

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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

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May 2021

We Remember
Bob Shimabukuro

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Why You Should GiveBIG in 2021

GiveBIG Days Are May 4 and 5

When I think about the changes we need to get our country on the right track, giving to PSARA is something I can do that makes a difference. I believe activism is the key, and PSARA effectively leads by encouraging and supporting our members' work while providing a sense of community to bring in others to join us. Just what's needed to address our society's biggest challenges. **Jessica Bonebright, Administrative VP PSARA**

PPSARA is the only progressively political organization which organizes specifically for senior Americans in our state. PSARA works with other social justice organizations and provides essential education of current issues and legislation for all Americans and organizes its members to take action in order to form a more just and equitable society. PSARA provides wonderful social events where members feel a true sense of community and often celebrate in song and other art forms. **Angela Bartels, PSARA Fundraising Committee Member**

PPaul and I joined and we contribute to PSARA because it is a progressive organization that cares about all the things we do -- building a better future for all generations, fighting for social, economic, and climate justice, equal rights, and dignity for all of us in our retirement years. PSARA reaches out to a number of likeminded organizations to leverage our ability to achieve these goals. Plus I appreciate working with a group of really great people, and we have some really great events! **Karen Richter, VP Membership and Fundraising Committee Chair.**



PSARA relies on the participation of our members (Photo: Garet Munger)

By contributing to GiveBIG I am sustaining and advancing the work of PSARA at several levels. PSARA members continue to educate, lobby and fight for social equity and justice issues important to me and to our society overall. From securing and advancing Social Security benefits to addressing climate change and racial equality, my contributions guarantee that passionate, untiring advocates for justice continue their work into the future. **Carlos de la Torre, PSARA Executive Board Member**

Here's how to GiveBIG in 2021. GiveBIG days are May 4th and 5th. Early online giving for GiveBIG starts on April 20th. Donations can be made from April 20th through May 5th by going to <https://www.givebigwa.org/psara-education-fund>. Alternatively you can

go to <https://www.givebigwa.org/> and enter the PSARA Education Fund. Once on that page, you can donate beginning April 20.

For members who prefer not to donate online or want the Education Fund to receive the full amount of your donation, send a check to the PSARA Education Fund any time between now and May 5. Write in the memo line "GiveBIG" so we know it is in response to the challenge. Mail your check to the PSARA Education Fund, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle, 98144.

Choosing this option saves the PSARA Education Fund a small percentage processing fee for online donations. Thank you for generously contributing in past years, and hope you are able to donate this year.

The Retiree ADVOCATE

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information or to renew:
www.psara.org
or visit PSARA on Facebook

Join Us for a Concert With John O'Connor Saturday, May 1, 4:00 p.m.

Folk music is about folks. And that's us! That's why folk music has an appeal to so many people – it's about us and all the sometimes serious, sometimes silly things that happen to us.

Folk music has a special appeal in stressful and contentious times like these because it reminds us of our common experiences as working people, and of our common hopes and dreams.

Join us on Saturday, May 1, at 4:00 p.m. for a concert featuring folk singer-songwriter John O'Connor, as part of the PSARA Education Fund's GiveBIG campaign.

John knows what he's singing about. Right out of high school he went to work in the factories of Waterloo, Iowa. His interest in Woody Guthrie led him to a 30-year career performing in coffeehouses, schools, union programs, and political events.

His album "Songs of Our Times" even has a local angle. While living in Seattle in 1983, John sent off some songs to Flying Fish Records and landed a contract – something almost unheard of in the recording business.

When the album came out in 1984, the *Washington Post* named it one of the best albums of the year.

John was also instrumental in organizing the North American Traveling Musicians Union, American Federation of Musicians Local 1000.

We're fortunate John has agreed to help us with our GiveBIG campaign. You'll get a top notch performance by one of the USA's leading folk musicians and activists, plus an opportunity to help the PSARA Education Fund with our crucial work. Your donations will help fund the *Retiree Advocate* and many PSARA educational programs.

Watch your email for registration instructions. If you don't get PSARA emails, email organizer@psara.org to get on our list.

