



'Don't mess with Medicare!' voters say

By Will Parry

Politicians mess with Medicare at their peril.

Republican Congressional candidate Jane Corwin ran into that rock-hard reality May 24, when her widely expected victory in an ultra-conservative upstate New York district was upended over her stance – and her party's – on Medicare.

Democrat Kathy Hochul won 48 percent of the vote to Corwin's 42 percent. Tea Party candidate Jack Davis trailed with 8 percent. The district had sent Republicans to Congress for 40 years.

At the outset of the campaign, Hochul honed in on Republican Rep. Paul Ryan's proposal to wreck Medicare by turning it into a voucher system – and she never let up. Post-election surveys confirmed that voters of both parties had chosen Hochul because they trusted her to protect Medicare.

"The results set off elation among Democrats and soul-searching among Republicans," *The New York Times* reported. The results were a blow to Ryan's proposed restructuring of Medicare, crafted to save money by sharply reducing coverage for seniors.

The Ryan proposal was incorporated in a budget adopted on a party-line vote in the Republican-controlled House.

Meanwhile, advocates warned that the integrity of Medicare was in

Continued on page 3

Senior programs slashed in final state budget

By Jerry Reilly

Services and programs important to older people are severely slashed in the budget adopted by the Legislature for the next two years. Nearly one half billion dollars in state and federal funds have been cut from the budget for services vital to seniors

Home care hours have been cut by 10% for people who get help from home care workers in order to remain in their own homes. Additional training for home care workers approved by Initiative 1029 has been postponed once again.

Enrollment in the Basic Health Plan (BHP) program will continue to decline. Approximately one third of BHP enrollees are between 50 and 65 years old.

The state will no longer pay the prescription co-pay for low income seniors enrolled in the Medicare Part D Pharmacy program. There is some hope that the federal government will end the co-pay requirement for these people in January, 2012.

Changes in the Adult Day Health program may force as many as 700 people living with developmental disabilities out of the program. Some Adult Day Health Centers will likely close.

The Senior Citizens Services Act will have reductions to the Meals on Wheels and other services provided through the Area Agencies on Aging.

Continued on page 8



For up-to-date
information about
PSARA and
issues important to all of us,
go to the PSARA web site:
www.psara.org
Read the Advocate on line,
post your comments
on our blog,
engage in discussions
with other PSARA members

Need to reach us?

Here's a directory of Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans email addresses:

PSARA or its President,

Robby Stern: president@psara.org

Administrative Vice President,

Maureen Bo: adminvp@psara.org

Community VP and Outreach Committee Chair,

Bette Reed: outreachvp@psara.org

Treasurer, **Edyth Koch:** treasurer@psara.org

Legislative Committee Chair,

Chuck Richards: legaffairs@psara.org

Retiree Advocate Editor,

Will Parry: pscsc@qwestoffice.net

Our web page: www.psara.org

Web Master, **Lorraine Pozzi:** info@psara.org

Or phone our office at (206) 448-9646.

If necessary, leave a message and your phone number. We'll call you back.

The Retiree ADVOCATE

Published monthly by the Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans, 2800 First Ave., #262, Seattle, Washington, 98121. Phone (206) 448-9646.

Email: pscsc@qwestoffice.net Website: www.psara.org

PSARA is affiliated with the Alliance for Retired Americans and the Senior Citizens' Lobby.

President: Robby Stern

Administrative Vice-President: Maureen Bo

Community Vice President: Bette Reed

Treasurer: Edie Koch

Secretary: Frieda Takamura

Board Members: Mary Anderson, Joan Bethel, Tim Burns, Rick Erickson, Steve Kofahl, Frank Irigoin, Vivian Lee, Rachael Levine, Gene Lux, Mac McIntosh, Bonny Oborn, Will Parry, Chuck Richards, Magdeleno Rose-Avila and Michael Warren.

Editor, Retiree Advocate: Will Parry

Editor Emeritus: Max Roffman

Layout and Printing: Trade Printery

Become a "friend" of PSARA on Facebook.

By Anita Nath

The age of social media is upon us. For many, this extreme change can be overwhelming and very confusing. Facebook is a great tool to keep you connected, once you get the hang of it.



Anita Nath

Facebook is a free online networking and connection site. You create a profile and can control how much information other Facebook members can see about you. To get started, all you

need is an e-mail address.

