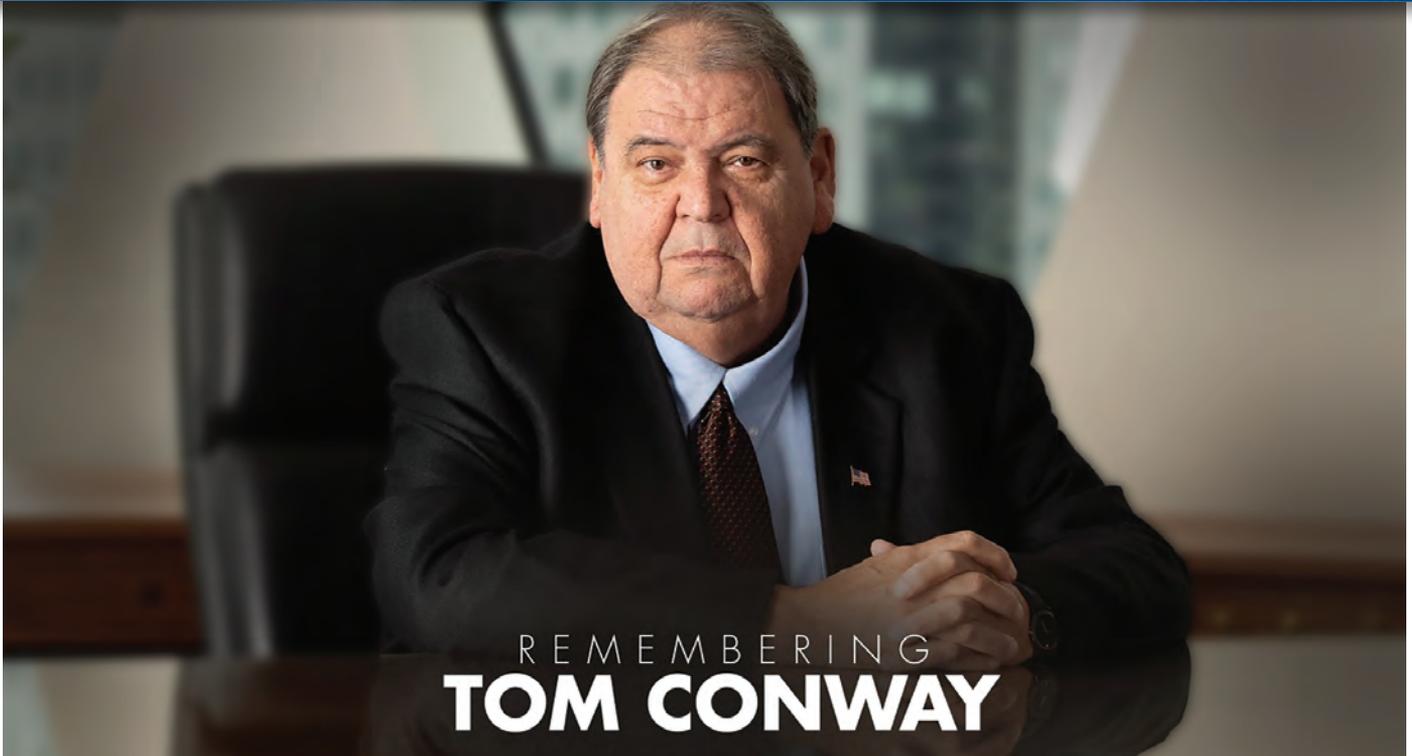


USW@Work

A Regular Publication of the United Steelworkers

Volume 18/4

A Powerful Voice for Workers



REMEMBERING TOM CONWAY

Longtime Leader was a USW Activist for 45 Years

International President Tom Conway passed away on September 25, 2023, at the age of 71, after four years leading the USW and 45 years as a USW member.

Conway's service as president followed 14 years as international vice president and one of the union's chief negotiators in major industries. Following Conway's passing, the USW international executive board appointed International Vice President David McCall to serve the remainder of Conway's term as president.

SOAR International President William Pienta, a former District 4 director who served on the USW executive board with Conway, remembered him as a leader who always put others first and never sought the limelight.

Pienta recalled marching with Conway at a fair trade demonstration in Miami, where participants were jockeying to be seen by television cameras.

"I saw Tom further back in the crowd, assisting another demonstrator who was having a difficult time, because of the heat, in keeping up with the crowd," Pienta said. "Tom had the talent of making everyone who he spoke to feel like he was really listening to you and cared about what you thought. The important part is that he really did."

Other USW members echoed those sentiments, calling Conway a selfless leader who always put others first.

Dorine Godinez, who represents District 7 on the SOAR executive board, said she had known Conway for more than 30 years, since her early days as a leader with Local 1010 at Inland Steel, also in northwest Indiana, and that he was always there to help members any way he was needed.

In fact, Godinez recalled a moment years ago when she was leaving a store after purchasing a microwave

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BILL PIENTA
SOAR President

Next Level of Activism

I am writing this article in memory of Tom Conway. Much will be said about him, but I believe Tom would prefer to have his legacy be remembered by the successes of our union. One of the best ways to honor his memory is to show examples of our successes under his leadership. Tom was a big supporter of SOAR, but he expected a return on that investment. I believe this article shows a clear example of the return on his investment in SOAR.

The Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) was officially established on May 23, 1985, when, by unanimous vote, the delegates approved an amendment to the USW Constitution, making SOAR an affiliate organization of the USW. More than that, the resolution created another level of activism for the union.

SOAR is as essential to our union as other programs, like Women of Steel, NextGen, Veterans of Steel or Rapid Response. However, the most significant difference is that SOAR is primarily

made up of retired, former union members who want to remain involved and activists for our great union.

In recent months, the activism of members of SOAR has been recognized in a way that identifies the real purpose of SOAR: to create another level of activism within the USW.

Recently, two individuals were recognized for their continued involvement:

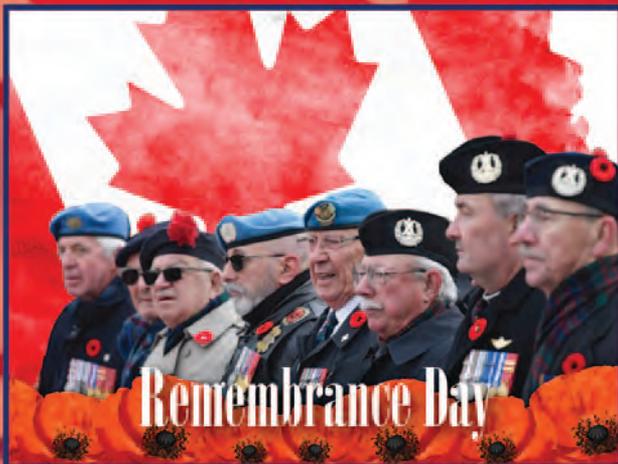
Albert Becco, one of the longest-serving chapter presidents at 90 years of age, received an award for his lifetime involvement in the labor movement, his community and his support and work towards electing labor-friendly candidates. *(See article on page 22.)*

Priscilla Marco, who is new to SOAR and was instrumental in forming her local union's SOAR chapter and is serving as the chapter's first-ever president, received an award at the USW District 4 Conference recognizing her as an outstanding SOAR activist for her commitment to the labor movement, her involvement in the community and also for her support and work towards electing labor-friendly candidates.

SOAR provides an opportunity for retirees like Priscilla and Al to stay active and involved and to be able to make a difference. They are just two examples of the many dedicated activists of SOAR who firmly believe that it is a logical progression to move to SOAR as their "next level of activism."



FREEDOM ISN'T FREE
NOVEMBER 11



Remembrance Day



Veterans Day

THANK YOU VETERANS! ALWAYS REMEMBER, NEVER FORGET.



JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

Two Senators Unite to Strengthen Retirement Security

In September, U.S. Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) announced the first bipartisan, bicameral push in nearly 40 years to improve the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, which currently punishes older and disabled Americans for saving for emergencies and their futures.

SSI provides modest cash payments (approximately \$585 per month for individuals) to ensure recipients can afford basic needs like food, shelter, and clothing.

Under current eligibility guidelines, individual recipients cannot exceed \$2,000 in assets (\$3,000 for married couples), which creates uncertainty and risk for the 5+ million Americans who depend upon the program.

“SSI’s arbitrary and outdated rules make no sense. The government shouldn’t punish seniors and Ohioans with disabilities who do the right thing and save money,” said Sen. Brown. “It’s long past time we end these out-of-date government restrictions and allow Americans on SSI to save for emergencies and their futures without putting the benefits they rely on to live at risk.”

