

CONNECTION

WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER





Your Union, Your Voice



In our last SOAR Chapter Connection newsletter, we announced the relaunch of the USW's Your Union, Your Voice campaign.

With town halls being held through late June and survey responses still being submitted by USW members and retirees, I cannot yet comment on what issues Steelworkers are saying are most significant to them right now.

However, what I can say is that your contributions to this important conversation within our union are more important now than ever.

People all around the globe are trying to adjust to life post-COVID. For many workers, this adjustment includes the fight for family-sustaining wages,

improvements to workplace safety and access to health care. We've also seen a drastic increase in the number of workers who are demanding the right to negotiate with their employer over the aforementioned and much, much more.

In fact, according to the National Labor Relations Board, worker petitions for union representation are up 57% over the first half of 2022. It is safe to say that most Americans are aware of the new wave of union organizing at Starbucks. But, did you know that an unprecedented 85% of union elections at Starbucks stores have been successful?

In early May, Starbucks Workers United successfully organized their 50th store. Hundreds of more stores are already scheduled to hold their election in the coming months. Starbucks worker organizing has even spilled over into Canada with our union, the USW, recently filing an application with the Alberta Labor Relations Board (ALRB) for a union-certification vote on behalf of workers at <u>five stores</u> in Lethbridge, Alberta.

Back in April, workers at Amazon celebrated a watershed victory when 8,300 workers won union representation at an Amazon fulfillment center in Staten Island, N.Y.

Acknowledging these historic efforts, President Biden invited representatives from both organizing campaigns to join him in the White House for an afternoon of solidarity.

Beyond our workplaces, the labor movement is also gearing up for a potential fight to protect Social Security and Medicare from a proposal by Senator Rick Scott to "sunset" the programs and require Congressional reauthorization every five years.

As we prepare for the 2022 midterm elections, it is vital that your voice be heard! Find a Your Union, Your Voice town hall near you, and submit your responses to our membership survey. Both can be done by visiting www.uswvoices.org

Your voice is an essential part of this effort!

Julie Stein, SOAR Director





We Want to Hear From You! 2022 Your Union, Your Voice Membership Survey

Get the survey at www.uswvoices.org

You can fill out the survey on line at the above web address - or-You can request a paper survey in either english or Spanish at the same web address.

We want to hear from you. Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts about what matters most to you. Thanks!

Once completed, mail your survey to:

United Steelworkers Attn: Eric Russell 60 Blvd. of the Allies Pittsburgh, PA 15222

SOAR Celebrates Its 37th Birthday!



The Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees was officially created on May 23, 1985, at the Union's 30th International Convention, when USW delegates voted unanimously to add an amendment to the USW Constitution recognizing SOAR as an affiliate organization of the USW.

Since then, SOAR has been integral to our union's mission by actively defending vital programs, like Social Security and Medicare, protecting Steelworker pension plans, and more. Further, SOAR has engaged in countless efforts to assure security for current and future generations of retirees regardless of whether they belong to a union.

SOAR is how retirees stay connected to our union and where we continue the fight for retired and working families.

Honoring Lewis H. Webber, 1941-2022



Unfortunately, I recently attended a funeral honoring the life of SOAR Chapter 4-6 President Lewis Webber. Lew had held an officer's position in the chapter since 1997 and had served as President of the Chapter since 2008. Before retirement, Lew worked in the maintenance department for Bethlehem Steel in Lackawanna, N.Y.

My first encounter with Lew was at a meeting held by then-Senator Hillary Clinton regarding former employees who had been exposed to radioactive material while working at the plant.

Lew spent many years and countless hours fighting for and assisting workers from Bethlehem Steel and other companies in processing claims



Lew Webber

with the Government to ensure that former employees and their families received whatever settlement they were entitled to. Lew became involved with this many years ago, and he learned how to navigate through the Government red tape and provide employment documentation after a plant that was shut down. Lew did this even though he was not entitled to any settlement.

Lew, along with members of his chapter, could always be seen at protests, demonstrations, meetings or picket lines in support of USW members and their issues.

I had asked him to show support to the ATI workers who were on strike by showing up at the picket line, and without hesitation, he replied that he would be there and bring his members with him. He then added that although he could not walk the line because of his health and limited ability to walk, he would show up and bring refreshments for those who could walk the line.

