

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

Vol XXXIII, No 9

September 2017

**Special Labor
Day Issue**

Closing Colstrip Coal Plants: PSARA Supports Climate Progress and Justice for Working Families

By Marc Krasnowsky

Puget Sound Energy is a privately owned utility that provides both natural gas and electricity to more than 1 million customers in eight Washington counties. King County represents half of PSE’s service territory.

PSE also owns the largest share of two generating units in Colstrip, MT, that after 2025 will be the last remaining coal-fired electricity producers in the Northwest region (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana). Agreements already are in place to shutter the plants in Centralia, Wash., and Boardman, OR, as well as the two smaller units in Colstrip.

The future of human civilization and, indeed, most biologic life on this planet depends on rapidly turning away from fossil fuels and building a conservation/clean energy economy. That’s why climate activists and clean energy jobs supporters – as well as the King County Council, 14 King County mayors and even *The Seattle Times* -- have called on PSE to phase out its coal-fired power by 2025.

Extending beyond that date would require expanding the highly polluting Colstrip mine that provides coal to the plants, setting up a pernicious cycle in which the plants would have to run longer to pay off the mine investments. And, of course, that would delay investments in sustainable, local, job-creating clean energy projects that all of us – and especially working families and their descendents – will need to survive.

Continued on Page 10

Right-To-Work Takes Away Our Freedom to Join Together

By David Groves

Republicans in Congress and in Rstate legislatures across the nation, including right here in Washington, are promoting so-called “Right-to-Work” legislation that they say is about worker freedom. If you know anything about the history of RTW -- and of the GOP’s supposed advocacy for workers -- you know better.

In fact, just the opposite is true. RTW is about taking away our freedom to join together and negotiate a fair return for our work. This law, promoted exclusively by the political party that claims to abhor government interference, does exactly that. It bans unions and employers from agreeing to union-security contract clauses that guarantee that everyone who benefits from a union contract pays their fair share for union representation.



David Groves

Story continued on Page 8

Join PSARA for Labor Day

Join PSARA on Labor Day, September 4, at the Martin Luther King County Labor Council (MLKCLC) Cookout at the Tukwila Community Center, 12424 42nd Avenue S, in Tukwila. The festivities start at 11:00 a.m. and go till 3:00 p.m.

As always, look for the PSARA table, where we’ll have delicious baked treats, literature, and sharp political conversation. Don’t be surprised if political candidates and office-holders stop by too. It’s always a great opportunity to let them know what you think.

MLKCLC affiliates will provide hot dogs, beverages, ice cream, and pop corn, and there will be live music by union performers.

If you don’t live in King County, here are some Labor Day events near you:

In Pierce County, the Pierce County Central Labor Council (PCCLC) has a full day planned, starting with a Ralph Chaplin memorial at 10:30 a.m., Calvary Cemetery, 5212 70th Street W, in Tacoma. Chaplin wrote the lyrics to “Solidarity Forever” and

Continued on Page 11

The Retiree ADVOCATE

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

Officers of PSARA Education Fund:

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

Vice President: **Sally Davis**

Secretary-Treasurer: **Garet Munger**

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

Associate Editor: **Bob Shimabukuro**

Photographer: **Garet Munger**

Printing: **Trade Printery**

PSARA Directory:

President: **Robby Stern**

Administrative Vice President:

Bobby Righi, adminvp@psara.org

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

Outreach Vice Presidents:

Vivian O. Lee & Susan Levy, 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 Co-chairs: **Steve Bauck & Bob Swanson**, educationcommittee@psara.org

Environmental Committee Co-chairs:

Kristen Beifus & Tom Lux, envirocommittee@psara.org

Fundraising Committee Chair: **Karen Richter**, fundraising@psara.org

Government Relations Committee Co-chairs:

Chuck Richards & Tim Burns, govrelations@psara.org

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

PSARA Concert a Smash Hit!



Lou in action. Lou kept spirits and energy high for an evening of songs. (Photo: Sarajane Seigfriedt)

PSARA's August 13 fundraiser concert, featuring Lou Truskoff, was a smash hit!

The 50-plus PSARA members and friends who attended feasted on hors d'oeuvres and desserts and enjoyed Lou leading us in song.

For many in the audience, Lou's protest songs reminded us of specific times and places. PSARA member Sarajane Siegfriedt remembered singing "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around" 50 years ago when she sneaked out to participate in an open housing march in Louisville in the summer of 1967.

In addition to food, song, and an opportunity to catch up with our friends, the concert brought PSARA more than \$2,600 in donations.

Thanks to Fundraising Committee Chair Karen Richter, Amy Davis, Dina Burstein, Lou Truskoff, and our hosts Angie Bartels and Tony Lee.



