

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

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February 2020

PSARA Book Group
*A Planet to Win: Why We
Need a Green New Deal*

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PSARA Forum

The Black Panther Party in Seattle

For a decade – from 1966 into the mid-70s – the Black Panther Party was an iconic organization, an example of revolutionary politics for people of all races.

While the media focused on the externals – the Panthers’ distinctive look, the berets, the leather jackets, the weapons – the party struck roots in the African American community through its Survival Programs, providing free breakfasts for children, medical clinics, and substance abuse counseling.

The Panthers also reached out to potential allies in other communities, working with SDS for example.

The party’s Seattle chapter was chartered in 1968 – the first chapter outside of California – and it lasted till 1978, when it dissolved. While the organization is gone, lasting achievements remain, including the Sydney Miller Free Clinic, now Carolyn Downs Family Medical Center.

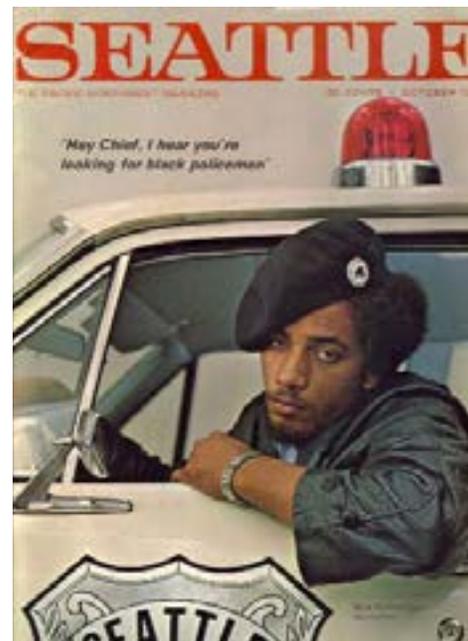
Veterans of the party also remain, and PSARA is proud to host a forum featuring six former Black Panther Party members who are now members of PSARA: Mark Cook, Larry Gossett, Vanetta Molson, Garry Owens, and Na’eem Shareef, and Mike Tagawa.

Our guests will recall the history of the Seattle chapter illustrated by a power point presentation, and then discuss why they joined the party, what they learned, and what they think the example of the Black Panther Party means for us today.

The event is FREE, but your donations will be gratefully accepted. Please join us.

Join us!
All are welcome

Saturday, February 22
2:00 p.m.
Washington State
Labor Council
321 16th Avenue S,
Seattle



Seattle Magazine, October 1968

PSARA Lobby Day

Thursday, February 6, 9 a.m., in Olympia

How do you get your elected representatives to commit to do the things you care about? How do you get them to follow through on their commitments?

The best way is to meet them face to face. Tell them about PSARA's Legislative Agenda. Ask them to promise their support. And urge them to tell you when and how they will deliver.

That's what PSARA's Lobby Day gives you the opportunity to do.

Join us for our 2020 Lobby Day, Thursday, February 6, at the Washington State Labor Council office in Olympia, 906 Columbia Street SW. We'll start

with an orientation at 9:00 a.m, and we'll be on our way home by 1:30 p.m.

We know that lobbying our representatives works, because we've been doing it for years. And we've won significant victories. Just last year we helped pass the Long-Term Care Trust Act, important environmental protections, and major tenants' rights bills.

This year we're taking care of transportation to and from Olympia, and we've made appointments with the legislators.

All you have to do is reserve your place. Email organizer@psara.org or call 206-261-8110 today.

The Retiree ADVOCATE

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or visit PSARA on Facebook

You Can Help

By Karen Richter

PSARA is working to make retirement security for all generations an important part of the 2020 election campaign. Increasing membership will make us more effective.

PSARA membership plateaued at 1,300 members the past few years. Our 2020 goal is to reach 2,000 members. Would you help us achieve that goal by recruiting two new PSARA members this year?

Membership brochures are available at our office or you can direct people to our website, PSARA.org, where they can learn about our work and join online.

Our Executive Board is discussing ideas to increase our visibility and membership. Your ideas are welcome. Please contact Karen Richter, membershipvp@psara.org.

Karen Richter is PSARA's Membership VP and Chair of our Fundraising Committee.

