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*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.*  
 Martin Luther King, Jr.

About the Alliance:About the Alliance

The Alliance is a unique state/national organization working to protect the health and economic security of seniors, reward work, strengthen families and build thriving communities. Launched in Wisconsin in 2005, it is a coalition of AFL-CIO affiliated unions, retiree groups, and community-based organizations dedicated to economic and social justice.

The Alliance is a voice for retirees and older Americans. Our goal is to educate, energize and mobilize seniors to make a difference through activism. The Alliance fights for:

A strong Social Security system that provides guaranteed benefits & protects families for life.

Health care seniors can depend on through Medicare.

Affordable and accessible prescription drugs.

Strengthening pension laws.

Affordable and accessible long term care

## Message from the President

Leon Burzynski

With passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, the first sweeping steps toward reforming the nation's healthcare delivery and insurance system have finally occurred. While the WIARA strongly supported the Single Payer Plan as the best possible measure for reform, I believe this is a good first step.

Robert Kraig, Executive Director of Citizen Action of Wisconsin, an affiliate of the WIARA, identified benefits Wisconsin residents will gain when this legislation is fully enacted. It becomes clear this is truly historic, in the nature of Social Security and Medicare. Here are some of the benefits Kraig lists specifically for Wisconsin.

- It will prevent 10,300 medical related bankruptcies per year by capping out-of-pocket costs and removing annual and lifetime coverage limits.

- It will guarantee coverage to 63,200 Wisconsinites who have

pre-existing conditions and cannot now get insurance.

- It will give 45,000 young adults access to health coverage under their parents policies.

- It will provide premium subsidies, in the form of tax credits, for up to 1.3 million Wisconsin families and 123,900 small businesses, with an average \$5,800 for families and 50% of the cost for small businesses.

***"Like Social Security and Medicare, which were highly controversial before they were enacted, Wisconsinites will not even think of giving up these benefits once they are established."***  
 Robert Kraig, Exec. Dir. Citizen Action of Wisconsin

- It will improve coverage for 3.8 million Wisconsinites now covered by private insurance by allowing them to keep existing coverage, while outlawing insurance company abuses, like rescission.

## What's in it For Seniors?

It is not just Wisconsin's working families who will benefit from passage of the reform legislation. We in the Medicare category were included in the benefits.

- ▶ The Act reduces drug costs, starting with a \$250 rebate in 2010 for those in the donut hole, and a 50% reduction for donut hole purchases in 2011.

- ▶ The Act eliminates co-pays for preventive services, like mammograms, colonoscopies, and other screenings.

- ▶ The Act extends the solvency of Medicare nine years by eliminating fraud and wasteful overpayments.

- ▶ The Act creates a voluntary, self-insured program to help families cover the costs of long-term care and services when a loved one develops a disability.

- ▶ The Act provides financial assistance to employer health insurance plans that cover early retirees in an effort to lower costs for premiums and health care services.

- ▶ The Act creates incentives for health care providers to coordinate services and reduce costs.

**The WIARA views the reform as a great beginning. We will continue our efforts toward improving the system for current and future retirees.**

# OBAMANOMICS WORKS...GET THE WORD OUT

Vivien De Back

A recent nation-wide poll reported the majority in this country get their news from television. TV is noted for its "sound bites," sensationalism, and in most instances, is more likely to cover news about Tiger Woods' affairs than the improving state of the economy. Perhaps this explains, in part, why the good news about President Obama's Administration's success is such a secret. It is time to let the secret out.

Author Frank Schaeffer described in detail, "Why President Obama Will Succeed." There is good news about success, but you never hear about it. So *here it is*. In just 12 short months President Obama has:

- >Continued to draw down the misbegotten war in Iraq.
- >Thoughtfully and decisively picked the best of several bad choices regarding the war in Afghanistan.
- >Restored America's image around the globe.
- >Banned torture of American prisoners.
- >Stopped the free fall of the American economy.
- >Put the USA squarely in the middle of the international effort to halt global warming.
- >Stood up for educational reform.
- >Won a Nobel Peace prize and donated the money to charity.
- >Moved the terrorists' trials back into the American judicial system of checks and balances.
- >Did what was needed to start the slow, torturous and almost impossible process of health care reform.
- >Responded to hatred from the right and left with measured good humor and patience.
- >Stopped the free fall of job losses.
- >Showed immense personal courage in the face of armed and dangerous far right

opposition that included people who came to public meetings with loaded weapons.

>Demonstrated that he could not only make tough military choices but also brilliantly explain and defend them.

In addition, he signed the historic Health Insurance Reform bill that provides stability and security to Americans who have insurance, affordable options for those who do not, and lower costs for families, businesses, and our country as a whole. It made Medicare stronger and better. It lowered costs for prescription drugs as the Part D donut hole will begin to close, with a \$250 credit this year. Over time, it will completely disappear. No longer will a family go broke or lose their home because a loved one had an accident or got sick.

