

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

The Monthly Publication of
PSARA EDUCATION FUND
“Uniting Generations for a Secure Future”

Vol XXXI, No 7

July 2015

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What could possibly
go wrong?
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August 8: Celebrate Medicare & Social Security



Daniel Pak (left) of Kore Ionz and Geo Quibuyen (right) of Blue Scholars will perform at the August 8 Rally for Social Security's 80th & Medicare's 50th Birthdays. (Photo: Candace Inagi)

For 50 years - five decades – seniors have had the security of knowing that they will have access to health care services! We won a monumental victory 50 years ago with the passage of Medicare and Medicaid. Now it is time to celebrate that victory AND demand that Medicare be updated to cover dental, vision, long-term care services and any other essential health care services that people need in the course of their lives. We also need to escalate the demand that Medicare be available before people turn 65. Medicare is the entry path way to universal health care.

For 80 years – eight decades – many seniors and disabled people have had a steady and reliable monthly flow of income to assist them with the everyday

needs of life. Our ancestors who won Social Security were amazingly brave, winning their victories against what appeared to be insurmountable odds. We have an obligation to celebrate their victories and to fight to make the Social Security program more responsive to the economic realities of the 21st century.

On Saturday, August 8, we will celebrate the victories and renew our commitment to fight like hell for the expansion of Medicare and Social Security, the two bedrock programs essential for a decent life for all people in our country.

From 1-3 p.m. we will gather at Westlake Park. We will listen to dynamic

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The Greatness of America Lies in Its Future, Not in Its Past

By Bob Shimabukuro, Associate Editor and member of PSARA's Executive Board

“America has the worst (human Rights) record in the world!” --- Zenshu Shimabukuro, . . . '53, '54, '55, '56, '57, '59—'62, when he died.

“America has the greatest Constitution in the world!” ---Zenshu Shimabukuro, 1958.

The reason my dad changed his tune in 1958 was that the “Hawaii Seven,” who had been serving time for violations of the Smith Act, were set free by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. The Court ruled that the abstract teaching of communism did not constitute conspiracy to overthrow the government by force or violence as defined by the Smith Act.

That decision was instrumental in his thoughts about America. Dad followed local, national, and international politics and shared his thoughts about the world in family conversations, especially around the dinner table. He was very happy that day. He thought America had a chance to redeem itself.

As I write this, it is a few days before Father's Day, 2015. I wonder about what he would think about the socio-political-economic state in which we find ourselves today. He felt like he was a failure because he could not provide for his children, and because he lived in a country/culture that punished kids for failures of the father. He also thought his biggest failure was getting angry and fighting with a luna (fore-

man) at Lahainaluna, a work/study high school on Maui, and being kicked out of school, ruining his chance to go to college.

Today, I also wonder what he would say about the changes that so obviously need to be made. Change, he always said, is inevitable. “When system broke, change ‘em. Every thing today, even if good, in future going need change. Because they only ‘scotch tape.’ If everybody get education, people can get together and fix stuff.”

“Nah,” I thought. Dad would just get angry. He always cautioned me, “Don't get angry.” He was 62-years-old when he died.

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Published monthly by the PSARA Education Fund, 2800 First Ave., #262, Seattle, Washington, 98121. Phone (206) 448-9646.

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For up-to-date information about PSARA and issues important to all of us, visit the PSARA website: www.psara.org

PSARA Rocks!

By Maureen Bo, Administrative Vice President

Thanks to all who helped make PSARA's annual summer meeting a success.

--Thanks to our featured speaker, Seattle City Councilmember and long time PSARA member, Nick Licata. Nick has helped put Seattle on a progressive course including his backing of the \$15 an hour minimum wage, paid sick and safe leave, and other actions to move the city forward.

--Thanks to Machinists District Lodge 751, which gave us free use of their meeting hall and help from their staff to set up and clean up. Many members who attended said the room was perfect for our meeting and expressed their gratitude.

--Thanks to officers and members of PSARA who helped make everything work well and provided another great potluck. Reports from Committee chairs showed how active PSARA is on economic and social justice issues.

-- Thanks to those who gave money or food items for the Puget Sound Labor Agency Foodbank. Morgan Stine, Director of the Foodbank and now a PSARA member, said he collected \$226 at the meeting, which will help 30 families get groceries for July. Members are encouraged to send checks to Puget Sound Labor Agency Food Bank, 2800 First Ave #126, Seattle WA 98121.

We were joined by members of the Initiative 735 campaign who are also PSARA members: Alice Woldt, Nancy Amidei, and Jay Heyman seeking signatures and volunteers to gather signatures to overturn the Citizens United ruling and get big money out of politics.

