SOAR kicked off its 12th International Conference with welcoming remarks from District 12 Director Bob LaVenture. He thanked the leaders of SOAR for all their dedication and leadership while they were active members of the USW, and paid tribute to their continued involvement with the union and all of its activities. LaVenture thanked President Pienta and Director Centner for their good work and wished Centner a long and healthy retirement. He stressed how important SOAR is to the union and the need for us to grow our membership.

SOAR President Bill Pienta addressed the delegates. He told them he was honored to serve as their President. He thanked the delegates for all that they have done and will continue to do. He reminded the delegates of the board members who recently stepped down and the contributions they have made to our organization.

Pienta stressed to the delegates that we are an integral part of the USW and the importance of us speaking in one voice. He said “…in essence SOAR is an extension of the USW and it’s important that when we speak as SOAR representatives we not go against what the USW is saying on issues or in support of a candidate. He discussed the state of politics in both our countries. He told the delegates, “Our fight is the same on both sides of the border and we must be united in our defense. Health care and retirement security are two issues that must be strengthened not dismantled as championed by those on the right.” He urged the delegates “to continue their activism” on behalf of working families and retirees.

President Pienta asked for a point of special privilege, called Director Centner’s wife to the front of the room and presented a plaque to Jim thanking him and Carol for their hard work and dedication to SOAR and wished them a healthy and happy retirement on behalf of the officers and members of our retiree organization.

Director Centner introduced Julie Stein who was recently appointed by USW International President Leo W. Gerard to assume his responsibilities for SOAR. Julie stated she was honored by the appointment and was looking forward to the challenges of the new job. Her appointment is covered in more detail on page 11 of this issue.

President Gerard addressed the delegates and extended his personal best wishes for a successful conference. He reviewed the state of the union with them and discussed the challenges facing the union down the road.

President Gerard discussed the difficult position the union is in, navigating the political landscape with an unscripted populist president and Republican-led Congress. He discussed political landscape in Canada and told the delegates in many ways the battle for survival is really the same on both sides of the border. Trade is a constant battle that we keep fighting. Congress has Social Security and Medicare in their sights. “We have to keep fighting to make sure that our kids and grandkids will have at least as good a future as we have.”

continued on page 6
Having just returned from our SOAR Conference and USW Constitutional Convention, I am reminded of the many things that I am thankful for and what an honor it is to be part of both organizations. I want to thank the SOAR delegates for showing confidence in my leadership by reelecting me as their President and for supporting the Executive Board by reelecting most of the existing members.

Unfortunately, as in any organization, change is inevitable and SOAR is no exception. At our Conference two long-serving members of our Executive Board stepped down from their positions. Rod Bezo, District 3 Board member and Charlie Averill, Secretary-Treasurer did not run for election. Both have served SOAR for a number of years in their positions and will be missed. However, I am happy to say that both have decided to continue to be active in SOAR in their own respective ways. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their years of dedicated service to the organization.

There is one more significant change in our organization that will impact many of our members; that being the retirement of SOAR Director Jim Centner. Jim has been a good friend and the best supporter of SOAR the Organization has ever known. Jim and his wife Carol were honored in a presentation during our Conference with a plaque recognizing their service to the members of our organization. I cannot put into words the gratitude I have for all Jim has done for SOAR and his friendship and guidance he has provided me during my time as President. THANKS, JIM!

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome Julie Stein, who has been appointed by President Gerard to take over Jim’s responsibilities to SOAR after his retirement.

Time to Hang it up!

I have reached the conclusion that it’s time for me to retire. This year I celebrate my 40-year anniversary as a dues-paying member of the United Steelworkers. From my 11 years toiling in the mill though my 29 years working for our union, it’s been a truly rewarding experience. Over the years, I have served as a Health and Safety Grant employee, a Health and Safety Technician, Assistant Director of our union’s Membership Development Department and for the last 16 years as your SOAR Director.

