

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

Vol XXXIV, No 2

February 2019

**Medicare:
What's Next?!**

By Robby Stern

Page 5

Don't Miss Senior Lobby Day, February 26!

By PSARA's Government Relations Committee

In Washington State, we are fortunate to have a governor and legislature who plan to make sure the people in this state are protected from some of the craziness in D.C.

PSARA's Legislative Agenda focuses on six issues that are important to seniors: retirement security, a more progressive state budget, low-income affordable housing, health care, environmental justice, and economic justice. See Page 7 for our full legislative agenda.

We are focusing on what we can likely achieve this year. Three important issues are:

1) The Long-Term Care Trust Act (HB 1087/SB 5331) that will assist families with the cost of long-term care. The legislation creates a trust fund through low paycheck deductions, and after a person is vested, they have access to \$100.00 a day for 365 days to assist with the cost of long term care. See Page 4 for Ruth Egger's testimony on the LTCTA.

2) The Governor has proposed a package of climate protections, that are, for the most part, encapsulated in bills HB 1110, 1112, 1113, and SB 5116. See Bobby Righi's article on Page 3 for an analysis of these measures.

3) Low-income seniors are being pushed out of King County by property taxes. The Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Exemption RCW 84.36. addresses this, but currently only about 30 percent of eligible seniors take advantage of this exemption. WHY? Two major reasons are that the



The PSARA gang in Olympia, 2017

(Photo: Garet Munger)

income levels are too low for the current market and the form is too complicated, with 16 separate items used to calculate disposable income. PSARA supports raising the senior property tax exemption, simplifying it, and indexing it to inflation.

These goals, along with other items on our Agenda, are attainable this session with our involvement. The rule of thumb is for every letter received by an elected member, there are 100 other constituents who feel the same way. It is even greater for personal visits, as we do on Lobby Day.

Please plan to attend Senior Lobby Day on February 26th. We make appointments with our legislators, provide all the information we need, provide breakfast and lunch, and transportation from Seattle. To get up to speed on current legislation, Pam Crone, our lobbyist and members of the Legislature will meet with us. It is very important that we talk with our Legislators about the issues on PSARA's Legislative Agenda.

To attend Senior Lobby Day and take part in this critical educational work, it is critical that you pre-register. PSARA must provide the Senior Lobby organization a complete count of our members who plan to attend by February 20. Reserving a spot in advance also means PSARA will cover the your registration fee which includes a continental breakfast and lunch.

To reserve a place, please RSVP to organizer@psara.org or call 206-261-8110. Indicate your legislative district when you RSVP.

Let us know if you need a ride or can offer rides. A certain number of seats will be available on vans provided by IAM 751 from the union hall in South Park. We will match you with those seats if possible.

PSARA's Government Relations Committee usually meets the first Thursday of every month at the Washington State Labor Council, 321 16th Avenue S, Seattle.

The Retiree ADVOCATE

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16th Avenue S, Seattle, Washington, 98144. Phone
206-254-4910.

Officers of PSARA Education Fund:

President: **Robby Stern**,
psaraedfund@psara.org
Vice President: **Sally Davis**
Secretary-Treasurer: **Garet Munger**
Advocate Editor: **Mike Andrew**,
organizer@psara.org
Associate Editor: **Bob Shimabukuro**
Photographer: **Garet Munger**
Printing: **Trade Printery**

PSARA Directory:

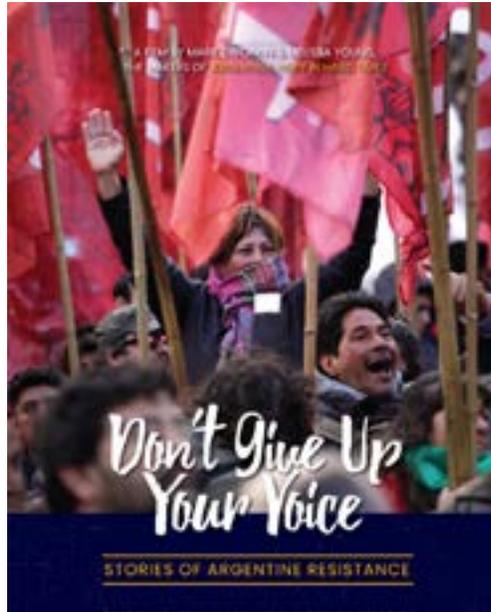
Co-Presidents: **Jessica Bonebright & Tim Burns**, president@psara.org
Administrative Vice President:
Maureen Bo, adminvp@psara.org
Membership Vice Presidents: **Karen Richter & Bobby Righi**, membershipvp@psara.org
Outreach Vice President: **Bob Swanson**,
outreachvp@psara.org
Secretaries: **Andrea Sawczuk & Mike Warren**, secretary@psara.org
Treasurer: **Tom Lux**, treasurer@psara.org
Race/Gender Equity Committee Chairs:
Frank Irigon & Bob Shimabukuro,
racegender@psara.org
Education Committee Chair: **Steve Bauck**,
educationcommittee@psara.org
Climate & Environmental Justice Committee
Chairs: **Kristen Beifus & Tom Lux**,
climateenviro@psara.org
Fundraising Committee Chair: **Karen Richter**,
fundraising@psara.org
Government Relations Committee Chairs:
Mindi Lee & Pam Lux,
govrelations@psara.org