The PSARA Environmental Committee brought a laptop computer so that members could sign the petition to the Gates Foundation to divest their investments in the fossil fuel industry.

Check out our events on the last page of the newsletter and join our activities. PSARA Rocks! Help us keep rocking.

Dave Reichert Steals from Medicare for TPP!

PSARA and other community activists picket in front of Seattle's World Trade Center on April 28 to tell Rep. Dave Reichert "Don't Steal Medicare Money!"

Reichert promoted a scheme to take money from the Medicare trust fund to finance the TPP free trade deal.

Not only will TPP put our labor and environmental safeguards at risk, it might also jeopardize medical care for seniors -- that we have paid for with our taxes!

(Photo: Garet Munger)



The Fight for a Secure and Dignified Retirement

By Robby Stern

I had already begun writing this column discussing the May, 2015, report issued by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) entitled "Retirement Security: Most Households Approaching Retirement Have Low Savings," when a front page New York Times (NYT) article entitled "U.S. Seniors Prosper, Finding 'Sweet Spot' in Middle Class" appeared. The Seattle Times ran the NYT article with a more modest headline, "Social Security, pensions and investments pay off for seniors."

What the heck! The NYT's headline and the GAO report seemed to be directly contradictory. And the NYT article made no reference at all to the May, 2015, GAO report.

The GAO report was requested by Senator Bernie Sanders. The report documented what many strongly suspected. The economic realities of the 21st century and in particular the growing income disparity between the top 2% and the remaining 98% of the population is creating the likelihood that more and more seniors will be forced to forego retirement, retire later than they had planned and/or spend their senior years in relative poverty.

The 65 and older population will grow over 50% between 2015 and 2030. This demographic group faces growing retirement insecurity for a variety of reasons. The elimination of defined benefit pensions is a big source of retirement insecurity. Corporations and public entities are eliminating the third leg of the three-legged retirement stool while 401(k) accounts are proving to be, at best, inadequate. In addition, low and declining wages make it very difficult to save,

The GAO reports, "About half of households age 55 and older have no retirement savings (such as in a 401(K) plan or an IRA)." It goes on to say, "many older households without retirement savings have few other resources, such as defined benefit (DB) plan or non-retirement savings, to draw on in retirement."

The report adds, "Among those with some retirement savings, the median amount of those savings is about

\$104,000 for households age 55-64 and \$148,000 for households age 65-74, equivalent to an inflation protected annuity of \$310 and \$649 per month, respectively. *Social Security provides most of the income for more than half of households age 65 and older.*" (emphasis mine)

Up steps the NYT reporting that U.S. seniors have found the "Sweet Spot" for retirement security. The age group to which the NYT was referring who "weathered the economic downturn that began in 2007 and made significant gains" are between 65-74. But, according to the GAO report, many if not most of the people in this age group are facing significant financial challenges. For example, 52% of people in this age group have NO retirement savings. While a higher percentage of this group have defined benefit pensions, 27% of people between 65-74 have no retirement savings and no defined benefit pension. Some "sweet spot"!

According to the GAO report, people between 65-74 who have retirement savings have a median savings of \$148,000, meaning half have more and half have less. If there is no defined benefit pension, which there is not for a majority of the people even in this age group, they are having to live on Social Security and whatever they have been able to save.

More older people are working to supplement their income, and in most cases not because they want to, but because they have to. According to the NYT, the number of older people working has increased from one in five in the late 1990s to one in three.

The NYT article quoted Alice Munnell, director of the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College who stated, "It is not so much that older people are experiencing unseemly gains in income. It's more that middle-aged people are not seeing incomes growing or even keeping pace with inflation."

The NYT article reports that the middle class is now made up of more seniors than ever. Middle class is defined as people between 40% and 80% on the income distribution scale. The economic context is the overall stagnation or decline in



income for all distributions along the income scale with the exception of the top 10%. Even within the top 10%, almost all the gains have gone to the top 2%.

After juxtaposing the GAO study with the NYT article and particularly with the headline "U.S. Seniors Prosper, Finding 'Sweet Spot' in Middle Class," it strikes me that the NYT's front page article really missed the point. Retirement insecurity is growing. The loss of defined benefit pensions, and declining incomes and pensions for a large majority of the people have created the threat that many, if not most, seniors now and in the future face relative poverty (with Social Security creating the floor) as they look forward to their senior years.

