

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

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Don't Miss This Exciting Event With Author and PSARA Member Tim Wheeler

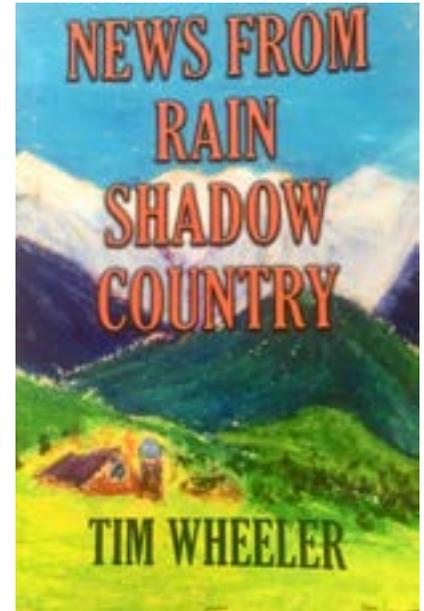
On Sunday, March 31, at 2 p.m., author Tim Wheeler will be featured in a fundraiser for PSARA. Nick Licata, former Seattle City Councilmember and PSARA member, has enthusiastically agreed to be the emcee and interviewer for our event.

Tim will read excerpts from his book *News from Rain Shadow Country*. Tim is a Sequim resident and a long-time PSARA member. Since 1966, Tim has been a news reporter and editor for the *Worker*, *Daily World*, and now the online *People's World*. The book is a collection of stories about Tim's life and the people he covered as a reporter. The collection of stories vividly describes coming of age on the farm, resisting the Cold War repression directed at his parents during the Red Scare, and the vicious attacks by the House Un-

can Activities Committee. There is even a story about Will Parry's 90th birthday celebration, sponsored by PSARA, on page 169.

Tim was and is a member of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA). He and his wife, Joyce, spend their lives fighting for union rights, racial and gender equity, world peace, and environmental justice. You can read Robby Stern's book review on page 4 of the January 2019 issue of *The Advocate* at www.PSARA.org

PSARA members are invited to come and bring family, friends, and neighbors. Tim will bring copies of his book, which he will sign, and his autoharp. He looks forward to leading us in singing some familiar songs. Light refreshments will be provided.



Please contact Karen Richter at fundraising@psara.org for information about this event and Mike Andrew at organizer@psara.org to make reservations.

PSARA Southend Committee Presents *Herstory: Stories of Old Lesbians* March 14

On Thursday, March 14, PSARA's Southend Committee will feature a presentation of the Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project (OLOHP), at the Burien Library, 400 SW 152nd Street, Burien, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

OLOHP has interviewed more than 600 old lesbians to preserve their stories. These women struggled to live consistent with who they were at a time when there were no books, magazines, or organizations that advocated for their lives.

Being an out lesbian at that time presented the very real peril of arrest or being committed to a mental institution. Their stories are poignant, brave, sad, and also filled with laughter and joy.

Herstory offers a glimpse into a world that was often hidden and ignored by mainstream historians.

We invite all PSARA members and friends to join us at the Burien Library for this special presentation.



The Retiree ADVOCATE

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Give Big Day is Coming!

Give BIG Day is May 8 this year. It is one of the most important days of the year for the PSARA Education Fund. Funds that are raised are critical to the Ed Fund's annual budget. Like last year, the Executive Boards of the PSARA Education Fund and PSARA will challenge our members to collectively match their contributions in order to fund the publication of the *Retiree Advocate* for the coming year.

It costs approximately \$20,000 annually to publish and mail this newsletter. In the April addition we will announce the amount of the challenge from the Executive Boards. In the past our Executive Boards and our members have been generous. We hope that will continue!

Gen X, Millennials, and the Future of Social Security and Medicare Phinney Neighborhood Association March 26

Social Security and Medicare are a critically important leg of a three-legged stool for retirement. The other two legs, pensions and personal savings, are increasingly wobbly. Fewer people have traditional pensions anymore. And saving a nest egg for retirement is extremely challenging given the inequitable distribution of income and wealth, the high cost of housing, childcare, healthcare, and education.

Even those lucky enough to have a 401(k) with an employer contribution may find it is built on a house of cards. For example, after the 2008 downturn, many found that their accounts had dropped by more than half.

So the stability of the Social Security and Medicare Programs have become even more critical, especially for younger workers.

For more information on Social Security and Medicare and what we can do to strengthen them for future generations, you are invited to attend a presentation by PSARA at the PNA, Phinney Neighborhood Association, PC Blue Building (upper Building) Room 5., 6532 Phinney Avenue N., at 7:00 p.m. on March 26.

We urge PSARA members to bring family and friends.

