

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

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October 2015

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for Climate Justice
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Something's Sour at Darigold

By Jeff Johnson

On September 2, 2015, farm workers from eastern Washington, representatives of the United Farm Workers union, and labor and community allies rallied at a park around the corner from Darigold headquarters in Seattle. They were protesting the horrific death of Randy Vasquez and the atrociously high rate of injuries and deaths in Washington's dairy industry.

The Darigold Company brought great shame upon itself and its member dairies by refusing to meet with the wife and family of Randy Vasquez who was tragically killed due to serious safety violations at a member dairy. The family along with supporters simply wanted to present the over 38,000 petitions gathered requesting Darigold to take steps to ensure what happened

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Making Retirement Security Real for Everyone

PSARA will premiere our new workshop "Making Retirement Security Real for Everyone" on Friday, October 30, from 10 a.m. to noon at Washington State Labor Council, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle. Led by PSARA Education Committee Chair, Mark McDermott, the workshop will educate and inspire participants to fight for a more secure retirement for all people and generations.

Retirement security programs must be expanded to address 21st Century economic realities. We can anticipate significant resistance from those who want to shrink government programs that help the vast majority of people in our country. We need to insist that our elected representatives support this effort.

We will also be showing the new music video, Don't Wanna Work 'Til We Die!

PSARA members are urged to attend and bring family and friends to the workshop. We want your ideas and your help in bringing this new workshop to other organizations and venues. If you have ideas, please send them to Mark McDermott at markmcdermott1@msn.com



PSARA Education Chair Mark McDermott

PSARA Diversity Presentation Features Senator John McCoy

As part of the ongoing series featuring our ethnic communities in Washington State, the PSARA Diversity Committee will host a presentation and discussion by State Senator John McCoy on the historical, cultural, and political perspectives of Washington State Indian Tribes. He will address topics such as Tribal recognition, Tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, and issues and challenges facing Indian Country on Tuesday, November 10, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Washington State Labor Council offices, 321 16th Avenue S., in Seattle.

Senator McCoy represents the 38th District, which includes the Everett, Marysville, and Tulalip communities

in Snohomish County. He is a member of the Tulalip Tribe and is the only self-identified Native American in the Washington State Senate.

Senator McCoy served 20 years in the U.S. Air Force, retiring in 1981 with extensive training in computer operations and programming. He worked as a computer technician in the White House from 1982 to 1985. He then worked in the private sector becoming instrumental in leading the development of what is now the Quil Ceda Village Business Park on the Tulalip Reservation, serving as General Manager of the development until he retired from that position several years ago.

John and his wife, Jeannie McCoy,



make their home in Tulalip. They have three daughters, nine grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

PSARA and our Diversity Committee are honored to welcome Senator McCoy to discuss Tribal issues with PSARA members.

The Retiree ADVOCATE

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Officers of PSARA Education Fund:

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

Vice President: **Sally Davis**

Secretary-Treasurer: **Garet Munger**

Advocate Editor: **Mike Andrew**, msand76@hotmail.com

Associate Editor: **Bob Shimabukuro**

Photographer: **Garet Munger**

Printing: **Trade Printery**

PSARA Directory:

President: **Robby Stern**

Administrative Vice President:

Maureen Bo, adminvp@psara.org

Membership Vice President:

Outreach Vice Presidents:

Vivian O. Lee and Mildred Ollee,
outreachvp@psara.org

Secretary: **Frieda K. Takamura**,
secretary@psara.org

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

Diversity Committee Chair: **Frank Irigon**,
diversitycommittee@psara.org

Education Committee Chair: **Mark**

McDermott, markmcdermott1@msn.com

Environmental Committee Co-chairs:

Kristen Beifus & Tom Lux,
envirocommittee@psara.org

Government Relations Committee Co-chairs:

Chuck Richards & Tom Lux,
govrelations@psara.org

Our web page: www.psara.org

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

Or phone our office at (206) 448-9646.

Board Members: Kristen Beifus, Jackie Boschok, Tim Burns, Rick Erickson, Jim Grayson, Frank Irigon, Steve Kofahl, Gene Lux, Tom Lux, Mark McDermott, Mac McIntosh, Bonny Oborn, Chuck Richards, Bobby Righi, Bob Shimabukuro, Ronnie Shure, Sarajane Siegfriedt, Rita Smilkstein, Aganita Varkentine, Michael Warren, Imogene Williams, and Katie Wilson.

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about PSARA and
issues important to all of us,
visit the PSARA website:
www.psara.org**

Initiative 122 - Big Changes Afoot

By Margie Joy

What if there was a way to empower ordinary voters? What if there was a way to decrease the influence of big money in our Seattle elections? What if any ordinary citizen had the chance to run for office?

Seattle has a possible way to pull this off. It's Initiative 122 and it's on the November ballot.