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PSARA on the Move

Looking for something to do? Something fun, but at the same time something that will make a difference? The next couple of months will be filled with exciting PSARA events. Here are some of them:



Film Showing:
Don't Give Up Your Voice.
Sunday, February 3
2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Washington State Labor Council
321 16th Avenue S, Seattle

A 40-minute documentary by PSARA members and award-winning filmmakers Mark Dworkin and Melissa Young. The film chronicles the 2015 election of Argentine President Mauricio Macri, a Trump-like figure who campaigned against immigrants, workers, and the poor.

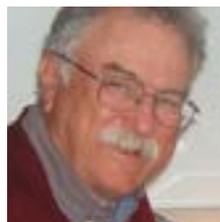
Following the film there will be discussion with Mark and Melissa and light refreshments.

The Long-Term Care Trust Act (HB 1087/SB 5331)

In this year's legislative session, we have a very good chance of passing the Long-Term Care Trust Act (HB 1087/SB 5331). This measure would give families the security of knowing that financial help is available for the care they need when they need it. We have two forums on the Long-Term Care Trust Act scheduled:

Sunday, February 10
2:00 - 3:30 p.m.
Olympic Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship
1033 Barr Road, Port Angeles

Tuesday, February 12
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Langley United Methodist Church
Fellowship Hall
301 Anthes Avenue, Langley



Meet PSARA Member Tim Wheeler, discussing his book
News from Rain Shadow Country
Sunday March 31
2:00 p.m.

Washington State Labor Council
321 16th Avenue S

We are excited to announce that Nick Licata, former Seattle City Council Member, author, activist, and PSARA member will be the emcee for the event.

Since 1966, Tim has been a news reporter and editor for the *Worker, Daily World*, and now writes for *People's World*. The book is a collection of Tim's articles that tell many fascinating stories about Tim's life and the people he covered as a reporter. Tim will also bring his autoharp and lead us in a few songs. For more information on Tim's book check out Robby Stern's book review in the January *Advocate*. Contact Karen Richter at fundraising@PSARA if you have questions.

Climate Legislation is on the Agenda

By Bobby Righi

In the last few months, three national and international studies have been published telling us that climate change is even worse than expected. The federal government blows it off.

But this year, more climate champions have been elected to the state legislature, and things seem hopeful that the Governor will get his package of climate proposals passed into law. These include:

- 100% Clean energy used to generate electricity. Inslee's plan requires Washington utilities to start transitioning to a carbon-neutral electricity supply by 2030, and puts the state on a pathway to entirely eliminate fossil fuels from electricity generation by 2045. Senator Reuven Carlyle and 13 other co-sponsors have introduced a bill, SB 5116, which mandates these goals.

- Cleaner buildings. The building sector contributes 27% of overall greenhouse gas emissions in Washington and they have grown by 50% in the past 20 years. Inslee's proposal encourages retrofitting of commercial buildings and empowers local government to accelerate clean buildings through modernized codes. He also plans to build 750 low-income housing units with net-zero emissions and 4 net-zero carbon schools. As we go to press, there are no bills yet on this issue.

- Clean Transportation. Inslee proposes much more infrastructure for electric vehicles and tax relief for their purchase. He is requesting money to convert two ferries to hybrid energy and to buy two electric ferries. He also wants to continue to work toward a high speed train linking Portland, Oregon, Seattle, and Vancouver, BC. As we go to press, no bills have been submitted on this issue.

- Clean Fuel Standard (CFS). This is an attempt to make the fuels used for transportation less carbon intensive. The whole process of the production of fuel is included in measuring green-

house gas (GHG) emissions: drilling, refining, transporting, and distributing, not just its final use for transportation. Some possibilities are bio-gas and corn produced ethanol. (Industrial agriculture is a huge emitter of GHG, so hopefully, the GHG emitted to grow the corn will be counted in determining if the fuel is "clean.") Cleaner fuel for cars and trucks would cut approximately 30% of state GHG emissions.

This program would be administered by the Department of Ecology. B.C, Oregon, and California already have CSF programs. Rep Fitzgibbons has introduced HB 1110 to implement this plan.

