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At their meeting in Washington, D.C. on September 6, 2007, the International Executive Board of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) unanimously and enthusiastically supported the endorsement of John Edwards for President of the United States, following the announcement of the same by the United Steelworkers International Union.

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USW International President Leo W. Gerard (left) administers the oath of office from the union constitution to install Connie Entrekin (center) as the new president of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), while retiring SOAR President Lynn R. Williams (right) looks on. The changing-of-the-guard for SOAR president took place during the USW retiree organization’s executive board meeting on Sept. 6, 2007 in Washington, D.C. Entrekin recently retired as USW District 9 Director. Retiring SOAR President Williams, who also served as USW International President, will retain an Emeritus position with SOAR.

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SOAR Executive Board Endorses JOHN EDWARDS for President

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Presidential candidate John Edwards addresses Labor Day crowd in Pittsburgh, PA as Steve Skvara, SOAR District 7 Executive Board Member and others cheer him on.

continued on page 2
Williams Steps Down
ENTREKIN Takes the Helm for SOAR

Washington, D.C. – The SOAR Executive Board met on September 6, 2007. This special meeting was called by United Steelworkers International President Leo W. Gerard who, with the unanimous support of the SOAR Executive Board, appointed Connie Entrekin to succeed outgoing SOAR President Lynn R. Williams. Connie will serve the remaining term of President Williams, who has been appointed SOAR President Emeritus.

Williams has led SOAR since July of 1997. In his comments to the Board Lynn stated, “I am proud of SOAR and what has been accomplished by the Board, and want to thank all of you for your great work.” He went on to say, “I believe that SOAR plays an important role in our union.” In stepping down he said, “I never thought that SOAR should be a depository for past presidents of the union. It’s time for a generational switch. The union has a lot of young retirees that can do a good job.”

In closing, Lynn thanked Leo and the Board for their support. He said that he was going to remain active in his own SOAR chapter in Toronto. In handing over the gavel to Connie, Lynn stated, “SOAR’s important role in mobilizing our retiree population could really make a difference, and I’m sure Connie will do a great job in leading our organization.”

After being sworn in, Connie thanked President Gerard for having the confidence in him to take this position. He recalled that the first thing he said to himself after discussing this position with Leo was, “Oh Lord, how can I fill Lynn’s shoes? I can’t, but I can build on his foundation.” In addressing the SOAR Executive Board, Entrekin stated, “We want to change the direction of this country in the next election. I want your help and I know that I will get it. I want to thank all of you for what you have done and what you will do in the future, and I look forward to working with you all.”

Prior to his retirement from active employment, Connie served on the International Executive Board of the United Steelworkers as Director of District 9, which encompasses the Southeastern region of the United States. For more information on Connie, please see page three of this issue.

SOAR Executive Board Endorses JOHN EDWARDS for President

In making that announcement, USW President Leo W. Gerard said, “All of the Democratic candidates in the field share our values, and any one of them would be a major improvement over the current administration. But none of them is a more forceful advocate for those values than John Edwards. Senator Edwards is committed, as he has been throughout his life, to going to bat for everyday Americans, and to changing a broken political system that leaves millions of Americans without a voice in their government.”

“Edwards has laid out a plan that will lead to universal health care for every American, and he will fight to restore the freedom of workers to form unions and raise their standards of living through collective bargaining.”

President Gerard added, “John Edwards will put workers and families first, and there’s nothing that’s needed more than that right now.”

The USW and SOAR intend to play a leadership role in ensuring Edwards’ nomination. The union’s significant active and retired membership that reside in the early caucus and primary election states — along with the high levels of union density in crucial battleground states in a general election—provide us with a unique opportunity to contribute to Edwards’ nomination and election.
Your SOAR Executive Board

Connie Entrekin · President

In September 2007, Connie Entrekin was appointed SOAR President by USW International President Leo W. Gerard, to serve the remaining term of President Lynn Williams who retired.

Connie Entrekin retired from the USW after serving on the International Executive Board as Director of District 9, which encompasses the Southeast region of the U.S.

Before becoming director, Connie held a number of positions in the labor movement, beginning in 1959 as

Harry Hynd · Vice President

Harry’s union experience began in the Scottish coal mines with his early membership in the National Union of Mineworkers where he was a steward. He immigrated to Canada in 1957. In 1958 he was hired on at Stelco in Hamilton where he became an active member of Local 1005 as plant grievance chairperson.

