

UNITED STEELWORKERS
SOAR
STEELWORKERS ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE RETIREES

CONNECTION
WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER



HAPPY FALL!

STAY HEALTHY. STAY ACTIVE. STAY SAFE.

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Beyond Roads and Bridges



Yes, President Biden’s proposed infrastructure plan would invest billions to rebuild our nation’s crumbling roads and bridges, expand broadband internet, and ramp up the production of clean, renewable forms of energy.

If passed, all of the aforementioned would be a boon for our economy, the nation’s future, and for Steelworkers who manufacture a lot of the products needed to deliver upon the promise of rebuilding our infrastructure.

However, the President and a significant number of Congressional representatives also see an opportunity to invest in the American people in a way that has not been seen in decades.

Most meaningful to senior citizens is the proposal for a historic expansion of Medicare to include coverage for dental, vision and hearing benefits for the first time ever. There have also been discussions about potentially lowering the program’s eligibility age from 65.

This proposed expansion of Medicare is included in a \$3.5 trillion-dollar budget blueprint, which also seeks to invest in child care, family leave, public education, and more.

We’ve already seen some in Congress sounding the alarm, expressing concerns about increased government spending. But, many of them are the same people who didn’t think twice about furthering the war in Afghanistan and argued it was premature to bring our troops home in August.

I am ecstatic about the opportunity for more seniors to gain access to expanded care through Medicare. After all, we know that Medicare provides coverage at far lower cost than private insurance.

Additionally, more senior citizens might make the decision to retire if their access to health care services isn’t in question. This would mean younger Americans might have a better chance at finding that union job rebuilding the infrastructure we all know is in dire need of repair.

This is a real opportunity to lift all boats. So, let’s get it done!

Bill Pienta, SOAR President



The pumpkins are ready to be picked and sold, and the autumn leaves are falling.

The cooler nights make for wonderful opportunities to sit outdoors by the fire and sip hot chocolate or apple cider.

The apple pies are being baked, and the deer are on the move.

Try to enjoy the outdoors before winter sets in. You all deserve a rest after putting up with this COVID-19 pandemic.

What a COLA Increase Means for Recipients

Sixty-five million Americans receive a monthly Social Security benefit.



The overwhelming majority of recipients, 72%, are retirees who collect approximately \$1,500 each month. The remaining 28% is comprised of more than 8 million disabled workers and 5.8 million survivors of deceased workers who, on average, receive a monthly benefit of approximately \$1,200.

Next year, Social Security recipients could see the largest cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in four decades. Current estimates project the increase to be upward to 6%, which is significant when compared to the modest 1.3% increase in 2021.

As a result, come January, the average Social Security recipient could see an increase of approximately \$80-100 in their monthly benefit.

However, don't be fooled by the words "additional," "largest," and "increase." Social Security's COLA reflects changes in the Consumer Price Index, which means every time prices go up for everyday goods, so will our COLA. In other words, whatever increase we see in our monthly benefit will likely be spent on the increased cost of groceries, toilet paper, and more.

Over the last 19 months, the cost of many consumer goods has increased to compensate for workers contracting COVID, skyrocketing death rates, and the various impacts on the production and transport of goods related to any number of necessary safety protocols that were put in place to protect workers.

So, while we probably shouldn't be celebrating our COLA increase in January, we can at least be thankful that Social Security was written in a way that assures recipients aren't adversely impacted by unforeseen fluctuations in the economy.

Sources:

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/09/14/social-security-cost-of-living-adjustment-could-be-at-least-6-percent-in-2022.html>

<https://www.fool.com/investing/2021/08/29/how-much-average-social-security-benefit-rise-2022/>

Julie Stein, SOAR Director

“Buy American” isn’t just a catchy slogan. It’s what every American should look for when purchasing an American flag. It’s a path back to the strength and prosperity that Americans of past generations struggled to achieve.