Save the Date for a Special Performance

For six days Seattle stood still as thousands of workers walked off the job. Making headlines around the world, the 1919 General Strike inspired others in the labor movement both nationally and internationally.

Experience this historic moment through an immersive performance featuring the voices of workers, politicians, businessmen, and live music. Save the date -- Saturday, April 13. The live performance begins at 2:00 p.m., followed by a post-show talk-back and Q & A.

Created by playwright Ed Mast and the Seattle Labor Chorus in collaboration with the UW Labor Archives of Washington and historian James Gregory.

So save the date for this great event. Contact Karen Richter at fundraising@psara.org for further information.

Meet Larry Brown, WSLC President and PSARA Member

By Mike Andrew

“There are two kinds of people,” Larry Brown told me when I sat down to interview him for this issue of the *Retiree Advocate*. “People who are retired, and people who want to be. We have to make sure we live in a world that respects seniors. And we rely on seniors to help us accomplish that.”

I interviewed Larry almost one month to the day after he was inaugurated President of the Washington State Labor Council, and, since PSARA has an office in the WSLC building, I can testify that Larry – who is also a PSARA member – hit the ground running.

I usually get to the office between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m., and often I’ve discovered Larry already in his office, on the phone, or working at his desk.

“I like a certain level of stress,” Larry explained. “It’s motivational. I was pleased to discover I had a talented staff who’d get here early and stay late. It’s hard to out-work them.”

“My greatest fear,” he continued, “and this was self-imposed, was that I wouldn’t live up to the responsibilities of the office.”

“I knew it was a big job. I wasn’t certain whether I’d knock down strikes every time I rolled the ball. I was hopeful I’d be up to the task.”

How did he see the scope of that task? I asked him.

“My number one charge as president is to unify a labor movement that can occasionally divide itself over individual issues,” Larry replied. “But these are transitory issues. They’re not as important as the fact we’re stronger when we’re united and projecting power on behalf of working people.”

Certainly, one of the issues that divided organized labor in the recent past was I-1631 – the initiative that hoped to establish a framework for a just transition to a carbon-free economy. Many WSLC affiliates supported it, but many opposed it – including unions whose members would have benefitted from the plan.



WSLC President Larry Brown

How did the WSLC plan to overcome that split? I asked.

“You have to acknowledge the fears of working people. We’re often victims of well-meaning – and maybe inevitable – public policy outcomes.”

“I’ve always felt it was a false dichotomy – jobs or the environment – but it takes a lot of work to transition to an economy that doesn’t add carbon. The challenge is to ensure that workers don’t get screwed in that process. 1631 was an attempt to do that.”

“My senior thesis at the National Labor College was titled *Worker Retraining – Is It an Adequate Exchange for Your Lost Job?*” Larry continued. “I surveyed 320 laid-off aerospace workers who were part of a retraining program. Less than 20 percent ended up with a union. Almost none ended up with parity. They simply made less.”

“Yes, 1631 was intended to do better than that, but it’s hard to convince people to look beyond their past experiences.”

A crucial part of that, Larry adds, is ensuring that our state’s booming economy benefits rural communities as well as Seattle. This could expand the progressive electorate in the state, he believes, and take some of the economic pressure off Seattle.

“Sure, some rural areas consistently vote Republican,” Larry explained, “how-

ever, some rural areas were traditional Democratic bastions, but in the last, let’s say the last two decades, they’ve felt abandoned by the Democrats. Grays Harbor, for example.

“By spreading out the benefits of the economy, developing industry and business opportunities outside Seattle, you also affect housing prices in Seattle. It’s supply and demand. Part of it is increasing housing inventory in Seattle, but part is also creating more capacity outside the city so that people want to live there.”

Increasing housing inventory in Seattle is also a complicated question. Many people doubt whether supply-side solutions will even make a dent in housing prices, and some of those “solutions” create their own problems. Upzoning, for example, means that some people – including seniors – will be displaced from communities where they feel comfortable and forced to move outside the city.

“I know people don’t want things to change, but Seattle does not look like it did 30 years ago,” Larry answered.

“Without question we’ve left some people behind. We have to be mindful to not gentrify. We should protect low-income housing. And we should have something in place to give seniors some consideration when it comes to property taxes.”

Finally I asked how PSARA can help the WSLC.

“Jeff Johnson did a great job of reaching out to the community outside labor,” Larry said. “Building coalitions. All sides benefit if we educate each other on what’s important to our constituencies.”

“The labor movement can and should be a powerful advocate for racial, social, environmental justice – but we can only play that role if we remain powerful.”

“PSARA can speak for a strong labor movement to take our rightful place in society.”

King County Council Votes for Moratorium on Fossil Fuel Infrastructure

On Monday, January 28, PSARA members joined 100 other people to testify before the King County Council in support of a moratorium on new fossil fuel infrastructure in King County.