Good friends, good food, good music. Could there be a better way to spend an evening? (Photo: Karen Richter)

Visit our website for up to date information or to renew:
www.psara.org
or visit PSARA on Facebook

Cuba's Literacy Campaign

By Robby Stern

1960 was declared the Year of Agrarian Reform in Cuba. The revolutionary government had embarked on a progressive redistribution of land. It sought to return the fruits of the labor of the rural *campesinos* to those who did the work. Despite the yet unfinished and revolutionary agrarian reform, Fidel announced in Cuba in 1959 and at the United Nations in 1961 that Cuba would embark on a campaign to eliminate illiteracy.

Planning and experimentation with curriculum began in 1959, and the dispatching of the volunteers began in 1961. The literacy campaign began despite the emergence of CIA-funded counterrevolutionary groups in several mountainous regions in Cuba, all part of the preparation for the April, 1961, Bay of Pigs invasion orchestrated by the U.S. government. Defense of the revolution absorbed a huge amount of energy and resources in Cuba. But despite this life-and-death struggle, the revolutionary leadership committed itself and the country to the elimination of illiteracy throughout the entire country.

There were more than 100,000 volunteers, and the vast majority were young people, many in their teens and even younger. A large number of the volunteers traveled from the cities to the most remote rural areas of Cuba to integrate into the lives of the *campesinos*. After being trained on how to teach literacy, they went to work participating in agricultural work with the rural workers and families during the day and teaching reading and writing at night, often by candlelight. While the program was not confined to rural areas (there was illiteracy across the country), the largest number of volunteers went into the rural areas, and their experiences were life-changing.

In her introduction to *Un Año Sin Domingos, A Year Without Sundays*, a book of reflections by participants in the campaign, Esther Perez wrote:

"Our country was changing before our eyes, and now young people were



1961: Rally of the Pencils, Plaza de la Revolucion, Habana

being called to participate in a transformation that we knew was transcendental, eliminating chronic illiteracy. It was a huge goal in itself, but also a symbol of the new direction we could give our country through our efforts. It was a radical break with the past and much more...

"New worlds opened up for the pupils, imparted to them by literacy teachers. But those who changed the most were the literacy teachers. They learned about where the coffee they drank came from, how to wash clothes in the river, and how hard it is to handle an axe on a mountainside. And, almost without realizing it, they learned about other, deeper things that would last them a lifetime. Most importantly they learned how to be different men and women.

"For girls, or course, the change was even more remarkable: the traditional ideas about being a woman (subordinate to the masculine desires of fathers and husbands, confined to domestic spaces and chores) began falling apart..."

Our delegation spent a morning at the Literacy Museum. For many of us it revealed a history of which we were unaware. First we heard from Luisa Campos Gallardo, who has been the Director of the National Literacy Museum in Havana since 1996. The museum is part of the University of Pedagogical Sciences. She gave us an overview of the campaign, the successes of the effort and the sacrifices that were made by participants in the campaign, including some who were murdered by the counterrevolutionaries.

Next, we heard from two older adults who had volunteered during the literacy campaign. Blanca spoke about her experiences and how they impacted her perception of herself as a woman and the direction of her life. She talked about how her participation changed her definition of women's role in society and the contribution that can be made personally and collectively by challenging the traditional role of women. She quietly mentioned the

Continued on Page 11

Stand Up for Justice – Resist Hate!

By Maureen Bo, Catherine Pottinger, and Mason Taylor, PSARA members

Zahid Chaudhry is a decorated U.S. Veteran who served many years in the U.S. military and was disabled in active duty; he received many honors for his bravery and volunteering spirit and was honorably discharged.

Zahid has been a community activist in Seattle, president of the Rachel Corrie Chapter of Veterans for Peace, volunteering to help seniors, the Red Cross, and other community organizations. He is married to an American citizen for many years. He has never been charged with a crime, even a misdemeanor.

Then he was suddenly faced with a deportation hearing on July 17 after years of delay since he first filed his papers for citizenship. Citizenship is a promise that is made to qualify any immigrant who volunteers and serves in our military, as Zahid did. His lawyer had been told that the matter could be settled, but that was switched by



Zahid Chaudhry
(Photo: AP)

authorities at the last minute before the hearing.

Many PSARA members, Veterans for Peace members, church leaders and others were present outside the hearing July 17 to support Zahid. PSARA members Catherine Pottinger and Imo-

gene Williams were allowed to enter the courtroom with a handful of other supporters, although Zahid's citizen supporters were severely limited. The rest of us, including PSARA members Mason Taylor and Maureen Bo, stayed outside and waited for the hearing to end. After three long hours, the judge continued the proceedings.

This outrage has gone on long enough! Please join PSARA members and other supporters of justice to make it clear that existing law cannot be broken just to satisfy a newly resurgent islamophobic/hate campaign engendered by the Trump gang.