Harry has a wide range of experience in the labor movement. He was appointed to a Steelworker staff position in 1971 where he served members in Hamilton, Vancouver, the Niagara Peninsula and Toronto.

Throughout his career in the labor movement, education was always a priority for Harry. He was an instructor in the Steelworkers’ education program for many years, served on the Mohawk College Board of Governors, and was a member of the Ontario Federation of Labour’s (OFL) Education Committee. He was the Education Coordinator for the Steelworkers’ District 6 for six years prior to his appointment to Director

Charlie Averill · Secretary-Treasurer

In 1961, after high school, Charlie Averill joined the United States Navy and was a 2nd Class Signalman aboard the U.S.S. Walker (DD517), a destroyer stationed in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. His ship took two cruises to the Western Pacific and took part in shore bombardment off the coast of Vietnam.

Shortly after being discharged from the Navy in 1965, Charlie began his union career at the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO). He worked most of thirty-three years as a Relief Operator in a coal-fired generating station in Wheatfield, Ind.

In 1978, Charlie became active in Local Union 12775 as a Grievance Committeeman. In 1980 he experienced an eight-month strike (242 days) in what was, at the time, considered the longest utility strike in U.S. history.

In 1991, as a retiree, Harry continues to be called on to teach, passing his skills on to another generation of Steelworkers.

As director, Harry served as OFLVice-President and was a member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Steel Trade and Employment Congress (CSTEC). Harry was a member of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund Board and sat on the First Ontario Fund Board.

Harry’s reputation was always as a skilled negotiator and troubleshooter, skills that added to his leadership throughout his years as director. Following his 1991 appointment, he was elected to a full term in 1993 and again in 1997. He retired at the end of that term in March 2002.

In 2005, USW International President Leo W. Gerard appointed him SOAR Vice President, to fill the vacancy created when Ken O’Neal stepped down due to health concerns. Harry was then elected SOAR Vice President at the following International SOAR Conference.

Harry and his wife Margaret are both active in the New Democratic Party.

They have two daughters and three granddaughters.

Charlie held various positions in his local union serving as Inside and Outside Guard, Treasurer, Chairman of the Community Services Committee and Insurance Committee Chairman. Charlie retired in 1998 after 33 years of service and soon after formed a SOAR Chapter for NIPSCO retirees.

Charlie served as a District 7 SOAR Coordinator for a couple years and was elected District 7 SOAR Executive Board member in 2002. In 2005, he was appointed SOAR Secretary-Treasurer by USWInternational President Leo W. Gerard to fill the vacancy created when Matt Peulen resigned due to his increased responsibilities as the Pueblo (Colorado) County Commissioner. Charlie was elected SOAR Secretary-Treasurer at the National SOAR Conference the following April.

Charlie and his wife Elaine have been married 41 years, and reside at Bass Lake, about nine miles south of Knox, Ind. They have one son, Matthew, who is a teacher in Zionsville, Ind. and vice president of his union. Matt is married to Janet, also a teacher.
Lynn Williams was born in Springfield, Ontario. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario in 1944. He went to work at the Inglis plant in Toronto in 1947 where they manufactured appliances. He was a member of USWA Local 2900 and was subsequently hired as an organizer by the Canadian Congress of Labor.

In 1956, Lynn went on staff for the USWA in the Niagara Peninsula area. Under his leadership, the union doubled its membership in the area. In 1965, Lynn was transferred to the District 6 headquarters in Toronto, and in 1973 became the Director of District 6.

In 1977, Lynn was elected to the position of USWA International Secretary. Upon the untimely death of USWA President, Lloyd McBride in November 1983, Lynn was elected temporary acting president by the International Executive Board. In March 1984, Lynn won a special referendum election and was sworn in as the fifth International President of the USWA, being the first Canadian to do so. In 1985, and again in 1989, he won a full term by acclamation, serving in that capacity until he retired in 1994.

Lynn was the first person to have served, although not simultaneously, on both the Executive Board of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). Lynn led our union during some of its greatest struggles and earned a reputation from those inside and out of the labor movement as an articulate, fair-minded and tough labor leader. Not forgetting his roots, Lynn became the President of the SOAR organization in 1997.