This unusual initiative puts power back into the hands of ordinary voters and gives them the ear of the politicians. It creates a public financing system for elections and limits the power of corporate and wealthy interests. In essence it will redefine our system--how it works, who participates, and who is represented.

A democracy relies on citizen participation. Given the lack of voter turnout in our elections (60% of us didn't vote in the general election in 2014; our August 15 turnout this year was 25%) it is no wonder that those elected don't represent us. I-122 attempts to change this by providing each registered voter with four \$25 vouchers to contribute to the candidate or candidates of the voter's choice. The vouchers are paid for by a small increase in property tax amounting to less than \$8/year for a \$400,000 house. Seattle would be the first city to use this voucher system.

Candidates for mayor, city council, and attorney general qualify for participation in the voucher program by filing with the Seattle Ethics and Election Commission (SEEC). Candidates must take part in at least three public debates in the primary and general elections and comply with campaign spending and contribution limits. Candidates for mayor have a \$400,000 spending limit in the primary election and \$800,000 limit total; candidates for city attorney and district city council seats have a \$75,000 limit in the primary and a \$150,000 ceiling; at-large city council candidates are limited to \$150,000 in the primary and a \$300,000 ceiling. These totals reflect the higher end of spending in elections held in 2009, 2011, and 2013.

In addition, candidates must raise money on their own to qualify for the program. Candidates for mayor must receive 600 individual contributions of \$10 or more; at-large city council candidates must receive 400 contributions of \$10 or more; city attorney and district city council candidates need 150 contributions of \$10 or more (half of the contributions for city council must come from their district).

Not only do candidates have to limit their spending, there are also limits on contributions: For mayor, the limit is \$500 (down from \$700) and for the other offices, the limit is \$250. The initiative bans contributions from a person or company that has been paid \$250,000 or more by the city in the last two years or has spent \$5,000 or more lobbying the city in the past year. It also mandates new disclosure requirements so that voters know where the money comes from.

If an opponent for office does not participate in the voucher program, SEEC will release the participating candidate from the spending limits.

There are three other important parts to the initiative: 1. It requires signature gatherers to disclose if they are being paid by wearing a badge. 2. It prohibits city officials from taking lobbying jobs for three years after leaving office. 3. It increases fines and penalties for election violations.

Sound confusing? It's not. I-122 increases participation of ordinary citizens in the way our city is run by giving public money to support candidates. The candidates will speak to, hear from, and represent these voters because the vouchers are a valuable resource. It's a game changer: Candidates will be talking to the people who actually vote instead of their wealthy backers. Spending limits can't be mandated (Citizen's United equates money and speech) so candidates make a voluntary decision to be in the program and abide by its rules. This initiative reignites the promise "of the people, by the people, and for the people" and makes it possible.

Find more information at www.honestelectionsseattle.org

Margie Joy, a long-time PSARA member, is the newest member of the Retiree Advocate Editorial Board.

Two Big Issues for the Coming Year

By Robby Stern

A quick statistic: less than 50 percent of people between the ages of 50 and 65 have savings for retirement, and the average amount of savings for those who have been able to save is \$140,000. That is the average. The people with lots of money really bring up that average. The number of us with defined benefit pensions is growing smaller and smaller (note Boeing's immoral power play to eliminate the pensions of their workers!). Social Security & Medicare are growing more critical if seniors and disabled people are to experience economic security, dignity, and respect in their lives.

We will prioritize in the next year winning our two U.S. Senators to open and public support for eliminating the cap on taxable income for Social Security. Neither of them has publicly or privately, to my knowledge, supported eliminating the cap.

Bringing more income to the Social Security system is critical for benefits to be expanded and increased. In addition, a very modest increase in the payroll tax for Social Security is needed so that the system can pay increased benefits that will allow people to live with a modicum of economic security.

Our Senators need to lead the fight to expand Social Security benefits, and in order to do that, they must address bringing more revenue into the system. Also targeted are the two Democratic Representatives who have not yet supported bringing more revenue into the system – Reps. Kilmer and Heck.

Medicare must also be expanded. It is unacceptable that Medicare does not cover vision and dental. Most seniors have medical issues with either or both of these senses. Vision and dental treatment are very expensive for individuals to cover, both from a preventive perspective or when dealing with an acute condition.

Finally, the big elephant in the room is long-term care services. Medicare needs to play a much bigger role in

covering long-term care services. At the same time, we will be joining in a broad coalition to consider state-based policy options to partially address the long-term care crisis.

We will be asking PSARA members to help as we advocate on these critical issues.

Why I Decline to Sign I-732

I have declined to sign Initiative 732 sponsored by Carbon Washington. PSARA strongly supports the need to reduce carbon emissions and the growth of renewable energy sources. We are members of a very broad coalition entitled the Alliance for Jobs & Clean Energy. This Alliance, made up of 150 organizations including 50 groups from communities of color, is taking a progressive approach and is considering putting an initiative on the ballot in 2016.