- Eliminating HFC Super Pollutants. Hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, are greenhouse gases that can be thousands of times more damaging to the climate than carbon and their use is growing in the state. Rep. Fitzgibbons has introduced HB 1112 to the legislature to ban HFCs.

All of the proposals work together to reduce GHG emissions to 25% below the 1990 level by 2035. This is in line with the targets set by the Washington Legislature in 2006, and we will have to work hard to get these passed. **BUT...**

THE REDUCTION GOALS ARE STILL TOO LOW!

In 2014, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its 5th Assessment Report (AR5) updating the current global understanding of climate impacts and future projections. The Washington Department of Ecology took this assessment seriously and in December 2016 advised the legislature that the limits set in 2006 are too low. To be effective, the requirements should be: By 2035, reduce overall GHG emissions in the state to 40 percent below 1990 levels. And, by 2050, reduce overall GHG emissions in the state to 80 percent below 1990 levels.



Bobby Righi campaigning for I-1631
(Photo: Garet Munger)

Representative Slater, from the 48th District, has introduced HB 1113, which brings Washington's commitment to cut GHG emissions in line with what is needed. It increases the target for 2035 from a 25% reduction to a 40% reduction, and the target for 2050 from a 50% reduction to an 80% reduction.

This is a big order, and even with the Democrats in charge we know that we are going to have to fight hard to make sure these bills pass.

The Democrats controlled the legislature last year too, and they didn't pass a single climate bill. We need to track all progressive bills -- single-payer health care, long-term care, supplemental retirement support, and the many climate change bills all during this session and write letters, make calls and visits, carry banners, and hold sit-ins if necessary to make sure the legislature does the right thing!

Bobby Righi is PSARA's Membership Co-VP and Co-Chair of the PSARA Climate and Environmental Justice Committee.

Testimony on HB 1087/SB 5331, the Long-Term Care Trust Act

By Ruth Egger

On January 16, PSARA member Ruth Egger testified in Olympia about why we need the Long-Term Care Trust Act. This is a transcript of her testimony.

Hello, I am Ruth Egger, representing Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action. I want to talk to you about the importance of passing House Bill 1087, the Long-Term Care Trust Act. I have worked in the gerontology field for the past 40 years, and recently retired from Homage Senior Services as a Family Caregiver Advocate. I worked with unpaid family caregivers and saw first hand how caring for a loved one can cause the caregiver to become physically and emotionally weaker, and most of the time to get sick themselves. The stress can be overwhelming, especially if they have no other help in the house. Most often caregivers are wives and are 75-90 years old themselves.

I am now the caregiver for my 90-year-old parents. My father was a school principal and my mother a teacher. Fortunately, they have a pension, so were able to afford to move into a retirement community that offers independent and assisted living. But the rent, food, and utilities are basically all they think they can afford. They don't believe they can access the assistance offered at their residential community, which they desperately need. They are frightened at the expense of an aide, the loss of my dad's pension if he should die first, and of losing their savings.

My dad has been sick for two and a half years after falling and breaking a hip and experiencing severe depression. He has become physically, cognitively, and emotionally weaker. My 91-year-old mother has taken the role of the family caregiver. She has to make sure he drinks water, so he doesn't get dehydrated, takes his meds,



PSARA members Tim Burns, Pam Lux, Jessica Bonebright, Mindi Lee, and Ruth Egger in Olympia.

eats regular meals including the one offered in the dining room, supervise him in the shower, and help him put on his shoes, socks, and pants. She has also had to take over paying the bills, paying the taxes, and other administrative duties. She has been reluctant to hire help in the retirement home due to the expense and her fear of being without enough money in her future. This reluctance has caused her to suffer now. Her chronic illnesses have become more acute and she suffers from lack of sleep and exhaustion. Consequently, I have become more involved in their

daily care and must drive from Seattle to Issaquah on a regular basis.

If they had a public long-term care insurance, which would provide \$100 a day, they would feel less afraid to hire the help they need, and possibly my mother would not be at risk of increased stress and physical strain. Thank you.

Ruth Egger is PSARA's representative to Washingtonians for a Responsible Future, the coalition that is leading advocacy for the Long-Term Care Trust Act. She is a retired social worker and family caregiver advocate.

Medicare: What Next!?

By Robby Stern

Medicare for All and expansion of Social Security are significant policy issues with the new majority in the House of Representatives. Rep. Pramila Jayapal is the Co-chair of the House Progressive Caucus, the largest caucus within the House Democratic majority. Rep. Jayapal also co-chairs the Medicare for All Caucus, which includes Rep. Adam Smith. All six Democratic House members from Washington and Sen. Murray are members of the Expand Social Security Caucus.

