

insight

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS

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On the Cover:

PROTEC17 Executive Board Trustee Jennell Hicks, staff member Xuan-Trang Tran-Thien, President Rachael Brooks, and Executive Director Karen Estevenin stand with former King County Council member Larry Gossett (center) at the 38th Annual Martin Luther King Rally and March on Jan. 20. ■

News and Features



PROTEC17 supports striking Swedish workers	4
Revisions underway to the PROTEC17 constitution.....	5
Creating equitable energy programs at Seattle City Light.....	6
Meet the Young Members of PROTEC17 (YMP).....	7
Life After Work: Portland member and photographer	8
PROTEC17 photo gallery.....	9
Helo from your PROTEC17 President.....	12



Government Affairs

Public Health Legislative Education Day	10
PROTEC17 Transportation Lobby Day.....	11
Protecting your privacy and safety.....	11

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Karen Estevenin
Executive Director

Hope for our future



he month of February, designated as Black History month, is a time to celebrate the contributions and achievements of African Americans to our country. There are many, and I want to acknowledge, thank, and honor African Americans past and present, who have faced adversity with tremendous courage to bring about change.

In the Labor Movement, the fight for economic justice is intrinsically linked with the fight for racial justice. One will not truly be won without the other. While we mark February as a time to celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans, we need to do more – every month and every day. This month cannot simply exist to be honorary; it needs to serve for those that care about humanity as a recommitment to the work that is still necessary to undo racism.

For our country and even our union, this work can seem overwhelming and uncomfortable. But climbing the steep hill of justice is uncomfortable. It starts with us as individuals to recognize, understand, and break down the systems and structures that perpetuate the many forms of racism within ourselves, in our union and workplaces, and in our communities.

At our Regional Executive Committee meeting last fall, delegates voted to approve racial equity as a strategic priority for our union. This is not just a box to check, or a bunch of buzzwords that sound good. This is real. I'm asking for us as a union to consider what this means, and how we can challenge ourselves and our organization to carry out this priority.

So far 2020 has provided some good forward momentum. We're beginning to define goals and objectives that will move our strategic plan and priorities ahead. We represented as a union for the first time at the 38th annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. workshops, celebration and march (cover photo). Staff and members attended a powerful and transformative two-day Undoing Racism workshop (photo, p. 9). Our new Young Members of PROTEC17 group (p. 7) is striving to get new voices and perspectives onto the King County negotiations team. And, of course, many of our members work on equity and racial justice issues every day on the job – like Julie Scrivner at Seattle City Light (p. 6) and our recently organized members who work on a new regional team in King County to eradicate homelessness (photo, p.9).

We have the people, the energy, and the power to make change, and we need to start today so that there is hope for our future. As Barack Obama said: "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

In unity,

Karen

The NEW PROTEC17 member portal is live!



For the last year, PROTEC17 has been working to build a new web-based tool that brings members-only news, information, events, and activities right to your fingertips!

The portal was built after gathering feedback through surveys, focus groups, and beta tests with members. It's not an app, but a secure, responsive website that can be bookmarked on your smartphone, tablet, or desktop.

To gain access to this new PROTEC17 members-only tool, follow the personalized registration link that was emailed to your personal email. If you've already registered, you can log-in at <https://members.protec17.org>. Questions or issues? Email Communications Director Deidre Girard at deidre@protec17.org. ■

PROTEC17 supports Swedish Hospital strikers for safe staffing, fair wages

In solidarity with health care workers at Swedish Hospitals throughout both King and Snohomish County,

PROTEC17 staff joined several of the picket lines during their three-day strike from January 28-30.

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Healthcare 1199NW – the union representing 8,000 nurses, technicians, social workers, environmental services personnel and others at Swedish Hospitals – were striking to address patient safety and staffing levels in their contract, which has been under negotiations since the fall. With over 900 unfilled positions across all Swedish Hospitals, already overworked employees have had to take on extra shifts and other responsibilities, and worry about the impacts to their patients.

