

USW@Work

A Regular Publication of the United Steelworkers

Volume 19/2

A Powerful Voice for Workers



Charleeka Thompson, Conference MC and Panel Lead, extends a warm welcome to NextGen delegates at the USW Int'l NextGen Conference kickoff.

A group of SOAR leaders joined forces with more than 1,200 young USW activists in March to help build the future of the union during the 2024 Next Generation conference in Pittsburgh.

The five-day event, packed with workshops, panel discussions, community service projects, speeches, public solidarity actions and other activities, provided an opportunity for longtime USW leaders and retirees, along with the newest generation of members, to build relationships and learn from each other.

SOAR President Bill Pienta began his United Steelworkers career in 1966 as an electrician at a steel mill. Before taking on his leadership role in SOAR, he served as president of Local 2693 and later

Bridging the (Next) GENERATION GAP

SOAR and NextGen Members Build Connections at Conference in Pittsburgh

on the USW's International executive board as director of District 4.

Pienta said that the NextGen conference provided much-needed connections between younger members and more seasoned union activists like him, both of whom have much to learn from each other.

"As I get older, I learn how much I don't know," Pienta said. "We have to move forward, and we have to do it together."

Among the dozens of workshops at the conference was one specifically focused on that idea — "From NextGen to SOAR: A Lifetime of Activism"—which attracted a diverse crowd of members to discuss how the USW could get stronger together.

"We're here to learn, and I believe I am taking home a lot more information than I gave," said Pienta, who added that he never cared for the expression that young union members "stand on the shoulders" of retirees. "I prefer to say that we stand 'shoulder to shoulder.' We need each other."

SOAR Vice President (East) Doug Macpherson said he hoped that SOAR members would build closer connections with rank-and-file USW workers in the regions where they live and work, both to engage on political issues and to build social connections.

"Maintaining these relationships as we age is very important," Macpherson said.

SOAR Secretary-Treasurer Denise Edwards, who worked as a millwright at a U.S. Steel facility in Western Pennsylvania, said that SOAR helped her and her fellow retirees to stay connected to each other after they left the mill.

"We're not going anywhere," said Edwards, who served on her local borough council for 18 years and encouraged her fellow members to

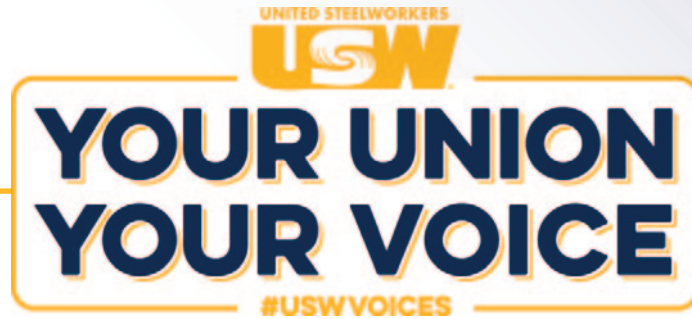
continued on page 3



In a workshop session, SOAR Int'l President Bill Pienta advocates for the vital role of SOAR. Lena Sutton, SOAR Canadian National Coordinator, and Julie Stein, SOAR Director, are seated alongside him.



BILL PIENTA
SOAR President



JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

A combined message from SOAR President Bill Pienta and SOAR Director Julie Stein

In March, our union embarked upon another round of the Your Union, Your Voice campaign.

Our union first launched Your Union, Your Voice (YUYV) in 2020 to ensure USW members' and retirees' opinions were reflected at every level of our union's work.

We circulated a union-wide membership survey and held dozens of town hall meetings, providing valuable opportunities for our district directors, other elected union leaders and staff to hear what was on our members' and retirees' minds.

Because this feedback proved so vital in shaping our union's work, we repeated this effort in 2022, and it continues to inform our efforts as we head into 2024.

In April, USW districts began holding town hall meetings in locations across the United States. These meetings are again an opportunity for USW members, retirees, and families to participate and be part of these important discussions.

Additionally, our union has launched another membership survey to gauge our members' and retirees' views on some of the biggest issues facing working and retired Americans today.

If you haven't already responded to this survey, you can find it at www.uswvoices.org. Town hall meetings are also posted on this website, publicized through our social media channels, and shared by USW districts. You will also find other ways to get involved in the YUYV campaign on this site.

Our common values, like fair pay, safe workplaces, a secure retirement, and vibrant communities, connect us as union members.

Please take the time to attend a town hall meeting, participate in this survey, and get further involved with the YUYV campaign. Share this information widely with your SOAR chapters and fellow USW retirees and families.

