



Connection



A Report from the SOAR International Executive Board Meeting – Let’s Get Active!



The SOAR International Executive Board recently held their annual meeting in Pittsburgh. At that meeting, we welcomed two new Board members, John Patrick of District 13 and Jay McMurrin of District 2.

It is at this meeting that we discuss various issues pertaining to SOAR, give District reports, as well as discuss ways of making SOAR more relevant to the locals and to strengthening our chapters. It is during listening to the District reports that we hear just how much SOAR contributes to the union and the communities in which we live.

I think, for me, it is the most interesting and enjoyable portion of the meeting. I want to thank all the SOAR chapters that choose to become involved and contribute so much to what makes SOAR the institution that it is. It comes as no surprise that the chapters that are the most active are seeing the most growth; while other chapters are having a difficult time maintaining membership levels.

In an attempt to help the SOAR chapters grow and become more active, the Executive Board is supporting a proposal in which at-large members, those that belong to SOAR, but for one reason or another do not belong to a chapter, will be given an opportunity to join a chapter in their area. No one will be forced to join a chapter they do not desire to join; nor, will a chapter be compelled to accept new members.

After identifying chapters that are willing to accept members, we will be notifying the at-large members in the chapters’ area to see if something can be worked out. There are over 5,000 members of SOAR who are listed as at-large and reducing this number while growing the membership of area chapters should turn into a benefit for all.

Bill Pienta, SOAR President



“The future of the country rests on this election!” - Leo W. Gerard



“We can never insure 100 percent of the population against 100 percent of the hazards and vicissitudes of life, but we have tried to frame a law which will give some measure of protection to the average citizen and to his family... against poverty-ridden old age.”

– President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 8/14/35

Un mensaje de la reunión de la Junta Ejecutiva Internacional de SOAR - ¡Vamos a Activarnos!



El Consejo Ejecutivo Internacional de SOAR recientemente tuvo su reunión anual en Pittsburg. En esa reunión, dimos la bienvenida a dos nuevos miembros de la Junta, John Patrick del Distrito 13 y Jay McMurrin del Distrito 2.

Es en esta reunión que discutimos varios asuntos pertenecientes de SOAR, proporción informes de los Distritos, y discutimos formas de hacer que SOAR sea más relevante para los locales y para fortalecer nuestros capitulos. Es al escuchar los informes del Distritos que escuchamos cuanto contribuye A SOAR a los sindicatos y a las comunidades en las que viven. Es al escuchamos los informes de los Distritos que escuchamos cuanto contribuye SOAR a los sindicatos y a las comunidades en las que viven. Creo para me, es al mas interesante, y mas agradable parte de la junta. Quiero agradecer a todos los capítulos de SOAR que decidieron participar y contribuir tanto lo que hace que SOAR sea la institución que es. No sorprende que los capítulos que son los más activos sean los que tienen el mayor crecimiento; mientras que otros capítulos están teniendo dificultades para mantener los niveles de membresía.

En un intento de ayudar a que los capítulos de SOAR crezcan y se vuelvan más activos, la Junta Ejecutiva está apoyando una propuesta en la que se otorgarán miembros en general, aquellos que pertenecen a SOAR, pero por una razón u otra no pertenecen a un capítulo. una oportunidad para unirse a un capítulo en su área.

Después de identificar capítulos que estén dispuestos a aceptar miembros, notificaremos a los miembros en general en el área de capítulos para ver si se puede resolver algo. Hay más de 5,000 miembros de SOAR que figuran en la lista general y que reducen este número, mientras que aumentar la membresía de los capítulos de área debería convertirse en un beneficio para todos.

Bill Pienta, SOAR Presidente

**On Social Security's 83rd Anniversary
Program's Future Depends on November Elections**

After eight decades of paying benefits to multiple generations of retired workers – and keeping them out of poverty – one would think Social Security's legacy would be apparent and its promise secure. Yet, here we are in 2018, with Social Security under threat from conservatives who clearly don't believe in that promise. Using the misleading label "entitlement reform," they want to cut benefits, raise the retirement age, and [privatize](#) the program. They attempt to break the compact by dividing the generations with the specious argument that any "reforms" wouldn't affect current retirees, only future ones – who, in reality, won't need Social Security any less. Don't worry, we're only cutting your children and grandchildren's benefits – not yours!