Despite participation in the program, approximately 40 percent of SSI recipients maintain employment, mainly because of inflation, our changing economy, and increased life expectancy for many (but certainly not all) Americans.

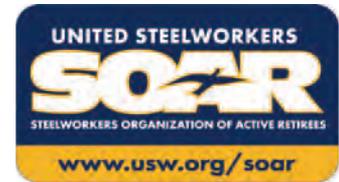
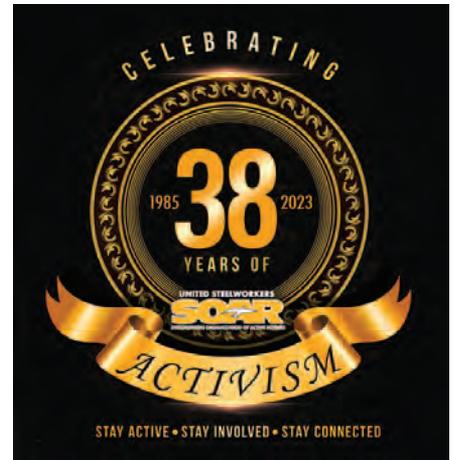
“Someone who is disabled should not have to choose between a better job and losing their safety net,” said Sen. Cassidy. “This is an easy fix that encourages work, allows people to save, and lifts people out of poverty.”

The proposed SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act would, for the first time since 1984, raise those caps to \$10,000 and \$20,000, respectively, and index them to inflation moving forward. A companion bill in the House is being led by U.S. Reps. Brian Higgins (D-NY26) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA1).

Strengthening retirement security has long been a top priority of Steelworkers, as evidenced by our 2020 and 2022 Your Union, Your Voice (YUYV) membership survey results.

For an in-depth look at our YUYV membership survey, visit www.uswvoices.org

Be sure to watch for and participate in our 2024 YUYV membership survey when it rolls out early next year.



facebook.com/groups/uswsoar



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REMEMBERING TOM CONWAY

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oven and encountered Conway outside, where he insisted on carrying the purchase to her car.

“He recognized me right away,” she said. “And he was an immediate gentleman and he came over to help me.”

It was just one small example, she said, of Conway’s humble and selfless approach to his job, and to his relationships with his fellow workers.

“Some people in positions like that, they maybe feel they do enough already,” Godinez said. “But Tom wasn’t like that. He would help immediately, any time.”

Godinez said Conway, who appointed her to fill a vacancy on the SOAR board, was skilled at identifying the best people for the diverse jobs that needed to be done in the union.

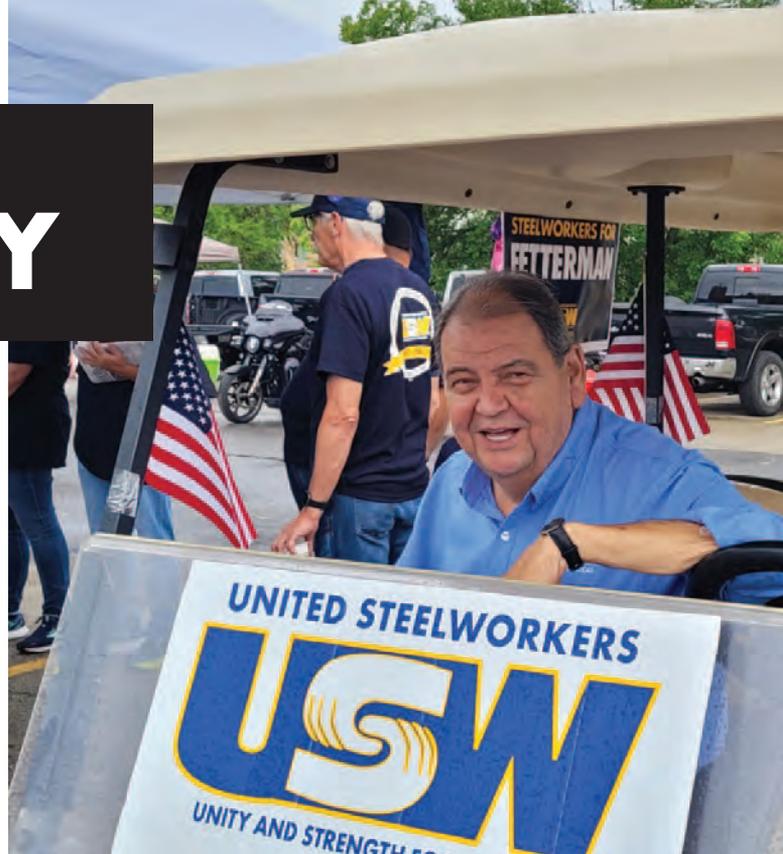
“He always had his hand on the pulse, to make sure the union’s efforts were maximized,” she said. “He knew who the people were, and when the right time came, he knew who the best person was who would serve our membership well.”

Tom O’Shei, president of Local 135L and a member of SOAR in Buffalo, N.Y., worked with Conway on several difficult rounds of bargaining with Good-year, including one summer a decade ago when the bargaining committee spent much of the summer together in Cincinnati hammering out proposals.

“Tom taught many of us on the committee about negotiating and how to conduct yourself as a union leader,” O’Shei said. “His demeanor was always kind, and he always took the time to talk to members and teach them, or just listen to them. He was definitely one of a kind.”

O’Shei said Conway’s influence went far beyond the bargaining table.

“He helped educate members on the importance of electing individuals who support working people and their issues,” O’Shei said. “He was also very effective



at pushing politicians to make the right decisions as it pertained to trade and trade agreements.”

Steve Ackerman, president of Local 169 in Mansfield, Ohio, whose local is in the process of forming its SOAR chapter, said Conway helped members of his local when their former employer, AK Steel, locked them out of their jobs for 39 months.

Ackerman credited Conway with helping to keep members focused and united during the ordeal, which ultimately ended with their return to work in January 2003.

“President Conway was one of the most fearless, selfless, and courageous leaders that could have led this organization,” Ackerman said.

Ackerman also cited Conway’s commitment to preparing the union’s younger members for leadership roles through the NextGen program and other efforts.

NextGen was just one of the many ways Conway sought to strengthen the USW during his tenure by bringing a diverse group of voices into the union.

As he said in his keynote speech at the 2022 USW convention, “Every worker deserves a seat at the table and the protections of a union contract.”

Pienta said that when decisions had to be made, even those that were the exclusive right of the international president, Conway sought input and consensus from those who worked with him.

Conway, he said, won’t necessarily be remembered as an orator, because he would rather be listening to others.



David McCall succeeds Tom Conway as USW International President.



Photo of Tom Conway taken at the staging area of the 2022 Pittsburgh Labor Day Parade.

“He was more interested in hearing from the membership instead of telling them what they thought,” Pienta said. “When he did give a speech, the membership would always listen intently because what he was doing was not an attempt to impress the membership; he was trying to inform them and they understood that.”

Conway worked alongside McCall in the 1970s and 1980s as a millwright at the Burns Harbor steel

facility in Northwest Indiana, and served with him on the international staff for many years.

The pair, born on the same day, were friends, co-workers and union brothers for 45 years. Conway’s lifetime of union activism began early on, when he led a fight against the company hiring contractors to work at the mill while union members were laid off.

“That got him a lot of notoriety at the plant,” McCall said. “We had hundreds of our guys recalled who had been laid off.”

McCall said that he looked forward to building on Conway’s legacy of activism.

“From his earliest time making steel to his steady hand leading us through the darkest days of the pandemic, Tom followed two simple guiding principles: the dignity of work and the power of working people,” McCall said. “Tom was never afraid of a fight, and thanks to his ingenuity and determination, generations of workers can enjoy better jobs and brighter futures.”

Conway’s passing sparked an outpouring of grief and condolences. Tributes came from the White House, from the halls of Congress, and from

rank-and-file workers in news reports, on social media accounts and in union halls across the continent.

“American workers have lost an extraordinary champion, and I’ve lost a great friend,” President Joe Biden said of Conway. “He made our nation fairer. He made our nation stronger. And I will miss him dearly.”

As a top USW officer for 18 years, Conway relished going toe to toe with top leaders of some of the biggest USW employers. Over the course of his career, he became one of the union’s most accomplished negotiators in steel, aluminum, oil and other major industries, often directing bargaining during crises.

He led talks with U.S. Steel in 2008, 2012 and 2015, when the industry was on the verge of crisis. In 2018, with the steel industry improving, USW members under Conway’s leadership successfully fought off demands for cuts and ratified a new four-year agreement, covering 16,000 workers, that significantly boosted pay and benefits.