To say it’s been an interesting journey would be a huge understatement. But the best part of the job has always been our members. I have had the opportunity to work with and meet some of the most amazing people. Their dedication and commitment to our union; and to social justice reinforced my beliefs. It energized me to do the very best work I could do, not only for our members and retirees but for all working families.

But all good things must come to an end. I thank the leadership of our great union for letting me have the opportunity to serve. I thank the SOAR Executive Board for all their hard work and support. All that we’ve accomplished over the last 16 years, we did as a team. I thank our members for their activism and most importantly, I thank my wife Carol for being there and supporting me over the years. I know it hasn’t been easy!
Long time union and SOAR activist Rod Bezo stepped down from the SOAR Board after 15 years of service to our retiree organization. A union member since 1960, Rod served in a number of local union positions including president before going on the United Glass & Ceramic Workers Union’s staff in 1973. Six years later, Rod was elected Director of that union’s District 6. A few years later, his union merged with the Aluminum & Brick Workers Union and he became the Executive Officer for the ABG District 6 in Canada. In 1995, Rod was elected as the Canadian Director and International Vice-President for the Aluminum, Brick & Glass Workers Union.

In 1997 the union merged with the United Steelworkers of America and Rod was appointed Assistant to the Canadian Director. In October of 2002, Rod retired and was appointed National SOAR Coordinator for Canada. He held that position until he moved to Calgary. After he settled in he once again became active in SOAR and has served on the SOAR Executive Board representing District 3 since 2012. Rod has always played an instrumental role in the political arena though out Canada. He is a strong supporter of SOAR and worked tirelessly to build the organization throughout the district.

Dennis Carrigan
Elected to SOAR Board

Dennis Carrigan was elected as District 3 Executive Board Member at the 12th International SOAR Conference held in Las Vegas, Nevada April 7 & 8, 2017. Dennis was elected to a three year term taking the spot of Rod Bezo who did not run for re-election.

Dennis started his union career in 1968 with Local 5606 when he went to work at I.P.S.C.O. in Regina, Saskatchewan. He became active winning his first election in 1972 and served consecutive terms in a number of positions including Financial Secretary and Vice President until he retired in 2003.

In 1975 Carrigan was elected Vice President of the Regina and District Area Council and was instrumental in starting a fishing camp for underprivileged children which was named for the former District 3 Director Len Stevens. He also obtained his Journeyman’s certificate as an Industrial Mechanic that same year.

Dennis worked as a “Back-to-the-Locals” instructor, served as a temporary staff to facilitate the union’s “Back-to-the Family” project and represented District 3 on a Humanity Fund mission to Central America. He also represented the USW on the Board of Directors for the Saskatchewan Labor Force Development Board and served for many years well into his retirement on the Board of Directors of Skills Canada. He represented his Province on the National Technical Skills Committee for Millwright/Industrial Mechanics.

Upon his retirement he was appointed Financial Secretary of Chapter 19 and has served as President of that chapter since 2004.

Dennis and his wife Lois have been married for 50 years. They have two children and two grandchildren.

Denise Edwards
Elected SOAR Secretary-Treasurer

Denise Edwards served on the SOAR Executive Board representing District 10, Pennsylvania, from 2010 to 2013. She was elected Secretary-Treasurer at the International SOAR Conference in 2017.

Despite having to work outside of our union’s core industries, Edwards has been a SOAR and USW activist for over 20 years and remains president of SOAR Chapter 20-15, Greater Pittsburgh SOAR. She was a member of USW 1219, US Steel Edgar Thomson Works, Braddock, Pa. for 12 years. The first woman millwright at the mill, Edwards volunteered for local union projects like the unemployed committee and woman’s committee (a forerunner of Women of Steel). Like hundreds of thousands of brother and sister steelworkers, she lost her job when her department closed. Edwards remained connected to SOAR and worked on political action campaigns from phone banking to door knocking to helping fill the buses to New York, Harrisburg, Toronto and Washington.

In 1998, her neighbors elected Edwards to serve on the Wilkinsburg Borough Council where she served for 12 years. On her watch, the borough reversed the privatization of trash pickup (returning those jobs not only to the public sector but to union coverage), attracted new stores and built senior housing in the financially troubled municipality.

