

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

Vol XXXII, No 4

April 2016

Life and Death on the
Mexican Border

Page 9

May Day, the Original Labor Day

By Mike Warren

For the past 10 years, Seattle has marched for immigrant rights and worker rights. PSARA is proud to be a supporter of this event. We will walk with our brothers and sisters from labor and from the immigrant communities and May Day marchers across the world.

The program will start Sunday, May 1, at Judkins Park (behind St. Mary's Church, 611 20 Ave. South) with an initial rally at 2 p.m. The march begins at 3 p.m. and meets up with a contingent of labor union members as we pass the Washington State Labor Council office at 16th and South Jackson. The march will then pass Seattle Central College in solidarity with staff and students and then proceed past the QFC on Broadway and Pike in solidarity with grocery workers in UFCW 21 who are in negotiations for a new contract. We will then march to the Federal Courthouse where there will be another rally.

We will be flying our union, PSARA, community, and religious colors as we walk, chant, and demonstrate our solidarity.

The marches and demonstrations began 10 years ago in order to stand together with our neighbors to end deportations and to push for pathways to citizenship. From the beginning, the march recognized the need for justice for all workers.

Join with PSARA in this annual worldwide event to honor the struggles of working people for equity and a better way of life for all.

Mike Warren is a PSARA Executive Board member and has been representing PSARA on the May Day planning committee.

Participate in Give BIG Day

Tuesday, May 3, is a BIG day when you can do something simple and concrete to help move our work forward. The Seattle Foundation is once again sponsoring Give Big Day. The PSARA Education Fund is one of the designated non-profits eligible to receive funds on Give Big Day.

On Tuesday, May 3, between 12:01 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. go to givebig.seattlefoundation.org and enter PSARA Education Fund in the FIND AN ORGANIZATION field. Click on the magnifying glass. Then click on Donate. Fill out the required information on the online donation form and click Continue. Any amount is welcome.

Your tax deductible donation to the PSARA Education Fund will be increased by a special stretch fund. The Seattle Foundation, through the generosity of other donors, will provide a partial match of funding. Basically, this is “extra money” that we otherwise would not get. Every dollar you give will bring us additional support! Every donation of every size will make a difference. If you are willing to make a contribution above and beyond your annual membership, this is a great time to do it!

The PSARA Education Fund, a 501c(3) nonprofit, publishes this newsletter and performs other important educational work. The Education Fund also provides much of the research and education that allows PSARA, our 501c(4), to be an effective advocacy organization. The combination of the two separate organizations provides for PSARA's significant presence in the broader progressive community.

Our educational work is becoming more demanding as the presentations become more frequent and our geographic reach expands. Your donations make a huge difference in assisting our educational work.

Please mark your calendars for May 3. If you already use the internet and use your credit card to do online shopping or make donations on websites, this will be easy for you to do. (If not, don't worry—it is easy.)

So please remember: On Tuesday, May 3, between 12:01 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. go to givebig.seattlefoundation.org and enter PSARA Education Fund in the FIND AN ORGANIZATION field. Click on the magnifying glass. Then click on Donate. Fill out the required information on the online donation form and click Continue. Each of us can make a BIG difference.



Former Seattle City Councilmember Nick Licata speaks to PSARA's Green Lake Discussion Group in January. This is one of many educational activities you can support with a donation on Give Big Day, May 3. (Photo: Garet Munger)

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**, msand76@hotmail.com

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: **Paul Muldoon**, 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 Co-chairs: **Frank Irigon & Mildred Ollee**, diversitycommittee@psara.org

Education Committee Co-chairs: **Mark**

McDermott & Steve Bauck, educationcommittee@psara.org

Environmental Committee Co-chairs:

Kristen Beifus & Tom Lux, envirocommittee@psara.org

Government Relations Committee Co-chairs:

Chuck Richards & Tim Burns, govrelations@psara.org

Our web page: www.psara.org

Board Members: Steve Bauck, Kristen Beifus, Maureen Bo, Jessica Bonebright, Jackie Boschok, Tim Burns, Jim Grayson, Frank Irigon, Steve Kofahl, Gene Lux, Tom Lux, Mark McDermott, Mac McIntosh, Bonny Oborn, Mildred Ollee, Chuck Richards, Bob Shimabukuro, Ronnie Shure, Sarajane Siegfriedt, Aganita Varkentine, Michael Warren, Imogene Williams, and Katie Wilson.

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

Moving Forward with PSARA

By Susan Levy, Vivian Lee, and Paul Muldoon

This spring the Outreach and Membership Team (OMT) will kick off a range of activities to help build PSARA membership and relationships in our community.

