

USW@Work

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A Powerful Voice for Workers

Recently, the “USW Cares” program announced our 2019 Jefferson Award winners for community service, including three SOAR retirees from Canada. These three members have won honors from the Jefferson Awards Foundation due to their impact on their community, and selfless service to those in need.

USW CARES ANNOUNCES 2019 Jefferson Award Winners



JEFFERSON
AWARDS
FOUNDATION

About the Jefferson Awards Foundation

The Jefferson Awards Foundation (JAF) is the country’s longest-standing and most prestigious organization dedicated to activating and celebrating public service through a variety of programs and awards. Created in 1972 by the American Institute for Public Service, the Jefferson Awards are given at both national and local levels. Local winners are ordinary people who do extraordinary things without the expectation of recognition.

Why USW Cares

Since our founding, Steelworkers and their families have been leaders in the workplace and our communities. Community service is not uncommon, but speaking up about it is.

For many Steelworkers, lending a helping hand is part of being a member of our union. Outside of work, our members are known for their generosity in their neighborhoods. The USW Cares program aims to celebrate locals and members, who

donate their time, money or goodwill to assist others in communities across the United States and Canada. It may be organizing a fundraiser or providing meals for those in need. Maybe it is visiting sick patients in the hospital or being a great role model for our youth.

In 2015, as a way to honor the great work all of our members do, the United Steelworkers (USW Cares) joined the Jefferson Awards Foundation as a Champion. The goal is to highlight their projects and their commitment and to inspire others to do “good.”

As a Champion, the union was able to create a formal structure to allow members and retirees to be nominated for Jefferson Awards and put a spotlight on USW Cares efforts in communities across North America. The program includes training to help build leadership and other skills through effective community service.

One USW Cares Jefferson Award winner is chosen from each district. One is selected from USW staff. And, a separate winner is selected to honor the community service work of one of our SOAR members. The highest-scoring of all the winners becomes the USW Champion Volunteer.

The following features the profiles and achievements of our 2019 SOAR retiree winners:

USW Cares: 2019 SOAR Jefferson Award Winner

Eleanor Gattafoni-Robinson, a member of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) Chapter 3-12 and former member of USW Local 9705 was named the 2019 SOAR Jefferson Award winner, in recognition of her dedication to helping others by devoting countless hours per week for the commu-



Eleanor Gattafoni-Robinson

nity of Trail, in British Columbia.

Eleanor helps organize or is involved with the many community organization events that offer assistance to those in

need. She currently volunteers for the following events, including the Annual Terry Fox Run, Silver City Days Annual Festival, and cancer fundraisers such as Relay for Life. She also spends time working with local organizations such as United Way which helps with community events

#USWCares

www.usw.org/uswcare

Social Security and Medicare Changes



BILL PIENTA
SOAR President

This is the time of year when retirees receive the answer to the recurring question regarding Social Security (SS) benefits: Will their Social Security increase; and if so, how much? Using the average SS benefit of \$1,461 for 2019 and the announced 1.6 percent increase in the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), the average SS benefit will increase to \$1,484. This is

not much of a benefit when we consider the increases to the cost of living, the price of food, Medicare and out-of-pocket health care costs. Also, consider that many retirees who do not have other income or have a minimal pension depend on Social Security as their main source of income.

Part A has a deductible that applies to each benefit period. In 2019, it is \$1,364, but it's projected to increase to \$1,420 for 2020. The increase in the Part A deductible will apply to all enrollees, although many enrollees have supplemental coverage that pays all or part of the Part A deductible.

The Part A deductible covers the enrollee's first 60 inpatient days during a benefit period. If the enrollee needs additional inpatient coverage during that same benefit period, there's a daily coinsurance charge. In 2019, it's

\$341 per day for the 61st through 90th day of inpatient care, and projected to increase to \$355 in 2020.

The standard Part B premium is projected to increase to \$144.30/month from the present \$135.50/month, an \$8.80 increase. The Part B deductible is projected to increase to \$197 for 2020 from \$185.

Part D donut hole will no longer exist after the end of 2019, but a standard plan's maximum deductible will increase to \$435, and the threshold for entering the catastrophic coverage phase will increase to \$6,350.

If a Social Security recipient's COLA isn't enough to cover the full premium increase for Part B, that person's Part B premium can only increase by the amount of the COLA, as Part B premiums are withheld from Social Security checks and the net check can't decline from one year to the next.

We must continue to be aware of recently proposed budgets that have proposed adjustments to both Social Security and Medicare, and remain vigilant as there is much talk in Washington about addressing the deficit with changes to the level of benefits to both.

Source: <https://www.medicareresources.org/faqs/what-kind-of-medicare-benefit-changes-can-i-expect-this-year/>

Social Security Fall? A Sound We May Never Hear!



JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

We've all heard the old question, "(If a tree falls in the woods and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?)"

Unfortunately, this twisted logic mirrors what some of Wall Street's favorite politicians have in mind for their deceiving efforts to cripple vital programs like Social Security behind closed doors.

In a September 2019 town hall meeting, U.S. Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA), complained openly that activist groups like SOAR are making her job more difficult than she'd like.

Ernst lamented, "We do need to sit down behind closed doors so we're not being scrutinized by this group or the other, and just have an open and honest conversation..." "The minute you say we need to address Social Security, the media is hammering you, the opposing party is hammering you—there goes granny over a cliff." Ernst continued, "We know that there is a point in time when we as Congress will have to address the situation, and I think it's better done sooner rather than later, to make sure that we shored up that system."

In August, Ernst's Senate colleague, John Thune (R-SD), was quoted in the New York Times when he stated, "it's going to take presidential leadership [and] courage by the Congress to make some hard votes..." with regard to Social

Security. In the same article, Republican Senator John Barrasso of Wyoming stated such cuts (to Social Security) are "usually best done during divided government." Barrasso also admitted, "We've brought it up with President Trump, who has talked about it being a second-term project."

Ernst, Thune and Barrasso have achieved absolutely dismal ratings from the Alliance for Retired Americans, voting against seniors' interests 93, 90 and 96 percent of the time throughout their service in Congress.

