

# Connection

## Who's New to SOAR?



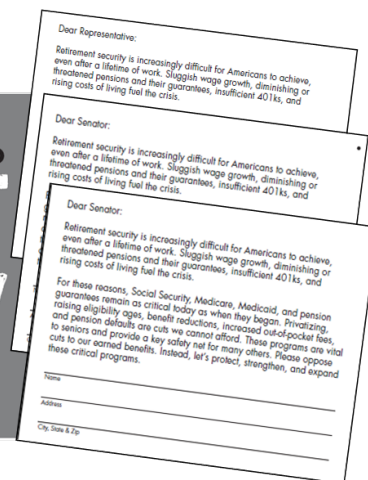
Please join us in welcoming Alysse Rico, our new administrative assistant to the SOAR Department. She joins us after working in our USW mailroom for the past three years. Alysse definitely will bring “younger” blood to SOAR and we’re excited to have her join the department!

# Welcome Alysse!

Alysse replaces our former administrative assistant, Lee Etta Hairston, who was selected to fill an open position in another department of the USW.

Alysse can be reached directly at 412-562-2578 or by calling the SOAR office on our toll-free number at 866-208-4420. Her email address is [arico@usw.org](mailto:arico@usw.org).

Again, WELCOME Alysse!



## To Sign the Postcard

Visit:

<http://usw.to/rrsoar>

**Attn: Chapter Presidents and Coordinators:**

Please try to get these post cards returned to Pittsburgh by the end of April. This is extremely important so that we can take them to our members of congress.

Thanks so much!

**From the President's Desk**

**GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER**



Our Union has recently concluded the elections of the International Officers and Directors. I would like to congratulate all of the officers and directors in our Union and thank them for what they do. The Local Union elections will be nearing conclusion, or will have concluded, by the publication of this article. This is the perfect time to reach out, to your director and local union leadership, in order to make new friends or renew old relationships.

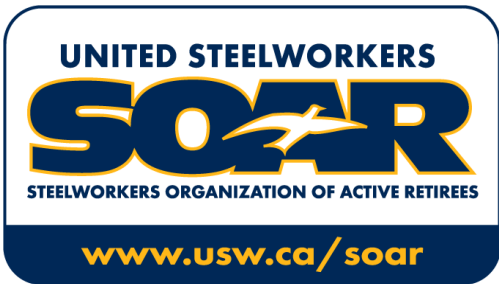
If the local has new leadership, it would be very important to develop a relationship with the new officers, if a relationship does not already exist. If your chapter no longer has an existing local to work with, you may want to “adopt” a local that could benefit from your knowledge and activism. If the local has a Rapid Response, Legislative, Next Generation or Women of Steel contact person, get to know them and invite them to speak at one of your chapter meetings and offer to go speak at their local union meeting.

Let them know that your chapter is willing to work with the local and the district on issues that impact both active and retired members.

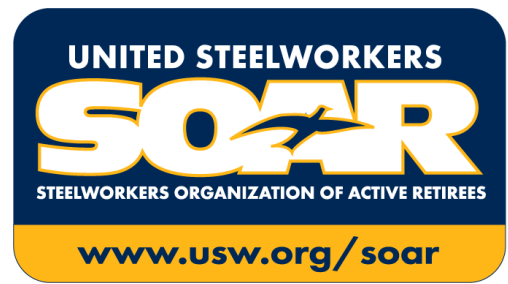
I would also like to suggest that chapters invite their District SOAR Executive Board Member or District SOAR Coordinator to speak at a SOAR chapter meeting. In addition, invite someone from the Alliance for Retired Americans or a representative from your area AFL-CIO or CLC to speak at your SOAR meeting. The more people with whom we develop a relationship that share our interests, the better off we will be.

So, go out and get to know one another. This is the time to start building a foundation with others that can be used in the future to improve the lives of all whom we care about. And lastly, thank you for all you do and will be doing in the future, to further build SOAR.