Head to www.facebook.com. It is pretty simple to sign up and all that is essentially required is a name and e-mail address. Once you begin the sign-up process, Facebook guides you through setting up your Profile. You can provide as much information as you want. You can also choose to add a picture of yourself or a picture of anything you wish to post to your page.

Once you have set up your profile, you can search for people and organizations to become "friends" with. Use the search bar at the top of your Facebook page. To find someone, simply type in their name or e-mail address and click "Search." Then once you find the person or organization, simply click "Add as friend" or "Like." This will send a personal request to that person or organization to be connected to your page.

Once connected, you can communicate by posting and commenting on what is known as the "wall." With a Facebook page, you have a "wall" area and also a "news feed" area. On your "wall," you can post a comment about anything, post a link to another website, or post pictures and information

that is important to you. On the "news feed" your friends will be able to see what you posted on your "wall." You will also be able to see the postings of your friends and of the organizations you have become connected with, on your personal "news feed."

If you run into any kind of trouble, the Facebook Help section is very user-friendly and searchable. You could type in a question in the help section, such as "How do I post a Link?" and it will give you great directions.

Facebook is another tool when it comes to staying informed. Many organizations and groups (including PSARA!) post about important topics and upcoming events. Once you have a Facebook account, you will be able to see all of these posts on your news feed. Even if you only log into your Facebook account once a week, you will still be able to see many of the past updates. Also, when someone wants to become friends with you, you will get an e-mail notification sent to the e-mail address you provide. This is helpful if you do not frequent the Facebook site.

Privacy is always a concern when being active on the internet. Facebook has many privacy options that you can utilize. To work with your privacy settings, simply login to Facebook and click on "account" in the upper right corner. This will allow you to access your personal privacy settings where you can determine how much to share.

If you are interested in Facebook, use the instructions in this article to get started. Once you have a Facebook account, be sure to add PSARA by searching for "Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans" in the search bar and give it a thumbs up once you go to the page. Give it a try. It sure helped the Egyptian people!

(Anita Nath is a PSARA member.)

'Don't mess with Medicare!'

Continued from page 1

jeopardy in bipartisan debt-reduction talks initiated by President Obama and presided over by Vice President Joseph Biden. Referring to these talks, Rep. Steny H. Hoyer of Maryland, the No. 2 Democrat, declared that "I have said it over and over again, everything needs to be on the table. Medicare is one of the things that needs to be on the table."

Medicaid a major GOP target

After encountering a firestorm of voter anger over their scheme to destroy Medicare by turning it into a voucher program, House Republicans are training their Congressional gun sights instead on a program that serves children and the poorest Americans: Medicaid.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee was expected to move a bill that would repeal the vital "maintenance of effort" (MOE) requirement in the health care reform law. The MOE provision blocks the states from cutting their Medicaid rolls before the establishment of health care exchanges in 2014.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated that eliminating the MOE requirement would cut about 300,000 beneficiaries -- mostly children -- from the program.

"More than \$1.3 trillion of the savings in Representative Paul Ryan's budget proposal would come from Medicaid," *The Hill*, a news service that summarizes activity in Congress, reported. "So far, those plans haven't attracted the same political furor as the budget's Medicare components. Some Democrats have been blunt about the reason: Seniors vote in large numbers, whereas Medicaid primarily serves children and the poor."

Medicaid advocates are also concerned about a second proposal in the GOP budget, to convert federal Medicaid funding into block grants for the states. Either Republican proposal would be "all about rationing care and cutting people off of coverage," Bruce Lesley, a children's advocate, told *The Hill*.

Remembering Silme and Gene

By Frank Irigon

Thirty years ago, on June 1, 1981, Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes were murdered in the office of Alaska Cannery Workers Local 37 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) near Pioneer Square in Seattle.

Silme and Gene were both the anchor and rudder that gave meaning and direction to those who followed them in reforming Local 37, and in building the anti-Marcos movement in Seattle. They were murdered because of their determined and successful efforts to restore democracy within their union and because of their efforts to expose and resist the corrupt regime of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines.

Gene died at the scene, but Silme lived another 24 hours -- long enough to identify the gunmen. The murderers were Pompeyo Benito Guloy Jr. and Jimmy Bulosan Ramil, two cannery workers and members of the Tulisan, a Filipino street gang. On September 24, 1981, Guloy and Ramil were found guilty of aggravated first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison. On May 12, 1982, their leader, Tony Dictado, was convicted of ordering the murders. In 1990, Tony Baruso, the former president of Local 37 who had ties to the Marcos regime, was convicted for the two murders. Both Dictado and Baruso were sentenced to life in prison.