Privilege and exploitation allow these politicians to wonder whether that tree makes a sound when no one is there to hear.

But, whether the tree makes a sound is not what matters. What matters is whether it falls. The citizens of this country deserve the right for politicians to be transparent and ethical when it comes to negotiating the fate of our earned benefits.

We must not let them cut it down.

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

Sources: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/21/us/politics/deficit-will-reach-1-trillion-next-year-budget-office-predicts.html>
<https://news.yahoo.com/trump-says-may-begin-cutting-201130207.html>
<https://iowastartingline.com/2019/09/04/ernst-need-to-sit-down-behind-closed-doors-for-social-security-fix/>

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such as “Storm the Stairs” to promote fitness and “Park with Us” where the city waives parking meters in the downtown area for a day by seeking sponsorship from businesses/individuals.

Eleanor serves others at the Catholic Church, Kates Kitchen, The Salvation Army, Trail Association for Community Living, and at the Cominco Arena, providing meals for families and fans during hockey games (especially for Junior A hockey team the Trail Smokies).

She was also elected as a member of her City Council, and is currently a sitting City Counselor in her fourth consecutive term, and stays active in six different council-selected committees.

Eleanor enjoys her time volunteering with the local youth at the Take a Hike Foundation (a full-time alternate high school program that uses the outdoors to engage vulnerable youth) and the Kootenay Alternative Learning Centre, which connects students to their community through frequent field trips and weekly volunteer efforts.

USW Cares: 2019 District 3 Jefferson Award Winner

Brian Arnold, a member of SOAR Chapter 3-25 and former member of USW Local Union 7619 is the District 3 Jefferson Award Winner, in recognition of his community service in Kamloops, British Columbia.

During the nearly thirty years Brian Arnold worked at the mine, and even after he retired, he has devoted decades of his life in the sincerest service and care for others. Brian shows great compassion for those in need, and he purposely puts himself in places where there are those who are suffering the most.



Brian Arnold

Daily, Brian spends his time visiting the hospital in Kamloops where he checks-in on friends who he knows through his work and the church he attends. He volunteers in a pastoral role for those who are sick or otherwise afflicted. He has been there for many and has been by the side of many people as they passed on, and provided support for families during their most trying and difficult times.

Arnold, described as, “one of the most caring and selfless human beings to have ever lived,” has dedicated his time to volunteering at countless events, fundraisers, barbeques, and service projects in his community. Though he is a kind-hearted individual, he is also part of a “powerhouse team,” as his wife Linda is equally angelic in the way she also always cares for others, every day, in every way.

USW Cares: 2019 District 5 Jefferson Award Winner

Gilles Bordeleau, an at-large member of SOAR and former member of USW Local Union 6887 in Montreal, Quebec is the District 5 Jefferson Award Winner.

Gilles cares deeply for his community. He has influenced many lives through coaching the youth. He has provided companionship and support to many people through their toughest times, and cared for people who were struggling or alone.



Gilles Bordeleau

Although retired, Gilles is still very present in his local as a member of its Retirement Committee, where he meets with workers and their families to explain the defined benefits and pension plan.

He is the founder of the breakfast program “Petits déjeuners CCR” for the children of St-Octave school of Montréal-East, he organizes the collection of Christmas baskets for distribution to the most disadvantaged people of the Montréal-East and Pointe-aux-Trembles area, and he provides support to his former co-workers struggling with addictions. He also has ensured children’s safety during Halloween trick-or-treating for three years in Montréal-East and Pointe-aux-Trembles.

Gilles also volunteers as a coach; he started coaching in a hockey league where he led a team for three years and then coached a soccer team for about five years. Gilles then created a soccer league specifically for people with trisomy, to which he devoted two years of his life, a gesture that was highlighted in two television shows. Gilles was also president of the softball league of Affinerie CCR, the plant where he worked.

Gilles is a dedicated individual who loves to help others. He simply is extremely generous without expecting anything in return.

Last year, the winner of the SOAR category was Marc Scott, a retiree from Washington, Pennsylvania, and a member of SOAR Chapter 15-20. Marc was selected as the USW’s overall Jefferson Awards Foundation Champion volunteer for 2018, after receiving the highest score of all the winners. As the USW Champion Volunteer, he attended the Jefferson Awards National Ceremony in Washington, D.C. (June 28, 2018) and he won top honors in the Champion category and received a national Jefferson Award, which marked the third-straight year that the USW had taken a national prize at the Jefferson Awards National Ceremony.

All the 2019 Jefferson Award recipients will be honored at a ceremony to be held in Pittsburgh, in December.

If you know a Steelworker or SOAR member who is doing something amazing in their community, we want to know about it! Use the #USWCares hashtag and give a shout-out to @Steelworkers when you post on social media. To see the profiles of all the 2019 award recipients or to learn more about USW Cares, visit <http://usw.org/uswcares>. SOAR applauds all of 2019 Jefferson Award winners, and we thank them for shining their light and showing how we are a union that works in our communities.



SOAR Members Grill Election Candidates on Health Care and Pension Protection

At their quarterly luncheon meeting in September, SOAR Chapter 6-17 members in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., heard from candidates in the Canadian federal election on critical issues, including health care and pension protection.

A newly elected Chapter 6-17 executive and board had decided that, given the chapter's quarterly meeting in September would fall in the midst of the Canadian election, it was important to allow members to hear directly from local candidates running for the various federal parties.

The political candidates were advised that SOAR members did not want to hear political attacks, but rather the policies and positions of their respective parties and how they would address key issues facing Canadians and particularly retirees.

The candidates also were asked to pronounce themselves on political priorities identified by SOAR Canadian members at their national conference in Vancouver in April.

The candidates were provided copies of resolutions passed at the SOAR national conference, which

included calls for the federal government to pass legislation protecting pensions and benefits in corporate bankruptcy and insolvency cases, strengthening Canada's universal public health-care system and implementing a national seniors' health strategy.