The most recent information we have is that the next hearing will be Monday, October 16, at 1:00 p.m., at the Seattle Immigration Court, 1000 - 2nd Ave., (2nd and Spring).

Maureen Bo, Catherine Pottinger, and Mason Taylor are PSARA members.

Northwest Clean and Affordable Energy Conference Coming to Seattle

By Sean O'Leary

Most people in the Northwest – even electric utility executives – agree that problems like climate change and pollution make it imperative that we transition to a “clean” electric grid.

But what is a clean grid? Does it include electricity generated from natural gas, which is cleaner than coal but still a source of greenhouse gases? What about nuclear? And is a 100% clean grid even attainable given that “the wind doesn't always blow and the sun doesn't always shine”?

Hear these questions explored and debated at the Fall 2017 Clean & Affordable Energy Conference, on Thursday, November 2, at the Seattle Hilton Hotel.

The conference will also explore:



- How we can protect those who struggle to pay utility bills or who are disproportionately harmed by energy generated from fossil fuels.
- How, during the clean energy transition, we can assist people and communities whose livelihoods are tied to the fossil fuel industry.
- How we can develop policies that motivate or require utilities and other

energy sector players to do what's needed.

Register today for the fall 2017 Clean & Affordable Energy Conference to learn, to participate, and to connect with others who care deeply about the Northwest's energy future. For more information, visit the NW Energy Coalition website at nwenergy.org.

Sean O'Leary is Communications Director for the NW Energy Coalition and a member of PSARA.

The World According to Trump: Neo-Nazis Are “Fine,” Civil Rights Laws Not So Much

By Mike Andrew

While Donald Trump's endorsement of Neo-Nazis and white nationalists as “very fine people” has the whole world reeling in disbelief, his Justice Department is quietly working on even more dreadful developments – undoing all the Obama-era rules that protect civil rights, healthcare, and the environment.

“Many of these changes are not just changes in policy, but they're actually reversing the U.S. government's official position on what statutes mean,” says David Cole, legal director for the ACLU. “What a statute means ought not to change from one administration to another. The law is the law.”

The complete reversal of Obama-era guidelines and administrative rulings suggests that Trump's aim is not merely to shift legal policy in a more conservative direction but to dismantle existing American civil rights laws.

In some cases, the new administration is threatening to take its policy changes even further by filing briefs in controversial court cases that literally say the opposite of filings by Obama's Justice Department.

For example, Trump's Justice Department has intervened in voting rights cases to try to restrict ballot access for people of color and poor people.

In a case originating in Ohio – which will be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court this fall – the Obama Justice Department opposed a state law allowing people to be removed from voter rolls merely for failing to vote, and without any other inquiries or evidence. Trump's attorneys, on the other hand, say the Ohio law is reasonable.

In a Texas case, Obama's Justice Department opposed the state's stringent photo ID requirements, and a federal judge subsequently found that the Texas law was intended to discriminate against minorities. In February the Trump Justice Department dropped that claim, and in July it said the Texas law did not harm minorities at all.

At right, Trump and his cabinet: Also some “very fine people.” (Photo: Trump Twitter feed)



On voting rights, “this is the most aggressive set of changes we've seen,” says Paul Smith, Vice President of the Campaign Legal Center and a frequent Supreme Court litigator who specializes in defending voters' rights.

On another key civil rights issue, the Trump Justice Department, headed by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, said in a court filing that federal civil rights laws do not protect gays and lesbians from workplace discrimination.

This is in direct contradiction to a 2015 ruling by the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) – the federal agency charged with enforcing workplace protections – that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects sexual orientation.

In 2012, the EEOC ruled that Title VII protects gender identity. Federal appeals courts have split on these issues, and the U.S. Supreme Court may ultimately render a decision in one or more cases involving the scope of Title VII.

If or when it does, the high court will make its decision with the Trump Justice Department arguing for the most restrictive interpretation of federal law, whereas Obama's Justice Department supported the most expansive reading of the laws.

While EEOC commissioners do not change with every new administration, and Obama-era appointees still dominate the agency, the commission depends on support from Justice Department attorneys to uphold its

rulings in court. So the prognosis for an LGBT-inclusive reading of Title VII is not good.

The Trump administration is not stopping there, however, but is reversing Obama-era legal policies in a number of other areas as well.

On immigration, Trump's Department of Homeland Security ended Obama's DAPA program in June, putting millions of undocumented immigrants with children who are U.S. citizens at immediate risk of deportation. The Trump administration is also thinking about ending Obama's DACA program, which has protected 800,000 immigrants who came to the US as children.

