

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

Vol XXXII, No 5

May 2016

Please take the
**PSARA Membership
Survey**
Pages 7 & 8

PLEASE REMEMBER GIVE BIG DAY, Tuesday, May 3

GIVE BIG DAY is all day until midnight on Tuesday, May 3. You can go to givebig.seattlefoundation.org. Enter PSARA Education Fund in the FIND AN ORGANIZATION field. Then click on the magnifying glass, and then click on Donate. Just fill out the required information on the online donation form. Then click Continue. Any amount is welcome as you assist the PSARA Education Fund to continue to produce this quality newsletter and do the other educational work so important to the movement we are building. These contributions are tax deductible, and your donations are increased by the Seattle Foundation stretch fund. You can make a BIG difference!



PSARA members join Washington CAN, union members, and community allies to take the fight to ZoomCare, this time in Ballard on April 19.
(Photo: Garet Munger)

Forum on I – 732 at General Membership Meeting

By Bobby Righi

At our June 16 potluck and general membership meeting, there will be an informational forum on a critical issue for our state. Not only will PSARA members get to eat a delicious lunch as we share our favorite foods, but we will get the opportunity to consider one of the ballot measures facing Washington voters.

PSARA will host presentations on Washington State Initiative 732, which will be on the November ballot. Yoram Bauman, the founder of CarbonWA, which sponsored I – 732 and organized the gathering of signatures, will speak for the initiative. Jeff Johnson, the President of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL- CIO, and one of the leaders of the Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy, will speak against.

Climate scientists are sending out alarming news about how the climate is changing faster than previously predicted. We are faced every day with news about 2015 being the hottest year on record. This year is already surpassing these high temperatures here in Western Washington and around the world.

Today, there are few people who doubt the urgent need to act to head off climate catastrophe. The actions need to be collective and not just putting better light bulbs into the sockets of our homes and driving less, though those are important.

We have a strong organization in PSARA, and because of this we are well situated to take collective action. We need to think together about what that action should be.

PSARA members are fortunate that both Yoram Bauman and Jeff Johnson are able to attend and give us their views on the carbon tax proposal in I - 732. Lots of people worked to get Initiative 732 on the ballot. But it has been criticized for failing to address climate justice and just transition issues and for the claim that it is revenue neutral. Both of these speakers have long histories of working on climate change, and it is important to hear their views.

The PSARA general membership meeting is Thursday, June 16, at Greenwood Community Senior Center, 525 N. 85th St., Seattle, from noon – 3 p.m. (See the flyer on Page 6 for more details on potluck, directions, public transit, etc.) Please join us for our summer meeting.

Bobby Righi is the Administrative Vice President of PSARA and serves on the PSARA Environmental Committee. She is one of the primary authors of PSARA’s environmental position paper entitled “Environmental Justice and Full Employment,” which will be reprinted in the June Advocate in preparation for the forum.



Yoram Bauman (left) and Jeff Johnson (right) will be featured speakers at PSARA’s June 16 General Membership Meeting.

The Retiree ADVOCATE

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For up-to-date information about PSARA visit our website: www.psara.org or visit PSARA on Facebook

Vivian O. Lee Inducted into Nursing Hall of Fame

By Mildred Ollee

Vivian Lee, PSARA's Outreach Vice President, was inducted into the Washington State Nurses Association Hall of Fame on March 17, 2016. The Hall of Fame began in 1996 with the goal of recognizing deserving registered nurses for their lifelong contributions and achievements in professional nursing and for their leadership in the advancement of nurses and healthcare in Washington State.

Vivian's career is a demonstration of excellence in patient care, leadership, education, public service, and nurse and patient advocacy. Her contributions have led to advancements that will have value well beyond her lifetime.

Her interest in service to others through the profession of nursing began when she was a young girl of eight years old. As a member of a military family, she had the opportunity to travel to Japan in 1946.

There, her experiences began to stimulate her interest in the nursing profession. During the Korean War, masses of wounded American soldiers flooded U.S. military hospitals in Japan, and Vivian decided that she had to become a nurse to help people.

After five years in Japan, her family was transferred to Fort Lewis and then Fort Lawton in Seattle. Vivian began attending Garfield High School, where she was the only African American in her classes.

She prepared to become a competent nursing professional at the University of Washington, where she graduated with a Bachelor in Nursing in only four years instead of the usual five.