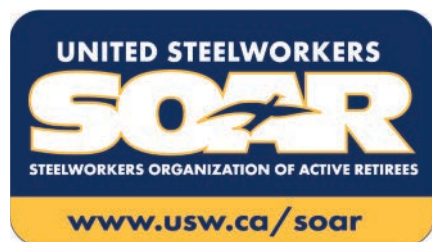
The SOAR resolution on the protection of pensions and benefits is a major concern for SOAR members and active Steelworkers and in Sault Ste. Marie, who have faced considerable anxiety and impacts over the years due to multiple bankruptcy protection proceedings involving the community's largest employer, Algoma Steel.

Dozens of members of SOAR Chapter 6-17 in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., turned out for the chapter's quarterly membership meeting in September to hear from local candidates running in the Canadian federal election.

Algoma recently emerged from a three-year restructuring process under bankruptcy-protection rules, throughout which SOAR members and Steelworkers Locals 2251 and 2724 had to fight continually in the courts to protect their pensions.

SOAR Chapter 6-17 was the first organization in Sault Ste. Marie to host an all-candidates meeting during the election campaign that attracted candidates from every major national party.

To view a news report on the meeting, visit www.northernontario.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1783201.



Candidates from all major parties in the Canadian federal election addressed members of SOAR Chapter 6-17 in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., at their quarterly membership meeting in September.

Lifetime SOAR Membership Presented to Workers' Champion David Christopherson

By Lena Sutton
SOAR Executive Board Member, District 6

Over a 35-year career in political life, serving his community in all levels of government, David Christopherson remained a champion of working people.

Throughout the decades of representing residents of his hometown of Hamilton, Ont. — Canada's Steeltown — Christopherson always stood up for unions and Steelworkers, in particular. And, Hamilton's Steelworkers always returned that steadfast support.

On Sept. 3, 2019, only weeks away from his retirement from politics, Christopherson was honoured with a lifetime membership from SOAR Chapter 10 in Hamilton.

A motion passed unanimously by Chapter 10 members recognized Christopherson's dedication to fighting for the interests of workers and retirees, particularly for retiree benefits and pensions. Chapter President Lena Sutton thanked Christopherson for his commitment to the labor

movement and presented him with Chapter 10 shirt, a SOAR pin, and his official membership card.

Christopherson became a labor activist as a young man, after he began working at International Harvester in Hamilton and joined UAW Local 525. He eventually became president of the Local.

Christopherson launched his political career in 1985 when he was elected to Hamilton City Council. He served two terms before turning to provincial politics in 1990 and being elected as a member of the first pro-labour New Democratic Party government in Ontario. He served as a senior cabinet minister in the NDP government and was later re-elected twice to provincial parliament.

In 2004 Christopherson turned to federal politics, running for the New Democrats and scoring a decisive victory over a Liberal cabinet minister. He served five consecutive terms before announcing his retirement this year as the Member of Parliament for



SOAR Chapter 10 President Lena Sutton presented veteran Hamilton, Ont., politician David Christopherson with a lifetime SOAR membership in September.

the riding of Hamilton Centre.

As guest speaker at the Chapter 10 meeting in September, Christopherson said he was honoured by the lifetime membership and he thanked SOAR and the Steelworkers for their support throughout his political career.

Christopherson noted that, "Unions remain a crucial force for economic and social justice in our society.

Unions are needed to protect the gains made over decades of struggle and to lead the fight to defend workers' rights, decent wages, health and safety, benefits and pensions," he said.

SOAR members wish Dave and his wife Denise well in the next chapter of their lives.

SOAR Chapter 3-19 Celebrates 60 Years



SOAR Chapter 3-19 volunteers were on hand in Regina, Saks., on Sept. 21, 2019, to set up the facilities, grill the burgers and hotdogs and otherwise help ensure the success of the 60th-anniversary celebrations of USW Local 5890. There was plenty to eat, lots of swag to hand out and an enjoyable day for SOAR members and active USW members and their families alike.



Ken Mair, John Szala, and Dennis Carrigan were among SOAR Chapter 3-19 members who volunteered their time to ensure the success of the 60th-anniversary celebrations of USW Local 5890 in Regina, Saks., on Sept. 21, 2019.

SOAR Chapter and Local Awarded the A.Q. Evans Award

Members of SOAR Chapter 80 and Local Union 5328 were awarded the A.Q. Evans Award for their combined effort in fighting for the health and safety of their union workers and retirees in the rubber industry. The A.Q. Evans Award is presented to USW local unions and SOAR chapters for outstanding accomplishments in occupational safety and health. The award honors the memory of A.Q. Evans, former president of USWA Local 5554, whose courage and determination, continuing to the day of his death, inspired the union's efforts to protect workers from the hazards of lead.

The A.Q. Evans Award for 2019 was presented to USW Local Union 5328 and Chapter 80 of the Steelworker Organization of Active Retirees in District 6. Working through the Rubber Town Workers Alliance in Kitchener, Ontario, the local union and SOAR chapter succeeded in documenting widespread occupational illness among retired rubber



Left to Right. Receiving the award on behalf of USW Local 5328 and SOAR Chapter 6-80. Gerry LeBlanc Department leader H&S CNO, Sylvia Boyce District 6 H&S Coordinator and Ken Neumann, Canadian National Director.

workers, and are fighting to get them the medical help and compensation they deserve. Through their efforts, Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board has agreed to review more than 300 previously denied claims. The Alliance continues to identify new claims, and has found more than 150 to date.

SOAR applauds the members of SOAR Chapter 80 and Local Union 5328, for their continued support of the retired rubber workers in need of medical assistance due to the negligence of their employer.

Pharmacare: A Social Program Whose Time Has Come

By Doug Macpherson
SOAR Canadian National Coordinator

The high cost of prescription medications on both sides of our border is a continuing concern for all.

In Canada, medication costs have become a hot election issue. The major political parties claim concern over the problem, but only one party—the New Democrats—is committed to implementing a national, universal pharmacare program that our country desperately needs.

