



# The Badger Bulletin

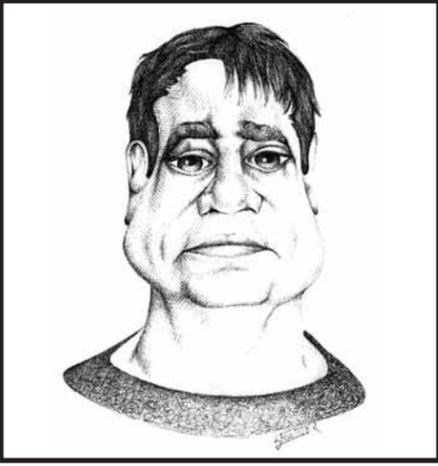
The American Postal Workers Union of Wisconsin

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## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT . . . BY STEVE LORD



# Legislators Seek To Destroy The USPS

does not matter to right wing Republicans. The goal is not and has never been to have a healthy postal service. The goal is to dismantle it and destroy its workers and unions. The USPS has also overpaid into its two retirement systems to the tune of 50-75 billion dollars depending on which independent audit is correct. When asked to get relief from

of Wisconsin is sending out a statewide mailing that will have a letter stamped and addressed to your Congressman for you to sign and mail. It has been made simple for every member to show their support of this bill. Please make sure that you and your fellow members send in this vitally important letter. Also, look online to see when

the rights of state union workers. The APWU and its members will face the same fate if we do not act now to help our brothers and sisters in the public sector here in Wisconsin. We must take back our state by voting against those bent on destroying unions in the upcoming recall elections. If legislators see that there are consequences for their actions maybe they will think before they fall in line behind Governors like Scott Walker who only seek to enrich corporations and the wealthy.

In 2006 in the waning hours of that Congressional session the Republican Congress passed the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act. This bill as most of you know requires the US Postal Service to prefund future retirees' health care costs to the tune of 5.5 billion dollars per year. The bill also set a debt ceiling for the USPS at 15 billion dollars. This was the Republicans first shot in a war against the USPS and postal workers. Their strategy has worked well. Now in 2011 we are about to reach that debt ceiling and the Republicans are poised to take us down.

Republican Congressmen Darrell Issa (CA) and Dennis Ross (FL) are members of committees that oversee the USPS. They have proposed a bill that would gut the USPS and destroy its unions and collective bargaining process. The bill would create a commission that could unilaterally close 2 billion dollars' worth of post offices over its first 2 years. Would yours be one of them?

The bill would also create a board that would be allowed to unilaterally cut your wages and benefits. This would mean the demise of collective bargaining. Issa and Ross have stated that postal workers are overpaid by 34%. All of this wrath and destruction brought about by the 2006 PAEA bill. Like I said the Republican strategy has worked well for them. Without the PAEA the USPS actually would have averaged a profit since 2006. This fact

the PAEA or get repayment of the monies overpaid the Republicans in Congress cleverly call it a bailout. Even though they know that it really is not a bailout when you are not taking any taxpayer money. But, they hope they can dupe the public by calling it a bailout and maybe turn them against us.

### HR 1351

What can we do to stem the tide against the USPS and its workers? Support HR1351. This bill would allow the USPS to use the money it has overfunded its retirement systems with to meet its financial obligations including the future retirees health care costs. **HR 1351 will not pass on its own.** We have to actively support it. The APWU

your Congressman will be in your area and set up a meeting to voice our concerns and urge them to support and cosponsor HR1351. So far only Representatives Gwen Moore and Tammy Baldwin have cosponsored the bill. Write letters to the editorial section of your local newspaper so the general public can be informed about plans to destroy the USPS. Please get involved any way you can. We are on the brink of destruction but, it is not too late if we all get involved.

