The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

The Monthly Publication of **PSARA EDUCATION FUND**

"Uniting Generations for a Secure Future"

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· William

December 2016

Vision for Black Lives Page 5

End-of-Year Contributions

By Robby Stern

As we approach the end of 2016, please consider making a contribution to the PSARA Education Fund. Contributions are tax deductible.

We face many challenges in the next four years. There is much educating and mobilizing that will be required of PSARA and the PSARA Education Fund if we hope to avoid damage to Social Security and Medicare and stand in solidarity with others who are under attack.

We want to be good allies in supporting immigrants, women, people of color, the LGBTQ community, the Muslim community, and labor, all of whom will be under assault. We hope to raise the funds we need to have a full-time organizer! We believe we will need this additional resource.

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Annual Holiday Party & Membership Meeting December 15

We will be preparing ourselves for the challenges of 2017 at one of PSARA's favorite events. Our annual holiday potluck and membership meeting will be held at the Greenwood Community Senior Center, 525 N. 85th St., Seattle, on Thursday, December 15, from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Bring your favorite potluck dish! Participate in our annual membership meeting and elections. Hear from David Loud, PSARA's representative to the Health Care is a Human Right Coalition; Mary Le Nguyen, Co-Executive Director of Washington CAN!; and Mike Andrew, PSARA's organizer, about some of the challenges we anticipate in 2017 and how we are organizing to effectively face those challenges. Also invited is newly-elected Representative Pramila Jayapal. We've been told she would like to be there if her sheedule allows.

If you would like to run for an Executive Board position, please contact Bobby Righi, our Administrative Vice President, adminvp@psara.org, or call the PSARA office, (206) 448-9646. Executive Board members are asked to be active in PSARA's activities. You can write for the *Advocate* and/or help with the mailing, attend discussions and political actions, or serve on one of the PSARA working committees.

For planning purposes, we ask you to RSVP for the holiday potluck and membership meeting. Tell us what food or beverage you can bring, e.g., main dish, salad, dessert, or juice. RSVP to Bobby at adminvp@psara.org or 206-448-9646.

Also, please consider donating a non-perishable food or drink item or cash for the ML King County Labor Council Food Bank.

Join us and support PSARA as we face the challenges of 2017 and beyond! See the flyer on Page 7, which includes public transportation information.

The Time to Build a Movement is Now!

By Jeff Johnson

Presidential candidate who won the popular vote did not win the Presidency. In fact President-elect Donald J. Trump was elected with only 26.8% of the voting-eligible population -- anything but a mandate.

Hilary Clinton received about two million more votes than Trump and garnered 27.5% of the voting-eligible population.

When you add in the votes of thirdparty candidates, it turns out that 58.4% of the voting-eligible population cast votes for President, and 41.6% of eligible voters in the U.S. did not vote for President. This is a sad commentary on the state of politics in the U.S., but it is not unusual.

I want to hope that President-elect Trump will be more reserved in his policies than his misogynistic, xenophobic, and racist rhetoric. But his early cabinet selections and policy rumors have communities of color, immigrants, unions, women's groups, seniors, climate justice advocates, and health care advocates anticipating the worst.



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The Retiree ADVOCATE

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Visit our website for up-to-date information or to renew:

www.psara.org

or visit PSARA on Facebook

100th Anniversary of the Everett Massacre



Some of about 130 passengers on the Virginia V singing along with John O'Connor, nationally known labor singer and poet. On November 12 labor historians and activists boarded the restored steamer, the Virginia V, in Seattle and headed for Everett to commemorate the 100th anniversary of IWW members (Wobblies) who sailed on November 5, 1916, to fight for free speech and workers' rights. The fateful event would forever be called the Everett Massacre.

The voyagers joined another commemorative event in Everett sponsored by the Snohomish County Labor Council. On the return trip to Seattle they spread roses on the water as the Virginia V passed the site of the massacre. The sailing was sponsored by the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association (PNLHA).

(Photo: Garet Munger)

End-of-Year Contributions

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Much time and effort goes into the publication of this newsletter and all the educational work we do. The *Advocate's* circulation has grown, and that is a positive development. If the *Retiree Advocate* has been a valuable source of information and/or there have been articles that have touched you or provided a new perspective, please help by making an additional contribution to our work.

If you have appreciated our work, providing additional financial assistance would be really helpful. A tax-deductible contribution to the PSARA Education Fund is a great way to add the dimension of community support to the celebration of the holidays and to bring in 2017.

You can donate by check or by going to our website, www.psara.org

We are working hard to achieve our goals to build a caring and compassionate community and world. Please do a little bit more to help us keep going.

What Next?

By Robby Stern

was surprised, after Donald Trump's electoral victory, by the number of people who either contacted me or with whom I spoke in the course of my everyday life who asked what we should do. I found myself challenged to quickly get through my personal shock and fear and to think about how we can effectively resist the attacks that we know lie ahead.