As he always did, Conway gave credit for those victories to the solidarity of rank-and-file workers.

“Solidarity wasn’t just a word to Tom; it was a way of life,” said USW International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn. “He understood that by working together, we could balance the scales against greedy corporations and the billionaire class.”



Tom Conway poses with members of SOAR attending a “Medicare for All” demonstration held at a Health Care Service Corporation location in downtown Chicago. From left, Victor Storino, USW District 7 SOAR Coordinator; Tom Conway, then-USW Int’l Vice President; the late Daniel Frost, Chapter 31-5; Scott Marshall, SOAR Int’l Vice President; and Phylliss Frost, SOAR Chapter 31-5 ~ photo taken 2019.



Toronto, ON – Members of SOAR Chapter 10 (Hamilton) attended the demonstration at Queen's Park. From left: Bob Sutton, Clyde and Elaine Lewis, and Lena Sutton.

SOAR Tells Ontario Government: **KEEP HOSPITALS PUBLIC!**

By Lena Sutton,
SOAR National Co-ordinator and
District 6 Executive Board Representative

SOAR members from across Ontario joined a massive demonstration at Queen's Park in Toronto at the opening of the fall session of the provincial legislature on Sept. 25. Hundreds of people from across Ontario came to this demonstration to protest the Ford government's plans to privatize health care.

Sponsored by the Ontario Health Coalition, speakers included patients, doctors, Indigenous leaders, community group leaders, labour leaders, long-term care advocates, small and rural community advocates and faith leaders who described the impact privatization of health care has on their communities.

The main message from the Ontario Health Coalition is that our public hospitals must stay public. Health care is about caring for people, not profit.

OUR DEMANDS TO PREMIER FORD

- ▶ Stop privatizing our public hospitals and other health care services.
- ▶ Stop creating a crisis in our public hospitals by underfunding them, cutting and closing services and trying to roll back the wages of nurses, health professionals and support staff.
- ▶ Expand the use of existing operating rooms in our public hospitals that are closed much of the time due to understaffing and underfunding.
- ▶ Expand capacity in our public hospitals and restore closed services.

This is not only a problem in Ontario, but throughout Canada. If you have a health coalition in your area, please join and take part. If you require more information on health care in Canada please visit the Canadian Health Coalition website which also lists the provincial health coalitions: healthcoalition.ca

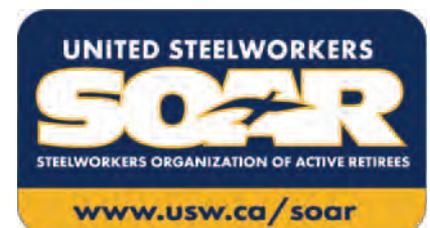
Universal Pharmacare

Another push in Canada is for universal pharmacare. As SOAR National Co-ordinator, I am requesting that you to send a letter to your federal MP requesting pharmacare for all Canadians. Have friends and relatives do the same.

We could have a federal election very soon and pharmacare is a very big election issue, especially for seniors, retirees and families who cannot afford medications.

The federal Liberal government must deliver universal pharmacare as part of the NDP-Liberal Confidence and Supply Agreement. To put pressure on the Liberals to speed this up, Jagmeet Singh's NDP introduced its own pharmacare bill in June this year.

The House of Commons is currently in its fall session and this could be the last chance to put pharmacare forward as a major issue.



IN MEMORIAM

DAN McNEIL

Built Connections ~ 1924-2023

Dan McNeil died in July 2023, just shy of his 99th birthday.

McNeil was a journeyman, then a machinist, making bolts at Stelco's Swansea Works in Etobicoke, Ont., where he started in 1951, becoming a member of USW Local 3767.

"During his years at Stelco, he was often on leave to the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) and the New Democratic Party (NDP). He became involved with the Steelworkers union by becoming a trustee and served in every local office except the financial secretary," wrote Charlie Averill, emeritus member of the SOAR Board of Directors, who has kept a profile about the board members since 2005.

"My mother would never let him hold that job," said Dan McNeil, Jr., McNeil's son.

Through the union, McNeil got involved in the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and was a delegate from his local to the convention where the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the CCF founded the NDP in 1961.

Doug Macpherson, SOAR Executive Board Vice President, recalls meeting McNeil through a Stelco advisory committee in the 1970s, long before they served together on the SOAR Executive Board.

"He was always a gentleman, which is not generally common among trade unionists," said Macpherson.

Michael Lewis, former USW District 6 staff for Political Action, recalls sending McNeil to political

campaigns to organize telephone canvassing. McNeil worked at least two campaigns for NDP Leader Ed Broadbent in Oshawa, and worked NDP campaigns in British Columbia as well as in Cape Breton in his home province of Nova Scotia.

"He was a terrific organizer," said Lewis. "He was good-natured. One of the loveliest human beings."

Dan Jr., remembers that even before his dad's retirement, McNeil was talking about the retiree gatherings and how the Steelworkers should have an official organization.

It was only appropriate that McNeil became a founding member of SOAR when Lynn Williams, then-International President, started the organization in 1985, appointing McNeil to represent District 6 on SOAR's International Executive Board.

In the late '80s, District 6 asked McNeil to join what is now the Ontario Federation of Union Retirees (OFUR), Averill wrote. He was also a founding member of what would become the Congress of Union Retirees (CURC). McNeil served as 2nd Vice-President, becoming president in 2007.

Like the job he'd had at Stelco, making bolts that hold things together, McNeil was always making connections — between the union and politics, between the members and the retirees, and urging retirees to be involved in political action.

An ardent sports fan of all the Toronto teams, Dan. Jr. said his dad watched the Blue Jays on TV the night before he died.



A youthful Dan McNeil on the streets of Toronto in the 1940s or '50s.



Dan McNeil sporting his favorite hockey team jersey.



Dan McNeil with then-NDP leader Jack Layton at a kitchen table chat.

Dan McNeil with two SOAR Chapter 6-1 members at the Steelworkers Hall in Toronto.

Doug Macpherson Takes His Second Retirement

Doug Macpherson has been at it longer than many people stay at one job. He’s been the National Co-ordinator of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) for 17 years, despite technically being “retired.”

In August, Doug stepped down as National Co-ordinator, handing the reins to Lena Sutton, President of SOAR Chapter 10 in Hamilton and District 6 Representative on the SOAR Executive Board.

A long-time Steelworker and USW staff member, Macpherson came to Canada from Scotland in 1965 with his young family. He became a Steelworker in 1968 when he got a job at Stelco’s Parkdale Works in Hamilton (now ArcelorMittal) and joined USW Local 5328.

A plumber by trade, Macpherson’s appreciation of unions solidified after a stint at non-union Dofasco in 1967. He hated the job because there were no rules, no recognition of his certifications and prior experience, and the bosses treated people badly. He applied to work at Stelco, a union plant, after seeing a job ad in the newspaper.

“The difference at Stelco... was like night and day from Dofasco,” said Macpherson. “In the first interview I had with the foreman, while we were talking about health and safety, he reached into his drawer and pulled out a collective agreement and said, ‘These are the rules we live by in this plant.’”

As a member of Local 5328, Macpherson became a Steward. Then Chief Steward. Then President. His talents led to his recruitment as a Steelworkers’ Staff Rep, followed by appointments as Area Co-ordinator in Peel-Halton, Assistant to then-District 6 Director Harry Hynd (also a Scot), Assistant to National Director



Outgoing SOAR National Co-ordinator Doug Macpherson with SOAR Director Julie Stein and incoming SOAR National Co-ordinator Lena Sutton. Photo: Mike Hnutjak, Hamilton Steelworkers Area Council.

Lawrence McBrearty, and Executive Director of what was then known as the Canadian Steel Trade and Employment Congress (CSTEC).

USW National Director Ken Neumann appointed Macpherson as the SOAR National Co-ordinator in 2006—a role Macpherson agreed to continue as a volunteer when he first retired in 2010.

As co-ordinator, Macpherson worked to build the organization, inside and out—recruiting new members, growing the chapters and encouraging SOAR advocacy — on retirement security, retirees first in bankruptcies, protecting universal health care and pushing for a national pharmacare plan.

One of Macpherson’s proudest achievements as a labour activist was being part of the campaign to expand the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), a victory achieved in 2016 after years of lobbying, and like many of the issues SOAR champions, one that largely benefits future generations.

Macpherson encouraged stronger connections between young Steelworkers (NextGen) and retirees, participating in cross-generation networking at multiple USW National Policy Conferences.

Macpherson joined the New Democratic Party in his early days of unionism, recognizing that unions could further improve workers’ lives through political partnership with labour’s party and advocacy for worker-friendly policies.

