

USW@Work

A Regular Publication of the United Steelworkers

Volume 17/4

A Powerful Voice for Workers



USW Int'l Vice President Kevin Mapp administering the oath of office to the newly-elected SOAR Executive Board.

Leaders Gather for SOAR Conference

In the days leading up to the 2022 USW Constitutional Convention, about 120 retiree leaders and activists met in Las Vegas for the 13th International SOAR Conference.

The group, consisting of representatives from each USW district across North America, debated and passed resolutions on the important issues facing retired workers, heard from high-profile speakers and USW leaders, and set a course for activism for the organization in the coming years.

“For 37 years, SOAR has had a proud history of standing up for retiree rights and supporting the issues important to the active members of the USW,” said SOAR President Bill Pienta. “I have no doubt that this group will put forth the energy and commitment to make SOAR an even better and a bigger player on senior and retiree issues important to our members.”

Those issues, he said, include making sure that Social Security and retirement plans remain stable for future generations, reforming health care to ease the burden on retirees and their families, protecting collective bargaining and organizing rights, and mobilizing retirees to remain active in political and labor causes after they leave the workplace.

The importance of those concerns was reflected in the series of resolutions that SOAR activists passed through

the course of their two-day conference, held at the MGM Grand hotel on August 5 and 6.

Rich Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, spoke to delegates about the importance of the senior vote in the 2022 mid-term elections. He told them that because retirees vote in higher numbers than the rest of the population, they have the power to swing elections. He discussed how retirees voted in the last election and stressed that the percentage of union retirees voting for the pro-retiree Democratic candidate was far greater than non-union retirees.

Top USW officers addressed the gathering, including International President Tom Conway, who told the delegates that their activism, and the work of all SOAR members, was an indispensable part of the USW’s effort to support workers, retirees, their families and communities. Conway stated that the support of SOAR members has helped make a



Tom Conway

USW Int'l Vice President Roxanne Brown leads round table discussion — “Making our Government Work for Us,” along with other USW legislative and political leaders: From left, Roxanne Brown, Roy Houseman, Kim Miller, Anna Fendley and Amber Miller.



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We Really Mean SOAR IN ACTION!



BILL PIENTA
SOAR President

The members of SOAR have really been “IN ACTION” the last few months.

After being limited in what we could do regarding socializing or participating in actions involving groups for almost two years, the members of

SOAR seem anxious to resume their activities and to be engaged in issues related to retirees and working families in Canada and the United States.

Over 100 retirees attended the recent SOAR Conference in Las Vegas and participated in discussions on resolutions dealing with the future of SOAR. In addition, our Canadian delegation spoke on their participation in efforts to expand national health care coverage to include prescription drugs.

Once we returned home, several districts announced the formation of new SOAR chapters, which is extremely important because SOAR needs to continue to bring in new members. Because of who we are, and our tendency to “age-out” as we get to our senior years, we need to continually bring in new members in order to maintain our ability to function.

Districts recently sent in reports of their participation in the Labor Day parades around the country. SOAR

participation in Districts 10, 7 and 4 did a great job of getting recognized for their involvement, with District 4 getting coverage on a local news station in New York City.

Many of our chapters and members volunteered to participate in the *Your Union, Your Voice* postcard writing campaign. As this publication goes to print, early reports show that our retirees have accounted for over 8,000 handwritten postcards. Special mention must go to District 7 SOAR Board member Dorine Godinez, and the SOAR chapters in District 7, as they worked in solidarity to prepare over 2,600 postcards for this campaign.

Many of our members have volunteered to get involved in the upcoming election. Some will be working at voting locations or simply be an observer. Others have volunteered to jump in with both feet, to do leafleting and door knocking, and to participate in rallies for candidates that support our position on issues important to active and retired workers and their families.

Our members may have retired from the company, but they never left their union. They continue to be involved in issues important to them, and they continue to be “SOAR IN ACTION!”





JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

Your Union, Your Voice 2022 Survey Results ~ Retirement Security Ranks as Top Issue

Our 2022 *Your Union, Your Voice* survey effort has concluded with thousands of members and retirees responding to our membership survey and thousands more providing feedback at the 150+ town halls that USW districts hosted across the United States.

You'll recall that the USW first launched *Your Union, Your Voice* (YUYV) two years ago so that we could hear about your top priorities and share information about our union's core issues.

Thousands of you helped make that effort an overwhelming success. Your input helped shape our work over the last two years, and I'm extremely proud to remind you that we've been able to celebrate significant progress in a number of the areas you indicated as most important to you.

Progress on Workers' Issues



Most notably, we:

- ▶ Achieved a massive win on retirement security that will protect the benefits of 120,000 active and retired members who were at risk of losing everything.
- ▶ Realized a decades-long goal with the once-in-a-generation infrastructure bill the President signed into law in November 2021. This move will keep countless USW members' jobs strong for years to come while improving our communities and overall global competitiveness.
- ▶ Saw a change in the leadership at the National Labor Relations Board that provided fundamental improvements for workers seeking justice when they or their unions are subjected to unfair labor practices.

Our 2022 *Your Union, Your Voice* Report

As I am providing this report to SOAR members, the results were no surprise to me. I highlight that retirement security was the top-rated issue of importance among respondents to our 2022 YUYV membership survey.

Retirement security was followed closely by affordable health care and prescription drugs (which was 2020's top-ranked issue of concern among members and retirees) and labor laws that allow us to organize and secure good contracts took the third spot.

Additionally, more than 70 percent of respondents listed trade agreements and laws that protect U.S. workers, increased worker wages, and safety and health as "very important."

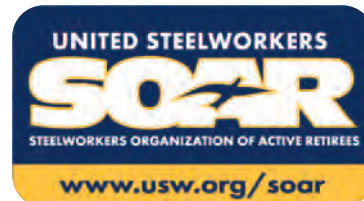
Acting Upon Your Feedback

With the 2022 midterm elections rapidly approaching, union members and retirees will be presented with another opportunity to help elect pro-retiree, pro-worker and pro-union lawmakers who can be our allies in making progress on the issues you've indicated to be most important to you.

*Join with us, as we continue the fight to protect
and enhance the quality of life of our retirees
and working families.
We are stronger together!*



HAPPY FALL!
STAY HEALTHY. STAY ACTIVE. STAY SAFE.




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SOAR in ACTION

USW@Work


Published as an edition to *USW@Work* for the United Steelworkers
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222



**Winner of ICLA's
journalistic competition
awards for General Excellence
in 1986, 1990 and 1993**

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Address editorial material to:
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Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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**When submitting an address change, please
include address label from last issue.**

USW@Work (ISSN 0883-3141) is published four times a year by the United Steelworkers AFL-CIO-CLC, 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Subscriptions to non-members: \$12 for one year; \$20 for two years. Periodicals postage paid at Pittsburgh, PA and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: **USW@Work**, USW Membership Dept., 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

Leaders Gather for SOAR



John Shinn



Marty Warren



Dave McCall

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difference in the union's advocacy for health care and pension reforms, infrastructure investments, fair trade policies, and other issues.

"We couldn't do what we do without you," Conway said. "We owe everything we have to those who came before us, and who continue to support the work of our union."

Pienta credited SOAR activists with helping to pass the Butch Lewis Act,

which protected pension benefits for hundreds of thousands of retirees in multi-employer retirement plans.