A subsequent civil law suit brought against Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos and their co-conspirators established the ties between the murderers of these two union leaders and the corrupt and murderous

But Medicaid also benefits legions of seniors. About 70 percent of the nation's 1.4 million nursing home residents are dependent on Medicaid, the Kaiser Family Foundation reports. Medicaid also helps fill the infamous "donut hole" in Medicare's prescription drug coverage. Democrats who support deep cuts in Medicaid as a deficit reduction measure could find themselves in serious trouble.

Marcos regime.

From June 29 to July 4, there will be 30th Anniversary events. The theme of these events is "Global Activism and the Struggle for Philippine Democracy." To find out more about these events, go to www.lelo.org.



Frank Irigon

The work that Silme and Gene led, both in the struggle to win union democracy and in the struggle to overthrow the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines will be remembered and honored. The contribution of these two men will not be forgotten.

(Frank Irigon is a PSARA member.)

Building power

Our banner and members have taken to the streets at one demonstration after another, for labor rights, for taxing the rich, for social justice. No two ways about it. People respect PSARA!

Our bold activities have everything to do with our membership growth. Good people support organizations that get into the action. "Older and Bolder" is more than just a slogan for us.

We're going to continue to grow. The times demand it, and we're responding. We're shooting for 250 new members in calendar 2011.

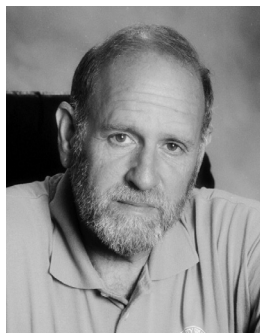
Our mission is to work with others to build a stable, ongoing movement strong enough to challenge the corporate powers that today dominate the economics and politics of our country. That new member you're going to sign up is an indispensable contribution toward political power.

Millions are in motion, here and across the country. Across the world, for that matter! The times are ripe for growth. We don't have to do it all. Just our share.

Paid sick days: A PSARA issue

By Robby Stern

PSARA is involved in the effort to pass an ordinance mandating a minimum standard for paid sick days in Seattle. During the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, the key public health message was “stay home when you’re sick.”



Robby Stern

Some were able to heed that message, but many others were not. They could not afford to take time off work without pay. The H1N1 virus spread in work places and our schools as children were

sent to school sick because their parents could not afford to take time off work without pay.

A recent report issued by the Economic Opportunity Institute (EOI) documents that four in ten workers get no paid sick leave – including many restaurant, grocery, and health care workers who are on the front lines of food safety and public health. It is estimated that approximately 190,000 workers in Seattle have no paid sick days.

Quoting from an EOI Report, “Food-borne illness has a major impact on health and the economy in the United States. According to the most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), every year one out of six Americans gets sick from food, resulting in 125,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. About 20% of cases can be traced to an ill food worker.”

Elderly people are particularly vulnerable to food borne illnesses such as norovirus ... The CDC estimates there are more than 21 million annual cases of norovirus, and half of all cases of food borne illness in the U.S. can be attributed to norovirus infection. Norovirus symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, cramping and fever...Of the cases analyzed

by the CDC from July 1997 to June 2000, 57% were caused by food, which most often became contaminated by an infected food handler immediately prior to consumption.

The CDC advises that “the measures most likely to significantly reduce the incidence of norovirus are correct handling of cold foods, frequent hand washing and provision of paid sick leave...” The King County Public Health Department has also stated strong support for a paid sick days ordinance.

Since most restaurants do not offer paid sick time, ill employees are forced to choose between taking unpaid leave or going to work sick. A recent report in the Journal of Food Protection found that 19.8 percent had worked while experiencing vomiting or diarrhea in the past year. Another survey of over 4,300 restaurant workers found that 88 percent did not receive paid sick time and 63 percent had worked serving or preparing food while sick.

There is unequal access to paid sick days. 80 percent of people earning above the median hourly wage get paid sick days while 19 percent of the bottom 10 percent wage earners receive paid sick days. Women are far less likely than men to have paid sick days. Latinos and African Americans are less likely to have paid sick days.

My wife is a school nurse in a school with a high percentage of lower income families. She frequently tells me stories of children being sent to school with fevers or children getting sick at school. When she calls the parents, all too often they are unable to pick up their children. Another frequent phenomenon is older siblings missing a day of school because they have to stay home with their younger sister or brother who is too sick to go to school.