Macpherson isn’t going away; he’s just having a second retirement. He continues to serve on the SOAR Executive Board as Vice-President.

“Congratulations on your second retirement, Doug. You are a treasure to our union,” USW National Director Marty Warren said at a surprise party for Macpherson in Hamilton, organized by Sutton.



LENA SUTTON Takes the Reins

as National SOAR Co-ordinator in Canada

Aims to Strengthen Intergenerational Connections

Lena Sutton arrived at her union and political inclinations independently.

One of seven children growing up in the tiny community of Long Harbour, Newfoundland, she recalls how her parents split the vote—her dad a Liberal and her mum a Tory (Conservative). Once

old enough to vote, Sutton would spoil her ballot, knowing that “Liberal or Tory, same old story.”

As soon as New Democratic Party candidates came along, Sutton supported them, identifying

with the NDP’s values of helping others without expecting anything in return.

Sutton joined Steelworkers Local 7711 in 1974 when she got a job in the steno pool at ERCO, a phosphorus plant. She got involved in the union as a Shop Steward, Recording Secretary, Health and Safety Representative and on the Grievance and Bargaining committees.

Sutton won a grievance to work in the lab, after the company tried to prevent women in such jobs because it didn’t want to install additional washrooms or showers. Sutton put up with shared washrooms, just like at home, and demonstrated women’s value in industrial roles—her supervisor said she was one of the most efficient lab workers on site.

After the plant closed in 1989, Sutton found other union jobs, first at the Newfoundland Telephone company, and later when she moved to Ontario, at a grocery store.

“The union is very important to me. I see so many injustices to people, and even women who are in a union. The treatment of workers that don’t have a union—it’s just disgusting,” she says.

After retirement, Sutton volunteered with SOAR Chapter 10 in Hamilton, helping with social bus trips. After joining the chapter’s executive, she made clear that, “I wasn’t about bus trips and plays and card games. We were going to be political and involved in the community.”

Sutton became Chapter 10 President in 2006 and she proudly notes the Hamilton SOAR chapter is the largest in Canada.

The chapter is renowned for its community work, from food, clothing and toy drives as well as fundraising for the United Way and St. Matthew’s House, a non-profit organization helping those in need. Sutton’s dedication to the community earned her a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hamilton YWCA in 2020.

Hamilton’s SOAR chapter also remains resolutely political. Sutton ensures members know why the USW supports the NDP—the only party for workers. Members are encouraged to get involved in local campaigns and get active on issues that are important to seniors and retirees—health care, housing and retirement security.



Doug Macpherson, USW National Director Marty Warren and Lena Sutton.

As she succeeds Doug Macpherson as National Co-ordinator, Sutton wants to build SOAR by speaking to local union members before they retire, encouraging them to stay active. She also intends to keep building connections with young Steelworkers members, inviting NextGen members to attend SOAR meetings and learn about the organization.

Now that Sutton has the keys to the office, she’s preparing her first presentation as SOAR National Co-ordinator, to a USW Health Council meeting in Kingston, Ont., in October. She also will continue as District 6 Representative on the SOAR Executive Board.

“We welcome Lena to the role of SOAR National Co-ordinator. Present and future Steelworkers retirees will benefit from your commitment to activism and continued strong ties with the Next Generation,” said Marty Warren, USW National Director.



Tom Conway

FIGHTING for ALL WHO SERVED

In Memory of Tom Conway ~ USW International President
Chairman of the Veterans of Steel Council ~ Sgt. ASAF 1970-1974

Sgt. Jackie E. Garland, twice wounded during combat in Vietnam, returned home only to face even more battles that battered his spirit as well as his body.

The ex-Marine and his wife, Helen, struggled for decades to support their six children while fighting for service disability benefits that always remained a few steps out of reach.

Garland—wracked by pain from the shrapnel he took in his back and the hepatitis he contracted during surgery to repair the damage to his spine—died feeling abandoned by his country.

Spurred by that tragedy, George Walsh, Garland's son-in-law, now finds himself on the front lines of efforts to improve support for veterans and arrest the epidemics of suicide, homelessness and alienation afflicting those who served.

Walsh, a trustee of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 10-00086, is helping to lead the union's push for the federal Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach (CVSO) Act. The bill would expand the ranks of county veteran service officers across the nation and provide other resources needed to connect veterans with care.

"This is a no-brainer. We send people to war. We ask them to fight for their country. We need to start

taking care of them," explained Walsh, himself a veteran of the Navy submarine service who later served in the Reserve as a Seabee. "We need to start putting our money where our mouths are and helping these veterans and their families."

"This is really a good piece of legislation. We should have had this years ago," added Walsh, a USW safety representative at the Merck plant in Lansdale, Pa., noting many veterans feel adrift and lose hope. "My father-in-law was that way."

County veteran service officers are trained advocates, accredited by the federal government, who help former service members, their loved ones and caregivers "navigate the complex intergovernmental chain of veterans services and resources."

They make veterans aware of the medical benefits as well as the education, job search, housing assistance and other services available to them. They also assist veterans in applying for these opportunities and go to bat for them if government agencies balk at approving claims or applications.

These grassroots officials leverage billions in support every year. But there's a dire shortage of them across the country.

The CVSO Act would provide \$50 million a year for counties to hire more veteran service officers and fund outreach campaigns aimed at connecting ex-service members with assistance.

High levels of suicide and homelessness speak to veterans' struggles on the home front. Yet the resources to confront these





Photo of Sgt. Jackie E. Garland

challenges often go unused because veterans either don't know what's available to them or struggle to access it.

Walsh's in-laws felt overwhelmed trying to penetrate the bureaucracy on their own while coping with life's daily challenges.

"If it wasn't for my mother-in-law, I don't know how they would have done it," said Walsh, noting that Helen Garland, a Navy nurse who met her husband during his recovery at Camp Pendleton in Southern California, largely held the family together on her own.

He said his father-in-law, once a "Marine's Marine" who wanted a military career, endured pain every day and became so disillusioned with the government's treatment of him that he refused to let Taps be played at his funeral.

Walsh knows what an enormous difference a county veteran service officer would have made because, at the end of his father-in-law's life, he found one.

He recalled watching a nonprofit television channel one night when he saw an interview with Elias Tallas, a veteran service officer

from Berks County who served with the Army in Vietnam.

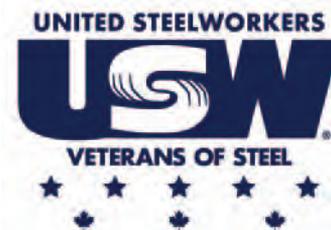
He tracked down a phone number for Tallas, met him a couple of days later and handed over the "meticulous notes" his mother-in-law kept about Jackie Garland's quest for benefits.

Tallas agreed to wade into the case. And although his assistance came too late to help Jackie Garland, he succeeded in securing benefits for Helen Garland that enabled her to live decently for the rest of her life.

Walsh wants all former service members to have the expertise, support and compassion that Tallas provided. Motivated by respect for his in-laws and a sense of duty to fellow veterans, he's meeting with members of Congress to explain the need for the CVSO Act.

He starts those meetings by showing his father-in-law's photo. "I'd like to introduce you to Sgt. Jackie E. Garland," he says, then tells his story.

While the Garlands fought on their own, other veterans lean on one another—sharing leads, tips and information—as they try to



navigate the system. Just last week, for example, Frank Brondum and a friend exchanged information about the various education opportunities available to them.

It's outrageous, he said, for the nation to leave veterans in the dark. "I'm 42 years old, I served for 13 years, and I'm still learning about the benefits I'm qualified for," said Brondum, a member of USW Local 13-1 who works at the Shell refinery in Deer Park, Texas.

Brondum, who served in the Army, said more than two dozen former service members at the refinery alone would benefit from a single point of contact for veterans' programs.

However, it's as important to publicize the work of the county veteran service officers as it is the benefits and services themselves, Brondum said, noting he only found out about his county's representative a few days ago.

Once they're back home, Walsh said, veterans deserve a system of care that serves them as reliably as they did the nation.

"When he was asked to serve, he served," Walsh observed of his father-in-law. "There was no hesitation on his part."



2023 Scholarship Recipients



SOAR scholarship recipients, from left: Brennan Templeton, Amelia Hylla, Caspar Dowdy, and Olivia Upshaw.

Brennan Templeton

attending Missouri Baptist University

Amelia Hylla

attending University of Indiana

Caspar Dowdy

attending University of Missouri

Olivia Upshaw

attending Southern University of Edwardsville

2023 SOAR Award Recipients



SOAR award recipients, from left: Debbie Mendoza, Gene Briggs, Craig McKey and Virginia Woulfe-Beile.

