

# The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

The Monthly Publication of  
**PUGET SOUND ADVOCATES FOR RETIREMENT ACTION**  
"Uniting Generations for a Secure Future"

Vol XXVIII, No 11



November 2012

**Remembering  
Bette Reed. . .**

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## Legislative Conference is November 10

PSARA's annual Legislative Conference will be held from 10 a.m. until noon Saturday, November 10, at UFCW 21's Joe Crump Hall, 5030 First Avenue South in Seattle. A light breakfast will be served.

The 2012 elections will be over and the 2013 legislative session will be around the corner. PSARA members will be preparing to give their legislators their views on fiscal matters, health care, the state bank and other issues important to our members and their families.

At the request of some of our

*Continued on page 3*

## PSARA Election Notice

At our December 20 holiday party and general membership meeting, we will elect/re-elect a number of PSARA officers. The position of Outreach Vice President is open. Additionally, the positions of Secretary, Treasurer and eight Executive Board members will be up for election.

We need people who are willing to put in some time to help PSARA be an effective community-based organization. If you are interested in donating time to PSARA, to help lead and represent PSARA for the next two years, call the PSARA office (206) 448-9646 and leave your name. Someone from the Election Committee will call you back, explain the duties of the position and confirm your interest.

## 'Lame duck' with a dangerous bite

By Will Parry

Immediately after Election Day, a mighty alliance of labor and community organizations will launch a campaign to block any congressional deficit-reduction deal that damages Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid.

The allied groups are deeply concerned over the willingness of leading Democrats, including President Obama, to enter budget talks prepared to yield ground on the three vital programs to get a bipartisan deal.

The lame duck session, between Election Day and the installation of the new Congress, looms as the arena for the battle between the deficit hawks and the defenders of critical social programs.

Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action will be fully engaged in the campaign.

"People, groups, organizations and networks are working very hard to get Obama and the Democrats elected, and yet we are worried that it is possible that we could be betrayed almost immediately," said Roger Hickey, co-director of the Campaign for America's Future.

During talks with House Speaker John Boehner in 2011, White House negotia-

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Will Parry



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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 or  
visit PSARA on Facebook.

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## Need to reach us?

Here's a directory of Puget Sound Advocates  
for Retirement Action email addresses:

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**Will Parry:** [pscsc@qwestoffice.net](mailto:pscsc@qwestoffice.net)

**Our web page:** [www.psara.org](http://www.psara.org)

Web Master, **Reed Wacker:** [info@psara.org](mailto: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.

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## The Retiree ADVOCATE

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# Membership Meeting and Holiday Party December 20

PSARA members will mix pleasure with business at our annual Membership Meeting and Holiday Party on Thursday, December 20.

The festivities begin at 12:30 p.m., at UFCW Local 21, 5030 First Avenue South, with a potluck to make the mouth water and the table groan. Bring your favorite tasty dish or drink to share.

And please bring as well a thoughtfully-chosen food donation for the King County Labor Agency Food Bank, to express solidarity with our brothers and sisters hit hard by the Great Recession.

Our meeting will renew and replenish our PSARA leadership, electing our Outreach Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and several Executive Board members to two-year terms. If you are interested in serving in any one of these positions, please contact Maureen Bo, [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org) or call the office, (206) 448-9646.

Yes, there's business to conduct, but our Holiday Parties are always wonderful fun, socializing with some of the sharpest people on the planet. And troubadour Will Parry has promised to bring his guitar to lead us in singing our way to a better world.

**Mark that date – Thursday, December 20. See you there!**

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## Lessons from an old disaster

By Mike Andrew

George McGovern was the first presidential candidate I ever voted for. I was 20, and I meant my vote to be a vote against the war in Vietnam and the toxic residue it was leaving in American politics.

The election of 1972 turned out to be a disaster. In spite of my vote, Nixon swept every state except Massachusetts and the District of Columbia.

When I heard on Sunday that McGovern was dead, I remembered how disappointed I'd been on election night 40 years ago. But I also remembered some other things.

First, I remembered how hopeful we'd been about McGovern's campaign, even though all the evidence pointed to the fact that he was going to lose, and lose big.

I also remembered how terrified Nixon must have been of even the token opposition McGovern represented, so terrified, in fact, that he gambled – and lost – his presidency on a crackpot scheme to break into Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate Apartments.

Finally I remembered phoning my

Republican father the day Nixon resigned to say "I told you so." He said, "Yeah, you did." It was the first time he ever acknowledged that I might be right about politics.