USW International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn also addressed the delegates. In his remarks, he thanked them for their "service, sacrifice and for the work that they do." Shinn said, "We stand with you, shoulder to shoulder, in our fight for economic justice. You're an integral part in what we do. SOAR is not just an asset but an enormous asset to our union."

Retired Leaders

The SOAR conference also heard from a number of retired leaders, including two former Canadian national directors, Ken Neumann and Lawrence McBrearty, and the current director, Marty Warren.

Recently retired district directors, including Michael Bolton of the former District 2, Bobby "Mac" McAuliffe of District 10, and Ruben Garza of District 13, also attended the SOAR conference. Delegates voted to elect district representatives to the SOAR executive board and chose Garza to represent District 13.

In his remarks, Warren urged SOAR members to get involved, and stay involved, in the union's organizing and political work.

"Politics matter. How we elect people matters," Warren said. "Wherever you go, when the Steelworkers walk in the room, it matters."

One USW member turned political leader, Jamie West of Local 6500, spoke of the difference the union made in his life, and said the same could be true of others as long as the union continues to organize new workplaces and fight for workers' rights.

West, who grew up in poverty, said he became involved in politics because of the USW and eventually got elected as a member of the provincial parliament in his hometown of Sudbury, Ontario.



Jamie West



Conference



Roxanne Brown



Bill Pienta

“This union changed my life,” West said.

Pienta, who has served in a number of leadership roles through his USW career, said that he appreciates his current role as SOAR president the most, because everyone who gets involved is doing so because they care about the union.

“The people in this room are not looking at their present position as a stepping stone or an opportunity to seek advancement or power or influence,” Pienta said. “The people in this room love their union, they enjoy helping others and they want to continue to stay

involved in their union and their community.”

After hearing from Pienta, Conway, Shinn and a series of other speakers including International Vice President Dave McCall, over the two-day conference, members concluded the sessions by participating in a roundtable discussion—“Making Our Government Work for Us,” led by USW political leaders, including Inter-



national Vice President Roxanne Brown, who directs the union’s legislative and political work in Washington, D.C.

New SOAR Leaders

Finally, before they adjourned, delegates witnessed the swearing-in of the new slate of SOAR leaders elected to serve for the next three years. The officers and executive board members are as follows:

President
Bill Pienta

Vice President/Canadian Coordinator
Doug MacPherson

Vice President (West)
Scott Marshall

Secretary-Treasurer
Denise Edwards

President Emeritus
C.L. “Connie” Entrekin

Emeritus: Dan McNeil

Emeritus: Charlie Averill

Emeritus: Bill Gibbons

Emeritus: Jay McMurrin

District 1: Ronnie Wardrup

District 3: Ben Medernach

District 4: Al Polk

District 5: Lawrence McBrearty

District 6: Lena Sutton

District 7: Dorine Godinez

District 8: Ronnie Watson

District 9: Claude Karr

District 10: David McLimans

District 11: Bonnie Carey

District 12: Joel Buchanan

District 13: Ruben Garza

SOAR Director: Julie Stein



SOAR Welcomes New Board Mem

Four new board members were elected to the SOAR Executive Board to represent their districts at the 13th International SOAR Conference held in Las Vegas, Nevada, on August 5 & 6, 2022. All will serve a three-year term.



Ruben Garza

Ruben Garza

Ruben Garza was elected as District 13 Executive Board Member, taking the seat previously held by Andres Rosas, who did not run for re-election.

The son of migrant workers from Orange Grove, Texas, Ruben was born in Lubbock, Texas, and grew up in Rotan, Texas.

Ruben went to work at National Gypsum Co. on May 6, 1976, the same day he became a member of the Cement

Lime and Gypsum Workers Int'l Union. After serving on the plant's joint health and safety committee, he ran for president of his local in 1984 and defeated an 18-year incumbent.

In March 1989, Garza was unjustly terminated for union activity and was out of work for almost two years. Eventually, he won his job back through arbitration and returned to work in 1991.

In 1990, Garza's union merged in to the United Paperworkers Int'l Union (UPIU). On March 1, 1996, he joined

the UPIU staff as an International Representative, and he spent the next three years leading union locals through successful contract negotiations at dozens of work sites.

In 1999, when the UPIU merged with the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) to create the Paper, Allied Industrial, Chemical and Energy Int'l Union (PACE), Garza was reassigned to western Texas, where he serviced locals in Texas and New Mexico.

Garza became a USW staff representative when the Steelworkers merged with PACE in 2005.

Garza was elected Director of USW District 13 in November 2013 and again in 2017, leading a district that serves more than 50,000 USW members in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Arkansas, and he served in that capacity until his retirement in June 2022, and then quickly became involved with SOAR.

Ruben and his wife Maria have been married for 42 years and continue to reside in Rotan. They have two children and three grandchildren.



Ronnie Watson

Ronald "Ronnie" Lee Watson

Ronnie Watson was elected as District 8 Executive Board Member taking the seat of Daniel Stevens, Jr., who did not run for re-election.

Ronnie began his career as a tire builder with Goodyear Tire and Rubber in March 1970. He joined the former United Rubber Workers Union, Local 831, in Danville, Va., and continued his affiliation with union work when the URW merged with the United Steelworkers.

His educational background prepared him for the many facets of union work. Ronnie graduated with an Associate's Degree from Danville Community College as a requirement of his apprentice program with Goodyear Tire and Rubber, also earning his industrial mechanic journeyman card. In addition, he graduated with the Regents Bachelor of Arts degree from Bluefield College, Bluefield, W.V. and an MBA from Averett University, Danville, Va.

In 1989, Ronnie was elected as Treasurer of Local 831, a position held for eight years. After serving an internship with the Steelworkers Legislative Program in Washington, D.C., he went on the Steelworkers staff as a temporary staff

representative in August 1998. Ronnie was made a permanent International Staff Representative in March 1999 and was appointed as the District 8 Rapid Response Coordinator, in which capacity he served until his retirement on June 1, 2019.

Ronnie won the prestigious E. J. Thomas Goodyear Spirit Award in 1994, chosen from among 92,000 other employees worldwide. The recognition of his scope of involvement in community service and leadership at the local, regional, state, and national levels for labor, work attendance, safety record, participation on work teams, commitment to quality, work ethic and a willingness to go the extra mile, was supported by letters of recommendation from leaders at these levels that resulted in the selection of Ronnie for this award.

Ronnie is a member of SOAR Chapter 8-UR1 in Danville, VA and was appointed a SOAR Coordinator by USW District 8 Director Larry Ray in June of this year.

Ronnie and his wife of 53 years, Darlene, live in Cascade, Virginia. They have three adult children who are all successfully employed. In addition, they are blessed with four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



Ben Medernach

Ben Medernach

Ben Medernach was elected as District 3 Executive Board Member taking the seat of Dennis Carrigan, who also did not run for re-election.

Ben was born in 1948. He grew up on a farm and attended a one-room school until grade 8. From there, he went to Bruno School and St. Peter's College, Muenster Saskatchewan for high school.

Ben started working for the Duval Corp. (Potash Corporation of

Saskatchewan) at the Cory mine site in 1969. He became a Union Member of USWA Local 7458. As a member of the local, he was a shop steward and served on the Occupational Health & Safety and Grievance committees. Sometime later, he became Vice President and later President.

He attended various courses at the District 3 summer schools. Ben took a USWA instructor training course and

became a District 3 instructor. Ben has been a Vice President for the Steelworkers to the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and held the position of Registrar for the Saskatoon & District Labour Council.

