

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

Vol XXXIII, No 5

May 2018

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Medicare Advantage*

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PSARA Sponsors Screening of CARE on Whidbey Island

Let's face it. We're all aging. We hope to stay healthy and independent for a long time. But in the end, most of us will need some help. What will it look like? Who will provide it? How will it feel? Will we be able to afford it?

On Tuesday, May 8, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Langley, United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 3rd and Anthes in Langley, Washington, there will be a screening of the award-winning documentary, CARE, and a panel discussion following the film. The program is sponsored by PSARA and co-sponsored by South Whidbey Friends of Friends Medical Support Fund, South Whidbey at Home, Island County Democrats, and SEIU 775.

The documentary delves deep into the world of home care through the

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The Time Is Now

By Robby Stern

Now is the time to meet the financial challenge from the PSARA and PSARA Education Fund Executive Boards.

Early online giving for GiveBIG Day began on April 26. To schedule a donation to the PSARA Education Fund, go to givebigseattle.org and enter "PSARA Education Fund." Your donation will be processed on May 9, the actual GiveBIG Day.

Another very welcome alternative is for members who would prefer not to donate online to write a check to the PSARA Education Fund any time between now and May 9. Write in the memo line, GiveBIG, so we know it is in response to the challenge from the two Executive Boards. Mail it to the new PSARA office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle, 98144. Choosing this option also saves the PSARA Education Fund the small percentage processing charge for each online donation.

Please make a GiveBIG donation to support this newsletter and our educational work. We plan to continue being a leader in educating and advocating for the preservation and expansion of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. We want to build a growing crescendo of support for funding long-term care services through the state-based Long-Term Care Trust Fund and by creating a better long-term care benefit in Medicare. We will be educating and promoting these goals and other policies that allow all people to live their senior years with dignity and respect. You will also help further our organizational commitment and strengthen our voice as we continue our work for racial and gender equity and economic and climate justice.

PSARA's New Home

PSARA has a new home! After many years at the Seattle Labor Temple, PSARA has moved to the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) building at 16th Avenue S and S Jackson Street.

If you look at the Advocate's mast-head on Page 2 and the renewal coupon on Page 11, you'll see our brand new address, 321 16th Avenue S. A new phone number will be coming soon.

Our new building is noted for the inspiring workers' history mural which wraps around the outside of the building and makes the WSLC offices a landmark in the surrounding neighborhood.

PSARA has been affiliated with the WSLC since our beginnings as the Puget Sound Council of Senior Citizens

decades ago. We deeply appreciate the WSLC providing space for our office, and we look forward to many more years of close cooperation.

We hope members will find our new location just as accessible as the Seattle Labor Temple. The WSLC building is served by Metro route 14, and the First Hill Streetcar, which runs from the International District Light Rail Station to 14th Avenue S and S Washington Street.



PSARA's new home, the WSLC building at 16th & Jackson

PSARA members are always welcome to drop by and look around our new digs. Take time to walk around the outside of the building and appreciate the long history of workers' struggles depicted in the mural. After all, many of us were there for some of the events depicted by the artists.

The Retiree ADVOCATE

Published monthly by the PSARA Education Fund, 321
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Visit our website for up to date
information or to renew:
www.psara.org
or visit PSARA on Facebook

A Call for Stories!

Dear PSARA Members,

The Economic Opportunity Institute is working to protect, strengthen, and expand Social Security and Medicare benefits for all. Your voices help us communicate the urgency and reality of these issues to policymakers and the public, and we need your help!

If you're a Social Security/Medicare recipient, we want to hear your stories. By sharing the importance of Social Security and Medicare to your life or possible improvements to the programs that would help you live more comfortably, you have a direct impact in protecting these crucial benefits.

To learn more or to share your story, contact Melanie at melanie@eoionline.org or at (206) 633-6580. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,
Melanie & The Economic Opportunity Institute

PSARA Oral History Project

We are excited to announce the launch of PSARA's new oral history project. We will be conducting interviews with various PSARA members to be published in the Advocate as space allows. Most of our members are retirees, and many have long histories of activism in their unions, community organizations, or faith groups.

