

USW@Work

A Regular Publication of the United Steelworkers

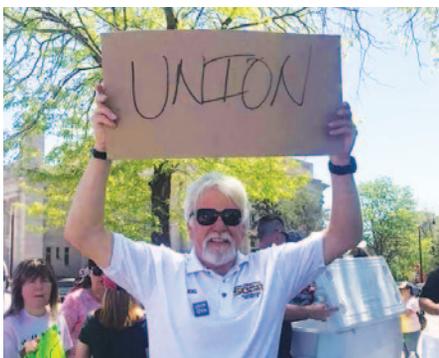
Volume 16/4

A Powerful Voice for Workers

#USWCares
www.usw.org/uswcares

The “USW Cares” program recently announced our 2021 Jefferson Award winners for community service, including a SOAR retiree from Pueblo, Colorado, Joel Buchanan. The recipients have won honors due to their impact on their community and selfless service to those in need.

The “USW Cares” program honors Steelworkers who are making a difference in their community with USW Cares Jefferson Awards through our partnership with Multiplying Good (formerly known as the Jefferson Awards Foundation.)

MULTIPLYINGGOOD

Joel Buchanan

USW CARES ANNOUNCES 2021 Jefferson Award Winners

About Multiplying Good

Multiplying Good is the country’s longest-standing and most prestigious organization dedicated to activating and celebrating public service through a variety of programs and awards. Multiplying Good’s Jefferson Awards program celebrates corporations, unions, schools, media partners and individuals who go above and beyond to lift up their communities. Created in 1972 by the American Institute for Public Service, the Jefferson Awards are given at both national and local levels. Local winners are ordinary people who do extraordinary things without expectation of recognition.

Why USW Cares

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

For many Steelworkers, lending a helping hand is part of being a member of our union. Outside of work, our members are known for their generosity in their neighborhoods. The USW Cares program aims to celebrate locals and members who donate their time, money or goodwill to assist others in communities across the United States and Canada.

In 2015, the USW joined with Multiplying Good (when it was known as the Jefferson Awards Foundation), as a “Champion” partner, as a way to honor the great work all of our members do and to show the world that Steelworkers have big hearts.

As a Champion, the union created a formal structure to allow members and retirees to be nominated for Jefferson Awards and put a spotlight on USW Cares efforts in communities across North America. The goal is to highlight their projects and commitment and to inspire others to do “good.”

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

USW Cares: 2021 SOAR Jefferson Award Winner ~ Joel Buchanan

Joel Buchannan has been a dues-paying member of the United Steelworkers for 51 years. His long career of political, community, and labor activism started in 1970, when he worked as a Mechanical Maintenance Technician in a Pueblo Colorado steel mill. Pueblo is known as the Pittsburgh of the West, a steel town

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Bringing in the New Year with a COLA



BILL PIENTA
SOAR President

No, not that kind of cola. I'm talking about a Cost-of-Living Adjustment.

In January 2022, Social Security recipients will see the largest Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) in four decades.

Last month, the Social Security Administration (SSA) announced that its annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will be

5.9 percent, which is significant when compared to the modest 1.3 percent increase in 2021.

The 2022 COLA is the largest increase to Social Security benefits since the 7.4 percent hike that went into effect in January 1983. As a result, this increase will mean the average Social Security recipient will see an extra \$92 in their monthly benefit.

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

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

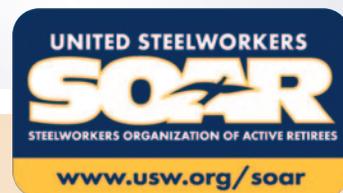
However, don't be fooled by the words "additional," "largest," and "increase." Social Security's COLA reflects changes in the Consumer Price Index, which means every time prices go up for everyday goods, so does our COLA. In other words, whatever increase we see in our monthly benefit will likely be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

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

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

Wishing you a safe and healthy holiday season!

Source: <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/10/13/social-security-cost-of-living-adjustment-will-be-5point9percent-in-2022.html>



What's in It for Us?



JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

As we wrap up 2021 and prepare ourselves for next year, there are a few things I wanted to bring to your attention that probably aren't on the front page of your local newspaper.

I'd like to share with you the details of two proposals included in President Biden's multi-trillion-dollar Build Back Better

Agenda that is being negotiated in Congress right now.

It is unclear whether the following proposals will be included in the final legislation, and it is possible that the fate of the budget blueprint could be decided before you read this.

Either way, I thought these proposals should be highlighted because they will have a significant impact upon retirees regardless of whether they become law or not.

First, buried inside this massive budget reconciliation bill is a historic proposal to allow Medicare to negotiate the cost of prescription drugs. Currently, Medicare is able to negotiate the price seniors pay for other vital, unavoidable services and products including hospital visits, wheelchairs

and crutches. So why should it be any different for the medicine we take?

Allowing Medicare to debate prescription drug costs would be a monumental leap forward. It would mean seniors like you and me wouldn't have to cut pills in half or mull the decision to let our bills lapse so we can pay for our medications.

Also meaningful to seniors is the proposal to expand Medicare to include coverage for dental, vision and hearing benefits for the first time ever and potentially lower the program's eligibility age from 65.

Can you imagine what this would do for current Medicare enrollees and the millions of Americans who are nearing retirement?

Again, none of us can know whether the final legislation will include those mentioned above.

The only thing I can promise you at this point is that we will be sure to let you know who in Congress fought against these life-changing, life-saving reforms.

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

USW CARES ANNOUNCES 2021 Jefferson Award Winners

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with union roots and a deep history in steelmaking. “Everybody is connected to the steel mill somehow, either their father or grandfather

worked in the mill. Steelworkers, and SOAR especially, are known in this community.”