We hope you can join us for the concert, but even if you can't you can still help with our GiveBIG campaign. Go to PSARA.org, click Donate to the PSARA Education Fund, and follow the prompts. Or send a check to PSARA, 321 16th Ave S, Seattle WA 98144.



John O'Connor

Thank You
to PSARA member Maria Batayola
for her generous donation
in memory of
Bob Shimabukuro

Washington's Labor Movement Must Keep Fighting the Good Fights – and Organize, Organize, Organize!

By Larry Brown

It has been my honor to lead the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO since January 2019. When I look back at what our state's labor movement has accomplished in the past two years, and then I look ahead at our next (and ongoing) challenges, I feel great optimism.

Amid the dark times and uncertainty of this horrible COVID-19 pandemic, unions have demonstrated why they are so necessary. We've demanded personal protective equipment (PPEs), fought for safer workplaces, and won hazard pay for essential frontline workers. Unions are more popular than they have been in decades.

Here in Washington, our state labor movement has been a powerful force in advocating for public policies that benefit working families. That's because we have excelled in helping to elect pro-worker candidates at all levels of government, including some of our own members we've trained to win election. (I'm a graduate of the WSLC Path to Power candidate training myself, and I'm running for my second term on the Auburn City Council.) And most importantly, we've continued to win strong union contracts – in both the private and public sectors – for our members and their families.

During my tenure at the WSLC, we've sought to maintain and improve the direct assistance that we provide to new and displaced workers through our Workforce Development Department and to injured workers via our Project Help program. We have also strived to build connections with community partners on critical issues that affect our members' lives -- from addressing racial injustice to supporting humane policies for our state's essential immigrant workers.

As I look forward to the next two years, I am hopeful that the Biden Administration will continue to enact pro-worker policies that not only undo

the damage done by the previous administration, but also reverse decades of erosion of workers' freedom to join together in unions.

That means priority #1 must be passage of the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. It's passed the House and Senate; approval is within reach. Of course, there are other federal priorities, including approving a major job-creating (and job-sustaining) investment in America's infrastructure, protecting voter rights, comprehensive immigration reform, and others.

Although great progress in protecting retirement security was made with the inclusion of a multi-employer pension relief in the American Rescue Plan, the Social Security system remains under threat from hostile administrators left over from the previous administration. President Biden should fire Social Security Commissioner Andrew Saul and Deputy Commissioner David Black.

And there's a certain postmaster that needs to be replaced.

When I look ahead at priorities in Washington state, I have great confidence that our movement's exceptional legislative advocacy will continue to achieve progress, as it has this year on overtime pay for farm workers, establishing new workers' compensation protections and immigrant relief amid COVID-19, and other important legislation.

But I truly believe that our focus must be on organizing.

To sustain and build upon our progress in Washington state, we need to grow our labor movement. It's that simple. We are already the fifth most unionized state in the country, with union members accounting for 17.4 percent of the state's workforce. That union density is why we have the power to negotiate better contracts for our members and make progress on pro-worker public policies.



WSLC President Larry Brown

Until we can achieve federal labor law reform in the form of the PRO Act, unions face multiple headwinds in our organizing -- from anti-union Supreme Court decisions to a multibillion-dollar union avoidance industry that exploits our weak system for unionization. Amazon's quashing of the organizing drive in Bessemer, Alabama, spotlighted those headwinds for the public, but the rest of us have known for decades that it is way too hard in this country for workers to join together in unions.

But we can't be discouraged by the challenges before us. The labor movement's hard work in the face of major obstacles is a big reason why we now have a pro-union president. It's a big reason why the obstruction of US Senate Republicans has been removed (somewhat). And it's a big reason why we have been able to advance pro-worker policies at the state and local levels.

Our history is one taking on great challenges and persevering -- one day longer -- until we win. That same determined mentality must be focused on organizing new members, and the Washington State Labor Council stands ready to help all of our affiliated unions accomplish that goal.

Larry Brown is President of the Washington State Labor Council and a member of PSARA.

Andrew Saul and David Black Must Go

How You Can Help

Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security, and David Black, Deputy Commissioner, are Trump appointees. They are undermining the administration of Social Security.