What is a progressive approach and why isn't I-732 progressive? (Read the statement from Communities of Color on Page 9 of this issue.) I-732 purports to be revenue neutral. It will not bring revenue to the state. We have a structural deficit at the same time that our infrastructure is crumbling. The impacts of climate change are taking a larger and larger share of state revenue (witness the enormous cost of the forest fires). We need to invest in renewables, and we must assist those communities (primarily communities of color and low-income communities) that are being most negatively impacted by climate change. (A number of tribes lost huge sources of revenue as a result of the forest fires on their reservations. Water resource-based communities are being devastated by the combination of drought and the warming of the Sound and oceans. Middle- and upper-income people can make some adjustments, such as purchasing air conditioners as temperatures rise. This is not an option for people with low incomes, including many seniors.)



The fight is for the future of our diversified communities, and it is going to take additional revenue to create a response that assists all communities to respond to the devastating impacts of climate change.

Jeff Johnson, President of the Washington State Labor Council and one of the leaders of the Alliance for Jobs & Clean Energy, wrote a letter to the Washington State Democrats. This is a portion of what he wrote:

"I-732 fails to address the 'Just Transition' issues that will be necessary to make the economic transition from a carbon-based economy to a clean-energy economy, one where workers and communities are kept whole. There will be much economic dislocation in the next several decades as we significantly lower carbon emissions. To do this in a 'just' manner we need to develop a plan and fund that protect the wages and benefits of direct line workers in the fossil fuel-dependent industries and creates both job opportunities and job training for direct line workers and workers in vulnerable communities and communities of color."

He goes on to say: *"We are at a point in history where we need to deal with climate change and extreme inequality together. Looking through an equity lens, we need to develop a climate policy*

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The Great Seattle School Strike of 2015: United for Great Schools

By Beth Brunton

Once again, across the country people were watching a battle in Seattle. This time, our teachers were striking, not just for fair pay, but for better learning opportunities for all our children. After a long, hot summer of heated negotiations over excessive testing and inadequate support for student learning, the Seattle teachers and support staff took their battle to the streets and to our communities to reclaim our purpose of public education: To empower our next generation to solve challenges - not to bubble in answers to eliminate wrong choices.

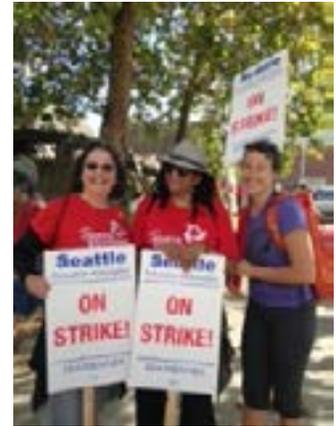
What was the strike really about? It was about unity for great schools that our students need and our community demands. From the start, Seattle educators -- teachers and support staff, nurses, counselors, instructional assistants, office professionals, and more were united to stand together for improved compensation and working conditions. In schools, our working conditions are our students' learning conditions. If staff is overloaded, they can't spend the quality time each student needs. If students are unfairly disciplined or hungry, hurt, or homeless, they can't learn as well.

At first in the negotiations, the District laughed off the union non-salary demands for more fair discipline, more

recess and more voice in standardized testing. But the bargaining team and members stood strong, the students and families walked beside us, and allies around the town and nation spoke up for us. After just four days on strike, the District agreed to most demands.

The unity for great schools came loud and clear from our students, families, and community. Every day, people of all ages would join us on the picket line, bring snacks for our bodies, and sing and play music for our spirits. We picketers felt energized by the love from visits by the Seattle Labor Chorus, Raging Grannies, Anti-Fascist Marching Band, Jeff Johnson President of the WA State Labor Council, King County Councilmember Larry Gossett, and our City Councilmember Kshama Sawant. Social media was buzzing as Facebook posts and tweets of support came in from all over the country and world. People everywhere are ready to unite to protect our public schools and our children.

What an amazing way to start the new school year -- a powerful learning opportunity about why we need labor unions, what our schools are for, and when we are united, we win. This strike reminds our colleagues in other states, our community, and our youth how they can and must stand up for their rights and build power.



On the picket line: Beth Brunton with colleagues Paulette Thompson and Jenni Conrad.

How bright is our future? Thanks to our union as well as strong community solidarity, we won a better contract and the power to keep fighting for all our common good. Thank you all for your support for our students, teachers, and schools. Keep it up!

Beth Brunton is a PSARA member and long-time Seattle public school teacher at Middle College High School, a school for students seeking alternative ways to finish high school while preparing for success in college, career, and community leadership.



Featuring delicious baked treats and kick-ass organizing, the PSARA table at the Martin Luther King County Labor Council's Labor Day Picnic was a hub of activity.