Lew Webber never asked the Union for anything. He would only ask what he could do to help the Union or what help he could offer to the active and retired members. Lew is now resting, and I am incredibly saddened that he is gone but very honored to have known him and been able to call him a friend.

Rest in peace, my friend. You will be deeply missed by your SOAR family, alongside the many other workers and families whose lives you've touched.

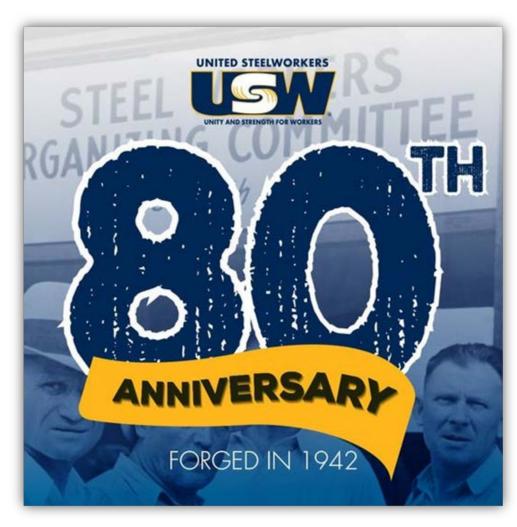
Bill Pienta, SOAR President

"Lew Webber worked tirelessly for years to bring justice for Bethlehem Steelworkers who were exposed to uranium on the job in Lackawanna, N.Y. Many of them suffered slow, painful deaths from cancer they contracted due to this exposure. In addition, their families suffered financially dealing with this disease due to expensive medical treatments and the loss of, in many cases, the sole provider of income for the family. It was a long, hard fight, but Lew never gave up and continued to fight to expand the class of workers who were covered by this settlement. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him." USW District 4

"A true champion of working families and retirees. A legend in the retiree community. A dedicated activist that helped so many. Rest in peace, Lew. You earned it!"

Jim Centuer, former Director of SOAR

Happy Birthday, Steelworkers!



80 years ago, on May 22, 1942, with 700,000 members in Canada and the U.S., delegates voted to create the United Steelworkers.

A union founded on the principles of justice, solidarity and a common interest to organize and demand better conditions for workers - we are proud, every day, to see the same spirit and strength that created our great union still reflected in the actions of our members 80 years later.

Today, we are stronger and prouder than ever - and we have never been more committed to believing that together, we can fight to make life better for all.

To the Steelworkers who make our union strong - thank you. We are nothing without our members.

Here's to the next 80!

SOAR Supports Ukrainians in Face of Russian Assault

Local unions and SOAR chapters can send donation checks to aid Ukraine to the attention of:

John Shinn, International Secretary-Treasurer **United Steelworkers** 60 Boulevard of the Allies Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Make checks payable to "United Steelworkers" with "Ukraine Aid" in the memo line.

SO-IR

SOAR Chapter Connection

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Articles and Photos Requested

- The next deadline to print for the SOAR in Action magazine will be June 24 and articles should be emailed to the SOAR Director Julie Stein at jstein@usw.org
- The deadline to submit articles for next publication of the SOAR Chapter Connection newsletter is September 25. Email articles and photos to soar3@icloud.com Photos should have a short caption included. Thanks so much.



The McNeil Report

It is a well-documented fact that for every mile that you jog, you add one minute to your life. This will enable you, at the age of 85, to spend an additional 5 months in a nursing home at \$5,000.00 per month.

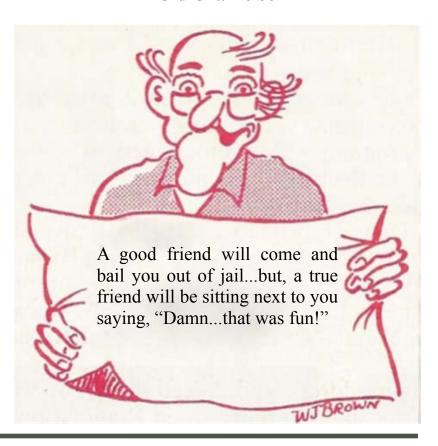
My Grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was 60 years old. She's 97 now, and we don't know where she is.

I joined a health club last year and spent about \$400. I haven't lost a pound. Apparently, you have to show up. | I have to exercise early in the morning before my brain figures out what I am doing. | I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.