A 2016 study found that 1.6 million Canadians, who were prescribed medication in 2016, didn't fill those prescriptions. They skipped doses or otherwise did not buy their medication because they could not afford it.

The researchers from the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, McMaster University and the University of Toronto, said the study confirms that Canada needs to take another look at how prescription medications are covered.

"Despite Canada having a universal health-care system, the fact that so many people cannot afford their medications is a sign that people are falling through the cracks," said one of the researchers.

Recently, Bernie Sanders, a democratic socialist candidate for the Democratic

presidential nomination, garnered a fair amount of publicity on both sides of the border when he led a busload of U.S. citizens on a trip to Windsor, Ontario, in order to get cheaper prescription drugs. He did this of course to highlight the high cost of drugs in the U.S. and the fact that Big Pharma is fleecing the American people at their time of greatest need.

I want to point out that his approach, while novel, was not original.

Back in 2002, SOAR in conjunction with the Alliance for Retired Americans, began a series of bus excursions from the U.S. States to Hamilton, Ontario, to do exactly the same thing (see the two pages from Steelabour, Oldtimer edition. Volume 67/Number 3 Summer 2002).

Then, SOAR Vice President Ken O'Neal and SOAR Coordinator Bill Fuller, both members of Chapter 6-10 in Hamilton, initiated this initiative with Director Jim Centner and it proved a huge success. So successful in fact, that Big Pharma began a campaign of misinformation claiming that Canadian prescription drugs could be unsafe as they might not meet FDA approval.

Big Pharma made such a political fuss about the campaign that President Bush's administration made it illegal, or very

difficult at least, to get individuals prescription drugs over the border, and eventually, we had to stop. Notwithstanding that these same companies were shipping huge amounts of the same prescription medication back and forth between our two countries.

I am highlighting this because, although prescription drug costs may be cheaper in Canada vis-a-vis the U.S., they are still among the highest in the world and are out of reach for about one-third of Canadians.

Although the Canadian government attempts to exert some control over drug prices through the Patented Medicines Prices Review Board, we are still at the mercy of Big Pharma who threaten that if drug prices are lowered research and development will move to other countries where, they claim, they can recapture the cost of research and development through increased costs of prescription drugs.

On Aug. 23, 2019, six pharmaceutical companies in Canada began a constitutional court challenge against the Federal government, claiming the government has no constitutional right to regulate drug prices.

It has never been more clear that Canadians need a universal, public pharmacare program. We will see what the election results bring.



Veterans of Steel Council Meets for First Time

Establishes Goals for USW Vets

In October, several dozen active and retired USW members and staff who served in the armed forces in the United States and Canada made history today with the first-ever meeting of the new Veterans of Steel Council.

The council, which included representatives from the union’s districts and staff, gathered under the leadership of International President Tom Conway, who served as a sergeant in the U.S. Air Force before he began his union career. They spent the day brainstorming and setting goals for moving forward on our work to improve the lives of their fellow veterans.

The veterans’ council, established at our most recent constitutional convention, brought a wealth of experience and ideas to the discussion, which included topics such as ideal contract language for veterans’ issues, increasing funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, placing qualified veterans in good union jobs, helping veterans in both countries deal with mental health and other issues, and publishing a resource guide for vets who are union members, among other topics.

Conway welcomed the delegates to Pittsburgh for the meeting and reminded them that the Veterans of Steel program was intended to grow from the local level, rather than being a top-down project. He urged the council members to reach out and connect with other veterans as much as possible “both inside and outside” of the USW, by doing

community service projects that help veterans. Goals included engaging veterans in the union and community, educating and advocating for veterans issues in both the United States and Canada, and providing a variety of resources for Steelworker vets and their families, including help with PTSD.

“There’s a reason all of you are in this room,” Conway said. “We want to learn from you and for you to learn from and help veterans in our union and our communities.”

Will Attig, executive director of the AFL-CIO’s Union Veterans Council, also joined the meeting where he said veterans makeup almost a quarter of the labor movement and have unique needs as well as a lot to offer, including strong leadership skills. “Unions veterans have passion and purpose,” he said.

For all that you have done, and continue to do, WE SALUTE YOU!

From SOAR, USW, and Veterans of Steel, we thank you for your service this Veteran’s Day.



Veterans who are interested in participating in the program can sign up at www.usw.org/vetsofsteel to get more information and receive a free Veterans of Steel sticker. Members can also text VET to 47486* to join.

In Canada, go to www.usw.ca/vetsofsteel or text VET to 32323* to join.

*Message and data rates may apply. You can opt-out at any time by replying STOP.



Steelworker Retirees Award Scholarships to Five Students

By Carl Green
Illinois Correspondent
St. Louis/Southern Illinois Labor Tribune

Granite City – The reach of the Granite City Steelworker retirees extends far and wide because of their scholarship program, which now, in its 10th year, is lending a helping hand to five young Steelworker relatives preparing for their future careers.

The students were presented their honors August 12 at the Granite City SOAR Chapter 7-34-2 Scholarship Awards Luncheon at Neighborhood Social Club in Pontoon Beach, Ill.

The scholarships are named in honor of Jane Becker, a longtime United Steelworkers activist who was the wife and best friend for 57 years to the late USW International President George Becker. She ran the union's phone banking and political outreach efforts.

"She was more than George's wife," said recently retired International President, Leo W. Gerard. "She was a leader in her own right, a great activist for working and retired men and women who was always willing to volunteer and always willing to advance the cause of workers."

That spirit was evident as the retirees of the SOAR chapter raised \$10,000 to split evenly among the five scholarships. Each recipient gets \$1,000 now and the other \$1,000 after successfully completing a semester in college.

Scholarship applicants were asked to write essays on "The Economic Impact of the Rising Costs for Higher Education."

"Congratulations and good luck to the scholarship winners as they pursue their higher education," stated, Jeff Rains, president of the SOAR chapter, "We would like to express our appreciation to all of the essay judges, those officials who were in attendance, and to all the SOAR members who consistently volunteer for our ongoing efforts to make the world a better place."