Buchanan was a member of Local Union 2102, a local known for a 7-year-long labor dispute that started as a strike

over massive overtime beginning in 1997 and ended as an unfair labor practices lockout. The local won the labor dispute in 2005 and 1,100 members were awarded the largest backpay settlement ever awarded by the NLRB. During the strike-turned-lockout, Buchanan was selected by District 12 to be a “road warrior” and was sent by the Steelworkers on a boycott campaign, finding out which local unions in the area were banking with Wells Fargo (the bank financing the company) and convincing them to withdraw their funds. The campaign was extremely successful. “That period of time was the best time of life. It ended up being the highlight of my life,” says Buchanan.

Buchanan retired in 2013, after 43 years at the mill and in the union, and was immediately appointed to the International SOAR Executive Board where he still serves today. He is also Vice-President of SOAR Chapter 38-3, serves on the Colorado AFL-CIO Executive Board, and was appointed by the Governor to the Colorado

Workforce Development Council and the Skilled Worker Outreach and Key Training Grant Review Committee.

For the last three years he’s organized the annual SOAR Christmas Sock Drive. Last year, because of the pandemic, Buchanan made it a “donation drive-through” and collected 250 pairs of socks, gloves, hats, and 60 stockings for Cooperative Care Center, an aid organization that helps the homeless.

When the pandemic first started, fellow SOAR member Betty Spinuzzi sewed 140 masks that she and Buchanan personally (but safely) delivered to SOAR members.

Buchanan is active in local and state politics; he lobbies for labor-related causes, like rewriting tax incentives for companies to benefit workers, and has volunteered with the USW and AFL-CIO political programs for many years.

He lobbied support for the construction of a New Rail mill at the steel mill in Pueblo. The project was approved and is moving forward, ensuring jobs for years to come. Without this project thousands of jobs in the community would have been lost.

Buchanan even nominated the current Colorado State Representative of his district, Daneya Esgar, for her position. It just-so-happens that he worked with Esgar’s grandfather in the steel mill.

Buchanan is always aware of current labor disputes and helps every time: he traveled to Carson, California, during the oil refinery strike and spent several weeks walking the picket lines, helping organize community support and involvement; in 2018



he helped the striking Silver Miners in Mullen, Idaho, speaking at several rallies in Idaho and then organizing events in Denver to collect hundreds of dollars from Colorado supporters; again in 2018, he helped with a teachers strike in Pueblo, Colorado, and in the cold winter of 2019 he walked the picket line with Denver teachers during their strike.

When the Steelworkers were helping the Los Mineros campaign, Buchanan was called upon by the late District 12 Director, Robert Laventure, to go to Mexico and guide Los Mineros in building a retiree program emulated by the SOAR program.

Buchanan also volunteers at Central High School and Pueblo Classical Academy with their STEM programs concerning manufacturing in the community; he teaches the history and workings of a steel mill and how railroad rail is made.

Now he’s working with the City Museum, El Pueblo Museum, on their next exhibit about the famous strike he had such a huge part of.

Joel Buchanan lives the definition of solidarity. For being a lifelong and constant leader in labor, supporting workers in more than just his own community, and holding strong to the union’s values, he is the 2021 SOAR USW Cares Jefferson Award winner.

Congratulations, Joel!

SOAR applauds all of 2021 Jefferson Award winners, and we thank them for shining their light and showing how we are a union that works in our communities.

Go to usw.org/uswcares for all awards and program information.

Highlighting Indigenous Women's Contributions to Canadian History

By Kay Noonan, Chapter 3-14 President and Lori Travis, Chapter 3-14 Vice-President

In May 2021 the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation announced finding a mass grave of 215 children on the site of a former "Indian residential school" near Kamloops, British Columbia. Many similar findings were announced across Canada this summer, a solemn reminder of the tragic and devastating impact of colonization on Indigenous communities in what is now Canada.

These findings ignited many discussions across society, including the need for a broader perspective on understanding Canadian history. Around the same time, we came across an article in the spring 2015 issue of *Herizons* magazine, by Lianne C. Leddy, titled "Aboriginal Women's Fight to Keep their Status." The article chronicled Mary Two-Axe Earley, an activist fighting gender discrimination in Canada's Indian Act (1867). We felt the story exemplified what women can achieve with grit, guts and sheer determination.

The story also got us thinking that many, ourselves included, have a gap in our understanding of Canadian history. Specifically, about the challenges Indigenous women have faced and the contributions they have made to Canadian history. Our article is hopefully the first in a series that shares such stories, focusing on Indigenous women's contributions to Canada's legal landscape and culture.

As women in leadership roles, we wish to find a way to share knowledge of Canadian women who fought for women's rights and gender equality. We chose to have our first article highlight the struggles of Mary Two-Axe Earley. Furthermore, our intention is not to replicate the *herizons* article. It is to share some of Mary Two-Axe

Earley's story in the hope that you are encouraged to learn more about her and other courageous women who challenged systems that discriminated against them.

Until 1985, the legal "Indian Status" of Indigenous women could be taken from them if they married a non-Indigenous man, through a process known as "marrying-out." A woman's status came first from their father, then from their husband, under the Indian Act (1867). Men did not lose status regardless of who they married and their wives would gain status regardless of their backgrounds. The results of marrying-out were often severe. Women could lose access to housing, crucial services on reserve, often access to the communities they were born into and their rights to be buried with their families.

Mary Two-Axe Earley (1911-1996) (Mohawk/Oneida) was a human rights activist who fought the gender-based inequality against Indigenous women in the Indian Act. Mary was born in 1911 and grew up on the Kahnawà:ke reserve, which at the time was a



Kay Noonan



Lori Travis

farming community adjacent to the St. Lawrence River on Montreal's south shore. At 18 she moved to Brooklyn, New York, in search of work, and met Edward Earley whom she later married in the 1930s. Because Edward was a non-Indigenous man, Mary lost her "Indian Status" through marrying out. Her entrance into activism wouldn't come for another 30-plus years.