On Jan. 29, over 1,000 strikers and their supporters marched through downtown Seattle and rallied at Westlake

Center to deliver a message to Swedish management to put patients before profits. The rally and strike gained national media attention.

PROTEC17 showed support and solidarity by contributing \$1,000 to the strike fund, which helps striking workers make ends meet. Staff also walked alongside our fellow union members in the strike lines at the First Hill, Cherry Hill, and Ballard campuses, as well as in the big rally in downtown Seattle.

The Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) strike was authorized by a supermajority of SEIU1199NW members on every Swedish campus. Picketing was set to conclude at 7:30 a.m. on Jan. 31 when the strikers would return to work; however, Swedish management had hired scabs (at a cost of \$11 million dollars) and locked out many of the striking workers. SEIU1199NW continues to push management to do the right thing and address the safe staffing levels. ■



PROTEC17 Executive Director Karen Estevenin and Union Representative Denise Cobden with strikers at the SEIU1199NW picket line on Cherry Hill.

Find more news on our website: www.protec17.org/news

PROTEC17's Constitution:

Committee formed to refresh our governing document



our union's Regional Executive Committee (REC) – the policy-making body of PROTEC17 –

has started to work on revising the governing document of our organization: the constitution.

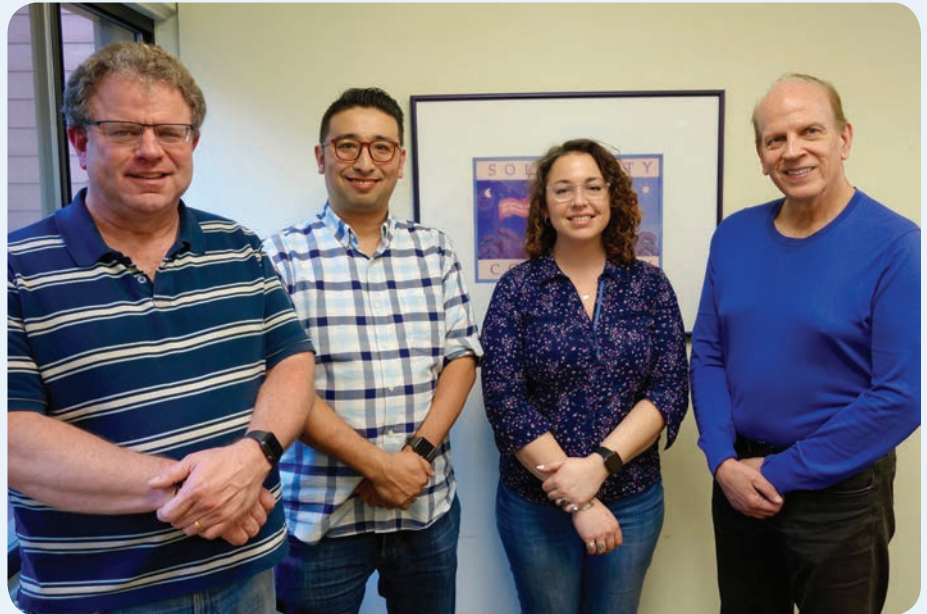
The PROTEC17 constitution contains articles guiding the objectives, governance, membership, election procedures, policies, and more for our union. It is an instrumental document that sets the structure of our organization.

At the last REC meeting in October, a motion was passed to propose the first revision to the document. This revision now goes to the entire membership for a vote, per the procedure spelled out in the constitution.

The first revision, if approved by the membership, will allow voting on constitutional changes via an electronic ballot. Currently, as written, voting on these changes must be by paper ballot which is costly, time-consuming, and does not get the turnout that electronic balloting does. Members have until March 10 to submit their vote on this first constitutional change.