Your voice is an essential part of this effort.



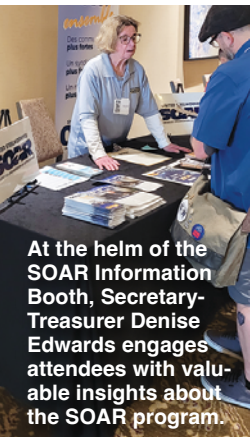
On May 23, 1985, at the Union's 30th International Convention, USW delegates voted unanimously to add an amendment to the USW Constitution recognizing SOAR as an affiliate organization of the USW, solidifying its focus on the unique issues impacting USW retirees and their spouses.

Since then, SOAR has been integral to our union's mission by actively defending vital programs like Social Security and Medicare, protecting Steelworker pension plans, and more. Further, SOAR has engaged in countless efforts to assure security for current and future generations of retirees regardless of whether they belong to a union.

SOAR is how retirees stay connected to our union and where we continue the fight for retired and working families.

Bridging the (Next) GENERATION GAP

continued from page 1



At the helm of the SOAR Information Booth, Secretary-Treasurer Denise Edwards engages attendees with valuable insights about the SOAR program.

get involved in their communities in a similar fashion.

Lena Sutton of District 6, who serves as the Canadian national coordinator for SOAR, recalled her first experiences as a union member in 1974 and pointed out that the USW has

grown to be much more diverse as the years have passed, while adding thousands of members in higher education, health care, service industries and other non-industrial workplaces.

Sutton encouraged USW members of all ages to become activists as early as possible and to stay active through retirement and beyond, because health care, wages, labor rights, retirement security and other issues are important to all workers, regardless of their age.

“We have to come together. We have the same issues, we have the same fights,” Sutton told NextGen leaders. “You are the future of SOAR, but you’re also the now. We have to be open to your ideas, and vice-versa.”

Sutton congratulated the hundreds of young USW activists gathered at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh on the spirit they showed during the five-day conference.

“The enthusiasm is unbelievable,” she said.

One of those activists, Zack Mainhart, co-chair of the NextGen committee for Local 1557 at U.S. Steel’s Clairton Coke Works, said he was glad to be able to

build connections with some of the union’s most experienced leaders, who have demonstrated that, through solidarity, workers can overcome any obstacles in their path.

“They’ve been through a lot of struggles, and they continue to even into retirement,” Mainhart said. “For us to be able to understand our struggles, we need to learn from them and how they navigated those situations.”

That educational exchange across the generations goes both ways, Mainhart said.

“For them to be able to relate to us, we have to build that bridge between the generations and become one,” he said.

Pienta said that as the USW has evolved and diversified, SOAR has likewise tried to “reinvent itself,” and must continue to do so, with as much help as possible from younger workers and new retirees. He encouraged NextGen leaders to return to their locals after the conference and build stronger connections with retired USW members in their communities.

“It’s not simply that we’re the past,” Pienta said in addressing NextGen activists. “You’re the union’s first level of activism, and SOAR is simply the next level of activism in our union. We will not be successful without your help.”

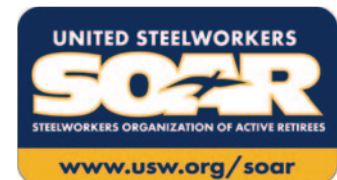
Curious NextGen delegates gather at the SOAR Information Booth, eager to learn more about the program. Bob Sutton, D6 SOAR Activist; Bill Pienta, SOAR Int’l President; and Doug Macpherson, SOAR Int’l Vice President, share their expertise.



2024

HAPPY SPRING!

STAY ACTIVE. STAY INVOLVED. STAY CONNECTED.
STRONGER TOGETHER.



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



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

Julie Stein, Editor
Jay McMurren, Copy Editor
Eric Russell, Copy Editor

Address editorial material to:

Editor, *USW@Work*, *SOAR in Action*
United Steelworkers
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222



Send address changes only to:

USW Membership Department
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Or E-mail: MEMBERSHIP@USW.ORG

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.

SOAR Chapter 3-30 Celebrates USW Local 7884's 50th Anniversary Book

By Gilbert Bourgeois, President, and Murray Haight, Vice President, SOAR Chapter 3-30, Elkford, B.C.

We are writing to share with you the remarkable achievement of SOAR Chapter 3-30 in helping to produce the USW Local 7884 50th Anniversary Book, commemorating the years 1971-2021. This monumental project was a collaborative effort that involved extensive research from dedicated SOAR Chapter 3-30 members, as well as active 7884 union members and executive members.