In 1966, a friend died in her arms of a heart attack and it is reported that Mary firmly believed the stress related to being denied property rights in Kahnawà:ke under the Indian Act was a contributing factor. This sparked a nearly 20-year campaign against gender discrimination in the Indian Act. On July 5, 1985, Mary Two-Axe Earley became the first woman to have her Indian status reinstated under Bill C-31 which amended the Indian Act.

Mary's story is one of many of the lesser-known stories of people making important contributions to Canadian history. If you have other stories you'd like to highlight please send them in and we will publish them as we get them.

CO-AUTHOR'S NOTE FROM LORI TRAVIS

The story of Mary Two-Axe Early is one of an amazing fight for dignity, respect, recognition and equality.

I am personally grateful for the fight waged by Mary Two-Axe Early and how it affected my life, including my reinstatement to my status as an Indigenous person after I had lost that status when I married a non-Indigenous man.

We do not have a say in what colour we are born, what accents we have and definitely what nationality we are born into. No one has the right to tell us we are unworthy because of things we do not control. We should be judged for our actions and how we treat one another. We all deserve dignity and respect.

As a second-generation survivor of Canada's residential "school" system, I have seen and still see the horrifying residual effects of the substance, physical, emotional and sexual abuse inflicted by this system.

Thank you, one and all, for your hard work in honoring and highlighting the amazing women who have struggled to make things right and to create an even playing field.

These strong women will encourage young people to stand up and make a difference. We are all equal and should be treated as such.

Local 1005 – Remembering the 1946 Stelco Strike

75 Years and Still Fighting

In 1942, Local 1005 received its charter from the United Steelworkers of America, but like many newly-chartered unions, recognition by the company was going to be a difficult struggle. There had been previous attempts at unionizing Stelco, with some short-lived success. The company created a works council (company union) to try and prevent real unionization. Fortunately, this was defeated by dedicated union men being elected to the union side of this committee. In 1943, Local 1005 applied to the labour court for certification and a vote of all workers was ordered. Even though Local 1005 only had less than 300 members, the vote of the entire workforce was overwhelming with 66% voting yes for USWA 1005.

With no progress made negotiating with Stelco, Local 1005 pressed ahead with a strike mandate vote even though the local still only had a few hundred dues-paying members. The vote was 3,114 in favour of strike action and 80 opposed. At the end of June, USWA National Director Charles Millard gave authorization for the three unionized steel companies in Canada to take strike action. Of the three companies, Algoma, Dosco in Sydney, N.S., and Stelco in Hamilton, Local 1005 had the lowest dues-paying membership and faced the most anti-union employer.

Reasoning it was averting a steel shortage, the anti-union federal government, by order of council, placed the three steel companies under a government controller and threatened huge fines and possible jail time for any worker or union executive that took part in strike action. In response to this, the workers in all three plants struck. At Algoma and Dosco, the walkouts were 100 percent effective. However, at Stelco, 2,500 workers took to the picket lines and 2,000 became scabs.

Scabs were afraid of losing their jobs if the strike failed, and enticed by the 24-hour-a-day payment the company was offering. This divided families and friends and many strikers. My friend Bill and his brother, never spoke to their father again since he scabbed. The houses of many scabs had the word “scab” painted on them. When I started my apprenticeship at Stelco in 1966, older fellow workers were still pointing out scabs and advising new employees to avoid them. This may seem extreme, but if the strike had been broken in 1946, those on the picket line could face unemployment and hardship finding another job.

Stelco President Hugh Hilton was determined that Stelco would continue production no matter what strikers would do.

The union had tremendous community support. Strikers from nearby Westinghouse and Firestone, along with many others from the community spent their time on the Stelco

picket line. The CNR and CPR men would not cross the picket lines. When scabs were using boats to cross the bay in order to get in and out of the plant, the union bought a speedboat from a rum runner who used to outrun the police. The union’s “navy” would circle the scab’s boats until the wash would capsize them.

Hamilton Mayor Sam Lawrence declared himself a union man first and a chief magistrate second and refused to allow intervention by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). Uniformed Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers were refused service at local hotels and restaurants.

At the end of September, Millard was able to meet with the government controller and Hilton and a compromise settlement was reached. This ended not only the Stelco strike but also the other two at Algoma and Dosco.

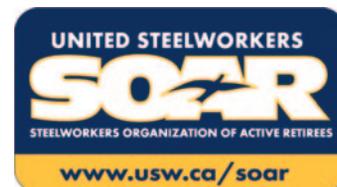
This didn’t end the ongoing conflict between Local 1005 and Stelco — bitter strikes took place in 1958 (two months); 1969 (three months); 1981 (four months); and 1990 (three months). At the conclusion of these strikes, the workers did make some wage and benefit gains. Recessions at the conclusion of the 1981 and 1990 strikes did result in some layoffs and downsizing.

Free trade agreements, manufacturing plant closures and the dwindling customer base drove Stelco into bankruptcy protection (under the Companies’ Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA)). U.S. Steel bought Stelco and proceeded to take its customer base and locked out the workers for extended periods to extract any concession they could from union members. U.S. Steel did exactly what it intended and then drove Stelco back into CCAA protection, took whatever financial assets they could and went back to the U.S.

Through all of this, USW Local 1005’s fight was not just with the company, but also with governments and the courts. One thing was for sure — Local 1005 always put the union and its members first.

While the struggles of 1946 were tough, what is happening to workers today on both sides of our border is just as tough. Today’s battles may be different, but the determination of our members is just as great. Thankfully, our great union is doing everything it can to assist not only its members, but our communities.