We anticipate debates and possible votes in the House over the next two years on expansion of these two social insurance programs. It is our goal and the goal of progressive allies in the Congress that expansion of Social Security and Medicare be important issues in the 2020 elections.

The PSARA Education Fund and PSARA as well as Social Security Works-WA and the Washington Health Care is a Human Right Coalition will continue our advocacy and education to build support for expansion of Medicare and Social Security. We will do all that we can to encourage the national momentum.

News from the Center for Medicare Advocacy (CMA)

CMA is a national resource providing information about Medicare and patient rights. Below is a lengthy excerpt from CMA regarding existing underutilized Medicare coverage for home care.

"Medicare-Covered Home Health Care Can Help People with Long-term Conditions

Medicare covers certain health care provided at home **when an individual is unable to leave home without help and has a doctor's order for home care that includes skilled nursing and therapy.** *There is no time limit to coverage as long as the individual continues to need help leaving home and needs skilled nursing or therapy.* When these standards are met, Medicare also covers care provided by home health aides.

The Medicare home health benefit has been misunderstood and underutilized.

People are often told Medicare will not pay if a person's condition is not "improving." This is not true. Medicare is available for skilled nursing and therapy intended to maintain a person's condition, prevent deterioration, or slow decline.

What services are covered under the Medicare home health benefit?

- Skilled nursing
- Home health aides for up to 28 hours a week combined with skilled nursing care (in some cases, up to 35 hours a week, if needed, as documented by the doctor)

- Skilled physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech language pathology services

- Medical social services
- Medical supplies

Helpful Tips:

- Family members cannot be required to help provide care in order for the patient to receive Medicare coverage.

- Home health agencies must submit a claim to Medicare upon the request of a beneficiary. A claim decision is required in order to appeal.

- A new rule prohibits agencies from discontinuing services without a doctor's order.

- **The doctor is the patient's most important ally in obtaining and retaining home care."**

At the end of 2018, the Center for Medicare Advocacy issued a platform for the improvement of Medicare. This platform will help inform the discussion in Congress about Medicare services and the coverage of a Medicare for All program.

CMA platform for the improvement of Medicare:

1. **Consumer Protections and Quality Coverage for All Medicare Beneficiaries** (Including Parity Between Traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage)

- Cap out-of-pocket costs in traditional Medicare

- Require Medigap plans to be available to all individuals in traditional Medicare, regardless of pre-existing conditions and age ("Guarantee Issue" and "Community Rating")

- Ensure all benefits in Medicare Advantage are also available in traditional Medicare....

- Simplify enrollment in traditional Medicare, Part D and Medigap, and ease transitions from other insurances to Medicare

- Improve consumer protections in Medicare Advantage

- o Standardize benefit packages,
- o Strengthen network adequacy requirements

- o Strengthen plan oversight
- o Strengthen marketing protections

- Ensure the Medicare appeals system is cost-effective, accessible and fair

2. Reduce Ongoing Barriers to Care

- Eliminate the harm of hospital "Observation Status"

- Home Health – Ensure access to coverage is actually available for all beneficiaries who meet coverage criteria, ensure access to legally authorized home health aides...

- Jimmo Implementation (short-hand for a settlement agreement in a law suit brought against the Department of Health & Human Services) – Ensure beneficiaries with longer-term, chronic, and/or debilitating conditions have full access to skilled nursing, therapy and related care needed to maintain their conditions or slow decline

3. Improve Traditional Medicare

- Add oral health, audiology, vision coverage

- Restructure Medicare to make it comprehensive, simpler and affordable

- Increase Low-Income Protections in the Medicare Savings Program (at least on par with ACA subsidies)

- Long-term Care – Add coverage over time...."

Medicare for All, a more comprehensive Medicare program, and an expanded Social Security program will benefit present and future generations. We will work together with allies across the country to win this battle.

At the same time, the PSARA Education Fund and PSARA will educate and advocate in the 2019 Washington legislative session for the passage of **HB 1087/SB 5331**, the Washington Long-Term Care Trust Act, and other legislation that will expand quality, affordable health care coverage.

100th Anniversary of the Seattle General Strike

By Tom Lux

When World War I broke out, the USA was unprepared for war. To increase ship production, Congress established the Emergency Fleet Corporation (EFC) to oversee ship construction. Under EFC supervision, shipbuilding in Puget Sound expanded rapidly to 37 shipyards and more than 35,000 workers. This made the shipyards the largest employer in Seattle.