On health care, the administration will probably drop its appeal of a lower court decision striking down a provision of the ACA (Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare) that pays insurers to keep costs down for low-income participants. Without the reimbursements, insurance premiums could skyrocket, pricing low-income people out of the market.

On climate change, Trump administration attorneys have asked a federal appeals court to delay ruling on Obama's landmark Clean Power Plan, which cuts greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired power plants. The administration previously put the policy on hold for 18 months, and a delayed court ruling could prevent it from ever taking effect.

New Seasons Market: Bad News for Workers, Bad News for Communities

By Morgan Currier

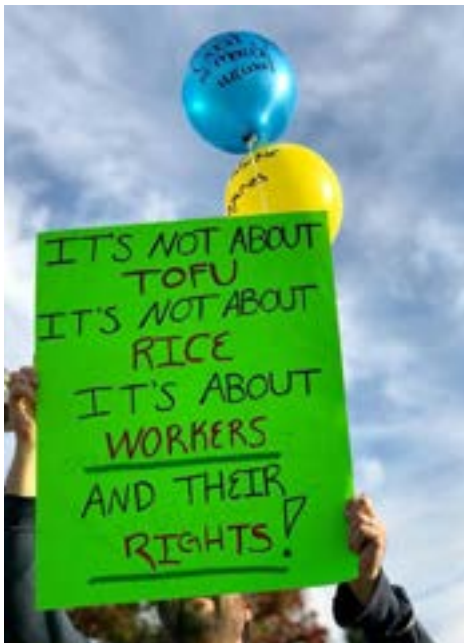
Portland-based New Seasons Market (NSM) is trying to open new stores throughout Seattle.

I care about that because I'm an organizer with United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 21 and NSM is bad news for grocery workers. You should care about it because NSM is also bad news for the communities they move into.

Let me explain.

Although NSM presents itself as a socially responsible company – on par with Seattle's community-owned cooperative grocers and our local, family-operated grocery stores – it does not live up to our community values of fairness, diversity, sustainability, and opportunity.

New Seasons' employment practices are inferior to established standards in Seattle's grocery industry. Over the years, union grocery workers in our community have won living wages, affordable healthcare, secure retirement benefits, and the right to advocate for better working conditions.



Picket at Mercer Island New Seasons Market. Photo: UFCW 21



UFCW 21 spreading the word, including PSARA members Ariana Davis (center) and Morgan Currier (right). Photo: UFCW 21

NSM stands for the exact opposite. For example, they offer more expensive health care benefits than union alternatives, they deprive workers of basic job security, and object to employees having a voice on the job.

New Seasons disciplines – and even fires – employees who call in sick. We believe that nobody should fear losing their job because they're too ill to work or need to care for a sick child -- especially not a grocery worker, who handles our food

New Seasons claims to be socially responsible but its executives brag openly that they seek to expand in communities in the process of "gentrification" and that opening a New Seasons store pushes surrounding rents and home values higher.

Maybe New Seasons didn't get the memo that Seattle is already too expensive for working families and it's not socially responsible to displace people from their homes.

The majority stockholder in NSM is a private equity firm, Endeavor Capital. One of Endeavour's repeat investors is the Murdock Charitable Trust, which

has provided millions of dollars to extremist right-wing organizations including the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) and the Freedom Foundation.

The ADF has been designated an anti-LGBTQ hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

The Freedom Foundation has a record of working to undermine workers' basic rights. New Seasons expanding into our communities will ultimately put profits in the hands of the Murdock Trust, which is not socially responsible.

We should have a say in how our communities are changing, and we need to raise our voices to let New Seasons know we don't want them in our neighborhoods so long as they refuse to meet our standards. I am proud that PSARA and UFCW 21 are united in this effort, and we are always looking for more community members to join us. If you're interested in getting involved or learning more, visit www.nsmsick.org.

UFCW 21 represents over 46,000 grocery, retail, and healthcare workers throughout Washington State.

Morgan Currier is an organizer with UFCW 21 and a member of PSARA.

Never Forget Heather Heyer

Killed by Neo-Nazis, August 12, 2017



"My daughter had more courage than I got. She's got a wider background than I do. That girl had some courage, and it's just who she was. She was always that way. I'm proud of what she tried to accomplish. She woke up the town of Charlottesville in a big way."

Mark Heyer, Heather's father

"We were against hate, that's what we were against ... This is our city. We work here. We live here. And we didn't want neo-Nazis and alt-right and racists to come into our city and think they could spread freely their hate, and their bigotry, and their racism. We wanted to let them know that we were about love, that we would overpower them ... We were peacefully protesting and we were just standing up for what we believe in... And that's what Heather stood for. That's why she was out there, that's why we were out there."

Marissa Blair, Heather's friend and co-worker

"She died doing what was right. My heart is broken but I am forever proud of her."