A Big PSARA Thank You to Our Sequim Planning Group Donation Honoring Will Parry



From left: Morgan Wheeler, Tim Wheeler, Lisa Dekker, Honey Bee Wheeler Burns

Thank you to our Sequim planning group who donated \$590 in memory of Will Parry at PSARA's December membership meeting. Donors included Tim Wheeler, Jane Caughlan, Charles Cooper, Honey Bee Burns, Thomas Hodges, plus anonymous donors.

Will -- for those that didn't have the pleasure of knowing him -- was one of the founders of Puget Sound Council of Senior Citizens, the ancestor of PSARA, past President of PSARA, former editor of the *Retiree Advocate*, and a tireless activist for social justice.

Our Sequim group has followed in Will's footsteps, organizing many PSARA presentations: Making Retirement Security Real for Everyone, Time for a Green New Deal, and Winning the Long-Term Care Trust Act.

A big PSARA thank you!

Medicare: Important Developments

By Robby Stern

HR 3

On December 13, 2019, the House of Representatives passed HR 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, by a vote of 230 to 192. President Trump promises to veto the bill if it passes the Senate. This bill:

- Gives Medicare the power to negotiate directly with the drug companies and provides the ability to force drug companies to the table to agree to price reductions.
- Makes the lower drug prices negotiated by Medicare available to Americans with private insurance.
- Stops drug companies from charging US consumers more than what they charge residents of other countries for the same drugs. It limits the maximum price for any negotiated drug to the average price in other developed countries.
- Creates a new, \$2,000 out-of-pocket limit on prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries.

- Reinvests in innovation and research for new cures and treatments. HR 3 uses some of the savings from lowering the unjustified drug prices to reinvest billions of dollars in the search for new breakthrough treatments and cures at the National Institutes of Health.

Also under the provisions of HR 3, all Medicare beneficiaries would see expanded benefits, including some coverage for dental, hearing, and vision coverage. It would begin the process of creating some equity for traditional Medicare recipients in the face of the present favoritism that is shown to Medicare Advantage plans.

HR 3 would add preventive and screening dental services to Part B benefits beginning in 2025, including oral exams and cleanings. Beneficiaries would be required to chip in the standard 20%. It would also cover basic procedures such as tooth restorations and extractions at that same rate. Bridges, crowns, and root canals would start out

with beneficiaries paying for 90% of the cost, a share that would drop to 50% over several years. Dentures also would receive limited coverage through Medicare Part B.

Routine eye exams would be covered through Part B with beneficiaries generally paying 20% of the cost. It also would provide some coverage -- \$85 -- toward contact lenses or eyeglasses. Hearing exams and hearing aids also would be covered under Part B, with beneficiaries contributing 20%. HR 3, while not nearly enough, is a step forward for Medicare recipients.

The Medicare for All proposals sponsored by Rep. Jayapal and Sen. Sanders would provide more comprehensive benefits to all Medicare beneficiaries. PSARA actively supports the Medicare for All proposals and is mounting an educational campaign to support Medicare for All. If you would Like a Medicare For All educational program in your area, contact Linda Peterson, educationcommittee@psara.org

Growing Concern Over Medicare Advantage

On September 13, 2019, six US Senators, Sherrod Brown, Bernie Sanders, Amy Klobucher, Chris Murphy, Richard Blumenthal, and Debbie Stabenow, sent a detailed letter to Seema Verma, Chief Administrator of the Center for Medicare Services (CMS), stating major concerns with Medicare Advantage. Among the issues the six senators raised were:

Overbilling: Taxpayers have overpaid MA plans more than \$30 billion over the last three years. CMS has taken little or no action to correct this.

Persistent performance problems: Audits done by CMS itself have found "widespread and persistent Medicare Advantage performance problems related to denials of care and payment," and MA plans that "threaten the health and safety of their members."

Misleading plan star ratings: Some "deficient" plans -- "even those found to threaten people's health and safety -- receive four- and five-star ratings."

Missing information beneficiaries need: The Senators called attention to missing information seniors need to make an informed choice. The senators said people should know "they cannot rely on star ratings or MA plan provider directories and that their out-of-pocket costs in a MA plan could be as high as \$6,700 for in-network medical and hospital care alone and \$10,000 if they use out-of-network providers. They should also know that in some plans they may face inappropriate delays and denials of care."

Then, on December 12, 2019, the federal inspector general's office found that a number of health insurance companies reported patients were sicker than they actually were in order to receive higher reimbursement from the Medicare Trust Fund, a fund composed of taxpayer contributions.