After listening to hours of testimony, the Council, in a 6 to 3 vote, approved a six-month moratorium prohibiting the establishment of new, or the expansion of existing major fossil fuel facilities. The resolution declared that a climate emergency exists and that this ordinance is necessary for public peace.

King County joins with Whatcom County; the cities of Portland, Oregon; Tacoma; Hoquiam; Aberdeen; and Vancouver, Washington, in voting to restrict the building of fossil fuel terminals, refineries, storage facilities, and other infrastructures that cause damage to the air, water, and people in the area.

The ordinance, introduced by Council member Dave Upthegrove, directs the County Executive's office to produce a survey of existing facilities, study those facilities' impacts on communities, analyze the existing regulations that apply to them, recommend changes to regulations and permitting, and evaluate county-owned facilities for health impacts.

Bob Barnes spoke for PSARA and presented a letter from retired Washington State Labor Council President Jeff Johnson to the council members.

From Jeff's letter: *"Now, there are those who will dissent from this measure. Some will argue that stopping fossil fuels in King County will simply export the jobs and the pollution somewhere else, and so it is best to take the economic benefits now... My advice is to respect the fear behind such arguments but not the argument. The argument would have us applauding Emperor Nero for an encore while Rome, and in fact, all of Italy burned. We have the opportunity to build a real 'Just Transition' if we give voice and agency to community members, workers, and their unions to participate in what our fossil-fuel-free economy looks like."*

Bobby Righi testified for PSARA: *"I am here speaking for the Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action, a group of over 1,300 members. Our slogan is 'Unite Generations for a Secure Future,' and most of our energy is directed at expanding health care and Social Security. We are also very aware that a secure future is impossible if we continue to spew greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. At the rate we are going, our grandchildren and their children will suffer short, brutal lives. Of course, even now, some communities are suffering the effects of bad air and dirty water, and right now in King County, lives are already being shortened by the effect of burning fossil fuels. Building fossil*

fuel infrastructure keeps us on the path to destruction and makes it ever more difficult to move to clean and renewable energy. Please support this moratorium."

The Council will hold a public hearing on the moratorium on Wednesday, March 13, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the council meeting room on the 10th floor of the M.L. King County Courthouse, 516 3rd Avenue, Seattle.

This is a normal procedure, but we need to be there to support the council members who voted for the moratorium.

Bob Barnes, Jeff Johnson, and Bobby Righi are members of PSARA's Climate and Environmental Justice Committee.

A Short History of American Capitalism: The Founders

By Mike Andrew

Think that drug cartels started in Sinaloa, Mexico? That the international drug trade is a new phenomenon?

Guess again. Some of the Founding Fathers of American capitalism were drug smugglers.

America's first multimillionaire, John Jacob Astor, joined the opium smuggling trade in 1816 when his American Fur Company bought 10 tons of Turkish opium and smuggled it into Canton. Astor was seeking alternative investment opportunities because he was losing money selling pelts. By 1830, he'd dropped both the furs and the opium, and started buying real estate in Manhattan.

Astor was followed in the opium trade by Samuel Wadsworth Russell, who landed in Canton in 1819 and quickly amassed a fortune in the opium



John Jacob Astor

Continued on Page 11

***From the Ground Up: A Journey to Reimagine the Promise of America* by Howard Schultz (Random House, 2019)**

Another Billionaire President — what could possibly go wrong?

By Steve Beck

When we retire, it's wise to find new projects and goals to replace the world of work just ended. For just-retired Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, this has meant using his billions to elbow his way into presidential politics as a "centrist" third party candidate, and going on a road trip with his new book.

So far it's not going so well. "You ego-tistical billionaire asshole!" screamed one heckler at his first New York event, while other listeners were merely unimpressed. TV comics like Bill Maher are mocking him, and at my local QFC his book is already marked down 30 percent.

The book itself is more a memoir than a campaign manifesto, zigzagging between his early years growing up in a Brooklyn public housing project to his years building and expanding the Starbucks brand. His father, a World War II veteran, he describes as a "working class laborer...with a fiery temper" who became disabled in a work accident. His mom nurtured his dreams of a better future.

I have friends who found Starbucks a good place to work when other options had closed to them. When I was a union rep for AFSCME 375, we often used the cafes as a neutral place to talk to members away from management's prying eyes. Yet, according to *The Stand*, the publication of the Washington State Labor Council, when those baristas petitioned for their own union, Schultz responded with both self-pitying "disappointment" and the full weight of corporate and legal anti-labor venom.