PSARA and organizations like PSARA are on the leading edge of fighting back. We will take every opportunity we can, including the upcoming anniversaries on August 8, to build the movement for retirement security and against those who are threatening to cut Social Security and Medicare. (Shame on our U.S. Senators and those U.S. Representatives from Washington who voted to cut Medicare in the recent Fast Track debate!). We demand the enrichment and expansion of Medicare and Social Security and significant equitable redistribution of income and wealth.

Ending Homelessness

By Thalia Syracopoulos

By the end of 2014 the “10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in King County” had been declared a total failure.

On March 26, 2015, Mayor Murray held a press conference to announce that he is directing a housing advisory panel to “develop specific proposals” to build and preserve 50,000 new housing units over the next 10 years within the city limits. Of these, 20,000 would be “income-restricted” affordable housing for seniors and 30,000 would be at market rate. The project is to be paid for by asking the voters to substantially increase the housing levy, which comes up for renewal next year.

Ten days earlier, on March 16 the Housing Affordability and Livability Advisory Committee (HALA) presented an “Immediate Action Agenda” to Mayor Murray and the City Council. The report is 17 pages long and is easy to read: (<http://sagacitymedia.com/pdfs/publicola/ForPressOnly-CHCReport.pdf>).

The HALA report addresses many options including Tenant Access/ Protections, Preservation of Existing Subsidized Housing, Preservation/Creation of Affordability in Existing Market-Rate Housing, New Affordable Housing Resources (including public land availability), Place-based Strategies and Sustainable Homeownership.

The first section of the report addresses financing. Three of the recommendations are readily available to the City and do not involve increased or additional taxes.

1. Councilmanic bonds do not require a vote of the people, and do not increase taxes. Among the many projects these bonds have been used for are the new City Hall, McCaw Hall, remodeling Key Arena, Interbay Golf facilities, fire/police stations, and community centers. While admirable and even necessary, very few of these projects qualify as emergencies. If it so chose, the City could issue at least \$500M in \$100M increments over a few years and still stay within the current bond cap for



Thalia Syracopoulos
(Photo: Garet Munger)

low-income and housing for homeless families and individuals.

Councilmanic bonds are the source of the \$34M the City is contributing to the Pike Place Market expansion. If it goes as planned, the expansion would include 40 units of low-income senior housing.

2. The City presently has a \$228M “emergency reserve” and could spend up to \$128M of that and still maintain its \$100M obligatory reserve. Homelessness and its consequences (and costs, human and financial) are already an emergency. One has to question why the City does not consider the thousands of people sleeping on the streets and hundreds more in “emergency” shelters “an emergency.”

3. The Real Estate Excise Tax [REET] each year generates approximately \$50 million for the City. Until it was discontinued by former Mayor Nickels, there was a “Growth Related Housing Fund” (GRGF), which took 20 percent of the incremental increase in property tax revenue from new construction and used it for the development of low-income housing. Restoring the GRGF would provide about \$10M/yr that could be dedicated to housing for those who are homeless.

All three of these options are readily available and easy to implement if only the City chose to do so.

The section under “Zoning and Housing Types” has a number of suggestions, but it is the first that is most pressing and easiest to do. “Expand the city’s authority to require developers who demolish low-income housing to replace 1 for 1 the housing they remove and at a comparable price (p. 9).” The absence of this authority has resulted in the loss of hundreds of units of affordable housing. The most recent example is Yesler Terrace, which contained 520 units of housing affordable to families. Only 420 of those units will be replaced on-site and, if this project follows the path of other such “renovations,” the 100 “off-site” units might well never be replaced.

I do not understand why the Mayor, 10 days after receiving the HALA report, touted a plan to use an increase in the housing levy, which requires voter approval, to fund 20,000 “income restricted” housing units. What I do understand is that we have to raise our voices and convince the City to implement readily available solutions outlined in the HALA report.

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Thalia Syracopoulos is member of the Board and former President of Seattle NOW, a PSARA member, and stands with Seattle Women In Black.

This Was Our Vision from the Beginning...

An interview with Hilary Stern of Casa Latina

By Mike Andrew

Casa Latina has come a long way since its start in 1994. Beginning in a trailer sitting in a Western Avenue parking lot, it now occupies a beautiful complex of meeting rooms, classrooms, and offices on Jackson Street.

While Casa Latina's development has been stunning, it hasn't surprised executive director Hilary Stern.

"This was our vision from the beginning," she told me. "We still have the drawings from 15 years ago. At the time, though, it seemed like a pipe dream.

"At the start we didn't have the resources to do more than we were doing. We provided what we could with the smallest amount of money.

"And after a successful 10-year capital campaign, we're still raising money," she added. "We have an elevator shaft, but we still need money to install the elevator."