*Bill Pienta*, SOAR President



*Stay  
Connected!*



[facebook.com/groups/uswsoar](https://facebook.com/groups/uswsoar)

**Desde el escritorio del Presidente**

**Conocernos unos a otros**



Nuestro sindicato ha concluido recientemente las elecciones de los Oficiales y Directores Internacionales y me gustaría felicitar a todos los Oficiales y Directores de nuestra Unión y agradecerles por lo que hacen. Las elecciones de la Unión Local estarán a punto de concluir, o habrán concluido, con la publicación de este artículo. Este es el momento perfecto para acercarse, a su Director y al liderazgo de la Unión Local, para hacer nuevos amigos o renovar viejas relaciones.

Si el local tiene un nuevo liderazgo, sería muy importante desarrollar una relación con los nuevos oficiales, si aún no existe una relación. Si su capítulo ya no tiene un local con el que trabajar, es posible que desee "adoptar" un local que podría beneficiarse de su conocimiento y activismo. Si el local tiene una persona de contacto de Respuesta rápida, Legislatura, Generación neta o Mujer de acero, conózcalos e invítelos a hablar en una de las reuniones de su capítulo y ofrézcase para hablar en la reunión sindical local. Hágales saber que nuestro capítulo está dispuesto a trabajar con el local y el distrito en asuntos que impactan tanto a los miembros activos como a los jubilados.

También me gustaría recomendar que los capítulos inviten a su miembro de la Junta Ejecutiva del Distrito SOAR o al Coordinador del Distrito SOAR a hablar en una reunión del capítulo SOAR. O bien, invite a alguien de la Alianza para estadounidenses jubilados o a un representante de su área AFL-CIO o CLC a hablar en su reunión de SOAR. Cuantas más personas con las que desarrollemos una relación que comparta nuestros intereses, mejor estaremos.

Este es el momento de comenzar a construir una base con otras que puedan usarse en el futuro para mejorar las vidas de todos los que nos importan. Así que salgan y conozcan la tierra unos a otros, gracias por todo lo que hacen y lo que harán en el futuro.

*Bill Pienta*, Presidente de SOAR, translation by Dorine Godinez, Pres. Chapter 30-18



**Lamb's Victory a Win for Social Security, Medicare, and Working Americans Everywhere**

“Our nation needs his leadership, vision and determination to fight for working families and older Americans. Conor Lamb understands and supports the critical roles that Social Security and Medicare play in the lives of our nation’s older citizens and their families. We look forward to working with Conor Lamb to protect – if not expand – Americans’ earned benefits.” - National Committee president and CEO Max Richtman.

An exit poll found that 53 percent disapprove of Republican efforts to repeal Obamacare, while 39 percent approve. This is leading some Democrats to think health care could be a winning issue for them in the 2018 midterms, when they hope to retake seats in Congress. – The Hill newspaper, 3/15/18



## SOAR Director, Julie Stein Says, “It Takes A Union”



It takes more than hard work to protect the promises America has made to our people and retirees – it takes a Union.

The inception of the Social Security and Medicare systems would not have been possible without the years of hard work and resolve exhibited by activists in the labor, child welfare, and anti-poverty movements. Even to this day, this same coalition works to halt efforts to cut benefits or privatize these programs.

As we’ve moved into 2018, more and more discussions coming out of Washington are about potential cuts to our earned benefits. As a way to build power, we announced in the last Connection newsletter (Jan/Feb 2018), that SOAR is teaming up with Rapid Response to launch a “Retirement Security” postcard campaign to urge members of Congress to oppose any cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and pension guarantees.

In addition to this postcard campaign, our union seized upon the March 13 special election in Pennsylvania’s 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, where we saw an opportunity to elect a representative who would support our efforts to protect Social Security and Medicare.

This special election, triggered by scandal, necessitated the embarrassing resignation of Congressman Tim Murphy, who had represented this district since 2003. Due to partisan gerrymandering, Murphy was able to win reelection to the union-dense district, in spite of his support for job-killing free-trade agreements and cuts to Social Security and Medicare.

In this southwestern Pennsylvania district where the president won by 20 points in 2016, our union understood that any candidate, who wanted to win the support of workers, must focus their campaign on kitchen table issues. In response to our union’s candidate questionnaire, Conor Lamb made it clear that he supported efforts to strengthen unions and protect Social Security and Medicare.