The 50th Anniversary Book serves as a tribute to the brothers and sisters of Local 7884 at Fording River Operations, who have tirelessly worked over the past five decades to establish numerous collective agreements. Despite facing numerous challenges along the way, their unwavering dedication, sacrifices, determination and unity have paved the way for the benefits that we enjoy today.

This comprehensive book not only chronicles the history of Local 7884 but also highlights the significant milestones, achievements, and contributions made by



Left to right: SOAR Chapter 3-30 Vice President Murray Haight and President Gilbert Bourgeois with the USW Local 7884 50th Anniversary Book.

its members throughout the years. It is a testament to the resilience and strength of the union and its commitment to advocating for the rights and well-being of its members. The production of this book required countless hours and days of meticulous research, compilation and editing with the help of our designer Norja Vandrelst, Color Infusion. The attention to detail and dedication of all those involved is evident on every page, making this a truly invaluable resource for current and future members of Local 7884.

We believe that the publication of the USW Local 7884 50th Anniversary Book is a momentous occasion that deserves recognition and celebration of this important piece of Steelworker history.

SOAR Lobbies for Fair Oxygen Therapy Pricing

By Gilbert Bourgeois, President, and Murray Haight, Vice President, SOAR Chapter 3-30, Elkford, B.C.

The USW SOAR 3-30 Chapter has initiated a bold lobby campaign to combat the alarming price gouging of oxygen therapy and equipment in the Elk Valley in B.C.

Local residents have been reeling on the discovery of soaring prices for essential medical supplies, up to double the rates found in city retailers and online markets.

USW SOAR 3-30 aims to shed light on this unjust practice and advocate for fair pricing regulations to protect the community's health and well-being. With the cost of oxygen therapy and equipment

skyrocketing locally, accessing vital health care resources has become an economic burden for many Elk Valley residents.

The disparity in pricing has raised serious concerns among community members, prompting USW SOAR 3-30 to take action. By launching this lobby campaign, the organization is rallying support to address the issue at both local and legislative levels.

As Elk Valley residents grapple with the financial strain of inflated medical supply costs, USW SOAR 3-30's advocacy efforts seek to bring about tangible change. Through collaboration with stakeholders and policymakers, the

campaign endeavours to establish pricing standards that ensure equitable access to essential health care resources for all members of the community.

In the face of adversity, USW SOAR 3-30 remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding the rights and well-being of Elk Valley residents. Together, we stand united in the fight against price gouging, advocating for a future where health care affordability is not a privilege but a fundamental right.



SOAR Chapter 6-17 Joins With USW Locals in Sault Ste. Marie FOCUSING on HEALTH CARE CRISIS

By Burnie Thorp, President
SOAR Chapter 6-17, Sault Ste. Marie, ON

In 1959, the United Steelworkers in Sault Ste. Marie, under the leadership of John Barker, sought to find a better way to deliver health care to its members in the days before universal health care was established in Canada. The Steelworkers union knew of the Group Practice of Medicine and decided that this was the solution they were seeking. The union embarked on the building of the Group Health Centre (GHC) by asking members to commit to raising \$800,000 (\$8,500,000 in today's dollars) through payroll deductions. Each member agreed to commit to contribute \$135 over 27 pay periods (\$53 per pay period in today's dollars). In 1963, the GHC became a reality despite strong opposition, especially from the local medical community.

The GHC thrived. Roy Romanow, as Chair of the 2002 Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, touted the GHC as a model of comprehensive health delivery that should serve as an example for the rest of the country. Many in Sault Ste. Marie and the surrounding area saw the value being delivered by the GHC such that up to 80,000 people in a population of 110,000 became members.

Cracks began to appear in July 2023 when 3,000 patients were about to be de-rostered because their doctor was retiring and no replacement could be found. People were shocked and upset. Then a huge, almost cataclysmic, crack occurred in January 2024 when the GHC announced the de-rostering of more than 10,000 patients effective May 31, again because doctors were retiring or resigning with no replacements. The impact on the community was devastating because so many were being impacted at once. Even more distressing was that those being de-rostered included some of those who had been the "first brickers," those who had committed in 1959 to build the GHC. If your doctor was retiring or resigning, you were out.