After graduation, Vivian worked briefly at Virginia Mason, then applied to be the first African American nurse at the Seattle VA Hospital.

During her nursing career, Vivian founded the first Office on Women's Health in the Public Health Service Region X. In this position she managed federal health programs throughout Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and Idaho.

Vivian created the Title X Nurse Practitioner Training Program to help nurse practitioners in her region get additional training so they stayed competitive in the changing field of medicine. She also conducted the first household survey on the reproductive health of Southeast Asian refugee women, the largest U.S. household survey of Asian women that had ever been done.

In 1993, the University of Washington Nursing Alumni Association honored her with the Distinguished Alumnae Award in recognition of her long-time support. On her retirement in 1995, the UW School of Nursing established an undergraduate nursing scholarship fund in her name.



Vivian Lee (left) and Mildred Ollee (right) confer at PSARA's 2015 Winter Membership Meeting. (Photo: Garet Munger)

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Our Fight for Present and Future Generations

By Robby Stern

In late April, the workshop developed by the PSARA Education Committee, "Making Retirement Security Real for Everyone," was presented to leaders from over 30 organizations. PSARA offered to present the workshop to members of these organizations and their families if the organizations were willing to sponsor the workshop and do the necessary turn-out work. We are also cooperating with other institutions and organizations to reach out and provide education to the general public. An example is the presentation of the workshop at the Greenwood Community Senior Center on May 25. (Details in Meetings & Events)

A delegation met with Senator Murray and four members of our Congressional delegation to explain why Social Security and Medicare must be expanded. We received significant statements of support from these elected leaders. We are waiting for Sen. Cantwell's office to schedule a similar meeting and will be meeting with additional members of Washington's congressional delegation. In these meetings we enumerate some of the harsh realities of growing senior poverty and the absolute necessity to expand Social Security and Medicare.

Seattle City Councilmember Lorena Gonzalez has agreed to be the lead sponsor for a resolution to the Seattle City Council. While local bodies have no policy-making power on these federal programs, gaining the support of local leaders will be helpful with our Congressional delegation. Additionally, the local governing bodies have lobbying arms in D.C., and the resolution specifically directs those lobbyists to support expansion of the programs. The Seattle City Council will be the first of the local governing bodies to which we will bring the resolution. Below is the resolution we have drafted to be brought before the Seattle City Council.

Resolution to Seattle City Council on Addressing the Retirement Security Crisis

Whereas, the United States is facing a vast retirement savings deficit estimated to be as much as \$6.6 trillion, and most Americans have little or nothing in retirement savings, and

Whereas, the median retirement savings for all working-age households in the U.S. is \$3000, and more than one-third of working age adults have no retirement savings at all, and

Whereas, a January, 2016, survey by Forbes Magazine and Bankrate.com found that a majority of Americans, (56.3%) have less than \$1000 in their checking and savings accounts, and

Whereas, more than half of U.S. workers have no workplace retirement plans and of those who do, just 35% have defined benefit pensions, and

Whereas, Social Security retiree benefits average less than \$1300 per month. For two out of three retirees, these benefits provide more than half the total of their income and for 36%, Social Security is the sole source of their income, and

Whereas, in Seattle in 2010, 11.5% of the population is over age 65, and 24.5 % are between the ages of 45-64 (American Community Survey), and

Whereas, people of color make up approximately 30% of Seattle's population, and the Social Security Administration statistics demonstrate that people of color are more likely to rely on Social Security as their primary source or sole source of income (American Community Survey and Social Security Administration), and

Whereas, women in Seattle comprise 57.9% of Seattle's population over the age of 65 and the average Social Security benefit for women 65 and older is about \$12,400 per year compared to about \$16,500 per year for men 65 and older (American Community Survey, SSA and National Women's Law Center), and

Whereas, all wage earners who earn above the cap of \$118,500 pay no payroll tax on all of their earnings above the cap thereby paying an effective tax rate below wage earners who earn under the cap, and

Whereas, approximately 11.6% of Seattle residents do not have health insurance and many more have inadequate cover-



age (American Community Survey), and allowing younger people to buy into the Medicare program would help address this significant problem, and