The PSARA crew spent the day talking to people about our issues and theirs, lobbying political candidates, and signing up new PSARA members.

After the picnic, many of us went to the Space Needle for a picket line and civil disobedience action in support of UNITE HERE workers at the Seattle landmark, who have been fighting for almost four years for a new contract.

SecureFamily.org Wants to Make Your Family Less Secure

By Mike Andrew

Maybe you've seen the TV ad. A nice middle-aged couple is dropping off their daughter at college. Back in the car, the wife starts to leaf through a thick brochure.

"It's those new regulations they're pushing in Washington that worry me," she says. "They want to make it really hard to get advice from our financial advisor."

"No more help from Anne?" her husband asks plaintively. "Even with our IRA and 401(k) savings?"

"Only if we want to pay a lot more," the wife replies. "Otherwise, we'll be talking to a robot on the phone."

"We'll never get the information we need!" the husband laments.

What a predicament! If you have retirement investments, you immediately think how awful it would be if you couldn't get information about the 401(k) you're counting on to see you through after you stop working.

Another TV spot features a contractor who worries that he can no longer offer 401(k)s to his employees. Another one shows an older couple – probably already retired – fretting about their retirement income.

After each little drama, the voice-over asks you to contact SecureFamily.org, to express your opposition to the "Washington regulations" that will interfere with your retirement security.

We all want secure families, don't we? And very few of us are investment specialists, so we do depend on the advice of our brokers. What if Anne – or whoever handles our investments – won't talk to us anymore?

But wait! Who is SecureFamily.org? Once you know, the real meaning of the TV ads becomes crystal clear.

In their own words, SecureFamily.org is "a partnership of America's life insurance companies, agents, and financial advisors that is dedicated to educating policymakers about the role our products play in the financial lives of 75 million American families."

In other words, a lobbying arm of the insurance industry.



They're not the nice middle-aged couple down the street. They just play them on TV.

In 2013 the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA) formed the group with five other insurance associations to make sure that the \$400 billion industry is as free of federal regulation as possible.

The reason for the new TV ad campaign is that the US Department of Labor (DOL), which oversees retirement funds, is tightening up regulations to make 401Ks and other financial products safer for ordinary investors.

And the insurance industry doesn't like it one bit.

Central to the proposed reforms is the idea of "fiduciary responsibility." If Anne the insurance broker has a fiduciary responsibility to the nice TV couple, that means the advice she gives them actually has to be true. If she says the financial products she sells will earn her clients a certain return, they actually have to perform.

Fiduciary responsibility also means that Anne's advice must be based on her clients' interests and not her own. She can't advise her clients to buy into a fund just because she'll make a lot of money off the sale.

If Anne violates her fiduciary responsibility to the TV couple, they can sue her, or – worst case scenario for Anne – she might even go to federal prison. That's probably why she doesn't want to talk to them anymore.

Current federal regulations on retirement investments date back to 1975 when IRAs were brand new and

401(k)s didn't even exist. In the 40 years since, DOL says, conflicts of interest have become commonplace and destructive.

"In the current marketplace for retirement investment advice, however, advisers commonly have direct and substantial conflicts of interest, which encourage investment recommendations that generate higher fees for the advisers at the expense of their customers and often result in lower returns for customers even before fees," the DOL says in the paper explaining its new regulations.

"A wide body of economic evidence supports a finding that the impact of these conflicts of interest on retirement investment outcomes is large and, from the perspective of advice recipients, negative," DOL adds.

According to the DOL's analysis, underperformance resulting from conflicts of interest just in the mutual funds sector alone could cost investors \$210 billion over the next 10 years, and \$500 billion over the next 20.

If the broker takes her commission off the top of each transaction, the damage to her clients could be even greater. DOL estimates in that case the loss to investors could be \$430 billion over 10 years and almost \$1 trillion over 20 years.

What the TV ads are saying is that if the insurance industry has to tell us the truth about what they're doing with our money, they'd rather not talk to us at all!

What is Washington State Doing about the Long-Term Care Crisis?

By Paul Muldoon, Bob Shimabukuro, and Felicita Irigon

What topic are most of us least prepared and do we least prefer to discuss? If polls can be trusted, it's long-term care. Long-term care is known in the medical field as Long Term Services and Support (LTSS). LTSS in the medical field refers to someone who needs assistance with routine/everyday activities. Obviously, there are different levels of LTSS needs.

If you have not taken any action to prepare for LTSS, you are not alone. Only 17 percent of the Boomer generation has taken any steps to prepare for LTSS, and many of those still do not have adequate insurance or financial reserves.

LTSS is viewed by most people as a seniors-only issue. In reality LTSS will be needed by a cross-section of Americans. A surprising 42 percent of LTSS users are working age. Older Americans are 53 percent of the users, with children accounting for the 5 percent balance.