With this also came the elimination of direct bargaining with the companies. For more than a year, the shipyard workers worked without a raise on the understanding that wages would increase at war's end. Once the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, the Metal Trade Unions started to negotiate with the largest shipyard, Skinner and Eddy Shipyards, who agreed to a small increase to the elite crafts. The Shipping Board stepped in and sent a telegram to the shipyard owners ordering them to "STAND FIRM OR LOSE YOUR STEEL ALLOTMENT." The telegram was delivered by "mistake" to the Metal Trades office rather than the employer.

This was the final straw for the Unions, and on January 21, 1919, 35,000 workers went on strike in the shipyards.

The next day, January 22, the Central Labor Council began talking about support for the strikers, and the idea of a general sympathy strike was formed. The ensuing debate showed clearly that both sides saw the conflict through a broad lens. "We knew that if the metal trades were forced to their knees our turn would come next," said a plasterer explaining his local's pro-strike vote. One by one, unions voted to support the strike. In all, 300 delegates from 101 unions voted to strike. They then elected a Strike Committee. Thursday, February 6, at 10:00 a.m. was to be the start of the strike. The committee established sub committees to handle all the details. The strike was joined by others; The Japanese Association of Labor, Tacoma Labor Council, and Ab-



The Seattle General Strike earned headlines across the nation and across oceans. In an extraordinary act of solidarity, members of more than one hundred unions had voted to stop work in support of shipyard workers who had already been on strike for two weeks.

To commemorate this historical event a years' worth of activities are planned by the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association, Bridges Center for Labor Studies, Labor Archives, WSLC, King County Labor Council, Museum of History and Industry and many more groups. You can find all the events on the Solidarity Centennial Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/solidaritycentennial/>

Jan 16, UW Jim Gregory's book signing – "The Seattle General Strike Centennial Edition" – Third Place Books, Seward Park

Feb 2, MOHAI presents the film – "Labor Wars"

Feb 4, UW Jim Gregory's book signing – "The Seattle General Strike Centennial Edition" - University Book Store

Feb 6, MOHAI presents Historic Dramatic Recreation of the strike

Feb 7, MOHAI – "Witness to Revolution"

**FEB 9, Pacific NW Labor History Association
SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE BUS TOUR**

Bus tour 9:30 – 12:30

**Starting and ending at the Seattle Labor Temple
Followed by a free soup kitchen and at 1:00 pm the
LABOR ARCHIVES Annual Event with entertainment
PNLHA members Free**

Non-members \$25 (Includes Membership & a 2020 PNLHA calendar)

"Nothing Moved but the Tide"

erden Labor Council also struck. Forty thousand non-union employees were also idled by lack of transport and work.

Mayor Ole Hanson described Seattle on the morning of February 6, "Streetcar gongs ceased their clamor; newsboys cast their unsold papers into the street; from the doors of mill and factory, store and workshop, streamed 65,000 workingmen. School children with fear in their hearts hurried homeward. The life stream of a great city stopped."

The strike committee kept things peaceful and running. People stayed home who were not directly involved in the strike. People were fed at dining halls, the cooperatives gave credit to people needing food, hospitals had food and clean laundry, some power was on, and there was nothing for all the military who had been deployed to Seattle to do but sit around.

Continued on Page 11



PSARA 2019 Legislative Agenda

PSARA opposes cuts to programs that provide vital services to seniors, children, and low- and moderate-income families. We support efforts to pass progressive revenue measures that achieve the goal of funding education and protecting essential social service programs.

Retirement Security:

PSARA supports efforts to create a state-based long-term care social insurance program to enhance retirement security. PSARA will work to pass HB 1087/SB 5331, the Long-Term Care Trust Act, to assist families with the cost of long-term care.

State Budget:

PSARA supports a more progressive revenue system and legislation to increase transparency and accountability in the budget process including a progressive capital gains tax.

PSARA supports requiring the legislature to adopt a transparent budget accounting for tax exemptions and their impact on the biennial budget.

PSARA supports the elimination of tax exemptions that do not have a demonstrated public benefit.

Housing:

PSARA supports allocation of at least \$200 million to the Housing Trust Fund to provide a much larger stock of low-income housing for the growing population of seniors who rely in great part or solely on Social Security as their source of income, as well as for many Washington residents who are unable to afford adequate housing.

PSARA supports raising the senior property tax exemption, simplifying it, and indexing it to inflation.

PSARA supports changes to the landlord-tenant laws which presently allow for unjust evictions, unfair leases, and steep financial penalties charged to tenants, all of which can push low-income people, including seniors, into homelessness.

Health Care:

PSARA believes that comprehensive, affordable health care is a fundamental human right. We will support legislation that furthers the goal of universal health care coverage in Washington.

PSARA continues its ongoing support for the Washington Health Security Trust, a publicly-funded, privately-delivered health care coverage plan.

PSARA also supports a bridge to single-payer.