Outreach Forum in West Seattle

Included in this issue of the Advocate is a flyer (Page 7) announcing the Outreach and Membership Team's first forum on Improving and Expanding Social Security and Medicare. During 2016, there will be four forums in different geographic areas of Puget Sound. The forums will be designed with our co-sponsors/partner organizations. We are reaching out to the general public about one of PSARA's key issues, preserving and expanding Social Security and Medicare. Our outreach effort at this first forum is being cosponsored by several other organizations. The Outreach and Membership Team will continue to reach out to other community organizations to build our bridges in the community and to expand awareness of PSARA's mission and activities.

Membership Survey

A membership survey will be in the May Advocate and will also be available online. It is designed to help us understand what PSARA members' priorities are and how best to communicate with PSARA members. The survey will be a key input in steering outreach and membership activities. For those who want to complete the survey online, you will be able to go to the PSARA website and click on the link. We will also be emailing the link to the online survey to our members in early May.

Lunch Discussion Groups

The Outreach and Membership Team is also planning to build on the success of the Green Lake lunch discussion group (held every second Thursday at the Green Lake Library). Over the next few years the goal is to establish several monthly discussion groups around the Puget Sound area. These discussion groups can cover a range of topics that address PSARA's mission and subjects of interest to PSARA members. They will offer groups an opportunity to present and discuss issues such as Affordable Housing or Living Wage or other Aging-related topics. Look for more information on the discussion groups in the next few months.

As always the Outreach and Membership Team welcomes and needs your input and support. If you have comments or want to volunteer, please contact us through our email address: outreachvp@psara.org.

Susan Levy and Vivian Lee are PSARA's Outreach Vice Presidents. Paul Muldoon is PSARA's Membership Vice President.

SAVE the DATE!! April 14 2016: National Day of Action to End Income Inequality

Too many workers are trapped in poverty.

On April 14, PSARA members can join workers in Washington State as they connect the issues of fast food workers, Uber drivers, homecare workers, janitors, adjunct professors, truck drivers, health care workers, grocery workers and many others.

There will be opportunities to collect signatures for I-1433 throughout Washington, as well as take direct action in a series of actions in Seattle.

Jointly organized by Working WA, Teamsters 117, SEIU 6, SEIU 775, SEIU 925, SEIU 1199NW, UFCW 21 and others.

For more details contact Kristen Beifus, kbeifus@ufcw21.org or call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646.

We Can End Homelessness

By Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant

In recent years, we have won victories -- the \$15/hour minimum wage and city-sanctioned homeless encampments with funding and services -- by getting organized, formulating concrete demands, and identifying the best strategies to shift the balance of forces in a corporate-dominated city like ours.

This year, there is broad agreement among working people that homelessness is Seattle's most urgent social crisis. Together with other activists, social service providers, and community and labor organizers, I called for a People's Assembly to address the crisis. On February 27, over 400 people joined us at City Hall for an exciting and inspiring day of action against homelessness.

The People's Assembly was centered on a rich discussion about what we can do to end homelessness here in Seattle, featuring activists from the Tenants Union, the Gender Justice League, Seattle/King County NAACP, Seattle Human Services Coalition, Socialist Alternative, Real Change, PSARA, and, most importantly, courageous organizers from our homeless community.

Throughout the evening, we rallied around the call to treat the emergency for what it is, and immediately allocate \$10 million in emergency funding. Last year, I put forward a \$10 million budget amendment to expand shelter space to

serve homeless people. That proposal originally came from the activists and the advocates from the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness. At the time, it only received two votes: former Councilmember Nick Licata and myself. But pressure is building now. We can win if we fight for it.

Corporate politicians make the argument that interim solutions, like encampments and shelters simply don't work, and that we shouldn't invest in them. Unfortunately, these are the same politicians who have obstructed efforts to making permanent housing affordable for all. Our movement should refuse to buy into these disingenuous arguments, and pursue both avenues. We can fight to expand shelter space so that not a single human needs to live even a single night out on the streets -- that is an immediate need. At the same time, it is our movement that has been fighting for citywide rent control, to make big developers pay for affordable housing, and to use the city's bonding capacity to build thousands of city-owned affordable housing units every year.



Councilmember Sawant speaking at a February 22 rally against ZoomCare.
(Photo: Garet Munger)

Our past victories were won by recognizing that corporations and the corporate politicians are not on our side, and that we can push back against the establishment if we are strong and if we build solidarity among ourselves. That is what we are going to need to do to end homelessness. The People's Assembly has helped us unify and clarify our movement's demands. Please join us in our call by signing the petition for \$10 million in immediate emergency funding to end homelessness: <http://sawant.seattle.gov/homelessness-petition/>. Together, we can take the necessary first steps toward ending homelessness and win real change in 2016.

Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant is a PSARA member.