-Tom Conway, USW Int'l. President



SOAR Chapter Connection

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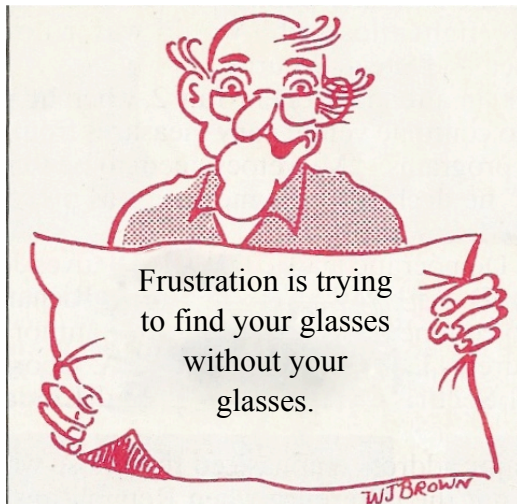
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Ole Charlie Sez:



Articles and Photos Requested

- The next deadline for the SOAR in Action magazine will be Oct 8 and articles should be emailed to the SOAR Director Julie Stein at jstein@steelworkers.org
- The deadline for the next publication of the SOAR Chapter Connection newsletter is November 25. Email articles and photos to soar3@icloud.com

Elaine Sez:

This year, the bumper crop was my Fosh grapes. I've tried making wine in the past, but the best results were from Fosh grapes.

The vine just keeps getting bigger, and because they grow on a fence, the deer only get the ones on the outside of the garden fence. I'm looking forward to this year's results.



Forbidden fruits create many jams.

Three Older Gentlemen

Three retired Steelworkers were out walking.
The first one said, "Windy, isn't it?"
The second one said, "No, it's Thursday!"
The third one said, "So am I. Let's go get a beer."



Flu Shot Time



There are many places you can get your flu shot – don't wait.

People who are 65 and older are at high risk of having serious health complications from the flu. Getting the shot [protects you from getting the flu](#) and keeps you from spreading it to others.

Your Costs in Original Medicare

Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) covers one flu shot per flu season. You pay nothing for a flu shot if your doctor or other qualified health care provider accepts assignment for giving the shot.

Things To Know

- Don't wait to get the flu shot. You can get the flu shot many places, including your doctor's office and your local pharmacy — contact them for details. If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, contact your plan — most places accept Medicare Advantage Plans.
- Stay safe. Your doctors and pharmacies are working hard to keep you safe and socially distanced. Remember to wear your mask when you get your shot.



Note: Your doctor or other health care provider may recommend you get services more often than Medicare covers. Or, they may recommend services that Medicare doesn't cover. If this happens, you may have to pay some or all of the costs. Ask questions so you understand why your doctor is recommending certain services and whether Medicare will pay for them.

Source: Medicare.gov

Medicare & You Handbooks for 2022 Are on the Way

My guess is very few people enjoy reading the Medicare and You Handbook. Still, it does answer a lot of questions for those interested. Medicare is a wonderful healthcare program, but there are some things about its benefits that many aren't familiar with.

For example, eye care: Although Medicare doesn't usually pay for glasses, it does pay for glaucoma testing. So, a person can make an appointment with an Optometrist and simply tell them to check the health of their eyes. The office visit will be paid for by Medicare. It's when a patient allows the Optometrist to check his vision that it will be coded in such a way that Medicare won't pay for it. That's why it's so important for retirees on Medicare to leaf through the book once in a while. By the way, the handbook is also online at Medicare.gov



Charlie

Alliance Lawsuits Are Protecting the Right to Vote

by Robert Roach, Jr.



Eighteen states have enacted 30 restrictive new voting laws since 2020. That is why the Alliance for Retired Americans is working to make it easier for voters to cast a ballot, not more difficult.

Seniors take voting seriously, and consistently turn out to vote at a higher rate than other age groups. More seniors used mail ballots, drop boxes and early voting in 2020, and efforts to limit or eliminate those methods of voting may result in older voters' voices not being heard at the ballot box.

The Florida Alliance, together with the League of Women Voters of Florida, the Black Voters Matter Fund and several individual Florida voters, filed a lawsuit in May of this year over the state's sweeping new voter suppression bill. The suit, which contends that the new law illegally targets elderly and disabled voters as well as minority voters, challenges such changes as new restrictions on the collection of mail-in ballots and the use of drop boxes.

As a result of the lawsuit, state officials handed over emails and text messages that provided important evidence. *Politico* looked at that information and then reported that Florida officials had future election results in mind, not just voter fraud, when they moved to restrict voting rights in the state. A recent *Politico* article specifically states that the internal emails and text messages "show that a crackdown on mail-in ballot requests was seen as a way for the GOP to erase the edge that Democrats had in mail-in voting during the 2020 election."