Source: NCPSSM Blog

Tax Cuts for the Rich are Threatening Our Retirement Security



The Joint Committee on Taxation, a non-partisan Committee of the United States Congress, originally established under the Revenue Act of 1926, and is Congress' official estimator of tax legislation, reported that a lopsided 38 percent of the benefits of the tax bill that the president signed in December 2017 (H.R. 1) will go to households making more than \$1 million per year (approximately 3 of every 1,000 Americans who file taxes).¹

Though backers of the law said the tax cuts would pay for themselves, a new analysis by the Congressional Budget Office shows that under the new tax law the nation's debt could spike by \$33 trillion over the next ten years, potentially resulting in another debt crisis.²

With wages being stagnant for nearly three decades, you might be asking yourself how hard-working Americans are going to find the money to pay for this expensive law which benefits so few.

The answer – according to some in Congress – cuts to Social Security and Medicare, of course! As Pennsylvania Republican Senator Pat Toomey explained, “(t)hese big spending programs that are growing faster than the economy,”...“you’ve got to make some curbs.” That’s easy to say when the people who funded his campaign are the ones seeing the biggest benefit from H.R. 1.³

However, not everyone is on board with the idea. On September 23, 2018, it was announced that 19 U.S. Senators and 140 House members have added their name to a new Expand Social Security Caucus being led by Senators Bernie Sanders (VT), Elizabeth Warren (MA), and Democratic Reps. John Larson and Debbie Dingell of Michigan.⁴

As union members, we believe every American deserves a secure retirement. We also understand that Social Security and Medicare are programs that workers have paid into our entire lives. We won't forget this when we vote in the pivotal midterm elections which conclude on Tuesday, November 6.

Sources:

¹ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/joint-committee-on-taxation-distribution-tables-confirm-skewed-priorities-of>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/09/us/politics/federal-deficit-tax-cuts-spending-trump.html>

³ <https://community.aarp.org/t5/Politics-Current-Events/GOP-Speaker-Ryan-Cuts-OUR-Social-Security-gets-85-000-pension-at/td-p/2045985>

⁴ <https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/406495-more-than-150-democrats-launch-expand-social-security-caucus>

Julie Stein, SOAR Director

Most Americans Agree on Fair Trade



Americans across the country stand firm in their belief that anybody who is part of the political system in Washington, D.C. can't agree on anything.

This is unfortunate, because when you put partisan politics aside, many Americans agree on a variety of issues that would help move our country forward.

When asked to share your opinion on major policies of the federal government, it doesn't matter if you are a Democrat, Republican or Independent. These three groups agree on exponentially more policies when you take away their political party affiliation ideologies.

One example, from a recent poll conducted for the Alliance for American Manufacturing by the Mellman Group Inc., and Public Opinion Strategies suggests that most of the never-miss-an-election voters are more concerned about addressing China's unfair trade practices than the potential for a trade war. When asked to get tough on China and other countries that practice unfair trade, a whopping 81 percent of poll respondents agreed with the statement, "We must be willing to get tough with trade restrictions on countries like China who cheat in international trade."

Republicans led the way with 94 percent in agreement, but 78 percent of Independents and 70 percent of Democrats were in favor of a tougher trade stance, too. These numbers would likely be similar if partisan politics was not a factor.

The startling support of 94 percent of Republicans would decrease but the party faithful is supporting their man in the White House. The number of Democrats in favor would most likely increase but progressives are against anything and everything the president stands for. The Democrats are giving him the same treatment Republicans bestowed on President Obama.

So, maybe the number of Americans greatly concerned about fair international trade is closer to the 78 percent of Independents. This is still a stunning number of Americans that agree on one federal government policy.

This is overwhelming evidence that most Americans agree about correcting unfair trade and the current administration seems bound and determined to level the playing field.

AAM President Scott Paul said, "Even in this era of upended politics, pushing back against unfair trade practices is an issue that largely unites American voters."

Jeff Bonior, Staff Writer for the Alliance for American Manufacturing

SOAR Chapter Connection

A Regular Publication of SOAR

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Elaine Says...

Stuff.....that is what I am thinking about right now. I am sharing a photo of my dad, Alex Adams, who passed away on September 12, on his 100th birthday. Dad was a minimalist. He had enough kitchen things, linens, clothing, home maintenance gadgets, electronics, and memorabilia in his home to have a good life. My sister and I really appreciated his lifestyle. Once again, Dad provided a life lesson to his family. Don't have too much stuff! If only.....you can guess the rest. Yes, Charlie and I have way too much stuff!

The McNeil Report

When in the Navy, we drank coffee by the gallon. Then, when working shift work in a generating station, we drank coffee by the gallon. When retired, I continued to drink the stuff when SOAR Vice President, Harry Hynd told me that he used to roast his own coffee in a skillet.