The President signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which is on track to result in 3.5 million jobs by the end of this year. This act gives 95 % of working families Work Pay tax credits in their paychecks and gives more than 7 million low and moderate-income students a 15% increase in their Pell Grants to pay for college.

President Obama re-authorized and expanded health insurance for 4 million more low-income children through the State Children's Health Insurance program (SCHIP), an action President Bush vetoed twice. Now 11 million children are covered under SCHIP.

The President signed into law the first of many bipartisan job bills to put more Americans back to work. He signed a bipartisan credit card reform bill and the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act into law. He signed a National Service Bill to create several thousand opportunities for people

to serve their communities. He lifted the ban on funding stem cell research, signed the Fair Pay for Women Act, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and nominated Sonia Sotomayor, the nation's first Latino justice, for the Supreme Court. She was confirmed and seated.

The list goes on and on. Yet his critics seem to think because he has not done EVERYTHING he mentioned during the campaign, none of this is good enough. How do we respond? Pennsylvania Governor Edward Rendell says "**Call them out**" When they say he has done nothing, repeat just a few of the items listed here.

When they ask where's the CHANGE? Describe the legislation passed and the steps taken to continue to move this country forward. Write letters to your local paper and **Call them out** for their lack of recognition of the successes of this President and his administration. Show your passion and **Call them out** whenever you hear "he has failed"

Frank Schaefer says: "Who actually failed are the Americans that can't see the beginning of a miracle of national rebirth right under their jaded noses. Who failed are the smart-ass ideologues of left and right who began rooting for this President to fail so they could be proven right in their dire and morbid predictions. Who failed are the movers and shakers behind our obscenely dumb news cycles that have turned our daily news into just more stupid entertainment for an infantile country. Here's the good news. President Obama is succeeding without the help of his lefty "supporters" or hate-filled Republican detractors"

<http://frankschaeffer.com/> (official web site of Author Frank Schaeffer)

# What if There Were no Black People in the World?

Submitted by George McKinney

This is a story of a little boy named Theo, who woke up one morning and asked God, "What if there were no Black people in the world?" Well, God, thought about that for a moment and then said, "Son, follow me around today and let's just see what it would be like if there were no Black people in the world.

Theo ran to his room to get dressed. But there were no shoes and his clothes were wrinkled. He looked for the iron and ironing board, but they were no longer there. You see Sarah Boone, a Black woman, invented the ironing board and Jan E. Matzlinger, a Black man invented the shoe lasting machine.

"Oh well," God said, "Go and do your hair." Theo ran in his room to comb his hair, but the comb was not there. You see, Walter Sammons, a Black man, invented the comb. Theo decided to brush his hair, but the brush was gone. You see Lydia O. Newman, a Black female invented the brush. Well, he was a sight, no shoes, wrinkled clothes, hair a mess without the hair care inventions of Madam C. J. Walker, -- well, you get the picture.

God told Theo, "Let's do the chores around the house and then take a trip to the grocery store." Theo's job was to sweep the floor. He swept and swept. When he reached for the dustpan, it was not there. You see, Lloyd P. Ray, a Black man, invented the dust pan. He decided to mop the floor, but the mop was gone. You see, Thomas W. Stewart, a Black man, invented the mop.

God said. "We should wash clothes and make a list for the grocery store." When Theo went to place the clothes in the dryer, it was not there. You see, George T. Samon, a Black man, invented the clothes dryer.

Theo got a pencil and paper to make the market list, but noticed that the pencil lead was broken. He was out of luck because John Love, a black man, invented the pencil sharpener. He reached for a pen, but it was not there because William Purvis, a Black man, invented the fountain pen.

So they decided to head to the market. When Theo opened the door, he noticed the grass was as high as he was tall. You see the lawnmower was invented by John Burr, a Black man. They made their way to the car and found that it wouldn't move. You see, Robert Spikes, a Black man, invented the automatic gear shift and Joseph Gammel invented the supercharge system for internal combustion engines.

They noticed the few cars moving were running into each other because there were no traffic signals. You see, Garrett A. Morgan, a Black man invented the traffic light. |

It was getting late, so they walked to the market. When they were about to put away the milk, eggs and butter, they noticed the refrigerator was gone. You see, John Standard, a Black man, invented the refrigerator.

By this time, they noticed it was getting cold. Theo went to turn up the heat and what do you know, Alive Parker, a Black female, invented the heating furnace. Even in the summer they

would have been out of luck because Frederick Jones, a Black man, invented air conditioner controls.