The PSARA Executive Board

Photos by Garet Munger

Seated left to right: Frank Irigon, Frieda Takamura, Aganita Varkentine, Maureen Bo, Vivian Lee, Mike Warren. 2nd row: Mac McIntosh, Bonny Oborn, Susan Levy, Paul Muldoon, Tom Lux, Robby Stern, Steve Bauck, Kristen Befus, Bobby Righi. 3rd row: Jim Grayson, Steve Kofahl, Tim Burns, Jessica Bonebright, Katie Wilson.

Inset: Latecomers Sarajane Siegfriedt, Chuck Richards, Gene Lux.

Missing: Mildred Ollee, Bob Shimabukuro, Ronnie Shure, Mark McDermott, Imogene Williams.



Finding Common Ground Across Our Differences

By Mark McDermott

My post-retirement career has taken me around the state and country speaking to a wide range of organizations. My consistent themes have been finding common ground across our differences as we work toward a country with greater economic, racial, and social justice.

I often speak to unions that have a significant number of socially conservative members or are in areas of the country that are more socially conservative. The issues of God, guns, gays, and abortion emerge as challenges in convincing many members and their families and friends to not vote against their economic self-interest, which is rooted in greater fairness and equity. In response I have started to experiment with putting more emphasis on reframing how I discuss these “social” issues. Here is an example of how I reframe the discussion around reproductive rights.

The challenge is to begin to find more common ground while respecting that people of conscience may disagree from a principled, values-based perspective. It would be easy to write them off, but I have never found that this attitude is helpful in promoting dialogue and deeper understanding.

Let me be clear. I am a lifelong supporter of a woman’s right to choose an abortion and the broader issue of reproductive rights. I am also a lifelong supporter of a worker’s right to a safe and healthy workplace. This is a personal issue as I have a 30 percent permanent disability in my left arm from an industrial accident which could have been prevented if my employer had provided a safer workplace. I was also generally aware of the decades-long wave of violence against workers who provide reproductive health services to their patients.

I asked the National Abortion Rights Action League - Washington (NARAL)

for information on this wave of violence. I thought I was reasonably well informed, but I was truly stunned. In the past 37 years, workers providing legal and constitutionally protected reproductive health services across the country have experienced the following:

- 8 murders
- 17 attempted murders
- 42 bombings
- 182 arsons
- 6,900+ acts of violence
- 19,000+ threats and acts of intimidation
- Many more failed bombings and arsons

I assume you and probably the vast majority of people you know would agree that this wave of terrorist violence violates a broadly shared principle that all workers should have a right to a healthy and safe workplace.

We can tie these issues together. I ask people: “Do you support the right of all workers who are engaged in legal work activities to a safe and healthy workplace?” I have yet to meet people who oppose this concept. Then I read them the statistics listed above. The follow-up questions are: “If you agreed that all workers should have a right to a safe and healthy workplace, do you agree that reproductive health care service workers across the country should have the same right?” “Will you stand in support of these tens of thousands of workers to a safe and healthy workplace?” “If yes, how do we show our support?” “If not, why not?”

The same approach can be used for the rights of patients to a safe and healthy place to receive their health care. I certainly haven’t met anyone who opposes this right. No health care worker or their patients should ever have to fear violence from political extremists.



Mark McDermott

I firmly believe we can use approaches like these to change the hearts and minds of many people and isolate the violent extremists and their allies. Advocating, tolerating, or excusing violence or intimidation toward people who are exercising their legal rights is intolerable.

I don’t pretend to know the best ways to be bolder about this issue. This is my way. What is yours? Our sisters and brothers are under attack. Regardless of the issues that we care passionately about, I hope all of us can agree that all workers providing reproductive health care services have a right to a safe workplace. Too many of us, including me, have been too quiet on this issue for too long. It is time to be loud and strong in our support.

I would love feedback about this article. You can email me at markmcdermott1@msn.com

Mark McDermott co-chairs PSARA’s Education Committee and serves on PSARA’s Executive Board.

Exxon Knew!

By Bobby Righi

This article is drawn from the Union of Concerned Scientists and from *Inside Climate News*, who broke the story of Exxon's treachery. Exxon became Exxon-Mobil in 1999.

The burning of fossil fuels is endangering life on our planet. Fumes from fossil fuels are responsible today for hundreds of thousands of deaths annually from heart disease and asthma, and for extreme weather events that also are taking the lives of hundreds of thousands.

How much death and destruction could have been avoided if we had cut back on fossil fuel use say 30 years ago? We can only guess. But now evidence has been made public that Exxon, the largest fossil fuel company in the world, knew of the danger of burning fossil fuels as early as the late 70's.