Edwards graduated West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia with a BA in history.
Of the three types of diabetes, Type 2 is most common. Usually developed later in life, Type 2 diabetes is caused when the body cannot make enough insulin and/or cannot properly use the insulin it produces. Although there is no cure, Type 2 can be managed with healthy eating, exercise, blood glucose testing, medication and sometimes insulin injections.

Who is most at risk?

You may be at risk for diabetes if you have a family history of the disease, if you are over 40, or are Aboriginal, Asian, South Asian, Hispanic or African. You are more at risk if you do not exercise, are overweight (especially around your stomach), have high blood pressure and/or high cholesterol.

Know the signs

Excessively high glucose level in your blood is a sign of diabetes. Symptoms of high blood glucose levels often include: frequent urination, unusually high thirst, change in weight, extreme tiredness, blurred vision, many infections, slow-to-heal cuts and bruises, tingling or loss of feeling in hands or feet, trouble getting or keeping an erection. If you develop any of these symptoms you should see your doctor. However, many people with Type 2 diabetes are unaware they have it, so it is important to get tested.

Choose a healthy diet

Try to add more grains and vegetables to your diet. Cut back on red meat and high saturated fats. For vegetables, choose as large a serving as you can hold in both hands. (7-10 servings a day)

- Tip: choose dark green and orange vegetables/fruit (darker the colour, the higher the nutritional value).

For grains and fruit, a serving size is approximately the size of your fist. (6-8 servings per day)

- Tip: choose whole grains like barley, bulgar and brown rice because they have more nutrients and fiber.

For meat and meat alternatives, a serving size is approximately the size of your palm and the thickness of your little finger. (2-3 servings per day)

- Tip: try a meatless meal at least once a week.

For fats and oil, a serving size is approximately the size of the tip of your thumb.

- Tip: Try seasoning with herbs and use a cooking spray rather than frying in oil.

For milk, cheese, yogurt, fortified soy beverages (2-3 servings per day), a serving size is 250 ml (1 cup) milk or low fat soy beverage, 2 slices (50g) processed cheese or 50g (1 1/2 oz) hard cheese

- Tip: substitute low-fat yogurt for mayonnaise and sour cream.

Develop an active lifestyle

Try to reach 150 minutes of exercise every week — that is a little more than 20 minutes a day.

Add in some weight lifting exercises a couple of times a week. Try lifting soup cans or heavy books while you watch TV.

Start slow and build up. Small changes make a big difference.

- Park the car further from the store.
- Take the stairs.
- Walk the dog.
- Play actively with your kids.
- Begin with walking.

- Tip: clip a pedometer to your leg (it counts your footsteps) and try to increase the steps you take each day.

With a well-balanced diet and a reasonable exercise program you can help reduce the risk and/or severity of diabetes.

Follow Dr. Scourboutakos’ blog at www.thatnutritiongirl.com
Canadian SOAR chapters sent a large delegation to the International SOAR conference in Las Vegas. The Canadian delegation represented approximately 25 percent of delegates and played an active part in the deliberations.

The conference adopted an aggressive agenda for our chapters’ active engagement in both our countries.

Seventeen Executive Board resolutions were debated and adopted and another 19 chapter resolutions were submitted and debated. In addition to the resolution committee’s recommendations, delegates also adopted 22 resolutions that were passed at the Canadian National SOAR conference in Montreal last April.

Twenty-two delegates, from Bathurst, New Brunswick, to Vancouver, British Columbia, were attentive to speakers and resolutions throughout the conference.

An especially interesting presentation was given on fraud perpetrated against seniors, something that all delegates can take home and share with their chapter members.

**MP Scott Duval Addresses Delegates**

**Las Vegas** – The New Democratic Party (NDP) is fighting to protect Canada’s steel industry and tens of thousands of workers and pensioners, Member of Parliament Scott Duvall told SOAR delegates at their international convention in Las Vegas in April.