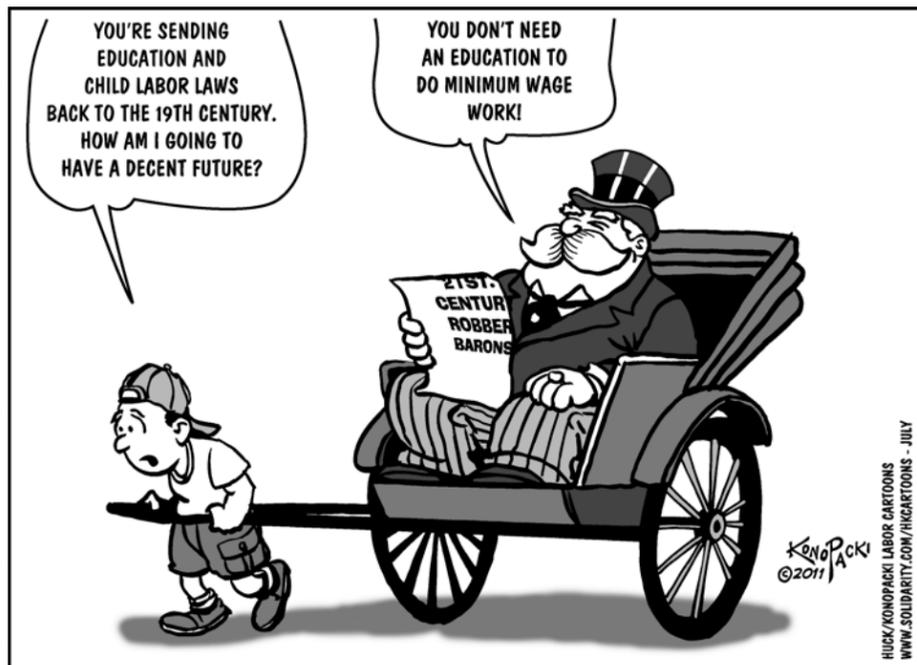
### Wisconsin State Senate Recall Elections

Perhaps the Republicans in Congress have been emboldened by the success of state legislators around the country who have taken away

Walker has been called the anti-Robin Hood and for good reason. Over the next 10 years corporations in Wisconsin will be given 3.2 billion dollars in tax cuts. Wisconsin is close to becoming a state with no corporate taxes. These tax cuts don't have a single job creation requirement. Not one! All the while we are being told how broke we are and that we have to cut workers benefits, money for education, and aid to the elderly and low income residents of Wisconsin. These cuts will not be a one-time event. They will have to continue and get deeper in order to fund the 3.2 billion in corporate tax cuts.

It's shameful! But, if we stand by and let it happen and continue to vote against our own interests. Shame on us! We are approaching the endgame of a corporate takeover of Wisconsin and America. It is a war on the middle class. Our standard of living and working conditions could face setbacks of 50-100 years. We could lose benefits that past workers have bled and died for. Do you think I am exaggerating? Take a look around. It is happening as I speak. It's up to us to stop it. Please get involved. If you don't know how, call or write and I can help you.

Thanks for listening.





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The APWU of Wisconsin publishes this newsletter as a means of communicating with our members. The union encourages letters to the editor; letters must be signed but name will be withheld upon request. All opinions expressed are those of the writer, and not necessarily those of the state organization or its officers. The *Badger Bulletin* is a proud member of the APWU Postal Press Association. The *Badger Bulletin* is printed six (6) times per year. Articles not credited are those of the editor.

**EDUCATION AND ORGANIZATION . . . BY RICK GALLO, DIRECTOR**



As this year began, working men and women came under a vicious attack. In Wisconsin especially, and then in several other states, workers became the "public enemy!" Workers were pitted against other workers, and citizens began to somehow infer that workers were to blame for everything that is wrong with America. Even worse, UNION workers were branded as thugs, bottom feeders, leeches, undeserving feeders at the public trough. This whole issue has completely polarized the people from coast to coast. And it should; because there are some very fundamental differences in philosophy underscoring this polarization.

Either you stand for workers and workers' rights, or you stand for big business and all their spoils. As postal workers, we were in no way exempt from this branding. In fact, we postal workers are now under siege, perhaps as never before. We finally reached agreement on a new contract, only to have our own Union President, along with the Postmaster General summoned before a congressional committee to explain and justify the new agreement. Congresspersons have stated that we are overpaid by as much as 34%; that we do not deserve the benefits we get.

In fact, California (Republican) Con-

**The Way Things Are In America Today**

gressman Darrell Issa has submitted a bill (HR-2309) to markedly curtail our existing rights, and to strip our rights to negotiate at all over certain issues. The laundry list of things this bill would do is absolutely scary! Among those things, Issa's bill would: Ensure that Postal wages are "comparable" to the private sector. Empower a board to unilaterally cut wages, abolish benefits, and end protection against layoffs. Create a commission that would order: \$1 billion

advocate that we should continue to embrace these proven failures and that we should return to this path as rapidly as possible.