In July 1977, at a meeting at Exxon Corporation's headquarters, a senior company scientist named James F. Black addressed an audience of powerful oilmen. Black delivered a sobering message: carbon dioxide from the world's use of fossil fuels would warm the planet and could eventually endanger humanity. "In the first place, there is general scientific agreement that the most likely manner in which mankind is influencing the global climate is through carbon dioxide release from the burning of fossil fuels," he told them. Black said quick action was needed. "Present thinking," he wrote in a 1978 summary, "holds that man has a time window of 5 to 10 years before the need for hard decisions regarding changes in energy strategies might become critical."

In August, 1979, Exxon spent over a million dollars installing a state-of-the-art lab aboard the Esso Atlantic, one of the biggest supertankers of the time and then sent this floating lab into the North and South Atlantic oceans to measure how quickly the deep oceans could absorb atmospheric CO2. If

Exxon could pinpoint the answer, it would know how long it had before CO2 accumulation in the atmosphere could force a transition away from fossil fuels. They found that the oceans absorb only about 26 percent of all the releases from fossil fuel burning. That percentage is decreasing with the increase of CO2 in the atmosphere.

In 1982, in a corporate report labeled "not to be distributed externally," Exxon's environmental affairs office stated that heading off global warming "would require major reductions in fossil fuel combustion." Unless that happened, the report states, "there are some potentially catastrophic events that must be considered." And, Exxon also went public (a bit). Edward E. David, the head of Exxon Research, told a global warming conference financed by Exxon in October 1982 that "few people doubt that the world has entered an energy transition away from dependence upon fossil fuels and toward some mix of renewable resources that will not pose problems of CO2 accumulation." The only question, he said, was how fast this would happen.

So, what happened??? In the mid-1980's the price of oil dropped and Exxon cut employees, including many of the scientists. In 1988, James Hansen testified before congress about the threat of climate change, and Exxon decided all of this was too great a threat to their profit.

Exxon stopped funding climate change research in the late 80's and reversed course. They joined other oil and coal companies in paying millions



Bobby Righi

for a campaign of deception to mold public opinion and to stop any legislation that would lower the use of fossil fuels. They hired scientists who were willing to say climate change was not scientific. Through organizations like the American Petroleum Institute and the Western States Petroleum Association and the coal industry's Information Council on the Environment, they sowed confusion and fought any law -- local, state, national -- and any international agreements that would put a damper on burning fossil fuels. The coal barons went so far as to forge letters from the NAACP and communities of color in order to fight clean air legislation.

Since 1988, more than half of all industrial carbon pollution since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution has been emitted! Imagine if Exxon had told the truth on climate change! We could have averted some of the deaths and health problems caused by pollution. We could have limited some of

Continued on Page 11

ZoomCare—The Fight Gets Bigger

By Steve Marquardt

On February 22 PSARA followed a successful January action against the growing for-profit ZoomCare chain of clinics with a rally outside of ZoomCare's Capitol Hill Seattle location. This second action was twice as big as the first, with a wider coalition, and it featured keynote speaker Councilmember Kshama Sawant, who joined in our outrage that the ZoomCare chain continues to turn away Medicare, Medicaid and Tricare patients.

ZoomCare's response to our first protest deepened the coalition's resolve. A Zoom board member -- who is part of the chain's private equity backer Endeavour Capital, called PSARA president Robby Stern to argue that the era of "all things to all people" health care was over. He insisted that Zoom's focus on the young and healthy was the shape of the future—an argument repeated in a recent letter to PSARA from Zoom's Vice President of Public Affairs.

Rally co-sponsors and participants included Washington CAN, Physicians for a National Health Program, Health-care for All, the Seattle Labor Chorus'

"Flying Squad," UNITE HERE Local 8, and UFCW 21. The two unions linked the protest against ZoomCare to other worker struggles. UNITE HERE member Julia Dube--laid off by the Space Needle restaurant in retaliation for her union activism and vindicated by the NLRB--noted that the Wright family, who own the Space Needle restaurant, own a piece of ZoomCare as well through their investments in Endeavour Capital, Zoom's private equity backer.

In my own remarks representing UFCW 21, I read aloud some of the terrible reviews that Zoom's employees give their employer on the website Glassdoor.com, including "CEO is a bully but doesn't know it... culture of fear...." and "they treat providers like interns or children, or worse, robots."

UFCW 21 is also in the fight because Zoom's backer, Endeavour Capital, owns the non-union grocery chain New Seasons Market, which is currently trying to undercut grocery job standards on the land being developed next to the new Broadway Light Rail Station. In fact, New Seasons is trying to pressure its workers in Oregon to sign up for Zoom



Steve Marquardt front and center at the February 22 ZoomCare picket. (Photo: Garet Munger)

insurance, in effect asking them to get their health care from the company store.