While the big bright buildings are Casa Latina's visible proof of success, the numbers tell an even bigger story.

Last year, almost 9,000 jobs were dispatched through the center. More than 900 workers attended workplace safety and skills trainings. More than 300 attended ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. Eighty-five attended computer classes.

"We started out working with a very particular group," Stern explained, "day laborers who were homeless.

"They were the most vulnerable. Many were recently arrived, they were poor people out on the street, mostly men of color. The neighbors didn't like them.

"They were very difficult to organize. They worked for so many different employers – it was the opposite of organized labor – and it was a perfect situation for driving down wages."

Now, however, Casa Latina workers have set their own minimum wage – \$16 per hour – \$1 above the City of Seattle's minimum.



The old Casa Latina and the new.

The minimum wage was one of the issues taken up at a Thursday morning assembly at which the workers themselves set policy for the center, including wages and rules of conduct in the Day Worker Center.

While Casa Latina's earliest members were almost all men, women began to come in increasing numbers, Stern said. Today 30 percent of Casa Latina's members are women.

On Friday evenings the women's leadership group *Mujeres Sin Fronteras* (Women Without Borders) meets. Topics of trainings and discussion include civil rights, domestic violence, women's preventative health care, and household finances.

To foster leadership by the workers, Stern relies on popular education techniques she learned when she worked for Nicaragua's Ministry of Education.

Like Casa Latina, "they really emphasized adult education," Stern recalls. "You can't change power dynamics unless you give education to the poor."

Stern believes that Casa Latina's success may offer a model for organizing other low-wage workers as well, not only immigrants.

"It seems like that's the direction we're going – a gig economy, project work," rather than workers being permanent employees of a single company, she says. "And that's not just for immigrant workers."

The replacement of permanent full-time employment by as-needed hiring would make life more difficult both for workers and for the unions that want to organize them.

"The union model has worked, but it's not a growing model," she says. "Factories are moving overseas [along with the manufacturing jobs that used to be the bedrock of organized labor].

"Now our problem is, 'How do we organize the businesses around us?' Maybe we organize guilds. That's the way we organized when we used to organize small businesses.

"The problem is how to finance that in a sustainable way. And we haven't figured that out yet."

Stern is the granddaughter of immigrants. On her mother's side the family were Eastern European Jews "who took a 20-year detour through Wales." On her father's side, they were Russians who escaped from Siberia, and landed in New York's Garment District.

Federal immigration law has become much more restrictive since her grandparents arrived, Stern says, but she thinks that public opinion is growing more accepting of immigrants.

"Things have changed, and the nice thing is that they're continuing to change," she says. "My kids don't see the logic behind discrimination – which is great! Younger people don't see immigrants as a cultural threat."

Hilary Stern is a PSARA member.

"Experts" Ruin Everything

By Bob Shimabukuro

"What's an industrial engineer?" I asked my sister Toki.

"You read *Cheaper by the Dozen**, right?"

"Yeah."

"Well, the dad is an industrial engineer. His work is studying how to make things more efficient. Remember the chapter on how to take showers? That's what he does."

I would be interested in seeing how fast people could take showers?

The rebellion against high stakes testing in the public schools, and against Common Core, reminds me of a test I took in my high school over 50 years ago. It wasn't a "high stakes," test but a test that all students had to take.

The Kuder Preference test measured students' personal likes and dislikes with a wide variety of preferences and interests, which suggested what kind of profession the student might be interested in.

"You not going do that," my dad answered, when I asked him. They 'efficiency experts.' Tell bosses how to get more work out of workers in less time so bosses make more money. They no think about workers. Anyway, they goin' get robots pretty soon."

"Toki, what's an actuary?" That was another "occupation" that was suggested to me by Kuder.

"Insurance man," she answered.

"Oh."

A few years later, in my first week in college, my dorm roommate suggested we should have a study group for Ayn Rand's book *Atlas Shrugged*. For me, her "Objectivism" came from the mind of an imbecile. Think about a "red diaper baby" being raised on "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," to having to conceptualize Rand's belief that the super elite are entitled to all, damn the needs of anyone else. I brushed the book and my roommate aside. Nobody in his right mind would embrace this. Or so I thought.

In fact, "Objectivists" have now taken over the world economy. The One Percent really believe that they are superstars, and deserve all the fruits they can steal. They've used all the creativity and invention of the last four decades, not to create a better, safer world for all but to increase their own advantage. And they've done a lot of it with efficiency experts and statistical geniuses who have been greatly aided by the new technology with the ability to crunch some big numbers quickly.