I have flabby thighs, but fortunately my stomach covers them. | The advantage of exercising every day is that you die healthier. | If you are going to go cross-country skiing, start with a small country.

Dan McNeil...SOAR Executive Board Connection, April 2006

Old Charlie Sez



Michigan Staff In District 1 Join SOAR

In April, USW District 1 held their Biennial & Educational Conference in Detroit, Michigan. Leading by example, and in show of solidarity, the USW staff in Michigan have signed up to become members of SOAR. This photo illustrates the importance of a recent change in SOAR's Articles of Association and Bylaws that welcome active members of our union, age 45 and older, to join SOAR.



Thank you for your strong support of SOAR!!

Shown left to right, front row: Ed Leary, Sub-District 6 Director; Tammy Beebe, Admin. Asst.; Donnie Blatt, District 1 Director; Julie Stein, SOAR Director; Mike Bilodeau, Staff Rep. Back row: Terry Newton, Staff Rep; Cathy Ferguson, Staff Rep; Steve Meyer, Sub-District 4 Director; Al Calhoun, Staff Rep; Jeff DeLong, D1 SOAR Executive Board Member; Tonya DeVore, Staff Rep; and Steve Donovan, Staff Rep.

Elaine Sez

I've seen better days, but I've also seen worse. I don't have everything I want, but I do have all I need. I woke up with some aches and pains, but I woke up. My life may not be perfect, but I am blessed.

Source: From Daily Inspirational Quotes

Now Is Not the Time To Remove Tariffs on China



During this time of rising inflation there has been a flawed argument put forth by many of America's corporate leaders and Wall Street wizards that removing the tariffs placed on Chinese imports would ease the cost of goods for our nation's consumers.

We at the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM) not only think removing the tariffs is a bad idea but believe this type of action would actually be rewarding China for its years of bad behavior on matters of trade.

Our United Steelworker brothers and sisters greatly benefitted from the steel tariffs of 25% that were put in place in 2018 as many idled steel mills went back online and thousands of workers were recalled from layoffs. Steel mills

across America are still looking for new hires today and veteran workers have enjoyed generous profit-sharing compensation during the past year and a half.

Additional tariffs were placed on \$360 billion of products and trade commitments during the so called "Phase One" trade deal with China in 2020 and pressure is mounting on President Biden to eliminate these import charges in hopes that it will help curb inflation.

But there is no evidence that lifting these tariffs will have any major impact on the inflated cost of goods and services Americans are enduring these days. Many factors are contributing to inflation including Russia's invasion of Ukraine, corporate consolidation, Covid-19 shutdowns in China and the global supply chain crisis.

Removing the tariffs would reduce America's leverage with China and reward the Chinese Communist Party for not living up to the "Phase One" trade agreement, its support of Russia's invasion, its aggression toward Taiwan and the genocide of the Uyghurs and other minority groups in China. Do we really want to reward China whose lopsided trade actions have cost the United States at least 3.7 million jobs between 2001 and 2018?

USW members know firsthand the benefits of tariffs on China. And at AAM we know that returning to the same old trade cheating policies that were in place before the tariffs would only weaken America's resolve and efforts to temper the bad actions of China that have hurt the United States economy for years.

We urge all our SOAR brothers and sisters to call the White House at (202) 456-1111 and tell President Biden that now is not the time to remove the tariffs on China.

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

The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what directions we are moving.

-Holmes

Social Security Benefits Projected To Increase 8.6 Percent In 2023



Inflation is taking a huge toll on Americans. If there's any silver lining, it's that people receiving Social Security benefits should see their largest benefit increase in more than 40 years. <u>CBSNews.org</u> reports that Social Security benefits are projected to rise 8.6 percent in 2023; with that being said, Social Security benefits should increase far more.

How does the Social Security increase translate to dollars? It will mean about \$142.60 more each month for the typical person on Social Security. The total average monthly check should rise to \$1,800.

Since last April the Consumer Price Index is up about 8.3 percent. It's up about 8.9 percent for urban wage earners and clerical workers, the CPI-W. Social Security bases its cost of living adjustment for older Americans on a somewhat different calculation.

Today, 69 million Americans receive Social Security benefits. This year they saw a <u>5.9 percent cost of living adjustment</u>. That increase is lower than the overall cost of living increases typical older adults are facing. Older adults spend a lot more than younger people on health care.