Following his retirement in 2010, he joined SOAR Chapter 3-9, where he served as Treasurer, Vice President and later President. He has held the position of President for the past four years. He also became a member of Saskatchewan Union of Retirees Federation and holds the position of 2nd Vice President.

Ben has also been active with the New Democratic Party as a regular member, a member at large, and later President of his constituency.

Ben and his partner, Theresa, reside in Saskatoon and have six daughters, 11 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. They are both active in SOAR and other retirement groups.



Ronnie Wardrup

Ronnie "Pup" Wardrup

Ronnie "Pup" Wardrup was elected as District 1 Executive Board Member, taking the seat previously held by Jeffrey DeLong, who did not run for re-election.

Ronnie went to work at Southwestern Ohio Steel on September 7, 1978, and became a dues-paying member of the United Steelworkers Local Union 5541, and held his first union position when appointed as a Grievance

Committeeman in the early 1980s.

He later served as Vice President of USW Local 5541 and moved up according to the USW Constitution to the position of President when the office was vacated. He also served on the Civil Rights, Organizing and Political committees.

Wardrup served on the State of Ohio Worker's Compensation Committee and the USW Safety Committee. In addition, he was appointed to the Butler County United Way as a board member by the Butler Warren Clinton County AFL-CIO.

Ronnie joined the Butler Warren Clinton Counties AFL-CIO, serving as an Executive Board Member until merging with the Dayton-Miami Valley Regional Labor Council of the AFL-CIO. He then served on the Executive Committee and Executive Council, working collaboratively with the Cincinnati AFL-CIO at every opportunity. He was

appointed and then elected in his own right to serve on the Area Labor Federation (ALF) of the Cincinnati and Dayton/Miami Valley Labor Councils of the AFL-CIO.

Ronnie joined the Butler County Democratic Party serving as 2nd Vice President and later served as Chair of the Executive Committee of the Butler County Democratic Party. He currently serves as a member on the Central Committee for his district.

On May 15, 1998, he joined the USW staff as an International Representative, leading union locals through successful contract negotiations. He served in that capacity for 21½ years until his retirement in February 2021.

Also, during his long-time tenure with the USW, he was elected as Democratic Party Man for Butler County as a member of the Executive Committee of the Ohio Democratic Party, then appointed and served as "At Large" for the Ohio Democratic Party Executive Committee.

Lastly, Ronnie was appointed a USW Vice President to the Ohio AFL-CIO State Federation and served in that position until his retirement.

Wardrup then became active in SOAR and was appointed a SOAR Coordinator by USW District 1 Director Donnie Blatt in March of this year and was key to forming District 1's newest SOAR chapter in the greater Cincinnati, Ohio area.

Ronnie and his wife Lisa have been married for 37 years and reside in Indian Springs, Ohio. They have two children and four grandchildren.



Tom Conway

VOTING to Continue America's Progress

Al Polk will bid his wife goodbye on Oct. 11, and set out for New Hampshire with boots, gloves, heavy coat, windshield scraper and shovel in the trunk of his Chevy Impala.

As the weather grows colder over the next few weeks, the fight for America's future will also reach a turning point. And there's no way the 79-year-old will let brutal temperatures, ice or snowstorms impede his efforts to turn out Granite State voters for the crucial Nov. 8 election.

Polk, a Massachusetts resident and member of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), is among thousands of union activists across the country committed to knocking on doors, handing out leaflets and organizing rallies to support the pro-worker candidates needed to continue moving America forward the next two years.

"I wouldn't be doing this if I didn't believe in it," declared Polk, who served as president of his United Steelworkers (USW) local at Cleveland Twist Drill in Mansfield, Mass., for 20 years and then worked on the union staff before retiring in 2015.

Polk has volunteered for election work in New Hampshire for decades.

He's lived in hotels for weeks at a stretch, just as he intends to do again this year. He's endured drenching rain as well as early winter snowstorms forcing him to shovel out his car before long days of door-knocking.

He's talked with thousands of fellow union members, securing untold votes with his respectful doorstep advocacy, and handed out thousands of flyers at USW-represented workplaces like the Manchester Water Works, New Hampshire Ball Bearings in Laconia and 3M in Tilton.

And while every election has its pivotal issues—the Democrats' tireless work on invigorating the economy and growing the middle class proved decisive factors in 2020, for example—Polk cannot remember another time when voters in New Hampshire and

throughout the country faced so stark a choice as they do this year.

"Keep the forward movement or stand still," explained Polk, who expects to log many miles traveling around the state to highlight the string of accomplishments that pro-worker officials and their union allies racked up since President Joe Biden took office just 20 months ago.

That list of accomplishments includes the American Rescue Plan, which provided the child care assistance and other support that families needed to survive the COVID-19 pandemic while also saving the retirements of 1.3 million Americans enrolled in faltering multi-employer pension plans.

It includes the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, already contributing to record job growth by rebuilding roads, bridges, waterways, energy systems and communications networks with union labor and products.

And it includes the CHIPS and Science Act, intended to spur production of crucial supply chains, and the Inflation Reduction Act, which imposes a \$35 cap on insulin costs for Medicare recipients, fuels development of the clean economy and forces the wealthiest Americans to begin paying their fair share in taxes.

These bills set the stage for a manufacturing renaissance after years of industrial decline, Polk said, adding he often



Photo taken at the 2018 USW District 4 Conference in Atlantic City, N.J., where Al Polk received the "Retired Activist in the District" award. Pictured from left: Bill Pienta, SOAR International President; John Shinn, USW Int'l Secretary-Treasurer; Al Polk, honoree and District 4 SOAR Board Member; and Del Vitale, District 4 Director.

Long-time SOAR Activist Receives Award

“felt like a mortician” over the years while assisting families devastated by mill and plant closures.

Electing more pro-worker officials would pave the way for still more prosperity. Passage of the Protecting the right to Organize (PRO) Act, for example, would eliminate barriers to union organizing and help more Americans secure family-sustaining wages, safe working conditions and a voice on the job.

As he knocks on doors, Polk will emphasize the support that Democratic officials like New Hampshire’s Sen. Maggie Hassan and U.S. Reps. Chris Pappas and Annie Kuster, all seeking re-election this year, provided for worker-friendly bills.

But he’ll also point out the important role that more than a dozen Republicans in the New Hampshire legislature played in defeating anti-worker legislation in the state last year. These Republicans, several of them union members themselves, joined forces with Democrats to kill a falsely named right-to-work bill that would have undermined unions and weakened workers’ voices.

“It’s very simple,” Polk said of the USW’s approach to candidates. “If they support our issues, we support them. If they don’t support our issues, we don’t support them.”

“It’s bipartisan,” agreed John Gros, president of USW Local 13-447 in Westwego, La., citing his members’ close ties with city Councilman Johnny Nobles, a member of the GOP. “We endorse Republicans, just like we endorse Democrats. They just have to support working men and women.”

If union-endorsed officials of either party fail to honor their promises to working people, he said, he’ll work to defeat them in the next election.

Getting out the vote for pro-worker candidates is essential in countering the billions that corporations spend to influence elections, observed Gros, noting that big business courts officials who will let them cut corners on safety, violate labor rights and suppress workers’ voices.

During the last administration, pro-corporate appointees at the National Labor Relations Board turned the agency against the very workers it was created to serve. But Biden, elected largely with the support of USW members and other union workers, quickly put the agency back on course.