Whereas, Medicare, while providing good health care benefits, fails to cover hearing, vision, dental, and most long-term care services, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Seattle City Council goes on record calling for the expansion of Social Security benefits to address the growing crisis of financial insecurity among Social Security recipients, and be it further

Resolved, that the Seattle City Council goes on record calling for the elimination of the income cap on Social Security to pay for the expansion of Social Security benefits, and be it further

Resolved, that the Seattle City Council goes on record supporting the opening of the Medicare program to make it possible for younger people to buy into the Medicare program, and be it further

Resolved, that the Seattle City Council goes on record supporting the expansion of vital Medicare benefits, including dental, vision, and hearing, to be funded by raising the Medicare payroll tax from 1.45% to 2%, and be it finally

Resolved, that the Seattle City Council will communicate this resolution to the entire Washington Congressional Delegation and instruct the Seattle lobbyist in Washington D.C. to oppose all efforts to cut and/or privatize Social Security and Medicare and support efforts to expand these two vital social insurance programs.

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CLIFF Notes for *Relocating Authority*

By Bob Shimabukuro, Associate Editor of *The Retiree Advocate* and PSARA Executive Board member

September 2015

Mako, my daughter Mira's son, my wife Alice and I are eating at Papaya restaurant in The Landing. Mako sets aside one half of his banh mi sandwich that he had ordered, to get it wrapped to take home; he puts the half he is eating into his mouth when I ask him, "Do you want to get some ice cream?"

He answers in a mono/dia-logue as he breaks down whether it is okay to have some ice cream, because it is "okay to eat some food that's not good for me, but only sometimes." But he wants to be taller than his friend, and he knows that he won't get taller if he eats unhealthy food. He goes on for about a minute, maybe longer, then finishes the banh mi half that he has in his hands.

Not wanting to break his chain of thought, I ask Alice, "Do you think he wants the ice cream, or not?" She answers, "I think he wants the ice cream but let him go out the door (of Papaya) first, and see which way he goes." She's right. He heads right toward Full Tilt Ice Cream shop.

All that I can think about is that I once knew a little five-year-old girl who could break down a simple question, analyze it like Mako did, and make a decision. I wonder what she's doing now.

February 2016

After reading my daughter Mira Shimabukuro's recently published *Relocating Authority: Japanese Americans Writing to Redress Mass Incarceration*, I realized that the little five-year-old girl was collecting information, gathering knowledge of what's happening around her, "practicing" analysis, trying to put 2+2 together, and maybe seeing if 2+3 made sense also.

But clearly for her following 35+ years, she was absorbing all she was

observing, reading, and hearing (and also not hearing) in order to create a thought-provoking book about Resistance, Justice, Culture, Community Narrative, and us. It was released in the last week of last year.

(Spoiler alert! Spoiler alert! For those who don't want to know the ending of an academic book before you read it yourself, stop reading this now.)

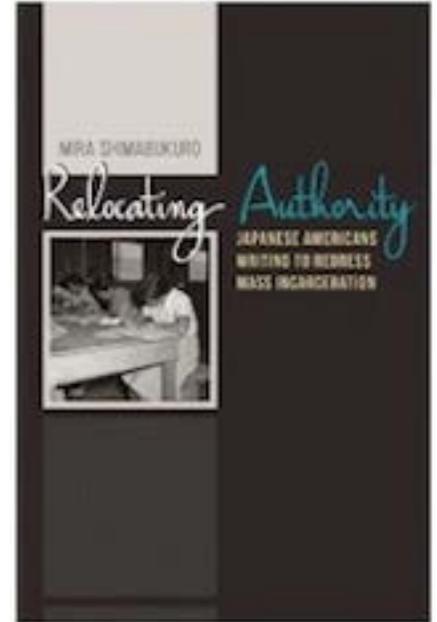
Relocating Authority is ostensibly about Resistance writing by incarcerated in the WWII American concentration camps.

But it is not "just" an academic book. It is also a well-crafted look at words and meanings, an analysis of earlier (self) stereotyping of Japanese Americans by JA writers and sociologists, and false narratives of the incarcerated population.

She has stories within stories and interpretations of words based upon stories written by novelists and expressions of resistance and heartbreak by poets. Mira gleans thoughts not only from rhetoricians but scholars of history, philosophy, art, literature, and education, and just about everyone else. She uses (and credits) what she's learned from her very multicultural community of friends, elders, relatives and teachers.