Friend of Labor: *Debbie Mendoza, Retired Madison County Clerk*

Edward Sadlowski Labor Leader of the Year: *Craig McKey, USW Local 1899 Vice President*

SOAR Activist of the Year: *Virginia Woulfe-Beile, SOAR Chapter 7-34-2*

SOAR Volunteer of the Year: *Gene Briggs, SOAR Chapter 7-34-2*

Steelworker Retirees Award Scholarships to Four Students

Granite City, IL—On Monday, August 7, the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) Chapter 7-34-2 hosted their annual **Jane Becker Scholarship Award Presentation** at the Granite City Cinema.

Established in 2009, the SOAR scholarship has been named the “Jane Becker” Scholarship in honor of her activism as a gifted labor and political organizer who mentored a generation of activists. Jane was the wife and working partner for 57 years to the late United Steelworkers International President, George Becker. Still, she built a reputation as a tireless advocate for working people and causes. She was one of the pioneer organizers of SOAR and lent her time and expertise to numerous Democratic political campaigns.

Four area high school graduates, related to active SOAR members, were each presented with a \$2,000 scholarship for their well-researched essays on this year’s topic, “*A Just Transition for Workers Moving from Fossil Fuel Jobs to Clean Energy Jobs.*”

The SOAR chapter, now in its fourteenth year of hosting the event, was pleased to announce this year’s scholarship recipients.

During the ceremony, retired Madison County Regional Superintendent of Schools Dr. Bob Daiber left the soon-to-be college students with a good message.

As the morning’s emcee, Dr. Daiber, suggested, “The SOAR organization would like to impact the future by helping students move forward with these scholarships. SOAR wants you to be successful. With the help of your sponsors, these efforts can make it happen. Please remember the work that labor has committed to growing good, family-supporting jobs that have provided a better path forward.”



SOAR sold advertising for a 118-page awards booklet that generated enough money for the four \$2,000 scholarships. “We could not have done this without our donors,” stated Jeff Rains, president of the SOAR Chapter, “We had a lot of support.”

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

Additionally, thank you to our sponsors and Granite City Cinema for providing a great space for presentations and allowing us to show our chapter’s video, a compilation of past activities and outreach throughout the community, now available on YouTube. https://youtu.be/pWM_SqH78V8

Immediately following the award presentations, the day was made complete in fellowship with a wonderful BBQ picnic at Horseshoe Lake State Park.

Sadly, in a follow-up statement provided by Rains upon learning of the passing of USW International President Thomas Conway, he explained, “This year we only had four applicants; but in the past, when needed, Tom Conway was one of our panel of judges. He was always the first to respond with his top picks of submitted essays. His leadership will be missed by many on many levels. Still, in this small way, he took his role as essay judge very seriously, a level that most are unaware of.”



“Steelworker, social reformer, union organizer and labor statesman, I. W. Abel has forged a distinguished record of wise and firm leadership that exemplifies the very best tradition of the American labor movement. His many achievements and his unfailing concern for people have earned him not only the gratitude, but the esteem and respect of fellow citizens.”

Remarks from the White House
at the Medal of Freedom Ceremony
January 10, 1977

Abel Family Visits USW Headquarters

Family members of former International President I.W. Abel visited USW headquarters in Pittsburgh just before Labor Day to visit with USW leaders and donate items to the USW’s archives.

Karen Abel-Jones, daughter of Abel, who served as USW president from 1965 to 1977, and her son Greg Jones, Abel’s grandson, brought with them a number of historical items and papers from President Abel’s personal collection.

President Abel played a key role in diversifying the industries the USW represented by facilitating the 1967 merger with the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers and the 1972 merger with District 50, Allied and Technical Workers.

Abel, the third international president of the Steelworkers, was instrumental in the passage of the landmark workplace safety legislation that created OSHA, and the pension reform act ERISA, as well as in reaching an experimental agreement with major steel producers that curtailed nationwide strikes in return for guaranteed wage increases and cost-of-living adjustments.

He served on the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, which concluded that poverty and institutional racism were key factors in the violence that occurs in U.S. cities.

In 1989, the USW officially renamed its headquarters building for Abel, who was instrumental in the union’s

move into the building in 1973.

“He wasn’t a large man but he had a huge, booming voice, and boy did he use his voice,” said Abel-Jones.

“We had to share my father with the union and the world, but when we had him all to ourselves it was magical, and he made sure we really had him all to ourselves by taking a break from work.”

During his tenure, Abel also helped to make the USW a leader in fighting back against unfair trade, a mission that continues to be part of the union’s core work.

Born in Magnolia, Ohio, Abel organized his co-workers at Timken Roller Bearing with help from the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) and remained a member of Local 1123 for the rest of his life.

During Abel’s tenure as international president, current International President Dave McCall was a young union activist at his local union.

“I remember that he was such an inspiring leader, and really took the time to share history and knowledge with me as I was coming up through the ranks,” McCall said. “It’s an honor to be able to welcome his family into our headquarters, the I.W. Abel Building.”

McCall said Abel was at the forefront on subjects such as trade, retirement security, living wages and other issues that continue to influence the work of the USW.

“He would be so proud of how the union has grown and continued the work he dedicated his whole life to. I know he’s smiling down,” said Abel-Jones.

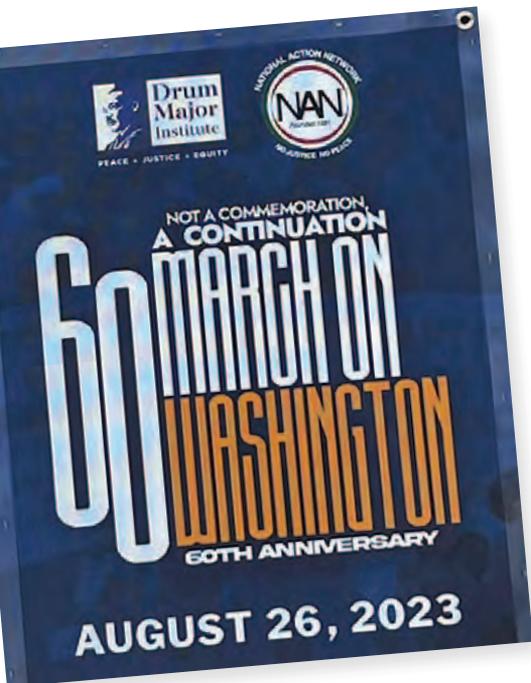
President Gerald Ford presented the Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian award, to labor leader I.W. Abel. Abel was among 22 outstanding recipients bestowed this prestigious award at a ceremony held at the White House on January 10, 1977.





Union Members Mark 60 Years

USW Members Travel to Washington to March on Anniversary of Seminal Civil Rights Event



Union members, retirees and activists from across the United States kept up the fight for Martin Luther King, Jr.’s dream this summer as they gathered in Washington, D.C., to mark the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington.

The rally took place Aug. 26 at the Lincoln Memorial, which also served as the backdrop to King’s impassioned call for equality in 1963.

USW International Vice President Roxanne Brown, who joined members at this year’s event, said the march provided a much-needed opportunity for the labor movement to redouble its work on behalf of civil and human rights.

“We can’t stand by and watch as rights are stripped away from Black and Brown folks, from women, from LGBTQ+ people, from immigrants and disabled people,” Brown said. “The house of labor includes everyone, and it’s our duty to fight to improve the lives of all working

people. This is our lane, this is our family.”

International Vice President Kevin Mapp said that he was inspired by the crowd and believes there is no better time to push forward with King’s work.

“Young people especially are fired up,” Mapp said. “They’re paying attention and they’re organizing their workplaces and their communities. We need to make sure that we, as labor, are communicating with them and working alongside them.”

A. Philip Randolph Institute President Clayola Brown, who helped organize the anniversary event, was one of dozens of speakers to take the stage. She reminisced with the crowd of nearly 75,000 about being at the historic 1963 march.

“When I look out and see all of you, I can remember 60 years ago because I was in the trees right over there,” she said, pointing across the National Mall. “It was Randolph and Bayard Rustin who got to the



Washington, D.C.— On August 26, members of SOAR Chapter 35-1, otherwise known as the Steelworker Retirees of Local Union 8888, gathered in D.C. to honor the legacy of the historic March on Washington.

It was 60 years ago, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

“We were so proud to participate in today’s March on Washington to continue, NOT commemorate, the legacy of Dr. King, A. Philip Randolph, and all civil & labor leaders who marched in 1963,” stated Linda Kindred, SOAR Chapter 35-1 President.