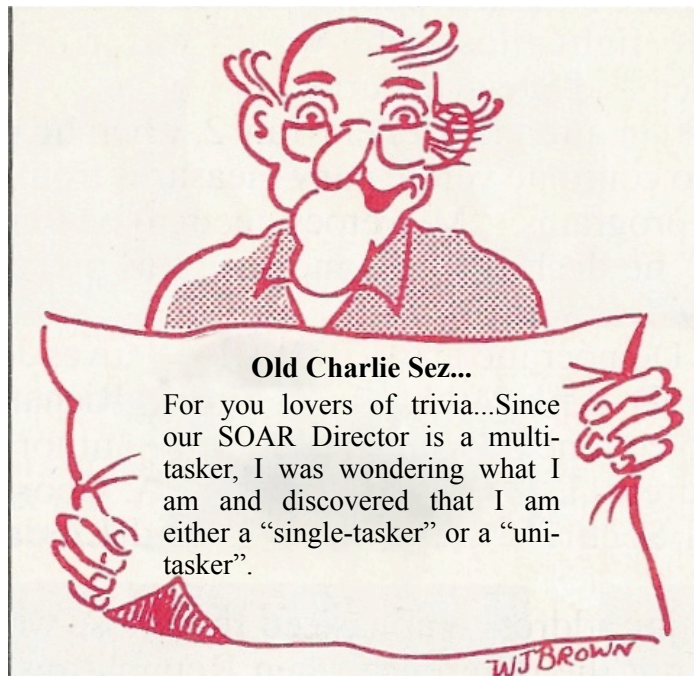
After some research, I discovered that I could roast my own coffee beans using one of those old hot air popcorn poppers. I've been doing that for years now and I encourage you coffee lovers to give it a try.



All you have to do is purchase some green coffee beans over the internet or at one of those coffee specialty stores if you live in one of these big cities.

It's a hobby, really. It takes about five minutes per day. But, just like growing your own tomatoes or green beans, they're absolutely the best tasting. Give it a try.....Charlie

Don't forget to email chapter and district articles and photos to the address on the left. Photos should be the highest resolution possible.



The “Expand Social Security” Caucus: Sign of Growing Momentum in Congress



Too many older Americans struggle to make ends meet. We’ve told politicians in Washington for years that an average monthly Social Security benefit of \$1,413 is not enough to ensure a dignified retirement. In fact, it puts the average retiree just above the poverty level.

This fact hasn’t stopped politicians from looking to cut or privatize Social Security time and again. And throughout 2018 we’ve heard near-constant threats, from top GOP officials both inside and outside the administration, to slash so-called “entitlement” spending in order to rein in federal deficits caused by the tax scam Congress passed in 2017.

Retirees know how important Social Security is to our quality of life, and that it needs to be protected for us and for future generations. We have earned these benefits, and we will not let anyone take them without a fight.

The newly formed Congressional Expand Social Security Caucus is comprised of more than 150 Democrats from the House and Senate who are committed to protecting, strengthening, and expanding Social Security.

In the Senate, the Expand Caucus is chaired by Senators Bernie Sanders (VT) and Elizabeth Warren (MA). In the House, co-chairs include Representatives Debbie Dingell (MI), Raúl Grijalva (AZ), Conor Lamb (PA), John Larson (CT), and Terri Sewell (AL).

Expanding Social Security will help all retirees, present and future, to have the secure retirement they worked a lifetime to achieve. We must support elected officials, like the members of this caucus, who understand that Social Security must be expanded to keep pace with retirees’ actual expenses.

Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously General Secretary–Treasurer of the IAMAW. For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.

“Blind belief in authority is the greatest enemy of truth.”

- Albert Einstein

It is Important to Vote



I know you heard this before that this is the most important election and you need to vote. I have to say that since I have been voting, for several decades and reviewing the impact and results of the last election, this really is the most important election for the middle – working class. Let me explain why I say that.

Take an objective review of what is happening with our government. Our various regulatory agencies, including the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), are being run by the appointment of individuals who do not even agree with the purpose and function of the agencies they have been appointed to. For example, the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) is reducing various protections regarding pollution and the environment, etc. Regulations that were intended to protect workers’ rights by the NLRB are being taken away, an Education Secretary that does not support all of the functions and the purpose of the agency, and now we see the attempt to appoint a Supreme Court Justice that is supported by conservative big money and business interests.

The recent tax cut legislation that provides most of the benefits to big business and the wealthy is estimated to increase the US Government deficit over a trillion and a half dollars. Some legislators are using this expected deficit as the basis for cutting Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid benefits. The list could go on and on.