“We can’t throw a lot of money at folks because we don’t have a lot of money,” said Gros, who also serves as vice president of the Louisiana AFL-CIO and the Greater New Orleans AFL-CIO. “We have votes. We have boots on the ground.”

“That’s why it’s so important that we get out there,” he said of union voters. “Every vote does make a difference.”

The Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees applauds SOAR activist and coordinator Bill Finkle on winning the Kansas City’s Labor’s Educational Political Club Independent (LEPCI) 2022 “Labor Representative of the Year” award. Finkle was awarded a plaque to honor his many years of activism and dedication to labor at an awards dinner attended by more than 300 guests on September 23 in Kansas City, MO. Club President Bobby Davidson stated, “Our group has been in existence since the early 1950s, and we work together to raise funds to support labor-endorsed candidates all across Missouri. Bill earned his award for, “always being there” and his “readiness to step-up to the plate” to help defeat the all-too-many attacks on organized labor.”



Finkle, a member of SOAR Chapter 34-3, serves as the chapter’s treasurer and its legislative chair. He is also actively involved with the Alliance for Retired Americans in the Kansas City area.

Congratulations Bill!



SOAR in ACTION



Lavergne, TN — SOAR Chapter 9-UR9 met on September 13 at the USW Local 1055L Hall, located in Lavergne, TN. This SOAR chapter was fortunate to meet during the COVID-19 pandemic because their meeting location is outside and they could safely social distance.

Pictured from left are chapter members: Ed Hicks; Lou Patterson, President; Terry Heady, Vice President; Mike Devine; Richard Moline, Trustee; Glenn Boatright, Trustee; AJ White; Dwight Horton, Sr.; Loyd Pierce, Financial Secretary; Ricky Rigsby and behind the camera Delana Patterson (not shown.)



Dunkirk, NY — On September 10, retired union members from AFSCME and the USW held a joint picnic. During that event, John Taddio, a former President of USW Local 2693, was honored for his past years of service to his members and the community. Taddio (3rd from the left) was the longest-serving president in the history of the local and chose not to run again. Pictured are former presidents of the local dating back to the 1970s, including the current President Justin Barrett and NY State Senator George Borillo, who presented a proclamation to Taddio. However, being retired did not mean ending their involvement with the union for three of the people pictured. Jim Bickhart (2nd from left) is currently President of SOAR Chapter 4-1, and Roger Calanni (far right) serves as Vice-President of the chapter. Bill Pienta (3rd from right) serves as the International President of SOAR.



Muscle Shoals, AL — Members of SOAR Chapter 9-4 participate in the *Your Union, Your Voice* postcard writing campaign for the 2022 mid-term elections. Pictured front row from left: Heath Ayers, Vice President; Irene Clancy, Trustee; J.C. Vandiver, Trustee; and Dallas Balch, Trustee. Back row from left: Dan Whited, President; Claude Karr, Recording Secretary; Floyd Hall, Treasurer; James Lowery, Member; and Faye Watson, member.



Plymouth, IN — At their September meeting, SOAR members of Chapter 30-18 wrote postcards as part of our union's *Your Union, Your Voice* postcard campaign for the 2022 midterm elections. The postcards were sent to USW members and retirees to encourage recipients to make their plans for how they will vote this year; either by mail or in person. From left: Carl Anspach, Trustee; Elaine Averill, Recording Secretary; John Clark, Trustee and founding member of the chapter; Lynn Downhour, member; Patsy Kline, Vice President; Charlie Averill, President and Mike Henning, Treasurer.



Victoria, TX — On July 13, SOAR Chapter 12-3 celebrated its 20th anniversary from when it was officially chartered as a SOAR chapter on July 2, 2002. Its members are mainly retirees of USW Local 4370 who were employed at the ALCOA facility in Point Comfort, TX, which has since shut down. Pictured from left: Larry Burchfield, USW District 13 Director; Gerald Thompson, President; Ron Crain, Vice President; Evelyn Burseson, Treasurer; Fred Balboa, Recording Secretary; Caspar Janak, Trustee; Leonard Dramala, Historian/Photographer and Andy Rosas, then-District 13 SOAR Board member. Congratulations on your 20-year anniversary!



Gwinner, ND — On July 18, USW Local 560 arranged for a plant tour of their Bobcat facility and invited the retirees of SOAR Chapter 11-PC1 to attend. A luncheon was served at the union hall following the tour. In addition, the retirees were invited to the local's SOLIDARITY picnic at Silver Lake. Pictured are members of the SOAR chapter awaiting their tour of the facility. In Solidarity!



Pueblo, CO — The USW Bat Light was shining a spotlight on corporate greed, this time at 5am on September 8. SOAR was at the solidarity rally to support USW Local 2102 and Local 3267 in their negotiations for a fair contract with EVRAZ Rocky Mountain Steel.

Labor Day 2022



Chicago, IL — SOAR Chapter 31-9 Activist Bea Lumpkin serves as Grand Marshal of the Chicago Labor Day parade! 104 years old and still fighting the good fight! Way to go, Bea!



New York, NY — SOAR Chapter 4-17 members reside all across New York State. In this photo, several SOAR Chapter officers participated in New York City's Labor Day Parade and were proud to take a photo op with Parade Chairperson Fred Redmond, who is a former USW Vice President and currently serves as AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer. From left, Leonard Mangano, Trustee; Blair Burroughs, Trustee; Fred Redmond; Priscilla Marco who serves as President of the chapter; and USW District 4 Director Del Vital.



New York, NY — District 4 SOAR Coordinator Priscilla Marco poses with Howard Boyer, a member of SOAR Chapter 4-18, located in Phillipsburg, NJ. Boyer also serves as LU 4-417 Rapid Response Coordinator. Priscilla and Howard happened to meet at the parade march because they recognized each other's SOAR apparel!



Pittsburgh, PA — SOAR Chapter 20-15 members march in the city's first Labor Day parade since 2019, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Even in the rain, everyone was happy to be marching this Labor Day!



Modesto, CA — At 113 degrees in the shade, SOAR Chapter 12-11 President Stephen Talbott stopped by the North Valley Labor Federation Labor Day Picnic and was able to say hi to their friend from the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors Mami Grewal.



Albany, NY — Members of SOAR Chapter 4-17 are retirees of USW Local 9265 and they reside all across New York State. Pictured from left, attending the Albany, NY Labor Day Parade are SOAR Chapter 4-17 members Karen Conte; Andrea Coton, Trustee; Gary Cunningham, Vice President; and retiree Mario Bruni.



Altoona, PA — USW Local 6521 and SOAR members stage for their annual parade, held Saturday, September 3.



Granite City, IL — SOAR members of Chapter 7-32-4 stage for their Labor Day Parade in front of the Tri-cities Labor Temple.



MINORITY PARLIAMENTS *Can Work to Our Benefit*

By Doug Macpherson
Vice President and Canadian National SOAR Coordinator

Two recent political events have shown the advantage of minority governments. Several months ago, the Liberals and the New Democrats landed big gains for workers in the historic confidence and supply agreement between the two parties.



Doug Macpherson

As USW National Director Marty Warren said, “This is a triumph by the NDP. To get the Liberals to agree to bring in anti-scab legislation, dental care and pharmacare—all things the Liberals have voted against in the past—is a big deal.”