And that good employee health coverage for part-timers, which Schultz takes credit for in the book, was in fact already in a Starbucks contract with the United Food and Commercial Workers

here in Seattle when he took over the company in a 1987 merger. He helped decertify the UFCW and block its later organizing drives as Starbucks expanded to other cities, according to Eric Scigliano's recent coverage in *Politico*. "If they had faith in me and my motives, they wouldn't need a union," Schultz wrote in his earlier 1999 memoir, while in a recent "Morning Joe" interview on MSNBC he would only acknowledge that unions "have a role to play" in reducing inequality, but "are not the answer."

Last year, despite his "Race Together" campaign to encourage discussions about racism, he and his company were deeply embarrassed when two black men were removed in handcuffs from a Philadelphia Starbucks merely for not ordering while waiting for a friend. Ultimately he closed all his stores for one day so his "partners" could be trained to raise their awareness of "white privilege and unconscious bias." But Schultz seems unconscious of his own bias against seeing either Starbucks baristas or the voting public as truly equal to him. As in all the projects he describes, however well-meaning, he had to have the final say and total control.

As owner of the Seattle SuperSonics, he tried to strong-arm our city into building him a new stadium, ultimately selling out to a group of Oklahoma investors who moved the team there. In his book he finally admits to being "deeply sorry" for betraying Sonics fans. But like Schultz, I was born in postwar Brooklyn, whose Dodgers would never forgive the money men who sold their team to LA.

The book concludes with no grand vision or plan for addressing the crisis in our democracy, rather with many inspiring examples of "civic engagement"

by ordinary citizens, many of whom are also highlighted in his Amazon Prime series *The Upstanders*. To his credit, Schultz demonstrates how his company or family foundation have taken stands for marriage equality, gun safety, refugees and immigrants, jobs for veterans and youth, and many other issues. Yet over the past two years, millions of us have indeed risen up in an explosion of activism which has sent a "Blue Wave" of new progressive representatives to Congress. Instead of praising that public engagement, Schultz smears those representatives as too "leftist" for trying to restore a more equitable tax burden on the wealthy. Apparently, distinguishing who is an "Upstander" and who an "Extremist" requires only his discerning eye, which can't possibly be tainted by "unconscious bias" in favor of his own portfolio.

Hopefully, the American people are losing patience with billionaire blowhards who think "only I can fix it." If Schultz ignores the feedback he's getting on his tour and launches a misbegotten third party effort which rebounds to Trump's benefit, then the heat he's gotten from Sonics fans will be a small taste of the vitriol he'll inherit to his dying day.

And yet, if Schultz takes his time to truly listen and recommit himself and his resources to causes he seems to really care about, he could join the ranks of the Roosevelts and Kennedys, who turned against the narrow interests of their upper-class peers and are remembered by the rest of us with love and respect. Surely, if even Jeff Bezos (Jeff Bezos!) is now the hero of the hour for defending his *Washington Post* and striking back at blackmail, anything is possible.

Steve Beck is a retired AFSCME member and a member of PSARA.

PSARA Signs On to Letter Supporting Eviction Reform

PPSARA's Executive Board voted unanimously to sign on to the following letter initiated by our friends at Washington CAN! and the Washington Low-Income Housing Alliance. Many seniors are renters, and we believe all renters deserve these protections:

The Honorable Governor Inslee

The Honorable Washington State Senate/Washington House of Representatives

RE: Support SB 5600 / HB 1453 and SB 5733 / HB 1656

Dear Governor Inslee, State Senators, and State Representatives,

We believe people come first and that every person should have stable housing so they can live good lives. We entrust our legislators to lead courageously and enact housing protections that work for the communities longest denied housing stability. We support the legislative solutions proposed in SB 5600 / HB 1453 and SB 5733 / HB 1656 to ensure working people, struggling to make ends meet, can keep their families housed in Washington, no matter their zip code.

However, our current tenant and eviction laws are woefully outdated and protect the financial interests of the few over the fundamental needs of the many. Tenants have only three days to catch up on back rent, regardless of the reason they fell behind. Judges do not have discretion to consider the full facts of the situation. As a result, tenants are facing the trauma, expense and long-term destabilization of eviction for as little as \$2. The leading reason Washington tenants face eviction is for falling behind only a month or less in rent after experiencing setbacks we can all relate to: medical emergencies, temporary loss of income, or a death in



the family. These temporary hardships that are beyond our control should not push families out of housing and onto the streets.

We know evictions are a leading cause of homelessness. Passing legislation to reform the eviction process (SB 5600 / HB 1453) creates low-cost solutions to immediately stem the flow of families falling into homelessness. The common sense approaches in these bills, such as extending the notice to pay or vacate and allowing judges to fully consider the facts of a situation, have been implemented in much of the country for decades, in states ranging from Tennessee to Ohio to Vermont.