Pictured at left are Linda Kindred and SOAR member Larry Dickerson.

60 Years Since MLK’s Dream

young people to talk with them about why it was necessary to do those same things we must do all over again.”

The 1963 march brought more than 250,000 people to the nation’s capital to push for an end to discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Many activists mark this occasion as the catalyst for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and see today’s America as in need of similar widespread change.

Local 8888 member Kevin Fowler from Newport News, Va., took a bus with other USW and SOAR activists to participate in the rally because he believes the

work of the original march is not complete.

“Every right we fight for at the bargaining table can be taken away at the state and federal level,” Fowler said. “Unions fight for everybody, and all people do better when we do that. We need to unify, because our opposition is unified.”

Joseph Brown of Local 12698 in Pennsylvania agreed. He said that while the fight for justice has been long, those on the ground cannot afford to give up as the next generation joins the battle.

“Civil rights, housing, education, voting rights—we have

been fighting for equality for so long,” he said. “We must continue to teach young people how to walk the walk and work toward a better and more just America.”



USW VPs Roxanne Brown and Kevin Mapp.

“We can’t stand by and watch as rights are stripped away from Black and Brown folks, from women, from LGBTQ+ people, from immigrants and disabled people.”

Roxanne Brown
USW Int’l Vice President

LABOR DAY 2023



BETHLEHEM, PA

Cars lined the streets of Bethlehem for the annual Steelworkers and Friends Labor Day Parade on Sunday, September 3. "We've been doing this consistently since 2008," said Jerry Green, president of USW Local 2599 and also a member of SOAR Chapter 7-9.

"We used to walk the parade years ago, but we're all getting older, so now we drive it," said retiree David Schwartz.

The former Bethlehem Steel Blast Furnace serves as a backdrop during much of the parade. It's done as a way to recognize that the old Bethlehem Steel is gone but not forgotten. The Steel-Stacks now sit as a monument and an entertainment venue, where "the Steel" once employed close to 33,000 people. Bethlehem is home to members of USW Local 2599 & SOAR Chapter 7-9, also known as the Paul J. McHale Retirees, located in the Lehigh Valley. Way to "ride" SOAR!

Pictured from left to right: Jerry Green, Jill Schennum, Ron Harley, Mike Dzwonczyk, Susan L. Vitez, Bill Toth, and Tim Rehrig. The photo was taken Edward A. Leskin.



MILWAUKEE, WI

Every year, to celebrate Labor Day, labor unions and union members of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, AFL-CIO, put on the biggest festival on the Milwaukee Lakefront that's free and open to the public.

Pictured at right, is one of the trucks that members of USW Local 3740, employed at Renaissance Foundry, make parts for. The USW contingent staged for the annual Labor Day Parade that routes through downtown Milwaukee. The parade kicked off at 11 a.m. from Zeidler Union Square and ended at the Henry Maier Festival Grounds where Laborfest takes place.

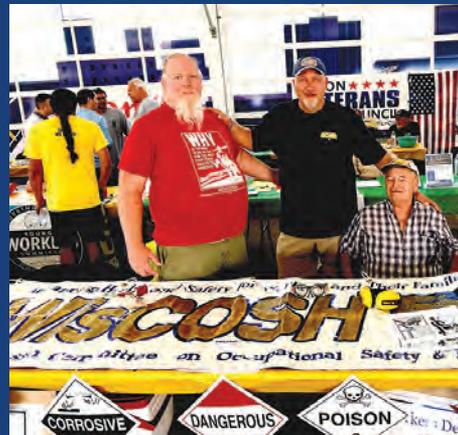


CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Members of SOAR Chapter 13-1, also known as Corpus Christi SOAR, attended the Coastal Bend Labor Council's Labor Day Breakfast.

Photo 1: Pictured from left: George and Jesse Rosas, Texas AFL-CIO President Rick Levy and Andy Rosas, who serves as the president of the SOAR chapter.

Photo 2: Pictured from left: Nena, Tina and George Rosas, U.S. Senate candidate Colin Allred, Andy and Jesse Rosas.



Members of USW Local 3740 and SOAR Chapter 2-6, also known as LU 3740 SOAR Retirees, help to man the Wisconsin Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (WisCOSH) booth at Milwaukee Laborfest. From left, former LU 3740 President and current SOAR Chapter 2-6 President Bruce Pasbrig; LU 3740 Recording Secretary and SOAR member Jim Schultz; and Allen R. Schultz LU 3740, retired; all of whom are on the WisCOSH Board of Directors and active in the Milwaukee/Southeast Wisconsin area and beyond.

WisCOSH is an independent statewide organization that works closely with the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, unions, individual workers, and other occupational safety and health (COSH and other) groups across North America, and goes wherever workers need help with Emergency/Occupational Health and Safety issues.



FORT WAYNE, IN

Pictured at left, the banner of SOAR Chapter 7-PC-2, also known as USW Local 903 Fort Wayne Retirees (Dana Corp), was hung at Indiana's largest Labor Day Picnic, which is free to the public and put on by the local unions in the Fort Wayne area.

On September 5, the SOAR chapter held its monthly meeting. Pictured are some of the members in attendance. Shawn Smith (kneeling) serves as the SOAR chapter president.





ALBANY, NY

Labor Day celebrations continued. On Friday, September 8, at New York's state capital—the Albany Labor Day Parade kicked off at 6 p.m. Members of USW Local 9265 and SOAR Chapter 4-17, also known as the Local 9265 SOAR Chapter, marched in the parade.



Pictured at right: LU 9265 member Janice Treanor, LU 9265 Pres. Ed Bradley, Albany Labor Day Parade Grand Marshall Bill Ritchie, and Chapter 4-17 VP Gary Cunningham at a Labor Breakfast on September 8.



NEW YORK, NY

Labor Day celebrations continued. On Saturday, September 9, New York City's parade stepped off at 10 a.m. from 44th Street & Fifth Avenue, marching to the grandstand at 64th Street. Pictured above, members of USW Local 9265 and SOAR Chapter 4-17 marched in the parade.

Pictured below: LU 9265 Rec. Sec. Niki Grabo, USW Staff Rep. Rick Sauer, Chapter 4-17 VP Gary Cunningham, LU 9265 VP Tara Bentley, LU 9265 Negotiations Chair Caitlin Janiszewski, LU 9265 President Ed Bradley and LU 9265 member Ed Aluck at the Albany Labor Day Parade on September 8, 2023.



Pictured above, from left: Rick Sauer, Ed Aluck, Ed Bradley, Gary Cunningham, and Congressman Paul Tonko.

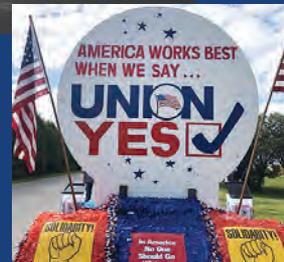
NEW CARLISLE, IN

Members of SOAR Chapter 7-7, also known as LU 9231 Retirees, were welcomed to Local Union 9231's Labor Day picnic held at Lynn Williams Hall, by SOAR Chapter President Paul Rausch (front center left) and Todd Kegley, president of the local (front center right).



CLOQUET, MN

Members of SOAR Chapter 11-5, also known as Head of the Lakes SOAR, marched in the Cloquet Labor Day parade on September 5. Holding the SOAR banner from left: Chapter 11-5 President Lee Popovich and 93-year-old SOAR Chapter 11-5 Trustee Millicent O'Connell. Walking behind the banner, from left: Rita O'Connell and SOAR Chapter 11-5 Treasurer Lauri Popovich.



PUEBLO, CO

On Labor Day, longtime SOAR Chapter 38-3 activists, Albert and Norma Becco and Mike Orzam, volunteered their time for the Democratic Party booth set up at the Colorado State Fair in Pueblo, Colorado. Even at age 90, Becco continues to serve as president of SOAR Chapter 38-3, also known as the Philip Murray SOAR Chapter. Way to go, Al!

Pictured above, from left: Candice Rivera, Pueblo County Clerk; Mike Orzam, Al Becco (sitting) and Norma Becco.

GRANITE CITY, IL

On Labor Day, Monday, September 4th, SOAR Chapter 7-34-2, also known as the Steelworker Retirees of Tri-Cities Area, had their SOAR trailer staged in front of the Labor Temple at 8:30 a.m. to decorate for the Granite City Labor Day Parade. The parade stepped off at 10 a.m. and concluded at Wilson Park for refreshments. The float was for anyone who wanted to "ride" in the parade, and they also had candy for the kids along the parade route. Way to "ride," SOAR!



