



# COLUMBIA RIVER CHAPTER

## NEWSLETTER

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA

P.O. BOX 1872 VANCOUVER, WA 98668

5-STAR EXCELLENCE  
CHAPTER



Legislative Reporting  
Newsletter Editor

ESTABLISHED 1970

website: [www.moaacolumbiariver.org](http://www.moaacolumbiariver.org)

January 2015

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**President:**

Dave Casteel  
360-834-2448

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President:**

Paul Crosby  
360-666-8871

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President:**

**& Membership:**

Evelyn Brady  
360-696-1592

**Secretary:**

**Treasurer:**

Ron Pastor  
360-882-1275

**Immediate Past**

**President:**

Rod Williams  
360-891-5605

**Army Rep:**

Jon Frederick  
360-576-9078

**Marine Rep:**

Terry Babin  
360-608-7789

**Navy Rep:**

Rich Wersinger  
360-901-1915

**Air Force Rep:**

Beth Brown  
360-260-9845

**Coast Guard Rep:**

**Public Health Rep:**

Roger DeRoos  
360-835-5450

**Auxiliary Rep:**

Marie Wolfe  
360-574-6675

**Legislative Affairs:**

Rod Williams  
360-891-5605

**Personal Affairs:**

Terry Babin  
360-608-7789

**Public Affairs:**

John Donnelly  
360-904-8966

**Scholarship:**

Paul Crosby  
360-666-8871

**Chaplain:**

Rev Max Metcalf  
541-961-0869

Calendar year 2014 is in the books and 2015 is here--ready or not. We accomplished much but still have a lot more on our plate.

We finished 2014 with our annual Christmas Scholarship Social held at the 40et8 where we met three of our very worthy scholarship recipients. Thanks to your generosity, we added \$750.00 to our scholarship fund at the event. We enjoyed a delicious buffet meal and were entertained by "Santa

**Rich Wersinger's** rendition of "Twas The Night Before Christmas." Just before newsletter press time, we learned the fourth Clark College Scholarship (the Colonel James Chriss scholarship) has been awarded to **Kelsey Bishop**. Hopefully you will have a chance to meet her soon at one of our future functions.

In late December, our national President and CEO, **VADM Norbert Ryan Jr.**, wrote a letter published in the Wall Street Journal (see complete letter in this newsletter) titled "Blunt-Force Military Cuts Need Revisiting." He challenges the faulty argument that weapon procurement systems are immune to cutbacks and therefore

personnel accounts have to bear the burden. He notes that "...defense-acquisition programs experienced overruns of nearly \$411 billion...nearly the entire cost of sequestration." He makes the case that "Congress should take a critical look at waste in the Pentagon's acquisition programs."



Just as football players will battle on February 1 in Super Bowl XLIX, it is my belief to expect to do the same with respect to administration proposals to make benefit cuts to our military and retirees. On February 1, the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) report will be released detailing proposals to overhaul military pay, retirement, and other forms of compensation.

[Continued on page 2]

### 21 February Annual Business Meeting

#### Club Green Meadows

1030 gather  
Brunch at 1100

\$15 per person

RSVP: Ron Pastor  
at 882-1275 or  
[pastor2718@comcast.net](mailto:pastor2718@comcast.net)  
NLT 16 February

**Details on page 10**

### Newsletter Highlights

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued**

This, combined with the fact the President will submit his budget proposal to Congress on February 2, will undoubtedly offer MOAA members an opportunity to contact their Senators and Representative.

Here, at home on Saturday, February 21, we will conduct our annual business meeting immediately after our brunch at Club Green Meadows. We will present 2014 recap reports, 2015 goals and the election of four chapter officers: 1st VP, 2VP, Secretary and Treasurer (see the nomination committee's report inside). Each officer will be elected for a term of two years. I look forward to the privilege of serving you and our award-winning chapter for the final year left in my last term.

**Dave Casteel**  
President

***Blunt-Force Military Cuts Need Revisiting: Making benefits a target, not wasteful acquisition programs, is unfair to those who serve.***  
*by Norbert R. Ryan Jr.*

With new congressional leadership stepping into key defense oversight committees and subcommittees, this is the right time for Congress to address budget sequestration and its effects on military personnel. Balancing the nation's budget on the backs of those in the uniformed services is unacceptable.