As President of SOAR Chapter 6-17, I sent an email to the presidents of USW locals: Mike DaPrat, Local 2251 (hourly-rated production and maintenance employees at Algoma Steel); Rebecca McCracken, Local 2724 (salaried and technical employees at Algoma Steel); Hans DeFeyter, Local 9548 (employees at Tenaris' tube mill); and the USW Northwestern Ontario Area Co-ordinator, Marc Ayotte. I asked if we should make a collective response since the USW was instrumental in the creation of the GHC. With all in favour, we met in late January. As expected, USW 2251 President Mike DaPrat came well prepared since 2251 had already begun to search through their archives as it was the local that was first to get the GHC idea off the ground. John Barker was President of



2251 before becoming the USW Area Co-ordinator. Members of 2251 had served on the Board of Directors from the outset and had the records going all the way back.

Our first action was to draft letters to Ontario Premier Doug Ford and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau with copies to their respective ministers of health, our MPP and MP, the leaders of the opposition at Queen's Park and in Ottawa, the mayor, the GHC, Algoma District Medical Group (which represents the doctors who work at GHC), USW National Director Marty Warren, USW District 6 Director Myles Sullivan and SOAR National Co-ordinator Lena Sutton. When the letters were sent, they were also released to the media.

This letter brought some response, not so much from politicians, but from members of the community who had information related to the physician shortage. One huge piece of information was that there were 50 internationally trained physicians living in Sault Ste. Marie who were struggling to get certified. (This was also mentioned in the interview that Dr. Jodie Stewart of the Algoma District Medical Group did with Matt Galloway on CBC radio's "The Current").

There is a program in B.C. that is dealing with the same issue aimed at fast-tracking certification. We also learned that a similar program existed in Ontario but seemed to be under the radar. Since this seemed like a sure-fire solution to the immediate crisis, this spawned a second letter signed by the USW locals, the USW Area Co-ordinator and SOAR.

On Feb. 21, Ayotte, McCracken, DeFeyter, Joe Krmpotich of the USW Area Office and I went to Toronto to meet with Official Opposition NDP Leader Marit Stiles and NDP Health Critic France Gelinias and to participate in a media conference and after the Ontario Legislative Assembly's Question Period. DaPrat joined via telephone. We also attended Question Period but unfortunately missed the fireworks when Stiles raised the issue because we were still answering media questions. I was interviewed by City News as well as the Toronto Star. The media conference was also picked up by SooToday.com.

On March 1, members of the Steelworkers, SOAR, other unions (Unifor, CUPE, OPSEIU, the Sault and Area Labour Council) and the Algoma Health Coalition held a rally outside local MPP Ross Romano's Constituency Office in Sault Ste. Marie.

continued on page 11

SOAR in ACTION



Martins Ferry, OH—SOAR Chapter 23-9, known as the Steelworker Retirees of Martins Ferry Area, meets monthly at the former Local 1138 union hall, now serving as the USW District 1 staff office in Martin Ferry. On March 6, while traveling, USW Int'l President Dave McCall and USW District 1 Director Donnie Blatt stopped by the chapter meeting to say hello to the chapter members.

From the center, SOAR Chapter 23-9 President Frank Papini stands with USW Int'l President Dave McCall, USW District 1 Director Donnie Blatt, and chapter members. Staying Connected!



Muscle Shoals, AL—SOAR Chapter 9-4 President Dan Whited congratulated USW Local 200 President Heath Ayers on the completion of the local's new union hall. The chapter held its monthly meeting at the new location on March 20. SOAR 9-4, known as the LU 200 Retirees, appreciates Local 200 for allowing the chapter to hold its monthly SOAR meetings at the new hall. We're better together! In solidarity!



St. Paul, MN—On March 13, USW District 11 held a Lobby Day at the Minnesota state capital. Members of SOAR Chapter 11-5 Duluth and SOAR Chapter 33-7 Minneapolis joined the delegation of steelworkers in St. Paul, where they met with legislators of their district.

From Left: Lee Popovich, Chapter 11-5 President; Glenn Jackson, Chapter 11-5 Vice President; USW District 11 Director Cathy Drummond; Chapter 33-7 President Gerry Parzino and Gary Evenson, Chapter 33-7 Activist. SOAR was in the house!



St. Paul, MN—Members of SOAR Chapter 33-7, also known as the Twin Cities SOAR Retirees, marched on January 27 with the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation in the St. Paul Winter Carnival Grand Day Parade. SOAR Chapter 33-7 President Gerry Parzino is holding the banner on the left, and USW D11 Staff Representative Justin Recla is carrying the banner on the right. In solidarity!

Photo credit: Michael Moore, editor of the St. Paul Union Advocate newspaper.



Corpus Christi, TX—On February 6, members of SOAR Chapter 13-1, also known as the Corpus Christi SOAR Chapter, celebrated its 15th anniversary! Pictured, SOAR Chapter 13-1 President Andy Rosas holds the cake honoring this special day!