After endorsing Lamb, our union rapidly assembled a campaign that would reach our members and families in each of the district’s 593 precincts spanning four counties.



**Left to Right: Alysse Rico, SOAR Administrative Assistant; Mario Giron, USW Auditor; Denise Edwards, SOAR Executive Board Secretary-Treasurer; Lee Etta Hairston, Civil & Human Rights/Women of Steel Administrative Assistant.**



Lamb’s opponent had supported anti-union efforts like so-called “Right to Work” legislation and cuts to unemployment compensation. In conversations with fellow members at their doors and in worksites across the district, our activists highlighted our opponent’s anti-union record, while bringing attention to Mr. Lamb’s commitment to protecting the rights of working families and retirees.

After more than a month of organizing and mobilizing Steelworkers to get out and vote, our union helped elect Conor Lamb – a former Marine Captain and federal prosecutor – in the March 13 special election in Pennsylvania’s 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. After all of the votes were counted, our work contributed to the erosion of a 20 point deficit, and helped Lamb secure a narrow victory.



**Left to Right: Tom Wolf, Pennsylvania Governor; Conor Lamb, Congressman-elect; Leo W. Gerard, International President.**

Regardless of whether you belong to a union or not, this victory is one everyone should celebrate. Campaigns like this are essential to protecting vital programs like Social Security and Medicare. Without these programs, countless Americans would be homeless and unable to access affordable, quality healthcare. Social Security has been credited for nearly eradicating homelessness amongst the elderly and disabled populations, and Medicare provides for almost-universal health coverage for persons 65 years of age and older ([www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)).

Whether it is postcard campaigns, organizing union voters before Election Day, or turning out to rallies in state capitols and Washington, D.C., **IT TAKES A UNION** to get the job done!

SOAR Chapter  
**Connection**

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**The McNeil Report**

An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house, and after eating, the wives left the table and went into the kitchen. The two gentlemen were talking, and one said, "Last night we went out to a new restaurant and it was really great. I'd recommend it to anyone." The other guy said, "What's the name of the restaurant?"

The first man thought and thought and finally said, "What is the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know... the one that's red and has thorns."

"Do you mean a rose?" "Yeah, that's the one," replied the man.

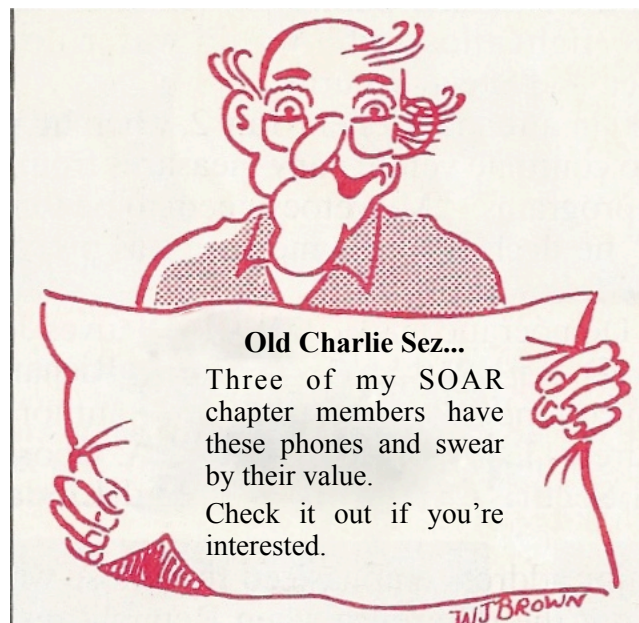
He then turned towards the kitchen and yelled, "Hey Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?"

**How ClearCaptions Works**

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## Report from the Alliance for American Manufacturing



During his campaign, the president promised to make American steel great again when he said, “We are going to put American-produced steel back into the backbone of our country, this alone will create massive numbers of jobs.”

The White House took the first major step in fulfilling that promise when the president signed a long-awaited proclamation on Thursday, March 8 that would level a 25 percent tariff on imported steel and a 10 percent tariff on imported aluminum.