The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2015, signed into law by President Obama on Dec. 19, caps military pay, cuts military housing allowances, and disproportionately shifts military

health-care costs to beneficiaries. Meanwhile, the Defense Department has proposed still more cuts for fiscal 2016 and beyond.

Such measures are terribly shortsighted. From 2000 to 2010, Congress worked hard to restore the pay and benefits of military personnel, closing a 13.5% private-sector pay gap, eliminating out-of-pocket housing expenses, and re-establishing health care for retired military personnel.

Yet even after these needed reforms the numbers show that military pay and benefits are far from being unsustainable and are essential to retaining a capable, dedicated force. Moreover, since 2011 the growth in military pay and benefits has declined by an average of 1.5% a year.

Congress has already authorized several changes to curb personnel costs in recent years. First, cuts of more than 100,000 active-duty troops will dramatically lower personnel costs. Pay-raise caps will further reduce costs.

Second, Congress has implemented several reforms to the military health-care system. Most of these cost savings have come at the expense of those who serve.

Military retirees have seen their Tricare enrollment and pharmacy fees increase over the past three years, bending the health-care cost curve. They have absorbed a 13% increase in Tricare Prime enrollment fees in fiscal 2012, felt the sting of significant pharmacy copayment increases in fiscal 2013 and fiscal 2015, and will soon be forced to refill all maintenance medications through mail order or at military treatment facilities.

Retirees will continue to pay higher fees each year as future increases are tied to annual cost-of-living adjustments.

[Continued on page 3]



**7 December 2014 Vancouver, VA:  
"Santa" Rich Wersinger recites  
"Twas the Night Before Christmas"  
at our Christmas Scholarship Social.**

## **Blunt-Force Military Cuts Need Revisiting: continued**

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Finally, the Pentagon forced many beneficiaries from Tricare Prime into the cheaper Tricare Standard alternative, which provides fewer benefits. The Pentagon also created the Defense Health Agency to consolidate health-care oversight. The Defense Department estimates that these changes could yield \$2.9 billion in savings over six years.

The organization I head, the Military Officers Association of America, is asking Congress to sustain, not erode, the pay and benefits needed to recruit and retain a high-quality all-volunteer force—one that has shouldered the burden of security for this nation and that has given so much over the past 13 years of war.

We recognize that the Pentagon is in a difficult position, attempting to balance the readiness and personnel costs required to sustain the all-volunteer force amid the blunt-force cuts of budget sequestration. But the Pentagon's proposed solutions take a myopic approach by cutting needed people programs to solve budget woes. Continuing down this path will threaten the viability of an all-volunteer force, the bedrock of national defense.

Instead, Congress should take a critical look at waste in the Pentagon's acquisition programs. In 2013 alone, the Government Accountability Office reported that the Pentagon's top 85 major defense-acquisition programs experienced overruns of nearly \$411 billion. Reporter Andrew Tilghman of the Military Times observed that this amount in itself is almost enough to cover the entire cost of sequestration for the Defense Department.

The Ford-class aircraft carrier has seen cost overruns of \$2 billion. The price tag of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter has topped out at \$1.5 trillion and is now \$160 billion over budget. Raising military health-care plans for \$2.6 billion in savings over six years suggests that Congress is looking in the wrong places to rein in spending.

Insisting, as some observers in and out of the military do, that weapons systems must be immune to cutbacks inevitably means that the money must

be taken out of personnel. That's akin to forcing soldiers to pay for their own bullets.

The new congressional leadership should remember that nothing is more important to America's national security than protecting the one weapon system that has never failed—the men and women of the uniformed services.

Mr. Ryan, a retired U.S. Navy vice admiral, is president of the Military Officers Association of America.

## ***Membership Update* by Evelyn Brady**

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Our chapter had a really good year in 2014, and we can make 2015 great. Chapter members are the best recruiters but how do you answer someone who asks you "Why should I join MOAA?" You can answer with MOAA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to support military officers and their families at every stage of life. But if your prospect starts to get a glazed look, try something simpler.