Please! The leadership of the republican party has stated openly, that their goal is simply to insure that President Obama will be a one-term president. They choose not to focus on the issues and problems facing this nation. They have no interest in proposing any solutions, or in making the lives of U.S. citizens better. They seek to strip away any and all individual rights held by the working class, in favor of further bolstering their corporate backers.

Folks, it's all about the money. One group wants to spread more money to all citizens, so that they might all enjoy

a higher quality of life. The other group wants all rights and benefits to go to big business, and the rich. Personally, I don't even look at this as a choice - I favor the working class! A friend of mine suggests that the "other" folks simply don't get it. That they are incapable of understanding these concepts because their brains are wired differently. There is even some scientific evidence supporting this theory. I think this may actually be true, because those other folks indeed do not get it. How many jobs need to be lost? Maybe these folks recognize that the Republican Party is the party of the rich, and they actually believe that by voting that way, they are, or will be, rich too? I just don't know. How much damage needs to be done before our very own brothers and sisters realize which is the right path? Let's all hope we don't have to find out the hard way.

**"Please! The leadership of the republican party has stated openly, that their goal is simply to insure that President Obama will be a one-term president."**

worth of post office closures in the first year, and \$1 billion worth of facility closures in the second year. Increase employees' costs for healthcare and life insurance, and eliminate the right to bargain over these crucial benefits. Even scarier than that, at least to me, is the fact that some postal workers, even some of our own APWU members support these changes and actually vote for these congresspersons who push this agenda. Talk about voting against your own best interest - yikes!

We had a Republican president for eight years. During that period, our national debt climbed from zero, into the trillions! Job growth remained negative for all of that same period. That means that not only did the number of jobs fail to increase; the number of jobs actually decreased. So much so, that the number of unemployed is now in the tens of millions of people. Yet, some people

**Sixteen U.S. Senators Call For Department Of Justice Review Of New State Voter ID Laws**

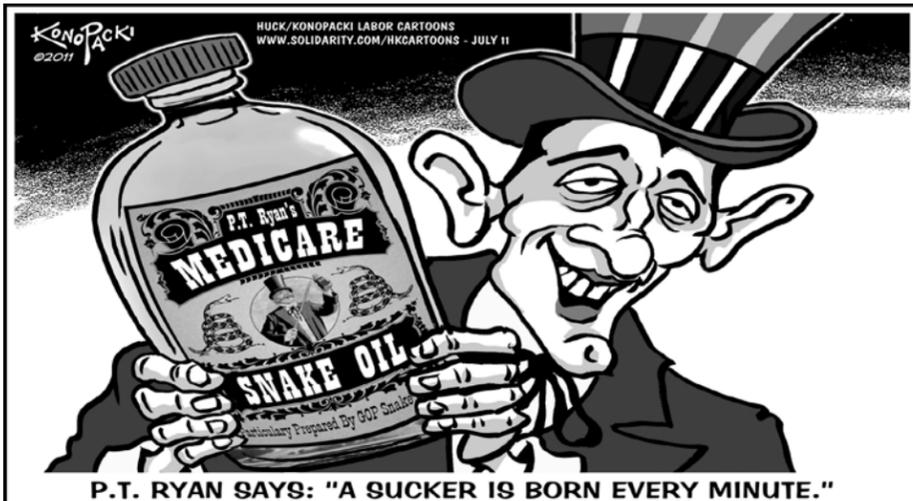
This week, sixteen United States Senators called on the Department of Justice (DOJ) to review multiple pieces of proposed and passed legislation at the state level that could potentially disenfranchise thousands of voters in each state. The Voting Rights Act gives the DOJ a large authority to review voting laws before they are implemented. Specific covered jurisdictions have the burden of proof to show that any changes in voting laws will not have any type of discriminatory impact on minority communities. The DOJ oversees to make sure that new voting laws do not discriminate against any protected class in the Voting Rights Act. Overall, the DOJ under Voting Rights Act requires that all individuals who are a qualified to vote will be held to the same standards, practices and all procedures.

In 2008 President Obama won NC by a slim 14K votes. One NC group estimated that there are currently 147K legally registered to vote African Americans in NC that do

not currently have an ID that would qualify them to vote in the next election. In 2004 John Kerry won New Hampshire by a close 9K votes. This simply shows how legislation like this can easily change the tide of voting in a state for a presidential election.