Although passing SB 5600 / HB 1453 would be a tremendous improvement from the status quo, the legislature cannot stop there. We need to protect renters from arbitrary tenancy terminations by passing SB 5733 / HB 1656. Currently, month-to-month tenants can receive a 20-day notice to vacate for any reason and because landlords don't have to provide a legitimate business reason, tenants are not protected against discrimination or retaliation. Local government attempts to require cause are weakened because landlords can get around local protections by terminating the tenancy at the end of a fixed term lease agreement.

These no-cause evictions create great housing instability. Many tenants live in fear of a 20-day notice and are hesitant to assert their most basic rights, such as for a repair, in fear of a retaliatory notice to terminate their tenancy. Landlords should have a legitimate business reason to make someone move. Allowing no cause notices to stand, allows landlords to terminate tenancy for retaliatory or discriminatory reasons.

Our state's outdated eviction laws and no cause terminations cause children of renters to live without stability and in unsafe conditions because we have not updated our landlord-tenant laws in nearly half a century. The impact of housing instability increases the adverse childhood experiences that will impact a child's education, sense of safety and mental health in long-term ways. This barrier to a child's well-being is widespread in both urban and rural communities.

We all see the evidence of inaction as more and more people are forced to survive on the streets, couch-surf, sleep in cars or settle for unsafe housing. There is no denying that Washington is in a housing crisis that for thousands of people is life threatening. We know that people of color, women, seniors, people with disabilities, LGBTQ, low-wage workers, and families are disproportionately impacted by the housing crisis. If our legislators follow the lead of much of the country, we will be able to set higher standards to keep people housed and help all communities in our state.

In this critical moment in Washington, we need our lawmakers to advance common sense solutions to one of our state's biggest problems: the housing crisis. Pass SB 5600 / HB 1453 and SB 5733 / HB 1656 without delay.

Victory for Halcyon Mobile Home Park, Affordable Housing for Retirees is Still an Issue

By Mike Andrew

"When I moved in, I was told I could settle down for life there," Eloise Mickelson told a Seattle City Council committee about her home in Halcyon Mobile Home Park.

"Now it's like someone came in and robbed my life, and dumped me into a homeless camp."

Mickelson, 74 years old, was right to worry. The mobile home park where she's lived since 2003 was being offered for sale to developers. The site, close to Haller Lake in North Seattle, was zoned to accommodate buildings up to 40 feet, and possibly more under a new development plan the Seattle City Council is considering.

Halcyon and the smaller Bella-B Mobile Home Park, operated next door by another owner, are the last mobile home parks in Seattle. Their residents are particularly vulnerable because they own their own homes, but rent the land the homes sit on.

Most Halcyon homes are too old to move. That means that if developers bought the site, the residents would be out of luck. Their homes would simply be demolished, and they would lose all their investment and be out on the street.

All of the 80-some homeowners at Halcyon are seniors, some in their eighties and nineties. Some also give in-home care to disabled relatives. Many are union retirees struggling to live on their modest pensions.

Among the residents who testified at the City Council hearing were a UNITE HERE retiree, a SPEEA retiree, and a retired Teamster. All worked hard to save up enough money to buy a manufactured home – one of the few affordable ownership options left in Seattle.

The \$650 per month they pay to rent the concrete slabs their homes sit on won't buy them much in a Seattle housing market where the average one-bedroom apartment rents for upwards of \$1,900.

When they settled at Halcyon, they were told the land was being held in trust for the University of Washington's nursing school scholarship program. Because the trust was benefitting UW, they were told, the site would never be sold off from under them.

Somehow – and it's not clear how – US Bank now controls the trust, and they decided to put the property up for sale, asking \$22 million. For a developer, it would be a great opportunity. For the seniors living at Halcyon, it would be a catastrophe.

As Kylin Parks, organizer for AMHO (Association of Manufactured Home Owners), said, "We've poured your coffee, made your beds, delivered your groceries, and now you want to throw us away."

Friends Step Up

Fortunately for the residents, they had at least one friend on the Seattle City Council. Councilmember Kshama Sawant introduced a measure to rezone the Halcyon site so it would be

sheltered from development, at least temporarily.

A coalition of unions and community groups also stepped up to support the Halcyon residents. The Aerospace Machinists District Council 751, UNITE HERE Local 8, and OPEIU Local 8 sent strong letters to the City Council.

PSARA, the Tenants Union of Washington state, Be:Seattle, the Association of Manufactured Home Owners, the Reverend Angela Ying of the Bethany United Church of Christ, the Church Council of Greater Seattle, the Vietnamese Senior Association, the Trinity United Methodist Church, and others helped build powerful grassroots pressure on the City Council.