The chapter is home to retirees from former USW Local 235A, which represented steelworkers at the Reynold Aluminum (Sherwin Alumina) facility near Gregory, Texas. The plant closed in 2016 after a nearly two-year lockout of Local 235A's members, but the chapter remains at 60 members strong!



Moline, IL—On March 26, SOAR Chapter 11-4 members once again volunteered at Bridging the Gap's annual taco dinner to help raise funds for the homeless veterans in the Quad Cities area of Iowa/Illinois. Thank you for all the donations of food, baskets, money, and hard work!



Granite City, IL—On March 11, proceeds from SOAR Chapter 34-2, the Steelworker Retirees of Tri-Cities Area Trivia Night, were presented during the chapter's monthly meeting.

The successful event, held on January 27 and co-sponsored by the USW Local 1899 Women of Steel, will assist in Jordan Ayers' lifetime care and support of the Granite City Saturday Breakfast Ministries.

Proceeds also allowed the chapter to present the Granite City Breakfast Ministry with a \$2,000 check to support its effort to provide a hot breakfast to struggling people in the Granite City community.

Chapter President Dennis Barker stated, "Thank you to the Local 1899 Women of Steel Committee, the Trivia sponsors, and everyone who attended the Trivia Night for making it a huge success!"

Jordan, the 18-year-old grandson of SOAR member Dennis Warren, suffered a workplace injury that resulted in Jordan becoming dependent on lifetime care. The chapter presented the family with a check for \$9,500.



WILL MEXICO RESPOND?

as U.S. Ratchets up the Pressure on Steel Imports Making Its Way in From China

Is the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) on trade turning into a redux of the failed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)?

Well, not exactly. The USMCA has created more balanced, reciprocal trade and includes a number of important upgrades.

But the USMCA contains NAFTA's zero-tariff policy that is now being challenged by members of Congress as Mexico has become a third-party, tariff-free dumping ground of Chinese steel.

Thanks to the Section 232 tariffs imposed by the Trump administration, China faces a 25 percent tariff on all its steel and aluminum products that are directly imported into the U.S. To circumvent this American policy, China is using Mexico as a vehicle to ship its steel into the U.S., an end run that allows China to escape most tariffs and duties.

The USMCA does allow, however, for the tariffs to be reinstated on Mexico if steel imports surge.

Well, a surge is indeed happening, and U.S. Senators Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) have taken notice. Along with a dozen other colleagues, they have sent a letter to the Biden administration's national security advisor alleging that Mexico breached the trade deal.

In mid-March legislation was introduced in the House by Reps. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.) and Rick Crawford (R-Ark.) that would return tariffs of 25 percent for no less than one year and give the president the authority to impose additional tariff rate quotas on specific products as needed.

Known as the Stop Mexico's Steel Surge Act, members of both the Senate and House point to the removal of the 25 percent tariffs on steel from Mexico in May of 2019 that was part of an agreement which stipulates that if steel imports "surge meaningfully

beyond historic volumes of trade...the importing party may impose duties of 25 percent...in respect to the individual product(s) where the surge took place."

It has become clear that Mexican steel imports now "exceed historic volumes of trade" and are "surging meaningfully" into our market.

The 2019-2022 Mexican iron and steel surge is the largest from any iron and steel exporter to the U.S. The volume of annual iron and steel exports from Mexico has increased approximately 73 percent over the pre-Section 232 baseline of 2015-2017. Semi-finished steel and long product imports are up 120 percent and steel conduit imports have risen even more by an alarming 577 percent.

The wave of Mexican steel imports has already contributed to the loss of more than 200 steel jobs in California and led to the closing of one of less than a dozen American factories that produce steel conduit. Many steel producers are concerned that additional production cuts, layoffs and plant closures are imminent.

Bilateral trade between Mexico and China has boomed in recent years as tariffs have curtailed some U.S.-China trade and Mexico has become a bridge for Chinese goods destined for the U.S. market.

Even if this becomes legislation that is unlikely to succeed in passing both chambers of Congress, it will provide the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) negotiating leverage as it continues to do something about this unfair trade practice.

That Congress is taking up this issue early on is a positive sign that it is serious about enforcing the USMCA and not letting this trade agreement become another NAFTA debacle.

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





Dave McCall



Photo by Getty Images

The widowed single mom attacked grocery shopping with the doggedness of a Marine on a mission.

To provide for her family in the face of corporate price-gouging, she bought off-brand items and selected eggs for protein instead of higher-costing meat. She even worked multiple jobs to keep the family solvent.