Felicia Correa, Heather's childhood friend

"They tried to kill my child to shut her up. Well guess what? You just magnified her."

Susan Bro, Heather's mother

Save the Dates for Exciting Upcoming Events

Book Group: *No Is Not Enough!*, by Naomi Klein, Date TBA

PSARA's Diversity Committee and Environmental Committee invite you to a discussion of Naomi Klein's new book, *No Is Not Enough!*

"YES is the beacon in the coming storms that will prevent us from losing our way," Klein says. Join us in building community and finding our "YES."

"No Is Not Enough is an essential handbook for economic, social, and political forces that produced the current crisis we are facing-and how we can effectively organize to win a better world," Danny Glover says.

Start reading now! Dates will be announced in the upcoming Advocate. For more information, email adminvp@psara.org with the subject header "Fall Book Group -- I'm Interested" or call the PSARA office 206-448-9646.

Birding With Karen Richter and Noelle Congdon, November 11

Join us as we go back to the Billy Frank Jr. National Wildlife Refuge in the beautiful Nisqually Delta https://www.fws.gov/refuge/billy_frank_jr_nisqually/ on Saturday, November 11, 2017. (Rain date Saturday, November 18, 2017.)

Our leaders will be PSARA Executive Board member Karen Richter, PSARA and her friend and fellow PSARA member, birding expert and naturalist Noelle Congdon. More details will be provided in the October Advocate or by contacting Karen at fundraising@psara.org or by calling the PSARA office at 206-448-9646.

Herstory: Interviews with Older Lesbians, October 19

The Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project (OLOHP) has been collecting the stories of old lesbians (usually women over 70) for many years. The group already has more than 650 completed interviews.

PSARA's Diversity Committee has invited OLOHP to do a presentation for PSARA members and guests. This will include showing a portion of a DVD of the interviews plus live readings.

The "Herstory" presentation will be Thursday, October 19, 11 a.m. until noon. All are welcome to this exciting event at the Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave S, Seattle.

For more information, contact organizer@psara.org, or call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646.

Golf and Power: Labor Day Lessons

By Lynne Dodson

I'm not a golfer.

Or I wasn't, until I decided to play in the Washington State Building and Construction Trades golf tournament supporting the Building Trades' pre-apprenticeship education program a couple of weeks ago. Now I am, and there are some things I've learned from golf that help me think about our work in the Labor Movement. It's particularly important as we reflect on our movement this Labor Day.

First, I may not be the most athletic or graceful person, but I am stubborn and persistent. When things look bleak in our state and nation, we have to remember – the Labor Movement was born for times like this. We weren't born in good times when workers were able to make the decisions about pay and working conditions. We were born in bad times, in times when inequality was high, with workers' wages stagnant while the rich got richer, times when working conditions were unsafe, when immigrant labor was exploited, when race, nationality, and religion were used to divide working people for the benefit of the wealthy, times when workers were pitted against each other to keep our attention away from those who profit from our work. Times similar to now.

And like before, we can organize, we can work in solidarity, we can build a stronger labor movement. We can. We must.

Our strength and persistence will pay off, as long as we follow another critical lesson I've learned from golfing -.....

The ability to listen and change how we are doing things. There are any number of ways to hit the ball with a club. I could whack it and make it go pretty far. I can swap at it and make it go into the hole, eventually, maybe.

But unless I change my swing, unless I use the right club, I won't be improving and I won't be consistent in getting the ball where I want it to be.

Right now we are facing increasing threats from the right wing, with a clear agenda to divide us.

And we are still not up to par. Over 80 percent of working people in our state aren't organized in unions, wages for 99 percent of us are still stagnant, the underground economy is still exploiting migrant workers, trade deals are still in place that perpetuate a race to the bottom in wages and industry, our state legislature is still divided making it difficult to pass good legislation, the Freedom Foundation is trying to undermine our collective bargaining agreements through legislation in small towns across the state, encouraging our members to quit the union and decertify, and filing frivolous legal challenges to suck our member's' dues into legal fees.

We have to change. We have to organize like we haven't before, in places we haven't before, and in ways we haven't even thought of yet. We have to engage our members, and we have to engage working people who aren't our members. Otherwise, just as in golf, we'll eventually give up because we aren't getting stronger and better.

Another lesson I've learned in golf is that the set-up is critical to the whole thing working. Hold your club right, align with your target, stand just so, take it back slowly and just the right amount, keep your eye on the ball. If you've set things up right, you'll connect with the ball, it will fly, and you'll be in perfect position to take your next shot.

That brings up another lesson. There's almost always a next shot to make it to the pin.