As we thought about the project we realized that the interview team will collect far more information than we can print in a short monthly article. So we reached out to the folks at University of Washington's Labor Archives who are very interested in storing our interviews and -- we hope -- using them or making them available to people who'd want to use them. They will even loan us a video recorder so we can have a visual as well as audio record of the interviews.

In April we conducted our first interview with PSARA member Norma Kelsey. Look for it soon in the *Advocate*. If you would like to suggest a member to be interviewed, or if you would like to be interviewed, please contact Karen Richter at kerichter100@gmail.com

Intrepid PSARA interviewers Angie Bartels (left) and Karen Richter (right) with their equipment.

Have a story to tell? Contact Karen and set up an interview.

Know a PSARA member whose life story says something about working people here in the Pacific Northwest? Let us know.

(Photo courtesy of Karen Richter)



The Fight for Medicare and Medicaid

By David Loud

As we've known since the 2016 elections, the Republicans are coming for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and many of the social and safety-net programs we and those who came before us have won to make life better and more secure for ordinary people in our country. Regarding health care, here are some of the key lines of assault on our benefits:

- October, 2017 Budget Resolution: Having failed to repeal the ACA because of massive popular opposition, Republicans in Congress rammed through a resolution calling for \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid and almost \$500 billion to Medicare over 10 years.

- Ongoing since early 2017: Without legislation to enable its agenda, the Trump regime is making multiple administrative attacks on programs (environment, education, housing, labor, voting and civil rights, LGBTQ, immigration, refugees . . .). Some health care examples: deleting "cost sharing reduction" funding that made insurance more affordable in the ACA's health plan Exchanges; cutting outreach and assistance funds that promoted enrollment in Exchange plans; allowing employers to deny contraceptive coverage on "moral" grounds; allowing states to impose work requirements, premiums and co-pays in Medicaid plans – and much more.

- December, 2017 tax scam: To set up the cuts to health care and much more, the Republicans used the "reconciliation" procedure to pass a tax "reform" bill with a 51-49 majority in the Senate. This bill represents a \$1.5 trillion transfer of wealth over 10 years from working families, the poor, retirees and the disabled to corporations and the very wealthy.

- March 23, 2018, Appropriations Act (fiscal year 2018, ending 9/30/18): Congress largely ignored Trump's proposed 2018 budget and passed a bipartisan bill that increased both mili-

tary and non-military spending above the caps previously set by Congress to end a budget stalemate in 2013. The Congressional Budget Office on April 9 predicted massive increases in the federal deficits over the next 10 years due to tax cuts and spending increases, reaching over \$1 trillion/year starting in 2020 and increasing the national debt by over 50%, to \$33 trillion, by 2028.

- April 9, 2018, Republicans call for "rescission": With the ink barely dry on the 2018 budget, Trump and Congressional allies began calls to roll back just-adopted non-military spending, walking back from the bipartisan deal reached with Democrats.

The logic of this game plan was captured by Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York: "From Day 1, the Republican agenda has always been to balloon the deficit in order to dole out massive tax breaks to the largest corporations and wealthiest Americans and then use the deficit as an excuse to cut Social Security and Medicare." (*New York Times*, 4/9/18)

Medicare and Medicaid will continue to be prime targets for the Republicans, whose goal is to privatize health coverage and get rid of these programs' guarantees of benefits. In addition, Trump's firing of VA Secretary David Shulkin in late March brought to light a renewed effort to privatize the Veterans Health Administration's national system of hospitals and clinics, which Secretary Shulkin opposed.

Beware the "balanced approach"

But the threats to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security also come from a different direction, from those who advocate a "balanced approach" to managing budget deficits, taxes, and the cost of "entitlements." This is an old story, reviving arguments brought forward in 2010 by the bi-partisan Simpson-Bowles Commission as well as earlier such attempts to trim benefits



David Loud

in the cause of "fiscal responsibility" – never mind the obscene and growing wealth inequalities in our country.