Her major sources are community-based, including Densho.org, an online source based in Seattle; the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles; and her own observations and memories of real, live events in her life: Portland's First Day of Remembrance, building the exhibit for Wing Luke Museum's "EO 9066: 50 Years Before and 50 years After," *Pacific Citizen* and *International Examiner* discussions, performing in Nobuko Miyamoto's production.... and much more.

Given the depth and breadth of the book, I wondered how she managed to compress it in a meaningful way for



both scholars and community folks, because that was obviously the point. Maybe I just don't have the words in my arsenal. So I'll just take a page out of Mira's book. Figuratively, that is. The following is not a direct quote from the book, but Mira uses a rhetorical device that runs throughout the book.

This is a story about the (public and private) resistance in American concentration camps.

This is a story about the rhetoric of the resisters.

This is a story about restorative justice.

This is a story about community building and rebuilding.

This is a story about Mira Chieko.

This is a story about us.

• • •

Mira Shimabukuro will discuss her book, *Relocating Authority*, in conversation with Tom Ikeda of the Densho on May 5, 6 p.m., at the Wing Luke Museum, 719 S. King St, Seattle, WA 98104.

Flint, Michigan: Victim of Capitalism

By Mike Andrew

The first indictments have been handed down in the Flint water scandal.

On April 20, two Michigan state officials and one Flint city administrator were charged with misconduct in office, willful neglect, tampering with evidence, and conspiracy. Charges against other state and local officials – possibly including Michigan Governor Rick Snyder – are expected.

Certainly, Michigan officials deserve to go to prison for their roles in poisoning Flint's children and wrecking the lives of their families, but there is an unindicted co-conspirator in the case – global capital.

The role of money in the Flint crisis goes far back into American history, as far back as the founding of the city.

Flint was established by fur trader Jacob Smith in 1819. When we think of "globalization," we don't usually think of 19th Century capitalism, but international trade was an important motive for the westward expansion of American settlement even in the early days of the 19th Century.

Beaver felt was the most desired material for men's hats in those days. Muskrat was second, and Flint became a major trading post for trappers working the Michigan woods and selling their pelts for shipment to hat makers in the East.

A few decades later, as the old Saginaw Trail from Detroit into Michigan's north woods became a major road capable of carrying heavy cargo, Flint became a lumber town. Then, because of the ready supply of wood, it became a carriage-making center.

Already, before the 19th Century was half over, Flint was known as "Vehicle City."

In 1908 industrialist William Crapo Durant founded General Motors in Flint. It made sense, because early "horseless carriages" were constructed just like carriages intended to be drawn by horses.

As the auto industry developed, Flint became the base for GM's Buick and Chevrolet divisions and then a base of the United Auto Workers (UAW) after the famous Sit-Down Strike of 1936-37.

World War II established the U.S. as the dominant military and economic power in the world. As such, it was able to restructure the postwar global economy in American interests.

The Bretton Woods Agreement of 1944 ushered in the heyday of American capitalism and the high point of Flint's fortunes. All the Allied countries agreed that after the war the U.S. dollar would be the standard global currency, and U.S. banks would be the central banks for global trade.

This led to a period of huge trade surpluses for American companies, including GM. Flint – GM's capital city – hit the peak of its prosperity and population in the 1960 census with just under 200,000 people.

During that time no governor, Democrat or Republican, would have dared treat Flint the way Rick Snyder has treated it. The city and its UAW members were just too powerful to mess with.

Then catastrophe – and capitalism – struck. By the early seventies the Bretton Woods system was in disarray.

Europe and Japan had recovered from World War II, and their companies were competing with their U.S. counterparts for global markets. The U.S. trade surplus turned into a deficit.

By 1971, when the Nixon administration unilaterally pulled out of the Bretton Woods system, U.S. banks had adapted to the new financial order, financing trade deficits just as happily as they had surpluses in the past.

Manufacturers like GM adapted too, pushing so-called "free trade" policies that made it much easier for them to move production to other countries where the work force was not unionized and wages were therefore much lower.



Gate of a GM plant in Flint.

U.S. workers did not fare so well. When the OPEC countries raised the price of crude oil by 70 percent in 1973, Flint workers took a double hit. First, they had to pay more for gas like everyone else. But even worse, demand for American-made automobiles plummeted as consumers turned to lighter and more fuel-efficient imports.