*Bob Sutton
Recording Secretary
SOAR Chapter 10,
Hamilton, Ontario*



B.C. SOAR Coordinator Fred Girling Introduces SOAR to Local Member of Legislative Assembly

We met with Megan Dykeman, the local NDP MLA. Dykeman represents the constituency of Langley East where USW Local 2009 has its hall. The group was able to bring her an awareness of SOAR, its goals and accomplishments. We were very pleased to be on the same page on so many items, including:

- ▶ cell phone rates
- ▶ seniors and computers
- ▶ long term care homes
- ▶ inter-generational families
- ▶ social isolation

We discussed COVID and its effects on seniors. Right now, the vaccination rate in B.C. is 84.5 percent with a goal of 90 percent. In the two days after the government announced a vaccination passport plan, 30,000 people registered for their first jab. We plan to have another meeting in the near future.



Megan Dykeman (MLA) and Fred Girling, B.C. SOAR Coordinator.

FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

NOVEMBER 11



THANK YOU VETERANS! ~ ALWAYS REMEMBER, NEVER FORGET.



USW VP Fred Redmond Named Secretary-Treasurer of National AFL-CIO

In late August, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler was elected by the American Federation of Labor’s Executive Council to serve as AFL-CIO President after the untimely passing of then-President Richard Trumka.

The Executive Council also elected USW Vice President Fred Redmond to be the next Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO upon Shuler’s exit, and Tefere Gebre to serve as Executive Vice President.

As the first woman, person of color and immigrant to hold their respective offices, the trio is the most diverse AFL-CIO leadership team in the organization’s 66-year history.

Secretary-Treasurer Redmond, in a *Newsweek* op-ed following his election, reflected on how his life was forever changed when his dad got a union job at an aluminum mill outside of Chicago. “Nearly overnight, we had more security, opportunity and prosperity. We stopped going to the free clinic. We got off of food stamps. We still went to our local Goodwill—only now it was to donate clothes,” Redmond remembered.

“Today, too many families are still waiting for that kind of change as the very fabric of America verges on disintegration after decades of inequality, dismantled workers’ rights, attacks on voting rights and neglected investment in our families and communities.”

In addition to “building a modern labor movement that gives every working person access to a good-paying union job,” he outlined the importance of unions leading the fight to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and ensure every American is guaranteed the right to vote.

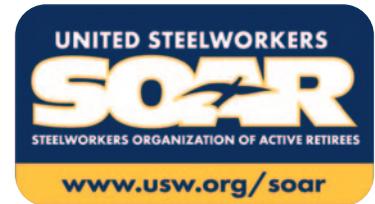
Having also served as the Chair of the AFL-CIO’s Older and Retired Workers Committee, Redmond has long fought to protect union members’ health care and pensions. As Secretary-Treasurer, Redmond will continue to advocate tirelessly so all workers can retire with dignity.

Soon after his inauguration, over Labor Day weekend, Redmond spoke about the intersections of faith and labor at First Institutional Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz. At the Arizona AFL-CIO headquarters, he joined labor leaders to discuss strategies to pass new laws that will protect workers and our democracy. Also in attendance were Arizona Secretary of State and candidate for Governor Katie Hobbs and U.S. Representative Ruben Gallego (AZ-7).

Redmond’s focus on Arizona is strategic because the support of U.S. Senators Mark Kelly and Kyrsten Sinema are essential to passing some of labor’s most sought-after reforms, including the PRO Act, which would establish new, enforceable penalties for employers who illegally interfere with union organizing, and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, which would expand union rights to all public service workers.



HAPPY FALL!
STAY HEALTHY. STAY ACTIVE. STAY SAFE.



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SOAR Continues to Receive Strong Support from USW

The United Steelworkers continue to show strong support of our retiree organization. This year SOAR had the opportunity to attend a number of USW District Conferences across our great union. When afforded the opportunity, SOAR leaders attend these conferences to promote our organization and to share the value SOAR adds to our union with local union leaders.

SOAR leaders and activists play a major role in promoting the union's social, economic, and political agenda. Our attendance at these meetings allows us to showcase our work. We are also provided a chance to address the delegates to explain the structure of our organization and how to get a chapter up and running.

A special thank you to the leadership of the USW! Our continued involvement in the union's conferences and activities plays a critical role to the growth of our organization. In solidarity!



SOAR President Bill Pienta addresses the delegates about the importance of SOAR at the USW District 4 Educational Conference held August 23-26, 2021, in Atlantic City, N.J.

Photo by Luke Gordon



SOAR Coordinator Bill Finkle and District 11 SOAR Executive Board Member Bonnie Carey stand by the SOAR booth in anticipation for the USW District 11 Conference to begin, held August 29-September 1, 2021, in Kansas City, Missouri.



SOAR Coordinator Walter "Butch" Deems stands by the SOAR booth in anticipation for the USW District 1 Biennial & Education Conference to begin, held July 25-30, 2021 in Lewis Center, Ohio.



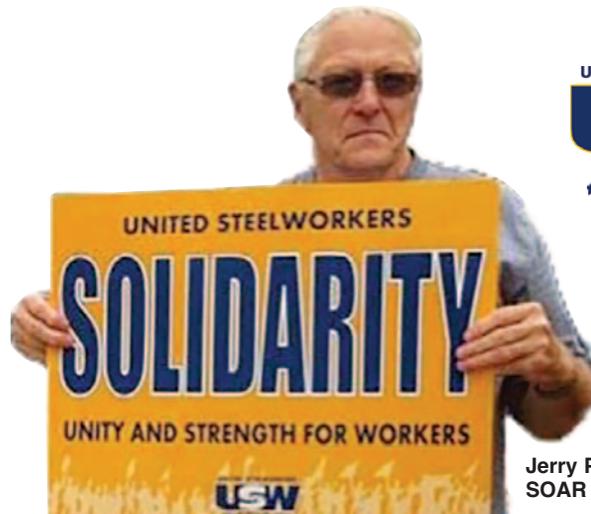
SOAR Coordinator (and Retired SOAR Director) Jim Centner speaks to the delegates about the value SOAR adds to our union at the USW District 10 Conference held August 15-19, 2021, in Atlantic City, N.J.