Since the start of this year six states have already passed voter ID laws at the state level. As of today at least three more state are in the process of voting on or drawing up legislation to pass similar bills.

— Source: APWU e-team



## LEGISLATIVELY SPEAKING . . . BY JEFF WORDEN, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

# — It's Time To Write! —

First off, I would like to thank all the people who attended the Contract Seminar in Appleton, WI. It was good to see such a large turnout; we also collected over \$1000 for COPA! Thank You to everyone who attended and DONATED to COPA.

While we do have a National Agreement we aren't out of the water just yet. Now more than ever we need to WRITE! That's right; we need to have our family, friends, co-workers and neighbors write letters to our Congressional representatives.

APWU National President Cliff Guffey said *"To ensure the survival of the Postal Service – and our jobs- I urge each and every member to make a commitment to legislative action"*. President Guffey also stated that *"The USPS is under attack by anti-labor politicians and by some sectors of the business community and it is crucial that APWU members get involved"*.

Recently, there have been news stories that suggest that the USPS is near collapse and then blames the problem on labor cost?!

Fact is the true problem of the USPS is the congressionally imposed mandate that requires the USPS to prefund future retiree health benefits.

Absent this prefund burden the USPS would have experienced a SURPLUS and that's despite falling mail volume and the worst recession in recent history.

On June 17th I sent a letter to ALL Congressmen/Congresswomen in Wisconsin asking each of them to become a co-sponsor to bill H.R. 1351 which was introduced by (D) Stephen Lynch of MA. H.R. 1351 would help the USPS because it would stop the unnecessary prefunding (that by the way) no other company (government or private).

Is mandated to do! Those payments are 5.5 billion per year.

**We all need to write but also we need to get EVERYONE WE KNOW to write as well!**

You can get a copy of the wording to use when writing your congressional representative from the APWU web site, or if you want you can call me and I'll send or fax you a copy of the sheet and you can make copies and then get all the people you know to sign it or you can re-write the letter in your own words. Whatever you choose . . . it must be now!

Also, it's RECALL TIME! Yes indeed there are six (6) republicans up for recall. On July 12th the voters of Wisconsin will go to the polls. This is for the recall of the (Governor Scott Walker cronies) state senators who agreed to destroy collective bargaining rights for state/public employees throughout Wisconsin! While there are three (3) Democrats up for recall (AND YES THE PEOPLE IN THOSE DISTRICTS SHOULD VOTE FOR THOSE DEMOCRATS) we must keep our focus on **removing** the six (6) republicans!

Remember the republican (cowardly/yellow-bellied) agenda is to have a fellow Republican run as a (fake) Democrat on July 12th, this way if the Republican Disguised as a Democrat challenger wins on this date . . . well they would just withdraw/drop-out of the race and their republican buddy would automatically win, therefore there would not need to be a vote on Aug. 9th!

**We need to STOP this right NOW in its tracks!**

**The Democrat/Worker friendly (REAL) State Senators we NEED TO HAVE IN OFFICE ARE THE FOLLOWING;**

**District-8.....Sandy Pasch  
District-10.....Shelly Moore**

**District-14..... Fred Clark  
District- 18..... Jessica King  
District-28.....Dave Hanson  
District-32.....Jennifer Shilling**

Let's not forget that 50 years of progress was wiped-away by Governor or Scott Walker and his cronies!

NOW is the time. We must come out in

FULL FORCE and VOTE on July 12th and Aug 9th.

As APWU President Cliff Guffey put it *"When your local calls on you to visit your congressional representatives, you must act as if your job depends on it, because it does!"*

Have a fun and safe summer.  
Take Care.

## Economics 101

While all the economists, financial leaders, industrial CEOs and our government wonder why we can't get our economy moving and face a double dip recession that may yet become a depression, I end up wanting to scream at them "U's the jobs, stupid!" Since NAFTA was passed in 1994, anywhere from 4 to as many as 12 million American jobs have been sent overseas. Every one of those job holders paid taxes, paid into Social Security and Medicare and provided disposable income to Americans that was spent purchasing goods and services in addition to fueling other jobs needed to meet the demands of that disposable income. Those jobs provided the impetus

to keep our economy moving forward. Today, the top 2% of wealthy Americans control over 20% of our nation's wealth while the workers' share of national income has plummeted to the lowest level since the Great Depression!