Please contact the White House and our two US Senators and tell them these two men must be removed from leadership of the Social Security Administration.

- They tried to cut benefits particularly for people receiving disability benefits.

- They have systematically attacked the unions representing Social Security workers and Social Security administrative law judges and have created a toxic work environment. Both unions representing these workers have overwhelmingly voted "no confidence" in these two men and requested that the President remove them.

- They delayed providing the IRS information that would have allowed for prompt payment of stimulus checks from the recently passed Recovery Act.

- A Social Security Administration whistle blower recently revealed that Saul and Black put pressure on administrative law judges to deny people with disabilities the Social Security Disability benefits to which they are entitled.

Contact President Biden and ask that he remove these two men from Social Security Administration leadership. Also, contact our two US Senators and ask that they contact the White House requesting the President remove these two men.

To contact President Biden - <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/> or call 202 456-1111

Message: To preserve and protect our Social Security system please remove Andrew Saul and David Black from their leadership positions in the Social Security Administration.



Andrew Saul (left) and David Black (right)

To contact Sen. Maria Cantwell - <https://www.cantwell.senate.gov/contact/email> or call (206) 220-6400

To contact Sen Patty Murray - <https://www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/mobile/contactme> or call 206-553-5545

Message: Please urge the President to remove Andrew Saul and David Black from their leadership positions in the Social Security Administration.

Take your nativist crap and...

QAnon Republicans Marjorie Taylor Greene and Paul Gosar are organizing a new America First Caucus in Congress dedicated to "common respect for uniquely Anglo-Saxon political traditions."

One of the first recruits is accused child sex trafficker Matt Gaetz.

The group's policy platform promises to "follow in President Trump's footsteps, and potentially step on some toes and sacrifice sacred cows for the good of the American nation."

"America is a nation with a border, and a culture, strengthened by a common respect for uniquely Anglo-Saxon political traditions," they continue.

"History has shown that societal trust and political unity are threatened when foreign citizens are imported en-masse into a country, particularly without institutional support for assimilation and an expansive welfare state to bail them out should they fail to contribute positively to the country."

Democrats swiftly condemned the newly formed caucus and its stated positions.

"As an immigrant, I served on active duty in the US military to defend your right to say stupid stuff. What makes America great is that we don't judge you based on bloodline, we look at your character," Democratic Congressman Ted Lieu wrote in a tweet, tagging Greene and Gosar.

"So take your nativist crap and shove it," Lieu added.

Bob Shimabukuro

By Robby Stern

On March 29, 2021, our beloved comrade and inspiring leader, Bob Shimabukuro, died. Bob played a very important role in PSARA as a leader of the RaGE Committee, an Executive Board member, Associate Editor of the *Retiree Advocate*, and a frequent author of articles that combined personal stories of his life and family with political insights that were unique and challenging.

In May, 2013, the following announcement appeared in the *Retiree Advocate*:

The Executive Board voted to appoint Bob Shimabukuro to the PSARA Executive Board subject to a vote by the general membership. Bob retired from numerous occupations including freelance writer/editor, community organizer, woodworker, artist-craftsman, and restaurateur/chef. He has been a volunteer in progressive change work for more than 50 years, including farm worker rights, anti-Vietnam War, anti-apartheid, and most recently in Asian Pacific Islander (API) community-building work in Seattle.

Bob is the founding member/director of the Asian Pacific AIDS Council, an education and prevention group in the API community. He has written extensively on his brother's bout with AIDS.



Bob leading a PSARA tour at the Wing Luke Museum

*He authored the book *Born in Seattle: The Campaign for Japanese American Redress*, published by the University of Washington Press. He constructed the award-winning Wing Luke Museum exhibit "EO 9066: 50 years before and 50 years after," which covered the century of Japanese Americans in the US. Executive Order 9066 was the presidential order which allowed the military to "exclude" anyone they deemed a security threat from the West Coast, which led to the incarceration of over 120,000 Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans.*

We are privileged to have Bob join the PSARA Board.

Little did we understand what a privilege it would be. Bob threw himself into the work of PSARA despite struggling with a growing number of physical challenges. He provided leadership to the People of Color caucus that transformed into the Race and Gender Equity Committee (RaGE) and constantly challenged the organization to fashion educational programming and policies that take into account the lives and experiences of communities of color.