SOAR activists attend the USW District 7 "Meeting the Challenges" Conference held September 8-10, 2021, in Michigan City, Indiana.

When they join the Army,
soldiers quickly learn to look out
for one another and leave no
fallen comrade behind.

Jerry Porter honored that sacred
duty all his life.



Jerry Porter,
SOAR Activist

Jerry Porter's Death Leaves Void in Veterans, Steelworkers Families

After his service in Vietnam, Porter dedicated himself to rescuing comrades knocked down by misfortune and hardship at home.

He found shelter for homeless veterans, gave free rides to VA hospitals, helped organize "Stand Down" events to connect former military personnel with social services and drove an old troop transport in parades to call attention to those who served.

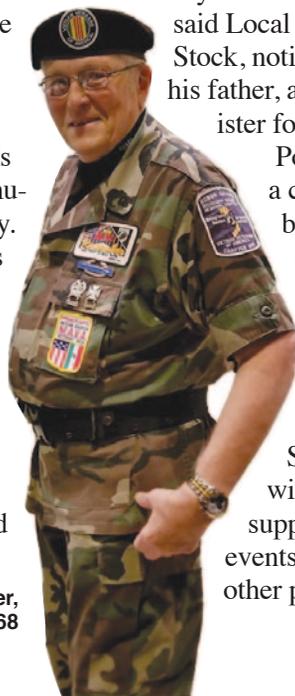
Porter, 77, a longtime member of USW Local 105 and the vice president of SOAR Chapter 11-4, died Sept. 18, in Rock Island, Ill. His wife, Eva, died three weeks before him.

"I was so very blessed to have him as my union brother," said Bonnie Carey, president of SOAR Chapter 11-4, noting Porter's death leaves huge voids in both the local veterans community and the Steelworkers family.

Porter landed a job at Alcoa's Davenport Works, now operated by Arconic, before leaving for Vietnam in 1967. He returned to the plant after his discharge and worked there more than 40 years in all.

His union job provided a stable retirement, and he dedicated it to serving others.

Jerry Porter,
US Army Spec 4, 1966-1968



When he found a veteran sleeping on a fetid mattress in a run-down house, Porter got the man a new mattress and a new place to live. When he learned about a vet living outdoors in a broken tent, he arranged for a friend who owned an awning company to repair it.

And when he encountered former military members who needed help connecting with local Department of Veterans Affairs offices, Porter set up the meetings and drove them to the appointments.

"Jerry was always bringing somebody in there who needed help," said Local 105 President Patrick Stock, noting Porter once helped his father, a Vietnam veteran, register for benefits.

Porter helped to forge a close relationship between Local 105 and the veterans' community. "Anything he needed, we'd help him out," recalled Stock, noting Porter enlisted USW and SOAR members to help with fund-raisers, deliver supplies to the Stand Down events and assist with other projects.

Porter served on a color guard for veterans' funerals, and each Memorial Day, he joined USW members and retirees in placing flags on the graves at Rock Island National Cemetery. His brother, Don, a veteran of Korea, is among those buried there.

Porter was just as devoted to his union and working people as he was to veterans, Carey said, noting she got to know him during the widescale protests at the World Trade Organization conference in Seattle, Wash., in 1999.

"We even got gassed," Carey said, recalling the police attacks on protesters.

Porter joined Carey and other activists in advocating for pro-worker legislation in Washington, D.C., as well as the Iowa and Illinois state capitals.

He also faithfully attended meetings of the Quad City Federation of Labor, traveled to Wisconsin to march against anti-union Gov. Scott Walker and mowed the lawn at the Local 105 hall because, Carey said, "he wanted it to look nice."

"He just touched so many people's lives," she said.

*May he rest as he served ~
in power and in peace.*

Steelworker Retirees Award Scholarships to Six Students

By Carl Green

Illinois Correspondent

St. Louis/Southern Illinois Labor Tribune

Granite City, IL – It didn't seem right to gather members of the Granite City SOAR Chapter 7-34-2 (Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees) at the usual place for lunch in the middle of a pandemic, but there were annual awards and scholarships to be given out, so Chapter President Jeff Rains came up with a different idea—going to the movies. So, on August 23, the socially-distanced program was held at Granite City Cinema.

The Granite City Cinema is a downtown favorite here with three cool and dark film auditoriums. Rains had a movie to show, too—a rousing highlight reel of photos taken by Steelworkers retiree Doug May at SOAR meetings and community service projects in recent years.

“In the past, we've had a big luncheon and had a great time, but unfortunately, we have to tone things down a little bit,” Rains said.

He noted that the broad umbrella of today's United Steelworkers now covers a wide range of industries, including primary and fabricated metals, paper, chemicals, glass, rubber, heavy-duty conveyor belting, tires, transportation, utilities, container industries, pharmaceuticals, call centers and health care. And SOAR's membership reflects that.

“It's retirees from all walks of life now,” Rains said.

Twelfth Annual Jane Becker Scholarship Awards

The SOAR chapter, now in its twelfth year of hosting the annual Jane Becker Scholarship award presentation, were pleased to announce this year's winners.

The first order of business was to honor the chapter's annual scholarship winners—six recent high school graduates who penned the best entries in this year's essay contest, about the significance of presidential appointments.

“Our celebrities are right here in front of us,” Rains said. “These kids wrote fantastic essays. This is our future. Thank you, guys, for taking the time.”

Bob Daiber, former Madison County regional school superintendent, introduced the winning students, who each will receive \$2,000 toward their educations.