PITTSBURGH, PA

Members of SOAR Chapter 20-15, also known as the Steelworkers of the Greater Pittsburgh Area SOAR, staged for the Pittsburgh Labor Day parade held Monday, September 4th to be followed by a picnic-style luncheon held at USW's head-quarter building.

SOAR in ACTION



Cleveland, OH—The following photos are from an award presentation held during SOAR Chapter 1-979's meeting on August 2, 2023.

SOAR Chapter 979 recognized and applauded members who are 90+ years of age. Pictured above, left to right: Brother Jim Reed, age 90, worked for 44 years at the steel mill; Brother Beaury Nimmer, age 99, worked for 28 years; Brother Archie Horhn, age 91, worked for 37 years; and Brother Clarence Everett, age 91, worked for 38 years at the steel mill.

Yvonne Naylor, the wife of late Brother Al Naylor, receives a plaque on his behalf, for his many years and dedication.

Former SOAR 979 president Jim Reed receives a plaque from the SOAR chapter in recognition of his many years of dedication and service, presented by SOAR 979 Treasurer Virginia Robinson.

Congratulations to all the award recipients!



Cleveland, OH—SOAR Chapter 1-979 members, also known as 979 SOAR, participated at an AFL-CIO "Vote No on Issue 1" rally held on August 4 in Cleveland. Pictured from left, W. Dean Hudson, Sheila Ostrow, Fred Landers, Bob Parker, and Wynne Antonio.

Issue 1, which did not pass in the August 8 special election, would have denied Ohioans the right to put Constitutional Amendments directly on the ballot for voter approval with a simple majority, a right they've had since 1912. If passed, Issue 1 would have raised the threshold to 60 percent of the vote.

USW District 1 and SOAR, in Ohio, actively opposed Issue 1! In solidarity!



Ligonier, PA—While participating at the USW District 10 Union Picnic, held August 20 at Idlewild Park, in Ligonier, SOAR Int'l Secretary-Treasurer Denise Edwards and SOAR activist Cheryl Omlor spent their day spreading the good word about SOAR. Here we GROW again!

District 10 SOAR State Coordinator Dave Harvey volunteered his time as one of the grill masters. Everyone who turned out enjoyed a beautiful day of food, fun and relaxation, and there were plenty of hot dogs for everyone!



Pueblo, CO—Members of SOAR Chapter 38-3, also known as the Philip Murray SOAR Chapter, joined the rally protesting Colorado Congresswoman Lauren Boebert’s anti-senior stand on cutting Social Security benefits and her votes against lowering drug prices. The protest took place on August 16, the one-year anniversary of the enactment of Medicare drug price negotiations, which Boebert voted against.

New Brunswick, NJ—On Friday, September 1, Maria Castro, a new member of SOAR Chapter 4-17, and Chapter President Priscilla Marco joined the picket line with nurses from USW Local 4-200, who have been on an unfair labor practice strike at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick. Local 4-200 represents more than 1,700 nurses employed by the hospital and have been on strike since August 4, 2023, as negotiations over a contract remained at an impasse. In solidarity!



Hoyt Lakes, MN—Members of SOAR Chapter 33-4, also known as the Steelworkers Retirees of Aurora, MN, marched in the 2023 Hoyt Lakes Water Carnival parade held on Saturday, July 22. The parade started at noon and routed down Kennedy Memorial Drive to the Arena, where the festival took place.

What started as a city picnic in 1954 has grown into a 4-day festival that draws thousands of people to Hoyt Lakes and the surrounding communities. It is held annually on the fourth weekend of July. Events now include softball, volleyball and bean bag tournaments, a 5K race, turtle races, bingo, a queen coronation, a parade, fireworks, a Shockwaves water ski show, live music and much more! Fun was had by all. There was no shortage of food or candy, either!

Ed Casey serves as the SOAR chapter president.



Destrehan, LA—Members of SOAR Chapter 13-5, also known as USW Local 750 SOAR Chapter, held their first volunteer day at the Matthew’s 23:35 Food Party at the St. Charles United Methodist Church in Destrehan on August 15, 2023. The chapter intends to volunteer at the food pantry on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Pictured front row: Betty Foret, Bud Becnel, Jean Schesxnaydre. Back row: Mrs. Parquet (Food Pantry Coordinator), Steve Hernandez, Carmine Frangella, and Armond Thomatis.

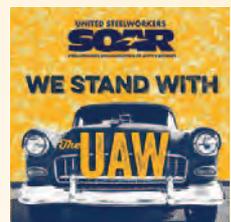


Mansfield, MA— On September 29, SOAR member Albert Polk joined the picket line with UAW Local 422, whose members walked off the job as part of the expanding United Auto Workers strike. Local 422 represents the UAW members at a nearby Stellantis parts distribution center in Mansfield, Mass. In Solidarity!

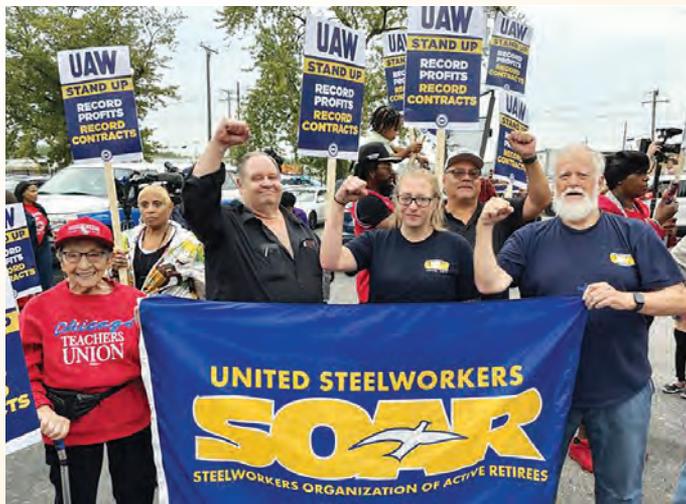


Chicago, IL—On Thursday, September 14, UAW Local 551 in Chicago held a “practice picket” in case of a strike with the Big Three automakers. Local 551 represents the UAW members at a nearby Ford assembly plant. Other unions supported this event, including the USW, IAM, IBEW, SEIU, Teamsters, and the Chicago Federation of Labor. Also, several other local community organizations and neighbors were present.

Pictured above, holding the SOAR banner is Secretary-Treasurer Don Villar of the Chicago Federation of Labor (left) and SOAR Vice President Scott Marshall (on the right.) The UAW officially went on strike on September 15, 2023. In solidarity!



Chicago, IL—USW and SOAR members participated at UAW Local 551’s rally held Thursday, September 21, in anticipation of a possible 2nd round strike at their plant. Pictured at right: 105-year-old SOAR activist Bea Lumpkin, our union all-time “Shero,” led us all. In solidarity!





SOAR EYES ON WASHINGTON

By Jay McMurran, SOAR Legislative Director

Still Raising Hell

As active unionists, they fought for and won benefits enjoyed by Steelworkers today. So, it should be no surprise that current SOAR members have continued that activism into retirement. That was the case last



Jay McMurran

June as the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) held its annual SOAR executive board meeting in Washington, D.C., followed by teaming up with Rapid Response at the 2023 USW Rapid Response, Legislative & Policy Conference and Lobby Day.

During the SOAR meeting, board members heard presentations on the expansion of Social Security and Medicare and held discussions on a new campaign to be launched

by SOAR to work with our affiliates in D.C., like the Alliance for Retired Americans, and with elected congressional leaders to develop policies to end misinformation related to Medicare Advantage plans.

Each year, during open enrollment, seniors are inundated with television commercials, advertisements, mailings and phone calls meant to sell them Medicare supplemental insurance plans. Some of the products are expensive and may be unnecessary. For some of the elderly, who may be alone or vulnerable, the information can be simply overwhelming. So they don't act and miss out on essential benefits. To help members navigate the system better, SOAR will ask Congress to pass legislation to simplify the information insurance providers distribute about their plans and ensure that it is factual.

During the discussion of this campaign, SOAR President Bill Pienta stated, "Some of the information the insurance companies convey can be confusing to our members. Whether that is their intent or not, it needs to stop. It results in seniors becoming frustrated and opting not to sign up for benefits they have earned and deserve."

According to Pienta, adopting such policies would benefit countless union and non-union retirees during their enrollment process.

At the end of the meeting, SOAR delegates remained in Washington to join with Rapid Response activists as part of the union's legislative conference, who gathered for the first time since the COVID epidemic. During the week-long event, USW retirees participated in various activities that included workshops and called on legislators to urge their support for important Steelworker issues. They then took their message to the streets, joining in a rally for workers' rights in support of the No Tax Breaks for Union Busting Act to end the practice of allowing companies to get a tax deduction for the cost of their anti-union activity and the Tax Fairness for Workers Act to provide workers a tax deduction for union dues and expenses.