Elderly people are particularly vulnerable to the spread of viruses and infections. The well-publicized growth in resistance of infections to antibiotics

makes the spread of diseases even more dangerous for all of us, but particularly seniors. The realization that people who handle our food in the grocery stores and people who help us care for ourselves do not have access to paid sick days makes the need for a minimum standard even more apparent.

While there are some employers who are supportive of the establishment of a paid sick days standard, there are very powerful forces lining up against this common sense standard. The same business associations who declared the sky was falling when opposing 1998 minimum wage standard are now leading the charge to declare that a paid sick days standard will be the ruination of businesses in Seattle. The Seattle Times, using the term “nanny government,” has announced its opposition. Opponents make their economic arguments despite the fact that San Francisco has had a similar standard for four years and has seen an increase in employment.

Several Seattle City Council members who greeted the proponents of the ordinance with expressions of support may now be getting cold feet and seeking delay of consideration of the ordinance. Some have said this should not be a “campaign” issue. Well, it IS a campaign issue in the upcoming City Council elections.

You will be hearing from us to attend various actions and hearings to express your support for a minimum paid sick days standard. We will also let you know where the council members and Mayor stand on the issue.

Kudos go to Council members (and PSARA members) Nick Licata (sponsor of the ordinance) and Jean Godden (co-sponsor of the ordinance). These council members are supporting immediate consideration and passage of the ordinance.

We will be calling on you for help... this ordinance is good for our community and is in the interest of our parents, children and grandchildren.

Selling out injured workers

By Jeff Johnson

Just a month after celebrating the 100th anniversary of Washington's workers' compensation system, Governor Christine Gregoire, along with Senate Democrat and Republican leadership and House Democrat leadership, passed HB 2123, undermining the security of the safety net for injured workers by approving "structured settlement agreements" (compromise and release agreements) whereby workers will receive less than what they are entitled to under the law.

Injured workers 55 years of age or older, ratcheting down to those 50 or older by 2016, will be able to settle their claims at less than their statutory amount. You might ask why workers would agree to lower their benefits. For many workers it won't be a choice. Strapped financially from receiving only partial wage replacement benefits, many injured workers will accept a lump-sum payment paid out over several months to meet family needs. And once the money is gone, they are just out of luck.

And it will happen. The Department of Labor and Industries assumes that the workers' compensation state fund will save \$335 million in fiscal year 2012 and over half a billion dollars by 2015. Most of these so-called savings will be in the form of lower benefits to injured workers.

Even worse, these settlement agreements are a lure for private insurers. After Initiative 1082, that would have allowed private insurance into our comp system, was defeated by nearly



Jeff Johnson

60% and was voted down in every county, HB 2123 lays out a welcome mat for the private insurance industry. Denying claims and reaching settlement agreements are the means by which private insurers profit in the workers' compensation arena. Until now, Washington's workers' compensation market has not been all that attractive to private insurers. HB 2123 changes that.

HB 2123 also places a one-year cost of living freeze on injured workers' time-loss and pension benefits, and offsets the value of a permanent partial disability award against an injured worker's pension award – both these provisions will lower benefits for our most disabled workers.

The bill includes a positive program modeled after the Oregon "stay at work" program. This measure incentivizes small and medium size employers to bring their injured workers back to employment through offering wage, equipment, and training subsidies to the employer for 66 days. If this works, it will return workers to the job more quickly and reduce long term disability and costs.

The bill also sets up three studies which will look at occupational disease, structured settlement agreements, and the claims management process. Finally the bill continues some funding for health and safety grants that focus on workplace safety training.

While labor could have lived with many portions of the bill, the radical change to compromise and release is a huge and grotesque corporate give-away at the expense of our older and most disabled workers. Shame on the Democrats for selling out injured workers.

(Jeff Johnson is president of the Washington State Labor Council and a PSARA member.)

Bankers grow fat as teachers are laid off

By Mike Andrew

Seventy-five people – including Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich – protested in front of the Chase Bank in Seattle's Wallingford district May 21.



Mike Andrew

The protest was called by the Seattle Education Association, Social Equality Educators, and Martin Luther King County Jobs with Justice. It was supported by the Service Employees' State Council, Working Washington, Washing-

ton Citizen Action Network, US Uncut, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and SNOW (Seattle Nonviolent Opponents of War).