Lynn was recently named an Officer of the Order of Canada for a lifetime of distinguished service. The Order of Canada is the country’s highest civilian honor which recognizes lifetime contributions made by Canadians who have made a major difference to Canada. The City Council adopted the idea of recognizing Lynn by naming a street in the new housing development being built where the Inglis plant had been located and where Lynn had joined the Union. In this way, Lynn’s Local 2900 and the Steelworkers were recognized for the great contribution they made to the economic and cultural development of the city.

Larry Spitz was one of the early organizers of the labor movement in New England. In 1933 he went to work as an organizer for the United Textile Workers of America. Three years later he participated actively in the New England area in the formation of the Committee of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and was appointed by John L. Lewis to a three-man committee which headed the organizational drive of the CIO in the state of Rhode Island.

From 1943 to 1946 he served in the United States Army participating in the Philippine campaign. Upon his return to the United States in 1946, he was appointed by Philip Murray as Sub-District Director of the United Steelworkers in Providence, R. I., and occupied that position for 19 years.

In 1965, Larry became the Director of the Wage Division of the Steelworkers and moved to Pittsburgh. The following year he left the Steelworkers to become Executive Director of Community Progress, Inc. in New Haven, Conn.

Upon his return to the Steelworkers in 1968, he worked as the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer and on special assignments from the President. He has represented the Steelworkers at a number of international labor conferences in Europe and the Caribbean, has been a guest lecturer at the University of the West Indies, in Kingston, Jamaica, and was on the faculty for specialized programs of the Rutgers University Extension Division.

He is listed in “Who’s Who in the East” and was awarded an honorary degree (Doctor of Laws) by Brown University in 1976. That same year he retired to Sun City, Ariz. and with help from his close friends—former USW President I. W. Abel and Treasurer Walter Burke—organized 13 union club chapters with over 7,000 members, giving voice to union retirees and forming a strong support group for the labor movement.

In 2000, Larry was inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame. He continues to be very involved with our SOAR organization, and is always fighting for the rights of working families and retirees.
**George Edwards**  
*Emeritus Board Member*

George Edwards was born March 24, 1918 in Philip, South Dakota. His first award in life was the 201st birth certificate in the county. George lived in a log and sod house in preschool years. During WWII, George was stationed in Ft. Benning, Georgia where he attended Officers Candidate School.

George received his BA in psychology from the University of Tennessee before entering Oberlin Seminary where he took two years of theology with the intention of becoming a minister. He subsequently studied two years of law at the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law.

In 1942, George joined Local 1104 of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) in Lorain, Ohio, and later that same year, attended the founding convention of the USWA as a guest.

George was founding editor of the union newspaper, the Lorain Labor Leader, which at one time was the largest labor publication in Ohio. George held various positions in his local including Trustee and Vice President. He served as President of the Lorain County CIO Council, but lost all leadership positions during the McCarthy era. He was also co-chair of the National Steelworkers CIO Council in the ’70s. In 1981, he retired from his Machinist Apprentice Instructor position at U.S. Steel after 39 years.

George is a founding member of SOAR, becoming a charter member in 1985. He organized SOAR Chapter 20-15 where he’s been the chapter president since 1993. He became a SOAR Coordinator, and later the District 10 SOAR Executive Board member. George was appointed SOAR Board Member Emeritus by USW International President Leo W. Gerard. He has worked as a volunteer in the SOAR office in Pittsburgh since 1989, and is currently the associate editor of SOAR in Action.

George’s wife Denise is a member of the Wilkinsburg (Pa.) Borough Council and the Recording Secretary of her SOAR chapter.

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**Willie Moore**  
*District 1 Board Member*

Willie, who is 77 years young, lives in Canton, Ohio. In 2002, he became the SOAR Executive Board member for District 1.

Willie hired in to Republic Steel in 1948 at which time he joined the United Steelworkers of America. One year later, he joined the United States Navy Reserve and served as an Engineman for 15 years until 1964.

After working 42 years in the same plant as a Steel Inspector (Finishing), Willie retired from LTV Steel in March of 1990, and joined SOAR that same year.

Willie is a widower after being married for 43 years, and has been blessed with six children, 13 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

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**Milio “Mimi” Rinna**  
*District 2 Board Member*

Mimi was 18 years old when he hired in as a Laborer at the Great Lakes Steel Plant of National Steel Corporation.

He was drafted into the Army in 1951 and was discharged in 1953 after spending a year in Korea. Upon return to his millwright job, he got involved with the union, serving as a steward for six years, in-plant grievance committee person for ten years, and fulltime grievance committee person for seven years.