Five PROTEC17 REC delegates have stepped up to lead this committee: Marc Anderson (King County), Rachael Brooks (City of Seattle), Jake Jacobovitch (King County), Dan Santon (King County) and Sean Simmons (WSDOT). Since its formation, the committee meets monthly to discuss other potential language changes to modernize this living document.

“The guiding document of any organization is critically important,” said Anderson. “It’s important to revisit our constitution from time to



Constitution committee members (left to right): Sean Simmons, Dan Santon, Rachael Brooks, and Marc Anderson. Missing: Jake Jacobovitch.

time to make sure it stays up-to-date with the changing times.”

The PROTEC17 constitution has not been revised since 2011 when our members voted to disaffiliate from IFPTE, our international union. At that time, the constitutional language was merely cleaned up to reflect changes to our name and new independent status.

The members on the committee are taking their roles very seriously, thoughtfully considering what language changes would benefit the organization today – from clarifying and improving processes to integrating technological advances.

“I wanted to be involved in this process because I am a proud PROTEC17 member and I care about this union,” said Anderson.

Members should expect to receive more information about constitutional changes in the months to come. The committee will be working on this project throughout 2020. ■



Did you vote yet?

A paper ballot to vote on the first constitutional change was mailed to your home address.

Please mail in your ballot by March 10!

PROTEC17 member helps make Seattle City Light's clean energy programs more equitable and accessible for all

As a new Planning Analyst at the City of Seattle, PROTEC17 member Julie Scrivner plays an integral role in designing more equitable energy programs at Seattle City Light. In her first six months on the job, she has conducted research and met with community leaders and stakeholders to learn how the City can create better clean energy programs that reach all communities.

"I have been specifically focused on applying a racial equity analysis to our work to learn how we can design more equitable programs for communities of color, immigrants, refugees, individuals surviving on low-incomes, and individuals with limited English proficiency," said Scrivner.

Her work will be integrated into City Light's plans for improvements to Customer Energy Solutions (CES) programs, which offer incentives to Seattle residents for becoming more energy efficient. CES has rebate and assistance programs for everything from energy efficient lighting, appliances, and

windows, to electric vehicles and solar energy.

Scrivner first got interested in environmental justice issues when she was introduced to a sustainable and justice-focused farm in tenth grade. In college, she studied how environmental issues are intertwined with social, political and economic systems, as well as the history of poverty and inequality.

Prior to starting her job at the City, Scrivner worked for four years as a consultant to utility companies, helping research, develop and implement products for clean energy programs. Now that she works within the public sector, she is able to bring all of her knowledge and experience to provide a direct benefit to the Seattle community. She likes that in the public sector there is a responsibility to serve all.

Also, as a new PROTEC17 member, Scrivner is keenly aware of the role unions play in building support and power for workers, as well as the responsibility they have to promote equity and social justice in the workplace, and in their own internal structures.

In the work Scrivner is doing at City Light, equity is important to her because the clean energy programs have the potential to make tangible differences in people's lives. From creating materials in multiple languages, to finding the right access points to deliver resources to the community, to creating offers that address what's needed, Scrivner sees the opportunity to build varying programs and services that meet the needs of everyone served by City Light.

"Everyone should be able to readily access, participate in, and benefit from these programs," she said. "A one-size-fits-all solution doesn't work for the diversity of people within our communities."

At six months in, Scrivner is finding her job incredibly rewarding.

"I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work in the intersection of clean energy and equity to ensure that everyone benefits from our investments," said Scrivner. "I am excited to show up for work every day because I love what I do and I love working on it with my teammates." ■

"Everyone should be able to readily access, participate in, and benefit from these programs. A one size fits all solution doesn't work for the diversity of people within our communities."