Chase was targeted because corporate tax loopholes exempt it from many state taxes at a time when the state legislature is cutting essential services to close a \$5 billion revenue shortfall. Chase pays no state taxes whatsoever on its mortgage interest income thanks to a loophole that allows banks based in Washington to avoid these taxes.

Chase is based in New York, but Washington Mutual, which Chase acquired in September 2008, was Washington-based, enabling Chase to apply their tax credit to its earnings. Had

Chase paid its fair share, it would have added nearly \$100 million per year to the state's revenue.

As part of the federal bailout, Chase was loaned billions of dollars at zero percent interest, money that they are now loaning back to the federal government at 5% interest – actually making money off taxpayers.

Last year, Chase compensated CEO Jamie Dimon with a \$1 million base salary, a \$5 million bonus, over \$6 million in options, and nearly \$8 million worth of stock. The \$20.8 million total was a 1,500 percent increase over his 2009 income. The average U.S. household income for 2010, in contrast, was just \$49,777

Continued on page 6

Health care: The right of every American

By Senator Bernie Sanders

The United States is the only major nation in the industrialized world that does not guarantee healthcare as a right to its people. Meanwhile, we spend about twice as much per capita on healthcare and, in a wide number of instances, our outcomes are not as good as others that spend far less.

It is time that we bring about a fundamental transformation of the American healthcare system. It is time for us to end private, for-profit participation in delivering basic coverage. It is time for the United States to provide a Medicare-for-all, single payer health coverage program.

Under our dysfunctional system, 45,000 Americans a year die because they delay seeking care they cannot afford. We spent 17.6% of our gross domestic product on healthcare in 2009, which is projected to go up to 20% by 2020, yet we still rank 26th among major, developed nations on life expectancy, and 31st on infant mortality.

It is certainly a step forward that the new health reform law is projected to cover 32 million additional Americans, out of the more than 50 million uninsured today. Yet projections suggest that roughly 23 million will still be without insurance in 2019, while healthcare costs will continue to skyrocket.

Twenty-three million Americans still without health insurance after health

Sweeter than maple syrup!

On May 26, Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin signed into law a plan that will give the Green Mountain State the nation's first single payer system. To be implemented in stages, the government-administered system offers a uniform benefits package to all 620,000 Vermonters.

"It will produce savings of 24.3 percent of total health care expenditures between 2015 and 2024," according to Harvard economist William Hsiao, who guided Vermont legislators in drafting the historic legislation.

reform is implemented? This is unacceptable.

And that is why, this week, Representative Jim McDermott and I are announcing the re-introduction of the American Health Security Act, recognizing health care as a human right and providing every U.S. citizen and permanent resident with healthcare coverage and services through a state-administered single payer program. Let's face it: Until we put patients over profits, our system will not work for ordinary Americans.

It is incomprehensible that drug companies still get away with charging Americans twice as much, or more, than citizens of Canada or Europe for the exact same drugs manufactured by the exact same companies. It is an outrage that insurers still often hike premiums 20%, 40% and 60% a year on individual policy holders; and some insurers still spend 40 cents of every premium dollar on administration and profits while lavishing multimillion-dollar payouts on their CEOs.

I am very proud that my home state of Vermont is now taking big steps to lead the nation in healthcare by moving forward on a plan to establish a single payer healthcare system that puts the interests of patients over chasing profits. The American Health Security Act would make sure every state does the same - taking profits out of the equation by implementing a single payer system, but letting each state administer its own program, according to strict standards, in a way best suited to its needs.

We must ensure, to as great a degree as possible, that the money we put into health coverage goes to the delivery of healthcare, not to paper-pushing, astronomical profits and lining CEOs' pockets.

(Reprinted from the Guardian UK.)

Bankers grow fat...

Continued from page 5

On April 16, Bank of America was also the target of a protest picketline. For 2008 and 2009, the banking giant paid no federal income taxes at all and actually received tax refunds of \$3 billion. Its CEO, Brian Moynihan, "lost money" in 2010, when his pay was cut to \$1.9 million. Early this year he did get a \$9 million bonus, however.

Bonuses paid to executives at the nation's six largest banks totaled \$140 billion in 2009, a sum equivalent to the

total of all state budget deficits combined.

Meanwhile, 70 Seattle teachers in Seattle are facing layoff as the state tries to fill the \$5 billion hole in its budget with cuts rather than raising new revenue.

The legislature also passed a 1.9 percent cut in pay for teachers. Funding to reduce class size in schools has taken a 70 percent cut, college tuition has increased, and public library hours are being reduced. Some 40,000 people have lost their Basic Health coverage.