Mike Andrew

All this remembering is my way of asking you to become a PSARA member, if you're not already, and to recruit a new member if you are. Help us to meet our goal of bringing 250 new members into PSARA by the end of this year.

One of the lessons of that 40-year-old disaster is that corrupt and powerful leaders actually fear ordinary people, fear them under all circumstances, but fear them most of all when they are getting organized and are hopeful about the future.

Regardless of the outcome of this year's election, if we have hope for the future, we need to get organized to get ourselves there. You can help PSARA get where we need to be by joining today. If you're already a member, renew your membership and recruit a friend.

# 'Lame duck' with a dangerous bite

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tors agreed to cut at least \$250 billion from Medicare over the next ten years, and an additional \$800 billion over the following decade, and to water down the formula for determining Social Security cost-of-living adjustments.

"We don't want Obama putting on the table what he proposed to Boehner," Hickey said.

The talks within the so-called bipartisan "Super Committee" also raised red flags.

Before the talks collapsed, Democratic senators on the committee proposed hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts to Social Security and Medicare benefits, as well as Medicaid, while Republicans on the committee proposed even bigger cuts.

On the initiative of Senator Bernie

Sanders (Independent, Vermont), 29 senators, including Washington State's Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, have signed a "Dear Colleague" letter to other senators, urging them to hold the line on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

Sanders, who chairs the Senate Social Security Caucus, has been the foremost member of that chamber in vigorous defense of the three basic programs.

The AFL-CIO, the Service Employees International Union, the Strengthen Social Securities coalition and dozens of other groups are expected to be active in the campaign to prevent the deficit from becoming the pretext for program cuts.

AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka declared that labor will "oppose any cuts to Social Security or Medicare benefits,

or to the federal contribution to Medicaid.

"We call on politicians of both parties to stand firm and demand that Wall Street and the wealthy finally pay their fair share – given the extraordinary increases in corporate profits and income inequality in recent years," Trumka said.

The AFL-CIO will stage a series of coordinated events around the country on November 8, to pressure lawmakers not to sign onto any deficit-reduction deal that raises the Medicare eligibility age or changes the Social Security cost-of-living formula.

In a related development, the Institute for America's Future, after Election Day, will release a letter signed by 350 economists warning that austerity measures could derail the economic recovery.

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## Legislative Conference is November 10

Continued from page 1

working members, this year's conference is being held on a Saturday to enable them to attend.

Our Executive Board has contracted with an experienced and highly respected lobbyist, Pamela Crone, to advocate for PSARA's legislative goals. Pam will assess for us the impact of the election on the legislature. She will also discuss how the Governor-elect is likely to affect the 2013 session.

During the 2011/2012 legislative cycle, the "road kill" caucus of business-oriented conservative Democratic senators blocked many progressive bills. The election results will determine the relative strength of that caucus in the 2013 session.

If Jay Inslee is elected governor, and if both house and senate have working Democratic majorities, our legislative goals and those of our allies are more likely to be within reach.

Implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in our state will be a

major issue in 2013. Teresa Mosqueda will clarify for us the complex road ahead for the state's work on the new federal law. Teresa chairs the Healthy Washington Coalition, is a member of the Washington Health Care Exchange Board, and is Legislative and Policy Director for the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

The national election outcome will have an enormous effect on the Affordable Care Act. Teresa recently attended a White House Conference on the implementation of the ACA. She will discuss how the outcome of the presidential and congressional elections will shape our efforts to achieve quality and affordable health care coverage for all Washingtonians.

The recently organized Caring Across Generations campaign will bring major policy proposals before the legislature. Susie Levy, Coordinator for the Caring Across Generations campaign in Washington and an organizer with WA Community Action Network, will

discuss the Caring Across Generations legislative proposals, and what PSARA can do to help.

Following the presentations by these three remarkable women, PSARA members will discuss and vote on PSARA's legislative agenda for 2013. Then we will caucus by legislative districts to arrange to meet with our legislators to discuss our legislative proposals. All of this in just two hours!

At the time of the conference, we are not likely to have one crucial piece of information. A challenge to the constitutionality of Tim Eyman's initiative requiring a two-thirds vote to raise revenue or to close tax loopholes is pending before the Washington State Supreme Court.

