estimated to save $281 million for Vermont in the first three years of operation as a result of administrative efficiencies, even with the enhancements to coverage, elimination of the uninsured, and a reduction in out-of-pocket costs for Vermonters.”

Washingtonians who believe that healthcare is a fundamental human right can be inspired by Vermont. At the same time, we are a much larger state with many more insurers, no income tax and a regressive tax system, a large insurance market outside the healthcare exchange, and a very politically divided state.

PSARA is part of a coalition to advocate for Health Care as a Human Right in Washington. Our first step is to mount a campaign to apply for a federal waiver in 2017 or shortly thereafter. Much work lies ahead.

PSARA has a long history of fighting for single payer healthcare. We believe healthcare is a fundamental human right! We look forward to joining with our allies to mount this campaign.

job. Most of the CNAs feel the need to have two jobs. I'm the only one at my workplace who doesn't have kids." So raising the minimum will not mean they can get by on one job?

"It will be a big difference, because some go to school, some send money back home. Some do both. And there’ll be more money for food."

Postscript:

As the wedding procession was coming to its end, all eyes turned first onto mother-of-the bride Ann, accompanied by John, and finally to bride Marisela, accompanied by Tom, as they slowly and carefully made their way down the 75-foot aisle. Ann’s (and Tom's too) caring community had produced nothing short of a miracle. Few dry eyes in the place.

Furthermore, Ann and Tom were on the dance floor in the reception that followed. I was surprised especially about Tom, since his ankles and heels were swollen, and we had a hard time getting his foot into the fancy shoes that went with his tux.

Bob Shimabukuro is Associate Editor of the Retiree Advocate and a member of PSARA’s Executive Board. Hodaviah Okonda is a PSARA member, a Certified Nursing Assistant, and plans to attend school to become a Registered Nurse.

PSARA’s Diversity Committee meets at the Panama Hotel in Seattle’s International District, planning the PSARA tour of the Wing Luke Museum. From left to right: Bob Shimabukuro, Frieda Takamura, Frank Irigon, Maureen Bo, and Imogene Williams. (Photo courtesy of Rebecca Williams.)

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Meetings and Events

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, August 6, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave., Seattle. All members welcome as we begin preparation for the 2015 Legislative Session.

PSARA Tour of Wing Luke Museum: 10:30 a.m., Thursday, August 7, 719 S. King St., Seattle, 98104. PSARA Diversity Committee members will lead PSARA members on a tour of the Museum, a unique treasure in our community. We will view several of the exhibits including “In Struggle-Asian American Acts of Resistance”. We will follow the viewing with a discussion and then we will adjourn for a no host lunch at a restaurant in the International District for anyone who wants to have lunch together. Space is limited. This tour will be first come, first serve for the first 15 PSARA members who rsvp. Either call the PSARA office, (206) 448-9646 or email Maureen, adminvp@PSARA.org to find out if there is still room available.

PSARA Environmental Committee: 3 p.m.- 4 p.m., Thursday, August 7, Seattle Labor Temple, 2800 First Ave., Room 226, Seattle. All members welcome.

PSARA Diversity Committee: 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Thursday, August 14, Seattle Labor Temple, 2800 First AV, Room 226, Seattle. The Committee will evaluate the Wing Luke tour and begin planning for new programs.

PSARA Executive Board Meeting: 12:30 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, August 21, Central Area Senior Center, 500 30th Ave. S., Seattle. All PSARA members are welcome.

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon to 1:00 p.m., Thursday, August 28, Green Lake Library, 7354 East Green Lake Drive N., Seattle. Brown bag lunch. The gathering will discuss end of life concerns.

Martin Luther King County Labor Council Labor Day Picnic: 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., Monday, Sept. 1., Lower Woodland Park – Shelters 1, 2 & 3, N. 50th St & Woodland Park Ave. N., Seattle. Come join us at the PSARA table. Bring cookies that we provide for the celebration. Lawn chairs are always welcome if you have them. Enjoy a time of relaxation and schmoozing! There are lots of politicians present so you can get some face time with them.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, September 3, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave., Seattle. All members welcome as we continue planning for the 2015 Legislative Session.