More cuts are projected for city, county, and state services.

This is not a spending crisis. It's a revenue crisis, caused when corporations like Chase and Bank of America pay little to no taxes on their huge earnings. Working people who had no part in creating the crisis are being made to pay for it.

The money to pay for social services is there, enriching banks and bankers. It just needs to be tapped to meet the needs of the people.

(Mike Andrew is a PSARA member & Associate Editor of The Advocate.)

Libya and the Hitler mythology

By Alfredo Peppard

History rapidly becomes myth, and once myth replaces reality it propagates more nonsense until stupidity is passed off as wisdom. When the political discourse of an empire comes to this point, priesthoods arise that can seemingly explain events.

The priests employ a method of thought that we find amusing when we read about its use in medieval times. They reason by analogy and employing a crushing reductionism wherein the mythic common knowledge is used as the ultimate authority and diverging from this authority can only invite disaster. Our myths are many, but one of the most popular is the WWII mythology.

Once you have your enemy pegged as a Hitler all facts are swept aside. The fact that the irrelevance and stupidity of this reasoning is not at any time challenged on television or in the Congress demonstrates how much of our crucial political discourse has been reduced to mindless references to the WWII mythology. The paralysis of imagination that adherence to this mythology requires is nowhere more apparent than in the antics of that gang of clowns we call the Republican Party. And of course the best place to watch them perform is on television.

In the nineteen thirties and forties, George Orwell observed how Hitler, Roosevelt, and Churchill used radio and film to manipulate the masses. This did much to form the ideas he put forward in his major work, *1984*. In this novel he projected a future in which television was the state's main instrument for controlling the population. The State was always at war and as the war ground on, the Plebs willingly worked longer hours for less pay. The TV watched the watchers and controlled their very sex-lives. Lacking the intellectual equipment to question this arbitrary arrangement, their critical faculties having been aborted by the din emanating from the

TV, the Plebs plodded on.

In 1984, Big Brother, the head of state, speaks for the God, Ford He is both the ruler, protecting them from the slaving hordes of the east, and High Priest. He is on TV constantly explaining events in the language of New Speak in which anything he says is true because he said it, even though it might be the very opposite of reality. It's much like what we encountered in the Bush era.

A few days before writing this, I was watching the TV news about Libya. Keep in mind that President Obama says we are not at war with that country;

Once you have your enemy pegged as Hitler, all facts are swept aside.

we are just bombarding their air defense system so that the unarmed civilians we are defending can get their tanks and missiles into the field. In fact it is such a piddling little humanitarian mission the White House saw no need to pester Congress about it. Nevertheless, here are the Republicans yapping at Obama's heels demanding more vigorous action; with the leader of the pack, Senator John McCain, the Sage of Arizona, arguing that Kaddafi's aggression had to be stopped, as he was another Hitler -- a serious threat to world peace.

My God, another Hitler! Never mind the fact that any state has the right to put down an armed uprising; the sacred mythology of WWII had been evoked. Thought is no longer appropriate; intervention is necessary to save the world. Yes, McCain in invoking scripture and promoting Kaddafi to Hitler had lifted the discussion out of the mundane ordinary affairs of state; the struggle was then elevated to an elemental conflict between good and evil. I

couldn't help noticing that as he referred to scripture he looked even more beady-eyed and stupid than usual.

Once we have wheeled Hitler onto the stage, the sacred mythology of WWII takes over. An entire series of conclusions comes into play.

When on CNN, Anderson Cooper, of New Orleans fame, openly sneers at a Libyan spokesman who claims that a group of 13 coffins are civilians killed by American missiles, Cooper demands proof that the bodies in the coffins are indeed civilians.

When he is shown a devastated industrial plant, he points out to the increasingly agitated Libyan that this was a legitimate military target. As a highly popular priest, it is his role to determine legitimacy. After all he is dealing with the minions of a Hitler. And so Anderson Cooper, employing his "awe shucks home town kinda guy" good looks, explains the rights and wrongs of an attack upon a sovereign nation.

One more layer of obscurity is added to events when the intervention is taken over by NATO. Again reality is turned upside down; NATO, a creation and a tool of American military policy, is now in charge, not the US. The tool has become the hand and the hand the tool. Believe that if you will.

Will Rogers said, "All I know is what I read in the newspapers." It worries me to think that so many Americans can say the same thing about TV.

(Alfredo Peppard is a PSARA member.)