PSARA members Sarajane Siegfriedt, Brent McFarlane, and Imogene Williams testified in support of Halcyon residents at public hearings. As Sarajane noted, "mobile home parks are one of the few ownership options available to low-income seniors."

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Barbed Wire

By Barbara Flye



Health Care Is a Human Right Campaign Makes Progress, Needs Help

By David Loud

PSARA has been a core member of the Health Care Is a Human Right Campaign since HCHR was founded in 2014 with a mission of achieving universal health care.

At the time, the focus was on Washington State, since the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was being implemented, and the federal government lacked the political will to go further to a universal plan. Much work was done to build support at the grassroots and in the Legislature for covering all Washingtonians.

Fast forward to 2017: Trump tried repeatedly to repeal the ACA, but this only stirred up massive popular support for access to health care. HCHR helped lead the successful campaign to defeat the repeal efforts and then pivoted to advocacy of a national Medicare for All plan.

By 2018, a majority of Americans – including over 50 percent of Republicans – were supportive of the idea of Medicare for All.

Representative Jayapal (WA-07) has just introduced a superbly updated “Improved and Expanded Medicare for All” bill in Congress.

Her colleague Rep. Ro Khanna is about to re-introduce the “State Based Universal Health Care Act,” which would give the needed federal funds and regulatory authority to states to build universal coverage systems if they are ready to do so before Congress is able to pass a universal national plan.

We need your help.

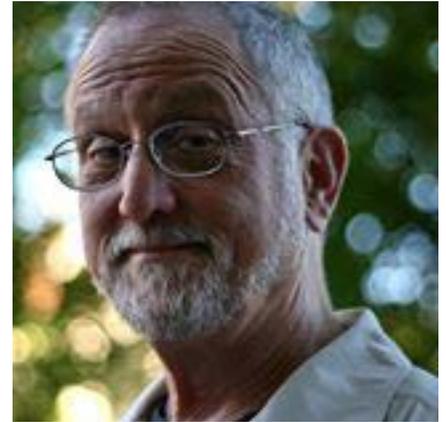
In Olympia, HCHR is currently working for passage of SB 5822/HB 1877, “Pathway to Universal Health Care.”

This would create a workgroup of all stakeholders to report back to the Legislature next year on how to cover all WA residents. It’s off to a good start,

but many legislators still need to be persuaded to support this bill. HCHR is doing targeted calling of constituents.

We need PSARA members to make calls to other PSARA members in key legislative districts. IF YOU CAN HELP WITH THE CALLS, PLEASE CONTACT DAVID LOUD AT doloud8058@gmail.com.

David Loud is PSARA's representative to HCHR (Health Care is a Human Right).



David Loud

Breaking News: State House Passes Long-Term Care Trust Act

On Thursday, February 21, the Washington State House passed HB1087, one of PSARA's highest priorities for the 2019 legislative session. The legislation now goes to the Senate for passage. The legislation passed the House with bipartisan support by a vote of 63 yes and 33 no.

A strong coalition of advocates, Washingtonians for a Responsible Future, continues to do a terrific job of educating legislators about the crisis we are facing in long-term care, the family sacrifices that are being made to access these needed services, and why this legislation is necessary.

PSARA and the PSARA Education Fund have played an active role in educating and supporting passage of the legislation. It is a very important first step in addressing the broken financing system for long-term care.

We will now focus on the Senate and hope to be able to report in the April or May newsletter that the Long-Term Care Trust Act has passed the Senate and been signed by the Governor.



"The Wall is Just Another Confederate Statue."

By Jeff Johnson

In a fiery no-holds-barred speech at the MLK celebration at Garfield High School, Reverend Kelle Brown, of the Plymouth Congregational Church, said don't be fooled, "the wall is just another Confederate statue."

Reverend Brown implored people to be honest and call out the racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and the rhetoric of hate by our President and his administration. The wall isn't about protecting the United States from terrorism but keeping waves of brown and black political, economic, and climate refugees from entering the United States.

Trump's America First agenda -- isolate the US from world affairs and responsibilities; wall off the southern border from criminals, riff-raff, and non-white people; and take care of rich white people first -- is threatening our democracy and putting a stranglehold on our economy.

President Trump has no real plan to address the economic devastation of the working class, no plan to address income and wealth inequality, and no plan to address job loss from automation, offshoring, growth of the app-based economy, or climate disaster. But he has a narrative, and in that narrative black and brown people are the cause of the economic woes of white Americans.

So in Trump world what do you do? Simple, you build a wall.

What do walls do? They divide things -- both physically and metaphorically.

And then what?

In Trump's desperation to fulfill a campaign promise and political narrative he has separated 800,000 federal workers from their income and livelihoods, separated hundreds of federal contractors and thousands of private sector workers from employment and income, and separated millions of poor



Jeff Johnson

and needy Americans from the services they need to survive.