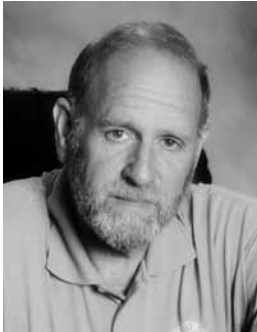
We hope that the decision will be issued either before the session or very early in the session. The decision will give us a much clearer idea of what can be done to raise revenue in 2013.

Our conference will prepare us for what promises to be a very challenging legislative session.

# **Stripping the secrecy from The Trans-Pacific Partnership**

*By Robby Stern*

**O**n Saturday, December 1, at 1 p.m., trade justice groups, labor activists, family farmers, immigration reformers, public health and net neutrality advocates, environmentalists, students, small business owners, and community activists from Canada, Mexico and the United States will gather at Peace Arch Park in Surrey, B.C. and Blaine, WA.



**Robby Stern** These groups are united in their opposition to a new trade and investor rights agreement being written by U.S and other Pacific Rim country negotiators with the guidance of multinational corporation representatives. Canada and Mexico recently joined the negotiations.

Negotiations have been going on for more than two years under extreme secrecy. Thankfully, there have been leaks, and what we have learned is very very disturbing. This agreement represents a fundamental attack on the 99%.

Public Citizen and our local WA Fair Trade Coalition, led by PSARA member Kristen Beifus, have done terrific work in gathering information on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

NAFTA, WTO, Korus (Korea/US trade agreement) and now the TPP are only partially about “trade”. Rather, they are designed to set up a system of enforceable global governance to benefit large corporations.

The TPP would establish corporate-run tribunals invested with the power to require that tax dollars be used to compensate corporations if environmental and health laws in the Pacific Rim countries undermine “expected future profits” of multinational corporations.

TPP will also increase the offshoring of U.S. manufacturing jobs and production to Vietnam and China.

Twenty years of NAFTA, WTO and other corporate managed trade agreements have already helped lead to the loss of 5 million U.S. manufacturing jobs and 45,000 U.S. manufacturing facilities. In addition, millions of service sector jobs have been offshored. Tax bases have declined, with subsequent cuts to education, vital services and infrastructure. Only the top 1% has benefitted from this economic dislocation.

According to Public Citizen, “this “Mother of all Trade Agreements” could in one blow lead to the off-shoring of millions of U.S. jobs, free the banks from the limited oversight they now experience, decrease access to medicine, ban Buy America policies that are now used to create green jobs, and empower corporations with new tools to attack our environmental and health safeguards.

Only two of the 26 TPP chapters address trade. The remainder create new corporate powers, limit domestic policy that would impact corporate profits and grant new monopoly rights. The rules are enforced by binding dispute resolution, overseen by corporate representatives with the ability to impose trade sanctions or to grant cash payments to corporations.

The process by which the TPP is being negotiated is incredible. Over 600 official corporate trade advisors have access to the draft TPP text. But public officials and other representatives from civil society do not have access.

In July, 134 members of the House of Representatives, including Rep. Rick Larsen, sent a letter to U.S. trade Representative Ron Kirk requesting that the appropriate Congressional committees be consulted and that a draft of the text be released. The letter received no response.

Reps. Adam Smith and Jim McDermott sent their own letters calling for

more transparency and authentic stakeholder involvement in the negotiation process. Journalists, unions and others in civil society are excluded from seeing draft TPP texts or knowing the positions of U.S. negotiators.

Information about the TPP has been leaked. The Public Citizen web site, <http://www.citizen.org/TPP> or the WA Fair Trade Coalition web site, <http://washingtonfairtrade.org/>, contain more information. Here are just a few highlights:

The TPP will assure higher drug prices for pharmaceutical companies and actually decrease access to medicines by extending patent monopolies on prescription drugs. It empowers pharmaceutical companies or their trade association, PhRMA, to challenge medicine pricing formularies such as those used with Medicaid/Medicare and national health-care systems. It allows the companies to raise the costs of drugs for programs such as PEPFAR (Presidents Emergency plan for AIDS Relief).

The assistance the agreement provides to pharmaceutical companies would also be mirrored in provisions related to Wall Street (rolls back regulations and actually prohibits bans on risky financial products) and large scale agricultural corporations (food labels are considered “trade barriers” and food corporations can directly challenge domestic standards).

The fight against the TPP has begun throughout the Pacific Rim. We can join with our sisters and brothers who are already in motion in Malaysia, Japan, Australia and other Pacific Rim countries.