In 1977 Mimi was appointed to the USWA International staff by then President I.W. Abel, a position he held for 18 years until his retirement in 1994.

Mimi has been a member of SOAR since its inception and, “...will continue to support our Union in whatever way I can since I owe everything I’ve achieved in life to the Steelworkers, my family and those I’ve had the privilege to represent.”

Mimi is 75 year old and lives with his wife of 53 years, Viola, in Allen Park, Mich. They have two children.
Jerry Edwards  
_District 3 Board Member_

Jerry Edwards worked 14 years at IPSCO, one of the world’s leading producers of steel plate and pipe before becoming a USWA Staff Representative. He retired in 1998 and became a member of SOAR and served on the Executive Board for seven years.

Jerry has served as President of the South Saskatchewan Labor Council. He was Area Council President in Regina, Saskatchewan, Treasurer of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labor, Director of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and he served on the New Democratic Party (NDP) Provincial Executive Board in Saskatchewan and B.C. He was also a trainer in the “Back to the Local Program.”

Jerry has been a member of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) —now known as the New Democratic Party (NDP)— since 1948. He is president of the NDP Executive Board of the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows Provincial Constituency.

In 1990, Jerry was presented with the SOAR Pioneer Award by then USWA President Lynn Williams.

Jerry and his wife, Sharon, have been married 18 years and live in Pitt Meadows, British Columbia. They have six children and 13 grandchildren.

Mickey Berger  
_District 4 Board Member_

Mickey spent four years in the U.S. Navy in Corpus Christi, Texas where he served on the aircraft carrier, U.S.S. Wasp.

Mickey worked as a mechanic for Allied Chemical before retiring in 1980, when he was put on staff for the USWA. He was appointed Sub-District Director in 1990 by District 4 Director Lou Thomas, and ten years later retired from his staff job with the union.

Mickey has been a SOAR member for five years, and has been on the SOAR Executive Board for three years.

Sixty-eight year old Mickey Berger and his wife Isabel reside in Syracuse, New York. They have been married 45 years, and have one child and three grandchildren.

Robert Saumure  
_District 5 Board Member_

Bob, who is 79 years old, lives in Les Cèdres, Québec. In 2004 he became the SOAR Executive Board member for District 5.

Bob began his working career at the age of eighteen at the Steel Company of Canada (STELCO) in Lachine, Quebec, where he worked for twenty years.

He served as steward and chief steward at Local 3258 before being elected president of the local, a position he held for eleven years. Bob was put on staff in 1968, servicing the Montreal area for twenty-three years. He was also an Unemployment Insurance Referee in arbitration for 31 years.

Bob retired from the union in 1987. He was a member of SOAR before retiring and has stayed involved ever since.

Bob and his wife Rita have been married for 55 years and have six children and 19 grandchildren.
Dan McNeil
District 6 Board Member

Dan retired from the Steel Company of Canada (STELCO) 20 years ago, becoming the SOAR Executive Board member for his district upon his retirement.

Dan serves as 1st Vice President of the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada (CURC), and is also a council member on the Ontario Federation of Union Retirees (OFUR).

He is the Secretary of the Toronto Area Council Political Action Committee (PAC) and a member of the USW District 6 Political Action Committee.

Dan is 80 years old. He and his wife Ruth have been married 56 years and reside in Toronto, Ontario. They have three children and six grandchildren.

Steve Skvara
District 7 Board Member

Steve began his career as a Mechanical Helper with Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co. which later became LTV Steel. He held several other positions in the plant, retiring as an Electrical Repairman with a total of 34 years of service. He’s been retired for five years and a member of SOAR for that long. Steve served as a SOAR Coordinator for two years before being elected in 2007 as his chapter president and the District 7 SOAR Executive Board member.

Steve has always been involved in union work, his church and community. He served as a shop steward for over ten years at Local 1011. He’s involved in the Knights of Columbus, served on the homeowner’s association in his county, and also as an elected Township School Board member. When LTV Steel went into bankruptcy, leaving the retirees without health care, he became a certified SHIIP (Senior Health Insurance Information Program) representative, helping seniors with Medicare problems and finding Medigap insurance. Steve has assisted USW retirees at Bethlehem, National Steel and Slater Steel. He volunteers one day a week at the union hall and one day a month at a senior center in Valparaiso, IN.