SOAR SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (from left) are: Tyler Hahne, Elsie Loftus, Jude Nejmanowski, Karalyn Mitchell and Morgan Marinelli. – Labor Tribune photo

THE FIVE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Jude Nejmanowski, a graduate of Crossroad College Preparatory School in St. Louis, who will major in classical trumpet performance at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

"I just want to give a big thanks to everybody who put this on, and for demonstrating to all of us kids how much education means to you and how supportive a community can be," he told the retirees. "It really takes a village to raise a kid. You're making my further education possible and my future possible, and I can't thank you enough."

Elsie Loftus, graduate of Jerseyville (IL) Community High School, who will study music education with a concentration on voice at College of St. Rose in Albany, N.Y. She is also preparing for the Medical College Acceptance Test.

"I want to thank you all for all the support you've given to my family and me in the past and all that you've done for this community," she said.

Karalyn Mitchell, graduate of Collinsville High School who works at Glik's Department Store and will study business and marketing at Southwestern Illinois College.

"I want to thank everybody for making this possible for me," she said. "You're making my future a lot easier, and I really appreciate it."

Morgan Marinelli, graduate of Atascocita High School near Houston, Texas, who will study chemical engineering at the University of Texas at Austin.

"Thank you for making me feel so welcome in this town," she said. "I didn't grow up here, but I appreciate everything you do. This scholarship contest was a very impressive feat to organize, and I thank you all for the hard work you've put into it."

Tyler Hahne, graduate of Granite City High School, who participated in the Running Start program that allowed him to attend classes at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE). He now starts at SIUE full-time but with junior status.

"Thank you to everyone here at SOAR," he said. "You really helped me complete my college goals. With help from SOAR and a few other grants, I won't have to pay for my first year at SIUE. So thank you."

Special Thanks to Bruce

Longtime union and SOAR activist, Bruce Bostick, has stepped down from the SOAR Executive Board.

Bruce joined the United Steelworkers in 1972 as a member of Local 1104, when he went to work for U.S. Steel Lorain Works in Lorain, Ohio. At that time, Local 1104 had over 8,500 members.

Soon after hiring in, he became involved in the reform Rank & File Movement in the Steelworkers. That movement, of mostly younger workers, pushed to expand roles of minority and women workers, for a stronger union and for solidarity with other unions.

Bostick was elected to the grievance committee in 1978 and served as chairman of that committee for a number of years. Bruce served on various committees throughout his 30-year career. Among them were the trade and craft committee, contracting out, education, and newspaper committees. Bruce helped set up a very active Volunteer Organizing Committee (VOC) at USW Local 1104, successfully helping bring our union into a dozen Ohio workplaces.

Bruce, a life-long activist for the union, has been committed to fighting for worker's rights. Bostick served as a twenty-five-year delegate to the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council, where he helped build numerous coalitions. Among them was the Unemployed Crisis Center, which brought labor, churches, and community groups together to help the unemployed during the economic downturn of the 1980s.

When USW was locked out in 1986 by U.S. Steel, he was very active in that year-long struggle.

In the '90s, he went on the road, working as a casual staff member for the Strategic Projects Dept., assigned to help our members involved in tough strikes and lockouts. These included USW LU 8888, Newport News Shipyard, our nation's largest majority African American local union. His grandfather had worked there during WWII, and this was a struggle he is most proud of being involved in. He

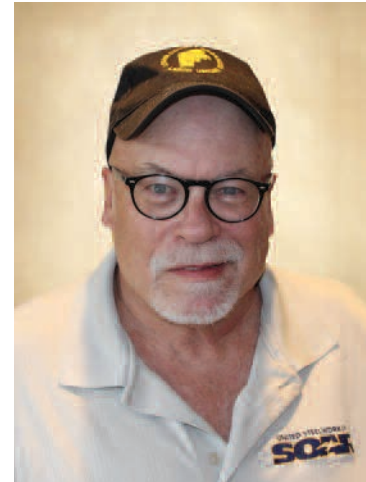
was also immersed in other USW fights, including the AK Steel strike in Mansfield, Ohio, the Titan strike, Magnetic Specialty, Inc. recognition strike in Marietta, Ohio, and the Warren Consolidated Industries steel mill strike in Warren, Ohio.

After retiring in 2002, Bostick was pulled back into our struggles, as Republic Technology declared bankruptcy, and with help from the anti-labor Bush administration, they drastically cut/stole pensions from our members. Bruce was assigned to go to work, helping garner political support the USW fight, where he was able to help regain partial pensions for our retirees, with the assistance of US Senator Sherrod Brown. While helping gain only a partial win in this fight, he joined SOAR and has remained active ever since.

In 2004, Bruce was appointed a SOAR Coordinator for USW District 1. He held that position for 11 years before being elected to the SOAR Executive Board to represent the retirees of his district in 2014. He was re-elected in 2017, and he served in that position until his resignation this past August. Bostick resides in Columbus, Ohio, and continues to serve as Vice President for the Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans.

As Bruce steps down from the SOAR Executive Board he leaves with the following words of hope, encouragement and lasting memories, "It seems as though the years just flew by, but the people I've met, walked picket lines with, are the folks I have more respect for than I have words for, the very best friends I'll ever have. It's been tough, hard struggles we fought together, and I have tremendous pride that I was able to play a small role in them." Bostick expressed in closing, "As my health permits, I hope that I may continue to stand up alongside the fine people of this union. Our strength, unity, fighting spirit, has given all working folks hope in these difficult times. I feel that this wonderful union is a family, as singer-songwriter Billy Bragg so aptly sang 'what a comfort to the widow, a light to the child!'"

On behalf of the entire SOAR organization, we wish Bruce and his family well, and we thank him immensely for his many years of dedicated service to the Labor Movement and to SOAR.



Bruce Bostick



APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED TO **SOAR EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Jeffrey DeLong

*Appointed to the
SOAR Executive Board*

In August, United Steelworkers International President Thomas M. Conway appointed Jeffrey DeLong as the District 1 SOAR Executive Board Member; to fulfill the remaining term of Bruce Bostick, who has resigned from the position due to health reasons.