Meanwhile, the President and Seema Verma are actively promoting Medicare Advantage and opening the door for Advantage plans to provide benefits not available in traditional Medicare. The long-held dream of the right wing to privatize Medicare is gaining significant ground. The only way to counter this privatization offensive, short of eliminating MA (which I am certain many Medicare recipients would oppose because of the additional benefits or the desire to stay with their long-term network or medical providers), is to equalize benefits. We can insist that traditional Medicare and MA be required to provide the same benefits.

We are facing a very large threat of privatization, and if we do not want Medicare privatized, we must organize and advocate for equalization of Medicare benefits regardless, of whether a beneficiary is in traditional Medicare or Medicare Advantage.

Robby Stern is President of the PSARA Education Fund.

Root Causes of the Central American Migration

A Film Screening Co-Sponsored by PSARA: February 29

By Dina Burstein

E*ternos Indocumentados* (The Eternally Undocumented), a documentary film distributed by the L.A.-based Human Rights Alliance for Child Refugees and Families, gives a detailed understanding of US social and military intervention in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. The film shows that the US has intervened for decades in order to ensure its economic control of resources and markets and to undermine democracy. In the film we see the lives of people on the ground at home, living and resisting these policies. We see their perilous forced migration to the US and the trampling of their human rights once they arrive at the US-Mexico border. Migrants portrayed in the film are not "seeking the American dream." Rather, life in their homes has been made so dangerous that they see no choice but to make the perilous trip north to the US.

Seattle Interfaith Migrant Rights Network and the Pacific NW Chapter of the International Migrants' Alliance invite you to a showing of this film. It will be followed by audience discussion with local experts and information about ways we can provide solidarity to migrants at the US-Mexico border and here in Washington State. Learn ways to link with community support organizations on the ground at the US-Mexico border, including legal defense, medical assistance, community action, and accompaniment. Learn ways to take action here in Washington State to secure safety and justice for migrants in the Tacoma Detention Center and in our communities. These include advocacy for legislation to make private, for-profit incarceration of immigrants illegal, standing up for migrants at their bond hearings and asylum hearings, and providing material support for vulnerable migrants in Seattle.



*"It's what I went through, it's what they've been through."
Screen shot from the film.*

Eternos Indocumentados screening and discussion will be Saturday, February 29, 2-4:30 p.m., at the Washington State Labor Council, 321 16th Ave S., Seattle, a wheelchair accessible location. The film is in English and Spanish with subtitles. We will have Spanish interpretation for the discussion after the film.

There is no charge but we welcome your donations, which will support the work of local immigration justice organizations. You can see a trailer for the film at <https://youtu.be/dJyJL712DyQ>

Dina Burstein is a member of PSARA and the Seattle Interfaith Migrant Rights Network.

The Barbed Wire

By Barbara Flye

An impartial trial



Social Security Expansion: A Woman's Issue

By Linda Peterson

Preserving and expanding Social Security is important for everyone, and women face challenges that make it especially important. It should be no surprise that on average women's Social Security benefits are less than 80% of men's. In 2017 women received on average \$14,353/year, compared to \$18,041/year for men. Women are also less likely to have pensions, though that is becoming more true for everyone.

The Social Security disparity is due to several reasons, most obviously women earning less than men while working. But it is also due to women's traditional caregiving role. Women tend to spend fewer years in the workforce. More often than men, they take time out to care for children. They are also more likely to drop out of the workforce early, before reaching full retirement age, in order to care for a disabled spouse or aging parent. This is significant, because for each year someone opts for taking benefits early, they forego nearly 7% of what they could otherwise have received. And this reduced annual benefit is for the rest of their life. They cannot "catch up."

Couple this with the hidden costs of caregiving, and you have a double whammy. An AARP survey found that 78% of caregivers pay out-of-pocket costs associated with caregiving that average \$7,000/year. Some (25%) dip into their savings to pay these costs, and others (23%) actually take on additional debt. Many caregivers skimp on their own needs (household maintenance, utilities including heat and electricity, groceries, etc.). They often sacrifice their own health, sleeping less, foregoing dental care and preventive care, or skipping recommended tests or prescriptions. If they are still working, they may work fewer hours, or leave more demanding jobs to take less well-



Linda Peterson

paying ones that are closer to home, more flexible, or part time. The AARP survey found that caregivers still working spent on average 1 hour 20 minutes less per day on paid work -- impacting their future Social Security benefits in the long run. And 32% had left their previous jobs due to the overwhelming demands of caregiving.