Environmental Justice and Climate Change:

PSARA supports all efforts to achieve environmental justice to counter the disastrous effects of climate change, including: HB 1110, establishing a clean fuel standard program for transportation; HB 1112, banning hydrofluorocarbons; HB 1113, updating the legislature's 2006 pledge for cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050; and SB 5116, mandating 100% clean energy for electricity generation by 2045.

Economic Justice:

PSARA supports efforts to create a State Investment Trust (State Bank).

Martin Luther King and the Racial Wealth Gap

By Michael Righi

“You can’t talk about solving the economic problem of the Negro without talking about billions of dollars. You can’t talk about ending the slums without first saying profit must be taken out of slums. You’re really tampering and getting on dangerous ground because you are messing with folk then. You are messing with captains of industry. Now this means that we are treading in difficult water, because it really means that we are saying that something is wrong with capitalism.” – Martin Luther King, Jr., speech to his staff, 1966.

“[W]e are saying that something is wrong ... with capitalism.... There must be better distribution of wealth and maybe America must move toward a democratic socialism.” – Martin Luther King, Jr., speech to his staff, 1966.

First, some key facts. Actual facts. Our 1% class owns over 40% of all the country’s net worth (net worth means assets such as stocks and bonds and businesses and housing, minus liabilities or debt). Thirty years ago they “only” owned about 25%. Over the past quarter century, only the most affluent have added to their net worth.

Meanwhile, the rest of us have been slammed by recession and lost jobs, the housing crisis with subprime lenders and underwater mortgages, and burgeoning medical and educational debt. Our already meager net worth fell 30% because of the 2007 financial crisis.

Net worth, or family wealth, matters. Most of us consider ourselves “middle class,” but without a comfortable buffer of savings, how would we be able to weather medical crises or loss of income, or retire? Or how can we take advantage of opportunity, to further education or buy a home? Twenty percent of us have negative net worth, another 20% have about \$7,000, and the next “wealthiest” 20% of families have about \$69,000.

The Asset Value of Whiteness

Let’s look at the data another way. The median net worth of white families in the U.S. is \$147,000. That is mostly housing, of course; the truly wealthy own the businesses and stock that enable them to control the major banks and corporations.

The median net worth for Black families is \$3,600; for Latinx families, \$6,600. Since 1983, the median net worth for Blacks has fallen by half; a typical Black family owns about 2% of the median white family. The 2007 recession did hurt everyone, but on average white families have begun to recover, slowly. Not so much people of color, who had to wipe out the little they had to fall back on. The Forbes 400 richest Americans own more wealth than all 16 million Black families together.

This is our history: from slavery through Jim Crow, to redlining and subprime lending, to unemployment rates double those of whites, to the carceral state, Black families have been systematically denied opportunity to build wealth. Wealth-building chances such as the Homestead Act, the GI Bill, and Federal Housing policies have been, intentionally or not, directed at white families. We wind up with the present unequal wealth distribution through the transfer of resources across generations.

Private and Public Assets

All families have a claim on our public assets. Those include Social Security benefits, which can be seen as part of individual families’ “wealth” – they are due at retirement, and they will be paid (and we will fight to make sure they are, and increased). Social Security somewhat dampens the extreme inequalities in wealth we have, since it provides a floor under all workers’ income.



Michael Righi

But we can’t just rely on Social Security to get us a fairer distribution of wealth. We have to “mess with the captains of industry.” We have to get some possible ideas out there – 70% tax on very high incomes, for example. Or caps (as a multiple of average worker pay) on CEO pay. Reenact high estate taxes. Go after corporate and wealthy individual overseas tax evasion. Establish Children Savings Accounts (everyone gets a nice lump sum at birth, and can access it as an adult). Pay reparations for African-Americans and Indigenous peoples.

There is no one magic bullet; a major reorientation of many institutions is necessary. The source of much of the obscene wealth of Bezos and Gates and their ilk is the monopoly power and outsized profits of corporate America. And the financial and bank profits gained from speculation and manipulation. Power and profit must be controlled by a government, not beholden to the wealthy.

Let’s celebrate MLK Day by putting these ideas into action.

Michael Righi is a retired economics professor and a member of PSARA.

Fo' Real: Inclusion/Exclusion

By Bob Shimabukuro

Episode 1

Bob and Mom over 50 years ago

Bob: What's the Okinawan word for Japanese? You know Japanese people?

Mom: Naichi..., and sometimes Yamato-cho.

I pondered that for a while. Naichi I had heard often, but I had never heard Yamato-cho before.

B: What's that about?

M: Don't know. Ask Uncle.

I just forgot about it.

Inclusion: Episode 2

Bob & Homer/Miki Yasui about 35 years later

I was invited to have dinner at the Yasui's house in Portland, Oregon.