Personal confession: I continue to be anxious about whether this election will bring fascism to our country. Will the white nationalist movement that has been emboldened by the election become an armed force and join with some elements within law enforcement to intimidate and/or worse? There has already been a shocking increase in hate crimes and intimidation.

Taking seriously what they say, the alt-right and right wing forces controlling the federal government will attack immigrants, Muslims, people of color, women, organized labor, seniors, etc. There will be resistance, hopefully on a massive scale, to these attacks. There is good reason to be concerned about the level of violence that will be used by the legal armed forces (police, national guard, armed forces) when the resistance is mounted.

At the same time, I cannot, and we cannot, let these reasonable fears paralyze us. I wanted to have a good answer to those who asked me what to do. When asked by friends, family members, people at the gym, and PSARA members, my response has been to find an organization working on issues you want to prioritize. Become a member of the organization. Support the actions of the organization as much as you can when the organization requests. To the extent possible support the organization(s) financially. It is very difficult to be effective as an individual. To the extent that we act together, our impact is much greater.

PSARA's leadership is fully committed to coming to the defense of communities under attack. When asked, we will respond, and we will be asking our members to respond. This is truly a time to uphold the principle that an injury to one is an injury to all. We will work to model that principle to the best of our capacity.

ATTACKS ON MEDICARE, MEDICAID, AND SOCIAL SECURITY

House Speaker Paul Ryan announced that he will use the repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to also privatize Medicare. He has a plan. He says he will include in the ACA repeal legislation additional language creating a voucher system for Medicare. Medicare recipients would receive a voucher with which they would purchase private insurance in the market place. He will characterize his actions as "saving Medicare."

At the same time, Ryan has announced his intentions to block grant Medicaid, which will lead to deterioration in the benefits provided under Medicaid.

PSARA will organize to resist this effort to undermine Medicare and Medicaid through the Health Care is a Human Right coalition (HCHR), which will lead this fight in Washington. We are in the process of working with HCHR to significantly broaden that coalition. Our goal is to have a large number of organizations all agree to work together to make sure that the Democrats in Congress will oppose the attacks. We also will work to educate and build resistance in the four congressional districts in Washington represented by Republicans to make it clear that there will be political consequences for undermining Medicare and Medicaid.

On the Social Security front, the transition team members appointed by Trump to oversee changes to Social Security and the Social Security Administration are all supporters of privatization. In talking to allies in D.C., we anticipate the first attack on Social Security may be launched on December 9 in the temporary Budget Resolution. Although we do not know yet, we believe there will be significant cuts to the administration of Social Security.

Congress controls the allocation of funds from the Social Security Trust Fund for the Social Security Administration. This is considered part of discretionary spending which the Congress approves. By starving the administration of Social Security and creating a significant



deterioration in services to Social Security recipients and new applicants, they hope to build momentum for ultimately privatizing or partially privatizing Social Security.

We all paid for these services, and we have to be prepared to fight cuts to the services. The Social Security Works WA coalition, in which PSARA plays a leadership role, will take the lead in this fight. We will work to expand this coalition. We won't have time to organize effectively for the December 9 temporary Budget Resolution, but that resolution runs out in March, and we will be preparing for that fight.

We are not backing down from our campaign to expand Social Security and Medicare. When Medicare was first created, it was anticipated that the age of eligibility would continually be lowered until our country achieved a system of Medicare for all. Social Security benefits must be expanded by scrapping the cap. We will continue to organize toward these goals. At the same time, we recognize that the expansion goals will not be achieved with the present political alignment in D.C..

Our organizing goal will be to fight the right-wing efforts to weaken or eliminate the social insurance programs for which we have paid and which are so vital to seniors, the poor, the disabled, and children. We will educate and organize with PSARA members and our allies to the best of our capacity. Help us build that capacity!

Standing Rock: The Struggle Continues

By Dina Burstein

North Dakota has moved from autumn to winter, and the battle over the Dakota Access Pipeline has intensified. The DAPL, a \$3.8 billion, 1,100 mile (slightly shorter than the Keystone XL Pipeline) oil pipeline is more than 80 percent built. Hundreds of Tribes have gathered since April in Cannonball, North Dakota, to resist pipeline construction, forming the largest gathering of native people in more than a century. As they build structures to help keep warm during the North Dakota winter, the state of North Dakota has approved \$10 million to support a militarized police and National Guard force that has arrested over 500 protector-protestors, many of them strip-searched in jail.