Now we have as much as 25 million Americans who are unemployed or underemployed and this is such a significant number that the demand for goods and services lags and drags our economy down in every way, including less tax monies to the governments at all levels to fund services to the people. And, our government still gives tax breaks to American companies who move our jobs overseas. China is now the second largest

economy behind the U.S. strictly because our former middle class jobs have been sent there and they now receive the benefits of these jobs and we do not. And so we all understand, I hold both political parties and the President responsible for not acting to create more jobs in America by eliminating tax breaks for those companies who ship jobs overseas and creating tax breaks for companies who move jobs to the U. S. Yet, our well educated leaders profess to be unable to decipher why we can't get our economy moving again. So again, "IT'S THE JOBS STUPID!!!"

— Source: *101 Facts*, Scranton, PA.

## Preserve Retirement COLAs For Federal Employees

WASHINGTON, DC – Joseph A. Beaudoin, president of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), released the following statement today in response to news that a new formula is being suggested that will lower cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for Social Security: "As part of a grand budget agreement, leaders in Washington are considering altering the way cost-of-living adjustments are calculated in Social Security, and the proposed threat could

also apply to federal retirement annuities. On behalf of the nation's retired federal employees, NARFE opposes lowering federal retirement annuities, which will make it even more difficult for these Americans who live on already-thin fixed incomes to get by in these tough times. Retired and active federal employees have served our country proudly and should not be singled out to bear the burden of fixing a budget problem they did not create."

NARFE, one of America's oldest and largest

associations, was founded in 1921 with the mission of protecting the earned rights and benefits of America's active and retired federal workers. The largest federal employee/retiree organization, NARFE represents the retirement interests of nearly 5 million current and future federal annuitants, spouses and survivors.

— Source: *NARFE Website* (For more information about NARFE, go to: <http://www.narfe.org>)

## Polls Show Americans Overwhelmingly Oppose Bad Free Trade Deals

With free trade agreements between the United States and Panama, South Korea and Colombia set to hit the congressional floor as soon as this month, lawmakers should check out recent polling which shows American voters are overwhelmingly opposed to trade deals that end up sending jobs overseas.

Polls have consistently shown that Americans believe the nation's trade policy plays a major role in putting our workers behind, but the numbers are growing as the job crisis deepens and more Americans are out of work longer. A recent report from **Global Trade Watch** brings together in one place results of years of polling on trade and the global economy.

Here's what people are saying about trade deals.

• This year, for the first time in history, a majority of Americans believe that China –

not the United States – is the world's leading economic power, according to a February 2011 Gallup poll.

• A whopping 80 percent of Americans believe that the global economy has a great or a fair amount of influence on the way things are going in America, while 63 percent believe America's ability to compete economically is less than good.

• A Washington Post poll in January 2011 revealed most Americans said the trend to a global economy is a bad thing, compared with 60 percent who said it was good in 2001.

• Nearly 60 percent of Republicans at all educational levels believe offshoring plays a "major role" in current unemployment, according to May 2011 poll by the National Journal.

A September 2010 NBC News-Wall Street Journal poll found that the impact of

trade and outsourcing is one of the only issues in which Americans of different classes, occupations and political persuasions agree. Eighty-six percent said outsourcing of jobs by U.S. companies to low-wage foreign nations is a top cause of our economic woes – by far the top concern, with deficits and health care costs well behind.

Speaking at the **"The Jobs Crisis – Moving to Action: A Dialogue Between Workers and Policymakers"** forum at the AFL-CIO, Rep. Sander Levin (D-Mich.), ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee, said the agreements in their present form are unacceptable and said they must include enforceable labor rights clauses. He also singled out Colombia's failure to reign in or prosecute those who have been assassinating union leaders there.

— Source: *AFL-CIO NOW BLOG*

# Postal Jobs, Pay, Benefits Threatened By Congress

The Postal Service is in danger of financial collapse, and could close its doors as early as July 2012. A battle is raging on Capitol Hill over what to do about it, and one thing is clear: Our jobs, our pay, and our benefits are in jeopardy! Two very different plans are under consideration in the House of Representatives.

## House Resolution 1351

A bill introduced by Rep. Stephen Lynch (MA), the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, would address the cause of the USPS financial crisis without cutting pay and benefits, eliminating collective bargaining rights, or slashing service. H.R. 1351 would:

- Allow the USPS to use billions of dollars in pension overpayments to meet its financial obligations — including the congressional mandate to pre-fund the healthcare benefits of future retirees.
- Leave workers' collective bargaining rights intact. It would make no changes to wages, benefits, or protection against layoffs.