Julie Scrivner, PROTEC17 member
and Planning Analyst
Seattle City Light



Young Members of PROTEC17 (YMP)

King County group gains momentum as negotiations begin

Last summer, PROTEC17's intern from the Washington State Labor Council, Xochi Suarez, led an effort to gather input from our younger members through several focus groups. With the help of Union Representative Alex Il and a core group of new member-leaders, the group that formed in King County has grown and expanded in the last six months into the 'Young Members of PROTEC17' (YMP).

On Jan. 30, the YMP held an event to boost interest in the union among younger members and find pathways to get their voices into the many different workgroups in which PROTEC17 is currently involved at the County. With contract negotiations slated to begin in mid-March, one of the big priorities is getting new voices and perspectives on the bargaining team.



Above: members Jessy Hardy, Darian Kis-Young, and Heather McPherson of the YMP group at King County. Below, left: YMP member Fred Lott.



Over 50 young members showed up to the successful lunchtime event where the YMP proposed different questions to their fellow colleagues, ranging from: *what social justice issues are important to you? What have been your barriers to getting more involved with your union? And what do you want to see in the next contract?*

The successful member-led event – several months in the making – helped YMP leaders meet other young members at King County and to answer their questions about union membership, as well as get valuable feedback on which issues are most important to them.

“This event was important because it served as a great opportunity for younger

members of the union to leave better informed about the ways in which the union is able to support them and how they can take a more involved role in participating in their union,” said Naod Sebhat, a YMP and Engineer in the Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

“Young members voices have traditionally not been well represented within the union but growing this YMP group is hopefully a way to address this issue.”

As many long-time members begin to retire and new workers come on board, it is vital that younger employees identify as PROTEC17, and find ways to engage in leadership roles. The YMP will be analyzing the feedback they received in January and will reach out to members more regularly in the future. Additionally, the King County negotiations survey is now open – young members are encouraged to take the survey and volunteer for the bargaining team!

If you have questions, or are interested in joining the YMP, please contact Union Representative Alex Il at alex@protec17.org or 206-328-7321 ext. 118. ■

“This event was important because it served as a great opportunity for younger members of the union to leave better informed about the ways in which the union is able to support them and how they can take a more involved role in participating in their union.”

Naod Sebhat, Engineer
King County Department of
Natural Resources and Parks

Life After Work: Portland member uses union-negotiated vacation for photographic work to help people celebrate, heal

PROTEC17 member Zim Zimmerman spends his days inspecting the streets of the City of Portland to keep the roads safe and well-maintained. But when he's not working, he's able to pursue his lifelong passion in photography – in large part because of his union benefits.

As an avid photographer since his teenage years, Zimmerman worked as a photographer and lighting assistant around Portland for years before joining the Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) and PROTEC17 in 2017.

“Ever since I was a kid I’ve liked to look at the world through a viewfinder,” said Zimmerman.

Photography, he says, satisfies the technical side of his nature.

“It’s one of a few art forms with a strong left brain component to it. On some level, every shoot is just a math problem.”

“I am so grateful for the extra vacation days that PROTEC17 negotiated. I’m able to spend time with my kids, visit family on the East Coast, and volunteer my time as a photographer at the Oregon Country Fair, which has been so rewarding to me.”

Zim Zimmerman
PROTEC17 member and
Engineering Tech II
City of Portland



Portland member Zim Zimmerman testing the lighting in the photo booth at the Oregon Country Fair.

His innate technical abilities also serve him in his job at PBOT, where he collects data on the type and severity of cracks, weathering, and pavement distresses to help engineers prioritize repairs and determine their budgets. Currently, he is also helping to inventory every street light in the City using Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Since he started working at the City, Zimmerman has enjoyed a work-life balance that has allowed him to pursue photography in a volunteer capacity for several non-profits, including the Oregon Country Fair (OCF). Each year, he brings his lighting gear and sets up a studio out in the woods, where he offers free, professional quality portraits to anyone patient enough to wait in line.

Last year, the OCF celebrated 50 years of bringing arts, music, education, environmentalism, and philanthropy to

Central Oregon. The annual event attracts nearly 50,000 people over its three-day run.