December 1 is an opportunity for PSARA members to get involved in the fight. Buses and carpools will be heading to Peace Arch Park. Contact Kristen Beifus at [kristen@washingtonfairtrade.org](mailto:kristen@washingtonfairtrade.org), or call 206.227.3079 if you would like to participate.

# Workers shake up mighty Walmart – Prepare for action November 24!

By Mike Andrew

In a series of strikes spreading across several states, and involving hundreds of workers, Walmart employees are taking the initiative against unfair and unsafe working conditions.

The strikes began in June when immigrant “guest workers” shut down Walmart supplier CJ Seafoods in Louisiana. In July, the Department of Labor ruled in favor of the workers, demanding CJ Seafoods pay over \$248,000 in back wages, fines, and penalties for wage theft and forced labor.

In September, Southern California warehouse workers walked out and set off on a 50-mile pilgrimage to dramatize issues within Walmart-controlled warehouses.

By the end of the month, the strike had spread to warehouses in Illinois. Warehouse workers did not return to work till their employers agreed to pay them for the 21 days they were out on strike.

On October 3, Walmart union members from around the world – including Argentina, Brazil, Central America, Chile, India, South Africa, and the United Kingdom, as well as OURWalmart members from the US – met in Los Angeles to form the Global Walmart Alliance.

The next day, more than 70 Walmart workers from Southern California walked out in protest against Walmart’s unfair labor practices in the first multi-store strike in Walmart’s history. They returned to work the next day without incident.

On October 8, Walmart struck back with threats of legal action against pickets at its stores. In a letter to several UFCW locals and community allies, an attorney for Walmart said the company “reserves the right to pursue appropriate remedies with local law enforcement...”

On October 10, in a National Day of Action against Walmart, hundreds of striking workers converged on Walmart headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas, to demand an end to threats of retaliation, and a response to their concerns of unfair, unsafe working conditions.



Photo by Gareth Munger

**PSARA Executive Board members Tim Burns and Jim Grayson join in a national day of support and solidarity with Walmart workers as they demand living wages and better working conditions from the largest employer in the world.**

The Day of Action included a picket line at Walmart headquarters, a flashmob at Walmart’s original store, Walmart #1, and hundreds of actions across the nation by community and labor allies.

Locally the Making Change at Walmart, Puget Sound coalition, including PSARA, led leafleting and delegations at Walmart stores throughout our region. In all, 185 people protested at 23 Walmart stores in a single day.

Walmart workers have promised that if retaliation against striking workers does

not end, they will go ahead with another Day of Action on Black Friday, November 24 – the busiest day of the year for retailers.

By walking off the job together, Walmart workers sent a signal about their deep discontent, and – more important – about their capacity for collective action. They have already achieved historic gains in demonstrating their rights to organize and to defend themselves against retaliation by the employer.

## **\$29 a week in food stamps**

**P**hoenix Mayor Greg Stanton observed Hunger Action Month by living on a \$29 food budget for one week. “I’m tired, and it’s hard to focus,” the Mayor said on Day Four. “I can’t go buy a sandwich because that would be cheating....I’m facing a long, hungry day and an even longer night.”

**Mayor Stanton now knows what \$29 in food stamps will put on his table for an entire week.**

**Meanwhile, in Congress, the deficit-happy, budget-slashing Republicans who control the House have drafted a budget that would deny even that \$29 in food stamps to millions of Americans.**

**The GOP budget-cutters would also cut the deficit by eliminating the funding for school lunch programs for hundreds of thousands of children.**

**Maybe members of Congress should emulate Mayor Stanton and go without lunch for a while. Say, for a full school term. They, too, might find that they’re “tired and it’s hard to focus.” Or they might focus – on restoring money for the food stamp and school lunch programs.**

**– Rap Lewis**



# **2012 PSARA Legislative Conference**

***Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup>  
10 am – 12 noon***

**UFCW Local 21  
5030 First Ave. South • Seattle WA**

METRO Route #132 on 1st Ave. So. to Hudson  
METRO Route #23 & #174 on 4th Ave. So. to Dawson

***Learn about the impact of the Nov 6<sup>th</sup> election  
on the 2013 Legislative Session***

***A light breakfast will be provided.***

*Issues Speakers:*

**Pam Crone,  
PSARA's new Olympia lobbyist**

**Teresa Mosqueda,  
Chair of the Healthy Washington Coalition**

**Susie Levy,  
Caring Across Generations campaign**

*Discuss and approve our 2013 Legislative Agenda*

*Gather with PSARA members from your legislative district and plan for meetings with your legislators to advocate for PSARA's legislative agenda.*