Another factor to take into account when considering the disparity in Social Security benefits is that women tend to live longer than men, and to be hit with higher health care costs as they age. Everyone has increasing health care costs as they age, and the Kaiser Family Foundation found that average out-of-pocket health care spending for women over age 85 equaled about 83% of their Social Security benefits, compared to men's 58%.

This erosion of benefits due to increasing health care costs could be made even worse because there have been ominous attempts -- so far foiled

in Congress—to begin using something called the "chained" CPI (consumer price index) to calculate the annual cost-of-living adjustment for Social Security recipients. Compared to the current CPI-U (urban), which already results in meager annual adjustments, the chained CPI would result in even lower annual adjustments. Since the adjustments compound over time, this means benefits would fall ever further and further behind retirees' actual costs of living as the years go by. This would be particularly devastating for women as they age, since they make up ever larger shares of the older age groups, exhausting whatever savings they may have had, and getting poorer and poorer with each passing year.

PSARA is fighting for changes to Social Security that would help address these issues faced disproportionately by women. In addition to "scrapping the cap" and other steps to ensure the Social Security Trust Fund is adequately funded, PSARA wants to:

- Increase Social Security benefits for all recipients, especially for the lowest income earners, many of whom are women;
- Apply a caregiver credit to offset some of the working years lost by people who leave the workforce to care for family members;
- Apply the new CPI-E (Elderly) when calculating the annual cost-of-living adjustment. The CPI-E would take into account the inflation of costs borne disproportionately by the elderly, especially health care costs. It goes without saying that PSARA would strongly oppose any attempt to use the chained CPI.

Linda Peterson is Chair of PSARA's Education Committee.

A Planet to Win: Why We Need a Green New Deal

A PSARA Book Group

By Bobby Righi

The events of the past 10 years or so have been sounding the alarms about climate change. The alarms reached a cacophonous roar in 2019: The ongoing news of the fires in Australia which have killed at least 17 people and wiped out millions of animals; Typhoon Hagibisi in Japan killed more than 70 people in October; Typhoon Kammuri slammed into the Philippines in December and killed more than 14; and Hurricane Dorian killed 63 people in the Bahamas in September. We saw heat records broken in Europe and India. In the other extreme, there was an off-the-charts “polar vortex” storm in New York and the Midwest that brought temperatures into the arctic range and kept them there for weeks.

Scientists tell us that this is just a sample of what is to come with climate change. At the same time, the Trump government has rolled back regulations about clean air and water and fuel efficiency and has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement. It makes me want to pour a stiff drink and curl up somewhere with a friend and a good book (while I still have a roof over my head) and just give up. We need profound, radical change.

But! There are books that bring hope and we should read one together.

PSARA’s Climate and Environmental Justice Committee is holding a book group to discuss *A Planet to Win: Why We Need a Green New Deal* by Kate Aronoff, Alyssa Battistoni, Daniel Aldana Cohen, and Thea Riofrancos. Foreword by Naomi Klein. Published by Verso in 2019.

Let’s read this book and discuss our questions: What would our lives be like if we implemented a Green New Deal? How do we do this in the few years we have? How do we combat the well-funded opposition of the fossil fuel oligarchy? How can the minerals needed for clean energy technology be mined without keeping poor countries poor?

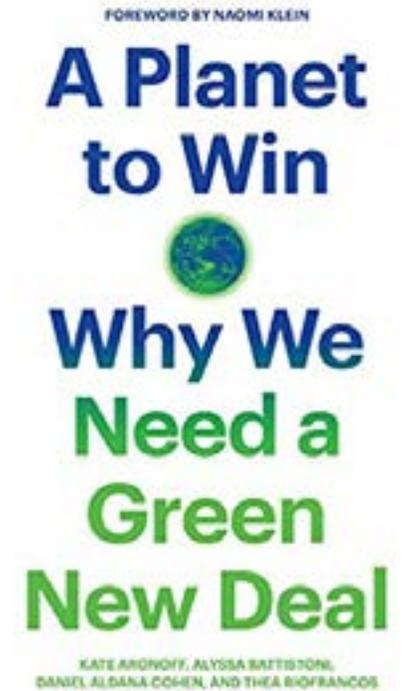
How do we build the broadest coalition possible? How does the Green New Deal break down existing race and class inequalities?