Some of the Social Security benefit increase will go to the cost of the Medicare Part B premium, which is likely to increase next year. Last year, it rose 14.5 percent or a total of \$21.60.

Then again, \$11 of the increased Medicare Part B premium this year is attributable to the projected <u>cost of Aduhelm</u>. Since the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ended up deciding not to cover Aduhelm except in rare instances, people are already spending \$11 more in Medicare premiums than they should be.

Because Social Security checks do not keep up with the inflation older adults see, the value of their benefits is estimated to have eroded 40 percent. As a consequence, an increasing number of older adults and people with disabilities rely on food banks and food stamps. A <u>better COLA index would be the CPI-E</u>, which factors in rising health care costs more heavily.

Source: just+care website written by Diane Archer

Humility Block

Many of today's quilt makers believe intentionally incorporating a mistake in a quilt is paying tribute to an age-old Amish tradition. The so-called "humility block" was intended to express the belief that only God was perfect. Charming story, but did they really do that? A romanticized myth gone viral, the humility block is the stuff of legends.

Charlie's note: Although this may be the popular belief today, actually some quilters still do this, so it's no myth, and not just a legend.



Union Members, Union Retirees Can Help Us Win the 2022 Midterm Elections by Robert Roach, Jr.



Two-thirds of Americans now support unions – the highest approval level since 1961. Recent organizing at companies like Amazon and Starbucks has helped build the momentum, and 48% of the workforce would join a union if they could, according to an MIT survey.

Yet today only 10 percent of working people belong to unions, due in large part to efforts by corporations and anti-union politicians to keep them from doing so. The labor movement has made a profound contribution to our country – our brothers and sisters have strengthened democracy, advanced racial equality and social justice, and improved

workplace health and safety while advancing greater income equality. And of course, the weekends we all enjoy wouldn't have happened without unions.

Economists also estimate that belonging to unions raises members' compensation by more than \$150 billion annually. In addition, workers who form or join a union have greater retirement security than their non-union counterparts. Union workers can negotiate for benefits such as health care, pensions and employer contributions to retirement plans, which leads to increased Social Security benefits in retirement. Further, unions often come with negotiated defined benefit pensions, which provide lifelong retirement income.

Working people do not seek the government to lift them up, but to be given a level playing field in the workplace so they, collectively, can lift themselves up. Unions play an important role in every democracy, and the labor movement has helped make our society more anti-authoritarian.

Union members and union retirees are a key political demographic in 2022. That bodes well for electing politicians who have a pro-worker, pro-retiree agenda in the midterm elections — if we hold true to the core values that have brought us so far since the days of the robber barons.

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.

Just Sit Back and Relax

If you're like me, you will most likely be waiting anxiously for the next edition of this exciting world-renowned newsletter. But, because of the upcoming Int'l SOAR Conference and USW Int'l Convention, there won't be a July/August publication. So, we'll just have to sit back and relax and wait for the September/October edition of the Connection newsletter, instead. So sorry, folks.

Charlie



COVID-19 Death Toll Among Older Americans Still Rising

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, unvaccinated people have accounted for a majority of COVID-19 deaths in the United States. But, in recent months, an alarming number of vaccinated older and disabled Americans have succumbed to the disease.

Forty-two percent of the people who died in January and February during the highly contagious omicron variant's surge were vaccinated, compared with 23% in September, the peak of the delta wave. Most of the vaccinated people who died had not received a booster shot. This analysis was conducted by The Washington Post using data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

While a majority of seniors are immunized, the vaccine's potency wanes over time, leaving older people vulnerable to severe infection. The highest concentration of vaccinated deaths occurred among older Americans and the immunocompromised, with those over the age of 75 making up two-thirds of the deaths from the 'omicron' wave.

Still, unvaccinated people remain far more likely to die from COVID-19 than the vaccinated, especially when compared to Americans who have received booster shots.

Health experts continue to stress that the overwhelming majority of the vaccinated will survive COVID-19 infection. However, they argue that the deaths serve as a reminder that high-risk groups such as older Americans should receive booster doses and exercise extra precautions during infection surges.