Many people think that Medicare covers LTSS. Unfortunately, Medicare covers a very small percentage of LTSS. Most expenses are covered out-of-pocket and by Medicaid (when you have spent down your savings and have no other resources). Insurance for LTSS is expensive, and many insurers have gotten out of the market, in some cases leaving their insured customers with few coverage options.

Costs are escalating and are expected to escalate further as the population ages. Nationally, federal Medicaid costs are expected to nearly double and in our state the level of state matching Medicaid costs is also expected to double.

But all is not lost. We recently had an opportunity to attend a round table discussion sponsored by Washingtonians for a Responsible Future, (WRF) a broad-based group of nonprofits and union organizations that have mobilized to take action in Washington State. The purpose of the round table

was to inform participants about the immediacy of the crisis, attitudes about LTSS nationally, and about various strategies we might employ to engage more people to learn and advocate for legislation regarding LTSS. A cross-section of community, union, and nonprofit organizations were present.

A national nonprofit, LeadingAge Pathways, provided a background briefing on the demographics and economics of the crisis. A representative from SEIU 775 presented the situation in Washington. A key part of the round table focused on questions concerning what LTSS data (attitudes, projected needs) were relevant to the state of Washington, what issues were missing, and what groups were missing from the conversation. We broke into small groups and were asked to address these questions. There were a number of suggestions, particularly on what groups to include in the discussion (e.g., immigrants, veterans, LGBT, long-term caregivers).

In Washington, during the past legislative session, three bills concerning LTSS were considered by the state legislature. The only bill to pass was part of the budget. It will fund a study to determine which of two alternatives could meet the needs of Washington residents better:

Alternative 1: A public long-term care benefit for workers funded through a payroll deduction that would provide a time-limited long-term care insurance benefit. (For example, an employee through payroll deduction would pay a monthly premium that would accumulate a benefit toward long-term care support that would grow the longer the employee paid into the plan); and

Alternative 2: A public-private reinsurance or risk-sharing model, with the purpose of providing a stable and ongoing source of reimbursement to insurers for a portion of their catastrophic

LTSS losses to help provide additional insurance capacity for Washington residents.

The WRF coalition worked with state legislators to get this study passed. Through the advocacy of various organizations, including PSARA, there was broad bipartisan support for the study. The Washington State Department of Health & Human Services (DSHS) will be responsible for completing this study.

The report is to include:

- a) the expected costs and benefits for participants;
- b) the total anticipated number of participants;
- c) the projected savings to the state Medicaid program, if any; and
- d) legal and financial risks to the state.

DSHS is to submit a report to the legislature no later than January 1, 2017. The report is to include the Director's recommendations based on the feasibility study and actuarial analysis gained through the study.

PSARA supports state and federal action on LTSS. We advocate for a significant LTSS benefit in Medicare and state action to support LTSS.

This is the beginning of a long road. We will work with Washingtonians for a Responsible Future to assure that the DSHS study has the input of all stakeholders. Please anticipate PSARA members being asked to support a number of public meetings and demonstrations to assure that our elected officials understand the priority.

When you have the opportunity, ask your state and national elected representatives what their position is on solving the LTSS issue. Test their awareness of the LTSS study being undertaken by the State. Look for more articles and emails in the coming months as we work to address the growing LTSS crisis.

Paul Muldoon, Felicita Irigon, and Bob Shimabukuro represented PSARA at the Round Table discussion.



Making Retirement Security Real for Everyone

A new interactive workshop led by PSARA Education Committee chair Mark McDermott for all PSARA members and friends.

Friday, October 30 from 10 a.m. to noon

321 16th Ave. S., Seattle (Washington State Labor Council offices)

This interactive workshop will educate and inspire participants to fight forward toward a more secure retirement for all people and generations.

Our ancestors' great victories against determined resistance won Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Today we need to expand retirement security programs once again and we need to insist that our elected representatives support this effort.

Bring family members and friends. We also want your ideas and your help in bringing this new workshop to other organizations and venues. If you have ideas, please send them to Mark McDermott
markmcdermott1@msn.com

We will also be showing the new music video, *Don't Wanna Work 'Til We Die*

Our Lives, Our Work, Our Future: People's Climate March, October 14

By Kristen Beifus

PSARA members Bobby and Michael Righi joined hundreds of thousands of people at the People's Climate March last year in New York City. They participated in workshops leading up to the march organized by communities of color suffering from climate, economic, and racial injustice, as well as impacted workers from across the country and around the world. They contributed to the historic March that started out with a moment of silence, and then everyone's voice was heard in a powerful cacophony of different movements coming together for climate justice. Everyone was an official speaker in the struggle to stop and reverse climate change, and that is what made it awesome.