His articles in the *Retiree Advocate* blending personal history with deep political and cultural insights were a favorite read for many PSARA members. He also demanded that our programming demonstrate respect for the many cultures impacted by the issues we were addressing. He clearly had the respect of many young people in the API community, and through those connections exposed us to music and thought that we had not previously been exposed.

Bob spoke quietly, but that did not in any way diminish the passion of his words and desire for a country and world free of racism, class oppression, and economic and social justice. He knew personally economic hardship and racial oppression, and he knew the struggle of someone with health limitations.



Bob Shimabukuro

As Bob wrote in one of his columns:
For Eric Garner, may you rest in peace.

For the rest of us choking, literally and spiritually, we know that we cannot rest in peace. We must remain cool, calm, and collected, and act only when we are strong, all of us, together. We know we must make allies. While we accept the fact that some of us will not see the "new world," we also know that collectively we will overcome.

Then Bob would end his articles: *Let's catch a breath, then keep moving.*

As his friend, Cindy Domingo said when learning of Bob's death: *Garry and I are just so saddened by this. Bob was so special in so many ways -- the humanity of his writing especially about his brother always gave me so much to think about. I will miss his quiet but strong opinionated ways. Rest in peace my brother.*

Rest in peace brother Bob. It is a better world for your presence. Alice, our thoughts are with you and your beloved family.

Robby Stern is the President of the PSARA Education Fund.

Overcoming Despair and Finding Hope in Difficult Times

By Dorothy Van Soest

Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.

—Representative John Lewis

Even when we lean on Rep. Lewis' inspiring words, how can we not despair when the pandemic is far from over, our economy is collapsing, increased violence endangers our democracy, and ecological devastation threatens the survival of our planet? Where is the hope when more people are living in cars, RVs, and tents and tens of millions more are on the verge of eviction? How can we be optimistic when a tiny sliver of people are receiving larger shares of wealth while people working minimum wage jobs, no matter where they live in our country, cannot afford basic essentials?

Forward Together, Not One Step Back

There are copious messages that lead us to believe that we are helpless, that the problems are too big and we're too small. But there is an antidote to helplessness, and that is hope -- defiant, resilient, persistent hope. And when our spirits begin to flag, there are ways to find that hope.

Use your imagination. Allow yourself to imagine the world you would like to inhabit, and then believe it is possible to create it, no matter what evidence there is to the contrary. Imagine a world without nuclear weapons where adequate food, shelter, and access to health care are universal human rights for all. Use your imagination.

Change the narrative. Challenge the dominant superior-inferior ideology that values some people over others, creates disposable people, and makes war inevitable.

Turn to history. Our spirits are buoyed by stories of others who faced equal or greater challenges in the past.

Not myths about superheroes that make it harder for us to act, but real stories about ordinary people who did seemingly insignificant things and persevered in the face of doubt and real danger. Know that, when we join forces today with the Poor People's Campaign to dismantle systemic poverty and racism, we stand on the shoulders of untold numbers of people in the 1960s civil rights movement.

No action is too small. Even one small step on the journey changes our perspective on the landscape. Action, either practical or symbolic, overcomes the inertia and apathy connected with the absence of hope. Know that our efforts—no matter how small or boring—when combined with and multiplied by millions of people across the globe over time, transform the world.

Don't be intimidated by "those who have power." No one can prevent us from thinking independently, speaking our minds, and following the still small voice inside that leads us to act.

Pair a deep-seated sense of social justice with pragmatism. People are not necessarily either with us or against us. A vast center of those not ideologically driven with strong opinions about some issues are willing to work on beginning reforms. Consider that the Social Security, Medicare, Voting Rights, and Affordable Care Acts were all reforms that add up, over time, to a kind of revolution.

Reframe issues to reach more people. Our brains allow us to have both conservative and progressive worldviews but on different issues. Instead of negating opposing positions, we can tune into peoples' worldviews and reframe issues based on what's important to them.

Know when to step back. When we feel red-hot rage -- no matter how justified -- take a breath, look at the spiraling anger of others, and decide not to ratchet it up. We can be impatient with evil and, at the same time, be patient with people.