Join us to read this book and discuss these and other questions. We will have three meetings to discuss the book, about 70 pages of reading for each session. The first meeting will be on February 29, “Leap Day,” which is appropriate because we need to make a “leap” to new ways of doing things.

Note: The Green New Deal resolution was brought to the attention of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, before she was elected, when she joined the youth in the Sunrise Movement at a sit-in they organized in congressional offices.

To register for the book group email organizer@psara.org or call 206-261-8110.

Bobby Righi is Co-Chair of PSARA’s Climate and Environmental Justice Committee.



What I Want

By Rachael Levine

I want forgiveness
For all the things I have left undone,
Forgotten, ignored, wasted.

I want that forgiveness
To result from what I completed,
Remembered, attended to, saved.

I want the wisdom
To review, redact and fiercely focus,
On this hard work of reconciliation.

Rachael Levine is a long-time member of PSARA and a past president of the Puget Sound Council of Senior Citizens, PSARA's predecessor organization.

Children Sue Big Tech: Supply Chain Justice

By Michael Righi

Several million Africans from the Congo were enslaved by European powers during the slave trade. Then, in the late 19th century and the “scramble for Africa,” the brutal King Leopold of Belgium plundered the Congo, using forced labor, for ivory and rubber.

Now the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), rich in mineral wealth, is exporting those minerals for the devices our largest technological multinational corporations are selling us. The DRC mines copper, tin, tungsten, tantalum, gold, and cobalt, an essential component of lithium-ion batteries, which power everything from cell phones to laptops to electric vehicles. The DRC has 60-70 percent of the world’s cobalt.

British, Belgian, Chinese, and local mining companies mine some of this cobalt industrially as a byproduct of copper. But a significant percentage (25 percent is probably close) is mined with primitive hand tools, on the surface and in unsupported tunnels, by what are called “artisanal miners” (what a wonderful phrase).

Something like 40,000 of these “artisans” are kids under the age of 14. They have no safety equipment. “Cobalt lung” is a risk, many are maimed in accidents and tunnel collapses, and dozens are killed each year. They make, according to investigations by human rights activists, about 81 cents a day (adult males make about \$2 a day).

Many of the kids are sent to the mines because their families cannot pay the \$6 per month school fees. The DRC government promises free education, but its budget is limited by its inability to raise tax revenue. The International Monetary Fund requires the DRC, as a condition for IMF loans, to “limit spending to available resources.”

The Kids Sue

Now human rights lawyers have filed suit in District of Columbia federal



Young mine workers, Democratic Republic of Congo
(Photo: Amnesty International)

court against the companies who are benefiting from cheap cobalt: Apple, Microsoft, Dell, Google, and Tesla. The lawyers represent 14 families (out of hundreds) whose children have been maimed or killed. The case holds the companies responsible for their “supply chains” (another term that seems designed to sanitize human rights abuses and absolve companies of any ethical responsibility).

What the supply chain means in the case of the Congolese children is hammering and/or lugging rocks to dealers, who sell to local traders. Then it is partially processed by multinational mining companies, then to China for the production of batteries, then to Apple or Tesla and into our phones and electric cars.

The companies claim they have complaint processes anyone along the supply chain can use to report abuses. So perhaps a Congolese family could pull out its iPhone and fill out a form when a child is killed. Microsoft said, in response to Amnesty International, that they “have not traced cobalt through our supply chain to the smelter level

due to the complexity and resources required.” Bill Gates is worth \$90 billion.

It’s Not Only Cobalt

Batteries also need lithium. The “lithium triangle” is the high-altitude salt flats of Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile. Companies and countries are scrambling to control these resources. China seems to have the upper hand in African cobalt, but when it comes to lithium, Latin America has been the US backyard since the Monroe Doctrine.

Lithium mining is devastatingly destructive to the environment, and it damages and uses huge amounts of water (as does copper mining). Environmentalists, unionized miners, and indigenous communities in Chile and elsewhere are challenging mine development -- how much of the resource should be developed and who should benefit if it is.

We know how that question has been answered historically -- sacrifice

Continued on Page 11

The Emperor's Red Button: Part I

By Dorothy Van Soest

The Year 2020

"Is it red, Grandma? The button. Is it red?"