A group of United Steelworkers gathered around the president and Cabinet members as the Section 232 proclamation was signed in the White House Roosevelt Room. Other steelworkers around the country were celebrating this long overdue action because it means returning to work for many laid-off USW members and better job security for those still working in the mills.

In the ten days following the tariff signing, approximately 3,000 jobs were added by America’s steel and aluminum companies.

U.S. Steel was the first to weigh in, announcing it would be bringing back 500 workers at its Granite City Works plant located just across the Mississippi River from St. Louis in Granite City, Illinois. The mill had been operating with just 700 employees who mostly were finishing slabs from other U.S. Steel plants. One of Granite City Works two blast furnaces will be restarted, returning the mill to full steelmaking capabilities with workers who have been laid off since December of 2015.

In Lorain, Ohio, Republic Steel had shut down its mill in 2016, but now plans to reopen the facility and add more than 1,000 jobs to help meet the anticipated demand for steel following the administrations’s Section 232 trade action.

Century Aluminum is another USW facility that quickly announced it would restart idled potlines at its smelter in Hawesville, Kentucky, restoring 300 jobs. Century Aluminum is the only remaining American smelter that makes the high-purity aluminum essential to America’s national security needs.

Alcoa Corporation released a statement saying it will reopen its smelter at Warrick Operations in Evansville, Indiana, restarting three of five potlines creating 275 jobs. The facility has been closed since 2016.

While signing the Section 232 tariff proclamation is an important step for American steel and aluminum makers, the president’s policy will only be effective if he limits the number of exempted countries and diligently produces enforcement.

It has taken longer than expected for the White House to address the unfair trade in the steel and aluminum industries, but the president has not forgotten the promise he made to steelworkers.

There is still a lot of work to do on this issue, but for now a healthy American steel industry is a bonus for SOAR members. The return of thousands more steelworkers to the mills will help strengthen future pensions and health care for retirees.

To learn more and get the latest updates visit [www.americanmanufacturing.org](http://www.americanmanufacturing.org)

*Jeff Bonior*, Staff Writer for the Alliance for American Manufacturing



## Lessons from Conor Lamb's Victory



A focus on the concerns of retirees and union members helped propel first-time candidate Conor Lamb to victory in the special election for Pennsylvania's 18th Congressional District seat. His victory was not a foregone conclusion - The president won the district by nearly twenty points, and it has been represented by a Republican in the House since 2003.



During his campaign, Lamb not only said he would resist House Speaker Paul Ryan's plans to cut Social Security and Medicare, he promised to go a step further: he said he would work to expand these earned benefit programs. He also pledged to tackle the rising cost of prescription drugs and to protect and defend earned pension benefits through the Miner's Pension Act.

For the most recent election cycles, seniors voted Republican by large margins, but Congressman-elect Lamb was able to connect with them. In a poll by Monmouth University just before the election, he was tied with his opponent among voters over sixty-five.

Lamb's results could be replicated since older voters make up a disproportionately large share of the electorate in midterm elections that represent millions of votes nationally. These issues cut across party lines. Together, we showed candidates across the country that putting them on the front burner is a winning formula for November. Speaker Ryan still wants to cut Social Security and Medicare, and voters remain concerned about their health and financial security.

Voters in southwest Pennsylvania demonstrated that a candidate who campaigns on these retiree issues will win their votes. The rest of the country is likely to agree.

***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](http://www.retiredamericans.org).***

People of high intelligence talk about ideas. People of average intelligence talk about things. People with no intelligence talk about other people.

## New Medicare Cards are Coming

Medicare is mailing new Medicare cards to all people with Medicare starting in April 2018.