The arrangement also provides for among other important items, increased health care funding and a Safe Long-Term Care Act to ensure seniors get the dignified and proper care they need in their later years.

Another win is the culmination of a long and continuous fight by working people to have pensions, termination and severance pay owed to workers protected in case of bankruptcy and insolvency proceedings. This cause

was most recently championed by SOAR member Scott Duvall, recently retired NDP Member of Parliament (MP) for Hamilton Mountain. The torch has passed to Manitoba NDP MP Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood–Transcona), who, with Conservative MP Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia–Lambton), Bloc Québécois MP Marilène Gill (Manicouagan), and their parties, agreed to vote Gladu’s bill (C-228) through to committee. Once at committee, the three parties will vote together to pass important changes to the bill. You can assist by calling or emailing your Liberal MP and demanding that they vote in favour of the bill when it returns to the house.

This is particularly amazing, as the Conservatives have in the past refused to vote in favour of amending the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, until it showed up in the party’s last election platform.

If this becomes law it will be a major victory for working people across Canada.

Minority parliaments in 1965 and 1966 have worked to advance the interests of working people in major pieces of social legislation like the Canada Health Act and bringing in the Canada Pension Plan.

Why We Need a National Universal Pharmacare Program!

My story, by Monty Bartlett, SOAR Chapter 3-14

I would like to share with you my personal journey around pharmacare. I cannot stress enough how important pharmacare has been to me as I have struggled with various health issues.



At the age of 32, I was diagnosed with arthritis, and from then on an increasing list of illnesses. Drugs well control these but that comes at a cost.

To put that in perspective, when I was working, my employer’s drug plan paid 90 percent of the cost of prescription drugs. Due to my arthritis, I took early retirement in 2016. Having no retiree benefits I would have faced the stark choice of which illness to treat and which not to.

Luckily I didn’t have to make that decision as my rheumatologist got me on BC Pharmacare.

To underline the importance of that let me, let me give you an example. For many years I took an infusion for my arthritis. This was very successful and helped me stay in the workforce

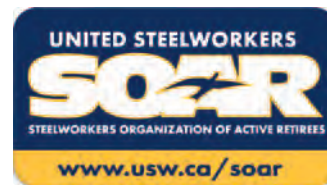
for longer than I otherwise could have. The downside was that the cost was \$3,000 every seven weeks.

Without pharmacare in my retirement, I would have had to pay \$21,000 a year for one drug making it impossible to get proper treatment.

With pharmacare, I paid \$2,615.50 on prescriptions in 2021 from a retirement income of \$19,054.50. This is still a significant amount to pay in a year.

I have never been forced to make that decision. That is why we need a national pharmacare program so that no one has to choose between health care and other living expenses.

Monty Bartlett, PAC Chair, middle, with Kay Noonan, President, and Fred Girling, Financial Secretary, SOAR Chapter 14.



Rick Lewis, President of SOAR Chapter 3-12, with the memorial bench.



SOAR Chapter 3-12 Promotes Recruitment of New Members

Concerned about declining membership in his chapter in Trail B.C., Rick Lewis, President of SOAR Chapter 3-12, contacted the local newspaper with a short article, which they placed on the front page. With the change to the SOAR articles of association permitting like-minded individuals 45 or older to join SOAR, Rick is reaching out to the broader community for new members.

The chapter has also dedicated a “memory bench” to the former members of SOAR Chapter 12 who have passed. The bench is located in a memorial garden close to the Trail Memorial Centre and is ideally situated for quiet contemplation of departed friends and relatives.

Clearly chapter 3-12 is looking to the future, while remembering the past.

An article promoting SOAR membership appears on the front page of the *Trail Times* in B.C.



Steelworker retiree organization seeks new members
by JIM BAILEY
Chapter 12 of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) is in recruitment mode after a publication in its membership over the past five years. SOAR Chapter 12 includes all Greater Trail organizations, and like the national organization, its before was amended in 2019 to welcome any 45 or over, who agree with and support the guiding principles and programs of the organization and the union.
Membership is available to all steelworker retirees, as well as relative family members and supporters.
“Because of COVID we haven’t had a meeting for five years and we’re going to try something if we can,” SOAR president Rick Lewis said in the *Trail Times*. “That is one of the things we’re trying to do since the onset of COVID.”
“We don’t even know who has passed and who hasn’t,” said Lewis. “Not everybody keeps in contact, and a lot of people aren’t aware.”
In addition, the pandemic’s adverse effect on mental health and isolation has made recruiting new members more challenging.
“It’s a matter of getting the phone out and starting to call again, explaining what we are trying to do, and who we might get as a sponsor,” Lewis said.
Lewis and his Chapter 12 vice president Steve Dewell says they are seeking new members who remain after several years since the onset of COVID.
Chapter 12 of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees president Rick Lewis and vice president Steve Dewell stand behind the new Stone Howell memorial in the future place for a bench honoring the steelworker retirees.
Photo: Jim Bailey
and getting together at the Legion for breakfast,” said Lewis.
SOAR held its last meeting on March 6, 2020. The group meets weekly and is trying to resume meetings in June at the Royal Canadian Legion hall, and thereafter three months after that.
The meetings are both informative and educational, as SOAR invites keynote speakers who deliver members on taxes, social information, health care, recreation and other information requested by members.
In addition, members can enjoy a taster \$20 breakfast.
SOAR membership costs just \$1 per month for singles (\$12/year), \$15 per year for a couple, and \$3 per year for a retiree widow.
For more information or to become a member contact Rick Lewis at 250-368-8571 or Steve Dewell at 250-231-1166.

Under the Cover of COVID, Ontario Premier Doug Ford Wages War on the Poorest and Most Vulnerable Members of Society

By Doug Macpherson
Vice President and Canadian National SOAR Coordinator

Ontario’s Conservative government has forced through legislation that takes away fundamental patient rights for choice of long-term care facility when moving from hospital. Bill 7, erroneously named the More Beds, Better Care Act, was passed without committee hearings or public consultation. The new law allows medical staff in hospitals to assess the level of care required for patients awaiting placement in long-term care facilities (LTC) and, if deemed ready to be discharged, the patient can be moved to any LTC facility with open beds or rooms without their prior consent, regardless of the patient’s list of LTC preferences. There are long waiting lists for desirable long-term care facilities. Only those LTC’s which have a bad reputation or a record of sub-standard care have open beds.



Doug Macpherson

This is an attack on the working class, the poor and our most vulnerable citizens at a weak moment in their lives. It is also an attack on women, as patients in hospital awaiting transfer to long-term care are mostly women. The practices permitted under the new law will have no effect on the rich, wealthy or well-to-do, as when faced with a determination that they have to leave hospital, are able to afford private luxury retirement residences costing \$5,000 or \$7,000 thousand a month or more, with private suites, gourmet meals and private limousine service for appointments.

The rest of us can never afford such luxury and are therefore doomed to LTC facilities which provide the basic of level of care for about \$1,860 per month.

The government’s callous treatment of our most vulnerable citizens is disgraceful. As the death-toll rose in long-term care homes in the early days of COVID, Ontario Premier Doug Ford said that he would put an “iron ring” around LTC residents. Instead of protecting our most vulnerable, Ford is dehumanizing them. While the law has already passed, we should still contact our Conservative members of provincial parliament and call them out. They need to know the distress they are inflicting and that there will be a cost at the next election. We will not forget.