1. **Make yourself heard.** MOAA's chapters provide critical grassroots support for MOAA's national legislative agenda.
2. **Giving back to the community.** Chapter members are MOAA's ambassadors in their communities, supporting countless programs that make a difference in the lives of others.
3. **Value added to chapter member lives.** MOAA chapters sponsor interesting programs and opportunities to interact with civic, political, military, and business leaders on issues important to members.
4. **Camaraderie with a purpose.** Many chapter members miss the camaraderie and core values of military service and want to develop close and lasting friendships with other members with similar backgrounds and interests.

I look forward to another dynamic year in the Columbia River Chapter! Hope to hear from you soon with your new recruits!

You can reach me at [evelynbrady@rocketmail.com](mailto:evelynbrady@rocketmail.com) or (509) 427-3424.

**Evelyn Brady**  
**Membership Recruitment Committee**

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***Treasurer's Update*** by Ron Pastor

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It's that time of year when you not only have to look forward to paying your income tax but also your MOAA annual chapter dues. In comparison, we are a good deal -- \$15.00 again this year. I know Uncle Sam can't beat that.

We would also ask you to consider making a donation to the scholarship fund, the support the troops program or both.

Regarding support the troops, the Fisher House will be opening later this year and we plan to be of help.

Where does the money go? We ask you to attend the February meeting when reports will be provided. Suffice to say for now, we believe we have been good stewards of your support, and your support has been very generous.

On behalf of the board, thank you.

**Ron Pastor**  
**Treasurer**  
**882-1275**  
**pastor2718@comcast.net**

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***Newsletter Editor***

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Newsletter Editor: Rich Wersinger. You can contact him at 360-901-1915 or e-mail him at rich@rjwconsulting.org.

Our Chapter Secretary coordinates calendar inputs and newsletter distribution.

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***Newsletter Distribution***

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We continue to distribute our newsletter by e-mail, so if you are receiving this via postal service and would prefer e-mail please notify our Chapter Secretary,



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**NOMINATING COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES CANDIDATES  
FOR COLUMBIA RIVER CHAPTER OFFICERS** by Roger DeRoos

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Consistent with our chapter by laws, current chapter President David Casteel recently appointed the following individuals to serve on the 2015 nominating committee:

Rod Williams - Past President  
Roger DeRoos- Public Health  
Jon Frederick- Army  
Terry Babin - Marines

Rich Wersinger -Navy  
Beth Brown - Air Force  
Marie Wolfe – Auxiliary

The committee was charged with proposing a slate of nominees for the following four positions for two year terms: (1) First Vice President, (2) Second Vice-President, (3) Secretary, and (4) Treasurer.

The committee is pleased to announce that they have identified willing and able candidates for each of the four positions noted above. They are:

First Vice President: LTC Evelyn Brady (Retired), Army National Guard (Current 2<sup>nd</sup> VP & Mem. Chair)

Second Vice President: Marie Wolfe (Current Auxiliary Representative to the Board)

Secretary: CAPT Rod Heidelberg (Retired) United State Air Force

Treasurer: Lt Col Ron Pastor (Retired) United State Air Force (Currently Serving First Term as Treasurer)

It is the intention of your Nominating Committee to present this slate of nominees to our membership at our annual business meeting on Saturday, February 21, 2015, immediately following the brunch at Green Meadows Golf Course Clubhouse.

Presented by: Roger DeRoos, Nominating Committee Chair

## The Surviving Spouses of MOAA

### The Heart Behind One Powerful Voice



**DATE:** January 10, 2015

**TO:** Washington State Chapter Auxiliary Liaisons

**FROM:** Washington State Council of Chapters Auxiliary Liaison  
Beth Ann Daigre, home 509-921-9581 cell 509-220-6508

### Marie Wolfe, Auxiliary Liaison, Columbia River MOAA Chapter

Marie became the Auxiliary Liaison January 1, 2013. At that time she was a new widow and in the process of downsizing. What a brave and wonderful woman to accept the added challenge at that time in her life. Like many of us, Marie was not an active duty Navy wife but loves being part of the military community.