A retired Steelworker and an active member of SOAR Chapter 6-10 in Hamilton, Scott spoke about how the Canadian steel industry has struggled since foreign owners purchased all of the country’s major steel companies. Hamilton’s Stelco was purchased by U.S. Steel and Sault Ste. Marie’s Algoma Steel was purchased by Essar. These companies are now claiming bankruptcy protection through the Companies Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA).

Scott described what he considers ‘legalized theft’ by these foreign companies as they seek to reduce retirees’ pensions and benefits. He cited U.S. Steel in Hamilton, which has over $300 million in cash reserves, yet the judge overseeing the CCAA case has allowed the company to stop paying city taxes, stop payments to pension funds and eliminate post-retirement benefits for pensioners. Close to 20,000 retirees and surviving spouses have lost critical health benefits, including prescription medication.

Scott described how the CCAA was designed to protect small companies from creditors during the Great Depression, but is now being used by corporations to shed pensions and benefit costs even though they are still financially viable. He described the NDP’s efforts to change the law so that workers and their pensions and benefits are considered secured creditors and are protected. He told of situations across the country, with company after company applying for CCAA protection to abrogate their responsibilities to their workers, retirees and communities.

A member of the federal parliamentary Steel Caucus, Scott also described efforts to regulate foreign steel dumping — primarily from China — that has depressed steel prices in North America.

**Sudbury, Ontario**

SOAR Chapter 6-02 officers assist striking Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) on the picket line. These 10 members of a small local union are striking their employer over wages and working conditions. The striking members mostly women work with hearing impaired patients.

In photo L-R front row are: President William (Whipper) Lawson, Financial Secretary Kevin Conley and Vice President Dennis Lafraniere.
USW International Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson addressed the delegates. In his remarks he thanked them for their “service, sacrifice and for the work that you do.” He said “we stand with you, shoulder to shoulder, in our fight for economic justice… “You’re an integral part in what we do. SOAR is not just an asset but an enormous asset to our union.”

Rich Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans spoke to delegates about the importance of the senior vote. He told the delegates that because retirees vote in higher numbers than the rest of the population, they have the power to swing elections. He discussed how retirees voted in the last election and stressed that the percentage of union retirees voting for the Democratic candidate was far greater than non-union retirees.

Fiesta stressed the importance of the upcoming fights… “From transportation funding and voters’ rights to health care and Social Security, nearly every major political discussion directly affects retired Americans. We need your help at Town Hall meetings, rallies, marches—wherever seniors are under attack—and we must act.”

Other speakers at the Conference were National Director of Canada, Ken Neumann, who spoke on the political climate in Canada; Vice President (Administration) Tom Conway and Vice President (Human Affairs) Fred Redmond.

Also addressing the delegates were District Directors; Dave McCall, Michael Bolton, Steve Hunt, John Shinn, Marty Warren, Dan Flippo, Bob McAuliffe, Emil Ramirez and Rueben Gaza.

The delegates also heard from: Holly Hart, USW Legislative Director, who discussed current legislative initiatives; Kim Miller, Director of the union’s Rapid Response Program gave an overview and update on their latest initiatives. She also presented an interesting historic perspective on legislative fights in the past and how similar they were to our current struggles.

Scott Duval, Member of the Canadian Parliament who discussed the tragedy of U.S. Steel Canada and the legislation he has sponsored to correct the failures of the Canadian bankruptcy laws. His presentation is covered in more detail on page 5 of this issue.

The conference also heard a presentation on investment fraud presented by Susan Arthur from the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, the largest independent regulator for all securities firms doing business in the U.S. She cautioned the delegates on strategies used by unscrupulous investors and reviewed tools we all can use to protect ourselves from them.

The delegates elected officers and executive board members for the next three years. The changes in the board are highlighted on page 3 of this issue.