During the sub-freezing night of November 20, police attacked several hundred water protectors with water cannons, rubber bullets, tear gas, and mace, sending 26 of the most severely injured to area hospitals. The water protectors that night had tried to clear access to a public bridge, a main north-south route between Bismarck and the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, which had been blockaded by authorities since October, in order to improve access to emergency services in the camps. (Democracy Now! and Seattle Times 11-22-16)

As your author recoils in horror at the image of water cannons turned on praying people in sub-freezing temperatures, here is a review of key events of 2016 leading to the conflict on the public bridge, based in large part on a timeline on the website of Earthjustice, the law firm representing the Standing Rock Tribe:

April 2016: Encampment begins, publicly expressing Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's concerns that pipeline spills could endanger drinking water and that construction of the pipeline could destroy sacred sites and burial grounds.

July 27, 2016: Tribe sues Army Corps of Engineers, alleging that ACOE violated multiple federal statutes when it



November 20: police firing water cannons at protestors in sub-freezing weather. (Photo: SacredStoneCamp.org)

issued the permits for pipeline construction. The assessment by the ACOE relied on an environmental assessment prepared by DAPL's developer, Dakota Access Limited. The Tribe, EPA, Department of Interior, and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation expressed concerns of risk to water, inadequate emergency preparedness, potential impacts to Standing Rock Reservation, and insufficient environmental justice analysis.

September 4, 2016: One day after the Tribe identified sacred sites in the pipeline corridor to the Court, Dakota Access bulldozes the sacred area. Demonstrators are attacked by dogs and pepper spray, as filmed by *Democracy Now!*.

September 9, 2016: The Court denies the Tribe's request for an injunction against construction. The Departments of Justice, Army, and Interior announce they will withhold a final easement for digging under the Missouri River at Lake Oahe, will reconsider past permits, and call for a national review of the government's approach to Tribal consultation for major fossil fuel projects.

October 24, 2016: Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman, David Archambault, calls on the Department of Justice to investigate violent police tactics and civil rights violations.

November 3, 2016: An independent expert hired by the Tribe finds that the ACOE's environmental assessment of the DAPL's environmental impact was inadequate and calls for the pipeline to be rerouted away from areas prone to landslides.

November 14, 2016: The Army Corps of Engineers, which holds control of the easement that would allow Pipeline construction under the Missouri River at Lake Oahe, the last remaining construction to be completed in North Dakota, announces that it will halt construction under the River. The ACOE states, "Additional discussion and analysis are warranted in light of the history of the Great Sioux Nation's dispossessions of lands, the importance of Lake Oahe to the Tribe, our government-to-government relationship, and the

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Vision for Black Lives

By Bobby Righi, Administrative Vice President of PSARA

The Trump administration "transition team" appears to be all the racists, anti-union, climate-denying bullies that can be scraped together. So how do we go forward now?

While PSARA, like other progressive organizations, plans our work and resistance for the next four years, we have to keep working on longer-range plans for transforming our society into one that is equitable, one that supports the health and development of children, that allows the elderly to live lives of dignity, provides access to education, and opens avenues to meaningful, productive work at life-sustaining pay – just to name a few of the things we need.

The document "A Vision for Black Lives," which was written by groups of activists and academics around the country, is an extensive plan for where we need to go to achieve a just and equitable world. It focuses on the lives of Black people in the U.S. upon whose backs capitalism was built and who have resisted oppression for hundreds of years. "Black people have bravely and brilliantly been the driving force pushing the U.S. towards the ideals it articulates but has never achieved." (A Vision for Black Lives Platform)

Every advance in the liberation of Black people and others who are oppressed has been met with a strong backlash, and we have seen the gains of the Civil Rights struggle being snatched back almost as



soon as they were won. Incarceration, resegregation, and the legalized lynching of black people -- the shootings by police and white vigilantes -- are all part of the war on Black people. Racism is about the ways different groups are "vulnerable to premature death," whether at the hands of the state or the structures that kill. These structures include poor schools, inadequate food, shelter, and health care.

Young Black activists have taken to the streets and worked in their communities to give voice to the lives that are being shortened by racist policies. "We have created this platform to articulate and support the ambitions and work of Black people. We also seek to intervene in the current political climate and assert a clear vision, particularly for those who claim to be our allies, of the world we want them to help us create." (Platform)

This platform is a political proposal that may take years to achieve, but we should study it and think about how our work today helps build a better future. What can we do to help? How do we work together to combat the existing war on Black people and gear up for yet more attacks from Trump?

Join other PSARA members to read and discuss the Vision for Black Lives Platform. We will meet on Saturday, January 14, from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Washington State Labor Council, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle. At this first session we will view "13th," a documentary by director Ava DuVernay. This is a film titled after the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which outlawed slavery.

We will discuss the "Platform," which is a short introduction to the program. Please read this before the meeting.

The Vision for Black Lives is online at https://policy.m4bl.org/

At our second session, two weeks later, we will discuss the "End the War on Black People" section of the program, which has 10 demands, explanations of these, and proposed ways to meet these demands at the federal, state, and local levels.

Please email Bobby Righi at adminvp@ psara.org if you want to join this discussion group.