Alfredo Peppard

Senior programs slashed in state budget

Continued from page 1

Dental coverage for Adults on Medicaid will be severely restricted to only emergency services. Services will still be available for people who receive long term care services.

Eyeglasses and Hearing aids will no longer be available to adults on Medicaid.

One positive step taken by the Legislature was to enact a Safety Net Assessment Fee on nursing homes that will provide funds to generate additional federal Medicaid dollars. This program avoided about \$80 million in cuts that would otherwise have been imposed on the funding for the care of about 11,000 Medicaid residents in nursing homes.

The sweep and severity of the cuts to senior programs is difficult to comprehend. Without doubt this is the worst budget we have ever seen. Senior programs are not alone. There were harmful cuts throughout the safety net programs that affect children, people with disabilities, mentally ill people and all low income people. Education programs, especially higher education, have also been deeply cut.

How did things get this bad? The

twin drivers of this sad situation were the steep decline in state revenues driven by the great recession and the straightjacket the voters imposed on the legislature when they overwhelmingly passed Tim Eyman's Initiative 1053 last November. This initiative re-imposed a two-thirds requirement for the legislature to pass any revenue measure or to close any tax loophole.

Once it became the accepted conventional wisdom in Olympia that the voters wanted an "all-cuts" budget, the legislature set about the task of delivering what they believed the public wanted. Some tried to make the cuts in the most responsible way available to them. Some seemed to enjoy the prospect of shrinking the footprint of state services and keeping taxes as low as possible. But almost no one argued for any real alternative to an "all-cuts" approach. Toward the end of the session, there was some attention paid to a set of notoriously outrageous tax loopholes, but in the end nothing was done to change our regressive, preference-ridden, and inadequate tax structure.

Most discouraging of all was that

nothing was done to lay the groundwork for a legal challenge to Eyman's initiative 1053 on grounds that it violates the state Constitution.

So instead of a sharing of the burden of replacing the revenue lost through the recession, the old, the sick, the poor and the children were asked to shoulder a grossly disproportionate share of the load.

We now await the next revenue forecast that is due around mid-June. Hopefully, revenue will be stable and we can begin to plan getting through the next two years without further reductions.

We need also to develop a plan to convince the public that we can no longer operate a prosperous, decent, and progressive state based upon a tax structure that cannot keep pace with the needs of our people.

Jerry Reilly is a PSARA member, Chair of the ElderCare Alliance and former Assistant Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services. He can be reached at jerryreilly@msn.com.

Our July 7 Membership Gala with Mayor McGinn

Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn will be our guest Thursday, July 7, at our annual party and membership meeting at the Greenwood Senior Center, 525 N 85th Street.

The party starts with a potluck dinner at 4:30 p.m. At 5 p.m., Mayor McGinn will make brief remarks with plenty of time left over for questions and answers. The Mayor says he is looking forward to the meeting.

"Thank you to PSARA leadership and members for inviting me to attend your annual member-



Mayor McGinn

ship meeting," Mayor McGinn said in a statement to The Advocate. "Your advocacy for progressive causes and the well-being of older people is essential. I hope you can attend the annual meeting and tell me about the issues that matter most to you."

Please bring a main dish, salad, fruit, or soft drinks for the potluck if you can.

At 6 p.m. we'll have a brief PSARA business meeting, followed by more time for socializing. If you can be there, please RSVP to the PSARA office, 206-448-9646 or email adminvp@psara.org. Metro route #48 passes the Senior Center on 85th Street. Limited parking is available in the Center's lot, and on-street parking in the surrounding neighborhood. See you there!

Social Security funding is sound, but program remains at risk

By Steve Kofahl

The recent report by the Social Security Trustees shows only a slight deterioration in future funding projections, with the Trust Fund reserves now expected to last until 2036, rather than 2037. After that date, 77% of scheduled benefits would still be payable, with checks actually being higher than those issued today, even when adjusted for price inflation. That is because benefit amounts and cost-of-living adjustments are calculated based on wages, and in most years wages rise faster than prices. This period of recession, high unemployment, and wage suppression is the exception, not the rule. The trustees' "intermediate" economic assumptions have proved to be pessimistic assumptions in normal times, with most of their previous reports extending the projected date by which the reserves would run out.



Steve Kofahl

jobs that pay a living wage, and second, to scrap the \$106,800 cap on wages and self-employment income that is subject to Social Security contributions. Politicians need to make real investments in education and job creation, and stop busting the unions that created the middle class. They should stop slashing public sector jobs. The vast majority of local, state, and federal workers now pay into Social Security.