What is happening with our government will, and can adversely affect us, our children and grandchildren. Elections have consequences, make sure you are registered and vote.

Bill Gibbons, PACE Representative



A Word To The Wise

Did you know about 1 million Americans go to the hospital with pneumonia every year? Pneumonia is a lung infection caused by pneumococcal disease, which can also cause blood infections and meningitis.

The pneumococcal shot is the best way to help prevent certain types of pneumonia and other pneumococcal infections. Medicare Part B covers the initial shot, plus a second shot (a year after you’ve gotten the initial shot). Talk with your doctor to see if you need one or both shots.

Source: Health and Human Services

Five Exercises to Improve Balance for Safety and Health

by Diane Archer



As we age, it becomes more likely that we will fall and break a hip or a shoulder. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that falls are the top cause of injury and death from injury for older adults. Exercise can improve your balance, reducing your risk of falls and promoting your safety and your health.



According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), one in three people over 65 fall each year, and more than two million end up in the emergency room. In 2014, older adults experienced 29 million falls, resulting in seven million injuries and costing Medicare about \$31 billion.

The consequences of a fall can be horrific, restricting your activities if not robbing you of your independence. So, it's important to do balance and strength exercises to help prevent falls. Here are five exercises to improve balance that the NIH recommends:

1. **Standing on one foot.** Place a chair in front of you and hold on to it with one hand. Then raise one leg and hold it up for 10 seconds. Then do it again with the other leg. Repeat this exercise three times on each leg.
2. **Walking heel to toe.** Place the heel of one foot in front of the toe of the other. Now take a step with your back foot and move it so that the heel is just touching the toe of your other foot. Repeat 18 more times. Focus your gaze on a spot in front of you to steady yourself. You can also hold your arms out on either side of you for balance.
3. **Back leg raises.** Place a chair in front of you and hold on to it with one hand. Breathe in. Lift one leg back as you breathe out. Keep the leg you stand on slightly bent. Repeat 10-15 times on each leg.
4. **Side leg raises.** Place a chair in front of you and hold on to it with one hand. Breathe in. Lift one leg to the side as you breathe out. Keep the leg you stand on slightly bent. Repeat 10-15 times on each leg.
5. **Balance walk.** Walk in a straight line for 20 steps lifting one knee up and then the other. You can hold your arms out on either side of you for balance. You can also focus your gaze on a spot in front of you.

Be sure to let your doctor know if you have fallen. And, bring the doctor a list of all the medications you are taking—over-the-counter and prescription—for your doctor to review. Some medications can increase your risk of falling. Also, get an eye exam each year. And, get rid of any fall hazards in your home.

Source: justcareusw.org

Five Ways to Ease Your Fear of Falling

by Dianne Lange



Editor’s note: According to the National Institutes of Health, more than one in three older adults falls each year and the likelihood of falling increases with age. More than 1.6 million of them end up in the emergency room, with bone fractures and other serious injuries. Dianne Lange of Senior Planet offers this advice to help prevent falls:



Having a fear of falling is a slippery slope. It turns out that being afraid you’re going to fall increases the risk that you will take a tumble, even when you’ve never fallen before. Whether your fear of falling is due to physical or medical issues, or you’re just anxious, there are things you can do to help yourself stay upright:

1. Do exercises for balance and strength. You want to make your legs stronger, improve your balance and raise your confidence level.
 - Tai Chi is a good example of a practice that does all three.
 - Yoga is strengthening and has many poses that improve balance, some of which you can do seated.
 - There are also balance exercises that you can do almost anywhere — including while you’re standing in line at the grocery store.
2. If you’re taking medications, have your health care provider or pharmacist review them so you’ll know if any cause dizziness, make you sleepy or might cause you to fall for any other reason.
3. Have your vision checked.
4. At home, put away anything you could trip over on stairs and paths that you often walk, so you won’t have to worry. You can find tips on making your home safe on the CDC website.
5. Check out your shoes. The American Pediatric Association has a [1-2-3 test](#) that can help you evaluate whether your shoes are optimal for balance.

Source: justcareusa.org

“The third-rate mind is only happy when it is thinking with the majority. A second-rate mind is only happy when it is thinking with the majority. A first-rate mind is only happy when it is thinking.”

