



Retiree Review

Oregon ARA will be the premiere organization on issues affecting retirement security

ORARA Convention: Officer elections, more

The Eighth Annual ORARA Convention is scheduled for Saturday, March 12, from 10 am until 2 pm at Madison's Grill East (Banquet) Room, located at SE 11th and Madison.

There will be a variety of speakers with expertise on Oregon state and national fiscal politics (i.e. deficit issues, implications for Social Security, etc.), including John Mullin

March 12, 2011
10 am—2 pm
Madison's Grill East Room
SE 11th & Madison

from the Oregon Law Center who will speak on the Oregon

Budget Crisis.

Also on the agenda will be the election of ORARA officers, consideration of submitted resolutions and other business as needed. In order to participate in votes on convention business, those attending must have a paid-up membership form or attend as a delegate on behalf of an affiliate with up-to-date affiliation paid.

Lunch and Danish brunch are included in the \$20 per person registration fee. For additional information and registration, see the enclosed form.

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Historic legislative session begins with division and deficit

by Dr. Jim Davis

As the 2011 Oregon Legislative Session opens, we face an historic situation in state government, with record deficits and an economic slump that Oregon has still not recovered from. The situation for human services remains dire, with a projected state deficit of more than \$3.2 billion deficit in the 2011-13 biennium, with a divided legislature and a new Governor. Governor Kitzhaber returns for a record third term as Governor. The House of Representatives is split 30/30 with co-speakers and co-chairs of every committee. In the Oregon Senate the democrats have a slight majority.

It is unlikely that such a divided political environment will produce any significant revenue, especially with the remaining bitterness over the Measure 66, 67 campaign and a very conservative measurement of taxation, with even tax expenditures/loopholes being considered tax increases. However, a divided legislature is not necessarily that bad for senior and disability services, which have traditionally enjoyed fairly strong support on the Republican side.

Senior and disability services will almost certainly sustain more major cuts, at best holding their ground and not allowing the nation's model senior and disability community-based long term care system to be stripped. Our senior and disability service model can only sustain so many cuts before it loses much of the foundational services and supports that make it a model system. The greatest impact of these potential cuts will be in in-home services, long term care facility reimbursement, and the likely loss of Oregon Project Independence as our systems safety net.

The OrARA will be co-sponsoring a number of bills with partners United Seniors of Oregon (chaired by our Verna Porter), Oregon State Council for Retired Citizens, and Parkinson's Resources of Oregon. A key effort will need to be made around the beloved Long Term Care Ombuds-

(Continued on page 3)

ORARA Lobby Day—March 24

The Oregon ARA will be holding its Lobby Day in at the State Capitol in Salem on March 24. The day will begin at 10:00 a.m. in Room 167-A with an orientation and legislative briefing conducted by ORARA Lobbyist Verna Porter and Dr. Jim Davis.

Following the briefing, members will visit senators' and representatives'

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The Tea Party: troubling politics

By Jerry Morris, Oregon ARA President



I've had occasion recently to spend some time in eastern Oregon. For one not familiar with the area, it is simply gorgeous in the winter months. And, the people by and large are very pleasant. They are good folk—convivial, trustworthy, industrious, and ready to offer a helping hand. I have enjoyed their company, but their politics trouble me. With respect to federal and state government many have a burning political resentment. A number are active in the Tea Party and want to reduce the federal government to its status prior to Roosevelt's New Deal. I have struggled to understand their

thinking.

Many of these good people view politics and government in what are essentially biblical terms. As with the ancient Israelites, Americans are presumed to have a special relationship, or covenant, with the deity. God gave us this country, we vanquished its former inhabitants, and we have since prospered safely and securely, an example to people around the world. We will continue to do so as long as we obey God's moral precepts – as we interpret them – and God's grace will flow over the land. Conversely, plagues, locusts ... bank failures, stock market collapse, widespread bankruptcy, and such are signs that we've abandoned the covenant. We must return to basics.