Loss of demand in turn meant layoffs at the GM plants. After the layoffs came plant closures. In 1984 Chevrolet's Plant Four closed. It reopened a few years later but finally closed for good in 2004. Plant Five closed in 1995. Buick City closed in June, 1999.

Throughout the eighties and nineties deindustrialization accelerated with GM employment falling from a high of 80,000 to less than 8,000. Today Flint's manufacturing workforce is only 10% of what it was at its height.

The decline of Flint in the Eighties is documented in Michael Moore's classic film *Roger and Me*, Roger B. Smith being GM's CEO at the time.

As things went downhill, anyone who could get out of Flint did. Between the 1970 and 1980 censuses, Flint lost more than 17% of its population, and another 12% between 1980 and 1990.

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***PSARA SUMMER MEMBERSHIP
MEETING and POTLUCK***

***Thursday, June 16 – Noon to 3 p.m.
Greenwood Community Senior Center,
525 N. 85th St., Seattle***

***Bus 5 to Greenwood Ave. N. and N. 85th St., Bus 45 directly to Greenwood Senior Center,
or Bus E to Aurora Ave and N. 85th St. ****

***Please Join Us for Our Summer Potluck and Meeting:
Noon - Potluck Lunch and Socializing***

***1:00 p.m. - Forum on I-732, the Carbon Tax Initiative
Speakers: Yoram Bauman, founder of CarbonWA, and
Jeff Johnson, President of the Washington
State Labor Council, AFL-CIO.***

1:45 p.m. - Q & A and other business.

Yoram Bauman, founder and proponent of CarbonWA, and Jeff Johnson, President of the WA State Labor Council, speaking in opposition to I – 732, will give us their views on this important issue. The discussion at our meeting will center on how the initiative conforms with the PSARA position paper entitled Good Jobs & Clean Energy, which we will re-publish in the June Advocate.

RSVP needed. Please bring a main dish, fruit, salad, dessert, or soft drink to share. Let us know the food item you can bring by leaving a message on the office phone: 206-448-9646 or email Bobby Righi at adminvp@psara.org

Please also bring a food or financial donation for the King County Labor Agency Food Bank.

****Call the office or e-mail adminvp@psara.org if you need a ride or can offer a ride.***

Getting to Know You: PSARA Membership Survey

PPSARA's Executive Board is interested in getting the membership's input on a range of PSARA activities. We have three objectives with this survey:

- Understand what you like about PSARA
- Determine if there are issues you would like to work on
- Learn how to improve communications with our members

The information you provide will be important in helping direct us as we expand our outreach and communications program this year.

When you're done, please clip out this survey and send it to PSARA, 2800 1st Ave. #262, Seattle WA 98121. Thank you for helping us in this effort.

PSARA is leading the grassroots fight in our region to make retirement security real for everyone. We are launching workshops and forums which we want to take statewide that discuss the history of Social Security and Medicare and the necessity of expanding both of these vital programs.

1. Would you like to attend one of these workshops and forums?

- Yes No

2. Are you interested in helping in these workshops and forums? (If yes, please give us your phone number or email so we can contact you.)

- Yes No

For several years PSARA has hosted a monthly brown bag lunch session at the Green Lake Library. Past brownbags have covered a range of topics including discussions with authors and speakers on such issues as Social Security, aging, and current affairs/politics. The sessions have been well attended and we would like to set up similar monthly brown bags in other parts of the region.

3. Are you interested in attending these sessions?

- Yes No

4. Are you interested in helping in this effort? (If yes, please give us your phone number or email so we can contact you.)

- Yes No

5. The PSARA Board is interested in improving our outreach to groups (including faith-based organizations) involved in the following causes:

- Social Justice
- Racial Justice
- Labor/Economic Justice
- Environment

Are there groups that you would be willing to help us contact?

Name:

Email Address:

Phone Number and preferred time we can contact you:

The Retiree Advocate is PSARA's monthly newsletter. Please give us your views on the newsletter

7. How often do you read the Retiree Advocate?

- Not at all
- Occasionally
- Skim it every month
- Read one or two articles every month
- Read it thoroughly every month

8. In what ways can we improve the Retiree Advocate?

9. Can you help other member volunteers with the newsletter mailing (labeling, counting, bundling) about 2 hours in the last week of each month? (If yes, please give us your phone number or email so we can contact you.)