I turn down the volume on the radio. More news about North Korea. Another missile test. About #45 ordering the evacuation of almost ten million people from Seoul, South Korea. About someone talking him down from his alternative universe, so then he said to just evacuate the Americans living there. And now Iran. My four-year-old granddaughter doesn't need to know any of this.

"Is it in his office? On his desk? Does he sleep with it?"

"So many questions, Sweetie. Go out and play now."

"What's nuclear, Grandma?"

"A form of energy."

"Momma says I'm full of energy. Do I have a nuclear button? Can I push it whenever I want, too?"

I place my forefinger on her up-turned nose. "Whenever you want to release energy, just push this cute little button." I give her a big hug.

She giggles and heads for the back door, then stops and turns around. "Grandma, what is energy?"

"You. You're energy. Go outside now."

I sit down at the breakfast nook with a steaming cup of coffee. I watch my granddaughter on the swing and listen to National Public Radio. *The purpose of having nuclear weapons is to never use them. But the president gives no indication that he understands our deterrence policy or what a nuclear war would mean. During his presidential campaign, he said . . .*

I cover my ears. I know what he said. Somebody hits us with ISIS, you wouldn't fight back with a nuke? If we have nuclear weapons, why can't we use them? If we can't use them, why do we make them?

My granddaughter screams. I look out, see her on the ground under the swing. I race out the door and pick her up, kiss the scraped boo boo on her



elbow. "What happened?"

"I touched my button to make the swing go higher and I fell off."

I pull her close and whisper in her ear. "You're okay. Ready to get back on?"

She whimpers. "I have too much energy."

"Sweetie, there's no such thing as too much energy. Just remember to hang on."

I watch her get back on the swing and push off, tentative at first then bolder. What I just told her isn't true; there is such a thing as too much energy. The energy in one megaton nuclear bomb is enough to wipe out the largest city on Earth and suck all the oxygen out of the atmosphere. My granddaughter doesn't need to know that. But adults do, because it's our job to ensure the safety and survival of the next generation. We need to comprehend the difference between nuclear and conventional weapons, chances of surviving weapons of mass destruction versus chances of surviving weapons that target a limited area.

I brush the dirt off my jeans and go back inside, turn up the volume on the radio. *The world is once again contemplating the very real possibility of a nuclear war. And one man has authority to push the button.*

I sigh. There is no nuclear button. There's a nuclear football, though, a forty-five pound briefcase containing a list of targets, that goes with the president wherever he goes. To launch a nuclear attack he verifies his identity with a code, nicknamed "the biscuit,"

that he is supposed to carry with him at all times. Four minutes after he gives the command, the missiles leave their silos.

No president in his right mind would ever actually launch a nuclear attack. I mean, seriously, if Clinton had even remotely considered the idea, he wouldn't have gone around without "the biscuit" for several months without telling anyone he'd lost it. Nor would Carter have sent his suit off to the cleaners with the biscuit in one of the pockets.

And, now, as a tumultuous fall season draws to a close with the President impeached, a long and difficult winter lies ahead. There are rumors that the President has been stricken with an unnamed malaise and is deteriorating at an alarming rate.

I talk back to the radio. Everyone already knows he's not of sound mind. Last night at a rally, he raged so violently they almost had to restrain him. Even some of his supporters are now saying they think his behavior is unbecoming. He rants about a plague on the land. It's like he wants to hasten his own demise.

What happens if the president comes unhinged, the radio asks. What safeguards are there if he goes off the rails? All our prior concerns that a deranged president might use the nuclear button irrationally are now magnified. And since all the adults in the White House have been purged, who is left to remove the nuclear football from the President's hands as they did with Nixon in his last days? Is there anyone left to step in quietly, like Schlesinger did, to order a pause on any nuclear strike commanded by this president?

I turn off the radio, look out the window at my precious granddaughter, and pray.

Dorothy Van Soest is a retired university professor, novelist, activist, and a member of PSARA.

Part II of *The Emperor's Red Button* will appear in the March issue of *The Retiree Advocate*.

It Takes a Village...And a Program

By Bob Shimabukuro

"It takes a village to raise a child..." I heard this over and over in my head....

With a twist of course -- "...and a program, too," I thought as I waited for the Yonamines to appear.

1:30 p.m., Moe had promised that she and her daughter Kaiya would be at 321 16th Ave S, to present Kaiya's movie *Our Island's Treasure*.