In September, 2021 the Texas Alliance for Retired Americans joined three other groups, Voto Latino, LULAC Texas and the Texas American Federation of Teachers, in filing a lawsuit contending that the core provisions of a new voter suppression law in Texas will deeply degrade the democratic cornerstones of representation and fairness.

The right to vote is sacred, and we will continue to defend that right by any legal means necessary in advance of the 2022 midterm elections.

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.

Many Thanks to Our Volunteers

We appreciate our SOAR Executive Board members, coordinators, chapter officers and members who have done so much in various ways to keep our organization working for justice and helping our communities.

You all deserve a raise in pay...whoops, my mistake...*Charlie*

Retirees Applaud Election of Liz Shuler and Fred Redmond to Lead the AFL-CIO

August 20, 2021 - Statement of Robert Roach, Jr., President of the Alliance for Retired Americans



On behalf of retirees across the country, the Alliance for Retired Americans congratulate Liz Shuler on her election as president of the AFL-CIO and United Steelworkers (USW) International Vice President Fred Redmond on his election as Secretary-Treasurer.

"Both of their elections are historic and well-deserved.

"President Shuler is the first woman to lead the AFL-CIO and she brings an innovative spirit, creativity, and tenacity to the fight to win a strong future for working families. As an accomplished and inspiring leader, she will lift the voices of workers across the country as we seek to build back a better economy for all.

"USW's Fred Redmond brings his global leadership and experience to the office of Secretary-Treasurer.

"President Shuler has done an outstanding job as Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, and Alliance members have benefited from her serving as our Executive Vice President. We worked together on the AFL-CIO's Retirement Security Working Group, where she was a driving force in successfully battling to shore up failing multiemployer pension plans."



"Secretary-Treasurer Redmond has also made retirement security a focus of his career at USW and has served as the Chair of the AFL-CIO's Older and Retired Workers Committee. He fought to protect USW member's health care and pensions, and has made sure that retiree issues receive the attention they deserve.

"AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka's untimely death on August 5 has left us with big shoes to fill. But, with President Shuler and Secretary-Treasurer Redmond leading the way, I am confident that the labor movement will work to ensure that retired union members, and all Americans, have the secure retirement they have earned after a lifetime of hard work."

Charlie sez: When I was the District 7 SOAR Executive Board Member, Fred Redmond was the District 7 Assistant to the Director. All of my needs in doing my job were directed to Fred and I can say that he never has said no to me. What a wonderful person to deal with. Congratulations Fred and thanks to President Tom Conway for nominating you.

“With all their faults, trade unions have done more for humanity than any other organization of men that ever existed. They have done more for decency, for honesty, for education, for the betterment of the race, for the developing of character in men, than any other association of men.”

— Clarence Darrow

Note: Darrow was an American lawyer who became famous in the early 20th century for his involvement in the Scopes “Monkey” Trial and also in the famous Leopold and Loeb murder trial.



Charlie

Let's Build Back Better – Every Way We Can



In the coming weeks, the Biden administration and Congress will continue debates to finalize agreements on infrastructure spending and the continuance of the Section 232 trade tariffs on imported steel.

These two issues are top priorities for us at the Alliance for American Manufacturing and we urge you to contact your representatives in Congress to approve a robust infrastructure funding package and to keep the Section 232 tariffs in place as they continue to boost America's steel industry and provide thousands of good-paying jobs to our nation's USW members.

We also realize many of you are weary of the Covid pandemic and the minute policy details of legislative matters.

It may take weeks, or even months, for these essential issues to be finalized. So, in the meantime, many Americans have turned to more celebratory matters such as the upcoming holidays.

We may still be one month away from Halloween but believe it or not, the holiday shopping season has already begun. Changing times and the Covid pandemic have more and more people shopping online as shopping malls and main street America stores see less and less foot traffic. People are doing their holiday shopping even earlier this year because of a shortage of manufacturing products, supplies and slower shipping avenues.

However you choose to do your holiday shopping, the AAM team encourages you to Buy American-made products whenever possible. If you begin shopping now, you have plenty of time to research gifts that are made in America that will be appreciated for their top quality. Your made in America purchase will also help those small businesses that have suffered with poor sales during the pandemic and will help create additional job openings for American workers.