Marie finds the best part of being the auxiliary liaison is keeping in touch with the community (her chapter and national MOAA). She really enjoys working with her chapter members but sometimes feels like "Napoleon's corporal"-the one who says "what are you talking about?!" It is easy to get lost when too much Military jargon is used in discussions. One of the things she thinks makes her chapter outstanding is the genuine care its members feel for each other. 3 to 4 times a year chapter members call the membership to find out how they are and update their records. Auxiliary and spouse members make up 50% of these callers. This program has been organized by the Personal Affairs Officer, Terry Babin. Along this same track, about once a year one

of the monthly meetings is dedicated to reviewing the major concerns of survivor benefits and what ought to be kept up to date. A checklist was developed for everyone's use along with national MOAA pamphlets. Hopefully, with this support, all members will share with their spouse information of where important documents are located that will be needed at the death of the officer and the surviving spouse will know what they will need to do to keep receiving the benefits earned for them. These sorts of issues are so important and so often postponed until it becomes difficult.

She said she sees MOAA and our mission to be like a Military AARP, always working to protect and enhance our benefits and ultimately enhance our lives. Marie is a sharp and articulate woman. Columbia River is fortunate to have her serve their chapter.

Remind your auxiliary members and spouses to subscribe to the Spouses E-Newsletter at MOAA. It will keep you up to date with what is happening for the active duty spouses who may not but could be active in your chapter.

*Beth Ann*

***Livewell this New Year***  
*submitted by John Donnelly*

While you may not set New Year's resolutions, you can set new goals for yourself. Whether you need to quit smoking, lose weight, or learn a new skill, a New Year offers a fresh perspective on the year that you won't have any other time. The American Psychological Association cautions that the New Year isn't meant to serve as a catalyst for sweeping character changes, but as a time for people to reflect on their past year's behavior and promise to make positive lifestyle changes.

The APA offers five steps to help you make lasting change.

- Start small
- Change one behavior at a time
- Talk about it
- Don't beat yourself up
- Ask for support

Are you a pessimist? Begin daily affirmations to give yourself a more positive outlook. Tend to overindulge on desserts? Try replacing dessert with a healthier option you enjoy, like fruit or yogurt.

In order to make lasting changes, the National Institutes of Health reminds us that maintaining a change requires continued commitment until the change becomes part of your life, like brushing your teeth or washing your hair. You also want to envision how the change will impact your life. For instance, when you stop smoking, think about how your risk plummets for cancer, heart disease, stroke and early death.

With thoughtful planning and realistic goals, you can end the year in accomplishment. For more information on living your best you and living well, visit [TRICARE.mil/livewell](http://TRICARE.mil/livewell).

**The Officer's Wives Club of Vancouver  
Invites all MOAA members to a joint luncheon.**

Join us for our annual gathering at  
Touchmark at Fairway Village  
2911 SE Village Loop  
Vancouver, Wa

January 22, 2015  
11:30am

NEW!! Speaker:  
Dana Carpenter, "My Culinary Journey in Italy"  
\$15 pp

Menu choices:

Rolled Flank Steak, Parmesan Crusted Tilapia, or  
Mediterranean Stuffed Bell Peppers (vegetarian)

Please RSVP with menu choice.  
Marie Wolfe [slatsrie@comcast.net](mailto:slatsrie@comcast.net) or 360-574-6675





## Legislative Contacts

### MOAA Legislative Action Center

<http://www.moaa.org/Legislative/>

**MOAA Capitol toll free hotline** at 1-866-272-6622

### White House

Comments: 202-456-1111 Switchboard: 202-456-1414  
FAX: 202-456-2461 E-mail: [comments@whitehouse.gov](mailto:comments@whitehouse.gov)

### Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler

#### Washington's 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District

<http://herrerabeutler.house.gov/>

The U.S. Government's Portal: <http://www.usa.gov/>  
U.S. Senate: <http://www.senate.gov/>  
U.S. House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov/>



<b>Washington, DC Office:</b> U.S. House of Representatives 1130 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-3536 Fax: (202) 225-3478	<b>Vancouver, WA Office:</b> O.O. Howard House 750 Anderson Street, Suite B Vancouver, WA 98661 Phone: (360) 695-6292 Fax: (360) 695-6197
Contact Congresswoman Herrera Beutler via email: <a href="https://herrerabeutler.house.gov/contact-me/email-me">https://herrerabeutler.house.gov/contact-me/email-me</a>	