Economist Dean Baker points out that projected increases in life expectancy in this year's report also made a difference in the trustees' projections. How much you can expect to benefit from these increases depends largely on your race and economic class. Those with low and moderate incomes, and African-Americans, have seen little increase in life expectancy. Rich white folks are the ones who are living much longer. That should only strengthen our resolve to defend the majority of the population that is not enjoying increased longevity, and that therefore will not receive significantly more checks in their lives than did previous generations. We must not tolerate any cuts in benefits or in cost of living calculations, period.

Faced by angry crowds at home, some of our elected representatives are now saying that they will not include Social Security in their plans to address

growing budget deficits. However, we must remain vigilant. The President has Joe Biden negotiating with both political parties, and says he wants no lines drawn in the sand, and a bipartisan compromise.

The greatest threat now is that Congress and the White House may agree to binding caps or "triggers" that would automatically cut future domestic spending, including Social Security payments, when overall spending exceeds a certain level. There would be no new revenues, just more shredding of the social safety net.

This approach to deficit reduction would not only be cowardly, but cruel and inequitable. The wealthiest among us would continue to avoid paying their fair share from the riches they have accumulated, while the vast majority of Americans would suffer even more. No individual politician who holds office today would be held accountable for the future damage done.

We will not be fooled into accepting that kind of raw deal. We will press lawmakers to make the right choices, insist on healthy cuts in war spending, and demand an end to tax breaks that benefit only big corporations and the richest Americans. The battle is far from over, and the Alliance will never stop fighting.

(Steve Kofahl is a PSARA member.)

Annual surpluses (\$69 billion this year) continue until 2025, when the current \$2.6 trillion Trust Funds will have grown to well over \$4 trillion. You wouldn't know it if you relied on the major media, which misrepresents the finances of the program by failing to count interest payments as income. The Social Security chief actuary has told us that the law requires that all income and assets be included when describing the financial health of the program. Too many politicians refer to Trust Fund assets as "worthless IOUs." They're just as real and secure as U.S. Savings Bonds, and our debt held by China and other nations, and we need to keep saying it.

What we clearly need is first, to get more Americans back to work now in

To Subscribe, go to . . .

<http://www.psara.org/membership.pdf>

Join Pride at Work for the annual LGBT Pride Parade!

Gather at 11 a.m. Sunday, June 26, at Fourth Avenue and Columbia Street in downtown Seattle. PSARA members will assemble in front of the Rainier Club, then take our assigned spot in the line of march. Carrying our PSARA banner, we'll march with Pride at Work up Fourth Avenue to the Seattle Center.

Pride parades are always fun. Use sun screen, wear good walking shoes, bring water and snacks – we'll see you there!

Meetings and Events

Discussion Group: Greenwood Senior Center:

1 p.m. Thursday, June 9, at 525 N.85th in Seattle. Discussion group led by PSARA member re: "The Impact of Budget Cuts," a continuation of discussion.

Discussion Group: West Seattle Senior Center:

12:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 14, at 4217 S.W. Oregon Street. Discussion led by PSARA member re: "Death by a Thousand Cuts."

PSARA Board Meeting: (Note time change)

Noon to 2 p.m. Thursday, June 16, Central Area Senior Center, 500 30th Ave. S., Seattle. All PSARA members welcome.

Family Wage Jobs Rally:

4:30 p.m. Friday, June 24, in Wenatchee, WA. Buses will depart from Seattle. For a seat on the bus, call Leanne at (206) 290-7710 or (425) 277-6680.

PSARA General Membership Meeting: 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, July 7, at Greenwood Senior Center, 525 N. 85th in Seattle. Our special guest: Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn. Arrive at 4:30 for the delicious potluck!

Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans
2800 First Avenue, Room 262
Seattle, Washington 98121
(206) 448-9646

Key Facts on Taxes:

In 1961: 15,753 U.S. households had \$1 million or more in taxable income. **In 2011**, an estimated **361,000** households had \$1 million or more in taxable income.

In 1961: Millionaire families paid an estimated **43.1** percent of their reported income in federal taxes. **In 2011**, millionaire households will pay only an estimated **23.1** percent of their total income in federal taxes.

In 1961: Corporations paid **47.4** percent of their profits in federal taxes. **In 2011**, Corporations will pay only an estimated **11.1** percent of their profits in federal taxes.

- **Chuck Collins, Institute for Policy Studies**