And despite the challenges she faced, she never complained, recalled Denny Mitchell, a longtime United Steelworkers (USW) activist who's filled with admiration for the way the woman raised her family.

Ordinary working people like Mitchell's friend continue to build America with humble heroism, even as the greedy rich try to cheat them not only at the checkout line but everywhere from the workplace to the halls of power.

"It's a fight. It's always a fight," observed Mitchell, noting that in February, Kellogg's CEO Gary Pilnick

underscored the arrogance of the one percent when he flippantly suggested that struggling families eat cereal for dinner.

Pilnick, who pockets millions in salary and incentive compensation, runs a corporation largely responsible for the rampant price-gouging in the nation's grocery stores.

Kellogg's jacked up prices by more than 14 percent over the past couple of years while announcing plans to shower shareholders with stock buybacks and dividends.

Other food-makers joined in the exploitation, raising prices, reducing the amount of product in their packaging or switching to cheaper, lower-quality ingredients that enable them to pad their bottom lines on unwitting consumers' backs.

U.S. Sen. Bob Casey of Pennsylvania released a report in December assailing numerous companies for "shrinking products to super-size profits." Among many other examples, Casey revealed that General Mills quietly shaved 1.2 ounces from boxes of Cocoa Puffs

in 2021 while Conagra started skimping on ingredients in its Smart Balance spread in 2022, "resulting in a watery product that sparked consumer backlash."

Even Cookie Monster resents the unscrupulous sleight of hand. "Me cookies are getting smaller," the lovable Muppet grouched, in a hugely popular social media post in early March, shaming greedy food companies.

Mitchell said his friend, the single mom, worked so hard to provide nutritious meals that her kids never went without or even realized that she struggled.

Still, her sacrifices fuel his contempt today for millionaires and billionaires eager to fleece the working Americans who kept the nation functioning all through the pandemic.

"Let's get a little bit more out of them," said Mitchell, a retired member of USW Local 135L and now an active member of Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) Chapter 4-1 in Tonawanda, N.Y., summing up the mindset of the rich. "It's a constant squeeze."

Yet it isn't enough for the wealthy to take ever-larger portions of Americans' paychecks. They also plot alongside right-wing politicians to inflict more pain on workers with no income at all.

On March 1, West Virginia's corporate-friendly, Republican-controlled Senate passed a bill that would not only reduce unemployment benefits—supported by employer contributions—but impose the deepest cuts on those struggling the longest.

They'd rather force people into dead-end jobs than support them during the search for family-sustaining employment. That helps corporations exploit low-wage work forces while putting families on a course for poverty.

Fortunately, also in March, pro-worker lawmakers in Nevada stymied proposed cuts in their state's unemployment compensation program after publicly embarrassing the bill's Republican supporters for coddling the rich at the expense of working people.

"We fight over nickels and dimes and pennies in this place when it comes to poverty, and we give money away like it's a free-for-all when it comes to the most wealthy,"



Denny Mitchell



Vikki Marshall

Connecticut SOAR Chapter Receives Charter

SOAR members in Connecticut were honored to have their SOAR chapter officially chartered by the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees.

On February 9, 2024, SOAR Chapter 4-21, known as the Steelworker Retirees of Connecticut, was presented its official charter by USW District 4 Director Dave Wasiura at the District 4 LM Conference in Norwich. The new state-wide chapter will be home to steelworker retirees from multiple local unions within the state.

Tammie Botelho, a former business agent and president of Local 134L, a large amalgamated local based in Orange, Ct., will serve as the chapter's first president. Over the past year, Al Polk, SOAR District 4 board member; Abdellatif "Abdou" Elberchouii, USW District 4 staff; and Nick Pillis, business agent and president of Local 134L, have worked to lay the foundation for this new chapter, which already has approximately 27 members.

The other chapter officers are Gary Beaulic (LU 40), vice president; Wanda Howard (LU 12160), recording secretary; Lorenzo Foreman (LU 134L), financial secretary; Frank Markey (LU 134L), treasurer; and Joe Pawlowski (LU 134L), Iva Johnson (LU 134L), and Kevin Clark (LU 134L), trustees.

The chapter's first meeting will be held on May 16, 2024. All Connecticut local union presidents are invited to attend to learn about SOAR and join our chapter.

The chapter plans to hold quarterly meetings to support the work of the local unions in Connecticut while fighting against efforts to compromise vital programs like Medicare and Social Security.

SOAR welcomes our new members from Chapter 4-21, and together, we will continue the "good" fight for retired and working families. In solidarity!