I think about this when we work to elect advocates for labor, and our own members to elected office. We have a great set-up: our labor neighbor program enables us to engage more union households; we recruit, train, and support our own members as they run for office (special shout out to Teresa Mosqueda!) We help get the right people elected. But there's always a next shot to make it to the pin. We have to continue to pressure elected officials



Lynne Dodson

– Democrat and Republican – so they will champion working people.

And right now, every local union needs a strategy for talking with members and retirees, with community allies, with our neighbors, our kids, everyone we know about the importance of unions. Now's the time for the set up – we do this right, and we'll be stronger than ever.

The other thing I learned from playing in the golf tournament was that the work doesn't end. Tournaments are exhausting, and you want to drink a lot. Our work can be that way. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. Do both graciously, look for your mistakes, learn from them, move on, and get ready for the next time. We're not going to grow and strengthen the labor movement by looking back and moaning about those cheaters. We're going to grow, we're going to be stronger, because we not only know what's right, but we know that when we stand shoulder to shoulder, the millions of us who work for a living are stronger than any enemy of working people.

MaryBe McMillan, Secretary-Treasurer of the North Carolina AFL-CIO, spoke to our WSLC convention a couple of weeks ago. I was inspired and

Continued on Page 9

Right to Work Takes Away Our Freedom to Join Together

Continued from Page 1

RTW allows people to get union representation for free and the union has no choice but to provide services for them anyway. It is akin to allowing people to opt out of paying taxes, but still requiring the government to provide the same services to taxpayers and free-riders alike.

Right-to-work laws have roots in southern racism and the Jim Crow-era quest for super-exploited labor. Texan Vance Muse, who coined the term “right-to-work,” was a lobbyist, political strategist and white supremacist who used racial stereotypes and slurs to gain support for his legal strategy of spreading RTW laws state-by-state.

Muse infamously argued that without RTW laws, “White women and white men will be forced into organizations with black African apes whom they will have to call ‘brother’ or lose their jobs.”

These days, the obvious goal of RTW is to weaken unions both economically and politically, which is why they are sought exclusively by one party. Weakening unions not only serves the interests of their corporate financiers, it takes away the voice of working people that so often stands in opposition to Republican efforts to lower wages, eliminate worker protections, cut or privatize Social Security, among many other things.

Once confined to states in the South, Republican-controlled states like Michigan and Wisconsin have adopted RTW laws in recent years with the support of conservative billionaire industrialists like the Koch brothers. States where the GOP just gained control following the 2016 elections, including Missouri and New Hampshire, made the passage of right-to-work laws their first order of business in 2017.

RTW laws are especially harmful for women and people of color.

Every worker does better with a union, earning an averaging 25 percent higher than nonunion wages. But the disparity between union and non-union wages is even higher for Black, Latino and female workers. Add negotiated benefits to that equation and union membership has a life-changing economic impact. That’s a big deal for all low-income families, but especially for families of color.

At a time that income and wealth inequality has risen to unprecedented levels, never before has there been such a clear path to equity and economic justice as having a union.

Insert RTW and create an incentive for financially struggling workers to try to get those benefits for free, and the strength of that union and the quality of its contracts are immediately undermined. That has been the experience

in every state that has approved RTW: lower wages, fewer health and pension benefits, and weaker work safety laws and other protections.

Even here in Washington state, which has a relatively strong labor movement with the 5th highest union density of any state in the nation, RTW has reared its ugly head.

This year, Sens. Michael Baumgartner (R-Spokane) and John Braun (R-Centralia) introduced SB 5692 to make Washington a RTW state. Historically, such bills have been introduced by a handful of extreme right-wing Republicans, but have rarely gotten hearings and have no chance of passage.

But as chairman of the Senate labor committee, Baumgartner held a public hearing on his RTW bill in February. On short notice, more than 1,000 union members, most of them from the building and construction trades, swarmed the State Capitol to voice their objections.

The bill quickly died, as everyone knew it would. But the message was clear: if their party gains control of Olympia, Republicans would make Washington a “Right-to-Work” state in a heartbeat.

David Groves is Communications Director at the Washington State Labor Council, editor of WSLC's online newspaper The Stand, and a PSARA member.

Golf and Power: Labor Day Lessons

Continued from Page 8

heartened by her message – she is in a right-to-work state, but union members there are not defeated by right to work laws. They are organizing, they are standing as a united labor movement with community allies and the faith community, they are growing their numbers. They are fighting back. We in labor are NOT complacent, we are NOT tired, and we will NOT be defeated. We will demand the kind of wages, safe

workplaces, health care, family and medical leave, unemployment benefits, workers compensation, climate sustainability, and retirement security that all working people are entitled to. We’ll build our communities through our hands, our hearts, and our solidarity.