The 119 delegates also adopted resolutions supporting the following actions on major issues facing SOAR and our members:

- Renew our commitment to recruit former and retired USW members into our organization.
- Endorse, support, participate in, and partner with the Alliance for American Manufacturing effort for the mutual benefit of both SOAR and the AAM.
- Support and recognize the Alliance for Retired Americans as a viable and active retiree organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of retired workers.
- Fight to protect Social Security and Medicare.
- Continue the fight to protect voting rights for all.
- Continue to work with the USW on issues of concerns for retirees.
- Defend and support improvements in the Affordable Care Act.
- Fight to preserve and improve the Canadian health care system.
- Labor Law Reform.
- Continue to oppose trade policies and trade agreements that do not include provisions to protect workers’ rights.
- Fight for legislation to create and support good family-supporting jobs.
- Increase Political Action within our SOAR chapters.
- Fight to improve pension security and changes to the bankruptcy laws in both of our countries that; would guarantee workers priority over any other claims in bankruptcy proceedings.

The conference came to its successful conclusion with USW Vice President Fred Redmond administering the oath of office to the newly-elected Executive Board.
SOAR Director Honored

SOAR Director Jim Centner was honored at the 12th International SOAR Conference for his leadership and dedication to the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees. Jim has announced his retirement that will be effective June 1, 2017. The plaque was presented by SOAR’s International President Bill Pienta on behalf of the officers and members of our retiree organization.

The plaque reads:
“The Officers and Members of SOAR present James Centner—On your retirement we thank you for your leadership of our organization and your dedication to improving the lives of our members. Along with your wife Carol, you were always choosing our members interest over your own. We thank you for your 17 years of service as our Director and wish you many years of health and happiness in your retirement.”

Jim is retiring after 40 years as a steelworker. He held a number of positions with his local union including Vice-President and Safety and Health Committee Chairman. International President Lynn Williams appointed him to staff in 1988. He has served our union as a Safety and Health Technician, Assistant Director of the Membership Development Department. He was appointed SOAR Director in 2001 and has held that position until his upcoming retirement.

Jim and his wife Carol just recently relocated to Florida. They plan on travelling, spending time with family and having fun in the sun!

Happy 90th Marie!

Marie Malagreca celebrates her 90th birthday on May 26. Marie retired from the then USWA in 1994 after 47 years of service to our union. Marie served as a secretary in the union staff office in Etna, Pa., was promoted to a servicing staff representative and was asked by International President Lynn R. Williams to be the coordinator of a new program the union was starting called SOAR. She served in that capacity from 1985 until she retired in 1994.

Marie has been a union and political activist her entire life. After retiring from the Steelworkers she became active in the former National Council of Senior Citizens and is a founding member of the Alliance for Retired Americans and served on their Executive Board for many years.

Much of what SOAR does today had its foundation established under Marie’s leadership. From the very beginning she worked to fulfill President Williams’ vision to mobilize our union’s retirees to support legislative policies that improved their quality of life.

On behalf of our members I thank Marie for all she has done for SOAR and wish her a very happy 90th birthday! — Jim Centner, Director

Charlie Averill Appointed Emeritus Member of the Board

USW International President Leo W. Gerard appointed Charlie Averill as an Emeritus Member of the SOAR Executive Board. Charlie just recently stepped down as our International Secretary-Treasurer when he decided not to run for reelection at our International Conference in April. Charlie served in that capacity since 2005. In his appointment letter President Gerard stated in part... “I understand your decision not to run for reelection however, I believe you still have many good years in front of you. That’s why I am very pleased to inform you that I have appointed you to serve on the SOAR Executive Board as Emeritus Member…”

Charlie began his union career in 1965 at Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) shortly after being discharged from the United States Navy. He became active in his local union in 1978 as a Grievance Committeeman. In 1980 he experienced a 242-day strike in what was considered the longest utility strike in the United States.

He held various positions in his local and served as Chairman of the Community Services Committee. He retired in 1998 after 33 years of service and was instrumental in forming a SOAR Chapter for NIPSCO retirees. Charlie also served as a SOAR Coordinator and Board Member for District 7 prior to being elected Secretary-Treasurer. In addition, Charlie has represented SOAR on the National Alliance for Retired Americans Executive Board since 2006.