Norwich, CT— On February 9, 2024, SOAR Chapter 4-21, also known as the Steelworker Retirees of Connecticut, received their official charter while at the LM Conference in Norwich. Pictured from left: USW D4 Asst. to the Director Steve Finnigan, USW D4 Staff Rep. Abdellatif el Berchoui, SOAR Chapter 4-21 President Tammie Botelho, USW D4 Director Dave Wasiura, USW D4 Sub-District Director John Buonopane, SOAR Chapter 4-21 Recording Secretary Wanda Howard and USW Local 134L Business Agent and President Nick Pillis. Chapter 4-21 President Tammie Botelho stated, "They are excited to get to work!"

declared Democratic Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh, who led opposition to the measure.

A coalition of workers and their allies last year defeated proposed unemployment benefit cuts in Arizona, where Republicans float the idea from time to time either because they either fail to recognize the potential impact or don't care, said Vikki Marshall, president of the SOAR Chapter 39-8 in Tucson.

"We want to make sure our children are eating," she said, noting the cuts would have devastated single-income families. "We want to make sure they go to school with something in their stomachs and clothes on their backs."

"This is the only avenue they have. Nobody knocks on the door saying, 'I want to give you some money to tide you over,'" said Marshall, one of the union activists who oppose measures like these across the country.

Unions provide workers with a path forward.

Even as it exploited consumers, for example, Kellogg's also attempted to deny its manufacturing workers a decent living. So, in 2021, about 1,400 union members at four cereal plants staged a 77-day strike that forced the company to provide raises, pension increases and other enhancements.

"It was a tough strike. They didn't want to give anything. They wanted to take, take and take," Dave McLimans, a member of SOAR's executive board, said of Kellogg's management.

Ultimately, "solidarity, sticking together," won the day for the striking workers, added McLimans, who showed his support by joining the picket line at Kellogg's Lancaster County plant.

Inspired by that victory, and other worker wins, more and more Americans seek to join unions to secure not only the higher wages and better benefits but the safer working conditions and voice on the job that collective action provides.

The surge in union drives makes sense to McLimans, who took part in the USW's successful 105-day strike against Lukens Steel in 1991 and 1992.

McLimans credits the USW with paving the way for his middle-class life and secure retirement. And he knows that unions still serve as the only true bulwark for workers fighting corporate greed today.

"There comes a time when enough is enough," he said. "It's time we all come together and start kicking and screaming. We need to keep the pressure on."



Dave McLimans



SOAR EYES ON WASHINGTON

By Jay McMurrin, SOAR Legislative Director

USW Endorses Joe Biden for Reelection as President



Jay McMurrin

Usually, we dedicate this space to legislative issues pending before Congress. However, our union took action during the week of March 18, which is very important and needs to be discussed by every Steelworker in the United States. Our Int'l. Executive Board endorsed President Joe Biden for a second term as President of the United States. SOAR couldn't agree more with that decision, and we urge all members to get behind the President's bid for reelection.

WHY?

There are plenty of reasons why we

throw our support behind the candidate from Pennsylvania. The most recent was his words during the annual State of the Union Address.

During his speech, Biden said, "The middle class built America, and Unions built the middle class." If you are familiar with the President, you'll know those words were no one-time utterance. He speaks of our movement often and encourages workers to join our ranks wherever he goes.

He not only talks the talk, but he walks the walk. That couldn't be more evident than his visit to the picket lines in Detroit last fall during the UAW "Stand-Up Strike." At that time, he became the first president in U.S. history to walk an active picket line. He used the opportunity to urge the Detroit Big Three automakers to "reach a fair deal with the striking auto workers."

Beyond the visit to the picket line, Biden's biggest victories in his first term were matters that benefited working people. His first win came with the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs

Act, an issue that former President Donald Trump grappled with for four years but couldn't get legislation passed.

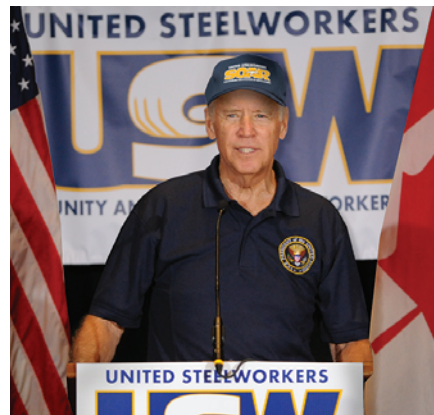
Biden convinced Congress to pass the largest infrastructure investment in the U.S. The Act created thousands of new construction jobs and is repairing hundreds of miles of roads and bridges. The strong "Buy American" language in the bill also creates new jobs in steel, equipment manufacturing, and other sectors that supply the construction industry.