Jeffrey “Jeff” DeLong graduated from high school in 1979 and attended Ohio University. He began his career in the papermill in January 1981 at the Mead Corporation/ Chilpaco Division, in Chillicothe, Ohio. He worked in various departments throughout the papermill; but, his primary job roles included the Coater/Calender Rewinder and shipping clerk. During his 38 years of employment at Mead, he served on the Emergency Response Team, was Chairman of the Blood Drive Committee, a member of the Safety and Environmental Committees, Mead Athletic Association, and numerous other volunteer positions, such as First Responder and Tour Guide. He was also a graduate of the Mead Paper Knowledge School in May 1997.

Jeff took great pride in his union and was actively involved with USW Local 988 (formerly UPIU and PACE.) During his 38-year tenure, he was elected and served the local in several roles, including Workers’ Compensation Representative (since February 1997), Union Steward,

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

Also, during his tenure, the papermill experienced multiple changes of ownership. The most recent change occurred November 2018, when Pixelle Specialty Solutions purchased the former Mead Corporation/Chillicothe mill from P.H. Glatfelter, which was previously owned by MeadWestvaco,



Jeffrey DeLong

and then later NewPage Corp. DeLong took early retirement from Pixelle Specialty Solutions, effective January 1, 2019, and joined SOAR soon after.

In addition to his many responsibilities at the papermill and the local union, Jeff also served a two-year stint as General Manager of

Shawnee Lanes Bowling Center, from September 2009 through October 2011, and currently holds a seat on the Board of Directors. This 40-lane family entertainment center, in Chillicothe, was an idea/vision inspired by his father, J. Kenneth DeLong, in 1959. Jeff was also instrumental and deeply involved with other business ventures over the past few decades.

Jeffrey married his wife Teresa L. Curtis in 1989, who sadly passed away in October 2003. He raised their two sons who still reside in Chillicothe, which is approximately 50 miles south of Columbus (the state capitol). The three of them enjoy traveling throughout the United States together, visiting

National Parks, sightseeing, hiking, walking, camping trips, fishing, hunting, swimming, and excursions on the Ohio Lake Erie Islands and Ohio River. Jeff also resides in Chillicothe with his faithful companion, a 14½-year old yellow English Labrador Retriever, named Tank.

Daniel G. Stevens, Jr.

*Appointed to the
SOAR Executive Board*

Then, in September, United Steelworkers International President Thomas M. Conway appointed Daniel G. Stevens, Jr., to the SOAR Executive Board to fill the vacancy created when District 8 Executive Board Member Bob Adkins stepped down.

Daniel’s union career began right after he graduated from high school, in 1964, at Kenrose Manufacturing Company as a member of the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA). Two years later, he joined the Navy and fought for our country during the Vietnam War. Daniel served aboard the USS Kiowa ATF as a petty officer in charge of the engine room.

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

members to help organize the union at Mohawk Tire.

In the '90s, many significant changes affected Daniel's local union. The URW merged with the USWA, and Mohawk Tire was sold and became what is now Yokohama Tire. During his tenure at



Daniel G. Stevens, Jr.

Mohawk/Yokohama tire, he was elected and served as a Division Chairman (similar to a grievance chair) and also local union Trustee, for many years. In February 2002, Daniel took early retirement after 31 years and five months of employment with the tire company.

After his retirement from Yokohama in 2002, Daniel wanted to stay active in the union. He joined SOAR Chapter 8-UR2 in Salem, Va., and was soon elected vice president, where he served as the VP for six years before being elected president of his chapter in 2008. Stevens served

as president of his chapter from 2008-2012. Also, in 2006, he was appointed a SOAR Coordinator for Virginia by USW District 8 Director Ernest "Billy" Thompson and had served in that position until his recent appointment to the SOAR Executive Board.


Locally, Daniel stays involved with the area Labor Council by advocating for retirees and working families in Southwest Virginia. For the past 20 years, he has served as a delegate for the Southwest Virginia Labor Federation, and he is currently a trustee for the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Daniel has enjoyed volunteering at the Lewis Gale Hospital for the past 14 years, and he has been an active member and volunteer at the American Legion for 29 years. He especially enjoys spending time with his daughter and four granddaughters, and resides in Salem, Va.

On behalf of SOAR, we welcome Jeffrey and Daniel to the SOAR Executive Board and look forward to working with them as we continue our mission to protect and enhance the quality of life for retirees and working families.

SOAR in ACTION
USW@Work


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Social Security Benefits to Increase in 2020

Social Security's annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is an increase in the benefit amount people receive each month. By law, the monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) federal benefit rate increases when there is a rise in the cost of living. The government measures changes in the cost of living through the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index (CPI-W).

The CPI-W rises when prices increase, making your cost of living go up. This means prices for goods and services, on average, are a little more expensive. The COLA helps to offset these costs. As a result, more than 69 million Americans will see a 1.6 percent increase in their Social Security and SSI benefits in 2020.

Other changes that will happen in January 2020 are based on the increase in the national average wage index. For example, the maximum amount of earnings subject to Social Security payroll tax will increase to \$137,700. The earnings limit for workers younger than "full" retirement age will increase to \$18,240 and the limit for people turning "full" retirement age in 2020 will increase to \$48,600. There is no limit on earnings for workers who are "full" retirement age or older for the entire year.



www.socialsecurity.gov

Special Thanks to Bob

Longtime union and SOAR activist, Bob Adkins, has stepped down from the SOAR Executive Board.

Bob began his work career in 1973, when he hired on at INCO (later renamed Special Metals) in Huntington, West Virginia, eventually retiring in 2008. He was an active member of USW Local 40 for 35 years and served the local in a variety of elected and appointed positions, including shop steward, member of the grievance committee and grievance chair, a position he held for nine years. He was

also elected and served as a trustee for two terms and elected to the negotiating committee for three contracts. He is currently employed with the local as a part-time secretary.