This year on October 14 the People's Climate March has called for a National Day of Action in the US to focus attention on the upcoming UN climate talks in Paris. Here in Washington, One America and the Sierra Club convened a diverse group of climate and environmental groups, communities of color, and labor unions to coordinate an action in the Pacific Northwest. PSARA's Environmental Committee has been involved in this effort and encourages our members to take part in this day of action, which will bring together communities impacted by climate change, workers on the front lines, and those advocating for policies aimed at slowing climate change by investing in jobs and infrastructure and economic and racial equity in our communities. There will be events throughout the day on October 14 culminating in a final collective action.

Science has shown that climate change, to different degrees, is impacting all of us right now. So we all need to be part of making climate change a priority now and for future generations.

Please join us on October 14.

People's Climate March 2015: Our Lives, Our Work, Our Future.

Local Action for Global Climate Justice.

October 14, 5 p.m. Meet at City Hall, 5:30 p.m. March at to Occidental Park.

The time for action on climate change is NOW. Join a diverse coalition of communities of color, workers, immigrants, activists, and everyday folk on October 14 as we build upon last year's wildly successful People's Climate March in New York to send a message that will be heard from Seattle to Paris: Our communities are united in the fight against climate change. Climate change affects low-income communities and communities of color disproportionately, and a just transition away from fossil fuels means making sure that no one gets left behind, especially the communities most affected.

Naomi Klein will join speakers from all walks of life. We'll gather at 5:00 p.m. at City Hall Plaza to make climate ribbons and then march at 5:30 p.m. sharp to Occidental Park, where we'll have speakers and video projections of people from across the state talking about how climate change is affecting our lives, what we're doing about it, and what our hopes for the future are. We'll also have an interview tent set up to record the stories of those present. Our world is changing faster than anyone expected, and our voices must be heard in Paris and beyond. Please join us!

For more information visit: People's Climate March 2015: Our Lives, Our Work, Our Future on Facebook.



Naomi Klein will join speakers from all walks of life in Seattle on October 14.



Michael and Bobby Righi will represent PSARA at the UN Climate Talks in Paris.

And PSARA will once again be represented by Bobby and Michael Righi, this time at the UN Climate talks in Paris, where they will be joining many others in the street. They will share their experiences in an upcoming Advocate article. PSARA is indeed global and local!

Kristen Beifus is a member of the PSARA Executive Board and Co-Chair of PSARA's Environmental Committee.

Statement of Communities of Color For Climate Justice Opposed to I-732

The following letter was written by representatives of a coalition entitled Communities of Color For Climate Justice.

Dear Colleagues:

Climate change poses one of the greatest threats to social, economic, and racial justice here in Washington State and across the world; and it's happening right here, right now. Our jobs, health, and communities are the prices we pay for escalating climate impacts like polluted air, severe weather, and drought. But not all of us are impacted the same. Communities of color and those with lower incomes are the first and worst impacted by the brunt of global warming. That's why getting it right, with equitable, inclusive policies, is so important. Initiative 732, created by a group called "CarbonWA," fails this test and lacks the grassroots coalition to tackle the most pressing and inter-related issues of our time: climate and equity.

Communities of color and lower-income communities are experiencing asthma in higher rates, increasingly polluted neighborhoods, and income loss, as workers in frontline industries and in farmlands, are economically barred from accessing clean energy, transportation, and housing. Worse, these communities have contributed the least to this crisis, and the fossil fuel industry is holding hostage proven solutions that align climate advocates with movements fighting for economic and health justice. Winning will take both the organizing strength and policy brainpower that only an inclusive campaign can achieve.

Last year, a community of organizations including Asian Pacific Islander Coalition, Community-to-Community, Got Green, El Centro Del La Raza, Latino Community Fund, OneAmerica, Puget Sound Sage, and Washington Community Action Network came together to

hold fossil fuel industry climate polluters accountable in addressing social, economic, health, and food justice. This past January we helped form an inclusive statewide coalition with a mission that includes equity, the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy. Our diverse coalition includes faith, families, health, labor, business, environmental, and justice communities calling for action to reduce pollution, create green jobs, and invest in communities of color and lower incomes.

help workers. Justice should be the main meal, not a side dish. Communities of color and lower-income people understand justice, and like the climate, they can't wait any longer.

Together, we can do better, and we will. Climate policy must significantly reduce carbon pollution now. A successful and equitable policy centers investments in accessible alternatives to fossil fuels, a just transition for workers, and communities' needs and participation. Without it, we simply won't win.

A successful and equitable policy centers investments in accessible alternatives to fossil fuels, a just transition for workers, and communities' needs and participation. Without it, we simply won't win.

As communities of color, we have grounded our position on climate justice through a set of shared principles to help shape and recognize good policy. The first principle is that equity – making sure people of color have access to the same voice and opportunities - is at the center. The second is that people of color and communities with lower incomes receive net-environmental and economic benefits. The third is for accountability and transparency that requires inclusive engagement and oversight by lower income communities and communities of color.