**To help us plan materials for the conference,  
please RSVP to PSARA at 206-448-9646 or to [govrelations@psara.org](mailto:govrelations@psara.org).**





# *PSARA Annual Membership Meeting & Winter Party*

*Membership Meeting, Election, Potluck and*

*Singing led by Will Parry*

***12:30 to 3:30 p.m. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20***

**12:30 Potluck lunch and socializing:** Please bring a main dish, salad, fruit, dessert or soft drink to share at the party. **RSVP** to office phone and let us know the food item you can bring: 206-448-9646 or e-mail to [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org). **Also, if you can, please bring items of non perishable food for the Labor Agency Food Bank.**

**1:00 pm.** Brief business meeting and election of PSARA officers and board members in accordance with our By-laws. If you have questions about the election, you can call the office 206-448-9646.

- Then we sing, eat and socialize. Celebrate the holidays and our determination to keep fighting for a better world with social and economic justice for all!

**Location: United Food & Commercial Workers Union Local 21  
5030 First Avenue South, Seattle**

*South of the SODO between the corner of Dawson and Hudson streets. Parking available in Local 21 lot. Transit bus #132 on First Ave to Dawson or on Fourth Ave to Hudson . If you cannot drive or take public transit and need a ride, or if you can offer a ride to a member who cannot drive, please e-mail Maureen Bo at [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org) or leave a message on the office phone 206-448-9646.*

# A tough, self-critical assessment to clear the way to a better future

By Mark McDermott

The outcome of the 2012 election is extremely important, but even a victory for President Obama and the congressional Democrats will not ensure that our nation moves toward a new shared prosperity and genuine economic opportunity and security for all. For more than thirty years, corporate America's relentless attacks and its economic and political domination have been growing and will not stop regardless of the election results.



Mark McDermott

What is the way forward? First and foremost, we progressives from many movements need to do an in-depth self-criticism of how we are organized to carry forward the fight for a better future. We need to ask ourselves tough questions about our vision, values, agenda, strategy and collective organization. I include myself in this tough self-critical examination.

I submit that the progressive movements lack the critical collective organizational capacity to develop an overall coherent vision of a better future and to proactively map the road forward. We are a multi-limbed organism that lacks a well-developed brain and central nervous system. If hard work, dedication, and a deep commitment to justice were all that were needed, our nation would look very different. Unfortunately much more is needed.

What does this deep self-criticism look like? Major league professional sports teams study game films every week. They study the offense and defense on every play. They analyze the strategies, tactics, timely adjustments, quality of the players, and the role of random luck. Their study leads to deci-

sions to rebuild the team, to fundamentally shift strategies or tactics, to add a few new players and/or persist with the current strategy.

For political and economic movements, history itself is the game film. Let's look at the 30-plus years of the game films of the origins of the financial collapse and the Great Recession. Most importantly we need to look hard at what we, the progressive movements, did to combat the financial deregulation origins of this economic catastrophe.

For decades, Corporate America, its Republican and Democratic allies, and many elite economists and commentators aggressively pushed deregulation of the banks and financial industries. President Carter and the ruling congressional Democrats started the process in the late 1970's. President Rea-

gan and Congress continued. President Clinton and most of Congress delivered massive deregulation in the late 1990's. Bush, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and their cronies mismanaged the weakened regulatory protections in the 2000's. It added up to a largely bipartisan selling out of the American people. Final score: Big banks bailed out — massive pain for the people,

Studying the game films of our opponents is easy. Deregulation took place in broad daylight. We know what they did if we care to look. Here comes the uncomfortable part for the movements and for me personally. What was our collective offense and defense over the past 30+ years?

Our offense and defense were largely non-existent. If you doubt this, try to recall how many demonstrations and protests of any size took place across the country in opposition to deregulation or in support of the need for greater

regulation. I can't remember any. Why? Deregulation took place publicly. Brilliant progressive economists and some progressive Democrats warned us of the great dangers. Let me be blunt. We were not paying attention. We can't blame our opponents for this. Why were we so unprepared?

The progressive movements are splintered into literally thousands of organizations focused on single issues. We have labor, health care reform, immigration reform, hunger, poverty, human services, senior issues, reproductive and gay/lesbian rights etc. What mass movement is in charge of ensuring that we don't have unnecessary economic collapses? None.