A sigh of relief, as I saw the family walking toward the building, in good spirits, talking and laughing. I waved to them, they waved back, and thought, "yes, show time, right on time, now it begins."

For about two weeks earlier I was getting worked up as my memory was really playing tricks on me, and the planning processes were being upset by regular blanks on what day of the week and time of day it was: "Alice, is this today or tomorrow?" I would ask seriously between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. in the morning on some days.

Funny, maybe, but not very productive.

Got a lot of laughs and scoldings, from my kids who could do all the computer work that I couldn't apprehend, in record time.

Followed the planning work going on with Frieda, Frankie, and the rest of the committee folks...and especially the work of Michael to put the whole thing together.

And of course, all the PSARA (and APALA members) too.

Thank you.



January 11: A full house for *Our Island's Treasure*



Misa moved from Eugene, Oregon, last year and is now a member of the Winnemum Wantu Tribe in Northern California.

Just one more thought: As the program unfolded, I thought of one woman in particular who played a large part in the program but was never mentioned: Misa Joo.

She played a big part in mentoring Moe through junior high and high school when Moe wanted to quit school. Saturday's program was vintage Misa.

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

"So, we are now in a new year and we have entered a new decade and so far, during this decade, we have seen no sign whatsoever that real climate action is coming and that has to change," Thunberg said in a speech in Lausanne.

"To the world leaders and those in power, I would like to say that you have not seen anything yet. You have not seen the last of us, we can assure you that."

Greta Thunberg

A Personal Reflection

By Robby Stern

“We have to work on courage. This is the time to do what scares us. Rather than being individualistic, humans are actually so social that it’s hard to be different from the pack – even if the pack is heading over the falls. But fear doesn’t have to kill us. Fear can be exhilarating. Choose people in your life who are gutsier than you, more willing to take risks, and absorb that from them and be courageous yourself. That is what this moment calls for...Because we have got to pull together. That’s what democracy is all about.”

Quote from an interview of Frances Moore Lappé, author of *Diet for a Small Planet*, published in 1971, and co-author of a recent book, *Daring Democracy*. The interviewer was David Marchese, a staff writer for the *New York Times Magazine*.

Recently I was following reports by Amy Goodman on Democracy Now! from the Madrid U.N. Climate Conference (COP). Led by young people from all over the world, the mobilization and actions of young activists took place both inside and outside the hall where the conference was being held. With their voices and their bodies, they challenged the tragic inaction by political leaders and condemned the significant inside influence of the fossil fuel industry.

Then during Amy Goodman’s holiday reporting, I learned more about Fire Drill Fridays, which are being held weekly in Washington, D.C. and are led by Jane Fonda -- who decided to move to the nation’s capital. Ms. Fonda said she was picking up the call from Greta Thunberg. Ms. Fonda had just been arrested for her fifth time since October. Her arrest was the day before her 82nd birthday. She said she realized she had to get out of her comfort zone, that we were facing a climate emergency.

Ms. Fonda said that there were not two sides to this story. We have 10 years to reduce carbon emissions by 50 percent. She is using her platform of fame and her present status with a very popular TV program to help build an army of people to demand action against the emissions of carbon associated with the fossil fuel industry.

She said things happen when millions of people demand it, and we older people must heed the call of younger people and join with them to wage this battle.

The interview with Frances Moore Lappé and the inspiration of Jane Fonda awakened in me the need to reflect on what more I could be doing. I want to do more. My love and hope for our kids and grandkids are motivating me. The terrible inequity of what is happening to people who are in front line communities require me to step out of my comfort zone. I need to act with the understanding that our home, our planet, is on fire.

Ms. Fonda said this is not a time for moderation. Brave bold steps are needed. It is going to get worse. We must stand in solidarity with the front-line communities and workers who rely on the fossil fuel industry to support their families.

Being strategic is important. All of us have different tolerances for risk. Operating outside our comfort zone will be different for me than for other people I respect.

I have a friend who is organizing his network of friends to go to a battle-



Robby in action

ground state in October to help get Trump out of office and win a Democratic Senate. This is great work and will require people stepping outside their comfort zones.

My wife, Dina, is spending literally hours every day organizing to give support to immigrants in the face of the cruelty of our government. It is hard work and often falls outside her comfort zone. I deeply admire what she and her compatriots are doing.

For me, I will try to figure out what makes the most sense. I want to use my almost 76-year-old body, brain, and heart to support the young people who are leading this fight for survival.