It was almost time for Theo's father to arrive home. He always took the electric trolley, invented by another Black man, Elbert T. Robinson. He usually took the elevator from his office on the 20th floor, but there was no elevator because Alexander Miles, a Black man, invented the elevator controls.

He usually dropped off the office mail at a nearby mailbox, but it was no longer there because Phillip Downing, a Black man, invented the letter drop mailbox, and William Barry invented the postmarking and canceling machine.

Theo sat at the kitchen table with his head in his hands. When his father arrived he asked, "Why are you sitting in the dark?" Because Lewis Howard Latimer, a Black man, invented the filament within the light bulb.

Theo quickly learned what it would be like if there were no Black people in the world. He was happy to learn that if he were ever sick and needed blood, Charles Drew, a Black scientist, found a way to preserve and store blood, which led to his starting the world's first blood bank. And what if a family member had to have surgery. This would not have been possible without Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, a Black doctor, who performed the first open heart surgery.

So if you ever wonder, like Theo, where we would be without Blacks? Well, it's pretty plain to see, we could very well still be in the dark!

## Jobs and Immigration Tour

**WIARA Affiliated Vice President Ken Greening** joined **Voces de la Frontera** in March on a five city tour from Milwaukee to Washington, DC, to highlight the impact the economy is having on working class families, and put pressure on federal politicians of both parties for vigorous job creation. The tour emphasized the need to hold banks accountable for the economic crisis that has spiraled foreclosures and unemployment, while corporations bailed out with public money continue to give themselves millions of dollars in bonuses.

Testimonies ranging from an immigrant working as a welder and facing deportation for a workers' comp claim to a service worker laid off due to offshore subcontracting (telemarketing) were given at each stop. A dairy farmer, Midwest pilot, African American unemployed worker, and a Latino US citizen laid off from Harley Davidson all told their story. Their testimony underscored that workers have been the scapegoat of Wall Street. They are suffering as banks - especially big banks who received TARP money - brought down the economy by creating, marketing, and gambling on risky and worthless financial products.

The tour began March 15th in Milwaukee at the Milwaukee Area Labor Council. It continued on to Chicago, Toledo, and Cincinnati, and arrived in Washington, D.C. on March 22, 2010. The tour was hosted in each city by a local group (Jobs for Justice, Faith Community for Worker Justice, or Labor Organizations) who recruited folks to attend the forum and invited elected officials and local and state media to attend. In Washington, they joined three bus loads from Milwaukee and over 200,000 participants to send a strong message to Congress - **we need family supporting jobs. We need to pass a pro-worker, pro-family immigration reform bill.**

Ken Greening said this about his experience: "We expected 100,000 to come to Washington - we more than doubled that. Workers came from all across the country - I stood next to a worker from Honolulu. I saw the blistered feet of a group that walked from New York to Washington, D.C., just to be there. It was an incredible experience."

## WIARA Power Lunch Nominations Needed

Each year the Wisconsin Alliance honors members of our state who have made significant contributions to the quality of life for seniors. The nominees are selected from three groups, labor, legislative, and community.

We need your assistance in nominating a person who, in your opinion, is deserving of the award. Please consider helping us in this important selection process.

This will be the fifteenth year that the Power Lunch will honor those Wisconsin residents who have been noteworthy in their efforts on behalf of seniors and retirees. As a supporter, your judgment is important to us, as you are familiar with individuals in your community who should be acknowledged.

To mail your nomination, the office address is:  
Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans  
6333 West Bluemound Road  
Milwaukee, WI 53213

If you wish to email the nomination, use:  
[bfeitlinger@hotmail.com](mailto:bfeitlinger@hotmail.com)

**The Nominee Information** should include their name, complete address, telephone number, occupation, and a note on whether you advised the nominee that her/his name was being proposed for the award.

**The Sponsor Information** should include the name of the person, organization, or agency doing the nominating. Include the complete address, contact person, title of the contact (if applicable), and the telephone number.

The prior awards have gone to fifty-three recipients, all of whom have contributed to the quality of life that we retirees and seniors enjoy in Wisconsin. A multitude of beneficial programs are in place today, all because of their continuing labor and hard work. We know there are many more who deserve to be recognized.