Dialogue with Colin Kaepernick

Miami Herald reporter Armando Salguero – from a family of Cuban exiles – challenged Colin Kaepernick about the quarterback's T-shirt depicting Malcom X with Fidel Castro.

It's "uncomfortable" for exiles to see images of Castro, Salguero said.

"One thing that Fidel Castro did do," Kaepernick replied, "is they have the highest literacy rate because they invest more in their education system than they do in their prison system, which we do not do here, even though we're fully capable of doing that." Salguero said Castro also broke up families, unlike what occurs in the United States.

"We do break up families here," Kaepernick said. "That's what mass incarceration is. That was the foundation of slavery so our country has been based on that, as well as the genocide of Native Americans."

Salguero asked if Kaepernick was equating incarceration with breaking up families.

"I'm equating the breaking up of families with the breaking up of families," Kaepernick answered.



"I've never been afraid to ask people to do things."

An interview with Karen Richter, by Mike Andrew

"ve never been afraid to ask people to do things," Karen Richter said with a smile.

I talked to Karen recently about her work lobbying the King County Council to pass the PSARA-endorsed resolution on expanding Social Security and Medicare. The Council acted on October 17 after months of work by Social Security Works Washington, Washington CAN!, and PSARA.

A willingness to ask people to do things always comes in handy, and it may prove particularly important now – in the era of Trump – when we can no longer count on a sympathetic hearing from the national administration.

Knowing how to lobby City and County Councilmembers and members of Congress could make all the difference in getting what we want and preventing what we don't.

One thing Karen found important was building on personal relationships with elected officials. She had an existing relationship with Councilmember Claudia Balducci, for example.

"I met Claudia when I worked at the Puget Sound Regional Council," Karen explained.

"She served as Chair of our Transportation Policy Board, and she was a joy to work with. I was delighted to reconnect with her and re-establish our relationship by asking her help explaining Sound Transit 3 to the PSARA Executive Board.

"Then later I asked for her support for our King County Motion.

"The key, though, was Robby's long relationship with Councilmember Larry Gossett, who agreed to sponsor our Motion in the first place. I think these relationships are necessary and critical as we go forward in the next four years."

Having a good relationship with officials' staffers is also important, Karen added, as is persistence in setting up appointments.

"When I didn't get callbacks from Councilmembers as I was setting up meetings for PSARA, I called their respective Chiefs of Staff, explained what I was asking for and if I had to leave a message, followed up with an email," she told me.

"I also was fortunate to know several staffers in various departments and had good relationships with them. That helped on several occasions.

"I want to emphasize the importance of having relationships with key staffers who can provide necessary information and support. Building those relationships is a great idea, and that will help in the long run."

Although Karen's relationships with elected officials and their staffs started on her job, anyone can build similar relationships, she added. All it takes is seeking out opportunities to interact with them.

"People can start by joining their local legislative district organizations and volunteering to serve on a committee or participate in get-out-the-vote work," Karen explained.

"Many local, county, and state electeds attend these meetings, and they will make time to talk with their constituents. Working on their election campaigns is effective.

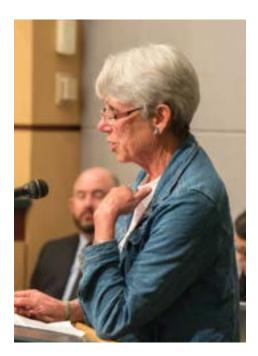
"Participating in any organization that either interacts with our elected officials or perhaps has electeds on their board is another way to build relationships."

I asked Karen if she found anything particularly hard about lobbying the Council.

"The hardest part for me was very personal," she replied.

"I thought it might be effective to talk about caring for my mother as her Alzheimer's progressed and the impact of Medicare's failure to cover basic needs of seniors such as hearing, vision, dental, and caretaking expenses. I never expected to be my mother's caretaker.

"Every time I shared her story it became easier for me to get past my sorrow, anger, and guilt and to know that what I was sharing might help others in the future.



Karen Richter delivers powerful testimony to the King County Council on October 17. (Photo: Garet Munger)

"The easiest part," Karen added, "was working with a coalition of very committed people, representing various organizations, to advance the Motion. They volunteered to provide needed data, to participate in the meetings, and to share their experiences. I am inspired by them."

Karen also described the one moment she got angry.

"It was when we learned that Kathy Lambert, the chair of the Council's Committee of the Whole, heard our Motion but then did not take action to move it forward to a vote by the King County Council," she recalled.

"It was a surprise, to say the least. Eventually Councilmember Gossett, who was the main sponsor of the Motion, had the votes to take it to the full Council where it was ultimately approved by a 6-1 vote."

Karen Richter is a new member of PSARA's Executive Board. Mike Andrew is PSARA's Organizer and Editor of The Retiree Advocate.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2016

PSARA Annual Holiday Potluck & Membership Meeting

12:00 - 3:00 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 15

Greenwood Community Senior Center, 525 North 85th Street,

Seattle. (Parking at the center and in nearby neighborhood. Bus 5 to Greenwood Ave. N. and N. 85th St., Bus 45 directly to Greenwood Senior Center.)