### 10 Things to Know About your New Medicare Card

- 1 Your new card will automatically come to you. You don't need to do anything as long as your address is up to date. If you need to update your address, visit your mySocial Security account.
- 2 Your new card will have a new Medicare Number that's unique to you, instead of your Social Security Number. This will help to protect your identity.
- 3 Your Medicare coverage and benefits will stay the same.
- 4 Mailing takes time, your card may arrive at a different time than your friend's or neighbor's.
- 5 Your new card is paper, which is easier for many providers to use and copy.
- 6 Once you get your new Medicare card, destroy your old Medicare card and start using your new card right away.
- 7 If you're in a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO), your Medicare Advantage Plan ID card is your main card for Medicare—you should still keep and use it whenever you need care. However, you also may be asked to show your new Medicare card, so you should carry this card too.
- 8 Doctors, other health care providers and facilities know it's coming and will ask for your new Medicare card when you need care, so carry it with you.
- 9 Only give your new Medicare Number to doctors, pharmacists, other health care providers, your insurers, or people you trust to work with Medicare on your behalf.
- 10 If you forget your new card, you, your doctor or other health care provider may be able to look up your Medicare Number online.

### Watch Out for Scams

**Medicare will never call you uninvited and ask you to give personal or private information to get your new Medicare Number and card.** Scam artists may try to get personal information (like your current Medicare Number) by contacting you about your new card. If someone asks you for your information, for money, or threatens to cancel your health benefits if you don't share your personal information, hang up and call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

### How can I Replace my Medicare Card?

If your Medicare card is lost, stolen or damaged, you can ask Social Security for a new one.

- Your Medicare card will arrive in the mail in about 30 days.
- Social Security will mail your card to the address they have on file for you.
- If you need proof that you have Medicare sooner than 30 days, you can request a letter from Social Security. The letter will arrive in the mail in about 10 days.
- If you need proof immediately for your doctor or for a prescription, visit your local Social Security office.

How do I change my name or address?

Medicare uses the name and address you have on file with Social Security. To change your name and/or address, visit your online my Social Security account.

Source: Medicare.gov

## Congress Deflects President's Budget Ax on Seniors' Programs



Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer

In a rare victory for seniors, the passage of the FY 2018 Omnibus Appropriations bill in Congress increases funding for several programs that assist the elderly – and gives a much-needed boost to the beleaguered Social Security Administration. The bill favorably responds to a March 14 letter from the National Committee to House and Senate Appropriations Committees members, urging them to prioritize funding for federal programs and agencies vitally important to older Americans. In passing this bill, Congress defied President Trump's proposed 2018 budget, which called for severe cutbacks to – or outright elimination of – several federal programs which vulnerable seniors depend upon.

In the omnibus bill, the Social Security Administration (SSA) gets an increase of \$480 million over the previous fiscal year, including \$100 million for reducing the backlog in Social Security Disability Insurance hearings – which some 10,000 Americans died waiting for in 2017. The funding bump – which the National Committee has long advocated – should also alleviate some of the excessively long wait times for customer service on SSA's toll-free phone line and in-person at SSA field offices.

On March 7, National Committee president Max Richtman testified before the House Social Security subcommittee, urging members to adequately fund SSA. The agency had been subject to an 11 percent budget reduction since 2010, causing severe cutbacks in customer service at a time when 10,000 Baby Boomers turn 65 every day.

The Omnibus bill also includes \$59 million more for Older Americans Act Senior Nutrition programs and an increase of \$250 million for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), while the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) receives a modest increase in funding. The spending plan also gives a \$414 million boost to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for Alzheimer's and dementia research.

Source: Max Richtman, President of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare



### Elaine Sez...



Elaine Averill and Una MacPherson

For me, the best part of being in SOAR is the wonderful people I have met. In the past (almost twenty years now) I have been privileged to spend time with many remarkable women. This is Una MacPherson, whose husband, Doug, is the Canadian SOAR Director.

All the Canadian ladies are dear to me. Last month in Pittsburgh, I met Marie Malagrega, the amazing, and beautiful, woman who started SOAR many moons ago. She was way ahead of her time. And, my dear friend, Carol Centner, her generosity will never be forgotten. We had some real adventures on our travels. Every woman I have met in the years Charlie has been active in SOAR are so very special to me. I wish I could name you all! Sadly, some are no longer with us. I will never forget you! To those who are still here, I say "Thank You" for your friendship. And to those I have just met (or will meet) I must say I am excited about the future!