Trump's shutting down the US Government shows his disdain for working Americans, his ignorance of what it takes for the average American family to survive on a paycheck, and his total lack of understanding of how the economy works. But he is willing to sacrifice working families in order to gain a political victory that fits his false narrative of a wall that is supposed to help white Americans sleep easy at night and prosper during the day.

It used to be that people thought too many issues diluted the message of a rally. But the administration's mindless assault on America has shown us how interconnected our lives and needs actually are. As a result, whether you were at one of the Women's Marches, rallies in support of federal workers, or one of the MLK Marches and rallies,

multiple messages spoke to the unity we must have to take back our country from politicians who would "disrespect our existence."

It was gratifying to hear speakers from multiple communities speak equally forcefully about workers' rights, women's rights, immigrants' rights, and LGBTQ rights, and human rights as interconnected.

As Reverend Kelle Brown implored us, it is now time to be honest. It is time to stop holding federal workers and our communities hostage to Trump's false racist political narrative. It is time to deal with immigration reform, racism, sexism, and homophobia head-on -- no-holds-barred. All of these issues are our issues.

Jeff Johnson is the retired President of the Washington State Labor Council and a member of PSARA.

MLK Day Event Highlights Support for Affirmative Action

By Beth Brunton

At a recent workshop on Martin Luther King Jr. Day titled "Affirmative Action = Justice: Poets Bearing Witness," poet Jacqueline (Jaye) Ware began with a spoken word litany making the case for affirmative action.

"If it wasn't for slavery, for unjust Jim Crow laws, for cross-burnings, for police harassment, for separate but unequal schools ... affirmative action would not be a necessary tool to dismantle 400 years of oppression," she said.

You may have seen the signs, "Affirmative Action = Justice, Equal Opportunity in Education, Jobs, Contracts" carried in the annual Seattle MLK Day March. The Seattle MLK Organizing Coalition unanimously chose to support Initiative 1000 that, if passed, would restore affirmative action to Washington for the first time in 20 years.

I-1000 is meant to "guarantee every resident of Washington State equal opportunity and access to public education, public employment, and public contracting without discrimination based on their race, sex, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation ... disability, or veteran or military status."

If enacted, this law will allow the state to fix discrimination against disadvantaged groups and establish a governor's commission on diversity, equity, and inclusion to draft legislation. I-1000 has just been filed with enough signatures to be enacted by the State Legislature or be placed on the November, 2019 ballot.

Unfortunately, racial progress took a hit in our state when affirmative action was banned in 1998 by the passage of Initiative 200. Since then, women- and minority-owned businesses have lost \$3.5 million in state contracts, according to the Yes on 1000 campaign. Also, the percent of qualified African American students admitted to the University of Washington has dropped from 70 percent prior to I-200 to 30 percent in 2017.

According to a recent study by the personal finance website WalletHub, Washington State does not place among the most racially integrated states or those with the most racial progress. Washington is one of only eight states that do not that have affirmative action laws.

How can our schools remedy past discrimination to reduce opportunity gaps? How can public agencies ensure fair hiring and contracting of underrepresented, disadvantaged groups? An important step is to allow affirmative practices in our public schools, employment and contracting.

In her book, *So You Want to Talk about Race*, Seattle author Ijeoma Oluo advocates for affirmative action, citing studies showing that racial bias is still at work. She writes that if you have a "black sounding name, you are four times less likely to be called for a job interview. Black women still earn only 65 cents for every white man's dollar, Black men earn only 73 cents for every white man's dollar. In education, Black and Hispanic students are far more likely to be suspended, more likely to have to work after school, less access to Internet and tutoring, more likely to attend underfunded schools, and underrepresented in colleges and universities."

Implicit bias is the most common manifestation of racism. Affirmative action can reduce or cure that common cold of racism, implicit bias. According to tests of bias, even people who renounce racism, have good intentions, and make a deliberate effort to be fair are very likely to be unconsciously tainted by the prejudices in our dominant culture. Research shows



PSARA members at MLK Day

employers are more likely to hire family, friends, or people with close ties who are more likely to be of the same race. Affirmative action policies may be the best way to help people overcome their unintentional, unwanted biases by ensuring that they recruit, train, and set goals designed to increase diversity.

As Oluo says, "The work to truly end systemic racism, while crucial, is a long and hard road. ... Affirmative action can help with that. Even if we were to flip a switch today and end all racism, millions of people of color would still be disadvantaged and need policies to replace opportunities previously denied."

At the MLK Day rally in the packed Garfield gym after the workshop, Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown of Plymouth Congregational Church, challenged all to tell the truth about policies that are anti-black and patriarchal, saying, "The bank of justice is not bankrupt."