How we are preparing for 2017:

- David Loud: Represents PSARA in the Health Care is a Human Right WA coalition
- Mary Le Nguyen: Co-Executive Director of Washington Community Action Network (Washington CAN!)
- Mike Andrew: PSARA organizer

Bring your favorite potluck dish.

<u>12:00 Noon</u> Potluck lunch and socializing: Please bring a main dish, salad, fruit, dessert, or soft drink to share at the party. <u>RSVP</u> to office phone and let us know the food item you can bring: 206-448-9646 OR email Bobby Righi at <u>adminvp@psara.org</u>. Also, if you can, please bring items of non-perishable food for the Labor Agency Food Bank.

<u>1:00 p.m.</u> Program and business meeting including election of PSARA Officers and Executive Board members.

If you cannot drive or take public transit and need a ride or if you can offer a ride to a member who cannot drive, please e-mail Bobby at <u>adminvp@psara.org</u> or leave a message on the office phone 206-448-9646.

Reading, Writing, Surviving Portland Time

By Bob Shimabukuro

hen you're lost in the rain in Juarez
And it's Eastertime too
And your gravity fails
And negativity don't pull you through
Don't put on any airs
When you're down on Rue Morgue Avenue
They got some hungry women there
And they really make a mess outta you
--Bob Dylan, Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues

Wednesday

I thought I was going into a depression spin. Again.

Alice didn't seem to be too concerned.
"Oh, you always go through this when the days keep getting shorter. You'll be okay."
Well, she was right. Again.

But still, mo' different when you old. Joints hurt. Walk hurt. Sciatic nerve pain going' down my legs. Hard fo' breathe, means hard fo' talk too. What I goin' do? Fo' fun? Fo' take care my family? Fo' live 100 years? Fo' make bettah world?

Hard to figure anyting out, when my brain goin' roun' and roun' with all kine stuff, no can concentrate on one thing. The odda day, was looking all around for bag of sweet potato chips Alice wen buy for me. Know I wen put it somewhere. Couldn't find it. Later on, I like eat some ice cream. Found the potato chips in the freezer. And ice cream in the refrigerator part. But that's okay 'cause the ice cream made with coconut milk so the ice cream nevah melt.

Thursday

Wen put one frozen patty in the frying pan. Get two pieces bread, put in the toaster. Cut up one avocado. Get ketchup. Flip the patty. Get the toast out. Put the ketchup and the avocado and kim chee on the toast. Remember I needed to take some meds. Turn off the burner. Go take some meds. Get distracted, but do get back to the kitchen. Put together and eat the sandwich. Did the puzzles in the paper. Thought, "Geez, that wasn't very filling, still feel hungry." So I went to frying pan to clean it to cook another patty, and lo and behold, the patty I cooked was still in the pan. Duh, I had just eaten a lettuce,

avocado, and kim chee sandwich. Was good though. Was like small kid time. My bruddah Roy wen eat kim chee sandwiches all the time.

So, fo' now, can only write, talk little bit, with other folks, maybe use other folks' words too. And try play ukulele (with slightly deformed fingers).

Friday

Woke up this morning, looked at the newspaper. Saw side by side stories with these headlines: ACQUITTED: Jurors side with leaders of armed takeover of Oregon's Malheur Refuge; pepper spray, chaos at pipeline protest (Standing Rock Sioux).

Just raw anger. Went back to bed. Later, got up, looked at the paper. Still ticked off, but realized, not despondent.

Mo' lively, mo' angry than depressed. Easier to think wen angry. Wen' walk (with walking sticks) back and forth thinking. About all kind stuff that happening like the acquittal of Malheur Refuge occupiers and the attack on Dakota Access Pipeline Protestors.

But then started thinking about Portland. 'Cause that's where the trial of the Malheur Refuge occupiers was. Hard time live there. Try forget incidents. But hard, yah? Gotta learn where no can go, eat, or say anyting you want. Watch out for white barbers with straight razors. Stand for the Star Spangled Banner unless surrounded by five National Lawyers Guild Lawyers. And you make friends very carefully.

Used to listen to Bob Dylan songs and replace key words to make them more relevant. And this morning found myself singing 'When you're lost in the rain in Portland/And it's Christmas time too/ And your gravity fails/And negativity don't pull you through/Don't put on any airs/When you're walkin' on Broadway Avenue/They got some angry white folks/ And they really make a mess outta you.'

Easy to get depressed. Shouldn't be only two choices, angry or depressed.

These are books that I've read/reread over the last few years that I turn to for ideas on organizing and writing. These



books I list are ones that give me hope. They stimulate my brain. And they're all connected with a common thread that would resonate with what my dad and uncles were thinking. I think it's about Stories. Narratives, Truth. Dreams.