Their experts have driven most family-wage jobs from the economy. The Big One Percent have found that robots are faster, more reliable, and don't talk back. They have robots that put together cars, kill folks with absolute precision, spy, load cargo, mix medicine, drive.

And these robots can find ways to make money without making or doing anything tangible. They connect a service or a product to a person or corporation who wants it and take a cut in the action. An online robot pimp.

Actuaries also are a lucrative profession, because they now work in almost every type of business doing evaluation and research: science, food and health, professional athletics (think sabermetrics), genetics (all about probability and statistics), and Wall Street "financial products" (steal money out of other people's retirement funds).

These experts also chip away at Social Security and Medicare, cutting benefits or actually stealing from trust funds surreptitiously (e.g. \$700 million is going to be taken away if Fast Track passes).



They raid state education money by privatizing public schools in the 50 states, all the while privatizing our prisons. We've got a problem with private "public" schools and prisons with no public accountability provisions.

The "philosophical ethics" battle rages on— a few people are trying to continue/increase their dominance of the world's population with the belief that the rest of us don't matter, that we are just leeches, we are but a pipeline to confinement of black and brown Kids, immigrants and elders.

Thinking about it, I guess Kuder must have been wrong. There's no way I could have been happy being on the One Percent side of this battle.

Remember the slogan I've been repeating in previous columns? Well, I've added a line to it:

We're not crap!

Scrap the cap!

* *Cheaper by the Dozen*, written by Frank Gilbreth Jr and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey, 1948.

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The Story of Lewis G. Clarke, Part II

By Carver Gayton

Editor's Note: In Part I of this article, published in our June issue, the author recounted how his great-grandfather, Lewis G. Clarke, escaped from slavery with his brother Milton.

After Lewis and Milton escaped from slavery, each settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Milton remained there until his death in 1901, while Lewis moved on to New York State, Canada, and ultimately back home to Lexington, Kentucky. Milton never considered himself black, as did Lewis. He consistently made statements over the years such as "... somewhere a link was lost [in his lineage] and a single drop of dark blood flows in my veins, but it is not discernable." Like Lewis, Milton did not have prototypical black features. Milton married a white woman and they had several children. Newspaper and census records reflect that Milton's children also never considered themselves black.

After Lewis's death in 1897, the bloodline issue began to come to a head within Milton's family. Jim Crow discriminatory laws in the late 1900's along with the infamous Plessy vs. Ferguson "separate but equal" U. S. Supreme Court decision in 1896 reflected a greater backlash against blacks. Many individuals and families who appeared to be white but had black blood in their veins opted to cross over to the white world to avoid rampant discrimination. Such was the case concerning Milton's family. His fear for his family is understandable.

The U. S. Library of Congress was in the process of gathering information on black authors and their books to appear as part of an exhibit in the planned Paris World's Fair of 1900. Library officials wanted permission from Milton to have two books dictated and published by the brothers: *Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis Clarke* (1845) and *Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis and Milton Clarke* (1846) included in the exhibit. Milton refused and became so

incensed by repeated efforts to contact him that he placed a copy of a court document in the *Boston Globe* in November, 1900, prohibiting publication of stories related to the early history of his life because they may cause "annoyance and embarrassment to my children and relatives ... except such facts as may be given out by my family after my death." The decree was obviously an act of desperation. The story went viral and appeared in newspapers throughout the nation. Concern over the "one drop rule" clearly divided the families of the two brothers. My mother never mentioned Milton Clarke to me or other members of my family during her entire lifetime. However, as the result of research on my recent book, two years ago I connected with the great-great grandson of Milton and his family who, after more than 100 years, never realized they had black blood in their veins. Our conversations are continuing.

A sad and sordid example of the one drop rule being still with us happened about a year or so ago when I was invited to attend a party given by a white couple I had known for a few years. The hostess introduced me to her son and his fiancé. I congratulated them on their engagement and began talking with the young lady. During the conversation she said, "I think you know my father." She told me his name, and I replied, "Of course, I've known Bob since high school days." I was taken aback because Bob was a light-brown-skinned African American, who I heard married a white lady. His daughter did not in any way appear to have black blood. As the conversation continued it became clear to everyone in the conversation that her father was black. The future groom began to sweat and appeared uncomfortable. It was apparent that he had not met the young lady's father. Less than a week later I was informed by a mutual acquaintance that the engagement was broken off because of the race of the young woman's father. Appearance, by itself, may not bring

about a racist reaction. Just knowing one has the "blood" may trigger the act. It was the young man's loss because his former fiancé is very bright and attractive.