In the photo booth, Zimmerman has had a range of interactions with festival go-ers, and has found the experience incredibly rewarding.

“I’ve had the privilege to photograph individuals, couples, friends, and families in their most joyful times – reunions, anniversaries, even a wedding day – as well as their most sorrowful, including a woman who recently lost her sister and her own infant daughter in the same year.”

Volunteering, though, requires that Zimmerman use some of his earned vacation time from the City.

Two years ago, during City of Portland contract negotiations, members made the case to increase their vacation accrual rates. The data showed that the City’s rates had lagged behind other municipalities and companies in the Portland area, and members were increasingly leaving City employment to pursue other opportunities that afforded them more time with their families. The City finally agreed and starting in January of 2019, members received more vacation time in their banks.

“I am so grateful for the extra vacation days that PROTEC17 negotiated,” said Zimmerman. “I’m able to spend time with my kids, visit family on the East Coast, and volunteer my time as a photographer at the Oregon Country Fair, which has been so rewarding to me.”

You can find examples of Zimmerman’s work in the Oregon Country Fair portrait booth at: <https://ocf.smugmug.com>. His photos from the 2019 Fair are posted under “Thursday PM” and “Fri/Sat/Sun AM”. He will again be volunteering in the photobooth at the OCF this year from July 10-12, 2020. ■

Have a story you’d like to share? Email: deidre@protec17.org

GALLERY



Young Members of PROTEC17 (YMP)



Supporting Swedish hospital strikers

Long-time PROTEC17 leader Peg Taglianetti retires



2020 MLK Rally and March



100+ new King County Public Health members join PROTEC17

PROTEC17 at the new employee orientation in Portland



PROTEC17 members at the Undoing Racism workshop

Public Health Legislative Education Day



n Feb. 5, Public Health employees from across Washington state – including many PROTEC17 members – met in

Olympia to help educate their representatives about the important work they do every day to keep us safe and healthy.

The Washington State Public Health Association (WSPHA) – an organization connecting public, private and community groups to Public Health funding and education issues – organizes the annual event, which PROTEC17 has supported for many years.

While Public Health Legislative Education Day is not a day for public health professionals to directly ask for funding, it is an important opportunity to give legislators – who are often far removed from public health work – a sense and scope of the most important health issues that are affecting the state. From trying to track and contain the Coronavirus, to tackling the opioid crisis, to making sure our food and water is safe for consumption, the work of Public Health often goes unnoticed, yet impacts our lives on a daily basis.



PROTEC17 members and staff on the steps of the Legislative Building.

PROTEC17 member Marlon Hall, an Administrative Specialist II at Seattle-King County Public Health, (pictured below, left with WSPHA Executive Director Jeff Ketchel) was at Legislative Education Day for the first time, and really enjoyed the event.

“It was a great experience to be face-to-face with my legislators advocating for the important work of Public Health,” he said.

Thanks to our PROTEC17 members from Seattle-King County Public Health, including Marlon Hall, Jennell Hicks and José Romo, who shared their stories with their legislators, making this another successful education day.

This legislative term this year is a short 60-day session, meaning that time is of the essence to get policy bills approved by the March 12 closing date.

As part of the Public Health Roundtable – a collective of organizations advocating for public health funding and policies – PROTEC17 supported several health-focused legislative priorities for 2020, including supporting efforts to regulate vapor products that deter youth access, and to fully implement a vapor tax that funds core public health services.

You can find more photos on our Facebook page, and visit the government affairs page on our website to learn how you can find your legislator to share your story: protec17.org/government-affairs. ■



PROTEC17's first Transportation Lobby Day

PROTEC17 members who work for various transportation agencies throughout Washington state attended our first ever

Transportation Lobby Day on Feb. 13. The day gave members the opportunity to talk with their legislators about their jobs and the importance of funding and support to keep residents safe and moving.