### U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell <http://cantwell.senate.gov/>

<b>WASHINGTON, DC</b> 511 Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 202-224-3441 202-228-0514 - FAX 202-224-8273 - TDD	<b>SW WASHINGTON</b> The Marshall House 1313 Officers Row Vancouver, WA 98661 360-696-7838 360-696-7844 - FAX	<b>SEATTLE, WASHINGTON</b> 915 Second Avenue Suite 3206 Seattle, WA 98174. 206-220-6400 206-220-6404 - FAX
Contact Senator Cantwell via email: <a href="http://cantwell.senate.gov/contact/">http://cantwell.senate.gov/contact/</a>		

### U.S. Senator Patty Murray <http://murray.senate.gov/>

<b>WASHINGTON, DC</b> 173 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510 Phone: (202) 224-2621 Fax: (202) 224-0238	<b>SW WASHINGTON</b> The Marshall House 1323 Officer's Row Vancouver, Washington 98661 Phone: (360) 696-7797 Fax: (360) 696-7798	<b>SEATTLE, WASHINGTON</b> 2988 Jackson Federal Building 915 Second Avenue Seattle, WA 98174 Phone: (206) 553-5545 Toll Free: (866) 481-9186 Fax: (206) 553-0891
Contact Senator Murray via email: <a href="http://murray.senate.gov/email/index.cfm">http://murray.senate.gov/email/index.cfm</a>		

## Vancouver Area Washington State Legislative Districts and Representatives

Legislator	District 49	District 17	District 18	District 14	District 20
<b>Senator</b>	Annette Cleveland 786-7696	Don Benton 786-7632	Ann Rivers 786-7634	Curtis King 786-7626	John Braun 786-7638
<b>Representative, Position 1</b>	Sharon Wylie 786-7924	Lynda Wilson 786-7994	Brandon Vick 786-7850	Norm Johnson (509) 454-7210	Ed Orcutt 786-7990
<b>Representative, Position 2</b>	Jim Moeller 786-7872	Paul Harris 786-7976	Liz Pike 786-7812	Charles Ross 786-7856	Richard DeBolt 786-7896

Note: All phone numbers are 360 area code, except where otherwise noted. Toll free **1-800-562-6000**  
 \* Party Caucus Phone Number until Official Swearing-in. More info at [www.leg.wa.gov/legislature](http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature)

**Legislative Affairs: by Rod Williams**

There is a new Congress in place in Washington, DC. But how do we make sure it truly does take a new approach to solving the old problems that linger along year after year. Once the votes have been tallied the only tool we have is our voice. In the last newsletter I solicited your voice be heard by the lame ducks. I make a similar appeal to make sure the new Congress hears your voice. Congress is poised to tackle several serious issues in 2015: the highly anticipated report from the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, the looming return of sequestration, and increased calls for further defense spending reductions.

While there was turnover in many places, here in Southwest Washington we have the same US Representative, Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler, and the same two US Senators, Senator Patty Murray and Senator Maria Cantwell. These may be familiar names but do not assume they know your position on issues – tell them. In the November 2014 Newsletter I provided some detailed directions on how to use the MOAA Web site to quickly send emails to our representatives. If you need a refresher, it is okay. All of our newsletters are posted on our Chapter Web Site at [www.moaacolumbiariver.org](http://www.moaacolumbiariver.org) so you can review it.

As they do each year, the national MOAA team, has built a set of legislative goals for 2015. The short version is: Protecting pay, force levels, retirement, and health care for uniformed service members and their families — especially wounded warriors and their caregivers. Here is the detailed list. I know there will be something here that catches your attention.

**Active/Reserve/Family Issues**

- Ensure active duty, Guard and Reserve force sizes meet mission requirements
- Sustain military pay comparability with private sector pay as required by law
- Protect currently serving and retiree benefits from severe, arbitrary sequestration cuts
- Credit all Post-9/11 active duty service toward Guard and Reserve early retirement
- Create new incentives for employers to hire and retain drilling Guard and Reserve members
- Restore tax deductions for reservists' out-of-pocket expenses for travel of 50 miles or more
- Create new incentives for employers/government/contractors to hire military spouses
- Protect funding for commissaries, exchanges, dependent schools and family support programs
- Ensure service sexual assault and suicide prevention measures provide positive outcomes
- Improve professional licensure transferability for service members and spouses
- Require better education on the financial disadvantages of the REDUX retirement option