Dorothy Van Soest

Hold our leaders accountable. Politicians will say this is not the time to ask for anything that costs money, that we are in debt or at war. History proves otherwise. In the depths of the 1935 depression, people held their leaders accountable and got the Social Security Act passed; during the Vietnam War era, they got the Civil Rights, Medicaid, Medicare, Elementary & Secondary Education, WIC Program, and Economic Opportunity Acts passed. Now is the time to hold our politicians accountable for saving countless lives and lifting millions out of poverty.

Believe that, in the long run, justice will win out. By standing with the Poor People's Campaign, we are casting our lot with growing numbers of people who believe it is possible to reconstitute the world. (www.poorpeoplescampaign.org)

Dorothy Van Soest is on the Washington State Poor Peoples Campaign coordinating committee and a member of PSARA. (www.dorothyvansoest.com)

Sunrise Movement Responds to Biden's Infrastructure Plan: It's a Start

Following news of Biden's infrastructure plan, Varshini Prakash, Executive Director of Sunrise Movement, released the following statement (Edited for the *Retiree Advocate*):

"Though it won't solve the climate crisis on its own, if we fight to make it stronger and pass it into law, President Biden's infrastructure package can be step one in our fight for a Green New Deal. Thanks to the activists, young people, and people of color who fought like hell to get Biden elected on a climate mandate, Biden has finally heard us and is speaking our language. The framing of this package is our framing; the priorities are our priorities. But I feel deeply aware of how much more power we must build to fully realize our vision of a Green New Deal.

"There are a lot wins for us in this package: the funding of a Civilian Climate Corps, the commitment to the creation of good union jobs and the passage of the PRO Act, finally delivering 100% universal clean water in the United States of America, an energy efficiency and clean energy standard to decarbonize our power sector and incentivize mass deployment of renewable energy, deep equity and justice investments in disadvantaged communities, and more. Despite those wins, the plan lacks a commitment to the full scale of transformation that is needed of our economy.

"The priorities and approach are right—this contains the frameworks of the Green New Deal—but as of now this plan could only be considered a beginning of that truly transformative vision. But we've always said that the Green New Deal wouldn't be just one bill, and the only thing worse than not meeting this moment at scale, would be not meeting it at all.

"So here's the deal: We will continue to push and build power towards deploying at least \$1 trillion/year over the next decade to transform this economy and to push Biden to live up to his own

campaign promises to deploy these investments as fast as possible during his first term. Our movement is prepared to agitate and shift the ground under politicians' feet to ensure Congress strengthens this package to get it closer to the scale and scope our country and our planet demands. But we need President Biden to do more, too.

"Biden has said he wants to have a 'Rooseveltian Presidency' and that tackling climate change would be his Presidency's top priority. The task of transforming our economy and rescuing our planet from the brink of collapse are just as existential to our country now as the war effort was in the 1940's. Biden will need to use his bully pulpit to build the political will for a more transformative vision, like FDR famously did. Biden must tell the truth about the scale of the climate crisis — as he's done with the COVID crisis — and work to rally the political will to truly lead the world in stopping it.

"We're up against a lot — a GOP that won't even vote for Covid Relief, fossil fuel executives more interested in profit than people, and an urgent climate emergency that's worsening with every passing day. Whatever happens, we must ensure that we pass something, as soon as possible. We cannot miss this moment. Congress must strengthen this plan and Biden must pass it into law as quickly as possible. If Republicans don't

cooperate, do it without them. If the filibuster obstructs progress, abolish it. Money needs to go out the door and flow into communities now."

According to Sunrise, the Biden administration did not meet the scale of the crisis on: **housing** – the plan only upgrades two million homes out of around 140 million housing units in America; **research and development** – downsized from Biden's campaign promise of \$300 billion to \$180 billion; the **Civilian Climate Corps** investment – only 10-20,00 jobs; and **investment in transit** – significantly less than what's been proposed in Schumer's Clean Cars Act and Warren and Markey's BUILD Green Act.

Despite this, Sunrise is pushing for the plan's strengthening and passage, emphasizing that they expect more than just one bill to realize the vision of a Green New Deal.