After voters narrowly passed Tim Eyman's \$30 car tab initiative (I-976) in November 2019, several members expressed concern about the impacts to their jobs. In response, Transportation Lobby Day was created to encourage members to get politically active so that decision-makers know the true impacts of their funding decisions. I-976 was one of the main topics with legislators.

Over 15 PROTEC17 members and staff attended the event, representing the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), King County, and Pierce County (Daniel Jones, Kristina Lei, Steve Morgans, Nate Schumer, and Ed Walker from WSDOT; Jake Jacobovitch and Dan Santon from King County; and Troy Lee from Pierce County).

"I appreciated being heard by our State legislators and their staff about our concerns for transportation funding and public employee privacy," said Jones.



PROTEC17 members and staff in Sen. Rebecca Saldaña's office at Lobby Day.

"I encourage everyone to gather your thoughts and ideas for policies, rules, and laws that will make your work and workplaces better and share them with your legislators."

Just one day before Lobby Day, a King County judge upheld some of the constitutionality of I-976, which had been challenged in the courts shortly after its passage. However, implementation of the \$30 car tabs will still be on hold through

the appeals process that will likely head to the state Supreme Court. Car tabs will be collected as usual until the decision is finalized.

If you are interested in getting connected to your fellow members in transportation to discuss ways to advocate for funding for good jobs and safe transportation, please contact Union Rep Sarah Lorenzini at sarah@protec17.org or 800-783-0017 ext. 110. ■

Protecting your privacy: House Bill 1888

In Washington, PROTEC17 has been working with other unions to strengthen public disclosure laws so that political groups like the Freedom Foundation will not be able to access sensitive information, like your date of birth. In the legislature, House Bill 1888 aims to restrict the law that currently allows the release of identifying and contact information of people who work in the public sector. The information that can currently be accessed poses a danger to the privacy, digital security, and in some cases, personal safety of our members. As *Insight* went to press, HB 1888 is still active, and we are hopeful for a positive outcome.

While we are doing everything we can to fix the lax public disclosure laws and protect your personal information, the Freedom Foundation will continue to spam your email inbox, send you junk mailers, and may even show up at your home or office. If you are contacted via email, phone, or in-person, politely demand that they stop contacting you and remove you from their list, and mark any email sent to you as junk/spam. Also, keep your Union Representative informed of any anti-union activity. Only we decide how strong our union will be!

Did you move?
Let us know! 800-783-0017

Hello from your Union President

I often think about what our union means to me. This is a question we, as union members, frequently get asked, and it's important to have a heartfelt answer. Whether your answer is about wages, fair treatment, your benefits package for your family, or being a part of our family, it is a helpful way to let your coworkers and other working people know the importance of a union.

I have a deeply engrained appreciation for the power of a union. Both of my parents were public school teachers and were very active in their union, on a local, state and national level. But my experience became even more personal when I started working as a Dam Safety Engineer for the City of Seattle and became a member of PROTEC17.

I had come from a private engineering firm where I was paid way under market, had minimal healthcare benefits, a 401K with a low matching rate, 10 days total paid time off (both sick and vacation leave combined) for the year, and was treated differently because I am a woman. When



Rachael Brooks

I heard from a friend that engineers at the City of Seattle and King County were unionized, I immediately focused all my job search attention on those two employers.

When I started my current job, I immediately saw the difference. My co-workers were much friendlier and more collaborative because they had job security. I had health insurance that actually covered preventative and alternative care. I had separate sick time and vacation time. And we had a cost-of-living adjustment negotiated in our contract that wasn't at the whim of the CEO.

This complete change in my job satisfaction motivated me to immediately get involved in PROTEC17. I became an REC Delegate and started training to be a shop steward right away. Now I am extremely honored to be able to serve our union as Executive Board President, and I look forward to working with you to support the mission of PROTEC17. We are a strong and active member-powered union and I am proud to call you all my union siblings. ■