In the Tea Party perspective, the chief culprit in this moral lapse is the federal government. For some time now, the federal government has been punishing those citizens who behave morally and responsibly, and it has been rewarding those (alas, often not citizens) who behave immorally and irresponsibly. Accordingly, these concerned citizens want to undo the federal government in most respects. And, if the politicians can't or won't do that, they'll do it themselves. Hence, the Tea Party echoes Ronald Reagan, "Government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem." They view the federal government, under the undue influence of "liberals," as using their tax dollars to promote abortions, gay rights, affirmative action, gun control, socialized medicine, corrupt unions, pornography, fat pay and benefits for lazy public employees, the coddling of criminals, and so on. In short,

the federal government is promoting immorality and is giving away the "birthright" of its good citizens. Even worse, the federal government is clearly hostile to the nation's moral institutions – for example, banning school prayer, aid to religious schools, and Christmas nativity displays.

From a Tea Party viewpoint, perhaps the most egregious example of the federal government rewarding immoral and irresponsible behavior is the recent bailout of major financial institutions. True enough, the bigger economic fish (and sharks) did get a disproportionate share of federal assistance. And, there certainly was widespread corruption and malfeasance among the "river boat pirates" running our (private) New York financial institutions. However, to attribute the calamity to moral lapse among the general citizenry, or to blame government regulators – who were stifled by corporate lobbyists in Washington, DC – is to miss the central facts. Likewise, the attempt to blame our mounting federal deficit on Social Security, Medicare, and other programs in the social safety net, and not recognize the several trillion dollar costs of two wars and tax cuts for the super rich, is specious reasoning. The facts are clear: Social Security is financially sound and requires only minor funding adjustments, cost problems attributed to Medicare are actually problems of the general health care system, public employees are not overpaid and do not have exorbitant employee benefits, etc. Furthermore, our tax burden is not high, but is among the lowest of major industrial nations.

Although in my view they are good

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Fighting foreclosure? Here's help....

Facing possible foreclosure? Know someone who is? Any union or union member who is interested in information that could assist in stalling off a current or future home foreclosure, please contact CWA retiree and ORARA Board Member, Grady Storms.

Storms volunteers with a non-profit

organization that holds informational workshops about illegal bank foreclosures. Their goal is to give people necessary information to assist in pushing back on a foreclosure that could be illegal. This is an effort to try and force banks to do the right thing and work with people who need loan modification in order to keep their home.

Storms can be reached by email (grady@GradyStorms.com) or phone (503-784-8326).

Commemorate the 10 year Anniversary of the ARA at the Legislative Conference, *Celebrating Our Past, Fighting for Your Future*, September 6-9, 2011, in Washington, D.C.

(Continued from page 2 - President's message)

people, the many adherents of the Tea Party are politically naive and misinformed about our nation's history. And, many are being misled and manipulated by right-wing demagogues. They have been drawn into working against their own interests and serving the financial and political interests of our country's new "robber barons." However, the Tea Party activists are correct in believing there is an ongoing struggle for our nation's soul – a struggle over what kind of nation it is and will become. Will it be a country of economic opportunity and social equality for all, and tolerance for those with divergent lifestyles, or will it be a society of increasing inequality, restricted opportunity, and social intolerance. Confronted with the misrepresentation campaigns funded by right-wing billionaires, sowing widespread confusion among our fellow citizens, and with demagogues poised to reap political benefits, we have an obligation to speak out, organize, and act to defend the general welfare. We can start by challenging the untruths being circulated about the purported unsoundness of Social Security, Medicare, and other government programs that are essential to a civilized society.

(Continued from page 1 - Legislature)

man Program, which faces a loss of \$1 million per biennium because of lost Medicaid dollars. We are also sponsoring a bill that requires a much more thorough process of outreach to the senior and disability communities in the selection of the Long Term Care Ombudsman, as brought to light by the inadequate handling of the selection process by the state in 2009.

There will be **other legislation we will co-sponsor**, including: forming a state level task force on the mental health and addiction needs of seniors, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities; the developing senior and disability mental health programs; enhancing the appeals process for senior and disability services; increasing the penalties and consequences for breaking the patient bill of rights in long term care facilities; and fighting efforts to incorporate senior and disability services into managed health care.

Advocates are particularly concerned about efforts coming out of the Governor's office and Department of Human Services to support senior and disability service system being integrated into **managed health care**, which is universally opposed in the senior and disability advocacy communities. We need to take a renewed stand against this threat to our community-based long term care system. Our system is not a medical, but community living model. We do not want managed health care entities making decisions about the care of our seniors and people with disabilities, nor do we want them to be able to negotiate rates for long term care facilities.