The tragic shooting of unarmed Tony Robinson recently in Madison, Wisconsin, and the protestations by the mother of the victim that her son was not black but biracial, raises questions that are related to the one drop rule. Clearly, individuals have the right to identify themselves in any way they desire. That right must be respected. However, from looking at photographs of Mr. Robinson, I must say he had the appearance of many young men who also identify themselves as African American. A policeman with a gun and a racist mindset who sees someone like Mr. Robinson will not go down a check list before determining if the suspect is African American, multiracial, mulatto, etc., before he decides to perpetrate unjustified harm. He would see a man of color. I hope Mr. Robinson's mother was not intimating a hierarchy of acceptability within racial categories. That certainly was the obvious intent when racial categories were first initiated in America.

When it comes to racial mixtures in the United States, 58 percent of African Americans have at least 13 percent European ancestry. Among those who identify themselves as white, 30 percent have some African ancestry. These figures show that we in America, both black and white, are more "family" than many of us are willing to admit. Taking into consideration the aforementioned statistics and anecdotes, and as we see an increase of racial tensions swirling around us, shouldn't we ask: Are we as a nation operating within a paradigm of race and bloodlines that limit us from making greater strides toward racial harmony in America?

Carver Clark Gayton is the author of "When Owing a Shilling Costs a Dollar: The Saga of Lewis G. Clarke, Born a White Slave" (2014) and a PSARA member.

What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

By Tom Lux, Co-chair, PSARA Environmental Committee

What would be the best way to reduce the chances of climate change wreaking havoc on earth? Obviously, one answer is to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide we put into the atmosphere. Burn less fossil fuels – keep them in the ground. Putting this policy into practice and transitioning to clean energy, which we have the technology for now, however, is incredibly difficult because of the political power of the fossil fuel industry. So, we continue to pump more CO₂ into the atmosphere and heating the planet.

But don't worry: there are a few scientists, engineers, and inventors who are burning the midnight oil trying to develop an "easier fix." The deliberate use of technology to manipulate the environment is called geoengineering. So what are these modern-day Dr. Strangeloves coming up with? According to one geoengineering supporter Joe Nocero in the *New York Times*, "One method is carbon capture, traditionally conceived as a process that sucks up carbon from the air and buries it in the ground." (Wouldn't it be better to leave it in the ground in the first place?) Nocero continues, "A second is called solar radiation management (SRM) which uses techniques like shooting sulfate particles into the stratosphere in order to reflect or divert solar radiation back into space." Again, wouldn't it be sim-

pler to attack the source of the problem – carbon pollution – rather than to try to divert the sun's rays? SRM is expensive, and it is messing with one of the most basic sources of life on earth.

For these modern Dr. Strangeloves "the story of the past and the story of the future revolve around one thing: 'Meaningful climate mitigation is fundamentally a technological challenge.' It is not kings, presidents, proletarians or generals who make history – but rather scientists, inventors and engineers, and it is they who will save us. This position is a defense of the status quo and is the same one argued by those who have resisted all climate protection legislation that would disrupt the structure of power..."*

"What could possibly go wrong?" Naomi Klein asks in her book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*. SRM basically behaves like a volcanic eruption and this causes havoc with weather systems and historically has caused drought in large parts of the world with enormous loss of life. But proponents of dimming the sky say not to worry, the drought would all be in the southern hemisphere! Why worry? The scientific field called chaos theory tells us that when we alter a system in such a drastic way, the results are entirely unpredictable, and there is no going back.

The geoengineering clique (partly funded by Bill Gates) feel that with big enough brains and big enough computers we can control the climate just like we have been trying to harness nature since the beginning of the industrial era. As Naomi Klein states, "...digging, damming, drilling, diking. Is it really as simple as adding a new tool to our nature taming arsenal: dimming? This is the strange paradox of geoengineering. Unlike cutting our emissions in line with the scientific consensus, succumbing to the logic of geoengineering does not require any change from us; it just requires that we keep doing what we have done for centuries, only much more so."

The ancients called this hubris; the great American philosopher, farmer, and poet Wendell Berry calls it "arrogant ignorance." Maybe it is time to start listening to the vast majority (97 percent) of scientists who perceive climate change as a real threat to Mother Earth and the future of our children. Maybe it is time we weren't so concerned about how we can control and manipulate the forces of nature, but rather how we can live in harmony with nature's laws and transition to clean energy.

* "The Technofix Is In," by Clive Hamilton; *Earth Island Journal*, April 21, 2015.