Fighting back

The good news is that millions of people are mobilizing to protect and expand the programs we depend on and to take political power away from those who serve the corporate, right wing, and white-supremacist agendas. It is almost dizzying to try to keep track of the multiple grass-roots movements blossoming all over the country. It is exciting to see the growing embrace of "intersectionality" among these movements, in recognition that we are all in this together and must build our campaigns accordingly.

For health care, here are some highlights of the good work underway:

- The Healthy Washington Coalition, of which PSARA is a member, helped win significant legislative victories in Olympia in the session that ended in March. These include covering more uninsured Washington residents (whose numbers fell from 14% to under 6% thanks to the ACA), guaranteeing coverage of reproductive services and improving access to charity care. The

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Stand Up Against Nuclear War

By Tim Wheeler

PSARA's Executive Board voted unanimously at its March meeting to endorse S.200 and H.R. 669, bills pending in the US Congress "to prohibit the conduct of a first use nuclear strike absent a declaration of war by Congress."

Massachusetts Senator Ed Markey introduced S.200 over a year ago, January 24, 2017, as fears grew that President Trump might launch a preemptive nuclear strike against North Korea. Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA) and eight other Democrats introduced an identical bill, H.R. 669, the same day in the House.

"The framers of the Constitution understood that the monumental decision to go to war, which can result in massive death and the destruction of civilized society, must be made by the representatives of the people and not by a single person," the bills declare, clearly a reference to fears of Trump pushing the nuclear button.

"Nuclear weapons are uniquely powerful weapons that have the capability to instantly kill millions of people, create long-term health and environmental consequences throughout the world, directly undermine global peace and put the United States at existential risk from retaliatory nuclear strikes."

PSARA Board member, Imogene Williams, offered the motion to endorse the bills to the PSARA Executive Board. A broad Seattle-based coalition, Washington Against Nuclear Weapons, is working in support of the legislation, meeting monthly at the offices of El Centro de la Raza, an affiliate of the coalition.

In a statement of purpose, the Coalition warns, "There are nearly 15,000 nuclear weapons in the world, which represent a constant threat to global security. The US plans to spend billions on rebuilding the entire nuclear weapons arsenal (of nearly 7,000 weapons) at a projected cost of over a trillion dollars over the next thirty years. The obscene cost of nuclear weapons



Tim Wheeler

expansion diverts money that could be used for badly needed civil infrastructure and social programs that would truly increase our nation's well-being, security, and resiliency. Escalating our nuclear weapons program ensures a constant threat to life as we know it and promotes a new arms race reminiscent of the Cold War."

Members of the coalition include Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, American Federation of

Teachers of Washington State, Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Church Council of Greater Seattle, Fellowship of Reconciliation, South Seattle Climate Action Network, Veterans for Peace, Olympic Peninsula Progressives, and From Hiroshima to Hope. Clallam County Democrats voted unanimously to endorse the two bills at its Feb. 10 membership meeting in Port Angeles.

Peace overtures at the recent Winter Olympics have eased the crisis for the moment. Trump has announced that he will meet with Kim Jong-un, leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. But Trump has fired Sec. of State Rex Tillerson, reportedly because Tillerson was too conciliatory toward Iran. He has nominated former CIA Director, Mike Pompeo to replace Tillerson. Pompeo has repeatedly and loudly denounced the agreement aimed at curbing Iran's drive to develop nuclear weapons. S.200 and H.R.669 deserve strong grassroots support to stop the rising danger of nuclear war.

Tim Wheeler is a PSARA member.

To See Ourselves as Others See Us



Cartoon from the Greek newspaper Kathimerini, English language edition April 11, 2018

Passover at the Northwest Detention Center

By Jonathan Rosenblum

Passover is the Jewish holiday celebrating the freeing of the Hebrew slaves from Pharaoh's Egypt. Every year, Jewish people and friends around the world gather for this spring holiday with a feast, ceremonial foods, and a retelling of the story of liberation.