PSARA intends to follow the lead of Sunrise and push for the passage of Biden's plan as hard as we can while at the same time demanding more engagement from our government to fight inequality, white supremacy, and climate change. While we retirees may not have much time left on Earth, we intend to do as our mothers taught us and leave the Earth better than we found it.



Billionaire Wealth Surges During Pandemic

By Michael Righi

It's hard to make sense of the numbers. US billionaires, 650 of them, have gotten \$1.3 trillion wealthier during COVID. Three of them – Buffet, Gates, and Bezos – now own as much as 50% of the population. The combined wealth of eight white guys is more than a trillion dollars.

How do we get a handle on this? Here are a couple ways. Bezos could use just the increase in his wealth since last March to pay Amazon's employees, all 875,000 of them, a \$105,000 bonus each. He would rather use it to fight worker unionization efforts.

Or, the increase in wealth during COVID of just 10 global billionaires would be enough to buy vaccines for the world -- even at the prices being charged by patent-hoarding pharmaceutical monopolies.

So what? Billionaires are glorified in our economy – they supposedly earned it by their amazing innovations and contributions to everyone's well-being. Or perhaps, in another way of looking at it, they were aggressive at amassing monopoly power and taking advantage of technologies developed over time by scientists and societies and governments. They are good at finding ways of extracting wealth from workers, small suppliers, communities, and the planet.

They are very good at avoiding taxation. Good at setting up foundations, becoming "philanthropists." We pay the taxes they do not, thereby subsidizing the philanthropic preferences of the wealthy. This contributes to the dangerous anti-state ideology that the rich solve problems, governments do not.

Inequality Kills

Those of us born in rich countries live longer. But when you compare life expectancy in the US to other countries, you find 35 countries with higher numbers (the US is at about 78 years, Japan (#1) close to 85). There are, of

course, wide variations in the US by race and class.

Despite the huge amounts the US spends on "health care," an unequal country is not a healthy one. Stress, shame, precarity, overwork, racism and poverty are systemic, structural violence that take years from people's lives. The pandemic made it all worse. GoFundMe has, over the past year, gone from appeals to help with medical bills to donations for rent and food. When people are born into what amounts to a caste system, with little or no opportunity for advancement, frustration, dejection, and class anger simmer.

Meanwhile the wealthy are a caste apart, retreating to private islands, installing luxury bunkers, building learning pods for their kids with private tutors. The Federal Reserve pumps trillions of dollars into corporations and the stock market, and the wealthy get wealthier. There's no crisis for owners of corporate stock.

Billionaires are bad for us. An analysis by the RAND Corporation released in September found that the bottom 90 percent of American workers would be taking home \$2.5 trillion more per year if economic inequality were at the same level it was in 1975. That's about \$50 trillion transferred from one class to another.

While the working class struggles with job and income loss, the rich have by and large kept their incomes and are piling up wealth they cannot spend. The wealthy do spend on some things, of course, like air travel, which is why the polluter elite are responsible for more than twice the carbon emissions of the poorest half of humanity since 1990. Wealth inequality and climate change are closely linked.

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The Barbed Wire

By Barbara Flye



A Warning Against “Far Right” in Rural Washington

By Tim Wheeler

Approximately 175 people attended a March 30 webinar discussing the “Far Right in Clallam County and Beyond.” Lisa Dekker and Vicki Lowe told of the struggle against the QAnon cult, armed vigilantes, and racism targeting the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe. Devin Burghart, Executive Director of the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights (IREHR), described the growing menace of far-right hate groups in the Northwest.

PSARA Clallam County Executive Board member Lisa Dekker described how “Save Our Sequim” (SOS) organized opposition to the tribe’s planned opioid clinic in Sequim. A Republican consultant orchestrated the packing of the Sequim City Council with SOS sympathizers. A majority of the present Sequim City Council is appointed, not elected. A council member, William Armacost, a QAnon follower, was later appointed mayor.

Dekker described the intimidation of Black Lives Matter protesters in Sequim last June 3 by armed vigilantes. Similar armed vigilantes terrorized a multiracial family of campers in Forks that same day.