Adkins completed the four-year West Virginia University Institute of Labor Studies Course in 2000 and has served as a delegate to the Southwestern District Labor Council with the West Virginia AFL-CIO, since 1996. He served two terms as vice president and two terms as president for the Council; and he currently serves as vice

president. In May of 2003, he was inducted into the West Virginia Labor Hall of Fame.

Upon retiring, Bob joined SOAR Chapter 8-23-4 and was soon elected as chapter recording and financial secretary. He is presently serving as recording secretary. In 2010 he was appointed as the West Virginia SOAR Coordinator in USW District 8 and in 2012 he was appointed to fill a

vacancy on the SOAR Executive Board to represent the retirees of District 8. Bob was elected in August 2014, re-elected in 2017, and he served in that position until his resignation this past September.

Adkins serves on the Executive Board of the West Virginia Alliance for Retired Americans and he was also elected to serve as trustee for the Special Metals Hourly Employees Voluntary Employees' Benefits Association (VEBA), established in 2003, after the company filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy. He was re-elected as trustee to the VEBA board in 2019, which is responsible for a current \$112 million dollar trust to provide health insurance for hourly retirees.

Currently, Bob serves as chair on the executive board of the Huntington Municipal Development Authority, where he was elected president in 2017 and then re-elected for a third term in 2019.

In addition, he was appointed to the City of Huntington Planning Commission in 2018, and he continues to serve in that capacity.

Amongst all that Bob is involved in, he intends to remain active with his SOAR chapter and the West Virginia Alliance for Retired Americans. Adkins stated, "It has been an honor and privilege to represent the retirees of District 8. I encourage all retirees to become active members of SOAR."

On behalf of the entire SOAR organization, we wish Bob and his family well and we thank him immensely for his many years of dedicated service to the Labor Movement and to SOAR.



Bob Adkins

2020 Social Security COLA Will be 1.6 Percent

Not Enough to Keep Up with Escalating Costs of Prescription Drugs and Other Expenses

The following statement was issued by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, regarding the government's announcement that there will be a 1.6 percent benefit increase for millions of Social Security beneficiaries, disabled veterans and federal retirees next year:

"The members of the Alliance for Retired Americans are disappointed that 63 million Social Security beneficiaries will receive a paltry 1.6 percent benefit increase in 2020.

"While any COLA (cost-of-living-adjustment) helps a little, 1.6 percent is not nearly enough to keep up with the escalating cost of prescription drugs and other expenses. One in four older Americans report that they are not taking a prescription their doctor prescribed due to cost. Retirees

deserve to live in dignity in retirement without worrying about paying for basic necessities."

"To help seniors and strengthen Social Security, we need to expand the program and increase benefits. We can do this by making the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share by removing the artificial earnings cap. Doing so would strengthen the Social Security Trust Fund and provide all retirees with increased benefits and require future COLAs to be based on the CPI-E, the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly. The CPI-E reflects health care and housing costs, things that seniors actually spend their money on."





Our SOAR brothers and sisters might wrestle with some painful reminders but, there is a passionate reason every American should watch the Netflix documentary film “American Factory.” It tells the story of a shutdown General Motors plant near Dayton, Ohio, that was purchased by a Chinese billionaire and refitted as an auto glass factory called Fuyao.

By Jeff Bonior

Many USW members suffered through similar times, thanks to the overcapacity of Chinese steel that caused American steel mills to stop production. Millions of U.S. steelworkers and suppliers lost their jobs, benefits, health care, or were just constantly being laid off since 2001.

“American Factory” offers a glimpse into the emotions of being forced to leave a job where your co-workers are a big part of your extended family.

It is the initial offering of Higher Ground Productions run by Barack and Michelle Obama, and it is a likely Academy Award contender having won the U.S. Documentary Directing prize at the Sundance Film Festival.

The film’s directors, Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar, chronicled the closing of the GM plant outside Dayton in their 2009 documentary “The Last Truck: Closing of a GM plant.” Not only did nearly 3,000 auto workers lose their jobs, but suppliers were left in the lurch, including many steelworkers who manufactured the steel for those cars.

Now comes “American Factory,” which debuted on Netflix recently and is making the rounds on a tour throughout the U.S.

At first, reopening the factory seemed like a savior returning to put people back to work and food on the dinner table.

But what we see more of than anything is the cultural differences in U.S. and Chinese corporations that leads to distinct ethics problem between the American and Chinese workers.

But the association between the American workers and Chinese staff that was brought in to oversee operations was not a rancorous one.

The film not only conjures respect for workers of both countries, but also shines a light on the dichotomy of the way business leaders operate in different cultures.

Americans, especially USW members, know how they feel about competing with China but, “American Factory” gives you a look at how the Chinese feel about working with Americans.

What is so amazing about “American Factory” is the seemingly unlimited access the filmmakers were allowed to record and document. This is not a story promoted by the Chinese Communist Party.



It is a story about men and women, from all walks of life, trying to communicate and see the world through each other’s eyes.

And yet, there are many bumps in the road.

The chairman of Fuyoa, Cho Tak Wong, tells his Chinese employees that they are not working there for the money, but rather to represent their country, and his biggest worry is the implementation of a collective bargaining union.

The Chinese hierarchy fails to understand why company benefits are essential and why Americans prefer a two-day weekend and fair wages. Cho seems to comprehend these American benefits, but just can’t seem to break the Chinese work mold.

Union membership seems to decline each year in the United States, and that is propagated by the corporate entities.

But toward the end of the film, workers from both countries become friends and learn to understand that sometimes there is a better way to do something.

Left to their devices, the workers from America and China would most likely create a great partnership, producing a quality product at well-paying jobs.

You can see it in most of their eyes, a manufacturing union representing the workers would form a personal union between workers of the two most diverse cultures.

Just try to imagine what it would be like to have the USW represent workers of both countries.

The sad truth is that SOAR and USW members still on the job must fight daily for what is rightfully theirs.

Jeffrey Bonior is a staff writer for the Alliance for American Manufacturing.