Carbon Washington's Initiative 732, crafted without inclusive input, fails to equitably reinvest revenue from pricing carbon pollution. It relies on a flat payout using the same regressive sales tax structure that has made our state dead last in fairness. Put simply, CarbonWA confuses equity with treating everyone the same. It does carve out a slice for low-income working family rebates, an important, unfunded tool. But working families are funded the same as preferential industry giveaways that won't

As leaders working for racial and economic justice, we invite you to join our movement and campaign for action on climate justice now. Global warming, guarded by the fossil fuel industry, will accelerate racial and economic disparities, and proposals like Initiative 732 mask this reality. Together we can ensure equity is at the center of the climate movement. Join us by advocating for climate justice and support the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy. Contact Aiko Schaefer, coordinator of Communities of Color for Climate Justice to learn more at aikoschaefer@gmail.com and 206-941-4817.

Signed,

Rosalinda Guillen, Jill Mangaliman, Rebecca Saldaña, Mauricio Ayon, Rich Stolz, Tony Lee, Estela Ortega, Peter Bloch Garcia, Community to Community, Got Green, Puget Sound Sage, Washington CAN, OneAmerica, API Coalition, El Centro de la Raza, Latino Community Fund

Something's Sour at Darigold

Continued from Page 1

to Randy would never happen again. Darigold locked their doors and refused to accept the petitions, leaving a sour taste all around. Shame on Darigold!

On Tuesday, February 24, 2015, Randy Vasquez said good-bye to his wife, Nubia, and their two children, aged two and three, and left for work at the Riverview Ranch Dairy in Mabton, WA. He never returned.

Randy worked as a milker on the night shift. At around 9:00 p.m., an hour before milking, he took the front loader out to feed the cattle. Randy never made it back to the milking shed.

At 4:30 a.m. on February 25, Randy was found strapped into the front loader sunk six feet in a manure pond. Randy died of "asphyxiation due to the inhalation of dairy waste water sludge," according to the Yakima County coroner. Randy drowned to death in cow manure.

The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries found the Riverview Ranch Dairy guilty of three serious violations that exposed employees to a manure pit that was unguarded and that did not have any hazard or warning signs posted and did not have any fencing/railing/guarding to prevent entry. The manure pit was alongside a dirt road and there was no lighting (it was night time). There was also no rescue equipment located near the manure pit.

The fine by L&I was \$6,800. The employer, John Banks, has appealed this fine and has requested that the Washington State Farm Bureau, which runs his "Retrospective Rating Workers' Compensation and Safety Program" be present at the appeal hearing. Shame on them both!

What I want to know is why supervisors didn't go looking for Randy when he didn't show for the 10:00 p.m. milking? Why did it take until 4:30 a.m. the next morning to discover what happened to Randy? Why wouldn't a manure pond be marked, lit, and fenced? And finally, why is the penalty on this employer so very low? None of this is right.

On March 31, 2015, I was part of a delegation to Darigold headquarters in Seattle to speak with the CEO about what level of responsibility they had for ensuring the safety and health of the workers at their member dairies. I wanted them to engage with us in putting together a health and safety training for dairy workers and supervisors.

John Kennedy, the assistant general counsel of Darigold, said the accident was an "anomaly" and that "while they regretted the accident, they could not comment until after the Labor and Industries investigation."

In June I spoke with the Darigold CEO on the phone and asked whether they would sit down with the WSLC, the UFW, the Church Council of Greater Seattle, and the Faith Action Network to work on a joint health and safety program for the dairy industry.

He responded by telling me that the statistics they had seen indicated that the industry was quite safe and that he would not meet with the farm workers union. Given that the UFW is the true representative of these workers, no meeting took place. I told the CEO that we would continue to work on these issues with or without Darigold.

So now we come to September 2, 2015. Darigold refused to accept the farm worker petitions and locked their doors, while telling KIRO news that Randy Vasquez's death was an "anomaly."

There have been 11 deaths in Washington dairies since the year 2000. That's a lot of anomalies.

In fact it is more dangerous to be a dairy worker than it is to be a construction worker or a police officer. In 2013 there were 438 reported accidents in Washington dairies – 10 percent of the entire workforce. This injury claim rate was 73 percent higher than any other industry in the state. But the truth is most injuries in dairy are not reported because workers (primarily non-English-speaking immigrant workers) are afraid that they will be retaliated against for reporting injuries. This is the same reason why complaint-driven inspections are so low in dairies!



Representative Brady Walkinshaw (D-43) has agreed to work with the UFW and the WSLC and others on introducing legislation that would improve the health and safety standards, penalties, and fines in the dairy industry. Rep. Walkinshaw understands how hard dairy work is, having grown up in rural Whatcom County. He believes the injury and death numbers speak for themselves – no anomalies here.