"Seniors remain especially vulnerable during this pandemic," said Joseph Peters, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "The CDC has approved second booster doses for those 65 and older and those 50 and older with underlying medical conditions that increase their risk for severe disease from COVID-19, and we encourage all seniors to follow their guidance when it comes to receiving that added level of protection."

Source: Alliance for Retired Americans Friday Alert May 6, 2022

Nobody is perfect...that's why pencils have erasers.

Medicare & Coronavirus

Get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can.

- Medicare covers the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost to you. Medicare covers the vaccine for anyone 5
 and older who has Medicare due to their age, a disability, End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD), or ALS
 (also called Lou Gehrig's disease). Be sure to bring your Medicare card.
- Medicare covers a COVID-19 vaccine booster shot at no cost to you. You can get a booster from the same COVID-19 vaccine that you originally got, or choose a different one.
 - If you got a Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, you can get a booster shot at least 5 months after you complete your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine series.
 - If you got a Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, you can get a booster shot at least 2 months after you got your first shot.
 - Learn more about who should get a booster shot.
- If you're immunocompromised (like people who have had an organ transplant and are at risk for infections and other diseases), Medicare will cover an additional dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, at least 28 days after a second dose, at no cost to you. Note: Don't mix vaccines. If your first two doses were Pfizer, your third dose should also be Pfizer. If your first two doses were Moderna, your third dose should also be Moderna.
- If you're 50 and older, or if you're moderately to severely immunocompromised, you may get a second COVID-19 vaccine booster shot, at no cost to you, at least 4 months after your first booster. Your second booster must be a Pfizer or Moderna booster. It doesn't need to be the same as your initial COVID-19 vaccine.
- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Get details about the vaccine.
- If you have Medicare and have a disability or face other challenges in getting to a location away from home for a vaccination, Medicare will pay a doctor or other care provider to give you the COVID-19 vaccine in your home. You may need to give them your Medicare Number for billing, but there's still no cost to you for the vaccine and its administration.



Memorial Day Tribute

"The Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees honor and remember the heroes who have selflessly given their courage and lives to serve our nation. We will never forget their patriotism."

Episode 026: Aches and Pains

by Dick Smith

Most of us retire while still young and vigorous, but soon enough, our bodies betray us, and as the years go by, we experience more physical problems and loss of memory. At 81 years of age, I have a few infirmities, but I try to stay active and avoid what I call the "Ward Effect." When I meet an old friend and ask, "How are you doing?" if I get a listing of aches and pains, I try to change the subject.

I have worked on hospital wards and in rehab centers helping patients to get over the effects of disease and injury. But unfortunately, some people seem to enjoy poor health, and they like to compare symptoms and complaints with others. Some of that is useful, but severely disabled people can profit from concentrating on their remaining abilities.

A young therapist once reported to our psychologist that one of her clients complained all the time even though she stayed with him and sympathized with him. Finally, he suggested what every parent knows. "Try ignoring his sick behavior and come back when he is busy and praise his activity." A few days later, she reported that it had worked and wondered if it would work on others. The end result was that we all embarked on a program to manage our own and our patient's behavior.

Two of my sons were visiting me once and noticed a bathtub in the middle of my living room. I explained that I was remodeling and planned to reinstall the tub in a downstairs bath. "We'll get it for you, Dad," they cheerfully proposed as they maneuvered the heavy tub down the stairway. I could have done it myself, but it gave us all great pleasure to have these young men assert their superior strength.

We all manipulate one another at times. Some people fall into a pattern of helplessness. I like to ride my bike three miles each morning to pick up the newspaper. In bad weather, I may skip it for a few days, but it is a test of my strength and coordination, and after a few days, I am back in high gear again. We also often visit many state and national parks in our truck camper, walking the trails and enjoying the birds.

Some people enjoy health spas and gyms or personal exercise machines. The important thing is to find an activity that will stretch your mind and body and do it regularly, preferably with a spouse or a friend.

Staying in touch with the natural world helps us to recognize and respect the needs of our bodies for proper diet and exercise. We don't have a television, in part because it is boring but also because it takes time that can be invested in better ways.

I chopped up some wood during the Super Bowl, then read a few chapters of Moby Dick. But, of course, the main danger here is self-righteous arrogance, so I don't tell my friends.