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## Deregulation took place in broad daylight. We weren't paying attention. Why were we so unprepared?

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to discuss these matters across movements, to ensure an effective vision and strategy to prevent crises, and to lead us forward to a better future. The institutional Democratic Party failed miserably in this historic task.

**All progressive movements and their constituencies have been hit hard by the five-plus years of economic hard times. For decades, we have lacked the collective capacity to ensure that economic policy and financial regulation serve the people and not the wealthy elites. When the collapse came, we were both powerless and largely clueless regarding what to do.**

**All of us want a brighter, more secure and sustainable future. We must recognize our collective strategic organizational failure as the first step in laying out our positive vision for the future and how we will get there. More on this in later articles.**

More importantly, we lack a central organizational structure



# Remembering Bette Reed

**P**SARA and the broader community of housing advocates lost a valiant champion with the death on September 24 of Bette Reed. Bette died of complications following a stroke, at the age of 78. A woman of quiet dignity, modesty and quick wit, she became a crusading dynamo when she sought housing justice for the thousands of low-income families for whom she spoke.

Bette was elected to the PSARA Executive Board in 2006 and was elected Community Vice President (later called Outreach Vice President) in 2009. She was serving as Outreach Vice President at the time of her death.

She also served as president of the Tenants Union of Washington board and was active in its leadership for seven years.

“Bette was a visionary for advancing the cause of housing justice in our community, with a sharp wit and tremendous source of energy, both for herself, and anyone else who had the fortune of working alongside her,” said Jonathan Grant, Executive Director of the Tenants Union of Washington.

“Her leadership was instrumental as a part of a core group of tenants organizing to bring accountability to Seattle Housing Authority and to reform the Section 8 grievance hearing process,” Emil Paddison of the TU board said. “Thanks to her leadership as Board President of the Tenants Union, the organization has reached new heights, and she will be greatly, greatly missed.”

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**O**ur community and the world is a lesser place with the loss of Bette. She was a wonderful, warm and loving person and a fighter of enormous skill and passion. She was not to be dallied with, but eating her baked goods was a joyful treat for everything but the waistline. Her knowledge and her ability to articulate what needed to be done on housing and other issues was a guide for PSARA. Her willingness to take on responsibility and carry through was a comfort to all of us who are committed to building a strong and feisty PSARA.

– Robby Stern, President

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“Bette was a visionary for advancing the cause of housing justice in our community, with a sharp wit and tremendous source of energy, both for herself, and anyone else who had the fortune of working alongside her,” said Jonathan Grant, Tenants Union Executive Director. “Thanks to her leadership as Board President of the Tenants Union of Washington State, the organization has reached new heights, and she will be greatly, greatly missed.”

In earlier years, Bette worked as an aide in the Justice Department Civil Rights agency and in a law firm specializing in workers’ compensation cases. She also served as director of a vocational training facility.

She had established a record of exemplary housing activism years before coming to PSARA. John Fox, head of the Seattle Displacement Coalition, told of working closely with Bette on housing issues over 15 years.

“She made an enormous contribution to the efforts of the Seattle Displacement Coalition and to the cause of seniors,

low-income residents and tenants,” Fox said. “Whenever there was a meeting or hearing before elected officials to address critical economic justice issues, I could count on Bette to join us, speak out, and carry the word back to fellow senior residents to help get them involved.”

Seattle City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen relied on Bette when he chaired the Council's Housing Committee.

“She was a tireless and consistent advocate for low income people and for seniors,” Rasmussen said. “You could always count on Bette. You need people like that to get things done.”

Fox identified campaigns in which Bette played a leadership role.

- \* She led in organizing CASHA, the Coalition for Accountability at the Seattle Housing Authority. This ad hoc coalition of seniors, labor representatives and housing advocates secured the state law that requires representation on the SHA board for SHA tenants and labor representatives.

- \* Her role was critical in a successful campaign to block rent increases on SHA Senior Housing Bond units above what the low-income residents could afford. “To this day,” Fox said, “rents on those one thousand units remain accessible and affordable to the poor – only because of her work.”

- \* She organized meetings in her building (Blakely Manor) including city-wide meetings that drew hundreds, to keep rents low and to demand accountability from SHA. She also traveled by bus (she had no car) to all 23 senior housing buildings to meet with resident councils on tenants' rights issues.

- \* She worked to organize and keep together the “SSHP Advocates,” a loose-knit but effective group of senior housing activists.