At the end of the rally, former State Rep. Jesse Wineberry reminded all that the nation's founders had declared independence years before they had won it. So, he declared, from now on, we are free to take on affirmative action for justice for all.

Beth Brunton is a member of PSARA.

Victory for Halcyon

Continued from Page 7

Ultimately, the Seattle City Council passed the temporary rezone legislation unanimously, and the potential buyers backed off from the deal.

Much More to Do

Evictions may no longer be imminent at Halcyon, but the residents still have to win permanent zoning changes to save their homes.

The bigger problem of affordable housing for seniors and low-income workers also remains. And other mobile home parks in the Seattle area are still at risk.

Residents of the 479-unit Bow Lake mobile home park in SeaTac, for example, have had to contend with dramatic rent increases of \$40-60 per month each year, leading to rents that exceed the monthly income for many of the park's low-income residents.

At Firs Mobile Home Park, near Angle Lake, the 69 families who live there have been fighting their landlord's threats to close the park for more than two years. In addition to seniors, many immigrant families – most of them Spanish-speaking – live at Firs, and local residents say some 90 students in the Highline School District could lose their homes if the property is closed.

Some Washington cities – Tumwater, Lynnwood, and Spokane for example – have created zones to protect mobile homes. Portland rezoned 56 mobile-home parks last year to shield them from development.

Seattle City Councilmember Rob Johnson said he might consider similar legislation later this year in his land-use committee.

"It shouldn't take a crisis for you to do something," Ishbel Dickens, lawyer and Executive Director of the National Manufactured Home Owners Association, said. "It shouldn't take people with gray hair crying on your shoulder."

A Short History of American Capitalism

Continued from Page 4

trade. Russell started as an orphaned apprentice to a maritime trade merchant, made his initial investment capital on trading commissions while working for other traders, and eventually founded Russell and Co., the most powerful American merchant house in China for most of the second half of the 19th Century.

His cousin and fellow opium trader, William Huntington Russell, was a co-founder and funder of Yale University's Skull and Bones Society.

Warren Delano, Jr., the grandfather of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was chief of operations for Russell and Co. in Canton. He first went to China at age 24 and spent a decade dealing dope on the Pearl River before returning to New York as a newly wealthy and very eligible bachelor.

He admitted in letters home that opium had an "unhappy effect" on its users, but argued that its sale was "fair, honorable, and legitimate," akin to importing wine and spirits to America. Delano lost his fortune in the Great Panic of 1857, but returned to China and rebuilt it in part by supplying the US military with opium to treat Union soldiers in the Civil War.

Thomas Handasyd Perkins of Boston made his initial capital as a young man selling slaves in Haiti, then peddled furs to China from the American Northwest before amassing a huge fortune smuggling Turkish opium into China.

Later in life, Perkins assuaged his guilt through philanthropy, supporting the Boston Athenaeum and the New England Institute for the Blind, which was re-named for him. The town of Belmont, Massachusetts, is named after the estate of his nephew, John Perkins Cushing, who was also active in the opium trade.

John Murray Forbes and Robert Bennet Forbes worked for Perkins and Co. in its China trade. While John's main job was to secure quality tea for export, Robert was in the importing side of the business and had a direct role in the opium trade. Their father, Ralph Forbes, had married into the Perkins family, but it was his sons' activities in the 1830s and 1840s that led to the Forbes family's accumulated wealth.

The Forbes legacy in the China opium trade lived on in the Museum of the American China Trade in Milton, Massachusetts, which was housed in Robert Bennet Forbes' 1883 Greek Revival-style home.

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

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Meetings and Events

West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 6, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave SW, Seattle, (35th & Henderson). Topic: *The Green New Deal*. Brown bag lunch.

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

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

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

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

King County Council Meeting on Fossil Fuel Moratorium: 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., ML King County Courthouse, 516 3rd Avenue, Seattle, 10th Floor.

PSARA Southend Committee: 1 p.m., Thursday, March 14, Burien Library, 400 SW 152nd St., Burien. Topic: *Herstory: Stories of Old Lesbians*. All are welcome. See details on Page 1.

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

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

Gen X, Millennials, and the Future of Social Security and Medicare: 7:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m., Tuesday, March 26, Phinney Neighborhood Association, PC Blue Building, Room 5., 6532 Phinney Avenue N. See details on Page 2.

Meet the Writer: Tim Wheeler, author of *News From Rain Shadow Country*, 2:00 p.m., Sunday, March 31, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Avenue S, Seattle. See details on Page 1.

Seattle Labor Chorus Performance to Benefit PSARA: 2:00 p.m., Saturday, April 13, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Avenue S, Seattle. See details on Page 2.