Charlie and his wife, Elaine, have been married 51 years, and reside at Bass Lake, about nine miles south of Knox, Indiana.
 Those words certainly are not new, but they are particularly timely right now considering what is happening in Washington, D.C.: many elected officials and their corporate allies are attempting to eliminate the gains we made many decades ago. It’s important to remember how and why we’ve made progress.

**THEN** — In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) was signed into law, putting “a ceiling over hours and a floor under wages.” It established what would eventually become a 40-hour work week via overtime protections, a minimum wage and prohibitions against child labor. These provisions were fought over for many years because the needs of workers were clear: people needed decent jobs with reasonable hours of work and wages to keep them out of poverty—and their kids out of factories. There was a corporate effort to derail the bill. In a fireside chat, FDR would warn the American people, “Do not let any calamity-howling executive with an income of $1,000 a day...tell you...that a wage of $11 a week is going to have a disastrous effect.”

**NOW** — We’ve currently fighting the “Working Families Flexibility Act,” a misleadingly-named bill that would take our system of guaranteed overtime that dates back to the FLSA and replace it with a “comp time” alternative. The business community is lining up behind it. In every local and national effort to raise the minimum wage, we see the same arguments from the 1930s recycled!

**THEN** — The quest for a national health policy goes back for more than a century. Theodore Roosevelt campaigned in 1912 on a platform calling for a single national health service. When Social Security was being debated, a national health proposal was scrapped due to opposition. After WWII, Truman asked Congress to tackle health care, but it didn’t ultimately happen. It took a breakthrough after the 1964 election for President Lyndon Johnson to finally get a bill on his desk. He would sign Medicare into law with former President Truman at his side. Truman would be the first person enrolled in the new program. The dissenters persisted throughout the fight. Ronald Reagan urged opposition to the proposal saying, “If you don’t do it and I don’t do it, one of these days you and I are going to spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it once was like in America when men were free.”

**NOW** — Today, this wildly popular program continues to come under attack from those who would like to privatize it, underfund it, raise the eligibility age and otherwise undermine the program. We are seeing similar efforts to dismantle and weaken the Affordable Care Act.

**THEN** — Social Security finally came about in 1935 due to the desperation of the Great Depression and the demands of workers and citizens across the country, despite opposition from many in the business community. The National Association of Manufacturers would decry it as “the ultimate socialistic control of life and industry.”

Social Security was funded via payroll deductions for a reason. That included President Roosevelt’s explanation in 1941: “We put those payroll contributions there so as to give the contributors a legal, moral and political right to collect their pensions... With those taxes in there, no damn politician can ever scrap my social security program.”

**NOW** — Over the years, Americans have come to view Social Security as one of the most successful programs in our nation’s history. That hasn’t stopped hostile lawmakers from trying to undercut benefits, though they are more creative about their approach. Their current argument is to claim Social Security is going broke. Simple fixes — such as raising the cap on the amount of income that an individual pays taxes on — could shore up the finances long term.

The Administration recently floated an idea to replace the Social Security payroll tax with funding the program out of general revenues. This has quickly raised alarms, as it could be a back-door way to cut the program. If the payroll taxes are gone, Social Security becomes one more program susceptible to budget cuts down the road, especially if Americans buy into the false argument that the system is in financial peril.

These examples show that some things never change. For every gain we make for better jobs and secure retirements, someone will try to take them away. History has shown this repeatedly. We’ll continue to stay on top of these developments in Rapid Response and act to defend our gains, while seeking better policy to address the needs of workers and retirees today.

For the latest information, sign up for our Rapid Response alerts by emailing your contact information to uswrr@usw.org.
President Donald Trump made many campaign promises that have yet to come to fruition during his first 100 days in office. The potential good news, however, is Trump’s concern about China’s overcapacity of steel production. His appointment of Wilbur Ross as Secretary of Commerce and nomination of Robert Lighthizer as International Trade Representative reaffirms his commitment to protecting the American steel industry.