Another major victory for the Biden administration came when he capped prescription insulin prices at \$35.00 per month. At the time, insulin prices were exploding, and many seniors were unable to pay for life-sustaining drugs. That action has saved our retirees hundreds of thousands of dollars.

While we're talking about the high costs of prescription drugs, another major accomplishment was legislation allowing Medicare to negotiate Rx prices with America's pharmaceutical companies for the first time. That legislation is just now taking effect, so we haven't seen the savings yet. However, it is sure to save seniors money and allow them to take their medication in prescribed doses.

SOAR members should be proud to support President Joe Biden for a second term for many reasons. We will be discussing them in future columns. For now, the list provided above is pretty impressive and shows where Biden's loyalty is.

Oh, and there is one more reason we haven't mentioned yet. As a native of Pennsylvania, Joe has been a friend of the United Steelworkers for years. He has worked with our union on many important issues, from unfair trade to workplace safety and health, the environment, and renewing labor laws. President Biden respects our union and its members and seeks our input on many important issues. He is a friend we can count on!



2015 Labor Day Celebration
USW Int'l Headquarters
Pittsburgh, Pa.



New Retiree Voting Record Released

By Robert Roach, Jr.

In March the Alliance for Retired Americans released its 2023 Congressional Voting Record, which scores how each U.S. Senator and Representative voted on critical retirement security issues. It is available at www.retiredamericans.org.

Almost every member of Congress claims to care about seniors. Our annual voting record shows which House and Senate members actually back up their words with actions and vote in older Americans' best interests.

Ten Senate and House floor votes are considered. They include votes on bills and amendments to establish a fiscal commission — which could lead to potentially deep cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other essential government programs; avoid default on the national debt; and undermine numerous health care protections for older Americans in the Affordable Care Act.

In addition, Congress cast key votes on funding for seniors programs and expanding voting access for millions of Americans.

What happens in Washington, D. C. has real consequences for every single American retiree and their families. Votes in Congress can either strengthen Americans' retirement security or make it more difficult to achieve.



The senior vote is always crucial in every election. The Alliance voting record is a valuable tool for older voters as they consider who to support in November. With Seniors voting at a higher rate than any other age group, the Alliance's voting record takes on even more importance.

Both the national 2023 Congressional Voting Record and a version for each state delegation are available now on the Alliance's website.

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.

SOAR Chapter 6-17 Joins With USW Locals in Sault Ste. Marie FOCUSING on HEALTH CARE CRISIS

continued from page 5

On March 6, the USW, SOAR and numerous other union leaders in Sault Ste. Marie had a meeting with federal Minister of Labour and Seniors Seamus O'Reagan and local MP Terry Sheehan. They reminded us that health is a provincial matter but said they supported our concerns and would do what they could to ensure that the \$3.1 billion transferred to Ontario by the federal government to address health funding would be used to address the primary care physician situation as outlined when the transfer was announced.

This meeting spawned a third letter on March 15, signed by the USW, SOAR and numerous local union leaders. It was addressed to MPP Romano seeking a meeting on this issue. The meeting was held on March 22 (see below). This letter was forwarded by Lena Sutton to all SOAR chapters in Canada to let them know about what was happening in Sault Ste. Marie and that this was their fight too.

On March 18, our SOAR Chapter met for its quarterly lunch and meeting. Our guest speaker was Al Dupuis, Chair of the Algoma Health Coalition, who reminded us that public health care was under threat in Ontario primarily because of underfunding even though it has been shown that there is plenty of money to fund it. Dupuis said if the government is claiming there is no money for public health care, how do they explain money going to private clinics that charge the

government significantly higher rates than are paid for the same procedures in public institutions?

On March 22, USW 2251 arranged a meeting with local MPP Romano, who is a member of the governing Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario and Chief Government Whip. Attending were several Steelworkers representatives including SOAR and representatives for other unions including Unifor, CUPE, Ontario Nurses' Association and some from the education sector.

After DaPrat's opening comments, the discussion that followed showed that Mr. Romano, who had struck a task force of "experts" to provide him with advice on how to identify the problem and present solutions, had already made up his mind that his task force was going to fix the problem without our input.

This is far from over. As in 1959, the Steelworkers union has done the heavy lifting on this issue and will continue to do so. SOAR is seen by the Steelworkers locally as an important ally in this endeavour. The USW encourages everyone over the age of 45 to join SOAR so that there will be a significant voice and, more importantly, voting block, which will have health care in the forefront at the next election.

SOAR Chapter 6-17 welcomes this support and will be there every step of the way.



USW Membership Department
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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