My amazing golf team – April and Niah Sims, Marcy Grail, and I didn’t win, but that’s not the end of our playing. In the labor movement, Trump doesn’t

stop us, the state senate doesn’t stop us, bad employers don’t stop us. Like that old labor song – we shall not give up the fight, we have only started.

We will fight. And we will win. We’ve said it on the picket line, we’ve said it in the streets. We know we have the power. When we fight, we win.

Lynne Dodson is Secretary-Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council and a member of PSARA.

Closing Colstrip Coal Plants: PSARA Supports Climate Progress and Justice for Working Families

Continued from Page 1

A current arena for the Colstrip controversy is Washington State's Utilities and Transportation Commission. UTC regulates private utilities, most importantly setting their rates of profit and the amount they may charge customers for power. PSE has brought a "general rate case" before the Commission, seeking approval for somewhat lower gas rates and slightly higher electric rates.

But when the Commission held a public input hearing on July 31 at Bellevue City Hall, those testifying had little to say about the rate changes themselves. Instead, scores of people asked the Commission to speed up Colstrip's closure. PSE's rate case reflects costs for the agreed-upon closure of the smaller Colstrip units 1 and 2 by 2022 but assumes continuation of the larger units 3 and 4 through 2035.

PSE Regulatory Affairs Director Ken Johnson told the *Bellevue Reporter* that accelerating debt payoff ("depreciation schedule") for Colstrip 3 and 4 probably would raise customer rates by less than one percent. Those who care about their children's future know the costs of delaying effective climate action are incalculable.

As part of its commitment to uniting generations for a secure future, PSARA has endorsed the Beyond Coal campaign, including the 2025 deadline for transitioning Colstrip off of coal. But PSARA is just as committed to economic justice for Colstrip's workers and community and cannot sign off on any agreement that does not provide a fair transition.

Below is a (fairly close) version of PSARA's testimony at the July 31 hearing, reflecting that dual commitment.

The UTC will hold its final hearing on PSE's rate case on Sept. 1 and render a final decision sometime in December. You can go to www.utc.wa.gov and search for docket No. 170033 for up-to-date information.

Here's our testimony:

"Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening.

"My name is Marc Krasnowsky. I live in North Bend in East King County and am an all-electric customer of Puget Sound Energy. I am a volunteer for Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action, and I speak on behalf of that organization tonight.

"PSARA is the region's progressive voice for older Americans, their children and their families. That means that in addition to working to improve Social Security and health care, we care about leaving a better world for all. And that means dealing effectively with climate change NOW.

"We are affiliated with the Washington State Labor Council. Two weeks ago, the Labor Council passed a resolution noting that:

- The working class, the poor and developing countries will be most adversely affected by climate change.
- We may still prevent the most catastrophic levels of global warming if we eliminate the burning of fossil fuels worldwide within the next few years, which is perfectly feasible with existing technology.
- Millions of good jobs can be created by increasing energy efficiency, reliance on renewable energy, and the rebuilding of our infrastructure.
- We must take steps toward a just transition for workers and communities directly affected by the transition to a renewable energy economy, providing income, benefit, wage insurance and retraining support for workers in the fossil fuel industries, and creating quality jobs in infrastructure, energy and efficiency, and the clean energy economy.

"Puget Sound Energy needs to get out of the coal business – and not just

by switching its electricity production to another polluting fossil fuel. Extending Colstrip 3 & 4 beyond 2025 would be a disservice to all those now suffering and soon to suffer more from global warming – and we know whom would suffer most. It also would needlessly delay the just transition to a job-creating clean energy economy that working people and communities everywhere so desperately need.

"Clean energy creates three times more jobs for every dollar invested than fossil fuels. Of course a fair transition requires those green jobs be family-wage, union (or at least prevailing wage) jobs with equitable pathways for local residents, communities of color, and lower-income communities.

"You may have noticed my Montana hat. I wear it all the time. It's to show solidarity with my brothers and sisters working in Colstrip, and their community. It's not their fault that the industry they're working for is making the world unlivable for their children and ours. Colstrip must close, but these people cannot simply be tossed aside.

"Let's not get into a vicious cycle of extending the plant life and then the mine life. Workers and communities need certainty, a rapid-as-reasonable transition, and the knowledge that their needs will be fairly addressed in that transition.

"PSE must commit to retiring Colstrip units 3 & 4 by 2025, replacing their power completely with energy efficiency and new renewables, and assuring just transitions for the workers and community. We – and our utilities – can do this. In fact, it's the only reasonable, sustainable, fiscally responsible and moral path forward.

"Thank you."

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

Join PSARA on Labor Day

Continued from Page 1

designed the IWW's Black Cat logo, and he is buried at Calvary Cemetery.

At noon PCCLC moves to Fort Steilacoom State Park, 8717 87th Avenue SW, Lakewood, for its Labor Day picnic. Festivities last till 5:00 p.m.