Passover is quintessentially a union story. Some 3,500 years ago, in the middle of the night, 600,000 immigrants downed the tools of their oppression and defiantly walked away from slavery in Egypt. It was the first recorded mass strike in history. And yes, it was an illegal strike!

Given the story and lessons of Passover, it seemed only fitting to celebrate the holiday at the site of today's most inhumane injustices – to recall past freedom victories while also reminding us of liberation work yet to be completed.

On April 1, more than 100 Jews and friends gathered outside the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma to recall the ancient story of liberation and to recommit ourselves to fighting for the rights



Rabbi David Basior of Kadima Reconstructionist Community, foreground, leads the assembled crowd in the Passover Seder at the Northwest Detention Center April 1. (Photo courtesy of Jonathan Rosenblum)



Rabbi Zari Weiss of Kol HaNeshamah displays the ceremonial Passover Seder plate and matzah. There are at least three PSARA members in the background. Can you name them? (Photo courtesy of Jonathan Rosenblum)

of today's Hebrew slaves – immigrants unjustly detained inside places like the for-profit-run Northwest Detention Center, awaiting legal proceedings and likely deportations.

"We cannot be free until we are all free," noted Rabbi David Basior of Kadima Jewish Community in Seattle, pointing out that 1,500 people are held behind the barbed wire of the detention center, and that the center itself was built on occupied Puyallup land. "Let us celebrate Passover, let us acknowledge it, but in this world where there are still places that occupy indigenous land, that break moral codes of how we should treat one another, that defy our values not just as Jews but as humans . . . our work is not done," Rabbi Basior said.

With broad representation, including many PSARA members, the group celebrated the Passover liturgy, or Seder, and heard from a number of people facing deportation threats by the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency.

"None of us should be in deportation

proceedings," declared Monica, whose partner, Melesio Morales Mata, or Mele, is being held by the detention center. "We need to dismantle ICE," she said. "We need to stop the legal kidnapping of our families."

The event, billed as Justice for Mele / Northwest Detention Center Resistance Solidarity Seder, was organized by Kadima, the Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice NW, and the Northwest Detention Center Resistance (NWDRCR) movement.

Jose Robles told the crowd that he has been fighting against government deportation efforts for six years and is now being told by ICE that he must leave the country by June.

"My heart is being ripped apart from my five children," said Norma, who has been ordered to leave the country in May.

Immigrant rights leader Maru Mora-Villalpando, herself facing a deportation order, pointed out that "it's important to remember this is happening to hundreds

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PSARA Stands With Tenants Against Abusive Landlord

By Mindi Lee

Members of PSARA joined with Washington community action network to protest disrespectful treatment of minority tenants.

This property manager has:

- Given 10 Day Eviction Notices for parking lot infractions.
- Tried to evict a tenant because the tenant's high school son turned 18 (and she also then emailed the tenant resources for shelters).
- Called the cops on tenants when they tried to address their problems with her.
- Doubled rent on a tenant who was laid off in January (even though these are rent-restricted units getting steep tax subsidies).
- Forced a tenant to pay \$10,000 (in addition to rent) because the company "miscalculated" previous rent (again these are low-income tax credit buildings).
- Refused to talk to a tenant unless she had an interpreter, but then skipped the meetings.

A group of 15 people along with an attorney attempted to deliver a 10-day notice to the property manager to stop this harassment of tenants.



PSARA Executive Board members Mindi Lee (center) and Xochitl Maykovich (right). Xochitl is also an organizer with Washington CAN!
(Photo courtesy of Mindi Lee)

The office hours notice on the door indicated it was open. However, the door was locked. The people inside the office refused to answer the door and closed the blinds when the tenants held signs and chanted for respect outside their office. The letter was

nailed to the office door, and the tenants remained outside, being joined by other residents chanting and giving statements to local media.

Mindi Lee is Co-Chair of PSARA Government Affairs Committee.