So far, however, Zoom's attempt to expand into the insurance business is failing. Less than 160 of New Seasons' over 3,000 workers have chosen Zoom insurance, though workers report that management is "pushing" the plan hard. Zoom has also flopped on the Oregon Obamacare exchange, with only 772 individuals choosing it; far from the 4,500-10,000 Zoom predicted in the fawning Oregon business press.

In the face of these results, Zoom put its application to provide insurance in Washington State on hold for now, but PSARA members should expect that they will be back, as they try to remake healthcare in their own profit-driven, discriminatory image.

Inspired by Councilmember Sawant's call for truly universal healthcare, PSARA and its coalition partners plan another protest against ZoomCare's newest Seattle-area clinic in Ballard. **Join us at noon on April 19 at ZoomCare Ballard, 2038 NW Market Street, Seattle.**

Steve Marquardt is a researcher with UFCW 21 and a PSARA member.

First in January in Belltown, then in February on Broadway, next on April 19 at ZoomCare's Ballard location. They will get no rest as long as they continue their discriminatory business practices. (Photo: Garet Munger)





Lunch and Learn

Protecting, Strengthening and Expanding Social Security and Medicare for ALL Generations

**Thursday, April 28, 2016
11:45 a.m.–1:30 p.m.**

Senior Center in West Seattle
4217 SW Oregon Street, Seattle
206-932-4044 | www.sc-ws.org

Lunch (\$3) will be served at 11:45 a.m.

Tandoori Chicken, basmati rice; broccoli; cook's choice dessert. If you do not want this lunch, there is a cafe that serves soup, sandwich and/or salad for about \$4.50.

RSVP to Susan: outreachvp@psara.org or PSARA 206-448-9646

Please join Robby Stern, President of Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA) and Chair of Social Security Works Washington for lunch and a lively multigenerational discussion about the status of Social Security and Medicare now and for the next 50 years. And join other senior, health care advocacy and community-based organizations to see how we can work together to insure not only the preservation of Social Security and Medicare for future generations but also make the necessary changes to enhance benefits in both programs. All generations need to fight together to insure real retirement security today and tomorrow.

Social Security has been one of our government's most successful programs for over 80 years. It has helped seniors, children, families, and individuals with disabilities. Medicare is another successful program that, for more than 50 years, has provided seniors and other Social Security recipients' medical care. These programs have been successful and will continue to serve seniors and future seniors for many years to come. They are not going away. However, because of the deep income inequality that has become the reality in our country and the inability of the vast majority of our population to save for retirement, it is time to mount a campaign to expand these two vital programs.

Sponsors: Senior Center of West Seattle, Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action, Physicians for a National Health Program - Western WA, West Seattle Neighbors for Peace and Justice, Washington CAN, Puget Sound Old Lesbians Organizing for Change, Health Care for All-Washington, 34th District Democrats

Dangerous Liaisons

Republican Lawmakers and Right-Wing Gunmen

By Mike Andrew

The right-wing gunmen who took over Malheur Wildlife Refuge in Burns, Oregon, are now in prison awaiting trial, but some of their co-conspirators are still on the loose.

They are likely to remain at large, however, because they are not simple ranchers or farmers, like the people who were taken into custody by federal officers. They are "respectable" Republican legislators from several Western states.

In fact, one of the leading co-conspirators is Republican Rep. Matt Shea from the Spokane Valley.

According to reporter John Sepulvado of Oregon Public Broadcasting, Shea and other Republican politicians "planned and participated in key aspects of [the] refuge occupation."

Shea led a group of Republican officials from four states trying to negotiate with the Harney County sheriff and FBI on behalf of the occupiers, Sepulvado says.

While they claimed to be interested in de-escalating the conflict, they were in fact trying to elicit tactical information from local and federal law enforcement officials. Shea and his group then visited the gunmen holding the wildlife refuge and revealed what they learned about the plans of law enforcement officers.

"[Shea's group] visited the refuge, which was closed to the public," Sepulvado reports. "The lawmakers acknowledge they fed the militants information gathered from that meeting, and militant leaders talked openly about what they learned from those disclosures."

In another case, Shea's associate Anthony Bosworth, an unsuccessful candidate for Yakima County sheriff, traveled to the occupied refuge at Shea's request as a "security specialist."

Bosworth stayed on, and helped one of the occupation leaders escape.



Best friends forever: At left, Rep. Matt Shea, posing in front of a flag. At right, occupation leader, Ammon Bundy, with his posse, posing in front of microphones.

In fact, one of Shea's group, Greenlee County, Arizona, Commissioner Robert Corbell, said that they knew in advance that the gunmen were planning an armed takeover of a federal installation, although they didn't know which one it would be.

Shea is no stranger to Ammon Bundy, leader of the gunmen who raided the Malheur Wildlife Refuge. In fact, Shea is an old ally of Bundy's father, Cliven Bundy, who led a similar armed standoff with federal officers in Nevada in 2014.