### It's Time to Act!

"The choices are clear," said APWU President Cliff Guffey. "But the word on Capitol Hill is that Chairman Issa won't allow Rep. Lynch's bill to come up for a vote! "APWU members must let their U.S. representatives know that we adamantly oppose H.R. 2309 and that we urgently

support H.R. 1351. "We must demand that Rep. Issa stop blocking H.R. 1351," he added.

"We can't win the battle to defend the Postal Service and protect jobs without you! We are asking local union officers to organize APWU members to visit their U.S. representatives to discuss our concerns with them," Guffey said. "If you don't hear from your local officers, ask them why.

"In the meantime, I urge you to call Congress to voice your opposition to H.R. 2309 and your support for H.R. 1351." The phone number for the Capitol Hill switchboard is (202) 224-3121 (202) 224-3121.

## House Resolution 2309

H.R. 2309, introduced by Rep. Darrell Issa (CA), the Republican chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and co-sponsored by Rep. Dennis Ross (FL), the Republican chairman of the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and Labor Policy, would:

- Do nothing to correct USPS overpayments to its pension accounts.
- Do nothing to correct the congressional mandate that requires the USPS to pre-fund

the healthcare benefits of future retirees. (No other government agency or private company bears this burden, which costs the USPS \$5 billion annually.)

- Force postal workers to make up the difference:
  - Ensure that Postal wages are "comparable" to the private sector. (Rep. Ross claims postal employees enjoy a "compensation premium" of 34%.)
  - Empower a board to unilaterally cut wages, abolish benefits, and end protection against layoffs.
- Create a commission that would order:
  - \$1 billion worth of post office closures in the first year, and

\$1 billion worth of facility closures in the second year.

Would that include your office or your facility? Would that wipe out your job?

- Increase employees' costs for healthcare and life insurance, and eliminate the right to bargain over these crucial benefits.
- Rep. Issa says his bill is designed to avoid a "bailout," but the USPS doesn't rely on taxpayer funding, and doesn't need a bailout. As noted above, the federal government is holding billions of dollars in excess postal payments to FERS (Federal Employees Retirement System) and CSRS (Civil Service Retirement System).



# 'Chained' CPI Targets Middle And Lower-Income Workers

A senior White House official said on Thursday that while Social Security is not a driver of the deficit, "it does need to be strengthened." A *Huffington Post* article (<http://huff.to/pVo5xm>) noted that the idea of "strengthening" is vague.

Last week, numerous consumer advocacy groups expressed concern over news that lawmakers were considering changes to the way the government calculates the rate of growth for benefits people receive. Four senior congressional aides said lawmakers are discussing using an alternative yardstick, known as the "chained consumer price index," to gauge inflation, determining COLAs for millions of Americans.

The "chained" CPI is an alternative Bureau of Labor Statistics index that shows a lower inflation rate than the standard

calculation. According to a Joint Committee on Taxation report (<http://bit.ly/oIt81w>), a "Chained" CPI would disproportionately affect middle and lower-income Americans.

The Chief Actuary estimates that the reduced COLA would result in a decrease of about \$130 a year (0.9 percent) in annual benefits for a typical 65-year-old. Because the cut grows every year relative to scheduled benefits, by the time that senior is 95, the annual benefit cut will be almost \$1,400 (9.2 percent). Social Security's oldest beneficiaries, mostly women who have outlived their non-Social Security sources of income, are significantly poorer than younger beneficiaries and rely on Social Security more.

To see the Alliance's one-pager on the Chained CPI, go to <http://bit.ly/nuxKjG>.

— Source: Alliance for Retired Americans — *The Friday Report*



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE



After being married for thirty years . . . a wife asked her husband to describe her. He looked at her slowly . . . then said, "You're A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K."

She asks . . . "What does that mean?"

He said, "Adorable, Beautiful, Cute, Delightful, Elegant, Foxy, Gorgeous, Hot."

She smiled happily and said . . . Oh, that's so lovely . . . What about I, J, K?"



He said, "I'm Just Kidding!"

His eye is still swollen . . . but it will get better . . .

— Source: Lucy Hauser

*The next Badger Bulletin due date is August 1, 2011 for those who would like to or are required to submit an article for publication. Thank you for your cooperation.*