10. How often do you visit the PSARA website?

11. How would you suggest we improve the PSARA website? (check those changes you would like to see):

- Like the website the way it is
- Update the website more frequently
- Improve the calendar of activities
- Add a search function for easier access to articles and information
- Other (please specify)

13. How often do you visit PSARA on Facebook?

14. How would you suggest we improve the PSARA Facebook page? (check those changes you would like to see):

- Like the Facebook page the way it is
- Update the Facebook page more frequently
- Other (please specify)

15. THIS QUESTION IS OPTIONAL:

A key goal of PSARA is to expand the diversity of our organization. To help us assess this, please specify your ethnicity:

- Black/African American
- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native American or American Indian
- Asian
- Pacific Islander
- Mixed Race
- Other

Thank you for participating in PSARA's membership survey. The results of the survey will be posted on the PSARA website and discussed in a future issue of the Retiree Advocate.

Break Free from Fossil Fuels

By Bob Barnes and Bobby Righi

Earlier this spring 350.org called for an international week of actions from May 4-15 to shine a spotlight on the world's most dangerous fossil fuel projects because of their ongoing damage to the atmosphere and the health of nearby communities. The transition to 100 percent renewable energy is technologically possible, and these demonstrations hope to strengthen the political will not only to act but also to act in a way that does not make workers and communities that are now dependent on the fossil fuel industry bear the cost for this transition. These actions are a follow-up to the Paris talks, guided by an understanding that nothing significant will happen without massive grassroots pressure.

Answering the call to keep carbon in the ground, people in at least 11 countries are planning activities during that week. In the U.S. there will be eight locations including the Tesoro and Shell refineries in Anacortes. Break Free PNW, the local coalition organizing actions, is planning three days of activities from May 13-15 including workshops, trainings, music and non-violent civil disobedience.

The Anacortes refineries produce transportation fuels and other petroleum products. They produce 47 percent of all the gasoline consumed in the Pacific Northwest. These facilities are also among the most dangerous places to work in the country. In April, 2010, seven workers were killed at the Tesoro plant in an explosion and fire caused by 40-year-old equipment. Tesoro has a history of hostility to workers and fighting EPA air quality standards. It puts profits over concern for workers or the community.

Building support for Break Free has produced positive results in broadening the coalition to fight for a just transition away from fossil fuels. Conversations with the United Steelworkers, the union that represents the hourly workers in the refineries, have resulted in a greater

understanding of the need to make the cost of ending the burning of fossil fuels as low as possible for communities that now depend on these fuels for their livelihood.

The transition away from fossil fuels has already begun. The fossil fuel industry is in decline and will continue to decline over time. The priority now is to make sure it doesn't take its workers and the communities it has impacted down with it.

Working together, the environmental movement and threatened communities can organize to assure that, as fossil fuel jobs phase out, there are other union jobs available.

We can look at the coal industry for what typically happens when companies want to protect profits and cut costs - they declare bankruptcy, pay the CEOs huge bonuses, cut pensions and jobs, and leave toxic chemicals for communities to live with. Peabody Coal has just declared bankruptcy and plans this kind of reorganization. But people in the Black Mesa area of Arizona and community activists in St. Louis, Missouri, have other ideas and are filing with the courts to demand money for job training, support for clean energy projects, and funds to clean up the devastation left behind.

We need to organize now to be ready to demand that profits from big oil companies be used to help pave the way to clean energy jobs and well-paying work in building needed infrastructure. After all, we have subsidized them for years with our taxes, and they have never had to pay for the climate pollution they cause.

The actions in May in Anacortes will take place over three days and will



Tesoro Refinery, Anacortes.

include workshops, flotillas of kayaktivists, some opportunities to engage in civil disobedience both on land and water, and, on Saturday, a large family-friendly march and a healing ceremony led by the Lummi and Swinomish tribes, whose land the refineries occupy. Early Saturday evening a lantern and salmon windsock parade is planned in Anacortes. Many of the plans are still being made and involve consultations with the U.S. Steelworkers' union at the plant and with the local tribes. As the date draws nearer, there will be information at the breakfreepnw.org website.