Based on their 15 years of common struggle on behalf of low-income tenants, Fox paid Bette Reed this tribute: “She set an extraordinary example and sent us all a message by virtue of her unwavering commitment to the cause of social and economic justice.”

Hinda Kipnis is a fellow resident at Blakely Manor and one of Bette's many friends. She considered Bette an “indestructible” woman who “would give you her all.” Kipnis remembers a time when she was planning a midwinter trip to Chicago. Bette knitted her a hat and scarf to protect her against the biting Chicago cold.

Bette is survived by a son, Alexander Sibbald, and two daughters, Christy and Katherine Sibbald.

– Will Parry



# The Supreme Court rules on age discrimination

By Will Parry

A 5-4 decision by the Supreme Court in 2009 has virtually destroyed workers' rights to sue under the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

The decision, in *Gross versus FBL Financial*, shifted the burden of proof so that workers have to show that their age was the deciding factor – not simply one of multiple factors – in an employer's decision to discharge or demote an older employee.

Justice Clarence Thomas wrote the majority opinion, joined by Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy and Samuel Alito.

Before the Supreme Court decision, if a worker showed that age was a factor in an employment decision, the employer would have to demonstrate that he acted for valid and nondiscriminatory reasons. Since the decision, the *New York Times* reports, "lower courts have applied its onerous standard of proof to deny thousands of age discrimination claims."

Some courts have even applied the ultra-tough standard to cases involving disabilities and to those alleging discrimination based on race, sex, national origin and religion.

To address this sweeping injustice, Iowa's two senators, Republican Charles Grassley and Democrat Tom Harkin, have introduced legislation to reverse the Supreme Court's ruling and restore older workers' rights.

The legislation is urgently needed. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission says age-related charges make up a growing number of complaints filed with EEOC.

Gerald Maatman is a Chicago attorney who represents employers in age discrimination cases. He admits that employees have a hard time bringing cases. "Those claims are very, very difficult to prove, in that the smoking gun evidence that needs to exist to prove a successful claim is very difficult to find in those circumstances."

The Gross decision has had a chilling effect, according to Dan Kohrman, an AARP Foundation senior attorney.

"These kinds of decisions scare off workers and scare off lawyers," Kohrman says. "The clear trend is, it's harder to prove an age case."



**TOMORROW'S BANKING: Representative Bob Hasegawa, speaking at a PSARA-sponsored Seattle forum, outlines the merits of the Washington Investment Trust (state bank) legislation that he pioneered.**

*The New York Times.*

Until now, Dr. Freedman notes, "people with mental illness and substance disorders have faced stingy annual and lifetime caps on coverage, higher deductibles, or simply no coverage at all."

There is solid evidence that timely care can positively change the course of psychiatric illness, Dr. Freedman said.

Older people with mental illness

will benefit as the new law phases out the "doughnut hole" over the next eight years, making psychiatric medicines much more affordable.

"This law has the potential to change the course of life for psychiatric patients for the better, and in that sense it is both humane and right," said Dr. Dilip V. Jeste, president of the American Psychiatric Association.

– Rap Lewis

## Better coverage coming for mental illness

One of the most under-reported benefits of the new Affordable Care Act is also one of the most transformative.

The law's near-universal coverage will apply not just to medical problems, but to psychiatric disorders as well. The law combines parity of coverage with the individual mandate requiring insurance.

To grasp the importance of this coverage, consider that about half of Americans will experience a major psychiatric or substance disorder during their lives, according to an authoritative 2005 study cited by Dr. Richard A. Freedman in

# Health care top concern at forum

By Mary Anderson

A standing-room crowd of several hundred packed a forum at the Mercer Island Community Center October 1 to discuss Washington State's readiness – or lack of it -- to meet the expanding health and social service needs of its elderly thousands.

Nineteen candidates for the state house and senate were on hand to interact with their constituents.

An informal show of hands in the audience identified health care and funding for state services as the top two concerns, followed by the provision of long-term services and supports; protections for vulnerable adults; financial security; housing; and transportation.

These aging and funding issues are certain to be prominent in the 2013 legislative session. The Caring Across Generations campaign, of which PSARA is a part, is sure to play an active role. The campaign is calling for the creation nationally of two million new caregiving jobs – doubling the present workforce – with strengthened wages, hours and safety provisions and with training and certification to ensure skill and lend dignity to the job.