A.A. Milne

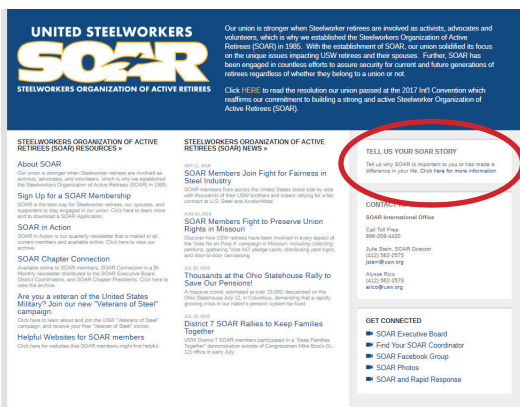


Photo on previous page is of the SOAR Executive Board members as of August 2018.

Left to right, by row:

1. Director, Julie Stein; President, Bill Pienta; Administrative Assistant, Alysse Rico; V.P. Harry Hynd;
2. V.P. (West) Al Becco; Sec/Treas Denise Edwards; Emeritus Connie Entrekin; Emeritus Dan McNeil;
3. Emeritus Charlie Averill; D 1 Bruce Bostick; D 2 Jay McMurrin; D 3 Dennis Carrigan;
4. D 4 Al Polk; D 5 Lawrence McBrearty; D 6 Doug MacPherson; D 7 Scott Marshall;
5. D 8 Bob Adkins; D 9 Claude Karr; D 10 Dave McLimans; D 11 Bonnie Carey;
6. D 12 Joel Buchanan; D 13 John Patrick; PACE, Bill Gibbons; Legislative, Ken Kovack.

New Reporting Tool: Tell Us Your SOAR Story



We now have a link on our SOAR webpage that allows members to “tell us their SOAR story.” Go to:

<https://www.usw.org/act/activism/soar>

New tool!

- Are you an active USW retiree or member of an active SOAR chapter?
- Has SOAR made a difference in your life? Your community?
- How are you or your chapter promoting SOAR? Tell us your SOAR story.

You simply fill in the field information like the one below, and then type in a paragraph or two as to why SOAR matters to you. You can even attach a photo, if you like. Once submitted, a thank you message will pop up on your screen that confirms that your story was sent.

Once we receive it, we’ll follow-up to gather more information and to determine the best way to promote the story, whether it be on the SOAR webpage or in an upcoming issue of SOAR in Action; or, maybe on our SOAR Facebook page.

We know there is much activism that goes unreported within SOAR and we hope this tool will make it easier for those who prefer to contact us online so we may better promote the activism of our SOAR chapters and members. Thanks for all you do to build SOAR!

Tell us your SOAR story

Are you an active USW retiree or member of an active SOAR chapter? Has SOAR made a difference in your life? Your community? How are you or your chapter promoting SOAR? Tell us your SOAR story.

Just fill out the form below and share your story in the area provided. You can even attach a photo to illustrate your story.

Form fields for submitting a SOAR story:

- First Name*
- Last Name*
- Email Address
- Phone Number*
- City
- Home State or Province
- Home ZIP or Postal Code*
- SOAR Chapter Number (if known)
- Add your image (optional)
 - Choose File | No file chosen

Text area: Tell us why SOAR matters to you in a paragraph or two...

SUBMIT



Social Security Joins in the Celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month



From September 15 to October 15, we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. This is when we honor the contributions of Hispanics to American society and celebrate this warm and vibrant culture. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanics make up about 17.8 percent of our nation's total population.

As with all ethnicities in America, Hispanics can benefit from learning about Social Security's benefit programs. We want to [share](#) with all Hispanics, particularly those of you who are younger, information about how Social Security helps support you now, what we mean for your future, and our commitment to be there with you throughout your life's journey. By knowing about our benefits and basic services, you can see how we can help you secure today and tomorrow.

Here are ten ways to get you started:

- 1 Go to our [website](#) to find a wealth of resources and information on everything our agency does. It's also available in Spanish at [SeguroSocial.gov](#).
- 2 Visit our [Hispanics and Social Security page](#) to learn how we are there for you. You can also share it with your [Spanish](#) speaking family and friends.
- 3 Understand what Social Security means to you during your [student](#) years.
- 4 Learn [how you earn Social Security credits](#).
- 5 Read how Social Security is with you from [your first job](#), through your [working life](#), and in your [retirement](#).
- 6 Open a [my Social Security](#) account to help you stay in control of your Social Security record and so much more!
- 7 Educate yourself on our [disability](#) program.
- 8 See how Social Security takes care of [surviving family members](#).
- 9 Help your older family members [stay informed](#).
- 10 Check out our [With You Through Life's Journey](#) infographic, also in [Spanish](#), and share it with your friends.

Social Security is always here for you. If you need information about programs and benefits, [visit us](#) anytime. Feliz Hispanic Heritage Month!