Many Thanks to Retiring SOAR Bo



Daniel Stevens

Daniel Stevens

Long-time union and SOAR activist Daniel G. Stevens, Jr. has stepped down from the SOAR board.

Daniel's union career began in 1964 right after he graduated from high school, at Kenrose Manufacturing Company as a member of the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA). Two years later, he joined the Navy and fought for our country during the Vietnam War.

Daniel served aboard the USS Kiowa ATF as a petty officer in charge of the engine room.

After Daniel received his Honorable Discharge from the Navy, he went to work for the Norfolk and Western Railroad, which is now Norfolk and Southern Railroad (BMWED). He was employed by the railroad for a year and a half before getting laid off. In 1970, while on lay-off, he hired on at Mohawk Rubber Company, a non-union company. Fortunately, in 1977, the employees of Mohawk successfully voted in the Union, and Local 1023 (now 1023L) was established under the United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum, and Plastic Workers of America Union (URW). Daniel was one of the original charter members to help organize the union at Mohawk Tire.

In the '90s, many significant changes affected Daniel's local union. The URW merged with the USWA, and Mohawk Tire was sold and became what is now Yokohama Tire. During his tenure at Mohawk/Yokohama tire, he was elected and served as a division chairman (similar to a

grievance chair) and also local union trustee, for many years. In February 2002, Daniel took early retirement after 31 years and five months of employment with the tire company.

After his retirement from Yokohama in 2002, Daniel wanted to stay active in the union. He joined SOAR Chapter 8-UR2 in Salem, VA, and was soon elected vice president; he served as the VP for six years before being elected president of his chapter in 2008. Stevens served as president of his chapter from 2008-2012. Also, in 2006, he was appointed a SOAR Coordinator for Virginia by then-USW District 8 Director Ernest "Billy" Thompson and had served in that position until his appointment to the SOAR Executive Board in September 2019. Stevens stepped down at the end of his term in August.

Locally, Daniel stays involved with the area Labor Council by advocating for retirees and working families in Southwest Virginia. For the past 23 years, he has served as a delegate for the Southwest Virginia Labor Federation, and he is currently a trustee for the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Daniel has enjoyed volunteering at the Lewis Gale Hospital for the past 17 years, and he has been an active member and volunteer at the American Legion for 32 years. He has committed to staying active with his SOAR Chapter in Salem, Va., while taking more family-time to spend with his daughter and four granddaughters.

In September, Daniel was re-appointed by USW District Director Larry Ray to serve as a SOAR Coordinator for District 8, which encompasses the states of Kentucky, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.



Dennis Carrigan

Dennis Carrigan

Long-time union and SOAR activist Dennis Carrigan stepped down from the SOAR board after five years of service to our retiree organization.

Dennis started his union career in 1968 with Local 5606 when he went to work at I.P.S.C.O. in Regina, Saskatchewan. He became active, winning his first election in 1972 and serving consecutive terms in a number of positions, including Financial Secretary and Vice President, until he retired in 2003.

In 1975, Carrigan was elected Vice President of the Regina and District Area Council and was instrumental in starting a fishing camp for underprivileged children, which was named for the former District 3 Director Len Stevens. He also obtained his journeyman's certificate as an Industrial Mechanic that same year.

Dennis worked as a "Back-to-the-Locals" instructor, served as temporary staff to facilitate the union's "Back-to-the Family" project and represented District 3 on a Humanity Fund mission to Central America. He also represented the USW on the Board of Directors for the Saskatchewan Labor Force Development Board, and he served for many years well into his retirement on the Board of Directors of Skills Canada. He also represented his Province on the National Technical Skills Committee for Millwright/Industrial Mechanics.

Upon his retirement, he was appointed financial secretary of SOAR Chapter 3-19 and has served as chapter president since 2004. In 2017, he was elected as District 3 Executive Board Member at the 12th International Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. Before stepping down, he served one term, plus a two-year extended appointment due to COVID-19. Dennis commits to staying involved with his SOAR chapter in Regina while spending more time with his family.

Dennis and his wife Lois have been married for 56 years. They have two children and two grandchildren.

ard Members



Andy Rosas

Andy Rosas

Long-time union and SOAR activist Andres “Andy” Rosas has stepped down from the SOAR board.

Andy Rosas is a retired member of USW Local 235-A, which represented Steelworkers at Reynolds Aluminum in Corpus Christi, Texas. He worked at the plant for nearly 33 years and served the Local in a variety of elected and appointed positions, including Local Union President from 1992 until 1995.

Early in his working career, Andy completed a three-year Union Millwright apprenticeship program, and he earned his paycheck by performing maintenance duties as a trained mechanic until he retired in 2001.

Rosas is a founding member of SOAR Chapter 13-1 and has served as the chapter’s president since its inception. “When I retired, I wanted to stay politically involved. I didn’t always know about SOAR,” stated Rosas. “But, when I found out, I quickly applied for a charter, and the chapter was officially chartered on February 3, 2009.

Chapter 13-1 is very active with the Coastal Bend Central Labor Council supporting the causes of Union members in the greater Corpus Christi area.

Additionally, the SOAR chapter and the American Federation of Teachers’ retirees formed a local chapter of the Texas Alliance for Retired Americans (Coastal Bend Alliance for Retired Americans). Both groups advocate seniors’ issues.

Andy devotes a good deal of his time working to maintain membership in his SOAR chapter. There are two reasons for that: First, the Reynolds plant shut down several years ago, and members have moved on to other jobs.

Second: Texas’ status as a Right to Work state. Rosas stated, “Texas has always been Right to Work. Because of that, we have a good number of workers who are not familiar with our union or the SOAR organization. It takes a little more effort to reach out to them and explain the importance of membership.”

In February 2019, Andres was appointed as the USW District 13 SOAR executive board member to fill a vacancy on the SOAR board by USW President Thomas Conway. He served in this position until the end of his term, stepping down in August 2022.

Andy has committed to staying actively involved with his SOAR Chapter in Corpus Christi and the Coastal Bend Alliance for Retired Americans, while taking more time to spend with family.

Andy and Enedina have been married for 60 years. They have four children, nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Jeff DeLong

Jeff DeLong

Long-time union and SOAR activist Jeffrey DeLong has stepped down from the SOAR executive board.

Jeffrey “Jeff” DeLong began his work career in the papermill in January 1981 at the Mead Corporation/Chilpaco Division, in Chillicothe, Ohio. He worked in various departments throughout the papermill; but, his primary job roles included the Coater/Calender Rewinder and shipping clerk. During his 38 years

of employment at Mead, he served on the Emergency Response Team, was chairman of the Blood Drive Committee, a member of the Safety and Environmental Committees, Mead Athletic Association, and numerous other volunteer positions, such as First Responder and Tour Guide. He was also a graduate of the Mead Paper Knowledge School in May 1997.

Jeff took great pride in his union and was actively involved with USW Local 988 (formerly UPIU and PACE.) During his 38-year tenure, he was elected and served the local in several roles, including Workers’ Compensation Representative, Union Steward, Negotiations and Grievance

Committees, and Union President from 2011–2018. He also represented his local by actively participating on the USW District 1 Education and Legislative Committees.

Also, during his tenure, the papermill experienced multiple changes of ownership. The most recent change occurred November 2018, when Pixelle Specialty Solutions purchased the former Mead Corporation/Chillicothe mill from P.H. Glatfelter, which was previously owned by MeadWestvaco, and then later NewPage Corp. DeLong took early retirement from Pixelle Specialty Solutions, effective January 1, 2019.