PSARA Pickets New Seasons Market Mercer Island

On April 14, PSARA members joined the Northwest Accountability Project and other community groups to picket New Seasons Market in Mercer Island. (Photo courtesy of Karen Richter)

Our next opportunities to stand with New Seasons Workers:

Wednesday, May 9, 10 a.m.

New Seasons Market Ballard, 951 NW Ballard Way, Seattle

Rally to protest the opening of New Seasons' Ballard location

Sunday, May 20, 2-4 p.m.

New Seasons Market Ballard, 951 NW Ballard Way, Seattle

PSARA has adopted this day to flyer in support of New Seasons workers





Let's face it. We're all aging. We hope to stay healthy and independent for a long time, but in the end, most of us will need some help. What will it look like? Who will provide it? How will it feel? Will we be able to afford help?

Join us for a screening of CARE, which pulls back the curtain on the poignant and largely hidden world of in-home care. Beautifully shot and deeply moving, the film reveals the deep bonds that form between paid care providers and care recipients while exposing the cracks in the US care system.

"A powerful tale of dedication . . . through the eyes of workers and clients." Huffington Post



**Join us for a showing of CARE,
followed by discussion.**

Tuesday, May 8, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Langley United Methodist Church,
Fellowship Hall
301 Anthes Avenue (3rd and Anthes),
Langley WA 98260**

Following the film there will be a discussion with:

Cheryn Weiser, Executive Director, Island Senior Services and a family caregiver.

Jerene, a South Whidbey home care provider.

Madeleine Foutch, SEIU 775, Strategic Campaign Coordinator, who is leading the campaign to pass state legislation to provide financial assistance for long-term care.

Continuing education credits available for certain long-term caregivers.

Sponsored by Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA) and co-sponsored by South Whidbey Friends of Friends Medical Support Fund, South Whidbey at Home, SEIU 775NW, Island County Democrats.

For further information contact psaraedfund@psara.org or call Robby at (206)391-6998.

PSARA Kicks Off Our Work on I-1631, the Protect Washington Act

By Bobby Righi

On April 19, PSARA members listened to Aiko Schaefer explain the historic new Washington State Initiative 1631, the Protect Washington Act.

The measure was conceived and drafted by the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy, a large group of diverse organizations including PSARA. The Alliance includes environmental groups, unions, communities of color, faith groups, women, and tribes in Washington State. Such an inclusive process is unique in Washington and potentially a national model.

For the past three years, these groups have been meeting and listening to people across Washington to learn people's concerns about climate change and the environment. Out of this has come the plan to make the state's biggest polluters pay a fee and use the money for developing new sources of clean energy, more mass transportation, clean water, protection for forests, support for workers transitioning from jobs in fossil fuels, and help for the most affected communities.

Aiko Schaefer has long worked on issues of poverty and oppression and said that she has come to realize that these issues are intertwined with climate change and that the work to solve them must be linked.

This Initiative is a step in the right direction, she says, because it will



*Aiko Schaefer speaks to PSARA members
(Photo: Garet Munger)*

improve the bad health and living conditions caused by pollution in poor neighborhoods. It will also provide more jobs in a clean energy economy.

PSARA members who were at the presentation took packets of petitions so they can gather signatures to put the initiative on the ballot. We will try to have teams of PSARA members go out together to gather signatures at public events.

If you want to help get this historic initiative on the ballot, contact Bobby Righi at membershipvp@psara.org

See the article on Page 3 in last month's *Advocate* for more information on the initiative.

Bobby Righi is PSARA's Membership Co-VP and our representative to the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy.

Donate to PSARA's June Silent Auction

At our June 21 membership meeting, we will reprise our very successful Silent Auction. If you have items to donate, please contact PSARA's Fundraising Committee at fundraising@psara.org or Co-President Jessica Bonebright at president@psara.org

At right is a photo of our December Silent Auction, which featured books, wine, jewelry, artworks, and more. (Photo: Garet Munger)

Please help PSARA raise money and make our June membership meeting even more interesting. Donate an item or two to our June Silent Auction.