PSARA, Voices for Health & Healing, Indivisible Sequim, AVATAR, Sequim Protests Racism, Etc. (SPARE), and the



Clallam County residents take a stand against the far right (Photo: Tim Wheeler)

Sequim Good Governance League have rallied against the far right with vigils and petitions signed by as many as 1,900 people. The State Legislature recently enacted a ban on “open carry” of firearms at the State Capitol and at street protests. A grassroots campaign convinced all three state legislators representing the Olympic Peninsula to vote for this gun control measure.

Dekker thanked the Jamestown S’Klallam tribe for their leadership in organizing mass COVID-19 immunizations, sharing their vaccine allotment with the community so that Clallam County ranks among the highest in the state for vaccinations. Grateful residents have staged vigils thanking the tribe and protesting Mayor Armacost’s refusal to approve a proclamation thanking the tribe. Several groups have come together to elect progressive council members in next November’s election.

Vicki Lowe, a descendant of both the Jamestown S’Klallam

Tribe and pioneer settlers, is a candidate for the City Council. She is currently executive director of the American Indian Health Commission for Washington State (AIHC). She described racial discrimination against the Pacific Northwest tribes that reaches back before the 1855 Treaty of Point No Point that stripped the tribes of their ancestral lands. The S’Klallams in 1874 were compelled to pool their money and buy back their own land near Dungeness, now called Jamestown Beach. Today, many tribal descendants live throughout the community.

When SOS formed in 2019, they spread fear and disinformation about the proposed opioid clinic. They attacked the Tribe and began legal action to stop the clinic, which failed. At a City Council meeting Lowe displayed racist posts from the SOS Facebook page, including one with the racist epithet, “Indian Idiots.” She noted there was also community support for this much needed medical facility. The Council

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(Photo: Tim Wheeler)

Billionaire Wealth Surges

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Every Billionaire Is a Policy Failure

There is much to do to prevent new billionaires – strengthen unions, crack down on monopoly power, restrict financial manipulation. But we've already got a bunch of them controlling our economic and political system. So, what's to do?

Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders are proposing annual wealth taxes: 2% on wealth above \$50 million and 3% on billionaires. That should be coupled with renewed taxes on corporate profits (the main source of the wealth of the 1%), and higher marginal income tax rates. This would raise revenue, yes, but over the very long run it would also reduce the wealth holdings of the 1% and prevent the rise of new billionaires.

Do you like to dream big? Here is a plan, drawn from the work of Thomas Piketty, well-respected French analyst of systems of inequality (*Capital and Ideology*, pg. 975, ff.). He also proposes an annual wealth tax, but one that goes from 1% of wealth that is twice the national average, to 90% of any wealth above ten thousand times the average.

Yes, 90%. That would be a system of temporary ownership of capital. Piketty would pair that with a significant capital grant for every young adult. The plutocracy would be weakened, and everyone would have a better chance to participate in economic and social life.

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

PSARA Stands With Grocery Workers

By Mike Andrew

Nothing is more essential for human life than food. So you might think that grocery workers are among the most essential workers. You might also think that the grocery store owners would go out of their way to reward such essential workers for staying on the job during a deadly pandemic.

Well, the store owners don't see it that way.

In fact, some grocery owners have gone to court to try and block "hazard pay" for their employees.

The giant Kroger chain has announced it will close two of its Seattle-area QFC stores rather than pay workers there an extra \$4 per hour during the pandemic.

PCC, while not a party to the lawsuit, lobbied Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan to veto the city ordinance establishing hazard pay.

Once noted for its progressive values, PCC has hired a former Kroger executive to run its stores. There used to be worker representatives on the PCC Board of Trustees, but no more. In fact, if the current Board has its way, there won't be again.

In the current PCC Board election, two workers – members of UFCW 21 – Donna Rasmussen and Laurae McIntyre, are running for seats on the Board.

Some 2,000 PCC members signed the petition to get Donna and Laurae on the ballot. They were nominated by over 1,000 PCC workers to represent their needs as PCC becomes more and more governed by corporate values.