PSARA members take action against Shell Oil's plans to drill for oil in the Arctic.
(Photos: Garet Munger)

The Greatness of America

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Zenwa Uncle, on the other hand, was 97 years old when he died, and I had never seen him angry. "Your faddah and me, we 'wen' read too many history books. History books don't tell truth. More truthful history in fiction."

He was pointing out a truth. They who control the narrative control the history. We (the 99%) are controlled by a narrative that emphasizes mostly entrepreneurs (beginning with Columbus), slave holders, invaders, conquerors, and thieves as heroes. Really. The One Percent conveniently gloss over what they have done in our (American and European) name: Slavery. Genocide. Incarceration. Torture. Devastation of states/countries/colonies/ecosphere in order to produce food and goods for us.

Education should not be viewed as just part of a school/job/retirement pipeline. We learn stuff from schools, family, environment, media, from listening to the stories of others very different from ours. Frontline community organizers' primary function is to teach and learn about narratives that are true to what is happening in the community. But the school part of the pipeline, especially the public school system, is most important because it can provide the common cultural background in which we develop a more accurate narrative, especially one that reflects more what is happening with us than with the One Percent. We can't let them stifle our narrative. We can't throw our children and grandchildren under the "school reform" bus.

The last two weeks have been an overwhelming learning experience for me, thinking about my life, my family, about leadership, community organizing. I've been moved to tears, to joy, having a good time (and paying for it), to anger, to reflection. As all these emotions and thoughts have gone through my head, there's one simple message that keeps pounding through from Dad: The greatness of America lies in its future, not in its past.

I also think about Zenwa Uncle's thoughts. I've also been reading a lot. Non-fiction. Any recommendations for fiction books that are more truthful than non-fiction books? Let me know.

Let's catch a breath, then read some fiction.

Cuba Si: May Day in Cuba

By Beth Brunton

Last month, I traveled to Havana, Cuba, with Code Pink, the national women-led peace group, to celebrate May Day in Havana, Cuba, and to meet with education, health, agricultural, and cultural leaders. They shared with us their analysis, hopes and fears about both U.S. and Cuban policy changes. Our group was among thousands of travelers, including a 100-strong U.S. delegation, and labor leaders from 70 countries.

The Cubans we met expressed both joy and concern about their changing economic opportunities, including increased trade with the U.S. While they welcome U.S. visitors and trade, they are adamant about preserving their socialist values of equality and unity and resisting domination by the U.S. or any other nations or corporations.

For example, Cuban-born economist Rafael Betancourt, taken to the U.S.

at age 11, returned to stay in Cuba in 1986 to help invent a new economic model. Rejecting the Chinese model of Market Socialism, he explained. "Cuba seeks to reinvent 'socialism with a market' to preserve the hard-won social equity while allowing new, small enterprises to flourish to raise living standards for all Cubans."

Another inspiring speaker, Mariela Castro, director of CENESEX National Sex Education Center and President Raul Castro's daughter, exhorted other Cuban leaders to be the revolutionary vanguard to challenge all forms of discrimination—including gender identity and sexual orientation—because they divide us. Mariela reminds all, "Our power is our unity in diversity. The struggle is not only class based, but also cultural."

We had a delightful surprise at the end of a visit to the Atelier Opina textile worker co-op, when the 47 mostly women members showed us how they take a break from their antique black Singer sewing machines (like the ones your mother may have used). They turned on salsa music and invited us to dance with them. They told us how proud and grateful they are since voting to become a co-op. They are producing and earning more and building stronger relationships, while producing high-quality uniforms and clothing. Their greatest challenge to growth is the U.S. embargo, which keeps them from importing the fabric they need.

At last, a new relationship with Cuba is possible. With your help, we can learn with and from each other how to create a more fair economy. If you would like to go on a similar delegation, Code Pink plans another Cuban tour in November which will include Guantanamo.

If you support our rights to visit Cuba freely, you can ask your Senators and Representatives to pass the "Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act", S 299/HR 664.

Beth Brunton is a Seattle teacher, a peace and justice activist, and a PSARA member.



*Dancing in Havana
(Photo: Courtesy of Beth Brunton)*

I Believe in Washington

By Sameer Ranade

Our agricultural breadbasket is in a state of severe drought – and the rest of the state isn't faring much better: the U.S. Drought Monitor shows nearly every inch of Washington is abnormally dry. This spells danger for farms, fish, forests, and, of course, people. We rely on our mountain snowpack to slowly melt and provide water during the spring and summer. But this year's snowpack runoff is expected to be the lowest recorded in 64 years! Is global warming responsible? You bet. But thanks to the fossil fuel industry's political influence, we haven't mustered the will to effectively address global warming by curbing heat-trapping carbon pollution.