Also, at the rally, delegates called on Congress to quickly pass the Protect the Right to Organize (PRO) Act to remove unnecessary barriers to union organizing and collective bargaining and increase penalties for companies that break the law.

Then, it was off to Capitol Hill. SOAR members teamed with active Steelworkers to lobby the above issues and discuss the Leveling the Playing Field Act 2.0 to give workers more power to fight back against unfair job-killing imports and stop efforts to privatize Social Security and Medicare with their representatives, urging Congress to protect retirement security by ensuring there are No Cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Although these vital programs are constantly under attack, at the time, there was deep concern that opponents of the programs would use raising the debt ceiling as a vehicle to make devastating changes.



SOAR activists participate at the 2023 RRL&P Conference in Washington, D.C.



Looking to Buy
AMERICAN-MADE
This Holiday Season?
HERE'S HOW.

Tis the season to shop Made in USA!

The holidays are just around the corner, which means that it's also the busiest shopping season of the year. Unfortunately, it can sometimes be tricky to find American-made goods at big box stores or online retailers, let alone items that are union-made.

But it's not impossible—and the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM) is here to help.

The 2023 Made in America Holiday Gift Guide is set to be officially unveiled on Monday, Nov. 20. It's the 10th anniversary of the annual gift guide, which shines a spotlight on American manufacturers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

This year, the gift guide includes companies we haven't featured before, along with several of our favorite past picks, including USW-made brands like Fiesta Ware dishware and All-Clad cookware. We work hard to ensure that the gift guide includes an eclectic mix of items at a variety of price points. We think there's something Made in America for everyone on your holiday shopping list!

Poll after poll finds that Americans want to buy more Made in USA goods, they just often don't know how. More than 8-in-10 Americans (81 percent) said that they would purchase more Made in America gifts during the holiday season if they were more widely available at large retailers, according to a 2022 poll conducted by Morning Consult for AAM.

AAM started the gift guide to make it easier for folks to find American-made products during the busy holiday shopping season. Buying locally made goods is one of the most direct ways that Americans can support U.S. manufacturers and factory workers, and even swapping out just a couple of imported items for Made in America products during the holidays can really go a long way.



Shopping Made in the USA is also a great way to find some really cool stuff! The truth is, most American manufacturers know that they can't compete against cheap imports in a race to the bottom. Instead, they often focus on innovation and quality to set themselves apart. That means when you shop American-made, you are likely to find gifts that will be unique and special—not the same, boring thing everyone else is ordering off Amazon.

And when you buy American-made, you can feel good about your purchase, knowing that you've supported American jobs and manufacturers. It's a win-win-win!

You can find the 2023 Made in America Holiday Gift Guide online at www.americanmanufacturing.org starting on Nov. 20. If you are on social media, be sure to follow the conversation via the hashtag **#USAMadeGifts**.

*Elizabeth Brotherton-Bunch
is Senior Vice President for Communications
at the Alliance for American Manufacturing.*

Long-time SOAR Activist Receives Award



SOAR Chapter 38-3 members join Albert Becco at the annual “Bob Scarlet Labor Dinner,” as he receives the Mother Jones Labor Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southern Colorado Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

The Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees applauds SOAR activist Albert Becco on receiving the Southern Colorado Labor Council, AFL-CIO Mother Jones Labor Lifetime Achievement Award.

Becco was awarded a plaque to honor his lifetime of activism and dedication to labor, which stretches more than six decades, at the annual Bob Scarlet Labor Dinner attended by more than 120 guests on September 16 in Pueblo, CO.

Al earned his award for a lifetime of involvement and devotion to the labor movement, his community, and his support and work toward electing labor-friendly candidates.

At age 90, Becco continues to serve as president of SOAR Chapter 38-3, otherwise known as the “Philip Murray SOAR Chapter.” He remains actively involved with the Pueblo County Democratic Party and continues to serve as a site coordinator with the Alliance for American Manufacturing for the state of Colorado. Way to go, Al!

Also, thank you to his wonderful wife, Norma, an activist in her own right, for supporting him all these years!

Congratulations, Al!

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 2023 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.

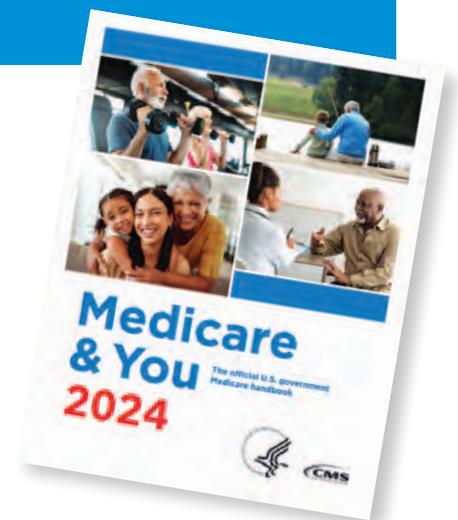
If you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can change to a different plan one time during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period, between January 1 and March 31 each year.

For more information on joining, dropping, and switching plans, visit [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) or call **1-800-MEDICARE**. The link to the 2024 Medicare and You Handbook follows:

<https://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10050-medicare-and-you.pdf>

Additionally, beneficiaries can contact their State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to get free, unbiased information about Medicare options in their state.

Find your local SHIP office at <https://www.shiphelp.org>





Now is the Time to Think and Talk About the 2024 Elections

By Robert Roach, Jr.

We are now less than a year away from the critical November 5, 2024 Election Day when we will choose the next President of the United States, a new Congress, and candidates running

for positions in state and local government. The Iowa Republican presidential caucus will take place in January, just two months away.

Seniors issues already look to be key in determining who we elect. GOP threats to Social Security and Medicare are a deliberate, methodical and coordinated campaign against workers and retirees. The Republican Study Committee, which counts nearly 75 percent of U.S. House Republicans as members and influences policy changes, has released proposals to raise the retirement age for both seniors programs and cut our earned benefits.

As we begin to think about who to support, we cannot allow out of touch Republicans to undermine and dismantle Social Security and Medicare. We must instead elect candidates who will expand benefits. President Joe Biden has defended Social Security and is working to strengthen Medicare by requiring people earning more than \$400,000 annually to contribute more.

In contrast, GOP presidential candidates have made their intentions to go after our earned Social Security and Medicare benefits clear. Former President Donald

Trump said “we’re going to look” at cutting Social Security and Medicare if he gets a second term.

Florida Governor and 2024 presidential candidate Ron DeSantis voted three times to raise the Social Security retirement age to 70 and privatize Social Security.

Former South Carolina Governor and presidential candidate Nikki Haley says a retirement age of 65 is “way too low.” Sen. Tim Scott (SC), former Vice President Mike Pence, former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy also have made clear their plans to cut Social Security and Medicare.

In addition, drug prices will continue to be a major issue for seniors in 2024. While the Inflation Reduction Act requires drug corporations to negotiate prices with Medicare, the pharmaceutical industry continues to fight the law tooth and nail in Congress and the courts.

I wish all SOAR members a Happy Thanksgiving. And while you are enjoying your turkey, please remember it is not too soon to begin discussing the 2024 elections with your friends and relatives.

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.



2024 Social Security COLA Will be 3.2 Percent

Not Enough To Keep Up With Escalating Costs of the Basics, Like Food, Housing, and Rx.

The following statement was issued by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, regarding the announcement that there will be a 3.2 percent cost-of-living (COLA) benefit increase for millions of Social Security beneficiaries, disabled veterans and federal retirees next year:

“The seventy-one million Americans who rely on their earned Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits will undoubtedly benefit from this modest cost-of-living increase, but it is not enough.

“The increase amounts to an additional \$59 per month for the average retired worker. A COLA increase is always welcome news, but too many older Americans will continue to struggle to pay for basics like food, housing, and prescription drugs.

“Strengthening Social Security and increasing benefits is a must. If billionaires and the wealthiest Americans paid their fair share into the system, we could afford to increase benefits across the board and ensure Social Security is there for future generations.

“What we don’t need are the dangerous proposals tossed around by many Republicans in Congress and on the presidential campaign to gut the benefits we’ve earned over a lifetime of work. Schemes to raise the retirement age, cut benefits or privatize Social Security are unacceptable. Retirees should pay close attention and make sure they support candidates who will protect the benefits they earn, not slash them.”



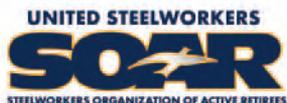
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