Lighthizer, a former deputy trade representative during the President Reagan administration, has made a career out of representing America’s steel companies in illegal trade cases at the Commerce Department.

“Mr. Lighthizer fought to secure anti-dumping and countervailing duties against foreign companies who were violating U.S. trade law and is uniquely qualified to represent America’s trade interests,” said Alliance for American Manufacturing President Scott Paul. “As the administration investigates these issues, his experience is needed to create and enforce policy that levels the playing field for America’s workers.”

Protection from illegal, Chinese steel dumping in the United States is a major concern for United Steelworker members. Each year, thousands of jobs are lost and steel mills are idled or shut down because they can’t compete with the state-subsidized Chinese steel mills that dump their overcapacity of product in America at bargain-basement prices.

To illustrate how subversive China’s steel production is let’s look at the facts. China has manufactured 75 percent of the world’s new steel stock since 2000. Its overcapacity alone in 2015 was 336 million metric tons. China now has the combined steelmaking capacity of the United States, European Union, Japan and Russia.

China had promised to lower its steel production in 2016 but instead increased production. Just another in a long line of China’s broken promises. President Trump has walked back on many of his campaign promises but has continually targeted China and Mexico as America’s biggest trade problems. His meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping at Trump’s Mar-O-Lago resort in Florida, however, seemed to moderate his stance on China and global trade.

Trump could possibly be using his trade leverage to receive help from China in dealing with the North Korean crisis. But, in the long run, this approach threatens America’s national security.

Without a strong American steel industry, America will suffer when it comes to manufacturing military armaments. Do we want to rely on China for steel to build battleships during a major military conflict? This alone should cause a major U.S. concern.

Trump signed an executive order officially launching a 232 investigation into foreign steel imports. Led by the Commerce Department, that investigation will determine whether dumped steel imports pose a threat to national security. This investigation could lead to tariffs or other actions in response.

Four days after Trump signed the executive order, China announced that it had revoked the licenses of 29 Chinese steel firms and that 40 additional steel companies have been asked to make environmental protection and safety measures.

But we’ve heard this song before from China. It has repeatedly promised to reign in its steel production only to keep producing more and more to keep Chinese workers employed.

AAM supports the 232 investigation and has confidence that changes will come when Robert Lighthizer officially becomes the United States Trade Representative.

“The investigation sends a strong signal to Beijing that our government will pursue sensible trade actions that will push back against persistent unfair trade practices,” said AAM’s Paul.

All SOAR and USW members should contact their representatives in Congress to encourage them to force President Trump to tackle China’s overcapacity problem. It will bring back American steelworker jobs and protect our national security.

*Jeff Bonior is a staff writer at the Alliance for American Manufacturing*
Rumblings from the Beltway

The Senate, before departing for the holiday recess, handed President Trump his first major victory. In a 54 to 45 vote Neal Gorsuch was confirmed as the 9th member of the U.S. Supreme Court. This confirmation clearly moves the court to the right and ends a year-long battle between Republicans and Democrats.

Several important issues are expected to be scheduled that will gather national attention and motivate the electorate to demonstrate and march in the streets. We should pay close attention to these issues. Our Constitution allows us the “Freedom of Assembly” and we should never abandon our right to have our voices heard.

Our President has continued to insist that there were millions of fraudulent votes cast in the presidential election regardless of proof. The Brennan Center for Justice/New York University survey tracked the Trump allegations and found them to be false. They were not alone in their findings. Phillip Bump, (Washington Post, N.Y. Office) wrote, “There was no widespread evidence of voter fraud and there was not evidence of modest voter fraud. He stated, as of December 1, 2016 there were only four documented cases of voter fraud.” I think it’s time to move on from these false allegations and down to the business of running our country.

It’s never too early to start! Our goal in the 2018 midterm election must be to elect a democratic majority in both the House and Senate. It has become painfully obvious that the right-wing extreme agenda and power grab will have a devastating effect on the quality of life of working families and retirees. Make no mistake about it. They clearly have Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid in their sights. There is no doubt that the proposals from the administration and a Paul Ryan-led House will hurt retirees and future retirees for generations to come.