Daddy Bundy's issue was that he claimed the right to graze his cattle on federal property without paying land use fees like every other rancher does. The federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) charges fees to help pay for conservation measures.

Once he got into an armed confrontation with federal authorities, Bundy called for support from armed right-wing militias – the Oathkeepers, the White Mountain Militia, and the Praetorian Guard.

He also got support from Matt Shea and a group of Republican politicians, who formed the Coalition of Western States – better known by its acronym, COWS. The group now claims 50 members in six Western states.

Shea also made a series of videos castigating the federal government at Bundy's Bunkerville, Nevada, ranch.

It was the COWS who visited Bundy's son Ammon at Malheur Wildlife Refuge. In addition to relaying information on the plans of law enforcement, Shea and company issued a press release defending both the Bundys.

Their charges against federal authorities in Oregon were almost word for word what they said previously in Nevada.

"This is a war on rural America," the COWS said in a press release. "The Coalition of Western States stands ready to defend [against] the continued federal overreach and once and for [all] restore management of public lands to the states where it constitutionally belongs."

Some of the COWS made even more extreme statements.

Nevada Assemblywoman Michelle Fiore charged that "the BLM has become a bureaucratic agency of — basically — terrorism. So at what point do we band together as elected officials and say, 'Enough is enough of the BLM?'"

Ammon Bundy was arrested with his brother Randy and three other gunmen on January 26.

Cliven Bundy was arrested at Portland Airport in February, on charges stemming from the 2014 standoff.

Shea and his colleagues remain at large.

Life and Death on the Mexican Border

By Mark McDermott

It is Sunday morning four miles from the Mexican border southwest of Tucson. We begin our hike up a rugged canyon on extremely rough trails that, at times, are hard to follow. We are carrying gallon jugs of water that we will leave for anyone who is hiking and may be in need of life-saving water. We have no idea who might drink the water, but we are sharing it out of the goodness of our hearts and a belief that we have a responsibility to our fellow humans in need.

It is illegal under federal law to aid and abet immigrants who are crossing the border without proper papers. We are not aiding and abetting illegal immigration. We are sharing water with anyone who needs water. We have no idea who might need water. We don't want anyone to die of thirst, heat stroke, or exposure in this harsh desert.

There are no accurate statistics that record all of the deaths in the deserts and mountains on both sides of the border. In 2013, the Pima County (Tucson) medical examiner reported over 2,100 human remains found in the deserts and mountains since 2001 covering three of the four Arizona border counties. How many more bodies are still unfound? How many in Texas, New Mexico, and California? What about the Mexican side of the border?

It is getting hot as we work our way toward the border. First we find a torn pair of pants. What happened? Then we find one worn out tennis shoe with no string. We are hiking in our \$150 REI rugged hiking boots, and the jagged rocks and rough terrain are pounding our feet. Worn out tennis shoes hiking at night - twist an ankle, break a leg and how much water can you carry? We keep finding more discarded clothes. Who lost their shoe? This moment has haunted me for days. It is a man's shoe. What is his name? Where is his family?

Is he alive? Is he dead? Is he safe in the US? Is he in a US detention center? For us, he is a man with no name. To his family, he is real. To me he is a powerful symbol of a world that needs more justice and equity on both sides of the border.

Who abandons their clothing? We are told that people who are delirious and disoriented from thirst and heat start throwing their belongings away as they struggle through the desert. It is hard to find the words to express the surge of emotions as we keep finding the remnants of unknown lives in crisis.

We finally reached the border. It is a six foot-high barbed wire fence. It has a gate with a piece of wire holding it closed. We could have walked into Mexico by lifting the wire and pushing the gate. We did not. For thousands of years, native peoples walked through these lands with no border. Today, thousands die trying to cross this artificial line that separates us from our brothers and sisters of other nations.

We left four gallons of water for any hikers who need a drink. Maybe they are hikers who need the exercise. Maybe they are people fleeing drug cartel violence, repressive governments backed by the US, unjust and desperate economic conditions that benefit multinational corporations, or women and children fleeing violence. We will never know who will drink our water.

It took over four hours to hike the eight miles and drop our water. By that time it is hot. I drank a half gallon of water in my effort to bring one gallon



An obelisk marking the US-Mexican border in rough terrain near Nogales.

to someone in need. Perhaps we will save a life today. We may never know. I thought about this out loud. My experienced partners buoyed my spirits by reporting that they have met people who deeply thanked them for their work and assured them that they were indeed saving lives.

I am now writing in my comfortable Airbnb house in Tucson. That canyon, the shoe, and the torn and discarded clothes are far away in space, but they will remain with me for years to come. When I hear the angry hateful people lashing out at desperate immigrants risking their lives for a better future, I wish I could open their hearts to the inhumanity of our immigration policies and the need for true justice and compassion on both sides of the border.