In the next issue of this newsletter, AAM will post a link to our 2021 Made in America Holiday Gift Guide. Our staff is currently at work researching unique American-made gifts that have not appeared in our previous seven issues that began in 2014.

Supporting investment in America's infrastructure, safeguarding our steel industry from cheap imports with the Section 232 tariffs and buying made in America products all contribute to the economic future of the United States.

To follow President Joe Biden's mantra, let's "Build Back Better," every way we can.

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

Now, I don't know a thing about motorcycles but this Janus motorcycle is one that is designed and hand-built in Goshen, Indiana.

Charlie





Memorial Day and Veterans Day each honor the military, though the two holidays are not the same.

Memorial Day, which is celebrated annually on the last Monday in May, honors the brave men and women who lost their lives while serving in the American military. Many communities host memorial ceremonies honoring their fallen soldiers on Memorial Day, ensuring such soldiers' bravery and sacrifices are never forgotten.

While many people now view Memorial Day weekend as the unofficial start of summer, the weekend should not be celebrated without also pausing to reflect on and recognize the military personnel who lost their lives in defense of freedom and the American way of life.

Veterans Day is celebrated annually on Nov. 11 and recognizes all men and women who have served in the military. Veterans Day coincides with Remembrance Day, which is celebrated by the Commonwealth of Nations — an association of 53 member states, with connections to the British Empire. Countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom observe Remembrance Day.

Though Veterans Day and Remembrance Day are each celebrated on Nov. 11, the latter recognizes armed forces members who died in the line of duty, making it more similar to Memorial Day than Veterans Day.

It's not uncommon for people to recognize fallen soldiers on Veterans Day, but many use the holiday to express their appreciation to existing veterans.

Quilts For Wounded Soldiers — Quilts = Healing



The Quilts of Valor www.qovf.org is an organization that gives quilts to comfort American Soldiers that are wounded in war. This is not limited to the Iraq war but encompasses all the wars and war zones. The quilts are pieced by a volunteer quilter, then sent on to a long-arm quilter that volunteers their time to quilt the piece. She/he then returns it to the piecer for the binding and label. The quilt is then sent to the recipient or a volunteer that will take it to a hospital or rehab center and distribute it.

“I have a long history of family in war zones; my father was in WWII in Europe, my grandfather was put into service as an agricultural attaché to Korea during the Korean conflict, my ex-husband spent two years in Vietnam, and my oldest son has served three tours in Iraq.

When I read of the Quilts of Valor Foundation in a quilt magazine, I knew I had to contribute to them. I vowed to make at least one quilt for each time my son went over to a war zone and came home safely. I have made two so far and I still owe them one. My first two quilts went to Marines. The next one I plan on making more feminine and will request it go to a female soldier.”

Sandi Faust, Member Chapter 30-18

The WW1 Origins of the Poppy as a Remembrance Symbol

The Remembrance Day symbolism of the poppy was initiated with the poem, “In Flanders Field,” written by World War 1 brigade surgeon John McCrae, who was struck by the sight of the red flowers growing on a ravaged battlefield.

Ever wonder why Veterans day is on the 11th and does not change? World War 1 ended on the 11th month on the 11th day on the 11th hour. Recently, I saw a man selling poppies stop a lady and asked if he could re-position her poppy. While doing so, he told that lady she should wear the poppy on her right side; the red represents the blood of all those who gave their lives, the black represents the mourning of those who didn’t have their loved ones return home, and the green leaf represents the grass and crops growing and future prosperity after the war destroyed so much. The leaf should be positioned at 11 o’clock to represent the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the time that World War 1 formally ended. He was worried that younger generations wouldn’t understand this, and his generation wouldn’t be around for much longer to teach them. We must remember those from our current wars too.

I copied this from someone else. Please do the same to pass this knowledge on to those who don’t know the meaning and who care enough to know.

Julie



Purpose of SOAR

The Organization shall concern itself with and deal with the social, economic, educational, legislative and political developments and concerns of its members and spouses, the USW and the labor movement. In addition, the purpose of this Organization is to better the communities in which said members live, to advance in every way the policies of the United Steelworkers, and to engage in political and legislative action directed at bettering our nation and safeguarding and enhancing the economic security and general well-being of all its members and older and retired persons in general through educational, legislative, political, civic, social, and community activities.