In Centralia, the Thurston-Lewis-Mason Counties Labor Council hosts their Labor Day picnic from 11:00 a.m. till 4 p.m. at Washington Park, 100 S Pearl Street, Centralia.

In Bellingham, the Northwest Washington Central Labor Council will host a picnic at their headquarters, 1700 N State Street, from noon to 2:00 p.m.

In Kennewick, the Southeast Washington Central Labor Council will hold its sixth annual Labor Day Picnic at the Columbia Park Main Stage, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Naomi Klein Explains Donald Trump

"Trump first started selling the notion that he held the key to joining the One Percent at the precise moment when many of the ladders that provided social mobility — such as free, high-quality public education — were being kicked away, and just as the social safety net was being shredded. All this meant that the drive to magically strike it rich, to win big, to make it to that safe economic stratum, became increasingly frantic.

"Trump built his brand by selling the promise that "you, too, could be Donald Trump" — at a time when life was becoming more precarious if you weren't in the richest One Percent. He then turned around and used that very same pitch — that he would make America a country of winners again — on voters, exploiting their deep economic anxieties with the reality-simulation skills that he had picked up on TV. After decades of hawking how-to-get-rich manuals, Trump understood exactly how little substance needed to be behind the promise if the desperation was great enough."

— Naomi Klein, "W.W.E the People," *Harper's Magazine*, August 17, 2017

Cuba's Literacy Campaign

Continued from Page 3

feeling of sisterhood that developed for her personally and the comradeship that emerged between the women and men who participated in the campaign as well as between the volunteers and the people they were teaching.

The other participant was a complete surprise for our delegation. Our very quiet and very capable bus driver, Nafal, had been one of the teenage volunteers in a rural area. Nafal had lived with the large family he was teaching and during the day he worked hand in hand with them. At night they studied by candlelight. He had to learn to handle a rifle as a result of the threat from the counter revolutionaries and that was the first time he had ever handled a firearm.

Nafal spoke of the young literacy volunteers and the peasants they had been teaching who had been killed by the counter-revolutionaries. These martyrs now hold a special place of honor in the Museum and in the lives of those who remember the campaign or learn about it in the curriculum of the schools.

Both Blanca and Nafal consider their time as volunteers one of the most significant events in their lives. Nafal, a rather tall and imposing figure, started to weep as he spoke of his time as a volunteer, the family who became so important to him, and the volunteers who became comrades as they together transformed their country.

At the end of their year of volunteerism, all the volunteers gathered in the Plaza of the Revolution. Many of them were holding gigantic pencils raised in the air. In 1961, the illiteracy rate in Cuba went from 27 % to 3%. The pictures of the gathering are remarkable as they capture the pure joy of those young people who had devoted a year of their life to this campaign and had experienced a year "without Sundays or parties".

To again quote Esther Perez in her introduction, "Every generation deserves a heroic achievement. The generation of those who were 12, 13, and 15 years old in 1961 had theirs. They took on something insurmountable, and they triumphed. They were part of something that was bigger than all of them, and they have never forgotten that great feats are possible."

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

Demonstrate for Health Care at Dave Reichert's Office: 11 a.m., Wednesday, August 30, 22605 SE 56th St., Suite 130, Issaquah. Reichert will be endorsed by a "funeral director" because his policies will bring the funeral industry so much business. All are welcome, but please wear black.

Labor Day: September 4. See the article on Page 1 for events near you.

West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, September 6, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave SW, Seattle, 98126 (35th & Henderson). Topic: *Poetry with Claudia Castro Luna*. Brown bag lunch.

PSARA Environmental Committee: 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Thursday, September 7, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Thursday, September 7, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave. All welcome as we make final plans for Senior Lobby Day.

PSARA Fundraising Committee: 11 a.m., Monday, September 11, PSARA office, Seattle Labor Temple, 2800 1st Ave., Room 262.

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, September 14, Green Lake Branch, Seattle Public Library, 7364 E. Green Lake Dr. N., Seattle. 98115. Topic: *Cuba*. Brown bag lunch. For further information contact Susan at sjlevy.01@gmail.com

PSARA Diversity Committee: 11 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Thursday, September 21, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Avenue S., Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Executive Board Meeting: 12:30 p.m. - 3 p.m., Thursday, September 21, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Avenue S., Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Education Committee: 1p.m. – 3 p.m., Monday, September 25, 10 a.m. – Noon. Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome as we discuss our work to expand outreach with the PSARA workshop, "Making Retirement Security Real for All Generations."

Save the Date: "Herstory," 11 a.m. - Noon, October 19, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle. "Herstory," is a project of Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC) featuring interviews with older lesbians. See the announcement on Page 7.