These are Angry, Depressing, and Hopeful times for me.

Maybe you can help me with this.

Bob's Book List

Jeff Chang, Who We Be
Naomi Klein, Shock Doctrine and This
Changes Everything
Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow
john a. powell, Racing to Justice
Grace Lee Boggs/Scott Kurashige, The
Next American Revolution
E. F. Schumacher, Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered
James Loewen, Lies My Teacher Told Me
More Recently:
Mira Shimabukuro, Relocating Authority:
Japanese Americans Writing to Redress
Mass Incarceration
Karen Ishizuka, Serve the People: Making

Let's catch a breath. Then keep moving. Bob Shimabukuro is Associate Editor of The Retiree Advocate. This column was written before the November 8 election.

Asian America in the Long Sixties

Big Wins for Very Low-Income and Homeless Transit Riders

By Katie Wilson

If you're homeless or living on a barebones income, transportation is a challenge. With even reduced fares out of reach, chances are you rely on Metro's Human Services Ticket Program.

This program was born of protest. Back in 1991, SHARE (Seattle Housing and Resource Effort) was spending most of their budget buying bus tickets so people could travel from their South Lake Union shelter to an overflow church on Capitol Hill. Nearly broke, they began meeting at the King County Administration Building before making the trek on foot. After weeks of this public demonstration of need, the Metro Council relented: SHARE and other service providers could purchase tickets at a discount. The program has expanded steadily for 25 years, and last year 138 service providers distributed over 1.4 million tickets to homeless people, seniors, youth, students, veterans, refugees, and victims of domestic violence.

With housing costs and homelessness rising, the need for tickets has skyrocketed. The Transit Riders Union (TRU) learned from our members that tickets are a scarce resource; just procuring a few to get to appointments, meals, and shelter, let alone social activities, is time-consuming and stressful. Service providers confirmed this story. Queen Anne, West Seattle, and North Helplines can give people only a ticket or two per month. Often Compass Housing can't get people to job and housing interviews. Casa Latina can help their day workers with transportation for only 20 days of each month. The King County Code caps the quantity of tickets available, and many organizations were not allocated nearly what they requested. For others, cost was prohibitive: providers pay 20 percent of face value, so the



Katie Wilson (Photo: Garet Munger)

price per ticket doubled since 2008 due to fare increases.

The simple answer? Make more tickets available and cut the price. This summer TRU launched a campaign to do just that. We delivered hundreds of petitions and letters. Transit riders and service providers met with county officials and testified at public hearings.

This fall the King County Council and Executive responded. The council voted unanimously to raise the cap and then to halve the ticket price. Moreover, the Executive has promised to "direct Metro to engage other transit agencies, the state, other local jurisdictions, human services agencies, and other potential

partners in a discussion of transit's role in contributing to the social safety net for the lowest-income residents and how to provide assistance while still being able to meet the growing demand for transit service throughout King County and the region."

This last part is important, because ultimately we need to do better than tickets. As our regional transit system is increasingly integrated across modes and agencies, we need card-based solutions. Earlier this year TRU campaigned successfully to enable ticket-users to ride the light rail, but Metro's "comboticket" solution is clunky. An unlimited ORCA card that is very inexpensive or administered through a service provider would be liberating for many who rely on single-use tickets. King County should look to Calgary, Canada, where a sliding-scale transit pass will soon provide transportation for as little as \$5.15 per month for people living in extreme poverty.

Homelessness and poverty are not going away any time soon. We hope King County and Sound Transit will start taking a more integrated approach to affordability and access so that activists can focus elsewhere. How about shifting the state legislature to win stable and progressive transit funding? Or building a multi-modal movement to make Seattle a place where few people need to own and drive cars? Many of the hundreds of low-income people who have participated in struggles for affordable transit would love to take on these broader transformative issues if only they didn't have to be more immediately concerned about getting from A to B.

Katie Wilson is the General Secretary of the Transit Riders Union and a member of PSARA's Executive Board.

An unlimited ORCA card that is very inexpensive or administered through a service provider would be liberating for many who rely on single-use tickets.

Standing Rock: The Struggle Continues

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statute governing easements through government property." (*High Country News,* 11-15-16) In other words: It's the I AWI

In response, Kelcy Warren, the CEO of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, the company behind the DAPL, said the company would not reroute the pipeline; "There's not another way. We're building at that location." (Seattle Times) The company says it will delay construction under the Missouri River only if the Corps will give them a certain date when construction will resume. "It is widely understood at (Standing Rock) camp that the company will continue to drill in direct violation of the Corps' delay, choosing to pay the relatively minor fines they will incur. The only thing standing in their way is the water protectors." (Sightline Institute, 11-21-16)

Which brings us to where we are at the time of this writing. Energy Transfer Partners seems to be in a big rush to complete pipeline construction. An explanation might be found in a report recently published by Sightline Institute, which says that the project faces a January 1, 2017, completion deadline. A failure to meet this deadline, which would be certain if they respect the halt imposed by the Army Corps of Engineers, would trigger a renegotiation of contracts signed two years ago. Prices for Bakken oil were much higher in 2014 until global supply of oil increased faster than demand, leading to a crash in oil prices.