Trickledown economics is in vogue again. It’s been a Republican staple that has never worked. It hasn’t balanced a budget or strengthened our economy. This philosophy is what caused the great disparity of wealth in our nation and across the globe. Tax cuts for the rich have never ever had the so-called desired effect of boosting our economy and putting money in the pockets of the working class. It just makes the rich richer and the poor poorer!

Getting people registered to vote, educated on the issues and to the polls is our only and best chance to grow the middle class. It’s up to everyone. Work as you have never worked before. Join with SOAR in our coalition of active organizations. It’s better than walking alone.

New Chapter in District 12

Our newest chapter, 12-10 received their charter at the 12th International SOAR Conference held in Las Vegas, Nevada in April. The chapter members are retirees from Local 7600 that represents over 6,000 members at Kaiser Permanente hospitals in Fontana and Riverside, Calif. The charter was presented to Chapter President and founder Loureen Evans. Loureen is a longtime activist and recent retiree from that local.
Candidate Donald Trump made promises to working families and we need to continue speaking out and resisting bad policies to make sure he is forced to keep his word.

Trump promised to protect people with pre-existing conditions, but the GOP plan he’s backing would jeopardize care for the most vulnerable citizens. While not explicitly eliminating coverage, anyone with a serious health condition could face such high premiums that it would be virtually impossible for them to buy health insurance. It’s a cynical move, and the American people will not be fooled by it.

Despite assurances Social Security and Medicare would not be cut, the Trump Administration is full of officials who are actively finding ways around those promises.

There have been reports of President Trump himself considering the elimination of FICA tax contributions, the payroll deductions that are the primary means of funding Social Security.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Mick Mulvaney has attacked House Speaker Paul Ryan for not planning to cut Social Security and Medicare fast enough.

Asked by reporter John Harwood if the president would veto Medicare privatization if it was passed by Congress, since he promised not to cut the program, Mulvaney urged Congress to pass the legislation and then said the Administration and Congress should “talk about it.”

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) that guarantees coverage of pre-existing conditions and health care for millions is in real danger. It will take a concerted grassroots lobbying effort to continue protecting our earned Social Security and Medicare benefits, as well as Medicaid and coverage of pre-existing conditions.

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.

Julie Stein Chosen to Lead SOAR

United Steelworkers International President Leo W. Gerard appointed Julie Stein to assume the duties of SOAR upon the retirement of current SOAR Director Jim Centner.

Julie began her work career in 1984 as a laborer at the Appleton Coated Paper Mill in Combined Locks, Wisconsin. She became an active member of what is currently USW Local Union 2-144 and served in various positions of the local including Trustee, Recording Secretary and Bargaining Committee Member.

In spring of 2005, Julie was elected Recording Secretary for the PACE Region Ten Council; and, after the USWA/PACE merger, was part of the merger process between the PACE and USWA district councils to help develop the current council structure in USW District 2.

In January 2006, Julie began her career with the International Union as Executive Administrative Assistant to the District Director at the USW District 2 office in Menasha, Wisconsin. In addition, she became actively involved with the Women of Steel program and served as a Regional Coordinator for the state of Wisconsin and the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Julie always had an interest in politics. Her first involvement as a political activist began with the election campaigns in 2006, and in subsequent election cycles, where she knocked on hundreds of doors and participated in phonebanks to educate our members on the issues that affect working families and retirees and to encourage support of and votes for labor-friendly candidates.

USW International President Leo W. Gerard assigned Julie to the staff of the Political Department in December 2011 and she moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As a Technician, she assisted with the coordination of the national field program for several USW districts during election cycles and worked to promote and grow the USW PAC program.

Julie and her husband, Matthew, reside in Glenshaw, Pennsylvania with their dogs, Maggie and Otis. They enjoy spending time with Matt’s four daughters. They both enjoy traveling the roads of western Pennsylvania, or wherever the open road may take them, on their Harley-Davidson motorcycles.
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