SOAR EYES ON WASHINGTON

By Jay McMurrin, SOAR Executive Board Member, District 2

SOAR Eyes on Washington is a new column that will appear regularly in the quarterly SOAR in Action publication.

With the announcement of Ken Kovack's retirement, this column replaces the articles formerly written by the long-time USW legislative staffer and volunteer SOAR Legislative Director. Ken was active in the legislative process and has lobbied in support of legislation to benefit steelworkers in every sector of the Union and continued to fight for our retiree benefits. Ken has retired from his SOAR activities, effective March of this year. We want to thank Ken for



Ken Kovack

the many years of dedication and contributions he has made toward improving the lives of our steelworker members and retirees, and we wish him the very best as he enjoys the fruits of his labor.

Congress has returned to work after its August recess and SOAR is going to keep a close eye on several legislative issues that directly affect our active and retired steelworker members.

The first legislative action on the table is NAFTA 2.0. That's the new trade agreement the Trump administration has been renegotiating with Mexico and Canada. The proposed trade pact is an improvement over the current NAFTA agreement. It takes steps to correct some flaws in Mexican labor rights laws and addresses the pay disparity between Mexican and U.S. workers. The problem is there is no language in the agreements to enforce violations of the labor and wage standards. National AFL-CIO

President Richard Trumka told a national media audience that without enforcement, the American labor movement could not support this agreement. Trumka said, "Without a way to ensure that all parties abide by this trade agreement, there must be provisions in it to guarantee total real compliance with the language. While the Trump administration is going in the right direction in regards to the NAFTA agreement, our union agrees that it will not be effective and benefit the citizens of this country without correct execution.

Another sticking point from truly benefiting the American worker is the pact's failure to adequately address concerns about global warming and environmental protections. Trumka further stated, "In the U.S. we have developed pollution standards that are cleaning up our air, soil and water. Those standards have cost industry millions to comply with, but they are working. Unfortunately, several of our trading partners have not taken the needed steps to protect our environment and it has become a trade issue. Without the pollution standards similar to ours in America, building plants in places like Mexico and Viet Nam are cheaper and prompting U.S. employers to move overseas. Trading nations must be held to the same standard to level the playing field and ensure a healthy future for a clean planet."

Another issue being discussed in Congress is the Butch Lewis Act. We will be lobbying for this act during the USW Rapid Response & Legislative Conference to be held in Washington, D.C., at the end of October. The Butch Lewis Act addresses the



Jay McMurrin

lack of funding for multi-employers pension plans and the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC). The act establishes a loan program to help plans meet funding obligations and therefore allow them to continue paying full benefits to plan participants. The measure has

been passed by the House and was sent to the Senate for consideration. However, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is sitting on it as he waits for word on whether the president will sign it or not.

McConnell is holding numerous pieces of legislation he thinks will cast Republicans in a bad light during the run-up to next fall's election. Included in that is a bill that would reform the Labor Relations Act of 1932. The proposed bill would level the playing field for workers attempting to join a Union and correct some of the injustices of Republican legislation over the past ten years.

Organized labor and Union members, including SOAR, will be taking action over the coming weeks to convince their U.S. Senators to push McConnell to act. Julie Stein, the USW's National Director of SOAR, stated in regards to the Butch Lewis Act, "The health of our multi-employer pension plan system is quickly reaching the crisis level. Congress needs to act swiftly to prevent hardship for millions of American retirees. McConnell has to be told the time to act is now!"

SOAR will stay the course and keep our eyes on Washington to protect and enhance the well-being of our retirees and working families.



Senator Joni Ernst's Sneaky Social Security Attack

By Robert Roach, Jr.

During a recent town hall meeting, U.S. Senator Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) told a constituent that Congress needs to “sit down behind closed doors” and make

“a lot of changes” to Social Security.

She knows that voters across the political spectrum overwhelmingly oppose cutting our modest earned benefits, so she won't admit she wants to do that. Sadly, her view is shared by many senators and members of Congress.

Every month, Social Security pays earned benefits to over 42.4 million retirees across the country and to over 8.6 million Americans with such severe disabilities that they cannot work. Millions more will receive those benefits in the future — unless politicians like Ernst are able to make a secret deal.

I can see why Sen. Ernst doesn't want the public involved in discussions over Social Security. As Rep. John Larson (D-Connecticut), the Chairman of the House Social Security Subcommittee said, “The hard truth of the matter is that Republicans want to cut Social Security.”

Rep. Larson held several hearings this year demonstrating

that our Social Security system is sound, but needs to be expanded for current and future beneficiaries. We should also strengthen it by asking millionaires and billionaires to pay more into the system.

There are several pending Senate bills that would ensure Social Security is able to continue paying out benefits without cuts. Of course, Sen. Ernst has not cosponsored any of them. Her solution is to “sit down behind closed doors.”

In one respect, I don't blame her. If I wanted to privatize and cut our earned Social Security benefits, I might try to hide it from my constituents too. That's why we need to pay attention to our elected officials and keep asking the tough questions they may not want to answer.

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

For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.



Don't Miss this IMPORTANT DEADLINE!

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

Have you looked at your Medicare Part D and Advantage plans to ensure they still work for you? Each year, both Medicare Advantage and Part D plans make changes to their benefits, cost-sharing, provider networks and monthly premiums. That means the plan that best served you in 2019 may not be the best plan for you next year.

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

New! Changes coming to Medicare in 2020 include the discontinuation of Plans C & F, as well as the introduction of High-Deductible Plan G.

If you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can join, switch, or drop a plan during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period, between January 1–March 31 each year. For more information on joining, dropping, and switching plans, visit Medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE.

Also, the link to the 2020 Medicare and You Handbook follows:
<https://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10050-Medicare-and-You.pdf>





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Let's Travel

Whether you want to travel the world or see America from sea to shining sea, the **Union Plus Travel** benefit offers a one-stop shop for all your travel needs. Book your flights and hotels together and save. Start planning your trip today!

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Learn more
at unionplus.org/usw