The migrants are our brothers and sisters. As a people we can do better, but we must feel the inhumanity of our policies both at home and abroad.

Mark McDermott is Co-chair of PSARA's Education Committee and serves on the PSARA Executive Board.

"Being tortured has been the best experience in my life."

Part IV of an interview with David Ayala, organizer with Working Washington

By Peter Constantini, reprinted from *Foreign Policy in Focus*

Editor's Note: Beginning in January, we have serialized this interview with David Ayala, now an organizer with Working Washington. In Parts I-III, Ayala recounts how he became an opponent of El Salvador's right-wing government, how he was captured by the military, and tortured in prison. The rest of the interview will appear in subsequent issues of The Retiree Advocate.

His training taught him: "Keep the conversation with the torturer going, because if he is talking he's not beating you up."

Ayala was close to finishing a degree in psychology. One of his captors asked him, "So are you a psychologist?" And we start talking about psychology, and I start asking questions about all this stuff. It was a nice conversation."

Another interrogator talked about communism, and Ayala explained that he wasn't a communist. "It was a really interesting conversation, but that leaves you mentally tired."

The training taught him other ways of keeping his spirits up. When he was being tortured, he repeated to himself a sort of mantra that helped him a lot: "I'm not the first and I'm not the last that this will happen to. Many have been tortured, many more will be tortured. This shows that I'm on the good side of justice."

Another principle they taught him was: "Nobody is your friend inside prison. They may put informers in there with you."

A strain of gallows humor developed among the prisoners. Ayala remembers being pulled out of his cell and lined up, face to the wall, with other prisoners he couldn't see. The guards were brutally beating a man in handcuffs, a professor they'd made stand face to the wall all day. Then one guard yelled: "Professor, three frog jumps." The professor tried to do the frog jumps, but he fell down. The guards laughed at him and beat him some more.

Later, the guards left all the prisoners standing there against the wall. When they were out of earshot, one of the prisoners said, imitating the voice of the guard: "Professor, three frog jumps." And the professor tried again to do three frog jumps.

After Ayala was transferred to Mariona, the public prison, he saw the professor again. He called out to him: "Professor, three frog jumps." The professor turned and stared at him: "It was you, wasn't it, asshole!"

At other moments, the pressure got to Ayala. "I remember one time that I felt really down, because that's what they want." One of his fellow union organizers had escaped from El Salvador before they could arrest him and was granted refugee status in another country. The interrogators asked for information about the other organizer. "And then they said, well, we know that he's out, we know that he's eating well, and look at you! You're fucked up!" Ayala let out a deep belly laugh.

"And then I didn't want to be given electrical shocks. I didn't want to be raped, you know? And then my fear in those moments was dealing with answering questions and being focused, but at the same time being defensive and trying to evade that stuff."

In one of those moments of weakness, he prayed: "Do what you have to do, but let me do what I can do. Because I have eyes, I have a mind, I have hands, I can do stuff."

Playbooks

Numerous Salvadoran officers, including many top commanders, had been trained at the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia.

There, militaries from around Latin America were taught torture techniques from the same CIA manuals later used under the George W. Bush administration, as revealed in the recent

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report on CIA torture. Some of the Salvadoran officers trained there were implicated in the worst massacres and assassinations committed during the war.

But many prisoners had training of their own. "One day I was so crummy and tired and down," Ayala remembers. "And they brought me to hear someone get beaten up. I was praying that they wouldn't torture me. Because if they torture me, I will start talking, making stuff up to give them answers.

"And I was there, front to the wall, hearing this guy they're beating up, but the guy was reacting in a different way.

"Because if the torturer hits you, don't show that you're suffering. That's part of the playbook. Show that they need to respect you."

"You could hear how hard he was being hit." Ayala grunted gutturally. "And then he said, 'Sir, you're hurting me.' And then later on there's a political argument. And the torturer was saying, 'You're fucking killing people.' And the guy says, 'No, you are the ones who are doing that.'"

"And I thought, 'Oh my God!' That guy inspired me."

Simple things became transcendent. "It's incredible how attached you are to your clothes. Your clothes are part of you. And I realized that at the moment they were going to take my photo to log me in. They kept me all the time with shorts and a military t-shirt. But when they were going to take my photo, they brought me my own shoes and clothes.

"It was interesting, the feeling I had about seeing my blue All-Star sneakers, my blue jeans, my striped blue shirt. I still remember that stuff. It was like a fresh breeze under a mango tree after a long day's work, a long journey. Just that stuff coming to me. Simple things."

David Ayala and Peter Constantini are both PSARA members.

Exxon Knew!