In August 2019, DeLong was appointed as the USW District 1 SOAR executive board member to fill a vacancy on the SOAR board by USW President Thomas Conway. He served in this position until the end of his term, stepping down in August 2022.

Jeff has committed to staying active in SOAR, while taking more family-time to spend with his two sons, Joe (and his new wife Shannon) and Paul; and also, his faithful four-legged companions, a seven-year-old Great Dane, named Dee and a two-year-old Yellow English Lab, named Charlie.

In September, DeLong was appointed by USW District Director Donnie Blatt to serve as a SOAR coordinator for District 1, which encompasses the states of Michigan and Ohio.

SOAR Mourns the Loss of Tireless Activist KEN YATSKO

When he retired from U.S. Steel’s Gary Works, Ken Yatsko also decided to step away from his decades of USW activism.

But his passion for working people quickly led him right back to the union. He became active in SOAR and established himself as a tireless political advocate who wrote thousands of postcards and made thousands of phone calls to support pro-worker candidates and legislation.



**Ken Yatsko
1946-2022**

“If we don’t do these things, we’re going to lose our voice,” Ken explained in an interview for International President Tom Conway’s blog in March. “We have to keep up the fight and stick together.”

Ken, 76, of Kouts, Ind., died Aug. 17, with his family at his side. George Ampeliotis succeeded

Ken as president of Chapter 7-1 and pledged to build on his longtime friend’s legacy. Ken also served as a SOAR coordinator for District 7.

“He was tough. He wanted to get things done,” recalled George, noting that even as Ken’s health failed he worked on plans for a retiree dinner and a chapter membership drive.

Ken worked decades at the Gary mill, starting as a crane operator and performing various other jobs before his appointment as safety chairman for Local 1066.

Management soon learned about Ken’s zero tolerance for safety lapses, said Dorine Godinez, SOAR executive board member for District 7.

While fighting to keep union members safe at work, he also remained committed to remembering and honoring those lost on the job. As safety chairman, he was instrumental in establishing the granite memorial to fallen Local 1066 members that stands outside the Gary Works.

After retiring, he continued supporting workers from various unions. “He never missed a rally that I knew of,” recalled Lillie Harris, recording secretary for Chapter 7-1.

Ken walked a picket line with members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers in Valparaiso, Ind.,

in 2019, saying, “You mess with one worker, you mess with all workers.” And during a contract dispute with U.S. Steel in 2018, he led hundreds of union members, retirees and other supporters on a five-block march to the Gary Works and later delighted in recounting how the size of the crowd startled company security.

“If I come up to the plant gate alone, they’d laugh at me. Come with 600 people, and it’s a different story,” Ken noted in Conway’s blog, calling that demonstration of union power and solidarity one of the greatest experiences of his career.

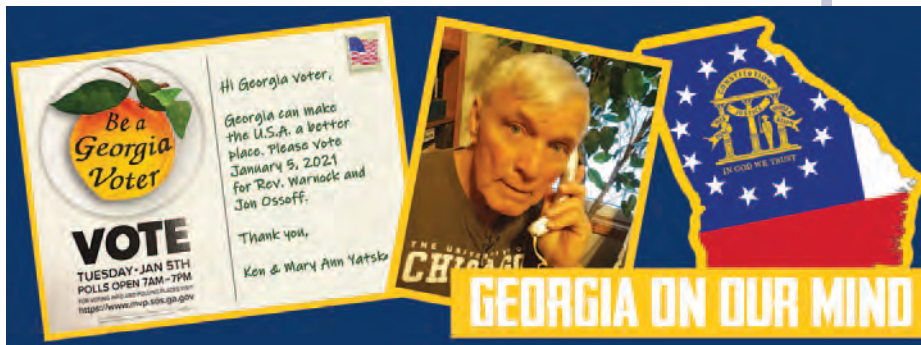
As one of SOAR’s most ardent activists, Ken traveled to Indianapolis, Washington, D.C., and other cities to lobby for worker-centered laws and policies. But he did much to advance the union’s mission with just a pen and a phone.

In the run-up to the pivotal 2020 election alone, he wrote hundreds of postcards and made thousands of calls to help put Joe Biden in the White House and elect Frank Mrvan, another friend of the USW, to one of Indiana’s congressional seats.

When the 2020 voting left the fate of Georgia’s two Senate seats up in the air, he swung into action again, making another thousand calls and, with his wife, Mary Ann, producing another 200 postcards to help the pro-worker candidates, Rev. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, win their run-off elections.

Shortly after, when asked why he worked so hard, Ken replied, “Hey, I know and love my union, what they want they get from me. I retired [then] 16 years ago; I didn’t quit the union, and the union didn’t quit me!”

“He understood that he stood on the shoulders of the people that came before him, and he wanted to help,” Lillie observed. “He was an activist for life.”



GEORGIA ON OUR MIND

May he rest as he served ~ in power and in peace.

Enforce the Ban of Chinese Imports Tied to Forced Labor!

When it comes to world economic powers, the United States and China are not that far apart in dominating manufacturing and providing the products consumers purchase on a global scale. No other country comes close.

But when analyzing human rights, the two global powers could not be more dissimilar.

China will gladly steal American inventions, trade secrets, technical knowhow and ingenuity but is unwilling to offer the personal freedoms to its workers that have helped make the Asian nation the second largest economy in the world.

A horrific abuse of people and power came to light during the Trump administration when it was revealed that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was engaging in what amounts to genocide in the Xinjiang region of the country.

The country's Uyghur population, the largest ethnic minority group in China's northwestern province of Xinjiang, and other mostly Muslim ethnic groups have been imprisoned to work in factories making apparel and other products that are sold throughout the Western World. Human rights groups have estimated that more than one million Uyghurs have been detained or imprisoned against their will in the past few years.

The Trump and Biden administrations and members of Congress took notice of such atrocities as imprisoning workers, forced sterilization, taking children from their families and even torture. Congress acted by nearly unanimously passing bipartisan legislation at the end of 2021 known as the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA). President Biden immediately signed the bill into law, and it went into effect in June of this year.

The law bans imports from China's Xinjiang region unless it can be proven they are not made using forced labor. Both the Trump and Biden administrations concluded that the CCP is overseeing a 21st century genocide of the Uyghur people and other groups who are forced to make everything from clothing to solar panels to vinyl flooring.

There's absolutely no excuse for the United States to knowingly import goods connected to forced labor. Many major American companies have removed their manufacturing facilities from the Xinjiang region including popular clothing brands that have their brands cut and sewn in what amounts to slave-type sweatshops. Cotton is a large commodity in this region of China, but it is immoral for apparel makers to continue to manufacture products with innocent, slave labor.

But still, Chinese companies and other global importers are working to undermine this critical new law. Some simply don't want the hassle of moving supply chains or proving their products are not made with slave labor. Others simply want to continue their exploitation of Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang to preserve profits.



The United States must not allow this to happen. The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act is now American law, and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency is taking on the monumental task of working to enforce this human rights regulation.

We are asking our SOAR brothers and sisters to take the time to contact your members of Congress and the President to do everything in their power to uphold this new law.