“SOAR only asks one thing—they want you to do your very best and they want you to be successful,” Daiber told the students. “I personally hope you recognize always, as you go through your careers, the importance of Organized Labor—and maybe what it did for you as you began.”

“Congratulations and good luck to the scholarship winners as they pursue their higher education, stated Jeff Rains, “We would like to express our appreciation to Granite City Cinema for opening their doors to hold our event. And, also to all the SOAR members who consistently volunteer for our ongoing efforts to make this world a better place.”



SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS (from left) are Anna Craig, Marissa Gilley, Kendra Jackson, Kyle Schneidewind and Noah Poiter. Another winner, April Downs, was unavailable for the photo. – Labor Tribune photo

THE SIX SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Anna Craig, of Granite City High School, to study biological sciences at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville; sponsored by her father, John Craig.

Marissa Gilley, of Pacific (Mo.) High School, to major in forensic science at St. Louis Community College-Wildwood; sponsored by her father, Darin Gilley.

Noah Poiter, of Granite City High School, to study electricity and crane training at Southeast Lineman Training Center, Trenton, Ga.; sponsored by grandparents Maurice and Shiela Poiter.

Kyle Schneidewind, of Collinsville High School, to major in business administration at SIUE to become a financial adviser; sponsored by his grandfather, Dennis Barker.

Kendra Jackson, of Granite City High School, to major in business at the University of Arkansas and plans to own her own business; sponsored by her grandfather, Kenny John Nicol.

April Downs, of Granite City High School, will study criminal justice and/or biology at SIUE; sponsored by Roger Downs, her grandfather. She was unable to attend the event.

Following the scholarship presentations, the program turned to the chapter's annual awards.

LABOR LEADER OF THE YEAR

Antonio Wellmaker, president of USW Local 1063, representing workers at Amsted Rail in Granite City, was named Labor Leader of the Year for his steadfast leadership as the union dealt with prolonged layoffs.

Amsted's work making rail parts tends to be cyclical, Rains said.

"People in Granite City know that after a couple years of the plant working steadily and hiring people, then they get a layoff, and everybody blames the union," he said. "But Antonio kept them together. When we have a food drive, this gentleman is right there with us giving it out. At Christmas-time, when people are laid-off, he raises money to make sure they can have presents for their kids. Antonio, thanks for all your wonderful work."



ANTONIO WELLMAKER (left), president of USW Local 1063, received the Labor Leader of the Year award from SOAR Chapter 74-3-2 President Jeff Rains in a ceremony at the Granite City Cinema.

– SOAR Chapter 74-3-2 photo

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Randy Affolter, a USW Local 1899 retiree, was honored as Volunteer of the Year by SOAR Vice President Dennis Barker for his work with SOAR's monthly food sharing program.

"He's always the first one there and the last to leave. He makes sure the food is given out," Barker said. "When it's not given out, he takes it down to Community Care."



AWARD WINNERS: Honorees at the SOAR Chapter 74-3-2 annual awards program were (from left) Activists Ron and Cynthia Overby, Volunteer of the Year Randy Affolter, Labor Leaders Antonio Wellmaker, and Friend of Labor Louis Goseland. – Doug May photo

"When we have a fish fry or barbecue, he's always the first one to stop and say, 'What can I do, how can I help?' There's no better example of a volunteer than that.

"Our organization wouldn't exist if it wasn't for volunteers," Barker added.

ACTIVISTS OF THE YEAR

Ron Overby, retired from USW Local 68, and his wife, Cynthia Overby, were named Activists of the Year for their dedication to causes including workers' pensions, health care and trade laws, Barker said.

The Overbys stay in contact with members of Congress, legislators and local elected officials to keep up with what decisions are being made and to put forward the union's positions, he said.

"We need people to go to their offices and we need people to write letters to the editor," Barker said. "We need people to do exactly what Ron and Cindy do for us. Without you, we couldn't do what we do. Thank you so very much."



LOUIS GOSELAND, newly appointed executive director of the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans, was named Friend of Labor. – SOAR Chapter 74-3-2 photo

FRIEND OF LABOR

Louis Goseland, newly named executive director of the Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans, has been an organizer for that group since 2017. Rains said he has been especially helpful to SOAR on technical matters such as setting up Zoom meetings and explaining legislation.

The Alliance for Retired Americans has 250,000 members in Illinois, and some four million nationwide.

"He's let us know what's going on in the state," Rains said. "If someone's trying to raid Social Security or trying to cut Medicaid or Medicare, he lets us know, and we try our best to keep up with what he's doing."

Goseland was at the meeting to accept the gratitude—and to give some back.

"We've got a lot of chapters in the Illinois Alliance around the state, but this is one of the best," he said. "The work that's done in building relationships on the political front, to advance the things that people need, is unparalleled, and the work that's being done in building the community is like no other that I've seen. You should be very proud of the work that you do."

Noting the nation's current economic disparities, Goseland said, "If we can see billionaires go into space, we can surely afford to make sure that the one-in-four Americans who are currently skipping their prescription drugs can afford their drugs; we can ensure that Social Security's here for the next generation. It's my honor to do this work with you, and it's my honor to be a part of the good work that happens in this community every day, thanks to your leadership."

New SOAR Chapter 4-17 was presented with their formal charter at the District 4 Educational Conference in Atlantic City.

On August 25th, SOAR Int'l President Bill Pienta presented Chapter 4-17 President Priscilla Marco with their official charter as the newest SOAR Chapters in District 4.

Organizing a SOAR Chapter is not an easy task, let alone during a pandemic. In spite of this challenge, Chapter 4-17 successfully organized their chapter with retired members of Local 9265, who represent the employees of a New York State public employees labor union, with offices throughout NY State.