Miki's in the kitchen. After chitchatting a bit:

H: You know, Bob, Miki's Okinawan. Not like most of us Japanese Americans here.

B: She is?

H: Yeah. They're mostly Nihon-jin. Yamato clan.

B: Well, I'm Okinawan too.

H: Aha! I knew it. Miki's dad was a radical in Hawaii apparently. Her dad was a radical, just like you.

I thought about the phrase "just like you" for a second.

H: It seems like there are a lot of radical Okinawans.

B: In Hawaii, there are; I don't think there are very many Okinawans around here, period.

And we had a good laugh.

Inclusion: Episode 3

I had just moved to Seattle and was staying at a friend's house.

I ran into Homer/Miki in the ID. Their daughter Barb was going to graduate school at UW.

After a little chat:

Homer/Miki: Hey, why don't you join us for lunch. We're going to lunch with Barb, she's with a Stanford friend, a Portland TV reporter who just got a job here.

B: What's her last name and is she radical?

We had a laugh about that, then,

H: Matsukawa and don't know if she's a radical.

Inclusion: Episode 4

Mentoring by listening

Jeff Johnson

"I am pretty pleased with the staff I've hired here. It's a staff of color for the most part. The way I mentor is to stay out of their way. We have meetings to discuss issues, but I want to hear what they think. So it's more encouraging them along rather than saying we have to do it this or that way. It's giving them the space to, the freedom to be creative as well as to make mistakes. We learn from making mistakes."

Inclusion: Episode 5

Listening to/for all, including silence

Mary Nguyen, executive director Washington Community Action Network

"I've never been the right age. I'm either too young and inexperienced or too old to be cool to youth.

"Our work has to be intergenerational because there is so much to learn from one another.

"I learned from my mom, who came to this country at the age of 26 as a Vietnamese refugee, that she didn't think she could survive here and succeed until she did.

"My nephew is 9 years old. One day, we were driving and getting onto an on ramp to get onto the freeway and we saw a homeless man asking for money. He asked why he was asking for money. I told him that he was hungry and needed to find a place to stay. He then asked why he didn't just get a job, to which I replied, maybe he has a job and still can't afford a place to live. After pausing for a moment, he said, "I have an idea of how he can not be homeless. He should get married and the wife will take care of everything.

"At first, I kind of giggled, and then when I thought really hard about why he came to that conclusion, I realized that he observed and learned that lesson from our family. His dad is an addict and was completely unreliable; he had started even selling the kids' stuff for drugs. And there my nephew was, learning that the mom will take care of everything. I then had to really talk to him about what he was learning from our family dynamics and counter it with asking, "How much easier would it be for your mom to have some help with making money and taking care of you?" Kids are always learning lessons and sometimes it's not the lesson you want them to learn.

"The other thing that I learned from my nephew is that if we want the younger generation to get involved, we have to make things fun. We have to find the joy in our movement."

(To be continued)

Let's catch a deep breath, then keep moving!

Bob Shimabukuro is Associate Editor of the Retiree Advocate and Co-Chair of PSARA's Race/Gender Equity Committee.

The Shutdown Drags on

By Steve Kofahl

As I write, the Trump and right wing media-driven partial government shutdown has lasted a record 25 days, with no end in sight. Approximately 800,000 Federal employees (about 11,000 in Washington State) continue to go without pay, with 420,000 of them deemed "essential" and required to work without compensation.

Congress voted overwhelmingly to retroactively pay Federal workers when appropriation bills are passed, with Congresswoman Herrera-Beutler joining all Washington State Democrats in voting "yes," but that is little comfort to them now. Thousands of low-paid contract employees (food service workers, janitors, etc.) have not been paid, and will never be paid.

With 78 percent of Americans living paycheck to paycheck, these workers are already in desperate straits. Thousands have set up GoFundMe pages. Transportation Security Administration workers are among the lowest-paid Federal employees, with fewer Union and legal rights, and low morale. Many are quitting, while others call in sick at risk of being fired or otherwise disciplined.

A December 21 *Newsweek* story incorrectly claimed that some Social Security Administration workers would be furloughed, with further delays in accessing service by phone or face-to-face, and a halt in issuance of benefit verifications and Social Security replacements cards. However, service deterioration elsewhere in government is mounting, with programs critical to seniors in jeopardy.

Food is not being inspected by Food and Drug Administration workers. Assistance to farmers affected by tariffs is not being provided by Department of Agriculture employees. Housing and Urban Development workers are not processing requests for housing assistance. Environmental and toxic waste issues are not being handled by the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, or the National Park Service.

It is now clear that the President did not understand what would happen, and who would be hurt. The Mortgage Bankers Association complained to the Treasury that the furlough of IRS employees interfered with processing of tax transcripts for the lending industry.