At the Mercer Island forum, Jessie Eller, Aging and Disability Services director; Ingrid McDonald, AARP advocacy director; Jerry Reilly, chair of the Elder Care Alliance; and Corie Borish, caregiver for her husband, who has Al-

zheimer's, took part in a panel discussion of the state's aging readiness.

Borish brought the issue alive, describing the care needs of her husband as his condition deteriorated, requiring four-hour daily care at first, increasing ultimately to a need for 24-hour care.

Representatives Bob Hasegawa and Gerry Pollet addressed the need for the creation of a state investment trust (state bank) to provide long-term fiscal stability for the state.

Also part of the discussion was the need for a special committee on aging in each house of the legislature. At present, aging issues are parceled out to many committees, preventing a focus on the special needs of the state's elderly thousands.

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## The challenge of dementia

By Will Parry

A new study by the World Health Organization (WHO) lends fresh urgency to the work of the recently-launched Caring Across Generations coalition.

WHO is the United Nations agency charged with monitoring global health trends. Its new 113-page report, *Dementia: A Public Health Priority*, declares that throughout the world an estimated 35.6 million people live with dementia today. By 2050, that number is expected to more than triple.

"The scope of the looming medical-care disaster is beyond comparison with anything that has been faced during the entire history of humanity," said Dr. Barry Greenberg, director of strategy for the Toronto Dementia Research Alliance.

"No one understands how it happens. Every day, the minds of millions of high-functioning people slowly slip into another reality, one in which life events, loved one's faces, children's names – all the memories that constitute a person's identity – have disappeared," Laura Gottesdiener writes in the AfterNet news service.

The disease often lies dormant for decades in a patient's cerebral spinal

fluid before it begins to affect cognitive functioning. Treatments? Dr. Evelyn C. Granieri is director of geriatrics at New York Presbyterian Hospital. "There really is nothing," she says. "You don't get better, ever."

The WHO report recommends the development of programs focused on improving early diagnosis, raising public awareness and reducing the stigma associated with the disease, and providing both better care for those with dementia and more support for caregivers.

That's where Caring Across Generations has a critical role. Every one of

the stricken millions is going to need a trained, empathetic caregiver. Caring Across Generations is raising public consciousness about this need, now and in the years ahead.

Caregiving, an exhausting occupation under the best of circumstances, is especially demanding when the one cared for has dementia. As the population ages, millions of people, often family or friends, will be stepping into caregiver roles. They will need and deserve decent wages and conditions, opportunities for respite, and the training and support they need, both for the one cared for, and for their own continued health.

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## Meetings and Events

**PSARA Legislative Conference:** 10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Saturday, November 10, UFCW 21, Joe Crump Hall, 5030 1st Ave. S., Seattle, 98134. Hear PSARA lobbyist, Pam Crone, discuss what can be anticipated for the 2013 legislative session. Discuss PSARA priorities for the legislative session, and join with other PSARA members from your legislative district to advocate with your legislators for PSARA's legislative priorities. Light continental breakfast will be provided. RSVP to [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org) or call PSARA office, (206) 448-9646

**PSARA Executive Board Meeting:** 1 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 15, Central Area Senior Center, 500 30th Avenue S., Seattle. All PSARA members are welcome.

**PSARA General Membership Meeting & Holiday Party:** 12:30 – 3 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 20, UFCW 21, Joe Crump Hall, 5030 1st Ave. S., Seattle, 98134. Award winning potluck, (bring your best recipe dish!), general membership meeting, election and socializing... Singing led by troubadour Will Parry and maybe a special guest! RSVP to [adminvp@psara.org](mailto:adminvp@psara.org) or call PSARA office, (206) 448-9646

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## Every senator...

**...in this chamber is partly responsible for sending 50,000 young Americans to an early grave. This chamber reeks of blood. Every senator here is partly responsible for that human wreckage at Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval (hospitals) and all across our land – young men without legs, or arms, or genitals, or faces or hopes. There are not very many of these blasted and broken boys who think this war is a glorious adventure. Do not talk to them about bugging out, or national honor or adventure. It does not take any courage at all for a congressman, or a senator, or a president to wrap himself in the flag and say we are staying in Vietnam, because it is not our blood that is being shed. But we are responsible for those young men and their lives and their hopes. And if we do not end this damnable war those young men will some day curse us for our pitiful willingness to let the Executive carry the burden that the Constitution places on us.**

**– Senator George McGovern, 1922-2012**

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