Dairy farming is no longer a mom and pop operation. The average dairy in Washington State has 550 cows, with dairies like Riverview having several thousand. This is more akin to industrial production than agriculture.

Most dairy workers work 6 to 7 days a week for about 10-12 hours a day. The work is hard and non-stop. Testimony from farm workers shows they seldom get rest or meal breaks, and are often forced to hold half a sandwich in one hand as they move from cow to cow. They work on slick concrete floors, breathing in manure dust and bacteria. Often cows are milked whether they are sick or not. None of this is portrayed in the "Got Milk" commercials.

There is a lot sour at Darigold and in the dairy industry. Our intent is to help turn that around by creating a safe and healthy working environment for workers. We need your help to do this. If you would like to learn more you can contact Indira Trejo from the United Farm Workers Union at itrejo@ufw.org

Jeff Johnson is President of the Washington State Labor Council and a PSARA member.

Two Big Issues for the Coming Year

Continued from Page 3

that allows us to give opportunity to those who have been most impacted by the negative effect of climate and allows us to rebuild our infrastructure and incentivize a clean energy revolution..."

Finally, I-732, which purports to be revenue neutral but could actually be revenue negative, exacerbates our state's revenue needs. Given our state's tremendous social and physical infrastructure needs, we cannot afford to be further boxed in by zero-sum revenue proposals.

I have been part of meetings where leaders from communities of color from around the state have spoken forcefully about how disrespected they have been by the founders and organizers of CarbonWA. They were not consulted in the formulation of I-732, and their concerns are not addressed. We must have a very broad coalition to win what promises to be a ferocious fight with the powerful fossil fuel industry.

I-732 will set our struggle back. It will lose at the ballot (and polling certainly demonstrates that fact). We have a chance to unite a lot of different communities and place a genuinely progressive policy on the ballot. I-732 is not what we need.

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CMS Developing Policies to Address Health Equity in Medicare

By Robby Stern

On September 8, 2015, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) introduced an Equity Plan for Improving Quality in Medicare. The plan is trying to eliminate health disparities experienced by underserved populations.

The Equity Plan targets Medicare populations that experience disproportionately higher rates of disease, lower quality of care, and barriers to accessing care. These populations include racial and ethnic minorities, sexual and gender minorities, people with disabilities, and people living in rural areas.

The six priority areas are

1. Expand the collection, reporting, and analysis of data.
2. Evaluate the disparities data and incorporate "equity solutions."
3. Develop and disseminate approaches that appear effective in reducing disparities.
4. Increase the ability of the health care workforce to meet the needs of vulnerable populations.
5. Improve communication and language access for individuals with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities.
6. Increase the physical accessibility of health care facilities.

Principles underlying the implementation of the priorities to achieve health equity include

1. Increasing understanding and awareness of disparities.
2. Developing and disseminating solutions.
3. Taking sustainable action and evaluating progress.

It is unclear from the information provided how the Medicare Advantage plans will be incorporated into the Equity Plan. What is clear is that US health care system is terribly fragmented as a result of multiple insurers with multiple plans and that is a barrier to achieving equity.

Traditional Medicare is uniquely suited to addressing health care disparities in order to create an equitable system. If everyone were covered by Medicare, creating equity in our health care system would be challenging but much more attainable.

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Meetings and Events

PSARA Environmental Committee: 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Thursday, Oct.1, Seattle Labor Temple, 2800 First Ave., Room 208, Seattle. All welcome as we discuss PSARA's participation in the October 14 national Climate Action Day.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 1, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave., Seattle. All welcome as we discuss taking action on important local, state, and federal issues.

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon to 1:30 p.m., Thursday, October 8, Green Lake Library, 7354 East Green Lake Drive N., Seattle. Brown bag lunch. The topic of discussion will be: Gender Identity—Challenging, Complex & Courageous. All are welcome. For further information contact Susan at sjlevy.01@gmail.com

PSARA Diversity Committee: 11 a.m. – noon, Thursday, October 15, Seattle office Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), 321 16th Avenue S., Seattle. All welcome as the Committee continues planning for the program with Sen. John McCoy and more long-term work.

PSARA Executive Board Meeting: 12:30 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, October 15, WSLC office, 321 16th Avenue S., Seattle. All are welcome.

Making Retirement Security Real for Everyone: 10 a.m. – noon, Friday, October 30, WSLC office, 321 16 Ave. S., Seattle. See flyer on Page 7.

Native American Perspectives Featuring State Senator John McCoy: 10:00 a.m. – noon, Tuesday, November 10, WSLC office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle, All members welcome. See article on Page 1.

We All Remember



"We all remember what happened the last time the Republicans shut the government down. \$24 billion was flushed down the drain for a political stunt."

Elizabeth Warren