Steve is 60 years old. He and his wife Sandy have been married 34 years and have four grown children.

Jack Casparriello
District 8 Board Member

In 1953, Jack Casparriello went to work for Uncle Sam by way of the United States Army. He served four years in Korea and then two more years in the reserves.

Upon returning home, he got a job with the Continental Can Company in Baltimore, Maryland where he became a member of USWA Local 4340. While working, Jack went back to school to get a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Management. He became Recording Secretary for the local union, served as Grievance Committee Chairman and then as President of the local.

In 1966, Jack went on staff for the USWA and later became Sub-District Director. He retired from the USWA in 1987. About a year later, Jack became active in SOAR and soon became the Executive Board Member for District 8. He is also the Treasurer for SOAR Chapter 8-1.

Jack has a real knack for raising money. His SOAR chapter is one of the best at raising money for the Political Action Committee. At our SOAR Executive Board meetings you can easily locate Casparriello — he’ll be the one selling the PAC raffle tickets!

Jack is 75 years old and has been married to his wife Barbara (Bobbi) for 26 years. They reside in Baltimore and have five children, 12 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Jack is a big sports fan being devoted to the Baltimore Orioles and Baltimore Ravens.
Dave Trach 
District 11 Board Member

After his high school graduation in 1953, Dave Trach went off to college for a couple of years and then started dating his high school sweetheart, Carol. They got married, and this year are celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

Dave retired from LTV Steel and worked at a taconite mine in Hoyt Lake, Minnesota. He was a member of USW Local 4108 and served as Financial Secretary for 35 years. Dave was also chairman of the local’s Human Services Committee helping chemically dependent co-workers, was chairman of the Grievance Committee and helped negotiate several contracts.

In 1995, Dave joined the SOAR organization and was assigned as a SOAR Coordinator. One year later, after 38 years in the mines, he decided to retire from LTV and four years later was elected to the SOAR Executive Board.

Dave is Mayor of Leonidas, Minnesota and has held that job for about 25 years. He has also been elected as a delegate to the last six state democratic conventions.

Dave and his wife Carol have three children and eight grandchildren.

Jean Friday 
District 10 Board Member

In 1952 during the Korean War, Jean Friday enlisted in the Air Force and was stationed at an air base in Alabama where she became a Senior Medical Specialist and operated the Physical Therapy Department at the base clinic.

After a three-year hitch, Jean attended UCLA on the G.I. Bill and got a degree in Chemistry. She then became a claims adjuster for the Occidental Insurance Company. In 1960 she went to work for Don Baxter Pharmaceutical Company doing quality control and research work.

When a family member became ill, Jean had to quit that job and return home.

Some time later, she hired in to U.S. Steel, Clairton Coke Works in Clairton, Pennsylvania working as a Quality Control Technician.

In 1984, her department was losing a lot of laboratory jobs which prompted Jean to become active in the union. She became a member of the Safety Committee and then was elected Grievance Committee person.

Jean retired in 1990 and joined SOAR, soon becoming Secretary-Treasurer of her SOAR chapter and later president, the position she still holds today. In 2002, Jean became the SOAR Executive Board member for District 10.

Jean is president of the Pennsylvania Alliance for Retired Americans, and is very proud to have been instrumental in the dumping of Senator Rick Santorum.

Jean has been married 38 years to husband Ed who worked and retired from the same mill.

Jim Swindle 
District 9 Board Member

Jim grew up in a family of coal miners during a time when wages were one dollar a day. He witnessed the struggle of miners in their efforts to organize and gain respect in their workplace. By the time of his high school graduation, Jim knew that he would spend his life helping workers get fair pay for a fair day’s labor.

On his first day of employment in 1941 at Tennessee Coal and Iron Company in Fairfield, Alabama, Jim joined the Steel Workers Organizing Committee which officially became the United Steelworkers of America in 1942.

Jim participated in the first wildcat strike at the tin mill and is one of the few still living to have stood at the pay line to collect dues. After the union was voted in, Jim served as Assistant Grievance Committee man for four years and was elected as Grievance Committee Chairman for the next sixteen years. A highlight of his career was serving as Chairman of the Inequities Program, where he worked to raise pay rates in the South to the level paid for the same jobs in the North.

After forty-one years of service, Jim retired in 1982 and immediately became a driving force in SOAR. He also is the president of his chapter.