The Tilt Toward Medicare Advantage

By Robby Stern

Dina becomes eligible for Medicare in August this year. We are experiencing a constant marketing campaign by private insurers to persuade her to sign up with their Medicare Advantage plan. What is particularly annoying and frustrating are the aggressive phone calls.

In that context, it was interesting to receive a recent email from the Center for Medicare Advocacy (CMA). The email from the center called for an end to the favoritism shown to private insurers through the Medicare Advantage program.

I am sure many PSARA members have chosen Medicare Part C, Medicare Advantage, sold by for-profit and not-for-profit private insurers. More than 33% of Medicare beneficiaries are enrolled in Advantage plans. The

the private plans could provide higher quality service at a lower price. According to CMA, the promise of higher quality and lower prices has not come true. Advantage plans receive 114% of what traditional Medicare would spend on a given individual. In part, that is due to “upcoding” that allows more reimbursement based on the reported health of individual enrollees.

According to the General Accounting Office (GAO) report in 2016, the Center for Medicare Services (CMS) estimates that 9.5% of its annual payments to Advantage organizations in 2013 were improper. The amount of over payments totaled \$14.1 billion, stemming from unsupported diagnoses submitted by the private insurers.

A big attraction of private Advantage plans is the offer of benefits not



Robby Stern

When Medicare Advantage was created, it was with the promise that the private plans could provide higher quality service at a lower price. According to CMA, the promise of higher quality and lower prices has not come true.

projections are that Advantage plans will grow, putting traditional Medicare, the public plan, at risk.

There are pros and cons to Advantage plans according to CMA. The pros include “one stop shopping” as opposed to traditional Medicare, where enrollees like myself often must purchase separate Part D prescription drug and Medigap supplemental plans. The cons often include limited networks of providers, and according to CMA increased difficulty in accessing services when the need for such services intensifies.

When Medicare Advantage was created, it was with the promise that

covered by traditional Medicare. The Advantage plans use the extra money they receive to gain a competitive advantage over the traditional public Medicare. Interestingly, the extra money has not necessarily led to better outcomes for Advantage enrollees.

CMA cites a recent article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* stating “some studies show that Medicare Advantage has higher quality in certain dimensions, such as higher rate of preventive care and screening among recipients,” but other studies “suggest that Medicare Advantage does not serve certain beneficiaries well, such as those with the greater illness

severity.” The article concludes, “Despite the important and increasing role of Medicare Advantage plans, there is fairly little insight into the relative value Medicare Advantage provides to beneficiaries or the funder, the US taxpayer.”

The bias toward private Advantage plans disadvantages the majority of Medicare beneficiaries who choose coverage through traditional Medicare. Further, the Advantage plans, as a result of their greater expense, threaten the very survival of the public plan.

The Center for Medicare Advocacy is urging Congress “to expand services and coverage equally for all Medicare beneficiaries. Both payments and coverage need to be equalized. If that fails to happen, the Medicare traditional public plan is in jeopardy of dying on the vine, as the sickest among us will end up constituting the majority of beneficiaries in the public program.

Robby Stern is President of the PSARA Education Fund.

PSARA Sponsors Screening of CARE on Whidbey Island

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eyes of both paid caregivers and their older clients. Vilma, an undocumented caregiver, cares for Dee, 92, an active businesswoman until dementia ended her work life. With her only family 3,000 miles away, Vilma is her lifeline.

In an isolated rural area, Laurie cajoles Larry to do his exercises and have hope while he waits for a lung transplant. Larry's wife Tiff says, "This is the hardest job in the world."

Toni knows how hard it is to be a caregiver. When her husband Peter, a former CBS executive, was struck with a vicious form of Parkinson's, she realizes the only way to keep him home is to have 24/7 help. At first she is uncomfortable having care workers constantly in her home, but as she realizes how dependent she and Peter are on them, her

concern changes to "You're not going to quit, are you?"