How will I step further outside of my comfort zone and put my body on the line? Previously it has been nonviolent disobedience. I know it will be, as Jane Fonda said, “aligning my body with my deepest values.” We are privileged to be alive and have the opportunity to make a difference. We must force our government to do what is right for the young people, for the children, for immigrants, for future generations.

Robby Stern is President of the PSARA Education Fund.

Children Sue Big Tech

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zones (environment and people) have been created across the globe for profit. The industrial revolution was based on coal and slavery and cotton and imperialism. The energy transition to oil strengthened the hold of extraction and the military power to back up the oil companies.

The Future Green New Deal

We are fighting for the next transition, to clean energy, but it cannot be based on new sacrifice zones. The Green New Deal needs mineral extraction for wires, batteries, wind turbines, and solar arrays. For the sake of justice, this must involve international solidarity and care.

Here are a few ideas about what that means in practice: Corporate accountability laws that require companies to monitor supply chains and eliminate child and labor abuse. Trade agreements that set appropriate labor and environmental standards, otherwise minerals cannot be exported or imported. Technological innovation that mitigates climate and environmental damage that is shared, not protected for the profit of a few.

One more point. We in the US must restrain demand for energy and minerals. Not individually, but through policy: Build public transit systems, not electric SUV's. Limit electronic planned obsolescence. Require easy-to-fix manufacturing and safe recycling.

Big Tech is interested in none of this -- only in grand pronouncements and public relations. We can't let them get away with that. We have to demand human rights and justice throughout their supply chain.

Michael Righi is a retired economics professor and a member of The Retiree Advocate editorial board.

Who's Behind the TV Ads for E-Verify?

By Mike Andrew

If you spent way too much time in front of the TV over the holidays like I did, you'd have seen ads for the E-Verify program, paid for by an outfit called NumbersUSA.

E-Verify is a Department of Homeland Security website that allows prospective employers to electronically research the Social Security numbers of potential employees. If there are questions about their eligibility to work in the US, the employer can be automatically notified -- and then notify ICE in turn.

It sounds like a rational system. At least until you ask whose eligibility would be questioned. Do you think white people's documents would be submitted to E-Verify? No, of course not. The assumption would be that white people are citizens. Only people of color would be questioned.

And even if you had all your documents in order, being singled out for special scrutiny would be intimidating for any worker, and even more so for a person of color, or someone whose primary language is not English.

And that begs the question: Who is NumbersUSA and why are they promoting E-Verify?

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, NumbersUSA is a nativist organization created by white nationalist John Tanton to advance his views.

Tanton, who died last year, wanted to prevent all immigration -- even legal immigration. To help him do that he founded a constellation of organizations including FAIR (Federation for American Immigration Reform), the Center for Immigration Studies, and NumbersUSA.

All innocuous-sounding, but all dedicated to keeping America white.

Tanton, by the way, also founded the pro-eugenics organization Society for Genetic Education.

To start NumbersUSA, Tanton used his protege, Roy Beck, as a front man. Beck also worked as a political strategist for Republican Congressman Tom Tancredo. Tancredo ran for Governor of Colorado in 2010, representing the right-wing American Constitution Party and advocating -- among other things -- repeal of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

All in all, not very good company to keep.

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PSARA Education Fund

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Meetings and Events

First Tuesday Vigil With the Seattle Anti-War Coalition: 11:00 a.m., Tuesday, February 4, Jackson Federal Building, 915 2nd Avenue.

West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, February 5, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave. SW, Seattle, (35th & Henderson). Topic: *Washington State legislative session - What issues matter most to you?* Brown bag lunch.

PSARA Lobby Day: 9:00 a.m - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, February 6, Washington State Labor Council office, 906 Columbia Street SW, Olympia. If you need a ride, you **must** RSVP to organizer@psara.org or 206-261-8110.

PSARA Southend Committee: 1:00 p.m., Thursday, February 13, Burien Library, 400 SW 152nd St., Burien. Topic: *Medicare For All*.

PSARA Fundraising Committee: 11:00 a.m. - Noon, Monday, February 10, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Education Committee: 2 p.m., Tuesday, February 11, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

PSARA Race and Gender Equity Committee: 11 a.m.–12:00 p.m., Thursday, February 20, 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 20, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

Forum on the Lessons of the Black Panther Party: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., Saturday, February 22, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

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