Carbon pollution is upsetting the balance of nature, causing more extreme weather like the droughts and wildfires that have been ravaging Washington in recent years. Climate science experts agree that such dangerous events are likely to become more frequent and intense if fossil fuels continue to dominate our energy supplies.

Our children don't deserve this future. We can take action that turns the tide against global warming and creates stronger economic growth and healthier communities everywhere. Investing in Washington's clean home-grown energy instead of imported fossil fuels produces immediate benefits: reducing heart and lung disease from air pollution and sparking new industrial growth and good paying jobs. The vehicle to move this idea forward is the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy, of which I am a member. We're building a broad and diverse coalition to advance the best climate policy for Washington.

Please join the Alliance by taking the "I believe in Washington" pledge, here: <http://jobsandcleanenergywa.com/> and affirm your support for keeping our communities vibrant, our families healthy and our economy strong.

Sameer Ranade is a Climate and Clean Energy Associate at the Washington Environmental Council and a PSARA member.

Why I Faced Off Against the Polar Pioneer

By Bob Barnes, PSARA Environmental Committee member and kayaker

There's a whole bunch of reasons why I decided I had to try to stop the Shell oil rig. Naomi Klein, in her book *This Changes Everything -- Capitalism vs. the Climate*, lays it all out, back to the beginnings when the colonial extractivists started running things in our country, right up to crazy people coming up with plans for seeding the atmosphere to deflect sunlight from reaching the surface of our planet



Bob Barnes
(Photo: Alex Garland)

so we can keep on polluting without cooking ourselves in the process. She also offers incredible hope for a movement capable of actually changing the course of history so humans might continue living on earth for a while longer. Read the book. Start a study group. We've even got some study questions we'd love to share.

Maybe what got to me most in the book was that we are living in Decade Zero -- we have but a few years left to turn this climate crisis around. Every credible scientist and climate expert is telling us that drilling and extracting oil from the Arctic will likely mean game over. That's pretty dire stuff. It means no more debate over jobs vs. the environment. It really is jobs and the environment -- or neither.

Several years ago, I vowed to chain myself to a bulldozer or some other heavy object if the fossil fuel industry attempted to drill in the Anwar oil field in Alaska. Then this big yellow, phallic oil rig from sHell showed up in our harbor, and I knew that I didn't have to wait for something to happen in Alaska -- it was right here in our back yard. And it was here without permission, arrogantly looming over Harbor Island. We had to stop it!

I can get all theoretical and scientific about our planet not sustaining human life, but it got real personal and un-theoretical for me when I found out that I'm going to be a grandpa soon. So when you ask me why we put our little kayaks in front of that big death rig, I can say I did it for my grandkids -- and mean it!

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

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, July 1, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave., Seattle. All welcome as we discuss important state and federal issues.

PSARA Environmental Committee: 10 a.m.- 11:30 a.m., Thursday, July 2, Seattle Labor Temple, 2800 First Ave., Room 208, Seattle. All welcome as we determine how we can best contribute to the education and action necessary to address the causes and solutions to the fossil fuel-created climate crisis.

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon to 1:30 p.m., Thursday, July 9, Green Lake Library, 7354 East Green Lake Drive N., Seattle. Brown bag lunch. The topic of discussion will be: "Spirituality – What it is in America." All are welcome. For further information contact Susan at sjlevy.01@gmail.com

PSARA Diversity Committee: 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., Thursday, July 16, Seattle office Washington State Labor Council, 321 16 Avenue S., Seattle. Members welcome as the Committee continues planning for the next committee project.

PSARA Executive Board Meeting: 12:30 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, July 16, Central Area Senior Center, 500 30th Avenue S., Seattle. All members are welcome.

Medicare & Social Security: Celebrating Decades of Success! 1 p.m. – 3 p.m., Saturday, August 8, Westlake Park, 4th Avenue & Pine Street, Seattle. Everyone deserves a secure and dignified retirement. Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Medicare and the 80th Anniversary of Social Security. Add your voice to the demand that Social Security and Medicare be expanded to address the 21st Century economic realities.

August 8: Celebrate Medicare & Social Security

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speakers who represent the wonderful diversity of our beloved communities. There will be music that crosses the generations and cultures. We will sing as we cut a cake.

And we will pledge to one another to carry on the struggle of our forbearers.

We will not be dissuaded by those who say there is not enough money. There is more than enough money! It just needs to be distributed more equitably. Please join us, and let's send a message across the land that while we celebrate, we are also prepared to carry on...

For details and a list of speakers, see the flyer on Page 7.