You can call your member of the U.S. House of Representatives or U.S. Senator at their state and district offices or reach them by phone by calling the U.S. Capitol at **202-224-3121**. Please also contact the White House and leave a message for President Biden at **202-456-1111**. You can also take action by going to the Alliance for American Manufacturing website www.americanmanufacturing.org and filling out a TAKE ACTION letter.

Please let our elected leaders know that this law must be fully enforced and that no products connected in any way to forced labor in Xinjiang—either directly or with parts made in Xinjiang—reach American shores. Our country must not be complicit in the atrocities that have befallen the Uyghurs and other minority groups in communist-ruled China.

Jeff Bonior is a staff writer at the Alliance for American Manufacturing

District 13 Gets a New SOAR Chapter

New SOAR Chapter 13-4 was formally presented with its official charter at the 13th International SOAR Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

On August 5, SOAR Int'l President Bill Pienta and USW District 13 Director Larry Burchfield, presented Chapter 13-4 President David Bradford with their charter as the newest SOAR chapter in District 13.



Organizing a SOAR chapter is not an easy task, let alone during a pandemic. Despite this challenge, the new chapter successfully organized its chapter and will be home to retirees from USW Local Union 895, an amalgamated local that represents Steelworkers at 15 facilities in the Dallas, Texas area, mainly in the paper sector of our union.

Serving as the chapter's first president will be David Bradford, a retiree from West Rock Corporation (LU 895-07.) Andres Rosas, former District 13 board member; Lawrence Castillo, USW District 13 staff and Bradford worked tirelessly over the last year, despite COVID-19, laying the foundation for this new chapter, which already has approximately 30 members.

Bradford also serves the local union as their business manager. Joining him as newly elected officers for Chapter 13-4 are: Connie White, vice president; Tenita Beard, recording secretary; Terry Troupe, financial secretary; and Donna Madden, treasurer. Additionally, Marcus Bowman, Lawrence Castillo and Marcus Flowers will serve as trustees.

The chapter plans on holding quarterly meetings, and they will support the work of LU 895 while fighting against efforts to compromise vital programs like Medicare and Social Security.

SOAR welcomes all our new members from Chapter 13-4, and together we will continue the fight for retired and working families. In solidarity!

Pictured from left: SOAR Chapter 13-4 President David Bradford, USW District 13 Director Larry Burchfield, then-District 13 SOAR Executive Board Member Andres Rosas, and SOAR Int'l President Bill Pienta pose for a picture after the charter presentation held during the 13th SOAR Int'l Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

How the INFLATION REDUCTION ACT Benefits Retirees

Our work in Rapid Response has always been focused on our core values of retirement security, job security and trade, collective bargaining, health care, domestic economic issues, and health and safety. In the last two years, we have fought for and seen gains in each of these areas. Finally, in mid-August, we saw a huge win that touched each of these issues with the passage and signing into law of the Inflation Reduction Act.

The Inflation Reduction Act plans to extend federal subsidies for the ACA (Affordable Care Act) through 2025. This change will help an estimated 13 million Americans afford healthcare. In addition, after three decades of attempts, the Inflation Reduction Act takes on one of the most powerful special interests in history—the pharmaceutical lobby—to deliver cost savings directly to American families.

And most notably, our retirees will benefit greatly from provisions in the law.

- ▶ For the 50 million Americans with Medicare drug coverage, the new law will cap out-of-pocket costs at a maximum of \$2,000 per year while allowing Medicare the ability to negotiate prices—with the ultimate intent of lowering prescription drug costs for seniors.



- ▶ Insulin, in particular, will be capped for Medicare enrollees at \$35 per month, which should help ease the financial strain for the 50 million beneficiaries who suffer from diabetes.
- ▶ The Inflation Reduction Act also includes inflation controls, where pharmaceutical companies will be penalized for imposing price increases beyond inflation.
- ▶ Under the Inflation Reduction Act, vaccines will be covered for both Medicare and Medicaid participants, further reducing medical costs for retirees.

This historic bill greatly reduces the cost of health care for millions of Americans who buy coverage on their own and for many Medicare beneficiaries. In addition, it will enable people to get and keep affordable coverage in the ACA marketplaces. The progress on prescription drugs is a milestone achievement toward making prescription drugs more affordable for Medicare patients and could pave the way for future reforms.

It truly is victories like winning the provisions in this bill that continue to build and sustain the middle class and allow folks to retire with dignity. SOAR plays a huge role in achieving these victories by staying informed and engaged in the legislative work and the impacts on our core values. Thank you, and onward!



The Remarkable Inflation Reduction Act ~ Passed without ANY Republican Support

By Robert Roach, Jr.

The historic Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), signed into law by President Biden in August, is truly groundbreaking.

Much has been written about the ways it will lower prescription drug prices: millions of seniors will benefit from Medicare being able to negotiate lower drug prices; insulin prices will be capped at \$35 per month; and drug costs for Medicare Part D beneficiaries will be capped at \$2,000 per year.

Seniors can and should also take advantage of the free vaccines available in 2023 through the IRA in order to prevent diseases like shingles.

But beyond that, this victory was especially satisfying because it showed seniors defeating the pharmaceutical industry for once. The efforts of 4.4 million Alliance members across the nation and our allies defeated one of the most powerful industries in the country.

The pharmaceutical industry spent at least \$187 million on lobbying in 2022 trying to protect their enormous profits. Congress after Congress and President after President

have failed or been unable to rein in drug costs due to Big Pharma's influence.

Alliance members know all about this. We have been fighting to allow Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices for two decades. Our members first took bus trips to Canada to obtain more affordable medications as far back as 2002.

Now we will finally start to see results. The \$2,000 annual out-of-pocket drug spending cap ALONE will help 1.4 million Medicare beneficiaries who today spend more than \$2,000 each year on prescription drugs.

And all of this passed without ANY Republican support. No Republican House members and no Republican Senators voted for the IRA. Please remember that when you vote in the midterm elections.

Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously the General Secretary-Treasurer of the IAMAW.

For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.



Don't Miss this IMPORTANT DEADLINE!

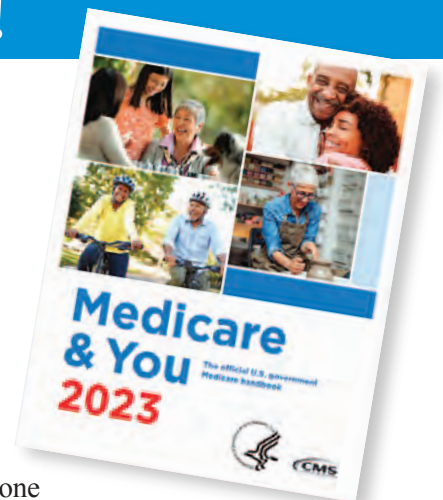
Open Enrollment season for all Medicare enrollees runs through December 7.

Have you looked at your Medicare Part D and Advantage plans to ensure they still work for you? Each year, both Medicare Advantage and Part D plans make changes to their benefits, cost-sharing, provider networks and monthly premiums. That means the plan that best served you in 2022 may not be the best plan for you next year.

Given that out-of-pocket health care costs may consume 25 percent or more of a Social Security check, it's especially important that beneficiaries take the time to ensure last year's plans, still meet their needs.

If you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can change to a different plan one time during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period, between January 1–March 31 each year.

For more information on joining, dropping, and switching plans, visit Medicare.gov or call **1-800-MEDICARE**. Also, the link to the 2023 *Medicare and You* handbook follows:



<https://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10050-medicare-and-you.pdf>



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