"If oil prices remain low, as projected, Bakken oil production will continue to decline. Existing pipeline will be more than adequate to handle the region's oil production. The DAPL could well become a stranded asset -- one that was rushed to completion largely to protect favorable contract terms negotiated in 2014...By the end of 2017, existing pipelines and refineries could handle the region's entire oil output, even without the addition of the DAPL -- while leaving every single oil-by-rail facility completely idle." (Sightline Institute, 11-17-16)

Unfavorable economic conditions like the decrease in oil prices that threatens the profitability of the DAPL have played a role in the cancellation or delay of numerous fossil fuel infrastructure projects in the past 18 months. Public protest like the encampments at Standing Rock have played an important role in the demise of these projects as well. (*Inside Climate News*, May 6, 2016)

Here in Washington, projects like the Millennium Bulk Terminal oil-by-rail site in Longview, coal and oil trains along the Columbia River Gorge, and oil tankers in Puget Sound threaten water quality over vast parts of the Pacific Northwest and threaten to lock in carbon emissions for future generations. A combination of market forces, lawsuits, and vigorous protest may end these projects as well. President-elect Trump has promised to lift restrictions on energy reserves, dismantle environmental regulations meant to improve our health and safety, re-open negotiations on the Keystone XL Pipeline, etc. But in order to render the oil and gas industry profitable, oil and natural gas prices would have to increase. It is doubtful that our new President can create the conditions for oil and gas profitability. (High Country News, 11-10-16)

According to Paul VanDevelder, an Oregon writer for High Country News, "Our nation has acted with lawlessness and reckless abandon with its solemn responsibilities to the Indian Nation." In order to explain a few strands of the complex tapestry of Native American sovereignty law, we can look at the fact that the DAPL was originally planned to cross the Missouri River north of the state capitol, Bismarck. Because this threatened to contaminate drinking water of white-dominated communities, the project was re-routed to cross near Native American land in a rushed vetting process without adequate consultation with the Tribes.

This process violated tribal sovereignty rights called usufructory rights, "the right of tribes to hunt, gather and fish in their 'usual and accustomed places'. Usufruc-

tory rights are coupled in treaties with reserved rights, which are guaranteed in perpetuity to Indian nations by the US government. These rights protect a tribe's ability to sustain the lives of its citizens with food, clean water, air and natural resources, and to practice traditional customs, cultural practices and ceremonies without interference from non-Natives... In most jurisdictional challenges, tribal sovereignty trumps state sovereignty. David Archambault II, the tribal chairman of the Hunkpapa Sioux Nation, has as much legal standing at the United Nations and in international courts of law as any American president." (High Country *News,* 11-11-16) These laws form part of the basis of the Tribe's court challenge to the process used to approve the construction of the DAPL. The permits issued to Energy Transfer Partners are less legally significant than the federal government's responsibility to the Tribes. According to VanDevelder, the law is on the side of the Sioux.

But since we know that "the law" hosed down, injured, and arrested water protectors in North Dakota a few nights ago, it is hard to confidently say that the law which is on the side of the Sioux will prevail. Zarina Parpia, a Seattle author who recently returned from a stay at the Oceti Sakowin Camp near the pipeline construction site, wrote, "I finally saw for myself what many Native and Black people have long understood to be true—that the institutions that are ostensibly charged with protecting us are used as violent, heavily militarized enforcers of corporate will." (Sightline Institute, 11-21-16)

PSARA activists will continue to support the water protectors at Standing Rock. If you would like to make a contribution to support their legal defense, construction of warm housing for the winter, and other needs, you can go to http://sacredstonecamp.org/donate/

Dina Burstein is a member of PSARA's Environmental Committee and one of The Retiree Advocate's dedicated proofreaders.

The Time to Build a Movement is Now!

Continued from Page 1

Attempts to end the Affordable Care Act; block grant and starve Medicaid; privatize Medicare and Social Security; pull out of the Paris Climate Accord; pass national "Right-to-Work" legislation, eviscerate environmental, labor, and reproductive rights; rescind DACA/DAPA and mass deport immigrants; and re-introduce stop-and-frisk policies will create huge divisions in our country's social fabric.

Already, as reported by the Southern Poverty Law Center, hundreds of incidents of hate, bigotry, and hate crimes have swept our country. Bullying in our schools is on the rise. And "fact-free" speech too often passes as truth.

It is imperative, now more than ever, that labor and community stand up and speak with one voice and act together. We must all be leaders.