Local 9265 is a very small local with just over 100 members, so meeting the minimum to form a chapter was a challenge. But thanks to the persistence of now President Priscilla Marco, they were able to collect the SOAR dues from enough retirees and current eligible members at the local's annual Conference Day in June 2021. They gave the dues money and membership forms to USW Int'l Secretary-Treasurer (and former District 4 Regional Director) John Shinn who hand-delivered their applications to the SOAR Office upon his return to Pittsburgh, the home of USW's headquarters.

District 4 Gets a New SOAR Chapter



Pictured from left: USW Int'l Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn, SOAR President Bill Pienta, SOAR Chapter 4-17 President Priscilla Marco, SOAR Chapter 4-16 President Donald Rei (whose chapter was chartered in May of this year), USW District 4 Director Del Vitale, and USW Assistant to the Director Dave Wasiura pose for a picture after the charter presentation held during the D4 Educational Conference in Atlantic City.

Photo by Luke Gordon

Priscilla Marco had been a very active member of Local 9265, having assisted USW District 4 with their campaign to get Buy American legislation in NY State passed through publicizing and lobbying locally-elected officials over the use of Chinese steel for re-decking of the Verrazano Bridge in Staten Island, where she resides.

Joining her as newly elected officers for Chapter 4-17 are Gary Cunningham – Vice President (Albany); Treasurer – Nancy Holford (Albany); Secretary – Lisa Pinkard (Long Island); and Trustees – Andrea Coton (Albany); Lenny Mangano (NYC) and Blair Burroughs (NYC).

Cunningham and Holford had both held officer positions in their local prior to retiring. It was important to the membership that the officers reflect regional diversity; and they have agreed to meet bi-monthly on Zoom so that meetings can be accessible across the state. The chapter hopes to join LU 9265 in person during their annual Conference Day so that retiree issues can be addressed and they intend to support the work of Local 9265 during their contract negotiations.

SOAR welcomes all our new members from Chapter 4-17, and together we will continue the fight for retired and working families. In solidarity!

SOAR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULED



The SOAR International Conference is scheduled for August 5-6, 2022 at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, NV. Chapters large enough to send delegates will be notified by mail.

For those chapters planning on submitting resolutions to the conference, all resolutions must be received in the SOAR office in Pittsburgh, no later than July 1, 2022.

Buy American Made Products This Holiday Season



The holiday season is in full swing and shopping for personal gifts for family and friends demonstrates the celebratory nature of this festive time of year. Holiday merriment, however, may just look a bit different again in 2021.

With the Covid-19 pandemic still upon us, the transport of potential gift items has been delayed and supply chain shortages have made the manufacturing of many items nearly impossible. Large container ships have been sitting at sea off the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach in California, waiting to unload their imported cargo so that it reaches retail outlets before the holiday season has long passed.

So, whether it be cheap toys manufactured in China or an automobile—often shown in TV commercials as vehicles parked in the driveway wrapped in a bow to surprise a spouse—access to these purchases has been limited.

At the Alliance for American Manufacturing, we have the ideal solution to make your holiday season festive.

Buy United Steelworker Made in America products!

Not only will your purchase have a much better chance of arriving at your specified time, but it will be an all-too important investment in America and its workers.



The exchange of holiday gifts is a classic, feel-good ritual and we at AAM certainly do not discourage this annual custom.

But an even more effective strategy is knowing that your purchase was made right here in America produced by your friends and neighbors in the manufacturing sector. It is an internal feel-good story knowing that you have helped sustain and create millions of jobs across our nation during these trying times.

The United Steelworkers membership not only produces the world's best quality steel, the union workers also manufacturer hundreds of other products used by Americans every day both for fun and necessity.

We realize that countries like China, India and Bangladesh have cornered the market on so many of our everyday staples (toys, clothing) so wouldn't it bring satisfaction to know you are helping fellow Americans successfully compete in the global marketplace.

President Biden's administration and Congress have provided us with a long overdue infrastructure investment and are upholding trade actions that put us on a level playing field with foreign countries that often manufacture products (many of which were invented and developed here in the United States) with a workforce that often amounts to "slave labor."

By Buying American, you will not only get a much higher quality product but will help the U.S. in its quest to return to the world's top manufacturing country. Yes, it may cost a bit more at the cash register but there is no substitute for American-made



quality and the wages and benefits afforded American workers to live a rewarding quality of life. Let's support each other.

For more than 20 years now, we have been undercut by inferior, foreign-made products that has left millions of Americans without jobs as industries have moved their manufacturing operations offshore.

It's about time we show the rest of the world that we can compete with anybody and echo President Biden's mantra of "Build Back Better."

For the past seven years, AAM has compiled an annual Holiday Gift Guide of American-made products. Please visit our website at www.americanmanufacturing.org for our 2021 Gift Guide that offers suggestions of American-made gifts in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. You can also research our previous Gift Guide catalogs which began in 2014. All recommended gift ideas are new items for each year so you will have eight years of proudly made American gifts to research from each state.

With the Biden administration's investment in America's industry and workers, you can quietly join the fight to advance opportunities for all Americans by buying American and investing in your country and your neighbors.

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

“In order to be a mentor, and an effective one, one must care. You must care. You don’t have to know how many square miles are in Idaho, you don’t need to know what is the chemical makeup of chemistry, or of blood or water. Know what you know and care about the person, care about what you know and care about the person you’re sharing with.” ~ Maya Angelou

Passing the torch. Sharing experience and knowledge. Creating space for an entire next generation of leaders. Mentoring is one of the most fundamental exercises in the labor movement. It isn’t easy, however. It requires extra energy and patience, and a very special kind of person who embraces the idea of helping to create a leader that is better than themselves.



Recently, Rapid Response was asked to attend the District 7 Women of Steel Conference to do some training. It was there that we saw so many great examples of mentoring — particularly from our amazing sisters in SOAR. In one exercise, each table was asked to report back to the full delegation, mic in hand, what their group had come up with in the breakout exercise. The content was focused around being a better leader and stepping up — the theme of the conference.