Jim’s other accomplishments include past president of the Alabama AFL-CIO retiree group, Jefferson County Labor Council Board member, President of the Jefferson County Retirees Organization and Board member of the Alabama Organized Labor Awards Foundation. In 2000, he was placed into the Alabama Organized Labor Awards Foundation Hall of Fame.

Jim has been a SOAR Board member for 12 years, and at the age of 81, has set even more goals. He and Clara have been married 65 years. They have three children, five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.
**Tino Torres**  
*District 12 Board Member*

In 1953, Tino Torres started his labor career with the International Union of Mine Mill and Smelter Workers, Local 886 which is still in existence. Subsequently he held practically every local union office, including the presidency of his local for approximately 16 years. In 1967 the Mine Mill and Smelter Workers merged with the USWA.

In the late ’70s, under the leadership of then USWA President Lloyd McBride, Tino was appointed to the position of staff representative and later Sub-District Director. He served mostly in the Southwest region of the United States. Tino has now served in the labor movement for more than 50 years, most recently as a SOAR Executive Board member, SOAR Coordinator for Sub-District 2, and as an Executive Board member for the Arizona Alliance for Retired Americans.

**Dan Henry**  
*District 13 Board Member*

Dan retired after working 27 years with the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA), as an Operator Technician. He was first elected to local union office in 1976 holding various positions in his local, was a grievance committee person until his retirement, and president of his Local from 1997 through 2005. Dan also served on the ALCOA national bargaining committee from 1980 through 2005.

Dan worked on various organizing drives in the mid-90s, and worked as a full-time casual USW organizer from 2003 to 2005. He retired from ALCOA in 2004 upon the sale of his facility and retired from the new owner, ALMATIS in 2006. Dan served as a District 12 SOAR Coordinator prior to the merger of PACE with the USW, and was then appointed as the District 13 SOAR Executive Board member by President Gerard. Dan and his wife Barbara, live in Benton, Arkansas, have been married 36 years and have one daughter.

**Jack Munro**  
*IWA Board Member*

Jack Munro is best known for the years (1987-1992) he served as the national president of IWA Canada (the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada) from 1987 to 2002, and president of the former IWA (International Woodworkers of America) of Regional Council No. 1, where he served as president between 1973-1992.

Jack began his career with the IWA as a Local 1-405 business agent in 1962 after previously working at Kootenay Forest Products in Nelson. He moved up the ranks to become president of the IWA, and also served as an officer of the British Columbia Federation of Labor and the Canadian Labor Congress.

Over the years, Jack served on numerous boards and advisory councils—including the University of British Columbia Forestry Advisory Committee and the Federal Forest Sector Advisory Committee. In 1984, Jack was appointed to the Working Group on Seasonal Work and Unemployment Insurance.

In the past, he served on the boards of the Vancouver Airport Authority, Tree Plan Canada and Tourism Vancouver.

He held appointments to the Canada-Japan 2000 Forum, the Federal Commission on Redundancies and Layoffs, a Federal Commission on Judges’ Pensions and the BC Forest Resources Commission. Jack also served as the Chairman of Catamaran Ferries International Corp. and as a Director of the BC Ferry Corporation.

He holds an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from the University of British Columbia and an Honorary Diploma from BC Institute of Technology.

Jack served as the Chairman of the Forest Alliance of BC from 1992 to his retirement in June of 2000. On February 3, 1999, he was invested with the Order of Canada and in 2002 received a Jubilee Medal from Queen Elizabeth II.

Since retiring, Jack has worked as a volunteer with the United Way of the Lower Mainland Fundraising Drive and has been involved with several groups of retired union members. He is also on the board of the Myasthenia Gravis Association of BC.

Besides serving as a SOAR Executive Board member, he is the Executive Board Chair of the Labor Heritage Centre, which is to be built in Burnaby, BC.
Bob Pryor
Benefits Coordinator

Bob worked as a scale clerk for Reynolds Aluminum in McCook, Illinois for 13 years. He was a member of USWA local 3911 and began work with the union as a shop steward. Bob also served the local union as a Grievance Committeeman and Treasurer, eventually becoming President of the local. He was also a member of the Wage Policy Committee.

Bob then spent about two years in the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department as an Organizer. In 1962, he became a Staff Representative in District 31 (now District 7) in the Chicago area and served in that capacity for about six years. He was then transferred to the USW Headquarters’ Pension and Insurance Department as a Technician, retiring from that position in 1987.