The film reveals that despite long days taking care of others, care workers often struggle to feed their own families. Laurie can't pay her rent, Vilma can't process her green card, and Delores winds up in a women's shelter. On the flip side, middle class Toni and Peter are going broke paying for the 24/7 care Peter needs.

Through these personal stories, CARE reveals the deep humanity and poignancy of care work, as well as the challenges faced by older people, their families and their care workers.

A panel following the film will feature, Cheryn Weiser, Executive Director, Island Senior Services, a family caregiver, Jerene, a South Whidbey homecare

provider, and Madeline Foutch, SEIU 775 Strategic Campaign Coordinator, who is leading the campaign to pass state legislation to provide financial assistance for long-term care.

After brief presentations by each panelist, there will be opportunity for general discussion.

At a moment when the older population is rapidly expanding, CARE highlights an issue that affects us all – urban and rural, immigrant and native born. Providing quality care for an aging population will require reimagining how we support families who need these services and how we compensate workers who provide the services.

For information contact psaraed-fund@psara.org or call Robby at (206)391-6998

Thoughts on Policing

By Phyllis Baker

The only rationale for routinely arming police is to protect police.

The best self-defense is to be non-threatening and non-lethal.

If the job is to go out and protect themselves, something is missing. A mission.

Keeping the peace? The police often destroy what peace there is.

Protecting people from other armed people? What difference does it make who shoots you? You're just as dead.

You can't defuse a situation with a gun. You can't calm people with a firearm sticking out of your hip. People's thinking processes are short-circuited by fear.

Bad decisions can be made on both sides when someone feels threatened, even if both sides are well-intentioned.

Lethal force only insures that justice won't be done.

An armed police force signals that there is no trust. It assures that violence is possible in every encounter. In most encounters this is an inappropriate message.

For one type of police function, settling domestic disputes, it is inappropriate to arrive on the scene bearing lethal force. Citizens should not need to fear calling the police. It should be the same as calling the fire department (which, by the way, is not armed.)

For the second function, executing the law, force is required to detain and arrest. These two functions of policing need to be clearly differentiated.

Traffic stops are not inherently dangerous. Drivers should not fear being stopped. Traffic stops should automatically include an order to go to the next safe area, and no prior police record should be considered during a traffic stop.

Phyllis Baker is a poet, a member of PSARA, and one of the Advocate's team of proofreaders.

The Fight for Medicare and Medicaid

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coalition will continue its work in 2019 to bring more Washingtonians into coverage.

• The Health Care Is a Human Right coalition (HCHR), of which PSARA is also a member, wants to sponsor health care forums in the 5th and 8th Congressional Districts, which the Democrats hope to take back in the 2018 elections. HCHR will also attempt to win more co-sponsors for the Medicare for All bills in Congress, H.R. 676 and S. 1804, which so far are supported in the Washington delegation only by Reps. Pramila Jayapal (7th CD) and Adam Smith (9th CD). For the first time, a majority of Democrats in the House have signed onto Medicare for All; one-third of the Senate Democrats are also on board. HCHR is also very interested in a bill Rep. Jayapal will introduce soon, the state-based Universal Health Care Act, giving states the tools they would need to build universal public plans. We expect that universal coverage will first be achieved at the state level, and several states are making real progress towards this goal.

• Health Care for All – WA (HCFA) has made significant headway in building support in the WA Legislature for a WA-state single-payer health plan (WA Health Security Trust, HB 1026 and Apple Care Security Trust, SB 5701). The Legislature approved a “budget proviso” that will pay for a study this year of universal health care plans and how they might guide our state in designing its own plan. HCFA will work with its prime bill sponsors (Rep. Nicole Macri, 43rd LD and Sen. David Frockt, 46th LD) to introduce an improved bill in 2019.

As in all progressive causes, our strength is in numbers and unity. We encourage all PSARA members to find ways of participating in PSARA’s education and advocacy work.

David Loud is PSARA’s representative to the Health Care Is a Human Right coalition.

Passover at the Northwest Detention Center

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of thousands of people around the country.”