It was refreshing to watch our SOAR sisters embrace new activists and

take them under their wings. We watched as sisters helped give courage to each other and create an environment that made them feel safe and inspired. Our SOAR sisters cheered for them, highlighted them in presentations, offered advice, and stepped up and stepped back to allow them to find and share their voices and gifts.

It was the best kind of leadership to witness.

Rapid Response is and always will be about one on one communication. Taking that time to really talk to someone and listen to what they care about and making an investment of yourself. Watching our most treasured assets — our retirees — amplify this concept in their actions was both inspiring and hopeful. We are so grateful to have all these women and every member of SOAR doing the things that make us all better.

Please keep showing us the way and making us all better, SOAR!

Social Security COLA is Welcome News

But Seniors Need Bigger Benefits

“The 5.9 percent Social Security COLA for 2022 is welcome news for seniors, who need this increase to confront ever-rising living costs. However, the fact that this is the highest increase since 1982 does not speak well for Social Security’s ability to keep pace with those expenses. The average COLA for the past ten years was only 1.65 percent. In three of the past 12 years the COLA was zero. Were it partly not for COVID-related inflation, the COLA for 2022 likely would have been more in line with the paltry increases of decades past.

Meanwhile, the cost of essentials such as housing, food, and health care have skyrocketed. So, while an average \$92 per month increase in Social Security benefits is helpful, it may only make a dent in many seniors’ ability to pay their monthly bills. Not to mention that an increase in Medicare premiums — to be announced in November — will take a bite out of most beneficiaries’ COLAs.

More than half of seniors receive over 50 percent of their income from Social Security, and it provides at least 90 percent of income for more than one-in-five seniors. They deserve a COLA formula that reflects their spending patterns. The current formula, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners (CPI-W), simply does not. That’s why we support legislation to adopt the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E), which is designed to calculate the true impact of inflation on seniors.

But the problem runs deeper. Seniors haven’t received an increase in their baseline monthly benefits in fifty years. The average annual benefit is only a few thousand dollars above the federal poverty line. It is time to boost benefits for everyone on Social Security. Rep. John Larson has for years been leading an effort, which we support, to expand Social Security, including an across-the-board benefit increase — and a specific boost for lower income workers. America’s seniors have paid into the system their entire working lives. They shouldn’t have to walk a financial tightrope every month, in constant fear of falling into poverty. This Congress, representing the wealthiest country in the world, must do better for its older — and most vulnerable — citizens.”

— Max Richtman, President and CEO,
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare





We Need Congress to Pass a Bill Without Delay that Protects Voting Rights

By Robert Roach, Jr.

Voting in the 2022 midterm elections will begin less than a year from now. With so much at stake for older Americans, we need the United States House and Senate to pass legislation quickly that protects the right to vote.

It is appalling that voting rights are not guaranteed in 2021, but that is where we are due to the Supreme Court and a systematic effort by GOP state governments to enact barriers to voting.

Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont recently introduced one bill to fix the problem, the “John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act,” S. 4. Forty-eight other senators joined him in introducing this important legislation, which would update the Voting Rights Act (VRA) to strengthen sections that were gutted by the Supreme Court’s 2013 Shelby County v. Holder decision and the 2021 Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee decision.

The Shelby County decision gutted Section 5 of the VRA, which allowed the Justice Department to screen voting changes in states with a history of racial discrimination. The Brnovich decision upheld a pair of Arizona voting restrictions that threaten to suppress the vote of racial minorities. Voting rights advocates decried the court ruling as a weakening of Section 2 of the VRA, which barred racially-targeted voting policies.

A version of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, H.R. 4, already passed in the U.S. House earlier this year.

S.4 is separate from a pared-down voting rights and elections bill, the Freedom to Vote Act, S. 2747, that was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (MN) in September just days after the state of Texas enacted a draconian new voting restrictions law.



The Freedom to Vote Act is the product of negotiations among a group of Senate Democratic lawmakers including Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (NY) and West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin. It would make Election Day a federal holiday, establish same-day voter registration nationwide, set federal standards on mail-in voting, establish limited voter ID requirements and ban partisan gerrymandering. However, Senate Republicans recently blocked the bill, filibustering the legislation to prevent it from even getting a floor debate.

Making sure everyone has the right to vote should not be a partisan issue. We need legislation that will ensure that all eligible voters, no matter where they live, can cast a ballot easily and make their voices heard.

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

For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.

Don't Miss this IMPORTANT DEADLINE!

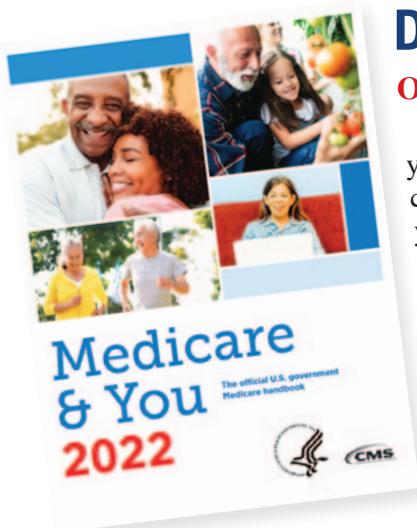
Open Enrollment season for all Medicare enrollees runs through December 7.

Have you looked at your Medicare Part D and Advantage plans to ensure they still work for you? Each year, both Medicare Advantage and Part D plans make changes to their benefits, cost-sharing, provider networks and monthly premiums. That means the plan that best served you in 2021 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–March 31 each year. For more information on joining, dropping, and switching plans, visit Medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE. Also, the link to the 2022 Medicare and You Handbook follows:

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





USW Membership Department
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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