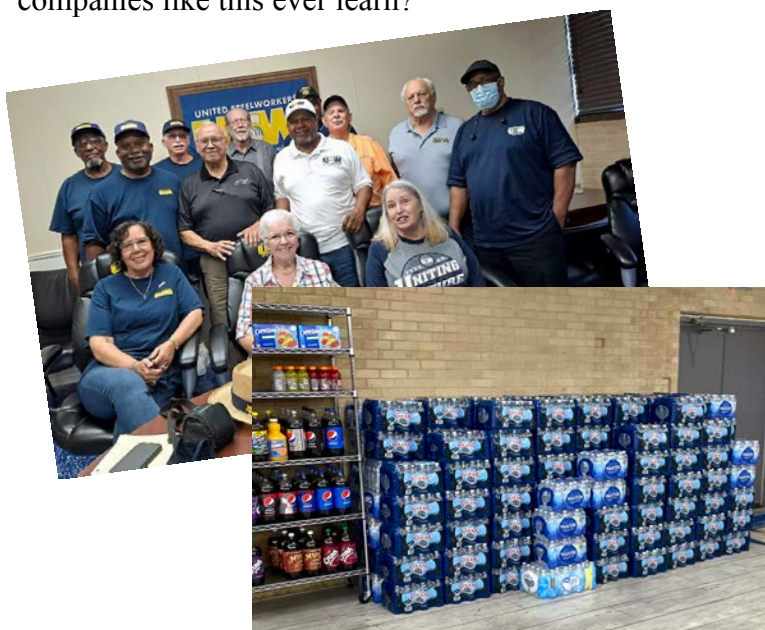
On May 23, 1985, the United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO-CLC (USWA), established the Articles of Association and By-laws to govern the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees, a membership organization affiliated with the United Steelworkers of America.



Source: Articles of Association and By-Laws for the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees

Lockout Continues in Beaumont, Texas

During the lockout at ExxonMobile, the members of Local 13-243 and SOAR members help the local union with their food pantry set up in the union hall. For five months, these workers have been locked out of work. When will companies like this ever learn?



Left to right are: Andy Rosas, District 13 SOAR Executive Board Member; Karla Konning, Secretary; Darrell Kyle President Local 13-243 and SOAR Chapter President, Robert Hill.



Who's New to SOAR?



When phoning the SOAR International office, there's a pretty good chance that the person answering the phone will be Zach Martin, our new assistant to the SOAR Director.

Welcome Zach!

For your information, Zach is filling in for Alysse Rico, who is currently on long-term leave.

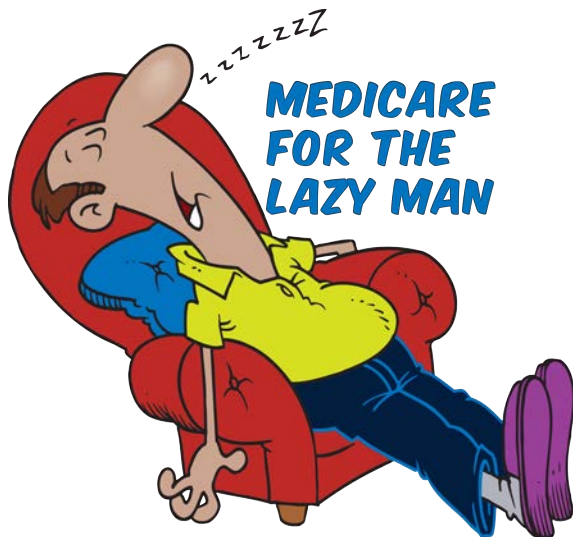
Zach, we hope you will enjoy your new job and you will find a great deal of satisfaction trying to answer the many questions that our retirees will have. There's no better feeling than to know you helped someone.

Again, WELCOME, Zach!

Some Other Ways To Get Medicare Information

Social media... Stay up to date and connect with other people with Medicare by following us on Facebook... <https://www.facebook.com/medicare/> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/MedicareGov>

Videos... Visit <https://www.youtube.com/user/CMSHHSgov> to see videos covering different health care topics.
Source: Medicare & You Handbook 2022



<https://medicareforthelazyman.podbean.com>