PSARA has voted to support the actions on Saturday, May 14, and will be sponsoring a Just Transition workshop in Anacortes. The sooner we break free from fossil fuels and engage in a fair transition to a new economy, the more we can insure that we can keep our planet a habitable place for all of us.

Bob Barnes and Bobby Righi are members of PSARA's Environmental Committee. In writing this article, Bob and Bobby consulted with PSARA member Steve Garey, retired past president of United Steelworkers Local 12-591, which represents hourly workers at the Tesoro Refinery.

Raise Up Washington Mobilizes to Lift Wages and Win Paid Sick Leave

By Jon Grant

The Pacific Northwest has led the national movement to raise wages and fight income inequality that was sparked in Seatac, exploded in Seattle and Tacoma, and now has the promise to catch fire across Washington State. Raise Up Washington, a broad coalition of labor, faith, and community groups, has introduced I-1433 that will give over 700,000 workers a raise to \$13.50, phased in by 2020, and allow one million workers the ability to earn paid sick and safe leave.

“For many this will mean no longer choosing between rent and childcare, between food and transportation. When we raise the minimum wage, we lift people out of poverty, and reduce dependence on social services and government programs. It’s how we build a pathway to the middle class,” said Michael Ramos, Executive Director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle.

The initiative was officially filed by Ariana Davis, a grocery worker from Auburn. Davis said, “Passing paid sick leave and raising the minimum wage would change my life and the lives of thousands of workers like me. It would make us healthier and more able to take care of our families and customers.”

I-1433 would take concrete steps to address racial and gender disparities that exist in our workforce. From the healthcare industry to restaurants, professional childcare, and home health care, women make up a majority of workers in many low-wage industries and are the least likely to have paid sick days. Restaurants and food services are some of the worst, where only 19 percent of their workers can earn sick leave. As a result, many female workers are forced to come to work sick — and risk getting their customers sick — or stay home and lose a paycheck.

People of color are disproportionately represented among those not being paid enough to make ends



*Ariana Davis, Auburn grocery worker, filing I-1433.
(Photo courtesy of Raise Up Washington)*

meet. Discrimination and systemic barriers have left 41 percent of African American workers and 45 percent of Latino workers earning less than \$13.50 per hour — double the rate of white workers — and the numbers are even worse for women of color. Raising the minimum wage will help thousands of people of color who now work in poverty earn more to provide for themselves and their families.

Raising wages and establishing paid sick leave doesn’t just help workers; it helps small businesses. According to the Budget and Policy Center, raising the minimum wage to \$13.50 would provide nearly \$2.5 billion more in earnings annually in the Washington State economy. Low-wage earners immediately spend paychecks on necessities like food and clothing in their communities, and local businesses throughout Washington will benefit. A study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that states that raised their minimum wage actually saw 50 percent faster

job growth — and a stronger economy — than states that left their minimum wage stagnant.

The Raise Up Washington coalition is organizing in communities across the state to win the passage of this historic initiative. “This campaign is being fueled by hundreds of volunteers to gather signatures at public events and street corners in their own neighborhoods. We can only win when more people step forward and stand with us to reach our goal of 250,000 signatures by the end of June to place this on the ballot. We are seeing overwhelming support for our initiative, but to make it a reality we need even more volunteers to give Washington a raise!

To sign up and volunteer with Raise Up Washington, visit <http://www.raise-upwa.com/get-involved/>

Jon Grant is the Outreach Director for Raise Up Washington and a PSARA member.

Our Fight for Present and Future Generations

Continued from Page 3

We will need the assistance of PSARA members to educate the Seattle City Council members on why it is important to support this resolution. We will ask you to attend Council meetings where the resolution will be discussed.

We are also working with other organizations to support state-based proposals that could assist with what is a nationally recognized growing crisis resulting from dramatic income inequality and the attack on defined benefit pensions.

Senator Bernie Sanders has been stellar in bringing to the national stage the need to expand Social Security and Medicare. Our movement is growing, and we will do all that we can to keep it going and help it grow!

Vivian O. Lee Inducted into Nursing Hall of Fame

Continued from Page 2

Her advocacy for nurses and nursing education continues through her volunteer work with the Mary Mahoney Professional Nurses Association. The mission of the Association is to provide financial aid and scholarships to African American and African immigrant students who wish to pursue careers in nursing.