There's an old saying, "I cried because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet." We see every day pictures of young soldiers who have suffered terrible injuries of all kinds but who are learning to adjust to their prostheses or their wheelchairs without complaints. They have learned from each other and from their VA caretakers that this is the best way to overcome their problems.

Support groups are an important part of adjusting to physical and mental injuries for soldiers and for all the rest of us who sometimes find ourselves disabled. Most of us have such a group in our family, church, workplace or elsewhere. Alcoholics Anonymous is such a group. It is a formula used in other addictions like drugs and gambling. We can stop complaining about our aches and pains and, with the help of our friends, develop a program to get the most out of life. Diet, exercise and friendship are natural means of dealing with our aches and pains.

Dick Smith is a guest writer on the Retirement Talk blog.

To see additional episodes, visit the website at https://www.retirementtalk.org/dicksmithspage.html

COVID-19 Protocols for Those Attending the International SOAR Conference

In order to keep our delegates as safe as possible, the USW has established COVID protocols and guidelines for the Convention. These include guidelines regarding attendance and masking.

Please be aware that all attendees must provide either proof of an accepted COVID-19 full vaccination or results of a negative qualifying COVID-19 test. No test results will be accepted if the test was self-administered and self-read. Face masks will be required at all indoor events, regardless of vaccination status.

Please be aware that federal, state or local requirements may change quickly, particularly as they relate to air travel. Please be sure to monitor the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Public Health Agency of Canada websites, along with the 2022 Constitutional Convention page on the USW website as we get closer to Convention for detailed protocols and guidelines and any updated information.

Source: USW Convention Call Letter https://www.usw.org/events/2022-constitutional-convention

To Find & Compare Nursing Homes, Hospitals & Other Providers Near You...

Just go to the website below to compare:

Doctors & clinicians, hospitals, nursing homes including rehab services, home health services, hospice care, inpatient rehabilitation facilities, long-term care hospitals, and dialysis facilities.

Source: Medicare website at https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/



Alliance for Retired Americans Voting Record. Every year the Alliance for Retired Americans publishes a Congressional Voting Record that scores every U.S. Senator and U.S. Representative on key retirement security issues.

The 2021 report considers 10 Senate and House floor votes, including bills and amendments to provide stimulus payments during the pandemic; protect voting rights; lower prescription drug prices; raise the federal minimum wage; and protect older workers from discrimination.

Download the national report or a state report by going to https://retiredamericans.org/voting-record/



MGM Hotel info for Non-Voting Conference Delegates
13th International SOAR Conference
MGM Grand Conference Center ~ Las Vegas, Nevada
August 5-6, 2022

The 13th International SOAR Conference will be held in the MGM Grand Conference Center located at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

As a courtesy to our non-voting delegates (guests) attending the Conference, below are the links to the hotel information at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas.

MGM GRAND HOTEL:

- Click here to make your hotel room reservation online.
- Or, go to: https://book.passkey.com/event/50239195/owner/28465/home?lang=en_US

The MGM Grand Hotel strongly recommends that reservations be made online and charges be paid via credit card.

The deadline to book your hotel reservation at the USW discounted rate is July 1, 2022. The negotiated nightly rate will be \$128 for single or double occupancy, not including nightly resort fees and taxes.

All rooms are subject to a \$25 per night resort fee. Currently the room tax is 13.38% per night.

If you are unable to make reservations online or need to pay for your accommodations via check, please contact the MGM Grand Hotel at 1-877-880-0880 and an agent will assist you.

Note: Any payments to be made by check must reach the hotel no later than June 15, 2022. All requests are based upon hotel availability; however, the hotel will do their best to honor all requests.

*** Please be advised that you are not required to stay at this hotel. However, if you choose to do so, it is strongly recommended that you make your reservations as soon as possible to avoid the room block being sold-out for the dates you need. Please keep in mind that the deadline is July 1, 2022, and after this date the above-mentioned rates will no longer be honored. ***



SOAR Member Non-Voting Delegate Registration Form 13th International SOAR Conference MGM Grand ~ Las Vegas, Nevada August 5-6, 2022

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1)	Name			
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The completed form must be received in the SOAR office no later than July 1, 2022. Please scan to jstein@usw.org or mail to:

Julie Stein, Director SOAR 60 Blvd. of the Allies Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Please make a copy for your records and bring it to the Conference to present to the registration committee as proof of registration.



Duplicate as needed