UNITED STEELWORKERS  
**USW News**  
 UNITY AND STRENGTH FOR WORKERS

**USW Welcomes News of Restart at U.S. Steel Granite City Works**

*PITTSBURGH (March 7) – The United Steelworkers (USW) union released the following statement today from USW International President Leo W. Gerard in response to U.S. Steel’s announcement that it would restart a blast furnace and steelmaking facilities at the company’s mill in Granite City, Ill.*

“The USW welcomes this announcement from U.S. Steel and looks forward to working with the company during the restart process to ensure it is done safely and efficiently. This is good news for the workers, for the company, and for the entire community of Granite City.

“For years, the USW has led the way in the fight for fair trade. This decision, along with the President’s recent move to impose tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, is a direct result of that activism.

“Workers across the United States, especially those in steel towns like Granite City, have for too long been the victims of the illegal and unfair practices of our overseas trading partners, particularly China. Our hope is that this marks the beginning of a much-needed recovery for the domestic steel industry and for American manufacturing.

“Perhaps no steel town in the country is as closely identified with its mill as the town of Granite City is with the historic Granite City Works. We hope this restart will breathe new life into the community and that the mill can continue to provide good jobs for workers and their families for generations to come.”



**What’s a Living Funeral?**



As we age, it’s important to plan for the unexpected. Planning ahead can mean everything from getting your affairs in order the people you know and trust can tend to them if you cannot, to identifying a health care proxy who will speak for you when you cannot speak for yourself. Some people are planning so far ahead that they are arranging a living funeral.

What’s a living funeral? In the words of one 60-year-old woman, “It’s a just-in-case-you-kick-the-bucket party.” It’s a funeral for people who are still alive to bring the people they love together. It’s an event that allows people, including people with terminal illnesses, to bring closure to their lives in an organized way. It’s also a way to say goodbye to and celebrate life with the people nearest and dearest to you.

There are all sorts of ways to celebrate the life of an individual before he or she dies. Whatever way a living funeral is designed, it helps us all focus on the reality that we are all human and to think deeply about the people we love because they will not be around forever.

Source: by Diane Archer of jus+care



### How Special Payments After you Retire Affect your Social Security Benefit



You should consider this when evaluating your work activity. If you are younger than full retirement age and make more than the yearly earnings limit, your earnings may reduce the amount of your monthly benefit. In 2018, the earnings limit is \$17,040 if you are younger than full retirement age for the entire calendar year. If you reach full retirement age in 2018, the earnings limit is \$45,360 for the months before you reach full retirement age. Starting with the month you reach full retirement age, you can receive your full monthly benefit no matter how much money you earn.

If you were self-employed, any net income you receive after the first year you retire counts as a special payment if you performed the services before you began receiving Social Security benefits. “Services” are any regular work or other significant activity you do for your business.

You can find more information and examples of special payments by reading [Special Payments After Retirement](#). If you want to learn more about the earnings limit, please read [How Work Affects Your Benefits](#).

Got another question about Social Security? On our website, you can find answers to over 200 of your most frequently asked questions, and much more. Social Security’s online services are here to put control at your fingertips. See what else you can do online at [SocialSecurity.gov](http://SocialSecurity.gov).

Source: Social Security Administration

### Aerobic Exercise may be Best Medicine for your Brain and Body

Business Insider reports on more than a dozen recent studies that demonstrate the value of aerobic exercise for your gut, your memory, your immune system, your cardiovascular health, your strength, your stress level, your mood, your cholesterol levels and more. In short, aerobic exercise may be the best medicine for your body and your brain. It is also the least costly!

A post on Harvard Health, “Regular Exercise Changes the Brain to Improve Memory, Thinking Skills,” explains how researchers at the University of British Columbia, found that aerobic exercise that brings your heart rate up and gets you sweating seems to increase the size of the hippocampus. The hippocampus is the part of the brain that focuses on memory and learning.

Another study published in [Exercise and Sports Sciences Reviews](#) found that aerobic exercise may have as great benefits as weight training, when it comes to building muscle and strength.

Source: excerpts from [jus+careusa](#) article