Continued from Page 5

PSARA Statement on the Colstrip Power Plant

the droughts and floods and extreme storms that have caused enormous suffering. The inability to forge a reasonable climate policy is in large part the result of the lies promoted by the fossil fuel corporations and their immoral investment of billions of dollars to impact policy decision. Their enormous profits are based on these lies.

The state attorney offices of New York, Vermont, and California are investigating ExxonMobil and Shell and may sue under laws related to fraud and violations of environmental laws. PSARA has joined with 22 other organizations to ask that Bob Ferguson, the Attorney General of Washington, also begin investigations. (He said that he could not comment.)

Many groups are demanding that the U.S. Department of Justice investigate. In early March, the Justice Department referred a request to investigate ExxonMobil to the FBI's criminal investigation unit. An investigation is a good start, but ExxonMobil and Shell need to be forced to stop extracting fossil fuels.

ExxonMobil should be made to pay by providing support to victims of climate impacts; helping developing countries to leapfrog dirty energy and improve their standards of living; and paying for a just transition where good jobs in a clean economy are guaranteed. The drive for profits was a major cause of our present crisis. ExxonMobil is the richest company in history, and it made that money by knowingly stealing our grandkids' futures.

Bobby Righi is Administrative Vice President of PSARA. She also serves on PSARA's Environmental Committee.

**True patriotism hates
injustice in its own land more
than anywhere else.**

Clarence Darrow

The following statement was delivered to the Washington Utilities & Transportation Committee by Rich Voget, a member of PSARA's Environmental Committee. It was delivered at a public hearing in response to Puget Sound Electric's 20-year plan for the Colstrip coal-fired power plant in Montana.

My name is Richard Voget and I am representing Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action and the Sierra Club.

Last year it was announced that the world's climate had crept past 1 degree Celsius of warming. And the fossil fuels we have burned in the last 40 years haven't had their effect yet. They will heat the climate another half a degree Celsius. We can only afford to burn 20 percent of the world's known fossil fuel reserves. If the business-as-usual mode of burning fossil fuels continues unchecked, our children and grandchildren will be living in a climate catastrophe.

PSE's proposal is simply more business as usual for the next 20 years. They have underestimated the costs of continuing to operate the Colstrip power plant. Because the ash pond is expanding, the longer they burn coal, the more expensive it will be to clean up, and the cost of the health problems caused by the burning of coal must be acknowledged in accounting the cost. They have overestimated the price of transitioning to wind powered electricity.

You are in the position to save ratepayers money and save the climate by only approving capital projects for renewable energy. Also approve PSE using dedicated funds for the closure and cleanup of the Colstrip power plant. After helping with the cleanup, current employees need to be assisted in a just transition to other employment.

The United States at the Paris Climate Conference pledged to limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius. Telling PSE to transition to renewable power will help the US keep that pledge. Continuing to burn fossil fuel as business as usual is no longer viable. Please move forward without further delay.

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

PSARA Government Relations Committee: 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Thursday, April 7, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave., Seattle. All welcome as we discuss activity leading up to the November election.

Green Lake Discussion Group: Noon to 1:30 p.m., Thursday, April 14, Green Lake Library, 7354 East Green Lake Drive N., Seattle. Brown bag lunch. Topic: Immigration – What issues are involved in this debate? How do you think they will play out in our communities? All are welcome. For further information contact Susan at sjlevy.01@gmail.com

Demonstrate Against ZoomCare: 12 p.m. – 1 p.m., Tuesday, April 19, Zoom-Care clinic in Ballard, 2038 NW Market St., Seattle 98107. ZoomCare, a for-profit health care provider, refuses to take Medicare or Medicaid patients. Their profit is based on providing service to the young and healthy.

PSARA Diversity Committee: 11 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Thursday, April 21, Seattle office Washington State Labor Council, 321 16 Avenue S., Seattle. All are welcome as we continue planning our activities for 2016.

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

Lunch & Learn at the West Seattle Senior Center: 11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, April 28, 4217 SW Oregon St., Seattle, WA 98116. Topic: Protecting, Strengthening, and Expanding Social Security and Medicare for ALL Generations. Lunch (\$3.00) will be served at 11:45. See flyer on Page 7.

May Day March: Rally – 2 p.m., March – 3 p.m., Sunday, May 1, Seattle Judkins Park, 2150 S. Norman St (behind St. Mary's Church). Theme: Workers Rights and Immigrant Rights. Join the PSARA contingent for this annual march.

GIVE BIG DAY: All day until midnight, Tuesday, May 3, Go to givebig.seattle-foundation.org and enter PSARA Education Fund in FIND AN ORGANIZATION field. Click on the magnifying glass. Click on Donate. Fill out the required information on the online donation form and click Continue.