Immigration laws, through ICE, are tearing apart and destroying families, Mora-Villalpando noted.

Passover celebrations include a Seder plate, displaying symbolic foods of the liberation story. For the Solidarity Seder plate, Rabbi Zari Weiss of Kol HaNeshamah, a West Seattle congregation, added a padlock to represent the mass incarceration of immigrants along with Black and Brown people in prisons around the country. The US represents just five percent of the world’s population, but holds 25 percent of the world’s inmates.

Rabbi Weiss also placed pieces of ice on the Seder plate, “to symbolize the hard-heartedness that separates loved ones and also the attitude of the top leadership of this country.”

“We can only pray,” Weiss noted, “that as the ice melts, that hard-heartedness will melt as well.”

Just as the liberation from Egypt 3,500 years ago took collective action, today’s fight for immigrant justice requires everyone’s creativity, passion, and energy. You can get involved in the Northwest Detention Center Resistance movement by going to this website: <http://www.nwdcresistance.org/>

People representing a wide range of organizations joined Kadima, NWDCR, and the Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice NW in attending the Solidarity Seder: Jewish Voice for Peace, Jews Undoing Institutional Racism, Advocates for Immigrants in Detention Northwest, Congregation Beth Shalom, IfNotNow, Socialist Workers Party, Temple Beth Am, the Raging Grannies, Bet Alef Meditative Synagogue, Kol HaNeshamah, the Jewish Reform movement, Temple Beth Hatfiloh, Temple Beth El, and Kol Shalom.

In addition to turning out some people for the event, PSARA provided its new sound system, to ensure that everyone at the Solidarity Seder could hear. This was the debut for PSARA’s new sound system, which was then permanently installed in the WSLC building where PSARA has its office.

Jonathan Rosenblum is a writer and union and community organizer based in Seattle. He is the author of Beyond \$15: Immigrant Workers, Faith Activists, and the Revival of the Labor Movement (Beacon Press, 2017), a member of the National Writers Union/UAW 1981, and a member of PSARA. Follow him on Twitter @jonathan4212

To Renew or Donate

PSARA Education Fund

321 16th Avenue S, Seattle WA 98144

- 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): _____

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Meetings and Events

West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 2, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave SW, Seattle, (35th & Henderson). Topic: *Discussion of this year's "Seattle Reads" book, Homegoing, by Yaa Gyasi.* Brown bag lunch.

PSARA Climate and Environmental Justice Committee: 10 – 11:30 a.m., Thursday, May 3, PSARA office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 12:30 – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, May 3, PSARA office, 321 16th Ave. S. All are welcome.

PSARA Education Committee: 2 p.m., Tuesday, May 8, PSARA office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

CARE Documentary and Discussion: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 8, Langley United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 301 Anthes Avenue, Langley, Whidbey Island, Washington.

Picket New Seasons Market Ballard: 10 a.m., Wednesday, May 9, 951 NW Ballard Way, Seattle.

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, May 10, Green Lake Branch, Seattle Public Library, 7364 E Green Lake Dr. N, Seattle. Topic: *Discussion of this year's "Seattle Reads" book, Homegoing, by Yaa Gyasi.* Brown bag lunch.

PSARA Southend Committee: 1 p.m., Thursday, May 10, Burien Library, 400 SW 152nd St., Burien. Join us for lunch before the meeting at Elliott Bay Brew-

house & Pub, 255 SW 152nd St., Burien. Please arrive for lunch by 11:15 a.m. All are welcome as we plan PSARA events in South King County.

PSARA Fundraising Committee: 10:30 a.m. - Noon, Monday, May 14, PSARA office, 321 16th Ave. S. All are welcome.

PSARA Race/Gender Equity Committee: 11 a.m.– Noon, Thursday, May 17, PSARA office, 321 16th Avenue S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Executive Board Meeting: 12:30 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, May 17, PSARA office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

Flyer at New Seasons Market Ballard: 2-4 p.m., Sunday, May 20, 951 NW Ballard Way, Seattle.