The PCC slate of candidates didn't need any community signatures or support of any kind to get on the ballot. The existing Board members are openly discouraging PCC members from voting for them in favor of their Board-appointed slate of candidates.

PSARA has urged our members who are also members of PCC to vote for Donna and Laurae, and on April 14 we were out on the street campaigning for them.

Stay tuned for new developments as we keep fighting for a fair deal for local workers.



PSARA members Robby Stern and Karen Richter support worker candidates for the PCC Board (Photo: Garet Munger)



Time after time we're told corporations should have freedom from pesky job safety regulations, environmental protections, and labor standards - giving working people the freedom to be crushed in collapsing mines, choke on filthy air, and get paid too little to live on.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka

A Warning Against Far Right

Continued from Page 9

was shamed into approving a resolution against racism with one dissenting vote.

Devin Burghart called on us to "never forget how close we came to losing our democracy in the insurrection on January 6." The coup was stymied, but now the Republican Party and its allies seeks to strip people of their voting rights and take majority control of the House and Senate in 2022.

Burghart documented that these far-right groups are bent on seizing power. They use anti-democratic tactics, driven by racial resentment fabricating lies of "white dispossession." They invent conspiracies to demonize and dehumanize non-whites and immigrants. QAnon, is among the most dangerous, a cult with roots in fascist smears against the Jewish people. "White victimhood" takes the slogan of MAGA to a whole new level as they claim whites are more discriminated against than people of color. Some call openly for a second Civil War.

Burghart warned against the illusion that these white supremacist movements will disappear. They are using COVID-19 denial, gun rights, and immigration as recruitment issues. In Washington state alone there are 42 different groups with approximately 177,000 members. Ammon Bundy's People's Rights group is holding protests against the wearing of masks and other anti-COVID measures in at least 12 Washington counties.

Asked about organized labor's role, Burghart said: "Organized labor plays one of the most critical roles in fighting the far right and has done so for decades in this country...I encourage them to get involved."

For more information on right-wing activity please go to IREHR.org.

To view the webinar go to www.psara.org and click on the link on the home page.

Tim Wheeler is a member of PSARA's Executive Board.

Storytelling With Heart and Laughter

By Jeff Johnson

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 22, at 4:00 p.m. for a special treat. PSARA has renowned Canadian storyteller Dan Yashinsky joining us for an hour of thoughtfulness, entertainment, wisdom, and laughter.

Dan is the author and editor of four acclaimed collections of Canadian stories. He has performed his stories all around the world including Israel, Sweden, Ireland, England, Norway, Austria, Germany, Brazil, Wales, France, Singapore, and the US.

From his "Lessons My Bubbe Taught Me" to the forthcoming documentary "The Wisdom of Solomons," Dan will make us laugh, think, and reflect on the wisdom we will need to traverse these unprecedented times with rising uncertainty caused by social media, information overload, and misinformation.

Dan created and hosted "Talking Stick," a CBC Radio One show. He has been a storyteller-in-residence at Queen's University, Toronto Public Library, and UNICEF Canada.

Please check Dan Yashinsky's website <https://www.storycare.ca/watch-listen/> to preview several of his great stories.

This Zoom event is sponsored by PSARA's Fundraising Committee. Go to the PSARA website for a link or look for an email from PSARA to register.

Join us on May 22 at 4:00 p.m.

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



Dan Yashinsky

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

For the health and safety of our members, all PSARA events will be virtual until further notice. For the Zoom links, email organizer@PSARA.org

Concert With John O'Connor: 4:00 p.m., Saturday, May 1. See article on Page 2.

PSARA Climate and Environmental Justice Committee: 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Thursday, May 6.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, May 6.

PSARA Fundraising Committee: 11:00 a.m. - Noon, Monday, May 10.

PSARA Education Committee: 2 p.m., Tuesday, May 11

PSARA Southend Committee: 1:00 – 2:30 p.m., Thursday, May 13.

PSARA Race and Gender Equity Committee: 11 a.m.– Noon, Thursday, May 20.

PSARA Executive Board: 12:30 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, May 20.

Storytelling With Dan Yashinsky: 4:00 p.m., Saturday, May 22. See article on Page 11.

We look forward to seeing you online until it's safe to meet in person once again.