We must stand with immigrants, our LGBTQ brothers and sisters, women, seniors, students, climate justice advocates, Black Lives Matter, and union sisters and brothers. We need to pull together the strands of our various movements and build one movement for social, economic, racial, and gender justice. Our movement must be ready to push back but also to move forward.

We will no doubt make mistakes, but our movement must learn to live in solidarity day by day and to strategically plan how to push back and move forward.

While we struggle at the national level, we need to continue advocating for progressive change at the state level as well. The 2016 elections brought a one-seat Democratic pick-up in the State Senate (Lisa Wellman LD 41), leaving the Republicans with a 25-24 majority and left the margin in the State House the same at 50 Democrats to 48 Republicans. Governor Inslee was re-elected, and Democrats retained all statewide offices with the exception of Secretary of State and State Treasurer.

Though the Democratic majority in the State House remains the same, Democrats picked up both House seats in LD 30 with wins by Mike Pellicciotti and Kristine Reeves. This is important because there have been huge labor and

community campaigns in this district over the past three years.

While it has been nearly impossible to significantly increase the number of progressive candidates elected (with the exception of LD 30, LD 41, and Pramila. Jayapal, CD 7), voters in our state continue to support progressive initiatives. This is encouraging because I think it speaks to an underlying sense of fairness of Washingtonians.

I-1433, raising our state minimum wage from \$9.47 to \$13.50 an hour in four steps and providing paid safe- and sick-leave days to over a million workers, passed with 58% of the vote.

Sound Transit 3 passed, providing 44 million labor hours, taking over 139 million metric tons of carbon out of our air each year, reducing congestion on the roads, and helping people get to and from work and appointments more easily.

I-124, passed in Seattle, provides protection from sexual harassment for hotel house cleaners, reduces work load, strengthens family health care coverage, and gives workers a stronger voice at work.

I-735 passed, calling on our Congressional delegation to support an amendment to overturn Citizens United.

I-1501 passed, strengthening the rights of seniors and protecting the information of home-care aides.

And I-732 was defeated. This was positive, not because it defeated a carbon tax, but because I-732 was bad climate policy, bad climate justice policy, and bad tax policy. We now have an opportunity to pass a carbon policy that generates revenue for equity and investments in the alternative energy economy.

During the 2017 Legislative Session, attention will be focused on raising revenue to fully fund education and state employee contracts, passing the Voting Rights Act and pay equity, and protecting our social safety net.

At the same time, attention will be focused on the 45th Legislative District, where there will be a run-off election in November 2017 to fill the seat vacated through the death of Senator Andy Hill. Whichever Republican is appointed to this seat will have to run in November against a Democratic challenger.

But the real opportunity the 2016 elections have given us is the opportunity to pull together the various movements in our society. This is an opportunity we must take at the national, state, and local levels. Everything is at stake and worth fighting for.

Jeff Johnson is the President of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO and a PSARA member.

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Meetings and Events

PSARA Environmental Committee: 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Thursday, December 1, WA State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Thursday, December 1, Seattle Labor Temple, Rm. 226, 2800 First Ave. All welcome as we finalize plans for our legislative conference for the 2017 Legislative Session.

PSARA Education Committee: 10 a.m. – noon, Tuesday, December 6, PSARA office, 2800 First Ave., Rm. 234, Seattle, 98121. All welcome as we discuss our work to expand outreach with the PSARA workshop, "Making Retirement Security Real for All Generations."

West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, December 7, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave. SW, Seattle, 98126

(35th & Henderson). Topic: Getting to know each other and debriefing from the election. Brown bag lunch.

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, December 8, Green Lake Branch, Seattle Public Library, 7364 E. Green Lake Dr. N., Seattle. 98115. Brown bag lunch. Topic: Year End Celebration – What did we learn this year? What do we want to take into 2017? For further information contact Susan at sjlevy.01@gmail.com

PSARA Holiday Potluck and General Membership Meeting: Noon – 3:00 p.m., Thursday, December 15, Greenwood Community Senior Center, 525 N. 85th Street, Seattle. Elect PSARA officers and Executive Board members. Learn how PSARA will be responding to the Trump presidency and Republican control of Congress. More information in centerfold of newsletter.

Renewing Your Subscription/ Membership Online

We heard from many of our members that they would prefer to renew membership and donate online. We have created that option. Go to the PSARA website, www.PSARA.org and click on Membership & Renewal. You can renew, donate to the 501c3, give gift memberships, and make monthly sustaining contributions.

If the date on your mailing label is in red, it is time for renewal. Renewing online when you see the date in red saves PSARA the cost of mailing reminder letters, although PayPal does take a small cut of what is contributed online.

You can also receive this newsletter online if you let us know that is your preference. The online version of the newsletter comes in living color! If you prefer hard copy, we are happy to keep mailing it to you.