He joined SOAR when he retired and a year later became a member of the SOAR Executive Board.

Bob, who is 82 years old, has been married to his wife Artherine, for 57 years. They have two children and two grandchildren.

Ken Kovack
Legislative Director

Ken Kovack was discharged from the Army Air Corps in 1946. A year later he hired in at Inland Steel’s 76-inch Hot Strip Mill in East Chicago, Ind. Ken held various positions within his local union. While serving as the local’s Recording Secretary, Ken was very active on the Legislative and Political Committee and was the local’s Community Services Committee chairman during the basic steel strike of 1959. He was also active in the United Way in East Chicago and Hammond, Ind.

He served one year as a Staff Representative in District 31 (now District 7) before being transferred to the Steelworkers’ Legislative Department in Washington, D.C.

Since his retirement in 1992, Ken has been active in SOAR, working in his old office in the D.C. Legislative Department at least once a week. He is still active with the United Way annual campaigns. Ken sends weekly legislative updates to his fellow board members, and attends a number of meetings on behalf of SOAR in the Washington, D.C. area.

Ken and his wife Valerie have five children and nine grandchildren.

New Charter Presented in District 9

August 11, 2007 – Retirees from USW Local 7739 in Johnson City, TN are the latest group to organize and join SOAR in the fight to protect the quality of life for our union’s retirees and working families. Pictured receiving their SOAR Charter from left to right: Richard Teague, Vice President; Tim Barnett, Local Union President; Geneva Lewis, President; Jim Centner, SOAR Director; Dorothy Sells, Recording Secretary; Lewis Stevens, Trustee; Rick Smith, Trustee; and Jean Smith, Treasurer.
“What’s wrong with America?”

This compelling question was raised by retired Steelworker and SOAR Board member, Steve Skvara. The question was raised at the Presidential Candidates Forum sponsored by the AFL-CIO that was recently held in Chicago.

Steve’s statement and question immediately drew journalists and commentators to Steve for interviews. Several interviews followed. MSNBC’s Chris Matthews commented that Steve could very well have provided the “defining moment” when Americans came together in support of a national health care plan.

Steve stated when asked to address the candidates: “After 34 years with LTV Steel, I was forced to retire because of a disability. Two years later LTV filed for bankruptcy. I lost a third of my pension, and my family lost their health care. Every day of my life, I sit at the kitchen table across from the woman who devoted 36 years of her life to my family, and I can’t afford to pay for her health care. What’s wrong with America and what will you do to change it?”

The response came from former Senator John Edwards: “Bless you first of all for what you have been through. You’re a perfect example of exactly what’s wrong with America, both on pension protection and on health care, and we’ve unfortunately not been able to do the things that need to be done in this country. I have a very simple view on all of this. My view is that we ought to treat the pensions and retirements of the chairmen and CEOs of companies exactly the way we treat every other worker in the company. That’s what we ought to do. And we ought to have universal health care in this country. We need it in the worst kind of way, so that when you are bargaining, you’re not bargaining about health care costs.”

Steve was forced to retire due to an auto accident after 34 years as an employee of LTV Steel in East Chicago, Ind. Two years later he, like tens-of-thousands of other retired Steelworkers, lost a portion of his pension and all of his health care benefits when his employer filed for bankruptcy. The Skvara family was forced to join the 47 million Americans, including over 8 million children, without health care coverage. The rate of uninsured has increased more than 22.3 percent since 2000. This figure doesn’t include the several million Americans whose health insurance coverage is grossly inadequate.

The time has come! The United States of America must have a national health care policy that meets the needs of its citizens. Why are we the only industrial nation without a health plan that meets our needs? What’s wrong with America?

Now is the time to fight for what we need. The AFL-CIO and its affiliates have for years recognized the need for a change in our health care system. At the AFL-CIO’s Executive Board meeting in Chicago, a policy resolution on health care was passed, and a nationwide drive for health care was launched over Labor Day weekend. The AFL-CIO has committed to put the full force of its 10 million members and 3 million retirees behind winning secure, high-quality health care for all. We have many allies and will attract many more in this fight as the campaign begins to take root. We need candidates for Congress that will make this a reality. We encourage you to get behind this effort. It is time for the dream of health care for all to come true. It is what’s right for America!