OrARA will continue to work in **key coalitions** that are impacting issues around senior and disability services and programs, including the United Seniors of Oregon, Advocacy Coalition of Seniors and People with Disabilities, and the Campaign for Oregon's Seniors and People with Disabilities.

We hope all OrARA will get involved in this important 2011 legislative advocacy effort, including attending our **OrARA Lobby Day Thursday, March 24**. We look forward to a successful legislative session where we take a strong and successful stand for the rights and services of our senior and disability populations.

Dr. Jim Davis is a member of the ORARA Board and United Seniors of Oregon



Membership Application/Oregon ARA Financial Contributor

- YES! I want to join the Oregon Alliance of Retired Americans because I too am committed to social and economic justice for retirees. I agree we must protect and strengthen Social Security, Medicare, and similar programs that promote retirement security for older Americans. Enclosed is \$10 for a one-year individual/couple membership. (Payable annually) New Renewal
- I would like to become a Financial Contributor to the Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans by enclosing \$_____ to the Oregon Alliance to help fund organization activities.

Please print:

Name: _____ Spouse/Partner: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email address: _____

Community Organization or Union Name & Number (if applicable): _____ Date _____

Make your check or money order payable to **Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans** and mail with this form to: **Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans, c/o Ron Rogers, 13857 SE Foster Rd., Dayton, OR 97114**

Senate fight over Social Security gains steam

The battle over Social Security in the Senate is not getting any calmer. On one side, there are Senators like Richard Shelby (R-AL) and Rand Paul (R-KY). Shelby proposed raising the age of retirement "every several years." Paul has stated that he has a plan to "fix" Social Security for 75 years in "one fell swoop." He has not publicly announced what his plan will entail, but he has hinted that he wants to raise the retirement age.

One of their most strident opponents is Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), who helped form the Senate's Defend Social Security Caucus. Whitehouse advocates against both privatizing the program and raising the retirement age, and supports recommendations to apply the Social Security payroll tax contributions to income over \$250,000. The budget President Obama will release on Monday (2/14/11) won't include any specific proposals to alter Social Security.

(Continued from page 1 - Lobby Day)

offices, gather for lunch (on their own) at the Capitol restaurant, and perhaps make additional visits.

In this period of state budgetary crisis, it is essential that our voices are heard at the State Capitol. Oregon has many model programs for seniors and the disabled and it is imperative that we work to prevent their destruction.

In addition, the state legislature will be considering important new legislation such as the single-payer healthcare bill, which is extremely important to seniors. Plan to meet at the Capitol and lobby your legislators.

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Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans 2011 CONVENTION REGISTRATION

WHEN: Saturday, March 12, 2011
WHERE: Madison's Grill East Room
 1125 SE Madison
TIME: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
PRICE: \$20/per person (including lunch, coffee and morning refreshments)

The Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans (ORARA) invites members, affiliates and friends to attend its Eighth Annual Convention. Check-in will begin at 9:30 am and the Convention will convene at 10:00 a.m. This convention will feature speakers with expertise on Oregon state and national fiscal politics (i.e. deficit issues, implications for Social Security, etc.) as well as consider resolutions submitted, the election of officers (President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, three trustees, four members at large), and other pertinent business as needed.

The number of votes an affiliate has shall be determined by the number of current members in that group for whom the affiliate has paid affiliation fees as set forth below:

Paid Members	Delegates		Paid Members	Delegates
0 – 75	2		651 – 1050	6
76 I- 175	3		1051 – 1750	7
176 – 350	4		1750 – 2150	8
351 – 650	5		2151+	9

Individuals who pay their own membership dues and spouses/domestic partners who are covered by those memberships are each entitled to one vote.



Eighth Annual Oregon ARA Convention
 March 12, 2011
 Official Registration Form

Name _____ Spouse/Partner/Guest _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Union or other Affiliation (if applicable) _____

Delegate carrying votes from (name of affiliate) _____

Individual delegate

Enclosed is my check to cover Registration Fee of \$20.00 per person (including Lunch) _____ (number attending)

Please list names of additional delegates below:

\$ _____ total enclosed

**Please mail completed form and your check (payable to ORARA) to:
 Ron Rogers, 13857 SE Foster Rd., Dayton OR 97114 by March 09, 2011.**