The Power Lunch Committee will review all nominations and make the final award selections from the nominations received. **The nominations are due in the WIARA office before June 18, 2010.**

# Calendar Raffle Winners

## December 2009

Sylvia Gear  
 Mary Schenkenberg  
 Rebecca Taylor  
 Bethann Obrion  
 Emma Liss &  
 Anna McConachie  
 Carl Foellings  
 Moriah Sherman  
 Scot Redman  
 Marlene Ramsey  
 Leon Burzynski (2)  
 Roger Timm  
 Isabel Rossey  
 Daniel Pallen  
 Bart Green  
 Nate Zilles  
 Jay Reinke  
 Bradley Schwanda  
 Frank Mauro  
 Mike Nemeth  
 Mary Ann Wilkes  
 Bill Sukkert  
 Elaine McDermott  
 Kathy Ven Rooy  
 Linda Riesen  
 Annie Flack  
 Patrick O'Connor  
 Leslie "Buzz" Davis  
 Joseph Behnke  
 Addie Brinkley  
 Dave Jurss

## January 2010

Marlene Ott  
 Ken Greening (3)  
 Kamryn Schnitzler  
 Douglas Riemer  
 Linda Tveten  
 Lowell Attoe  
 David Konrad  
 Janis Thompson  
 Joyce Reiland  
 George Scheerer  
 Larry/Cheryl Urban  
 Mike Hebert  
 Beth Waschow  
 Mandy Monahan  
 Suzi Larson  
 James Bemowski  
 Jeannette Thomas  
 Linda Riesen  
 George McKinney  
 Scott Parr  
 Roy Schmidt  
 Jenny Nemeth  
 Jerry Zepplin  
 Mary Beth Krueger  
 Jerry LaPoint  
 Gary Milolajczyk  
 Daniel Jakubowski  
 Mike Murphy, Sr.  
 Leon Burzynski

## February 2010

Tom Gadowski (2)  
 Yasouko Modheski  
 Ben Elizondo  
 Richard Presser  
 Mike Uschan  
 Lynn Gunther  
 Wayne Fillinger  
 Kelly Hautala  
 Samuel Blakeslee  
 Joe Gruber  
 Daniel Jakobowski  
 Dave Thoss  
 Ljiljan Radojicic  
 Craig Hetzel  
 Mike Burzynski  
 David Dove  
 Tom Krall  
 David Konrad  
 Mike Hebert  
 Bradley Schwanda  
 Mary Longsine  
 Ken Greening  
 Veronica Modjeski  
 Patrick O'Connor  
 Hugh Sloan  
 Joseph Dosemagen  
 Al Trebiatowski

## March 2010

George Prince  
 Helen Olig  
 Gary Miller  
 Bob Hoeft  
 Jean Haase  
 Mary Longsine  
 Cecelia Lewandowski  
 Sue Ledbetter  
 Joyce Reiland  
 Sandy Nass  
 Marlene Ott  
 Ljiljan Radojicic  
 Linda Tveten (2)  
 Dave Sippel  
 Reyne Kasten  
 Arlene Pribbernow  
 Helen Gadowski  
 James Marshall  
 Tom Doleschy  
 Al Trebiatowski  
 Lowoell Attoe  
 Ben Elizondo (2)  
 Jean Depotsie  
 Robert Agen  
 Dan Burzynski  
 Ken Germanson  
 Dave Thoss  
 Julie Page  
 Lev De Back

## JOIN THE WISCONSIN ALLIANCE      RETIREES CAN AND DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

*Our Mission is to advance public policy that protects the health and economic security of older Americans.*

*Our Goal is to educate, energize, and mobilize retirees to make a difference through activism.*

**JOIN** us on the *front line fighting* to preserve **Pensions, Social Security, Medicare**, and issues important to retirees!

Send your membership to: WI Alliance for Retired Americans    6333 W. Bluemound Road    Milw., WI 53213

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10 Annual Membership Fee Enclosed    *Additional Donation:* \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25

## Senate Skips Pay Raises

The Senate recently passed legislation that will deny members of Congress the built-in pay annual pay raise next year. Since they presently make \$174,000 a year, going without a raise should not bring them undue hardship.

Senator Feingold, a leading critic and opponent of the automatic increases, introduced the legislation to deny the \$1,600 increase this year. Senators and Representatives have been receiving an annual cost-of-living increase for many years. The only way it can be denied is by passing a bill to block it, as they did last year.

The House of Representatives still needs to pass a similar bill to deny the pay increase. Contact your representatives today to request their support for this common-sense measure.

## Federal Benefits to be Paid Electronically

In an effort to contain costs associated with federal benefit programs, the U.S. Treasury Department announced that payments will all be made electronically by 2013. This means Social Security, and programs like Railroad Retirement, Veterans Affairs, and Office of Personnel Management (government retirees), will be made via direct deposit.

Those receiving payments will have choice of having the funds deposited directly in a bank account or credited to a Treasury debit card. For new program enrollees, the start date is March 1, 2011. Recipients now getting checks will make the transition by March 1, 2013.

According to Alyssa Rosenberg at govexec.com, 85 percent of federal benefit recipients already use the direct deposit option. Moving the remaining 15% to electronic payments is estimated to save \$300 million over five years.

Attempts to mandate direct deposit in the past have not been successful, due to some recipients not having a bank account. The Treasury Department considers the debit card provision as an acceptable alternative.

May 2010 Newsletter



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