In possible violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act, 400 of them were recalled, with pay, to "take care of business." Other IRS workers were called back to process tax return refunds, presumably without pay.

A number of National Parks have been re-opened in response to complaints, the national flood insurance program was kept running, and funding was found to keep SNAP (food stamps) funded through January. In apparent violation of the 2010 Pay-As-You-Go Act, \$839 million in cuts (90 percent to Medicare) due January 24 have been put on hold, allegedly because relevant documentation is unavailable during the shutdown.

The suffering for Federal and contract employees, and for the public at large, is rapidly mounting. Senate leader Mitch McConnell must be pressed hard to call for votes on the appropriations bills already approved by the Senate, and then the House. The D.C. dysfunction must end!

Steve Kofahl is the retired President of AFG 3937, representing Social Security Administration workers, and a member of PSARA.

The Barbed Wire

By Barb Flye



100th Anniversary of the Seattle General Strike

Continued from Page 6

Yet arguably labor's greatest achievement was not in idling private industry but in organizing alternative public provisions. To feed the 30,000 single men who depended on restaurant meals every day, striking cooks prepared, and striking teamsters carried, hot food to labor halls that set up makeshift "eating stations." To supply other vital needs, the General Strike exemptions committees dispatched teamsters to haul milk cans and hospital laundry. And to maintain public order, labor's war veterans patrolled the streets unarmed to "persuade" fellow citizens to keep peace and to avoid clashes with the National Guard troops that the Secretary of War ordered to the city on February 6.

These measures won much sympathy, but anti-union forces dealt the CLC a powerful blow. Mayor Ole Hanson, under strong pressure from business leaders, declared the strike a Bolshevik action and on February 7 issued an ultimatum: end the strike or he would declare martial law. Meanwhile, AFL international officers, afraid that Seattle's conflict would scuttle organizing efforts in the east, declared the strike an unauthorized action, withheld support funds, and threatened to revoke striking locals' charters. Thus, attacked on both flanks, the strike gave way. A trickle of strikers went back to work on Saturday, February 8, and by Monday virtually all had returned. The CLC officially ended the action the next day.

Its fallout was mixed. From a shop floor perspective, the strike was a defeat, since the shipbuilders lost their wage bid. Moreover, true to labor's fears, Seattle industrialists soon launched a successful offensive against the closed shop. Within local labor ranks, criticism over the strike led to the ouster of militant leaders and the end of "Duncanism," the earlier state of toleration between craft and industrial unionists. Government repression also intensified. Federal agents arrested lo-



Seattle strikers carry home supplies

cal Wobblies and Union Record editors on charges of criminal syndicalism and sedition, in what would later appear to be a curtain-raiser for the Palmer Raids. Mayor Hanson became a national hero for facing down Bolshevism.

On the other hand, The Seattle General Strike lives in popular memory as a testament to the power of solidarity and direct action by working people. Diverse groups united across occupations and political affiliations to assert themselves in a powerful eruption of

action that closed down the city for six days. The strike was administered peacefully and competently by the workers themselves and had lasting consequences for the labor movement in Seattle, the United States, and beyond. Less a tactical failure than a last stand, the Seattle strike left a memory of worker solidarity and social vision that far outlasted 1919.

For a list of commemorative events go to www.solidaritycentennial.com/

To Renew or Donate

PSARA Education Fund

321 16th Avenue S, Seattle WA 98144

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

Name (Please print): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Meetings and Events

Film: *Don't Give Up Your Voice*. 2:00 p.m., Sunday, February 3. See details on Page 2.

West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 6, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave. SW, Seattle (35th & Henderson). Topic: *100th Anniversary of the Seattle General Strike*. Brown bag lunch.

PSARA Climate and Environmental Justice Committee: 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Thursday, February 7, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, February 7, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S. All are welcome.

Long-Term Care Trust Act Forum in Port Angeles. 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., Sunday, February 10. See details on Page 2.

Long-Term Care Trust Act Forum in Langley. 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 12. See details on Page 2.

PSARA Fundraising Committee: 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Monday, February 11, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S. All are welcome.

PSARA Education Committee: 2 p.m., Tuesday, February 12, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Southend Committee: 1 p.m., Thursday, February 14, Burien Library, 400 SW 152nd St., Burien. Topic: *Single Payer Health Care, with PSARA member*

Martha Koester. All are welcome as we plan PSARA events in South King County.

PSARA Race/Gender Equity Committee: 11 a.m.–Noon, Thursday, February 21, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

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

Meet the Writer: Tim Wheeler author of *News from Rain Shadow Country*. 2:00 p.m., Sunday, March 31. See details on Page 2.