[Continued on page 9]



**Legislative Affairs continued****Health Care Issues**

- Avert a 24% Medicare/TRICARE payment cut and fix the statutory formula to improve care access
- Oppose means testing of TRICARE Prime and TRICARE for Life enrollment fees
- Block the consolidation of TRICARE health plans into a single plan providing less choice
- Improve seamless transition and protect Defense and VA health budgets/programs and benefits
- Authorize the option to retain operational reservists' civilian family health insurance upon call-up
- Increase orthodontia payment cap under active duty plan
- Authorize TRICARE coverage for Applied Behavioral Analysis for active and retired members

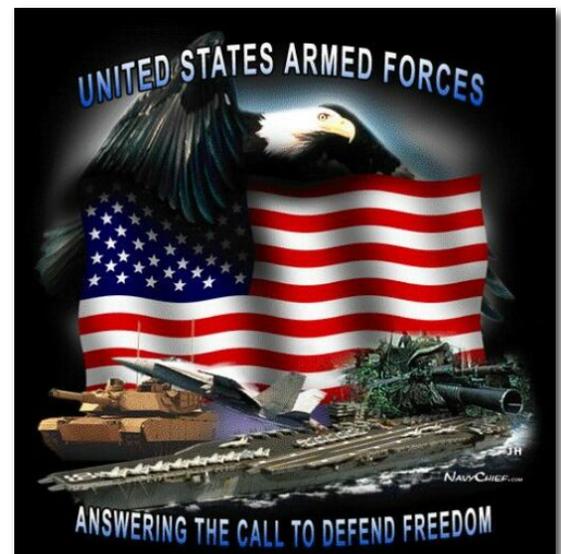
**Retirement/Survivor Issues**

- Evaluate Military Compensation & Retirement Modernization Commission recommendations; February 2015
- Oppose military benefit changes that are inconsistent with service career sacrifices
- Preserve full-inflation cost of living adjustments (COLAs)
- End the deduction of VA disability compensation from military retired pay
- End deduction of VA Dependency & Indemnification Compensation from Survivor Benefit Plan annuities
- Implement a more equitable military disability retirement system
- Restore VA Dependency & Indemnification Compensation for spouses who remarry after age 55
- Reform the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) calculation for reservists who die performing Inactive Duty Training
- Authorize survivors to retain a deceased retiree's full final month retired pay
- Reform the Uniform Services Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA)

**Veterans / Other Issues**

- Eliminate VA claims backlog and improve quality, efficiency and transparency of claims processing
  - Improve VA healthcare services and access for women veterans
  - Extend caregiver services and support to qualifying disabled veterans of all conflicts
  - Authorize pre-tax payment of health, dental, and long-term health care premiums
  - Prevent disproportional Social Security and Medicare penalties for any population segment
- See more at: <http://tinyurl.com/qxwv9oc>

**Rod Williams**  
Chapter Legislative Chair



2015

## 2015 CHAPTER CALENDAR

22 January  
Thursday  
**Luncheon Meeting**  
Touchmark at the Fairway Village Restaurant Retirement Community  
The Officers Wives Club is inviting MOAA members for the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Luncheon

21 February  
Saturday  
**Brunch** at the Club Green Meadows  
1030 Gather, brunch at 1100, \$15/person/reservations requested  
**Program: Annual Business Meeting** with Election and Installation of Officers  
Annual Financial and Committee Reports  
See below for details.

19 March  
Thursday  
**Luncheon** at 40 et 8 Chateau  
**Program:** Gary Webb Transportation Security Specialist: Explosives at PDX  
Details TBD

16 April  
Thursday  
**Luncheon** at China Cook Restaurant and Lounge  
**Program:** TBD

21 May  
Thursday  
**Dinner** at the Club Green Meadows  
**Program:** TBD

### Annual Business Meeting Brunch

**Club Green Meadows**  
7703 NE 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, WA 98661

1030 Meet & Greet  
1100 Brunch

Cost: \$15 per person

**RSVP:**  
Call or e-mail Ron Pastor NLT 16 February  
882-1275 [pastor2718@comcast.net](mailto:pastor2718@comcast.net)

### Program

Annual Business Meeting  
Election and Installation of Officers  
Financial and Committee Reports

Donations for raffle drawings welcome!