In 2000, Vivian received the Charles Odegaard Award, which honors an individual whose work and leadership sustains Odegaard's commitment and dedication to helping minority and disadvantaged students. Charles Odegaard was President of the UW from 1958 to 1973.

Throughout her career, Vivian has promoted the preparation of nursing graduates to interact with people from all cultures. She advocates for training requirements for a population more racially representative - students, staff, and faculty members. Her legacy continues to contribute to the University and to future generations.

Mildred Ollee is PSARA's Diversity Committee Co-chair.

Flint, Michigan: Victim of Capitalism

Continued from Page 5

The city's population in the 2010 census is down to 102,434, half what it was in the city's postwar boom time.

For those who stayed, life is hard. According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment in Flint stands at 16 percent, more than three times the national average. Thirty-eight percent of Flint's population lives below the federal poverty line.

Because they have no work and no money, Flint's residents require more public services than those who left. At the same time, they provide a much smaller tax base than Flint enjoyed in its heyday.

That's why the city went bankrupt. When it did, it got no help at all from Governor Rick Snyder. The poor, largely African American residents of Flint just didn't have the political clout they enjoyed when the city was a UAW stronghold.

The emergency manager Snyder appointed in 2011 to supersede Flint's elected government was not charged with helping the city's residents. He was only charged with cutting costs.

It was an easy decision, then, to change the source of the city's tap water to a cheaper alternative.

Flint had been buying water from Detroit, nice pure water from Lake Huron. It was cheaper, though, to get water from the Flint River, which ran right through town.

The problem was that the Flint River water was polluted by corrosive chemicals which ate into the old lead pipes that carried water to many of Flint's homes. The pipes were still hundred-year-old lead pipes because Flint couldn't afford to replace them with modern PVC pipes, and no one at the state level wanted to waste good money on Flint.

The story of Flint is still developing. We may not know for years how many children have been permanently disabled by lead poisoning.

We do know that the culprits are not just a handful of officeholders. A whole system that puts profits before working people stands accused.

To Renew or Donate

PSARA Education Fund
2800 1st Avenue, Room 262, Seattle WA 98121
Donations are tax deductible

- Basic contribution: \$20
- Limited income/living lightly: \$15 or whatever you can afford
- Supporting: \$50 New contributor
- Sponsoring: \$100 or more Renewing contributor

Name (Please print): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Meetings and Events

PSARA Education Committee: 10 a.m. – noon, Tuesday, May 3, 3016 E. Republican, Seattle, 98112 (home of Mark McDermott). All welcome as we discuss developing more venues for the PSARA workshop, “Making Retirement Security Real for All Generations.”

PSARA Environmental Committee: 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Thursday, May 5, WA State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome!

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Thursday, May 5, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave., Seattle. All welcome as we review how Senior Lobby Day went and what lies ahead.

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon to 1:30 p.m., Thursday, May 12, Green Lake Library, 7354 East Green Lake Drive N., Seattle. Brown bag lunch.

Topic: "Envisioning Our Library...What it is and what it could be." All are welcome. For further information contact Susan at sjlevy.01@gmail.com

PSARA Diversity Committee: 11 a.m. – noon, Thursday, May 19, WA State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Executive Board Meeting: 12:30 p.m. - 3 p.m., Thursday, May 19, WA State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle. All are welcome.

“Making Retirement Security Real for Everyone”: 1 p.m.- 3 p.m., Wednesday, May 25, Greenwood Community Senior Center, 525 N. 85 St, Seattle. The Senior Center is sponsoring the PSARA Education Committee workshop presented by Mark McDermott. All are welcome.

PSARA Environmental Committee: 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Thursday, June 2, WA State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome!

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Thursday, June 2, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave., Seattle. All welcome as we review how Senior Lobby Day went and what lies ahead.

PSARA Summer General Membership Meeting and Potluck: Noon – 3 p.m., Thursday, June 16, Greenwood Community Senior Center, 525 N. 85 St., Seattle. Join us for the always excellent potluck. Our membership meeting will include a very interesting forum on I – 732, the CarbonWA initiative, with Yoram Bauman speaking in favor of I – 732 and Jeff Johnson speaking in opposition. See the flyer on Page 6 for more details about transportation and how to RSVP.

